

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



**Belfast  
City Council**

14th December, 2023

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

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the Lavery Room and via Teams on Friday, 15th December, 2023 at 9.30 a.m., for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

### **AGENDA:**

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

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

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

- (a) Appointment of Strategic Director of Place and Economy (Pages 1 - 2)
- (b) Update on Contracts (Pages 3 - 14)
- (c) Update on Hardship Programme 2023/24 (Pages 15 - 36)
- (d) Asset Management (Pages 37 - 46)
- (e) Update on Area Working Groups – Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund Stage 2 Development (Pages 47 - 86)
- (f) Discretionary Payments (Pages 87 - 104)

- (g) Leisure Transformation Programme Phase 3 - Girdwood Indoor Sports Facility (Pages 105 - 110)
- (h) Revenue Estimates 2024/25 and Medium-Term Financial Plan (Pages 111 - 130)

### **3. Matters referred back from Council/Motions**

- (a) Motion - Removal of the Maximum Capital Value Cap on Domestic Rates (Pages 131 - 134)
- (b) Motion - Right to Grow on Council-Owned Land (Pages 135 - 138)

### **4. Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues**

- (a) 30 Under 30 Climate Change-Makers Programme (Pages 139 - 142)
- (b) Review of Energy Efficiency Requirements and Related Areas of Building Regulations - Council Response (Pages 143 - 148)
- (c) Draft Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls/Foundational Action Plan/Reaccreditation of the Safe Employer and Safe Place Awards (Pages 149 - 162)
- (d) UNESCO Learning Cities - Belfast Festival of Learning 2024 (Pages 163 - 168)
- (e) Department of Health Consultation Independent Review of Childrens Social Care Services in Northern Ireland (Pages 169 - 172)
- (f) Update on Common Purpose – NI2035 Legacy Programme Sponsorship (Pages 173 - 184)
- (g) Public Health Agency Consultation on the Substance Use Strategic Commissioning and Implementation Plan – Council Response (Pages 185 - 192)

### **5. Physical Programme and Asset Management**

- (a) Update on Physical Programme (Pages 193 - 200)

### **6. Finance, Procurement and Performance**

- (a) Audit and Risk Panel Report and Minutes of the Meeting of 5th December (Pages 201 - 226)

### **7. Equality and Good Relations**

- (a) Equality and Diversity: Equality Screening Outcome Report and Rural Needs Impact Assessment - Quarter 2 2023/24 (Pages 227 - 234)
- (b) Update on Race Equality Action Plan (Pages 235 - 240)
- (c) Minutes of the Meeting of the Shared City Partnership (Pages 241 - 284)

**8. Operational Issues**

- (a) Minutes of the Meeting of the Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum  
(Pages 285 - 288)
- (b) Requests for use of the City Hall and the Provision of Hospitality  
(Pages 289 - 294)
- (c) Requests for the use of the City Hall Grounds for Events in 2024  
(Pages 295 - 298)
- (d) Minutes of the Meeting of the All-Party Working Group on the City Centre  
(Pages 299 - 308)

**9. Issues Raised in Advance by Members**

- (a) Trademarket Belfast - Future Location (Councillor Murray to raise)

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**Belfast**  
City Council

STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES  
COMMITTEE

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Motion – Removal of the Maximum Capital Value Cap on Domestic Rates</b>
<b>Date:</b>	15th December, 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

## Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

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No

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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
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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

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## Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

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No

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<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
	To bring to Members' attention a motion in relation to the Removal of the Maximum Capital Value Cap on Domestic Rates, which the Standards and Business Committee considered at its meeting on 28th November.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
	The Committee is asked to consider the motion and take such action thereon as may be determined.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b><u>Key Issues</u></b></p> <p>The Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 28th November, considered the following motion which had been received for submission to the Council on 4th December:</p> <p><b><u>Removal of the Maximum Capital Value Cap on Domestic Rates</u></b></p> <p>"This Council notes that, for ordinary domestic Belfast rate payers, it is a struggle to make ends meet at present, especially with rates reaching 7.99% in 2023/2024. For the better off in society, rates are not such a struggle to pay.</p> <p>There is a maximum capital value cap on Domestic Rates known as the Max Cap, which is currently set at £400,000, that limits the rates those in more affluent homes are compelled to pay. The Max Cap has not been altered since 2009. It is prescribed in legislation: The Rates (Maximum Capital Value) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007, as amended.</p> <p>A rebalancing of the rates burden needs to take place so that all rate payers pay their fair share. There is no good reason for the poorer to pay more in percentage terms when they are struggling financially.</p> <p>The Council, therefore, urges the Government to remove the Max Cap and phase it in over several years. This will allow affluent rate payers a graduated response to rate rises over a period.</p> <p>In light of consultation that will take place on this issue, the Council will also make this motion a collective submission to the consultation".</p>



	<p>Proposer: Councillor McDowell</p> <p>Seconder: Councillor Flynn</p>
3.2	<p>As the motion calls upon the Council to support the removal of the maximum capital value cap on domestic rates, it was referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, as it is responsible for the annual revenue and capital budgets and the rate to be levied and will also be considering a Council response to the consultation paper on domestic rating measures.</p> <p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>None at this stage.</p> <p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p>
3.3	<p>This motion, if agreed, may have potential equality, good relations and rural needs implications and should be subject to our normal screening process as appropriate.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	None

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**Belfast**  
City Council

STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES  
COMMITTEE

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Motion – Right to Grow on Council-Owned Land</b>
<b>Date:</b>	15th December, 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

## Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

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No

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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

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## Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

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No

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<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
	To bring to Members' attention a motion in relation to the Right to Grow on Council-Owned Land, which the Standards and Business Committee considered at its meeting on 28th November.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
	The Committee is asked to consider the motion and take such action thereon as may be determined.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b><u>Key Issues</u></b></p> <p>The Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 28th November, considered the following motion which had been received for submission to the Council on 4th December:</p> <p><b><u>Right to Grow on Council-Owned Land</u></b></p> <p>“This Council notes the pressures upon food security caused by many issues, including the cost-of-living crisis, the impact of the pandemic and climate change. It is, therefore, vital that the Council plays its part to ensure that our citizens have access to enough fresh food for day-to-day living.</p> <p>The Council, therefore, agrees to adopt a right to grow on Council-owned land which is suitable for cultivation. This would probably involve licensing cultivation of suitable land via community groups.”</p> <p>Proposer: Councillor Bell  Seconder: Councillor Flynn</p>
3.2	<p>As the motion calls upon the Council to adopt a right to grow on Council owned land, it was referred, in the first instance, to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, which is responsible for maintaining the corporate land bank and city assets.</p> <p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>None at this stage.</p> <p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>This motion, if agreed, may have potential equality, good relations and rural needs implications and should be subject to our normal screening process as appropriate.</p>

<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	None

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>30U30 Northern Ireland Climate Change-Makers Programme</b>
<b>Date:</b>	15th December 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy
<b>Contact Officers:</b>	Debbie Caldwell, Belfast Climate Commissioner

<b>Restricted Reports</b>									
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
<p><b>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</b></p> <p>Insert number <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information relating to any individual</li> <li>2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual</li> <li>3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li> <li>4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter</li> <li>5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained</li> <li>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</li> <li>7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</li> </ol>									
<p><b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b></p> <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">After Committee Decision</td> <td style="width: 30%; text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>After Council Decision</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sometime in the future</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>		After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
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After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>								

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To inform the Committee of an approach to the Council for support for the 30U30 (30 under 30) Northern Ireland Climate Change-Maker's programme.

<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. agree to contribute £8,750 plus VAT to the overall 30U30 Northern Ireland Climate Change-Makers programme costs;</li> <li>ii. note that, whilst the Council's support represents a modest proportion of the overall budget (circa £100,000 in total), it will be crucial in making the initiative (the themes of which complement and supplement the Council's climate programme) a reality;</li> <li>iii. note that the Council's support will resource the launch along with six modules/events featuring world-class speakers/experts taking place from January – June 2024; and</li> <li>iv. note that the collaborative, cross sectoral initiative, featuring world-class speakers and experts, will be supported by organisations such as Pinsent Masons, Coca Cola and Danske Bank with a request for local authority involvement being addressed through this approach to the Council.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p>The 30 under 30 initiative is a climate focused programme where young leaders from Northern Ireland have the opportunity to take part in an international learning programme, led by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful and Podiem. Following an exceptionally successful, multi-award-winning pilot programme (supported by the Council last year) a new cohort of young leaders will be competitively selected and there is a request for the Council to support the programme of activity they will undertake. Most of the 30U30 modules are being delivered in Belfast City Centre and the vast majority of the participants will either reside or work within the Belfast City Council footprint. The cohort will be diverse with a broad range of backgrounds, sectors and interest/expertise areas represented. Within the pilot programme over 55% of the group were female with a mix of those in education, employment and currently economically inactive.</p>
3.2	<p>Within the modular programme, participants will learn from globally renowned thought leaders and exemplars across a range of relevant topics. These topics have been carefully crafted to create a cohort of leaders who will return to their fields of expertise with the tools to become planet positive change-makers in the short/long term. Speakers and facilitators from the pilot programme included globally renowned individuals such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alice Thompson, an international speaker and social business leader who co-founded Social Bite in Edinburgh and helped to establish 'The Worlds Big Sleepout' which took place in 52 cities around the world;</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gerry Hussey, Ireland’s leading health, wellbeing and performance coach, who has worked with many leading sports people and teams, and author of ‘Awaken Your Power Within’;</li> <li>• Philip Hesketh, an international authority on influence and persuasion, who has worked with clients such as the BBC, Nestle, Walt Disney, Nike, Microsoft and Bank of America, among others; and</li> <li>• René Carayol MBE, who has worked with leaders such as Mikael Gorbachev, Nelson Mandela, Sir Richard Branson, Bill Clinton, and Kofi Annan, and authored the book ‘SPIKE’. He has been Chairman, CEO and MD of businesses and served on the boards of Marks and Spencer’s and Pepsi. He is an authority on inclusivity and leadership.</li> </ul>
3.3	<p>The programme includes an international element which will encourage and enable the NI climate change-makers to build relationships and collaborations with climate change-makers from other parts of the world through the 30 under 30 programme currently run by the North American Association for Environmental Education.</p> <p><b>Potential benefits for the Council</b></p>
3.4	<p>The programme coordinators will ensure that the Council will be positioned as championing (along with the other partners) the creation and development of the next generation of local leaders who will lead work to address climate change in Northern Ireland. This will support the cities ambition, articulated in the Belfast Resilience Strategy, to “transition to a low-carbon economy in a generation”. It will also build on work undertaken by the Council Climate Unit with young people through the Belfast Climate Commission and Council funded research on young people’s perceptions of the climate crisis undertaken during COP26 in 2021. Should the Council support the initiative, the Climate Unit will explore opportunities to align with our existing climate programme and the work being undertaken with young leaders through Belfast Climate Commission and within other projects such as Belfast One Million Trees Programme, the UPSURGE project, the Belfast Retrofit Hub and the Belfast Sustainable Food Partnership. In supporting this programme, the Council will be going well beyond its own carbon footprint and direct activity, it is proactively inspiring and equipping those who have the ambition to transform industries (similar to Artemis and Responsible, both from Belfast) and create global solutions (for example Catagen, also from Belfast) to our most pressing climate and environmental challenges.</p>

3.5	In terms of profile, the Council brand will be prominent on all of the initiative marketing material which will be launched to ensure mass awareness. The Council brand will also be highly visible at all of the modules (including the finale event) and a Council representative will be invited to participate in the press photos launching the event and at the finale event.
3.6	There is also an opportunity for a member of the Council's Climate team to present on how a city is playing its part in helping to avert a climate crisis. The cohort will feature some of NI's finest future leadership talent (including those from the local government sector), so this content will be very useful and relevant to the participants.
3.7	There is an opportunity for the Lord Mayor of Belfast to greet the group and hear how they are planning to create meaningful impact as a direct consequence of the programme. A short video of the Lord Mayor greeting the group as part of the pilot programme is visible at <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c3wl5qXyd48">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c3wl5qXyd48</a> There is also an opportunity to host one of the modules in the City Hall and secure the press coverage associated with that. This would be the ideal event for the Lord Mayor to greet and listen to the group and the positive planet impact they plan to create.
<b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b>	
3.8	£8,750 plus VAT which will be allocated from existing City and Organisational Strategy budgets.
<b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Implications</u></b>	
3.9	None.
<b>4.0 Documents Attached</b>	
	None.



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Review of Energy Efficiency Requirements and Related Areas of Building Regulations – Council Response</b>
<b>Date:</b>	15th December, 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Kate Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Ian Harper, Building Control Manager James Calwell, Building Control Surveyor,

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</b>	
Insert number <input type="checkbox"/>	
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<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To present a response to a pre-consultation document, prepared by the Building Standards Branch of the Department of Finance (DoF), on potential proposals regarding energy efficiency measures and related areas of the Building Regulations.
1.2	The document is a call for evidence in a pre-consultation format covering a wide range of subject areas. It has 273 pages (with additional links to other documents) and contains 128 questions. The aim of this pre-consultation is to gather evidence that will help inform future improvements relating to energy efficiency of buildings and related areas.
1.3	At this stage, the nature of the evidence gathering is very wide and is not specific in a regulatory function. It is anticipated that further, directed consultation will follow (proposed under the next phase) which will require more specific input from Council as a Regulatory body.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Decision(s) required and recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. consider the draft response to the Department of Finance (DoF) pre-consultation and agree, subject to any amendments, a response on behalf of the Council; and</li> <li>ii. note that the closing date for responses to this consultation is 15<sup>th</sup> December 2023. If agreed, the response will be submitted, subject to ratification by the Council on 8th January.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
	<b><u>Background</u></b>
3.1	The document is a pre-consultation 'discussion document' that outlines potential future improvements in energy efficiency standards and related areas and explores the associated benefits and challenges in respect to future up-lifts.
3.2	This is essentially a scoping exercise to determine proposals that will be included in the next phase (phase 3) of the Department of Finance's 5 phase programme.
3.3	The overall objective will be to achieve much lower operational emissions and significantly improved energy performance of new buildings. The proposals also seek to uplift the standards when building work occurs to existing buildings, so that extensions are better aligned with new building practices. The consultation also explores the provision of improved building ventilation, electric vehicle charging infrastructure points around buildings, as well as new measures to help prevent overheating in dwellings.

3.4	<p>Uplifts to local Building Regulations in Northern Ireland normally take place following revisions made in England and the general technical guidance tends to be based on similar standards of technical performance with England, although some local adjustments may be made. This approach has been longstanding and follows the recommendations from the McConnell report 1970. Many of the proposals in the document follow England's Future Homes Standards.</p> <p><b><u>Proposals and Purpose</u></b></p>
3.5	<p>The Executive's <i>Energy Strategy - Path to Net Zero Energy (December 2021)</i> and associated Action Plans included a commitment to an interim uplift through revised technical guidance, which took effect in June 2022. That strategy also seeks to ensure new buildings are designed and constructed to net zero ready standards from no later than 2026/27. This discussion document represents the next step in that journey and seeks information and evidence on a range of technical issues to help inform subsequent uplifts.</p>
3.6	<p>The pre-consultation document is considering developments around energy efficiency aspects of the Building Regulations and related parts, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part F (Conservation of fuel and power)</li> <li>• Part K (Ventilation)</li> <li>• Overheating (potentially a new part to the Building Regulations)</li> <li>• Provision of Electric Vehicle charge-point infrastructure. (Potentially a new part to the Building Regulations)</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Headline Proposals</u></b></p>
3.7	<p><b>Timeframes</b> – Provisional timeframes being 2024 for the implementation of the next phase (phase 3) with a further uplift proposed in 2026/27 (phase 4)</p>
3.8	<p><b>New Notional Dwelling Recipe</b> – A new dwelling will be assessed against a similar size property which has much improved fabric measures and an expectation of 40% of the a building's roof to be covered with photovoltaic arrays (unless heated by a low carbon source). In addition to this, the DoF are keen to assess the appetite for a move to an alternative 'Option 2' heat-pump led approach.</p>

3.9	<b>Fuel Factors</b> - Removal of all existing 'fuel factors', which currently ease emissions targets, when higher carbon fuels are proposed. This will make use of conventional oil fuelled heating solutions very challenging in new dwellings.
3.10	<b>Introduction of New Measurement Metrics</b> – Introduction of a new secondary metric of 'primary energy' to act in addition to the carbon performance requirement. This is important, particularly in the context of decarbonisation of the electricity grid.
3.11	<b>New Fabric Requirements</b> – Improved insulation and airtightness levels within buildings. This would be supported by a new performance metric Fabric Energy Efficiency Standard (FEES). This will help with preventing the offsetting of emissions or primary energy impacts with excessive on-site renewables.
3.12	<b>Provision of Information</b> – Provision of information including, home user guides, compliance reports, geo-located and dated photographs of construction details.
3.13	<b>Extensions</b> - Improved elemental standards for extensions and minimum services efficiencies for existing dwellings to be more aligned with new-build standards.
3.14	<b>Consequential Improvements</b> - New consequential improvements requiring some low-cost interventions in existing dwellings where an extension is proposed.
3.15	<b>Heating installations</b> - New heating installations required to operate at lower flow temperatures. Improved efficiencies and controls on new heating installations.
3.16	<b>Amalgamation of Technical Documents</b> – It is proposed to introduce the updated guidance on minimum standards for building services and integrate this within Technical Booklet F (Conservation of Fuel and Power), rather than being published as a secondary reference document.
3.17	<b>Ventilation</b> – A review is proposed on the guidance for ventilation to ensure good indoor air quality is achieved. Proposals include limitations on the use of natural ventilation, revised ventilation sizes, ventilation provisions when work occurs on existing buildings and dedicated drying facilities for drying clothes.
3.18	<b>Overheating</b> – The DoF are considering the introduction of overheating mitigation standards to the Building Regulations. The proposal will require designers to carry out a 'simplified method' assessment of the extent of openings and glazing on the dwelling. Alternatively, or

	where the requirements of the simplified approach are not able to be met, dynamic thermal modelling of the dwelling can be used.
3.19	<p><b>Infrastructure for Electric Vehicle Charge Points</b> – The DoF is considering the introduction of EV infrastructure charge points / ducting to parking spaces in and adjacent to new buildings and buildings undergoing major renovation work.</p> <p><b>Belfast City Council Response</b></p>
3.20	The Building Control Service co-ordinated this response in consultation with colleagues in the Climate Team, Planning Service, Environment Health and Physical Programmes and the proposed response on behalf of the Council can be accessed <a href="#">here</a> . Members are advised that, given the wide range of issues discussed and evidence requested, officers have provided responses only where appropriate.
3.21	<p>The direction of travel being proposed in respect to an up-lift to the Building Regulations relating to improving the energy performance of buildings is broadly welcomed. The proposals reflect many of the priorities of the Net Zero Carbon Road Map for Belfast. The suggested ideas are expected to deliver benefits for the citizens of Belfast and improve use of our energy resources. Through the delivery of more energy efficient buildings, they will provide more comfortable indoor environments and potentially lower running costs.</p> <p>The full package of consultation documents can be found on the Department's website: -</p> <p><a href="https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/consultations/review-energy-efficiency-building-regulations">https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/consultations/review-energy-efficiency-building-regulations</a></p> <p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p>
3.22	<p>As this is a pre-consultation document the DoF has not carried out a Regulatory Impact Assessment to establish the financial impact of these changes to Industry, this will take place once proposals have been finalised under the next phase (phase 3).</p> <p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p>
3.23	The proposed amendments have been screened out by DoF in relation to the need to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment. A Rural Needs Impact Assessment has also been carried out by the Department which identified there may be impacts on the rural community in areas where access to mains gas and/or where the electricity network may not readily support the

	new requirements. It is expected that further work may be needed to assess the impacts depending on the route of travel in this regard. Both documents are published separately on the Departmental Website.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Document Attached</b>
	Draft BCC Consultation Response – <b>see paragraph 3.20 for link</b>





<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Draft Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls and Foundational Action Plan/Council's Reaccreditation of the Safe Employer and Safe Place Awards</b>
<b>Date:</b>	15th December, 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Christine Sheridan, Director of Human Resources
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Catherine Christy HR Manager - Development

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
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="text"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information relating to any individual</li> <li>2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual</li> <li>3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li> <li>4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter</li> <li>5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained</li> <li>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</li> <li>7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</li> </ol>	
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"/>

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the Women's Steering Group's response to the Executive Office's consultation on Ending Violence against Women and Girls

	and the Council's recent reaccreditation of the Onus employer Safe Place and Safe City Awards.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and the Council's reaccreditation of the ONUS Safe Place Platinum employers' award and the Onus Safe City award.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b>TEO Consultation</b></p> <p>The consultation ran for 13 weeks from 4th July to 3rd October, 2023 and sought views on the new draft Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls and Foundational Action Plan, being led by the Executive Office (TEO). The seven-year (2023-2030) Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls has been co-designed with over 50 partners from across government, community and voluntary sectors and organisations, as well as wider society. Importantly, these partners also include those with lived experience. It sets the agenda for all of government and society here to end violence against women and girls. (A summary of the TEO consultation is attached).</p> <p><b>Strategic Framework Content</b></p>
3.2	The Vision of the Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls is a changed society where women and girls are free from all forms of gender-based violence, abuse and harm including the attitudes, systems and structural inequalities that cause them.
3.3	<p>The aim of the Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls is to work together as partners across every sector of society to prevent and eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls with a focus on root causes with four broad themes identified:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prevention;</li> <li>2. Protection and Provision;</li> <li>3. Justice System; and</li> <li>4. Working Better Together</li> </ol> <p><b>Outcomes</b></p> <p>Six big changes were identified and grouped into outcomes, namely:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Changed attitudes, behaviours, and social norms;</li> <li>2. Healthy, respectful relationships;</li> </ol>

	<p>3. Women and girls are safe and feel safe everywhere;</p> <p>4. Quality frontline services, protection, and provision for victims and survivors of violence against women and girls;</p> <p>5. A justice system which has the confidence of victims, survivors and the public in its ability to address violence against women and girls; and</p> <p>6. All of government and society working better together to end violence against women and girls.</p> <p><b>Women's Steering Group Response</b></p>
3.4	<p>The Women's Steering Group (WSG) was established in 2006 to develop and the deliver the Council's Gender Action Plan, aimed at promoting gender equality both within the Council and across the city of Belfast. WSG proactively supports programmes aimed at ensuring women and girls are safe and feel safe everywhere and is keen to explore how the council, and local government in general, can support the prevention of violence against women and girls. A response to the consultation has been sent to TEO on behalf of Women's Steering Group, (please see Appendix 2.) The response emphasises the important role that local government has to play in delivering the framework and achieving the outcomes.</p>
3.5	<p>On 21st November, the WSG hosted a delegation from The Executive Office who presented on the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls, Draft Strategic Framework and Foundational Action Plan. The Executive Office has subsequently been asked to present to the Corporate Management Team and this will be followed by a workshop with council officers in relevant departments to consider how council can help deliver the action plan.</p>
	<p><b>ONUS Safe Place Platinum Employers' award and the Onus Safe City award.</b></p>
3.6	<p>An important element of the Gender Action plan is ongoing work to raise awareness around domestic violence and abuse, promote a zero-tolerance approach and provide support for those experiencing domestic abuse. Our workplace policy and activities and our work with partners across the city to raise awareness and provide support has been recognised again this year at the Onus Annual Awards with the Council being recredited with the Platinum Employers award and the Safe City award.</p>
	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p>
3.7	<p>There are no additional financial or human resource implications in this report.</p>

3.8	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>An EQIA and Rural Needs Impact assessment on the Draft Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls has been carried out by TEO.</p>
4.0	<p><b>Documents Attached</b></p>
	<p><b>Appendix 1</b> - Summary of TEO consultation on draft Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) and Foundational Action Plan</p> <p><b>Appendix 2</b> – Women’s Steering Group response to TEO consultation on draft Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) and Foundational Action Plan</p>

### **TEO consultation on draft Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) and Foundational Action Plan**

**Closes 3 October**

#### **Introduction**

1. This consultation seeks views on the new draft Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) and Foundational Action Plan, being led by the Executive Office (TEO).
2. The seven-year (2023-2030) Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls has been co-designed with over 50 partners from across government, community and voluntary sectors and organisations, as well as wider society. Importantly, these partners also include those with lived experience.
3. It sets the agenda for all of government and society here to end violence against women and girls. It is ambitious, long term, and wide reaching. It is a living document and will be adapted along the journey responding to emerging needs.

#### **Consultation**

1. The consultation will run for 13 weeks from 04 July 2023 to 03 October 2023.
2. While we want to hear from as many people as possible on as many of the changes as possible, please feel free to comment on as few or as many of them as you see fit.
3. The proposals for the Strategic Framework and Foundational Action Plan are subject to the views of the Executive who will be responsible for final approval.

#### **Purpose**

1. This seven-year (2023-2030) Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG), builds on the evidence received, and the key issues identified through the Call for Views consultation process, which took place in 2022. It sets the agenda for all of government and society to end violence against women and girls. It is ambitious, long term, and wide reaching. As a living document, it will be adapted along the journey according to emerging needs.
2. The **problem statement** that this Strategic Framework is addressing was agreed by our co-design group as,  
“Societal culture and systemic attitudes and beliefs enable violence against women and girls”.
3. Wellbeing for all is at the heart of what Government aims to deliver in this jurisdiction. The ability to form and enjoy healthy relationships is central to individual wellbeing, and vital to building communities and a society where everyone can thrive. This is something that we want for all our children, and for every individual and community here.
4. Violence against women and girls, in all its forms, is a critical obstacle to achieving this goal of wellbeing for all. It is damaging to women, girls, men and boys. Stopping violence against women and girls by

changing the attitudes, behaviours, and social norms that accept and enable it, can create a future that is not only better and safer for women and girls, but more just, equal, and respectful for everyone.

## **Overview of the Strategic Framework**

The co-design process to develop the Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls began in October 2022. It saw a group of over 50 partners come together from across government, different sectors, and wider society, including intersectional representation and, importantly, those with lived experience, to create a Strategic Framework that has been **designed with**, not for, our communities and society.

### **Vision**

The Vision of the Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls is

A changed society where women and girls are free from all forms of gender-based violence, abuse and harm including the attitudes, systems and structural inequalities that cause them.

### **Aim**

The Aim of the Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls is:

To work together as partners across every sector of society to prevent and eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls with a focus on root causes.

### **Four Themes**

In developing this Strategic Framework our co-design group identified 4 broad themes and 6 big changes or 'outcomes' required to end violence against women and girls. The outcomes are grouped under the four themes:

1. **Prevention;**
2. **Protection and Provision;**
3. **Justice System;** and
4. **Working Better Together**

### **Prevention**

The emphasis of this Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls is on the theme of **prevention**. Effective prevention can both stop violence from occurring in the first place, such as education and campaigns; as well as interrupt the cycle of violence, like making public transport safer. Our main focus will be on those outcomes associated with prevention:

- Changing attitudes, behaviours, and social norms
- Building knowledge and skills of individuals to form healthy relationships
- Ensuring that women and girls are safe and feel safe everywhere.

### **Outcomes**

The 6 big changes required to end violence against women and girls identified by our Co-design group were grouped into six outcomes, with priority areas identified under each outcome:

#### **• Outcome 1: Changed Attitudes, Behaviours, and Social Norms.**

Everyone in society understands what violence against women and girls is, including its root causes, and plays an active role in preventing it.

- **Outcome 2: Healthy, Respectful Relationships.**

Everyone in society is equipped and empowered to enjoy healthy, respectful relationships.

- **Outcome 3: Women and Girls are Safe and Feel Safe Everywhere.**

Organisations and institutions across government and society embed the prevention of violence against women and girls in all that they do so that women and girls are safe and feel safe everywhere.

- **Outcome 4: Quality Frontline Services, Protection, and Provision for Victims and Survivors of Violence Against Women and Girls.**

Provision of high quality services for women and girls who are victims and survivors of violence against women and girls.

- **Outcome 5: A Justice System which has the Confidence of Victims, Survivors and the Public in its Ability to Address Violence Against Women and Girls.**

In the context of violence against women and girls, a justice system that considers and addresses the needs of people who come into contact with it, holds perpetrators to account, while challenging and supporting them to change, gives victims and survivors a voice and a place in the process, and has the confidence of the public.

- **Outcome 6: All of Government and Society Working Better Together to End Violence Against Women and Girls**

A whole system approach with collaboration and cooperation by default across government departments and with, within, and between the community, voluntary, and other sectors.

Each of these Outcomes, and the priorities for delivering them are explained in more detail in our Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls.

## **Overview of the Foundational Action Plan**

This Action Plan is a foundational one which establishes our work for the remainder of 2023/24. This approach allows us to make progress in the challenging financial climate this year, and to align our planning cycle with the financial year from March 2024. As we go forward, further conversations will be needed to allow us to advise the Executive on decisions to be taken on budgets and priorities.

The Action Plan consists of a series of key actions that were developed to lay the foundations of the work to bring about meaningful change and effective delivery as we move forward, and which the Strategic Framework can build upon in subsequent years.

### **Foundational Action Plan**

#### **Actions falling under the theme of Prevention:**

1. Develop a society wide communications and engagement strategy to change attitudes, behaviours and social norms.
2. Adopt the Task Group Sprint Model to consider the needs (including Intersectional needs) of specific groups.
3. Establish a forum to coordinate work on equipping and supporting families, children and young people to enjoy healthy, respectful relationships using the curriculum (including Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)), policies and practices in early years, schools and community sector.

4. To embed structures and processes which give space for young people's voices to participate and influence decision makers in ending violence against women and girls (EVAWG) work.
5. Establish a cross sectoral Further and Higher education working group to develop a plan to address EVAWG on and off campus.
6. Establish a cross-sectoral workplace forum (including unions, Labour Relations Agency, employers' organisations and other professional bodies) to develop workplace policy toolkits/ guidance and to promote workplace training/ best practice in professional standards on EVAWG, Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) to lead good practice in public sector.
7. Support the cross-sectoral group addressing EVAWG issues in the hospitality sector and the night-time economy.

#### Actions falling under the theme of **Protection and Provision**

8. Map and undertake gap analysis of violence against women and girls (VAWG) provision in general frontline services to help inform further policy development and service delivery.
9. Map and undertake gap analysis of VAWG provision in specialist frontline services including a review of referral gateways to help inform further policy development and service delivery.

#### Actions falling under the theme of **Justice System:**

10. Develop further tools for communicating information on the justice system and processes to improve information sharing and enhance confidence amongst victims/survivors in support of implementation of the Victim and Witness Strategy.
11. In the context of care and protections for victims in the justice system:
  - a. evaluate agreed interventions that are providing support to victims to access the Justice System;
  - b. support research on victim attrition rates in serious sexual offences and domestic abuse cases as part of implementation of Gillen Programme and Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy.
12. Explore with partners options to create specialism in VAWG cases in court proceedings including information provision for juries.
13. Undertake a review of international best practice perpetrator prevention and management systems to inform policy development and practice in support of the review under the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy.
14. Undertake a review of trends in aggravating and reinforcing factors of VAWG to inform policy development and practice.

#### Actions falling under the theme of **Working Better Together:**

15. Create a Knowledge and Network Hub within the Executive Office (TEO) to provide an accessible central resource on EVAWG research, data & evaluation and communication & engagement.
16. Establish a cross sectoral group located within the Knowledge and Network Hub to develop and lead the programme of EVAWG work on data and evaluation.
17. Through the Knowledge and Network Hub, develop and deliver an agreed annual EVAWG research programme with advice and support from a cross jurisdictional panel of academic research experts.
18. Through the Knowledge and Network Hub create reference groups to engage with lived experience, service provision, and academic research expertise in the development of the EVAWG work programme.



19. Create a five jurisdiction officials forum to share best practice and encourage cross jurisdictional shared learning.
20. NICS will identify and implement mechanisms including Programme for Government (PfG) to mainstream opportunities to EVAWG in public policies and strategies at all levels.
21. Develop funding strategy for sustainable EVAWG work across departments and other sectors.
22. In order to build widespread support for a changed society where women and girls are free from all forms of gender-based violence, abuse and harm including the attitudes, systems and structural inequalities that cause them - to seek endorsement of EVAWG strategic framework and active participation in the whole of society programme of actions by political and civic leaders.

**Note: at a recent information seminar TEO presented the following:**

## How can we work together?

### Building strong partnerships

- Programme of engagement between EVAWG, NILGA and SOLACE to share information and expertise
- Consider arrangements to facilitate and support strategic collaboration
- Joining in NIwide campaigns for example Women's NightTime Safety Charter
- Building on existing problem-solving Partnerships for example Domestic and Sexual Violence Partnerships and Multi-Agency Support Hubs

### Local Community Relationships

- Leadership by Mayors, Councillors and officials
- Working with local partners to deliver on 'changed attitudes and behaviors'
- Working with local community groups on healthy respectful relationships programmes and bystander approach
- Mapping community services and needs

### Community Planning

- Considering violence against women and girls throughout community plans
- Role for PCSPs
- Creating opportunities to support young people in learning about healthy relationships
- Role of planning, licensing and other Council functions
- Mainstreaming safety of public spaces

## Summary of Consultation Questions

### Answer options:

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Please add any comments

---

### 1 Do you agree or disagree with our vision below?

"A changed society where women and girls are free from all forms of gender-based violence, abuse and harm including the attitudes, systems and structural inequalities that cause them"

### 2 Do you agree or disagree that Outcome 1 below, will enable us to achieve this vision?

#### Outcome 1 - Changed Attitudes, Behaviours and Social Norms.

Everyone in society understands what violence against women and girls is, including its root causes, and plays an active role in preventing it.

### 3 Do you agree or disagree that Outcome 2 below, will enable us to achieve this vision?

#### Outcome 2 – Healthy, Respectful Relationships.

Everyone in society is equipped and empowered to enjoy healthy, respectful relationships

### 4 Do you agree or disagree that Outcome 3 below, will enable us to achieve this vision?

#### Outcome 3 – Women and Girls Are Safe and Feel Safe Everywhere.

Organisations and institutions across government and society embed the prevention of violence against women and girls in all that they do so that women and girls are safe and feel safe everywhere.

### 5 Do you agree or disagree that Outcome 4 below, will enable us to achieve this vision?

#### Outcome 4 – Quality Frontline Services, Protection, and Provision for Victims and Survivors of Violence Against Women and Girls.

Provision of high-quality services for women and girls who are victims and survivors of violence against women and girls.

### 6 Do you agree or disagree that Outcome 5 below, will enable us to achieve this vision?

#### Outcome 5 – A Justice System which has the Confidence of Victims, Survivors and the Public in its Ability to Address Violence Against Women and Girls.

### 7 Do you agree or disagree that Outcome 6 below, will enable us to achieve this vision?

#### Outcome 6 – All of Government and Society Working Better Together to End Violence Against Women and Girls.

A whole system approach with collaboration and cooperation by default across government departments and with, within and between the community, voluntary and other sectors.

**8 Do you agree or disagree with our approach of focusing on PREVENTION to end violence against women and girls?**

**9. Do you agree or disagree that these are the right actions to take in our foundational Action Plan?**

**10. Do you agree or disagree with the way in which the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been carried out?**

**11. Do you agree or disagree with the findings of the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)?**

**12. If you or your organisation would like to receive our newsletter, to keep up to date with our work to end violence against women and girls, please provide a contact email address in the box below.**

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3 October 2023

FAO: The Executive Office [EVAWG.HaveYourSay@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk](mailto:EVAWG.HaveYourSay@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk)

Dear Sir/Madam

### Consultation on draft Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) and Foundational Action Plan

Belfast City Council established a Women's Steering Group (WSG) in 2006 to develop and deliver the Council's Gender Action Plan, aimed at promoting gender equality both within the Council and across the city of Belfast.

The WSG welcomes the consultation on the draft Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) and the Foundational Action Plan. We have circulated the consultation widely across the Council and have encouraged officers and elected members to respond. However, on behalf of the WSG we would also like to submit the following response to your consultation.

1. WSG supports the need for the EVAWG strategy and action plan.
2. We broadly agree with the vision and outcomes within the draft strategy. However, we feel that **Outcome 1 – changed attitudes, behaviours and social norms** should also reflect the need for everyone to not only understand what violence against women and girls is, but that they also “agree that it is unacceptable” and play an active role in preventing it.
3. Belfast City Council and the WSG proactively supports programmes aimed at ensuring **Women and Girls Are Safe and Feel Safe Everywhere (Outcome 3)**. We welcome the commitment to further embed the prevention of violence against women within organisations and government and are keen to support its implementation.
4. Belfast City Council provides many community and frontline services, including community centres, play centres, community safety programmes, our youth council and age friendly work. Whilst not directly focused on victims and survivors of violence against women, we would welcome the opportunity to explore how these services could help support the vision and outcomes set out in the strategy. This would be in keeping with the concept of a “whole system with collaboration and cooperation”.
5. Whilst we agree with **Outcome 6 – All of Government and Society Working Better Together to End Violence Against Women and Girls**, we feel the role of local government should be highlighted and not just “government departments”. Local government plays a key role in civic society and, through our Elected Members, is uniquely placed to listen and connect with residents at a local level. Councils are responsible for



leading community planning and the policing and community safety partnerships (PCSPs). We encourage TEO to engage early and continuously with local government and to work collaboratively with us to achieve shared outcomes for women and girls. This will help shape successful places where women and girls are safe, and everyone can fulfil their potential, enabling them to contribute and play a positive role.

6. We strongly support the focus on prevention within the draft strategic framework.
7. We broadly agree with the Foundation Action Plan. We are particularly keen to explore how council, and local government in general, can support the prevention and working together themes.
8. We note that one of the actions relates to developing a funding strategy for EVAWG work. Adequate funding to support the framework will be essential. Community groups, in particular, will need adequate financial assistance to support the ambitions set out in the framework.
9. We generally endorse the findings of the EQIA. We would stress the importance of recognising that women and girls will also fall within other s.75 categories, and that these characteristics may impact how they experience violence, access support or wider EVAWG prevention work. We note that the EQIA recognises this and has identified mitigations to address this.
10. We also recognise that all Section 75 groups have a role to play in EVAWG.

I trust that you have found these comments helpful. We look forward to working with you in the future on this important issue.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aine McCabe', enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

**On behalf of**  
**Councillor Aine McCabe**  
Chair of Women's Steering Group  
Belfast City Council



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>UNESCO Learning Cities - Belfast Festival of Learning 2024</b>
<b>Date:</b>	15th December, 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy Kevin Heaney, Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty
<b>Contact Officers:</b>	Patricia Magee, Policy and Performance Analyst, Naomi Doak, Portfolio and Programme Coordinator

<b>Restricted Reports</b>									
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
<p><b>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</b></p> <p><b>Insert number</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information relating to any individual.</li> <li>2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual</li> <li>3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li> <li>4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter</li> <li>5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained</li> <li>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</li> <li>7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</li> </ol>									
<p><b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b></p> <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">After Committee Decision</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>After Council Decision</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sometime in the future</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>		After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
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After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>								

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To update the Committee on the work underway in support of Belfast's membership of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities and the repositioning of this work in the context of community planning. on the proposed approach to Belfast's Festival of Learning 2024 and request Departmental consideration of support for the development of events for inclusion in the Programme.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) reaffirm our commitment to Belfast's designation as a member of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities;</li> <li>ii) note the proposed Belfast Festival of Learning will run from 22nd April (recognised worldwide as Earth Day) – 27<sup>th</sup> April 2024;</li> <li>iii) note the proposed focus (Climate Action) of the Belfast Festival of Learning in April 2024;</li> <li>iv) note the synergies with the ambitions and plans across the Council;</li> <li>v) approve the proposed £10k match-funding to be allocated from existing budgets in support of the festival and associated work; and</li> <li>vi) consider and agree the proposed open call for small grant funding (up to a maximum of £500 to support community groups to design and delivery events.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
3.1	<p><b>Background</b></p> <p>Members may be aware that Belfast joined the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities in 2018, in recognition of the City's commitment to promoting and encouraging lifelong learning for people of all ages. Within The Belfast Agenda, we have a vision that our city should be a great place for everyone to live and providing lifelong learning opportunities is a core part of this. Learning has the potential to transform lives for the better- it can build better relationships and help enhance quality of life for everyone in the city.</p>
3.2	<p>Belfast was awarded a UNESCO Learning Cities Award for outstanding learning in 2021. Whilst Belfast continues to play its role as a member of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities as well as a member of an All-Island Network of Learning Cities, it is felt there is a real opportunity to build on Belfast's Learning City status and to bring city stakeholders together to reenergise our focus and maximise the opportunities presented. It is important to recognise that it's not about creating new initiatives but rather connecting and enhancing existing programmes and initiatives as well as aligning policy ambitions across multiple partners. A Learning Cities Leadership Group currently exists and comprises representatives from QUB, UU, BMET, BHSCT, PHA, Education Authority, Libraries NI, community partners and Council.</p>



<p>3.3</p> <p>3.4</p> <p>3.5</p> <p>3.6</p>	<p><b>Festival Learning Week</b></p> <p>A key focus of the annual programme of work has been a 'Festival of Learning' which is a week-long programme of free interactive and engaging events. The festival showcases the range of learning opportunities that already exist in Belfast. Council officers are currently in the process of developing a citywide programme of 'learning' events to take place as part of a week-long festival of activity from <b>22<sup>nd</sup> April-27<sup>th</sup> April 2024</b>. We want to work with as wide a range of partners as possible to deliver an inclusive programme of citywide events with three key aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To shine a light on the value of learning in all its forms and promote Belfast as an inclusive learning city for all.</li> <li>▪ To engage and inspire people of all ages, in a wide range of settings across the city, with a variety of learning opportunities.</li> <li>▪ To raise awareness of the engaging, fun and surprising ways in which we can learn.</li> </ul> <p>Given the significance of the climate challenges facing the city and the need for significant behavioural change as well as leadership, it is proposed that this climate action is an overarching theme for the 2024 Festival of Learning. A core stand of the festival will be events which promote citizen awareness of, and engagement in initiatives focusing on lifelong learning in the context of the local and global climate emergency. This would align with the focus of the UNESCOs 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on Learning Cities (2024) which is 'Learning Cities at the forefront of climate action'.</p> <p>This proposed focus not only aligns with UNESCOs global call for member states to strengthen the collective approach to urgent issues around climate change, but it also provides alignment across a number of internal and external strategies and priority areas, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Refreshed <b>Belfast Agenda's</b> commitment to Our Planet</li> <li>▪ Belfast Agenda emphasis on Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel</li> <li>▪ <b>Belfast 2024's</b> principles of People, Place and <b>Planet</b></li> <li>▪ The draft <b>Economic Strategy</b> for Belfast's commitment to Enabling a <b>Path to Net Zero</b></li> <li>▪ A <b>Bolder Vision</b> for Belfast</li> <li>▪ Healthy Cities 6 thematic areas: People, Place, Prosperity, Participation, <b>Planet</b>, Peace</li> <li>▪ QUB commitment to <b>Net Zero</b></li> <li>▪ UU <b>Sustainable Travel</b> ambitions and plans</li> <li>▪ NIHE commitment to <b>retrofitting housing</b>.</li> <li>▪ <b>Green Port</b> and <b>Net Zero zones</b> established in Titanic Quarter</li> <li>▪ Belfast in top 10 ranking of Global Destination Sustainability Index for <b>tourism</b></li> </ul> <p>It is felt that there are significant opportunities to align with a seek to progress many of these linkages as part of the planning and implementation of the 2024 Festival of Learning. We are also actively</p>
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	exploring the potential for senior officials from UNESCO to visit Belfast during the festival week and contribute to the emerging programme as well as strengthen the All-Island Network of Learning Cities.
3.7	Feedback from recent engagement events undertaken as part of the refresh of the Belfast Agenda has highlighted a need for a citywide education programme which helps build awareness around the need for and benefits of effective planning to address climate challenges. The messaging needs to land with residents in terms of for example, helping to tackle poverty (reducing heating costs), creating new jobs and opportunities through green growth, helping alleviate impact of flooding and securing a city (place) for our future generations.
	<b>Grant Funding</b>
3.8	As part of the Festival Week, it would be the intention to develop an open call for small grants (up to a maximum of £500) to help local groups to develop and/or showcase an event. This approach is subject to SP&R Committee consideration and approval. It should be noted that £10,000 funding has been secured through the Public Health Agency in support of the festival and officers are actively exploring other sources of possible funding to enhance the programme.
3.9	It is proposed that a £10,000 match funding is allocated and ring-fenced from within existing departmental budgets within council to support the Festival of Learning
	<b>Next Steps</b>
3.10	<p>In order to deliver on the festival, it is proposed that a festival planning group to be established comprising of representatives from: Healthy Cities, Libraries, QUB, UU, MET, VCSE and from BCC Cultural, EDU, Climate, City Regeneration and Marketing and Comms teams, with a view to co-designing an impactful festival programme. The emerging programme should take account of the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Engage and inspire people of all ages, in a wide range of settings across the city, with a variety of learning opportunities, looking at 'learning' in its broadest sense.</li> <li>▪ Promote understanding of and discussion around climate change and the need to transition to a green economy in the broadest sense / enabling action to address climate issues/ looking at climate, poverty and health inequalities with a particular focus on food, energy and transport.</li> </ul>
	<b>Financial and Resource Implications</b>
3.11	£10K funding has been secured through the Public Health Agency in support of the delivery of the Festival of Learning. An additional £10k match funding from Council is proposed and will be funded through available in-year budgets within City and Organisational Strategy.

	<b>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</b>
3.12	There are no Equality, Good Relations or Rural Needs implications contained in this report.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	None

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Department of Health Consultation – Independent Review of Children’s Social Care Services in Northern Ireland</b>
<b>Date:</b>	15th December, 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Kevin Heaney, Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-poverty Karen Anderson-Gillespie, Strategic Performance Manager

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
<b>1.1</b>	The purpose of this report is to ask the Committee to approve the draft response to the consultation of the Independent Review of Children’s Social Care Services in NI.

<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) consider the draft consultation response which has been submitted as a draft response in-line with the closing date for consultation;</li> <li>(ii) note that the response has been submitted on the basis that it would be subject to Committee and Council approval, with any additional comments submitted; and</li> <li>(iii) approve its formal submission, subject to any comments or amendments provided at Committee.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b><u>Background</u></b></p> <p>Members may be aware that, in October 2021, the Minister for Health agreed to commission an independent review of children's social care in Northern Ireland. The review was announced in February 2022 and took 16 months to complete, publishing in June 2023. The review set out to understand and evaluate issues within the NI children's social care services, and the experiences of service users and providers. Information was gathered from a wide range of sources including children and young people, parents and carers and service providers.</p>
3.2	<p>Led by Professor Ray Jones, the review engaged with parents, children and young people and those working within and alongside children's social care services, including foster and kinship foster carers. A copy of the published review report and a summary easy read is available via the following link: <a href="https://health-ni.gov.uk/consultation-on-recommendations-of-independent-review-of-childrens-social-care-services-in-northern-ireland">Consultation on Recommendations of Independent Review of Children's Social Care Services in Northern Ireland   Department of Health (health-ni.gov.uk)</a>.</p>
3.3	<p><b><u>Consultation on Emerging Recommendations</u></b></p> <p>The Review Report sets out 53 recommendations for action, primarily focusing on the role of the Department of Health and the Health and Social Care (HSC) sector, although some are relevant to the policy responsibilities of other government departments. In the main, the recommendations relate to service provision, both existing and new services, while others focus on structural change at regional and local levels. A number of the recommendations seek to address current workforce pressures. Others relate to how progress is monitored and tracked.</p>
3.4	<p>On 8th September 2023, the Department for Health launched a consultation on the Independent Review of Children's Social Care Services in NI with a specific focus on the emerging recommendations as set out in the review. The closing date for feedback on the consultation was 1st December, 2023.</p>
3.5	<p><b><u>Belfast City Council Draft Response</u></b></p> <p>Accordingly, a draft officer response was submitted in line with this date, however, stating that the submission was subject to consideration and approval of the SP and R Committee on 15th December and ratified by the Council on 8th January, 2024. The DoH was informed that, should any changes be made at Committee or Council, an updated response would be submitted.</p>

3.6	<p>The draft response <a href="#">here</a> welcomes the Independent Review undertaken of the Children's Social Care Services in Northern Ireland and endorses the recommendations emerging from the review. The draft response welcomes the strategic and cross-cutting focus of the proposals to ensure our most vulnerable children and families are offered consistent and practical help and support including, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families need more help to care well for their children. (R4)</li> <li>• Action should be taken to tackle, through welfare benefits changes, the increasing prevalence and intensity of child poverty. (R2)</li> <li>• The success and contribution of Sure Start should be recognised and with it, along with other family support services: expanded, including for children aged 4-10 years. (R23)</li> <li>• Foster carers do a very important job and that should be recognised and supported. (R26)</li> <li>• Respite care for children with a disability should be expanded and with children receiving respite care not seen as looked after children. (R30)</li> <li>• Young people should be given a longer time, if they need it, to prepare for the transition to adult services. (R31)</li> <li>• Children and young people in care, and leaving care, should have a person they trust to stand beside them and support them throughout their journey. (R37)</li> <li>• There should be the development of emotional health and well-being services separate from clinical CAMHS services. (R42).</li> <li>• We need to think about some young people with Learning Disabilities being cared for in a hospital in-patient setting (R44)</li> <li>• Need for longer-term and increased funding commitment for key services rather than the insecurity of annual budgets. (R48 and R49).</li> </ul>
3.7	<p>The consultation document also sets out a recommendation to introduce a region-wide single focused children's and families Arms-Length Body (ALB+) which it states will provide the required leadership and delivery focus for children and young people. Whilst the draft council response supports this recommendation in principle, it highlights the need to ensure local connection and ability to deliver responsive local support services. We have requested that in considering the potential feasibility and design of a new ALB+, there is a need to recognise and seek to build upon already established local services and structures including, for example, community planning. It is important that we seek to enhance and connect services as may be appropriate, avoid potential duplication and maximise the potential contribution and commitment of cross-sectoral/ inter-agency partners.</p>
3.8	<p>Members should note that as part of the Belfast Agenda refresh, we are actively exploring opportunities to take a lead role in bringing forward with partners initiatives to test and explore new approaches and concepts to social challenges. We would wish to explore with the DoH and other partners what opportunities may exist and what recommendations emerging from the Review could be accelerated within Belfast to help address the long-standing systemic and endemic difficulties for children's social care services which impact on children and families across the City.</p>

3.9	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>There are no direct implications associated with this report.</p>
3.10	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>There are no direct implications associated with this report.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	Draft BCC cover letter and consultation response – <b>see link in Paragraph 3.6</b>





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

<b>Restricted Reports</b>									
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
<p><b>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</b></p> <p>Insert number <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information relating to any individual</li> <li>2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual</li> <li>3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li> <li>4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter</li> <li>5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained</li> <li>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</li> <li>7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</li> </ol>									
<p><b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b></p> <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">After Committee Decision</td> <td style="width: 30%; text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>After Council Decision</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sometime in the future</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>		After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
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After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
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Never	<input type="checkbox"/>								

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
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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.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
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.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b>Common Purpose – NI2035 Legacy Programme.</b></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><b>Update on NI2035 Legacy Programme</b></p>
3.2	<p>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"> <li>• <u>Delivery Dates:</u> 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> 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).</li> <li>• <u>Venue:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 24 January 2024 – MCS Group, 10th Floor, The Ewart, 3 Bedford St, Belfast BT2 7EP</li> <li>- 25 January 2024 - Belfast City Hall, Belfast BT1 5GS</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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 25<sup>th</sup> 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.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 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.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Next Steps</u></b></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 <a href="#">here</a> or through <a href="https://commonpurpose.org/legacy/northern-ireland-legacy">https://commonpurpose.org/legacy/northern-ireland-legacy</a></p> <p>A further update will be provided to the Committee in due course.</p> <p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></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><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></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>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	Appendix 1 – NI Legacy Programme Agenda Appendix 2 - NI Legacy Programme Marketing Materials Appendix 3 – NI Legacy Programme FAQs

## Northern Ireland Legacy Agenda

### Day 1 -24<sup>th</sup> January

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

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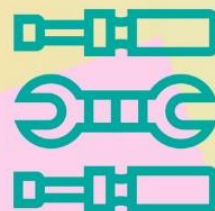
## Day 2 - 25<sup>th</sup> January

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9:30	<b>Welcome to day 2</b> Exploring what is top of mind as we start the day
10:00	<b>Lord Mayor</b>
11:00	<b>Break</b>
11:15	<b>Influencing across the generations</b> Small group conversations to explore the importance of intergenerational leadership in the effort to change systems of practice
12:30	<b>Our City</b> What needs to change and how can you make a difference?
13:15	<b>Lunch</b>
14:00	<b>Preparing to share</b> Preparing presentations for panel
14:45	<b>Re-imagining the future</b> Sharing your insights with a panel of key stakeholders from your city, region or country
16:00	<b>Break</b>
16:15	<b>Reflection focus</b> What are you now thinking about your contribution?
16:30	<b>Graduation</b> Saying a thank you to your group
17:00	<b>Close</b>

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



# Northern Ireland Legacy

## What's in it for you:



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!

Appendix 2

Page 179

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:



Belfast  
City Council



Venue location for day one proudly sponsored by MCS group

### 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](https://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*

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Public Health Agency Consultation on the Substance Use Strategic Commissioning and Implementation Plan – Council Response</b>
<b>Date:</b>	15th December, 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	David Sales, Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Nicola Lane, Neighbourhood Services Manager

## 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

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

☐  
☐  
☐  
☐

## Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

☒

No

☐

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To present for approval a response to the recent public consultation on the Substance Use Strategic Commissioning and Implementation Plan.

<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to consider and approve the draft response to the recent PHA consultation on 'Substance Use Strategic Commissioning and Implementation Plan' which has been submitted on behalf of the Council subject to any further changes from the Committee being submitted for consideration.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	As the Committee may be aware, the Public Health Agency (PHA) in partnership with The Strategic Planning & Performance Group (SPPG) recently undertook a consultation seeking views on the Substance Use Strategic Commissioning and Implementation Plan (the Plan) which will deliver the vision outlined in the Department of Health's recent Substance Use Strategy <a href="#">Making Life Better, Preventing Harm, Empowering Recovery</a> . The 12-week consultation closed on 24 <sup>th</sup> November 2023.
3.2	Views were sought on each of the eight strategic priority areas that were identified in the Substance Use Strategic Commissioning and Implementation Plan. Priorities include prevention and early intervention, pathways of care and models of support, trauma informed system, family support, stigma, workforce development, digital innovation and data research.
3.3	Given the impact substance use can have, it is important to regularly review the services that are in place to provide support, and to gather the lived experiences of those directly impacted by substance use and to ensure services are designed and delivered to support individuals, families and communities who may need them.
3.4	Council officers continue to work closely with a multi-agency partnership through the Belfast Drug and Alcohol Coordination Team (BDACT) to help shape the emerging proposals around substance use including a recent workshop held to develop a shared response to the consultation. Given the significance of this challenge for the city, all members of BDACT were encouraged to submit a supporting response individually. A draft Council response has been submitted (see attached) in line with the closing date, however, it is subject to Committee and Council consideration and ratification. The PHA will be informed of any emerging changes or additions from the Council.
4.0	<b><u>Financial and Human Resource Implications</u></b> There are no Financial or Human Resources implications contained in this report.
5.0	<b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b> There are no Equality, Good Relations or Rural Need implications contained in this report.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Document Attached</b>
	Council Response submitted to PHA subject to Committee/Council consideration.

Submitted to Substance Use Strategic Commissioning and Implementation Plan Consultation  
Submitted on 2023-11-24 10:02:00

## Introduction

### About You

Are you responding to this consultation as a member of the public, or on behalf of an organisation?

On behalf of an organisation.

### About You questions for members of an organisation

Please provide the name of the organisation you are answering on behalf of.

Organisation:  
Belfast City Council

Which of the following best describes the sector you operate in? This will assist us in monitoring the range of respondents the consultation has reached.

Local Government

Other Organisation:

### Strategic Priority 1 - Prevention and Early Intervention

Do you agree with the inclusion of Prevention and Early Intervention as a Strategic Priority in this Plan?

Strongly Agree

Please provide any comments in relation to the inclusion of Prevention and Early Intervention as a Strategic Priority in this Plan?:

Do you agree with the Commissioning Actions for Strategic Priority 1 Prevention and Early Intervention?

Agree

Please provide any comments in relation to the Commissioning Actions for Strategic Priority 1 Prevention and Early Intervention.:

- P. 22 states “We will also build on existing targeted support programmes such as Steps to Cope, Think Family NI, Pharos and Voices” but this is not listed as an action. Will there be an expansion of commissioning of these services as this sentence suggests?
- SP1.2: There should be consultation with professionals and the public about this action and resources needed; this should include information on the effectiveness of the current resources and what can be improved.
- SP1.3: “ensure the workforce is skilled in brief interventions in respect of substance use” – who does “the workforce” refer to? We would suggest that it should be available in all settings and across the public and voluntary sector workforce. Within Primary Care, Multi-Disciplinary Teams are ideally placed to have these conversations with patients and should be included in training.
- SP1.4 “Produce an evidence based, early intervention and prevention framework that maps and evaluates current provision and facilitates a responsive whole system approach across sectors.” It would be useful to know if this work commenced or is there work ongoing to collate an evidence base? This information would be key in eliciting support from partners across the community planning spectrum to deliver a coordinated responsive whole system approach.
- SP1.5 “Commission evidence-based universal and targeted programmes for young people and adults that support healthy decision making and Health Literacy” Council would support that commissioning take place on a evidence base
- The SU strategy mentions raising awareness of the link between alcohol and cancer on page 31. Will this be included in the development of new resources mentioned under SP1-2?
- Page 23 states “We will continue to focus on services that promote self-care and self-help, including enhancing the tools and resources available on the drugsandalcoholni.info website. One resource that should be given greater prominence on the web site, is the importance and availability of nutritional support”. This is an important development and an action should be aligned with this detailing how such resources will be developed and promoted. We would also recommend training for practitioners on how to support and encourage people to use these.

Do you agree with the timescales for implementation of our Commissioning Actions for Strategic Priority 1 Prevention and Early Intervention? i.e. Have we set our short, medium, and long-term timescales correctly?

Disagree

Please provide any comments in relation to the timescales for implementation of our Commissioning Actions for Strategic Priority 1 Prevention and Early Intervention:

• P. 8 states "In addition to the HSC recommendations contained in the Preventing Harm, Empowering Recovery strategy (refer Appendix 2), to deliver on our ambition for this strategic priority, this Plan commits to deliver the following commissioning priorities". How will progress on the recommendations listed in Appendix 2 be aligned to the Actions detailed in the plan? Where actions are listed as being short/medium term this doesn't always align with the references in Appendix 2.

## Strategic Priority 2 – Pathways of Care and Models of Support

Do you agree with the inclusion of Pathways of Care and Models of Support as a Strategic Priority in this Plan?

Strongly Agree

Please provide any comments in relation to the inclusion of Pathways of Care and Models of Support as a Strategic Priority in this Plan.:

Do you agree with the Commissioning Actions for Strategic Priority 2 Pathways of Care and Models of Support?

Agree

Please provide any comments in relation to the Commissioning Actions for Strategic Priority 2 Pathways of Care and Models of Support.:

- The commissioning framework does not speak to its intentions in relation to Low Threshold services despite these being currently commissioned. The framework should include an action to recommission low threshold services.
  - SP2.5 "Building on the review of the role, function and membership of the DACTs, develop the role of the DACTs as a mechanism for wider collaboration between local/ regional stakeholders". The review of DACTs is a significant piece of work and has not yet taken place. What is the timeline for this, given that it is listed as a short-term action?
  - SP2.5 In addition to DACTs, there are references in the document to other systems which are related to this work (such as ICS) but it is unclear what the role and relationship of each of these systems will be. It is important to have clarity on this to inform both delivery and governance arrangements. The lack of clarity in this document makes it difficult to comment on this action.
  - SP 2.6 "Strengthen the sustainability of services provided by the community and voluntary sector and review how the services are commissioned and procured through an ongoing review and assessment of models of intervention and evaluation of impact". It is unclear what is meant by this statement. – while members agree that the sustainability of C&V sector services is vitally important, this statement doesn't explain how sustainability will be achieved. We are aware that any review, assessment and evaluation of models of intervention is a significant piece of work. It is important that the review should include all relevant services, not just those commissioned through this strategy in order to review the wider range of services which are funded – for example, Trust commissioned counselling services and PNBI funded services. This should include reviewing which funding streams have been cut or ended in recent years in order to give a picture of current provision and gaps.
  - The need for better support for people experiencing co-occurring issues was raised regularly across all groups established to develop the Action Plan and is referenced in the narrative sections of the document, but this is not reflected in the actions. Only SP2-4 references this and is very limited in scope.
  - SP2.9 The C&V sector is often excluded from information sharing arrangements to the detriment of people who use these services. While recognising the legal issues relating to information sharing arrangements and the right to privacy, these need to be resolved in order for people using services to get the best service to meet their needs. Complex Lives is an example of where this has been achieved to great effect.
  - SP2.12 "Enhance advocacy services and peer mentors in treatment and recovery services" – does this mean the enhancement of these services where they already exist or the development of new services? All members agree with this approach but current service models do not allow for this type of work – either because there is no resource to support this work or because the use of volunteers is explicitly not allowed. There should be an action committing to include this approach when commissioning in order to ensure it is embedded consistently and effectively.
  - SP2.13 "Realign PHA and other contracts for substance use and mental health support, to ensure services are provided to those in, and on the periphery of, the justice system." This action is listed as within existing resources, however, we would ask if this is feasible without additional funding, and in the context of the current financial climate?
  - SP2.14 Regarding learning from Complex Lives, the learning from this project is relevant beyond the suggested expansion across rural geographies. The learning which has been realised on information sharing, governance of collaborative projects and the importance of commitment from CEO level down across organisations and departments could be applied to many service developments across substance use and mental health. The Complex Lives within Belfast is fortunate in that it is supporting through community planning and that many partners see the benefit of the work as delivering outcomes for [people and place. However, it is now moving into a further phase and there is an urgent need to secure funding commitments from a number of agencies to ensure sustainability of this project in Belfast before expansion to other areas. It should also be noted that additional resources, also includes employment of additional staff who are knowledgeable and experienced within this area and therefore, the model requires active participation from all relevant agencies.
  - SP2-15 "Review substance misuse services for people who come into contact with Probation Board of Northern Ireland" - The lead organisations for this should also include the Department of Justice. Budget restraints passed on to PBNi have already resulted in substantially reduced support for people with substance use problems and unless the funding from DOJ is addressed, this is going to continue to be a barrier to addressing this action. It should be noted that cuts to the PBNi budget by DOJ in 23-24 resulted in the closure of a key service provided to PBNi by?. This funding provided a Regional Rapid Response service for 330 PBNi clients with addiction issues who had complex needs or crisis. This service was eventually partially reinstated with non-recurrent funding to March 2024. However, the resource for this service is now only 30% what it was originally and there is currently, no indication if further funding will be available in 2024-25. This is a clear example where services being provided by the voluntary and community sector are most vulnerable to cuts, resulting from budget constraints despite being a crucial form of support to vulnerable groups. This would not be in line with the intentions expressed in action SP2-6.
- other, more generalised comments:
- The commissioning framework is not very clear about what will be commissioned and what will not, including its intentions for some of the currently commissioned services. For example there are no specific actions in the commissioning priorities to commission Low threshold services, Drug and Alcohol Workforce Development Programme, Targeted Lifeskills Service or DACT Connections service.
  - The actions should be more specific in terms of what exactly is to be commissioned to allow comprehensive feedback through this consultation.



(refer Appendix 2), to deliver on our ambition for this strategic priority, this Plan commits to deliver the following commissioning priorities.” Therefore, are all of the services mentioned in Appendix 2 being recommissioned as this is not clear?

- An Action B4 in Appendix 2 is “Continue to develop and expand highly accessible Low Threshold Services to meet the growing needs of those who use alcohol and other drugs.” However, as already mentioned, Low Threshold Services are not among the commissioning priorities in the document. Should we read that Low Threshold Services are to be recommissioned by the PHA or not?

- In another example on page 33, the document says “As we recraft pathways of support, and models of care, we will be bold in responding to the multiplicity of needs of our population - this includes how we provide support for people who wish to enter or maintain recovery”. However, there are no actions in the commissioning priorities to commission recovery services. These two examples demonstrate there is a need for clarity in relation to what the commissioning framework intends to see commissioned within the next financial year/s and which are ambitions that are not included as commissioning actions at this time.

- There is an ambition set out in this action plan to achieve a whole system approach but there is no detail or roadmap on how this will be achieved. To date, the commitment expressed in several strategic documents to ensure integration and joined up working across sectors and strategies has not been realised. How will a whole system approach be ensured in the delivery of action plan? Complex Lives is an example of how this can be achieved ; but it requires significant commitment from all partners and it is not evident in this document how that would be secured.

, Council would like to thank the PHA for your continued support of the Complex Lives initiative which is a valuable service. Complex Lives has been brought forward within the context of Community Planning but has been driven by the shared commitment of all the partners involved to make a difference to the lives of vulnerable people in the city. The long-term outcome is to ensure that by 2035, Belfast will be a city where everyone experiences good health and wellbeing

The ability to sustain and scale up the support made available through Complex Lives is essential. We are all aware that the challenges which exist cannot be addressed through short-term interventions and indeed, the level and complexity attached to vulnerability in the City Centre are likely to increase. Therefore, we would ask that support and funding for Complex Lives be considered by the PHA as part of the approach to addressing substance use and that it be included as part of any commissioning arrangements on a continuing basis. This would enable the Initiative to achieve sustainability and consistency of service for a most vulnerable group. It should be noted that the Council's Chief Executive, as Chair of the Strategic Leadership Group on Vulnerability, has written out to all who sit on the group to consider Complex Lives within their budget setting exercises.

Do you agree with the timescales for implementation of our Commissioning Actions for Strategic Priority 2 Pathways of Care and Models of Support?i.e. Have we set our short, medium, and long-term timescales correctly?

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Please provide any comments in relation to the timescales for implementation of our Commissioning Actions for Strategic Priority 2 Pathways of Care and Models of Support.:

There is uncertainty as to the timescales - definition of short, medium, long would assist with this answer.

### Strategic Priority 3 - Trauma Informed System

Do you agree with the inclusion of Trauma Informed System as a Strategic Priority in this Plan?

Strongly Agree

Please provide any comments in relation to the inclusion of Trauma Informed System as a Strategic Priority in this Plan.:

Do you agree with the Commissioning Actions for Strategic Priority 3 Trauma Informed?

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Please provide any comments in relation to the Commissioning Actions for Strategic Priority 3 Trauma Informed System.:

- Given the evidence relating to the role of trauma in substance use and the potential impact of adopting a trauma formed system approach, there should be a commitment to a Trauma Informed approach as an underpinning principle for this action plan; and support for this approach should be secured across all departments, services and strategic work streams connected to substance use.

- To truly embed a trauma informed system, a more comprehensive investment is likely to be required alongside a greater strategic focus.

- Current service models (usually 6 sessions) do not allow for the adoption of a trauma informed approach as this requires more time to ensure a safe and effective intervention.

- SP3.4 “Commission research to explore the trauma experienced by asylum seekers, refugees and other at-risk groups and make recommendations to adapt services” – other at risk groups could also include those affected by domestic abuse and those leaving care.

Do you agree with the timescales for implementation of our Commissioning Actions for Strategic Priority 3 Trauma Informed System?i.e. Have we set our short, medium, and long-term timescales correctly?

Disagree

Please provide any comments in relation to the timescales for implementation of our Commissioning Actions for Strategic Priority 3 Trauma Informed System.:

This is an important, transformational issue but the actions mentioned are all short term and within existing resources – greater focus may be required to achieve real change

Do you agree with the inclusion of Family Support as a Strategic Priority in this Plan?

Strongly Agree

Please provide any comments in relation to the inclusion of Family Support as a Strategic Priority in this Plan.:

Do you agree with the Commissioning Actions for Strategic Priority 4 Family Support?

Agree

Please provide any comments in relation to the Commissioning Actions for Strategic Priority 4 Family Support.:

- SP4-1 “Develop/ facilitate a network of family peer support groups that will provide support for families and carers not only as advocates for those using substances but also as individuals who have been impacted and traumatised by their loved one’s substance use, often at the cost of their own health” – It can be difficult to engage families in this support due to stigma and also because their primary focus is on how to support the person using substances rather than their own wellbeing. For this reason, consideration needs to be given as to how to attract families into these services and ensure they meet their needs/what they want to get out of the support.
- It should be noted that not all families live in the same area as the person using substances – this should not be a barrier to accessing services.
- There should be flexibility to offer ad hoc support rather than just structured, therapeutic interventions as this will not always meet the needs of family members.
- On Page 45 it says “We will enhance existing family systemic therapy provision with increased funding to the community, voluntary and statutory sectors. This evidence-based approach supports families in group settings to help family members better understand each other and the impact of substance use across the family unit. Investment in this approach aims to change negative behaviours, resolve existing conflicts and empower families to create their own solutions.”
- We particularly support this reference to systemic therapy as it is a highly effective model for therapeutic family support, however it is the model where there is least availability or capacity in services and requires significant investment.
- SP4-4 “Commission a range of evidence based therapeutic interventions for families with lived and living experience of substance use”. This may be too broad an action and would be relatively long term. The commissioning framework should include an action to specifically commission systemic family therapy provision in the short/medium term.

Do you agree with the timescales for implementation of our Commissioning Actions for Strategic Priority 4 Family Support?i.e. Have we set our short, medium, and long-term timescales correctly?

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Please provide any comments in relation to the timescales for implementation of our Commissioning Actions for Strategic Priority 4 Family Support.:

Again, it is difficult to understand the definition of short, medium, long term

## Strategic Priority 5 - Stigma

Do you agree with the inclusion of Stigma as a Strategic Priority in this Plan?

Strongly Agree

Please provide any comments in relation to the inclusion of Stigma as a Strategic Priority in this Plan.:

Do you agree with the Commissioning Actions for Strategic Priority 5 Stigma?

Agree

Please provide any comments in relation to the Commissioning Actions for Strategic Priority 5 Stigma.:

- As with Trauma Informed Approaches, there should be a commitment to reducing stigma as an underpinning principle for this action plan; and actions to support this approach should be embedded across all departments, services and strategic work streams connected to substance use.
- Additional resources and longer term funding will be required to effectively reduce stigma.
- Core training on stigma should be included for the wider workforce.

Do you agree with the timescales for implementation of our Commissioning Actions for Strategic Priority 5 Stigma?i.e. Have we set our short, medium, and long-term timescales correctly?

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Please provide any comments in relation to the timescales for implementation of our Commissioning Actions for Strategic Priority 5 Stigma.:

## Strategic Priority 6 - Workforce Development

Do you agree with the inclusion of Workforce Development as a Strategic Priority in this Plan?

Strongly Agree

Please provide any comments in relation to the inclusion of Workforce Development as a Strategic Priority in this Plan.:

Do you agree with the Commissioning Actions for Strategic Priority 6 Workforce Development?

Agree

Please provide any comments in relation to the Commissioning Actions for Strategic Priority 6 Workforce Development.:

- The interpretation of workforce should go beyond the HSC workforce, as there are many interfaces with alcohol and substance use across other sectors such as justice, education, local government, and community.
- SP6-1 The needs assessment should be across all aspects of the workforce including Primary Care, PSNI, Prisons, etc. Local areas may have specific needs in relation to training.
- Core training should include trauma informed practice and stigma reduction.
- It is unclear if the current workforce development training programme will be recommissioned as it is not included in the commissioning actions.
- Almost half of the actions listed in the plan require additional resources. It is unclear where these funds will come from and how much is required. An indication of costs alongside a timeline for identifying these monies would allow a more informed response to the plan. Confidence in the ability to deliver the commissioning priorities with the available resources is an area of concern. There are 21 actions that will be delivered within existing resources and 27 that require additional resources. In many cases the actions within existing resources are to expand on existing services or develop new services. We would be concerned that the framework is not realistic in delivering these actions within current resources and the impact that doing so would have on the quality of services.
- Several actions (such as SP-1.1) refer to developmental activity (in this case, "grow the provision of therapeutic services for children, young people and families"). However the plan states this is covered by existing resources. How does the PHA envisage growing the service in the context of existing resources, particularly in the evidence of growing need.

Do you agree with the timescales for implementation of our Commissioning Actions for Strategic Priority 6 Workforce Development? i.e. Have we set our short, medium, and long-term timescales correctly?

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Please provide any comments in relation to the timescales for implementation of our Commissioning Actions for Strategic Priority 6 Workforce Development.:

## Strategic Priority 7 - Digital Innovation

Do you agree with the inclusion of Digital Innovation as a Strategic Priority in this Plan?

Strongly Agree

Please provide any comments in relation to the inclusion of Digital Innovation as a Strategic Priority in this Plan.:

Do you agree with the Commissioning Actions for Strategic Priority 7 Digital Innovation?

Agree

Please provide any comments in relation to the Commissioning Actions for Strategic Priority 7 Digital Innovation.:

- Again, the reference to the workforce should go beyond the HSC workforce, as there are many interfaces with alcohol and substance use across other sectors such as justice, education, local government, and community.
  - Consistent use of the same digital resources will not only be more cost effective (lower costs associated creating/buying license for products to be used by multiple providers across the region) but it will also lead to better experience for people using services as there would be more consistency.
  - Local services should be consulted on what would work best / is most needed in their area as there may be differences across localities and population groups. There is potential for developing and trialling innovations through local services to meet needs.
- The Strategy refers to the opportunity for cross departmental working; an action which sits with the PHA alone. While recognising the critical role of the PHA, should this be an action which is brought forward through Community Planning Partnerships and or other For a which would maximise coordination and collaboration? What about connecting innovation to other sectors such as universities, research and private sectors?

Do you agree with the timescales for implementation of our Commissioning Actions for Strategic Priority 7 Digital Innovation? i.e. Have we set our short, medium, and long-term timescales correctly?

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Please provide any comments in relation to the timescales for implementation of our Commissioning Actions for Strategic Priority 7 Digital Innovation.:

Please provide any comments in relation to the timescales for implementation of our Commissioning Actions for Strategic Priority 7 Digital Innovation.:

## Strategic Priority 8 - Data and Research

Do you agree with the inclusion of Data and Research as a Strategic Priority in this Plan?

Strongly Agree

Please provide any comments in relation to the inclusion of Data and Research as a Strategic Priority in this Plan.:

Do you agree with the Commissioning Actions for Strategic Priority 8 Data and Research?

Agree

Please provide any comments in relation to the Commissioning Actions for Strategic Priority 8 Data and Research.:

- SP8-1 refers young people only, but prevention and early intervention actions should be looked at across the lifespan. This action should include researching what is effective prevention for the adult population.

Do you agree with the timescales for implementation of our Commissioning Actions for Strategic Priority 8 Data and Research?i.e. Have we set our short, medium, and long-term timescales correctly?

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Please provide any comments in relation to the timescales for implementation of our Commissioning Actions for Strategic Priority 8 Data and Research.:



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Update on Physical Programme</b>
<b>Date:</b>	15th December 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Sinead Grimes, Director of Property and Projects
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Shauna Murtagh, Portfolio Manager

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
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="text"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information relating to any individual</li> <li>2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual</li> <li>3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li> <li>4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter</li> <li>5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained</li> <li>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</li> <li>7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</li> </ol>	
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"/>

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	The Council's Physical Programme currently includes over 400 capital projects via a range of internal and external funding streams, together with projects which the Council delivers on

	behalf of external agencies. The Council's Capital Programme forms part of the Physical Programme and is a rolling programme of investment which either improves existing Council facilities or provides new facilities. This report includes an update on recognition for the Templemore Baths project, along with updates on capital letters of offer and contracts awarded.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. note the update in relation to Templemore Baths delivered under the Leisure Transformation Programme which has been shortlisted by the Civic Trust Awards;</li> <li>ii. note the update in relation to capital letters of offer; and</li> <li>iii. note the update in relation to capital contracts awarded.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	The Committee is advised that Templemore Baths has been shortlisted as Regional Finalists in a number of categories under the banner of the Civic Trust Awards: 2024 Civic Trust Awards 2024, 2024 AABC Conservation Awards and 2024 Selwyn Goldsmith Awards for Universal Design. Regional Finalists will now be considered by the relevant Judging Panels. The Civic Trust Awards scheme was established in 1959 to recognise outstanding architecture, planning, and design in the built environment. Regional Finalists are schemes which are of significant merit in their region, contributing to the quality and appearance of the built environment, whilst being sustainable, accessible, and providing a positive civic contribution. National Awards and Highly Commended winners will be announced at the annual Civic Trust Awards Ceremony in March 2024.
3.2	<p><b>Capital Letters of Offer</b></p> <p>The Committee is asked to note the update in relation to capital letters of offer from October to November, 2023 at Appendix 1.</p>
3.3	<p><b>Contracts Awarded</b></p> <p>The Committee is asked to note the award of tenders for capital works including services related to works at Appendix 2.</p>
3.4	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p><i>Resources</i> – Officer time to deliver as required</p>
3.5	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>All capital projects are screened as part of the stage approval process.</p>

<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	<p>Appendix 1 - Capital Letters of Offer (1st October to 1st December 2023)</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Contracts Awarded to November 2023</p>

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**Capital Letters of Offer 1st October 2023 – 30th November 2023**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Funder</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<i>2 Royal Avenue - Bank Square Enhancement (Amendment)</i>	DfC	£335,300
BCC - Public Realm Works - Heritage Centre Additional Funding (Roddy McCorley)	DfC	£20,840
<i>Girdwood Indoor Sports Site - Procurement of Integrated Consultant Team (Amendment)</i>	DfC	£410,274
<i>Shankill Shared Women's Centre (Amendment)</i>	SEUPB	€8,437,474
<i>Five C's Enhanced Revitalisation (Amendment)</i>	DfC	£162,000
Strand Arts Centre – Delivery	HF	£768,069
BCC – Changing Facilities at Brook Pavilion	DfC	£73,500
<i>Active Travel Enablers (Amendment)</i>	DfI	£402,500
<i>Black Mountain Shared Space Project (Amendment)</i>	SEUPB	€8,235,140

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**Appendix 2**

**Schedule of Contracts Awarded (Works and Works Related) for Notation  
(July – November 2023)**

<b>Contract Awarded</b>	<b>Supplier</b>	<b>Date of Award</b>
Integrated Consultant Team for Cathedral Gardens (and Blitz Memorial) Project	Doran Consulting	08/08/2023
Belfast Stories – Project Management and Design Assurance Team	Gleeds Management Services Ltd.	25/09/2023
Belfast Stories – Integrated Design Team	Todd Architects	17/10/2023

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Audit and Risk Panel Report and Minutes of the Meeting of 5th December</b>
<b>Date:</b>	15th December, 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Sharon McNicholl, Deputy Chief Executive / Strategic Director of Corporate Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Claire O'Prey, Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services

## 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

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

☐  
☐  
☐  
☐

## Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

☒

No

☐

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

1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with a summary of the key issues which were considered and discussed by the Audit and Risk Panel on 5th December and present the minutes of that meeting for approval.
2.0	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is requested to note the key issues arising at the meeting of the Audit and Risk Panel held on 5th December and approves the minutes of that meeting, as attached.
3.0	<b>Main Report</b>
	<p><b>Key Issues</b></p> <p><u>Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO)</u></p> <p>3.1 On 22 September, the Committee approved the Statement of Accounts for the year-end 31st March 2023. The NIAO has now completed its audit of the accounts and the Panel considered the final Report to Those Charged With Governance (RTTCWG) and the Annual Audit Letter, which provided an <b>unqualified audit opinion</b> on the accounts. These accounts are a fundamental part of the Council's overall corporate governance framework and provide assurance to Members and ratepayers on the stewardship of the council's finances and its financial position.</p> <p>3.2 The RTTCWG contained only <b>four recommendations for management action, which are priority three (i.e., issue of a minor nature which represents best practice)</b> and are all due to be implemented by April, 2024.</p> <p><u>Key Reports</u></p> <p>3.3 The Panel noted the <b>progress being made against the annual internal audit plan</b>, with five audits finalised in the period September - November 2023, all of which had an assurance opinion of "some improvement required". The Panel also noted the broad range of advisory work undertaken.</p> <p>3.4 The Panel considered the <b>corporate risk dashboard</b> which provided an analysis and update on the progress being made to manage the 25 risks that are considered to present the greatest threat to the delivery corporate priorities and / or compliance with key statutory requirements. These corporate risks are being considered in the development of the new corporate plan for 2024 – 28. Following a request from the Panel, management have re-set the target implementation dates for all of the corporate risk actions. <b>The Panel requested that Strategic Directors be reminded of the importance of implementing corporate risk actions timely,</b></p>

	that progress towards implementation will be monitored quarterly by the Panel and that they may request Strategic Directors to attend the Panel in relation to progress updates.
3.5	The Panel noted the <b>quarterly assurances provided by Directors</b> regarding compliance with risk management and internal control processes. The Head of AGRS is to meet the newly appointed Strategic Directors to brief them on risk, control and governance matters. Work is underway to re-introduce formal departmental risk management processes, with a view to having these agreed and in place for 24/25.
3.6	The Panel noted the work which was underway to exercise, review and update <b>business continuity management (BCM) plans</b> for the critical services by the year-end. Each critical service has been asked to focus their BCM exercise on a cyber-attack scenario; to review whether their BCM plans have sufficiently documented the learning from the pandemic response and; to review winter preparedness arrangements.
3.7	The Panel received <b>quarter 2 reports on corporate health and safety, absence management and performance improvement</b> .
3.8	Regarding health and safety, <b>the Panel requested that Strategic Directors be reminded of the importance of implementing all health and safety and fire safety actions in a timely way</b> , including manual handling actions.
3.9	Regarding absence management <b>the Panel requested that Strategic Directors be reminded to review progress on the implementation of their Departmental Improvement Plans quarterly and to ensure that their Absence Management Dashboards are reviewed monthly at their DMT's</b> and that they may be requested to attend the Panel in relation to these matters.
3.10	The NIAO updated the Panel on the current position of <b>audit and assessment of performance improvement arrangements</b> and indicated that their report would be ready for the next meeting of the Panel. The Panel also learned that there are plans to develop a new engagement framework for residents.
3.11	This was the first meeting of the new <b>external member to the Panel</b> , Mr Derek Wilson. In line with best practice, training is being organised for the Panel in early 2023.

	<u>National Fraud Initiative (NFI)</u>
3.12	<p>A key element of the Council's counter-fraud arrangements is our participation in <b>the National Fraud Initiative</b>. The NFI is essentially a data matching exercise that involves comparing sets of data against other records held by the same or another body, allowing potentially fraudulent or erroneous payments to be identified, reviewed and, where necessary, investigated. The Panel received an update on investigation of the matches which have now been investigated. The Panel learned that <b>no fraudulent payments were identified</b> and; that only four duplicate payments with a value of £17,250 were identified and that the majority of these monies had now been recovered. The Panel also learned that the NFI exercise had identified potential instances where conflict of interest declarations may be required, and that these had been referred to the relevant departments.</p>
	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u>
3.13	None.
	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u>
3.14	None known at this time.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Document Attached</b>
	Minutes of the Meeting of the Audit and Risk Panel of 5th December



# Audit and Risk Panel

Tuesday, 5th December, 2023

## MEETING OF AUDIT AND RISK PANEL

HELD IN THE CONOR ROOM AND  
REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor R. McLaughlin (Chairperson);  
Alderman Rodgers;  
Councillors McKeown and Verner; and  
Mr. D. Wilson (External Member).

In attendance: Ms. S. McNicholl, Deputy Chief Executive/Director of  
Corporate Services;  
Ms. N. Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal  
and Civic Services;  
Ms. C. Sheridan, Director of Human Resources;  
Mr. T. Wallace, Director of Finance;  
Ms. C. O'Prey, Head of Audit, Governance and Risk  
Services;  
Mr. L. Mulholland, Audit, Governance and Risk  
Services Manager;  
Mr. M. Whitmore, Audit, Governance and Risk  
Services Manager;  
Ms. S. Williams, Governance and Compliance  
Manager; and  
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

Also attended: Mr. P. Barr, Audit Director, Northern Ireland Audit  
Office; and  
Mr. M. Heery, Audit Manager, Northern Ireland Audit  
Office.

### **External Member**

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. Derek Wilson, who had replaced Ms. Geraldine Fahy as the external member on the Audit and Risk Panel, to his first meeting.

### **Apologies**

No apologies were reported.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 12th September were approved by the Panel.

**Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

**Absence Rates - Quarter 2 2023/24**

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

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Audit and Risk Panel of the Council’s performance in managing absence in quarter 2, April – September 2023.**

**2.0 Recommendation**

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

**3.0 Main Report**

**3.1 Key Corporate Indicators:**

**At the end of quarter 2:**

- **The Council’s average sickness absence rate stands at 7.9 days per FTE, a decrease of 0.31 days compared to absence for the same period last year (8.21).**
- **A total of 16749.39 working days was lost due to sickness absence. This accounted for 7.3% of the total working days available.**
- **The table below provides a summary of how Departments are performing against the target. As indicated below, 3 departments did not meet the corporate target for quarter 2 (7.43 days).**

End of year target:	14.85					
Q2 target:	7.43					
Department	Number of Employees (FTE)	Total days lost (FTE)	Actual absence per FTE	Variance	% of workforce	% of absence
City and Neighbourhood Services	1191.38	10966.86	9.21	1.78	56.16%	65.48%
City and Organisational Strategy	125.24	303.5	2.42	-5.01	5.90%	1.81%
Finance and Resources	191.77	769.78	4.01	-3.42	9.04%	4.60%
Legal and Civic Services	158.2	1658.18	10.48	3.05	7.46%	9.90%
Place and Economy	332.35	1555.89	4.68	-2.75	15.67%	9.29%
Physical Programmes	122.32	1495.18	12.22	4.79	5.77%	8.93%
Grand Total	2121.26	16749.39	7.90	0.47		

**3.2    Additional Absence Information:**

- There has been an increase in the number of staff with no recorded absence this period (60.11%) compared to the same time last year (56.63%);
- There has been an increase in absence classified as long term (20+ days) this year (12365.34 days or 73.83% of total absence) compared to the same time last year (11136.85 days or 67.28% of the total absence);
- The Council's average sickness absence rate further reduces to 7.5 days per FTE when COVID-19 related absences are deducted;
- The number of days lost per full time equivalent increased in quarter 2 (4.03 days) when compared to quarter one (3.88 days). This increase is illustrated in Figure 1 below;
- Depression/anxiety/stress (32% of total days lost) and musculo-skeletal (25% of total days lost) continue to be the top two reasons for absence. Refer to Figure 2 below for further information;
- Between July and September, 2023, 625 employees were off due to sickness absence (accounting for 8577.87 days). Discretion was applied to 106 of these employees (17%) and their absence accounted for 2243.44 days (approximately 26% of the total absence for quarter 2). Refer to Figure 3 below for further information;
- A total of 187 cases were identified as having compliance related issues. Refer to Figure 4 below for further information;
- Approximately 33.72% of absence (5648.11 days) is recorded as disability related, of which, 70% was managed as long term. Depression / Anxiety (29.85%), Osteoarthritis (10.13%) and Cancer (7.68%) accounted for over 47% of all disability related absence days. Refer to figure 5 below for further information;

- **Between April and September 2023, a total of 174 employees were recorded as absent due to COVID, accounting for 4.85% of the total absence in quarter 1;**
- **18 employees met the trigger for a Stage4/FAH in quarter 2:**
  - **Discretion was applied to 13 of these cases not to progress to a FAH, whereby:**
    - **3 employees returned to work at month six**
    - **2 employees were off due to disability related absence and returned to work shortly after month six.**
    - **2 employees were off due to cancer related absence.**
    - **2 employees availed of a career break.**
    - **1 employee was off due to complex medical reasons.**
    - **1 employee was off due to complex personal stressors.**
    - **1 case was awaiting GP notes.**
    - **1 case was delayed due to employee relations issues.**
    - **4 cases did not progress to a case review stage, and therefore could not progress to a FAH, due to non-compliant reasons.**
    - **In addition to the above, 5 employees were dismissed on the grounds of permanent ill health during quarter 2.**

### **3.3 Department Improvement Plans**

**Four of the six Departments returned improvement plan progress reports for quarter 2. However, they did not provide sufficient detail on what specific action(s) they had taken in quarter 2 to reduce sickness absence.**

**Corporate HR issued guidance to departments at the end of quarter 1 in relation to what should be included in the progress reports and met with individual departments to discuss their improvement plans.**

**Physical Programmes did not return its improvement plan update for quarter 2.**

**Place and Economy did not return its improvement plan update for quarter 2 due to unforeseen personal circumstances.**

It was noted that a number of Departments did not return its improvement plans within the specified time frames. Corporate HR is developing an annual schedule to assist departments in providing timely updates to CHR.

**3.4 Absence Dashboard update**

Five of the six Departments provided monthly dashboards for July, August and September.

The City and Neighbourhoods Services' update for July and August did not correlate with the compliance issues reported by Corporate HR.

The Physical Programmes Department did not provide an absence dashboard for July, August and September.

Departments have been reminded that the non-compliance issues raised, during the fortnightly compliance meetings, must be presented at their monthly DMTs in the format of the agreed absence dashboard.

**3.5 Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Initiatives:**

Consultation on the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plan is ongoing with the Joint Negotiation and Consultative Committee (JNCC). While the Strategy is still being developed, we continued to deliver a programme of health and wellbeing during the quarter.

The summer months allowed the promotion of the Active Challenge initiatives including Cycle to Work Day on 3rd August and a Men into Cycling programme.

The Council's participation in the Active Travel Challenge was recognised by being awarded 2nd place in the 1000+ staff category at the Active Travel Awards on 21st September. In addition, the following was delivered:

- Positive Mental Health training – 11 employees attended.
- Stress Awareness for Managers training – 10 employees attended.
- Caring for Carers Webinar
- Cycle to Work Day 3 August
- 15 minute desk yoga

- Financial Support for Working parents
- Vital Nutrition for Busy People
- Suicide Awareness Training

It should be noted that the corporate training programme is reduced over the summer period.

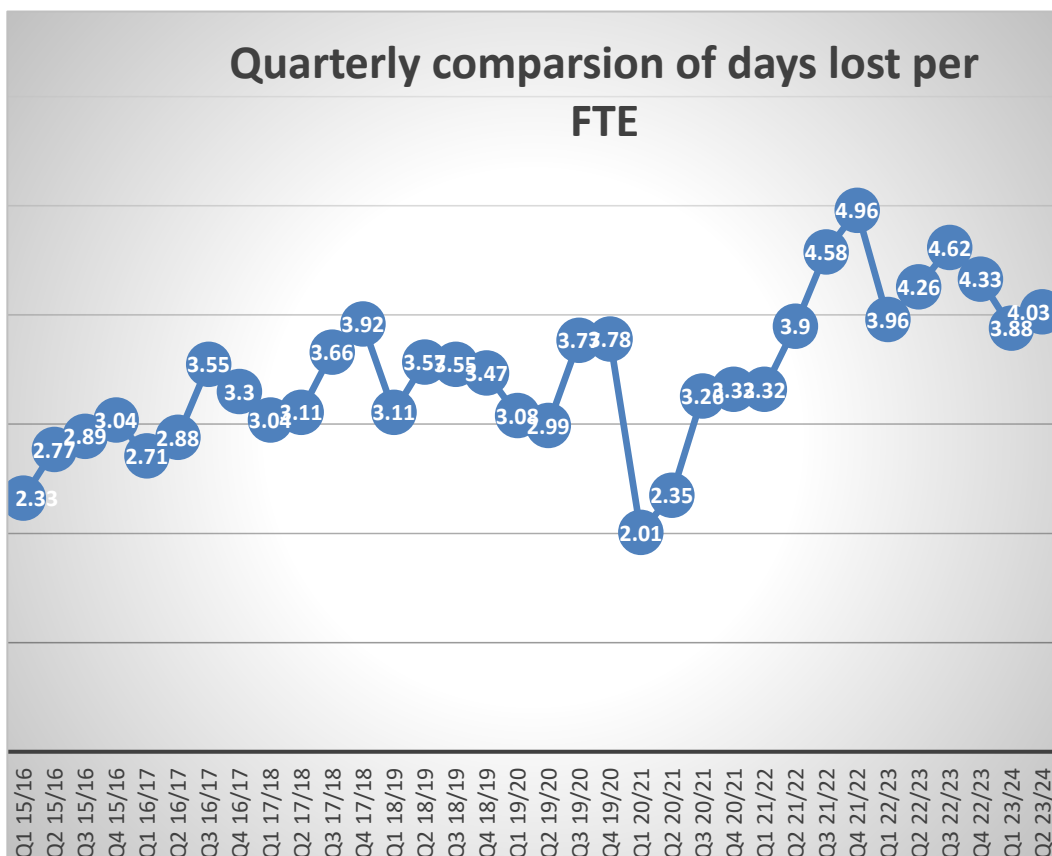
#### 4.0 Resource Implications

- 4.1 Directors are asked to ensure that resources are in place to ensure that adequate monitoring and review is in place at department level.

#### 5.0 Equality and Good Relations Implications

- 5.1 Approximately 33.72% of absence (5648.11 days) is recorded as disability related. The use of discretion and reasonable adjustments is considered in such cases.

**Figure 1**



**Figure 2**

<b>Reason for Absence</b>	<b>Days lost (FTE)</b>	<b>% of absence</b>
Stress. depression, anxiety	5421.07	32.37%
Musculo-Skeletal	4207.3	25.12%
Stomach, digestive, etc	1728.71	10.32%
Infections, Covid19	812.02	4.85%
Heart, blood press, circ, etc	793.57	4.74%
Neurological, inc headaches	733.92	4.38%
Eye, ear, nose & mouth/dental	706.9	4.22%
Chest and respiratory	658.24	3.93%
Infections, inc colds & flu	649.53	3.88%
Other	553.52	3.30%
Genito-urinary, inc menstrual	370.97	2.21%
Pregnancy related	112.64	0.67%
Indust/Other	1	0.01%
<b>Total</b>	<b>16749.39</b>	

**Figure 3**

<b>Reason for discretion</b>	<b>Total days</b>	<b>% of total</b>
Disability / Underlying medical condition	501.9	22.37%
Bereavement	362.8	16.17%
Industrial Injury	299.67	13.36%
Planned surgery	249.77	11.13%
Mental Health	186.03	8.29%
Hospitalisation	162.64	7.25%
Unresolved ER Issues	138.62	6.18%
Violence at work	84.93	3.79%
Maternity	78.83	3.51%
Previous long service and clear record	72.16	3.22%
Significant personal stressor	62	2.76%
Emergency domestic responsibilities	23.92	1.07%
Covid 19	11.42	0.51%
Pregnancy related	8.75	0.39%
Total days lost in quarter 2 (July to September 2023)	2243.4	
% of total days lost where discretion applied in quarter 2	26.15%	
Average days off per occurrence of discretion in quarter 2	21.2	

**Figure 4 Compliance issues**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Totals</b>
City and Neighbourhood Services	94
City and Organisational Strategy	3
Finance and Resources	18
Legal and Civic Services	35
Physical Programmes	27
Place and Economy	10
<b>Totals</b>	<b>187</b>

**Figure 5**

<b>Actual disability</b>	<b>Total days</b>	<b>% of total disability related absence</b>
Depression / Anxiety / Mental health conditions	1685.89	29.85%
Osteoarthritis	572.23	10.13%
Cancer	433.73	7.68%
Chronic back condition	424.26	7.51%
Arthritis	200	3.54%
Chronic gastrointestinal condition	146.96	2.60%
Chronic cardiac condition	146.42	2.59%
Stroke	142	2.51%
Diabetes	138.78	2.46%
Chronic heart condition	138.38	2.45%
Long Covid	121.35	2.15%
Brain Aneurysm	121.35	2.15%
Ulcerative Colitis	117.91	2.09%
Chronic leg condition	114.07	2.02%
Detached Retina	84	1.49%
Myofascial pain syndrome	82.5	1.46%
Rheumatoid Arthritis	80	1.42%
Chronic eye condition	79.93	1.42%
Osteoarthritis	76.76	1.36%
Chronic Genito/Urinary condition.	75.92	1.34%
Syncope	68.92	1.22%
Perianal abscess	68.92	1.22%
Fibromyalgia	68.5	1.21%



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Diverticulitis	66.96	1.19%
Graves' Disease	58	1.03%
Other*	334.37	5.92%
Total	5648.11	
Total absence end of quarter 2	16749.39	
Disability related absence in quarter 2	5648.11	
% if absence lost due to disability	33.72%	
% of disability related absence managed as LTA	70.00%	

**\*Other includes a total of 16 conditions that each individually account for less than 1% of total disability related absence.**

After discussion, the Panel noted the contents of the report and agreed that the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services would write to each Strategic Director stressing the need for their Departmental Improvement Plan and Absence Management Dashboard to be submitted in time and contain sufficient detail and pointing out that they would, in future, be required to provide the Panel with an explanation, in person, should these requirements not be fulfilled.

**Update on Corporate Health and Safety Performance**

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

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

Accordingly, she submitted for the Panel's consideration a report on corporate health and safety performance and activities for the quarter ending on 30th September, 2023.

She provided, on a Departmental basis, information on the implementation of actions associated with the key performance indicators of health and safety and fire safety and pointed out that, at a corporate level, compliance rates had been 62% and 75% respectively. Information was provided also on outstanding high priority health, safety and fire actions, outstanding health and safety actions and outstanding fire safety actions.

In terms of accident/incident reporting, there had, in that quarter, been 31 employee accidents, 4 non-employee accidents, 11 RIDDOR accidents and 23 incidents of work-related violence.

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

After discussion, the Panel noted the corporate health and safety performance and activities for the quarter ending on 30th September, 2023 and agreed that there was a need to monitor incidents of work-related violence, given the marked rise on the previous quarter and to address the significant number of health and safety actions (including manual handling actions) and fire safety actions which had still to be implemented.

**Report to those charged with Governance 2022/23**

The Director of Finance submitted for the Panel's consideration the following report:

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

**The Local Government Auditor has issued her Report To Those Charged With Governance for 2022/23. This report summarises any system/control issues arising during the Northern Ireland Audit Office's (NIAO) 2022/23 audit and includes recommendations for management action.**

**The purpose of this report is to appraise the Audit and Risk Panel of any issues raised in the Local Government Auditor's Report for 2022/23 21 in relation to the Accounts of Belfast City Council.**

**2.0 Recommendation**

**The Audit and Risk Panel is requested to note the Report to those charged with Governance Audit results for 2022/23.**

**3.0 Main Report**

**Key Issues**

**3.1 The Local Government Auditor has certified the 2022-23 statements for Belfast City Council with an unqualified opinion. The Auditor had identified in the Audit Strategy for 2022-23, the risk of fraud in revenue recognition and management override of controls as having an impact on the audit approach.**

**3.2 During audit fieldwork, no significant issues were identified in these areas.**

3.3 The Local Government Auditor has identified four areas where she has made prioritised recommendations. The NIAO definition of the priority levels are:

- i. significant issues for the attention of senior management which may have the potential to result in material weaknesses in internal control,
- ii. important issues to be addressed by management in their areas of responsibility, and
- iii. issues of a more minor nature which represents best practice.

3.4 In summarising the report there are:

- 0 priority 1 area,
- 0 priority 2 area, and
- 4 priority 3 areas

3.5 The 4 priority 3 areas are:

1. Creditors - recommend that the council updates its procedures for identifying and reviewing its year-end creditors;
2. Discounting of legal claims - recommend that the Council ensure that the discount rates applied to legal claims are reviewed on a periodic basis, and that the outcomes of any such reviews are supported appropriate documentary evidence to detail how discount rates have been calculated;
3. Depreciation method for Infrastructure Assets - the Council is in the process of implementing a programme of certified maintenance inspections for this asset. This would provide Council with information that would enhance the accuracy of the valuation of this asset; and
4. Agency Costs – Recommend that the Council should ensure arrangements are in place to measure and ensure continuing the value for money for use of agency Staff

3.6 A detailed response to the management letter has been circulated, identifying timescales. In accordance with the process adopted in previous years, management will monitor the progress made in implementing recommendations and will report back to the Audit Assurance Board and Audit and Risk Panel on the progress.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

None

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

None.”

The Panel noted the Report for those charged with Governance for 2022/23.

**Northern Ireland Audit Office - Annual Audit Letter 2022/23**

The Director of Finance submitted for the Panel’s consideration the following report:

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

- 1.1 As an independent auditor of the Council, the Local Government Auditor seeks to examine that the Council has managed its affairs having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness and that public money is properly spent or in the case of income properly accounted for. The Annual Audit Letter is issued under Regulation 17 of the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015. The Regulations require the Council to publish this Annual Audit Letter as soon as reasonably possible.**

**2.0 Recommendation**

The Panel is asked to note the comments and review the Annual Audit Letter.

**3.0 Main Report**

**1. Financial Statements**

The Local Government Auditor has noted no financial adjustment to the draft accounts as a result of her audit work. The accounts for the 2022/23 year were given an unqualified opinion.

**2. Proper Arrangements**

The Local Government Auditor is required to satisfy herself that proper arrangements have been made

for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.

The Local Government Auditor has confirmed that she is satisfied that the council has proper arrangements in place.

**3. Annual Governance Statement**

The Local Government Auditor has indicated that the Annual Governance Statement reflects compliance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022-23, it also complies with proper practices as specified by the Department for Communities, and it is not misleading or inconsistent with other information from the audit.

**4. Absenteeism**

The annual rate of absenteeism has shown an increase of 0.74 days from 2021/22. Covid related absences had a significant impact in 2021/22 A total of 558 employees were recorded as absent due to COVID in 2022-2023. COVID related absence accounted for 1.78 days per FTE, this equated to over 10 per cent of the Council's total absence.

Average number of days sickness absence per full time employee						
2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
12.44	13.72	13.71	13.58	10.86	16.33	17.09

The robust, fair and consistent management of attendance continues to be a key priority for Belfast City Council.

**5. Performance Improvement**

The Local Government Auditor's Annual Improvement Report for 2022-23 was published on 31 March 2023 and concludes that Council met its statutory duties in relation to publication of the 2021-22 self-assessment report and 2022-23 Annual Improvement Plan. Given the impact of the pandemic on council services, however, she was unable to conclude on an assessment of whether the council was likely to meet their performance improvement

responsibilities under legislation for the 2022-23 year.

6. Outlook

The Local Government Auditor has highlighted the current cost of living crisis and high inflation rates have had a significant impact on council finances and has indicated the Council should continue to carefully consider the impact of rising prices on budgets, and closely monitor and forecast future costs and affordability.

Financial and Resource Implications

None

Equality or Good relations/Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

None.”

The Panel noted the Annual Audit Letter for 2022/23.

Update on Corporate Risk Management

The Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services submitted for the Panel's consideration a report on the corporate risk dashboard, which summarised the key updates from the risk reviews for the quarter ending 30th September, 2023. The report provided also an update on compliance with the Risk Strategy, based on assurance statements completed by senior management for the quarter and on business continuity management arrangements.

After discussion, the Panel:

- i. noted the corporate risk management dashboard for the quarter ending on 30th September, 2023 and adopted the recommendation to replace the current wording of the corporate risks on Climate and Data with the following: ***“Fail to develop a Council climate action plan for the changes arising from climate change and to resource and implement that plan”*** and ***“Without a strategic approach to the utilisation of data at both a city and organisational level, we will be limited in our ability to design and deliver innovative solutions to city challenges.”***;
- ii. agreed that the Strategic Directors be reminded of the importance of implementing corporate risk actions in a

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timely manner, particularly in light of the recently revised implementation dates and that progress towards implementation would be monitored on a quarterly basis by the Panel, which may request them to attend a meeting in relation to actions which had not been implemented;

- iii. noted the assurances from senior management regarding compliance with the Risk Strategy, based on the assurance statements for the quarter-ending on 30th September 2023;
- iv. noted the progress being made to re-establish formal Departmental risk management arrangements; and
- v. noted the current position on the review and update of business continuity plans for the critical services and agreed that critical services be asked to focus their Business Continuity Management exercise on a cyber-attack scenario.

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

The Audit, Governance and Risk Services Manager drew the Panel's attention to a report providing an update on the progress which had been made on the Service's audit and related activities during the period from September to November, 2023.

He summarised the outcome of the five assignments which had been finalised during that period, namely, Police and Community Safety Partnerships, Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. – Risk Management, Sales and Marketing and Performance, the Social Value Procurement Policy and internal audits of the management of the corporate risks for the Customer Focus Programme and Preparing for Climate Change (Council Level). In terms of progress against delivery of the 2023/24 audit plan, 53% of planned activity was underway or had been completed.

He went on to point out that the assurance and advisory work on key corporate systems and programmes which had been undertaken during the period related primarily to the new accounting system and provided an update on the status of those audits which were in progress.

The Audit, Governance and Risk Services Manager then informed the Panel that the investigation into matches arising from the 2022/23 National Fraud Initiative exercise was nearing completion and Audit, Governance and Risk Services was liaising with Departments on some administration issues relating to declarations of interest. A more detailed report on the outcome of that exercise would, he pointed out, be presented later in the meeting.

He concluded by making reference to the advice and consultancy services which the Service had provided to management and to the recent publications which had been reviewed and notified to management.

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The Panel noted the information which had been provided.

**Update on National Fraud Initiative**

The Audit, Governance and Risk Services Manager submitted for the Panel's consideration the following report:

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

- 1.1 The Assurance Board / Audit and Risk Panel's terms of reference include provision for consideration of summary reports from the Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services on the Service's activity. This report addresses these requirements.**

**2.0 Recommendation**

- 2.1 The Audit and Risk Panel is asked to note the progress on the investigation of matches arising from the council's participation in the current National Fraud Initiative exercise.**

**3.1 National Fraud Initiative**

- 3.2 A key element of the Council's counter-fraud arrangements is our participation in the National Fraud Initiative (NFI). The NFI is essentially a data matching exercise that involves comparing sets of data against other records held by the same or another body, allowing potentially fraudulent or erroneous payments to be identified, reviewed and, where necessary, investigated. Council data was uploaded in October 2022 and included Creditor data for the period 1 October 2019 – 30 September 2022 and Payroll data for the period 1 April 2022 – 30 September 2022, matches were received in February 2023.**

- 3.3 Matches relating to 22/23 exercise have now been investigated and a summary of the outcome is as follows:**

- **Payroll Reports**

**There were 38 matches across 4 reports. Of these 26 have been reviewed and closed with no issue. The remaining 12 matches have been referred to the relevant departments to ensure that adequate conflict of interest declarations have been made. Departments have been asked to confirm to AGRS that the potential conflicts have been**



managed and the forms completed where appropriate, by the end of November 2023.

- **Creditor Standing Data Reports**

There were 365 matches in 4 reports. All matches not previously reviewed in prior year exercises were reviewed by CTU to identify if matches were valid, such as different suppliers at the same address or if they required cleansing from the SAP system. This review will identify any duplicate accounts that should be cleansed from the system. CTU intend to complete this as part of migration to the new accounting system, currently planned for April 2024.

- **Creditors Transactions Report**

There were 1,041 matches in 6 reports. Two of these reports included a further 38 matches that were not reinvestigated this time because they appeared in the 2020 exercise and were closed without issue.

3.4 Of the matches reviewed, four duplicates were identified, totalling £17,250 and the majority of these monies have been recovered.

3.5 We have provided details of these duplicates to Finance and have recommended that they review the root cause of these duplicates and determine whether any action is necessary to prevent reoccurrence.

3.6 Audit, Governance and Risk Services also carried out sample checking on the investigation of the creditor matches by the Central Transactions Unit to provide assurance over the results.

- **Procurement Reports**

There were 109 matches in 2 reports. Of these 95 matches have been reviewed and closed with no issue. The remaining 14 matches have been referred to the relevant departments to ensure that adequate conflict of interest declarations have been completed. Departments have been asked to confirm to AGRS that the potential conflicts have been managed and the forms completed where appropriate, by the end of November 2023.”

**Audit and Risk Panel,  
Tuesday, 5th December, 2023**

After discussion, during which the Audit, Governance and Risk Services Manager confirmed that the sharing of data by the Council was undertaken in strict accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation, the Panel noted the contents of the report.

**Update on Performance Improvement**

(Mr. G. Dickson, Strategic Planning and Policy Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Panel considered the following report:

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

- 1.1 To provide the Audit and Risk Panel with a mid-year update on progress made against activities contributing to the Improvement Objectives contained within our 2023-24 Improvement Plan. (Quarter 2 update).**

**2.0 Recommendation**

- 2.1 The Panel is asked to note the Quarter 2 (mid-year) status update on the 2023-24 Improvement Plan which has been circulated.**

**Note: the report was compiled in consultation with officers from across departments and presented to the Corporate Management Team on 22nd November.**

**3.0 Main Report**

**Background**

- 3.1 Part 12 of the Local Government (NI) Act requires councils to agree improvement objectives on an annual basis and publish these in the form of an Improvement Plan. In August 2023, Members agreed the Improvement Plan 2023-24, which contains our commitment to securing continuous improvement as well as delivery of five improvement objectives. The Act also requires us to monitor and report on progress in an annual assessment of performance. Our 2022-23 year-end performance assessment report which was submitted to the September meeting of the Audit and Risk Panel. This assessment was later published [online](#) ahead of the September 30th deadline as required by legislation.**

**Improvement Plan 2023-24**

**Audit and Risk Panel,  
Tuesday, 5th December, 2023**

- 3.2** In August, the SP and R Committee approved the Improvement Plan for 20223-24. It was then published on the council website as required by legislation. (Note: the plan must normally be published by 30 June, but with this year's local government elections the statutory deadline was extended to 30 September.
- 3.3** The Improvement plan does not include everything that council plans to do that year, but instead focuses on a smaller set of key improvement priorities, as informed by residents, and evidenced by need. The Plan for 20223-24 includes the following improvement objectives:

<b>Our services and facilities</b>
Maintain and where appropriate improve resident satisfaction with the council and the services and facilities that we provide.
<b>Our communities</b>
Improve our local areas and enhance how we engage and support residents so everyone can enjoy good quality of life.
<b>Our economy</b>
Help small businesses, including social enterprises and co-operatives, to develop and grow, and by doing so, help create opportunities for local jobs and employment.
<b>Our environment</b>
Help tackle climate change, protect our environment, and improve the sustainability of Belfast.
<b>Our city</b>
Revitalise our city and help it to innovate in an inclusive and sustainable way.

- 3.4** We monitor progress against our improvement objectives, and as part of our approach to continuous improvement, bring quarterly progress reports to CMT and Audit and Risk Panel. The draft mid-year report on progress made against activities contributing to the Improvement Objectives contained within our 2023-24 Improvement Plan has been circulated. It sets out the key milestones and provides a summary of activity under each objective. The report also includes the most up to date position in relation to the performance indicators included within the plan.

- 3.5** Progress against all the objectives is in the most part on target with only a few milestones that have been slightly delayed and ragged amber, only one action has been ragged red. Explanations for the delays are contained within the mid-year report. A further report on progress will be presented to the Panel at the end of quarter 3.
- 3.6** The Board should note that the Guidance accompanying the legislation advises that what we learn about our performance in the quarterly update reports and the NIAO assessment, should be used to help inform the content of our next improvement plan and ongoing improvement activity. It should also form the basis of our annual *Year-End Performance Assessment Report* which must be made available to the Local Government Auditor by 30th September each year.

**Arrangements for Performance Improvement 2022-23**

- 3.7** The 2022-2023 audit and assessment of council's Improvement activity has been undertaken by the NIAO. Their final report will be available by mid-December 2023. This will be presented to the Audit and Risk Panel in March.

**4.0** **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 4.1** The Council is charged an audit fee, which is calculated by the NIAO based on the time spent on Belfast's audit. We will be advised of this charge in due course.

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

- 5.1** There are no equality or good relations implications associated with this report."

After discussion, during which the Strategic Planning and Policy Manager outlined the work which was underway to increase engagement with residents across all Council strategies and the Audit Director confirmed that the annual Section 95 Audit and Assessment Report for the Council would be presented to the next meeting, the Panel noted the update on performance improvement for Quarter 2, 2023/24.

**Schedule of Meetings 2024**

The Panel approved the following schedule of meetings for 2024, with a commencement time of 12.30 p.m.:

- Tuesday, 5th March;

**Audit and Risk Panel,  
Tuesday, 5th December, 2023**

- Tuesday, 4th June;
- Tuesday, 10th September; and
- Tuesday, 3rd December.

**Date of Next Meeting**

The Panel noted that its next meeting would be held at 12.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 5th March.

**Training for Audit and Risk Panel**

It was noted that Audit, Governance and Risk Services was planning to hold a training session for the Audit and Risk Panel in January and that potential dates would be circulated.

Chairperson

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Equality and Diversity: Equality Screening Outcome Report and Rural Needs Impact Assessment - Quarter 2 2023/24</b>
<b>Date:</b>	15th December, 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Sarah Williams, Governance and Compliance Manager

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To provide the Committee with a summary of equality screenings and rural needs impact assessments for Q2 2023-2024.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<u>Background</u> One of the main requirements of the Council's Equality Scheme is to carry out the screening of new and revised policies. This allows any impacts related to equality of opportunity and/or good relations to be identified and addressed. An equality screening template is completed by the relevant officer, in collaboration with the Equality and Diversity Officer. On a regular basis, the Equality and Diversity Officer collates all completed templates into a Screening Outcome Report and publishes onto the council's website along with the relevant completed screening templates.
3.2	<u>Key Issues</u> The current Screening Outcome Report (including rural needs assessments) for July-September 2023 is attached. As usual, this report will be brought to the next Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for noting and will be published on the Council's website.
3.3	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u> None
3.4	<b>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</b> The actions outlined contribute to our legal compliance regarding the promotion of equality, good relations and duties under the Rural Needs Act.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Document Attached</b>
	Screening Outcome Report (Q2 2023-24).





**Belfast**  
City Council

**Equality Screening Outcome Report and Rural Needs Impact Assessment  
from July - September 2023**

# Introduction

## Legislation – An Overview

### Section 75 Statutory Equality Duties

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires the Council, when carrying out its functions in relation to Northern Ireland, to have due regards to the need to promote equality of opportunity between nine categories of persons, namely:

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

Without prejudice to its obligations above, the council must also have regards to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

The Council's Revised Equality Scheme was formally approved by the Equality Commission in March 2021. The revised Scheme outlines how we propose to fulfil our statutory duties under Section 75. Within the Scheme, the council gave a commitment to apply the screening methodology below to all new and revised policies and where necessary and appropriate to subject new policies to further equality impact assessment.

- What is the likely impact of equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy/proposal, for each of the Section 75 equality categories?
- Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within Section 75 equality categories?
- To what extent is the policy/proposal likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?
- Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

In keeping with the Council's commitments in its Equality Scheme, the Council has applied the above screening criteria to new policies and proposals. Screening identifies policies that are likely to have an impact on equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

Screening identifies the impact of the policy/proposal as major, minor or none.

- If major – an Equality Impact Assessment may be carried out.
- If minor – consider mitigation or alternative policy and screen out.
- If none – screen out and give reasons.
- Ongoing screening – for strategies/policies that are to be put in place through a series of stages – screen at various stages during implementation.

The council also committed within its Revised Equality Scheme to prepare and publish for information regular reports on its screening exercises. This is screening report providing details on all screenings undertaken from the period January – June 2023.

### **Rural Needs Impact Assessments**

The Council also has a statutory duty under the Rural Needs (Northern Ireland) Act 2016 to consider rural needs in the development of new policies, plans or strategies or in any service design/delivery decisions. The Council must therefore engage with rural stakeholders in relation to policy development when it is relevant and appropriate. The Equality and Diversity Unit is responsible for reporting to the Strategic, Policy and Resources Committee and for ensuring that annual reporting returns are submitted to DAERA.

To further promote openness and transparency, there is a link to each completed screening and rural needs impact assessment template on the Council's website. [www.belfastcity.gov.uk](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk)

The templates detail all policies screened over this period and includes decisions reached.

## Consultation

The development of new policies and proposals will be supported by effective engagement processes to ensure that staff, service users and all interested parties are fully involved.

Planning for and delivering safe and cost-effective services requires close collaboration at many levels.

If you have any queries about this document, and its availability in alternative formats (including Braille, disk and audio cassette, and in other languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English) then please contact:-

Bridgeen O'Neill  
Equality and Diversity Unit  
Belfast City Council  
City Hall  
Belfast  
BT1 5GS

Direct Line 02890 270555  
or 028 9032 0202 ext 6315

email: [equality@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:equality@belfastcity.gov.uk) or [oneillbridgeen@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:oneillbridgeen@belfastcity.gov.uk)

## Screening Outcome

The screening outcomes are outlined in the table below. Three possible outcomes are recorded:

If **Major** – an Equality Impact Assessment may be carried out. **EQIA** - subject to further scrutiny under Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 to determine the impact upon those directly affected, which in turn will require informal and formal consultation with a wide range of stakeholders.

If **Minor** – consider mitigation or alternative policy and screen out.

If **None** – screen out and give reasons.

## Screening Outcome Options

Major= In

Minor= Out with mitigation

None= Out without mitigation

## Rural Needs Impact Assessment Options

Does the policy, plan, strategy or service design/delivery impact on the social and economic needs of people in rural areas?

## Belfast City Council Equality Screening Outcome Report and Rural Needs Impact Assessment

This report includes published screenings and Rural Needs Impact Assessments for the period January – June 2023. Copies can be found at:-

<https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/council/equality-and-diversity/equality-screening-reports#711-3>

Description of Policy/Proposal	Rural Needs Impact Assessment	ECNI Screening Decision and Contact
Active Travel Plan	This plan will have no detrimental impact on rural area residents of Belfast.	Screened Out – No EQIA necessary (no impacts) Contact: Alison Patty
Change of security rotas	Will have no detrimental impact on rural area residents of Belfast.	Screened Out – mitigating actions (minor impacts) Contact: John Terrett
Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-26	This strategy will have no detrimental impact on rural area residents of Belfast.	Screened Out – No EQIA necessary (no impacts) Contact: Janette Hennessey
Interim staff car parking arrangements	Will have no detrimental impact on rural area residents of Belfast.	Screened Out – mitigating actions (minor impacts) Contact: Russell Connelly
People Strategy	This strategy will have no detrimental impact on rural area residents of Belfast.	Screened Out – No EQIA necessary (no impacts) Contact: Jenni Mulree

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Update on Race Equality Action Plan</b>
<b>Date:</b>	15th December, 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Tully Director of City and Organisational Strategy
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Catherine Christy - HR Manager Development Sarah Williams - Governance and Compliance Manager Leish Dolan - Good Relations Officer

<b>Restricted Reports</b>									
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
<p><b>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</b></p> <p>Insert number <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information relating to any individual</li> <li>2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual</li> <li>3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li> <li>4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter</li> <li>5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained</li> <li>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</li> <li>7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</li> </ol>									
<p><b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">After Committee Decision</td> <td style="width: 30%; text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>After Council Decision</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sometime in the future</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>		After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>								

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To update the Committee on the development of the Race Equality Action Plan.
1.2	Following the decision, in April 2022, to appoint a CMT representative as Executive Sponsor for Race to champion and take forward the development of a Race Equality Action Plan in the Council, work has been ongoing across departments to identify appropriate activity. This report sets out progress to date.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
	<b>Background and context</b>
3.1	In 2022, the Council, in partnership with Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and the Public Health Agency Northern Ireland, commissioned research into the inequalities experienced by Black, Asian, minority ethnic and Traveller people residing in Belfast at that time. The research was undertaken by Lucy Michael Research with the African and Caribbean Support Organisation of Northern Ireland (ACSONI) and Polish Language, Culture, And Affairs (POLCA).
3.2	The research identified that while minority ethnic residents have made significant and lasting contributions to the city many face challenges of racism, isolation and poverty. These have impacted on how they can participate in political, social, and economic life. There are a wide range of challenges identified for both minority ethnic and migrant individuals in gaining employment, accessing suitable housing, healthcare, education, leisure, political participation, access to justice, safety, economic inclusion, receiving language support and cultural integration.
3.3	Members will recall the decision to appoint a CMT representative as Executive Sponsor for Race, to take forward the development of a Race Equality Action Plan to help the Council lead the way in the city to help address these challenges.
3.4	CMT agreed that the Director of City and Organisational Strategy would be best placed to lead on this work and engage with relevant officers across all Council departments. A cross departmental working group and three subgroups were set up to consider three distinct strands of work:



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Workforce: attracting more ethnic minority applicants and supporting our existing ethnic minority staff in the workplace;</li> <li>○ Accessibility to services: promoting access to council services to ethnic minority customers and citizens and;</li> <li>○ Civic leadership: championing ethnic minority inclusion in decision making, in communities and in public life.</li> </ul>
3.5	<p>A variety of staff including officers from Corporate HR, the Equality and Diversity Unit, Good Relations, Employability and Skills, departmental policy officers, community safety, the Customer Hub, Marketing and Communications etc. have worked together to ensure necessary linkages with existing relevant service delivery, activity and work plans.</p> <p><b>Provision of Support and Assistance</b></p>
3.6	<p>Members will be aware that the Good Relations Unit has a significant level of engagement with people from Minority Ethnic Backgrounds and have regular contact with support organisations through the Council led Migrant Forum. In March 2023, the Council received Home Office Dispersal funding through TEO to support proposals to develop support and services for people seeking asylum.</p>
3.7	<p>Through this funding Council is supporting a number of initiatives to support those seeking asylum in the city. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>An Asylum Support and Triage Project</b>, providing a bilingual helpline and casework support for people seeking asylum, delivered by the Red Cross</li> <li>• <b>A Family Help Project</b>, Supporting parents and children coping with displacement through conflict, with a focus on school readiness, child development and parenting, delivered by Barnardos</li> <li>• <b>A Community Integration Programme and trauma therapy intervention</b>, delivered by LORAG</li> <li>• <b>A Language, mentoring, training befriending and integration programme</b>, delivered by Conway Education Centre</li> <li>• <b>An integration and well-being outreach project</b>, delivered by Belfast City of Sanctuary.</li> </ul>
3.8	<p>In addition to the Council's integral role in organising and hosting the Ukrainian Assistance Centre, the Council had also provided funding to the Red Cross to develop a bilingual helpline for Ukrainian Nationals to support them with accessing services.</p>

3.9	<p>Following a proposal at the SP and R Committee in August 2023 to explore funding opportunities for a migrant hub or hubs, officers have commenced work to commission a scoping of the current services offered as well as an assessment of need, demand and gaps in provision. As part of this project extensive engagement will be undertaken with key stakeholders, with those who have a lived experience of coming to Belfast and navigating services, existing service providers and statutory agencies. Following the completion of this first phase and presentation back to Members, the next steps will include a site options appraisal to identify the right location for a resource that would serve communities new to Belfast, identification of the specific services and agencies to be involved and identification of potential funding sources.</p>
3.10	<p><b>Belfast Agenda Refresh</b></p> <p>To ensure that the voices of everyone living in Belfast are heard, conversations have continued with a wide range of stakeholders, including the new communities in our city. The need for Belfast to be a Compassionate City - a welcoming, caring, fair and inclusive city where no one is left behind, has again emerged as an important theme to ensure the Council's inclusive growth and anti-poverty ambitions. This engagement across the city has helped shape the specific actions in the draft Belfast Agenda that is now in the final stages of preparation.</p>
3.11	<p><b>Belfast Business Promise and Race at Work Campaign</b></p> <p>Aligned to our inclusive growth ambitions, the Belfast Business Promise includes a number of pledges aimed at encouraging employers to commit to and implement inclusive recruitment and workplace practices for all communities facing additional barriers to employment. Having participated in the pilot exercise, it has been identified that the Council already fully meets the Recruit Inclusively pledge criteria.</p>
3.12	<p>Signing up to Business in the Community Race at Work campaign also demonstrates the Council's best practice and commitment to attracting employees from minority ethnic groups and supporting them in the workplace. Among other things it requires the Council to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commit at board level to zero tolerance of harassment and bullying</li> <li>• Make it clear that supporting equality in the workforce is the responsibility of all leaders and managers</li> <li>• Take action that supports ethnic minority career progression</li> <li>• Support race inclusion allies in the workplace</li> </ul>
3.13	<p>Further appropriate actions and outreach are being considered for the action plan.</p>

	<p><b>Building Capacity and Understanding</b></p> <p>3.14 In October, Livingstone Thompson of Living Cultural Solutions, a contributor to the inequalities research project referenced at paragraph 3.1, delivered Anti-Racism training to a number of directors and other members of the working groups. In addition, the Executive Sponsor for Race and working group members have been engaging with people with lived experience, both groups and individuals, to learn more about what changes are needed. Feedback from this “lived experience mentoring” has identified opportunities to further build capacity and understanding.</p> <p>3.15 A draft Race Equality Action Plan, incorporating all three strands of work, has now been produced and shared with Dr Lucy Michael and Livingston Thompson in their role as “critical friends” for this work, and detailed feedback on the draft plan has been received following this engagement.</p> <p>3.16 A key recommendation from this engagement is that the Council should continue to build capacity in this area ahead of the final publication of the plan. This approach will ensure that senior council officers and elected members are fully equipped with the relevant knowledge and understanding to maximise the positive impact of the Race Equality Action Plan and further support senior decision makers in identifying appropriate actions to underpin the Belfast Agenda ambitions.</p> <p>3.17 TEO approved the use of £20,000 Home Office Dispersal funding to support the procurement of a cultural competence training programme for the Council. This will be used to commission both awareness raising training for elected members, directors, senior managers and other relevant staff, and further consultancy support to assist the working group to finalise the development of a Race Equality Action Plan that will make a difference to the lives of people from minority ethnic communities living and working in our city.</p> <p><b>Resource Implications</b></p> <p>3.18 There are no direct resource implications in terms of costs or human resources associated with this report at present. Further resource implications will be identified through the development of a Race Equality Action plan and costed for future approval.</p> <p><b>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</b></p> <p>3.19 Work on screening of the Race Equality Action Plan is ongoing as the plan is being developed. Actions, which promote the inclusion of black and other ethnic minority</p>
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	communities in employment and civic life, would have a positive impact on equality and good relations within the city.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	None



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

## 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  
After Council Decision  
Sometime in the future  
Never

☐  
☐  
☐  
☐

## 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 report to the Committee the key issues discussed at the Shared City Partnership meeting held on 11th December and present the minutes for approval.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
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><b><u>Shared City Partnership Membership (Verbal Update)</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to note the verbal update and agree the approach provided by the Good Relations Manager.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Good Relations Action Plan 2024/25</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>TEO Asylum Dispersal Funding Update</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> </ul> <p><b><u>PEACEPLUS – Theme 1.1 - Local Action Plan Update</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to note the contents of the report and recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it notes the contents of the report.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>AOB – Increased Levels of Hate Crime in the City</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to note the verbal discussion and agree the approach provided discussed by members of the SCP and officers.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b><u>Key Issues</u></b></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"> <li>a verbal update on SCP Membership</li> <li>Good Relations Action Plan 2024/25</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TEO Asylum Dispersal Funding Update</li> <li>• Peaceplus – Theme 1.1 – Local Action Plan Update</li> <li>• AOB – Increased Levels of Hate Crime in the City</li> </ul> <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><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>All financial implications are covered through existing budgets.</p> <p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></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>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	<p>Appendix 1 – Minutes of the meeting of the Shared City Partnership 11<sup>th</sup> 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

<b>Due to complete in March 2024</b>		
<b>Proposal 4: Lower Ormeau Residents Group</b>  <b>Completed</b>	<b>Community Integration Programme and trauma therapy intervention</b>	<b>£14,728</b>
<b>Proposal 5: Belfast City Council</b>  <b>Committed: procurement happening in Dec / January</b>	<b>Cultural Competence Programme</b>	<b>£20,000</b>
<b>Proposal 6: Belfast City of Sanctuary</b>  <b>Winter integration and well-being proposal</b>  <b>Procurement completed and awarded to Belfast City of Sanctuary</b>  <b>Delivery commenced</b> <b>Due to complete in March 2024</b>	<b>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.</b>  <b>Activity will be held in Sandy Row Community Centre and Ballynafeigh Community Centre</b>	<b>£12,000</b>
<b>Proposal 7: Immigration and Legal Advice Project</b>  <b>Tender not awarded – re-tender being considered</b>	<b>Immigration and Legal Advice Project</b>	<b>£72, 732</b>
<b>Proposal 8: Belfast City Council</b>	<b>Project Management &amp; Coordination Costs</b>	<b>£8,000</b>

- 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**

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**Chief Executive Officer: Mr. John Walsh**

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

## Section 1

### 1.1 Programme information

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

<b>Name/contact details for staff responsible for financial management of programme</b>	<p>Mark McCloskey, Partnership Support Officer <a href="mailto:goodrelations@belfastcity.gov.uk">goodrelations@belfastcity.gov.uk</a> 028 90270663</p>
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	<b>100%</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b>Total cost</b>	£757,864.36	£568,398.27
<b>Total programme costs</b>	£495,000.00	£371,250.00
<b>Total staff costs</b>	£262,864.36	£197,148.27
<b>Staff cost breakdown</b>	<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 &amp; 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 &amp; 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 11<sup>th</sup> 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: <a href="https://www.belfastcity-grants.com/">https://www.belfastcity-grants.com/</a></p> <p>An Open call for applications to the Good Relations Small grants programme was made on the 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023. Applications closed on January 12<sup>th</sup> 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: <a href="mailto:dolanl@belfastcity.gov.uk">dolanl@belfastcity.gov.uk</a> Danny Sweeney: <a href="mailto:sweeneyd@belfastcity.gov.uk">sweeneyd@belfastcity.gov.uk</a> David Robinson; <a href="mailto:robinsondavid@belfastcity.gov.uk">robinsondavid@belfastcity.gov.uk</a>			
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			

<b>2.10 Name and post code of Programme HQ</b>	<b>Location</b>	4-10 Linenhall Street	<b>Postcode</b>	BT2 8BP
<b>2.11 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact</b>	<b>Location</b>	Newtownards Road	<b>Postcode</b>	BT4 1AF
	<b>Location</b>	Ormeau Road	<b>Postcode</b>	BT7 2EW
	<b>Location</b>	Falls Road /Shankill Road	<b>Postcode</b>	BT12 6FD /BT13 3AA
	<b>Location</b>	Antrim Road	<b>Postcode</b>	BT14 6BP
<b>2.12 T:BUC Key Aim</b>	All 4 T:BUC Priorities			
<b>2.13 Link to good relations audit</b>	<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>			
<b>2.14 Complementarity</b>	<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>
<b>2.15 Capacity Building</b>	<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: <a href="mailto:robinsondavid@belfastcity.gov.uk">robinsondavid@belfastcity.gov.uk</a>			
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>
<b>2.14 Complementarity</b>	<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>
<b>2.15 Capacity Building</b>	<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 <sup>th</sup> July bonfires.			
2.05 Contact details for programme staff	Danny Sweeney: <a href="mailto:sweeneyd@belfastcity.gov.uk">sweeneyd@belfastcity.gov.uk</a>			
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>
<b>2.14 Complementarity</b>	<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>
<b>2.15 Capacity Building</b>	<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	Develop and deliver a programme of events and training on good relations/diversity.			
	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.			
	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.			
	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.			
2.05 Contact details for programme staff	Leish Dolan; <a href="mailto:dolanl@belfastcity.gov.uk">dolanl@belfastcity.gov.uk</a> David Robinson; <a href="mailto:robinsondavid@belfastcity.gov.uk">robinsondavid@belfastcity.gov.uk</a>			
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

<b>2.12 T:BUC Key Aim</b>	Shared Community
<b>2.13 Link to good relations audit</b>	<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>
<b>2.14 Complementarity</b>	<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>
<b>2.15 Capacity Building</b>	<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><b>Migrant Forum</b> 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><b>Integration and Orientation Support</b> 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>

	<b>Supporting Community Groups to develop integration initiatives</b> It will also support small localised opportunities to promote positive relations between host and new communities.			
<b>2.05 Contact details for programme staff</b>	Leish Dolan; <a href="mailto:dolanl@belfastcity.gov.uk">dolanl@belfastcity.gov.uk</a>			
<b>2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)</b>	£80,000			
<b>2.07 Total target no. of participants</b>	<b>Direct</b>	1,000	<b>Indirect</b>	N/A
<b>2.08 Budgeted unit cost of programme</b>	£80.00			
<b>2.09 Targeted participant background analysis</b>	70% BAME, 15%CNR and 15%PUL			
<b>2.10 Name and post code of Programme HQ</b>	<b>Location</b>	Belfast City Council	<b>Postcode</b>	BT2 8BP
<b>2.11 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact</b>	<b>Location</b>	City wide	<b>Postcode</b>	All post codes
		South Belfast		BT7 1FY
<b>2.12 T:BUC Key Aim</b>	Safe Community			
<b>2.13 Link to good relations audit</b>	<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"> <li>1. Develop initiatives to address anti-Muslim hate.</li> <li>2. Develop a programme focusing on minority ethnic leadership</li> <li>3. Examine and explore the response of Council's and communities in Britain, Ireland and further afield regarding managing diversity and tackling systemic racism.</li> </ol> <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>			
<b>2.14 Complementarity</b>	<p>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>			



	<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><b>2.15 Capacity Building</b></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	Godfrey McCartney; <a href="mailto:mccartneygodfrey@belfastcity.gov.uk">mccartneygodfrey@belfastcity.gov.uk</a> David Robinson; <a href="mailto:robinsondavid@belfastcity.gov.uk">robinsondavid@belfastcity.gov.uk</a>			
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"> <li>1. Communication on good relations work is important, especially in challenging some behaviours or promoting others.</li> <li>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.</li> </ol> <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"> <li>- Skills development – including civic leadership – training and education initiatives – dialogues, talks, seminars and events;</li> <li>- 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;</li> </ul> <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><b>2.14 Complementarity</b></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 <b>improve good relations</b>, 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>
<b>2.15 Capacity Building</b>	<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"> <li>1. develop and deliver a city-wide initiative on anti-sectarianism and anti-racism to include other agencies and government</li> <li>2. support progress towards the softening, transformation and/or removal of interface barriers through Good Relations engagement.</li> </ol> <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; <a href="mailto:sweeneyd@belfastcity.gov.uk">sweeneyd@belfastcity.gov.uk</a>
2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)	£80,000

<b>2.07 Total target no. of participants</b>	<b>Direct</b>	1,200	<b>Indirect</b>	5,000
<b>2.08 Budgeted unit cost of programme</b>	£66.66			
<b>2.09 Targeted participant background analysis</b>	45% CNR; 45% PUL; 10% BME			
<b>2.10 Name and post code of Programme HQ</b>	<b>Location</b>	Belfast City Council	<b>Postcode</b>	BT2 8BP
<b>2.11 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact</b>	<b>Location</b>	Crumlin/Woodvale Road	<b>Postcode</b>	BT14 7EA/BT13 3BU
	<b>Location</b>	White City/Whitewell	<b>Postcode</b>	BT36 7JX
	<b>Location</b>	Falls Road /Shankill Road	<b>Postcode</b>	BT12 6FD /BT13 3AA
	<b>Location</b>	Antrim Road	<b>Postcode</b>	BT14 6BP
	<b>Location</b>	Black Mountain	<b>Postcode</b>	BT13 3TS
	<b>Location</b>	Thistle/Madrid Street	<b>Postcode</b>	BT54EE
	<b>Location</b>	Duncairn Gardens	<b>Postcode</b>	BT152GQ
<b>2.12 T:BUC Key Aim</b>	Safe Community			
<b>2.13 Link to good relations audit</b>	<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>			



<b>2.14 Complementarity</b>	<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>
<b>2.15 Capacity Building</b>	<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"><li>1. Malvern Primary School (BT13 1HW) and St Peters Primary School (BT12 4JD).</li><li>2. Donegall Rd Primary School (BT12 6HE) and St Brides' Primary School (BT9 6FP). (St. Bride's replaced St. Malachy's in 2022.</li><li>3. Springhill Primary School (BT13 3NH), St Clare's Primary School (BT13 2SE) and Springfield Primary School (BT12 7DJ).</li><li>4. Finaghy Primary School (BT10 0EF) and St John the Baptist Primary School (BT11 9EH).</li></ol> <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: <a href="mailto:robinsondavid@belfastcity.gov.uk">robinsondavid@belfastcity.gov.uk</a>			
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



<b>2.11 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact</b>	<b>Location</b>	West Belfast	<b>Postcode</b>	BT13 1HW BT12 4JD
	<b>Location</b>	West/South Belfast	<b>Postcode</b>	BT12 6HE BT7 2BJ
	<b>Location</b>	West Belfast	<b>Postcode</b>	BT13 3NH BT13 2SE BT12 7DJ
	<b>Location</b>	West/South Belfast	<b>Postcode</b>	BT10 0EF BT11 9EH
<b>2.12 T:BUC Key Aim</b>	Children and Young People			
<b>2.13 Link to good relations audit</b>	<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>			
<b>2.14 Complementarity</b>	<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>			
<b>2.15 Capacity Building</b>	<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"> <li>1. Cost of Living</li> <li>2. Health and Wellbeing</li> <li>3. The Environment and Climate Change</li> <li>4. Animating Parks and Public Spaces</li> <li>5. Education and Employment</li> </ol> <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; <a href="mailto:dolanl@belfastcity.gov.uk">dolanl@belfastcity.gov.uk</a>  David Robinson; <a href="mailto:robinsondavid@belfastcity.gov.uk">robinsondavid@belfastcity.gov.uk</a>  Danny Sweeney; <a href="mailto:sweeneyd@belfastcity.gov.uk">sweeneyd@belfastcity.gov.uk</a></p>

<b>2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)</b>	£50,000			
<b>2.07 Total target no. of participants</b>	<b>Direct</b>	800	<b>Indirect</b>	N/A
<b>2.08 Budgeted unit cost of programme</b>	£75.00			
<b>2.09 Targeted participant background analysis</b>	40% CNR, 40% PUL, 20% BME			
<b>2.10 Name and post code of Programme HQ</b>	<b>Location</b>	Belfast City Council	<b>Postcode</b>	BT2 8BP
<b>2.11 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact</b>	<b>Location</b>	All parts of the City	<b>Postcode</b>	All postcodes
<b>2.12 T:BUC Key Aim</b>	All four T:BUC Aims: Children & Young People, Safe and Shared Communities and Cultural Expression.			
<b>2.13 Link to good relations audit</b>	<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"> <li>- Ensure there continues to be a city-wide, consistent approach to good relations while inputting at local area level.</li> </ul> <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 <b>common vision</b> 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>			
<b>2.14 Complementarity</b>	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>
<b>2.15 Capacity Building</b>	<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**

<b>Programme name (2.01)</b>	<b>Code (2.02)</b>	<b>Key Aim (2.12)</b>	<b>Key Words (2.03)</b>	<b>No. direct participants (2.07)</b>	<b>Total Cost (2.06)</b>	<b>Post Codes (2.11)</b>
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.**

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

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## **Minutes of Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

### **Attendance**

#### **Members:**

Councillor Sam Nelson (*for Cllr Michael Long*)  
Councillor Ciaran Beattie  
Councillor Brian Smyth  
Alderman Sonia Copeland  
Councillor Christina Black  
Councillor Séamas de Faoite  
Alderman Dean McCullough (*for Councillor Sarah Bunting*)

**Apologies:** Councillor Michael Long, Councillor Sarah Bunting

#### **Officers:**

John Walsh, Chief Executive  
Sharon McNicholl Director of Corporate Services and Deputy Chief Executive  
Trevor Wallace, Director of Finance (for Item1)  
Christine Sheridan, Director of Human Resources (for Item 2)  
Catherine Christy, Human Resources Manager, Development (for Item 2)  
Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services (for Items 3, 4 & 5)  
Eunan McConville, Director of Communications, Marketing and External Affairs  
Joanne Delaney, Portfolio and Programme Coordinator (secretariat)

### **1. Finance Update**

The Director of Finance provided an update on the setting of the district rate for 2024/25. The Director outlined the challenges in setting the district rate for 2024/25 given the current economic climate and this will be discussed at the upcoming Party Group Briefings. It was noted that given that the party group briefings were due to take place the following week the timeframe would not allow for Member feedback to be included in the report to December SP&R Committee. Therefore, the special SP&R Committee being held for 12 January 2024 will be required in order to consider the overall position with a view to recommending the rate for 2024/25. Special meetings for the other standing committees will then be required the week commencing 15 January 2024 to agree the cash limits for Committees in order for the level of the District Rate to be set for 2024/25 by the 15 February 2024.

## **2. Elected Member Development Programme**

Members previously agreed that the proposed programme of work for the Elected Member Development framework and the re-accreditation of Charter Plus would be considered at this Forum. The Human Resources Manager outlined the current framework and there was detailed discussion with a number of recommendations made by Members in relation to the processes already in place for learning and development. Specific recommendations were made in relation to budget allocation for learning and development and the potential to extend this over a council term as opposed to an annual allocation and the need for flexibility. Officers to further consider the recommendations discussed and an update will be brought back in January. It was agreed that the Member Development Strategic Framework would be circulated to Party Group Leaders following the meeting for discussion with their individual parties. Plans for identifying a strategic case study were also outlined and it was noted that this will be discussed further at the next meeting.

The Human Resources Manager also advised that an offer had been received to observe another Council Charter Plus assessment panel and it was agreed that the Chair of SP&R would be the most appropriate Member to participate in this assessment along with the relevant Officer. Members also noted upcoming political management development training for Council Officers which includes the proposal for Members participation in some of the training sessions. The Human Resources Manager to follow up with Party Group Leaders to seek nominations.

## **3. Hugh Hanna Statue**

The City Solicitor provided an update for Members in relation to the relocation of the Hugh Hanna Statue which was previously considered by Party Group Leaders. Members noted that a subsequent request on a revised location had since been received. There were a number of issues and concerns raised in relation to the revised location outlined and it was agreed that further consideration by parties was required. Members to further consider and an update will be brought back to the Forum in January. A Member asked for supplementary information to also be provided in advance for the next meeting.

## **4. Planning Update**

The City Solicitor updated the Forum on the live planning applications and informed the Forum of applications that were being presented to the Planning Committee in the coming months. In relation to queries raised by Members the City Solicitor to follow up with those Members.

## **5. AOB**

### **Coronation Gift**

The Chief Executive referred to the offer of a coronation gift (*an Irish Oak Tree*) to His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant for Belfast which was previously discussed. Members discussed potential location options for the planting of the tree including the grounds of City Hall and it was agreed that this would be further explored and an update will be brought back for Members consideration.

### **Service Improvement Working Group**

The Chief Executive outlined the rationale for the establishment of a Service Improvement Working Group and the Director of Finance highlighted the linkages to the work being undertaken in relation to the Medium Term Financial Plan. He also advised that it would be beneficial for the work being undertaken on emerging efficiency proposals to help offset any future current district rate increase. The Chief Executive to consider the terms of reference for the group and an update will be brought back for Members consideration.

### **Belfast 2024**

The Chief Executive provided an update on the Belfast 2024 programme following the decision by Members at November SP&R Committee to hold a special SP&R meeting to consider issues raised. He advised that a date for the Special week commencing 11 January would be arranged imminently. Members will also consider an update on The Mac at the same meeting.

### **Northern Ireland Policing Board**

The Chief Executive advised that he had received correspondence from the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in relation to independent members to the Northern Ireland Policing Board. It was noted that a report would be brought to November SP&R Committee and the correspondence would be circulated to Party group Leaders in advance. In relation to a query raised by a Member regarding the request for the Secretary of State to meet with Members on a number of issues it was noted that this would be followed up with Democratic Services.

## **Illuminate Requests**

The City Solicitor outlined for Members a number of illuminate requests received. There were some queries raised on one specific request specifically in relation to criteria which will require further consideration. The City Solicitor to consider the queries raised by Members and then to be brought back to a future meeting.

Members then noted the following requests would be agreed under the City Solicitors delegated authority.

- **World Fairtrade Day – 10 May 2024**
- **Philippines Independence Day – 12 June 2024**



**Belfast**  
City Council

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Requests for use of the City Hall and the Provision of Hospitality</b>
<b>Date:</b>	15th December, 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Aisling Milliken, Functions and Exhibition Manager

### 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

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

☐  
☐  
☐  
☐

### Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

☐

No

☒

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	This report, together with the attached appendix, contains the recommended approach in respect of each of the requests by external organisations for access to the City Hall function rooms received up to 5th December, 2023.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to approve the recommendations as set out in the attached appendix.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
	<u>Background Information</u>
3.1	<p>The current criteria for use of the function rooms used to review external applications is:</p> <p>Functions permitted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• functions which support other events in the city and which are of demonstrable economic benefit to Belfast whether organised by the council or not;</li> <li>• functions which demonstrably enhance the city's image nationally or internationally as a desirable commercial, business or tourist destination;</li> <li>• functions designed to celebrate or commemorate a notable achievement or significant anniversary (25, 50, 100 years) by an organisation or body with close links to the city or province; and</li> <li>• functions organised by recognised local community or voluntary sector groups for non-profit and non-political purposes.</li> </ul>
3.2	<p>Functions not permitted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conferences, meetings, seminars, performances, wedding receptions, private parties or receptions and similar booking requests in the prestige function rooms;</li> <li>• functions, which have as their principal purpose the generation of commercial gain for the organisers. Charity-fundraising functions are managed by the Lord Mayor's Office;</li> <li>• functions which have no compelling links to the council or the city specifically and which could instead use local private sector facilities;</li> <li>• functions which have as their primary purpose the advancement of any political or religious cause or campaign or are otherwise potentially contentious or involve significant reputation risks for the Council; and</li> <li>• functions which involve exceptionally large or disruptive set-ups or pose a real and tangible risk to the fabric of the building or grounds.</li> </ul>
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.3	<p>The existing revised criteria and scale of charges have been applied to the various requests received and the recommendations herein are offered to the Committee on this basis for approval.</p>

3.4	The attached schedule covers two applications for functions, scheduled for 2024.
3.5	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>None, any recommendations for hospitality will be met from existing budgets.</p> <p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>None.</p>
3.6	
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	Schedule of function requests received up to 5th December 2023.

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## DECEMBER 2023 CITY HALL FUNCTION APPLICATIONS

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET		HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
<b>2024 EVENTS</b>						
Social Change Initiative	5 February 2024	<b>Reception for delegates attending the conference on Countering Violent Conflict and Polarization-</b> bringing together leading players from the world of philanthropy, peace building, civil society, multi-lateral agencies to hear/learn from the NI peace process.  Numbers attending - 100	A & D	No (charity)	Yes, Tea and coffee Reception	Approve No Charge Tea and Coffee Reception  <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer for wine on arrival</i>
Sisters In (charity) and Podiem	7 February 2024	<b>Celebration/ Recognition of Female Entrepreneurship –</b> organised as part of Belfast City Council's Enterprise Pathway Programme which Podiem is delivering. The purpose of the event is to celebrate/recognise the role of female entrepreneurs and inspire the attendees to consider pursuing an entrepreneurial journey themselves.  Numbers attending – up to 350	C & D	No (charity)	Yes, Tea and coffee Reception	Approve No Charge Tea and Coffee Reception  <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer for wine on arrival</i>

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Request for use of City Hall Grounds for Various Events in 2024 – Belfast24 and Belfast City Marathon 5K</b>
<b>Date:</b>	15th December 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Aisling Milliken, Functions and Exhibition Manager

## 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
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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

☐  
☐  
☐  
☐

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

☒

No

☐

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To consider requests for the use of City Hall grounds in 2024 for:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little Amal – part of the Belfast24 programme</li> <li>• Belfast Marathon Christmas 10k</li> </ul>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is requested to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. authorise the use of City Hall grounds on dates noted below; and</li> <li>2. agree that the events take place on the basis of submission of an event management plan and risk assessment to ensure delivery of a safe public events.</li> </ol>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><u>Background Information</u></p> <p>Members will be aware that requests for the use of City Hall are normally dealt with under the authority delegated by the Committee to the Director of Legal and Civic Services using criteria agreed for this purpose. Occasionally however, it is necessary to place such requests directly before the Committee, and the requests set out below falls into this category.</p>
3.2	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>Several requests have been received for events over the spring and summer period and this report seeks to update members on larger events using City Hall grounds, due to the larger scale of activities involved it is deemed necessary to seek Committee approval.</p>
3.3	<p><u>The Proposed Events</u></p> <p>The proposed events would take place on the front lawns only or cobbled area and areas such as the Titanic Garden and Cenotaph will remain open to the public. Access to the City Hall building will not be affected.</p>
3.4	<p>In each case, the organisers would be providing all stewarding/marshalling staff &amp; first aiders and would of course have to comply with the usual conditions including indemnities for damage and submission of a formal event-management plan.</p>
3.5	<p><b><u>17th – 19th May 2024 – Little Amal</u></b></p> <p>This project is part of Belfast 2024 and ArtsEkta has been commissioned by the Council to produce Little Amal. Little Amal is the 12-foot puppet of a 10 year old Syrian refugee child at the heart of The Walk. She has become a global symbol of human rights, especially those of refugees. Between 17th to 26th May, Amal is journeying across Ireland, starting in Belfast and ending in Dublin in one of the largest free public festivals ever created on the island. This event will be similar in scale to Mela Carnival, Lord Mayor's Day events previously held in City Hall grounds. The creative programme proposed for the city centre is currently in</p>

	design stage and organisers will engage with City Hall functions team for planning and delivery.
3.6	<p><b><u>16 November 2024 Belfast City Marathon</u></b></p> <p>A request has been received from Belfast City Marathon to use the cobbled area for a 4<sup>th</sup> event to their annual calendar of events. The intended distance is 5k and would be open to all ages, genders and abilities who could walk, jog, or run. All participants will be encouraged to fundraise for the official charity, Cancer Focus NI. The event will take place on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> November at 9 am, starting and finishing on Donegall Square North, outside the City Hall. The route will be 1 loop and will showcase Belfast City Centre to all participants and their families.</p>
3.7	<p>Over 1,000 people are expected to register including children, teenagers, adults, and the elderly. There will be three prizes for the top males and females, but all will be invited to come in fancy dress with special prizes for best dressed. Initial meetings with City Events and Markets team have confirmed this 5k event, on the day after the market opens and the Christmas Lights Switch On event, will not affect their event plans or delivery and both teams are happy for this 5k to take place subject to members approval.</p> <p>Previous marathon events have all taken place outside City Hall on the cobbled area without incident and the organisers engaging with various stakeholders for planning and delivery.</p>
3.8	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>There would be no costs for the council as the various organisers would bear any/all stewarding and equipment costs etc themselves. The utilities costs on the day are of a very minor nature and the normal event support in the form of electrical and water provision in the grounds will be provided.</p> <p>There are no concerns from an asset management point of view, although the organisers would be required to provide the usual insurances, indemnities, and obligations.</p>
3.9	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>There are no direct good relations, equality or rural needs implications arising from this report.</p>
4.0	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	None

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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 for 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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