

# Public Document Pack

## BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

### **SUMMONS TO ATTEND THE MONTHLY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

**TO: THE LORD MAYOR, ALDERMEN AND THE COUNCILLORS OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL**

Notice is hereby given that the monthly meeting of the Council will be held in the Council Chamber, City Hall, Belfast on Thursday, 9th January, 2025 at 6.00 pm, for the transaction of the following business:

1. Summons
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Minutes of the Council (Pages 1 - 8)
5. Official Announcements
6. Minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (Pages 9 - 64)
7. Minutes of the People and Communities Committee (Pages 65 - 100)
8. Minutes of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee (Pages 101 - 114)
9. Minutes of the Licensing Committee (Pages 115 - 120)
10. Minutes of the Planning Committee (Pages 121 - 136)
11. Minutes of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee (Pages 137 - 138)
12. Minutes of the Climate and City Resilience Committee (Pages 139 - 144)
13. Minutes of the Standards and Business Committee (Pages 145 - 146)

The Members of Belfast City Council are hereby summoned to attend.

John Walsh

Chief Executive

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## Council

### MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the Council Chamber, City Hall,  
on Monday, 2nd December, 2024 at 6.00 p.m., pursuant to notice.

Members present: The Lord Mayor, Councillor Murray (Chairperson);  
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor McCormick);  
The High Sheriff of Belfast, Councillor S. Douglas;  
and Aldermen Copeland, Lawlor, McCoubrey,  
McCullough and Rodgers; and Councillors  
Abernethy, Anglin, Beattie, Bell, Black, Bower,  
Bradley, Brennan, R. Brooks, Bunting,  
Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Collins, Doherty,  
M. Donnelly, P. Donnelly, R. M. Donnelly,  
Doran, D. Douglas, Duffy, Ferguson,  
Flynn, Garrett, Groogan, Hanvey,  
Kelly, Long, Lyons, Maghie, Maskey,  
McAteer, McCabe, McCann, McCusker,  
McDowell, McKay, McKeown, I. McLaughlin,  
R. McLaughlin, Murphy, Nelson, Nic Bhranair,  
O'Neill, Smyth, Verner, Walsh and Whyte.

#### Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

#### Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Magee.

#### Declarations of Interest

Councillor Groogan declared an interest in relation to 'Update on Hardship Programme 2024/25', within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that she was employed by Forward South Partnership. In addition, she declared an interest under 'PEACEPLUS Local Community Action Plan - Update', in that her employer had applied for funding under the programme.

Councillors R.M. Donnelly, Duffy, McCabe and Verner declared interests under 'PEACEPLUS Local Community Action Plan – Update', within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that they were employed by organisations which had applied for funding under the programme.

Councillor Brennan declared an interest in the item 'Update on Hardship Programme 2024/25', within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that she was a member of the board of Forward South Partnership.

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Councillor McCabe declared an interest in the minutes of the People and Communities Committee, in that she was employed by Féile an Phobail, should any matter within those minutes relating to the work of that organisation come under consideration.

**Minutes of the Council**

Moved by the Lord Mayor (Councillor Murray),  
Seconded by Councillor Duffy and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the monthly meeting of the Council of 4th November, be taken as read and signed as correct.

**Official Announcements**

The Lord Mayor and the Deputy Lord Mayor, together with representatives of the several political parties, extended sympathy to Mr. Philip Purdy of the Lord Mayor's Unit, on the passing of his mother, Mrs. Millé Purdy.

Councillor Doran congratulated the Westland Community Group on their receipt of an award of £1.6 million in grant-aid funding and requested that the Lord Mayor write to the group to extend congratulations on behalf of the Council.

The Deputy Lord Mayor referred to a recent visit he had undertaken to Greater Shankill Alternatives where he met representatives of 'Push4Change' programme. The Deputy Lord Mayor congratulated those individuals who had been instrumental in developing the programme, which sought to raise awareness in the community about the issues faced by people with disabilities.

Councillor McCullough referred to the recent election of Mr. Donald J. Trump as the 47th President of the United States and requested that the Lord Mayor consider forwarding a letter of congratulations. The Lord Mayor referred the matter to the Deputy Lord Mayor for consideration.

Councillor Abernethy expressed concerns relating to the prevalence of vaping amongst young people and commended Council officers for the enforcement work which they had undertaken in addressing the issue.

Councillor Nelson expressed condolences to the family of Mr. Gary McMahon, who had died in a cycling accident in Clifton Street on 21st November.

Councillor R. Brooks referred to a recent visit to the City Hall by young people from the Ledley Hall Boys and Girls Club as part of the Democracy Works Foundation programme. She expressed her thanks to all those who had helped to make the evening a success.

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Councillor Maghie referred to the recent passing of the former south Belfast M.L.A., Ms. Anna Lo, and requested that the Lord Mayor write to her family to convey condolences on behalf of the Council.

Councillor I. McLaughlin paid tribute to those individuals who had been awarded bursaries as part of the Baroness May Blood Education Bursaries Initiative at a recent event at the Ulster University.

Councillor McCabe encouraged Members to sign the White Ribbon Charter Pledge, which was on display in the Robing Room, which was a pledge in opposition to violence against women and a commitment to support anyone who had been a victim of, or affected by, domestic violence.

Councillor Doran congratulated those who had been involved in the organisation of the Ulster-Scots Agency's Belfast Tartan Day, which had taken place on Saturday, 30th November.

**Change of Membership on an Outside Body**

The Chief Executive reported that notification had been received from Sinn Fein that Councillor O' Neill would replace Councillor Nic Bhranair on the Visit Belfast Board

The Council noted the change of membership.

**Request to Address the Council**

The Chief Executive reported that a request to address the Council had been received on behalf of traders from Sandy Row who wished to outline their concerns in relation to the impact which the closure of the Boyne Bridge had had on businesses within the area. It was noted that a notice of motion in this regard, entitled 'Retail Business in Sandy Row', which had been proposed by Councillor Kelly and seconded by Councillor R. Brooks, had been referred, in the first instance, by the Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 21st November, to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.

The Council acceded to the request and the Lord Mayor welcomed to the meeting Ms. S. McCusker, Mr. B. Allen and Mr. C.J. McDowell, who were representing traders from the Sandy Row area.

Ms. McCusker, who operated a dog grooming business in the area, explained that local traders had been impacted upon by the closure of the Boyne Bridge and stated that some traders had reported a drop in trade of between 30 and 40 per cent. She advised that traffic disruption had meant that customers had been unable to keep appointments and she had had to change the operating hours to address the traffic problems. She added that between 4.00pm and 6.00pm traffic in the area was at a standstill and if measures to alleviate the situation were not introduced, she may be forced to close her business.

**Meeting of Council,  
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Mr. B. Allen, who operated Allen's Tours and T.A. Allen Furniture Shop, informed the Council that the traffic problems had limited the accessibility of clients to his businesses. That situation had impacted also on staff getting to and leaving work, as well as tourists arriving for coach tours. He suggested that that Council should introduce a parking scheme, similar to that which was in operation in the Donegall Pass area, whereby parking was free for the first hour, which would help alleviate customer accessibility.

The Council was then addressed by Mr. C.J. McDowell, who was representing Kirks Home Bakery. He advised the Chamber that the closure of the Boyne Bridge had created a downturn in business due to a lack of access to and from Sandy Row from the Grosvenor Road direction. He outlined the affect that this road closure had had on the wider Sandy Row/Donegall Road community and suggested that alternative arrangements should have been explored to minimise the impact caused by the closure of the Boyne Bridge.

The Lord Mayor, on behalf of the Council, thanked the deputation for attending the meeting.

**Minutes of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee**

Moved by Councillor Murphy,  
Seconded by Councillor Maghie,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd and 29th November, 2024, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

**Amendment**

At the request of Councillor McLaughlin, the Council agreed that the minute of the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd November, under the heading 'Heritage Assets Update', be amended to reflect the addition of the gate lodge at the Falls Park within those sites identified for consideration within the expression of interest process.

**Amendment**

Moved by Councillor McDowell,  
Seconded by Alderman McCormick,

That the minute of the meeting of 22nd November under the heading 'Notice of Motion – NILGOSC – Disposal of Government Bonds' be rejected and, accordingly, that the Council agrees, in the first instance, to write to NILGOSC to ascertain if the decision to divest the government bonds which had been purchased from the Israeli government had been as a result of political pressure.

**Meeting of Council,  
Monday, 2nd December, 2024**

On a recorded vote, seventeen Members voted for the amendment with thirty-nine against and it was declared lost.

| For (17)   | Against (39)   |
|--|--|
| The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor McCormick);<br>The High Sheriff (Councillor S. Douglas); Aldermen Copeland, Lawlor, McCoubrey, McCullough and Rodgers; and Councillors R. Brooks, Bunting, Cobain, Doran, D. Douglas, Ferguson, Kelly, McDowell, I. McLaughlin and Verner. | The Lord Mayor (Councillor Murray); and Councillors Abernethy, Anglin, Beattie, Bell, Black, Bower, Bradley, Brennan, Canavan, Carson, Collins, Doherty, M. Donnelly, P. Donnelly, R-M Donnelly, Duffy, Flynn, Garrett, Groogan, Hanvey, Long, Lyons, Magee, Maghie, Maskey, McAteer, McCabe, McCann, McKay, McKeown, R. McLaughlin, Murphy, Nelson, Nic Bhranair and O'Neill, Smyth, Walsh and Whyte. |

**Adoption of Minutes**

Subject to the foregoing amendment to the minutes of the meeting of 22nd November under the heading 'Heritage Assets Update' the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd and 29th November were approved and adopted.

**Minutes of People and Communities Committee**

Moved by Councillor R. Brooks,  
Seconded by Councillor Kelly and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 5th November, be approved and adopted.

**Minutes of City Growth and Regeneration Committee**

Moved by Councillor Nelson,  
Seconded by Councillor R. McLaughlin and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 6th and 27th November, be approved and adopted.

**Minutes of Licensing Committee**

Moved by Alderman Rodgers,  
Seconded by Alderman McCullough and

**Meeting of Council,  
Monday, 2nd December, 2024**

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Licensing Committee of 20th November, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

**Minutes of Planning Committee**

Moved by Councillor Carson,  
Seconded by Councillor Garrett and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee of 12th November, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

**Climate and City Resilience**

Moved by Councillor R.M. Donnelly,  
Seconded by Councillor M. Donnelly and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Climate and City Resilience Committee of 7th November be approved and adopted.

**Standards and Business Committee**

Moved by Alderman Lawlor,  
Seconded by Councillor Ferguson and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Standards and Business Committee of 21st November be approved and adopted.

**Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd.  
Shareholders' Committee**

Moved by Councillor Ferguson,  
Seconded by Councillor Smyth,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Shareholders' Committee of 18th, 25th and 29th November, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

**Amendment**

Moved by Councillor O'Neill,  
Seconded by Councillor Ferguson and



**Meeting of Council,  
Monday, 2nd December, 2024**

Resolved – that the decision of the Committee of 25th November, under the heading ‘Chief Executive Recruitment’, be amended to provide that, specifically under the third point of that decision, the Council agrees not to grant delegated authority to the Committee to take any such decision, or decisions, in relation to that issue.

**Adoption of Minutes**

Subject to the foregoing amendment, the proceedings of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Shareholders’ Committee of 18th, 25th and 29th November, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, were approved and adopted.

Lord Mayor  
Chairperson

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## Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 13th December, 2024

### MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Murphy (Chairperson); and  
Alderman McCoubrey;  
Councillors Beattie, Black, Brennan, Bunting, Cobain,  
de Faoite, R-M Donnelly, Duffy, Ferguson, Garrett,  
Groogan, Long, Maghie, McDonough-Brown, I. McLaughlin,  
R. McLaughlin, Nelson and Whyte.

In attendance: Mr. J. Walsh, Chief Executive;  
Ms. S. McNicholl, Deputy Chief Executive/Director  
of Corporate Services;  
Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and  
Civic Services;  
Mr. D. Sales, Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood  
Services;  
Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Property and Projects;  
Ms. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and  
Development;  
Mr. D. Martin, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;  
Mr. T. Wallace, Director of Finance;  
Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;  
Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;  
Mr. J. Girvan, Director of Neighbourhood Services;  
Ms. C. Sheridan, Director of Human Resources; and  
Mr. J. Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance  
Manager.

### Apologies

No apologies were reported.

### Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 22nd and 29th November were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council, at its meeting on 2nd December, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee and subject also to the amendment of the minute of the meeting of 22nd November, under the heading 'Heritage Assets Update', to reflect the addition of the gate lodge at the Falls Park within those sites identified for consideration within the expression of interest process.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,  
Friday, 13th December, 2024**

The Committee noted also that, at the meeting of 29th November, the Chief Executive had reported the appointment of Keith Harper as Director of Economic Development.

**Declarations of Interest**

Councillors Groogan, R-M Donnelly and Duffy declared an interest in item 7(b) Minutes of the Shared City Partnership in so far as it related to PEACEPLUS in that they worked for organisations which had applied for funding. As the item did not become the subject of debate they were not required to leave the meeting.

**Restricted Items**

**The information contained in the reports associated with the following four items is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.**

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the press and public from the meeting during discussion of the following item as, due to the nature of the items, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

The Members were also reminded that the content of ‘restricted’ reports and any discussion which took place during closed session must be treated as ‘confidential information’ and that no such information should be disclosed to the public as per Paragraph 4.15 of the Code of Conduct.

**Revenue Estimates 2025/26 and  
Medium-Term Financial Planning**

The Committee:

- Agreed to defer consideration of the report until January;
- Noted that it had previously agreed to the holding of additional special meetings, if required, to consider the rate-setting process, on dates to be determined in consultation with the Chairperson; and
- Agreed to the holding of a special Council meeting, if required, to strike the rate.

**Summer Community Diversionary  
Festival Programme Review**

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the independent evaluation of the Summer Community Diversionary Festival Programme (SCDFP) and which requested the Committee to consider the delivery of future programmes.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,  
Friday, 13th December, 2024**

The SCDFP evaluation report presented 3 options for members consideration on the purpose of the future delivery of the SCDFP:

- a. Summer Programme supporting any organisation that wants to develop diversionary activities and/or celebrate culture throughout July and August;  
or
- b. Summer Programme that supports groups to develop diversionary activities and/or programmes that celebrate culture around the 11th, 12th July and 8th August (with a 7-day window in and around dates to run activities); or
- c. Summer Programme that supports groups to develop diversionary activities and/or programmes that celebrate culture around the 11th, 12th July and 8th August (however they can run activities throughout July until 8th August with the emphasis still on those dates).

In addition, the Committee was asked to give consideration to the future name of the programme:

- i. Summer Community Diversionary Festival Programme (No change); or
- ii. Summer Community Diversionary **and** Festival Programme; or
- iii. Summer Community Diversionary Programme.

**Proposal**

Moved by Councillor Beattie,  
Seconded by Councillor R-M Donnelly,

That, in relation to the future delivery, the Committee agrees to adopt option B.

On a vote, eight Members voted for the proposal and twelve against and it was declared lost.

**Further Proposal**

Moved by Councillor Long,  
Seconded by Councillor Nelson,

That the Committee agrees the future delivery be a Summer Programme that supports groups to develop diversionary activities and/or programmes that celebrate culture around the 11th, 12th July and 8th August, with a 14-day window before and a 7-day after those dates to deliver activities.

On a vote, twelve Members voted for the proposal and eight against and it was declared carried.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,  
Friday, 13th December, 2024**

Accordingly the Committee agreed that:

- I. the name of the programme be changed to the Summer Community Diversionary Programme;
- II. the future delivery be a Summer Programme that supports groups to develop diversionary activities and/or programmes that celebrate culture around the 11th, 12th July and 8th August, with a 14-day window before and a 7-day after those dates to delivery activities; and
- III. The definition of 'community diversionary activity':
  - The Summer Community diversionary programme provides support for the delivery of community-based diversionary and festivals programmes. All funded activity will make a significant contribution to the reduction of anti-social behaviour linked to key areas, bonfires and dates over the summer period specifically 11th July and 8th August.
- IV. the criteria for the application process include:
  - how the proposal will be diversionary around the two contentious periods of the summer.
  - How the proposed diversionary activity will reduce summer community tension and ASB.
  - How the proposal will reduce anti-social behaviour or reduce community tension in the areas where the proposal is being delivered.
  - How the project will promote positive cultural expression by increasing participants sense of community belonging and celebrating cultural diversity.
  - Providing evidence of project planning and management arrangements for the proposal including project expenditure.

**World Irish Dancing 2026 bid**

The Committee acceded to the request from ICC Belfast to provide financial support towards the costs associated with hosting the World Irish Dancing Championships in 2026.

**Assets Management**

The Committee:

- i) **2 Royal Avenue – 'The Knotted Gun' Sculpture Relocation**
  - Noted the re-location of 'The Knotted Gun' sculpture from Belfast City Council lands at Girdwood Community Hub to Council lands at 2 Royal Avenue.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,  
Friday, 13th December, 2024**

**ii) Fullerton Park Pavilion – Licence Agreement**

- Approved a licence agreement with the Dunmurry Community Association for use of the Fullerton Park Pavilion.

**iii) Ballygomartin Road Site - Acquisition of land at Springfield Heights**

- Approved the acquisition of land at Springfield Heights from the Crown Estate.

**iv) North Foreshore – Lease and related agreements to Dargan Road Biogas Ltd or related company**

- Noted that, in line with the Committee’s decision of August 2018, detailed terms for a lease and related legal agreements had been agreed with Dargan Road Biogas Ltd or related Energia Group company, for the development and operation of an Anaerobic Digestion facility on a site of approximately 10.79 acres and approved the extended site size and lease term of 25 years with any other terms to be agreed by the Estates Manager and the City Solicitor.

**Matters referred back from Council/Motions**

**Notices of Motion – Quarterly Update**

The City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services submitted for the Committees consideration the following report:

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

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Committee on the progress of all Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance for which SP&R Committee is responsible for.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:**

- **Note the updates to all Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance that SP&R Committee is responsible for and**
- **Agree to the closure of Notice of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance 25, 171, 195, 225, 257, 280, 283, 300, 325, 331, 341, 359, 386 and 400 as referenced in Appendix 1 and paragraph 3.4 below.**

**3.0 Main report**

**Background**

**3.1 At SP&R Committee on 25th October 2019, the following Notice of Motion was agreed:**

‘That this Council notes that other Councils produce a monthly status report in relation to Notices of Motion; and agrees Belfast City Council adopts a similar practice and produces a monthly Notice of Motion Update which will be brought to each full Council Meeting, detailing the following:

1. Date received
2. Notice of motion title
3. Submitted by which Councillor
4. Council meeting date
5. Committee motion is referred to
6. Outcome of committee where Notice of Motion will be debated
7. Month it will be reported back to committee
8. Other action to be taken.’

**3.2 Following a review exercise, a new database containing all Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance at Committee was created and quarterly reporting to Committee commenced in March 2021. Appendix 1 is the latest quarterly update showing all active Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance which SP&R Committee is responsible for.**

**Closure of Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance**

**3.3 At SP&R Committee on 20th November 2020, it was agreed that Notices of Motion could be closed for one of two reasons:**

- Notices of Motion which contained an action(s) that has been completed; and
- Notices of Motion have become Council policy.

**3.4 SP&R Committee are asked to agree that the following Notice of Motions and Issues Raised in Advance are now closed:**

**Category 1 Recommended Closure:**

- **City Cemetery Bi-Lingual Signage (257) -This Issue Raised in Advance called for dual language signage to be installed at the City Cemetery and interim measures to be adopted to facilitate this for the opening. Dual language signage on the visitor centre is now complete**



and external dual language signs have been installed across the cemetery grounds. Therefore it is recommended that this Issue Raised in Advance is now closed.

- **Levelling Up Fund (300)** – This Issue Raised in Advance called for a report to be submitted outlining the lessons learned from the unsuccessful bid to secure levelling up funding during Round 2. Since the announcement of Levelling Up Fund Round 3 and the fact that this did not apply to Northern Ireland, Ministers opted to fund one additional LUF culture project in Northern Ireland, drawing from the list of bids submitted in Round 2. The Shore Road Skills Centre was selected at a value of £2.2 million. It is recommended that this Issue Raised in Advance is now closed.
- **Request for Artwork to celebrate the ‘Irish Goodbye’ film (325)** – This Issue Raised in Advance called for a report be submitted on the provision of artwork in the City to mark the success of this film. Belfast 2024 and Belfast Stories collaborated to deliver this and the artwork is being completed and it will be situated looking over the Belfast Stories site. There will be an official launch on Monday 30th September. Therefore it is recommended that this Issue Raised in Advance is now closed.
- **Save West Wellbeing Suicide Awareness (331)** – This Notice of Motion called on the Council to explore options to fund the West Wellbeing Suicide Prevention Centre, including using reserve funds, if necessary, to source up to £50,000 so the organisation could continue to deliver its full range of services. A paper was brought to SP&R on 19th April where Committee further discussed and agreed that the request be dealt with via the discretionary payments process. The Discretionary payment process opened at the end of June and closed on 2nd August. West Wellbeing Suicide Awareness did not apply for funding. Therefore it is recommended that this Notice of Motion is now closed.
- **Childcare Provision (341)** – This Notice of Motion called on the Council to carry out a review as to how they can support childcare provision in the area, including reviewing whether schemes supported by the Council during school holidays can be expanded. Whilst Council host a number of summer and play schemes, childcare is a very specific function with registration required with the Belfast Health & Social Care Trust and as such, BCC do not provide childcare schemes. In addition, support of £80,000 was agreed by SP&R Committee in February 2024 to support the

enhancement of provision of summer schemes for children with additional needs for delivery in summer 2024. Therefore it is recommended that this Notice of Motion is now closed.

- **Request for BCC to act as a Sponsor for a Community Asset Transfer for West Belfast Partnership Board (359)** – This Issue Raised in Advance asked for the Council to act as a sponsor for a community asset transfer for the West Belfast Partnership Board. This request has been agreed and LPS notified. Therefore it is recommended that this Issue Raised in Advance is now closed.
- **Agricultural Fines for Pollution ( 386)** – This Notice of Motion requested that the Council call on the DAERA Minister to reinstate the previous more stringent penalties in relation to repeated negligent breaches to more accurately reflect the environmental harm caused. This Notice of Motion was carried at full Council. Therefore it is recommended that this Notice of Motion is now closed.

**Category 2 Recommended Closure:**

- **Abortion Imagery (25)** – This Issue Raised in Advance called on the Council to investigate whether the public display of graphic abortion imagery in the city centre can be regulated lawfully. The Council undertook initial engagement with the Department for Communities and obtained legal advice on the draft byelaws. On 26 June 2023 the SP&R Committee agreed that the draft bye laws be issued for formal public consultation. Consultation commenced on 27 November 2023 and concluded on 4 March 2024. There was an extremely high level of response to this consultation and officers are currently working on analysing the responses in preparation for drafting a report on the consultation findings. Therefore it is recommended that this Issue Raised in Advance is now closed.
- **10% Pay Increase for Council Workers (171)** – This Notice of Motion called on the Council to support the pay claim submitted by Trade Unions, representing all public sector staff, for a substantial increase and to meet with local NJC union representatives to convey support for the pay claim and consider practical ways in which the Council can support the campaign. The Pay & Grading proposal for staff on Belfast City Council Terms & Conditions was accepted by the Trade Unions on 20th June 2024 and communicated to staff. Planning for the next phase of the project has commenced. This seeks to harmonise the remaining outstanding

Single Status matters where practicable. As the work to address the overall pay and grading structure is completed it is recommended that this Notice of Motion is now closed.

- **Chat Bench and Tackling Loneliness (195)** – This Notice of Motion called on the Council to re-purpose two council owned benches as ‘Happy to Chat Benches’. One in the grounds of City Hall and one in the Titanic quarter. Council does not own a bench at Titanic Quarter and will consider the re-purposing of the bench at City Hall at the City Hall Working Group. In addition there are already chatty benches in Marrowbone Park, Ligoniel Park, Glencairn Park, Woodvale Park and Waterworks Park. Therefore it is recommended that this Notice of Motion is now closed.
- **City Centre Built Heritage (225)** – This Issue Raised in Advance called on the Council to engage with the owner of a building of architectural and historical significance in the inner North of the City, which was currently empty, with a view to bring it into Council ownership and explore potential uses. A detailed report was presented to SP&R in April of this year on the ‘City Centre Regeneration Scheme’. A further report was presented to the Special SP&R Committee in June 2024 with regards to ‘City Centre Built Heritage’. Officers will continue to work with Elected Members as work advances, including through the City Regeneration Members Working Group. Therefore it is recommended this Issue Raised in Advance is now closed.
- **Fuel Poverty Hardship Fund (280)** – This Issue Raised in Advance called on the Council to allocate £500k from Council reserves to set up an Emergency Fuel Poverty Hardship Fund and write to the Department for Communities requesting match funding for this scheme. The £500k referenced evolved into the £1.1m Fuel Poverty Hardship Fund for 2022/23. Work has continued thanks to additional funding from DFC for 2023/24. An update report will be presented to SP&R. It is recommended that this Issue Raised in Advance is now closed.
- **Memorial to Baroness May Blood (283)** – This Issue Raised in Advance called on the Council to create a permanent memorial to the late Baroness May Blood. This request was discussed at the City Hall/City Hall Grounds Installations Working Group and it was agreed that this will be considered as part of the City Hall statues project under the Capital Programme. Therefore it is recommended that Issue Raised in Advance is now closed.

- **Good Relations Programme (400)** – This Issue Raised in Advance called for a review of the progress of Good Relations programmes in Belfast City Council to be completed within 6 months. The Good Relations Action Plan has been reviewed and presented to the Shared City Partnership and SP&R in September 24 and delivery is underway. It was agreed at the October 24 meeting of the Shared City Partnership to review and refresh the Council’s Good Relations Strategy and develop a three year action plan for Good Relations through a co-design process. This work is anticipated for completion in the second quarter of 2025. Therefore it is recommended that this Issue Raised in Advance is now closed.

### **3.5 Financial and Resource Implications**

There are no additional financial implications required to implement these recommendations.

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

There are no equality, good relations or rural needs implications contained in this report”

The Committee:

- Noted the updates to all Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance that it was responsible for;
- Agreed to the closure of Notice of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance 171, 195, 225, 257, 280, 283, 300, 325, 331, 359, 386 and 400 as referenced in Appendix 1 to the report;
- Agreed that 25 – Abortion Imagery; and 341 - Childcare Provision remain opened;
- Agreed that, if an update on a motion has not been provided with 12 months of its agreement, a report providing details of progress, if any, be submitted to the appropriate Committee; and
- That an update report on motion 326 – Data Protection be submitted to the January meeting of the Committee.

**Correspondence – Motion: Special Educational Needs – Legal Protection for Young People in NI**

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 4th November, had agreed to adopt a motion on Special Educational Needs – Legal Protection for Young People in NI.

Accordingly, Democratic Services had wrote to the Ministers for Communities, Education and Health, and responses have been received which confirmed the Ministers' support for legislative change.

The Committee noted receipt of the correspondence as set out in the report and agreed to close the Notice of Motion.

**Notice of Motion – Addressing Educational Inequalities in Belfast**

The Members were informed that the Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 21st November, had considered the following motion which had been received for submission to the Council on 2nd December:

“In light of the DENI ‘RAISE’ programme in response to the ‘Fair Start’ report, the Council resolves to:

1. Support the RAISE programme and align it with the Belfast Agenda.
2. Establish a cross-party committee to monitor progress and ensure community engagement.
3. Commit to continuous improvement in addressing educational inequalities, including writing to the Education Minister to seek confirmation that his department will proactively respond to feedback about the targeting of the programme and ensure it reaches the communities most in need.

This motion aims to ensure coordinated, effective, and inclusive efforts to reduce educational inequalities in Belfast.”

The motion had been proposed by Councillor Bell and seconded by Councillor Long.

The Committee was advised that the Belfast Strategic Partnership (BSP) was previously a partnership between Belfast City Council, the PHA and Belfast Trust. It had been superseded by the establishment of the Community Planning Partnership.

One of the working groups of the BSP was the Lifelong Learning Group. They had established a Lifelong Learning Charter and undertook a range of community-based learning activities – including the Festival of Learning. While the BSP no longer exists, that Lifelong Learning Group continues to meet – and the main focus of their activities

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remains the annual festival of learning, scheduled to take place in April next year. This was usually a week-long programme of events to promote learning opportunities across the board. It did not have a specific focus on any type of learning or any target group. Membership of the group involved Belfast City Council, UU, QUB, Forum for Adult Learning, BMC and a number of community-based learning partners. The work on the Learning City group was coordinated through our Community Planning team which brings updates to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the work. The Motion was therefore referred to this Committee.

The Committee noted that the Motion had been received and agreed that a subsequent report be brought to the Committee outlining a detailed consideration of the Motion and the potential costs implications.

**Notice of Motion – Armed Forces Covenant**

The Members were informed that the Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 21st November, had considered the following motion which had been received for submission to the Council on 2nd December:

“That this Council recognises the unique skills that are held by Armed Forces service leavers; recognises that many veterans can face disadvantages compared to the general population, arising from military life, when accessing services and as such, this Council commits to signing up to the Armed Forces Covenant immediately.”

The motion had been proposed by Alderman Lawlor and seconded by Alderman McCullough.

The Committee noted that, in accordance with Standing Order 13(i), Notices of Motion which commit the Council to expenditure must be referred to the appropriate Committee for consideration and report and was, therefore, before the Committee as it was responsible for Policy and Human Resources matters.

**Proposal**

Moved by Councillor Garrett,  
Seconded by Councillor Whyte,

The Committee agrees to reject the motion and that no further action be undertaken.

On a vote, ten Members voted for the proposal and eight against, with one no vote and it was declared carried.

**Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues**

**Belfast Region City Deal – update**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

**1.1 This report is to provide an update to Committee on the progress of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD).**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- **Note the progress on project development and delivery across the pillars of investment.**
- **Note the update in respect of programme communication and the BRCD Council Panel**

**3.0 Main report**

**3.1 It is almost three years on from the signing of the Belfast Region City Deal, formally signed on 15 December 2021 at the ICC Belfast, the programme of investment is now delivering results, creating more and better jobs, leveraging further private sector investment and developing inclusive growth and social value.**

**3.2 With one project already operational, four in construction/fit-out stage, eight projects at design phase, four with planning approvals, and three skills assessments completed the programme of investment is firmly in delivery phase.**

**3.3 There are now also a total of 15 Outline Business Cases (OBC's) approved with a combined approximate project value of £670m and 12 Contracts for Funding signed for projects. representing significant momentum since deal signing for the programme of investment.**

**3.4 Key highlights on progress across the pillars of investment since the last update in August include:**

- **iREACH Health has submitted and had its Full Business Case approved, ahead of on site construction work now commencing. The project has also secured key private sector partnerships with Celerion and Exploristics through tenancy agreement to expand clinical trials, boosting Belfast's role in cutting-edge clinical research and enhancing local healthcare innovation. It has also signed a lease agreement with the Belfast Health & Social Care Trust. The project received a green rating following its Gateway Review 3 at Investment Decision stage.**

- In relation to Momentum One Zero, the planning application was formally approved in November. The centre will transform the digital innovation activity taking place in our region, focusing on key sectors such as cyber security and artificial intelligence. The project has also recently received £6.25m from UK Research and Innovation UKRI to transform supply chains to support resilient and reliable supply chains supporting food stability.
- Construction work continues apace at the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre (AMIC) at Global Point Park. At Studio Ulster, specialist virtual production equipment worth almost £20m and funded by City Deal, has been delivered and is being installed at its location in north Belfast. The Contract for Funding is being agreed for the Centre for Digital Healthcare Technology and detailed design continues to progress well.
- The Digital Twin Centre project led by Digital Catapult has leveraged £15m of additional Innovate UK funding and almost £10m of further private sector investment. Rental accommodation within Belfast has also been secured, with occupancy being taken up early in 2025 and a significant recruitment drive is underway.
- An Outline Business Case is being commenced for an SBRI Programme valuing c.£5m – with a focus on addressing key challenges across the Belfast Region including net zero. The pilot SBRI project, Augment the City continues to progress very well.
- The Outline Business Case has now been approved for the Ards & North Down Innovation Hub, focusing on the creative industries, and a Contract for Funding is now being developed for sign off early in 2025.
- Mid & East Antrim Borough Council announced in September the appointment of WH Stephens, a multi-disciplinary construction consultancy to lead on the design for the i4C Cleantech Centre at St Patrick's Barracks. The centre will provide a physical base for businesses and will focus on the development of clean technology. The project is scheduled for completion in 2027. A subsidy control assessment was submitted for the project in late November, with the Contract for Funding due to be signed early in 2025.



- Following appointment of the integrated consultancy teams, concept designs are being developed and key surveys works being undertaken across a number of the tourism and regeneration projects including the Gobbins and Mourne Mountain Gateway Project. The RIBA Stage 2 report for Carrickfergus Regeneration has been completed and the project is now progressing to the detailed design stage and progressing towards planning.
- A series of public engagement events for Carrickfergus Regeneration and Mourne Mountain Gateway Project have taken place, with further events planned for the New Year. These events were designed to gather important feedback and provide insights from residents and key community and business stakeholders on the projects.
- Bangor Waterfront has appointed WH Stephens for Ballyholme Yacht Club and McAdam Design for Pickie Fun Park and design works are progressing. Procurement has commenced for a design team for the Urban Waterfront Public Realm project element. The Operator procurement for Pickie Fun Park and Bangor Marina are ongoing with appointments expected early in the New Year.
- Destination Royal Hillsborough has commenced procurement of their professional services teams with the first appointments expected in the New Year.
- Engagement is ongoing with the relevant statutory bodies to progress the planning applications for Destination Royal Hillsborough public realm and Newry Regeneration, to enable progression to the next stage of project delivery.
- The procurement of the contractors for the Theatre & Conference Centre and Civic Hub projects in the Newry Regeneration programme is nearing completion and we are expecting to see works commence on site on these two projects in the spring.
- A public consultation on Belfast Stories inviting people to explore the concept designs for the project was launched on 19 November and will run for 14 weeks until 23 February 2025. The consultation is being undertaken in order to inform the next stage of project development up to the end of RIBA stage 2 and beyond.

- Procurement of the Design & Build contractor for the Lagan Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge is ongoing with the intention to appoint in summer 2025 and work to finalise the OBC for Belfast Rapid Transit Phase 2 is ongoing.
- The skills assessment for the Creative Industries (Virtual Production) is now complete and the assessment for the Digital sector is now in progress.

#### **Delivering Social Value and Inclusive, Sustainable Growth**

- 3.5 As reported previously ensuring that the growth generated through the BRCD is inclusive and sustainable and that it balances societal and economic needs with those of the economy is a central tenet of the BRCD.
- 3.6 Partners have adopted the Buy Social model as the minimum requirement for Social Value within contracts and contractors have now commenced uploading their Social Value Delivery Plans to the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) portal and are reporting monthly on their progress. This process is closely supported and monitored by the Programme Management Office.
- 3.7 To date contracts that have commenced reporting to the SIB portal have committed to delivery of a total of 6,609 Social Value Delivery Points, mainly through interventions such as paid employment opportunities for apprentices, student placements and graduates, health and wellbeing initiatives and climate change and carbon reducing training.
- 3.8 The BRCD Programme Management Office (PMO) have also along with representatives from the Department of Communities (DfC) held a Social Value Plans Workshop on 10th September 2024. The focus of which was to learn how DfC have been using Social Value Plans to ensure that inclusive growth is maximised during the development and delivery of capital projects. The session provided some helpful insights for BRCD partners currently preparing their Social Value Plans.

#### **Finance and Governance**

- 3.9 The overarching Deal Document is supported by a Financial Plan which sets out the overall financial framework including stewardship, protocols and controls and the role of the accountable body. The plan also details the financial forecasts and predicted funding flows and timelines and forms the basis of the financial reporting and profiling arrangements.

- 3.10 Performance reports including financial performance are considered by the Executive Board on a quarterly basis and the recent 2024-25 Quarter 2 Finance Report demonstrated the positive progress being made across the programme. The total year to date BRCD spend at the end of Quarter 2 stood at just under £20m. Drawdowns to date from both the Department for the Economy and the Department for Communities total £22m, with a further c.£9m due to be paid over the coming months.
- 3.11 An internal audit of the BRCD PMO is complete with Audit, Governance and Risk Services (AGRS) providing substantial assurance that the BRCD PMO have controls in place to facilitate the delivery of the Programme. AGRS found the controls and processes over financial management, programme management, governance, oversight and risk to be adequate, appropriate and operating effectively in line with the requirements of the Heads of Terms and Deal Document and agreed governance arrangements at a programme level.

#### Communications and Engagement

- 3.12 Partners held a political engagement event on Wednesday 20th November at the Long Gallery, Parliament Buildings to inform and engage elected members on Deal delivery and progress to date.
- 3.13 The event provided a valuable opportunity to update and engage with MLAs on delivery to date on the Belfast Region City Deal programme of investment, to share the partners' shared vision and to showcase the region-wide economic and social opportunities that the Deal is creating.
- 3.14 Members learned of the significant progress that has been made, thanks to the strength of the partnership and how the Belfast Region will benefit from revitalised public spaces, innovation hubs with additional office spaces and improved transportation links. They also heard how a continued focus on inclusivity, social value and employability and skills will help make the city and wider region a better place to live, work and invest in.
- 3.15 Further business engagement is planned in early 2025 and Members will be updated as this work progresses.

**BRCD Council Panel**

- 3.16 The next meeting of the Council Panel will be held in February 2025 and will be hosted by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council.
- 3.17 The minutes from the meeting hosted by Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council on 29 May 2024 are attached at Appendix 1 for information.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.18 All costs associated with the BRCD are within existing budgets. As outlined additional resources have also been leveraged from other funding sources to extend the impact of the deal.

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

- 3.19 The approach taken to develop the City Deal has been subject to independent equality screening and rural proofing and states that;

*‘BRCD is inherently inclusive, affording an opportunity for the region to grow in a way that will benefit the economy of Northern Ireland as a whole, thereby enhancing the lives and well-being of its citizens. If during further development of the programme it becomes apparent that there may be an adverse impact on certain groups or communities then the partnership commits to carrying out further Section 75 work and including screening and EQIAs as and when appropriate.’*

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Consultation Low Carbon Residential  
Heating Consultation Response**

The Director of Organisational and City Strategy submitted for the Committee’s consideration the following report:

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

- 1.1 To present a draft response to the Department for Economy consultation regarding support for low carbon heating in residential buildings.

**2.0 Recommendation**

**2.1** Members are asked to note the proposals set out in the consultation document and to approve the draft council response as attached at appendix 1. Subject to approval by Council, the response will be submitted to DFE via their online consultation platform.

**3.0 Main Report**

**Background**

**3.1** In December 2021, the Northern Ireland Executive published a ten year Energy Strategy, setting out a pathway to 2030 that would mobilise the skills, technologies and behavioural change needed to achieve net zero carbon and affordable energy by 2050. This was followed in June 2022 by the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) which set a legislative target of at least 100% reduction in net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050.

**3.2** Energy accounts for almost 60% of greenhouse gas emissions in Northern Ireland however, despite around half of electricity being produced from renewable sources, through importing fossil fuels, the region continues to be susceptible to price volatility in its energy bills through the links to global wholesale commodity markets. The Energy Strategy aims to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, helping Northern Ireland to become more self-sufficient, utilising locally produced renewable energy to strengthen energy security. A key objective of the Energy Strategy is to ‘replace high carbon heating sources with lower and zero carbon sources in households’.

This consultation seeks views on a new domestic low carbon heat support scheme, to help inform and improve heat policy in this area. It will also serve as a method to gauge public awareness in relation to low carbon heating, together with assessing public interest, including the local renewable heating industry, for a future support mechanism.

**3.3 Draft Council Response**

Overall, many of the proposals outlined are welcomed, recognising this new grant scheme as an important step toward advancing low-carbon heating in Northern Ireland. However, within the draft consultation response, we’ve made a number of recommendations that in summary focus on:

- Stronger alignment of funding support where possible with the pathways and measures recommended in the Belfast LAEP, specifically retrofit (via a fabric first approach), district heating and the transition of homes currently heated by oil to low carbon heating (including hybrid systems as well as ASHP) as the most affordable near-term interventions to achieve net zero by 2050.
- The need for careful coordination with any plans to support and incentivise district heating in urban areas like Belfast referencing that if the heat zoning approach currently being trialled in England were adopted in NI, a situation could arise whereby grants are provided to households to install ASHP in areas that are subsequently included in a heat zone. This could be a wasteful use of public resources.
- Increased recognition of a fabric first approach to low carbon domestic retrofit as insulated homes with high levels of energy efficiency require less energy and result in lower bills. Heat pumps in less energy efficient homes risk consuming high levels of electricity risk exacerbating fuel poverty. The response recommends that a domestic grant programme aimed at optimising energy efficiency should precede grants for low carbon heating systems.
- The importance of providing additional funding support for workforce development to ensure that adequate numbers of certified installers are available to support safe and reliable installations of low carbon heating systems.
- The need to build consumer awareness and confidence with support for awareness campaigns and a one-stop-shop to inform homeowners about the benefits of low-carbon heating, as well as the operational differences compared to conventional systems.

A copy of the DFE consultation and supporting materials can be accessed at [here](#).

**3.4 Financial and Resource Implications**

None

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

None.”

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The Committee:

- 1) noted the proposals set out in the consultation document;
- 2) approved the draft Council response as attached at appendix 1 to the report; and
- 3) noted that, subject to approval by the Council, the response would be submitted to DFE via its online consultation platform.

**Changing Places Toilet Policy**

The Committee was reminded that a motion which had been proposed by former Councillor Ross McMullan calling for the introduction of a Changing Places Toilet Policy for Belfast City Council had been referred to the Committee on 1st September 2021. The Committee had adopted the motion and agreed that a report be brought to a subsequent meeting providing details on how it would be facilitated, resourced and managed.

An update report was brought to the Disability Working Group on 10th October 2023, which endorsed the draft Policy and recommended that it be brought back to the Committee for approval. The Committee had, on 24th November 2023, approved the draft Changing Places Toilet Policy for public consultation. The public consultation began on 29th January 2024 and ended on 22nd April 2024.

The final draft Changing Places Toilet Policy was reviewed by the internal CPT Officer Working Group on 29th August 2024, by CMT on 25th September 2024 and by the Disability WG on 11th December 2024.

90 people responded to the Public Consultation and the findings were:

- 75.4% of the respondents agreed with the draft Changing Places Toilet Policy, with a smaller percentage (17.9%) disagreeing.
- 66% of the respondents used the Parks at least once week.
- 39.7% of the respondents have a disability.
- 57.5% of the respondents were carers/dependents.

Two written responses were received which indicated that the wording of the draft policy was not acceptable, for example, the Council should be committed, and not to strive to do and that a commitment to a rolling programme of addressing the CPT deficit and toilet needs identified.

Two main recommended amendments have been made to the final draft Policy. The final draft Policy now states that 'the Council will commit to', instead of 'the Council will strive to' provide as required a Changing Places facility in every large building. Also, the Council will make it a commitment for large events being organised by external organisers/promoters to provide CPT facilities. The Council will also make an effort to include Changing Places facilities or to make toilet provision more accessible when extending or extensively refurbishing an existing Council-owned building when it is reasonable to do so.

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The Members were advised that the Council had received several requests recently in relation to improving physical access within Council owned toilets, including requests from a number of campaigns in relation to Stoma Friendly toilets and also correspondence from the Crohn's and Colitis UK campaign "Not Every Disability Is Visible". These campaigns has each requested the introduction of disposable facilities with accompanying signage/posters promoting the various causes.

It was proposed that, in response to such requests, officers advise that one of the first steps in the implementation of the CPT policy would be an audit of all accessible toilet provision across the Council estate. The purpose of this review would be to help identify any gaps and to quantify the level of resources which would be required to upgrade toilets and increase accessibility in order to make the toilets stoma, Crohns and colitis friendly.

Whilst the commitments in the policy could be met within existing budgets it was likely that there would be financial implications in the roll out of Changing Places Facilities following the audit of accessible toilet provision in the Council's estate.

The Committee approved the draft Changing Places Toilet Policy as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

**Corporate Plan 2025-28**

The Committee considered the following report:

**"1.0 Purpose of Report**

**1.1 To present Committee with the 2025-2028 Corporate Plan (Appendix 1) and seek approval for it to be published for public consultation early in the new year.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- i. consider and agree the draft Corporate Plan (2023-28) as attached at Appendix 1;**
- ii. agree that the draft Corporate Plan, subject to minor edits based on Members feedback, be published in January 2025 for public consultation;**
- iii. note that a draft annual Corporate Delivery Plan (2025-26) will be submitted for the consideration of Members in January / February 2025.**

**3.0 Key Issues**

**3.1 Members will be aware of the challenging environment within which the Council currently operates. The escalating fiscal strain, fuelled by rising prices, a cost-of-living crisis and**



economic challenges are having significant adverse impacts on individuals, families and services across the city and widening inequalities.

- 3.2 It is never as important for the Council to ensure it pivots to meet the challenges and opportunities which emerge over the coming months and years. The process through which the new three-year corporate plan is co-designed with elected members is essential and how this connects with and helps inform the Council's resource planning cycles (budgets, people, capital and assets) and the development of a Medium-Term Financial Plan.
- 3.3 Members will be aware of the discussions which has taken place since the election of the new Council through Standing Committees, Party Groups Leader meetings and all Member workshops in relation to key areas of the corporate plan and proposed priorities for future investment focus to help shape the emerging new Corporate Plan.

#### Corporate Plan 2025-2028

- 3.4 Members will be aware of the importance of the corporate plan as a key governance document, cited in the council's constitution as the means by which the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee sets the strategic direction of the council. It sets out what the council wants to achieve for the city and the key priority actions to make this happen. These priorities are then used as the basis for informing any emerging medium-term financial plan.
- 3.5 A copy of the proposed draft Corporate Plan (2025-2028) is attached at Appendix 1 for Members consideration and feedback. Members will note that the themes are largely aligned with the themes emerging from the recently published Belfast Agenda as well as the additional focus on 'our services' and 'our organisation'.
- 3.6 Subject to Committee consideration and Full Council approval, it is proposed that the draft corporate plan be published in January 2025 for public consultation.

#### Corporate Delivery Plan 2025-2026

- 3.7 Members will appreciate the scale of work which continues to be delivered by Council and the impact of this within communities across the city. The intention is to bring forward the detailed delivery plan for the 2025-26 period for the consideration of the Committee, in early 2025, which will be aligned with the budget setting process.

**3.8 Financial and Resource Implications**

There are no immediate resource implications. However, the priorities agreed in the corporate plan will form the basis of the rate setting process.

**3.9 Equality of Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment**

Equality screening has been completed as part of the plan development process.”

The Committee:

- i. agreed the draft Corporate Plan (2023-28) as attached at Appendix 1 to the report;
- ii. agreed that the draft Corporate Plan be published in January 2025 for public consultation; and
- iii. noted that a draft annual Corporate Delivery Plan (2025-26) would be submitted for the consideration of the Committee in January / February 2025.

**DAERA Consultation on the establishment of a Just Transition Commission for Northern Ireland**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report**

**1.1 To present a draft response to the DAERA consultation regarding the establishment of a Just Transition Commission for Northern Ireland.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- **Note the proposals set out in the consultation document and to approve the draft council response as attached at appendix 1. Subject to approval by Council, the response will be submitted to DAERA via their online consultation platform.**

**3.0 Key Issues**

**Background**

- 3.1** The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 (the Act) sets out a framework for tackling climate change and reducing emissions in Northern Ireland. It places requirements on government departments relating to delivering just transition objectives and includes a requirement for the establishment of a Just Transition Commission (Commission). The Act states the functions of the Commission will include overseeing the implementation of the just transition elements of the Act and providing advice to departments on how to ensure their emissions reduction policies and Climate Action Plans (CAP) comply with the just transition principle. DAERA is responsible for establishing the Commission.
- 3.2** The just transition principle aims to promote fairness during the transition to a low-emissions economy and to ensure support is provided to those who are most affected by climate change. Often this will be the individuals or groups who have done the least to cause it, and yet who may be the least equipped to adapt to its effects. High-level objectives include taking action to reduce emissions in a manner which helps to support environmentally sustainable jobs, low-carbon investment, and infrastructure.
- 3.3** Ensuring that Northern Ireland reaches its net zero goal in a way that is fair, sustainable and balanced is a priority for the NI Executive and the establishment of the Commission is an essential element in supporting the delivery of that ambition. The consultation is not about the merits or otherwise of the Commission, but rather the proposed Regulations (the legislation) that will set out the type of public body the Commission should be. DAERA is therefore seeking feedback on issues such as composition, membership, role and legislated functions, reporting arrangements, secretariat and support required. DAERA is also seeking initial suggestions for what the Commission should focus on.

**Draft Council Response**

- 3.4** Overall, the establishment of the Commission is to be welcomed. DAERA is proposing to base the structure of the Commission around the Scottish model, which provides a good practice framework. However, within the draft consultation response, we've made various recommendations that in summary focus on:

- Increased recognition of the role of local government and its participation in the framework.
- Suggested enhancements to the membership, including amendments to the Climate Change (Just Transition Commission) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024 so that local government is a named sector within the Schedule.
- The importance of meaningful collaboration and civic engagement an ensuring participation by key stakeholders including civic society, business and economy and the education and skills sectors.

3.5 As part of our response, we recommended that the Commission should focus on the following priority areas. More details are provided in the draft response attached at appendix 1 and area summarised as follows:

- Participation and collaboration.
- Addressing social risks.
- Supporting a green jobs revolution
- Laying the social groundwork for a resilient and inclusive net-zero economy.
- Driving local solutions.
- Reinforcing the urgency for concerted efforts to combat climate change.
- Focus on high-impact sectors
- Supporting processes.

3.6 A copy of the DAERA consultation and supporting materials including the draft Regulations can be accessed at [here](#).

#### Financial and Resource Implications

3.7 There are no financial or resource implications arising directly from this report. Whilst the Commission may have oversight of any Just Transition Funds that may be established in future, this consultation does not seek views on proposals to establish such funds.

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

3.8 There are no equality, good relations or rural needs implications arising directly from this report.”

The Committee:

- i. noted the proposals set out in the consultation document;

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- ii. approved the draft Council response as attached at appendix 1 to the report; and
- iii. noted that, subject to approval by the Council, the response would be submitted to DAERA via its online consultation platform.

**Planning Update**

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided an update on major planning applications and applications which had been determined by the Planning Committee.

**Physical Programme and Asset Management**

**Physical Programme Update**

The Director of Property and Projects submitted for the Committee's consideration the following report:

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

**1.1 The Council's Physical Programme currently includes over 200 capital projects with investment of £150m+ 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 a review of recently completed and underway physical projects including Sporting Pitches Investment, along with requests for approvals relating to the Capital Programme and an update on external capital funding via the PeacePLUS Programme.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- **Physical Programme Half Year Update - Note the overall update on projects that have been completed recently and projects currently under construction at 3.1 to 3.5 below and in Appendix 1; and that the Property & Projects Department is happy to arrange a site visit to any projects that have been completed or are underway.**
- **Sporting Pitches Investment Update - Note the update on the Sporting Pitches Investment via City & Neighbourhoods Services Department including work to investigate securing community access to sporting facilities owned by other key partners; progress in**

anticipation of future potential funding opportunities; and progress on work to increase pitch provision across the city.

- **Capital Programme Stage Movements:**
  - **IT Programme – In-Cab Technology and Routing System – Note that a satisfactory tender return has been received and that the Director of Finance has confirmed that this project is within the affordability limits of the Council and agree that a maximum of £653,000 be allocated.**
  - **Innovation Factory Access Control System - Agree that ‘Innovation Factory Access Control’ is moved to Stage 3 – Committed; note that a satisfactory tender return has been received, that the Director of Finance has confirmed that this project is within the affordability limits of the Council and agree that a maximum of £100,000 be allocated.**
  - **Floral Hall Health & Safety Works - Agree that ‘Floral Hall Health & Safety Works’ is moved immediately to Stage 3 – Committed due to the condition of the building; note that a satisfactory tender return has been received, that the Director of Finance has confirmed that this phase of the project is within the affordability limits of the Council and agree that a maximum of £750,000 be allocated for the immediate works**
  - **Belfast Zoo Health and Safety Works - Agree that ‘Belfast Zoo Health & Safety Works’ is added to the Capital Programme at Stage 1 – Emerging as a programme of health and safety works and that any necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate ‘framework’ arrangements) be initiated with contract to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver;**
  - **35-39 Royal Ave Health & Safety Works - Agree that ‘35-39 Royal Ave Health & Safety Works’ is added to the Capital Programme at Stage 1 – Emerging as a programme of health and safety works and that any necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate ‘framework’ arrangements) be initiated with contract to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver;**
  - **35-39 Royal Avenue - Agree that ‘35-39 Royal Avenue’ is added to the Capital Programme at Stage**

- 1 – *Emerging* to allow a business case to be developed on the long term model.
- Fleet Programme – Small Vehicles - Agree that ‘Fleet Programme – Small Vehicles’ project is added to the Capital Programme at *Stage 1 – Emerging* to allow a business case to be developed.
- External Capital Funding Update – PeacePLUS 1.4 – note the key conditions within the Letter of Offer from SEUPB for the Reconnected Belfast project under Theme 1.4 of the PeacePLUS Programme.

### 3.0 Main report

#### Key Issues

### 3.1 Physical Programme Half Year Update

Members are aware of the scale of the Council’s Physical Programme via a range of internal and external funding streams. Members are advised that the Property & Projects Department is happy to arrange a site visit to any projects that have been completed or are underway. Below is a brief summary of projects completed since June, as well as a sample of projects currently underway. Members are advised that from 2025 this half yearly reporting will be provided in line with the financial year to align with other reporting patterns, rather than by calendar year.

### 3.2 Awards and recognition

Three of the Council’s recently completed capital projects have been successful finalists for the prestigious National Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Awards held in October – St. Comgall’s winning in the Refurbishment category and Templemore Baths – finalist for the Heritage category. In addition, Shankill Shared Women’s Centre is also winner of the Construction Employers Federation (CEF) Awards 2024 for Social/Community Construction Project of the Year (above £2m). The awards recognise and celebrate the most inspirational initiatives and developments across the UK.

### 3.3 Recently completed projects:

- Shankill Shared Women’s Centre (PEACE IV) – a £7.7m purpose-built shared space for women and their families. This significant new building is now complete and operational.
- Black Mountain Shared Space Project (PEACE IV) – a £7m shared community space on the former Finlay’s

factory site in west Belfast. The new building provides cross community facilities, joint programming and outreach. The building is complete and operational. Phase 2 works are ongoing.

- Dual Language Street Signs – Gaeltacht Quarter - completion of the erection of dual language street signs en bloc within the Gaeltacht Quarter.
- Belfast Bikes Expansion – new bike station is now installed at Yorkgate.
- Playground Improvement Programme – improvements have been completed at New Lodge playground by CNS.
- Other enhancements to Council assets include - Waterfront Hall/ICC Toilet Refurbishment, Brook Changing Pavilion, Henry Jones Playing Fields CCTV and lighting, Flora Street Play Park, Waste Transfer Station Floor Repairs, Water Refill Stations at City Hall and St George’s Market, The Mount MUGA (North Queen Street), Cherryvale Playing Fields Pitch 1, Pedestrian Access at Alexandra Park HWRC, Napier Park boundary works, fleet workshop replacement lifts and EV lifts for workshops at Duncrue.
- Cavehill Tennis Club (BIF) - completion of the refurbishment of three tennis courts and replacement of perimeter fencing.
- Berlin Swifts Football Club (LIF and SOF) – provision of 2-team changing facilities and improvements now completed.
- Woodvale Park (SOF) - completion of Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) pitch upgrades.
- Women’s TEC (LIF) - completion of upgrade to windows at education centre.
- Shankill Road Environmental Improvement Project (SOF) - completion of environmental improvements and lighting for the Shankill Road.
- The Entries Project – completion of Sugarhouse Entry part of the transformation of city centre entries into vibrant places that are safe, welcoming, playful and imaginative.

3.4 Physical projects underway:

- Ballysillan Playing Fields (Urban Villages) - this is a £8.4m partnership project with DfI’s Living with Water Programme, DfC and Urban Villages. The contractor has recently been appointed with mobilisation this month and works to commence on site in the New Year.
- Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF) - a total of 20 significant scale projects have now progressed to Stage 3 – *Delivery* stage under the £10m+ NRF Programme.



Design Team procurements are underway for a number of schemes. The contractor is appointed for the first scheme at Act Initiative Community Hub & Visitor Centre with work due to start on site in January 2025.

- Lagan Gateway Greenway Phase 2 (BIF) – work continues on the next stages of this major investment of £5m in a new navigation lock, iconic foot and cycle bridge and new path connections. The procurement exercise is underway.
- Strand Arts Centre (BIF) – works to commence on the £6.4m major refurbishment of the NI last remaining art deco cinema building. The centre will provide a mix of educational and skills development workshops, arts, and heritage tours.
- The Lockhouse (Urban Villages) - this £2.7m partnership project will reimagine a historic and culturally important residential building along the Lagan towpath into a community focal point for good relations activity and cross-community partnership working, including minority ethnic communities. Remaining elements funded by DfC, DfI and Executive Office.
- ABC Trust Health and Leisure Hub (Urban Villages) – Phase 2 of the project is continuing on site comprising a community café, boxing club, minor halls, community gym and office space.
- Sandy Row Arts & Digital Hub (BIF and Urban Villages) – work is progressing on the new build development for creative and digital arts entrepreneurs.
- Hosford Community Houses (Urban Villages) – refurbishment of a building in ownership of East Belfast Mission at 240 Newtownards Road. Planned completion in early 2025.
- Titanic People Exhibition (Urban Villages) – redevelopment of the courtyard/frontage of the existing building at Westbourne Presbyterian Church. Planned completion anticipated in Spring 2025.
- Corporate projects – a range of capital IT projects via Digital Services to ensure business continuity including the completion of the Replacement Hardware for NIHE System, Server & Storage Technology Refresh, Grants Management System; Waste Plan – Expansion of Glass Collection Scheme, HWRC and CAS Containers, and ongoing delivery of Fleet Replacement Programme via City & Neighbourhoods Services.
- Developers Contributions – progressing a number of open space projects via CNS funded under S76 Developer Contributions.

- **Playground Improvement Programme – Grampian Avenue, Michelle Baird and Balfour Avenue playgrounds are all on track to be completed by Spring 2025.**
- **Sporting Pitches Investment – improvements to pitches at Falls Park, Mallusk Playing Fields, Henry Jones Playing Fields, and Strangford Avenue Playing Fields (see detailed update at 3.6).**

**3.5 Physical projects in development:**

The remainder of the Physical Programme covers projects at earlier stages i.e. tender preparation or before. This includes schemes at the start of procurement at *Stage 3 – Committed* as well as those at *Stage 2 – Uncommitted* and *Stage 1 – Emerging* or equivalent:

- **Capital Programme: Cathedral Gardens, New Crematorium, Belfast Stories, Reservoir Safety Programme, Alleygates Phase 5, LTP Girdwood Indoor Sports Facility, Waste Plan projects, Waterfront Hall – Chiller Units, Relocation of Dunbar Link Cleansing Depot, New Cemetery, Access to the Hills – connections from Cavehill to Black Mountain, Sydenham Greenway, Glencairn Park/Ligoniel Park Greenway, Black Mountain/Upper Whiterock Greenway, Colin Greenway, City Hall – Installation of 2 Stained Glass Windows, and recently added schemes including Floral Hall Health & Safety Works, Wilmont House, Fernhill House and Courtyard, Historic Cemeteries and Historic Tiled Street Signs.**
- **A range of other schemes are also in development including the remaining LIF, BIF and SOF projects.**

**Sporting Pitches Investment**

- 3.6** Members will recall that improvement works are underway to a number of pitches across the city. Work is also being progressed to investigate securing community access to sporting facilities owned by other key partners; to prepare for future potential funding opportunities; and on work to increase pitch provision across the city.

Members were advised in June 2024 of work on an area-by-area basis to identify, agree and secure quick wins at the Council's pitch sites whilst the Pitches Strategy is still in development. Work is progressing on sites across the city as summarised below. Works may be subject to slight change due to weather dependency. Officers continue to identify pitch sites, city wide,

for improvement as opportunities arise and will provide updates as work progresses.

*Sporting Pitches Investment 2024/25 update:*

- **Mallusk Playing Fields - Conversion of the redundant shale soccer pitch to full size, grass Gaelic football is underway, drainage works are ongoing with turfing works programmed to be complete by early 2025. Fabrication is currently underway for four GAA ball-stop systems with installation also due in early 2025. Due to the requirement for four full size, grass Gaelic football pitches at this location two existing, synthetic cricket wickets are programmed to be relocated within the site in February 2025.**
- **Henry Jones Playing Fields - Full planning approval for works at the Gaelic sports pitch was obtained in early November 2024. Fabrication of the GAA ball-stop systems and 1.2m high spectator railing is currently underway. Works will start this month with completion expected by the end of January 2025.**
- **Falls Park - Full planning approval for works at the Gaelic sports pitch was obtained in July 2024. Both GAA ball-stop systems have been installed. Fabrication of the 1.2m high spectator railing is currently underway; installation of the spectator fence and associated hard standing is programmed to be complete by the end of February 2025.**
- **Strangford Avenue Playing Fields - One of the soccer pitches was reconfigured for two small-sided pitches, including goals. The third pitch at the site, currently resting, will be set up in May for summer soccer for which there is demand at this site.**
- **Loughside Playing Fields – a new 9-a-side pitch has been created at this site adjacent to the new Crusaders FC 4G pitch.**

In addition, improvement works have also been undertaken at the following sites:

- **Napier Park - Installation of a new 4m high ball-stop fence to the boundary is complete.**
- **Belvoir Activity Centre MUGA - Improvement works are underway and include replacement of the existing MUGA carpet, drainage improvements and replacement existing basketball hoops and soccer netting. Works are expected to be complete within the coming weeks.**
- **Lenadoon Park (Section 76 Developer Contribution) - Improvement works at the soccer pitch are complete**

and included new spectator hard standings, an extension to the height of the existing pitch boundary fence and drainage improvements at dug out areas.

- Suffolk Playing Fields - The existing drainage system that served all three existing grass soccer pitches at Suffolk Playing Fields was improved in late November 2024, works included the construction of a new manhole and culverted outlet pipe.

**Partnership opportunities for community access to facilities**

In addition to these infrastructure improvements at council facilities, officers have been working to identify partnership opportunities to secure community access to facilities owned by the Education Authority or by other sporting clubs. Since the last committee update officers have secured access to a number of pitches located at the Montgomery Road Campus of the Belfast Met and negotiations regarding the terms of community usage for these are underway. The pitches previously used for rugby have potential for conversion to a number of smaller soccer pitches. Designs options are underway. Officers are currently engaging with the IFA to identify potential sites for improvements to facilitate further development of grass roots soccer. This work is being carried out in anticipation of a possible further release of funding from DCMS. Members will be kept advised of any announcement in relation to this potential funding stream.

**Capital Programme - Proposed Movements**

- 3.7 Members have agreed that all capital projects must go through a three-stage process where decisions on which capital projects progress are taken by the Committee. This provides assurance as to the level of financial control and will allow Members to properly consider the opportunity costs of approving one capital project over another capital project. Members are asked to note the following activity on the Capital Programme:

| Project   | Overview  | Stage movement   |
|---|---|--|
| IT Programme – In-Cab Technology and Routing System | Replacement of two current systems: Masternaut fleet tracking and Webaspx route optimisation software with one integrated system. | <i>Stage 3 – Committed:</i><br>Proceed to contractor appointment with a maximum budget of £653,000 |

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|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| Innovation<br>Factory Access<br>Control System | Procurement of a replacement<br>for the access control system at<br>the Innovation Factory.                                     | Move to <i>Stage 3</i><br>– <i>Committed</i> :<br>Proceed to<br>contractor<br>appointment with<br>a maximum<br>budget of<br>£100,000   |
| Floral Hall –<br>Health and Safety<br>Works    | Works required to stabilise and<br>secure the building  | Move to <i>Stage 3</i><br>– <i>Committed</i> :<br>Proceed to<br>contractor<br>appointment for<br>the immediate<br>health & safety<br>works with a<br>maximum budget<br>of £750,000 |
| Belfast Zoo –<br>Health and Safety<br>Works    | Health, safety and welfare works<br>at the Zoo including<br>improvements to animal<br>enclosures and boundary<br>fencing works. | Add at <i>Stage 1</i> -<br><i>Emerging</i> and<br>initiate<br>procurement<br>exercise  |
| 35-39 Royal Ave –<br>Health & Safety<br>Works  | Urgent works to recently<br>acquired Grade B2 listed<br>building.   | Add at <i>Stage 1</i> –<br><i>Emerging</i> and<br>initiate<br>procurement<br>exercise  |
| 35-39 Royal<br>Avenue                          | Emerging proposal for recently<br>acquired Grade B2 listed<br>building.   | Add at <i>Stage 1</i> –<br><i>Emerging</i>   |
| Fleet Programme -<br>Small Vehicles            | Procurement of two smaller<br>collection vehicles to improve<br>collection performance in narrow<br>and restricted streets.     | Add at <i>Stage 1</i> -<br><i>Emerging</i>   |

**3.8 IT Programme – In-Cab Technology and Routing System**

Members will recall that in September 2023 this project was moved to *Stage 3 – Committed* and held at *Tier 0 – Scheme at Risk* pending further development of the project and a satisfactory tender return. An update was to be brought back to Committee along with the final budget allocation and confirmation that this is within the affordability limits of the Council. This project involves the replacement of two current systems Masternaut fleet tracking and Webaspx route optimisation software with one integrated system - a digital system that integrates frontline operations, operational control and the customer hub. Members are asked to note that a satisfactory tender return has been received and that the Director of Finance has confirmed that this project is within the

affordability limits of the Council and agree that a maximum of £653,000 be allocated.

**3.9 Innovation Factory Access Control System**

Members will recall that last month this project was moved to *Stage 2 – Uncommitted*. The project is for the replacement of the access control system at Innovation Factory. The current system is no longer fit for purpose. There is a requirement to upgrade the system which includes new door controllers, readers, and associated software. Members are asked to agree that 'Innovation Factory Access Control' is moved to *Stage 3 – Committed*; note that a satisfactory tender return has been received, that the Director of Finance has confirmed that this project is within the affordability limits of the Council and agree that a maximum of £100,000 be allocated.

**3.10 Floral Hall Health and Safety Works**

Members will recall that last month this project was added to the Capital Programme at *Stage 1 – Emerging*. A series of immediate health and safety works are required to the building. This will allow the building to be stabilised and steps to be undertaken to secure the most historically significant elements of the Hall including the domed roof. Members are asked to agree that 'Floral Hall Health & Safety Works' is moved immediately to *Stage 3 – Committed* due to the deteriorating condition of the building; note that a satisfactory tender return has been received, that the Director of Finance has confirmed that this phase of the project is within the affordability limits of the Council and agree that a maximum of £750,000 be allocated with a further tender figure to be brought back for any remaining works.

**3.11 Belfast Zoo – Health and Safety Works**

A range of health, safety and welfare works are required at the Zoo including improvements to animal enclosures and boundary fencing works. Members are asked to agree that 'Belfast Zoo – Health and Safety Works' is added to the Capital Programme at *Stage 1 - Emerging* as a programme of health and safety works and that any necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate 'framework' arrangements) be initiated with contract to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.

**3.12 35-39 Royal Avenue**

The property recently acquired by the Council at 35-39 Royal Avenue is listed as Grade B2 and the building requires physical intervention, as well as further consideration on the future model. Health and safety works to the roof are required to be brought forward at pace to secure the building's integrity. It is proposed to bring this forward as two distinct pieces of work under the Capital Programme.

Members are asked to agree that '35-39 Royal Avenue Health & Safety Works' is added to the Capital Programme at *Stage 1 - Emerging* as a programme of health and safety works and that any necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate 'framework' arrangements) be initiated with contract to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.

Further, Members are asked to agree that '35-39 Royal Avenue' is also added to the Capital Programme as a *Stage 1 – Emerging* project to allow a business case and preferred model to be developed along with any associated improvement works.

**3.13 Fleet Programme - Small Vehicles**

Procurement of two smaller collection vehicles to improve collection performance in narrow and restricted streets. Members are asked to agree that 'Fleet Programme – Small Vehicles' is added to the Capital Programme as a *Stage 1 – Emerging* project to allow a business case to be developed.  
PeacePLUS Programme - Reconnected Belfast

**3.14** Members will be aware that the Council's Reconnected Belfast bid to the EU PeacePLUS Programme has been successful, securing an offer of €13.5m funding to enhance shared space and connectivity within and between Waterworks and Alexandra Park area of North Belfast as well as enhance linkages with other parts of the city and to the Belfast Hills. The Reconnect Belfast bid was submitted under Investment Area 1.4: Re-imagining Communities which seeks to 'create a more cohesive society through an increased provision of shared spaces and services, which will benefit and embed peace and reconciliation.' Members will also recall that the aligned Reservoir Safety Improvements project is currently at *Stage 3 – Committed* on the Capital Programme.

The Reconnected Belfast project is a strategic connectivity project which aims to make Belfast a fully sustainably connected city via a series of greenways, urban greenways, and pocket parks. A key element of this transformational project will be to reduce long standing severance issues between communities, created by the physical environment including road infrastructure and interface barriers, by developing the surrounding and internal infrastructure.

The Letter of Offer has been received from SEUPB and is under review across a number of departments prior to acceptance. Members are asked to note several key conditions within the Letter of Offer including:

- The period of assistance started on 1 November 2024 and runs until 31 July 2029. Any costs not processed by this end date will be ineligible for reimbursement.
- The Council must bear any budget overruns as the Lead Partner.
- The funding can only be used for the approved purposes to achieve the agreed outputs and indicators. Any changes must be agreed with SEUPB.
- The Council must enter into a Data Sharing Agreement – the content of which is under review with the Data Protection Team within Council.

Members are also asked to note that the Letter of Offer is in Euro. (€). Council officers have been liaising with SEUPB to ascertain if the offer can be in Pounds Sterling (£) but have been informed that this is not possible. This carries a risk of the Council being subject to currency fluctuations however the Council will continue to work with SEUPB in this regard and if any issues arise these will be reported back to Committee. Members are asked to note that this will also apply to the Letter of Offer for the Local Action Plan under Theme 1.1 and to agree that the Council accept the Letter of Offer subject to these going through the full Letter of Offer approval process.

During the development stage, significant community engagement was carried out on this scheme including an engagement and visioning exercise in 2023 as well as the pre-Planning community consultation in early 2024. Further Design Information Sessions on the project are due to take place in the coming months and officers will keep Members updated on next steps.



**3.15 Financial and Resource Implications**

***Financial Implications –***

**IT Programme – In-Cab Technology and Routing System - a maximum of £653,000 is now allocated to this project. The Director of Finance has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council.**

**Innovation Factory Access Control System – a maximum of £100,000 is now allocated to this project. The Director of Finance has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council.**

**Floral Hall Health & Safety Works – a maximum of £750,000 is now allocated to the first phase of this project. The Director of Finance has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council.**

***Resource Implications – Officer time to deliver.***

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

**All capital projects are screened as part of the stage approval process.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations and in regard to the External Capital Funding Update – PeacePLUS 1.4 – noted the key conditions within the Letter of Offer from SEUPB for the Reconnected Belfast project under Theme 1.4 of the PeacePLUS Programme and agreed that the council accept the LOO. It was also noted that the LOO had been received in €’ and that this would also apply to the LOO for Theme 1.1 the Local Action Plan’.

**Area Working Groups Update**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of North Area Working Group of 26 November and agreed:

- to the reallocation of £15,000 LIF funding, that officers would engage with Ardoyne Youth Club and Benview Community Centre to scope out project proposals and provide an update to a future meeting of the Working Group; and
- that the additional £68,179 NRF funding would be retained in contingency for the agreed projects progressing under the funding stream.

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**Installation of LGBT Stained  
Glass Window in City Hall**

The Committee agreed that, subject to minor amendments and refinements, to approve the design and concept of the new LGBT stained-glass window as agreed by the City Hall/City Hall Grounds Installations Working Group at its meeting on 12th December. It was further agreed that the design was restricted until the unveiling.

**Finance, Procurement and Performance**

**Contracts Update**

The Committee:

- approved the public advertisement of tenders as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 1);
- approved the award of STAs in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 2);
- noted the award of retrospective STAs in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 3); and
- approve the modification of the contract as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 4):

**Table 1: Competitive Tenders**

| <b>Title of Tender</b>                               | <b>Proposed Contract Duration</b> | <b>Est. Max Contract Value</b> | <b>SRO</b>     | <b>Short description of goods / services</b>  |
|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|---|
| Complex Lives Case Management System                 | Up to 4 years                     | £34,634                        | S<br>McNicholl | To enable BCC Complex Lives staff and external statutory, community and voluntary organizations to collaborate, share information, create and monitor plans to support vulnerable citizens affected by chronic homelessness |
| Provision of mobile phone service and mobile devices | Up to 3 years                     | £570,000                       | S<br>McNicholl | Mobile phones are needed for Council staff working away from Council offices.   |
| Consultancy support with online Office               | Up to 1 year                      | £40,000                        | C<br>Sheridan  | The procurement of externally validated online Office 365 tests is required for the recruitment of  |

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|  |               |            |                |  |
|--|---------------|------------|----------------|--|
| 365 testing exercises to assist with the recruitment and selection of Business Support Clerks                      |               |            |                | Business Support Clerks to assist with the Council's employability programme i.e. use of externally validated online tests in place of requiring prescriptive GCSE qualifications for applicants.  |
| Procurement of external Security Operations Centre (SOC) Services to augment the security team in Digital Services | Up to 3 years | £500,000   | S<br>McNicholl | To manage the council's escalating cyber security risk, Digital Services must procure the services of an external security operations centre (SOC) to acquire the skills and toolsets to augment a smaller and less experienced security team in BCC |
| Laptops, docking stations and other peripherals e.g. monitors  | Up to 3 years | £1,500,000 | S<br>McNicholl | New devices to facilitate hybrid working and replacement devices as per regular business as usual replacement cycle.   |

**Table 2: Single Tender Actions**

| <b>Title of Contract</b>                      | <b>Duration</b> | <b>Est. Max Contract Value</b> | <b>SRO</b>  | <b>Description</b>  | <b>Supplier</b>    | <b>STA Reason Code</b> |
|---|-----------------|--------------------------------|-------------|---|--------------------|------------------------|
| Provision of catering services at Belfast Zoo | Up to 2 years   | Income based contract          | D<br>Martin | Following a recent open tender exercise no bids were received. The Zoo's current catering contract finishes on 3 January 2024, so an alternative operator must be | Carousel Ice Cream | 1                      |

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|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  | <p>quickly sourced to ensure a catering provision is available to service the zoo's year-round operation. We have been able to secure an agreement with Carousel Ice Cream to provide all year round coverage with seasonal variations to suit demand (i.e. mobile catering in winter months/ low footfall) and normal café/restaurant operations in summer months/high footfall. Carousel currently operates a mobile food unit in the Zoo so they are familiar with the zoo's operation, visitor experience and seasonality of the catering provision. Their familiarity will allow for quick mobilisation and will aid with a smooth transition between catering providers.</p> |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

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|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  | The 2-year STA (1+1 year option) will allow BCC to trial the new operation to ensure it is profitable/viable with a view of re-approaching the market with an open tender. |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

**Table 3: Retrospective Single Tender Actions**

| <b>Title of Contract</b>   | <b>Duration</b> | <b>Est. Max Contract Value</b> | <b>SRO</b> | <b>Description</b>   | <b>Supplier</b>                   | <b>STA Reason Code</b> |
|--|-----------------|--------------------------------|------------|--|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| HPE Foundation Care 2x7 SVC Hardware plus Software Support for Aruba Servers and Controllers | Up to 1 year    | £68,448                        | P Gribben  | Hardware and software warranty and support on Aruba Servers and Controllers for wired and wireless networks. No other suitable supplier is available. Retrospective approval required due to delays in agreeing terms with supplier. | Specialist Computer Centres (SCC) | 3                      |
| Review and update final business case 'FBC' for the proposed new Crematorium                 | Up to 3 weeks   | £47,500                        | S Grimes   | Given the suppliers prior involvement in the commercial analysis of the project  | Morrow Gilchrist                  | 3                      |

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|                       |                |         |                  |   |           |    |
|-----------------------|----------------|---------|------------------|---|-----------|----|
| at Roselawn project   |                |         |                  | they have unique knowledge and insight to help finalise the 'FBC' without unnecessary delays to enable Committee consideration of the project   |           |    |
| Pest Control Services | Up to 6 months | £59,990 | D Sales/N Largey | <p>There is an ongoing need for an external contractor to provide pest control services required at Council owned sites. These are additional services to what the Council's internal Pest Contract Unit is currently resourced to provide.</p> <p>Approval to proceed to tender for these services via a corporate contract was presented to SP&amp;R in June 2024 but was not approved.</p> | Termapest | 11 |

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|--|--|--|--|---|--|--|
|  |  |  |  | <p>This was approved for 6 months on the basis that Depts seek quotations to cover service continuity and/or approval is granted to proceed with a tender for these services.</p> |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|---|--|--|

**Table 4: Modification to Contract**

| <b>Title of Contract</b> | <b>Original Contract Duration &amp; Value</b> | <b>Modification</b> | <b>SRO</b> | <b>Description</b>  | <b>Supplier</b> |
|--------------------------|---|---------------------|------------|---|-----------------|
| CPC Driver Training      | 2 years & £30k                                | Additional £4k      | D Sales    | <p>To ensure new &amp; current BCC drivers have CPS training/ qualification. Requirement originally procured via quotation as estimated to be &lt;£30k; however, due to increased demand the £30k value has now been exceed. Reported to SP&amp;R for information. Work underway to procure replacement longer term contract.</p> | Logistics UK    |

In noting the award to the retrospective STA for the Pest Control Services, which had been put in place to ensure service continuity, the Committee expressed its dissatisfaction that the award of the STA had been made without seeking, in the first instance, the Committee’s approval and in the absence of submitting a report on other potential delivery options as previously requested. It was agreed that a report be submitted to the January meeting outlining the status of the STA and whether it could be withdrawn.

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It was agreed also that, prior to the award of future STAs, where time does not permit these to be submitted to the Committee, that they be considered firstly by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairperson.

**Procurement Act 2023**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on the requirements of new Procurement Act 2023 (for Supplies, Services and Works contracts) relating to:**

- **Category Management**
- **Procurement process updates including Pre-Market Engagement (PME) and Conflicts of Interest (Col)**
- **Contract Management**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- **Note the Legislative updates contained within the report.**

**3.0 Main report**

**3.1 The new [Procurement Act 2023](#) is planned to go live 24 February 2025. Commercial and Procurement Services' (CPS) preparation of all upcoming changes required to above UK threshold procurements has commenced and is on schedule for go-live.**

**3.2 Any Contract Notice published, or contract awarded prior to go live will be managed under the current Public Contracts Regulations 2015.**

**3.3 Many of the changes that will come into effect impact the buyer side and will be managed centrally by CPS. These include additional notice requirements, changes to the standstill period and evaluation reporting / award letters. These changes will be managed through our existing governance which includes processes, procedures, template forms, and training. Council Officers involved in procurement activity will be kept up to date of changes made. Information on changes that impact bidders / suppliers is available and maintained on the Council's [website](#).**



- 3.4 The main change that bidders / suppliers will face is use of the Governments extended Find a Tender Service, named Central Digital Platform. The platform is currently being tested by Cabinet Office, with further guidance to be issued. New registration will be required for any bidder who wants to participate in an above threshold procurement exercise.

#### **Background**

- 3.5 The procurement process is one part of the Commercial Life Cycle. The National Audit Office defines the 'commercial lifecycle' as the entire process starting with the identification of a requirement that may be delivered by a supplier to government through to the selection and appointment process, contract management activity, and ending with contract termination or transition to alternative arrangements.
- 3.6 The new Legislation will introduce a number of requirements that will more widely impact staff involved in the end-to-end commercial lifecycle and the time taken to procure Supplies and Services.

#### **Category Management**

- 3.7 The new legislation requires Contracting Authorities to aggregate requirements that can reasonably be aggregated unless there are good reasons for not doing so. This is part of Category Management.
- 3.8 Category Management is a structured approach to grouping and improving the procurement of similar goods and services across the Council. CPS will continue to work with departments to support the implementation of a Category Management approach.
- 3.9 The introduction of new processes in the Council's finance system (implemented May 2024) is already helping us identify expenditure across the Council that can be aggregated. This will result in more cross-departmental contracts being identified, which will require a shift to more co-operative ownership and management of contracts across the Council.
- 3.10 CMT have agreed to ensure resources are in place to effectively implement Category Management. CPS will support Chief Officers resourcing consideration, which could include, for example, the appointment of a Contract Manager for a specific category of spend.

**Pre-Market Engagement**

- 3.11 Currently, formal pre-market engagement (PME) activity is facilitated by CPS to seek views from the market as required - for example, to support specification or pricing schedule development.
- 3.12 The new Procurement Act places a greater emphasis on the transparency of PME undertaken by considering the purpose and subject of the engagement and not the type of communication or engagement. Informal PME could include any communication with a supplier if the purpose is related to an upcoming procurement exercise. We will be required to publish all PME, informal as well as formal.
- 3.13 CPS will share updated guidance on PME with BCC officers and members as required.

**Conflicts of Interest**

- 3.14 Another aspect of the Legislation with greater transparency requirements is the declaration of any conflicts. We currently have a Conflict of Interest process that is aimed at officers involved in specification development and evaluation.
- 3.15 New requirements now:
- broaden the assessment of potential conflicts to include 'any interested parties that can influence a decision made by or on behalf of a Contracting Authority'.
  - broaden the consideration and management of conflicts across the entire contract lifecycle which includes taking up contract extensions and management of the contract.
  - require published confirmation a conflicts assessment has been conducted at various stages of the procurement and contract lifecycle.
- 3.16 To facilitate this CPS will update the Conflicts process and update members of any changes to their conflict process relating to the monthly Contracts Report.

**Contract Management**

- 3.17 Contract Management activity within BCC is devolved to each Department and is defined as the management of activity post contract award. It is an important phase of the procurement cycle in which a supplier delivers the required goods, services,

or works as described in the specification and terms and conditions of contract.

- 3.18 BCC Officers follow existing guidance on [contract management](#) in the delivery of their contracts. This activity will remain relatively unchanged. Contract Owners will continue to oversee contract management across their department or service and Contract Managers will continue to work with their suppliers to deliver contract outcomes including Social Value. The main change is related to the reporting on contract management activity.
- 3.19 The new legislation aims to embed further transparency requirements throughout the contract lifecycle so that the spending of ratepayers' money can be properly scrutinised. This includes specific reporting requirements during the contract management phase.
- For contracts with a value exceeding £5million contracting authorities will be required to:
  - set and publish a minimum of three KPIs for such contracts
  - actively report on the management and achievement of any KPIs set and
  - publish details of poor performance that has not been rectified by a supplier
- 3.21 The Governments new Central Digital Platform will be used for the publication of these requirements.
- 3.22 To facilitate this legislative requirement, CPS will introduce Contract Tiering. Contract Tiering involves classifying contracts based on value and importance, in line with Government guidelines.
- 3.23 CPS will update the existing [contract management guidelines](#) on a phased approach to:
- set out the additional mandatory Legislative requirements of Tier 1 contracts
  - recommend the appropriate level of contract management activity required for each Tier.
- 3.24 In conjunction with these changes CPS have commenced the process of customising a new Contract Management module which is linked to the new finance system. It is planned for implementation during 2025 which will support effective contract management including spend management etc.

3.25 CMT have agreed to ensure resources are appropriately skilled to deliver the mandatory and recommended contract management activity.

3.26 **Financial and Resource Implications**

Potential financial and resource implications as detailed within report.

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

Not relevant for this report.”

The Committee noted the Legislative updates contained within the report.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Audit and Risk Panel**

The Committee:

- noted the key issues arising at the Audit and Risk Panel meeting;
- noted that the Annual Audit Letter from the NIAO, providing a positive unqualified audit opinion on the financial statements for 2023/2024, had been received and would be published on the Council’s website in line with the regulations;
- approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Risk Panel of 3rd December 2024; and
- agreed that the governance arrangements between the Council and the Belfast Waterfront Hall Board be added to the assignments to be undertaken by Audit, Governance and Risk Services.

**Equality and Good Relations**

**Equality and Diversity: Equality Screening  
and Rural Needs Outcome Report  
Quarter 2 2024-25**

The Committee was reminded that the Council had a duty to have, under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998:

- Due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity in relation to the nine equality categories; and
- Regard to the desirability of promoting good relations.

In addition, under section 1 of the Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016:

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- Due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans, and when designing and delivering public services.

To this end, the Council had a process to carry out equality screening and rural needs assessment of new and revised policies. This allowed any impacts related to equality of opportunity, good relations or rural needs to be identified and addressed.

An equality screening and rural needs impact assessment template was completed by the relevant officer, in collaboration with the Equality and Diversity Unit. On a regular basis, the Unit collates all completed templates into a screening outcome report and publishes it onto the Council's website, along with the relevant completed templates.

The Committee noted the Quarterly Screening Outcome Report which would be published on the Council's website.

**Minutes of Meeting of the Shared City Partnership Meeting of 9th December**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes and recommendations from the Shared City Partnership Meeting held on 9th December 2024, including:

**Presentation from Belfast Stories**

- To note the contents of the presentation detailed in the minutes.

**Good Relations Action Plan 25/26**

- The Partnership is requested to note the contents of the report and recommend that the S P & R Committee agree to the submission of the Good Relations Action Plan to The Executive Office, for delivery during 2025/26.

**TEO Asylum Dispersal Funding**

- The Partnership is asked to approve the proposals detailed in the report which have been forward in draft to TEO in relation to the Asylum Dispersal Fund and recommend to the S P & R Committee to agree the content and recommendation detailed in this report.

**PEACE IV – Secretariat Update**

- The Partnership notes the contents of the report and recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it notes the contents of the report.

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**PEACEPLUS Local Community Action Plan – Update**

- The Partnership recommends to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it notes the contents of the report.

**Operational Issues**

**Minutes of Party Group Leaders  
Consultative Forum**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum of 5th December.

**Requests for use of the City Hall  
And the provision of Hospitality**

The Committee approved the recommendations as set out below:

| <b>NAME OF ORGANISATION</b>                   | <b>FUNCTION DATE</b> | <b>FUNCTION DESCRIPTION</b>  | <b>CRITERIA MET</b> | <b>ROOM CHARGE</b>                  | <b>HOSPITALITY OFFERED</b>                                      |
|---|----------------------|--|---------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>2025 Functions</b>                         |                      |  |                     |                                     |   |
| ARK for Ulster University & Queens University | 24 February 2025     | <b>Celebration event for 25th anniversary of the ARK research centre</b> (a joint centre for UU/QUB) to reflect on work, impact and users of ARK<br><br>Numbers attending – 60 | C                   | Current rate free as <b>charity</b> | Yes, Tea and Coffee reception as <b>significant anniversary</b> |
| European Youth Parliament                     | 4 March 2025         | <b>NI Regional Forum of Youth Parliament</b> - teams of secondary students debate and present their  | B & D               | Current rate free as <b>charity</b> | Yes, Tea and Coffee Reception as <b>charity</b>                 |

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| NAME OF ORGANISATION    | FUNCTION DATE | FUNCTION DESCRIPTION  | CRITERIA MET | ROOM CHARGE   | HOSPITALITY OFFERED   |
|-------------------------|---------------|---|--------------|---|---|
|                         |               | ideas and solutions on current topics.<br><br>Numbers attending – 70 - 100  |              |   |   |
| Northern Ireland Screen | 11 March 2025 | <b>Northern Ireland Screen's Irish Language Broadcast Fund 20th anniversary celebration</b> of speeches, panel discussions, networking and reception.<br><br>Numbers attending – 100+                 | C            | Room hire £450  | Yes, Tea and Coffee reception as <b>significant anniversary</b>   |
| JoinHer Network CIC     | 18 March 2025 | <b>Journeys Beyond Borders: Voices of Resilience reception</b> with speakers and engagement to raise awareness of anti discrimination campaign and help available.<br><br>Numbers attending – 50 - 70 | D            | Current rate free as <b>Voluntary Community Group</b> | Yes, Tea and Coffee Reception as <b>Voluntary Community Group</b> |

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| <b>NAME OF ORGANISATION</b>  | <b>FUNCTION DATE</b> | <b>FUNCTION DESCRIPTION</b>   | <b>CRITERIA MET</b> | <b>ROOM CHARGE</b>                                      | <b>HOSPITALITY OFFERED</b>                      |
|--|----------------------|---|---------------------|---|---|
| Ramadan Tent Project Ltd<br><br><i>(based in London but working with local community groups)</i> | 23 March 2025        | <b>Open Iftar 2024 programme</b> – this event aims to bring communities together, develop the understanding of Ramadan and welcoming people of all faiths and none to enjoy in the festivities of Ramadan. Festivities to celebrate Ramadan will include prayers, welcome speeches, lunch, networking.<br><br>Numbers attending 250 – 400 | B & D               | Current rate free as <b>charity</b>                     | Yes, Tea and Coffee Reception as <b>charity</b> |
| Translink  | 24 March 2025        | <b>Long Service Celebration</b> for staff who have provided 35 year's service to Translink – Buffet dinner and presentations.<br><br>Numbers attending – 120 -150   |                     | Room hire <b>£450 or £1250 dependent on room chosen</b> | No hospitality as commercial event.             |



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| <b>NAME OF ORGANISATION</b> | <b>FUNCTION DATE</b> | <b>FUNCTION DESCRIPTION</b>  | <b>CRITERIA MET</b> | <b>ROOM CHARGE</b>                  | <b>HOSPITALITY OFFERED</b>                      |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|--|---------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Belfast Islamic Centre      | 31 March 2025        | <b>Eid Unity Feast: A Celebration of Community</b> – a dinner reception and reflections with speaker on Islam and Christianity<br><br>Numbers attending – 100 -120 | D                   | Current rate free as <b>charity</b> | Yes, Tea and Coffee reception as <b>charity</b> |

**Minutes of City Hall/City Hall Grounds Installations Working Group of 27th November**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the City Hall/City Hall Grounds Installations Working Group of 27th November.

**Minutes of City Hall/City Hall Grounds Installations Working Group of 12th December**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the City Hall/City Hall Grounds Installations Working Group of 12th December.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the All-Party Working Group on the City Centre of 6th December**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the All-Party Working Group on the City Centre of 6th December.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Disability Working Group of 11th December**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Disability Working Group of 11th December.

Chairperson

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## People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 3rd December, 2024

### HYBRID MEETING OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

- Members present: Councillor R. Brooks (Chairperson);  
Councillors Abernethy, Black, Bower, Bradley,  
Bunting, Canavan, Cobain, Doherty, M. Donnelly,  
R-M Donnelly, Flynn, Garrett, Maghie, Maskey,  
McKeown, I. McLaughlin and Verner.
- In attendance: Mr. D. Sales, Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood  
Services;  
Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;  
Mr. J. Girvan, Director of Neighbourhood Services;  
Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control; and  
Mr. B. Flynn, Committee Services Officer.

### Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Bell.

### Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 5th November were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that the minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 2nd December.

### Declarations of Interest

Several Members, that being, Councillors Black, Bradley, M. Donnelly, I. McLaughlin and Verner, declared interests in respect of item 4a, 'Community Support Plan', in that they worked for organisations which were in receipt of revenue funding from the Council in this regard. However, since the report did not refer to any specific organisation and did not become subject to discussion or debate, the Members were not required to leave the meeting whilst the item was under consideration.

Councillor Abernethy declared an interest in respect of item 3b, 'GLL Single Parent Family Membership Category', in that he was the holder of such a membership. He did not take part in any discussion or decision-making in the matter.

Councillor McKeown declared an interest in item 5c, 'Pitch Partnership Agreements', in that a relative was a member of Rosario FC. Since there was no discussion in the matter, he was not required to leave the meeting.

**Presentations**

**Bryson Charitable Group**

Further to its decision of 5th November, the Committee received a presentation from Ms. K. Fulton, Director of Recycling with Bryson Charitable Group, on the work which that organisation delivered throughout Belfast.

Ms. Fulton reported that the Bryson Recycling had been working with the Council since 2001 and had been awarded its first recycling contract in 2004. Currently the organisation oversaw 58,000 weekly collections and had been awarded a further recycling contract until 2029. That contract would enable the current kerbside box collection service to be replaced with the introduction of a more efficient 'wheelie box' bin service. In addition, Ms. Fulton outlined the social value which the organisation delivered through its work. She referred to several programmes that assisted young people to prepare for employment and other social value initiatives delivered within local communities. She added that the aim of the organisation was to make the greatest difference in those areas where there was the greatest need.

The Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Ms. Fulton for attending the meeting and the Members noted the information which had been provided.

**Houses in Multiple Occupancy - HMO Unit Presentation**

Further to its decision of 5th November, the Chairperson welcomed Mr. K. Bloomfield, Northern Ireland Houses in Multiple Occupation Manager, based within the Council, who was in attendance to provide a presentation on the work of the HMO Unit.

Mr. Bloomfield outlined the role and remit of the HMO Unit. He provided the Committee with the current definition of a House in Multiple Occupation, insofar as it related to households and accommodation, as well as how that definition related to individuals and renting arrangements. He outlined the process by which the Council managed applications for properties to be considered as HMOs, which was in accordance with the Houses in Multiple Occupant Act (Northern Ireland) 2016. The Committee was informed of the terms and conditions that were applied in granting a HMO licence, as well as the planning controls applicable to both new and renewal applications. Mr. Bloomfield reviewed the criteria applied in determining an individual as a 'fit and proper person' to manage an HMO and gave details on the current number of HMO properties overseen by the Council in the Belfast area.

During discussion, Mr. Bloomfield clarified that there were two regulatory processes applied in the granting of HMOs, one of which was related to the planning process, with the other being the granting of an HMO licence by the Council. Should it be ascertained, he pointed out, that a property was operating as an HMO without authority under either of the regulations, then enforcement action would be undertaken by the Council.

A Member referred to the difficulty which was encountered by members of both the Planning and Licensing committees when considering applications for HMOs, particularly since a range of regulations, legislation and material considerations were applied from both a licensing and planning perspective. He suggested that it would be useful if a workshop, to which the members of the Licensing and Planning committees were invited, be held to receive a detailed

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overview of the legislative processes and material considerations which were pertinent throughout the full regulatory processes. Given that there existed separate legislative and regulatory processes, such a workshop, the Member added, would assist, particularly those Elected Members who served on both committees, to protect themselves from any suggestion of having expressed a pre-determined view when considering HMO applications.

The Director of Planning and Building Control clarified a number of matters raised and indicated that she was examining the feasibility of hosting a joint workshop, as outlined, for both the members of the Planning and Licencing committees in the new year.

The Chairperson thanked Mr. Bloomfield for his presentation and the Committee noted the information which had been provided.

**Restricted Matters**

**The information contained in the reports associated with the following four items was restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.**

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the press and public from the meeting during discussion of the following items as, due to the nature of the item, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42 (4) and Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

The Committee was advised that content of restricted reports and any discussion which took place during closed session must be treated as confidential information and no such information should be disclosed to the public as per Paragraph 4.15 of the Code of Conduct.

**GLL - Annual Schedule of Charges 2025/26 –  
Family Membership Charge**

The Committee was reminded that, at the meeting of the Council on 4th November, it had been agreed that the minute of the Committee's meeting of 8th October, under the above-mentioned heading, be referred back to the Committee for further consideration. That request had been made in order to re-examine a proposed increase to the rate applied for a family membership package for the Leisure Transformation Programme (Phase 4) centres for 2025/26.

After discussion, the Committee affirmed its decision of 8th October, that being, to note the Schedule of Charges for the Council's Leisure Centres for 2025/26, subject to the proviso that, in respect of the increase in cost to the family membership for 2025/26, a 5% increase would be applied, as opposed to the proposed 10.4% increase.

**GLL Single Parent Family Membership Category**

Further to its meeting of 8th October, when the Committee had requested that officers would create a family membership' pricing category for single-adult families which would be set at a lower rate than the current package offering for two-adult families, the Committee considered

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a report in this regard which had been prepared by the Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services.

The Committee noted the introduction of a single parent family membership category for 2025/26, under the terms requested at the meeting on 8th October.

Arising from discussion, it was noted that the Director of Neighbourhood Services would liaise with the Director of Property and Projects in respect of a presentation to the Committee on the planned future capital investment within the Council's leisure estate.

**GLL Annual Leisure Customer Survey 2024**

The Chairperson reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 8th October, it had deferred consideration of the above-mentioned survey to enable a more detailed report to be submitted. It was noted that the updated report would provide additional detail on the survey outcomes, scoring matrixes and samples used. In addition, the report would include further demographic detail and also reflect user experience in a more qualitative and user-friendly manner; and would seek also to incorporate the views of those users who had not partaken in the survey electronically.

Accordingly, the Committee considered a further report and an associated appendix in this regard. The Strategic Director reported that the data contained therein contained additional information which had broadened the overall citywide survey feedback, together with centre-specific outcomes. The revised survey contained also a cross section of the service improvement plan based on the customer feedback received. He added that the survey had generated 2,983 responses across the leisure estate, with 1,632 qualitative comments recorded.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and welcomed the revised format in which the information had been provided.

**Mr. Noel Munnis**

Arising from discussion in the aforementioned matters, the Chairperson advised the Committee that Mr. Noel Munnis, the Partnership Manager within the Department, would be retiring from the Council at the end of December. The Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, conveyed thanks to Mr. Munnis for his long-standing dedication and service to the Council and wished him well on his retirement. Several Members paid tribute to Mr. Munnis for his work with the Committee over the years.

**Quarter 2 Finance Update**

The Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services summarised the contents of the report which gave an overview of the Department's financial position as of quarter 2 of 2023/24.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and the financial reporting pack.

**Committee/Strategic Issues**

**Community Support Plan**

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the Community Support Plan to enable further examination and discussion to be undertaken between political parties and officers, particularly in respect of the viability of the funding model with a view that the matter be considered also within the wider rate-setting process for 2025/26.

**Ending Violence Against Women  
and Girls – TEO Funding**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

**1.1 To present additional detail on the emerging proposals being brought forward by Officers in terms of the role of the Council in supporting the implementation of the recently published Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls and The Executive Office’s associated two-year delivery plan.**

**2.0 Recommendation**

**2.1 That Members consider the following expanded proposals in relation to implementation of the EVAWG delivery plan in the city including:**

- i. Make comments and agree allocation of £110,000 momentum funding to deliver an action plan across 9 thematic areas to support immediate in-year actions while the change fund is being established.**
- ii. Approve the open call of a small grants programme to the community and voluntary sector to deliver projects between April 2025 and March 2026.**
- iii. Agree to Administer funding which TEO assessed and is in the process of awarding eight leading CVS EVAWG expert organisations under the £1.2m Regional Change Fund to increase delivery and co-ordination of community, school and workplace based programmes and initiatives up to March 2026.**

**3.0 Main Report**

**3.1 At the SP&R Committee of 25th October 2024, the Director of Neighbourhood Services submitted a report which provided details on the emerging proposals being brought forward by The Executive Office (TEO) in terms of the role of the Council in supporting the implementation of the recently published Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) and associated two-year delivery plan.**

3.2 The Committee noted the proposal and agreed that Council adopt a lead role for the allocation of Strand 1 funding to support a Belfast wide programme of activities in-year and over 25/26 year; and agreed that the Council also adopt a lead role for the allocation of Strand 2 funding to support a regionally wide programme of activities.

3.3 **ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS – Belfast Change Fund**

The EVAWG Change Fund is an investment in community-based action over 15 months to March 2026 to support the Prevention Outcomes within the Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls, which are:

3.4 There are two distinct strands to the Change Fund:

- Strand 1 – Equip community groups to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls. This will be supported by a localised grant scheme (£255k) with calls opening in the New Year to support delivery of projects from April 2025 to March 2026.
- Strand 2 – Resource and mobilise regional community and voluntary sector to drive society wide action so that everyone understands what VAWG is and knows how to prevent it. A £1.2m fund to increase delivery and co-ordination of community, school and work place based programmes and initiatives by leading CVS EVAWG expert organisations.

3.5 While the Change Fund is being established, TEO have agreed to utilise a momentum fund to support immediate action. The Belfast fund of £110k will enable council to implement emergency responses in the period to March 2025 in order to raise awareness and build on the ground momentum.

3.6 The committee is asked to consider proposals under each of the 3 strands.

3.7 **MOMENTUM FUND**

Given the call for urgent action, TEO have offered £110,000 'momentum support' to allow expansion of existing good work by council and communities during the current financial year.

In response to a request from SP&R, TEO have confirmed that this money must be utilised in year and cannot be added to the small grant fund for utilisation into the next financial year.



TEO indicate, while support must be community focused, council led programmes or commissioned services will be eligible.

- 3.8 Having sought advice from specialist sources and organisations, officers recommend the following initial menu of activity with a view to raising awareness for the EVAWG strategy, building capacity within our officer team in order to inform current and future service provision, build awareness and capacity within local community organisations to support applications to the Local Change Fund and to liaise with the cohort of expert regional organisations to maximise value for city based activity and programme support.
- 3.9 The Committee is asked to agree that Officers further develop and submit an action plan to TEO under the following themes:

|   | Theme   | Indicative Budget |
|---|---|-------------------|
| 1 | EVAWG Mobilisation Training Programme                 | £20,000           |
| 2 | Work with Men and Boys                                | £30,000           |
| 3 | Increasing Awareness & Visibility of EVAWG in Belfast | £15,000           |
| 4 | Area Events   | £20,000           |
| 5 | Safety Awareness Sessions                             | £5,000            |
| 6 | Support for those Working with Very Vulnerable Women  | £5,000            |
| 7 | Mobilising to Become Application Ready                | £5,000            |
| 8 | Mobilising in the Same Direction                      | £5,000            |
| 9 | Creating Content                                      | £5,000            |
|   | <b>Total</b>  | <b>£110,000</b>   |

- 3.10 A full outline of the proposed Mobilisation Programme is attached at Appendix one. The intention is to build interest and awareness, improve capacity and knowledge and develop a strong foundation for service change and development and sector support. During the mobilisation programme Council will scope for gaps and explore the development of resources that may be useful with missed groups.
- 3.11 There is however a challenge as to what can usefully be achieved in the short timeframe. In order to maximise impact and fully utilise the available funds during the spend period to 31st March 2025, committee is asked to delegate authority to the Director to review progress and move or direct investment across the agreed themes
- 3.12 STRAND 2 - LOCAL CHANGE FUND (£255,000)

It is proposed that council launch an open call for small grant funding that will support community groups to deliver local events, projects or programmes of activity that deliver prevention, awareness raising,

and early intervention initiatives aimed at EVAWG within the communities they support.

- 3.13 The Executive Office have instructed Council to award across 3 Tier's which are outlined below:

Tier 1 – Funding from £1,000 to £5,000

Tier 2 – Funding from £10,000 to £15,000

Tier 3 – Funding from £15,001 to £25,000

Organisations can only apply for one tier of funding.

- 3.14 The Executive Office requests that council ensures a balanced allocation across each of the 3 tiers and geographically pending the profile of applications received. They suggest that approximately 25% of funding be allocated to tier one and 25% to tier three applications.

Committee are therefore asked to agree the following indicative allocation model for the small grant programme.

| Tier   | Grant values      | Allocation per Tier (indicative) | Minimum no of grants |
|--------|-------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Tier 1 | £1,000 – £5,000   | At least £65,000                 | 13                   |
| Tier 2 | £10,000 - £15,000 | Approximately £90,000            | 6                    |
| Tier 3 | £15,000 – £25,000 | Up to £100,000                   | 4                    |
|        | Total             | £255,000                         |                      |

- 3.15 The table above outlines a preferred scenario but, given any final awards will be wholly dependent on the quantity and quality of application received, committee are asked that the Director of Neighbourhood Services is given delegated authority to amend the allocation per tier to enable a full committal of available grant resources within the agreed assessment timeframe.

- 3.16 As per previous committee approval, grants awards up to the value of £10,000 can be approved by the Director of Neighbourhood Services via delegated authority. Officers therefore propose that the Director can approve recommendations for Tier I grant awards (max £5k) up to the agreed ceiling (proposed as £65,000). All other grant recommendations will be tabled for committee consideration and approval.

Pending committee consideration, officers intend to proceed to an open call for applications in mid-January 2025. Support will be provided in the form of General Guidance booklets for applicants and information sessions in line with the open call.

**3.17 STRAND 3 - REGIONAL CHANGE FUND**

The Executive Office identified 8 organisations who were invited to provide proposals on ways their organisation might support delivery of the outcomes within the Prevention theme of the EVAWG Strategic Framework, using their existing EVAWG prevention programmes and initiatives:

- Barnardo's
- National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)
- Nexus NI
- Relate NI
- White Ribbon NI
- Women's Aid Federation NI (WAFNI)
- Women's Resource and Development Agency (WRDA)
- Youth Action NI

**3.18** All 8 organisations presented proposals to TEO for £150k (maximum individual award stated), totalling £1.2m. The EVAWG team have considered the proposals, carried out an in-depth review of how they align to the strategic outcomes and if they are value for money. While assessments are being finalised, it is the opinion of the EVAWG team in TEO that all eight proposals are suitable for funding. They address the urgent issue of helping to end violence against women and girls and demonstrate a strong commitment to implementing evidence-based strategies, innovative approaches, and sustainable resources that promise impactful results in this critical area.

**3.19** To facilitate committee awareness of the full portfolio, a summary description of what each organisation has proposed is included in the Appendices, supported by a statistical summary in terms of deliverables.

**3.20** TEO provide this information on a confidential basis with a caveat that it is still subject to the Executive Office and Department of Finance approvals including the following:

- Final panel approval, once final clarifications are agreed
- Senior Reporting Officer approval
- Business case approval

**3.21** If successful, support for this collective body of expert EVAWG work will enable government to advance its commitment to ending violence against women and girls and build the capacity of the community and voluntary sector to make a meaningful difference. The collaboration both between these organisations, and with central and local government in delivery of the change fund will facilitate the whole of society approach needed.

3.22 **Belfast City Council will be informed when the successful organisations have been appointed and we will begin the administrative work of monitoring and voucher their outcomes and financial claim until March 2026.**

3.23 **Financial and Resource Implications**

**The costs associated with the recommendations will be fully covered by the TEO letter of offer to the value of £1,565,000. Officers are continuing to negotiate an appropriate management fee to cover the costs associated with delivery.**

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

**The EVAWG Strategy has been subject to a full EQIA and Rural Needs Assessment.”**

After discussion, the Committee agreed to adopt the recommendations as set out within the report. In addition, given the urgency to ensure that the funding was allocated within the designated timescale, the Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to reallocate any underspends across the nine thematic areas as identified within the action plan.

**Belfast City Youth Council – Recruitment**

The Committee granted approval for the undertaking of a recruitment exercise to appoint a full complement of members of the Youth Council.

It was noted that any promotional information in this regard would outline the time commitments associated with serving on the Youth Council and that further utilisation of any reserve list of successful candidates would be examined. In response to a Member’s request, the Director of Neighbourhood Services undertook to circulate information regarding the recruitment exercise to Elected Members for their information as and when the trawl was due to commence.

**Operational Issues**

**Resources and Fleet Waste – Update**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

**1.1 To provide an update to members on waste collections, management and performance.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1** The Committee is requested to note the contents of this report and to support the proposal to develop and introduce a HWRC Waste Access and Acceptance Policy.

**3.0 Main report**

**Key Issues**

**Waste Performance & Recycling Rates**

**3.1** The most recent waste statistics published by the NIEA are the April to June 2024 quarterly statistics. The report is a snapshot of the first quarter of the 24/25 financial year versus the same period for the previous year.

**3.2** The overall picture for NI was one of; an increasing quantity of waste collected (271,500 tonnes collected, up 1.5%), a static municipal reuse and recycling rate (53.8%) combined with a significant decrease in the landfill disposal rate, down to 15.4% the lowest quarterly landfill rate ever recorded.

**3.3** An examination of the figures for Belfast City Council, indicates the following;

- **Municipal Waste Arisings** - the total tonnage of all types of waste collected by the Council was 42,566 tonnes. This is an increase of approximately 825 tonnes (2%) on the same quarter last year.
- **Municipal Waste Recycling Rate** – the percentage of all types of waste collected by the Council which was re-used, recycled or composted, increased by 2.8% to 41.5%. This increase was primarily due to increased organic tonnages.
- **Household Waste Recycling Rate**– the percentage of household waste only collected by the Council which was re-used, recycled or composted, increased by 3.6% to 44.9%.
- **Landfill Diversion Rate** – the percentage of all Council waste sent to landfill was 0.6%, down from 28% in the previous year.

For Q1 2024/25 the main contributors to the uplift in these figures were

- the increased tonnage of organic waste captured and
- the onboarding of the new arc21, interim residual waste treatment contract, resulting in significant quantities (10,800

tonnes) of waste being diverted from landfill to energy recovery.

- 3.4 As noted within this report and brought to the attention of Members through various consultation responses, there are a number of legislative, strategic and financial drivers which are going to shape future waste management arrangements. The full nature and implications of these policy drivers still remain somewhat unclear and in the absence of sufficient clarity, radical, systemic change aimed at delivering significant improvements in NI environmental targets is unlikely.

3.5 **Waste Framework Update**

At the People & Communities Committee meeting of June 2017, Members approved the Waste Framework document. It provides an overview of options on how waste could be managed within the city over the next decade. It was developed to align with the objectives of the Belfast Agenda and Resourceful Belfast (Circular Economy), designing out waste, improving the quantity and quality of recycling and supporting local jobs.

3.6 **Inner City Recycling Scheme Update**

On 1 August 2024, the new contract for the delivery of the kerbside recycling in the inner city commenced with service delivery carried out by Bryson Recycling. Officers continue to work with the contractor to ensure that the contract delivers according to the terms, conditions and service delivery plan. As a consequence of the new contract, the contractor has appointed a Customer Liaison Officer to deal with issues on the ground and answer customer complaints, new vehicles will be delivered and the contractor plans to install their own inCab technology solution to deliver improved customer service.

3.7 **Kerbside Glass**

As part of the 2024/25 revenue estimates setting process, Members committed to delivering phase one of this scheme which involves an expansion of kerbside glass to approximately 23,000 households. Internal funding and support funding from DAERA under the Household Recycling Collaboratives Change Programme has been secured to deliver phase 1 of the project. An update is provided in the accompanying report 'Resources and Fleet Pilot / Project Updates'

3.8 **Community Repaint Scheme**

The Service is planning for the implementation of a RePaint scheme at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs). The scheme seeks to reduce the amount of paint sent for treatment and disposal by

diverting quality paint for resale to the public and to community groups via donation as community paint.

The Service has completed a procurement exercise for the RePaint service and is now working with the successful contractor, East Belfast Mission (EBM) to go live in early 2025.

**3.9 Pre-loved Toys**

The Service explored alternative delivery models for 2024 and issued an Expression of Interest (EOI) for partners interested in delivering this scheme. Following discussions with those organisations responding to the EOI it was evident that the single, lead operator model would again be the delivery model for 2024. As a result, East Belfast Mission were appointed as the lead delivery partner for 2024.

- 3.10 The pre-loved toys scheme will run at the four HWRCs from 11 November to 15 December 2024. EBM will be collecting the pre-loved toys at these sites and will then have the option to sell some of these at a competitive price through their retail outlets and at the same time will be gifting bundles of these toys to feeder community organisations to distribute before Christmas. The project has been promoted on social media and signage has also been erected at sites regarding the scheme.

(i) **Infrastructure**

**Recycling Centres & Dargan Road WTS**

- 3.11 Following SP&R approval for capital funding, the Service completed a procurement exercise for a multi-year, container provision contract. Orders have been placed for the new skips with the priority to replace those skips which are currently on hire. It is anticipated these will start to arrive on sites in December 2024. This will subsequently reduce the revenue costs associated with the rental of these skips.

**Recycling Centres and Pedestrian Access**

- 3.12 The pedestrian access gate at Alexandra Park, Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) has been completed and operational as of August 2024. The service has requested that colleagues in Property & Projects commission a feasibility study regarding pedestrian access for Palmerston Road and Blackstaff Way HWRC. Discussions with the consultant are ongoing and a programme for delivery of the study is expected soon.

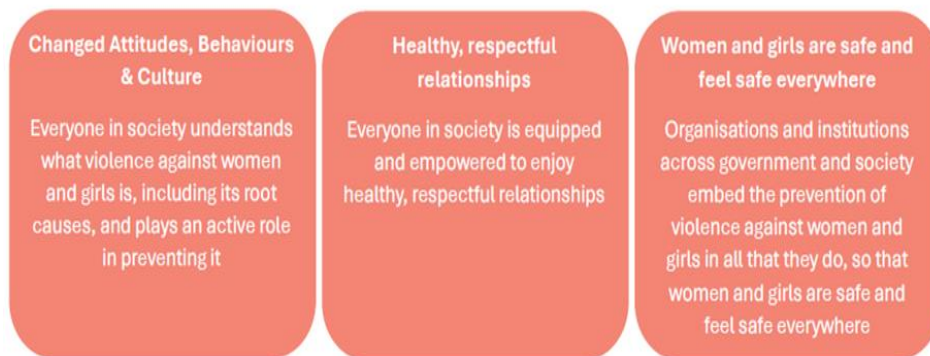
**Recycling Centres and Repair Works**

- 3.13 Members will be aware that at the committee meeting of 8 October 2024, it was noted that Alexandra HWRC would have to undergo a temporary closure in order to carry out essential repair works to the service bay and simultaneously introduce changes to the layout of the site aimed at improving health and safety for site users. These works took just over 3 weeks to complete with the site re-opening to the public on 14th November.
- 3.14 Similar repair works to the service bays will be required at both Ormeau HWRC and Palmerston Road HWRC in 2025. Further details will be provided once a full works schedule has been compiled by Property & Projects.

***arc21 Residual Waste Project and Interim Residual Waste arrangements***

- 3.15 arc21 is awaiting the determination by the Stormont Executive regarding the planning decision on the proposed Residual Waste Treatment Project. Due to the prolonged timescales regarding the residual waste treatment facility at Hightown, arc21 initiated a procurement exercise to secure future services for the treatment and/or disposal of constituent councils' residual waste. This service was broken down into a number of lots to reflect the different time scales and material requirements of the constituent councils.
- 3.16 Arc21 awarded the Belfast City Council lot to ReGen and the contract was scheduled to commence on 1 July 2023. The Council's contractor at that time, River Ridge Recycling challenged this decision through the courts and sought an injunction. On the 26 June 2023, the court refused to grant an injunction to stop the implementation of the contract and the contract for services related to interim residual waste disposal for use by Belfast City Council commenced as planned on 1 July 2023. It should be noted that while the injunction to prevent commencement of services was not successful, there is





still a legal challenge by River Ridge against the award of this contract by arc21. The time frame for this case is likely to be Summer 2025.

- 3.17 As noted in the performance statistics above, this contract is delivering a step-change in diverting residual waste from landfill to energy recovery.

#### Connected Circular Economy - Shared Island Project

- 3.18 The Service has worked with colleagues in the Economic Development Unit and Climate Team along with Dublin City Council (DCC) to deliver a feasibility study into a 'Connected Circular Economy.' This report investigated how the two cities can share knowledge and good practice with the ambition for the development of hubs in Dublin and Belfast to support the growth of the circular economy across the island.
- 3.19 In collaboration with DCC as lead partner, a further funding request has been submitted to the Shared Island Fund seeking to progress the report's recommendations and develop more detailed business cases for the preferred option(s). No update on this funding application has been received from the Shared Island Fund to date.

#### (ii) Behaviour Change

#### Performance Pressures at HWRCs

- 3.20 During the course of 2023/24, the Service noted a general, downward trend in the recycling rates achieved by the Council's Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs)<sup>1</sup>. Anecdotal evidence suggested that neighbouring councils had introduced robust access and waste acceptance policies at their recycling centres which may have resulted in some residents either returning to their own Council area to deposit waste or indeed availing of alternative facilities which by

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<sup>1</sup> Performance figures refer to both Household Waste Recycling Centres and Civic Amenity Sites (CAS) unless otherwise stated.

comparison lack access and acceptance policies. In essence, the sector may be witnessing a shift in the location of waste disposal across council boundaries

- 3.21 The Service, with the assistance of colleagues in the Performance Management Unit, decided to carry out a performance analysis of the Council's HWRCs to determine the validity of this argument. A comparison of the performance of the Council's HWRCs in 2023/24 versus the previous year is provided in the table below.
- 3.22 While the tonnage of recyclables captured increased slightly by 1.95%, the growth of the non-recyclable/residual waste at 5.95% has resulted in a fall in the overall recycling rate of the sites. It is notable that the recycling rate figure of 50.6% at the HWRCs is the lowest rate in the last 15 years (2009/10 = 50.1%). This is of particular concern as the HWRCs would always outperform other areas of Waste Collection within the council and would underpin the overall Household Recycling and Municipal Recycling Rates.
- 3.23 However, these figures disguise an underlying trend. In September 2023, in an effort to improve its recycling rate, Ards & North Down Borough Council (A&NDBC) introduced an online booking system for all users of their recycling centres. An analysis of the data from the Council's HWRCs for the period September to March 23/24, the period immediately post A&NDBC scheme, compared with the previous year, shows a much more significant impact on the recycling centre performance and financial impact.
- 3.24 As highlighted in table 2 below, an examination of the residual waste since the introduction of the A&NDBC online booking system indicates a 12% increase rather than the 6% annual figure above, which covers the first five months of the year when no such booking system was in place. In addition, while the increase across all sites is 12%, there are marked increases in particular at Palmerston HWRC, which sits in close proximity to Holywood CA site operated by A&NDBC.
- 3.25 This growth rate of residual waste at the sites is stark and without doubt has played a significant part in the decline in the overall recycling rate at the centres. Applying the growth rate for these 7 months to the full year and adjusting for the normal overall waste growth rate (+1.5%) gives a scenario of an additional 1,300 tonnes of residual/non-recyclable waste accepted at the Council's sites over the course of a year, with an estimated additional cost of handling and treatment of £194,000.
- 3.26 The Council operates an online booking system for light goods vehicles/vans seeking to access the recycling centres. This data was analysed over the same period (Sep'23- Mar'24 versus Sep'22 -

Mar'23) in an effort to identify potential sources of increased residual tonnage. As demonstrated in table three the sites have witnessed on average a 13% increase in the number of van bookings during this period and again of particular note is the 25% increase witnessed by Palmerston.

**3.27 Table 3: Number of Van bookings to BCC HWRCs**

| Van Bookings     |           |            |            |        |        |
|------------------|-----------|------------|------------|--------|--------|
| No. of visits    | Alexandra | Blackstaff | Palmerston | Ormeau | Total  |
| Sep'22 - Mar '23 | 5,141     | 7,870      | 5,082      | 7,190  | 25,283 |
| Sep'23 - Mar '24 | 5,606     | 8,324      | 6,352      | 8,164  | 28,446 |
| Variance visits  | 465       | 454        | 1,270      | 974    | 3,163  |
| Variance %       | 9%        | 6%         | 25%        | 14%    | 13%    |

- 3.28** This increase in residual tonnage and van bookings coincides with the introduction of the new access and acceptance policies in neighbouring councils. Indeed, shortly after the introduction of the A&NDBC booking system, media channels noted the emerging phenomenon of 'waste tourism' – residents crossing Council boundaries to deposit waste at recycling centres.
- 3.29** A further analysis of the van booking system for the period Jan-Mar'24 was conducted. The purpose was to identify usage patterns which would be considerably greater than the average household and which may identify opportunistic individuals or organisations availing of the recycling centres to dispose of their commercial waste and thereby avoid paying for its disposal but rather placing this burden on the Belfast rate payer.
- 3.30** All accounts which booked 14 times or more during this period i.e. used the site more than once per week, greater usage than the average householder, were examined in terms of their total number of visits to the sites.
- 3.31** Over this three-month period, 156 accounts placed 6,868 bookings. These 156 accounts represented around 56% of total bookings. The range in the number of bookings was 14 – 246. Of these 156 accounts, the average number of bookings over this 13-week period was 44 occasions. These figures would suggest that the lack of formal waste acceptance policies may be leaving the recycling centres vulnerable to commercial waste abuse.
- 3.32** Council officers have met with their counterparts in A&NDBC to discuss their policies and to view a demonstration of their online booking system. An online demonstration was also provided by the company behind alternative software, the 'Booking Lab' which is in use at over 70 councils across the UK. Both systems were more

suitable to the waste environment than the current system in place at the Council to manage van bookings which was installed as an off the shelf solution to manage visitor numbers in the context of the Covid-19 Public Health Regulations and social distancing.

- 3.33 The project also examined the performance of A&NDBC recycling centres over the same period to ascertain if their new booking system had in fact delivered the anticipated benefits. Despite the initial reservations expressed on various media channels, the introduction of the booking system and supporting policies has enabled A&NDBC to reverse the trend of declining recycling performance at the sites and at the same time generate efficiency savings. For the period Oct'23-Mar'24 versus the same period the previous year, the sites achieved an overall uplift in the recycling rate of 7%. This improved performance also resulted in significant avoided costs of landfill disposal.
- 3.34 Through desk research and interviews with neighbouring Councils and industry sources, Council officers noted that neighbouring councils have varying policies with regard to waste access and acceptance at HWRCs, ranging from simple proof of residency within the council catchment area to online booking systems for all users and fair use policies. At present, the Council does not have any such policy. The Service is therefore extremely limited in the terms of the tools at its disposal to challenge suspect behaviour and drive improved recycling performance at the sites. A summary of the policies in place in neighbouring councils is contained in Appendix 1 – Waste Access & Acceptance Policies.
- 3.35 The absence of a Waste Access & Acceptance policy means the Council is the path of least resistance for those who may wish to exploit this opportunity. As outlined above, this is having a detrimental impact on the recycling centre recycling performance and financial position.
- 3.36 Taking the above into consideration, it is recommended that an action plan is developed to tackle this issue in an effort to drive improved performance at the sites, and subject to members approval, develop and introduce a HWRC Waste Access and Acceptance Policy, designed to run in parallel with the current Waste and Recycling Collection Operational Policy which is in use for Waste Collections. The Service is exploring options which might be considered as components of an action plan for recycling centres and will provide a report to Committee in due course.

(iii) Information Technology

**In-Cab Technology**

- 3.37 The in-Cab technology project has been advancing through the procurement process.

A preferred supplier has been identified by the evaluation team and a Final Business case will be presented to the Financial Oversight Board before going through Council Governance. On passage, it is hoped to award the contract in January 2025.

- 3.38 Focus for the project team and project board will now switch to focus on a detailed implementation plan, with a phased roll out of the solution to take place throughout the 2025/26 financial year.

3.39 **Financial and Resource Implications**

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

3.40 **Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessments**

There are no equality or good relations implications associated with this report.'

The Committee noted the information provided and agreed to support, in principle, the proposal to develop and introduce a Household Waste Recycling Centres - Waste Access and Acceptance Policy, subject to the hosting of a workshop to examine, in conjunction with a range of other agencies, bodies and local authorities, a full range of options in this regard.

**Resources and Fleet Pilot/Project – Update**

(Mr. J. McConnell, City Services Manager (Resources and Fleet) attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the following report:

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

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the progress made to date in the planning and launch of three initiatives to improve the service delivery and recycling performance of Waste Collections within Resources and Fleet. These initiatives are

- Small Streets Pilot with PSNI/DFI (Park With Us in Mind)
- Introduction of Small Vehicles for Difficult to Access Streets
- Expansion of Separate Glass Collection Services.

**2.0 Recommendation**

**2.1 Members are requested to note the contents of the report, in particular**

- The status of the collaborative work with PSNI/DFI
- the phased introduction of small vehicle routes to difficult to access streets commencing 12th August 2024
- the update and proposed rollout timelines and streets for Phase 1 of expanded glass collections

**3.0 Main Report**

**3.1 Small Streets Pilot in collaboration with PSNI and DFI.**

**3.2 Members will be aware that this pilot was launched on 6th May 2024, with the first area identified as the side streets from the Stranmillis Road in the University area. The plan was envisaged to run as follows. The overall scheme envisages three 'cycles' in these areas over a period of approximately 18 months. The first cycle is complete, and the second cycle will take place as follows, each to cover a period of 6 weeks.**

| Area                              | Start Date |
|-----------------------------------|------------|
| Stranmillis Rd Area               | 21/10/2024 |
| Donegall Road / Village Area      | 18/11/2024 |
| Cregagh / Loopland Area           | 16/12/2024 |
| Springfield Road Area             | 13/01/2025 |
| Lower Ormeau Road/ Park Road Area | 10/02/2025 |
| Iveagh / Broadway Area            | 10/03/2025 |

**3.3 Officers are now in a position to provide some analysis and data to compare both crew reports and customer contact levels covering the 6 weeks prior to intervention compared to the 6 weeks of the intervention period for each of the areas. The data comes from two sources**

- Operational crew reports of not being able to access streets or blocked alleyway entrances etc
- Customer contact data in relation to residents in the relevant streets reporting non collections

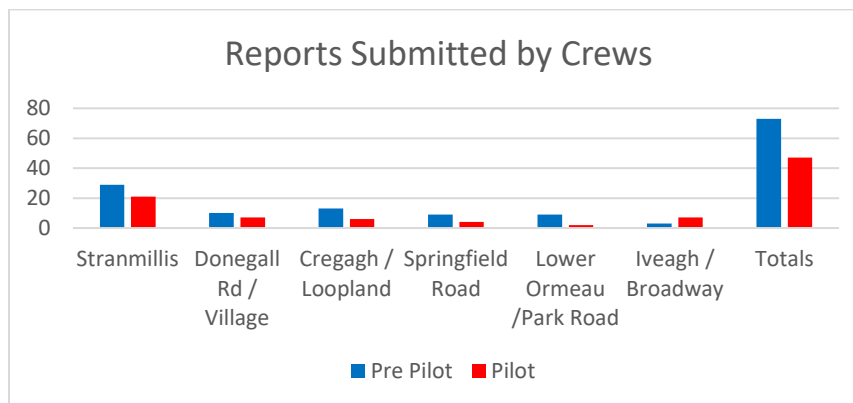
**Table 1 summarises the data from both sources and is illustrated in Chart 1 and Chart 2**

**People and Communities Committee,  
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**3.4 Table 1 Reported instances by crews and Customers**

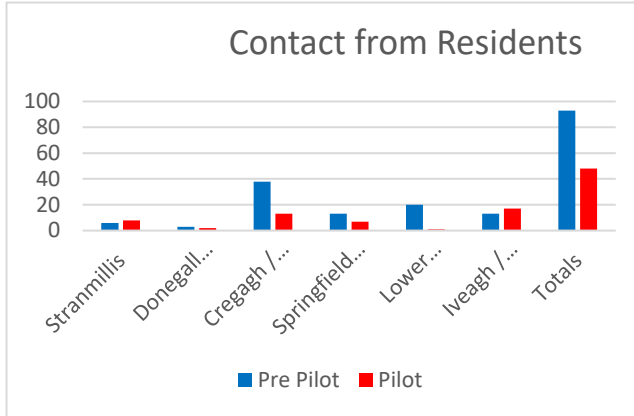
| Area                    | Crews via Report it App |           |            |          | Customer Contact |           |            |          |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|------------|----------|------------------|-----------|------------|----------|
|                         | Pre Pilot               | Pilot     | % change   |          | Pre Pilot        | Pilot     | %i change  |          |
| Stranmillis             | 29                      | 21        | 28%        | ê        | 6                | 8         | -33%       | é        |
| Donegall Rd / Village   | 10                      | 7         | 30%        | ê        | 3                | 2         | 33%        | ê        |
| Cregagh / Loopland      | 13                      | 6         | 54%        | ê        | 38               | 13        | 66%        | ê        |
| Springfield Road        | 9                       | 4         | 56%        | ê        | 13               | 7         | 46%        | ê        |
| Lower Ormeau /Park Road | 9                       | 2         | 78%        | ê        | 20               | 1         | 95%        | ê        |
| Iveagh / Broadway       | 3                       | 7         | -133%      | é        | 13               | 17        | -31%       | é        |
| <b>Totals</b>           | <b>73</b>               | <b>47</b> | <b>36%</b> | <b>ê</b> | <b>93</b>        | <b>48</b> | <b>48%</b> | <b>ê</b> |

**3.5 Chart 1 Reports by Crews by target area**



**Chart 2 Customer contacts from residents for missed collections**

- 3.7 From this initial set of data it would seem that there has been some improvements in accessing most areas more frequently.



- In 5 of the 6 areas crew have reported less instances of non-access with an overall reduction of 36% compared to the 6 week period prior to each intervention. The exception to this was in the Iveagh / Broadway area where crews reported more often.
- In 4 of the six areas there was a reduction of customer contacts with an encouraging overall reduction of reports by 48%. The exceptions to this are in the Stranmillis and Iveagh / Broadway area.

An officer review meeting with BCC and DFI officers took place at the end of November to discuss the data and to see if any improvements can be introduced to improve on the first cycle.

**Introduction of Small Vehicles for Difficult to Access Streets**

- 3.8 Members will be aware that the pilot for this initiative, consisting of two leased 18 tonnes Dennis Eagle Refuse Collection Vehicles and temporary crews, commenced collection in identified and agreed difficult to access streets on 12th August 2024. At the time of writing, the pilot continues to be rolled out and in operation for three months.
- 3.9 It was originally envisaged that all three waste streams would have been allocated and routed to these vehicles by November 4th. There have, however, been some operational delays but progress is still ongoing. Table 2 outlines progress to date



**3.10 Table 2 Transfer of targeted streets to smaller vehicles**

| Bin Type                        | Streets with Bin Type | transferred to smaller vehicle |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Black/Grey Non recyclable       | 126                   | 126 (100%)                     |
| Brown Food/ Garden Compostables | 85                    | 85 (100%)                      |
| Blue Dry Mixed Recyclables      | 79                    | 55 (70%)                       |

3.11 The main reason behind the delay is related to the amount of dry mixed recycle the vehicle can carry. Other waste streams can be measured by weight, but it is more difficult to assign routes based on volumes as the dry mixed recycling is very bulky with relatively little weight and therefore creating routes is a complex and iterative process. It is likely that the majority of outstanding 'blue' streets will be transferred to smaller vehicles in December but the process may be paused to allow for effective Christmas waste collections and will be finalised in January 2024.

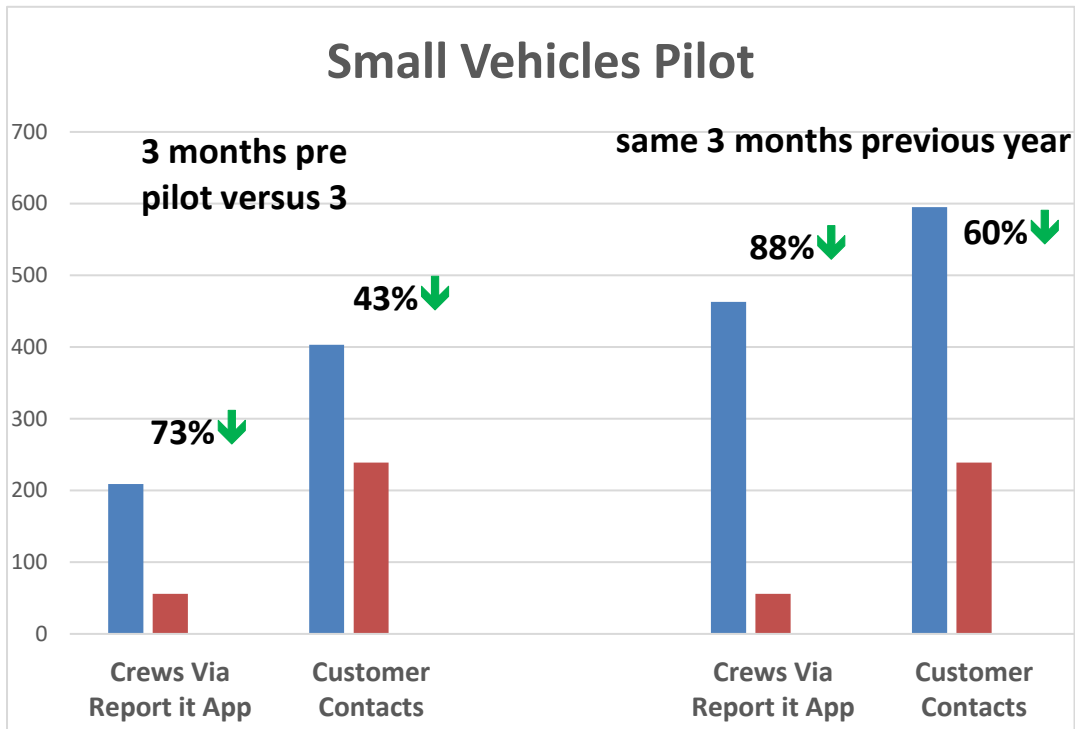
3.12 That said, the first set of data covering the first three months of operation is very encouraging. Two comparisons have been made in Table 3 and Chart 3. Data has been produced comparing the amount of crew reports and customer contacts in relation to missed collections as follows

- The first three months of small vehicles in operation against the three months immediately prior to their introduction
- The first three months in operation against the same period the previous year

**3.13 Table 3 - Reported incidents 3 months prior and three months same time last year**

|                         | 1st 3 months of pilot | 3 months pre pilot | % reduction |   | 1st 3 months of pilot | same 3 months last year | % reduction |   |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------|---|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------|---|
| Crews Via Report it App | 56                    | 209                | 73%         | ê | 56                    | 463                     | 88%         | ê |
| Customer Contacts       | 239                   | 403                | 41%         | ê | 239                   | 595                     | 60%         | ê |

3.14 Chart 3 - Reported incidents 3 months prior and three months same time last year



3.15 A list of streets being changed to smaller collection vehicle routes from 12th August is attached at Appendix 1 - Streets moving to 18 Tonnes vehicle collections from 12th August, 2024

3.16 Expansion of Separate Glass Collection Services

As previously reported, Resources and Fleet submitted an application to DAERA under the Household Waste Collaborative Change Programme for financial assistance with regard to capital funding for the expansion of segregated glass collections for remaining households across the Council area.. Having received a Letter of Offer from DAERA on 25th July, the Council's has approved approval of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) concerning, amongst other things, capital funding on a 50/50 basis and the first Phase is in the process of being implemented.

3.17 Planning continues in preparation for rolling this scheme out during January to March 2025. The Implementation phase involves the recruitment of collection crews, procurement of containers for both individual households and apartment blocks, initial leasing of vehicles prior to the procurement of new vehicles, communication of the scheme to the selected households, assessment of apartments (if

any within the selected areas) and finally delivery of containers followed by first collections.

- 3.18 The scheme roll-out commences with a letter drop to households within the agreed phase one catchment area. This letter will outline the key aspects of the initiative along with practical information such as collection day, frequency, accepted materials and start date. Within seven days of receiving the letter, households will be issued with a kerbside box and lid for the presentation of their glass containers at the kerbside. An information leaflet will also be included within the kerbside boxes reminding residents on the salient points of the scheme. Kerbside collections will then commence within 11 days of receiving the kerbside box.
- 3.19 Given the lead times associated with a number of these activities, in particular the purchase and receipt of containers, and mindful of the potential clash with collections arrangements for the Xmas season, it is now estimated that the main activities will be rolled out as per Table 4, subject to deliveries of containers arriving as per the agreed schedule from the supplier. It is envisaged that the implementation phase will start in January and will be completed by March 2025
- 3.20 Table 4 – Estimated timetable for project commencement

| Year 1 Rollout                       |                                     |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 23000 households approx.             |                                     |
| Letters to residents                 | 27th January – 21st February 2025   |
| Containers Delivered to households   | 30th January – 27th February, 2025, |
| Phased Collections roll out          | 10th February – 7th March 2025      |
| Regular Collection Schedule in place | 10th March 2025 onwards             |

- 3.21 Detailed route planning is still being finalised but a proposed list of streets to be serviced under Phase 1 has now been agreed with the Operations Team and can be found at Appendix 2 – Phase 1 Streets to receive Glass Collections

The Service will continue to keep Members apprised of the progress of the scheme through the Council’s usual governance procedures.

3.22 Financial and Resource Implications

In relation to the expansion of glass collections, DAERA will 50/50 match fund the agreed capital requirements as agreed in their Letter of Offer.

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

None.”

In response to several Members’ queries, the City Services Manager (Resources and Fleet) undertook to provide information, if requested, in respect of figures related to parking enforcement measures by the statutory bodies and agencies.

The Committee noted the information as set out within the report and specifically the information as outlined within the recommendation.

**Pitch Partnership Agreements**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

**1.1 This report is to provide an update on progress on implementation of Pitch Partner Agreements for 1 April 2024 – 31 October 2024.**

**2.0 Recommendation**

**2.1 Committee are asked to note the progress to date at Partner Agreement sites and that partner agreements have been extended until 31 March 2025 or until new arrangements are put in place following completion of the Community Asset Transfer Pilot.**

**3.0 Main Report**

**3.1 Legal Agreements**

**Council agreed to enter into Partner Agreements at the following sites with the clubs identified below. The Agreements are for a period of 5 years with option to extend for up to a further two years. The department has extended all of the Agreements beyond the initial 5-year period and up to 31 March 2024.**

**3.2 Agreement Extension**

**On 12 March 2024, Committee agreed to extend existing Pitch Partner Agreements until 31 March 2025.**

**3.3 Partner Agreement Sites**

| <b>Location</b>                            | <b>Partner</b>          |
|--|-------------------------|
| <b>Dixon Playing Fields</b>                | <b>Sirocco Works FC</b> |
| <b>Alderman Tommy Patton Memorial Park</b> | <b>East Belfast FC</b>  |

|                            |                      |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Woodlands Playing Fields   | Co. Antrim Board GAA |
| Loughside Playing Fields   | Loughside FC         |
| Shore Road Playing Fields  | Grove United FC      |
| Orangefield Playing Fields | Bloomfield FC        |
| Ulidia Playing Fields      | Rosario FC           |

3.4 Regular checks on the necessary Insurance, Health and Safety and Governance have been completed at all sites. The reporting documents were amended in accordance with audit requirements and sent to partners one month in advance of reporting deadlines. All partners are compliant on these matters.

3.5 **Financial Support to deliver Sports Development Plans**

All partners submitted their plans in early 2024 to improve sports development outcomes at each site in the 2024 – 2025 financial year.

Funding of up to £20,000 per annum has been available for each partner to deliver a programme supporting their Sports Development Plan. Letters of offer to all partners are based on approved sports development plans for the financial year. Partners must submit Sports Development plans annually which are aligned to the financial planning calendar for the incoming year.

3.6 **Monitoring**

Quarterly monitoring meetings with our delivery partners continue to take place. These meetings include updates on site management and bookings, health and safety, finance and their sports development plan. Action plans are reviewed and agreed with the partners during these discussions to ensure that planned outcomes are achieved, and improvements identified where required.

3.7 **Sports Development Impact**

In line with Council objectives, the diversification of use and improved sports development impact are priorities at the partner agreement sites. Programme delivery continues to achieve positive achievements across the sites.

3.8 The table below indicates outputs at the sites as reported by the 7 partners for Quarters 1 & 2 (April-October 2024).

|   |      |
|---|------|
| <b><u>A. Participation type</u></b>         |      |
| 1. Members of different codes               | 5154 |
| 2. People with a Disability                 | 420  |
| 3. People from a minority ethnic background | 4772 |
|   | 5018 |

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|  |       |
|--|-------|
| 4. Females   | 4127  |
| 5. Older people  | 27    |
| 6. Schools / youth organisations                                 |       |
| <b><u>B. Participation usage</u></b>                             |       |
| Number of full pitch/adult matches on site                       | 581   |
| Number of full pitch/adult match participations                  | 18762 |
| Number of small sided/youth matches on site                      | 781   |
| Number of youth match participations                             | 30168 |
| Number of training sessions held on site                         | 1963  |
| Number of training session participants                          | 48055 |
| Number of other bookings / activities on site                    | 174   |
| Number of other bookings/activity participants on site           | 12435 |
| <b><u>C. Partnership working</u></b>                             |       |
| 1. Working with Belfast City Council                             | 14    |
| 2. Sport's Governing Bodies                                      | 54    |
| 3. Other teams / groups in your sport                            | 56    |
| 4. Other teams / groups in different sports                      | 15    |
| 5. Community / voluntary groups                                  | 23    |
| <b><u>D. Social value</u></b>                                    |       |
| 1. Young people at risk  | 1026  |
| 2. Encourage participation of under-represented groups           | 12960 |
| 3. Promote positive cross community relations                    | 939   |
| 4. Promote health and wellbeing in socially deprived communities | 12714 |
| 5. Promote Volunteering skills                                   | 531   |
| 6. Develop skills that will improve employability                | 222   |

**3.9 Financial and Resource Implications**

A total of £140,000 per annum is available within revenue estimates to support annual Sports Development Plans at the Partner Agreement sites.

**3.10 Equality or Good Relations Implications**

None.”

The Committee noted the progress which had been achieved at the partner agreement sites and that those agreements had been extended until the end of the financial year, or until new arrangements had been put in place, following the completion of the Community Asset Transfer Pilot.

### **Advice Outreach**

At its meeting on 5th November, the Committee had requested that a report be submitted which would contain additional detail in relation to the provision of advice services offered by the Council, particularly in respect of the extent of outreach services available across the city.

Accordingly, the Committee considered a report in this regard which had been prepared by the Director of Neighbourhood Services, together with an associated appendix which outlined the location of advice provision services across Belfast.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and its associated appendix.

### **Air Quality Schools' Project – Update**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

- 1.1 The Committee will recall that at its meeting of 9th January 2024, it considered a paper concerning monitoring of ambient air quality in the vicinity of a number of primary schools across the city to help to inform Action 22 of the 2021-2026 Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan concerning a pilot scheme for the designation of ‘school streets’.**
- 1.2 A ‘School Street’ is a road or street outside of a school where a temporary restriction on motorised traffic is applied at am ‘*drop-off*’ and pm ‘*pick-up*’ times during the school day, resulting in a safer and environmentally improved local environment. The restriction is typically applied to both school and through traffic. This Action Plan measure has been proposed jointly by Sustrans and the Department for Infrastructure.**
- 1.3 The Committee was advised in the 9th January 2024 report that council Air Quality Officers had liaised with Sustrans in order to identify a selection of primary schools situated throughout the city where transport related ambient air quality monitoring in their localities might be undertaken to help inform the designation of School Streets. Selection criteria applied in the identification of suitable schools included: • Is there much traffic congestion at the school gates? • Does the infrastructure / road layout around the school seem suitable for a future intervention such as School Streets? • Is the school keen to increase active travel among pupils? • Is the school in the Active School Travel programme?**
- 1.4 Accordingly, eight primary schools were initially suggested by Sustrans, which were then subsequently surveyed by the council officers to identify suitable monitoring and mounting locations, resulting in the council agreeing to install Earthsense Zephyr ambient air quality monitors initially in the vicinity of the following four**

primary schools; Rosetta Primary School, Knockbreda Rd; Belvoir Park Primary School, Belvoir Drive; Holy Rosary Primary School, Sunnyside Crescent and; Holy Evangelists' Primary School and Nursery Unit, Glasvey Drive, Dunmurry.

- 1.5 The air quality monitors were variously installed from mid-March 2024 onwards and for the purposes of this project, monitoring data has been considered until the end of July 2024, to obtain nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>) air pollution measurements and trends whilst the schools were in operation and by way of comparator, during the July holiday period.
- 1.6 This paper provides for the Committee's consideration of summary monitoring data for nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter for the four primary schools, expressed as hourly and monthly means, and weekday and weekend diurnal (24-hour profile) nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) means. The paper also considers exceedances of relevant air quality objectives for nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>).
- 2.0 **Main Report**
- 2.1 The Committee is advised that council air quality officers installed solar powered Earthsense Zephyr small sensor air quality monitors in the vicinity of the above-mentioned four primary schools from mid-March 2024 onwards. The monitors were installed at locations to target adjacent public roads and transport routes to and from the schools so that there was no impact on school operations or pupils as a consequence of the ambient air quality monitoring.
- 2.2 Monitoring data has been resolved into hourly mean concentrations to enable comparison with the 200 µgm<sup>-3</sup> 1- hour mean objective for nitrogen dioxide and longer term 24-hour mean objective for particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>). The Committee will appreciate that the 1-hour mean objective is applied at locations where members of the public might reasonably be expected to spend one hour or more and therefore typically includes kerbside locations such as pavements of busy roads or streets, such as in the vicinity of schools during morning 'drop off' and afternoon 'pick up' periods. The 24-hour mean particulate matter objective would not normally apply at a roadside or kerbside location, where public exposure is considered to be short-term.
- 2.3 The Committee is advised that no exceedances of the 200 µgm<sup>-3</sup> 1-hour mean objective for nitrogen dioxide or the longer term 50 µgm<sup>-3</sup> 24-hour mean objective (not to be exceeded more than 35 times per annum) for particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>) were recorded throughout the monitoring periods. Accordingly, it is considered that there are no requirements to amend the council's existing Air Quality Management



areas or to declare any new Air Quality Management Areas as a consequence of the school streets monitoring. Moreover, the outworkings of the school streets monitoring are in broad accordance with the conclusions of the council's 2023 Detailed Assessment for Ambient Air Quality.

- 2.4 Particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) is not presently in regulation for the purposes of local air quality management by councils, although a 25 µgm<sup>-3</sup> annual mean target has been established, together with a 15% cut in urban background exposure, also assessed as an annual mean. As previously, the Committee is advised that annual mean targets for PM<sub>2.5</sub> would not apply at roadside or kerbside monitoring locations, where public exposure is short-term. Monthly mean monitoring data for particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>) have nevertheless been presented for each of the four schools within Appendix Sections 4.2 – 4.5 of this report for additional information. Monitored monthly mean PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations were all substantially below the 25 µgm<sup>-3</sup> target level throughout the March – July 2024 monitoring period.
- 2.5 Council air quality officers have shared the summary monitoring data with Sustrans and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Air and Environmental Quality Unit. The Committee will be aware that DAERA funded the purchase of two Zephyr air quality monitors through the 2023-2024 Local Air Quality Management grant process in specific support of this schools' streets project. It will now be for Sustrans and DfI to consider how they may wish to utilise the monitoring data generated through this project to help inform the designation of 'school streets' in accordance with Action 22 of the 2021-2026 Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan. It is however noted that the diurnal (24-hour profile) nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) mean graphs (Appendix Sections 4.2 - 4.5) demonstrate modest increases in nitrogen dioxide concentrations during the weekday peak morning travel period when compared to the equivalent weekend period during the March – June 2024 monitoring period, and to a lesser extent during the July 2024 monitoring period.
- 2.6 In consideration of the monitoring data to date, it has been agreed with Sustrans to maintain two of the air quality monitors in their current locations to determine if there are any increases in traffic related ambient air pollution in the vicinity of Rosetta Primary School or Holy Rosary Primary School throughout the winter period when school users and the local community may more frequently choose to commute by motor vehicle.
- 2.7 Sustrans have additionally agreed that the air quality monitors at Belvoir Park Primary School, and Holy Evangelists' Primary School and Nursery Unit may be redeployed to Nettlefield Primary School, Randor Drive, and Strandtown Primary School, North Road, subject to suitable lampposts / street furniture mounting locations in

those monitoring locations being identified, to help inform the potential designation of 'school streets' in those areas.

- 2.8 Council air quality officers have also proposed to Sustrans that the Zephyr air quality monitor currently located adjacent to the A12 Westlink corridor at Henry Place and Carlisle Road be relocated to a more southerly location along the A12 Westlink to undertake monitoring in the vicinity of St. Mary's Primary School, Barrack Street, located adjacent to the A12 Westlink and Divis Street; again subject to a suitable mounting and monitoring location being identified. St. Mary's Primary School, Barrack Street was considered as a sensitive receptor within the council's 2023 Detailed Assessment of Ambient Air Quality for the city.

2.9 **Financial and Resource Implications**

There are no immediate financial or resource implications associated with this report. Operation of the Zephyr small sensor air quality monitors is supported via the DAERA 2024-2025 Local Air Quality Management grant process. The 'school streets' monitoring project is being undertaken from within existing Scientific Unit air quality staff resources.

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

None."

The Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed that the small sensor air quality monitors be maintained at Rosetta Primary School and Holy Rosary Primary School.

In addition, the Committee agreed to the following:

- that the air quality monitors at Nettlefield Primary School, Randor Drive, and Strandtown Primary School be redeployed to North Road, subject to suitable to the identification of suitable mounting locations to help inform potential school streets designations in those areas; and
- that the air quality monitor located at Henry Place and Carlisle Road, adjacent the A12 Westlink, be relocated to a more southerly point on the Westlink corridor to enable air quality monitoring to be undertaken in the vicinity of St. Mary's Primary School, Barrack Street, to subject to a more suitable location being identified.

**Air Quality Updating and Screening Assessment 2024**

The Director of City Services reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 10th September, it had noted the contents of the Council's 2024 Updating and Screening Assessment (USA) and had agreed that it be submitted to the Department of Agriculture,

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Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) for independent consideration and appraisal. However, at that meeting, the Committee had agreed, in principle, not to move to revoke the Ormeau Road and Upper Newtownards Road Air Quality Management Areas – which had been recommended by DEARA – but to await DEARA’s independent assessment of the Council’s 2024 report.

Accordingly, the Committee considered a report, the portion of which in respect of the above matter is set out hereunder:

- “1.3 The council has now received a Bureau Veritas technical assessors’ report from DAERA concerning the appraisal of its 2024 USA, which, in addition to accepting the report and publishing it on the DAERA NI Air website recommends that the council should now progress revocation of AQMA No. 3 - Upper Newtownards Road and AQMA No. 4 – Ormeau Road.**
  
- 1.4 Bureau Veritas have also suggested that the council should liaise with DAERA to consider additionally revoking the Cormac Street and Albertbridge Road AQMA and revoking the M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink corridor AQMA for exceedances of the 1-hour mean objective for nitrogen dioxide.**
  
- 1.5 DAERA have asked that Belfast City Council reverts to the Air and Environmental Quality Unit with a timescale for revocation of the AQMAs and any associated planned public communications so that the Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Minister may be briefed accordingly.**
  
- 1.6 The formal process for revoking an AQMA is detailed from section ‘3.53 Amendment and Revocation of AQMAs’ of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance LAQM.TG(22) and within Article 12 Designation of air quality management areas of The Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002.**
  
- 1.7 DAERA and Bureau Veritas have commented that the council’s 2024 USA report has been completed to a high standard, with additional appropriate appendices to show the further work that the Council is undertaking to improve air quality within its area of jurisdiction.”**

A Member outlined his opposition to the recommendation by DEARA that the Council should move to revoke the current Air Quality Management Areas at the Upper Newtownards Road and the Ormeau Road. He pointed out that air quality standards had improved significantly in those two areas and had been sustained over several years. He added that DEARA’s recommendations to revoke the monitors had been based on the fact that both areas now met the UK’s air quality standards. However, he suggested that the Council should continue to monitor the two areas in an attempt to meet the standards for air quality management as recommended by the World Health Organisation, which, it was suggested, was the benchmark which the Council should be working towards.

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The Committee noted the contents of the report and the independent assessment of the Council's 2024 Update and Screening Assessment. However, the Committee agreed not to revoke the two Air Quality Management Areas, that being at the Upper Newtownards Road and the Ormeau Road for the reasons outlined previously.

**George Best Belfast City Airport –  
Request re: Rook Nests at Victoria Park**

The Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 9th January, 2024, it had agreed to enter into a legal agreement with the George Best Belfast City Airport to permit access to Victoria Park to facilitate the management of rook nests. The management of the nests was one of the obligations under the airport's Wildlife Hazard Assessment and Civil Aviation Authority Licence, which required the airport to identify potential sources of risk to aircrafts using the airport. The Committee was advised that a further request had been submitted by the airport authorities seeking to extend the current agreement to address a reported increase in the number of rooks nesting in the vicinity of Victoria Park. The work, he pointed out, which would include the removal of old nests and the undertaking of nesting site discouragement, was required to be completed by mid-January 2025.

Accordingly, the Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services indicated that, if approved, he would exercise his delegated authority to for the Council to enter into a legal agreement with the airport authorities under the terms as agreed previously.

The Committee approved the course of action outlined by the Strategic Director and acceded to the request from the George Best Belfast City Airport to grant access under licence to facilitate rook nest management within Victoria Park.

**Request for the Use of Ormeau Park Bowling Pavilion**

The Committee considered a request which had been received from a Ms. Sophie Lusby seeking permission to host a 'Preloved Sale for Gaza' in the Ormeau Park Bowling Pavilion on Saturday, 1st February, 2025.

The Committee granted authority for the hosting of the event, subject to the completion of the appropriate event management plans and satisfactory terms being agreed by the Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services and on the following conditions, that the organisers:

- resolve all operational issues to the Council's satisfaction;
- meet all statutory requirements, including Public Liability Insurance cover, Health and Safety, and licensing responsibilities; and
- consult with adjoining public bodies and local communities as necessary.

The Committee noted that the above decision was taken as a pre-policy position in advance of the Council agreeing to a more structured framework and policy for events, which was currently being considered in conjunction with the Council's commercial team.

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**Proposals for Dual Language Street Signs**

The Committee agreed to the erection of a second street nameplates in Irish at Newington Street, Chichester Road, Deerpark Road, Kerrykeel Gardens, Glenties Drive, Ashton Park, Newforge Grange, Ashley Grove, Lagmore Meadows, Riverdale Park West, Credenhill Park, Brooke Drive, Riverdale Park North, Ardmore Park South, Stewartstown Road, Wolfhill Drive and Kansas Avenue.

**Proposal to Name a New Street**

The Committee approved to the naming of a new street in the city as Lagmore Way.

**Matters Raised in Advance by Members**

**Biodiversity in Council Parks and  
Open Spaces – Request for Update**

With the permission of the Chairperson, Councillor Flynn reminded the Committee that, on 5th February, 2024, it had considered a notice of motion which he had submitted to the Council under the heading 'Biodiversity in Council Parks and Open Spaces'. At that meeting, the Committee had agreed officers would submit a report to a future meeting to consider how the Council could commission a survey of parks and green spaces to create a list of priority habitats and species therein.

It was noted that a report in this regard would be submitted for the Committee's consideration at its meeting in January.

Chairperson

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## City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 4th December, 2024

### HYBRID MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Nelson (Chairperson);  
The Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor McCormick;  
Alderman Lawlor;  
Councillors Black, D. Douglas, Duffy, Hanvey,  
Kelly, Lyons, Maskey, F. McAteer, McCabe,  
McDonough-Brown, McDowell, McKay,  
I. McLaughlin, R. McLaughlin, O'Neill and Smyth.

In attendance: Mr. D. Martin, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;  
Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration  
and Development;  
Ms. C. Cassin, Markets Development Manager;  
Mr. D. O'Kane, Planning Manager, Plan and Policy; and  
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services and Governance  
Coordinator.

#### **Apologies**

No apologies were reported.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the 6th and 27th November were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 2nd December.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

#### **Restricted Items**

The information contained in the report associated with the following three items was restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the press and public from the meeting during discussion of the following item as, due to the nature of the items, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

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Members were also reminded that the content of 'restricted' reports and any discussion which took place during closed session must be treated as 'confidential information' and that no such information should be disclosed to the public as per Paragraph 4.15 of the Code of Conduct.

**Vacant to Vibrant Scheme Update**

The Director of City Regeneration and Development provided an update on the Vacant to Vibrant Programme and outlined the recommendations from the Vacant to Vibrant assessment panel following the recent receipt and assessment of applications.

**Proposal**

Moved by Councillor Black,  
Seconded by Councillor Duffy and

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to the inclusion of a condition that requires the applicant V2V142 to provide an area management plan that outlines how the applicant, in conjunction with other services, will manage the potential impacts of the operation on the wider adjacent area, and that this area management plan is agreed with Council's Community Safety Teams.

After discussion, the Committee:

- I. Noted the update on the City Wide Vacant to Vibrant scheme which opened to applications on the 15th November, 2024;
- II. Noted the update in relation to the city centre Vacant to Vibrant Programme which, subject to approval of the three applications contained within this report, would be supporting up to 38 businesses to locate or expand into long term vacant city centre units; and
- III. Agreed to the recommended grant awards as outlined within Section 3.18 of the report, subject to the inclusion of a condition that required the applicant V2V142 to provide an area management plan that outlined how the applicant, in conjunction with other services, would manage the potential impacts of the operation on the wider adjacent area, and that this area management plan was agreed with the Council's Community Safety Teams.

**Markets Update**

The Committee was provided with a quarterly performance and financial update for the period to end September 2024, together with an overview of future plans for the coming quarter.



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During discussion, the Markets Development Manager advised that the Markets Rights Policy was under review which would include information on external market licence charges.

After discussion, the Committee:

- Noted the update on city markets – with a focus on St George’s Market;
- Noted the priority actions for the coming quarter and that further updates on progress would be submitted to the Committee in the future, including city markets revenue data.

**Financial Reporting - Quarter 2 2024/2025**

The Committee noted the report and the associated financial reporting pack.

**Matters referred back from Council/Motions**

**Notice of Motion – Retail Business in Sandy Row**

The Committee considered the following motion which had been referred by the Standards and Business Committee held on 21st November, and proposed by Councillor Kelly and seconded by Councillor Brooks:

“That this Council recognises the importance of small businesses and the creation of a thriving economy in communities across our city; accepts that changes to infrastructure can have a significant impact on local businesses in the surrounding area; agrees that businesses in Sandy Row have been disadvantaged by the closure of the Boyne Bridge as part of the Grand Central Station development and recognises the struggle of business owners in the area to survive given the reduction in footfall; and calls on this Council to look at options of re-opening the Boyne Bridge, create a Taskforce, alongside the Department of the Economy, Department for Communities, Translink and local business owners, to explore how businesses can be urgently supported.”

During discussion, Councillor Kelly highlighted the urgent need for an emergency plan and stakeholder group, together with animation and Christmas lights for the area.

Members also requested that the potential for rates relief for the businesses was investigated and the economic impact of business closures was considered as part of the report.

After discussion, the Committee agreed the motion and that a report, outlining a detailed consideration of the motion and the potential cost implications and economic impact would be submitted to a future meeting.

**Regenerating Places and Improving Infrastructure**

**City Centre Boundary – Local  
Development Plan Process**

The Planning Manager - Plan and Policy informed the Committee of the background to the emerging Development Plan in relation to the City Centre Boundary.

He highlighted that the Development Plan Strategy had now been legally adopted and defined the city centre with having a unique function.

He provided an illustrative map within the plan strategy and explained the associated settlement hierarchies and policies, including the employment plan policy, accommodating new homes policy and protection of existing residential areas policy.

He outlined the next steps in the process which included: Ongoing site assessment work; Member engagement; Wider Community engagement; Draft plan submitted to the Planning and Strategic Policy and Resources Committee; Formal Public Consultation; and Independent examination.

During discussion, the Planning Manager, Plan and Policy, answered a range of questions in relation to footfall counters, community consultation, special interest areas, built heritage and the protection of sites and inner city community protection.

He highlighted that the Local Development team would be happy to meet with interested parties to engage on the Local Development Plan.

After discussion, the Committee noted the update provided on the City Centre boundary and the Development Plan process.

**Positioning Belfast to Compete**

**Sub-Regional Economic Growth –  
Key Issues and Proposed Approach**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the Department for the Economy’s (DfE) recently published sub-regional economic plan and to set out proposed approaches to some of the key elements of work within the plan, including the establishment of a Local Economic Partnership (LEP).**

**2.0 Recommendation**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- Note the update on the Department for the Economy's [Sub-Regional Economic Plan](#)
- Note the draft funding formula and the potential implications for Belfast City Council
- Consider and endorse the proposals for the partnership structure and note emerging priority actions.

**3.0 Main Report**

**3.1** At the 6 November 2024 meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, members were advised that the Department for Economy had recently produced a 'sub-regional economic plan'. They agreed to receive a further update at the next committee meeting as to how some of the key proposals in this plan might be taken forward in Belfast.

**3.2** The Ministerial ambition behind the sub-regional plan is 'through local partnerships, central government, Invest NI, Councils and our network of education providers and civic society, we will work together to identify the main barriers to economic development, and the interventions that will unlock the area's potential'.

**3.3** The plan focuses on recognising and tackling regional imbalance across each of the council areas. It sets out a series of indicators and ranks each council area from 1 to 11 in terms of how they sit against each of these. Metrics include labour productivity; median wages, greenhouse emissions and sub-regional employment rate. While Belfast ranks top in the first three, it ranks 10 out of 11 for sub-regional employment rate.

**3.4** Following the publication of the plan, DfE officials have been working on guidance and financial allocations for the Local Economic Partnerships and these have been circulated as draft for discussion with each of the council areas.

**3.5 Local Economic Partnerships – proposed funding formula**

CMT will be aware that one of the central pillars of the sub - regional economic plan is the proposed establishment of Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs) in each council area.

These partnerships will be able to access funding from the Department – an indicative three-year budget of £45million has been identified but it is understood that this funding has not yet been secured. DfE officials have recently shared the guidance and a series of options around the funding formula for the partnerships. The funding formulas focus on two key metrics, namely productivity – as measured by output per job – and peripherality. There is also a variable allocation for ‘base’ costs (i.e. staff overheads). Based on the draft formulas presented, Belfast City Council would access an annual budget of either £865,000 or £956,000 for LEP activity.

- 3.6 Officers were asked to provide commentary on the draft formulas by mid-November. We did so, but noted that, given the significant impact on Belfast, we would want to share the proposals with elected members for their consideration and review. With regard to the productivity metric, we noted that we understood why this might be considered as an appropriate metric to some extent. However we also noted that it overlooks the fact that Belfast is a significant net employment generator of high value roles. Almost half of those that work in Belfast do not live in the city and Belfast City Council residents account for only 53% of total workplace employment in Belfast. The largest drag on regional productivity is its persistently high levels of economic inactivity. While this is an issue that affects all parts of the region, it is more visible in Belfast – and particularly within parts of north and west Belfast that are also marked by high levels of deprivation. The sub-regional plan acknowledged this fact by including the sub-regional employment rate as part of the LGD rankings (and Belfast was ranked 10 out of 11 here). However there does not appear to be any consideration given to this in any of the proposed formulas. Officers have shared their views that this is a significant oversight and asked that it be considered as a factor in any final formula.
- 3.7 The peripherality measure is based on an OECD Regional Typology which classifies areas in two ways, namely ‘scale from large metropolitan area to remote area and scale from predominantly urban to predominantly rural including close to city or remote’. Using these two measures, DfE have created a ‘composite indicator of less/more peripheral than average’. The upshot of this is, in reality, the measure of peripherality radiates out from Belfast, meaning that it scores lowest on this factor. There are a number of concerns with this measure. Firstly, it was not one of the factors that was considered in the original sub-regional plan that was issued in early October. The second point is that it is at odds with NISRA’s own statistical classification and delineation of urban/rural areas

and settlements in Northern Ireland – which identifies more than one urban centre. Having not been an original factor in the sub-regional economic plan, peripherality is now being proposed as the largest factor in the funding formula – with a proposal that it counts for either 40% or 45% of the funding formula.

**3.8 Potential approach to partnership**

The Department for the Economy has now provided high level guidance for councils relating to the establishment of the partnerships. With regard to the structure, this includes the following:

- Councils will determine what format the LEP will undertake to ensure flexibility and to meet local needs. This can be a new standalone body or integrated with an existing structure such as a Labour Market Partnership (LMP) or a Community Planning Partnership (CPP). Councils may merge LEPs to work across a neighbouring council area within an Invest NI region.

**3.9** Regarding membership of the partnership, the Department advises that this is for each council area to decide. However it notes that there are a number of mandatory partners including FE Representative(s), Local Enterprise Agency representative(s) and Local business representative(s)/Chamber of Commerce representative.

**3.10** The indicative timelines in the plan are that the LEPs should be formed by the end of the calendar year and that projects to be funded should be finalised by end March 2025 with a view to delivery starting from April 2025.

**3.1** Early indications from engagement across council areas is that most intend to use existing partnerships as a structure around which they will base their LEP. In reality, this means using either Labour Market Partnership (LMP) or Community Planning structures or, alternatively, establishing a new structure to take forward this work. In Belfast, options for existing structures include:

- Belfast Labour Market Partnership
- Our Economy Board – Community Planning Partnership
- Innovation City Belfast Board.

**3.12 Belfast Labour Market Partnership**

The Belfast Labour Market Partnership (BLMP) was established in 2020. It oversees the development of an annual Labour Market Action Plan and the associated resource allocation for priority activities. In addition to the Labour Market Action Plan, which is submitted to DfC to access funding, the BLMP has also agreed to bring forward a 'development plan' which considers wider factors and project ideas that could impact on labour market challenges but which don't currently have resources to support delivery or where further work is required. One example of this work was the research that the Partnership took forward on issues affecting migrant workers. This has led to the establishment of a new pilot programme for medics to enable them to access the requisite training for employment in the NHS.

Current membership of the BLMP includes: DfC; BHSCT; Invest NI; CBI; FSB; BAPs; VCSE Panel; ICTU; Belfast Harbour; DfE; Belfast Chamber; BMC and the Advice Sector. The group meets six times a year and there is generally good attendance and participation from all members.

**3.13 Our Economy Board – Community Planning Partnership**

The 'Our Economy' Board is responsible for taking forward the priority activity identified within the 'Our Economy' theme of the Belfast Agenda. The Board's first meeting since the Belfast Agenda refresh took place October 2024 and the next quarterly meeting is scheduled for January 2025. The membership includes all of the organisations currently involved in the BLMP (with the exception of ICTU and the Advice Sector). Additional representatives include: each of the Area Partnerships; Education Authority; Libraries NI; Social Enterprise NI; Tourism NI; UU and QUB.

3.14 One of the potential challenges with using this group as a conduit is managing the volume of representation (currently 28 members) and the challenges around securing decisions within the timeframe required by DfE.

**3.15 Innovation City Belfast**

Innovation City Belfast is a partnership that includes Belfast City Council, Belfast Harbour, BMC, Catalyst, Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University, with Invest NI as an advisory partner. ICB seeks to harness key strengths and to

grow the city's proposition as a globally significant location to invest for innovation.

**3.16** If we were to use any of the existing structures, we would be required to add representation from the Local Enterprise Agency (LEA) network as they are not currently represented on either. Our suggestion would be for one LEA member to represent the others in the network in Belfast (there are five LEAs in Belfast that are members of Enterprise NI – the umbrella body for the agencies).

**3.17** **Establishment of a stand-alone LEP**

In addition to using existing partnerships, there is an option to establish a stand-alone LEP to develop a new action plan and oversee delivery in line with DfE's funding agreement. As previously noted, DfE have confirmed that there are a number of mandatory representatives – namely the FE sector; the LEA network and local business representation. However other nominees are for the council to decide and may be dependent on priorities identified for the LEP. The feedback from most councils to date is that there are already too many partnerships in existence and that it can be difficult to secure representation given the draw on people's time. This is likely to be the case in Belfast as well. As noted above, the same organisations tend to be involved in most partnerships. Not only does this place pressure on resources. It also means that activities move forward in a stand-alone manner with limited opportunities for engagement outside of the remit of the specific partnership.

**3.18** Reflecting on the points noted above, officers consider that the most appropriate, expedient and effective conduit to act as the local LEP is the Belfast Labour Market Partnership. It is our understanding that this approach is to be used in a number of councils. If this is agreed, officers will work with both DfE and DfC to consider how the partnerships can align most effectively and also to ensure that the governance requirements for both funders can be met. It may be appropriate to consider whether this is an approach that we take as an initial way forward – but that we keep it under review in order to ensure that it remains appropriate for the priority work areas agreed.

**3.19** **Potential priority work areas – initial considerations**

Members will be aware that there has been significant engagement activity in recent times around future economic needs of the city. The most comprehensive of these was the

work undertaken as part of the Belfast Agenda refresh. However there has also been significant work done on labour market issues through the annual strategic assessment undertaken by the BLMP. In addition, the business cases for respective capital schemes such as the City Deal projects are based on a strategic analysis of the local economy including challenges and opportunities. Given the volume of information available, it is considered that there is no need at this point to undertake a further detailed analysis. Instead, it is suggested that initial engagement is undertaken with partners to identify a small number of priority schemes, aligned with Belfast Agenda priorities, that can have a positive impact on the local economy, that meet the criteria set out by DfE and that can complement or add value to planned activity in order to ensure alignment and avoid duplication of effort.

**3.20** Key considerations, taking account of the relatively limited amount of additional funding available, include the need to avoid diluting impact across too many priorities and seeking to maximise, sustain or extend the impact of successful programmes and interventions. At this stage, and in advance of engagement with the partnership some initial considerations for potential activities, include:

- **Inclusive employment pathways to high value roles:** through the council's employability and skills work, we have been able to develop targeted responses to meet employer needs across a range of sectors. In more recent years, we have explored opportunities to move up the value chain and create better paid roles with opportunities for career progression. There is currently engagement work underway with DfE to develop a new 'inclusive apprenticeship' approach and this would enable us to provide a seamless transfer from the employment academy into an apprenticeship. While these activities are working well at a small scale, there may be an opportunity to scale up much more significantly, with the potential to make an impact on our economic inactivity levels which have remained stubbornly high over decades
- **Maximising the impact of City Deal investments for local SMEs:** the original business case for the City Deal identified the potential to create 20,000 new and better jobs. As the projects begin to come forward, there are significant opportunities to consider how our local businesses can access the research expertise and facilities established through the City Deal funding – helping them develop new products and increase their employment numbers. This may include innovation



and technology transfer activities; access to challenge programmes and funds and use of the specialist facilities and equipment

- **Enhancement of ‘Go Succeed’ activities:** Go Succeed is the core business support offer for those starting or growing a business. Over the last year, the service has been funded by the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF). Following the recent budget statement, the government has announced a one-year extension of SPF – albeit with a 40% reduction in the overall budget. Officers are still working through the implications for Go Succeed but, as a collective, councils are considering whether there is an opportunity to use their LEP resources to ‘top up’ any budget shortfall.

### **3.21 Financial and Resource Implications**

No specific financial implications at this point. A number of options for the LEP funding formula have been circulated for discussion but these have not yet been finalised. All options include an element of staff resources to manage the programme of work.

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

All activities to be undertaken will be subject to equality screening. This funding formula will be determined by the Department for the Economy.”

During discussion, in response to a Member’s question in relation to engagement with local communities, the Strategic Director of Place and Economy advised that this was being considered, together with an approach of how the work would be joined-up in relation to innovation, the city deal and opportunities to create new pathways into employment.

One Member suggested that a joined-up approach would be beneficial to create supply networks and a robust economy and that best practice should also be considered.

### **Proposal**

Moved by Councillor R. McLaughlin,  
Seconded by Councillor Kelly and

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to progress discussions with the Department for the Economy and the Department for Communities in relation to utilising the Belfast Labour Market Partnership structure as the basis for the proposed Local Economic Partnership and that, following

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these discussions, a further report be submitted to the Committee for consideration.

After discussion, the Committee:

- Noted the update on the Department for the Economy's [Sub-Regional Economic Plan](#);
- Noted the draft funding formula and the potential implications for Belfast City Council;
- Noted the emerging priority actions; and
- Agreed to progress discussions with the Department for the Economy and the Department for Communities in relation to utilising the Belfast Labour Market Partnership structure as the basis for the proposed Local Economic Partnership and that, following these discussions, a further report be submitted to the Committee for consideration.

**Strategic and Operational Issues**

**Notice of Motion Quarterly Update**

The Committee was provided with a quarterly update on the Notices of Motion that it was responsible for, in line with the agreement of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that all standing committees receive regular updates.

It was reported that there were currently five Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance for which the Committee was responsible for and it was recommended that the Committee agree to close the following motion and note the status updates for the remaining four motions which remained open:

***Category 1 and 2 Recommended Closure***

- Translink – Night-time provision of services (ID = 289)

During discussion, one Member requested that the Translink – Night-time provision of services (ID = 289) motion, which had been recommended for closure, would remain open.

After discussion, the Committee:

- Noted the updates to all Notices of Motion/ Issues Raised in Advance that this Committee was responsible for as referenced in Appendix 1; and
- Agreed that the Translink – Night-time provision of services (ID = 289) motion, which had been recommended for closure, would remain open.

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**Minutes of Belfast Stories Working Group**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the Belfast Stores Working Group on 14th November, 2024.

Chairperson

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## Licensing Committee

Wednesday, 11th December, 2024

### HYBRID MEETING OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

- Members present: Alderman Rodgers (Chairperson);  
Alderman McCullough;  
Councillors Abernethy, Anglin, Bradley,  
T. Brooks, M. Collins, M. Donnelly, P. Donnelly,  
Doran, D. Douglas, Kelly, F. McAteer, McCann,  
McKay, McKeown, Ó Néill and Smyth.
- In attendance: Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor;  
Mr. K. Bloomfield, HMO Manager;  
Mr. S. Hewitt, Building Control Manager;  
Mr. J. Cunningham, Senior Licensing Officer;  
Mr. K. McDonnell, Solicitor (Regulatory and Planning); and  
Mrs. L. McLornan, Committee Services Officer.

#### **Apologies**

No apologies were reported.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 11th November, 2024 were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council, at its meeting on 2nd December, 2024, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were recorded.

#### **Delegated Matters**

#### **THE COMMITTEE DEALT WITH THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN PURSUANCE OF THE POWERS DELEGATED TO IT UNDER STANDING ORDER 37(d)**

#### **Licences Issued Under Delegated Authority**

The Committee noted the applications which had been issued under the Scheme of Delegation.

**Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)  
Licenses Issued Under Delegated Authority**

The Committee noted the applications which had been issued under the Scheme of Delegation during November 2024.

**Non-Delegated Matters**

**HMO Applications - Supporting Documentation**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

1.1 To consider a request to include additional supporting documentation confirming ownership and confirmation that mortgage or other loan holder’s consent before an HMO licence application is considered valid.

**2.0 Recommendations**

2.1 To approve the inclusion pursuant to Section 87(1) General notices of the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 ‘2016 Act’ that the following additional documents is required under paragraph 1(1) or (1)(2)(h) of Schedule 2 of the 2016 Act before any HMO licence application form received after 1 April 2025 is considered valid -

a) Confirmation of ownership of the HMO including the date such ownership commenced from a solicitor or other legally qualified person.

b) Confirmation from any party holding a mortgage, charge or lien against the property that they have no objection to the granting of the HMO licence.

**3.0 Main report**

**Background**

3.1 Schedule 2, paragraph 12 of the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 ‘2016 Act’ requires the Council to decide whether to grant or refuse an application for an HMO licence before the end of the period of 3 months beginning with the date on which the council received it.

3.2 The Department of Communities ‘DfC’ Guide to the licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation in Northern Ireland – Guidance for Local Government April 2019 states ‘the application is only

valid if the form is completed correctly, full payment is made, and the required supporting documents are included’.

**3.3 From the introduction of the HMO licensing scheme in April 2019 pursuant to Section 87(1) General notices of the 2016 Act the following documents as listed in points 1 – 12 below are required under paragraph 1(1) or (1)(2)(h) of Schedule 2 of the 2016 Act before an application is considered valid:**

- 1. Electrical Installation Condition Report**
- 2. Fire detection and Alarm Systems**
- 3. Emergency Lighting (if applicable)**
- 4. Current Portable Appliance Test (PAT) certificate**
- 5. Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)**
- 6. Gas Safety Certificate (if applicable)**
- 7. Chimneys and Flues (if applicable)**
- 8. Expiry/useful date on CO detector (if applicable)**
- 9. Current Fire Risk Assessment**
- 10. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (if applicable)**
- 11. Proof of suitable funding arrangements**
- 12. An anti-social behaviour plan**

**a) Confirmation of ownership.**

**3.4 Section 8 of the 2016 Act outlines that applications for an HMO licence must be made by the owner of the HMO.**

**3.5 For all new licence applications relating to the sale / transfer of a licensed HMO officers require confirmation from the solicitor acting on behalf of the purchaser details of the new owner(s) name whether an individual or a company and the date the transfer took place to ensure compliance with section 28 ‘Change of ownership: effect on licence’ of the 2016 Act.**

**3.6 Currently no such confirmation is sought in relation to renewal applications, however the HMO Unit currently undertake a percentage check of HMO licence applications via Land Registry and since the introduction of the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 on the 1 April 2019 have credited our Landweb account to the sum of £15,500.**

**3.7 Officers are of the opinion that the percentage check is not sufficiently robust, as we continue to get applications from persons other than the owner. Examples include –**

- a) applications from individuals when the property is owned by a company of which they are a director or vice versa,**

- b) applications from one limited company when the property is owned by another limited company which share the same directors,
- c) applications from an individual when the property is owned by their spouse or other family member.

3.8

b) Objections from mortgage or other loanees

Schedule 2, paragraph 1(2)(e) of the 2016 Act requires the HMO licence application to contain the name and address of any person (other than the owner) who has a relevant interest in the HMO. A relevant interest is defined as a freehold estate, a leasehold estate (unless the unexpired term is three years or less), a mortgage, charge or lien.

3.9 Officers are required to serve a copy of the notice of proposed decision on each relevant person in accordance with Schedule 2, paragraph 9(1) of the 2016 Act and must also serve a copy of the notice of determination (whether that be the licence certificate or notice of refusal) on those persons pursuant to Schedule 2, paragraph 13(1)(b).

3.10 A number of mortgage providers include terms in their loans which prohibit the use of the accommodation on which the loan is secured as an HMO and subsequently object to the granting of an HMO licence. Such objections are either received after the proposed decision is issued but before the licence is granted but more typically due to time delays on their part after the licence is granted.

3.11 If such an objection is received officers can no longer be satisfied that the management arrangements for the HMO are suitable. In such circumstances officers invite the owner to put new funding arrangements in place and provide proof of same and warn that the Council would consider revoking the licence in accordance with section 23 'Revocation of licences' if new arrangements are not adopted.

3.12 Administrative and other burdens

Both the issue of proof of ownership and funding are causing administrative burdens on the NIHMO Unit and equally as important causing worry and stress for HMO owners when issues are identified late in the process which may potentially lead to tenants losing their homes if revocation of the HMO licence becomes necessary.



**3.13 The provision of the requested documentation before an application is considered valid would allow officers to identify issues at an earlier stage and allow additional time if necessary for HMO owners to take corrective action before the issue becomes potentially critical.**

**3.14 Financial and Resource Implications**

**None. The cost of assessing the applications and officer inspections are provided for within existing budgets.**

**3.15 Equality and Good Relations Implications**

**There are no equality or good relations issues associated with this report.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Road Closures - Oral Update**

The Senior Licensing Officer provided the Committee with a detailed overview of the process for closing a road for a special event, such as a sporting or social event or for entertainment or filming on a public road. The Members were advised that road closures for the purpose of public processions, motor road races and cycle races/trials were not handled by the Council and were dealt with under separate legislation.

The Members were advised that, for roads within the Harbour Estate, the Harbour Police were responsible and for events on special roads, such as motorways or the Westlink, or when events were to be held off the road (for example, Belsonic) he clarified that DfI Roads was responsible.

The Senior Licensing Officer outlined the application process for requesting the closure of a road, which included a 21 Day Public Notice advertisement in a local paper and placement on the Belfast City Council website, neighbourhood consultation and consultation with DfI Roads, the PSNI, the NI Fire and Rescue Service, the NI Ambulance Service and Translink. He highlighted that each road closure required the consent of DfI Roads.

Each application required a Traffic Management Plan and a proof of public liability insurance cover of £10million. Some closures might also require more detailed event management plans or details of structures or equipment, depending on the event.

He provided the Committee with the classification and costs associated with small and large events.

It was highlighted that the organiser was required to pay all associated costs for the erection, placement and removal of all required signage and barriers and that prompt removal was a requirement for any road closure. Further conditions under the Order

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might include maintaining pedestrian access to premises or accessible from the road(s) on which the special event was taking place and that access for all emergency vehicles was essential.

During discussion on any breach of road closures, it was highlighted that, while the Council did not have enforcement powers, the PSNI did.

The Senior Licensing Officer confirmed that it was costly to place newspaper advertisements for each event, as the local papers in the City, included the Belfast Telegraph, the Irish News and the Newsletter. He advised the Committee that the advertisement was rotated around those newspapers and that newspapers circulating in the local areas that were outside the city centre were used where possible. He added that the Committee would be asked to consider the fees associated with road closure requests in the new year.

In regard to neighbourhood consultation, he advised the Committee that, for smaller events, organisers were asked to carry out neighbourhood notification in the locality of the road closure but that that was not possible for larger scale events such as the marathon.

The Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the officer for his comprehensive update.

Noted.

Chairperson

## Planning Committee

Tuesday, 10th December, 2024

### MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Carson (Chairperson);  
Aldermen Lawlor, McCullough and Rodgers;  
Councillors Abernethy, Anglin, Bell, Brennan,  
T. Brooks, Doran, Ferguson, Garrett,  
Hanvey, McCabe, McCann, Murphy and Whyte.

In attendance: Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;  
Mr. K. McDonnell, Solicitor (Regulatory and Planning);  
Mr. E. Baker, Planning Manager (Development Management),  
Ms. L. Walshe, Principal Planning Officer;  
Mr. M. Whittaker, Senior Planning Officer;  
Mr. N. Hasson, Senior Planning Officer; and  
Ms. C. Donnelly, Committee Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

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

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 12th November, 2024 were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council, at its meeting on 2nd December, 2024, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

### **Declarations of Interest**

The Chairperson (Councillor Carson) declared an interest in relation to item 9g, LA04/2023/2557/F - 260 no. dwellings, children's play area and other ancillary and associated works - Lands East of Meadowhill, North of Glencolin Court, North and East of Glencolin Rise, East of Glencolin Grove, North and West of Glen Road Rise, and North of Glen Road Grove, in that he had previously engaged with the applicant.

Councillor T. Brooks declared an interest in relation to item 9a, LA04/2020/0568/F and LA04/2020/0569/LBC - Demolition of building and structures at rear, refurbishment and alteration of frontage building and erection of 9 storey extension to rear to form hotel (74 bedrooms) with associated restaurant, bar and ancillary facilities and works (amended description). Demolition of building and structures at rear, part demolition to internal features, refurbishment and extension to listed building (amended description). - 21 Queen Street, in that in that her husband was associated with the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society.

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Councillor Whyte declared an interest in relation to item 9g, LA04/2023/2557/F - 260 no. dwellings, children's play area and other ancillary and associated works - Lands East of Meadowhill, North of Glencolin Court, North and East of Glencolin Rise, East of Glencolin Grove, North and West of Glen Road Rise, and North of Glen Road Grove, in that the applicant was a client of the company he was employed by.

**Withdrawn Items**

The Committee noted that the following items had been withdrawn from the agenda:

- Draft Planning Committee Operating Protocol; and
- LA04/2024/1623/F - Change of use from 4 bed dwelling (C1) to 5 bed House of Multiple Occupancy (Sui Generis) - 49 Woodcot Avenue.

**Committee Site Visits**

The Committee noted the site visits.

**Notification of Provision/Removal of Accessible Parking Bays**

The Committee noted the notifications regarding accessible parking bays at the following locations:

- Provision at 79 Cavendish Street; and
- Provision at Cuba Walk, adjacent to Scotch Row.

**Planning Appeals Notified**

The Committee noted the appeals decisions.

**Planning Decisions Issued**

The Committee noted the planning decisions issued in November, 2024.

**Live Applications for Major Development**

The Committee noted the list of live applications for major development.

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**Committee decisions that have yet to issue**

The Committee noted the list of Committee decisions which had not yet been issued.

**Miscellaneous Reports**

**Advanced Notice of Listed Buildings - 14 Carolan Road, 86 Lisburn Road, 88 Lisburn Road and 50 Windsor Avenue**

The Committee noted and supported the proposed listing of:

- 14 Carolan Road, Belfast, BT7 3HE;
- 86 Lisburn Rd, Belfast, BT9 6AF;
- 88 Lisburn Rd Belfast BT9 6AF; and
- 50 Windsor Avenue, Belfast, BT9 7DX.

**Delegation of Local applications subject to a NIW objection**

The Committee agreed to delegate to the Director of Planning and Building Control those Local planning applications to which NI Water had objected.

**Planning Applications previously considered**

**LA04/2020/0568/F & LA04/2020/0569/LBC - Demolition of building and structures at rear, refurbishment and alteration of frontage building and erection of 9 storey extension to rear to form hotel (74 bedrooms) with associated restaurant, bar & ancillary facilities and works (amended description). Demolition of building and structures at rear, part demolition to internal features, refurbishment and extension to listed building (amended description). - 21 Queen Street.**

The Planning Manager explained that the Committee had approved the applications at its meeting in November, however, the description of the application for full planning permission required amendment, to reference demolition.

He explained that the applications had been approved by the Committee, at its meeting in February, and that, since the decisions had been issued, a Pre-Action Protocol letter had been received from the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society (UAH) in June, 2024.

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He stated that officers had accepted that, on balance, the decisions should be quashed on the basis that it should have been clearer in the original Committee report that the building and structures proposed to be demolished at the rear were part of the Listed Building and how relevant planning policy that related to demolition of Listed Buildings had been applied.

He stated that the decisions had subsequently been quashed by the Court and the addendum report set out an updated assessment of the demolition of the Listed structures at the rear, having regard to the relevant planning policies and included updated advice from the Historic Environment Division (HED).

He reported that UAH had submitted a late objection that cited concern with regard to re-consultation and conflict with Policies BH1, BH2, DES1 and DES3, which implied that there were no exceptional reasons why the Listed Building could not be retained in its original or reasonably modified form.

The Planning Manager presented the amended description and asked the Committee to confirm its previous decisions.

The Committee agreed to grant planning permission and Listed Building Consent, subject to conditions and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and deal with any other matters that arise, provided that they were not substantive.

**LA04/2022/2103/F - Proposed change of use and redevelopment of the existing waste management facility and adjoining plant hire business to create a new waste disposal installation for the incineration of healthcare and hazardous waste streams and associated works. - 1 and 2 Duncrue Pass.**

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the application in order that a site visit could be undertaken.

(The Committee agreed to consider the following two items together.)

**LA04/2019/0081/F - Erection of 12No. apartments (social/affordable housing units comprising 3No. one bed & 9No. two bed) with provision of community pocket park, car parking, landscaping and all associated site and access works (Amended site location plan / site layout) - Lands at former Maple Leaf Club, 41-43 Park Avenue; and**

**LA04/2020/2325/F - Proposed erection 21no. dwellings (social/affordable housing units comprising 17no. townhouses and 4no. semi-**

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**detached), car parking, landscaping and all associated site and access works (Amended drawings, additional information) - Lands at former Maple Leaf Club, 41-43 Park Avenue.**

The Planning Manager summarised the applications and explained that they had been approved by the Committee in March, 2022 and re-approved in June, 2023, following the adoption of the Belfast Local Development Plan: Plan Strategy.

He stated that the applications were being reported back to the Committee as the Section 76 planning agreement remained outstanding after five years as there had been issues with regard to ownership of the land and that there had been an adjustment to the parking layout for the 12 apartments, reducing the number of spaces from 11 to 10.

He explained that the applications could not remain undetermined indefinitely as the Council must be mindful of its statutory performance targets and he recommended that, should the Section 76 planning agreement not be completed by the end of January, 2025, the applications would be reported back to the Committee at its meeting in February for redetermination.

The Committee agreed to grant planning permission in respect of both applications, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement, and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement.

The Committee noted that, should the Section 76 planning agreement not be completed by the end of January, 2025, the application would be brought back to the Committee for redetermination.

**LA04/2024/1020/F - Proposed change of use from dwelling (C1) to 3 Bedroom HMO (Sui generis) including partial demolition of existing rear extension to create new flat roof, fenestration changes and new roof light window to front (amended proposal description). - 6 Paxton Street**

The Principal Planning Officer outlined the application to the Committee and presented a site location plan, elevation imaging and floor plans.

She explained that, since the Committee's meeting in November, when the application was deferred in order that Members could undertake a site visit, the PAC had issued a decision to allow an appeal for an HMO. She reported that the main issues in the appeal related to whether the development proposal would unacceptably affect residential amenity and whether sufficient on-street car parking was available.

She stated that the Commissioner had considered that there was sufficient parking available in the vicinity of the site and that there was no evidence to support the view that an additional HMO would adversely impact residential amenity.

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She explained that the reasons for refusal were therefore not sustained and the appeal succeeded. She added that, having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal was considered acceptable and that it was recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to conditions.

A number of Members raised concerns with regard to a lack of amenity space, which one Member explained that it was clearly evident from the Committee site visit.

At the request of a Member, the Director of Planning and Building Control agreed to arrange a Committee Workshop to discuss a review of supplementary planning guidance with regard to HMOs.

**Proposal**

Moved by Councillor Ferguson;  
Seconded by Alderman Lawlor; and

Resolved – “That the Committee refuse the application due to a lack of amenity space and delegates authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the reasons for refusal.”

(The Chairperson (Councillor Carson) and Councillor Whyte left the meeting whilst the following item was under consideration, Deputy Chairperson (Councillor T. Brooks) in the Chair.)

**LA04/2023/2557/F - 260 no. dwellings,  
children's play area and other ancillary and  
associated works - Lands East of  
Meadowhill, North of Glencolin Court,  
North and East of Glencolin Rise, East of  
Glencolin Grove, North and West of Glen  
Road Rise, and North of Glen Road Grove**

The Planning Manager explained that the application had been considered and approved by the Committee at its meeting in June, 2024, and that part of the recommendation had been based on the implementation of a Travel Plan, secured via a clause within the final Section 76 planning agreement and dealing with the final consultation responses from DfI Roads and DfI Rivers, provided that they were not substantive.

He reported that, since the application was approved, subject to conditions, viability issues had been raised by the applicant in relation to the delivery of the proposed pedestrian crossing point on the Glen Road and the timing of its delivery. He stated that the applicant had requested that the Council consider reducing the travel card subsidy from three years to one year in order to enable the provision of the pedestrian crossing point prior to occupation of the first dwelling.



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He informed the Committee that the viability appraisal had been submitted by the applicant and reviewed by officers, and that it was recommended that the application be approved, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement.

The Committee agreed to grant planning permission, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement and to deal with any outstanding issues raised by DfI Roads, and any other matters that arise, including reviewing the applicant's viability appraisal and, if appropriate, amend the "green travel measures" offer to enable the construction and provision of the pedestrian crossing prior to occupation of the development.

(The Chairperson (Councillor Carson) in the Chair.)

**New Planning Applications**

**LA04/2024/0626/F - Erection of 104no. residential units across two detached blocks [ranging between 3 and 5 storeys] including 84 no. Social Rented Housing Units (comprising a mix of General Social Housing and Category 1 over 55's accommodation), landscaping, communal and private amenity space, ancillary cycle and car parking provision, and other associated site works - 1 Havelock House Havelock Place.**

The Planning Manager explained that a previous application at the site for 270no. apartments had been refused by the Committee in 2020 on the grounds of adverse impact on the setting of Listed Buildings, inappropriate height, scale and massing, design out of character with the area and over-dominant impact on neighbouring housing, loss of outlook, amenity and unacceptable harm to living conditions. He added that a subsequent appeal to the PAC had been dismissed.

He reported that the application proposed the construction of 104no. residential units, to include 84no. social rented units (approximately 80%), that would comprise a mix of general social housing and Category 1, over 55s accommodation.

He stated that the proposed development would comprise of two detached blocks, ranging in height from five storeys along the Ormeau Road elevation that would step down to three stories to the rear.

He outlined the following key issues for consideration of the application:

- Principle of housing in this location;
- Housing density;
- Affordable housing;
- Housing mix;
- Adaptable and accessible accommodation;

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- Design and placemaking;
- Impact on heritage assets;
- Residential quality and impact on amenity;
- Community cohesion and good relations;
- Security and design;
- Open space;
- Space Standards;
- Access and transport;
- Health impacts;
- Environmental protection and climate change;
- Flood risk and drainage;
- Waste-water infrastructure;
- Waste management;
- Natural heritage;
- Employability and skills;
- Section 76 planning agreement;
- Pre-application Community Consultation; and
- Matters raised in representations.

He explained that the site was a suitable and highly sustainable location for housing and that the proposal would make effective use of previously developed land and would support city centre living.

He reported that the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) was supportive of the on-site social housing proposals and that it had submitted a further response to the Council that reiterated its position on the proposal, stating that it fully supported a mixed-tenure scheme of 84 social homes, that there was a higher than average social housing stock in the area that would increase further with other schemes, and that there was a higher than average private rent and a below average owner occupation. He stated that the NIHE had asserted that consideration should be given to intermediate tenures, private for sale or private for rent homes and that waiting lists had applicants with different circumstances, needs and levels of points that required a wider variety of housing needs, therefore, it didn't anticipate difficulty in achieving fully mixed tenures for schemes of the scale proposed.

The Planning Manager informed the Committee that no objections from statutory or non-statutory consultees had been received and that there had been 52 representations received, that included one petition of objection submitted from the Donegal Pass Residents Association that raised concerns with regard to the planning process, form of housing, impact on amenity, height, density, design and impact on services and infrastructure. He informed the Committee that all concerns had been addressed within the report and summarised those issues that had been raised.

He stated that it was recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. D. Broderick, Mr. T. Stokes and Mr. A. Coulson and Ms. J. Sloan to the meeting, who attended on behalf of the applicant.

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Mr. Stokes outlined the history of the site and explained that the previous refusal had highlighted many areas of concern and issues to address, such as the impact of setting of listed buildings and the relationship to adjacent residential areas.

He stated that the proposal for a high quality shared housing scheme catered for a mix of housing needs and was located on a prime city centre site and key transport route and that it was sensitive to the adjacent residential areas through several key design features.

He explained that the proposal had initially been for 100% social housing scheme which had been amended during the course of the application to allow for ongoing discussions between the applicant, the housing association and NIHE, in terms of final tenure mix.

He stated that the ability to market the remaining 20 units as another form of affordable housing was currently being investigated and that it was clear from the most recent housing lists that had been provided by NIHE had shown that the demand for social housing had continued to increase.

He informed the Committee that the proposal represented a total investment of around £25m in the city, with a build period of just under two years.

In response to questions from Members with regard to the impact of the proposal on local residents and engagement with the community, Ms. Sloan explained that the housing association, along with the development partner felt that it had actively engaged with the local community.

A number of Members questioned the mixed tenure element of the proposal and the applicant's indication of an ultimate objective of a 100% social housing scheme. In response, Ms. Sloan explained that there was a critical need for social housing and that they believed that the local community also supported social housing at the site and stated that it was preferable that the scheme was approved to deliver 100% social housing.

The Planning Manager outlined the relevant policies and explained that the Council's 'Affordable Housing and Housing Mix' Supplementary Planning Guidance stated that "*In all cases, whether or not a proposal for mono-tenure social housing is deemed to deliver sustainable and balanced communities will be assessed on a case-by-case basis using the following factors:*

- *'The level of social housing need in the vicinity of the site and the availability of land to address such needs,*
- *The wider tenure and characteristics of an area, in order to minimise large areas of single tenure social housing; and*
- *Whether a scheme is proposed as 'shared housing'*"

He stated that, on balance, a 100% social housing scheme would be considered acceptable in this particular case and explained that to increase the minimum social housing requirement to 100% would overlap the NIHE's remit as a housing authority and that the Section 76 planning agreement would not provide sufficient flexibility, should the NIHE decide not to support a scheme any greater than 80% social housing.

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**Proposal**

Moved by Councillor Murphy,  
Seconded by Councillor Doran,

“That the application is approved on the basis that all 104 residential units be provided as social rented housing (100%) and that this shall be secured by the Section 76 planning agreement.

That the Committee grant planning permission, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement and delegates authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement and deal with any other matters that arise, provided that they are not substantive.”

On a vote, thirteen Members voted for the proposal and four against and it was declared carried.

At the request of Councillor Murphy, the Committee agreed to invite the NIHE to attend a discussion with the Committee to obtain clarity on its interpretation of the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance.

**LA04/2024/1138/F and LA04/2024/1141/DCA - Demolition of existing buildings and construction of Purpose Built Multi Storey Managed Student Accommodation (821no. rooms) with additional Short Term use outside of term time. Proposed heights of between 6-9 storeys and associated shared/ancillary spaces with ground floor retail/retail service units, resident's gym/cinema and ancillary development/uses. (Amended Description) - Lands including and to the rear of 24-54 Castle Street, 2-6 Queen Street, 1-7 & 21 Fountain Street**

The Planning Manager outlined the application to the Committee and highlighted the following key issues for consideration:

- Principle of PBMSA in this location;
- Design, Placemaking, and impact on Conservation Area;
- Impact on heritage assets;
- Impact on Conservation Area;
- Impact on amenity;
- Climate change;
- Open space;
- Access and transport;
- Health impacts;

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- Environmental protection;
- Flood risk and drainage;
- Waste-water infrastructure;
- Natural heritage;
- Waste management;
- Section 76 planning agreement; and
- Pre-Application Community Consultation.

He stated that the site was a highly sustainable location within the city centre and close to transport links such as Grand Central Station and other public transport services.

He informed the Committee that a late objection had been received from the owner of 11 Fountain Street, where Voodoo Bar was located, citing concerns with regard to its operation adjacent to future residents and suggested noise mitigation measures be considered. The Planning Manager explained that a noise impact assessment had been submitted and addressed by Environmental Health and that conditions would ensure that noise levels for prospective residents would be at acceptable levels with considerations to Voodoo Bar.

The Planning Manager stated that it was recommended that the application be approved, subject to conditions.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement, and resolve the outstanding consultation from DAERA NIEA in relation to the ecology report, and deal with any other issues that arise, provided that they were not substantive.

**LA04/2023/4405/F - Redevelopment of existing storage sheds, temporary office structures and yard area to provide new replacement Analytical Services Laboratories - Westland House, 40 Old Westland Road**

The Principal Planning Officer outlined the application and summarised the following key issues for consideration:

- Principle of development;
- Demolition / removal of structures;
- Design, character and appearance;
- Impact on amenity;
- Flood risk and drainage;
- Health impacts;
- Access, movement and parking;
- Natural heritage / biodiversity;
- Noise, odour, and other environmental impacts;
- Climate change, trees, and landscaping;
- Developer contributions and employability and skills;

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- Open space; and
- Pre-community consultation.

She reported that no statutory consultees had raised any objections and no third-party representations had been received.

She stated that it was recommended that the application be approved, subject to conditions.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and deal with any other matters that arise, provided that they were not substantive.

**LA04/2024/0122/F - Proposed mixed use development comprising of 62No. social housing units (mix of dwellings and apartments) and a new children's centre, car parking, landscaping, open space and all associated site and access works. - Former Belfast Metropolitan College Campus, Whiterock Road.**

The Senior Planning Officer summarised the application and explained that the site was a suitable location for housing, being within a generally residential area and would make effective use of previously developed land.

He stated that the height, scale and massing of the proposed buildings were in keeping with the surrounding area and that the proposal would provide dedicated in-curtilage and off-street parking in a highly sustainable location with access to public transport.

He reported that the NIHE was supportive of the social housing proposals and that statutory and non-statutory consultees, in general, supported the proposal and that no third-party representations had been received.

He stated that, having regard to the Development Plan and other material considerations, it was recommended that planning permission would be granted, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. P. Stinson and Ms. D. Lyle to the meeting, speaking on behalf of the applicant.

Ms. Lyle stated that the need for homes had been clearly communicated by those who had attended the pre-application community consultation event and that, overall, there had been clear support for the development which had been maintained throughout the application process with no objections having been made.

She explained that discussions with officers had led to an increase in the overall public amenity space in the proposal and would ensure better integration between the spaces and residents.

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She stated that the application was supported by a Section 76 planning agreement that would secure the delivery of social housing, green travel measures and the verifications of the proactive flood lighting upgrade.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement, and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement, and deal with any other matters that arise, provided that they were not substantive.

**LA04/2024/0475/F - Renewal of planning permission ref: LA04/2018/1755/F. New 7 classroom primary school and single unit nursery on the former site of the now demolished Ulidia Primary School. Existing site entrances to be retained and used for site access with proposed car parking, bus parking and drop off, footpaths, boundary treatment, and hard and soft play areas. - Ulidia Resource Centre, Somerset Street.**

The Senior Planning Officer outlined the proposal to the Committee and highlighted the following key issues:

- Principle of development;
- Visual impact of the proposed redevelopment;
- Impact on residential amenity;
- Impact on character of the area;
- Impact on transport infrastructure and road safety;
- Flood risk / drainage;
- Health impacts;
- Environmental impact;
- Climate change; and
- Community infrastructure.

He explained that the site was located within lands reserved for landscape, amenity or recreation use within the Belfast Urban Area Plan (BUAP) and that no objections had been received from any statutory or non-statutory consultees.

He reported that a petition had been received which objected to the proposal based on the impact of increased traffic and congestion and stated that all concerns had been addressed within the report.

He stated that, having regard to the Development Plan and other material considerations, the proposal was considered acceptable and it was recommended that planning permission was granted, subject to conditions.

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The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and deal with any other matters that arise, provided that they were not substantive.

**LA04/2024/1591/F and LA04/2024/1593/DCA - Demolition of the existing dwelling and construction of a two-storey replacement dwelling with accommodation in the roof, new garden store, widened site access, new gates and pillars and associated site works. - 20 Deramore Park.**

The Senior Planning Officer provided the Committee with an overview of the application and explained the following key considerations:

- Demolition of dwelling was acceptable in principle- made no material contribution to Conservation Area and Demolition Justification Statement considered in regards to ENV 2;
- Proposed height, scale, massing and design was considered contextually appropriate and would enhance the Conservation Area;
- Conservation Advice had no objection to demolition but raised concerns in relation to design of proposed replacement. The response had been considered;
- It was considered that there were no adverse or unacceptable impacts to neighbouring amenity; and
- Two objections had been submitted and were considered.

He stated that, having regard to the Development Plan and other material considerations, it was recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to conditions.

He pointed out that, the Committee report erroneously indicated that a Section 76 planning agreement had been required and confirmed that there was no requirement within the application.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and deal with any other matters that arise, provided that they were not substantive.

**LA04/2024/1744/LBC - Installation of metal gates to the Titanic Memorial Garden at the ground of Belfast City Hall - Belfast City Hall, 2 Donegall Square North**

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the application in order that a site visit could be undertaken.



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**LA04/2023/3691/F - Public realm scheme: Reconfiguration of Little Patrick Street to single lane carriageway, including localised shared space, traffic calming and restricted access to enable servicing / emergency access. Traffic calming measures provided to Little York Street. Other works to include installation of planters with integrated seating, tree planting, rain gardens, bespoke lighting pillars, catenary lighting and surface improvements. (Amended Plans and Information Received) - Little Patrick Street and Little York Street.**

The Principal Planning Officer summarised the application to the Committee and stated that, having regard to the Development Plan and other material consideration, it was recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to conditions.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and deal with any other matters that arise, provided that they were not substantive.

**LA04/2024/1046/F - Erection of a store to be used as a workshop for Eurobins. - Duncrue Complex, Duncrue Road**

The Principal Planning Officer outlined the application and stated that it was recommended that the application would be approved, subject to conditions.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and deal with any other matters that arise, provided that they were not substantive.

**LA04/2024/2016/F - Erection of a life-sized statue of Rory Gallagher on the existing patio area to the side of Ulster Hall - Ulster Hall 30 Bedford Street**

The Committee considered the application and granted planning permission, subject to conditions, and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and deal with the outstanding consultations and any new issues that arise, provided that they were not substantive.

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**Restricted Items**

**Quarter 2 Finance Report**

The Director of Planning and Building Control provided the Committee with an update on the Quarter 2 financial position for the Planning Committee that included a summary of the financial indicators and an executive summary.

The Committee noted the report and the associated financial reporting pack.

Chairperson

## **Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee**

Thursday, 19th December, 2024

SPECIAL HYBRID MEETING OF THE MEMBERS OF THE BELFAST  
WATERFRONT AND ULSTER HALL LTD. SHAREHOLDERS' COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Ferguson (Chairperson);  
Alderman Copeland; and  
Councillors Bell, Bower, Brennan, R. Brooks, Canavan,  
Collins, Flynn, Maghie, McCabe, McKay, Ó Néill and Verner.

In attendance: Mr. D. Martin, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;  
Mr. C. Campbell, Divisional Solicitor;  
Mr. J. Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance  
Manager; and  
Mr. C. Mealey, Committee Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors S. Douglas and Nic Bhranair.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

### **Restricted Item**

**The information contained in the report associated with the following item is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.**

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the Press and public from the meeting during discussion of the item as, due to the nature of the item, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Section 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

The Members were also reminded that the content of 'restricted' reports and any discussion which took place during closed session must be treated as 'confidential information' and that no such information should be disclosed to the public as per Paragraph 4.15 of the Code of Conduct.

### **Chief Executive Recruitment**

The Strategic Director of Place and Economy provided the Committee with an update in respect of the appointment and remuneration of a new Chief Executive to Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall (BWUH) Ltd.

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He provided, for the Members information, a timeline outlining BWUH Ltd.'s recruitment process for a new Chief Executive.

He advised the Committee that, at its meeting on 13th December, 2024, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee had agreed that the governance arrangements between Belfast City Council and the BWUH Ltd. Board be added to the assignments to be undertaken by Audit, Governance and Risk Services.

The Strategic Director of Place and Economy and the Divisional Solicitor answered a range of questions from the Members in relation to the timeline and the review of governance arrangements, to be undertaken by Audit, Governance and Risk Services.

After discussion, the Committee noted:

- i. the appointment and remuneration of a new Chief Executive to BWUH Ltd;
- ii. the timeline in respect of the recruitment process for a new Chief Executive to BWUH Ltd;
- iii. that, at its meeting on 13th December, 2024, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee had agreed that the governance arrangements between Belfast City Council and the BWUH Ltd. Board be added to the assignments to be undertaken by Audit, Governance and Risk Services; and
- iv. that the terms of reference for a review of the governance arrangements, to be undertaken by Audit, Governance and Risk Services, would be submitted to a future meeting of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Shareholders' Committee.

Chairperson

## Climate and City Resilience Committee

Thursday, 5th December, 2024

### HYBRID MEETING OF THE CLIMATE AND CITY RESILIENCE COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor R-M Donnelly (Chairperson);  
Aldermen Copeland and McCoubrey;  
Councillors Anglin, Bell, Bower, Brennan, R. Brooks,  
T. Brooks, Bunting, P. Doherty, M. Donnelly,  
P. Donnelly, S. Douglas, Flynn and Walsh.

In attendance: Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;  
Ms. D. Caldwell, Climate Commissioner;  
Ms. C. Shortt, Monitoring, Learning and Reporting Officer; and  
Mrs. L. McLornan, Committee Services Officer.

### Apologies

No apologies were reported.

### Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 7th November were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 2nd December.

### Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

### Global Destination Sustainability Index for 2024

The Monitoring, Learning and Reporting Officer advised the Committee that the Global Destination Sustainability (GDS) Index was a destination-level programme which measured, benchmarked and improved the sustainability strategy and performance of tourism and events destinations.

She reported that the GDS-Index was the leading destination-level performance measurement and benchmarking tool. The Committee was advised that it was a third-party evaluation and that it scored a destination under the following themes:

- **Environmental** - Including a city's performance pertaining to its policies and infrastructure, such as climate change commitment, carbon emissions, renewable energies, resource and water management, public transport, and air pollution levels.
- **Social** - Indicating the performance of the city against indicators of SDG integration, Corruption, Personal Safety, Access to Information and Communications, Health and Wellness, and Inclusivity, using external

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sources such as the Social Progress Imperative Index, and Corruption Perceptions Index.

- **Supplier** - Addressing the sustainability commitment and performance of the local meetings' industry supply chain, including airports, events agencies, hotels, venues, and restaurants.
- **Destination management performance** - Indicating the sustainability commitment, including questions pertaining to maturity of a destination's sustainability and regeneration strategy, leadership, communication of sustainability initiatives (to support client planners), and the accuracy of their reporting on sustainability operations.

The Members were advised that there were 77 indicators assessing policies and infrastructure, destination management and sustainability performance amongst the tourism supply-chain across each of the themes. The survey had been expanded in 2024 to include regenerative tourism, circular economy practices and enhanced climate action.

The Monitoring, Learning and Reporting Officer highlighted that the GDS-Index results for 2024 recognised Belfast as the most sustainable visitor destination within the UK and Ireland. The Members were advised that, through the collaborative efforts of Visit Belfast, Belfast City Council and a wide range of tourism industry partners, Belfast now ranked as the most sustainable visitor destination in the UK and on the island of Ireland. It was noted that, in 2023, Belfast had ranked 11th and that it had moved up to 9th place this year, alongside Sydney, Singapore, Oslo and Copenhagen, which were also within the Top 10.

The Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the officers for the hard work which had been undertaken to attain the result for the City.

The Climate Commissioner suggested that the Committee would invite Visit Belfast to present at a future meeting to discuss the measures which had been undertaken to achieve the high ranking.

After discussion the Committee:

- noted that Belfast had been ranked in 9th place in the 2024 Global Destination Sustainability Index and that it was now the highest-ranking destination in the UK and on the island of Ireland; and
- agreed to invite Visit Belfast to present at a future meeting.

**Heat Network Update**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

- 1.1 To update members on the ongoing work to explore a heat network in the city centre.**

## **2.0 Recommendation**

### **2.1 Note the contents of the report, specifically the following updates:**

- i The internal Heat Network Working Group established to help support delivery has been expanded to include the Senior Programme Delivery Manager in Property & Projects and the Marketing Manager, City Development.**
- ii A technical advisor (AECOM) has been appointed to develop a heat map of a heat network in the city centre by Feb 2025.**
- iii A commercial and legal advisor (Bird and Bird) has been appointed to advise Council on the legislative and regulatory requirements, potential delivery models and procurement implications associated with connecting to a heat network.**

## **3.0 Main Report**

### **3.1 Background**

- 3.2 Belfast has a high dependence on gas and oil for heating buildings across the city and low levels of insulation which is contributing to high emissions of greenhouse gas and high levels of fuel poverty exacerbated by the energy and cost of living crisis. Unlike power and transport, decarbonising heat in buildings can be challenging due to age and quality of the building stock.**
- 3.3 Belfast's high density residential areas in close proximity to significant base loads (buildings with a high heat demand) and local sources of waste heat is unusual for most cities and make it ideal for a heat network.**
- 3.4 Heat networks are one of five priority projects identified in the Local Area Energy Plan as a cost-effective measure to decarbonise the city, reduce fuel poverty, create employment and reduce exposure of households and local businesses to price volatility from imported fossil fuels. A heat network would make a significant contribution to Belfast's emission reduction targets – 66% reduction by 2025; 80% by 2030; 100% by 2050 and also to Northern Ireland's 'net-zero' emissions target of 2050. as well as reduce fuel poverty.**

**Various low carbon technology options exist: geothermal, water source heat pump etc. Heat networks tend to be marginal investments with high upfront costs. Attracting private sector finance is challenging in the absence of any grant funding – schemes in other parts of the UK provide 50% capex funding.**

In order to create a strong value proposition and compete for investment, proponents of this scheme will have to consider:

- including measures that reduce the operating costs utilise such as waste heat, a direct wire to a wind or solar facility (which reduces the electricity costs of heating the water), consider producing cooling as well as heat and grid constraint payments;
- coordinate a sizeable base load of initial off-takers are willing to sign heat supply agreements to give confidence to investors that an initial upfront investment will yield a financial return;
- providing land to establish an energy centre; and
- engaging with central government departments to advocate for grant support.

Off-takers will typically be required to sign a 15-20 year heat supply agreement with a commitment to only use heat from the network. Costs will include a connection fee, a fixed charge for O&M and a variable charge depending on the amount of heat drawn off the network.

### 3.1 Progress update

Following the last update to members in February 2024.

### 3.2

1. The internal Heat Network Working Group (comprising representatives from Climate Team, Procurement, Property and Projects, and Legal Services) established to help support delivery has been expanded to include the Senior Programme Delivery Manager in Property & Projects and the Marketing Manager, City Development.

### 3.3

2. A technical advisor (AECOM) has been appointed to develop a heat map of a heat network in the city centre - The Climate Team is currently working through a long RFI from AECOM which involves requesting data from 3rd parties. A heat supply analysis and the low and zero carbon heat source analysis is largely complete (pending receipt of sewer mapping data from NIW). Heat demand clusters and potential Energy Centre locations are also being identified. This will enable AECOM to commence the design and optioneering ahead of the techno-economic modelling.

### 3.4

3. A commercial and legal advisor (Bird and Bird) has been appointed to advise Council on the legislative and regulatory requirements, potential delivery models and procurement implications associated with connecting



to a heat network. This has involved meetings with some of the potential off-takers (EANI, NIHE, QUB and UU) that could provide large heat loads for phase 1 and a workshop with CMT. The potential delivery models for delivering city-scale heat networks were presented to Committee in November include:

- a. Local Authority Delivered;
  - b. Private Sector Delivered; and
  - c. Local Authority (Public/Private) Joint Venture (JV ESCo; Infrastructure/Operation Split; Concession; and Strategic Partnership).
4. A Project Manager (from Arup) has been appointed to coordinate the Innovate UK funded Net Zero Belfast Pathfinder project (£150K) which commenced in June 2024 to de-risk a heat network and a solar PV project.
  5. Engagement has also continued with other key stakeholders including DFE and the NI Utility Regulator on the potential use of a private heat network in Belfast as a use case to inform the development regulatory framework for heat networks in NI.

### 3.5 Next steps

1. Continue to engage with all of the stakeholders above.
2. Delivery of a heat map of a heat network in the city centre by AECOM (anticipated Feb 2025).
3. Continue to work with Bird and Bird to ensure Belfast is the client of choice in a competitive landscape for heat developers.
4. Continue to deliver the Innovate UK funded Net Zero Belfast Pathfinder project in partnership with the Energy Systems Catapult (with an update to members in due course). This work will include an opportunities assessment for local communities.
5. Continue the support and oversight of the programme of work by the internal Heat Network Working Group.

### 3.6 Financial and Resource Implications

The project is funded via the £150k funding award from Innovate UK and in-year City and Organisational Strategy budget.

### 3.7 Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment

None identified. Engagement with Equality and Rural Needs team is ongoing across the Programme.”

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The Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed to receive a presentation from the Gateshead project at a future meeting.

**Notices of Motion - Quarterly Update**

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy provided the Committee with an update on the Motions and Issues Raised in Advance for which it was responsible.

He outlined that an Issue Raised in Advance, namely to receive a presentation on the Connswater Community Greenway, was recommended for closure given that it had since taken place.

The Committee:

- noted the updates on the Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance that it was responsible for; and
- agreed to the closure of the Issue Raised in Advance, "Presentation on a vision for the Connswater Community Greenway".

Chairperson

## Standards and Business Committee

Tuesday, 7th January, 2025

### HYBRID MEETING OF THE STANDARDS AND BUSINESS COMMITTEE HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM AND REMOTELY VIA TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Lawlor (Chairperson) and Alderman Rodgers;  
Councillors Bradley, P. Donnelly, Carson, de Faoite, D. Douglas, Groogan, Kelly, Lyons, Maghie, Murphy, F. McAteer, McCormick, , McDonough-Brown and R. McLaughlin.

In attendance: Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services;  
Mr. J. Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance Manager, and  
Ms. C. Donnelly, Committee Services Officer.

#### **Apologies**

No apologies for inability to attend were reported.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 21st November were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 2nd December.

#### **Motions**

The Committee considered the following two motions which had been received in advance of the Council's meeting on 9th January:

#### **Vital Role of Trees**

The Committee agreed that the motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Abernethy and seconded by Councillor Maghie, be referred, in the first instance, to the People and Communities Committee.

#### **Rates Break Sandy Row Business Community**

The Committee agreed that the motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Kelly and seconded by Councillor Bunting, be referred, in the first instance, to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Chairperson

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