

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



**Belfast
City Council**

22nd May, 2025

MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the Lavery Room, City Hall and remotely via Teams on Friday, 23rd May, 2025 at 9.30 am, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

1. Routine Matters

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

2. Restricted Items

- (a) Social Supermarket Fund 25/26 (Pages 1 - 10)
- (b) City Hall Income Generation Project (Pages 11 - 14)
- (c) Asset Management (Pages 15 - 24)

3. Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues

- (a) Corporate Plan 2025-28 and Corporate Delivery Plan 2025-26 (Pages 25 - 104)

- (b) Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 (Pages 105 - 154)
 - (c) Sustain Exchange Climate Leadership Project - sponsorship (Pages 155 - 158)
 - (d) Planning Information (Pages 159 - 172)
 - (e) Smart Belfast: Inclusive Innovation programme (Pages 173 - 176)
 - (f) Diversity Mark Sponsorship (Pages 177 - 180)
 - (g) Sign Language Bill - response to Call for Evidence (Pages 181 - 192)
 - (h) City Centre Governance (Pages 193 - 198)
 - (i) Developer Contributions for Wastewater Infrastructure - Consultation (Pages 199 - 244)
4. **Physical Programme and Asset Management**
- (a) Physical Programme (Pages 245 - 250)
 - (b) Asset Management -moved to restricted
 - (c) Area Working Groups Update May 2025 (Pages 251 - 268)
5. **Finance, Procurement and Performance**
- (a) Discretionary Payments Framework (Pages 269 - 280)
 - (b) Requests for Funding (Pages 281 - 284)
 - (c) Contracts update (Pages 285 - 294)
 - (d) Commercial and Procurement Services Social Value Working Group (Pages 295 - 324)
6. **Equality and Good Relations**
- (a) Minutes of Shared City Partnership Meeting on 12th May 2025 (Pages 325 - 342)
 - (b) Equality and Diversity: Equality Screening and Rural Needs Outcome Report Quarter 4 2024-25 (Pages 343 - 350)
 - (c) Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 – DAERA Annual Monitoring Report (Pages 351 - 354)
7. **Operational Issues**
- (a) Minutes of Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum (Pages 355 - 360)
 - (b) Requests for use of the City Hall and the provision of Hospitality (Pages 361 - 366)

- (c) Use of City Hall Grounds - Trad Fest July 2025 (Pages 367 - 370)
- (d) Minutes of the Meeting Social Policy Working Group (Pages 371 - 380)

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

- (a) The installation of dual-language signage in Olympia, including GLL/BETTER information signage - Councillor Beattie to raise
- (b) The installation of dual-language signage on the Forth-Meadow Greenway - Councillor Beattie to raise
- (c) An update on the next stage in the development of the Irish Language Policy - Councillor Beattie to raise

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank



Subject:	Corporate Plan 2025-2028 and Corporate Delivery Plan 2025-26
Date:	23 May 2025
Reporting Officer:	John Walsh, Chief Executive John Tully, Director of City & Organisational Strategy
Contact Officers:	Kevin Heaney, Head of Inclusive Growth & Anti-Poverty Geoff Dickson, Strategic Planning & Policy Manager Karen Anderson-Gillespie, Strategic Performance Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</p> <p>Insert number <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 	
<p>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <p>After Committee Decision</p> <p>After Council Decision</p> <p>Sometime in the future</p> <p>Never</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 100px; position: relative;"> <div style="position: absolute; top: 0; width: 100%; height: 25px;"></div> <div style="position: absolute; top: 25px; width: 100%; height: 25px;"></div> <div style="position: absolute; top: 50px; width: 100%; height: 25px;"></div> <div style="position: absolute; top: 75px; width: 100%; height: 25px;"></div> </div> </div>	

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To present Committee with the Corporate Plan 2025-2028 and the accompanying annual Corporate Delivery Plan 2025-26 for consideration and approval.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. agree the draft Corporate Plan (2025-28) as attached at Appendix 1, for publication, subject to minor edits based on Member comments; ii. agree the draft annual Corporate Delivery Plan (2025-26) as attached at Appendix 2.
3.0	Key Issues
	<p>Background</p> <p>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.</p> <p>3.2 Members have set the challenge to the Council of pivoting its focus and resources to meet the challenges and opportunities which emerge over this Council term. The process through which the new three-year corporate plan has been co-designed with elected members was essential and provided a platform to help inform and connect the Council's resource planning cycles (budgets, people, capital and assets) and the development of a Medium-Term Financial Plan.</p> <p>3.3 Members will be aware of the discussions which has taken place since the election of the new Council through Standing Committees, Party Group Leaders meetings and all Member workshops in relation to the emerging draft Corporate Plan and proposed priorities for future investment.</p> <p>3.4 In December 2024, SP&R Committee agreed that a draft Corporate Plan be published for a public consultation exercise between January – March 2025. Whilst response numbers were small, most comments received were supportive of the priorities outlined in the corporate plan. Minor changes to language have been made to the draft corporate plan where feedback highlighted the need for greater clarity in some areas.</p> <p>Corporate Plan 2025-2028</p>

3.5	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.
3.6	The corporate plan is also a key communication tool for staff across the organisation in understanding the strategic importance of their work in terms of helping to shape the city and improving people's lives. This contribution and impact ranges from cleaning our streets, lifting bins, maintaining our excellent parks, delivering key strategic programmes such as our employability schemes, delivering large scale events or providing essential back office support.
3.7	Subject to Committee consideration and approval, it is proposed that the members approve the draft Corporate Plan 2025-28 for publication (subject to Full Council). Should Members do so, it will be published online, and an underpinning communications plan will commence in June that articulates the Members ambitions for the Council, as laid out in our corporate plan.
	Corporate Delivery Plan 2025-2026
3.8	As the 3 year corporate plan is strategic in nature, it is accompanied by an annual Corporate Delivery Plan (2025-16). This gives Members greater detail on what will be delivered against each priority with the resources allocated for 2025-26. It also contains a series of performance indicators for 2025-26 and associated targets. This give Members greater oversight of what is being delivered within the financial year and articulates the scale of work which continues to be delivered by Council and the impact of this within communities across the city. Members are asked to endorse this draft Delivery Plan, which will form the basis of progress updates to Committee throughout the year and accompanied by a year-end report to SP&R Committee.
	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u>
3.9	There are no immediate resource implications. However, the priorities agreed in the corporate plan will form the basis of the rate setting process over the coming years. Members are also asked to note that a financial planning workshop for Members is currently being arranged that will discuss the financial needs of the priorities contained within the corporate plan.
	<u>Equality of Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</u>
3.10	Equality screening has been completed as part of the plan development process.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached

	Appendix 1 – Corporate Plan 2025-28 Appendix 2 – Corporate Delivery Plan 2025-26
--	---

Corporate Plan

2025 - 2028

Page 29



Belfast
City Council

www.belfastcity.gov.uk

Contents

Welcome	3
The city vision.....	4
Our core values and behaviours.....	5
Belfast at a glance	6
Our city priorities	7
Our Services.....	8
Foundations for Success.....	10
Our People and Communities	13
Our Economy.....	16
Our Place	19
Our Planet	23
Compassionate city	26
Financing the plan	30
Measuring and reviewing our progress	31
Our Elected Members	32





Welcome

“Our residents and our staff are at the heart of everything we do”

Our new Council Corporate Plan is a significant milestone in the development of our organisation. It sets out a clear and positive statement of what we want to achieve for Belfast over the next four years, aligned to our Medium-Term Financial Strategy, it sets out the high-level policy direction for the whole organisation to be delivered through our key strategies, investments, our service delivery plans and the huge contributions that our staff make to the city every day.

The Corporate Plan takes the priorities of the city’s community plan ([The Belfast Agenda](#)) and sets out the ways in which the council will deliver these to grow a sustainable, inclusive economy, and equitable society.

Belfast is a place where ambition thrives. It is a place where people get things done, translating aspiration into action. We are proud of what we have achieved over the past two years and are very excited about the future for our council and city as we go forward with confidence to fulfil and advance the objectives of our Corporate Plan 2025–28.

While Belfast has faced unprecedented levels of uncertainty in recent years as a result of global shocks such as COVID-19 and the cost-of-living crisis, our citizens have demonstrated great resilience, and it is vitally important we don’t lose sight of delivering strong local services that contribute to tackling inequalities and improving the quality of life for our residents. As we plan ahead it is essential that we continue to engage with political leaders and decision-makers at all levels, and with communities across the city to enable us to continue to develop and deliver a successful city that works for everyone.

We are proud to serve Belfast and represent our residents. This is why our new Corporate Plan will put our residents at the heart of everything we do. Our collaborative approach with partners and communities offers a path to redesigning and delivering services that are responsive to local needs and delivering the investment that are essential for continuing success. The new Plan means that citizens, city partners, and investors will know what direction the council is heading, what it stands for and provide the opportunity to hold us to account.

Chair of Strategic Policy & Resources Committee

The city vision

Belfast will be a city re-imagined and resurgent.

A great place to live and work for everyone.

Beautiful, well connected and culturally vibrant, it will be a sustainable city shared and loved by all its citizens, free from the legacy of conflict.

A compassionate city offering opportunities for everyone.

A confident and successful city energising a dynamic and prosperous city region.

A magnet for talent and business and admired around the world.

A city people dream to visit.



Our core values and behaviours

Creativity



We are creative, always seeking new ways of working. Imagining and delivering a bright future for the city. We encourage innovation and new ideas in all that we do; giving positive recognition to those who contribute to our creativity.

Responsibility



We accept responsibility for our actions, individually and collectively. We act responsibly, respecting each other and taking care of Belfast's cultures and the environment.

Integrity



We are open and honest. We adhere to the highest possible ethical standards. We want the people of Belfast to trust us to do the right thing. We trust and support one another.

Problem Solving



We overcome problems through hard work, ingenuity, determination and real resilience. We overcome barriers and resistance and use our creativity to think about challenges in a different way.

Belfast at a glance



348,005 Belfast population



15% of people are aged 65+



72% of school leavers achieve at least 5 GCSEs A*-C including English and Maths



11,400 VAT registered businesses



247,100 jobs in the city (approx)



£28,677 average salary



70,000 students in further/higher education, training or apprenticeships



67% employment rate



96% of school leavers enter education, employment or training



90% of resident properties have broadband coverage; more than double UK average



57% Achieve 2+ A-Levels A* - E



149,200 Households



access to world class airports, harbour and strong public transport infrastructure



800,000 trees with plans to plant 1m more by 2035



33,000 properties at risk of surface water flooding



generates the regions lowest amount of household waste per capital



92% of residents consider the city as welcoming



42% aged 30 years or younger

Belfast

Page 34

Northern
Ireland

Scotland

Ireland

Wales

England

Our City Priorities for 2035

Our Corporate Plan sets out how we will deliver against the strategic priority areas for action (themes) and the significant ambitions set out within the Belfast Agenda for our city and its people. We are committed to a journey of continuous improvement, delivering strong civic leadership and creating a modern and responsive organisation. We want to continue delivering high quality services whilst continuing to invest in local community assets and facilities.

Our focus for the next three years will include:

Theme 1: Our services

Delivering responsive and value for money services.

Theme 2: Our organisation

Ensuring the correct foundations are in place and we continue to be a fit-for-purpose organisation.

Theme 3: Our people and communities

Making life better for all our residents.

Theme 4: Our economy

Creating inclusive, innovative and sustainable growth, learning and opportunity.

Theme 5: Our place

Creating a liveable and connected, vibrant and competitive city.

Theme 6: Our planet

Creating a sustainable and nature-positive city.

Theme 7: Compassionate city

Making Belfast a welcoming, caring, fair and inclusive city- leaving no one behind.



Our services

Delivering high quality, effective and efficient services that meet your needs is at the heart of everything we do. We will continually strive to invest in improving our services and facilities to ensure they meet the expectations of our services users and improve the lives of the people of Belfast. Below are some of the key services we delivered in 2023-24 and will continue to deliver over the course of this corporate plan. For a full list of all our services, please visit: www.belfastcity.gov.uk/all-services

Our people and communities

- 20 major projects were completed including:
 - The restoration and expansion of Templemore Baths and upgrades at Belfast Zoo
 - Upgrades to Sally Gardens, Areema Drive, Cavehill and Loughside play parks
- Thousands of people were supported through our £1m hardship programme in response to the cost-of-living crisis
- 3,483 housing, 2,336 food safety and 703 health and safety inspections were carried out
- 1,530 daytime and 3,767 nighttime noise requests were responded to
- 1,142 burials and 3,261 cremations were carried out.
- 3,987 births, 3,294 deaths, 1,500 marriages and 20 civil partnerships were registered
- Summer schemes were delivered at 30 community and play centres to 989 children

Our planet

- 200 of our larger vehicles (comprising 90% of our fleet fuel consumption) were switched to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) reducing carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxide emissions by 25%
- Nine Faster (50kW+) chargers for electric vehicles were installed at leisure centres
- The proportion of all waste sent to landfill was 29%
- The household reuse, recycling and composting rate was 41%
- 10.5 million bins (including Bryson collections) and 70,000 bulky waste items were collected
- 116 community cleanups involving 1,591 volunteers were facilitated
- 884 fixed penalty notices for littering were issued

12km
walking and cycling path completed as part of **Forth Meadow Community Greenway**

23,700
health and **fitness** members used our gyms, pools, fitness studios and courts

1,000 people (approx) benefited from the **Healthwise programme**

17,941
trees were planted - a total of 110,254 since 2021

58,500
(approx) tonnes of waste was recycled, reused and composted

19,000
young people attended 258 school visits and 447 litter workshops



Our economy

- 688 individuals were engaged in business start-up activities
- 263 business plans were produced for start-up businesses
- 57 organisations were supported to start a social economy or cooperative business
- 348 existing businesses were supported with business growth activity
- 222 people were supported to achieve vocationally- specific, level 3-5 qualifications
- 900 people were supported through Gateway to Choices (G2C) to access training and employment
- 850 people attended our Belfast Jobsfair
- 238 young people benefited from our GCSE Support Programme
- 1,759 individuals were engaged through enterprise awareness activity
- There were 816 participants on our Employment and Upskilling Academies

Our place

- 27 major and 1,300 local planning applications were determined
- 179 dangerous structures dealt with
- 435 entertainment licensing applications were processed and we undertook 829 inspections
- 6,143 building regulations applications were processed and 15,026 inspections undertaken
- The St Patrick's Day music weekend events attracted 30,000 people
- The Maritime Festival attracted 80,000 people
- 213,000 visitors were welcomed to Belfast Zoo
- 310,500 visitors were welcomed to City Hall exhibition and guided tours
- Over 234,000 visitors were welcomed and 808 events held at 2 Royal Avenue
- Six new Belfast Bikes stations and six active travel cycle stands were installed
- 112,000 journeys were taken on Belfast Bikes
- New Brown's Bridge on the Lagan Towpath was installed
- Funding support for over 100 cultural organisations annually

1,759

individuals were engaged through enterprise awareness activity

263

business plans were developed, supporting the creation of 233 jobs through our support for business start-ups

816

participants on our Employment and Upskilling Academies, with 87% progressing into work or gaining a better job

1,600

new homes were approved

Belfast 2024

an ambitious cultural celebration for our city - was launched

1 million+

Over one million visitors were welcomed to St George's Market

Our Organisation

Foundations for
success



Our Organisation: Foundations for Success

‘Our ambition is to be recognised for excellence in our role as service provider and as an employer’

We recognise the need to continually develop and improve our internal services to support our key priorities and ambitions set out within this corporate plan. Our foundations reflect our capacity to deliver and achieve successful outcomes, both for the organisation and the city, and we will work to ensure their strength over the next three years.

People

Our People are at the heart of everything we do. We will prioritise the implementation of our **People Strategy (2023 – 2026)** to provide opportunities for employees to develop and progress within the organisation. We will support departments to develop and implement strategic workforce planning to address resource and skills gaps whilst embedding inclusive growth into our approach to recruitment and apprenticeships. We will also continue to provide capacity building and support for our Elected Members to ensure they are equipped to carry out their roles effectively.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)

Belfast is a vibrant city with a diverse population. We promote and uphold equality and diversity in how we plan, offer, and provide our services. We will deliver against a number of action plans as part of the EDI Strategic Framework including **Race Equality** and **Diversity Action Plans**, making equality central to our policy and decision-making processes.

Digital Technology

Council will continue to explore enhancing our digital services and capability through the implementation of our **Digital Strategy**. This will focus on maximising our technology investments and systems to support service improvement across the council. Our Digital projects will focus on self-service and automation. We aim to create a data-driven culture which fosters responsible, ethical and innovative use of data to support evidence-based decision-making.

Continuous Improvement

Our **Continuous Improvement Programme** will continue to deliver a sequenced programme of improvement projects that place our citizens at the centre of the services the Council delivers, resolve organisational challenges, rationalise cost, build capacity, agility, capability, and enable delivery of our objectives. This work will focus on enhancing our services including Customer Programme, Digital Services, HR, Finance and Procurement.

Belfast Agenda (2024-2028)

The Council will work closely with the city partners to help deliver positive outcomes across the city. The **refreshed Belfast Agenda** will underpin the work of Council over the next three years to ensure that we achieve our ambitions to deliver a city where everyone fulfils their potential; benefiting from a thriving and prosperous economy, and better health & wellbeing.

Strategic Partnerships

Partnership working is essential to drive real change in the city – no single organisation can deliver the outcomes we want to see for the people of Belfast. To maximise the impact of our partnerships, a **strategic partnership framework will be developed** to cement key partnerships across the city.

Planning & Performance Management

The Council will implement a **planning and performance management framework** that supports the implementation of the corporate, departmental and service plans through regular monitoring, reporting and review.

Customer Focus Programme

To enhance our services and customer experience we will develop and deliver phase 3 of our **Customer Focus Programme**.

Celebrating language diversity

Council will implement a **Language Strategy Action Plan** which will promote, protect and enhance the linguistic diversity which exists within and across the city and our workforce.

Asset Management

Our property assets are an important part of supporting and enabling us to transform the way we deliver our services and our regeneration priorities. We will develop an **asset management strategy** which will set the framework for managing our property portfolio effectively.

Finance

The financial sustainability of the organisation is a fundamental priority to ensure that we are effectively resourced to deliver high quality services whilst ensuring value for money for the ratepayer.

We will develop a new **medium term financial plan 2025-2028** and **efficiency plan** to support the delivery of this corporate plan.

We will also produce a new capital programme financing strategy for 2025-2028 to outline our approach towards financing Council's capital programme.

Funding Framework

A corporate level **funding framework** will be established to enable Council to become more strategic and targeted when securing external investment into the city: enhancing services, creating new facilities, assets, and transforming local places.

Governance

We will review our **governance arrangements** to ensure effective and efficient political decision-making. We will focus on the implementation of agreed audit actions arising from delivery of the annual Audit Plan, ensuring adequate and effective risk, control, and assurance arrangements are in place.

Communications and Engagement

Council recognises the importance of communicating with ratepayers and other audiences through a range of platforms to keep people informed of services and projects. We will continue to innovate in how we **communicate, consult, and engage** to ensure communication reflects changing audience demands and emerging tools and platforms.

We will strive to ensure that our staff are continually engaged and informed through the introduction of a modern employee engagement platform that will become the main internal communications channel for council.

Commercial and Procurement Services

Developing and embedding the corporate approach to **sustainable** procurement activity across the organisation will support our aspirations to ensure inclusive growth and social value key factors within our procurement policies. We will refresh our **Commercial Strategy** as part of a medium-term financial plan, making sure we are maximising output for the minimum input, and developing a procurement approach for resources and fleet.

City innovation

Council will prioritise the development of an **Innovation Strategy and Policy** to help drive service transformation. We will collaborate closely with partners to influence investment in digital infrastructure in the city and support the work of Innovation City Belfast and the Innovation Commissioner. Council will provide strategic guidance and support on innovative approaches for the city and the Council, integrated with key corporate strategies. We will develop a strategic approach to managing and curating city data to support innovative approaches to delivering on the Belfast Agenda.

Our people and communities

Making life better for
all our residents



Our people and communities are at the heart of Belfast, and we will strive to ensure that we can positively impact the quality of life and wellbeing of all our residents. We will work to deliver impactful neighbourhood improvements for residents and continue to address key issues at a local level.

We will also continue to engage with key partners and networks to encourage more participation and engagement in communities, ensuring that local people can have a say in the key challenges within their neighbourhoods.

Community and Neighbourhood Regeneration

Physical Programme

Working in partnership to leverage significant investment from external sources towards ongoing delivery of the **£600m Physical Programme**, creating new community assets and a wide range of facilities across the city. Highlights include delivery of Cathedral Gardens, a state-of-the-art open space in the city centre and major improvements to parks including the Urban Villages £6.9m Ballysillan Playing Fields project and the €13.5m PEACE PLUS Reconnected Belfast: Waterworks and Alexandra Park. Working with a range of partners including National Lottery Heritage Fund we will redevelop the Strand Arts Centre, preserving and enhancing this iconic cinema.

Invest in our neighbourhoods

We will work with our community planning partners to develop a joined-up approach to **neighbourhood regeneration** by developing

tailored, placed-based interventions addressing specific social economic needs.

We will continue to deliver our **£10.28 million Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund** that will support local voluntary, community and social enterprise sector (VCSE) groups across the city to deliver major capital projects in their communities which help develop neighbourhood tourism, improve environmental sustainability, and support the city's social economy.

Council will take a strategic approach towards the development and management of **neighbourhood assets and facilities**, exploring opportunities for community wealth building and asset transfers to support and facilitate community ownership where possible.

Focus will be given to developing key **arterial routes** that will connect our communities.

We will continue to develop ways to strengthen **community participation** through inclusive co-design and ensure residents have a say in issues and interventions in their areas.

Enhance our open spaces and physical assets

Enhancement and improvement of our **public spaces and facilities** as part of our Physical Programme will be prioritised to support accessibility as well as physical, social and emotional wellbeing for all.

This work will include the continued delivery of our annual **Playground Improvement Programme** to ensure that young people can access high quality outdoor play facilities from an early age. We will also deliver animation programmes in our new parks: Páirc Nua Chollan, Ballysillan, Marrowbone and Pitt Park.

We will continue to deliver on our [Belfast Open Spaces strategy](#) for 2035 through the implementation of a revised action plan, in line with its strategic principles.

We will work with our partners to deliver a programme of **Greenways, pathways** and **Access to the Hills** projects including Sydenham, Blackstaff, West Belfast and Colin Greenways and pathways at Black Mountain, Glencairn, Ligoniel and Squire's Hill.

Build capacity within our communities

Our communities are an essential part of the fabric of Belfast. We will provide physical investment, revenue support and funding to **enhance our communities**. We will continue to build on our engagement framework to ensure

that the support that we offer meets local needs and addresses key challenges to help deliver long lasting and sustainable impact.

We will also continue to be **responsive** in times of need and develop interventions to support those most affected by emerging or ongoing

social issues such as the cost-of-living crisis and support our local VCSE organisations through Council managed grant programmes.

Health Inequalities

Support the delivery of integrated health services

We will continue to work in partnership with key agencies to deliver a local area approach to **reduce health inequalities** and address health related challenges across Belfast. Improved coordination and integration of established systems and processes can help to deliver a 'One Belfast Vulnerability Model' to support interventions such as **Complex Lives** which is aimed at vulnerable people identified as being impacted by chronic homelessness.

Our approach will be underpinned by our [Belfast Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy](#) which will bring together partners across the community, voluntary and statutory sectors with residents, clubs, schools, leisure providers and others to develop a locally led approach to improving participating in physical activity, recreation, and sport.

We will also continue to invest in our leisure provision through our [Leisure Transformation Programme](#) to ensure that our leisure centres and programmes deliver quality services that meets the needs of our communities.

Increase opportunities for people to be physically active

Evidence demonstrates that leading an active life with a healthy lifestyle brings multiple health benefits. We want to increase the number of people in Belfast that lead active, healthy lifestyles throughout the course of their lives.

We will deliver our Parks Improvement Programme and continue to deliver our pitch surface replacement programme. This will ensure our facilities are kept to a high standard, enhancing the playing experience and delivering health benefits.

Our economy

Page 44

Creating inclusive,
innovative and
sustainable growth,
learning and opportunity



Council is committed to ensuring that Belfast has a thriving and prosperous economy that is a hub for business and provides diverse employment opportunities for our population. Belfast and the Belfast City Region are central to driving productivity, innovation and growth in the Northern Ireland economy contributing more than two-thirds (£28.9bn) of Northern Ireland's economic output (Gross Value Added) and home to 50.5% of the total Northern Ireland business base, with an employment share of 63.5% of the Northern Ireland total.

Belfast region city deal

The highly ambitious [Belfast Region City Deal](#) (BRCD) represents a new way of working between central and local government and regional partners. The deal secured a bespoke package of investment from central government and the BRCD partners of more than £850 million to support the delivery of a shared vision to deliver “inclusive economic growth that delivers more and better jobs, a positive impact on the most deprived communities and a balanced spread of benefits across the region”.

Over the next three years we will work to implement the first £200m of BRCD funded projects emerging in the city (Studio Ulster, Digital Twin, Belfast Rapid Transit 2, Lagan Pedestrian Bridge, Momentum One Zero, I-REACH, Augment the City and Centre for Digital Healthcare Technology).

We will also continue to work closely with partners to support the delivery of other programmes such as the NI wide [Digital Transformation Flexible Fund](#).

Productivity and innovation

We will work with our partners, government, and key agencies to create more and better jobs that are sustainable and rewarding. We will focus on delivering the benefits of the **BRCD**, supporting innovation and application of advanced technologies that will drive the economy of the future in digital and creative industries, financial services and FinTech; life and health sciences and MedTech; and advanced manufacturing, engineering and green economy.

This will include delivery of the first phase of the £55 million **BRCD Innovation Challenge Fund** which aims to address the emerging needs and unique characteristics of the region and is designed to stimulate collaborative innovation and investment. The fund will stimulate innovation to address the region's 'Grand Challenges' of (i) artificial intelligence and data, (ii) health and wellbeing and (iii) sustainability and resilience.

We will promote the critical role of Belfast and the Belfast Region in driving productivity and delivering inclusive growth and work

collaboratively with public and private sector partners to support and encourage continuing international, business and government investment in the Region.

Inclusive, sustainable growth and opportunity

We will work with partners to deliver high quality enterprise support covering all stages of the business growth lifecycle. The **Northern Ireland Enterprise Support Service** ([Go Succeed](#)) – led by Belfast City Council on behalf of the 11 local authorities – will offer an enhanced menu of flexible support to anyone thinking about starting or growing a business. There will be specific support for key target groups including female entrepreneurs and those with a disability. It will also provide targeted support for social enterprises and cooperatives.

We will continue to develop our **City Markets**, in recognition of the key role that they play in enhancing the economic offering, vibrancy and employment opportunities in the city.

Economic activity and employment rates in parts of Belfast are amongst the lowest in Northern

Ireland. Employment rates and income levels also vary greatly across the city, and this can create barriers and exacerbate social exclusion challenges. We will therefore prioritise creating inclusive pathways to good employment opportunities through the delivery of **Belfast Employment Academies** which are short, intensive employment interventions designed to better equip residents to find good jobs.

Our work will include the ongoing collaboration with a wide range of partners through the **Belfast Labour Market Partnership** (LMP) which is focused on improving Belfast's employability outcomes and labour market conditions.

The Labour Market Partnership (LMP) will be key to building sector specific upskilling pathways, connecting residents with new or better employment opportunities, particular in our key growth sectors and areas of opportunity. We will target support for disadvantaged groups and places to ensure inclusivity and address existing imbalances. This work will require close collaboration with a wider range of community-based partners whose outreach and engagement work is essential in enabling us to attract participation from across key target groups. We will work with partners to build consensus around how we can make most effective use of resources to increase labour market participation, including

consideration of any future Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) interventions.

Council will continue to work with partners to optimise links between the business community and education / training providers to enable young people and adults to develop the skills and qualifications they need to progress in the workforce, at all stages of their career. Skills development is central to creating the conditions for sustained innovation, excellence, and growth for our Belfast businesses.

We will also support the delivery of the [Belfast Business Promise](#) which represents a new accreditation for employers who are working together to make Belfast a city that provides good jobs, better wages for employees, whilst also supporting a sustainable local economy and building a healthier city for everyone. It will create a community of organisations committed to improving how they do business together.

Council will continue to support and strive for the creation of a **sustainable circular economy** meaning materials are not wasted and nature is regenerated. We will also work with partners to help develop an ecosystem that supports and encourages innovation and collaboration in green tech amongst existing companies and start-ups and deliver the skills essential to

converting the net-zero challenge into an economic opportunity.



Our place

Creating a liveable and
connected, vibrant and
competitive city



A key ambition of the Belfast Agenda is to attract a further 66,000 residents to the city by 2035 and work in partnership with key agencies to ensure that all residents have access to the high-quality, sustainable homes they deserve. In order to achieve this Council has a key role to play in terms of supporting housing led regeneration across the city.

We want to ensure quality placemaking, that Belfast is a liveable city, in which local people are connected to their community, where both residents and visitors are able to connect with jobs, services and amenities in safe, active, accessible, and sustainable way.

Enhancing our city centre is also crucial to ensure that Belfast is a thriving and inclusive destination for residents and visitors alike. We will continue to strengthen and build on our sense of place by accelerating major regeneration schemes. These will seek to deliver inclusive economic, social and environmental benefits, whilst protecting and enhancing access to our built and natural heritage.

Quality Place-Making and Housing Led Regeneration

While the Council does not have direct responsibility for building new homes, it does have a range of powers that can support quality place-making and contribute to housing quality and housing development. These include the implementation of our Local Development Plan, HMO licensing, building control, planning control, non-statutory regeneration activities, economic development, promoting the city to investors and using our own land for household development and regeneration.

Local Development Plan

The Belfast **Local Development Plan** (LDP) 2035 Strategy was adopted in 2023 and sets a vision for how Belfast should look in the future. The LDP will guide investment decisions in the city, supporting the ambitions of the city for inclusive, sustainable growth and development.

Over the next three years, Council will produce the Local Policies Plan (LPP) which will contain local policies and site-specific proposals in relation to the development and use of land. The Plan will set out designations and land use zonings required to deliver the Council's vision, objectives and strategic policies.

To support the Local Development Plan and the strategic growth of the city, we will implement our **planning improvement programme** and streamline our planning application processes to provide a more efficient, effective and customer-focused service.

Support and work with partners to address housing challenges

Council will continue to work with partners such as Northern Ireland Housing Executive to support

increased provision of social homes through the [Social Housing Development Programme](#).

We will procure and engage with our long-term private sector partner (PSP) to act as a **master developer to deliver residential-led, mixed-use developments** in support of our city's growth targets.

Working with partners we will seek to **Accelerate City Centre Living** through the transformation of derelict and underutilised city centre buildings into mixed-use and residential tenures.

Strategic Site Assessments

A key priority for Council will be to deliver Phase Two of our **Strategic Site Assessments** to bring forward housing-led regeneration schemes.

Active and Sustainable Travel

Connectivity is vital for a city to be successful. Whilst Belfast is the transport and logistical hub for the entire region, it must also meet the needs of our communities, ensuring they have access to jobs and to each other. Improving connectivity within the city centre as well as between the city centre and neighbourhoods is critical to our future success.

We will work to deliver and implement an overarching programme including **access, active and sustainable travel, and connectivity** across the city.

Strategic Place Making Partnerships

The [Eastern Transport Plan](#) (ETP) is a strategic framework for bringing forward climate commitments, supporting the integration of a prioritised and modernised public transport system and a network of walking and cycling routes across a number of Council areas including Belfast. The Council will work closely with the Department for Infrastructure to ensure that the ETP aligns with and supports our ambitions for a connected and sustainable city.

Future City Centre and Wider City Regeneration and Investment

We will lead on the delivery of a range of strategic regeneration and investment schemes across Belfast to ensure that the potential of the wider city is maximized in a way that benefits all citizens and results in improved outcomes for communities.

We will also work to secure funding to sustain the long-term use of **2 Royal Avenue** in line with the acquisition objectives and recommendations set out in the operator feasibility report.

Future City Centre Programme

Our **Future City Centre Programme** seeks to address challenges facing the city centre. These include the emerging retail, tourism and hospitality landscape and the need to reimagine and diversify to future-proof the city centre. We will reimagine the city centre, promoting mixed uses, open and green spaces and community infrastructure.

A Bolder Vision

An ambitious blueprint developed jointly by Council, Department for Communities and Department for Infrastructure to explore a shared

approach to creating a more attractive, accessible, safe and vibrant city centre. [A Bolder Vision](#) is built on the principles of promoting wellbeing for all; prioritising walking, cycling and public transport; creating lively, safe and green streets; and removing barriers to movement between the city centre and surrounding communities.

We will prioritise the development of **A Bolder Vision** Delivery Plan that will identify a range of outline pilot projects and interventions that will be most beneficial for city centre.

Safeguarding our built Heritage

We will endeavour to safeguard our historic and heritage assets across the city, including Wilmont House, Palm House, Floral Hall and Fernhill House, as well as the continued maintenance of other significant heritage assets including City Hall, St. George's Market, Ulster Hall and the Tropical Ravine.

Cultural and Tourism Development

We will continue to work with our partners to deliver on our ambitions to grow, position and sustain our tourism industry, offer an improved visitor experience, strengthen our position in national and international tourism markets while developing sustainably to attract more people to

the city and to encourage them to stay longer and spend more. We aim to profile and leverage Belfast's position as a gateway city.

Neighbourhood tourism

We will prioritise growing our tourism product by investing in **neighbourhood tourism** and supporting the incredible range of community and cultural festivals and events that take place across the city.

We will continue to invest in an annual major events programme and seek to attract large scale events, such as the Fleadh Cheoil which will be hosted across Belfast in 2026, with all the benefits that these bring both to our economy and the liveability of the city.

Cultural Strategy and Tourism Plan

Council will drive delivery on our **Cultural Strategy - 'A City Imagining' and 10-year Tourism Plan 'Make Yourself At Home'** to create a culturally vibrant city which embraces and embeds culture, arts, events and festivals at its heart.

We will build on the legacy of **Belfast2024**, a cultural celebration for our city through supporting innovation, enhanced community engagement and key strategic partnerships to foster a sense of identity, social cohesion and economic growth...We will embrace our new status as a UNESCO City of Music and deliver the Multi-Annual Cultural and Arts Support Programme.

Belfast has been recognised as a UNESCO Learning City, to support this Council has been proud to deliver the Belfast Learning Festival annually and is committed to continue to promote Lifelong Learning with the support of our key partners across the city.

Belfast Stories

Belfast Stories is a key project within the Belfast Regional City Deal (BRCD). Due to open in 2030, it will be located in the historic Bank of Ireland building and the surrounding 5,000 m2 site at the

top of Royal Avenue. The key strategic objectives of Belfast Stories are to:

- Grow Belfast's economy through tourism led regeneration and support for screen-based creative industries.
- Create and sustain a diversified, vibrant city centre where people want to live and work, visit, and invest.
- Support a greater sense of connection with Belfast.

Belfast Stories brings together three threads as one:

- A public space – a place for everyone to gather, helping us to express our unique identities and share them with others.
- A visitor attraction which clearly communicates the spirit of the city – its past, its present and its future.
- A creative hub where writers, musicians, artists and film makers can meet to create and collaborate.



Our planet

Creating a sustainable,
nature-positive city



We are committed to tackling climate change and biodiversity loss head on to ensure that Belfast can be a place where people and nature thrive together, a place where we can reduce waste and single-use plastics, harness green energy and plant more trees.

To deliver a sustainable city we will work with our residents and industries to reduce their carbon footprints. Belfast has a great opportunity to lead the way in providing global green solutions by leveraging our unique market access and international networks to become a hub for low carbon design and manufacturing. We will therefore support our industries to thrive on all the opportunities in the green economy whilst creating a much cleaner environment.

Re-naturing the city and increasing resilience to climate change

We will support and shape a city that is learning and building on its existing strengths to become a green, transformed, and healthy city, promoting the uptake of nature based solutions across the city to support climate. Delivery, with city partners organisations, of the Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan (2021 – 2026) will continue in improving air quality for Belfast.

We value our natural ecosystems and will nurture and expand these further in areas most needed such as our inner city, to protect and support urban communities to thrive.

We will deliver our [Tree Strategy](#) to help manage and improve the tree-scape in the city, to provide a resilient and diverse urban forest for future generations.

The strategy sets out a commitment to delivering key priorities and actions over the next ten years.

Creating a sustainable circular economy

There is a real opportunity for Belfast to become a leading-edge city in driving forward a **sustainable circular economy** that minimises waste and promotes the sustainable use of natural resources.

This offers a potential route to **reducing waste**, reversing environmental harm and increasing the sustainability of products and supply chains.

Over the next three years, we will transform our throwaway economy into one where waste is reduced, resources are circulated, and nature is regenerated. Leaving no-one behind, we will maximise the social opportunities of the

transition and reduce the risks so that everyone benefits.

We will deliver local solutions to sustainable, healthy, and affordable food for our citizens. Bring together the right people to tackle the barriers that are preventing the uptake of energy efficiency measures in buildings across the city and develop a heat network project for the city centre to create jobs and prosperity. In particular we will:

- Promote sustainable circular economy approaches.
- Promote a Just Transition to Net Zero in Belfast.
- Increase the use of Electric Vehicles in Belfast and improve access to charge points.
- Reduce energy consumption (and bills) of housing and public and commercial buildings.
- Decarbonise the heat supply to buildings in the city.

Promote sustainable circular economy approaches

We will support the development of circular economy systems where materials never become waste and nature is regenerated. We will work to **reduce the carbon / environmental impact of municipal waste** across Belfast, working in partnership with others to ensure items are reused, recycled or recovered.

Council is supportive of the need to produce, process, distribute and dispose of good food that can contribute to thriving local economies and sustainable livelihoods, protect the diversity of both plants and animals and the welfare of farmed and wild species whilst avoiding damaging or wasting natural resources or contributing to climate change.

We will seek re-accreditation as a [Sustainable Food City](#) and prioritise the development of a **Belfast Sustainable Food Strategy**. We will coordinate the Belfast Sustainable Food Partnership and create and deliver the Belfast Sustainable Food Place whilst supporting community-based approaches to sustainable food in Belfast.

We will continue to deliver our **Fleet Strategy** gradually replacing existing old fleet with new low emission vehicles, investing in necessary infrastructure on our assets to support the transition; upgrading the electrical infrastructure at Duncrue to support EV vehicles.

In order to reduce energy consumption and costs for housing, public, and commercial buildings support will be given to the development of a neighbourhood retrofit pilot through the Belfast Retrofit Hub.

Innovating to Net Zero

Climate Action Plan

The Council will deliver its Climate Action Plan which sets out a roadmap to achieve its net zero ambitions. The plan features a range of actions across

five key themes; Tools for Transition, Energy and Buildings, Transport, Waste Management and Adaptation.

Enable the city to decarbonise at scale

Over the next three years, we will deliver on our ambition and roadmap to become an inclusive, net-zero emissions, climate-resilient economy by working with city partners to deliver the **Belfast Local Area Energy Plan** and develop a portfolio of net zero projects to achieve the city's emission reduction targets and support an inclusive transition to net zero. We will identify and respond to emerging funding opportunities, continuing to engage with investors and financial institutions. Council will lever existing and planned assets and investment through place-based interventions to become an exemplar of a low carbon economy creating opportunities for training, employment and green growth. The aim is to expand existing clusters of net zero technology companies which exist in the city to create a burgeoning **GreenTech sector** which drives growth across NI and helps realise the objectives of the Green Growth Strategy.

Investment in the physical and digital infrastructure to develop a GreenTech ecosystem will encourage innovation and collaboration amongst existing companies and start-ups to draw in more investment and to unlock new high-growth technology for domestic use and export. In particular we will:

- Support local energy projects.
- Create an exemplar net zero park to design and demonstrate green technology.
- Develop a stable supply of green energy to the Net Zero Park and surrounding lands to support the industrial cluster.
- Accelerate the transition to low carbon manufacturing.
- Support Green Multi-Modal Mobility.

Compassionate city

Making Belfast a
welcoming, caring,
fair and inclusive city -
Leaving no one behind



As a compassionate city, we recognise the complexity and diversity of our people, and we are determined to make life better for everyone. To do this it will be vital to build on the innovation, expertise and assets which already exists within our communities. We will continue to develop pathways connecting and engaging everyone, particularly those harder to reach. Working collaboratively, through specific actions and through our overall approach to programmes and projects we are committed to ensuring that no one is left behind.

Inclusive growth and anti-poverty

Promoting and embedding Inclusive Growth

Council is committed to inclusive growth and ensuring the success of the city reaches every citizen. Our aim is to support and connect all residents with economic growth to create vibrant communities where everyone has the opportunity and aspiration to succeed. We recognise that the council must take the lead and demonstrate how we use our range of powers to create an inclusive city. In our role as a civic leader, this includes signing up to the Belfast Business Promise (our inclusive growth city charter) and integrating inclusive growth into Council's decision-making processes so that we can support social mobility and create more inclusive labour markets and places across the city. We will continue to work with city partners, particularly key anchor institutions, to respond to the imperative to develop a more inclusive economy.

Addressing vulnerabilities and responding to societal challenges

We will continue to work with partners and stakeholders to help address vulnerabilities and key issues that impact on individuals and communities across the city. This will include the continued implementation of 'Complex Lives' which is a whole-system approach focused on people experiencing chronic homelessness. The Complex Lives initiative seeks to improve collaborative working between statutory bodies and voluntary sector organisations, so as to provide the right support to people who need it at the right time and in the right place.

We will also continue to respond to societal pressures such as the cost-of-living crisis to provide much needed support for children and young people, families and individuals across the city. This will include developing targeted and joined up approaches to address food, fuel and transport poverty and their impact on low-income households and adopting a responsive approach to other pressures that may emerge over the next four-year period.

Good relations and shared future

Good Relations Action Plan

Over the past five years, the number of displaced people has increased globally, and whilst not large, the asylum seeking and refugee population is growing in Northern Ireland, with the majority accommodated in the greater Belfast area. Refugees and asylum seekers represent some of the most vulnerable people in our society and they often find themselves settling in areas with the highest levels of multiple deprivation, causing further stress to communities who themselves are still recovering from division and conflict.

We will therefore prioritise **supporting new communities** to ensure that Belfast is a diverse and vibrant city where all people can live in peace, as equals. This work will include the implementation of our Good Relations Action Plan and mainstreaming of Good Relations into Council work, to promote positive cultural change. We will also develop an inclusive Belfast Intervention Plan to address inequalities and support the inclusion and integration of all including ethnic minorities and deliver racial equality, shared education and cultural inclusion programmes and activities.

We will work across government and with communities to deliver programmes such as the Urban Villages initiative which helps transform local places, create thriving spaces and deliver good relations outcomes.

PeacePlus

PEACEPLUS is a European Union funding programme designed to support peace and prosperity across Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland, building upon the work of the PEACE and INTERREG programmes.

The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) has allocated up to €17,433,277 to us for a [Local Community Action Plan](#) to fund community activities and infrastructure projects that help build peace and reconciliation in Belfast. We have worked with communities and partners across the city to further develop the plan for Belfast which will deliver projects on the following three themes: local community regeneration and transformation, thriving and peaceful communities, and celebrating cultures and diversity.

We will prioritise the implementation of the Local Community Action Plan throughout the next four-year period to deliver real and lasting peace and reconciliation across Belfast.

We have secured significant investment to enhance existing assets across the city including Waterworks Park and Alexandra Park.

We will also look at proposals for an Intercultural Hub(s) in the city.

Community Safety

We will work to ensure that Belfast is a safe city that encourages cooperation with, and inspires confidence in, the justice system and the police. We will engage in our multi-agency Police and Community Safety Partnerships and implement a new Police and Community Safety Action Plan for the city.

Ending Violence against Women & Girls

As a council, Belfast is supporting the NI Executive to roll out their [Ending Violence Against Women & Girls](#) Strategy, this is a pressing societal challenge however we are committed to ensuring that women & girls should feel, and be, safe everywhere.

Work has already begun; early 2025 saw the delivery of a training offer for community & voluntary groups, with plans to deliver more in the future.

Older people

Belfast Age Friendly Plan

We want Belfast to be a great place to grow older. To do this, we need to plan for an increasing aging population in a way that ensures our older people can continue to live happier, healthier and more connected lives. We will therefore prioritise delivering on the [2022-2026 Belfast Age Friendly Plan](#) which sets out a range of important priorities and actions for Council and partner organisations to implement to support the health and wellbeing of our older people.

We could not fulfil our vision of Belfast being a city where older people live life to the full without the input, support and challenge provided by [Greater Belfast Seniors Forum](#), the six local older people's forums and the many groups they represent.

We want to ensure that the needs of older people are considered during service development and to maximise the benefits of older people's experience.

Belfast is an Age Friendly City and we are currently implementing our 3rd Age Friendly plan which is delivered through the Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership which is facilitated by Belfast City Council. The plan contains a range of actions in relation to priorities identified by older people

Children and young people

We want all our children and young people to have the best start in life and will work closely with key agencies and partners to ensure that early intervention and early years support is available for all across Belfast.

Council will also work to ensure that we can empower our children and young people to have a say in the decisions that affect their lives to achieve a sustainable, inclusive and child-friendly place to live. We will facilitate, an active and engaged [Belfast City Youth Council](#) who work

with relevant fora and elected members to ensure that the needs of children and young people are reflected within our Belfast Agenda and council priorities.

We will also prioritise the development of a three-year action plan for play development across the city to ensure children and young people have access to high quality play opportunities from an early age.

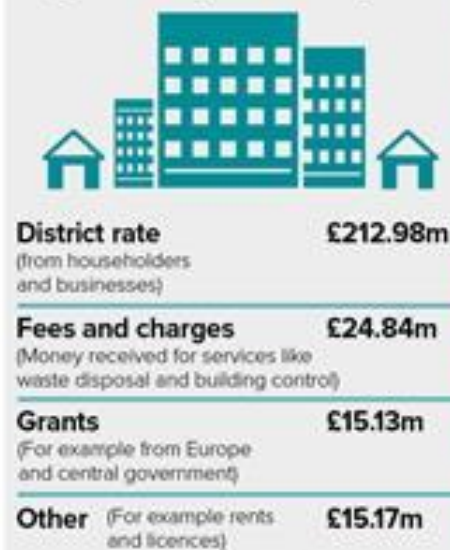


Financing the plan

Our corporate plan is based on a planned investment of £268.12 million for 2025-26. This includes a projection of £212.98 million from the district rate, £24.84 million from fees and charges, £15.13 million from grant funding and £15.17 million from other.

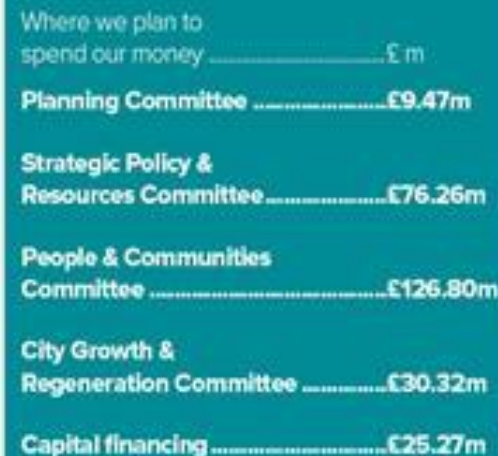
Where we get our money from

We get our money from these key areas:



Total planned income for 2025-26
£268.12m

Where we plan to spend our money



Total planned expenditure for 2025-26
£268.12m



Measuring and Reviewing our Progress

We will implement a performance and improvement framework to enable council to monitor the delivery of our identified actions and support the achievement of our agreed performance targets. The council's monitoring and reporting structures have been designed to ensure proper oversight and accountability arrangements are in place, and to provide our Elected Members and management teams with assurances that our governance arrangements are robust. This helps to ensure transparency, accountability and drive continuous improvement.

To support the ambitions of our corporate plan, an accompanying annual Corporate Delivery and Improvement Plan will be developed that details what will be delivered against each of our priorities and associated performance indicators and targets. Reporting arrangements for the Annual Corporate Delivery and Improvement Plan are detailed below:

Annual Corporate Delivery and Improvement Plan	
Reports to	Frequency
Corporate Management Team Oversight Board	Quarterly
Standing Committees	Bi-annually
Full Council	Bi-annually

Updates are provided to the relevant Standing Committees and full Council by relevant Chief Officers at mid-year and end of year to facilitate appropriate scrutiny, challenge and evaluation.

As well as reporting against the corporate plan, we are also required to publish an annual self-assessment of our Performance Improvement Plan and statutory targets on the Council's website by 30 September each year. This is supported by quarterly updates to CMT, the council's Audit and Assurance Board and Audit and Risk Panel as well as the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee to track progress regularly throughout the year.

Our Elected members

In May 2023, a new council was elected. Belfast City Council has 60 democratically elected councillors, representing ten District Electoral Areas, as indicated in the map. Our councillors play a key role in representing the interests of their constituents and ensuring that the views of their electoral areas and the entire population of Belfast are reflected in the decisions that the council takes.



Belfast
City Council

www.belfastcity.gov.uk/your-council

Balmoral (Belvoir, Finaghy, Malone, Musgrave and Upper Malone)



Councillor
Natasha Brennan
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Tara Brooks
Alliance



Councillor
Sarah Bunting
DUP



Councillor
Dónal Lyons
SDLP



(Lord Mayor) Councillor
Micky Murray
Alliance

Black Mountain (Andersonstown, Ballymurphy, Beechmount, Colin Glen, Falls Park, Shaw's Road and Turf Lodge)



Councillor
Ciaran Beattie
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Arder Carson
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Paul Doherty
SDLP



Councillor
Micheal Donnelly
Sinn Féin



Councillor Máire Donnelly
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Áine McCabe
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Ronan McLaughlin
Sinn Féin

Botanic (Blackstaff, Central, Ormeau, Stranmillis and Windsor)



Councillor
Áine Groogan
Green Party



Councillor
Tracy Kelly
DUP



Councillor Emmet
McDonough-Brown
Alliance



Councillor
Conor McKay
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Gary McKeown
SDLP

Castle (Bellevue, Cavehill, Chichester Park, Duncairn, Fortwilliam and Innisfayle)



Councillor
Brónach Anglin
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Fred Cobain
DUP



Councillor
Conor Maskey
Sinn Féin



Alderman Dean A
McCullough
DUP



Councillor
Sam Nelson
Alliance



Councillor
Carl Whyte
SDLP

Collin (Dunmurry, Ladybrook, Lagmore, Poleglass, Stewartstown and Twinbrook)



Councillor Michael Collins
People Before Profit
Alliance



Councillor
Joe Duffy
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Matt Garrett
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Caoimhín McCann
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Siobhán McCallin
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Séanna Walsh
Sinn Féin

Court (Ballygomartin, Clonard, Falls, Forth River, Shankill and Woodvale)



Councillor
Christina Black
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Claire Canavan
Sinn Féin



Alderman
Frank McCoubrey
DUP



Councillor
Ron McDowell
TUV



Councillor
Ian McLaughlin
DUP



Councillor
Nicola Verner
DUP

Lisnasharragh (Cregagh, Hillfoot, Merok, Orangefield, Ravenhill and Rosetta)



Councillor
Séamas de Faoite
SDLP



Councillor
Davy Douglas
DUP



Councillor
Bradley Ferguson
DUP



Councillor
Eric Hanvey
Alliance



Councillor
Michael Long
Alliance



Councillor
Brian Smyth
Green Party

Oldpark (Ardoyne, Ballysillan, Cliftonville, Ligoniel, New Lodge and Water Works)



Councillor
Nichola Bradley
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Jordan Doran
DUP



Councillor
JJ Magee
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Paul McCusker
Independent



Councillor
Ryan Murphy
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Tomás Ó Néill
Sinn Féin

Ormiston (Belmont, Garnerville, Gilnahirk, Knock, Sandown, Shandon, and Stormont)



Councillor Hedley
Abernethy
Alliance



Councillor
Christine Bower
Alliance



Councillor
Anthony Flynn
Green Party



Alderman
James Lawlor
DUP



Councillor
Jenna Maghie
Alliance



(Deputy Lord Mayor)
Councillor Andrew
McCormick DUP



Alderman Jim
Rodgers OBE
UUP

Titanic (Ballymacarrett, Beersbridge, Bloomfield, Connswater, Sydenham and Woodstock)



Councillor
David Bell
Alliance



Councillor
Ruth Brooks
DUP



Alderman
Sonia Copeland
UUP



Councillor
Pádraig Donnelly
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Sammy Douglas
DUP



Councillor
Fiona McAteer
Alliance

District Electoral Areas



Strategy, Programmes
and Partnerships team

City Hall

Belfast

BT1 5GS



028 9027 0234



policy@belfastcity.gov.uk



www.belfastcity.gov.uk/corporateplan

Access to information

As part of our commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations, we want to ensure that everyone is able to access the documents we produce. This document is available in alternative formats such as Braille, easy-read, audio, large print and also in other languages on request by contacting: 028 9027 0234.



Belfast
City Council

Corporate Delivery Plan

2025-2026

Page 63



Belfast
City Council

www.belfastcity.gov.uk



Table of contents

Introduction.....	3
Theme 1: Our services.....	4
Theme 2: Our organisation	7
Theme 3: Our people and communities.....	15
Theme 4: Our economy.....	20
Theme 5: Our place	24
Theme 6: Our planet	30
Theme 7: Compassionate city.....	37
Monitoring and Reporting	41

Alternate formats

We're committed to making sure that our publications are available to all sections of the community and will consider providing this in other formats. If you need an alternative format, please call 028 9032 0202.

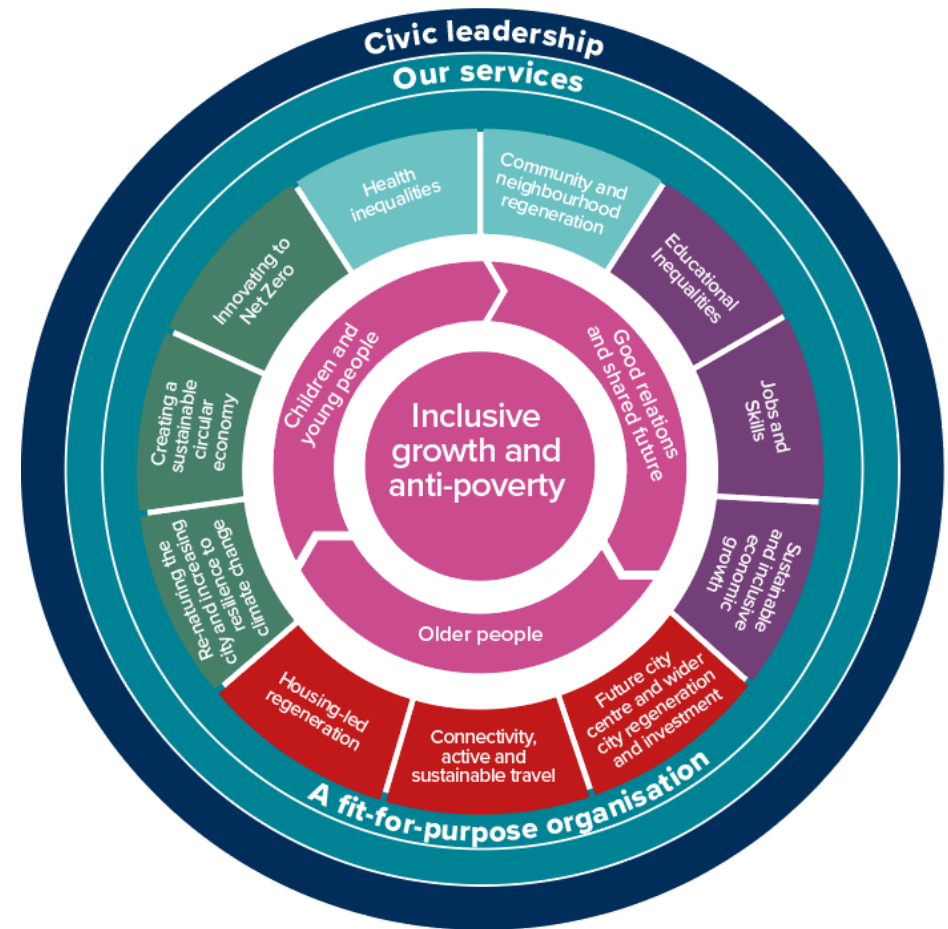
Introduction

The new Belfast City Council Corporate Plan 2025-28 sets out the Council's priorities, objectives and ambitions over the next three years. Our Corporate Plan is supported by this annual Corporate Delivery Plan 2025-26 – a key document for identifying the priority services and actions that will help deliver the objectives of the three-year plan. The annual delivery plan also includes a range of key performance indicators and targets that will enable us to measure, monitor and review our corporate performance and achievements.

This delivery plan is our shorter-term roadmap to drive change, continuous improvement and show progress towards achieving a more efficient, effective, and dynamic organisation. In today's rapidly evolving landscape, where we continue to face challenges such as the cost-of-living crisis, global economic and political uncertainty, the demands on local authorities are complex and extensive but we are committed to ensuring that our residents and stakeholders receive the highest standards in service delivery, transparency, and responsiveness while optimising our resources and capacity.

It is important to recognise that both the Corporate Plan 2025-28 and the annual Delivery Plan 2025-26 are not static documents, and more activity may be included over time to respond to new corporate policy and strategy, new and evolving corporate priorities, risk, opportunities and legislative changes.

Our Corporate Delivery Plan is also inextricably linked to the city's community plan, The Belfast Agenda and is structured around 7 strategic themes outlined below:



Theme 1: Our services

As a council we are committed to delivering highly effective, efficient and customer focused services for our residents and stakeholders. We aim to achieve this through modern, integrated, high-quality, agile, and cost-effective delivery on a city-wide basis. Our extensive range of statutory and core services include waste collection and recycling; street cleansing; planning and building control; bereavement services; inspections and enforcements relating to public and environmental health.

To deliver effective and efficient services, in 2025-26 we will:

Our Services		
Strategic Intent	Actions for 2025-26	Committee
Planning and Building Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver Planning Service Improvements leading to high quality, timely planning decisions aligned to the Belfast Agenda and Local Development Plan. • Maximise the value of the regional planning IT system. • Deliver effective and responsive statutory Building Control functions in relation to building regulations including quality checking of plan assessments. • Deliver effective and responsive statutory Building Control functions in relation to entertainment and other licensing functions. • Finalise the implementation of the building control IT system and review its benefits. • Implement agreed programme to deal with dangerous structures and dilapidated premises. 	Strategic Policy & Resources Planning Licensing People & Communities
Bereavement Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to deliver a high standard and customer focused Bereavement and Cemetery Service. • Support the Identification, acquisition, and development of new burial land provision for Belfast City Council. • Prepare for the new Crematorium development and the repurposing of the existing crematorium in the grounds of Roselawn Cemetery. 	P&C Committee SP&R Committee

Waste Collection and Recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operate daily bin collections of household and commercial waste through the deployment of adequate & efficient resources. • Delivery of waste management services across Belfast. • Implement the single bin policy and develop a supporting and costed action plan. • Create an operational control room to assist pre-planning, daily control of collections and data analysis. • Continue to pilot the introduction of smaller refuse collection vehicles to improve collection service to narrow and congested streets. • Continue to operate Household Recycling Centre's services across Belfast segregating various waste streams and working in partnership with others to ensure items are reused, recycled, or recovered. • Deliver phase two of the kerbside glass expansion programme to enhance customer service and improve recycling rates. 	P&C Committee
Port Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to implement the Northern Ireland protocol (including the Windsor framework) and operational activity with competent authorities including Food Standards Agency (FSA), Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), and other Ports/Local Councils. 	P&C Committee
Cleansing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a street cleansing programme to create a cleaner and greener city. • Progress relocation of Dunbar Link Cleansing Depot 	<p>P&C Committee</p> <p>SP&R Committee</p>

Our Services – Corporate Performance Indicators		
Priority area and objective	Key performance indicators	Targets 2025-26
Our Services – We will deliver efficient and effective services	Percentage of service requests completed for open spaces and streetscene within 5 working days	75%
	Percentage of service requests completed for missed bins within 5 working days	92%
	Number of additional households provided with kerbside glass collections	23,000 households
	Amount of additional tonnes of glass collected for recycling	650 tonnes
	City cleanliness index score	65%
	Average processing time of major planning applications	30 weeks
	Average processing time of local planning applications	15 weeks
	Average processing time of householder applications and advertisement consent applications	12 weeks
	Average processing time of tree works applications and Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)	6 weeks
	Percentage of enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks	70%
	Achieving average processing time of less than 12 weeks for Householder applications and Advertisement Consent applications	12 weeks
	Achieving average processing time of less than 6 weeks for tree works applications and Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)	6 weeks

Theme 2: Our organisation

We will continue to ensure that we are an efficient, effective, and agile council, delivering value for money and achieving positive outcomes for the city. We will prioritise our people, continuous improvement, performance management and build on our internal foundations and key enablers for success to help us meet our corporate objectives and priorities.

To continue to be a fit for purpose organisation, in 2025-26 we will:

Our organisation		
Strategic Intent	Actions for 2025-26	Committee
Prioritise the implementation of our People Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Show continued visible commitment to our people by working towards and achieving Diversity Charter Mark - Gold Level.• Update our learning and development policy to include a review of the PDP process.• Continue to develop our frontline staff through the frontline development programme.• Continue to develop our leaders and managers at all levels through our leadership development programme.• Undertake a review of the Pilot Workstyles Policy which outlines arrangements for the hybrid working model.• Deliver the Elected Members and Leadership Development Programme to provide dedicated support and build the capacity of our elected members.• Review and implement our approach to individual performance management cascading gradually to all tiers.• Explore and identify opportunities to create apprenticeships and internships across the Council.	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to deliver the 'Workplace Health and Wellbeing Strategy' and positively impact on employees, mental, physical and emotional wellbeing. • Continue to manage attendance. • Provide ring fenced job opportunities to the long term unemployed, providing pre-recruitment employment academies and increased employability outreach in communities to support our inclusive growth ambitions. • Develop a staff mentoring scheme that supports continued personal development and career progression. • Produce and implement a workforce development plan to underpin new ways of working. 	
Continue to explore enhancing our digital services and capability through the implementation of our Digital Strategy .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare for National Cyber Security Centre – Cyber Assessment Framework completion • Deliver Windows 11 upgrade • Deliver digital elements of priority corporate projects (HR & Payroll, Corporate EDRMS, Corporate Asset Management, Time & Attendance, other policies as required) • Deliver digital elements of Service design improvements (In-Cab Tech, City Services, Building Control, Customer Focus) • Data Analytics/Information as an Asset - e.g. Inclusive Growth, Performance Management, Data Architecture; AI adoption, Corporate EDRMS • Implement corporate infrastructure improvements (Network, ISP renewal, security architecture) • Progress plans to replace the current software system with a single modern and intuitive case management system designed to embed mobile technology and digitally transform how we plan, manage, and monitor our service delivery across the core regulatory areas of City Services & community safety within Neighbourhood Services. • Implement new software to support the planning, routing, and visibility of our fleet of vehicle's which will improve operations, increase safety, and reduce carbon emissions. 	<p>Strategic Policy & Resources</p> <p>P&C Committee</p>
We will seek to continually improve our organisation through a sequenced programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to ensure that structural management and maintenance are appropriately governed and allow for the production of accurate management information to enable effective decision making and identify key areas for corporate improvement. 	

of improvement projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the resolution to outstanding Single Status Issues where practicable for staff on BCC T&Cs below Chief Officer. • Develop and agree the long-term Staff Car Parking Policy. • Agree and implement the updated policy and resourcing model for Job Evaluations and appeals. • Complete a profiling of as-is Organisational Support arrangements to inform the wider approach to organisational support and improved quality of service. • Develop corporate approach to the design of services in collaboration with digital services and the customer programme. <p>Deliver the Customer Focus Programme to build organisational capacity to enhance our services and customer experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement "Voice of Customer" dashboard covering areas such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Customer Satisfaction of Service, Google Analytics, Complaints, Comments & Compliments, Speed of Closures of Requests • Develop Corporate Personas that can be used to support design of services. • Implement a Report it App to be used across frontline Community Safety in relation to Sharps reporting and workflows. • Benchmarking and research of local government use of customer portals to support self-service elements available across all services. <p>We will prioritise the development of an Innovation Strategy and Policy to help drive service transformation. We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and inform the roll-out of the organisational improvement and transformation agenda thought the use of innovative technology to drive service transformation. 	
Work closely with the city partners to help deliver positive outcomes across the city through the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work with city partners and key stakeholders to drive and deliver the key actions outlined within the Belfast Agenda (2024-2028). • Develop approach to creating area-based community plans. 	SP&R Committee

refreshed Belfast Agenda .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the refresh of the Belfast Voluntary, Community, Social Enterprise Sector Advisory Panel and new Terms of Reference. • Development of enhanced online presence for Community Planning within Belfast. 	
Implement a planning and performance management framework that supports the implementation of the corporate, departmental and service plans through regular monitoring, reporting and review.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New planning and performance management framework agreed and operationalised. • Corporate Plan 2025-28 launched. • Corporate Delivery plan agreed and monitored through CMT Oversight Board and SP&R Committee. • Development and publication of the Council's Performance Improvement Plan (2025-2026). 	SP&R Committee
Implement a Language Strategy Action Plan which will promote, protect and enhance the linguistic diversity which exists within and across the city and our workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of those priorities within the Action Plan which listed for delivery during 2025-26. • Carry out an annual review of the action plan delivery. • Provide regular updates to the Elected Member Language Strategy Working Group which reports to the Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. 	Strategic Policy and Resources
Continue to promote and uphold equality and diversity in how we plan, offer and provide our services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete 5-year review of Equality Scheme including design of new assurance model for decision makers and equality action plan. • Design new Disability Action Plan and commence implementation. • Review of the Equality and Diversity Network implemented. • Deliver Year 1 of the Race Equality Action Plan, including improved guidance on engagement and consultation with migrant and minority ethnic groups in the city, targeted outreach programmes, 	Strategic Policy and Resources

Develop an asset management strategy which will set the framework for managing our property portfolio effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate the development of an overarching Asset Management Strategy to set out how Council owned and managed land and property assets will be used to support service delivery and the delivery of objectives in the Corporate Plan and the Belfast Agenda. • Develop thematic based Asset Management Plans for different assets. • Review Asset Management policies. • Establish governance arrangements to ensure that a multi-disciplinary approach that supports alignment of assets within the Corporate Plan and Belfast Agenda is taken and provides a challenge function in terms of the Council's asset base to maximise contribution to corporate objectives. • Embed the use of the Asset Management System. • Commence a rolling programme of condition surveys of assets to develop an evidence based longer term planned maintenance programme. • Deliver the Planned Maintenance Programme for 2025-26. • Progress delivery of physical improvements to Council civic accommodation including the Cecil Ward Building and Duncrue Complex. 	Strategic Policy and Resources
Develop a new medium term financial plan (MTFP) 2025-2028 to support the delivery of this corporate plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft MTFP – June 2025. • Identified levels of efficiencies required – September 2025. • Updated MTFP following estimate process – February 2026. • Establish a corporate level funding and financing framework to enable Council to become more strategic and targeted in relation to securing external investment into city • Promotion and awareness within the Council and among partners of available funding opportunities through the GrantFinder system. • Develop a Corporate Social Responsibility Framework which will support the alignment of available funding to priorities identified for the city. 	SP&R Committee
Review our governance arrangements to ensure effective and efficient political decision-making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a Governance Review – to include a review of the Council's Constitution • Continue to deliver the 2025/26 audit plan. • Review and update Risk Strategy and Risk Appetite Statements. 	SP&R Committee Audit Panel

Continue to innovate in how we communicate and ensuring our communication tactics reflect changing audience demands and new tools and platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress the recommendations within the audit on digital accessibility regarding the establishment of a corporate approach to digital accessibility. • Increase evaluation and impact of output by baselining and monitoring with view to developing relevant KPIs and informing strategic decisions about updated and/or new channels. 	Strategic Policy and Resources
Develop and embed the corporate approach to sustainable procurement .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesign the Social Value Procurement Policy as a Sustainable Procurement Policy to include, Social Value, Ethical, Low Carbon • Review and Inform the Council's Internal Procurement Policy in line with the Council's Low Carbon Social Value, efficiency and ethical ambitions 	Strategic Policy and Resources
Develop a Commercial Strategy as part of a medium-term financial plan and efficiency realisation work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Commercial Strategy 	Strategic Policy and Resources

Our organisation – Corporate performance indicators		
Priority area	Key performance indicators	Targets 2025-26
Our organisation – We will continue to be a fit-for-purpose organisation.	Percentage customer satisfaction levels (with customer hub contacts)	80%
	Percentage of corporate complaints resolved within timeframe	65%
	Percentage of improvement actions introduced for corporate complaints	80%
	Diversity Charter Mark status achieved	Gold
	Number of work placements and apprenticeships created (incl. inclusive apprenticeships)	60 work placements and 5 apprentices
	% of planned audit assignments delivered	Majority
	% Uptime	100%
	% compliance with cyber awareness training	70%
	% customer satisfaction with digital service desk	90%
	% of council contracts awarded where social value policy has been applied	TBC
	% or Value (£) of procurement spend in local and social economy	Establish a baseline
	Percentage of invoices paid within 30 calendar days	90%
	Percentage of invoices paid within 10 working days	80%
	Actual outturn as a percentage of budgeted expenditure	+5%/-2%
	Number of condition surveys for Council assets completed	10
	Include certificate of compliance from the NIAO – Performance Improvement	Achieved
	% FOIs responded to within 20 working days	TBC

	Committee papers published on time	TBC
	Number of Equality Screenings completed annually	TBC

Theme 3: Our people and communities

Our people and communities are at the heart of Belfast, and we will strive to ensure that we can positively impact the quality of life and wellbeing of all our residents. We will work to deliver impactful neighbourhood improvements for residents and continue to address key issues at a local level.

We will also continue to engage with key partners and networks to encourage more participation and engagement in communities, ensuring that local people can have a say in the key challenges within their neighbourhoods.

To support our people and communities, in 2025-26 we will:

Community and neighbourhood regeneration		
Strategic Intent	Actions for 2025-26	Committee
Invest in our neighbourhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress the development and delivery of the Council's Physical Programme to enable needs led investment across the city i.e. Capital Programme, Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund, Belfast Investment Fund, Local Investment Fund, Social Outcomes Fund, PEACEPLUS, Urban Villages and other initiatives. 	Strategic Policy & Resources
Enhance and create new community assets and facilities across the city through the ongoing delivery of our £500m physical programme .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress delivery of the Council's Capital Programme. Progress the development of capital projects aligned to the Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy and Pitches Strategy. Continue partnership delivery of capital schemes under Urban Villages, PEACEPLUS, National Lottery Heritage Fund, Levelling up Fund, UK Shared Prosperity Fund and central government agencies. Progress delivery of the £10.28m Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund. Continue to progress delivery of committed projects through the Belfast Investment Fund, Local Investment Fund and Social Outcomes Fund. Progress the Greenways Programme to improve the connectivity of the city. Progress infrastructure works at the North Foreshore to support the development of the site 	Strategic Policy & Resources

Deliver our £10.28m Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support 20 Stage 3 Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund projects across the city. • Completion of one Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund project. 	Strategic Policy & Resources
Enhance our open spaces and physical assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain our Green Flag and Green Flag Heritage Award status across our parks and open spaces to ensure that our residents can access high quality open spaces. • Deliver animation and outreach activities to encourage and engage people to participate in our community, play and leisure development programmes. • Enhance our playgrounds, to ensure that we continue to provide high quality facilities and equipment across the city (Playground Improvement Programme). • Continue to deliver animation programmes in 7 new/ refurbished parks: Pairc an Lonnain, Shankill Bullring, Pairc Nua Colainn, Ballysillan, Marrowbone, Colin Glen and Pitt Park. • Deliver and facilitate a range of events and community programmes within our parks and open spaces. • Deliver improvements to parks and open spaces to improve people's health and wellbeing through multimillion pound transformational schemes* including: - Progressing delivery of Cathedral Gardens, a state-of-the-art open space in the city centre. - Progressing delivery of major improvements to parks including the Urban Villages £6.9m Ballysillan Playing Fields project and the €13.5m PEACE PLUS Reconnected Belfast: Waterworks and Alexandra Park under Theme 1.4 Reimagining Communities. • Progress delivery of the PEACEPLUS Reconnected Belfast: Alexandra Park and Waterworks under Theme 1.4 Re-imagining Communities. • Progress delivery of the open space focussed PEACEPLUS projects including Reconnected Belfast – Waterworks and Alexandra Park, Distillery Street Redevelopment project, Annadale Open Space and Access to the Hills. 	<p>P&C Committee</p> <p>SP&R Committee</p>

Build capacity within our communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a new Community Support Plan for the period (2025-29) which sets out the basis for how we provide support to local communities and residents across the city. This will include support to the community, voluntary and social enterprise sectors. • Implement the recommendations of the review of Belfast City Council Funded advice services. • Provide funding and support to community-based advice services across the city to provide dedicated and tailored support to individuals. 	P&C Committee
---------------------------------------	---	---------------

Health inequalities		
Strategic Intent	Actions for 2025-26	Committee
Increase opportunities for people to be physically active.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of people using our leisure centres, to participate in sport and physical activity. • Progress the development of capital projects aligned to the Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy and Pitches Strategy to enhance the quality and accessibility of sports and physical activity provision in Belfast. • Progress the development of Girdwood Indoor Sports Facility. 	<p>P&C Committee</p> <p>SP&R Committee</p>

Our people and communities – Corporate performance indicators

Priority area	Key performance indicators	Targets 2025-26
Health Inequalities	Number of people using our leisure centres	3.35 million
	Number of community, play and leisure outreach programmes delivered	200
	Number of outdoor leisure bookings (pitches, bowling greens)	160,000
	Numbers attending events in our parks	180,000
	Number of adult and junior leisure centre monthly prepaid memberships (including swim school)	31,250
	Number of events in parks	350
	Number of people supported who are impacted by, or at risk of, chronic homelessness	50
Community & Neighbourhood Regeneration	Number of major improvements to our parks progressed	3
	Number of major improvements to our open space progressed	1
	Number of development works commenced on capital projects aligned to the Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy and Pitches Strategy	3
	Amount invested in delivering the annual playground improvement programme	£580k
	Number of projects completed under the Physical Programme	10
	Number of projects developed under the Physical Programme	100
	Number of organisations supported under the £10.28m NRF Programme	20
	Number of projects completed under NRF	1

	Number of parks with green flag and heritage award accreditation	23
--	--	----

Theme 4: Our economy

Council is committed to ensuring that Belfast has a thriving and prosperous economy that is a hub for businesses and provides diverse employment opportunities for our population. Belfast and the Belfast City Region are central to driving productivity, innovation and growth in the Northern Ireland economy contributing more than two-thirds (£27.4bn, 2019) of Northern Ireland's economic output (Gross Value Added) and home to 40% of the total Northern Ireland business base, with an employment share of 63% of the Northern Ireland total.

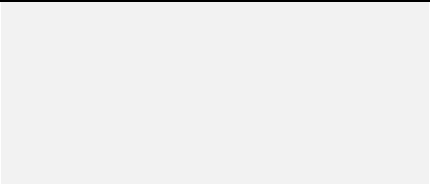
To support our economy in 2025-26 we will:

Productivity and innovation		
Strategic Intent	Actions for 2025-26	Committee
Work to implement the first £200m of Belfast Region City Deal funded projects and develop strategic partnerships and initiatives to encourage investment in our innovation economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support delivery of Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) projects at all stages of progress • Establish Benefits Realisation Framework for the Programme • Provide, in our role as Accountable Body, effective programme management arrangements • Integrate Social Value considerations into projects across the programme • Represent BRCD partnership in respect of cross cutting programme activity (e.g. engagement, negotiation, communication) and in engagement with government partners as Lead Authority • Maximise the benefits emerging from Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor (DBEC) • Develop and maximise international linkages to support inclusive economic growth through approval and implementation of new international relations framework 	Strategic Policy and Resources CG&R Committee
Deliver first phase of the £55 million BRCD Innovation Challenge Fund which aims to address the emerging needs and unique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed 2025-2026 Actions for BRCD PMO/City Innovation Service (replicates current Corporate Plan wording) • Develop and submit proposals for a BRCD digital innovation grants programme linked to the new centres of excellence and a local authority led SBRI Programme • Deliver the Belfast Region City Deal Innovation Challenge Fund to stimulate innovation to address the region's 'Grand Challenges' of (i) artificial intelligence and data, (ii) health and wellbeing and (iii) sustainability and resilience 	Strategic Policy and Resources

Continue to support and strive for the creation of a sustainable circular economy to ensure that materials aren't wasted and nature is regenerated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support our suppliers by helping business cashflow through the prompt payment of invoices. 	
--	--	--

Our economy – Corporate performance indicators		
Priority area and objective	Key performance indicators	Targets 2025-26
Productivity and innovation	Number of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) supported to engage in digital innovation	425 SMEs
	Amount of funding made available to organisations to engage in digital innovation	£600,000
Inclusive and Sustainable Growth	Number of events delivered through the Belfast Learning City Festival	130 events
	Number of organisations signed up to the Belfast Business Promise accreditation	100
	Number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity. (The delivery of client-led business plans under the Go Succeed programme)	325
	Number of (i) Regional and (ii) Belfast individuals/ entrepreneurs supported through start-up activity.	(i) 4300 (ii) 839
	Number of (i) Regional and (ii) Belfast businesses supported through business growth activity.	(i) 2000

		(ii) 380
	Percentage of (i) Regional and (ii) Belfast Go Succeed participants engaged who are female	(i) 50% (ii) 50%
	Percentage of participants who move into a positive outcome from an Employment or Upskilling Academy.	75%



Theme 5: Our place

A key ambition of the Belfast Agenda is to attract a further 66,000 residents to the city by 2035 and work in partnership with key agencies to ensure that all residents have access to the high-quality, sustainable homes they deserve. In order to achieve this, Council has a key role to play in terms of supporting housing led regeneration across the city.

We also want to ensure quality placemaking and that Belfast is a liveable city in which local people are connected to their community and both residents and visitors are able to connect with jobs, services and amenities in safe, active, accessible, and sustainable ways in the long-term.

Enhancing our city centre is also crucial to ensure that Belfast is a thriving and inclusive destination for residents and visitors alike.

We will continue to strengthen and build on our sense of place by accelerating major regeneration schemes. These will seek to deliver inclusive economic, social and environmental benefits, whilst protecting and enhancing access to our built and natural heritage.

To enhance our place in 2025-26 we will:

Quality place-making and housing-led regeneration		
Strategic Intent	Actions for 2025-26	Committee
Support and work with partners to address housing challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver the housing-led regeneration programme, working in partnership with the Private Sector Partner (PSP) and external partners, including establishing and overseeing governance arrangements across the PSP indicative workstreams, progressing the Strategic Site Assessments Phase 2, including Tranche 1 delivery routes, partnership working with DfC and Clanmil Housing Association as an outworking of the Inner North West Development Brief for the development of a city centre housing-led regeneration scheme and advancing placemaking action plan for agreed priority areas. 	Strategic Policy and Resources City Growth & Regeneration
Monitor the implementation of the Plan Strategy and produce the Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor the implementation of the Local Development Plan Strategy. Progress the development of the Local Policies Plan (LPP) to public consultation. 	Strategic Policy & Resources

Policies Plan (LPP) which will contain local policies and site-specific proposals in relation to the development and use of land		Planning
---	--	----------

Connectivity, active and sustainable travel		
Strategic Intent	Actions for 2025-26	Committee
Transform connectivity within the city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver an overarching programme to support enhanced Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel across the city including development of strategic projects aligned to the Waterfront Promenade Framework and A Bolder Vision (Under the Bridges and Sailortown to Titanic Quarter bridge) and delivery of Section 76 public realm improvements at Little York Street, Little Patrick Street, 5Cs and Blackstaff Square & Environs. Refresh A Bolder Vision strategy in line with the Eastern Transport Plan. Undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment and publish final documents with a Delivery Prospectus. Engage with partners and government to facilitate, support, progress and enable the Council's preferred position for major infrastructure projects including e.g. York Street Interchange; Belfast Rapid Transit Phase 2; Belfast Cycle Network; Living with Water project; Belfast Streets Ahead; and Weaver's Cross Progressing two greenways/pathways to improve the connectivity of the city e.g. Sydenham Greenway, Colin Greenway, Black Mountain Pathway. 	City Growth & Regeneration
		SP&R Committee
	Belfast Bikes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversee the implementation and mobilisation plan for changing to the new Belfast Bikes operator/ operating model in September 2025. Oversee the delivery of the Belfast Bikes public bike hire scheme, maximising revenue and reducing vandalism costs. 	City Growth & Regeneration

Ensure the Eastern Transport Plan aligns with and supports our ambitions for a connected and sustainable city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Department for Infrastructure to ensure that the Eastern Transport Plan aligns with and supports our ambitions for a connected and sustainable city. 	City Growth & Regeneration

City Regeneration and Investment		
Strategic Intent	Actions for 2025-26	Committee
Safeguard our heritage and historic assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake work to safeguard our historic and heritage assets within the Capital Programme including Wilmont House, Floral Hall, City Hall, St. George's Market, Ulster Hall, Palm House and others, ensuring their appropriate end use where necessary. Undertake health & safety works at Floral Hall. Progress a feasibility study for the Palm House. Initiate development work on Historic Cemeteries within the Capital Programme. Progress delivery of physical improvements to Belfast Zoo as part of the Capital Programme. 	Strategic Policy & Resources
Work to secure funding to sustain the long-term use of 2 Royal Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conclude the EoI for the sustainable long-term use of the ground Floor for 2 Royal Avenue. Continued development of the LGBTQIA+ Hub proposal at 2 Royal Avenue through the PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan. 	Strategic Policy & Resources

Address the challenges facing the city to maximise investment, generate rates and support growth in the surrounding neighbourhoods and wider region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a strategic engagement programme aligned to the Belfast Place Based Growth Proposition, working with city, regional and national government partners to seek to secure place-based and regeneration investment funding. • Deliver an overarching City Development and Investment programme, including progressing options for vesting and/or acquisition by agreement of the Tribeca site in whole or in part; implementing the proposed recommendations from the City Centre Investment Fund Review; and progressing options for the future use and development of the Sixth in partnership with the council's LLP partner. • Delivery of the City Wide Vacant to Vibrant capital grant scheme. • Position the City to Compete, working in partnership with the Belfast City & Region Place Partnership. • Work with external partners to deliver the Future City Centre Programme. • 	<p>Strategic Policy & Resources</p> <p>City Growth & Regeneration</p>
---	---	---

Cultural and tourism development

Strategic Intent	Actions for 2025-26	Committee
Grow Tourism in the City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress Belfast Stories, a landmark major tourism anchor in the city centre, to RIBA stage 3a and secure BRCD funding. • Deliver year 4 of Make Yourself at Home, the 10-year tourism plan for Belfast. • Position and promote Belfast in national and international markets through investment in Visit Belfast to increase the value of tourism to the local economy. • Deliver the annual City Events programme of large-scale public city events and activities attracting local audiences and out-of-state visitors. • Plan and prepare to host the Fleadh Cheoil na hEireann 2026. • Manage and oversee the delivery of the commercial assets, including Belfast Zoo, Belfast Castle & Malone House, ensuring value for money and long-term sustainability. • Improve the visitor experience at St George's Market to drive footfall and enhance customer satisfaction and provide support for city markets. 	<p>Strategic Policy & Resources</p> <p>City Growth & Regeneration</p> <p>Strategic Policy & Resources</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and progress the delivery of neighbourhood tourism physical projects, improving the city's local tourism facilities and infrastructure i.e. Titanic People Exhibition Centre, the Act Initiative Community Hub & Visitor Centre and Michael Davitt's Community Heritage Centre. 	
Create a culturally vibrant city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver Year 5 of A City Imagining, Belfast's 10-year cultural strategy. Deliver Year 2 of the music strategy, Music Matters – a roadmap for Belfast. 	City Growth & Regeneration

Our place – Corporate performance indicators

Priority area	Key performance indicators	Targets 2025-26
Connectivity, active and sustainable travel	Number of greenways/ pathways progressed	2
City regeneration and investment	Progressed the delivery of landfill gas extraction system at North Foreshore	TBC
	Progressed the delivery of additional NIE capacity at North Foreshore	TBC
	Progressed work with the developer undertaken to progress the Master Development Agreement for the 250-acre Giant's Park site	TBC
	Total number of previously vacant city-wide properties that are occupied as a result of the Vacant to Vibrant intervention	20
Cultural and tourism development.	Number of neighbourhood tourism physical projects progressed	3
	Number of projects securing match funding from external partners for neighbourhood tourism physical projects	3
	Number of visitor servicing enquiries (Visit Belfast)	805000
	Number of people attending the annual programme of large-scale public city events	111,000

Theme 6: Our planet

We are committed to tackling climate change and biodiversity loss to ensure that Belfast can be a place where people and nature thrive together. To deliver a sustainable city we will work with our residents and industries to reduce their carbon footprints. We will also lead the way in providing global green solutions by leveraging our unique market access and international networks to become a hub for low carbon design and manufacturing. We will work to support our industries to thrive on all the opportunities in the green economy whilst creating a much cleaner environment. We will lead by example, embedding a climate aware approach into every aspect of our work, minimising the impact we have and planning for a sustainable future throughout the entire council and beyond.

To support our planet in 2025-26 we will:

Re-naturing the city and increasing resilience to climate change		
Strategic Intent	Actions for 2025-26	Committee
Increase the number of trees across the city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch the tree warden scheme to improve the maintenance of existing woodland, urban tree and street trees. Continue to deliver the Belfast City Council's Tree Strategy and action plan to help manage and improve the tree scape in the city. Start to implement the tree establishment strategy. 	
Protect and enhance our local environment and natural eco-systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the Local Biodiversity Action Plan to set out our approach to address threatened species and habitats and protect and restore biological systems. Develop a demonstrator site in Botanic Gardens and test nature-based solutions through the UPSURGE project to strengthen climate resilience. 	P&C Committee
Promote the uptake of nature-based solutions across the city to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and target funding opportunities to scale up nature-based solutions across the city, targeting areas most in need. 	Climate and City Resilience Committee

support climate resilience.		
Improve air quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate the delivery of the Belfast City Council Air Quality Action Plan 2021 – 2026, in working partnership with Belfast Air Quality Steering Group Members. 	Climate and City Resilience Committee

Creating a sustainable circular economy		
Strategic Intent	Actions for 2025-26	Committee
Reduce the carbon / environmental impact of municipal waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve a Single Use Plastic Policy for the Council. 	
Promote sustainable circular economy approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the Horizon Europe funded UP2030 project which aims to embed net zero in urban planning. 	City Growth & Regeneration Climate and City Resilience Committee
Embed sustainable food practices and partnership working in Belfast.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval of a city-wide Sustainable Food Strategy, with associated delivery and monitoring arrangements and start implementation. Continue to coordinate the Belfast Sustainable Food Partnership. Develop a sustainable food policy for the Council that addresses waste, sourcing, packaging, emissions measurement and an events protocol. 	Climate and City Resilience Committee
Reduce energy consumption (and bills) of housing and public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the development of a neighbourhood retrofit pilot (led by social housing providers) through the Belfast Retrofit Delivery Hub. 	Climate and City Resilience Committee

and commercial buildings.		
Decarbonise the heat supply to buildings in the city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete feasibility study, market readiness assessment, business model development, route to market, community opportunities assessment and impact assessment for a low carbon heat network. Initiate pre-procurement market engagement for a low carbon Heat Network for Belfast City Centre. 	Climate and City Resilience Committee

Innovating to net-zero		
Strategic Intent	Actions for 2025-26	Committee
Enable the city to decarbonise at scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a pipeline of investable local energy projects arising from the Local Area Energy Plan, with a focus on a heat network and solar PV. Identify and respond to emerging funding opportunities and secure funding for projects. Continue to engage with investors and financial institutions to explore new financial models. 	Climate and City Resilience Committee
Create an exemplar net Zero Tech Park in the Harbour Estate to develop, test and commercialise green technologies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to contribute to a shared vision and a compelling place-based narrative to attract investors. 	Climate and City Resilience Committee
Develop a stable supply of green energy to the Net Zero Park and surrounding lands to support the industrial cluster.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with city stakeholders to create an affordable sustainable energy supply including exploring a green energy hub. 	Climate and City Resilience Committee

Monitoring, learning and reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collate climate data for annual disclosure to the Carbon Disclosure Project and Council Climate Action Scorecards. 	Climate and City Resilience Committee
------------------------------------	--	---------------------------------------

Climate Action Plan

Commence delivery of the Council Corporate Climate Action Plan to increase the climate resilience of Council assets and services and progress towards Council net zero emissions*

Strategic Intent	Actions for 2025-26	Committee
Ensuring BCC is equipped with the tools and mechanisms to successfully enable it to become a net zero, resilient council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and launch an accessible climate data platform to track progress on delivering climate adaptation and mitigation actions. Develop a sustainable food policy for the Council that addresses waste, sourcing, packaging, emissions measurement and an events protocol. Prepare departments for data collection required for Public Body Reporting under the Climate Change Act. Prepare mitigation report (Oct 2025) and adaptation report (March 2026) for submission to DAERA in line with Public Body Reporting requirements. Develop a sustainable/ low carbon procurement policy and supplier guidance documents to support a transition to an inclusive, net zero and resilient future. 	C&CR Committee
Ensuring BCC is future proofed and resilient to flood and heat related risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update the BCC Climate Risk Assessment in line with the new mandatory Public Body Reporting requirements (under the Climate Change Act). Apply SUDs policy and guidance (SUDS Manual C753) as standard practice in the Capital Programme Start to deliver the Tree Establishment Strategy and continue the One Million Trees Programme. 	C&CR Committee
Achievement of a low-carbon and sustainable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete a second phase of building energy audits - (Andersonstown LC, Lisnasharragh LC, Templemore Av LC, Brook LC) and the Waterfront Hall. 	C&CR Committee

energy system and Council estate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the integration of whole life carbon assessments as standard practice in the Capital Programme. • Launch a phased metering and retrofitting programme across BCC's top energy users based on the findings of the building level audits of Adelaide, Cecil Ward, City Hall and Duncrue. • Scope out a strategy to increase renewable and low-carbon energy use through corporate power purchase agreements. 	
Achievement of net zero and sustainable Council-related transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Business Travel Policy and develop the Sustainable Staff Travel Plan to encourage modal shift, active travel and more fuel-efficient driving for Council staff. • Conduct a commercial assessment of Council land suitable for installing low emission vehicle (LEV) charging points. • Repurpose parking spaces for car clubs and cycle parking and integrate appropriate facilities to support active travel e.g. shower and changing facilities. • Through sustainable procurement, aim to use local suppliers to the Council to reduce miles travelled within the confines of procurement legislation and Local Govt Act restrictions. 	C&CR Committee
Continue to deliver our Fleet Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to developing the Net Zero Fleet Replacement Strategy to agree council approach to transition to an alternative (non-fossil) fuel. • Continue to deliver the Fleet Replacement Programme gradually replacing existing old fleet with new low emission vehicles. 	P&C Committee
Enabling the Council and its operations to support the transition to a more circular economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate the development an internal Council-level Waste Management Plan which aligns with the Waste Management Hierarchy and with an emphasis on green waste. • Continue to progress the proposal for a single use plastics policy for the Council. • Develop a mechanism to track and report on internal Council generated waste. 	C&CR Committee

Our planet – Corporate performance indicators

Priority area	Key performance indicators	Targets 2025-26
a) Re-naturing the city and increasing resilience to climate change	Number of Council open space sites with dedicated areas positively managed for biodiversity (e.g. grassland management, wetlands, hedgerows, woodlands, fen etc)	4
	The number of hectares of council lands within designated parks and open spaces positively managed for biodiversity (e.g. grassland management, wetlands, hedgerows, woodlands, fen grassland management etc.)	Establish a baseline
	Air Quality Standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nitrogen dioxide (NO2). Particulate matter PM10 Fine particulate matter PM2.5 Carbon monoxide, sulphur dioxide and ozone objectives. 	100% 100% 100% 100%
b) Creating a sustainable circular economy	Percentage of council municipal waste arisings that is sent for recycling	38.5%
	Amount of (tonnage) of biodegradable council collected waste that is landfilled	7,000t
	Percentage of household waste collected that is sent for recycling (including waste prepared for re-use)	42%
	Amount (tonnage) of council collected municipal waste arisings	160,000t
c) Innovating to net zero	Council CO2e emissions (Scope 1, 2 and 3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scope 1 - gas, oil, HVO, diesel Scope 2 - purchased – electricity consumption Scope 3 - purchased - goods and services, business travel, employee commuting, waste) 	TBC
	Global Carbon Disclosure Project Score	A

	Number of Council Corporate Climate Action Plan short-term priorities completed	19
--	---	----

Theme 7: Compassionate city

As a compassionate city, we recognise the diversity and complexity of our people, and we are determined to make life better for everyone. We will proactively support the most vulnerable people in our society and work with partners to address key social and economic challenges that exist. We will work collaboratively, through specific actions and through our overall approach to ensure that no one is left behind and that people across Belfast can enjoy a better quality of life.

To create a compassionate city in 2025-26 we will:

Inclusive growth and anti-poverty		
Strategic Intent	Actions for 2025-26	Committee
Promote and embed Inclusive Growth into our business as usual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise the Inclusive Growth Toolkit and start to embed its use across the Council. Finalise the Inclusive Growth Index and start to embed its application across the Council. 	SP&R Committee
Through our inclusive growth commitments, continue to build on our procurement, employment, and investment practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redesign the Social Value Procurement Policy as a Sustainable Procurement Policy to include, Social Value, Ethical, Low Carbon. Review and Inform the Council's Internal Procurement Policy in line with the Council's Low Carbon Social Value, efficiency and ethical ambitions. Develop a Procurement Framework for the city. 	Strategic Policy and Resources
Help address vulnerabilities in Belfast and respond to societal challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver an enhanced Learning City Festival to promote and encourage lifelong learning for people of all ages across Belfast. Establish an Anti-Poverty Network in Belfast to support and facilitate a co-ordinated approach to tackling poverty across the city. Extend delivery of the Hardship Programme to ensure that support is available for those most impacted by poverty and the cost-of-living crisis. Provide funding and support to the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector to enable them to deliver local services across the city. 	SP&R Committee

Good relations and a shared future

Strategic Intent	Actions for 2025-26	Committee
Prioritise supporting new communities through the implementation of our Good Relations Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement the Good Relations Action Plan to support the delivery of locally identified good relations priorities. Complete two capital projects in partnership with The Executive Office's Urban Villages Initiative, designed to deliver good relations outcomes including ABC Health & Leisure Hub and Sandy Row Arts & Digital Hub. 	SP&R Committee
Through the EY funded PEACEPLUS, support peace and prosperity through the implementation of the Local Community Action Plan .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver local community actions plans as part of the Peace PLUS programme, to fund community activities and infrastructure project that help build peace and reconciliation in Belfast. Progress delivery of up to 5 capital projects across the city as part of the PEACE PLUS Local Action Plan to promote inclusive and shared spaces across Belfast. i.e. Sanctuary Theatre, Distillery Street Redevelopment Project, Annadale Open Space, Access to the Hills and LGBTQIA+ Hub. 	<p>P&C Committee</p> <p>SP&R Committee</p>
Continue to work to ensure that Belfast is a safe city through the implementation of a new Police and Community Safety Action Plan for the city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver the Police and Community Safety Action Plan to make people feel safer and increase confidence in Policing. Continue to facilitate the five multi-agency (D) PCSP's which work to make communities safer, making sure that the voices of local people are heard. Deliver a programme to help end violence against women and girls (EVAWG). 	P&C Committee

Older people

Strategic Intent	Actions for 2025-26	Committee
Help make Belfast a great place to grow older through delivering on the 2022-2026 Belfast Age Friendly Plan .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and deliver the Belfast Age Friendly Plan 2023-27 to help enhance the quality of life for people as they age. 	P&C Committee

Children and young people

Strategic Intent	Actions for 2025-26	Committee
Facilitate, an active and engaged Belfast City Youth Council to ensure that the needs of children and young people are reflected within our Belfast Agenda and council priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate, an active and engaged Belfast City Youth Council who work with relevant fora and elected members to ensure that the needs of children and young people are reflected within the Belfast Agenda and council priorities. 	P&C Committee
Prioritise the development of a three-year action plan for play development across the city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a three-year action plan for play development across the city. 	P&C Committee

Compassionate city – Corporate performance indicators

Priority area	Key performance indicators	Targets 2025-26
a) Inclusive growth and anti-poverty	Amount (£) of hardship programme funding delivered	£1.1m
	Number of social supermarkets supported	15
	Retain Belfast Business Promise Ambassador Status	Retained
b) Good relations and a shared future	Number of Local Community Action Plans delivered	10
	Amount (£) of EVAWG funding awarded and delivered funding as part of an open call small grants programme	£255k
	Amount (£) of funding administered through the Regional Change Funding to EVAWG expert organisations	£1.2m
	Number of capital projects progressed under PEACE PLUS Local Action Plan	5
	Number of good relations projects supported	25
	Amount (£) of Good Relations grant funding awarded	£160,000
	Number of participants engaged in good relations activity	35,000
c) Older people	Number of participants at age friendly events	1000
d) Children and young people	Number of Play sessions delivered	1500

Monitoring and Reporting

We will implement a Performance and Improvement Framework to enable council to monitor the delivery of our identified actions and support the achievement of our agreed performance targets. The council’s monitoring and reporting structures have been designed to ensure proper oversight and accountability arrangements are in place, and to provide our management teams and Elected Members with assurances that our governance arrangements are robust. This helps to ensure transparency, accountability and drive continuous improvement.

We are committed to delivering high quality services and ensuring high performance at all levels of our organisation. This is aided through implementing robust monitoring and reporting processes and ensuring that our key corporate strategies and plans, aims, and objectives align and cascade down through the organisation. Reporting arrangements for the Annual Corporate Delivery Plan are detailed below:

Annual Corporate Delivery Plan 2025-26	
Reports to	Frequency
Corporate Management Team	Quarterly
Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee	Annually
Full Council	Annually

Formal reporting arrangements are in place to ensure that the Annual Corporate Delivery Plan 2025-26 is effectively delivered in tandem with our Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26. Progress is monitored and reported on a quarterly basis to the Corporate Management Team (CMT) to ensure delivery remains on track and performance targets are being achieved.

Our CMT is responsible for the delivery and reporting of the statutory and self-imposed and indicators outlined in our Annual Corporate Delivery Plan and Performance Improvement Plan.

Updates are provided to the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and full Council by relevant Chief Officers throughout the year with a formal end of year report to facilitate appropriate scrutiny, challenge and evaluation.

We are also required to publish an annual self-assessment of our Performance Improvement Plan and statutory targets on the Council’s website by 30 September each year. This is supported by quarterly updates to CMT, the council’s Audit and Assurance Board and Audit and Risk Panel as well as the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee to track progress regularly throughout the year.

The Audit and Assurance Board and Audit and Risk Panels are responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of the arrangements in place to secure continuous improvement of Council functions and to provide assurance of council’s operations.

This page is intentionally left blank



Subject:	Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26
Date:	23 May 2025
Reporting Officers:	John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy
Contact Officers:	Kevin Heaney, Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty, Karen Anderson-Gillespie, Strategic Performance Manager

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update members on the findings of the public consultation on the draft performance improvement objectives and to present the Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) 2025-26 for Committee consideration and approval.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) 2025-26 attached in Appendix 1, for publication on the Council's website, subject to minor edits and formal ratification by the Full Council on 2 June 2025.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 requires councils to consult residents on proposed improvement objectives and to publish an annual Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) by the 30 June. The PIP identifies the agreed improvement objectives for the year ahead, the actions to be delivered and the measures of success to be achieved. The PIP helps to meet the outcomes and objectives of the Community Plan and the Corporate Plan 2025-28. The PIP doesn't include everything that the Council plans to do in a given year, it focuses specifically on areas for improvement and feeds into the Annual Corporate Delivery Plan 2025-26. The performance improvement objectives are aligned to the key themes and priorities identified within the new Corporate Plan 2025-28 and the Belfast Agenda 2024-28.</p>
3.2	<p><u>Consultation exercise and findings</u></p> <p>Members will be aware that we carried out an eight-week public consultation in relation to Council's draft improvement objectives 2025-26 and associated actions between 17 February - 14 April 2025. The public consultation process included an online survey via Council's Your Say Belfast consultation and engagement website and two targeted focus groups. The survey was promoted using a range of communication methods including social media posts, posters in community buildings, email marketing to existing mailing lists, intranet promotion and websites.</p>
3.3	<p>Out of the 88 people that completed the survey, it should be noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ there was broad consensus across majority of respondents supporting the improvement objectives. ▪ the highest level of 86.3% was received from respondents who strongly agreed or agreed with 'Our people and communities' improvement objective based on supporting our residents to become healthier and engaged. ▪ the lowest of level of 73.9% was received from respondents who strong agreed or agreed with the 'Compassionate city' improvement objective based on supporting our most vulnerable people to make Belfast a more caring, safe and inclusive city.
3.4	<p>In addition, two focus groups with 62 young people and 9 older people were facilitated to enable participants to reflect their priorities and areas for improvement. A detailed summary of the feedback received is included in the consultation report in Appendix 2.</p>

3.5	<p>The qualitative feedback and comments received was shared and considered internally by key officers from the relevant departments to action where relevant and help inform future delivery and/ or amend current activity. Some minor amendments were made to realign actions within the PIP. Members will also be aware that some of the areas suggested are being progressed through existing strategies, plans and programmes of work, and in partnership as part of the Belfast Agenda 2024-28 including addressing key issues across the city such as housing provision, homelessness, mental health and addiction.</p> <p><u>Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26</u></p>
3.6	<p>The updated Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 is attached in Appendix 1 which reflects public consultation feedback and engagement with key Council officers.</p>
3.7	<p>Members are asked to approve the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 in Appendix 1 and to authorise its publication on the Council website by 30 June 2025. In order to meet our statutory deadline, the plan will be published subject to formal ratification by the Full Council on the 2 June 2025.</p>
3.8	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The improvement plan has already been reflected in the formal planning and budgeting processes of council; there are no resource implications contained in this report.</p>
3.9	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are no direct equality, good relations or rural needs implications of the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26.</p>
4.0	<p><u>Appendices – Documents Attached</u></p>
	<p>Appendix 1: Draft Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26.</p> <p>Appendix 2: Consultation feedback report: performance improvement objectives 2025-26.</p>

This page is intentionally left blank



PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2025-26

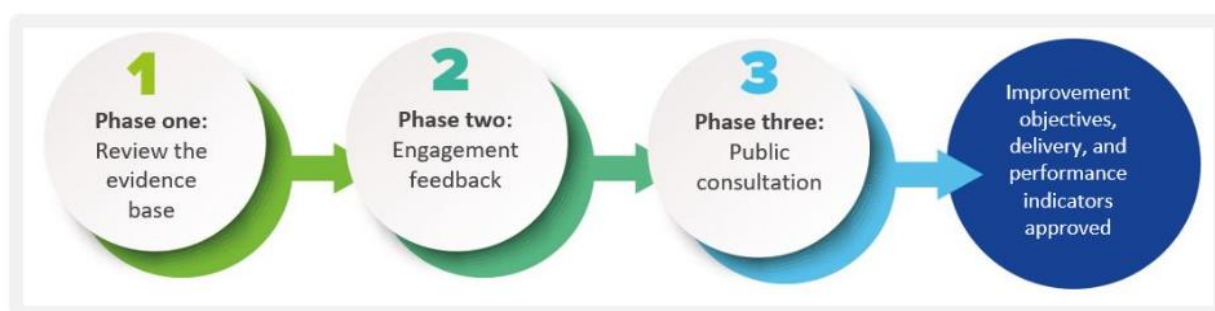
Draft Consultation Summary Report

1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to highlight the process for informing the development of Council's Performance Improvement Objectives 2025-26. The report outlines the approach and feedback received during the consultation process.

1.1 Approach to developing our improvement objectives

The improvement objectives and related actions for 2025-26 were developed based on the implementation of a three-phased approach as summarised below. This report focuses on the findings from Phase 3 of the approach.



Phase 1: Review the evidence base
<p>Conducted a review of existing baseline information and data to contextualise potential improvement opportunities. This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Results and trend data from our 2024-25 Performance Improvement Assessment report.• Ongoing monitoring and review of 2024-25 Corporate Delivery Plan (via quarterly reporting).• Inclusion of guidance issued by the Department for Communities and recommendations provided by the NI auditor (including the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) Section 95 report).• Evidence and issues arising from committee and meetings of the Full Council.• Areas for improvement emerging from the internal audit and risk management processes.• Priorities identified during the development of the new Corporate Plan 2025-28 and rate setting process.• Alignment with key Council and city strategies including The Belfast Agenda and the Corporate Plan 2025-28.• A review of customer complaints received.• Good practice data benchmarking with other local authorities.
Phase 2: Engagement feedback
<p>A series of internal engagements were carried out with members, Chief Officers, departments and key staff across Council. This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Initial meetings with departments to identify priorities and improvement activity.• Regular engagement with departmental teams and key officers, at every phase – ensuring alignment to departmental and service level budget setting and planning processes.

- Priorities identified during corporate planning engagement with Party Group Leaders, elected members and the Corporate Management Team (CMT).
- Reports presented and discussed at Corporate Management Team (CMT) and Strategic Policy and Resources (SP&R) Committee and the Full Council.
- Approval granted via scheduled meetings with senior management teams, CMT, committee and full council meetings.

Phase 3: Public consultation

An eight-week public consultation process was carried out to enable residents and stakeholders to inform our improvement objectives 2025-26. This included an online survey via council's Your Say Belfast consultation and engagement website (yoursay.belfastcity.gov.uk) and two targeted focus groups. The survey was promoted using a range of communication methods including social media posts, posters in community buildings, email marketing to existing mailing lists, intranet promotion and websites. As part of phase three, we:

- Received 88 survey completions via the Your Say Belfast website.
- Facilitated 2 focus groups with 62 young people and 9 older people to reflect their priorities and areas for improvement.
- Worked closely with departmental teams and key officers to consider consultation feedback and refine the Performance Improvement Plan.
- Secured approval of the final objectives through the normal Council governance cycle (CMT, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and the Full Council meeting).

2. Public consultation

The eight-week public consultation period in relation to Council's draft improvement objectives 2025-26 ran between 17th February - 14th April 2025 via Council's YourSay engagement platform. An online survey was carried out with 88 completed responses alongside 2 focus groups which engaged with 62 young people and 9 older people respectively. This section of the report presents and overview of the consultation findings including qualitative feedback received from survey respondents and focus group participants.

2.1 Draft improvement objectives

Draft performance improvement objectives 2025-26

Our Services

We will continue to adapt and improve our services to better meet the needs of our residents and stakeholders.

Our people and communities

We will improve our local areas and provide opportunities to support our residents to become healthier and engaged

Our place

We will create a more vibrant, attractive, and connected city (including the city centre).

Our planet

We will champion climate action; protect the environment and improve the sustainability of Belfast.

Our economy

We will stimulate inclusive growth and innovation, help businesses to start-up and grow and create opportunities for more and better jobs and employment.

Compassionate city

We will support our most vulnerable people to make Belfast a more caring, safe, and inclusive city.

3. On-line survey – high level analysis

3.1 Support for improvement objectives (survey responses)

78.4%

strongly agreed or agreed with
the 'Our services' improvement
objective

86.3%

strongly agreed or agreed with
the 'Our people and communities'
improvement objective

81.9%

strongly agreed or agreed with
the 'Our place' improvement
objective

76.2%

strongly agreed or agreed with
the 'Our planet' improvement
objective

84.1%

strongly agreed or agreed with
the 'Our economy' improvement
objective

73.9%

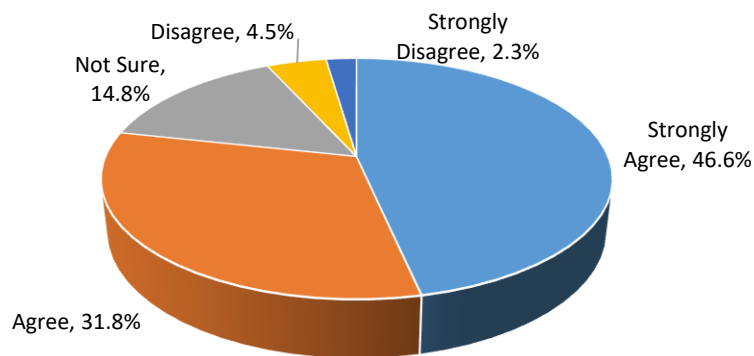
strongly agreed or agreed with
the 'Compassionate city'
improvement objective

3.2 Generic feedback

The generic feedback received included minor suggestions and improvements to internal practices within Council, including the need to improve communications and raise awareness of the different levels of planning within the Council and how they all link together and providing more opportunities for staff to network and collaborate. These areas will be actioned by the Council as part of business-as-usual practices and communication and awareness raising internally will be taken forward as part of the formal launch of the Corporate Plan 2025-28.

4. On-line survey – Improvement objectives analysis

4.1 'Our services' Improvement Objective



- 46.6% strongly agreed
- 31.8% agreed
- 14.8% not sure
- 4.5% disagreed
- 2.3% strongly disagreed

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Qualitative feedback



- Develop solutions that prioritise waste minimisation instead of more recycling campaigns.
- Assign extra resources to ensure waste collection services are more efficient and can reduce littering and clogging up streets with bins.

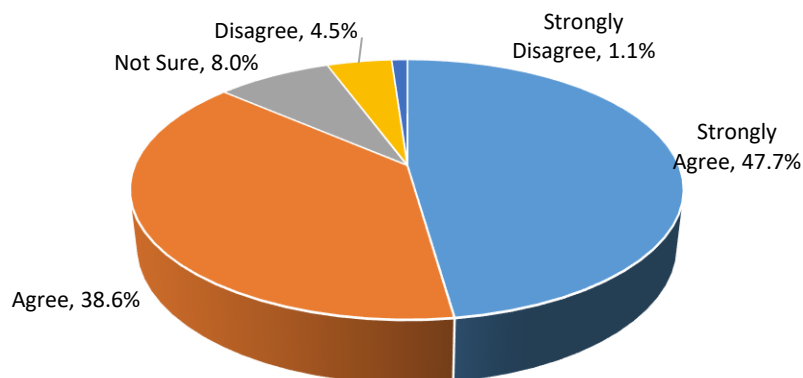


- Consider more specific improvement activity and actions relating to this objective.



- Whilst the implementation of the glass collection is a positive step forward, it should be extended across the city.

4.2 'Our people and communities' improvement objective



- 46.6% strongly agreed
- 31.8% agreed
- 14.8% not sure
- 4.5% disagreed
- 2.3% strongly disagreed

Qualitative feedback

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree



- Enhance key local amenities such as re-surfacing works at the Bog Meadows to engage more people in their local areas.



- Invest further in sport and leisure facilities, specifically outdoor tennis courts to encourage more participation.
- Cost for leisure facilities is prohibitive for many people to access – consider more inclusive pricing to encourage participation.

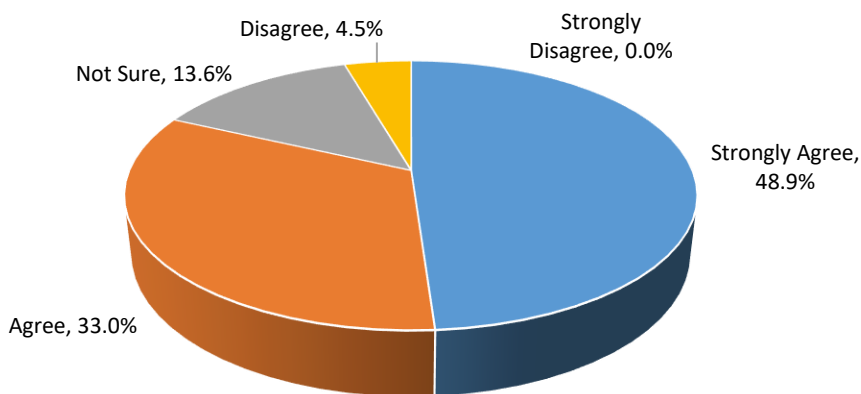


- Council should proactively prioritise participation of residents in civic society. Develop innovative ways to engage and support people and groups across the city.



- After decades of catching up, Belfast seems to have fallen behind the rest of UK and Ireland. Promotion of inclusion and reducing the segregation of our city should be prioritised.

4.3 'Our place' improvement objective



- 48.9% strongly agreed
- 33.0% agreed
- 13.6% not sure
- 4.5% disagreed
- 0.0% strongly disagreed

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Qualitative feedback



- Focus on greater pedestrianisation of city centre, reducing vehicles in and around commercial and shopping areas as well as enhancing active travel infrastructure.



- Consider how to prioritise increasing use of communal green spaces that are easily accessible and open to the public.



- Work with partners to enhance public transport provision and infrastructure, including provision of bus stops at Council facilities.



- Prioritise investment in addressing unadopted alleyways to deliver a 'cleaner and greener' city.

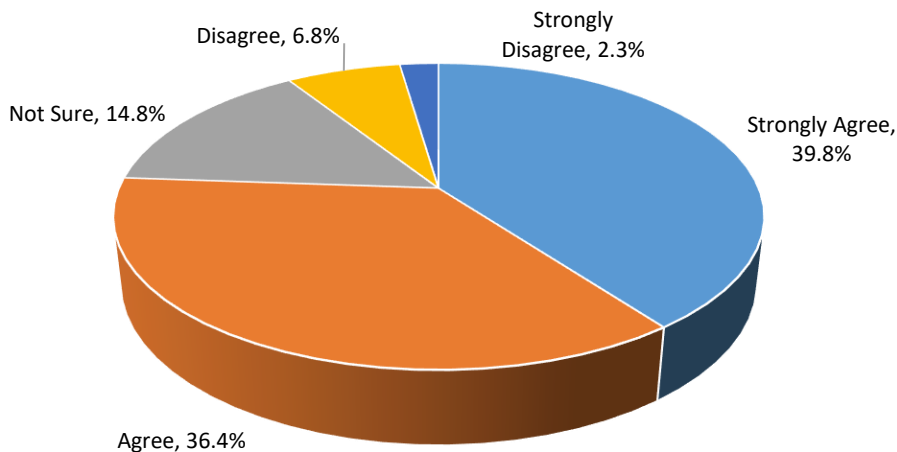


- Progress works with property developers and landowners to increase housing in areas where new housing is needed.



- Vacancy across the city not just the city centre needs to be addressed as dereliction is a major problem in housing as well as businesses.

4.4 'Our planet' improvement objective



- 39.8% strongly agreed
- 36.4% agreed
- 14.8% not sure
- 6.8% disagreed
- 2.3% strongly disagreed

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Qualitative feedback



- Whilst acknowledging positive tree planting ambitions across the city, it's also important to recognise the importance of hedges to the environment and beauty of the city.



- Reducing car use in the city and encouraging shared car schemes to try and address issues of parking across the city. Consider options to promote access to short term car usage, for example the GoCar in Ireland.



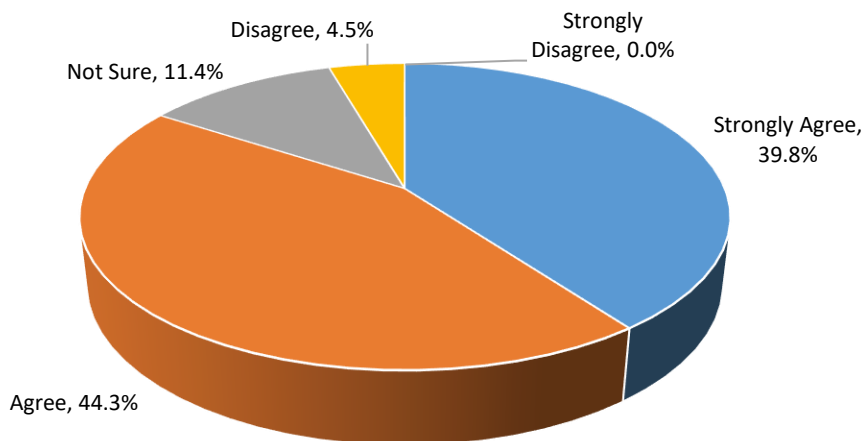
- Consider practical ways to educate and raise awareness in relation to climate change such as community science projects on air quality across the city.



- Council should use their leadership position as part of this theme to deliver positive action alongside partners.

- 39.8% strongly agreed
- 44.3% agreed

4.5 'Our economy' improvement objective



- 11.4% not sure
- 4.5% disagreed
- 0.0% strongly disagreed

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Qualitative feedback



- Council should be encouraging local supply chains and reducing exporting of resources as waste that could be used by other businesses as a material in production to deliver a 'circular economy'.

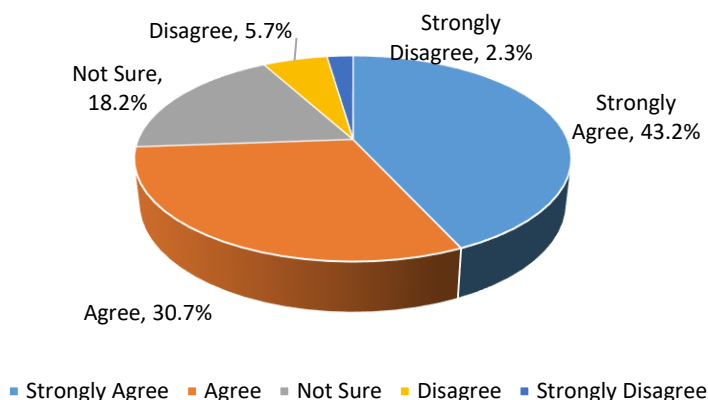


- An events strategy for outdoor concerts in Belfast is required to set out the approach in terms of event frequency etc in Belfast Parks in particular.



- Greater promotion, emphasis and visibility of arts and culture as key economic drivers that help to showcase what the city has to offer both for residents and visitors.

4.6 'Compassionate city' improvement objective



- 43.2% strongly agreed
- 30.7% agreed
- 18.2% not sure
- 5.7% disagreed
- 2.3% strongly disagreed

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Qualitative feedback



- Important that Council tackle the root cause for numerous issues in relation to violence against women and girls of which drug use and increased immigration are considered to be enablers.



- Whilst it is commendable that Council is taking the lead on poverty, this should be an issue for Central Government to deliver on.



- Council should make a commitment to rigorously understanding the causal factors of inequality, poverty and violence and to lead the city to change them so that the difference between those who are well off and those who are not is reduced.



- Focus on the services to support the most at risk, those with disability, homeless, addictions issues and review ways of working, For example - combining the family support hubs, complex lives, community safety etc and embrace joined up working.

5. Focus group feedback

Council's Strategic Performance Team facilitated two focus groups with 62 young people aged 18-24 and 9 members of the Greater Belfast Seniors Forum who represent the views of older people across the city. Workshops focused on identifying the needs and priorities for the two respective target groups. Key feedback is summarised below:

5.1 Older people focus group

Communication and awareness

Council should consider more traditional methods to engage and communicate with older residents. Many don't or can't access online methods and therefore don't stay informed, for example providing more frequent newsletters, brochures, key contact details and radio announcements would be beneficial.

Better understanding of older people's needs

The needs of older people can be sometimes overlooked, older people would welcome direct engagement, particularly with Elected Members to look at opportunities to help support them.

Increased public toilet provision

The lack of public toilet provision across the city restricts older people from getting out and about. Older people feel apprehensive that they won't be able to access toilet provision and therefore can become isolated from society. Reviewing toilet provision and how the city can better accommodate older people should be prioritised.

Working with partners

Council should be a civic leader and demand more from key partner organisations to improve the quality of life and provision for people across the city. Improving our roads, availability of public transport and improving accessibility of all facilities are key issues which should be delivered on.

5.2 Young people focus group

Mental health support

Mental health is a major issue for young people with more and more individuals seeking support. Service demand is vastly outweighing supply and thus many young people cannot access the support they need. Council should work with partners to consider interventions and supports to help address the challenges presented.

Social justice

Young people want to live in a city that is inclusive and equitable, ensuring everyone has the same rights and access to basic necessities. Council therefore has a key role to play in terms of addressing systemic inequalities and discrimination, through delivering interventions and programmes that promoting a society where everyone can thrive.

Youth unemployment

Accessing good quality jobs a priority for young people who feel that the cost of living crisis and political decisions (National Insurance increase) could lead to higher levels of youth unemployment. Young people would like to see better training and educational opportunities to ensure they are better equipped to access and sustain employment.

Homelessness

Homelessness was noted as a key issue for young people who feel more dedicated and wholistic support is required. Council should consider how they can help tackle the issue to reduce stereotyping and review practical solutions to support those in need i.e. extend Complex Lives, transform derelict buildings into safe spaces etc.

Ending Violence Against Women and Girls

Addressing the growing issue of violence against women and girls is a major priority for young people who feel that Council has a key role to play in terms of providing infrastructure, delivering legislation and education to help tackle the societal issue. Young people feel that Council need to show leadership and work with partners to ensure that Belfast is a safe place for everyone.

Climate change

Young people noted the positive work of Council in terms of the leading role in helping to address climate change in Belfast. They also stressed the importance that this work continues to be prioritised and elevated further to safeguard future generations.

This page is intentionally left blank



Performance Improvement Plan

2025 - 26



CONTENTS

Foreword	3
Introduction	4
Looking back - performance improvement summary achievements 2024-25	6
Our arrangements to ensure continuous improvement	7
Identifying our performance improvement objectives for 2025-26	9
Phase one: Reviewing the evidence base. -----	9
Phase two: Engagement feedback -----	10
Phase three: Public consultation-----	10
Consultation feedback summary -----	10
Looking forward –	15
performance improvement objectives 2025-26	15
Improvement objective 1: Our services -----	16
Improvement objective 2: Our people and communities -----	19
Improvement objective 3: Our place-----	22
Improvement objective 4: Our planet -----	24
Improvement objective 5: Our economy -----	26
Improvement objective 6: Compassionate city -----	28
Performance monitoring and reporting arrangements	30
Governance arrangements -----	30
Annual performance management and improvement cycle -----	32
Feedback on areas for improvement	33
Your feedback matters-----	33
Alternative formats-----	33

Foreword

I'm delighted to introduce Belfast City Council's Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 which is a key element of our arrangements to secure continuous improvement. Driving improvement is a priority for Council, evidenced by our recently developed Planning and Performance Framework which is a crucial component that will help us to embed a consistent approach to how we plan, deliver, monitor and measure the impact of our services and work across the organisation.

As we move past a decade since local government reform which was implemented to enhance service delivery and improve cost effectiveness for local authorities in Northern Ireland, as a Council we remain committed to improving the quality of life and environment for our ratepayers and communities over the next year and beyond.

This commitment is echoed in our new Corporate Plan 2025-28 which is closely aligned to The Belfast Agenda, our city's community plan. Our new Corporate Plan sets out our priorities and ambitions in terms of improving our services, supporting our people and communities, enhancing our place, growing our economy, protecting our planet, promoting a compassionate city and ensuring that we are an organisation fit to lead and serve.

Looking back on 2024-25, we are proud of the progress that we achieved and the positive impact that the work of council staff continues to have on our residents and stakeholders. Reflecting on last year's Performance, this plan highlights some of our key achievements, such the delivery of over £14.5m of investment in two PEACE IV projects- Shankill Shared Women's Centre and Black Mountain Shared Space.

These facilities will undoubtedly play a crucial role in connecting communities as we continue to strive towards a shared future for everyone.

We will continue to prioritise our commitment to creating a sustainable, nature positive city and championing climate action by increasing the climate resilience of Council assets and services.

To improve the health and wellbeing of our residents, we will maximise our contribution through investing in and offering a diverse range of activities in parks, open spaces, play and leisure facilities. Additionally, we uphold our dedication to stimulating inclusive growth and innovation and enhancing the prosperity of our city, through supporting local businesses and creating opportunities for more and better jobs and employment.

We have supported and continue to deliver real improvements for all our citizens, particularly those who are most vulnerable, underpinned by the desire to make Belfast a compassionate city, a city which is caring, safe and inclusive for all.

However, whilst much has been achieved, our continuous improvement journey is ongoing, and we remain determined not to stand still. As an organisation, we look forward to the year ahead as we strive to improve the quality of life and opportunities for all our citizens and stakeholders.

John Walsh, Chief Executive

Introduction

Our Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 sets out Council's key priorities for improvement over the next 12-month period to ensure that we fulfil our "Duty to Improve".

Duty to improve

Under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, we have a statutory duty to agree improvement objectives, publish an annual Improvement Plan and ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to achieve them.

Defining improvement

In accordance with the Act and accompanying guidance, for us "improvement" is about *enhancing the sustainable quality of life and environment for ratepayers and communities* rather than limited to gains in service output or efficiencies.

The development of this year's Performance Improvement Plan has coincided with the production of Council's new Corporate Plan 2025-2028. As a result, Council has been able to clearly define key priorities and areas for improvement this year, ensuring alignment between both plans and our overarching community plan, The Belfast Agenda.

Our Performance Improvement Plan has also been developed against the backdrop of Council's new Planning and Performance Management Framework to embed a consistent, streamlined approach to planning and performance management throughout the organisation. It will also help to build an effective culture of performance management to ensure all members, staff and stakeholders work to achieve the best possible outcomes and value for money for the residents and communities in Belfast. The Framework will also be a crucial tool to support informed decision-making, more effective use of resources and drive improvement across the organisation.

Our medium and longer-term arrangements to ensure continuous improvement are outlined in figure 1. This plan sets out our performance improvement objectives for 2025 – 26 which are compliant with the requirement for them to be:

- **legitimate** - making a *demonstrable contribution* to at least one (or, probably, more than one) of the aspects of improvement listed in the Local Government Act.
- **clear** - setting out the *visible improvement* that citizens can expect.
- **robust** - with defined *terms of success* (whether *quantitative* or *qualitative*).
- **deliverable** - with established *links to individual service programmes and budgets*.
- **demonstrable** - capable of being supported by *objective* (but *not necessarily measured or quantitative*) evidence.



Looking back - performance improvement summary achievements 2024-25

Our 2024-25 year-end self-assessment will be published on our website in September 2025 and some key achievements are summarised below:

100%

of actions achieved or partially achieved

87.5%

of available performance indicators either met or exceeded target

89.6%

of available performance indicators have either maintained or showed improvement on previous years



Signed up 57 companies to the Belfast Business Promise pledge (target 50)



Delivered over €17m investment in two PEACE IV projects - Shankill Shared Women's Centre and Black Mountain Shared Space.

Occupied 46 previously vacant city centre properties as a result of the Vacant to Vibrant intervention. (target 26).



Completed 91.93% of service requests for missed bins within 5 working days (target 85%)



Achieved 84% customer satisfaction levels with customer hub contacts (target 80%)



Increased the % of household waste collected that is sent for recycling to 42.7% (target 42%)



Increased the % of council contracts (over £30k value) where the SVPP has been applied to 75% (target 40%)



Processed 77% of planning enforcement cases within 39 weeks – exceeding the statutory 70% target



Completed over 26 Physical Programme projects (target 10)

Our arrangements to ensure continuous improvement

The Council has a statutory duty to put arrangements in place to secure continuous performance improvement. We are also specifically required to produce an annual Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). However, everything we do in Council is focused on improving the lives of people who live in or visit Belfast. The following legislative context, plans and strategies combine to form our performance management framework for improving outcomes for the people of Belfast and demonstrates how the Council's corporate objectives are cascaded throughout the organisation.

FIGURE 1: Council's performance management framework.



These arrangements are in accordance with Part 12 (Section 84 (2)) of the Local Government Act which states that they should improve our functions in terms of:



Strategic context

Our community plan, the Belfast Agenda was updated in 2024, with input from partners, residents, and other stakeholders to reflect the city's current priorities. The overarching strategic plan explains the WHY of what we are doing, providing a holistic view of the needs and aspirations of the city, and articulating this in five long-term outcomes. It outlines how partners will work collectively to support the most vulnerable in our city while growing the economy, regenerating neighbourhoods, supporting communities, and achieving our climate targets. Figure 2 depicts the five strategic themes and priorities, the five things' people want for Belfast by 2035 (our outcomes) and our ambitions which outline our key targets to make our vision a reality.

The Council's Corporate Plan 2025-28 sets out our approach to delivering for local people in a time of both significant opportunity and considerable challenges for our city. The Corporate Plan is inextricably linked to the Belfast Agenda and explains WHAT the Council will do to contribute to the outcomes above as well as outlining the key priorities for us as an organisation. And finally, Committee plans, and other departmental and business plans detail the HOW. Our corporate priority themes for the next three years are outlined in figure 3.



FIGURE 2: The Belfast Agenda 2024-28

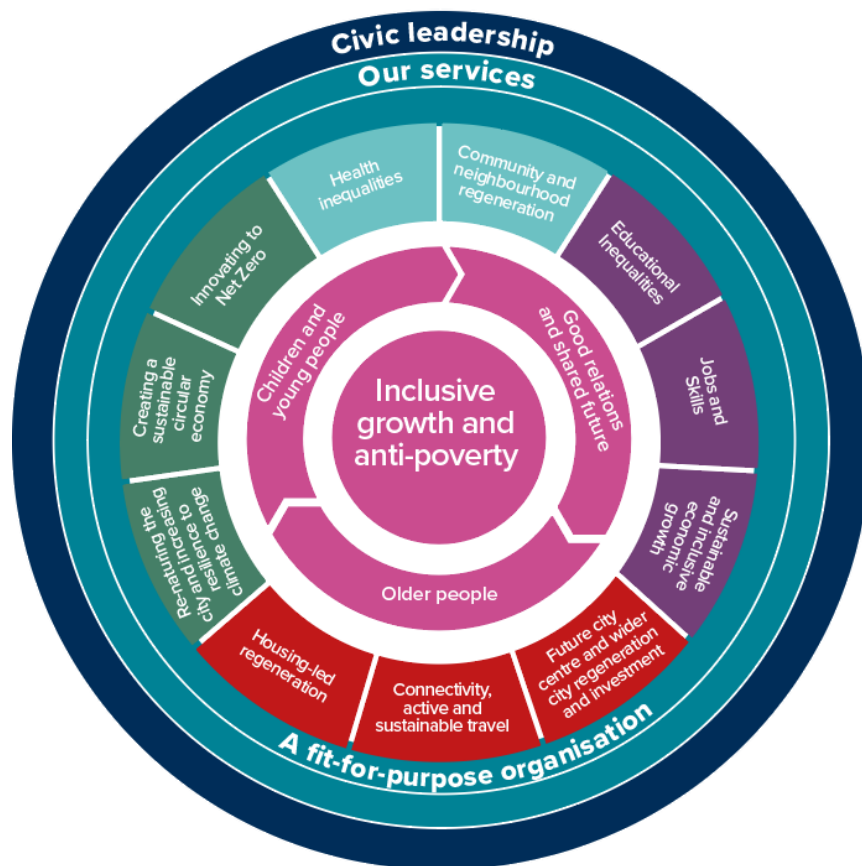
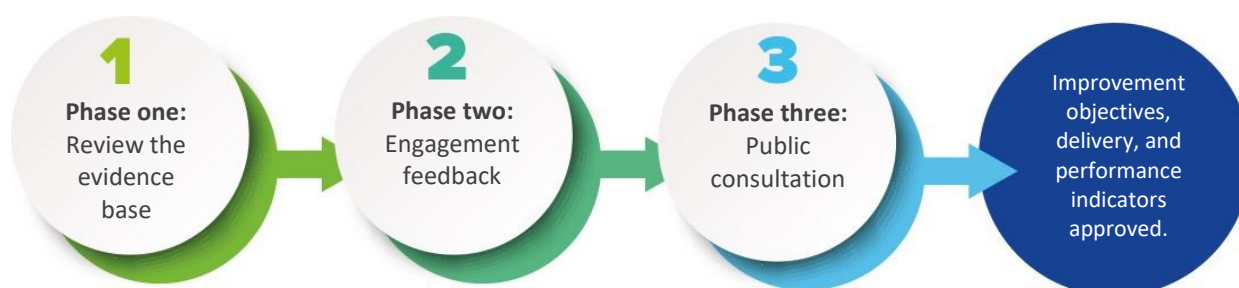


FIGURE 3: Council's Corporate Plan 2025-28

Identifying our performance improvement objectives for 2025-26

All our key strategies and plans are informed and developed by listening to our residents, businesses, partners, staff, and elected representatives. Our 2025-26 performance improvement objectives were developed via a three-phase process. In phase one, we reviewed the evidence base, in phase two, we engaged internally and in phase three, we conducted public consultation. The rich and diverse analysis and feedback we received throughout this process has been shaped into this revitalised Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26.

FIGURE 4: Three-phase process



Phase one: Reviewing the evidence base.

Understanding the needs of users, citizens and the internal and external environment is critically important. We analysed baseline evidence drawn from existing engagement findings, survey results, performance data and a review of relevant strategies and plans, including:

- Results and trend data from our 2024-25 Performance Improvement Assessment report.
- Feedback gleaned from partners, residents, and other stakeholders as part of the consultation and engagement process for the Belfast Agenda's refresh.
- Ongoing monitoring and review of 2024-25 Corporate Delivery Plan (via quarterly reporting) to identify areas of potential under-performance.
- Inclusion of guidance issued by the Department for Communities and recommendations provided by the NI auditor (including the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) Section 95 report).
- Evidence and issues arising from Committee and meetings of the Full Council.
- Areas for improvement emerging from the internal audit and risk management processes.
- Priorities identified during the development of the new Corporate Plan 2025-28 and rate setting process.
- Alignment with key Council and city strategies including The Belfast Agenda, Corporate Plan 2025-28 etc.
- A review of customer complaints received.
- Good practice data benchmarking with other local authorities.

Phase two: Engagement feedback

Feedback was gleaned and approval granted from a series of internal engagements with members, Chief Officers, departments and key staff across the Council. This included:

- Templates completed and initial meetings held with departments to identify priorities and improvement activity.
- Regular engagement with departmental teams and key officers, at every phase – ensuring alignment to departmental and service level budget setting and planning processes.
- Priorities identified during corporate planning engagement with Party Group Leaders, elected members and the Corporate Management Team (CMT).
- Reports presented and discussed at CMT, Strategic Policy and Resources (SP&R) Committee and the Full Council.
- Approval granted via scheduled meetings with senior management teams, CMT, Committee and Full Council meetings.

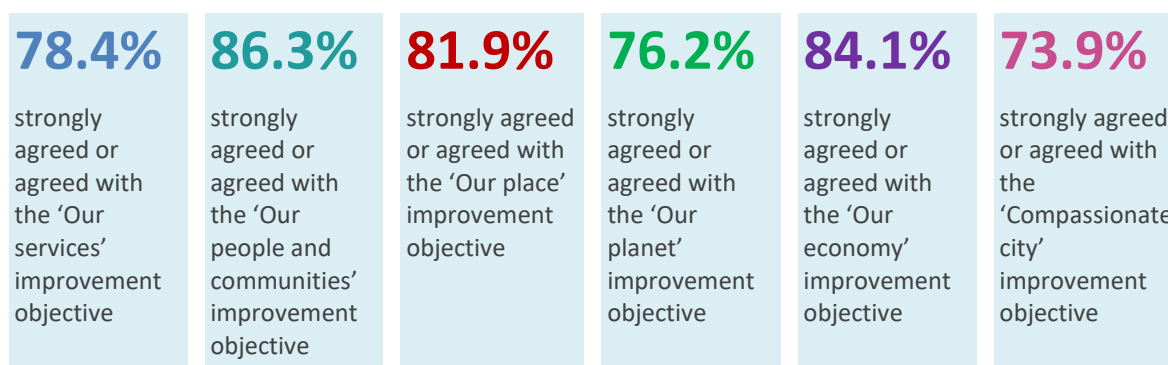
Phase three: Public consultation

An eight-week public consultation process was carried out to enable residents and stakeholders to inform our improvement objectives 2025-26. This included an online survey via council's Your Say Belfast consultation and engagement website and two targeted focus groups. The survey was promoted using a range of communication methods including social media posts, posters in community buildings, email marketing to existing mailing lists, intranet promotion and websites. As part of phase three, we:

- Received 88 survey completions via the Your Say Belfast website.
- Facilitated 2 focus groups with 62 young people and 9 older people to reflect their priorities and areas for improvement.
- Worked closely with departmental teams and key officers to consider consultation feedback and refine the final Performance Improvement Plan.
- Secured approval of the final objectives through the normal council governance cycle (CMT, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and the full Council meeting).

Consultation feedback summary

A summary of the consultation results is set out below:



The issues or improvements that respondents felt should be considered in relation to the draft 2025-26 improvement objectives are thematically summarised below. It is important to note that some of the areas highlighted as part of the public consultation process are already being progressed through existing strategies, plans, and programmes, and in partnership as part of the Belfast Agenda 2024-28, for example housing provision, homelessness, and mental health.

Survey feedback summary

Our services

- Develop solutions that prioritise waste minimisation instead of more recycling campaigns.
- Assign extra resources to ensure waste collection services are more efficient and can reduce littering and clogging up streets with bins.
- Consider more specific improvement activity and actions relating to this objective.
- Whilst the implementation of the glass collection is a positive step forward, it should be extended across the city.

Our people and communities

- Enhance key local amenities such as re-surfacing works at the Bog Meadows to engage more people in their local areas.
- Invest further in sport and leisure facilities, specifically outdoor tennis courts to encourage more participation.
- Cost for leisure facilities is prohibitive for many people to access – consider more inclusive pricing to encourage participation.
- Council should proactively prioritise participation of residents in civic society and promote inclusion. Develop innovative ways to engage and support people and groups across the city.

Our place

- Focus on greater pedestrianisation of city centre, reducing vehicles in and around commercial and shopping areas as well as enhancing active travel infrastructure.
- Consider how to prioritise increasing use of communal green spaces that are easily accessible and open to the public.
- Work with partners to enhance public transport provision and infrastructure, including provision of bus stops at Council facilities.
- Prioritise investment in addressing unadopted alleyways to deliver a 'cleaner and greener' city.
- Progress works with property developers and landowners to increase housing in areas where new housing is needed.
- Vacancy across the city not just the city centre needs to be addressed as dereliction is a major problem in housing as well as businesses.

Our planet

- Whilst acknowledging positive tree planting ambitions across the city, it's also important to recognise the importance of hedges to the environment and beauty of the city.
- Reducing car use in the city and encouraging shared car schemes to try and address issues of parking across the city. Consider options to promote access to short term car usage, for example GoCar in Ireland.
- Consider practical ways to educate and raise awareness in relation to climate change such as community science projects on air quality across the city.
- Council should use their leadership position as part of this theme to deliver more positive actions alongside partners.

Our economy

- Council should be encouraging local supply chains and reducing exporting of resources as waste that could be used by other businesses as a material in production to deliver a 'circular economy'.
- An events strategy for outdoor concerts in Belfast is required to set out the approach in terms of event frequency etc in Belfast Parks in particular.
- Greater promotion, emphasis and visibility of arts and culture as key economic drivers that help to showcase what the city has to offer both for residents and visitors.

Compassionate City

- Important that Council tackle the root cause for numerous issues in relation to violence against women and girls of which drug use and increased immigration are considered to be enablers.
- Whilst it is commendable that Council is taking the lead on poverty, this should be an issue for Central Government to deliver on.
- There needs to be more focus on disability – a disability strategy should be in place with associated improvement objectives around inclusion and accessibility in terms of goods, facilities and services.
- Council should make a commitment to rigorously understanding the causal factors of inequality, poverty and violence and to lead the city to change them so that the difference between those who are well off and those who are not is reduced.
- Focus on the services to support the most at risk, those with disability, homeless, addictions issues and review ways of working, for example, combining the family support hubs, complex lives, community safety and embrace joined up working.

Focus group feedback

Two focus groups were carried with sixty-two young people aged 18-24 and 9 older people to better understand the needs and priorities of these traditionally under-represented target groups. A high-level thematic summary of the key feedback from each respective focus group is provided below:

Older people focus group

Communication and awareness

Council should consider more traditional methods to engage and communicate with older residents. Many don't or can't access online methods and therefore don't stay informed. Providing more frequent newsletters, brochures, key contact details and radio announcements would be beneficial.

Better understanding of older people's needs

The needs of older people are often overlooked, older people would welcome direct engagement with Elected Members to look at opportunities to help support them.

Increased public toilet provision

The lack of public toilet provision across the city restricts older people from getting out and about. Older people feel apprehensive that they won't be able to access toilet provision and therefore can become isolated from society. Reviewing toilet provision and how the city can better accommodate older people should be prioritised.

Working with partners

Council should be a civic leader and demand more from key partner organisations to improve the quality of life and provision for people across the city. Improving our roads, availability of public transport and improving accessibility of all facilities are key issues which should be delivered on.

Young people (aged 18-24) focus group

Mental health support

Mental health is a major issue for young people with more and more individuals seeking support. Service demand is vastly outweighing supply and thus many young people cannot access the support they need. Council should work with partners to consider interventions and supports to help address the challenges presented.

Social justice

Young people want to live in a city that is inclusive and equitable, ensuring everyone has the same rights and access to basic necessities. Council therefore has a key role to play in terms of addressing systemic inequalities and discrimination, through delivering interventions and programmes that promoting a society where everyone can thrive.

Youth unemployment

Accessing good quality jobs, a priority for young people who feel that the cost-of-living crisis and political decisions (National Insurance increase) could lead to higher levels of youth unemployment. Young people would like to see better training and educational opportunities to ensure they are better equipped to access and sustain employment.

Homelessness

Homelessness was noted as a key issue for young people who feel more dedicated and wholistic support is required. Council should consider how they can help tackle the issue to reduce stereotyping and review practical solutions to support those in need i.e. extend Complex Lives, transform derelict buildings into safe spaces etc.

Ending violence against women and girls

Addressing the growing issue of violence against women and girls is a major priority for young people who feel that Council has a key role to play in terms of providing infrastructure, delivering legislation and education to help tackle the societal issue. Young people feel that Council need to show leadership and work with partners to ensure that Belfast is a safe place for everyone.

Climate change

Young people noted the positive work of Council in terms of the leading role in helping to address climate change in Belfast. They also stressed the importance that this work continues to be prioritised and elevated further to safeguard future generations.

Looking forward – performance improvement objectives 2025-26

Our performance improvement objectives, are clearly aligned with the Belfast Agenda 2024-28 and Corporate Plan 2025-28. Reflecting on our 2024-25 performance and feedback from residents and stakeholders we will continue to progress five out of the six performance objectives identified in the previous year, with refined associated actions. To meet the evolving needs of the city we have broadened the scope of our Compassionate city objective:



We are, therefore, committed to the following improvement objectives during 2025-26:

Our services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will continue to adapt and improve our services to better meet the needs of our residents and stakeholders.
Our people and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will improve our local areas and provide opportunities to support our residents to become healthier and engaged.
Our place	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will create a more vibrant, attractive, and connected city (including the city centre).
Our planet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will champion climate action; protect the environment and improve the sustainability of Belfast.
Our economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will stimulate inclusive growth and innovation, help businesses to start-up and grow and create opportunities for more and better jobs and employment.
Compassionate city	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will support our most vulnerable people to make Belfast a more caring, safe and inclusive city.

We have assessed each of these objectives and consider that they all meet the following statutory aspects of improvement:

Strategic effectiveness	Service quality, availability, and fairness	Sustainability	Efficiency	Innovation
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Improvement objective 1: Our services

In addition to the specific improvement activities set out below, we will implement our regular programme of service redesign and adjustments to ways of working through the implementation of risk and audit actions to continually adapt and improve our services.

Belfast Agenda Outcome	Belfast is a vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable city.
Corporate Plan themes and priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our services – Delivering effective and efficient services. • Foundations for success - Creating a fit for purpose organisation
Improvement objective	We will continue to adapt and improve our services to better meet the needs of our residents and stakeholders.
Why is this important?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from residents focused on improving the delivery of services. • Identified as a priority by Elected Members. • Aligned to the Corporate Plan
What will we do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the Customer Focus Programme to build organisational capacity to enhance our services and customer experience. • Continue to deliver the Planning Service Improvement Plan. • Deliver a street cleansing programme to create a cleaner and greener city. • Operate daily bin collections of household and commercial waste through the deployment of adequate and efficient resources. • Deliver phase two of the kerbside glass expansion programme to enhance customer service and improve recycling rates. • Initiate the development of an overarching Asset Management Strategy to set out how Council owned and managed land and property assets will be used to support service delivery and the delivery of objectives in the Corporate Plan and the Belfast Agenda.

How will we measure success?					
Measures of success	Cross-cutting themes/objectives:				
	Our people and communities	Our place	Our planet	Our economy	Compassionate City
Resolving 65% of corporate complaints within timeframe.	✓				
Introducing improvement actions for 80% of corporate complaints.	✓				
Deliver Customer Service Training qualification to a cohort of staff.	✓				
Achieving the 30-week target for average processing time for major planning applications (statutory indicator).		✓			
Achieving the 15-week target for average processing time for local planning applications (statutory indicator).		✓			
Processing 70% of enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks (statutory indicator).		✓			
Achieving less than 12 weeks average processing time for householder applications and advertisement consent applications.		✓			
Achieving less than 6 weeks average processing time of tree works applications and Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs).		✓	✓		
Completing 75% of service requests for open spaces and street scene within 5 working days.	✓	✓			
Completing 92% of service requests for missed bins within 5 working days.					
Providing 23,000 additional households with kerbside glass collections.			✓		
Collecting an additional 650 tonnes of glass.			✓		
Completing the Asset Management Strategy.	✓		✓		

**What is
our wider
policy
impact?**

- **Regional:** Waste Legislation NI (various), Waste Management Plan NI, Local Government Finance Act 2011, Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS).
- **Local:** Belfast City Council Resilience Strategy, Local Development Plan (LDP) 2035, Belfast Open Spaces Strategy (BOSS), Belfast City Council Financial Regulations 2015, Putting You First: Transforming Customer Experience, Belfast City Council Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy.

Improvement objective 2: Our people and communities

In addition to the specifics set out below, we will improve our local areas and improve health and wellbeing for our residents, by delivering programmes of work and activities contained within the Belfast Agenda 2024-28, the draft Corporate Plan 2025-28, committee plans and supporting departmental and business plans.

Belfast Agenda Outcome

Belfast will be a city where everyone experiences good health and wellbeing.

Corporate Plan themes and priorities

- Our people and communities – Making life better for all our residents.
 - Health inequalities and community and neighbourhood

Improvement objective

We will improve our local areas and provide opportunities to support our residents to become healthier and engaged.

Why is this important?

- Recent health data shows that life expectancy overall has stopped increasing and there is a growing need to tackle obesity and increase the levels of physical activity across Belfast.
- Based on resident feedback.
- Aligned to Belfast Agenda and Corporate Plan priorities.

What will we do?

- Enhance our playgrounds, to ensure that we continue to provide high quality facilities and equipment across the city.
- Increase the number of people using our leisure centres, to participate in sport and physical activity.
- Deliver animation and outreach activities in community, play and leisure development programmes.
- Deliver and facilitate a range of events and community programmes within our parks and open spaces.
- Deliver improvements to parks and open spaces to improve people's health and wellbeing through multimillion pound transformational schemes.
- Progress the development of capital projects aligned to the Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy and Pitches Strategy to enhance the quality and accessibility of sports and physical activity provision in Belfast.
- Progress the development and delivery of the Council's Physical Programme to enable needs led investment across the city.

How will we measure success?					
Measures of success	Cross-cutting themes/objectives:				
	Our Services	Our place	Our planet	Our economy	Compassionate City
Investing £580k and delivering the annual playground improvement programme.		✓	✓		
Increasing the number of people using our leisure centres to 3.35million.	✓				
Increasing the number of community, play and leisure outreach programmes delivered to 200.	✓				
Increasing the number of outdoor leisure bookings (pitches, bowling greens) to 160,000.	✓				
Increasing the numbers attending events in our parks to 180,000.	✓				
Progressing major improvements to three parks (Ballysillan Playing Fields, Waterworks, Alexandra Park).	✓	✓			
Progressing major improvements to one open space (Cathedral Gardens).	✓	✓			
Commencing development work on three selected sites (aligned to the Leisure Programme, Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy and Pitches Strategy).	✓	✓			
Completing 10 projects under the Physical Programme.	✓	✓			
Developing 100 projects under the Physical Programme.	✓	✓			
Supporting 20 organisations under the £10.28m NRF programme.	✓	✓			
Completing one project under NRF.	✓	✓			

What is
our wider
policy
impact?

- **Regional:** Programme for Government (PfG) 2024-27 'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most', Active Living the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for NI (2022), Marking Life Better – Strategic Framework for public health, Whole Systems Approach to Obesity Prevention, Regional Development Strategy (2035), SPPS.
- **Local:** The Department of Health's Annual Health Inequalities report, The World Health Organisation's Belfast Healthy Cities Strategy, LDP, BOSS, Get Active Belfast – A framework for physical activity – Active Belfast Partnership.

Improvement objective 3: Our place

In addition to the improvement action below, we will create a more attractive, vibrant, and connected city by delivering programmes of work and activities contained within the Belfast Agenda 2024-28, the draft Corporate Plan 2025-28, committee plans and supporting departmental and business plans.

Belfast Agenda Outcome	Belfast will be a vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable city.
Corporate Plan themes and priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our place – Creating a liveable and connected, vibrant and competitive city. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Connectivity, active and sustainable travel. ○ City regeneration and investment.
Improvement objective	Our Place - we will create a more vibrant, attractive, and connected city (including the city centre).
Why is this important?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on resident feedback. • Identified as a priority by elected members. • Aligned to Belfast Agenda and Corporate Plan priorities.
What will we do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to deliver the Vacant to Vibrant Programme 2025-26 to address city-wide vacancy rates. • Progress the Greenways and Access to the Hills Programme to improve the connectivity of the city. • Support and progress the delivery of neighbourhood tourism physical projects, improving the city's local tourism facilities and infrastructure. • Progress infrastructure works at the North Foreshore to support the development of the site. • Progress the Master Development Agreement for the 250-acre Giant's Park site in accordance with the schedule of works.

How will we measure success?					
Measures of success	Cross-cutting themes/objectives:				
	Our Services	Our People and Communities	Our planet	Our economy	Compassionate City
Occupying 20 previously vacant city-wide properties as a result of the Vacant to Vibrant intervention.		✓			
Awarding £470,000 through Vacant to Vibrant funding to city-wide traders.		✓			
Progressing two greenways and pathways to improve the connectivity of the city for example Sydenham Greenway, Colin Greenway and Black Mountain Pathway.		✓	✓		
Progressing three physical neighbourhood tourism projects - Act Initiative, Titanic People Exhibition Centre and Michael Davitt's Community Heritage Centre.		✓			
Progressing match funding for three projects from external partners for neighbourhood tourism physical projects.		✓			
Undertaking works with the developer to progress the development phase of the 250-acre Giant's Park site.		✓			
Progressing the delivery of landfill gas extraction system at the North Foreshore.		✓			
Progressing the delivery of additional NIE capacity at the North Foreshore.		✓			

What is our wider policy impact?

- **Regional:** Eastern Transport Plan 2035 (under development); Regional Development Strategy 2035, PfG.
- **Local:** Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS); A Bolder Vision for Belfast; Belfast Resilience Strategy, LDP.

Improvement objective 4: Our planet

In addition to the specific improvement actions set out below, we will champion climate action; protect the environment and improve the sustainability of Belfast by delivering our normal programme of work contained within the Belfast Agenda 2024-28, draft Corporate Plan 2025-28, Committee plans and supporting departmental and business plans.

Belfast Agenda Outcome	Belfast is a vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable city.
Corporate Plan themes and priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our services, Our people and communities, Our place, and Our planet.
Improvement objective	Our planet - We will champion climate action; protect the environment and improve the sustainability of Belfast.
Why is this important?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change is a global concern. Since we declared a climate emergency in 2019 and launched our Resilience Strategy in 2020, we have been taking action to transition the city to an inclusive, zero-emissions and climate-resilient economy in a generation. Council has statutory responsibility. Identified as a concern by residents and stakeholders. Aligned to Belfast Agenda and Corporate Plan priorities.
What will we do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress the planet section of the Belfast Agenda, which aims to create a sustainable, nature positive city (including investable local energy projects, an UPSURGE demonstrator site and a neighbourhood retrofit pilot). Commence delivery of the Council Corporate Climate Action Plan to increase the climate resilience of Council assets and services and progress towards Council net zero emissions, (over 20 priorities including a Sustainable Food Policy, energy audits of Council buildings and retrofitting of Council buildings). Deliver an effective waste management service across the city. Deliver year three of the Belfast Tree Strategy and action plan to help manage and improve the tree scape across the city, including the establishment of the woodland management programme.

How will we measure success?					
Measures of success	Cross-cutting themes/objectives:				
	Our Services	Our People and Communities	Our place	Our economy	Compassionate City
Progressing three Belfast Agenda Climate Projects (investable local energy projects, UPSURGE demonstrator site, neighbourhood retrofit pilot).		✓	✓		
Completing one Belfast Agenda Climate Project (Horizon Europe UP2030).		✓	✓		
Completing 19 short-term Council Corporate Climate Action Plan priorities.	✓				
Achieving 38.5% of council municipal waste arisings is sent for recycling.	✓	✓	✓		
Reducing the tonnage of biodegradable council collected waste that is landfilled to 7,000 tonnes (statutory indicator).	✓	✓	✓		
Maintaining the % of household waste collected that is sent for recycling at 42% (or prepared for re-use) (statutory indicator).	✓	✓	✓		
Achieving 160,000 tonnage of council collected municipal waste arisings (statutory indicator).	✓	✓	✓		
Planting 500 linear metres of new hedging.		✓	✓		

What is our wider policy impact?

- **Regional:** The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland)2022, Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme 2019-2024, Energy Strategy –The Path to Net Zero Energy, Draft Green Growth Strategy, PfG, Second Cycle NI Flood Risk Management Plan 2021-2027, Strategic Planning Policy Statement.
- **Local:** Belfast Resilience Strategy, A Net Zero Carbon Roadmap for Belfast, A Bolder Vision for Belfast, Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP), Belfast Open Spaces Strategy, Belfast Air Quality Action Plan, Belfast Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan, Belfast (Draft) Economic Strategy, Belfast (Draft) Adaptation Strategy, Belfast Local Area Energy Plan.

Improvement objective 5: Our economy

In addition to the specifics set out below, we will stimulate inclusive growth and innovation, help businesses to start-up and grow and create opportunities for more and better jobs and employment by delivering our normal programme of work contained within the Belfast Agenda 2024-28, draft Corporate Plan 2025-28, Committee plans and supporting departmental and business plans.

Belfast Agenda Outcome

Belfast is a place where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy.

Corporate Plan themes and priorities

- Our economy – Creating inclusive and sustainable growth, learning and opportunity.

Improvement objective

Our economy - We will stimulate inclusive growth and innovation, help businesses to start-up and grow and create opportunities for more and better jobs and employment.

Why is this important?

- Based on resident feedback.
- Identified by elected members as a priority.
- Aligned to Belfast Agenda and Corporate Plan priorities

What will we do?

- Work with the Enterprise Support Service to deliver 'Go Succeed' to increase the number of new business starts.
- Deliver employment and upskilling academies in priority sectors in line with industry demand.
- Deliver the Smart Belfast urban innovation programme to enhance Belfast's capacity for digital innovation.
- Deliver an enhanced Learning City Festival to promote and encourage lifelong learning for people of all ages across Belfast.
- Extend the delivery of Belfast Business Promise (BBP) initiative to support the provision of good jobs and a sustainable local economy.
- Support our suppliers by helping business cashflow through the prompt payment of invoices.

How will we measure success?					
Measures of success	Cross-cutting themes/objectives:				
	Our Services	Our People and Communities	Our place	Our planet	Compassionate City
Completing 325 business plans to promote business start-up and job promotion (statutory indicator).		✓			
Supporting 75% of participants to move into a positive outcome from an Employment or Upskilling Academy.		✓			
Supporting 425 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to engage in digital innovation.		✓	✓		
Awarding £600,000 of funding to organisations to engage in digital innovation.		✓	✓		
Delivering 130 events through the Belfast Learning City Festival.		✓	✓		✓
Supporting 10 businesses (existing BBP members) to improve their recognition level (reaching Member or Ambassador status).		✓			✓
Producing four good practice 'case studies' to highlight the Belfast Business Promise journey and 'inclusive growth in practice'.		✓			✓
Paying 90% of invoices within 30 calendar days.	✓				
Paying 80% of invoices within 10 working days.	✓				

What is our wider policy impact?

- **Regional:** A 10X Economy - Northern Ireland's Decade of Innovation; Innovation Strategy for NI 2014-25, Draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland, Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor Action Plan, PfG.
- **Local:** Belfast Economic Strategy 2022-30, Belfast Inclusive Growth Strategy, Belfast Region City Deal, SMART Belfast - Belfast Urban Innovation Framework 2022 – 26, Belfast City Council Social Value Procurement Policy.

Improvement objective 6: Compassionate city

In addition to the specific actions set out below, we will support our residents through the cost-of-living crisis by delivering of our normal programme of work contained within the Belfast Agenda 2024-28, the draft Corporate Plan 2025-28, committee plans and supporting departmental and business plans.

Belfast Agenda Outcome

Belfast is a place where everyone fulfils their potential.

Corporate Plan themes and priorities

- Compassionate City – Making Belfast a welcoming, caring, and inclusive city – leaving no-one behind.
- Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty.

Improvement objective

We will support our most vulnerable people to make Belfast a more caring, safe and inclusive city.

Why is this important?

- Based on resident and stakeholder feedback.
- Identified as an Elected Member priority.
- Part of our statutory duty.
- Aligned to Belfast Agenda and Corporate Plan priorities.
- Evolution of policy environment (Strategic Framework to End Violence against Women and Girls (EVAWG)).

What will we do?

- Deliver local community actions plans as part of the PEACEPLUS programme, to fund community activities and infrastructure project that help build peace and reconciliation in Belfast.
- Establish an Anti-Poverty Network in Belfast to support and facilitate a co-ordinated approach to tackling poverty across the city.
- Extend delivery of the Hardship Programme to ensure that support is available for those most impacted by poverty and the cost-of-living crisis.
- Deliver a programme to help end violence against women and girls (EVAWG).
- Progress delivery of up to five capital projects across the city as part of the PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan to promote inclusive and shared spaces across Belfast.

How will we measure success?

Measures of success	Cross-cutting themes/objectives:				
	Our Services	Our People and Communities	Our place	Our planet	Our economy
Delivering 10 local community action plans (including relevant peace monitoring information).		✓	✓		
Establishing the Anti-Poverty Network		✓			
Delivering £1.1m of Hardship Programme funding		✓			
Awarding and delivering £255k as part of an open call small grants programme as part of the EVAWG programme.		✓			
Administering £1.2m of Regional Change Funding to 8 EVAWG expert organisations.		✓			
Engaging a minimum of 8,000 children and young people as part of the EVAWG programme		✓			
Progressing up to five capital projects under PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan (Sanctuary Theatre, Distillery Street Redevelopment Project, Annadale Open Space, Reconnected Belfast and LGBTQIA+ Hub)		✓	✓	✓	

What is our wider policy impact?

- **Regional:** The Executive's Child Poverty Strategy, NI Audit Office Child Poverty in Northern Ireland Report, The Trussell Trust State of Hunger Report, DfC Poverty, and Income Inequality (PII) Report, Strategic Framework to End Violence against Women and Girls (EVAWG), NI Act 1998 (Section 75), Race Relations Order 1997, PfG.
- **Local:** Belfast Inclusive Growth Strategy, Belfast City Council Social Value Procurement Policy, Equality Scheme, Good Relations Strategy, PEACEPLUS Programme.

Performance monitoring and reporting arrangements

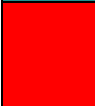








To ensure that we continuously improve and meet the needs and outcomes of our city and residents, we have established governance arrangements in relation to corporate performance management, summarised and set out in figure 5 below.

Governance arrangements

Monitoring and regular reporting of performance is essential to ensure that priorities are being achieved, and that the information that was collected informed decision making and plans.

Progress is monitored and reported on a quarterly basis to the Corporate Management Team (CMT), on a quarterly basis to the Audit Assurance Board and the Audit and Risk Panel, and regularly to relevant working groups, relevant committees, and the Full Council. At year end, corporate performance is assessed using the key below on figure 5.

FIGURE 5: Performance status and trend key

Actions/milestones		Performance indicator target		Performance indicator trend	
	Not achieved		Adrift of target (5% or more)		Negative change
	Partially achieved		Slightly adrift of target (between 1% and 5%)		No significant change
	Achieved/ completed		On target or exceeded target (within 1% or better)		Positive change

Corporate, Committee and departmental business plans and strategies containing statutory or self-imposed performance indicators, are monitored, and reported both internally to departmental and the Corporate Management Team and formally to the relevant Committee.

In addition, action plans and programme plans relating to council's key priority projects are monitored and reported through cross-departmental groups, management teams and boards, and regularly to the relevant committee.

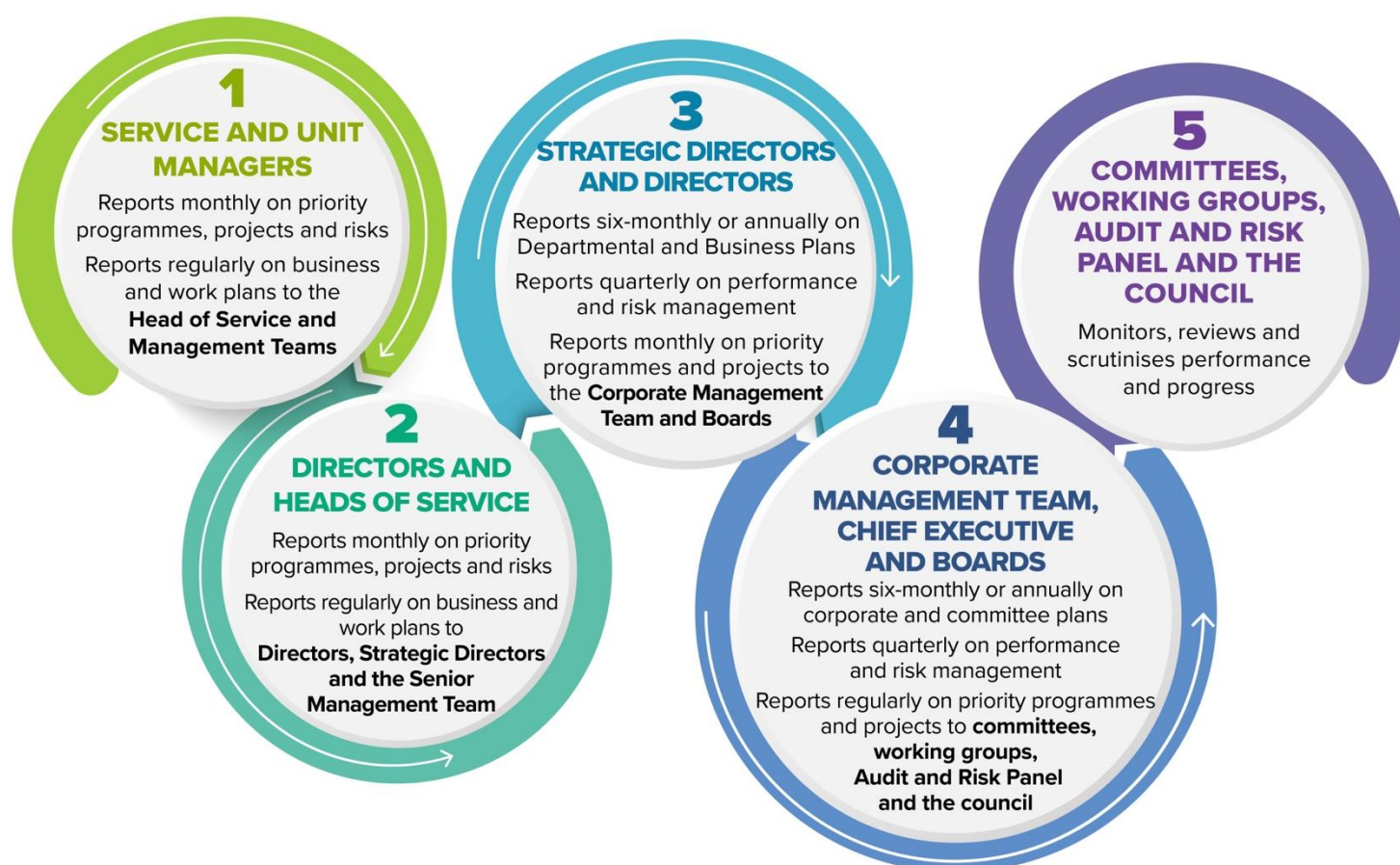
Figure 6 summarises the high-level governance arrangements and the responsibilities for implementing these.

Each year, we publish a self-assessment report, setting out details of how we have performed as a Council and benchmarked against other local authorities where possible. The Council is a member of the Association of Public Sector Excellence (APSE), which is a public sector benchmarking organisation. This enables us to compare and improve our performance across a range of services and activities, with other comparable councils.

The Council's internal audit team regularly review the improvement framework, and this is reported to the Audit and Risk Panel. Annually the NIAO reviews the processes and arrangements as part of the annual performance improvement audit and publicly publishes this.

A new planning and performance management framework is currently being developed which will refresh the current arrangements, provide a co-ordinated focus and a robust framework to enhance our continuous improvement journey. This new framework will enable us to deliver our collective responsibility with community planning partners, as well as supporting us to carry out our statutory duty to improve, deliver best value and achieve the best possible impact for the people of Belfast.

FIGURE 6: High-level governance arrangements

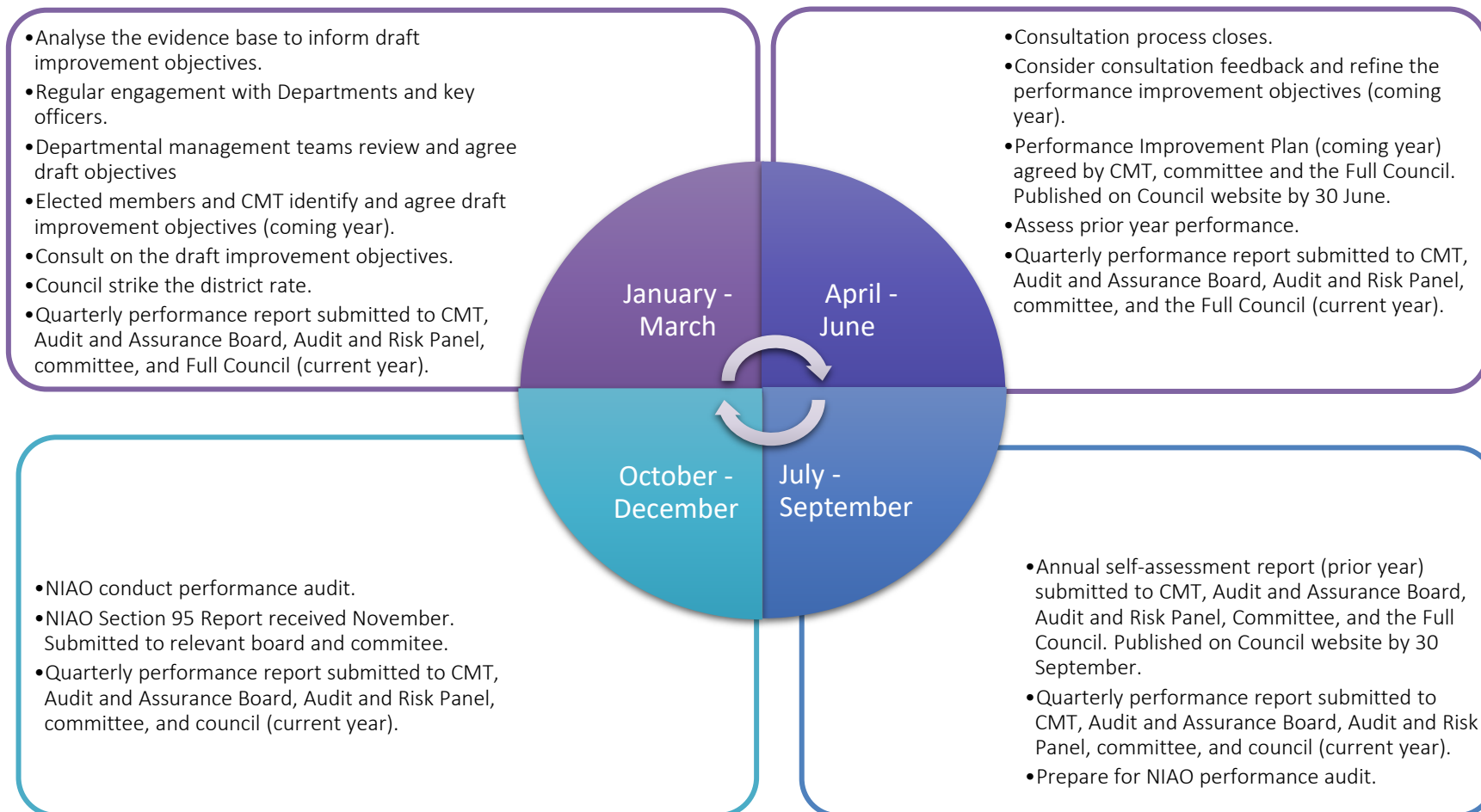


** Please note these arrangements may change as part of the development of the corporate planning and performance framework*

Annual performance management and improvement cycle

Every year, we review and update our performance improvement objectives and plan to ensure we are continuously improving. Our annual process to develop, monitor, report and review the council's progress to deliver performance improvement is set out in Figure 7 below.

FIGURE 7: Annual process.



Feedback on areas for improvement

We welcome ongoing feedback, comments, and suggestions on how we might improve our services and performance.

Your feedback matters

Please use one of the following methods to provide your comments or suggestions at any time of the year:

Email: performance@belfastcity.gov.uk

In writing to the:

Strategic Performance Unit
City Organisational and Strategy Department
Belfast City Council
Belfast City Hall
Room 212
BT1 5GS

You can also provide us with feedback or comments at any time via our website:
www.belfastcity.gov.uk/contact/complaints-comments-compliments

Alternative formats

This document is also available in hard copy format and can be provided in alternative formats by contacting the Strategic Performance Unit using the contact details above.

Contact us:

City and Organisational Strategy
City Hall
Donegall Square North
Belfast
BT1 5GS



performance@belfastcity.gov.uk



028 9032 0202



www.belfastcity.gov.uk/corporateplan



Belfast
City Council



Subject:	Sustain Exchange Climate Leadership Event - Funding Agreement
Date:	23 May 2025
Reporting Officer:	John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy
Contact Officer:	Debbie Caldwell, Climate Commissioner

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To inform Committee of a proposal by the non-profit Management and Leadership Network (MLN) to host a prominent climate leadership event 'Sustain Exchange' with up to 300 decision-makers.

	To request approval for a funding agreement to be put in place between Belfast City Council and the event organiser with the value of £8,450+vat. The event will put the challenges, opportunities and absolute need for positive action associated with climate change, on the agenda for local organisations and leaders.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support this climate leadership conference by approving a funding agreement to the value of £8450+vat be entered into with the event organiser.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p>Background</p> <p>It is now beyond doubt that organisations of all shapes, sizes and sectors need to radically reduce their environmental impact both directly and indirectly through their supply chains. The extreme weather experienced across the globe over the past 12 months has further evidenced the reality that the effects of climate change are being felt now and the need for decisive action from organisations, championed by their leaders, is now. We are fast approaching the point of no return.</p> <p>It is a truly transformative time for organisations as they address climate risks and identify new opportunities in the green economy. The transition is not straightforward. Organisations need help in developing planet positive practices, securing cleaner power, heat and transport solutions. They need help in navigating new markets to find more environmentally sustainable solutions in their supply chain, and they need to do it fast. There has never been a more important time to find specialist help to navigate the transition, and to educate, inform and engage by sharing the existing knowledge and exemplar experience of those at the forefront of the transition.</p>
3.2	<p>Purpose and format of event</p> <p>The Sustain Exchange Summit will deliver on the objectives above and will connect local decision-makers with international thought leaders as well as those at the forefront of the transition locally.</p> <p>The event is expected to attract some 300 local leaders (primarily business leaders but also those from the public, NDPB and third sectors) to a Belfast City Centre venue with strong public transport links to ensure the carbon footprint of the event is kept to a minimum. The Sustain Exchange project will ensure the messages, around the need and importance of positive climate action are heard, and the Council's proactivity in this area will be strongly profiled before and during the event.</p>

3.3	<p>Content</p> <p>Previous speakers at this event have included the eminent writer, broadcaster and commentator Sir Jonathan Porritt CBE, Norman Crowley (global entrepreneur and founder of CoolPlanet) and Sit Tim Smit KBE (Founder of The Eden Project and world-renowned thought leader in sustainability) and John Elkington (the global godfather of sustainability and creator of the triple bottom line concept). The 2025 Sustain Exchange Summit will again be delivered to a world-class standard and will feature globally-renowned speakers (Mary Robinson is the first in-person speaker to be confirmed). The speakers will encourage and empower attending organisations to consider their own climate impact and take the first (or next) steps in their quest to become 'planet positive'. Previous local speakers at this event have demonstrated how leaders from humble beginnings in Belfast have become game-changers in their respective fields. These include the likes of Dr Andrew Woods from Catagen (Sustain Exchange 2022), Eddie McGoldrick from The Electric Storage Company (Sustain Exchange 2021), Philip Rainey from Weev (Sustain Exchange 2023) and Dr Katrina Thompson from Artemis Technologies (Sustain Exchange 2024). The 2025 event will once again showcase how leaders from Belfast are leading the charge when it comes to the quest to avoid what is now a 'code red for humanity'. In doing this MLN plans to galvanise existing businesses to act and to inspire the next cohort of planet positive pioneers to emerge from our city.</p> <p>The event will also provide the opportunity to make the broader leadership community in NI aware of the proactive work of Belfast City Council when it comes to the climate emergency.</p>
3.4	<p>Management and Leadership Network Experience</p> <p>The Management and Leadership Network (MLN) is a non-profit which exists to connect decision-makers in NI with the insights of thought-leaders and world-class performers. The rationale is that be enhancing our leadership competence we will, empower local organisations, strengthen our economy, enrich our society and ultimately improve lives.</p> <p>MLN has worked with some of the most respected leaders on the planet and is vastly experienced in creating and delivering truly world-class events that engage, enrich and elevate attendees. As host, MLN will facilitate the event and invite all speakers to provide their slides in advance so that the idea-sharing session is delivered in a concise, visually impactful and professional manner. Belfast City Council would once again be invited to participate and profile its extensive climate work i.e the Mini Stern Report, Resilience Strategy, Climate Commission, One Million Trees etc.</p>
3.5	<p>Date, Venue & Contingence</p> <p>The Sustain Exchange Summit will take place on 20th October 2025. The total cost of the project will be in excess of £75k. Belfast City Council has been a key partner in the Sustain Exchange Summit since its inception in 2021 and its support has been crucial in the growth of the initiative</p>

	<p>and its impact. In order to reduce the financial cost to Belfast City Council and increase collaboration MLN will seek financial support from additional sources to include the private sector. MLN will give previous sponsors the opportunity to remain as partners. These have included Belfast-based organisations such as Danske Bank, AAB, CarbonFit, International Synergies (circular economy specialists), Belfast Harbour and Mills Selig Solicitors. As well as demonstrating real collaboration, these partnerships have allowed MLN to reduce Belfast City Council's financial contribution from £10,000+vat in 2021 to £8,450+vat in 2025.</p>
3.6	<p>Partner Contribution & Profile Benefits</p> <p>If Belfast City Council chooses to support the Summit, it would be profiled as an 'Event Partner' alongside several other lead event partners (examples given in 3.5). The Council brand would be prominent on all event marketing collateral as well as 'at-event'. A Council representative would be invited to participate in the event press launch and MLN would be delighted for the Lord Mayor of Belfast to speak at the event. Council would also promote the conference through its social media and other relevant communication channels.</p>
3.7	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>£8,450+vat to support this initiative has been allocated from within the existing Climate programme budget.</p>
3.8	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are no direct equality or good relations/rural needs implications.</p>
4.0	<p>Appendices - Documents Attached</p>
	<p>None</p>



Subject:	Planning Information
Date:	23 May 2025
Reporting Officer(s):	Kate Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control
Contact Officer(s):	Ed Baker, Planning Manager (Development Management)

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To provide an update on Major planning applications and applications that have been determined by the Planning Committee.

2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The report is for notation.
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Background</u>
3.1	The Committee received an update on Planning Performance at its meeting on the 27 th August 2024. At that meeting and previously, the Committee sought a regular update on Major applications and applications that have been determined by the Planning Committee, especially those where a Decision Notice has yet to be issued.
3.2	All Major applications must be determined by the Planning Committee. The Key Performance Indicator (given in weeks) is calculated from when an application is considered to be valid to when the Decision Notice ("Green Form") is issued. This means that any delays either pre- or post- committee will impact on the KPI. The target for determining a Major application is 30 weeks.
	<u>Major applications</u>
3.3	Appendix 1 sets out the Major applications that are currently with the Council to determine. Details are given on the location, proposal, the validation date and target date for determination (using the 30 week target set out in the Key Performance Indicator) as well as a status update.
	<u>Applications determined by Committee</u>
3.4	Appendix 2 sets out the applications that have been determined by Committee since February 2022 which are yet to issue. For completeness information is also given on those applications determined by Committee which have had their Decision Notice issued. Details are given on the time taken (in weeks) to bring the applications before Committee and where decisions are yet to be issued, information is given relating to the main reason for the delay.
	<u>Conclusion</u>
3.5	This report will be brought to each Planning Committee and to each Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for information on an ongoing basis
	Financial & Resource Implications
3.6	There are no financial or resource implications associated with this report.
	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment
3.7	There are no equality or good relations / rural needs implications associated with this report.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – Major planning applications at May 2025 Appendix 2 – Applications determined by Committee at May 2025

Number	Application No.	Category	Location	Proposal	Date Valid	Target Date	Weeks since valid	Status
1	LA04/2022/0809/F	Major	Lands to the south and west of Woodland Grange to the north of Blacks Gate and to the east of Moor Park Mews Belfast.	Amendments to approved schemes ref. Z/2008/0993/F (erection of 53 No. dwellings) & ref. Z/2013/0120/F (erection of 46 No. dwellings); to reduce overall density from 99 No. dwellings to 94 No. dwellings and associated and ancillary works.	21-Apr-22		158	Under Consideration
2	LA04/2023/2633/F	Major	St Teresa's GAC, 2 Glen Road Heights, Belfast BT11 8ER	Proposed extension to existing clubhouse to provide indoor sports hall, changing rooms, reception, and fitness suite. Proposed relocation of grass pitch and new 4G training pitch with integrated ball walls. Proposed annex building with club store and matchday shop. Site works including increased parking, fencing, catch nets, floodlighting, dugouts, paths, and other associated amenities.	14-Mar-23	10-Oct-23	112	Under Consideration
3	LA04/2023/3799/F	Major	Vacant lands (partial site of the former Wolfhill Flax Spinning Mill) located to the south, of Wolfhill Manor, north of Wolfhill Grove and west of Mill Avenue, Ligoniel Road, Belfast, BT14 8NR	New single storey 10-class based primary school, separate nursery school accommodation and school meals accommodation to facilitate the relocation of St. Vincent De Paul Primary School and Nursery from existing site on Ligoniel Road, Belfast. Proposal includes new pedestrian and vehicular accesses onto Mill Avenue, car parking, covered cycle storage area and hard play areas. Hard and soft landscaping including wildlife walkway, fencing, retaining walls, underground drainage system to include the reinstatement of underground storm sewer and headwall into adjacent DFI River wayleave. Includes temporary contractors compound and all associated site works.	09-Oct-23	06-May-24	82	Under Consideration
4	LA04/2023/4181/F	Major	Lands comprising the existing Sydenham Wastewater Pumping Station west of Park Avenue, Connswater River and King George V Playing Fields, to the south of the Sydenham By-Pass, east of The Oval football stadium, north and east of Parkgate Gardens and north of Parkgate Crescent, Parkgate Parade and Mersey Street, Belfast	Demolition of existing Wastewater Pumping Station (WwPS) with reinstatement of site as a landscaped area. Construction of a replacement WwPS including associated control building and hardstanding, the raising of site levels, in-channel works, provision of new rising main, other ancillary buildings, the creation of an access road on lands within the King George V Playing Fields to serve the facility, landscaping and other ancillary works. Provision of a temporary working area on lands within the King George V Playing Fields, the creation of a temporary access road from Mersey Street to facilitate construction traffic on lands to the rear of 1-35 Parkgate Gardens, the creation of a temporary footway adjacent to 88 Park Avenue and other ancillary development and landscaping restoration works.	14-Nov-23	11-Jun-24	77	Under Consideration
5	LA04/2024/0015/F	Major	Lands at Cabin Hill, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast BT4	Erection of 53 residential units (including 43 dwellings and 10 apartments) including creation of access, internal roads, landscaping and associated works (amended description and plans).	22-Dec-23	19-Jul-24	71	Under Consideration
6	LA04/2024/0211/F	Major	Existing Football Stadium The Oval Parkgate Drive Belfast BT4 1EW.	Redevelopment of the existing stadium by way of demolition of both existing stands and construction of two new spectator stands with reconfiguration of existing standing terracing at goal ends, new turnstiles and associated siteworks including new floodlighting, additional car parking and improved circulation routes to provide an overall capacity for 6000 spectators on site.	15-Mar-24	11-Oct-24	59	Under Consideration

7	LA04/2024/0570/F	Major	Stormont Hotel, 587 Upper Newtownards Road BT4 3LP and adjacent properties at Castlevue Road (nos. 2, 4, 6, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28 & 30), Summerhill Parade (nos. 18, 20 & 22), and Summerhill Park (nos. 37 & 39).	Change of use of from hotel, conference centre and offices (sui generis) to a 97-bed care home (Use Class C3(b) and 1,559sqm diagnostic medical facility (Use Class D1(a), associated access, car parking, landscaping and open space.	04-Apr-24	31-Oct-24	56	Under Consideration
8	LA04/2024/0569/O	Major	STORMONT HOTEL 587 UPPER NEWTOWNARDS ROAD BALLYCLOUGHAN BELFAST BT4 3LP	Outline planning permission with all matters reserved for independent living and assisted living retirement apartments (Use Class C3), associated internal access roads, communal open space, revised access from Castlevue Road, associated car parking, servicing, amenity space and landscaping.	04-Apr-24	31-Oct-24	56	Under Consideration
9	LA04/2024/0910/F	Major	70 whitewell Road, Newtownabbey, BT36 7ES Site at Hazelwood Integrated College	Redevelopment of Hazelwood Integrated College to include demolition of existing building and development of new school campus, new sports pitch, outdoor play areas, car parking, hard and soft landscaping and retention and refurbishment of the Listed Building (Graymount House) and other associated site works including a temporary mobile village during the construction process.	23-May-24	19-Dec-24	49	Under Consideration
10	LA04/2024/1121/F	Major	The Kings Hall And RUAS Site South Of Upper Lisburn Road/Balmoral Avenue West Of Harberton Park And North-east Of Balmoral Golf Club Belfast BT9 6GW	Vary of condition 6 of planning application LA04/2020/0747/F to extend timing of works from 3 years to 5 to accommodate design changes to elevations and vary of condition 7 of planning application LA04/2020/0747/F to accommodate design changes to the roof.	26-Jun-24	22-Jan-25	44	Under Consideration
11	LA04/2024/1592/F	Major	Marlborough House, (no. 28-32 Victoria Street), and no. 8 Marlborough Street, Belfast BT1 3GG	Residential development comprising the demolition of no. 8 Marlborough Street, partial demolition of existing Marlborough House, and the refurbishment of existing Listed Building (Princes Court) (3 storeys), for the erection of 103 no. apartments (mix of 1-bed, 2-bed and 3 bed units) (8 storeys), with provision of private amenity, and internal and external communal amenity spaces; and associated site and infrastructure works. (amended description)	20-Sep-24	18-Apr-25	32	Under Consideration
12	LA04/2024/1761/RM	Major	Land forming Plot 9 of the Kings Hall development as approved by LA04/2020/0845/O.	Application for approval of reserved matters application for a medical facility in accordance with outline planning permission LA04/2020/0845/O, seeking approval of layout, scale, appearance and landscaping details	15-Oct-24	13-May-25	29	Under Consideration
13	LA04/2024/1836/F	Major	Lands between Ballygomartin Road and Upper Whiterock Road and to the west (rear) of Moyard Parade and New Barnsley Crescent, Belfast Co. Antrim BT13 3QZ	Proposed development of new walking trails linking Black Mountain Shared Space Project building (approved under LA04/2022/0853/F) on the Ballygomartin Road with the Upper Whiterock Road and Moyard Parade. Proposal to include gated accesses, stockproof fencing, seated areas, information signage, landscaping and associated site works.	25-Nov-24	23-Jun-25	23	Under Consideration
14	LA04/2024/2044/F	Major	Lands at 39 Corporation Street, Belfast, BT1 3BA	Erection of 895 room Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) across 9-20 storey building blocks with communal facilities, internal and external communal amenity space including landscaped courtyard and roof terraces and ancillary accommodation. With additional use outside term time (no more than 50% of the rooms) as short-term let accommodation and (no more than 50% of the rooms) accommodation for use by further or higher education institutions	26-Nov-24	24-Jun-25	23	Under Consideration

15	LA04/2024/2024/RM	Major	Royal Ulster Agricultural Society, the Kings Hall, 488-516 Lisburn Road, Belfast, BT9 6GW	41no. retirement living apartments at Plot 6, parking and landscaping in accordance with outline planning permission LA04/2020/0845/O, seeking approval of layout, scale, appearance and landscaping details	18-Dec-24	16-Jul-25	19	Under Consideration
16	LA04/2024/2026/RM	Major	Royal Ulster Agricultural Society the Kings Hall, 488-516 Lisburn Road, Belfast, BT9 6GW	Multi Storey Car Park with ground floor units for local retail uses, restaurant and cafe uses, leisure and gym facilities at Plot 8, new public realm and amenity open space including a central plaza in accordance with outline planning permission LA04/2020/0845/O, seeking approval of layout, scale, appearance and landscaping details	29-Nov-24	27-Jun-25	22	Under Consideration
17	LA04/2024/2077/F	Major	Adelaide Business Centre 2-6 Apollo Road, Belfast, BT12 6HP	Proposed change of use from office space to Bowling Alley, Restaurant, Indoor Golf, Children's Soft Play, VR Zone & Amusements, Smoking Area, Car Parking and Associated Site Works.	29-Jan-25	27-Aug-25	13	Under Consideration
18	LA04/2024/2145/F	Major	Lands at North Foreshore / Giant's Park Dargan Road, Belfast, BT3 9LZ	Creation of a new Adventure Park comprising a community / visitor hub building including café, creche, flexible exhibition / community space, ancillary office space and maintenance yard. Development includes community gardens, bmx track, crazy golf, dog park, walking/running/cycle paths, outdoor amphitheatre, bio diversity zones, and recreational facilities. Associated landscaping and infrastructure (drainage, lighting, car / coach parking, WC block etc).	15-Jan-25	13-Aug-25	15	Under Consideration
19	LA04/2024/2131/F	Major	38-52 Lisburn Road, Malone Lower, Belfast, BT9 6AA	Section 54 planning application to revise the wording of the planning condition numbers 13 and 15 (Relating access gradient and visibility splays) of planning approval LA04/2023/3778/F.	31-Jan-25	29-Aug-25	13	Under Consideration
20	LA04/2025/0012/F	Major	Lands at the Waterworks Park, located off the Cavehill Road; and lands at Alexandra Park, located between Castleton Gardens and Deacon Street; extending along Castleton Gardens and Camberwell Terrace to the road junction approximately 30 metres to the north west of 347 Antrim Road, Belfast, BT15 2HF	Refurbishment and safety work to the Waterworks upper and lower reservoirs, and Alexandra Park Lake reservoir, to be complemented with wider environmental, landscape and connectivity improvements. The reservoir works comprise of a new overflow structure with reinforcement and protection of the return embankment parallel to the by-wash channel at Waterworks Upper reservoir. Repairs to the upstream face of Waterworks Lower reservoir with the addition of wetland planting to reduce the overall capacity of the reservoir. Removal of an existing parapet wall and embankment reinforcement at the Alexandra Park Lake reservoir. Improvements at Waterworks Park comprise the demolition of the existing Waterworks Bothy and replacement with a new building to include public toilets, Changing facilities, multi-purpose community room and kitchenette. Extension to existing Cavehill Road gatehouse building. Entrance improvements, new events space including multipurpose decking; resurfacing of footways; new pedestrian lighting along key routes; a dog park; replacement platforms and viewing area. New 3-on-3 basketball court; replacement surface to existing small sided 3G pitch; and upgrades to existing Queen Mary's playground. Improvements at Alexandra Park include the resurfacing of footways; new pedestrian lighting along key routes; new reinforced grass event space; new lake viewing area; new public toilets and changing places; entrance improvements. 2no existing bridges replaced; new pedestrian entrance; reimagined peace wall; new multi-sport synthetic surface with cover; and upgrades to existing play parks. Streetscape improvements along Camberwell Terrace and Castleton Gardens include resurfacing of footways with new kerbs; resurfaced carriageways and new tactile paving at pedestrian crossings; and all associated works.	20-Dec-24	18-Jul-25	19	Under Consideration
21	LA04/2024/2134/F	Major	Site of the former Dunmurry Cricket Club, Ashley Park, Dunmurry, Belfast BT17 0QQ, located north of 1-10 Ashley Park and south of 1-20 Areema Grove and Areema Drive, Dunmurry.	Mixed use scheme for new community recreational facilities, including basketball court, parkland and residential development comprising 40no social/affordable housing units with landscaping and associated works.	21-Dec-24	19-Jul-25	19	Under Consideration
22	LA04/2025/0184/O	Major	38-52 Lisburn Road, Malone Lower, Belfast, BT9 6AA	Mixed-use development comprising Use Class B1 (c): Business, Research & Development and Use Class, D1: Community and Cultural Uses, including landscaping, parking, and servicing.	10-Feb-25	08-Sep-25	12	Under Consideration

23	LA04/2025/0242/F	Major	2 - 10 Botanic Avenue, Belfast, BT7 1JG	Erection of hotel (164 beds) including ground floor bar / restaurant; proposed heights of 8 storeys (c. 26.8m to parapet) at Donegall Pass, reducing to 5 storeys at Botanic Avenue and 4 storeys at Ratcliffe Street; and associated works including demolition of existing building	13-Feb-25	11-Sep-25	11	Under Consideration
24	LA04/2025/0305/F	Major	38-52 Lisburn Road, Malone Lower, Belfast, BT9 6AA	Section 54 application to amend condition 8 of planning approval LA04/2023/3778/F relating to the submission of foul and surface water drainage details.	20-Feb-25	18-Sep-25	10	Under Consideration
25	LA04/2025/0535/F	Major	Lands West of Monagh By- Pass South of Upper Springfield Road & 30-34 Upper Springfield Road & West of Aitnamona Crescent & St Theresa's Primary School. North and East of 2-22 Old Brewery Lane, Glanaulin, 137-143a Glen Road & Airfield Heights & St Mary's CBG School Belfast	Variation of conditions 1, 2, ,3, 4 ,5, 11, 14, 17, 18, 19, 36, 37 and 41 of LA04/2023/2390/F to remove the previously approved retaining wall at this location,, retain existing sloped ground levels and landscaping, and the removal of 31 approved dwellings at this location.				Under Consideration

Planning Applications Discussed at Committee Between 01 Apr 2019 and 06 May 2025

(Red issued refusal decision - Amber to be issued - Green issued approval decision)

Decision Description	Totals
	25
Consent Granted	2
Consent Refused	
Permission Granted	3
Permission Refused	
Total	30

Application No.	Location	Proposal	Category	Date Valid	Delegated Committe	Committee Date	Weeks between Valid date and Comm date	Weeks Since Committee	Weeks between Comm Date and Issued Date 2	Decision	Issue date	Todays Date	Reason decision not issued	
Page 365	LA04/2022/2059/F	Lands south of 56 Highcairn Drive Belfast BT13 3RU Site located at junction between Highcairn Drive and Dunboyne Park Belfast.	Proposed Social Housing Development Comprising of 12 no. 3p/2b semi-detached dwelling houses with incurtilage parking and associated site works. (amended description and site location plan)	LOC	04-Nov-22	C	29/06/2023	33	96	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
	LA04/2020/1858/F	Hillview Retail Park Crumlin Road Belfast.	Proposed residential development of 18 no. social housing units, comprising two terraces. Development includes associated car parking, gardens, landscaping, site access and all other site works. (amended plans uploaded to the Planning Portal on the 5th April 2023 that revise the proposed access and road layout, including the introduction of a traffic island).	LOC	08-Jan-21	C	14/11/2023	148	77	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement

Agenda

LA04/2021/2016/F	21-29 Corporation Street & 18-24 Tomb Street Belfast.	Demolition of existing multi-storey car park and the erection of 298no. build for rent apartments (19 storey) including ground floor commercial unit (A1/A2), car/cycle parking provision along with associated development. (Further information received).	MAJ	26-Aug-21	C	16/01/2024	124	68	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2020/2105/F	1-5 Gaffikin Street Belfast BT12 5FH	Residential development comprising 55no. apartments comprising 12 no social, and 43 no private apartments and associated site works.	MAJ	21-Oct-20	C	19/03/2024	177	59	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2022/0612/F	Lands at the junction of Shankill Road, Lanark Way, and bound by Caledon Street, Belfast.	Residential scheme of 53 no. dwellings comprising 34 no. semi-detached and 4 no. detached) and 15 no. apartments (7 no. 2-bed and 8 no. 1-bed), amenity space, bin and bicycle storage, landscaping, access, car parking and all associated site works.(revised description	MAJ	15-Apr-22	C	18/06/2024	113	46	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2024/0483/F	34-44 Bedford Street and 6 Clarence Street, Belfast	Proposed change of use from Office (B1) and restaurant (Sui Generis) to Hotel comprising of 88 no. bedrooms, two storey rooftop extension, restaurant and bar offerings, gym facilities, including new dormer windows on roof, internal	MAJ	19-Mar-24	C	15/10/2024	30	29	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2024/0480/D CA	34-44 Bedford Street and 6 Clarence Street, Belfast	Part demolition of existing buildings (stripping back of roof, shopfront and other external alterations to facilitate change of use and extension of buildings to hotel use.	LOC	29-Mar-24	C	15/10/2024	28	29	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement

LA04/2024/0393/F	ECIT Building Queen's Road, Queen's Island, Belfast, BT3 9DT	Proposed 5 storey extension to the East of the ECIT Building (Institute of Electronics, Communications and Information Technology), and 3 storey extension to the West, to provide additional research and development space with	MAJ	21-Mar-24	C	12/11/2024	33	25	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2024/0369/F	Lands at Former Monarch Laundry site, and Broadway Hall Site, No's 451 - 457 Donegall Road, Belfast, BT12 6HD.	Proposed Specialist Nursing and Residential Care Facility comprising approximately 158 no. beds, day/dining rooms, treatment rooms, staff rooms, office/store rooms, including car parking provision, cycle parking, refuse storage, landscaping, and associated site and access works.	MAJ	08-Feb-24	C	12/11/2024	39	25	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2024/1744/LB C	Belfast City Hall, 2 Donegall Square North, Belfast, BT1 5GS	Installation of metal gates to the Titanic Memorial Garden at the ground of Belfast City Hall	LOC	16-Oct-24	C	10/12/2024	7	21	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Deferred for Site Visit
LA04/2024/1138/F	Lands including and to the rear of 24-54 Castle Street, 2-6 Queen Street, 1-7 & 21 Fountain Street, Belfast.	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)	MAJ	16-Oct-24	C	10/12/2024	7	21	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement

LA04/2024/1141/D CA	Lands including and to the rear of 24-54 Castle Street, 2-6 Queen Street, 1-7 & 21 Fountain Street, Belfast	Demolition of existing buildings and construction of Purpose Built Multi Storey Managed Student Accommodation (821no. rooms) with 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	LOC	28-Jun-24	C	10/12/2024	23	21	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2023/2557/F	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	260 no. dwellings, children's play area and other ancillary and associated works.	MAJ	24-Feb-23	C	10/12/2024	93	21	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2024/0754/F Page 60	Lands immediately north and south of existing film studios, north of Dargan Road (within wider Belfast City Council lands known at North Foreshore/Giants Park), Belfast.	Retrospective application for the construction of a landscaped earth mound, new fencing, the reconfiguration of internal access arrangements to provide a new turning head, and associated site works. (Amended	LOC	26-Apr-24	C	21/01/2025	38	15	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting issuing
LA04/2020/2325/F	Lands at Former Maple Leaf Club 41-43 Park Avenue Belfast.	Proposed erection 21no. dwellings (social/affordable housing units comprising 17no. townhouses and 4no. semi-detached), car parking, landscaping and all associated site and access works (Amended drawings, additional information)	LOC	06-Nov-20	C	11/02/2025	222	12	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting issuing
LA04/2019/0081/F	Lands at former Maple Leaf Club 41-43 Park Avenue Belfast.	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	LOC	04-Oct-24	C	11/02/2025	18	12	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting issuing

LA04/2024/1458/F	Divis and The Black Mountain National Trust Site, Divis Road, Hannahstown, Belfast, BT17 0NG.	Alterations to the site include refurbishing and repurposing of 3no existing vernacular buildings to provide visitor facilities and replacing 1 shed, a small garage and an agricultural structure with a new amenity building. Enhancements to the existing pond network, introduction of signage interpretation and a suite of site-appropriate furniture. Wider site improvement works are proposed including path	MAJ	20-Sep-24	C	11/02/2025	20	12	10	Permission Granted	24 Apr 2025	06/05/2025	Permission Granted
LA04/2024/1869/F	The Edge, 48-52 York Street, Belfast, BT15 1AS	Temporary Change of Use of 92 No. Student Bedrooms to Short Term Let Accommodation	LOC	01-Nov-24	C	18/03/2025	19	7	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2025/0140/LB C	Belfast City Hall, 2 Donegall Square, Belfast, BT1 5GS	Installation of new stained glass window within City Hall	LOC	29-Jan-25	C	18/03/2025	6	7	3	Consent Granted	09 Apr 2025	06/05/2025	Consent Granted
LA04/2024/1281/F	60 Carnanmore Park, Belfast, BT11 9YL	Construction of a new 3G football pitch on existing grass football pitches and associated site works.	LOC	10-Jun-24	C	18/03/2025	40	7	3	Permission Granted	11 Apr 2025	06/05/2025	Permission Granted

LA04/2024/0626/F	1 Havelock House Havelock Place, Ormeau, Belfast, BT7 1EB .	Erection of 104no. social rented residential units (comprising a mix of General Social Housing and Category 1 over 55's accommodation) across two detached blocks [ranging between 3 and 5 storeys], landscaping, communal and private amenity space, ancillary cycle and car parking provision, and other associated site works	MAJ	17-Apr-24	C	18/03/2025	47	7	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Dfl issued holding direction. Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2024/0126/F	15-16 Donegall Square South and 2-14 Bedford Street; and No. 7 James Street South, Belfast	Conversion of existing buildings into Hotel, comprising of 102 no. bedrooms with public bars and restaurants. Development includes ground floor extension, staff and service elevator, interior and exterior alterations and all	LOC	22-Jan-24	C	18/03/2025	60	7	4	Permission Granted	17 Apr 2025	06/05/2025	Permission Granted
LA04/2024/0138/LB C	15-16 Donegall Square South and 2-14 Bedford Street, Belfast	Proposed ground floor extension, staff and service elevator, interior and exterior alterations and all associated works to facilitate conversion of the existing building into a hotel.	LOC	22-Jan-24	C	18/03/2025	60	7	4	Consent Granted	17 Apr 2025	06/05/2025	Consent Granted
LA04/2022/1046/F	18 Annadale Avenue Belfast BT7 3JH	Proposed demolition of existing building and construction of a residential development consisting of 14 No. units (9 No. apartments within a three storey building and 5 No. two storey terraced dwellings) with associated landscaping and car	LOC	04-May-22	C	15/04/2025	153	3	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Deferred for additional viability information that considers options to retain existing building

LA04/2024/0675/F	The Arches Centre 11-13 Bloomfield Avenue, Belfast, BT5 5AA	Change of Use of first and second floor to 39 No. apartments; extension to second floor for 6 No. apartments and erection of new third floor for 19 No. apartments (all social housing dwellings, 64 No. in total), and ancillary/associated works. Solar panels on roof (amended plans and	MAJ	13-May-24	C	15/04/2025	48	3	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2024/1385/F	Olympic House, Titanic Quarter, 5 Queens Road, Belfast, BT3 9DH	Amendment to planning permission Z/2013/0931/F to permit occupation for Class B1(a) office and/or Class B1(c) research and development. (amended description and information)	MAJ	09-Aug-24	C	15/04/2025	35	3	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2025/0239/F	21a Cyprus Avenue, Belfast, BT5 5NT	Renewal of LA04/2019/2651/F - Demolition of existing garage, carport, porch and roof to dwelling. Single storey extension to side and rear. Porch extension to front, new roof creating a new ridge level and associated site works.	LOC	13-Feb-25	C	15/04/2025	8	3	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting issuing
LA04/2025/0240/D CA	21a Cyprus Avenue, Belfast, BT5 5NT	Renewal of LA04/2019/2628/DCA - Demolition of existing garage, carport, porch and roof to dwelling.	LOC	11-Feb-25	C	15/04/2025	9	3	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting issuing

LA04/2025/0305/F	38-52 Lisburn Road, Malone Lower, Belfast, BT9 6AA	Section 54 application to amend condition 8 of planning approval LA04/2023/3778/F relating to the submission of foul and surface water drainage details.	MAJ	20-Feb-25	C	15/04/2025	7	3	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting issuing
LA04/2024/2131/F	38-52 Lisburn Road, Malone Lower, Belfast, BT9 6AA	Section 54 planning application to revise the wording of the planning condition numbers 13 and 15 (Relating access gradient and visibility splays) of planning approval LA04/2023/3778/F.	MAJ	31-Jan-25	C	15/04/2025	10	3	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting issuing



Subject:	Smart Belfast: Inclusive Innovation programme
Date:	23 May 2025
Reporting Officer:	Sharon McNicholl, Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Corporate Services
Contact Officer:	Mark McCann, City Innovation Manager Deirdre Ferguson, Innovation Broker

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To seek Committee approval for the design and delivery of a Belfast inclusive innovation public dialogue series that will inform a new programme of work that seeks to unlock new inclusive growth opportunities from the Belfast Region City Deal and other investments.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To approve the Inclusive Innovation public dialogue series at City Hall as part of the development of an Inclusive Innovation programme. 2. To note that the £85,000 proposal by Newcastle University to work with Belfast and three other cities to develop tools and techniques for inclusive innovation, has been accepted by the Economic and Social Research Council and that the project will commence in June 2025 with a planning workshop with partners in Newcastle Upon Tyne.
3.0	Main report
3.1	The innovative adoption of technology by all sectors of the economy is a core element of the Government's strategy for increasing productivity, generating new jobs and businesses. By way of example, in the realm of AI tech adoption alone the Government is projecting a boost to UK's GDP by over 10% by 2030. To support this approach the Government is encouraging cities and regions to build the conditions that will encourage collaborative innovation by all actors including industry and business, government, academia and communities.
3.2	The Government's approach is echoed in the strategic rationale for the Innovation, Digital and Skills pillars of the Belfast Region City Deal. These investments are designed to foster a regional innovation ecosystem that encourages R&D, innovation, tech adoption in ways that generate inclusive benefits for SMEs, communities and individuals.
3.3	However, an innovation-driven economy offers both opportunities and challenges for city leaders committed to inclusive growth. While such an economy will generate significant growth and wealth for a region, there is evidence that without well-planned, citizen-focused interventions, such an economy can actually widen inequalities and generate new barriers to jobs, services, and business opportunities.
3.4	'Inclusive innovation' is an increasingly popular term for the types of interventions that are required to address such risks. While there is no settled opinion as to which interventions are likely to be the most effective, there is important, current research in this area by institutions including King's College, Cardiff University, Newcastle University, Nesta, and locally at Queen's University. Much of this research is being considered by UK Government as it seeks to ensure an inclusive approach to the national economic strategy.
3.5	Locally, the Belfast Innovation Commissioner recently co-authored a new paper with Robyn Klingler-Vidra and Alex Glennie of King's College on measuring inclusive innovation. The

	research draws on the Belfast experience and will be published in Global Policy Journal ¹ on 16 May.
3.6	Working with the Belfast Innovation Commissioner, and City Deal partners, the Council's City Innovation Office is aiming to unlock this research and practice to generate new inclusive growth opportunities through the Belfast Region City Deal investments. While there is recognition nationally about the inclusion risks and challenges of an innovation-driven economy, there has been only limited local discussion on the mitigations that need to be put in place to address them.
3.7	As a first step the City Innovation, Office working with the Commissioner, is therefore proposing an initial series of public engagements at City Hall aimed at politicians, leaders and policy makers to build shared understanding about the challenges that inclusive innovation represents, and work towards a series of interventions and programmes at scale. (It's proposed that this would take a similar format to the Council's influential <i>'Belfast: State of the City'</i> dialogue that sought to engage on urban policy in the period leading up to the Review Public Administration.)
3.8	Co-chaired by the Council's Chief Executive and the Belfast Innovation Commissioner, each session would bring leading thinkers to bear on the critical elements of any future Belfast inclusive innovation programme. A small steering group working with ICB would establish the final programme themes such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activating community infrastructure to realise the benefits of inclusive innovation • The impact of AI on education and learning • Skills for Good Jobs in a rapidly changing economy • New models of entrepreneurship in the era of AI • Measuring inclusive innovation
3.9	The series would support a number of outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help shape a shared understanding and approach to inclusive amongst Belfast partners. • It would ensure a framework for citizen co-design and collaboration is informed by thought leaders across inclusive skills, economies and innovation. • Shape the inclusive innovation programme of Belfast City Council and partners including the work of Innovation City Belfast • Inform decision-making on projects associated the Skills, Innovation and Digital pillars of BRCD. • Support Belfast in engaging with potential funders of inclusive innovation initiatives at both the national and European levels.

¹ <https://www.globalpolicyjournal.com/blog/16/05/2025/we-need-a-better-framework-measuring-inclusive-innovation-efforts>

3.10	Members are asked to approve the Inclusive Innovation dialogue series as part of the development of the inclusive innovation programme.
	Current inclusive innovation initiatives
3.11	While a full inclusive innovation programme is still to be developed, the City Innovation Office has been working on a number of 'pilot' inclusive innovation projects. These include a one-year 'citizen science' project in collaboration with Queen's University's QCAP team that will work with two inner city communities and is due to begin this Spring. The City Innovation Office is also working with Ulster University on a new £2.5 million EPSRC funded project that is seeking to maximise the place-based social and economic impact of the new Centre for Digital Healthcare Technology (CDHT).
3.12	Finally, Members will recall that the Council was approached by 'i30' a research collaboration between Newcastle University, the University of Pittsburgh, the University of Oslo and EAFIT University. i30 has been particularly interested in how 'City Deal'-type investments have supported inclusive innovation ambitions in cities in the UK and elsewhere. Their work is helping Newcastle City Council to shape its social inclusion strategy, while their work with Pittsburgh is ensuring that that their city's innovation district is having wider social impact. Belfast has been invited to be the fourth city in this inclusive innovation project.
3.13	Members should note that the £85,000 proposal has been accepted by the Economic and Social Research Council and the project will commence in June 2025 with a planning workshop with partners to which officers have been invited to attend. The project will build on i30's existing work to deliver a range of tools, policy guidance and practice that can support cities in delivering their inclusive innovation outcomes.
	Financial & Resource Implications
3.14	Resources for these initiatives have been identified within the existing departmental budgets. Based on costings for similar events it's estimated that the series would require a budget of approximately £40,000 (This would include travel, AV, promotional materials, write-ups, catering, etc). The series would be organised in-house.
	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment
3.15	None at this stage.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None.



Subject:	Diversity Mark Summit 2025 - Sponsorship
Date:	23 May 2025
Reporting Officer:	Christine Sheridan -Director of Human Resources
Contact Officer:	Catherine Christy – Corporate HR Manager - Development

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to seek approval to sponsor the Diversity Mark Summit 2025 taking place at Titanic Belfast on 8 October 2025.

2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree to the sponsorship of the Diversity Mark Summit 2025.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>At its meeting on 21 June 2024, the Committee approved sponsorship of the 2024 Diversity Mark Summit. Diversity Mark is an independent not-for-profit Diversity and Inclusion Accreditation in Northern Ireland and has to date accredited almost 200 organisations across the UK and Ireland on their path to a more inclusive workplace. Membership provides support to employers to make and demonstrate progressive improvement in creating an inclusive & diverse workplace. The Council holds Silver Diversity mark Accreditation and is currently working towards attaining Gold Accreditation. The Council continues to work closely with Diversity Mark on a number of initiatives and forums aimed at sharing and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion best practice.</p>
3.2	<p>The Council has been invited again, along with a small number of other organisations to contribute to the 2025 summit as a supporting sponsor. The main sponsor of the event is Allstate.</p>
3.3	<p>The benefits for sponsoring organisations are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Involvement: Continued involvement in the EDI Forum. The forum will support on shaping the strategic direction of this annual summit and meet to explore best practice and global trends in EDI as identified by Diversity Mark. • Prominent Recognition: Elevate your organisation's profile with extensive recognition and promotional opportunities throughout the summit as a valued supporting sponsor, ensuring visibility among industry leaders and decision-makers. • Exclusive Attendance: Secure up to 15 in-person summit passes for employees, promoting diversity from senior levels throughout, with the flexibility to invite guests or donate tickets to charitable organisations. • Thought Leadership Platform: Opportunity to showcase your expertise by speaking at the summit or suggesting influential speakers. • Comprehensive Branding: Benefit from extensive branding across all promotional materials, advertisements, and the website, with logo prominently displayed

	throughout the summit venue as a supporting sponsor, reinforcing your organisation's commitment to EDI and its pivotal role in driving economic growth and inclusivity.
3.4	<p>Financial and Resource Implications</p> <p>The investment required for this sponsorship is £2,250. this includes 15 places at the summit and a seat at the Steering Committee will be met from the existing Organisation Development budget.</p>
3.5	<p>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</p> <p>Sponsorship of this event will allow the Council to demonstrate its commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion as well as showcase our best practice as an employer and civic leader.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None

This page is intentionally left blank



Subject:	Sign Language Bill – response to Call for Evidence
Date:	23 May 2025
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, City Solicitor / Director of Legal and Civic Services
Contact Officers:	Russell Connelly, Policy, Research and Compliance Officer Michael Johnston, Language Officer

Restricted Reports									
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
<p>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</p> <p>Insert number <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="text"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 									
<p>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">After Committee Decision</td> <td style="width: 30%; text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>After Council Decision</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sometime in the future</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>		After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>								

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

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to seek retrospective approval from Members for the attached officer response to the Call for Evidence for a Sign Language Bill which was submitted to the Northern Ireland Assembly prior to the deadline of 9 th May 2025.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	It is recommended that Members: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the contents of this report. 2. Provide retrospective approval for the officer response to the Call for Evidence which was submitted on 2nd May 2025.
3.0	Main report
	<u>Background</u>
3.1	In March 2004, the then British Secretary of State, Paul Murphy, formally recognised British Sign Language (BSL) and Irish Sign Language (ISL) as languages in their own right. This recognition does not provide any statutory protection for the languages.
3.2	The Sign Language Partnership Group (SLPG) led by the Department for Communities (DfC) was established as a forum in 2007 to bring together the government Departments and key organisations and representatives representing the Deaf community to improve access to public services for sign language users. The Council's Language Officer sits on the SLPG.
3.3	In 2016, a Sign Language Framework was launched by DfC, which provides details to address the lack of support and historical under investment for ISL and BSL, including proposals for legislation to officially recognise, promote and protect both languages and to provide support for the parents and families of deaf children.
3.4	On 23 rd January 2025, Communities Minister Lyons announced at the Executive that he was introducing the draft Sign Language Bill to the Assembly. This took place on 18 th February 2025. The Sign Language Bill has been referred to the Assembly's Committee for Communities so that the Committee can consider and take evidence on the Bill and report its opinion to the Assembly.
	<u>Call for Evidence – Sign Language Bill</u>
3.5	The Committee is seeking views from stakeholders on the objectives, proposals and potential consequences of the Bill. Link to Sign Language Bill.
3.6	The Bill has 15 clauses. Clauses in Chapter 2 of the Bill requires prescribed organisations which includes Councils to carry out duties to ensure information and services provided are as

	accessible to individuals in the deaf community as they are to individuals who are not in the deaf community and to offer or facilitate the use of British Sign Language and Irish Sign Language for the benefit of the individuals in the deaf community in accessing information and services provided by the organisation. Prescribed organisations will be required to develop and implement five year Sign Language Action Plans and to submit updates to the Department for Communities.
3.7	The Council has prepared and submitted a response to each clause by the submission deadline, Friday 9 th May 2025.
3.8	Committee will note that the Council has already committed to the proposed obligations in the Sign Language Bill. We have a Language Strategy which includes Sign Languages as one of the language strands. We have a Language Action Plan which covers actions to improve Sign Language provision within the Council. Our work to date in relation to Sign Languages is set out below.
	<p>British Sign Language and Irish Sign Language Charter - In March 2019, the Council signed up to the British Deaf Association's British Sign Language and Irish Sign Language Charter and one of the pledges made was to ensure council staff working with Deaf people can communicate effectively using British Sign Language and/or Irish Sign Language.</p> <p>Sign Language Users' Forum - A Sign Language Users' Forum consisting of local Sign Language users was established in June 2019 and meets twice a year to advise, guide and support the Council to respond better to the needs of Sign Language Users in Belfast.</p> <p>Staff training - Sign Language courses are provided to council staff.</p> <p>Video Relay Service/Video Remoting Interpreting Service - The Council established a contact with SignVideo in 2020 to deliver interpreting support for Sign Language customers contacting the Customer Hub and visiting council venues.</p> <p>City Hall Visitor Exhibition & Tropical Ravine Sign Language Videos - Sign Language visitors can access translated videos via the Council's YouTube channel when visiting the Visitor Exhibition at the City Hall and at Tropical Ravine, Botanic Gardens.</p> <p>Public events - Sign Language interpreters are present at Council public events during the year e.g. Christmas and St Patrick's Day.</p> <p>Communication Support - Sign Language users can request a Sign Language interpreter for appointments/meetings. Documents/leaflets can also be requested in British Sign Language and/or Irish Sign Language.</p>
3.9	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None at this time.</p>

3.10	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Implications</u></p> <p>The Sign Language Bill if passed will promote equality of opportunity for Deaf Sign Language Users.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 - Response to the NI Assembly

Response to NI Assembly

Council's response to the Sign Language Bill – Call for Evidence.

[Sign Language Bill - Call for Evidence - Page 1 of 17 - Northern Ireland Assembly - Citizen Space](#)

Please confirm you have read the Northern Ireland Assembly's Committee privacy notice by clicking the button below:

[Privacy Notice](#)

(tick) I have read the privacy notice

Do you consent to your submission being published on the Committee's website and included in the Committee's report?

(0) Yes, publish in full.

(tick) Yes, publish but my personal information and any content that could be used to identify me redacted.

Clause 1

Clause 1 formally recognises BSL and ISL equally as languages of Northern Ireland, whilst preserving the architecture of existing disability and equality legislation.

Do you feel Clause 1 goes far enough in formally recognising BSL and ISL as languages of Northern Ireland?

Yes (tick)

No

Please give details to support your answer.

Clause 1 clearly states that British Sign Language (BSL) and Irish Sign Language (ISL) is formally recognised as languages of Northern Ireland, whilst preserving the architecture of existing disability and equality legislation that applies to Northern Ireland.

(261 characters)

Clause 2

Clause 2 places a duty on the Department for Communities to promote:

- the greater use and understanding of BSL and ISL (including an obligation to provide for the availability of classes BSL and ISL for deaf children, their close families, guardians and carers);

- the general entitlement of individuals in the deaf community to use BSL or ISL; and,
- the further development of deaf culture by the deaf community through the use of BSL and ISL.

Do you feel Clause 2 goes far enough in promoting the use of BSL and ISL and developing deaf culture?

Yes (tick)

No

Please give details to support your answer.

We are supportive of this Clause. We welcome the inclusion of available classes for deaf children, their close families, guardians, carers and individuals in the deaf community to learn BSL or ISL.

(197 characters)

Are there any other approaches (apart from providing for the availability of classes) that could help to meet the objective of the greater use and understanding of BSL and ISL?

Yes (tick)

No (tick)

Clause 3

Clause 3 places a duty on prescribed organisations to take reasonable steps to:

- ensure the information and services provided by them are as accessible to members of the deaf community as they are to the people who are not in the deaf community, at no extra cost to them; and,
- offer or facilitate the use of BSL or ISL for the benefit of individuals in the deaf community in accessing information and services provided by the organisation.

In considering what is reasonable, prescribed organisations may take account of cost and practicability.

[Further details are available in the Explanatory and Financial Memorandum included with the Bill which you can read here.](#)

Do you think the duty placed on prescribed organisations to make the information and services accessible to members of the deaf community is sufficient?

Yes (tick)

No

Please give details to support your answer.

We have a Language Strategy which includes Sign Languages as one of the language strands therefore as a public body, we are committed to making sure our information and services are accessible to members of the deaf community.

(226 characters)

Clause 4

Clause 4 provides for the Department for Communities to list the public bodies (known as the prescribed organisations) that are subject to the duties in Clause 3.

Do you support the approach taken by Clause 4?

Yes (tick)

No

Please give details to support your answer.

As a public body, we support this approach.

(44 characters)

Clause 5

Clause 5 states that the Department for Communities must issue guidance about the effects of the provisions in the Bill relating to BSL and ISL and the interests of the deaf community. This clause states that, when devising or revising guidance the Department for Communities must consult:

- each of the prescribed organisations; and,
- at least one person or group appearing to the Department to be acting on behalf of the deaf community.

Do you support the approach to consultation required in Clause 5?

Yes (tick)

No

Please give details to support your answer.

We will welcome the opportunity to work with the Department for Communities to ensure our information and services are accessible to Sign Language users.

(154 characters)

Clause 6

Clause 6 states that the Department for Communities guidance should include best practice advice on the implications of the recognition of BSL and ISL in the Bill for public bodies, including prescribed organisations. This would include:

- what may or must be viewed as amounting to reasonable steps to be taken by prescribed organisations;
- how prescribed organisations should develop plans to be called sign language action plans; and,
- advice on best practice for interacting with people who rely for communication on BSL or ISL.

Do you support the approach taken in this clause?

Yes (tick)

No

Please give details to support your answer.

We are satisfied with this approach. We have a Language Strategy Action Plan which covers actions to improve Sign Language provision within the Council therefore we are supportive of developing Sign Language Actions plans and the use of best practice advice and guidance from the Department for Communities.

(309 characters)

Do you feel there is anything else this Clause should include?

Yes

No (tick)

Please give details to support your answer.

Clause 7

Clause 7 makes provision for the Department for Communities to make regulations (some time in the future) for the purposes of the Bill.

The Department for Communities will have the power to create new regulations to support the Sign Language Bill. These regulations are a different form of law, with working detail and may cover things like **how** public services provide sign language access and **how** organisations support sign language users. These future regulations would also need to come before the Assembly for scrutiny and agreement before they come into effect.

The Department for Communities must consult with the deaf community and relevant organisations before making changes. It can assign responsibilities to public bodies, charities, or groups working with the deaf community.

If needed, the Department for Communities can limit or adjust requirements for certain organisations based on their resources. Any changes must be approved by the Assembly before they become law.

Do you support the provision for the Department for Communities to make regulations detailed in Clause 7?

Yes (tick)

No

Please give details to support your answer.

We welcome the provision for the Department for Communities to make regulations. It is important we are consulted and that our financial and resources implications are considered when drafting the regulations.

(210 characters)

Do you support the approach to consultation detailed in Clause 7?

Yes (tick)

No

Please give details to support your answer.

We welcome the approach to be consulted on the drafting of the regulations.

(76 characters)

Clause 8

Clause 8 states that, before laying a draft of such regulations, the Department for Communities must consult everyone on whom the regulations confer functions, and at least one person or group appearing to the Department to be acting on behalf of the deaf community. Such regulations need to be laid before and approved by the Assembly.

Do you feel the level of consultation required in Clause 8 is sufficient?

Yes (tick)

No

Please give details to support your answer.

We support this level of consultation which includes all listed prescribed organisations being involved in the process of drafting regulations.

(138 characters)

Clause 9

Clause 9 would require the Department for Communities to prepare a report evaluating the impact of the Bill within five years of the Bill's commencement and every five years thereafter.

Do you think evaluating the impact of the Bill in a report every five years is an appropriate length of time?

Yes (tick)

No

Please give details to support your answer.

We are supportive of an evaluation report being produced every five years showcasing the impact made.

(102 characters)

Clause 10

Clause 10 provides that the Department for Communities must make a scheme for, or connected to, the accreditation of (either or both) teachers of BSL or ISL, and/or interpreters of BSL or ISL.

Do you support the creation of a scheme for accrediting BSL and ISL teachers?

Yes (tick)

No

Please give details to support your answer.

An accreditation scheme for BSL and ISL teachers would assist in our on-going work within the Council's Language Strategy Action Plan. We will be able to identify, approach and supply accredited teachers to deliver Sign Language courses for council staff.

(245 characters)

Do you support the creation of a scheme for accrediting BSL and ISL interpreters?

Yes (tick)

No

Please give details to support your answer.

An accreditation scheme for BSL and ISL interpreters would assist the Council in making sure qualified interpreters are placed for required and requested

bookings made by Council staff. The scheme will also assist deaf employees in the Council by being able to book qualified interpreters for communication purposes in the workplace.

(334 characters)

Clause 11

Clause 11 defines, for the purposes of the Bill, the deaf community as all people falling within one or more of the following categories:

- (a) individuals who rely for communication on BSL or ISL;
- (b) deaf or deafblind people who normally use BSL or ISL for communication (including people who can obtain some or better levels of hearing when assisted by auditory devices); or
- (c) children of deaf or deafblind people who habitually or occasionally use BSL or ISL for communication (including children who have some or full hearing).

Clause 11 also provides that people who (whether or not they have some or full hearing) have little or no understanding of spoken or written language in English but are able to communicate effectively in BSL or ISL, are to be regarded as if members of the deaf community for the purposes of the Bill.

Do you agree with the definition of the deaf community provided for in the Bill?

Yes (tick)

No

Please give details to support your answer. Please outline what people or groups you think should be included or excluded and why.

We agree with the inclusion of the above categories as people belonging to the deaf community.

(95 characters)

Clause 12

Clause 12 defines, for the purposes of the Bill, BSL or ISL as either or both of the visual form of the Language as commonly used and understood by deaf people, and the common tactile or non-visual forms of the Language as used and understood by some deafblind people.

Do you agree with the definition of BSL and ISL provided for in the Bill?

Yes (tick)

No

Please give details to support your answer. If you think there are any aspects missing, please outline what you think should be included.

We agree with this definition of BSL and ISL.

(46 characters)

Clause 13

Clause 13 defines, for the purposes of the Bill, everyday reliance on BSL or ISL as relying (wholly or substantially) on BSL or ISL by necessity or for convenience in the course of everyday activities.

Do you agree with the definition of “everyday reliance” provided in the Bill?

Yes (tick)

No

Please give details to support your answer. If you think there are any aspects missing, please outline what you think should be included.

We agree with this definition of “everyday reliance” on BSL and ISL.

Any other comments

Is there anything which you expected the Bill to make provision for which has not been included in the Bill?

Yes (tick)

No (tick)

Please give details to support your answer.

If you have any other comments in relation to the Bill please tell us here.

Please note this is an officer response on behalf of Belfast City Council which will require ratification by full Council at their meeting in June

(Submit response)



Subject:	City Centre Governance
Date:	23 May 2025
Reporting Officer:	Damien Martin, Strategic Director, Place & Economy
Contact Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director, City Regeneration & Development Stephen Leonard, Director, City & Neighbourhood Services Kevin Heaney, Head of Inclusive Growth & Anti - Poverty

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

☐

No

☒

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

Insert number

☐

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

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

☐
☐
☐
☐

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

☒

No

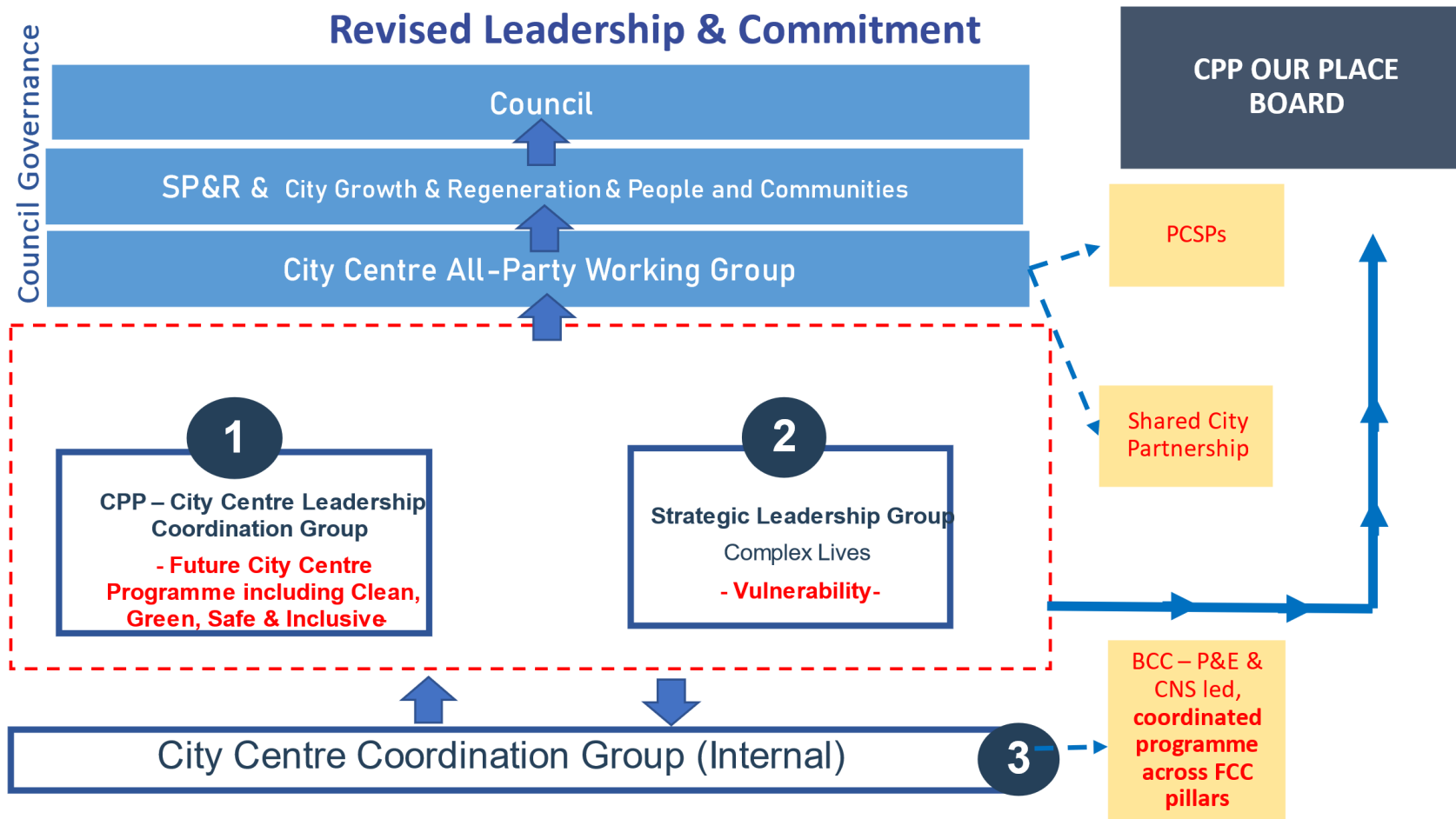
☐

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide proposals on a refreshed approach to city centre governance in the context of existing and established Community Planning structures.

2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree to proposed refreshed approach to city centre governance in the context of existing and established Community Planning structures.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	Members will be aware of the city centre governance arrangements agreed by this Committee in 2022. These were designed and implemented with relevance to a specific point in time which allowed responses to the emerging and often sensitive and difficult issues and anchored within established Community Planning Structures.
3.2	As the operating environment and circumstances have changed, and taking account of feedback on duplication from representatives in relation to the various groups that had been established, it is timely to revisit the governance and delivery arrangements which had been initially put in place for the city centre, with a view to streamlining, integrating and refocusing to ensure that they are fit for purpose and remain relevant to all involved. In addition, work on the stocktake of the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS) was completed last year and recommended “a multi-agency approach to place keeping and city management”.
3.3	This is line with the refresh of the Belfast Agenda, following which Community Planning Partnership partners agreed to revisit the associated governance arrangements to ensure they remain fit-for-purpose.
3.4	<p>Reflecting on the BCCRIS stock-take and status of initiatives, as well as engagement with and feedback from key stakeholders/partners, it is proposed that we seek to consolidate the Multi Agency Operational (Tasking) Group and FCC Leadership Group into one group “City Centre Leadership Coordination Group” (illustrated in Appendix 1). To ensure a cross sector shared partnership approach it is proposed that this is anchored as per the initial governance under the auspices of Community Planning. This will ensure a multi-agency approach with representation across the public, private and third and community sectors. The proposed draft TOR are set out below to provide Members with a sense of purpose to this proposed forum:</p> <p>a) The Group as anchored with Community Planning structures, will contribute to realising the shared vision and ambition as set out in the Belfast Agenda; encouraging greater coordination and collaboration across partners in relation to the city centre to deliver our shared vision of creating <i>“a vibrant, unique and thriving place where people spend time, live, work, visit and invest”</i>.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) To ensure that a fit-for-purpose vehicle exists to raise and expedite issues relating to the priorities for the city centre across the five pillars of Regeneration & Connectivity; Business Investment, Animation & Distinctive Offering, Clean, Green Inclusive & Safe and Vulnerability. c) To enable engagement, discussion and collaboration between key public and private stakeholders (including central and local government, anchor institutions, retail, business and umbrella organisations, developers, community, third sector and other relevant city centre stakeholders) to delivery activities aligned to these pillars. d) To support the delivery of priority projects that support the agreed vision for the City Centre. e) To provide a forum to develop shared messaging and joined up communications on matters pertaining to the Belfast City Centre. f) To be a vehicle for engagement with wider community interests. g) It would be expected that respective organisations filter updates and messaging as appropriate through their networks to ensure communication of relevant areas are understood across the board. h) The group will provide a forum to allow all stakeholders to feed in relevant workstreams / updates relevant to the ongoing and future success of the city centre. i) To monitor overall progress; and to review and update the objectives and priorities at least annually. j) Representatives on the group should be of sufficient level where they are able to convey issues, opportunities etc back into the relevant leadership / governance of their respective organisations as appropriate.
3.5	It is proposed that the meetings are organised and structured around the pillars of the Future City Centre (FCC) programme. This is aligned to the priority area under the Our Place thematic area of the Belfast Agenda, providing an opportunity for reporting into the City Centre All Party Working Group, relevant committees and the Community Planning Our Place Board.
3.6	It is not proposed to change arrangements in relation to Complex Lives, which are deigned to focus and coordinate multiagency support in relation to a specific group of vulnerable individuals who are experiencing very complex issues.
3.7	Positive discussions have taken place with officials in the Department for Communities and Department for Infrastructure on the refreshed governance proposals for the city centre.
	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u>
3.8	None

	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u>
3.9	None associated with this report.
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – Refreshed City Centre Governance Diagram



This page is intentionally left blank



Subject:	DfI consultation on Developer Contributions for Wastewater Infrastructure
Date:	23 May 2025
Reporting Officer(s):	Kate Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control
Contact Officer(s):	Kate Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control

Is this report restricted?

Yes

☐

No

☒

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

Insert number

☐

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

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

☐
☐
☐
☐

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

☒

No

☐

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To update the Committee on the consultation published by the Department for Infrastructure on 21 March 2025 on Developer Contributions for Wastewater Infrastructure and to agree a draft response to the consultation.

2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the contents of the consultation and agree the draft response set out in Appendix 2.
3.0	Main Report
	Background
3.1	Long term underinvestment in wastewater infrastructure continues to have a significant effect on development in NI and in Belfast. Upgrades to the system haven't been able to proceed at the pace required and much of the infrastructure is aging and needs upgrading. There are now areas across Belfast that have limited or no capacity to allow for new connections to the NI Water sewerage network.
3.2	The Living with Water Programme provided a route through which to implement improvements to the wastewater infrastructure across Belfast. Whilst projects were progressed, the funding required to deliver improvements has been cut and the programme itself has effectively been paused.
	Consultation
3.3	<p>A consultation on Developer Contributions for Wastewater Infrastructure was published on the 21 March. The document sets out that DfI are taking a three-pronged approach to resolving the current issue:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Working with Executive colleagues to try and increase wastewater investment 2. Exploring options for developer contributions and 3. Introducing the Water, Flooding and Sustainable Drainage Bill to the Assembly to enable the Department to issue future guidance on the design, maintenance and adoption of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)
3.4	DfI are also working at a strategic level with colleagues in DfC and DAERA to identify steps which can be taken to maximise the building of houses and with NI Water to identify projects that can release capacity. No further information is given on the other workstreams within the consultation document.
	The proposals
3.5	The consultation document recognises that there is no expectation that developer contributions will provide all, or even most, of the significant funding needed to address the full capacity challenges within the existing wastewater infrastructure network.

3.6

There is also recognition that any contribution towards upgrading or replacing wastewater infrastructure would increase the costs to the developer of building new houses, that this could be passed on to the purchaser and that this could be the case for both private and social housing developers.

3.7

Whilst the consultation considers “developer contributions”, it is clear that what is being proposed under the two options contained within the report is not what is currently considered as a planning agreement under s76 of the 2011 Planning Act (commonly referred to as developer contributions). Neither option would be operated by the local planning authority (although the consultation asserts that a payment made under the first option could be considered to be a material consideration in decision making).

3.8

A synopsis of the two options is set out below:

Option 1 – Voluntary Contributions	Option 2 – Compulsory Levy
Developers could opt to pay to offset the costs of upgrading or replacing infrastructure.	Requires a financial contribution from developers with the money then used on a prioritised needs basis across NI.
Legislation required – to make financial contribution directly to NI Water to pay some or all of the costs.	Creates a ring-fenced fund which would help to offset the funding gap between the amount that NI Water receive from the Executive and the amount needed to address constraints.
Developers could pool contributions to meet the required level of funding.	<i>“Consistent and predictable source of funding”</i>
<i>“Allows developers to decide whether and how much to contribute in consultation with NI Water”</i>	Automatically increases the cost of all development but seems to be limited to housing.
Secured through an upfront payment or bond.	Legislation required & administratively complex.
Planning authorities would not be party to the agreement nor the transfer of funds, but the existence of the agreement would be a material consideration in determining a planning application (may require negative condition).	Wouldn’t provide immediate solution – the fund cannot grow until houses are built, but houses cannot be built without the funding to improve infrastructure.

	<p>If developer pays for infrastructure that others then benefit from, a reimbursement scheme could be introduced.</p>	<p>The levy calculation and methodology as well as how the funds would be allocated and prioritised would need to be the subject of consultation.</p> <p>Possible exemptions (rural housing) are suggested.</p>
3.9	<p>The consultation also considers that it is possible to combine options 1 & 2 by allowing voluntary contributions in the short term whilst working on introducing the levy in the longer term.</p> <p>BCC consultation response</p>	
3.10	<p>A draft response to the consultation is set out in Appendix 2. The questions posed in the consultation are very focused, so additional commentary has been drafted to consider a number of issues around the proposals outlined.</p>	
3.11	<p>If the response is agreed and the decision ratified at Council on the 3 June, it will be submitted in time to meet the deadline for consultation responses on the 27 June 2025.</p>	
	Financial & Resource Implications	
3.12	<p>There are no finance or resource implications as a result of the consultation, however there may be financial implications should a compulsory levy be introduced on Council projects.</p>	
	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment	
3.13	<p>The consultation has been subject to its own s75 screening, Human Rights Impact Assessment and Rural Needs Impacts Assessment.</p>	
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached	
	<p>Appendix 1 – DfI Developer Contributions for Wastewater Infrastructure consultation document (21 March 2025)</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Belfast City Council draft response</p>	



Department for
Infrastructure

An Roinn

Bonneagair

Department fur

Infrastructure

www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Developer Contributions for Wastewater Infrastructure

21 MARCH 2025



CONTENTS

Ministerial Foreword	5
1. Consultation Arrangements	7
2. Background and Context	11
3. Developer Contributions for Wastewater Infrastructure	16
4. Options for Introducing Developer Contributions	21
5. Consultation Questions	29
Glossary of Terms	32

—

MINISTERIAL FOREWORD

1. Ministerial Foreword

This consultation on Developer Contributions for Wastewater Infrastructure seeks your views on whether and, if so, how my department should introduce developer contributions to help fund necessary improvements to our wastewater infrastructure.

Access to reliable wastewater infrastructure is essential for all of us. We depend on it daily for our homes, businesses, schools, and healthcare services to function effectively. The proper treatment and management of wastewater is crucial for protecting our environment, ensuring public health, and supporting economic prosperity.

The Executive has identified increasing housing stock, particularly social housing, as a key priority in its Programme for Government 2024-2027 (PfG). My department and NI Water play a vital role in ensuring that the necessary wastewater infrastructure is in place to support this vision and enable new housing development. I am clear that making this happen is one of my priorities going forward.

Due to years of historic underfunding, our current drainage and wastewater infrastructure is, however, sadly ageing and in urgent need of upgrades. As a result, there are areas right across the North which have limited or no capacity for new wastewater connections to the network, impacting housing development, economic growth, environmental sustainability, and public service delivery.

Improving our sewerage systems will be a significant undertaking, costing billions and spanning multiple decades. I am clear that the introduction of developer contributions would not alone present the funding needed to implement the improvements that are needed.

Finding a solution will take time, creativity and a commitment from all of us. I am currently taking a three-pronged approach to begin the journey towards having the infrastructure system we all need. This includes working with Executive colleagues to try and increase wastewater investment, launching this public consultation to explore options for developer contributions and introducing the Water, Flooding and Sustainable Drainage Bill to the Assembly to enable my department to issue future guidance on the design, maintenance, and adoption of Sustainable Drainage Systems.

Progress *is* being made. In December, my predecessor, John O'Dowd, was able to announce an additional £19.5m of ringfenced funding which allowed some 2,300 new properties to connect to the water and sewerage infrastructure. Launching this consultation is another major step forward.

It is important that everyone has the opportunity to express their views on whether and, if so, how developer contributions could be introduced to help bridge the funding gap for improving our wastewater infrastructure.

Your feedback will be invaluable in shaping future decisions.
Thank you for your participation and input.

LIZ KIMMINS MLA
Minister for Infrastructure

1 - CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS

1. Consultation Arrangements

Timetable

This consultation document will be available for comment and response for a period of 14 weeks from 21 March 2025 to 27 June 2025. The document can be viewed, downloaded and responded to from the consultation section of the Department's website <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/consultations/developer-contributions-wastewater-infrastructure>.

How to respond

We welcome your views on whether and, if so, how developer contributions should be introduced.

Responses should be submitted using the online survey.

When you respond, tell us whether you are doing this for yourself or for an organisation.

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please tell us,

- Who the organisation represents.

Please note that responses to the consultation must be received by noon on 27 June 2025.

Alternative Formats

The consultation document can also be made available in alternative formats. Requests should be made to **developercontributions@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk**

Impact Assessments

The following impact assessments are available to view on our website <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/consultations/developer-contributions-wastewater-infrastructure>

Equality Impact Assessment

A high-level section 75 screening has been carried as part of the preparations to launch this consultation.

No impacts were identified for any specific group at this stage. The Department recognises that equality screening is a live process that will be considered alongside the consultation process as it evolves.

Further s75 screening (and, if deemed appropriate) Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out as decisions are made and policies developed in response to this consultation.

Human Rights Impact Assessment

The Department has carried out a Human Rights Impact Assessment and considers the options laid out in this document are fully compliant with the Human Rights Act 1998.

Rural Needs Impact Assessment

The Department has carried out a Rural Needs Impact Assessment to assess any impacts of the proposed options on those in rural areas.

Regulatory Impact Assessment

The Department has carried out a Regulatory Impact Assessment to assess any impact on the proposed options on the wider business community including the voluntary and community sector.

Freedom of Information Act 2000 - Confidentiality of Responses

UK General Data Protection Regulation

The Department may publish a summary of responses following the closing date for receipt of comments. Your response, and all other responses to this publication, may be disclosed on request and/or made available on the DfI website (redacted). The Department can only refuse to disclose information in exceptional circumstances. Before you submit your response, please read the paragraphs below on the confidentiality of responses as this will give you guidance on the legal position about any information given by you in response to this publication.

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Regulations 2004 give the public a right of access to any information held by a public authority, namely, the Department in this case. This right of access to information includes information provided in response to a consultation.

The Department cannot automatically consider as confidential information supplied to it in response to a consultation. However, it does have the responsibility to decide whether any information provided by you in response to this publication should be made public or treated as confidential.

The information you provide in your response, excluding personal information, may be published, or disclosed in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR).

Any personal information you provide will be handled in accordance with the UK-GDPR and will not be published.

If you want the non-personal information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please tell us why, but be aware that, under the FOIA or EIR, we cannot guarantee confidentiality.

For information regarding your personal data, please refer to the DfI Privacy Notice at www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/dfi-privacy. For further details on confidentiality, the FOIA and the EIR please refer to www.ico.org.uk.

Next Steps

After consideration of all the responses received by the deadline, a Consultation Responses Report will be prepared and published.

2 - BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

2. Background and Context

This consultation is seeking your views on whether and, if so, how the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) should introduce developer contributions to help fund the wastewater infrastructure improvements needed to unlock housing development constraints and enable more homes to be built. Subject to the outcome of this consultation and any future policy direction taken, further consultation on the specifics of how developer contributions should operate may be required.

This section explains the wider context within which this consultation sits, including the background to the current situation in respect of wastewater infrastructure.

What is wastewater infrastructure?

Wastewater is water that comes from households or businesses and includes water from sinks, showers, toilets, and washing machines. This wastewater contains a mix of organic and inorganic substances, such as food particles, oils, chemicals, and human waste. Wastewater infrastructure includes sewer pipes, storage tanks, pumps, and treatment works, all of which are required to operate safely to collect and dispose of wastewater.

The preferred means of sewage collection and disposal is by connecting a property to the public sewerage network (which includes both foul and combined sewers) provided by NI Water and transporting the wastewater to a wastewater treatment plant, where contaminants are removed. The treated water is then returned to the environment via a watercourse or the sea. An alternative, primarily used in rural areas, is to install a self-contained septic tank that operates on a smaller scale for individual properties or a small collection of properties.

Paying for the delivery of wastewater infrastructure to households

The cost of delivering sewerage services throughout Northern Ireland is met from the Executive's budget and is administered through DfI. The Department is the sole shareholder of NI Water, which is both a Government Owned Company and a Non-Departmental Public Body. NI Water is operationally responsible for the delivery of all wastewater services in Northern Ireland.

In a single day NI Water collects over 360 million litres of wastewater from over 750,000 homes and businesses across Northern Ireland. Approximately 10% of wastewater is discharged through the storm overflow system: the other 90% produced is collected and travels through NI Water's 16,500km network of sewers. It is then taken to one of over 1000 wastewater treatment works where it is treated before being safely returned to the environment.

It costs around £680 million each year for NI Water to deliver water and wastewater services in Northern Ireland. This is funded through government subsidy, revenue raised by non-domestic charging and through borrowing. Using part of this £680 million, NI Water invests capital in the water and sewerage infrastructure – such as plant facilities including wastewater treatment works, pumping stations, combined sewer overflows, sewerage pipes and other assets.

Price Control

NI Water is a regulated utility and as such is subject to regulatory price controls undertaken every six years by the Utility Regulator. The Price Control (PC) is a formal process that determines the total revenue NI Water needs to provide efficient water and wastewater services. In the PC process NI Water submits a business plan to the Utility Regulator in line with the Department's Social and Environmental Guidance and the Utility Regulator makes a determination on the capital programme that is needed during the next six-year period at the most economic level of investment required to provide best value for the customer.

In May 2021 the Utility Regulator published its final PC determination for NI Water for the period April 2021 - May 2027, known as “PC 21”. The PC sets out the price limits NI Water can charge its non-domestic customers and the outputs to be delivered during the PC period. Much of NI Water's Business Plan and PC21 reflects the requirement for the on-going operation and maintenance of our water and wastewater infrastructure. At the time, PC 21 recommended some £2.1 billion of investment over the period to 2027. A mid-term review in September 2024 assessed that the cost of delivering PC21 has risen to £2.37 billion, mainly as a consequence of inflation.

The detail of the PC is published and is available on the Utility Regulator's website at [PC21 price control determination published | Utility Regulator \(uregni.gov.uk\)](https://www.uregni.gov.uk/price-control/price-control-determinations/2021-2027).

The current state of wastewater infrastructure

The funding of wastewater infrastructure in Northern Ireland has been a challenge for government for many years. Following decades of underinvestment, upgrades to the wastewater system have not been able to proceed at the pace required. Much of the wastewater infrastructure is ageing and needs upgraded, meaning that there are areas across Northern Ireland where there is limited or no capacity to allow for new connections to the NI Water sewerage network. This is having an effect not just on the development of new housing, but also on economic growth, the environment and the delivery of public services across Northern Ireland.

Currently there are over 100 areas where the wastewater system is operating near or above design capacity and therefore cannot accommodate any additional wastewater connections. In addition, given the increasing pressure on the wastewater and sewer

network, NI Water has indicated that a further 30 economically constrained areas may emerge during the PC21 period. The position on development constraints is constantly changing, and NI Water publishes up to date wastewater system capacity information by council area on its website at <https://www.niwater.com/capacity-information/>.

Due to these development constraints, the provision of wastewater connections has become one of the main barriers to building new dwellings, and so substantial investment in our drainage and wastewater infrastructure is needed to deliver significant progress on increasing the supply of housing.

To enhance capacity and allow for new wastewater connections to the NI Water network, a range of wastewater network improvement works may be required, depending on the area in which developers wish to build. These range in scale from comparatively minor, such as installing larger diameter sewerage pipes or undertaking storm water offsetting, through to major works such as upgrading combined sewer overflows, large wastewater pumping stations or wastewater treatment works.

Housing

The NI Executive has identified increasing housing stock, particularly social housing, as a key priority in its Programme for Government 2025-2027. The Executive-endorsd Housing Supply Strategy 2024-2039 is one of the main drivers for meeting this PfG commitment.

The vision of the strategy is that everybody has access to a good quality, affordable and sustainable home that is appropriate for their needs and is located within a thriving and inclusive community. The strategy also outlines several objectives to meet this vision alongside a key ambition of creating a housing system that can deliver 100,000 homes and more, with one third of these being social homes.

DfI and NI Water have a vital role to play in both ensuring that the necessary wastewater infrastructure is in place to help meet this vision and enabling new housing to be built. As explained above, there are, however, several areas across Northern Ireland where there is currently limited or no capacity to allow for new wastewater connections to be made.

While new developments will deliver significant benefits - including the provision of new homes and jobs - they can also place additional pressure and have adverse impacts on existing wastewater infrastructure, which needs to be managed.

Environmental issues and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency

The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) is an Executive Agency within the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

NIEA is responsible for protecting and enhancing Northern Ireland's environment. A key aspect of this duty is ensuring that freshwater and the marine environment are protected from damage caused by human action. NIEA enforces environmental laws and ensure compliance with regulations regarding sewage treatment and discharge.

Compliance with wastewater flow and treatment standards set out in legislation is a key determining factor in any decision by NI Water to declare that an area is at capacity for further wastewater connections. NIEA is working closely with NI Water on a regulatory reform programme, some elements of which are required to be in place by 2027.

What DfI is doing about the capacity issues - the three-pronged approach

Improving our sewerage systems will be a huge exercise, costing billions, taking decades and spanning multiple PC periods. The Minister for Infrastructure is taking a three-pronged approach to work towards resolving this issue. This approach includes working with Executive colleagues to try and increase wastewater investment, launching this public consultation to explore options for developer contributions and introducing the Water, Flooding and Sustainable Drainage Bill to the Assembly to enable the Department to issue future guidance on the design, maintenance, and adoption of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). DfI is also working at a strategic level with colleagues in the Department for Communities and DAERA to identify steps which can be taken to maximise the building of houses and with NI Water to identify projects that can release capacity.

3 - DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS FOR WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE

3. Developer Contributions for Wastewater Infrastructure

What are developer contributions?

When a developer in Northern Ireland wants to build housing and wishes to connect to the NI Water network, they contact NI Water to enquire if there is capacity in its network to cope with any new demands that the proposed development may create. NI Water can then apply their pre-planning and pre-development enquiry process to advise on any constraints or capacity issues in the area.

If there is a wastewater capacity issue in relation to a housing development, NI Water will then work with the developer to identify what works would be required to enable a wastewater connection to be made. As explored in the next section, it may be possible in certain circumstances for these works to be completed and paid for by the developer. NI Water is, however, currently precluded by law from accepting direct payments from developers for connections to the NI Water network for the provision of sewerage services in respect of a dwelling where the required improvement involves the upgrading of an existing NI Water asset. This consultation is seeking views on whether this position should change and, specifically, on options for DfI to introduce arrangements for developer contributions to help fund the wastewater infrastructure improvements that will release capacity in the wastewater system thereby enabling more wastewater connections.

To what extent are developer contributions currently permitted?

Where appropriate, developers may be permitted to facilitate specific housing developments by directly funding the wastewater improvement works required. These are sometimes referred to as 'developer-led and financed solutions' or as being 'developer-funded'. Where a developer-led solution could enable a connection to a development, NI Water will provide the developer with a cost.

Some examples of the developer-led solutions that are currently permitted are stormwater offsetting, flow transfer schemes and Package Wastewater Treatment Plants.

Stormwater offsetting

Storm water offsetting is the removal of storm water from a combined foul and storm drainage system to free capacity within the wastewater network or treatment works. The aim is to free capacity for a foul only discharge from a new development. The work will usually involve the disconnection of a surface water discharge entering a combined sewerage system and diverting it to a nearby watercourse, river or separate storm-only infrastructure.

Flow Transfer Schemes

Flow transfer schemes can be used to divert flows from drainage areas which have reached capacity to another wastewater network area where capacity exists, freeing space to connect a new development. Flow transfer schemes are often used in areas where storm water offsetting is not possible.

Package Wastewater Treatment Plants

If, following NI Water advice, developer-constructed sewage treatment is the only option, a suitable wastewater treatment plant which can meet the specification for NI Water adoption will be considered. This may involve a developer constructing a Package Wastewater Treatment Plant whereby they buy, install and maintain a standalone treatment works for their development. They are used more in rural areas.

Individual package wastewater plants can cause pollution if they are not properly maintained. Any increase in the number of such plants would be of concern to the NIEA in its role as the environmental regulator of NI Water.

Are developer contributions used elsewhere?

Within Great Britain, payments to water companies to improve wastewater treatment are primarily made through customer water bills, which fund the investments required by water companies to upgrade their wastewater treatment facilities. This process is regulated by organisations like the Water Services Regulation Authority, ensuring that these funds are used for necessary improvements and monitored to ensure compliance with environmental standards; this includes investments in infrastructure to tackle storm overflows and reduce sewage pollution.

In some jurisdictions, there is also a mechanism for developers to facilitate development by financially contributing to local councils through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The CIL is a standardised, non-negotiable charge that local authorities can impose on new developments with the aim of mitigating the impact of a development by providing funding or infrastructure. The CIL funding can support the delivery of new or improved infrastructure for water supply, wastewater, flood protection and drainage facilities as well as for transport, education, telecommunications, and waste management. In Ireland, where at present Uisce Éireann does not apply charges for water supply and wastewater services provided to domestic customers, local authorities use Development Contribution Schemes to require developers to contribute funding or infrastructure to offset the impact of new developments.

The NI Water funding model is unique to other jurisdictions in the UK, in that there are no direct domestic customer water charges in place which is used to fund many of the wastewater infrastructure improvement schemes elsewhere. Similarly, unlike other administrations where local councils manage key services such as roads, schools, housing

and water, Northern Ireland operates on a more centralised system. Instead of individual councils handling these responsibilities within their own council area, central government departments are in control of these matters. This contrasts with other areas where local authorities have broader autonomy in managing essential services.

There is therefore limited direct experience from elsewhere on which to draw. However, there are some principles which may prove useful for comparison purposes and it is clear that there is an expectation in other jurisdictions that developers will provide some form of financial contribution towards infrastructure costs.

How much does wastewater infrastructure cost?

The cost of wastewater infrastructure improvements can vary greatly depending on several factors including the nature of the works required, the specific site affected, construction complexities, and the nature of any existing infrastructure. As such, each improvement scheme needs to be assessed individually to provide an accurate cost for each project.

Works such as installing wider diameter sewerage pipes or building new stormwater storage tanks, are quicker and easier to complete. It would be more expensive to upgrade, for example, a small pumping station. These types of comparatively more minor works, costing up to £0.5m, will unlock a comparatively small number of additional housing connections to the network.

Major works such as upgrading or replacing a wastewater treatment works are significantly more expensive and take longer to complete but facilitate many more connections. These major works range in costs from £10m - £200m.

For example, the Belfast wastewater treatment works at Duncrue Industrial Estate was originally designed to treat a domestic and trade population equivalent of 290,000 and serves most of the City of Belfast. The necessary upgrade of this treatment works will cost approximately £170million with the initial cost of ensuring the compliance to the existing standards being £10m.

NI Water Developer Services have indicated that potential projects releasing development capacity over the next two years would cost £84m and would allow 5,300 houses to connect and future-proof capacity for a further 2000 connections. An additional £19.5m was allocated in October 2024 to facilitate the connections for 2,300 houses across five local council areas.

It is important to recognise that there is no expectation that developer contributions will provide all, or even most, of the significant funding needed to address the full capacity challenges within the existing wastewater infrastructure network. Without introducing

some method for providing additional funding however, even limited improvements will not be possible and the current situation in terms of housing development constraints will continue.

Impacts of introducing Developer Contributions

Any contribution towards upgrading or replacing wastewater infrastructure would increase the costs to the developer of building new houses. In some instances, a developer may make the commercial decision not to proceed with a development rather than make a contribution. Where the developer does make a contribution, it is likely that in many instances they will seek to pass on some or all of this cost to the purchaser which would increase house prices. There may also be an impact on the pricing of land for development as the added cost of building houses would need to be factored into the cost analysis undertaken by the developer. This would be the case for both private and social housing developers, with the cost of the former being met by private purchasers and the cost of the latter most likely by government.

However, if the current constrained budgetary climate persists and the Price Control is unable to be fully funded, then without the introduction of a pathway for developer contributions as a partial solution, the existing situation of limitations being place on new housing will remain unchanged.

4 - OPTIONS FOR INTRODUCING DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS

4. Options for Introducing Developer Contributions

Introduction

It is important at this juncture to reiterate that neither option for introducing developer contributions will result in the level of funding that is required to address the historical underfunding of wastewater infrastructure investment in Northern Ireland. However, either option will result in additional funding which will help to release capacity to enable wastewater connections.

In essence there are two main pathways through which developer contributions could be introduced: an optional contribution to upgrade or replace the existing wastewater infrastructure at a specific location to enable further wastewater connections; or a general levy applied on Northern Ireland - wide needs basis.

The following section explains these options in more detail but at a high level the main difference is that the first option allows developers to voluntarily choose to offset the costs of improving the wastewater systems which connect to land that they own to allow them to build houses which connect to the wastewater system, while the second option would instead make it compulsory for any person seeking to build a house in Northern Ireland to pay a levy for general use in improving wastewater connections at any location in Northern Ireland.

Option 1: Voluntary Developer Contributions for Wastewater Infrastructure

Option 1 would establish a system where developers, currently unable to build due to a lack of wastewater capacity in their locality, could opt to pay to offset the costs of upgrading or replacing the infrastructure preventing new connections.

Legislation would be introduced to enable developers liaising directly with NI Water about the upgrades to NI Water's sewerage, drainage, or wastewater treatment assets that are needed before their proposed housing development can proceed, to make a financial contribution to NI Water to pay some or all of the cost of those works. Developers could choose to make individual contributions for specific sites or pool payments to meet the required level of funding to NI Water if identified infrastructural improvements can benefit multiple development sites. This pooling mechanism is already in place in other UK jurisdictions.

Developer contributions could help offset costs in a range of scenarios. Where, for example, work would free up capacity for a limited number of additional connections, through installing a new storage tank or increasing the capacity of an existing sewer or pumping station, developers may wish to meet the full costs. Where more expensive remedial work is required, developers may wish to offer a contribution towards the costs to expedite the process.

This voluntary contribution option allows developers to decide whether and how much to contribute, in consultation with NI Water. The works funded through these optional developer contributions are most likely to be on the lower end of the spectrum, such as paying for storm water offsetting, enlarging or replacing sewers, or other comparatively lower-cost improvements.

To aid in determining whether to contribute, the developer would liaise with NI Water regarding the proposal site where wastewater capacity may constrain development. NI Water would undertake a cost assessment - involving site inspections and data analysis - and advise the developer of the cost to complete the improvements to the required standard.

Option 1 could be implemented either through:

- (A) An upfront payment of an agreed amount paid directly to NI Water to cover the cost of the works (including an adequate contingency) which NI Water would use to undertake the works either itself or using its own specialist contractors; or
- (B) The developer submits a secured financial bond to NI Water to cover the cost of the agreed works which would only be used in the case of the developer defaulting.

The upfront payment a) is the simplest approach and the easiest to administer. The bond method b) would be somewhat similar to that already in place in relation to the

development of roads, whereby prior to construction, a developer is required to enter into an agreement with DfI Roads, which is secured by a bond that may be used by DfI Roads to complete the road works should the developer default.

One factor which may favour only making provision for direct payment and not for a bond arrangement would be concerns about what could happen if a developer defaulted or became bankrupt and the infrastructure they put in place is not of an adoptable standard. Another is the complex nature of construction for wastewater infrastructure and the expertise required to undertake work to the required standard, at scale, taking appropriate account of the implications for the environment, the existing network and properties, and future potential developments which would be a barrier to anyone other than NI Water carrying out the works.

Key Considerations

Financial

NI Water would be responsible for assessing the anticipated cost of infrastructure improvements for the relevant developer's proposal. NI Water would also require a mechanism to receive the funds, and a means of ensuring that the received monies are allocated to the specific intended works.

As mentioned earlier, there could be an opportunity for the relevant developers to liaise with NI Water and pool the improvement payments in order to meet the level of funding required to complete the works to facilitate connections at more than one development site.

Planning

The planning authorities would not be party to the agreement nor the transfer of funds, between the developer and NI Water. The existence of such an agreement would, however, be a material consideration in the determining of the relevant planning application and be included in any planning approval to provide assurance to all parties that the required wastewater connections to facilitate the development will be available. This would ensure the planning approval is viable and is not dependent on future wastewater connections that may not be available.

It is envisaged that through the planning development management consultation process, NI Water would reference the financial agreement (that is, the contribution payment or bond) in place and ensure compliance with that agreement by including a negative condition on any planning approval.

Legislation

As it is not currently possible for developer contributions to be made to NI Water for wastewater infrastructure improvements, legislation would need to be introduced in order to facilitate this pathway. Amendments to the Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 would be required to enable developers to make direct financial contributions to NI Water for this purpose. This would involve an Executive Bill and the associated legislative procedures.

Fairness

Allowing developers to make financial contributions to enable their sites to proceed by privately funding the necessary improvement works may result in them being fast-tracked ahead of other sites, which could affect the prioritisation of wastewater infrastructure projects. This approach may also lead to high-value housing being delivered ahead of other types of housing, as private developers are more likely to invest in improving wastewater infrastructure in areas where they can sell houses for higher prices. Consequently, this could impact the Executive's target for delivering social housing, necessitating additional government funding to mitigate these effects.

In a similar scenario, a developer might invest in upgrading the wastewater infrastructure to facilitate housing development on their site. If these improvements are 'future-proofed' so that they allow for additional connections, future developers could then benefit from the existing work without incurring any of the costs - in other words they would have been subsidised by the first developer.

To address this, a reimbursement scheme could be introduced. In essence this would allow the initial developer to recoup some of the costs from subsequent developers who later rely on the enhanced infrastructure. This practice is currently employed by NI Electricity (NIE) through the Electricity (Connection Charges) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1992. In this scenario, if works such as the installation of a transformer, an underground cable or overhead line, are required to facilitate an electricity connection for a domestic dwelling and another connection comes off this network within five years from when it was initially energised, then that new customer must pay a contribution, via NIE and less NIE administrative fees, towards the original payee for sharing these assets.

Option 2: Compulsory Developer Wastewater Contribution Levy

Option 1 for the introduction of developer contributions outlined an approach whereby developers could choose to offset the costs of wastewater improvements in a specific location that is where it would directly benefit them. This second option would instead introduce a compulsory wastewater levy, requiring a financial contribution from developers which would be used on a prioritised needs basis across Northern Ireland.

The introduction of a compulsory levy whereby a fee would be paid by anyone wishing to build a new house in Northern Ireland would create a ring-fenced fund to be used exclusively for the purpose of improving wastewater infrastructure to unlock new housing connections. It would, help to offset the funding gap between the amount that NI Water receive from the Executive and the amount that is needed to address wastewater constraints. While bringing in the levy would never close the entire wastewater investment gap that has arisen due to historical underfunding, it would generate monies that could be set against the £84m that NI Water has indicated would enable projects to go ahead over the next two years allowing 5,300 houses to connect and future proofing capacity for a further 2,000 connections.

A compulsory levy has several advantages over voluntary contributions. Firstly, it would ensure that all developers contribute to the costs of wastewater infrastructure improvements, creating a more fair and equitable system. This prevents situations where only some developers bear the costs while others benefit without contributing. It would also provide an additional consistent and predictable source of (albeit limited) funding dedicated to wastewater infrastructure, assisting with advance planning for improvements and reducing delays caused by the uncertainty of ad-hoc funding. This would help with long-term planning and investment, ensuring that wastewater systems are resilient and capable of supporting sustainable development to meet current and future demands. This, in turn, unlocks housing development constraints, enabling more homes to be built and supporting economic growth for the entire community.

A compulsory levy also enables the pooling of resources, ensuring that essential wastewater infrastructure improvements are made based on need and impact, supporting compliance with environmental regulations and prioritising the protection of our environment.

There are however, also potential drawbacks in introducing a compulsory levy which need to be factored into any consideration of the options, and which may need to be mitigated in the design of any future levy.

As with option 1, the levy would increase costs to developers. However, unlike that option which allowed developers to make a choice, a levy would automatically increase the overall cost of development projects. These additional costs would either need to be absorbed (which could impact profit margins and financial viability) or be passed on to buyers, which would lead to higher housing prices. Increased house prices could affect

housing affordability and market demand, which could in turn impact on the ability to reduce housing waiting lists across Northern Ireland.

Higher development costs might also deter some developers from pursuing new projects, especially in areas with tight profit margins, which could lead to a reduction in the overall supply of new housing. Developers might also be more likely to focus on properties which have a high value, potentially leading to a concentration of new housing in more affluent areas.

There might also be a perception of the levy creating an unfair burden on some developers, as those who propose to build on sites with existing wastewater capacity might feel that they are being unfairly made to contribute to a fund for improvements they do not directly benefit from. Smaller developers might also find it more challenging to absorb the additional costs compared to larger developers.

Additionally, establishing and administering a compulsory levy would be administratively complex, including setting up the legal framework, calculating the levy amounts, collecting payments, and ensuring compliance, which may also offset some of the immediate benefits.

Implementing a levy would also not provide an immediate solution. Depending on when the fee is collected (e.g., at the planning permission stage or upon completion of construction), it could take some time before the fund accumulates enough to significantly impact housing. This creates a paradox: the fund cannot grow until houses are built, but houses cannot be built without the necessary funding to improve wastewater infrastructure. A potential resolution could involve the Executive investing an initial amount to stimulate the fund, possibly with a match-funding approach.

Key Considerations

Levy amount and calculation method

The amount of any levy imposed would need to be carefully calculated in order to mitigate the impact on developers and buyers whilst still achieving the aims of releasing capacity to enable connections to wastewater infrastructure. A methodology for calculating levy amounts would also need to be consulted upon, with options including a flat rate, a rate based on the number of wastewater connections, or a sliding scale that adjusts based on the size and type of development to be agreed.

Purpose of levy

There would need to be clear and transparent criteria governing how levy funds would be allocated, including defining the specific purposes for which the funds can be used and how decisions would be made in terms of prioritisation of wastewater infrastructure improvements.

Legislation that clearly defines the rules and regulations governing the levy would need to be drafted and consulted on, including specifying who is required to pay, when the payment would need to be made, how the funds will be used, and the penalties for non-compliance. A regulatory process in terms of audits and checks would also be needed, and a system for public reporting on the use of the levy developed.

Exemptions / Reduced Rates

Consideration would also need to be given to whether there should be exemptions or reductions to the levy to address any potential inequalities. This may include, for example, an exemption for new rural housing which require septic tanks, or reduced rates for certain types of developments, such as social housing, to ensure that the levy does not disproportionately impact vulnerable groups.

Combining Options 1 and 2

It would also be possible to combine options 1 and 2. In this scenario, the option for developers to voluntarily contribute to upgrading or replacing wastewater infrastructure that benefits them could be introduced in the short-term. Meanwhile, the longer-term process of designing and consulting on the specifics of a levy could be undertaken. Since option 1 is purely voluntary, it would not impact the later introduction of the levy. Developers would retain the ability to offset the wastewater funding required to upgrade a specific location in addition to paying the levy if they chose, though there would be no expectation that they would do so.

5 - CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

5. Consultation Questions

Question 1 -

Do you agree with the principle that a pathway for developer contributions should be introduced in Northern Ireland? (Tick only one answer)

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

Question 2 -

Referring to Section 4 of the consultation report which option do you think would be the best pathway? (Tick only one answer)

- ☐ Option 1: Voluntary Developer Contributions for Wastewater Infrastructure
- ☐ Option 2: Compulsory Developer Wastewater Contribution Levy
- ☐ Both Option 1 and Option 2
- ☐ Other -please specify in box below

Regardless of how you answered Question 2, we would welcome your responses to questions 3, 4, 5 and 6 below

Option 1: Voluntary Development Contributions for Wastewater Infrastructure

Question 3 - If voluntary developer contributions are introduced, how should these be made? (Tick only one answer)

- ☐ Upfront payment
- ☐ Bond
- ☐ Both an upfront payment and a bond
- ☐ Not Sure
- ☐ Other - please specify

Question 4 - If voluntary developer contributions are introduced, do you agree that there should be a reimbursement scheme? (Tick only one answer)

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

Please Explain:

Option 2: Compulsory Developer Wastewater Contribution Levy

Question 5 - What are your views on how a compulsory levy should be introduced?

You might want to tell us about what factors you think should be taken into consideration in designing the levy process, such as whether there should be an exemption or reduction scheme introduced, how the amount of the levy might be calculated, what that amount should be and how you think it should operate.

Impact Assessments

Question 6 -

Do you have any comments to make on any of the impact assessments that accompany this consultation?

The link to all the impact assessments is available on page 4 of this consultation.

- ☐ Yes- please use the comment box below
- ☐ No

Please explain:

Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Asset	An asset is a resource with economic value that an individual company or country owns or controls with the expectation that it will provide a future benefit.
Combined Sewer Overflow	Combined sewer overflows are pipes and pumps that carry both stormwater and sewage which allow excess flows of highly diluted wastewater - which in many cases pass through screens to remove plastic and rags - to be returned into watercourses/rivers and the sea to help prevent homes and businesses from being flooded.
Combined Sewers	These pipes carry both wastewater from homes and businesses, and rainwater (also known as storm water) which runs off from roads, drives and roofs (impermeable surface areas) to wastewater treatment works.
Drainage Infrastructure	A term used to collectively describe all the assets within a drainage system.
Drainage Network	A collective term to cover a system of open channels, watercourses or pipes that convey surface water.
Foul (wastewater)	Foul wastewater is wastewater that has been used for washing, cooking, or in a sanitary convenience. It can be contaminated with chemicals, effluent, or other pollutants.

Term	Definition
NI Water	Northern Ireland Water is the water and sewerage undertaker for Northern Ireland.
Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)	NIEA is responsible for protecting and enhancing Northern Ireland's environment.
Package Wastewater Treatment Plant	Package wastewater plants are pre-manufactured treatment facilities used to treat wastewater in small communities or on individual properties.
Price Control (PC)	The Price Control (PC) is a formal process that determines the total revenue NI Water needs to provide efficient water and wastewater services.
Pumping Station	A pumping station is a structure that moves water or wastewater to a different location. They can be used for groundwater, surface water, or sewage.
Sewage	The flow in foul and combined water that is produced by a community of people. For example, from toilets, sinks, washing machines, baths and showers. Typically used to describe the contents of foul and combined sewers, which can also be called wastewater. Sewage is one of the main components of wastewater.
Sewage Treatment	Sewage treatment is the process of removing contaminants from sewage to make it safe for reuse or release into the environment.

Term	Definition
Sewerage Network	This term is used to describe all of the NI Water sewers, overflows, storm tanks and pumping stations that convey flow to either a wastewater treatment works or to a receiving water (such as a river lake or sea).
Sewerage Pipe	A sewerage pipe is a pipe that carries waste and dirty water away from e.g. homes and factories.
Stormwater Offsetting	Storm water offsetting is the removal of storm water from a combined foul and storm drainage system to free capacity within the wastewater network or treatment works.
Stormwater Storage Tank	A stormwater storage tank is a designed structure that temporarily holds excess rainwater runoff from storms, collecting it from impervious surfaces like roofs and roads, and then releases it at a controlled rate to prevent flooding and manage water flow in drainage systems.
Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)	Drainage systems designed to mimic nature and typically manage rainfall close to where it falls. They control the quantity and quality of run-off waters by providing storage, for example in tanks or ponds. This delays or prevents discharge to streams or rivers until there is capacity to accommodate it.
Surface Water	This is caused by rainwater that falls on the ground, roofs, roads pavements and paths. It can either evaporate back into the air, infiltrate the ground, pond on the surface or flow into a receiving water (such as a river lake or sea) via a wide range of flow paths

Term	Definition
Utility Regulator	The Utility Regulator is the economic regulator for the water, gas, and electricity industries in Northern Ireland.
Wastewater	This is sewage plus other materials such as trade effluent (wastewater from commercial processes) and leachate (polluted water from landfill sites) that could also be discharged into sewers or directly to a wastewater treatment works by a tanker.
Wastewater Connection	A wastewater connection is a link between a property and the public sewerage system that carries wastewater away.
Wastewater Improvement Works	Wastewater improvement works refers to construction or maintenance projects aimed at enhancing the quality of wastewater by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of sewage treatment processes, typically including upgrades to existing wastewater treatment plants or sewerage systems to remove more pollutants and contaminants before returning back into the environment.
Wastewater Infrastructure	Wastewater infrastructure is a network of pipes, pumps, tanks, and other facilities that collect and treat wastewater from homes, businesses, and industries.
Wastewater Treatment Works	Wastewater treatment works have four main stages of treatment - preliminary, primary, secondary, and tertiary. The number of stages depends on what quality the treated wastewater needs to reach before it can be safely returned into rivers or the sea.
Watercourse	A channel or passage through which water flows.

This page is intentionally left blank

Developer Contributions for Wastewater Infrastructure – Consultation Questions

The availability and capacity of wastewater infrastructure is currently affecting development proposals in Belfast and could impact significantly on the delivery of the agreed growth ambition outlined in the Belfast Agenda. In this context, the consultation on developer contributions for wastewater infrastructure is welcomed, as is the acknowledgement that this alone will not provide the funding to implement the improvements that are needed to wastewater infrastructure in Northern Ireland.

In addition to the proposed developer contributions, the intention to work with the Executive to increase wastewater investment, and further work on the Water, Flooding and Sustainable Drainage Bill are welcomed and we look forward to seeing more detail emerge around those solutions in due course. Developer contributions (if agreed) will only provide a small element of funding needed to maintain, upgrade and improve wastewater infrastructure in Northern Ireland. The majority of the funding can only be found through work with the Executive to increase wastewater investment drawing on lessons learned from other jurisdictions including governance and finance models.

There should also be further consideration of whether the existing budget of NI Water has been appropriately maximised and prioritised ahead of seeking any additional funding. Whilst capital funding cuts have resulted in major projects and wastewater treatment and network improvement works being cut, there remains significant spend on planned and reactive maintenance, management and general spend and water treatments and networks. Expenditure in all these areas should be considered and reviewed to assess whether critical major projects could move forward within existing budgets.

Before answering the questions posed in the consultation, an introduction and commentary on some of the general issues of the proposals are set out below.

Definitions and Guiding Principles

Developer contributions is a term that is most commonly used when considering contributions to be made to a local planning authority for work required facilitate development proposals (para 5.69 of the SPPS). Such payments are usually made under Section 76 of the 2011 Planning Act or Article 122 of the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993. Whilst such definitions can be changed, it is somewhat confusing that the proposed “developer contributions” differ in operation and payment directly to a statutory body. This is exacerbated when considering viability issues and the priority to be given to such mitigation requirements (see later).

The guiding principles of Planning Agreements / developer contributions are set out in Development Management Practice Note 21 and include that the agreement sought is necessary in planning terms, directly related to development with a functional or geographical link and related in scale and kind to the development proposed. This could be a challenge if developer contributions sought under the current proposals involve a levy (which could contribute to infrastructure that is not directly related to development) or where contributions are needed to address existing conditions (therefore the contribution would not be related in scale or kind to the development itself), or where reimbursement proposals are being considered.

Viability Considerations

The consultation recognises that any contribution may have an impact on the viability of development. Currently a local planning authority has to consider mitigating the impacts of any development (i.e. roads and open space contributions) as well as any policy impacts (e.g social and affordable housing). When viability is raised as an issue, assessments must show which contributions are affordable and therefore which may be required to be reduced or waived by the authority. Introducing a separate process for contributions through another body could create a difficult balancing exercise for any planning authority considering a viability assessment of a proposal.

Community Infrastructure Levy processes employed in other jurisdictions of the UK and in Ireland consider all infrastructure requirements and calculates one payment (that is subject to viability testing itself). This results in agreed apportionment to infrastructure that is costed, prioritised and independently examined by a single authority. This is significantly different to the proposals included in the consultation, which could lead to wastewater infrastructure provision being prioritised over other essential mitigation and policy provisions.

Timing

The consultation recognises the issue of timing and suggests the use of negative conditions but this fails to identify a crucial issue that developers could make a contribution towards infrastructure (either voluntarily or through a levy) but it may take some time for others to contribute to the pool of monies and / or for the infrastructure needed for that particular development to come forward. Typically planning permission is given for five years, and if the development is incapable of being implemented until wastewater infrastructure is provided there is a significant risk that permission may lapse before it can be implemented.

Specific Issues for Belfast

There are specific issues for Belfast in the proposals given the scale of growth ambition in the city but also the scale of the investment needed to upgrade and improve wastewater infrastructure. In other areas it may be possible for developers to fund (or to pool funds) to pay for the necessary infrastructure upgrades, improvements such as the required upgrades to Belfast Wastewater Treatment Works that have been costed at £184 million are unlikely to be affordable in these circumstances. Even with payment of a levy, it is a significant investment to deliver the works needed in Belfast when there are more affordable (and therefore easily deliverable) options elsewhere in NI. Belfast City Council is therefore concerned that the significant investment needed in infrastructure in the city may not be prioritised over more easily deliverable and affordable option.

The consultation also outlines the intention to maximise the building of houses working to identify where NI Water projects that can release capacity. There is significant risk that more easily affordable and deliverable projects could be funded which may support development in otherwise unsustainable locations.

This concern is further exacerbated if the suggested exemption for rural housing is taken forward. Whilst there is an accepted need for rural housing, such a proposal may have the unintended consequence of supporting development in potentially unsustainable locations, contrary to the Strategic Planning Policy Statement. The SPPS (which has been subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment) is clear that:

“When place-making, planning authorities should make efficient use of existing capacities of land, buildings and infrastructure, including support for town centre and regeneration

priorities in order to achieve sustainable communities where people want to live, work and play now and into the future. Identifying previously developed land within settlements including sites which may have environmental constraints (e.g. land contamination), can assist with the return to productive use of vacant or underused land. This can help deliver more attractive environments, assist with economic regeneration and renewal, and reduce the need for green field development."

In addition, the Regional Development Strategy promotes the importance of Belfast City, at the heart of the Metropolitan area and a major driver for regional economic growth and a focus for administration, commerce, specialised services and cultural amenities. The Strategy sets out the need for sustainable patterns of residential development, promoting development within existing urban areas, recycling land and buildings to make use of suitable sites and reduce the use of greenfield land.

Belfast City Council would therefore suggest that in order to make the most efficient use of land and support the regeneration of vacant or underused land, an exemption should be considered for development that reuses existing derelict buildings in town and city centres. This acknowledges that connections to such buildings may already exist and any contribution could be reduced or waived depending on the intensification of use and the necessary infrastructure improvements required.

It is also important to recognise that viability is a well-documented issue in bringing forward development in Belfast. Whilst viability is considered on a site-by-site basis, a number of residential schemes that have come forward in the city centre have had affordable housing requirements waived on the basis of viability issues. Funding available in other jurisdictions (such as brownfield development funding) is not available in Belfast and NI which significantly affects development viability and delivery. Additional charges (whether voluntary or through a levy) could disproportionately affect development in Belfast which could be subject to more abnormal costs due to brownfield and remediation costs.

Clarity over calculation and application of costs

Costings currently included in viability assessments can be independently assessed before developers enter into an agreement with a local authority. In other jurisdictions Levy levels are subject to consultation and in some cases independent examination. Introducing voluntary contributions or a levy based on costs calculated by NI Water would need to be subject to some independent assessment to ensure the figures are robust and defensible. For transparency, there would also need to be clarity on what would be included in the costs whether that's costs for Wastewater Treatment Work upgrades, network connections, network upgrades or maintenance.

The consultation document appears to suggest that only housing developments should be subject to the levy. Belfast City Council considers that all development types (including residential and commercial) could have an impact on wastewater infrastructure and therefore any voluntary contributions or levy should apply to all types development, and it should be cognisant of the scale and nature of the development, so that a 2 bedroom house or flat should contribute less than a 6 bedroom house if all other conditions are equal.

There are some developments, however where a compulsory levy could have significant implications and unintended consequences and impacts on rate payers and existing government funding. The consultation document recognises that government would meet the cost of development for social housing and that exemptions could apply to social housing to ensure that the levy does not disproportionately impact vulnerable groups.

Belfast City Council would be supportive of further consideration of this issue and would also include public sector projects in a possible list of exemptions if the contributions were to be widened to include all development types rather than just residential.

The Council is one of the biggest developers in the city currently with a physical programme of approx. £400m. The assets we develop are all for the benefit of the city for use by residents and visitors for example new leisure facilities, new tourism and community infrastructure, new sporting and open space provision. Any levy on Council-led projects will have an impact on overall capital costs and could therefore make projects unviable. This could mean that projects which have significant community, economic health, social and environmental benefits could be negatively impacted, or the costs passed on to the ratepayers.

Issues for Local Development Plans

Whilst not related specifically to developer contributions, it should be noted that Belfast City Council is currently drafting its LDP Local Policies Plan (LPP). The current availability of wastewater infrastructure should not preclude the advancement of a plan led system. The Belfast LDP Plan Strategy recognises that development should not come forward without appropriate supporting infrastructure and whilst the LPP looks to provide certainty as to where development could come forward to 2035, the process of site identification, analysis and allocation cannot be held in abeyance until the appropriate infrastructure is in place.

Question 1 – Do you agree with the principle that a pathway for developer contributions should be introduced in Northern Ireland?

- Neither agree nor disagree

Whilst the intention to find funding for critical infrastructure is supported, on the basis of the information contained in the consultation, Belfast City Council can neither agree nor disagree that developer contributions for wastewater infrastructure should be introduced. There are significant questions remaining on the scale and impact of such charges on development in Northern Ireland and in Belfast in particular, as well as uncertainty on the prioritisation of spend of any monies collected and the timing of infrastructure provision.

Question 2 – Referring to Section 4 of the consultation report, which option do you think would be the best pathway?

- Both option 1 and option 2

As Belfast City Council can neither agree nor disagree that developer contributions for wastewater infrastructure should be introduced, it is suggested that further work is carried out on the implications of both options 1 and 2 to fully understand which one may be the best pathway. This does not mean that both should be introduced.

Option 1: Voluntary Development Contributions for Wastewater Infrastructure

Question 3 – If voluntary developer contributions are introduced, how should these be made?

Both an upfront payment and a bond.

If contributions are required, there should be an ability to either make an upfront payment or enter into a bond. Developments will differ in terms of deliverability and finance

arrangements and requiring one or the other might have implications for delivery of development.

Question 4 – if voluntary developer contributions are introduced, do you agree that there should be a reimbursement scheme?

The introduction of a reimbursement scheme recognises that voluntary contributions may deviate from the current guiding principles of developer contributions in that a developer could be required to pay more for infrastructure than is directly related in scale to their own development.

There would also be no certainty that other developments would contribute in future and therefore that any reimbursement would be possible, which could result in one development significantly over paying for infrastructure connections.

The ability to accurately model development coming forward in an area to allow payment and reimbursement should be based on the plan-led approach which would require all authorities to be significantly more advanced in their Local Policies Plan production. The plan-led approach underpins the Community Infrastructure Levy in England where infrastructure to bring forward development sites allocated in the plan is costed and prioritised.

Option 2: Compulsory Developer Wastewater Contribution Levy

Question 5 – What are your views on how a compulsory levy should be introduced?

A compulsory levy can only be introduced if all infrastructure to be provided is costed and prioritised and the funding apportioned to developer contributions is identified. This would need to be based on viability considerations and the levy may therefore differ in different parts of Northern Ireland. Significant engagement and consultation may be needed on which infrastructure should be prioritised.

The levy can only work if there is greater clarity on how the remaining finance for the infrastructure is to be found, as any uncertainty could lead to a gap in funding for infrastructure or only the prioritised schemes coming forward. This could cause significant delay for development or could ultimately mean that development is not delivered.

There also needs to be clarity on timing issues for provision of infrastructure and whether development could progress in an area before the implementation of the necessary infrastructure.

Any levy should apply to all development, not just housing and in recognition of the need to deliver significant infrastructure, Belfast City Council would not be supportive of an exemption for rural housing as this could be interpreted as being supportive of unsustainable development patterns. There should also be recognition of the scale of development in any levy so that larger houses and larger commercial floorplates would be required to contribute proportionately.

Impact Assessments

Question 6 – Do you have any comments to make on any of the impact assessments that accompany this consultation

- There are no comments on the s75 screening form, Human rights impact assessment, Rural needs assessment or Initial Regulatory assessment. The need for Strategic Environmental Assessment or Sustainability Appraisal of any prioritisation

of infrastructure should be considered to avoid unintentionally undermining the Regional Development Strategy and Strategic Planning Policy Statement by prioritising provision of infrastructure in areas where it is affordable / easier to deliver, but which could lead to unsustainable development patterns.



Subject:	Physical Programme Update
Date:	23 May 2025
Reporting Officer:	Sinead Grimes, Director of Property & Projects
Contact Officer:	Shauna Murtagh, Portfolio Manager

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report 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

	<p>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 presents requests for stage movement approvals under the Capital Programme and an update on Wilmont House.</p>
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is requested to –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Programme Movements - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Historic Tiled Street Signs - Agree that the project is moved to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i> to allow the options to be fully worked up. ○ Historic Cemeteries Phase 1 - Agree that a first phase is moved to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i> to allow the options to be fully worked up. ○ Bridges Improvement Programme Phase 1 - Agree that the first phase is moved to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i> to allow the options to be fully worked up. ○ Beacon Programme - Agree that the project is moved to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i> to allow the options to be fully worked up. ○ Communications Boards - Agree that the project is moved to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i> to allow the options to be fully worked up. ○ Ulster Hall Lighting Scheme - Agree that the project is moved to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i> to allow the options to be fully worked up. ○ Corporate Accommodation CWB and Duncrue Complex – Agree that the project is added to the Capital Programme at <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i> to allow a business case to be developed. • Note the update on Wilmont House and that funding has been secured by Golden Thread Gallery from National Lottery Heritage Fund for a feasibility study which will be carried out in partnership with the Council.
3.0	<p>Main report</p> <p><u>Key Issues</u></p>
3.1	<p>Physical Programme</p> <p>Members will be aware that the Council runs a substantial Physical Programme. This includes the rolling Capital Programme – a multimillion regeneration programme of investment across the city which improves existing Council assets or provides new council facilities. The Property & Projects Department is happy to arrange a site visit to any projects that have been completed or are underway.</p>
3.2	<p><u>Capital Programme - Proposed Movements</u></p> <p>As outlined above 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</p>

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
Historic Tiled Street Signs	Restoration of historic tiled street signs.	Move to Stage 2 – Uncommitted
Historic Cemeteries Phase 1	Conservation and restoration improvements at listed graveyards.	Move to Stage 2 – Uncommitted
Bridges Improvement Programme Phase 1	Programme of remedial works on bridges across the Council estate.	Move to Stage 2 – Uncommitted
Beacon Programme	Provision of beacons as an alternative to traditional bonfires.	Move to Stage 2 – Uncommitted
Communications Boards	Inclusive communications boards in playgrounds.	Move to Stage 2 – Uncommitted
Ulster Hall Lighting Scheme	Feature lighting to exterior of Ulster Hall.	Move to Stage 2 – Uncommitted
Corporate Accommodation - CWB and Duncrue	Enhancements to office accommodation at Cecil Ward Building and Duncrue Complex.	Add as Stage 1 – Emerging

3.3

Historic Tiled Street Signs

This project was added to the Capital Programme at *Stage 1 – Emerging* in November 2024. Belfast's iconic black and white tiled street signs have long been a unique and instantly recognisable feature of the city's architectural heritage, believed to date from c 1880 through to 1950's. The signs are either mounted on posts or are fixed to the gable walls of buildings. The survey of the first tranche of 32 signs by conservation architects, 24 of which are listed, showed that many are severely damaged, with fragments missing, and the lettering and blank field tiles also show significant damage. The initial research was carried out in conjunction with DfC's Historic Environment Division. An application for funding to the Pilgrim Trust for this first phase is being submitted this month. Officers are continuing to collate a database of other historic tiled street signs across the city, in order to prepare for further phases of survey work. **Members are asked to agree that 'Historic Tiled Street Signs' is moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted to allow the options to be fully worked up.**

3.4

Historic Cemeteries

This project was added to the Capital Programme at *Stage 1 – Emerging* in November 2024. Members will be aware that the Council owns five historic graveyards, four of which are currently closed namely Balmoral, Clifton Street, Friar's Bush and Knock. Surveys have identified a programme conservation and health and safety works which are required to improve the condition of the graveyards. Conservation and restoration improvements will allow the graveyards to be more accessible to the public and contribute to neighbourhood tourism. Safety works to monuments are being brought forward within a first phase of works. **Members are asked to agree that 'Historic Cemeteries Phase 1' is moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted to allow the options to be fully worked up.**

3.5

Bridges Improvement Programme

	<p>Development of a multiyear approach to bridge improvements is continuing for 50+ bridges across the Council estate, following on from the initial surveys that have already been carried out. A programme of remedial work is now being finalised for the first phase. Members are asked to agree that ‘Bridges Improvement Programme Phase 1’ is moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted to allow the options to be fully worked up.</p>
3.6	<p>Beacon Programme</p> <p>Members will be aware that demand is increasing for beacons as a managed, environmentally more acceptable alternative to traditional bonfires. Members are asked to agree that ‘Beacon Programme’ is moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted to allow the options to be fully worked up.</p>
3.7	<p>Communication Boards</p> <p>This project was added to the Capital Programme at <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i> in April. As agreed by Council, officers are exploring options in respect of funding the provision of communication boards for Council playgrounds in 2025/26, in addition to the recouped monies made available following the UKSPF funding last year. Members are asked to agree that ‘Communication Boards’ is moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted to allow the options to be fully worked up.</p>
3.8	<p>Ulster Hall Lighting Scheme</p> <p>This project was added to the Capital Programme at <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i> in April. The project involves the installation of an LED lighting display on the façade of Ulster Hall capable of changing colour similar to City Hall’s Illuminate scheme and will be in keeping with the building’s listed status. An offer of funding to the Council is being finalised from Linen Quarter BID for the design phase. Members are asked to agree that ‘Ulster Hall Lighting Scheme’ is moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted to allow the options to be fully worked up.</p>
3.9	<p>Corporate Accommodation - CWB and Duncrue</p> <p>This project will include upgrades to staff accommodation on the first floor CWB and in Duncrue to include office and staff welfare facilities such as canteens, kitchens, toilets and locker rooms. Members are asked to agree that ‘Corporate Accommodation – CWB and Duncrue’ is added to the Capital Programme as a Stage 1 – Emerging project to allow a business case to be developed.</p>
3.10	<p>Wilmont House – Update</p> <p>This project was added at <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i> on the Capital Programme in November 2024. Wilmont House is a Grade B+ Listed property in the grounds of Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park. The house has had various uses over the years and has now fallen into a serious state of disrepair. HED have assessed Wilmont House as “at risk” and officers have been in close liaison with HED officials on the condition of Wilmont House. In order to look at bringing forward a sustainable end use for the building and restoring it back to its original condition officers have been working with the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Golden Thread Gallery. Members are now advised that the Golden Thread Gallery has recently secured initial</p>

	<p>funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for a feasibility study on the restoration of the building. This study will explore the transformation of Wilmont House into a cultural venue to house the Golden Thread Gallery's Collection of Northern Irish Art. Members are asked to note the update on Wilmont House and that funding has been secured by Golden Thread Gallery from National Lottery Heritage Fund for a feasibility study which will be carried out in partnership with the Council.</p>
3.11	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p><i>Financial Implications</i> – None at this time.</p> <p><i>Resource Implications</i> – Officer time to deliver.</p>
3.12	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>All capital projects are screened as part of the stage approval process</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None

This page is intentionally left blank



Subject:	Update on Area Working Groups
Date:	23 May 2025
Reporting Officer:	Sinead Grimes, Director of Property & Projects
Contact Officer:	Shauna Murtagh, Portfolio Manager

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To present to the Committee for approval the minutes of the most recent meeting of the Area Working Groups.

2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the minutes of the meeting of South AWG – 19 May 2025 as attached.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Area Working Group Minutes</u></p> <p>It was agreed in June 2016 that the minutes of the meetings of the Area Working Groups would be presented to the SP&R Committee for approval going forward, in line with the Council's commitment to openness and transparency and to ensure a consistent approach with other Member-led Working Groups. The Committee is asked to approve the minutes of the most recent meeting, as attached.</p>
3.2	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None</p>
3.3	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>None</p>
4.0	Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 - Minutes – Meeting - South Belfast Area Working Group 19 May 2025

South Belfast Area Working Group

Monday, 19th May, 2025

MEETING OF SOUTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

HELD IN THE CONOR ROOM AND
REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor McKeown (Chairperson);
Councillors Brennan, T. Brooks, Bunting,
Groogan, Kelly, and McKay.

In attendance: Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Property and Projects;
Ms. S. Rafter, Neighbourhood Services Integration
Manager;
Ms. A. Diver, Climate Programme Manager;
Mr. A. O'Neill, Assistant Estates Surveyor; and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 24th February were approved by the Working Group.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Groogan declared an interest in Item 4, Enterprise and Business Growth Support Offering, in that she was an employee of the Forward South Partnership. However, as no decisions were required, and the presentation was for Members' information, there was no requirement for her to leave the meeting.

Physical Programme Update

The Director of Property and Projects presented the undernoted report to the Working Group:

"1. Introduction

The Council's Physical Programme covers projects under a range of funding streams including the Capital Programme, the Leisure Transformation Programme, the Local Investment Fund (LIF), the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF), Social Outcomes Fund (SOF) and the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF); in addition, the programme covers projects that

the Council is delivering on behalf of other agencies. This report outlines the status of projects under the Physical Programme.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to note:

- The Physical Programme update for South Belfast including the recently completed project – Sporting Pitches Investment 24/25 – Belvoir Activity Centre MUGA at Appendix 1.
- Correspondence from DfI regarding Finaghy Bridge (LIF) at Appendix 2.
- The update on Sólás (NRF) which has secured further funding and that the project will be delivered by the Group.
- Note the updated list of external capital funding opportunities attached at Appendix 3.

3. Local Investment Fund (LIF)

Members are reminded that LIF is a £9m fixed programme of capital investment in non-council neighbourhood assets, over two tranches: LIF 1 (2012-2015) - £5m total funding pot, allocated across each AWG area; and LIF 2 (2015 -2019) - £4m allocation. Each LIF project proposal is taken through a Due Diligence process prior to any funding award. The table below outlines funding spend to date for each tranche, at key stages of the delivery process: 24 projects received ‘In Principle’ letters under LIF1 and LIF2, of which 23 have been completed and 1 project is still at initial stage. Further details are below.

LIF breakdown – South	LIF 1		LIF 2	
<i>Stage/ Description:</i>	<i>No. Projects</i>	<i>Amount (£)</i>	<i>No. Projects</i>	<i>Amount/ (£)</i>
Number of Projects Completed	12 (92%)	£1,053,600	11 (100%)	£796,000
Number of Projects in Delivery				
Number of Projects in Pre-construction				
Number of Projects in Initial Stage (Due Diligence)	1 (8%)	£30,000		
Total Number of Approved Projects	13	£1,083,600	11	£796,000

The table below provides an overview of the remaining live project. Members are asked to note the status and ongoing actions.

LIF Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
SLIF017	Finaghy Bridge	£30,000	Design stage	Approved at SP&R Committee in May 2016 to undertake improvements to the bridge. Meeting held on 17 April and agreed to seek quotes for art work and traffic management to carry out some improvement works. Letter from DfI Minister dated 29 April 2025 advises that DfI has no plans for the bridge but will assist with development of a project and highlight that its progression rests with the Council. See Appendix 2.	Continue engagement with the group. Members are asked to consider the Finaghy Bridge allocation following correspondence from owner DfI.

4. **Belfast Investment Fund (BIF)**

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

Summary of BIF allocated projects.

South	Stage 3 - Lagan Gateway - £2.1m; Lanyon Tunnels - £1.3m; Bredagh GAC - £700k; Arts & Digital Hub - £584k; Coffee Culture - £286k Stage 1 - Sandy Row Open Space project- £479k
-------	---

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

Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
BIF04	Lagan Gateway	£6,545,000 <i>BIF - £2.15m</i> <i>UGV- £950k DfC</i> <i>- £470k DfI- £2m</i> <i>DfI Rivers -</i> <i>£975k</i>	Stage 3 - Committed	Planning decision is awaited for Phase 2. Detailed designs are ongoing. External match funding is in place from DfI. The contractor procurement exercise has commenced.	Continue engagement with the public and key stakeholders.
BIF07	Market Arches	£3.3m <i>BIF -£1.3m</i> <i>UV – £2m t</i>	Stage 3- Committed	Planning decision awaited. Business case being developed. TEO have confirmed capital funding for this project under Urban Villages.	Officer engagement with Executive Office and DfC as key funders
BIF48	Sandy Row Arts & Digital Hub	£1,129,023 <i>BIF-£584,167</i> <i>UV-£706,856</i>	Stage 3- Committed	On site. Planned completion in summer 2025. Official launch in Autumn – date to be confirmed. <i>Part of Sandy Row Area projects.</i>	Continue engagement with the group.
BIF46	Coffee Culture	£1,149,821 <i>BIF-£286,519</i> <i>SOF-£100,000</i> <i>UV- £463,302</i> <i>DfC-£300,000</i>	Stage 3- Committed	Agreement reached in principle with NI Water - awaiting written confirmation. Contractor can be formally appointed once permission is received from TEO. <i>Part of Sandy Row Area projects.</i>	Continue engagement with the group.
BIF33	Linfield FC/ Boys Brigade and Belvoir FC	£250,000	Stage 3- Committed	Agreement reached between Belvoir FC and NIHE on lease - valuation to be updated. Discussed at Due Diligence in March 2025. The	Continue engagement with the group and partners.

				lease process is progressing and Solicitors have been appointed.	
BIF47	Sandy Row Open Space project	£479,314*	Stage 1- Emerging <i>Part of Sandy Row Area projects</i>	Ongoing engagement between the Council and Translink in relation to the potential project site at Blythefield. Stakeholder meetings with officers continue as the project progresses. Translink remediation strategy required. The Council will carry out community consultation on design. <i>*The remaining balance of the ringfenced allocation for the Sandy Row Area projects</i>	Continue engagement with the group.

5. Social Outcomes Fund

SOF is a £4m ringfenced capital investment programme with a focus on local community tourism projects. 3 projects in South Belfast received an In-Principle funding commitment, and 2 have completed. Similar to LIF and BIF, all projects are subject to Due Diligence process prior to any funding award. Members are asked to note the progress update of the remaining project in the table below.

SOF – South Belfast project overview

Project	Award	Status and update	Action/ Recommendation
SOF02 Coffee Culture	£1,149,821 <i>SOF-£100,000 BIF-£286,519 UV- £463,302 DfC-£300,000</i>	Agreement reached in principle with NI Water - awaiting written confirmation. Contractor can be formally appointed once permission is received from TEO.	Continue engagement with the group and key stakeholders.

6. Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund

The Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF) is a capital fund with a current overall budget of £10,280,000 to help groups deliver capital projects that will make a real, long-term difference in their communities. The overall NRF allocation for South was £1,978,637, and 5 projects received an In-Principle funding commitment. Each NRF project is taken through a 3-stage approval process, including a rigorous Due Diligence process before any Funding Agreement is approved and put in place. Projects remaining at Stage 2 continue to have the support of a Client Manager for their proposals.

South Belfast – NRF overview

South	<p>Stage 3 - Sólás New Build project, GVRT Branching Out project, Lagan Water Access Activity Hub, Redevelopment of former School of Music, Market Heritage Hub</p> <p>Stage 2 (Reserve) - Redevelopment of Riddel's Warehouse</p> <p>Stage 1 (Reserve) - The Avenue Arts Centre, An Droichead Annex, Lagan Legacy</p>
--------------	--

South Belfast – NRF projects at Stage 3 - Delivery

Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
Sólás New Build project	<p>£2.5m</p> <p><i>NRF- £362,141</i> <i>COF- £800,000</i> <i>Various funders and group</i></p>	Stage 3- Committed	Funding package of £2.5m has been secured by Sólás from NRF, Community Ownership Fund, various foundations and the Group's own funds. Procurement of contractor is underway. Project was approved at Due Diligence on 15 May 2025.	<p>Continue engagement with the group.</p> <p>Members are asked to note that the project has secured further funding, and that project will be delivered by Group.</p>
GVRT- Branching Out project	£500,000	Stage 3- Committed	Planning application approved. Discussions continue with potential funders.	Continue engagement with the group.
Lagan Water Access Activity Hub	£308,248	Stage 3- Committed	Design for boathouse prepared and ground surveys have been undertaken. Planning application for boathouse submitted in April 2025.	Continue engagement with the group.
Redevelopment of former School of Music	<p>£2,308,248</p> <p><i>NRF-£308,248</i> <i>UV- £2m</i></p>	Stage 3- Committed	Business case being developed. TEO have confirmed £2m capital funding for this project	Continue engagement with the group.

			under Urban Villages. Stakeholder meetings to take place in May on progress.	
Market Heritage Hub	£800,000 NRF- £500,000 COF- £300,000	Stage 3- Committed	Purchase of the property, although advanced, is still subject to agreement with the vendor and remains a risk. Funding secured from COF. Council and Group are preparing for an application to HF for restoration of the building.	Continue engagement with the group.

7. Capital Programme

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

South Belfast – Capital programme overview

Project	Status and update
Playground Improvement Programme 24/25	<i>Stage 3 Committed.</i> City-wide playgrounds improvements. Works at three sites across the city including Balfour Avenue Playground. Progressing. Balfour Avenue Playground onsite, to be completed by July 2025.
Sporting Pitches Investment 24/25	<i>Stage 3 Committed.</i> Project completed. Agreed at P&C Committee in June 2024. Works at various sites across the city including Belvoir Activity Centre MUGA and Strangford Avenue Playing Fields.
Alleygating Phase 5 – City wide	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Works progressing. Progress made with the commencement of the installation for Phase 5a. Members agreed in February to proceed with the gating order for Phase 5b, with an estimated completion timeline following the enactment of four to six months.
City Hall – Installation of Stained Glass Windows – LGBT and NHS	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Unveiling of new LGBTQ+ window will take place on Thursday 22 May 2025. NHS – Members agreed that scope of window be extended to include request from Families Bereaved From Covid for a permanent memorial be included in design of new window. Officers to engage with organisation to seek their views on proposed way forward.
City Hall External Christmas Tree provision	<i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> Options are being explored and the City Hall Installations Working Group is receiving updates. A two stage procurement process may be put in place with potential

	suppliers to provide samples as part of the submission.
Electric Vehicle Charging Network	<i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> Land Asset Assessment underway to identify a long list of sites suitable in principle. Progressing.
Waterfront Hall Chiller Units	<i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> Detailed design of the new chiller system is underway.
Waterfront Hall Smoke Curtains	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Modelling of the auditorium has been completed. This report will now inform future needs and ancillary works.
Palm House, Botanic Gardens	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> This early-stage Council heritage asset project is being considered as a candidate for partnership working with the Heritage Fund. Updated feasibility study is being developed to support the application process.
Historic Cemeteries	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Restoration programme for heritage cemeteries in the city including Knock Cemetery, Clifton Street, Friars Bush and Balmoral Cemetery. Scoping work underway.
Historic Tiled Street Signs	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Capital restoration programme for the historic Belfast tiled street signs across the city. Scoping of signs is continuing along with opportunities for external funding.
City Hall Preservation	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Programme of works to ensure the preservation of the City Hall building.
Mobile Changing Places modular facility	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> This facility will be for use across the city. Specification developed and project now moving to procurement.
Communications Boards	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Inclusive communication boards in playgrounds. Initial capital funding secured via UKSPF recouped monies for first phase of installation at 29 playground sites. Officers are working on procurement for supply of boards. One board installed at Taughmonagh playground in April; one to be installed at Balfour Avenue playground under the CNS Playground Improvements in July.
Ormeau Park Basketball upgrade	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Upgrade to existing court. Next step is to appoint the design team to take the scheme forward.
Strangford Ave Playing Fields Enabling Works	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Enabling works for active travel container and gate improvements. Design for enabling works is complete and procurement is scheduled for Spring. Containers to be transferred in Autumn.
Musgrave Park Sensory Garden	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Upgrade to sensory garden. Next step is to appoint the design team to take the scheme forward.
Ulster Hall Lighting Scheme	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Feature lighting to exterior of Ulster Hall. Design and delivery is to be fully funded by DfC and Linen Quarter BID. Progressing.
Belfast Bikes Expansion	The tender for a new provider/ operator has been completed.

8. Externally funded programmes

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

Urban Villages Initiative

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

UV – South Belfast projects overview

Project	Status and update
The Lockhouse - Gateway to the River / Walkway	Stalled on site due to NI Water issue. Option to resolve this issue agreed by project board. Architects have changed the design accordingly and discussions with contractor ongoing.
Sandy Row Arts & Digital Hub	As above at BIF48. Planned completion in Summer 2025.
Coffee Culture	Agreement reached in principle with NI Water - awaiting written confirmation. Contractor can be formally appointed once permission is received from TEO.
Market Arches	As above at BIF07. Business case being developed.
Redevelopment of former School of Music	As above at NRF. Business case being developed.
Donegall Pass Good Relations Hub	Business case being developed.

PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan - Capital Project

Members are asked to note the update on PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan capital project in South Belfast. The Letter of Offer has been accepted and returned to SEUPB.

Project	Status and update
Annadale Open Space	Part of the overall Belfast PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan. The procurement for the design team is underway and anticipate that a design team will be appointed by early Summer 2025, with the view to submit a planning application by Autumn 2025. The first stakeholder meeting has been arranged for 13 May 2025. These meetings will be held on a quarterly basis to provide status updates and to receive community feedback.

DfC funded projects

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

DfC – South Belfast projects overview

Project	Status and update
Holylands Alleygating and Cleansing Project	Project progressing. Link to the citywide Alleygating Phase 5 project.

DfI funded projects

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

DfI – South Belfast projects overview

9.

Project	Status and update
Lagan Gateway	As above as BIF04. Planning decision is awaited for Phase 2. Detailed designs are ongoing. External match funding is in place from DfI. The contractor procurement exercise has commenced.

Capital funding opportunities

Members are asked to note the updated version of the list of external capital funding and finance opportunities attached at Appendix 3 which may be of assistance to groups and clubs.”

The Working Group thanked the Director for the comprehensive update and for the list of external capital funding and finance opportunities which they would share with their constituents.

At the suggestion of the Director, the Working Group agreed to visit some of the completed projects throughout South Belfast.

In relation to the update received from the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the the reimagining of the Finaghy Bridge, it was highlighted that Departmental officials had offered to work with the Council to try and develop proposals to improve the appearance of the bridge, without compromising the safety of road and rail users. The Working Group was advised that DfI officials had agreed to assist with any necessary legislative processes, lane closures, utility coordination and the issue of any required consents or licences in regard to any improvements. A Member added that a tender was underway, seeking an artist to carry out the Council-led reimagining of the bridge, with a nature-based design, within the £30,000 which had been ringfenced for the project since 2016. The Working Group agreed to keep the current process under review.

In response to a further Member’s request, the Director of Property and Projects agreed to ensure that there were no undue delays in progressing the Sandy Row Open Space project.

Memorial at Donegall Road – Oral update

The Director of Property and Projects advised the Working Group that officers would bring options to the next meeting of the Working Group for a suitable Memorial to commemorate a burial ground at the Donegall Road site, with consideration being given to the wording and the type of memorial which should be erected.

In response to Member's comments, it was agreed that officers would approach Dr R. Atcheson, local historian, in relation to the memorial.

Noted.

Enterprise and Business Growth Support Offering

(Ms. M. McKay, Enterprise and Business Growth Manager, attended in connection with this item)

The Working Group was presented with 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 business support available to constituents and businesses in their areas including Go Succeed – the regional initiative to support business start-up and growth that is being led by Belfast City Council on behalf of the 11 councils.**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- **Note and endorse the progress to date on the delivery of the Enterprise Support Service (Go Succeed) in South Belfast and beyond, with the objective of driving more and better businesses**
- **Promote opportunities for business support to constituents where relevant and appropriate**
- **Provide recommendations to Enterprise and Business Growth team on community and stakeholder engagement in the South Belfast area**

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Go Succeed (Enterprise Support Service)

The Go Succeed service has now been operational for around eighteen months and has reached thousands of potential entrepreneurs and businesses across Northern Ireland.

By way of background, Belfast City Council led on a successful funding application to UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF). This provided £17 million of support for the period

November 2023 to March 2025; £12 million programme delivery and £5 million for small grants. Following receipt of the funding agreement in September 2023, the service became operational in November 2023.

Belfast City Council, as lead for the service, has now secured additional funding via an application to UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) of £9.2 million for the 2025/2026 financial year, ensuring continuity of the service. The focus over the next year, alongside delivery of the service, will be working to secure a more permanent funding source.

The service aims to be the go-to source for expert business advice across the region. It represents the councils' collective response to our statutory responsibility and offers a set of connected enterprise support services where individuals, entrepreneurs or businesses can access a continuum of support to meet their needs, depending on their stage of development.

The key objectives of the model are to:

- **Nurture a strong entrepreneurial culture, recognising enterprise as a viable career option and/or a route out of economic inactivity**
- **Enable a vibrant and productive business base across Northern Ireland**
- **Increase the proportion of 'innovation-active' businesses in NI and embed this more firmly with enterprise/ start-up agenda**
- **Diversify the representation amongst those supported by the enterprise and innovation ecosystem**
- **Delivery a service designed with the user in mind**
- **Focus on adding value to existing support available in the ecosystem**
- **Providing regional coverage while ensuring that delivery reflects local differences/nuances.**

Go Succeed provides a continuum of support from early-stage enterprise awareness through to starting, growing, and scaling a business. The concept was that the service would help people get the right support at the right time – and would also help maximise other available funding streams by helping businesses to navigate the complex support ecosystem.

The service has been established to deliver across three core areas – Start, Grow and Scale – with tailored support for clients aligned with their growth ambitions.

- **Start: this element of the service aims to identify individuals with entrepreneurial intentions as well**

as reaching those individuals who do not have an intention to start a business but could be encouraged to do so. There is specific, targeted support for a range of underrepresented groups. The menu of support available includes masterclasses, peer support networks and 1-1 mentoring

- **Grow:** this element of the service provides support for existing businesses. 1-1 mentoring is allocated based on the business' potential to grow and innovate. Masterclass and peer support network activity are also provided to support existing businesses to make key decisions on issues such as entering new markets or accessing finance for growth
- **Scale:** this part of the service is geared to supporting start-ups that have the potential to go on and generate at least £1m in revenue after 3 years. Support is delivered through 1-1 mentoring which aims to enable access to finance or further support through Invest NI, Catalyst or others.

In addition to the tiered menu of support, small grants of up to £3,000 (up to 50% of capital costs) are available to entrepreneurs or businesses accessing support through the service who demonstrate growth potential.

The delivery is underpinned by investments such as a wide-reaching marketing and communications campaign; a call handling service to deal with phone enquiries as well as an online portal to deal with online requests for support and a regional CRM system to enable tracking of client engagement across the service.

Belfast Performance Update

Since the service launched in November 2023, we have achieved the following by way of Belfast performance:

- **4,059 individuals 'reached' through a range of community outreach activities. This has included:**
 - **Sector specific events and self-employment academies for those in the hair and beauty industry including delivery of aspirational workshops and hands-on mentoring support for over 80 newly qualified individuals.**
 - **Delivery of a female-focused 'inspiring enterprise' event for a group of 100 female entrepreneurs providing practical support to starting or growing their enterprise.**
 - **Working with apprenticeship providers across Belfast to deliver aspirational workshops to 100s of**

- 16–18-year-olds encouraging entrepreneurship as a very real and achievable pathway for consideration.
 - Facilitation of the '22 under 22' initiative, designed to unearth, recognise and fast track 22 exceptional potential entrepreneurs in the City.
 - Increasing awareness of enterprise among young people at the Young Enterprise Big Market event in St George's Market in December 2025.
- 1528 Belfast entrepreneurs supported through start up activity (1-1 mentoring, masterclasses, peer support networks) with 359 (23%) of these entrepreneurs being from the South Belfast area
- 888 Belfast businesses supported through growth activity (1-1 mentoring, masterclasses, peer support networks) with 160 (18%) of these businesses being based in the South Belfast area.

315 Belfast businesses have accessed Go Succeed Grants since the launch in February 2024, drawing down over £1 million. These grants have enabled businesses to purchase capital and/or revenue items which will support their future growth plans.

The Enterprise and Business Growth team would welcome any guidance from working group members to increase engagement in the South Belfast area. Constituent referrals or enquiries can be sent to the Enterprise and Business Growth team via gosucceed@belfastcity.gov.uk

3.2 **Go Social (Social Economy Support)**

Developing the social economy sector has been a priority of the NI Executive for some time and Belfast City Council is aware of the important and unique contribution which the sector can, and does, make to the local economy. In the 2024/25 year the demand for Belfast City Council's 'Go Social' programme, aimed at encouraging more start-ups within the local Social Economy, has increased with over 60 individuals starting their social enterprise/cooperative.

Via our dedicated 'Go Social' service we offer enhanced support to those thinking of starting up a new business as a social enterprise or co-operative and we encourage existing SE businesses to join our social economy register to help us on our journey to grow the sector. Go Social support is open to individuals, groups and existing organisations seeking to set up, or transition to, a social enterprise or cooperative model.

We recognise setting up a social enterprise or cooperative can be difficult due to navigating complex legal structures

and governance along with tackling a social cause or issue. Our Go Social support helps clients via specialist 1-1 mentoring support, access to networking opportunities and best practice visits as well as peer to peer support.

As part of our investment in the sector, Belfast City Council also deliver the Social Economy Incentive Fund which provides grants to new or developing social economy businesses in early growth stages. Each year we launch the fund in September with grants provided for up to £10,000, applications are assessed by a panel with shortlisted applicants invited to pitch. The fund is available to Belfast-based social enterprises and co-operatives, we would encourage anyone interested to sign up to our enterprise and business growth newsletter to be the first to hear about the fund launching again in September.

The Enterprise and Business Growth team would welcome any guidance from working group members to increase engagement in the South Belfast area. Constituent referrals or enquiries can be sent to the Enterprise and Business Growth team via gosucceed@belfastcity.gov.uk

3.3 Test trading

The Enterprise and Business growth team also offer fully funded opportunities for those receiving support through our services to test their products or services at St George's Market.

This opportunity gives businesses starting out, or those who have been in business for less than two years, the opportunity to test trade their products at our thriving, award winning St. George's market.

Taking part is free of charge, and businesses have the opportunity to test trade up to six times – a fantastic opportunity to gain real customer feedback, insights from other traders and hone their sales pitch.

The Enterprise and Business Growth team would welcome any guidance from working group members to increase engagement in the South Belfast area. Constituent referrals or enquiries can be sent to the Enterprise and Business Growth team via gosucceed@belfastcity.gov.uk

4.0 Financial & Resource Implications

There are no financial or resource implications for members to consider.

5.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

Equality impact assessments for all of the above services have been completed.”

In response to a number of Member’s comments, the Enterprise and Business Growth Manager agreed to look into more roadshows and getting out and about within the communities to maximise engagement.

A Member also suggested that digital information leaflets be circulated to the Members for sharing on their social media.

The Working Group agreed that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee would adopt the recommendations as outlined within the report.

Update on EV Charging Point Network Project

The Climate Programme Manager, along with the Assistant Estates Surveyor, presented the Working Group with the extensive work which had been carried out to date on the potential sites within the Council’s estate where EV charging stations could be installed. She outlined the process which would have to be undertaken with the providers.

In response to a Member’s query, the Programme Manager advised the Members that NIE and DFI had been working closely with the Council in regard to the expansion of the EV charging network and that it was important that the Council showed civic leadership.

In relation to a further Member’s queries, she confirmed that some sites could have a bank of EV chargers and that the opening and closing times of Council parks and leisure centres, for example, had already been considered and that the operational logistics could be considered further, if and when sites were deemed suitable by providers.

The Working Group thanked the officers for the update which had been provided.

**Request to present at a future meeting – Blackstaff Residents’ Association:
Proposal for a Workhouse Museum and an Interpretive Centre**

The Members were advised that the City Growth and Regeneration Committee had, at its meeting on 9th April, referred a request from the Blackstaff Residents’ Association to present at a future meeting to the South Area Working Group.

The South Area Working Group agreed to receive a deputation from the Association in relation to its proposal for a Workhouse Museum and Interpretive Centre at a future meeting.

Date of Next Meeting

The Working Group was advised that the next meeting would take place on Monday, 18th August, 2025.

Chairperson



Belfast
City Council

STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Subject:	Discretionary Payments Framework
Date:	23 rd May 2025
Reporting Officer:	Trevor Wallace, Director of Finance
Contact Officer:	Trevor Wallace, Director of Finance

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	To consider the reintroduction of the framework of the management of discretionary payment requests which do not fall within existing Council funding schemes.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to agree:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposed Discretionary Payments Framework detailed in this report. 2. On the basis of recommendation 1 being agreed, to set a discretionary payment limit of £431,972 for the 2025/26 budget.
3.0	Main report
3.1	Members will recall at the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 24 th November 2023, a new set of criteria for Discretionary Payments was agreed, based on the impact of the Cost-of-Living Crisis.
3.2	<p>Prior to this, the Council had a Discretionary Payment Framework in place to assist it in dealing with requests from external groups throughout the year for non-recurrent funding which does not fall within one of the Council's normal grant or other funding processes. This framework had been agreed at the SP&R meeting of 17th August 2018, attached at Appendix 1.</p>
3.3	In order to manage the discretionary payment requests which do not fall within existing Council funding schemes it is proposed that members agree to the re-instatement of the framework for the 2025/26 and future financial years.
3.4	<p>As part of the framework, and as part of the half year and year end position reporting of the Council to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, the Director of Finance will, after considering the level of financial risk and in discussion with the Chief Executive, recommend to the Committee the amount of underspend which could be re-allocated, together with areas of priority for such re-allocation and the amount of funding that could be applied to discretionary payments if the committee so wished.</p>
3.5	The calculation of the limit on total allocations allowable in any year, was based on a product of the domestic and non-domestic rate as detailed in Section 40 of the Local Government Finance (NI) Act 2011 and is included as Appendix 1.
3.6	Using the rate product calculation (appendix 2) a limit of £431,972 would be applicable for re-allocations from any under-spend arising from the 2025/26 revenue estimates.
	Next Steps if Framework is Agreed
3.7	If the reintroduction of the framework is agreed, then information on discretionary payments will be published on the Council website. It will be emphasised that there is no designated fund, but that if in year resources become available for re-allocation then an amount may

	be set aside by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for discretionary payments and that this will normally be considered at the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in June and November.
3.8	The application form used previously to be completed by those organisations wishing to submit a funding request, will be reviewed and updated if needed, which will allow the request to be assessed by officers against the agreed criteria.
3.9	A Committee report will be presented to the November (Half-Year) and June (Year-End) Committees outlining resources available, if any, up to the limit available for discretionary payments and a summary of applications received which meet the criteria.
	Financial & Resource Implications
3.10	There are no implications associated with this report
	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment
3.11	There are no implications associated with this report.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1: Discretionary Payments Committee Report SP&R 17 August 2018 Appendix 2: In Year Re-allocation Limit Calculation

This page is intentionally left blank



Subject:	<i>Discretionary Payments</i>
Date:	<i>17 August 2018</i>
Reporting Officer:	<i>Ronan Cregan; Director of Finance and Resources</i>
Contact Officer:	<i>Mark McBride, Head of Finance and Performance</i>

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To consider a proposed framework for the management of discretionary payment requests which do not fall within existing Council funding schemes.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	Members are asked to agree: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the proposed Discretionary Payments Framework detailed in this report. 2. On the basis of recommendation 1 being agreed, to set a discretionary payment limit of £396,600 for the 2018/19 budget.
3.0	Main report

3.1	The Committee is reminded that this report was deferred at the meeting of the 22 June 2018 to allow time for consideration by Party Groups.
	Management of In-Year Under-spends
3.2	Belfast City Council has an annual net expenditure budget of over £155m and inevitably, given the range and complexity of the organisation and the influence of internal and external factors on income and expenditure plans, there will be some areas of underspend and other areas of budget pressure during any financial year. This normally results in an under-spend position which can be re-allocated either during the year or at the year end.
3.3	The major external factor affecting the year end position is the District Rate Finalisation and whether this will result in a surplus for the Council or a clawback by Land and Property Services (LPS).
3.4	The net financial position of the Council and the year-end forecast position is reported to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on a quarterly basis, with decisions on re-allocation of any in-year under-spend being made when the half year forecast is considered at the November Committee and the year-end outturn is considered at the June Committee.
3.5	An in-year underspend provides the opportunity for the reallocation of resources to a non-recurrent purpose. For example allocation to General Reserves, Specified Reserves, a Designated Fund, Non-Recurrent Expenditure or Discretionary Payments. These are briefly explained below
3.6	General Reserves: These reserves are held to provide a short term safeguard against the consequences of general risk facing the Council. To ensure compliance with the Local Government Finance Act NI (2011), the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources must advise the Committee on the adequacy of the level of General Reserves
3.7	Specified Reserves: These are reserves established for a specified purpose for example the Voluntary Redundancy (VR) Reserve which finances the redundancy and actuarial costs of the VR Programme or a reserve for a major event which is built up over a period of time e.g. Tall Ships.
3.8	Non-Recurrent Expenditure: These allocations support the non-recurrent costs of delivering Council priorities without generating a recurring rate impact. For example the Customer Focus Project.
3.9	Designated Funds: These allocations establish or increase capital or revenue funds. The funds are normally held on a cash basis and include an agreed process for public access

	to these funds. For example the Belfast Investment Fund, the Local Investment Fund or Community Development Grants Programme.
3.10	Discretionary Payments: These are payments agreed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in response to a request for non-recurrent funding from an external group which does not fall within one of the Council's normal grant or other funding process.
3.11	<i>As part of the half year and year end position reporting of the Council to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources will, after considering the level of financial risk, recommend to the Committee the amount of underspend which could be re-allocated, together with areas of priority for such re-allocation and the amount of funding that could be applied to discretionary payments if the committee so wished.</i>
3.12	<i>The following paragraphs outline a recommended framework for the management of such discretionary payments.</i>
	Previous Council Criteria for Discretionary Payments
3.13	Prior to April 2015, Section 37 of the Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011 and previously Section 115 of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972, provided a framework for the consideration of requests which would bring direct benefit to the council; its district, or any part of its district; the inhabitants of its district, or any part of its district, within an overall annual financial spending limit. The Section 37 powers were repealed with the introduction of the Local Government (NI) Act 2014 and replaced with the wider general power of competence.
3.14	It is important to note that the council does not set an annual discretionary spend budget, however the Section 37 authority was used by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to consider the application of any overall departmental underspend to discretionary payments, up to the Section 37 limit, and the Policy and Resources Committee, in June 2004, agreed a set of criteria for assessing such requests.
3.15	The criteria agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee on the 18 June 2004 ensured that any payment met the legislative requirement, did not relate to other Committee funding streams and that the nature of the payment request was non-recurrent i.e. related to a specific event, activity or initiative as opposed to general funds or organisation running costs.
3.16	The calculation of the limit on total allocations allowable in any year, was based on a product of the domestic and non-domestic rate as detailed in Section 40 of the Local Government Finance (NI) Act 2011 and is included as Appendix 1.

3.17	Using the rate product calculation (appendix 1) a limit of £396,600 would be applicable for re-allocations from any under-spend arising from the 2018/19 revenue estimates.
	Proposed Discretionary Payment Assessment Criteria
3.18	Under the general power of competence, by virtue of the Part 11 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, the Council still has the power to make such discretionary payments and it is proposed that the committee reintroduce the previous criteria for such payment as agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee in June 2004.
3.19	<p>These are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the total discretionary payments may not exceed the rate product limit calculated using the formula in Appendix 1 to this report. 2. That there are sufficient in year resources available for reallocation to meet the discretionary payment expenditure approved. 3. That the application for the discretionary payment links to one or more of the council's corporate priorities. 4. That there is direct benefit to be obtained to the council or its district or inhabitants. 5. That the activity or initiative in respect of assistance being sought is being promoted by a person or organisation living or operating, or otherwise having a direct connection with the City. 6. That the request for a discretionary payment does not relate to an event or initiative which falls within a funding stream established through the remit and statutory power of any other committee of the council (in which case it should be so referred). 7. That the request relates to a specific event, activity or initiative as distinct from a request for a contribution to general funds or organisational running costs. 8. That the benefit to be obtained will be commensurate with the payment to be made.
	Next Steps if Criteria are Agreed
3.20	If the above criteria are agreed then information on discretionary payments will be published on the Council website. It will be emphasised that there is no designated fund, but that if in year resources become available for re-allocation then an amount may be set aside by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for discretionary payments and that this will normally be considered at the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in June and November.

3.21	An application form will be developed to be completed by those organisations wishing to submit a funding request which will allow the request to be assessed by officers against the above criteria.
3.22	A Committee report will be presented to the November (Half-Year) and June (Year-End) Committees outlining resources available, if any, up to the limit available for discretionary payments and an summary of applications received which meet the criteria.
	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u>
3.23	There will be no established budget for discretionary payments and therefore these must be funded by re-allocation of in year underspends.
	<u>Equality Implications</u>
3.24	There are no equality implications with this report.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – In Year Re-allocation Limit Calculation

This page is intentionally left blank

Calculation of the Annual Limit on Re-Allocations for Discretionary Payments

The total re-allocations in any one financial year shall not exceed the aggregate of:

- The product of the rate of 0.0596p in the pound on the rateable value of all hereditaments in a NAV list in the district and
- The product of a rate of 0.00082p in the pound on the rateable capital value of all hereditaments in a capital value list in the district.
- “capital value” means capital value for the purposes of the Rates (Northern Ireland) Order 1977 (NI 28) and shall be construed in accordance with Article 39 of that order.
- “NAV list” has the meaning given by Article 40(1)(a) of the Rates (Northern Ireland Order) 1977

This page is intentionally left blank



Belfast
City Council

STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Subject:	Requests for Funding
Date:	23 rd May 2025
Reporting Officer:	Trevor Wallace, Director of Finance
Contact Officer:	Trevor Wallace, Director of Finance

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	To ask the committee to consider three requests for funding.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A request from Shankill Juniors Football Club for funding of approximately £12,000 to support their participation in the Milk Cup in July. 2. A request from the NI Walking Football Federation to provide funding of £5,000 to support five individuals from Belfast who are competing in the International Federation World Championship in Malmo, Sweden on the 3rd to 7th July. 3. A request from the Irish Athletic Boxing Association for £25,000 towards the cost of hosting an elite boxing camp in Belfast in August 2025 in advance of the Elite World Championships in Liverpool in September.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	In the absence of a fund/grant stream to support sporting excellence the Committee is recommended to consider the requests.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	The Chief Executive has received three requests for funding.
3.2	Members are reminded that there is no established budget for these requests and if dealt with through discretionary funding they would have to be met through departmental underspends.
3.3	The first request is for Shankill Juniors who have been successful in qualifying for The Milk Cup. The 16 children are all from Greater Shankill. This prestigious tournament is normally reserved for higher levels clubs from NI and across the world. Juniors are the first Boys Club to have qualified, and as a Belfast team this is a hugely positive achievement for our City. They previously participated in the Foyle Cup, winning their category.
3.4	The issue for the team is how they manage the costs of participation, estimated at around £12,000. The tournament commences in July and so time for fundraising is a real difficulty.
3.5	The second request is from the NI Walking Football Federation to provide support to five individuals from Belfast who have been selected to represent Northern Ireland in the International Walking Football Federation World Championship in Malmo, Sweden on the 3 rd to 7 th July.
3.6	The amount requested is for £5,000 that will go toward the cost of travel and accommodation. Other participants are being supported financially by their local councils and the request is that Belfast City Council supports these five individuals all of whom are senior citizens of Belfast, rate paying residents and are actively involved in their local communities.

3.7	The third request is from the Irish Athletic Boxing Association to host an elite boxing camp in Belfast in August 2025 where the Irish Boxing team selected for the World Championships in September along with boxers from the Ulster High Performance team will host countries from across the world for a world class training and sparring camp in the city. It is envisaged this being USA, China, Brazil, Uzbekistan/ Kazakhstan, France & GB. This would be another unique first for the city in hosting such a high profiled camp ahead of the Elite World Championships in Liverpool in September.
3.8	This camp would bring between 150-200 guests from across the world to our city for a 12–14-day camp. This would increase bed nights in the city, bring a multitude of countries from a range of different cultures to the city, and increase visitors to the city. They would also like to host several open days to the camp where boxing clubs, community groups, summer schemes and general spectators can come and watch some of the world’s best boxers in our own city.
3.9	They are asking Belfast City Council for funding of £25,000 that could be put towards running this phenomenal event that will feature Olympic, World, European, Asian and Commonwealth Champions to name a few.
3.10	The Committee is asked to consider the requests.
3.11	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u> The requests fall under the Council’s discretionary expenditure policy, however, members are asked to note that there is no established budget for this and would have to be met through departmental underspends.
	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment
3.12	None.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None

This page is intentionally left blank



Subject:	Contracts Update
Date:	23 May 2025
Reporting Officer:	Sharon McNicholl, Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Corporate Services
Contact Officer:	Noleen Bohill, Head of Commercial and Procurement Services

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to: Page 285

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek approval from members for tenders, contract modifications to contract term and Single Tender Actions (STA) over £30,000 <p>And to ask members to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note retrospective Single Tender Actions (STAs) and non-procurement expenditure
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve the public advertisement of tenders as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 1) Approve the award of STAs in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 2) Approve the modification of the contract as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 3) Note the award of retrospective STAs in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 4)
3.0	Competitive Tenders
	<p>Section 2.5 of the Scheme of Delegation states Chief Officers have delegated authority to authorise a contract for the procurement of goods, services or works over the statutory limit of £30,000 following a tender exercise where the council has approved the invitation to tender.</p> <p>Standing Order 60(a) states any contract that exceeds the statutory amount (currently £30,000) shall be made under the Corporate Seal. Under Standing Order 51(b) the Corporate Seal can only be affixed when there is a resolution of the Council.</p> <p>Standing Order 54 states that every contract shall comply with the relevant requirements of national and European legislation.</p> <p>The Committee is asked to approve the public advertisement of tenders as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 1).</p>
4.0	Single Tender Actions (STAs)
	<p>The Council's current Single Tender Action (STA) process, which has been in place since 2020, provides assurance that the Council continues to comply with its obligations under the Procurement Act 2023 'the Act' and internal governance arrangements including required controls and approvals. It mirrors the Act setting out the exceptional and specific circumstances when a STA can be used (see STA/ Direct Award Reasons Table in Appendix 1).</p> <p>To support Officers understanding and to build capability, CPS offer support training and guidance on the STA process.</p>

	<p>In line with Standing Order 55 the Committee is asked to approve the award of the STAs in Appendix 1 (Table 2).</p> <p>In line with Standing Order 55 the Committee is asked to note the award of the retrospective STAs Appendix 1 (Table 4).</p>
5.0	Modification to Contract
	The Committee is asked to approve the following modification of the contract as per Standing Order 37a as set out in Appendix 1 (Table 3) .
6.0	Financial & Resource Implications
	The financial resources for these contracts are within approved corporate or departmental budgets
7.0	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment
	None
8.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	<p>RESTRICTED - Appendix 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table 1 - Competitive Tenders • Table 2 - Single Tender Actions • Table 3 - Modification to Contract • Table 4 - Retrospective Single Tender Actions

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank



Belfast
City Council

Subject:	Commercial and Procurement Services Social Value Working Group update
Date:	23 rd May 2025
Reporting Officer:	Sharon McNicholl Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Corporate Services
Contact Officer:	Noleen Bohill, Head of Commercial and Procurement Services

Restricted Reports									
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
<p>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</p> <p>Insert number <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="text"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 									
<p>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</p> <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">After Committee Decision</td> <td style="width: 30%; text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>After Council Decision</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sometime in the future</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>		After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>								

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

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	To update the Strategic Policy & Resources 'SP&R' Committee on the papers presented at the Social Policy Working Group 'SPWG' at their meeting in May 25.

2.0	Recommendations/Main Report
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to note the attached 3 papers presented to SPWG:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>SPWG Report - Sustainable Procurement Policy</i> which provides an update on proposed amendments to the current Social Value Procurement Policy 'SVPP' and asks Members to approve and/or provide further feedback on the proposed approach i.e. publish a new Sustainable Procurement Policy. 2. <i>SPWG Report - Short duration projects (including Appendix 1)</i> which asked Members to approve an amendment to the SVPP to allow for additional flexibility so that Officers can include a simpler/ more flexible social value scoring approach in tenders that are <6 months (approx.) in duration. 3. <i>SPWG Report - SVPP Delivery Report May 25 (including Appendix 1)</i> which provides an update on the delivery of social value outcomes via open tender competitions awarded in accordance with the 'SVPP'
	Financial & Resource Implications
2.2	The financial resources for these contracts are within approved corporate or departmental budgets
	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment
2.3	None
3.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1 - SPWG Report - Sustainable Procurement Policy</p> <p>Appendix 2 - SPWG Report - Short duration projects & Appendix 1 - SPWG Report - Applying Minimum Contract Period Feb 25</p> <p>Appendix 3 SPWG Report - SVPP Delivery Report May 25 & Appendix 1 - SPWG SV May 25</p>



Subject:	Sustainable Procurement Policy
Date:	13 th May 2025
Reporting Officer:	Noleen Bohill, Head of Commercial and Procurement Services 'CPS'
Contact Officer:	Lewis Murray, Strategic Category Manager, CPS

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
	To provide Members with an update on proposed amendments to the current Social Value Procurement Policy 'SVPP' and ask Members to approve and/or provide further feedback on the proposed approach i.e. publish a new Sustainable Procurement Policy.
2.0	Background
	<p>The Council has two procurement policies in place:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Social Value Procurement Policy - this external facing policy, introduced in June 2022, outlines the Council's commitment and strategic approach to embedding social value into its procurement processes, supported by a two-step toolkit and officer training. It sets the expectations for suppliers and stakeholders in supporting the Council's ambitions around inclusive growth and sustainability2. Procurement Policy - this internal policy (currently being updated in line with the Procurement Act 2023) sets out the standards of behaviour, actions, and procedures expected of Officers when procuring goods, services, and works for the Council. It also includes defined requirements around sustainable and ethical procurement practices, ensuring that these principles are embedded in day-to-day procurement activity. It incorporates:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sustainability aims aligned with the Belfast Agenda and Inclusive Growth Strategy• Ethical procurement expectations for both officers and suppliers, underpinned by the Council's Code of Conduct• Compliance with legislative requirements (e.g. Modern Slavery Act, Fair Employment)• Guidance on local supplier inclusion for low-value quotations• Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply 'CIPS' Ethics Kite Mark accreditation and annual training for officers <p>Together, these policies ensure procurement activity reflects the Council's values of fairness, transparency, inclusion, and environmental responsibility.</p>

	<p>Since these policies have been implemented, the Council has committed to a number of other strategies and action plans which will require extending the scope/ influence of the Council's procurement policies. These include:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Climate Action Plan (and Corporate Plan) which sets out a number of procurement actions including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Develop a sustainable/ low carbon procurement policy and supplier guidance documents to support a transition to an inclusive, net zero and resilient future</i> • <i>Through sustainable procurement, aim to use local suppliers to the Council to reduce miles travelled within the confines of procurement legislation and Local Govt Act restrictions</i> • <i>Scope out a strategy to increase renewable and low-carbon energy use through corporate power purchase agreements</i> 2. Single Use Plastics 'SUP' Policy (draft/ in development) which includes a number of procurement related actions to reduce the use of SUP in the Council's supply chains. 3. Sustainable Food Policy (draft/ in development) which includes a number of procurement related actions about how we procure food in a sustainable way. 4. Notice of Motion at Feb 25 SP&R and update paper at March 25 SP&R regarding developing a new ethical procurement policy 5. Race Equality Action Plan – to be reviewed when available <p>At April's S,P&R, members approved a review of the Social Value Policy to include wider ethical procurement considerations. As per the paper approved by members, this review would ensure an aligned 'sustainable procurement policy' is put in place setting out clear expectations of standards for suppliers regarding ethical, social value and environmental/low carbon considerations, having regard to the international guidance set out in this report, and how this might be factored into tender evaluations.</p>
3.0	Sustainable Procurement
	<p>The term 'Sustainable Procurement' is widely accepted across organisations in the public and private sector to mean the integration of ethical, social, economic and environmental criteria into an organisation's procurement processes.</p> <p>Some examples include:</p> <p><u>Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply</u> defines it as '<i>Sustainable procurement supports the sustainability goals of the organisation and optimises the environmental, social, and economic impacts over the life cycle of the product or service.</i>'</p> <p>Sustainable Procurement Task Force defined it as "<i>a process whereby organisations meet their needs for goods, services, works and utilities in a way that achieves value for money on a whole life basis in terms of generating benefits not only to the organisation, but also to society and the economy, whilst minimising damage to the environment.</i>"</p> <p><u>The International Organisation of Standardisation (ISO)</u> (ISO 20400 sustainable procurement accreditation) defines sustainable procurement/ development as "<i>integrating the goals of a high quality of life, health and prosperity with social justice and maintaining the earth's capacity to support life in all its diversity. These social, economic and</i></p>

	<p><i>environmental goals are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Sustainable development can be treated as a way of expressing the broader expectations of society as a whole.”</i></p> <p>A recent benchmarking exercise conducted by CPS when considering a new sustainable/ low carbon procurement policy, found that across the UK and Ireland ‘sustainable procurement’ is used as an overarching term that includes ethical, social, economic and, environmental/ low carbon considerations.</p> <p>Some examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City of Edinburgh Council - Sustainable Procurement Policy Cambridge County Council – Sustainable Procurement Strategy <p>In order to address current open actions as described in section 2, it is an opportune time to develop one externally facing procurement policy, positioned as a Sustainable Procurement Policy.</p> <p>The most effective way to achieve this is to update/develop our SVPP and any associated toolkits and guidance.</p>
3.0	<p>Potential development/improvements of the current SVPP for the new Sustainable Procurement Policy</p> <p>At this stage the following areas have been considered as key development/improvements areas:</p> <p><u>Ethical Procurement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand further on the visibility and scrutiny of our supplier’s supply chains and associated business operations to ensure supply chain practices adhere to ethical standards. These standards typically include labour rights, environmental sustainability, fair trade practices, and human rights. This might include supply chain audits/mapping, associated reporting and application of contract remedies for any found unethical practices e.g. termination. <p><u>Social Value</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on the good work done to date with the SVPP but refine certain areas based on lessons learned to date e.g. short duration projects and review initiatives, points and weightings to ensure these are fit for purpose Align the current social value initiatives, associated scoring and evaluation with developments in ethical and environmental/ low carbon procurement <p><u>Environmental/ Low Carbon</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set out expectations from our suppliers on Scope 3 emission data reporting and how the Council will use this data • Suppliers to publish and report progress on carbon reduction plans • Develop a toolkit for Officers to use to improve consistency when including low carbon standards in specifications when procuring goods, services and works to help lower the Council’s carbon footprint. This would include procurement related actions under SUP policy and Sustainable Food policy. <p>Current supplier guidance document and toolkit for Officers would be updated to incorporate these requirements.</p>

	All updates/additions will also be reviewed in line relevant legislation to ensure compliance i.e. Local Govt Act and Procurement Act.
4.0	Recommended approach
	<p>It is recommended that the SVPP and associated guidance and toolkit is updated, as outlined above, to create a new Sustainable Procurement Policy.</p> <p>Benefits of doing so include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment with definitions and wider understanding of what Sustainable Procurement incorporates and approaches by other GB and Irish councils • Simplified approach and consistent message to our suppliers with one externally facing procurement policy • Allows us to build on the positive outcomes the SVPP has delivered to date and refine/ develop these further • Provides a clear message to our suppliers of the Council's approach to procurement and the associated ethical, social, economic and environmental standards expected • Easier to manage and co-ordinate guidance and training for Officers • Easier to monitor and manage outputs under the one policy • Easier to manage future developments in line with sustainable procurement best practice and Council strategies and corporate plans. <p>In addition, the Council's internal facing Procurement Policy would be reviewed and aligned with the content of the Sustainable Procurement Policy.</p>
5.0	Proposed timescales and next steps
	<p>The most complex area of work is in the environmental/ low carbon standards workstream which will take longer to finalise due to the level of work involved in researching and developing the low carbon toolkit including wider stakeholder engagement required. This is to ensure any standards included are achievable, affordable and will make a material impact to the Council's carbon footprint.</p> <p>Interim policy updates could be adopted sooner and applied via work instructions to Officers whilst the Sustainable Procurement Policy is finalised should any be a priority during FY25/26 e.g. ethical procurement considerations.</p> <p>The aim is for the Sustainable Procurement Policy to be drafted and implemented before the end of FY25/26 subject to any public consultation and Council ratification, if required.</p> <p>Progress updates will be presented and discussed at each SPWG during 25/26.</p> <p>Members are welcome to send through any feedback/ input to the Sustainable Procurement Policy content to Lewis Murray in CPS at any time for consideration.</p>



Subject:	Social Value Procurement Policy – Short duration projects
Date:	13 th May 2025
Reporting Officer:	Noleen Bohill, Head of Commercial and Procurement Services ‘CPS’
Contact Officer:	Lewis Murray, Strategic Category Manager, CPS

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
	To ask Members to approve an amendment to the Social Value Procurement Policy ‘SVPP’ to allow for additional flexibility so that Officers can include a simpler/ more flexible social value scoring approach in tenders that are <6 months (approx.) in duration.
2.0	Background
	<p>Currently the SVPP only uses the £30k contract value as a measure of when the SVPP is to be applied to tender competitions. While this has largely worked well to date it has presented some challenges; particularly more recently for shorter duration contracts i.e. <6 months duration.</p> <p>Further to the paper presented to SPWG in February 2025 (attached as Appendix 1 for reference), Members asked that SV is still applied to short duration tenders/projects >£30k but would be open to a more flexible/ simplified approach when applying SV scoring and evaluation.</p>
3.0	Proposed amendment to SVPP
	<p>For shorter duration projects (i.e. <6 months approx. in duration) it is proposed that Officers can include a more open ended question for evaluation purposes with a minimum 10% weighting applied. An example question is set out below.</p> <p><u>Example question</u></p> <p><i>Qxx. Social Value/Community Support</i></p> <p><i>Please detail how your business will give back to the local community as part of the project/tender you are bidding for.</i></p> <p><i>Responses may include.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Donating/ supporting local charities or VCSE sector</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Any lasting relationships you might establish through your presence in the local community as part of the project</i> • <i>How your business might support local community organisations e.g. community groups, youth clubs, sports teams etc.</i> • <i>How your business might support micro/ small business in the local community.</i> <p>Other aspects for the SVPP will continue to apply to over £30k tenders i.e. Reserved Contracts, SV Organisational Behaviours, RLW and Zero Hours Contracts.</p> <p>This should help address some of the challenges faced by Officers and suppliers with marginal impact to value add that the SVPP is continuing to deliver.</p> <p>The SVPP and associated SV toolkit and guidance for Officers and suppliers will be updated to reflect this. <i>Note – this may be in line with timescales for the proposed ‘Sustainable Procurement Policy’ during FY 25/26. See separate paper.</i></p> <p>Members are asked to approve the proposed amendment to the SVPP above.</p>
4.0	Appendices
	Appendix 1 - SPWG Report - Applying Minimum Contract Period Feb 25



Subject:	Social Value Procurement Policy – Applying a Minimum Contract Period <6 months
Date:	11 th February 2025
Reporting Officer:	Noleen Bohill, Head of Commercial and Procurement Services ‘CPS’
Contact Officer:	Lewis Murray, Strategic Category Officer, CPS

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
	<p>To ask Members to approve an amendment to the Social Value Procurement Policy ‘SVPP’ to allow for additional flexibility so that Officers can opt out of including social value scoring and weighting in tenders that are <6 months (approx.) in duration.</p>
2.0	Background
	<p>The SVPP was approved by Committee in April 22 with full application of the SVPP from 1st April 2023.</p> <p>A copy of the SVPP can be found here - Social Value Procurement Policy (belfastcity.gov.uk)</p> <p>In short, the SVPP mandates that for all tendersⁱ over £30,000:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suppliers must pay the Real Living Wage to all its employees assigned to work on a BCC contract.• Suppliers must not use zero hours contracts for any of its employees assigned to work on a BCC contract.• Social value scoring and weighting is applied as part of the evaluation. SV weighting is determined by the cost weighting (i.e. if cost is >50% then SV is 10%; if cost is ≤50% then SV is 15%.)• A minimum social value scoring threshold is applied during evaluation. <p>The SVPP only uses the £30k contract value as a measure of when the SVPP is to be applied to tender competitions. While this has largely worked well to date (see section 2) it has presented some challenges; particularly more recently for shorter duration contracts i.e. <6 months duration. Some examples of this are set out in section 3.</p>
2.0	SV delivery to date (as of Dec 24)
	<p>Below is some key data from our records setting out SV commitments suppliers have made to date as part of tender competitions under the SVPP.</p>

	Data Metric/ Initiative	No./Value/ Metric
	No. of tenders SVPP fully applied (SV offers evaluated from suppliers)	101
	Total contract values	£112m
	Avg. contract value	£1.1m
	Avg. contract term	36 months
	Number of employment weeks (FTE) created for Apprenticeships	17 FTE
	Number of employment weeks (FTE) created for Priority Groups	7 FTE
	Number of employment weeks (FTE) created for Students	22 FTE
	Employability or skills initiatives to support Priority Groups	215 Days
	Initiatives to enhance employability of young people	230 Days
	Use of a social enterprise or co-operative in the supply chain (in relation to contract)	78 SEs supported
	Initiatives to support VCSE organisation	238 Days
	Initiatives to improve good relations between people from different religious, political, racial & ethnic backgrounds	26 Days
	Initiatives to reduce or prevent crime (including hate crime) and/or ASB	26 Days
	Initiatives to reduce or prevent health related inequalities	90 Days
	Initiatives to increase participation in sports related activities	82 Days
	Initiatives to increase participation in arts related activities	26 Days
	Reduce carbon emissions associated with energy supply	55 strategies/ action plans
	Reduce carbon emissions associated with transportation	52 strategies/ action plans
	Improve waste management, including recycling, upcycling and supporting the circular economy	64 strategies/ action plans
	Improve resource efficiency	25 strategies/ action plans
	Enhance environmental natural resources and biodiversity	29 strategies/ action plans
	Work is ongoing to monitor the delivery of these SV commitments through the Council's contract management procedures.	
3.0	Short duration contracts < 6 months	
	The Council procures a small number of >£30k projects each year that are of short duration i.e. <6 months. These are typically Works type contracts (e.g. installation projects). Some recent examples include:	

	Tender/ Project	Value (£)	Duration
	Henry Jones Car Park CCTV & Floodlighting Installation Works	£52k	<12 weeks. (6 week lead time for products and 1 week on site)
	NRF_ACT Initiative – Interpretive fit out design & installation	£75k	< 4 months
	Stained Glass window (LGBT) at City Hall	£32k	<12 weeks (On site <3 days for fitting)
	<p>Officer's experiences to date when trying to apply the SVPP to projects < 6 months (approx.) have found that in most cases it is not practical and often leads either to no bids or poor-quality submissions from the market.</p> <p>This is due to there not being sufficient time for a supplier to deliver a meaningful SV initiative(s) in the short period of time.</p> <p>Based on tenders awarded (89 total) during 2024 six (6) were <6 months in duration with 3 to 4 of those tenders also low value. This recommended change to policy only likely to affect <5 tenders per year (<5%).</p>		
4.0	Proposed amendment to SVPP		
	<p>Members are asked to approve that the SVPP is updated to include flexibility so that Officers can opt out of including social value scoring and weighting in tenders that are < 6 months (approx.) in duration. Other aspects for the SVPP will continue to apply to over £30k tenders i.e. Reserved Contracts, SV Organisational Behaviours, RLW and Zero Hours Contracts.</p> <p>Depending on the requirement Officers can still apply SV scoring and weighting to tenders <6 months i.e. larger value short duration projects.</p> <p>This should help address some of the challenges faced by Officers and suppliers set out above with marginal impact to value add that the SVPP is continuing to deliver.</p> <p>The SVPP and associated SV toolkit and guidance for Officers and suppliers will be updated to reflect this.</p> <p>Instances where SVPP has not been applied will continue to be reported to Members via the Social Policy Working Group as part of the regular reporting.</p>		

This page is intentionally left blank



Subject:	Social Value Procurement Policy Delivery Report
Date:	13 th May 2025
Reporting Officer:	Noleen Bohill, Head of Commercial and Procurement Services 'CPS'
Contact Officer:	Lewis Murray, Strategic Category Officer, CPS

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
	<p>To update the Social Policy Working Group 'SPWG' on the delivery of social value outcomes via open tender competitions awarded in accordance with the Council's Social Value Procurement Policy 'SVPP'</p> <p>The report also provides an update on tenders awarded by Property & Projects department where, due to project funding rules, social value has been considered and included in accordance with the CPD Buy Social Model.</p>
2.0	Background
	<p>The SVPP was approved by Committee in April 22 with full application of the SVPP from 1st April 2023.</p> <p>A copy of the SVPP can be found here - Social Value Procurement Policy (belfastcity.gov.uk)</p> <p>To help Officers and suppliers understanding the SVPP and how to apply this to applicable tender competitions, the Commercial and Procurement Services 'CPS' team has developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online guidance on interlink which takes Officers through key considerations in line with the SVPP.• A new Supplier Guidance document was launched in September 23 which includes step by step guidance for suppliers in how to offer social value as part of their tender and how their social value offers are evaluated (new innovative approach). This was developed taking on board key learnings since the SVPP was launched.• Social value evaluation training based on the new approach developed from September 2023. This was rolled out during October 23 to January 24. This is now included in CPS evaluation training. <p>A link has been provided below to the interlink guidance (within the link you can access the guidance which should open as a Microsoft Sway document)</p>

	<p>Social value procurement guidance now available (sharepoint.com)</p> <p>As outlined in the guidance to Officers application of the SVPP is considered in 2 key parts:</p> <p>Part 1 – For all tender competitions valued over £30k, consideration by Officers about whether to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reserve the tender competition to a social enterprise/ VCSE sector taking into consideration levels of market competition in this sector 2. Include organisational behaviours (i.e., ethical procurement, environmental and HR policies and procedures) taking into consideration relevance of these policies and procedures to the goods, services or works being purchased and relevance to the market. When selected for inclusion in the tender these social value organisational behaviours are mandatory pass/fail questions for suppliers to demonstrate rather than scored questions. <p>Note for all tender competitions valued over £30k the following is included as mandatory (in addition to the above in Part 1):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Payment of the Real Living Wage by suppliers to their employees 2. The prohibited use of zero hours contracts by suppliers <p>Part 2 – the inclusion of a social value weighting (10% or 15%) and scoring for tenders valued over £30k for tenders post-April 23</p> <p>The social value offer made by suppliers using the list of social value initiatives and points is then evaluated and scored with a minimum scoring threshold required to be met.</p> <p><u>CPD Buy Social Model</u></p> <p>The CPD Buy Social Model is applied where external central government funding of 50% or greater is provided for a capital/ works project managed by Property & Projects.</p> <p>Further information on the CPD Buy Social Model can be found here:</p> <p>PPN 01/21 - Scoring Social Value Department of Finance (finance-ni.gov.uk)</p> <p>Social Value - (buysocialni.org)</p> <p>The CPD Buy Social Model is broadly similar to the Council's SVPP in terms of achieving the social value outcomes. See comparison table set out in Annexe 1 (see below at end of report) which provides an overview of the similarities/ differences in key areas.</p>
2.0	Reporting Period
	<p>It is intended that this report is produced every 2 months in line with scheduled SPWG meetings.</p> <p>This report covers the Reporting Period 1st December 2024 to 31st March 2025 (4 months) to align with scheduled SPWG meetings in 2025.</p>

3.0	Main report
	<p>Appendix 1 of this report set out details of tenders valued over £30k which have been awarded during the Reporting Period and associated SVPP data/information.</p> <p>Appendix 1 includes:</p> <p><u>Table 1 - Tenders awarded during Reporting Period</u></p> <p>This sets out details of tenders awarded during Reporting Period and whether SVPP was applied or not.</p> <p>For ease of reporting this shows tenders awarded by Commercial and Procurement Services 'CPS' team and the Property & Projects department.</p> <p><u>Table 2 – Summary of key data and findings associated with application of SVPP</u></p> <p>This shows a summary of key findings from the tenders set out in Table 1; in particular a summary of the Part 1 SVPP considerations i.e. reserved contracts and social value organisational behaviours.</p> <p><u>Table 3 - Summary of Supplier's Social Value Offers (Evaluated submissions)</u></p> <p>This shows a summary of the tenders that included a social value weighting (10/ 15%) and the social value offers put forward by suppliers for evaluation as explained under Part 2.</p> <p>A summary of each applicable tender has been set out in the table.</p> <p><u>Lessons Learned and Continuous Improvement</u></p> <p>A Social Value Review Team has been established to review how the SVPP is being implemented and any lessons learned that need to be applied following conclusion of tender competitions. Areas the team are currently reviewing include, but not limited to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trends in the use of Reserved Contracts and any further guidance required for Officers on when these should be used 2. Trends in the selection of Social Value Organisational Behaviours by Officers when using the Social Value Toolkit and any further guidance required for Officers on when these should be applied 3. The quality of social value offers by suppliers (the evaluated submissions) and if further guidance is required in terms of how these are evaluated by Officers. In addition any further guidance required for suppliers to improve their understanding of BCC expectations in line with Belfast Agenda aims and associated strategies. <p>The Social Value Review Team will meet every 2 months in line with scheduled SPWG meetings and the production of this report.</p> <p>The content/ format of this report will be reviewed with further information included as more social value data becomes available i.e. social value delivery by suppliers using SIB reporting database.</p>

4.0	Summary
	<p>Members of the SPWG are asked to consider the content of this report and provide feedback (positive or negative) on the data/ information contained in this report and how the SVPP is being applied.</p> <p>This feedback can then be considered by the Social Value Review Team and associated guidance updated for Officers and suppliers when applying the SVPP.</p>
	Appendices
	<p>Appendix 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table 1 - Tenders awarded during Reporting Period • Table 2 – Summary of key data and findings associated with application of SVPP • Table 3 - Summary of Supplier's Social Value Offers (Evaluated submissions)

Annexe 1 – Comparison between BCC's SVPP and CPD Buy Social Model

Key Criteria	BCC SVPP Approach	CPD Buy Social Model Approach
Consideration of Reserved Contracts	Mandatory consideration with rationale document for inclusion/exclusion noted in Social Value Toolkit	Mandatory consideration but no further guidance provided about when to reserve.
Social Value Organisational Behaviours	See comparison table below	See comparison table below
Social value weighting	<p>Applied to all applicable tenders valued over £30k from April 23.</p> <p>Social value weighting determined by cost criteria for tender i.e.</p> <p>If cost criteria is >50% then social value weighting is 10%</p> <p>If cost criteria is ≤50% then social value weighting is 15%</p>	<p>Applied to above threshold tenders (applicable Public Contracts Regulations) for services and works. Supplies not included.</p> <p>For local government this means application to tenders valued above:</p> <p>£170k (approx.) for services contracts</p> <p>£4.3m (approx.) for works contracts</p> <p>Social value weighting 10%, (under review)</p>
Minimum Social Value scoring threshold	<p>If 10% social value weighting then minimum 7% out 10% required</p> <p>If 15% social value weighting then minimum 11% out 15% required</p> <p>Suppliers who fail to meet this threshold are excluded from award of tender.</p>	Not included
Real Living Wage	Mandatory from April 23	Mandatory requirement
Prohibited use of zero hours contracts	Mandatory from April 23	Not included

Social Value Organisational Behaviours comparison

BCC SVPP Approach	CPD Buy Social Model Approach
<p>BCC currently include the following requirements as mandatory for all suppliers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compliance with the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 2. Compliance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015 3. Prompt payment of suppliers/ supply chains <p>Using the Social Value Toolkit (as explained under Part 1) Officers then consider the inclusion of the following social value organisational behaviours in the tender:</p> <p><u>1. Ethical Procurement and Fair Treatment of the Supply Chain</u></p> <p>Suppliers are to demonstrate they have a procurement policy and/or corporate social responsibility policy which clearly sets out the supplier's commitment to ethical procurement practices and fair treatment of your supply chain including associated training/ communication to staff.</p> <p><u>2. Environmental Management Systems</u></p> <p>Suppliers are to demonstrate they have an environmental management system in place i.e. ISO14001 or equivalent.</p> <p><u>3. Single Use Plastics Policy</u></p> <p>Suppliers are to demonstrate they have a single use plastics 'SUP' policy which clearly sets out the supplier's commitment to managing and reducing the use of SUP in their business operations including associated training/ communication to staff.</p> <p><u>4. Donating/ Recycling equipment to the VCSE sector</u></p> <p>Suppliers are to demonstrate they have a policy in place which clearly sets out their commitment to supporting the VCSE sector through donating/ recycling equipment (e.g. ICT equipment)</p> <p><u>5. Equality and Diversity Policy</u></p>	<p>From the 1 September 2021 the following requirements are mandatory;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. compliance with relevant employment, equality and health and safety law and human rights standards; 2. adherence to relevant collective agreements; and 3. adoption of fair work practices for all workers engaged in the delivery of the contract.

<p>Suppliers are to demonstrate they have an equality and diversity policy and/or relevant HR policy which clearly sets out their commitment to equality and diversity in the workplace including associated training/ communication to staff.</p> <p><u>7. Development, Health and Wellbeing of Employees</u></p> <p>Suppliers are to demonstrate their commitment to the development, health and wellbeing of their employees by providing at least 3 of the following points i) to v):</p> <p>i) evidence that employees are offered fair and equitable terms of employment including sick pay, holidays, pension and set working hours;</p> <p>ii) evidence of having a learning and development policy in place which shows commitment to the personal and career development of your employees;</p> <p>iii) evidence of having in place employee appraisal procedures in place including regular employment engagement;</p> <p>iv) evidence of offering employees flexible working to support a healthy work life balance i.e. flexible working hours or working from home option;</p> <p>v) evidence of having in place policies/ initiatives to support the mental and physical health of your employees e.g. offer employee counselling services or occupation health support service.</p>	
---	--

This page is intentionally left blank

Table 1: Tenders awarded during Reporting Period

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

Ref	Contract Title	Contract Type	Value	Successful Supplier	SVPP applied (Y/N)	If No - Reason why?	Reserved Contract (Y/N)	Social Value Weighting % applied
T2551	Technical Support for Belfast PCSP	Services	£180,000	University Ulster	Yes	N/A	N	15%
T2583	Provision of venue management, operation and catering at 2 Royal Avenue	services	£196,096	May We	Yes	N/A	N	15%
T2599	Belfast Maritime Festival Presents "Festival of Fools" (STA)	Services	£40,000	Festival of Fools	No	STA/Direct Award	N	N/A
T2358d	DPS Food Products Category 7 Lucerne	Supplies	£69,000	Equestrian and Farm Feeds	Yes	N/A	N	10%
T2598	Provision of catering services at Belfast Zoo (STA)	Concession	£430,000	Carousel Ice Cream	No	STA/Direct Award	N	N/A
T2601	Supply and Delivery of 12T Glass Collection Vehicles (2)	Supplies	£254,510	MacPac Refuse Bodies Ltd	No	External Framework Used	N	N/A
T2358f *	DPS Food Products Category 1a Meat and Poultry	Supplies	£255,000	WD Meats	No	Dept/ Officer error	N	NA
T2573	Advertising panels at bus stops and outside newsagents - STA	services	£140,000	Clear Channel	No	STA/Direct Award	N	N/A
T2605	Provision of Asylum Support and Capacity Programme	Services	£100,000	Law Centre NI	Yes	N/A	N	15%
T2564	Provision of a Folder Insertor	Supplies	£155,000	Tilos Ltd	Yes	N/A	N	10%
T2561	Bulk LPG – Duncrue Estate	Supplies	£160,000	Calor Gas NI	Yes	N/A	N	10%
T2557	Provision of Specialist Sponsorship and Advertising Services	Services	£30,000	PHAR Partnerships Ltd	Yes	N/A	N	15%
T2606	Provision of a Case Management System (STA)	Services	£197,828	Civica UK Limited	No	STA/Direct Award	N	N/A
T2609	Provision of Maintenance and Support for Housing Benefit System for NIHE (STA)	Services	£759,320	NEC Software Solutions UK Limited	No	STA/Direct Award	N	N/A

Appendix 1

Ref	Contract Title	Contract Type	Value	Successful Supplier	SVPP applied (Y/N)	If No - Reason why?	Reserved Contract (Y/N)	Social Value Weighting % applied
T2463(a)1	Framework for Provision of Coach hire services with Driver	Services	£200,000	Belfast Mini Coach	Yes	N/A	N	10%
T2463(a)2	Framework for Provision of Coach hire services with Driver	Services	£200,000	Metro Private Hire	Yes	N/A	N	10%
T2616	Provision of Public Analyst Services	Services	£294,000	Eurofins Food Testing Ireland Ltd	No	External Framework Used	N	N/A
T2575	PEACEPLUS Arts Across the Genres	Services	£695,744	MayWe	Yes	N/A	N	15%
T2481	Maintenance, repair and inspection of grounds maintenance plant and equipment	Services	£750,000	Keys Brothers	Yes	N/A	N	15%
T2567(3)	PEACEPLUS From Multiculturalism to Interculturalism Lot 3	Services	£238,555	Féile an Phobail	Yes	N/A	N	15%
T2567 (4)	PEACEPLUS From Multiculturalism to Interculturalism Lot 4	Services	£234,200	Arts Ekta	Yes	N/A	N	15%
T2562	PEACEPLUS - Community Empowerment Programme Tender	Services	£903,578	NICVA	Yes	N/A	N	15%
T2563	PEACEPLUS - Language Up Belfast Tender	Services	£447,513	DPPF Ltd t/a People 1st	Yes	N/A	N	15%
T2569	PEACEPLUS Sport for Peace	Services	£711,646	Active Communities Network	Yes	N/A	N	15%
T2558 (1)	PEACEPLUS Youth Empowerment Inspiring Future Belfast Lot 1	Services	£239,259.25	GIGA Training Ltd	Yes	N/A	N	15%
T2558 (2)	PEACEPLUS Youth Empowerment Inspiring Future Belfast Lot 2	Services	£225,981	Active Communities Network	Yes	N/A	N	15%
T2558 (3)	PEACEPLUS Youth Empowerment Inspiring Future Belfast Lot 3	Services	£248,703	Streetbeat Youth Project	Yes	N/A	N	15%
T2577	PEACEPLUS Interfaith and Belief Programme	Services	£304,564	The Corrymeela Community	Yes	N/A	N	15%
T2511 *	Framework Agreement for the Supply & Delivery of Goods for Resale to Belfast Zoo. i.e. Animal	Supplies	£660,000	Various	Yes	N/A	N	N/A

Appendix 1

Ref	Contract Title	Contract Type	Value	Successful Supplier	SVPP applied (Y/N)	If No - Reason why?	Reserved Contract (Y/N)	Social Value Weighting % applied
	themed plush/soft toys, games and souvenirs							
T2547	Operation the Stables Café at Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Parks, including using the cafe facilities to provide additional optional catering Services	Services	£1,200,000	USEL	Yes	N/A	Y	15%
T2559(1)	Supply of Electricity - Lot 1 – Fixed and Unmetered Portfolio	Supplies	£1,000,000	3t Power	Yes	N/A	N	10%
T2559(2)	Supply of Electricity - Lot 2 – Flexible Portfolio	Supplies	£19,500,000	3t Power	Yes	N/A	N	15%
T2565 *	Framework Agreement for Local Newspapers to Print Various Advertisements	Services	£800,000	Various	Yes	N/A	N	N/A
T2592	Provision of mobile phone service and mobile devices	Services	£570,000	Vodafone Limited	No	External Framework Used	N	N/A
T2613	Provision of PTX Software (STA)	Services	£140,000	Bottomline Technologies	No	STA/Direct Award	N	N/A
T2385 *	In-cab technology solution for fleet telematics and vehicle routing	Supplies	£3,450,000	Whitespace Work Software	No	External Framework Used	N	N/A
T2570	Provision of Resilient Internet Service	Services	£95,000	Eir Evo	No	External Framework Used	N	N/A

* Note

T2358f – Oversight by Dept/ Officer when procuring and estimating contract value under the Council's Dynamic Purchasing System 'DPS' for food. Additional measures now in place under DPS to help ensure this does not re-occur in the future. Possibility of agreeing SV offer/delivery plan with supplier post award. CPS to initiate discussions with supplier.

T2511 – This is the award of a framework. SV weighting and scoring to be applied to any >£30k call off contracts awarded under the framework.

T2565 - This is the award of a framework. SV weighting and scoring to be applied to any >£30k call off contracts awarded under the framework.

Appendix 1

T2385 – included a 5% weighting for sustainability in line with framework guidelines/restrictions. Supplier has provided social value and environmental initiatives as part of their bid but not strictly in line with SVPP.

Table 1b: Tenders awarded by Property & Projects

Ref	Contract Title	Contract Type	Value	Successful Supplier	SVPP applied (Y/N)	If No - Reason why?	Reserved Contract (Y/N)	Social Value Weighting % applied
ITT 38140	Design, Supply, Maintenance & Operation of Belfast Bikes Public Hire Scheme	Supplies	£2,209,250	Beryl	Yes	N/A	N	10%
ITT 38228	NRF New Build Community & Heritage Centre at Davitts GAC (PQQ to ITT)	Works	£1,147,547.60	Piperhill Construction	Yes	N/A	N	10%
ITT 38271	Commissioning of an Artist for the design, manufacture and installation of a new stained-glass window in City Hall, Belfast (PQQ to ITT)	Works	£31,200	Alpha Stained Glass	No	Contract <6 months duration	N	N/A
ITT 38318	Floral Hall Asbestos Removal	Works	£645,145	Keltbray Ltd	Yes	N/A	N	10%
ITT 38333	MTC for Glazing Services at all Council Properties	Works	£41,857.50	John Hunter Glazing Ltd	Yes	N/A	N	10%
ITT 38371	MTC for Roller Shutter Services at various Council properties	Works	£52,930	D W Industrial Doors	Yes	N/A	N	10%
ITT 38397	BIF Castlereagh Community Hall (PQQ to ITT)	Works	£326,600	Bradley Construction (MF) Ltd	Yes	N/A	N	10%

Table 2: Summary of key findings/ data

Key area/ criteria	Summary/ Key Findings
Total number of tenders awarded during Reporting Period	44 tenders awarded
Total number of tenders awarded where SVPP was applied	31 out of 44 tenders (70%)
Summary of reasons why SVPP was not applied	<p>6 out of 13 – STAs/ Direct Awards</p> <p>5 out of 13 – an external framework was used to award contract therefore restricted to framework evaluation criteria which did not permit including social value</p> <p>1 out of 13 – Short duration project. SV delivery not feasible. <i>See updated paper re delivering SV for short duration projects.</i></p> <p>1 out of 13 – Dept/Officer error</p>
Number of Reserved Contracts	<p>1</p> <p>Café at the Stables, Lady Dixon Park was reserved to a social enterprise. USEL were successful.</p> <p>Social Value Review Team to consider if any further guidance is required about when/ what tenders should be reserved to social enterprises.</p>
Social value organisational behaviours selected for inclusion in tenders.	<p>Ethical Procurement Policies - included in 11 out of 31 tenders</p> <p>Environmental Management Systems - included in 6 out of 31 tenders</p> <p>HR Policies - included in 22 out of 31 tenders</p> <p>Although inclusion of these policies is considered by Officers on a tender by tender basis depending on the scope of the requirement, the Social Value Review Team will review guidance to ensure it is clear when to include these organisational behaviours in tenders; particular areas where there are low levels of inclusion.</p>

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

	Social Value Initiatives																
Page 320 Tender Awarded - Supplier	Number of employment weeks* (FTE) created for Apprenticeships	Number of employment weeks* (FTE) created for Priority Groups	Number of employment weeks* (FTE) created for Students	Employability or skills initiatives to support Priority Groups	Initiatives to enhance employability of young people	Use of a social enterprise or co-operative in the supply chain (in relation to contract)	Initiatives to support VCSE organisation	Initiatives to improve good relations between people from different religious, political, racial & ethnic backgrounds	Initiatives to reduce or prevent crime (including hate crime) and/or ASB	Initiatives to reduce or prevent health related inequalities	Initiatives to increase participation in sports related activities	Initiatives to increase participation in arts related activities	Reduce carbon emissions associated with energy supply	Reduce carbon emissions associated with transportation	Improve waste management, including recycling, upcycling and supporting the circular	Improve resource efficiency	Enhance environmental natural resources and biodiversity
T2551 Technical Support for Belfast PCSP - University Ulster							✓	✓									
T2583 Provision of venue management, operation and catering at 2 Royal Avenue – May We					✓												
T2358d DPS Food Products Category 7 Lucerne - Equestrian and Farm Feeds											✓		✓				
T2605 Provision of Asylum Support and Capacity Programme - Law Centre NI					✓												
T2564 Provision of a Folder Inserter - Tilos Ltd														✓	✓		

Appendix 1

	Social Value Initiatives																
Tender Awarded - Supplier	Number of employment weeks* (FTE) created for Apprenticeships	Number of employment weeks* (FTE) created for Priority Groups	Number of employment weeks* (FTE) created for Students	Employability or skills initiatives to support Priority Groups	Initiatives to enhance employability of young people	Use of a social enterprise or co-operative in the supply chain (in relation to contract)	Initiatives to support VCSE organisation	Initiatives to improve good relations between people from different religious, political, racial & ethnic backgrounds	Initiatives to reduce or prevent crime (including hate crime) and/or ASB	Initiatives to reduce or prevent health related inequalities	Initiatives to increase participation in sports related activities	Initiatives to increase participation in arts related activities	Reduce carbon emissions associated with energy supply	Reduce carbon emissions associated with transportation	Improve waste management, including recycling, upcycling and supporting the circular	Improve resource efficiency	Enhance environmental natural resources and biodiversity
T2561 Bulk LPG – Duncrue Estate - Calor Gas NI														✓	✓		
T2557 Provision of Specialist Sponsorship and Advertising Services - PHAR Partnerships Ltd					✓												
T2463(a)1 Framework for Provision of Coach hire services with Driver - Belfast Mini Coach			✓												✓		
T2463(a)2 Framework for Provision of Coach hire services with Driver - Metro Private Hire													✓	✓			
T2575 PEACEPLUS Arts Across the Genres - MayWe					✓												
T2481 Maintenance, repair and inspection of grounds maintenance plant and equipment – Keys Brothers	✓					✓				✓	✓						
T2567(3) PEACEPLUS From Multiculturalism to Interculturalism Lot 3 - Féile an Phobail						✓		✓									

Appendix 1

	Social Value Initiatives																
Tender Awarded - Supplier	Number of employment weeks* (FTE) created for Apprenticeships	Number of employment weeks* (FTE) created for Priority Groups	Number of employment weeks* (FTE) created for Students	Employability or skills initiatives to support Priority Groups	Initiatives to enhance employability of young people	Use of a social enterprise or co-operative in the supply chain (in relation to contract)	Initiatives to support VCSE organisation	Initiatives to improve good relations between people from different religious, political, racial & ethnic backgrounds	Initiatives to reduce or prevent crime (including hate crime) and/or ASB	Initiatives to reduce or prevent health related inequalities	Initiatives to increase participation in sports related activities	Initiatives to increase participation in arts related activities	Reduce carbon emissions associated with energy supply	Reduce carbon emissions associated with transportation	Improve waste management, including recycling, upcycling and supporting the circular	Improve resource efficiency	Enhance environmental natural resources and biodiversity
T2567(4) PEACEPLUS From Multiculturalism to Interculturalism Lot 4 - Arts & Media						✓											
T2562 PEACEPLUS - Community Empowerment Programme Tender - NICVA											✓	✓					
T2563 PEACEPLUS - Language Up Belfast Tender - DFPF Ltd t/a People 1st				✓	✓	✓	✓										
T2569 PEACEPLUS Sport for Peace - Active Communities Network					✓												
T2558 (1) PEACEPLUS Youth Empowerment Inspiring Future Belfast Lot 1 - GIGA Training Ltd											✓						
T2558 (2) PEACEPLUS Youth Empowerment Inspiring Future Belfast Lot 2 - Streetbeat Youth Project						✓											
T2577 PEACEPLUS Interfaith and Belief Programme - The Corrymeela Community						✓		✓									

Appendix 1

Page 3 of 3

	Social Value Initiatives																
Tender Awarded - Supplier	Number of employment weeks* (FTE) created for Apprenticeships	Number of employment weeks* (FTE) created for Priority Groups	Number of employment weeks* (FTE) created for Students	Employability or skills initiatives to support Priority Groups	Initiatives to enhance employability of young people	Use of a social enterprise or co-operative in the supply chain (in relation to contract)	Initiatives to support VCSE organisation	Initiatives to improve good relations between people from different religious, political, racial & ethnic backgrounds	Initiatives to reduce or prevent crime (including hate crime) and/or ASB	Initiatives to reduce or prevent health related inequalities	Initiatives to increase participation in sports related activities	Initiatives to increase participation in arts related activities	Reduce carbon emissions associated with energy supply	Reduce carbon emissions associated with transportation	Improve waste management, including recycling, upcycling and supporting the circular	Improve resource efficiency	Enhance environmental natural resources and biodiversity
T2547 Operation the Stables Café at Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Parks, including using the cafe facilities to provide additional optional catering services - USEL				✓											✓		
T2559(1) Supply of Electricity - Lot 1 – Fixed and Unmetered Portfolio – 3t Power								✓		✓	✓						
T2559(2) Supply of Electricity - Lot 2 – Flexible Portfolio – 3t Power					✓			✓		✓	✓					✓	✓
ITT 38140 Design, Supply, Maintenance & Operation of Belfast Bikes Public Hire Scheme - Beryl				✓			✓		✓	✓	✓			✓			
ITT 38228 NRF New Build Community & Heritage Centre at Davitts GAC (PQQ to ITT) - Piperhill Construction					✓	✓	✓										
ITT 38318 - Floral Hall Asbestos Removal - Keltbray Ltd			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ITT 38333 MTC for Glazing Services at all Council Properties - John Hunter Glazing Ltd														✓	✓		

	Social Value Initiatives																
Tender Awarded - Supplier	Number of employment weeks* (FTE) created for Apprenticeships	Number of employment weeks* (FTE) created for Priority Groups	Number of employment weeks* (FTE) created for Students	Employability or skills initiatives to support Priority Groups	Initiatives to enhance employability of young people	Use of a social enterprise or co-operative in the supply chain (in relation to contract)	Initiatives to support VCSE organisation	Initiatives to improve good relations between people from different religious, political, racial & ethnic backgrounds	Initiatives to reduce or prevent crime (including hate crime) and/or ASB	Initiatives to reduce or prevent health related inequalities	Initiatives to increase participation in sports related activities	Initiatives to increase participation in arts related activities	Reduce carbon emissions associated with energy supply	Reduce carbon emissions associated with transportation	Improve waste management, including recycling, upcycling and supporting the circular	Improve resource efficiency	Enhance environmental natural resources and biodiversity
ITT 38371 MTC for Roller Shutter Services at various Council properties - D W Industrial Doors			✓					✓							✓		
ITT 38397 BIF Castlereagh Community Hall (PQQ to ITT) - Bradley Construction (MF) Ltd						✓								✓			



Subject:	Minutes of Shared City Partnership Meeting on 12 th May 2025
Date:	23 rd May 2025
Reporting Officer:	Jim Girvan, Director of Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Godfrey McCartney, Good Relations Manager

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To report to committee on the key issues discussed at the Shared City Partnership meeting held on 12 th May 2025.

2.0	Recommendation
2.1	That the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approve the minutes and recommendations from the Shared City Partnership Meeting held on 12 th April 2025 including:
2.2	<p><u>Good Relations Quarter 4 Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Partnership recommends to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it notes the contents of the report.
2.3	<p><u>Good Relations Action Plan Budget Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Partnership noted the contents of the report and recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that they note the contents of the report, including the proposal to proceed with the Good Relations Action plan as detailed in the body of the report
2.4	<p><u>Update from Partnership Members</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Partnership noted a number of verbal updates from various Members in relation to ongoing good relations issues across the Belfast
2.5	<p><u>PEACE IV – Secretariat Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Partnership noted the contents of the report and recommends to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it notes the contents of the report.
2.6	<p><u>PEACEPLUS Belfast City Council Local Community Action Plan – Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The meeting was inquorate at this stage, as such the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is requested to endorse the report recommendations, summarised as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the revised CRT Animation Timeframe subject to SEUPB approval; the cross community breakdown for participants as outlined in Option 2.
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	The Shared City Partnership is a Working Group of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee which consists of Elected members and representatives from various sectors across the city. The minutes from the Partnership are brought before the Committee for approval on a monthly basis.
3.2	<p>The key issues on the agenda at the 12th May 2025 meeting were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership Papers of 7th April 2025

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good Relations Quarter 4 Update • Good Relations Action Plan Budget Update • Members Update • PEACE IV – Secretariat Update • PEACEPLUS Belfast Local Community Action Plan (LCAP) Update • AOB
3.3	<p>More details regarding the above issues and recommendations are included in the following minutes of the meeting attached in Appendix 1 Minutes of the Shared City Partnership 12th May 2025.</p>
3.4	<p><u>PEACEPLUS Belfast City Council Local Action Plan Update</u></p> <p>As noted in the minutes, some elected members left the meeting due to conflict of interests, and the meeting was declared inquorate, as such the recommendations were not considered.</p>
3.5	<p>On this basis the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is requested to endorse the recommendations as outlined in PEACEPLUS Local Community Action Plan (LCAP) report, as detailed in the minutes.</p>
3.6	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>All financial implications are covered through existing budgets, and the Good Relations Action Plan is included in the current estimates process.</p>
3.7	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>The recommendations of the Partnership are to promote the work of the Council in promoting good relations and will enhance equality and good relations impacts for the City of Belfast.</p>
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – Minutes of the Shared City Partnership 12th May 2025

This page is intentionally left blank

SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP

Monday 12th May, 2025

MEETING OF SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP HELD REMOTELY AND IN THE CONOR ROOM

Members present: Councillor J. Duffy (Chairperson) and
Councillors I. McLaughlin and Abernethy.

External Members: Ms. B. Arthurs, Community and Voluntary Sector;
Ms. L. Euler, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust;
Fr. M. Magill, Faith Representative;
Ms. T. Mimna, The Executive Office;
Mr. M. McBride, Education Authority;
Mr. G. Walker, Community and Voluntary Sector;
Ms. A. M. White, British Red Cross

In attendance: Mr. J. Girvan, Director of City and Neighbourhood Services;
Ms. D. McKinney, PEACE Programme Manager;
Mr. D. Robinson, Acting Senior Good Relations Officer;
MS. L. Dolan, Acting Senior Good Relations Officer; and
Mr. B. Flynn, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Mr. Naeem of the Interfaith Forum, together with Mr G. McCartney, Good Relations Manager.

A Member noted that the representatives of the PSNI had not attended meetings for several months. It was pointed out that the upcoming summer period was a time in Belfast when community relations could become strained and the Partnership agreed that its concerns in relation to the absence of the PSNI's representatives be conveyed onwards.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 8th April were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 18th April.

Declarations of Interest

In respect of the item 'PEACEPLUS - BCC Local Action Plan Update', declarations of interest were reported by Councillors Duffy and I. McLaughlin, as well as Independent Member Ms. B. Arthurs, in that they were associated with organisations which were in receipt of support under the terms of the plan. Mr. J. Girvan declared an interest also in the item in that he was related to a Member of the Council who was employed by an organisation in receipt of funding under the terms of the plan. They retired from the meeting whilst the matter was under discussion.

Good Relations Action Plan - Quarter 4 Update

The Partnership considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 To update the Shared City Partnership on the delivery of the Council's Good Relations Action Plan during Quarter 4 which covers the period January – March 2025.

2.0 Recommendation

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

3.0 Main Report

- 3.1 Members will be aware that the Council receives 75% of funding from The Executive Office (TEO) for the delivery of its annual Good Relations Action Plan.

The original total value of the Action Plan is £493,079.59. Within this the 75% contribution from TEO consists of £369,809.69 with the remaining 25%, or £123,269.90 being contributed by the Council. Of this overall total, £365,000 was allocated towards programmes.

- 3.2 In December, TEO offered the Council an additional resource of £38,170, at 100%. It was agreed that this be allocated towards programme activity. Therefore, the new Action Plan total for programme costs was £403,170.

- 3.3 Delivery of the Action Plan continued during quarter 4. In Q1, £181,714.48 was allocated. In Q2, a further £109,420 has been allocated. During Q3, £58,473 was allocated.

In Q4, £39,970 was allocated, giving a total allocation for programme during 2024/25 of £389,577.48. The small remaining amount of £13,592.52 will be reprofiled, along with any subsequent underspend as projects close, to offset the costs to the Council towards salaries and administration.

- 3.4 Members should also note that the Action Plan does not include the £128,700 allocated to the Council for work on refugee integration, or the Asylum Dispersal allocations totalling £406,228, all from TEO. These funds are in addition to the Action Plan as well as the delivery of actions within the Community Recovery Programme which is worth £600,000.

3.5 The following is a summary of update on activity and allocations within the Good Relations Action Plan during Q4:

Code	Project Summary	Budget	Progress in Quarter 3	Total allocated
BCC1	Good Relations Small Grants Programme.	£155,000	43 projects awarded funding in Q1. Projects closing.	£0
BCC2	St Patrick's Day Civic Events programme	£20,000	Programme completed	£0
BCC3	Positive Cultural Expression Programme	£20,000 (plus additional £13,170)	Beacon Demonstration event delivered in February.	£13,170 (from additional resource)
BCC4	Civic Engagement and Learning Programme	£20,000	Programme completed with small under-allocation.	
BCC5	Minority Ethnic Equality and Inclusion Programme	£60,000	March meeting of the Migrant Forum took place. Anti racism training Small under-allocation.	£300 £1,500
BCC6	Embedding Good Relations Programme	£0	This programme didn't proceed as a result of budget shortfall	£0
BCC7	Interface Engagement & tackling sectarianism and racism	£60,000	Programme completed	£0
BCC8	Shared Education Schools Programme	£20,000	Programme completed	£0
BCC 9	Strategic Connections and Support Programme	£10,000 (Plus an additional £25,000)	East Meets West Community Centre Programme Good Relations Strategy, Audit and Action Plan	£5,000 £20,000
	TOTAL	£403,170		£39,970

3.6 Financial and Resource Implications

All costs within the District Council's Good Relations Action Plan are covered within existing agreed budgets.

3.7 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

All activity within the District Council's Good Relations Action Plan

The Partnership noted the information set out within the report and agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it note the contents of the report also.

A general discussion ensued in relation to the prevalence of sectarianism across the City and the methodology used in evaluating the effectiveness of programmes funded through the action plan. It was noted that more qualitative data should be included in any future quarterly updates on the Action Plan, rather than just a report that dealt with financial issues. It was agreed also that consideration be given as to how the Interfaces Programme, as contained in the revised Good Relations Action Plan, could be delivered more effectively in order to focus particularly on sectarianism and the issues facing residents. It was noted also that there remained an onus on the Council and its Members to show greater leadership at a civic level to address the persistence of sectarianism in Belfast and other associated problems, such as racism.

The Acting Senior Good Relations Officer also provided an update on this year's forthcoming Day of Reflection on 21st June, information in respect of which would be circulated to the Members.

Good Relations Action Plan - Funding Update

Mr. Robinson, Acting Senior Good Relations Officer, reminded the Partnership that, at its previous meeting, it had noted that The Executive Office had indicated informally that the level of funding to be provided to oversee activity in 2025/26 would be sufficient to support the agreed programmes. However, since the previous meeting, the Good Relations Unit had been informed that the level of funding would, in fact, be £41,999.99 less than the figure originally communicated. Accordingly, the Acting Senior Good Relations Officer outlined a number of options for consideration and pointed out that, in previous years, the Council had received an additional in-year allocation as a result of monitoring rounds, which could be earmarked and reallocated to support the delivery of the programme in full in 2025/26.

The Partnership noted the comments of the Acting Senior Good Relations Officer and agreed that the programme for 2025/26 proceed as anticipated. The amount allocated towards programmes would remain the same and the deduction of the £41,999.99 would be taken from the salaries and administration element of the Action Plan programme.

The Partnership agreed that any in-year financial reallocation received would be reallocated towards salaries and administration, thus enabling the programme element to proceed as planned. It was noted that a report in relation to any reallocation received would be submitted for consideration and that an invitation be extended to representatives from The Executive Office to present to the Partnership in respect of the programme.

The Partnership agreed that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee be requested to note and endorse the course of action agreed by the Partnership.

PEACE IV Programme - Secretariat Update

Ms. McKinney reported that confirmation had been received from the Audit Authority that the Article 27 Audit of the Council's Programme had been completed successfully, which would enable SEUPB to progress final payments. In addition, the Partnership was informed that reimbursement of final claims for Children and Young People (that being £123.5K) and Building Positive Relations (that being £221K) that is, 'Claim 36', for the Shared Spaces and Services theme of £1.069 million had been received and reconciliation and reimbursement of funds was currently being progressed.

Noted.

Partnership Members' Update

The Partnership noted a number of verbal updates from various Members in relation to ongoing good relations issues across the Belfast.

PEACEPLUS Belfast City Council Local Action Plan – Update

(Councillors Duffy and I. McLaughlin, Mr. J. Girvan and Ms. Arthurs, who had all declared interests in the matter, left the meeting prior to consideration of the recommendations within the report.)

The Partnership considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Shared City Partnership members with an update on the mobilisation of PEACEPLUS 1.1. Co-designed Belfast Local Community Peace Action Plan (LCAP).

2.0 Recommendations

Members are requested to note the contents of the report and agree

- i. the revised CRT Animation Timeframe subject to SEUPB approval;**
- ii. the cross community breakdown for participants as outlined in Appendix II Option 2**

3.0 Main report

3.1 Letter of Offer (LoO) - Data Sharing Agreement

Correspondence has been issued to SEUPB's Director regarding finalising and agreeing the Data Sharing Agreement (DSA), which is becoming critical. SEUPB has advised they are seeking advice from Counsel and will advise Council in due course.

3.2 Contract Awards

Contract awards are continuing to progress, with further awards made to successful bidders as follows:

- TPC2 - Health & Wellbeing to Ashton with community partners
- CCD3 - LGBTQIA+ - Community Engagement Programme to The Rainbow Project

As previously reported, members should note that delivery partners have been requested to realign the implementation timeframes to condense delivery, where necessary, to ensure achievement of targets by December 2027.

3.3 Procurement

Final procurement checks are progressing for CCD2 Community Connections and CCD4 Community Empowerment Ex-Politically Motivated Prisoners, with formal contract awards imminent.

Clarifications for TPC3 Lot 4 Youth Empowerment are underway, and assessment of Lot 2 of CCD5 Multiculturalism to Interculturalism is progressing.

Members should note that feedback requests on the Lot 1 of CCD5 Multiculturalism to Interculturalism are ongoing, with a view to re-tendering the project by May 2025.

3.4 Mobilisation of Community Regeneration and Transformation

Procurements for the PQQ stage of the Integrated Consultancy Services (Design) for all capital projects were recently issued.

As reported in April 2025, alignment of the capital and animation timeframe is required to enable the achievement of targets. Given that construction works is expected to continue to May 2027, delivery of the animation activity, even with an extension, will be challenging.

The PEACEPLUS Programme Board, has considered delivery of animation activity across three phases of pre, during and post construction, as outlined in Appendix I CRT Animation Timeframe and recommend that the Shared City Partnership agree the revised timeframe, subject to agreement with SEUPB.

3.5 Programme Extension

A preliminary approach has been made to SEUPB to formally submit the extension request. SEUPB has advised that the extension request should be submitted via SEUPB's Modification Template once Council is formally contracted on JeMS.

Discussions with SEUPB on progressing formal contracting is progressing.

3.6 Monitoring and Evaluation

As referenced at 3.1 the Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) between Council and the SEUPB has not yet been agreed and signed. Proposed amendments from Council to the DSA are being considered by SEUPB's Counsel. These impacts finalising the Schedules of Processing (SOP's) between Council and Delivery Partners.

The Programme Board has considered the sharing of participant data and the risk to Council and Delivery Partners. It is recommended that as an interim measure, Delivery Partners submit participant databases, with personal data anonymised. Members are requested note this approach.

3.7 Cross Community Breakdown

Members are reminded that the cross-community breakdown of participants outlined in the PEACEPLUS Action Plan submission reflects the religious breakdown for Belfast based the 2021 Census data, which is Catholic 43%, Protestant 30%, Other Religions 3%, and No Religion 24%.

It was highlighted during the co-design and pre-market engagement phases, that the cross-community breakdown for projects reflective of participant age groups and area of delivery was critical. As such each project has individual cross community targets based on these factors, with the exception of TPC5 Employability (Language Up), which is based on those who do not have English as a first language.

- 3.8 As mobilisation of the Community Regeneration & Transformation (CRT) projects is progressing, consideration of the cross-community breakdown for projects based on the above factors (Option 1) has been compiled. However, a key aspect of the CRT projects is to attract people from other areas to the regenerated locations, and on this basis a further cross community breakdown of those within a 2-mile radius of the delivery area (Option 2), has been compiled. (Refer to Appendix II). As the LGBTQIA+ Hub is centrally located, the cross community split for Belfast has been applied.

Members should note that as each project assigned individual cross community targets, there are some rounding issues when figures from all projects are collated together, as outlined in the variances.

- 3.9 A Letter of Offer condition states that the 'community background of each cohort of participants should be confirmed and not vary from that set out in the application and detailed on JeMs.' As such applying a consistent rationale to achieve as close to the cross-community targets outlined in the Action Plan is required.

- 3.10 The Programme Board has considered the cross-community breakdown options and recommend that the Shared City Partnership

agree Option 2 as the preferred approach. It should also be noted that these are minimum cross community targets that delivery partners should be aiming to achieve and will not exclude anyone from participating in projects.

3.11 Governance

implementation of operation tier of the Governance structure is progressing, with meetings of the Thriving and Peaceful Communities (TPC) and Celebrating Cultures & Diversity (CCD) Thematic Steering Groups (TSG) scheduled for the 7 and 8 May 2025, respectively. Members are advised that the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the TGSs and streamlining of the Capital and Community Regeneration and Transformation TSG is being considered by the Programme Board. A further report on the proposed amends of the TSG will be presented to members at the next meeting.

3.12 Delivery Partner Support

Contract initiation meetings with appointed delivery partners are progressing. Further training workshops on the requirements for Data Sharing, Monitoring and Evaluation, Communications and Finance are scheduled for 14 May and 17 June 2025.

3.13 Financial Controller

An approach for management verification services for both the PEACEPLUS Action Plan and Reconnected Belfast projects, has been submitted to KPMG, as the first ranked contractor on SEUPB's Management Verification / Financial Controller Framework. KPMG has completed their initial checks and confirmed they have capacity to deliver services. A preliminary meeting to discuss the next steps has taken place. KPMG has advised they are to complete their onboarding process and agree a budget for the works with SEUPB.

3.14 Programme Risk Register

Members are reminded that quarterly risk updates will be reported, with delivery partner risks considered and escalated, as necessary. To date, 5 delivery partners have submitted Risk Registers that have been reviewed in line with the Programme Risk Register, and to date no additional risks have been identified.

Financial & Resource Implications

All expenditure associated with the PEACEPLUS Action Plan is eligible from 1 January 2024. Once SEUPB complete the formal contracting on JeMS, claims submission will progress. Claims expenditure from January 2024 to March 2025 is valued at £488,344 and relate solely to Salary and Office / Admin costs, preparation for the submission of claims on JeMS is progressing, although as referenced above xxx

claims submission will progress once the formal contracting on JeMS has been progressed.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

The PEACEPLUS Local Community Action Plan has been screened for equality, good relations and rural needs assessment, and has been screened out.

The Partnership was provided with an overview of the report.

(Councillor Abernethy in the Chair.)

Prior to considering the recommendations, the Acting Chairperson's attention was drawn to the fact that the meeting was inquorate in that only one Elected Member remained in attendance.

Accordingly, the meeting was declared to be at an end and it was noted that the above-mentioned report would be submitted to the meeting of the Strategic Policy Resources Committee on Friday 23rd May, with a request that it endorse the recommendations as set out.

Chairperson

This page is intentionally left blank

APPENDICES TO
Appendix I - CRT Animation Programme Timeline

Project	Targets	Original Timeframe	Target Audience	Key Activities	Pre - Construction	During Construction	Post Construction
CRT1						Jul 2026 - May 2027	Jun 2027 - Apr 2028
LGBTQIA+ Hub	470 Participants	Jan 2026 – Sept 2027	LGBTQIA+ individuals, parents and carers, BAME communities, wider community	Social events, Support Groups, Health Fair, Cultural Sessions, Therapeutic Programmes, Pride Events, Training		Initial commencement of all project activity - 186 Participants - target achievable	Ongoing delivery of all project activity - 284 Participants - target achievable
CRT2					Feb-Jun 2026	Feb 2027 - May 2027	Jun 2027 - Apr 2028
Annadale Open Space	800 Participants	Jan 2025 – Sept 2027	Cross Community residents, new residents, community groups / organisations, local youth practitioners, young people,	Event Management Training, Early Years/ Youth Training, Events, Detached Youth Work, Sports Sessions, Health & Wellbeing Sessions, Wildlife / Craft / Photography Workshops, Talks, Walks and Trips	Event management training, events, photography workshop	Training for earlier years providers and youth practitioners, detached youth work, sports sessions, health & wellbeing sessions, wildlife / gardening / craftsmanship / photography workshops, events, talks, walks and trips	
CRT3						May 2026 - May 2027	Jun 2027 - Apr 2028
Distillery Street	730 Participants 500 Attendees	Jan 2025 – Sept 2027	Cross Community residents, newer community residents, local artists	Focus Groups, Seasonal Animation, Weekend Events, Diversionsary Programme, Race together, Capacity Building, Environmental Learning, Site Regeneration, Cultural Celebrations	-	Initial commencement and ongoing delivery of all project activity. Participant, contact hours and activity numbers achievable through condensed delivery. Number of target meetings will not be achieved.	
CRT4						May 2026 - May 2027	Jun 2027 - Apr 2028
Access to the Hills	1,200 participants, 300 attendees	Jan 2025 – Sept 2027	Local and new residents, local community organisations, youth groups, primary schools	Capacity Building, Guided Walks and Talks, Educational / Celebration Events, Health Walks, Publications / Learning Resource, Forest School/ Sensory Classroom/ Story Telling, Outreach Session		Initial commencement and ongoing delivery of all project activity. Condensed delivery - walk targets achievable, costs remain the same. Query whether forest school sessions can take place during construction - other sites?	
CRT5					Jan 2026 - May 2026	Jun 2026 - May 2027	Jun 2027 - Apr 2028
Sanctuary Theatre	1,080 Participants	Sept 2024 – Sept 2027	Local and wider Belfast residents, pupils / staff from post primary schools, performers and crew, audience members, volunteers, stakeholders	Volunteering Programme, Performances, Discussions, Workshops, surveys, Drama Productions, marketing	Initial commencement of project activity - 232 Participants	Ongoing delivery of all project activity - 384 Participants	Ongoing delivery of all project activity - 464 Participants

Appendix II – Cross Community Breakdown Options for CRT projects within the Belfast PEACEPLUS Local Community Action Plan

Option 1 Cross Community Breakdown reflecting religion by target groups and delivery area

Theme	Project	Participant Target	% Catholic	% Protestant	% None	% Other
THRIVING & PEACEFUL COMMUNITIES - Actual						
TPC1	Community Empowerment Programme	1,000	49%	27%	21%	3%
TPC2	Health & Wellbeing Programme	1,620	56%	24%	18%	2%
TPC3.1	Youth Empowerment: Juniors (9-12)	1,500	47%	24%	26%	3%
TPC3.2	Youth Empowerment: Intermediate (12-15)	350	47%	24%	26%	3%
TPC3.3	Youth Empowerment: Seniors (16-18)	160	47%	24%	26%	3%
TPC3.4	Youth Empowerment: Young Adults (19-25)	96	47%	24%	26%	3%
TPC4	Sport for Peace	1,600	49%	26%	22%	3%
TPC5	Employability (Language Up)	816	23%	14%	42%	21%
TPC6	Arts Across the Genres	496	43%	30%	24%	3%
CELEBRATING CULTURES & DIVERSITY - Actual						
CCD1	Interfaith and Belief Programme	870	43%	30%	24%	3%
CCD2	Community Connections	726	43%	30%	24%	3%
CCD3	Belfast LGBTQIA+ Community Engagement Programme	625	43%	30%	24%	3%
CCD4	Community Empowerment - Ex Political Prisoners	750	43%	30%	24%	3%
CCD5.1	Multiculturalism: Cross Community Language & Cultural Access	1,110	43%	30%	24%	3%
CCD5.2	Multiculturalism: Cultural Spaces	426	43%	30%	24%	3%
CCD5.3	Multiculturalism: Flagship Events	404	43%	30%	24%	3%
CCD5.4	Multiculturalism: Culture and Built Heritage	625	43%	30%	24%	3%
OPTION 1 COMMUNITY REGENERATION & TRANSFORMATION - Proposed						
CRT1	LGBTQIA+ Hub	470	43%	30%	24%	3%
CRT2	Annadale Open Space	800	35%	22%	35%	8%
CRT3	Distillery Street Redevelopment Scheme	730	61%	24%	13%	2%
CRT4	Access to the Hills	1,200	57%	25%	16%	2%
CRT5	The Sanctuary Theatre	1,080	43%	30%	24%	3%
	Actual Community Split Avg	17,454	45%	27%	24%	4%
	Programme Overall Target		43%	30%	24%	3%

		Variance	2%	-3%	0%	1%
--	--	----------	----	-----	----	----

Option 2 Cross Community Breakdown reflecting religion by target groups and delivery area, with CRT delivery area 2 mi radius

Theme	Project	Participant Target	% Catholic	% Protestant	% None	% Other
THRIVING & PEACEFUL COMMUNITIES - Actual						
TPC1	Community Empowerment Programme	1,000	49%	27%	21%	3%
TPC2	Health & Wellbeing Programme	1,620	56%	24%	18%	2%
TPC3.1	Youth Empowerment: Juniors (9-12)	1,500	47%	24%	26%	3%
TPC3.2	Youth Empowerment: Intermediate (12-15)	350	47%	24%	26%	3%
TPC3.3	Youth Empowerment: Seniors (16-18)	160	47%	24%	26%	3%
TPC3.4	Youth Empowerment: Young Adults (19-25)	96	47%	24%	26%	3%
TPC4	Sport for Peace	1,600	49%	26%	22%	3%
TPC5	Employability (Language Up)	816	23%	14%	42%	21%
TPC6	Arts Across the Genres	496	43%	30%	24%	3%
CELEBRATING CULTURES & DIVERSITY - Actual						
CCD1	Interfaith and Belief Programme	870	43%	30%	24%	3%
CCD2	Community Connections	726	43%	30%	24%	3%
CCD3	Belfast LGBTQIA+ Community Engagement Programme	625	43%	30%	24%	3%
CCD4	Community Empowerment - Ex Political Prisoners	750	43%	30%	24%	3%
CCD5.1	Multiculturalism: Cross Community Language & Cultural Access	1,110	43%	30%	24%	3%
CCD5.2	Multiculturalism: Cultural Spaces	426	43%	30%	24%	3%
CCD5.3	Multiculturalism: Flagship Events	404	43%	30%	24%	3%
CCD5.4	Multiculturalism: Culture and Built Heritage	625	43%	30%	24%	3%
OPTION 2 COMMUNITY REGENERATION & TRANSFORMATION - Proposed						
CRT1	LGBTQIA+ Hub	470	43%	30%	24%	3%
CRT2	Annadale Open Space	800	36%	30%	29%	5%
CRT3	Distillery Street Redevelopment Scheme	730	46%	26%	24%	4%
CRT4	Access to the Hills	1,200	42%	37%	19%	2%
CRT5	The Sanctuary Theatre	1,080	29%	36%	31%	4%
	Actual Community Split Avg		43%	28%	25%	4%
	Programme Overall Target		43%	30%	24%	3%

		Variance	0%	-2%	1%	1%
--	--	----------	----	-----	----	----



Subject:	Equality & Diversity: Equality Screening and Rural Needs Outcome Report Quarter 4 2024-25
Date:	23 May 2025
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, City Solicitor and Director of Legal & Civic Services
Contact Officers:	Russell Connelly, Policy, Research and Compliance Officer

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to set out the Quarterly Screening Outcome Report of equality screenings and rural needs impact assessments for Quarter 4 2024-25.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>It is recommended that Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the Quarterly Screening Outcome Report which will be published on the Council's website.
3.0	Main report
	<u>Background</u>
3.1	<p>As Members will be aware, the Council has a duty to have, under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity in relation to the nine equality categories; and Regard to the desirability of promotion good relations
3.2	<p>In addition, under section 1 of the Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans, and when designing and delivering public services.
3.3	<p>To this end, the Council has a process to carry out equality screening and rural needs assessment of new and revised policies. This allows any impacts related to equality of opportunity, good relations or rural needs to be identified and addressed.</p>
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.4	<p>An equality screening and rural needs impact assessment template is completed by the relevant officer, in collaboration with the Equality and Diversity Unit. On a regular basis, the Unit collates all completed templates into a screening outcome report and publishes onto the Council's website along with the relevant completed templates. The current screening outcome report for Quarter 4 2024-25 is attached at Appendix 1.</p>
	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u>
3.5	<p>None.</p>
	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u>
3.6	<p>This report contributes to the Council's compliance with section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Rural Needs Act 2016.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – Screening Outcome Report for Quarter 4 2024-25.



Belfast
City Council

**Equality Screening Outcome Report and Rural Needs Impact Assessment
from January – March 2025**

Introduction

Legislation – An Overview

Section 75 Statutory Equality Duties

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The council also committed within its Revised Equality Scheme to prepare and publish for information regular reports on its screening exercises. This is screening report providing details on all screenings undertaken from the period July - September 2024.

Rural Needs Impact Assessments

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

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

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

Consultation

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

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

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

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

Direct Line 02890 270555
or 028 9032 0202 ext 6315

email: equality@belfastcity.gov.uk or oneillbridgeen@belfastcity.gov.uk

Screening Outcome

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

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

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

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

Screening Outcome Options

Major= In

Minor= Out with mitigation

None= Out without mitigation

Rural Needs Impact Assessment Options

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

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

This report includes published screenings and Rural Needs Impact Assessments for the period Jan to March 2025. Copies can be found at:-

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

Description of Policy/Proposal	Rural Needs Impact Assessment Outcome	ECNI Screening Decision
Changing Places Toilet Policy	The Changing Places Toilet Policy applies across the entire area of Belfast City Council and aims to address the inequalities experienced by disabled people. Therefore, this Policy will have a positive impact on people throughout the council area, including the rural areas.	No EQIA necessary – no impacts
Regeneration Framework	No rural needs were identified	No EQIA necessary – no impacts
Language Strategy Action Plan	No rural needs were identified	No EQIA necessary – no impacts
Implementation of the Little York Street – Little Patrick Street Public Realm / Placemaking Project and Lancaster Street Improvement Works	No rural needs were identified	Screened Out - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)
Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme	No rural needs were identified	Screened Out - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)

This page is intentionally left blank



Subject:	Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 – DAERA Annual Monitoring Report
Date:	23 May 2025
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, City Solicitor and Director of Legal & Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Russell Connelly, Policy, Research and Compliance Officer

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

☐

No

☒

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

Insert number

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

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

☐
☐
☐
☐

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

☒

No

☐

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To provide the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee with the Council's annual monitoring return (the "Annual Return"), which provides evidence of how the Council has met certain duties under the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 (the "Act").

2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to approve the submission of the Council's Annual Return for 2024 – 2025 (attached to this report as Appendix 1) to DAERA, subject to ratification by the Council at its meeting on 2 June.
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Background</u>
3.1	As Members will be aware, the rural population of Belfast is comprised of the small settlements of Edenderry, Hannahstown and Loughview.
3.2	Section 1(1) of the Act requires public authorities to have due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans, and when designing and delivering public services.
3.3	As part of that duty, Council officers complete Rural Needs Impact Assessments.
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.4	Section 3(1) of the Act requires public authorities to: (i) compile information on the exercise of their functions, (ii) include that information in annual reports and (iii) send that information to DAERA.
3.5	The Annual Return is designed to inform stakeholders and other interested parties of how the Council has had due regard to rural needs in the exercise of its functions. The attached Annual Return shows how the Council has met this duty for 2024-25.
	<u>Next Steps</u>
3.6	Subject to Committee and Council approval, the Annual Return will be submitted to DAERA next month for inclusion in its Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report.
3.7	A copy of the Annual Return, together with a list of the completed Rural Needs Impact Assessments will be published on the Council's website, as the Council does not have an annual report.
	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u>
3.8	Officers from across the organisation are involved in completing Rural Needs Impact Assessments and the Equality and Diversity Unit have corporate responsibility for collating this information.
	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u>
3.9	The Annual Return provides evidence as to how the Council has met its duty under the Act to have due regard to Rural Needs.
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
	Appendix 1: Annual Monitoring Return to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Appendix 2 - Template for Information to be Compiled

Information to be compiled by Public Authorities under Section 3(1)(a) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.

(To be completed and included in public authorities' own annual reports and submitted to DAERA for inclusion in the Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report).

Name of Public Authority:

Reporting Period: April 20 to March 20

The following information should be compiled in respect of each policy, strategy and plan which has been developed, adopted, implemented, or revised and each public service which has been designed or delivered by the public authority during the reporting period.

<i>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016¹.</i>	<i>The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to².</i>	<i>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing, or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service³.</i>
Introduction of a kerbside recycling scheme for the collection of glass from additional households in outer Belfast	N/A	No rural needs were identified
Development and implementation of the Belfast Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy	N/A	No rural needs were identified

<i>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016¹.</i>	<i>The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to².</i>	<i>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing, or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service³.</i>
Delivery of a Social Supermarket Support Fund	N/A	No rural needs were identified
Development of a Draft Changing Places Toilets Policy	Rural Tourism	The Changing Places Toilet Policy applies across the entire area of Belfast City Council and aims to address the inequalities experienced by disabled people. Therefore, this Policy will have a positive impact on people throughout the council area, including the rural areas.
Development of the Language Strategy Action Plan 2024 - 2026	N/A	No rural needs were identified
Implementation of the Little York Street Little Patrick Street Public Realm / Placemaking Project and Lancaster Street Improvement Works	N/A	No rural needs were identified
Regeneration Framework	N/A	No rural needs were identified
Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme	N/A	No rural needs were identified

NOTES

1. This information should normally be contained in section 1B of the RNIA Template completed in respect of the activity.
2. This information should normally be contained in section 2D of the RNIA Template completed in respect of the activity.
3. The information contained in sections 3D, 4A & 5B of the RNIA Template should be considered when completing this section.

Minutes of Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum Thursday 15th May 2025

Attendance

Members:

Councillor Michael Long
Councillor Ryan Murphy
Councillor Sarah Bunting
Councillor Séamas de Faoite
Councillor Áine Groogan
Alderman Sonia Copeland

Apologies: Councillor Ciaran Beattie

Officers:

John Walsh, Chief Executive
Sharon McNicholl, Deputy Chief Executive/Strategic Director of Corporate Services
Nora Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
Trevor Wallace, Director of Finance
Damien Martin, Strategic Director of Place & Economy
David Sales, Strategic Director of City & Neighbourhood Services
Jim Girvan, Director of Neighbourhood Services (for Item 4)
Margaret Higgins, Lead Officer (for Item 4)
Kate Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control (for Item 6, 9 & 10)
Stephen Leonard, Director of Resources, Fleet & OSS (for Item 10)
Joanne Delaney, Portfolio and Programme Coordinator (secretariat)

1. Northern Ireland Hotels Federation

The Chief Executive welcomed Janice Gault from the Northern Ireland Hotels Federation. The representative body for hotels, guesthouses and other accommodation providers in Northern Ireland. She briefed Members on the work undertaken by the Federation and circulated a copy of a report on the hotel market in Belfast which the federation had compiled. There was detailed discussion on investment in the hotel sector in Belfast and the current opportunities and challenges involved in the market. In relation to enforcement of usage of Private Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) outside of the student market, it was noted that the Director of Planning & Building Control would follow up. The Director to also link in with the Federation in relation to them being added to the list of consultees for PBSA planning applications going forward. A query was raised by a Member in terms of current pricing structures in the City and it was noted that Janice could provide a summary of the data requested. Members also discussed the many challenges and potential opportunities in considering a Tourism Tax model and noted that this would require further discussion. An electronic copy of the report discussed to be circulated following the meeting.

2. West Wellbeing Funding Request

The Chief Executive referred to a request made for funding under a Notion of Motion for the West Wellbeing Suicide Prevention Centre proposed by Councillor Collins. It was noted that Officers had been unable to source a contact for representatives to attend this meeting and it was agreed Officers to follow up in order to invite representatives to attend a future meeting.

3. Discretionary Payments

The Director of Finance provided an update on the criteria for the June round of funding, under the Discretionary Payments Scheme to allocate funding from underspends to groups/organisations. He outlined the current funding requests received and the funding limit and advised a report with the detail discussed will be considered at May SP&R Committee.

4. Social Supermarket Fund

The Director of Neighbourhood Services provided an update following the decision agreed by April SP&R Committee to not proceed with the current process and to reissue the applications for the programme. Detailed discussion followed on the revised approach and the Director outlined three options for consideration. Members also discussed considering other data alongside multiple deprivation data when reviewing the criteria and weighting assessment. The Director to consider the feedback provided in advance of a report going to May SP&R for consideration.

Clarity was sought by a Member in relation to the allocation of the bridging funding and which organisations would receive this funding. The Director to follow up and confirm agreed approach and the update to be included in the May Committee report.

5. Freedom of the City

The Chief Executive outlined for Members a proposed request from a Member for the conferment of the Freedom of the City. The Member provided a subsequent update following the request made which was noted.

6. Overview of Eastern Transport Plan

The Director of Planning and Building Control presented an overview of the Eastern Transport Plan for the city and four of the surrounding Local Authority areas being developed by the Department for Infrastructure. She outlined the approach, delivery timescales along

with an overview of the vision, objectives and general principles. It was noted that the CG&R Committee had agreed to receive a presentation from the Department for Infrastructure in relation to the Plan and a special CG&R Committee has been arranged at the end of May. Members to contact the Director with any queries they may have in advance of the special CG&R Committee.

7. City Centre Leadership & Coordination

The Strategic Director of Place & Economy referred to a previous proposal put forward by the Belfast Chamber for a multi-agency task force in relation to the City Centre. He presented the revised proposed governance model and approach in the context of the City Centre following review and consultation with other key stakeholders. Members also considered the proposed Membership which included Belfast Chamber, and it was noted that representatives from the Community & Voluntary sector from inner city areas should also be included. It was also agreed that there is ongoing engagement with Belfast Harbour in relation to this programme of work. A copy of the proposed model is to be circulated to Members to further consider.

Discussion ensued on some of the current issues in relation to the City Centre and it was agreed that a City Centre walk would be organised for Party Group Leaders and representatives from the relevant statutory agencies to allow for collaborative discussions to take place on key issues currently affecting the City Centre.

In relation to a query raised around the challenges with Commercial Waste the City Solicitor to follow up.

8. Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2026

The Strategic Director of Place & Economy presented an update in relation to the successful bid from Council in partnership with Ards CEE to host the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in 2026. The Director outlined the key priorities, which included an update on resourcing, communications & engagement, accommodation and regulatory issues to be considered. Members also considered the proposed governance structure and there was consensus given the significance of the event that consideration is given to establishing a Member Working Group. Updates will be brought back to the Forum as this work progresses.

9. Planning Update

The Director of Planning and Building Control updated the Forum on the live planning applications that had been considered at the May Planning Committee. In relation to a query raised by a Member the Director and City Solicitor to follow up and provide an update for the Member. Members also noted the year end performance for 2024/25.

10. AOB

Illuminate Requests

The City Solicitor outlined for Members a number of illuminate requests received. Members noted the following requests would be agreed under the City Solicitors delegated authority.

- **30th Anniversary of the Genocide at Srebrenica – 25 June 2025**
- **Female Gender Related Cancer awareness – 1 October 2025**
- **Black History Month & Show Racism the Red Card – 17 October 2025**

Lighthouse Building

The Chief Executive provided an update in relation to a proposed change of use from office use to residential use for the Lighthouse Building, in the Gasworks Estate which was deferred at April SP&R Committee. Members noted correspondence received following deferral and that this request would need to go back to SP&R for consideration.

Closed Bin Policy/Removal of Liners

The City Solicitor provided an update on the Closed Bin Lid Policy and the removal of liners recently agreed at April P&C Committee and highlighted the legislative requirements in order to ensure the Health and Safety of waste collection operatives as they carry out their collection duties. Members were supportive of the new policy but highlighted some areas of concern in relation to the new process for both staff and residents and outlined steps that could potentially be put in place in order to mitigate for those areas of concern. The importance of ongoing effective communication was also highlighted and the consideration to be given to visual communication products. The Strategic Director of City & Neighbourhood Services to consider the points raised in advance of a report going to June P&C Committee. Members to contact the Strategic Director or the Director of Resources, Fleet & OSS with any specific concerns they may have in advance of June P&C Committee.

Land at Boucher

The Chief Executive provided a briefing on an issue that had arisen in relation to a piece of land at Boucher and advised that the Director of Property & Projects was currently reviewing and an update will be provided for Members in due course.

Council Assets

The Deputy Chief Executive/Strategic Director of Corporate Services provided an update on the background around the operating model for a council owned asset. Members discussed the need to consider potential future use before progressing with any new operating model and it was agreed that this would be put on the agenda for the Efficiency/Consultancy workshop being arranged for Members in June.

Members also discussed the use of assets including vacant assets across the Council estate and how they may be better utilised. The Director of Finance advised that work was already ongoing in relation to some of the points raised and that this could also be considered at the upcoming workshop. A Member also made reference to the use of council owned cemeteries for historical tours and it was agreed that a tour would be arranged for Party Group Leaders.

Pilot Sunday City Animation Project

The Director of Planning and Building Control provided an update on the engagement work underway with key stakeholders in relation to the pilot Sunday city animation project and advised that a report will be brought to June SP&R Committee following the engagement process. Members also discussed other potential animation projects both in the City Centre and outside the City Centre and the benefit of looking at the approach by other Local Authorities. The Chief Executive advised that a visit to Dublin City Council was already being considered.

A Member also referred to some enforcement issues that had arisen and how they were being applied during the recent Belfast Marathon. The Director of Planning and Building Control advised that she is following up and arranging a meeting with the relevant statutory agencies to discuss. An update will be provided for Members at a future meeting.

Developer Contributions for Wastewater Infrastructure – Consultation

The Director of Planning and Building Control advised that the Department for Infrastructure is seeking comments on Developer Contributions for Wastewater Infrastructure. She outlined the content of the consultation document and provided a summary update on the proposed draft Council response. The draft response will be brought to May SP&R Committee in advance of submission for Members consideration.

Fly Tipping

A Member raised an issue in relation to fly tipping in South Belfast and given the complexities in relation to the site it was agreed that this would be considered at the next Bonfire Panel which was being arranged.

International Relations Framework

It was noted that the International Relations Framework would be added to the agenda for the Party Group Leaders meeting on 29 May. Consideration to be given to a number of issues raised by a Member for which the Strategic Director of Place & Economy to follow up.



Belfast
City Council

Subject:	Requests for use of the City Hall and the provision of Hospitality
Date:	23 May 2025
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Aisling Milliken, Functions and Exhibition Manager

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	This paper, together with the attached appendix, contains the recommended approach in respect of each of the requests by external organisations for access to the City Hall function

	rooms received up to 9 May 2025.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the recommendations as set out in Appendix 1.
3.0	Main report
	<u>Background Information</u>
3.1	The current criteria for use of the function rooms used to review external applications is set out below.
3.2	<p>Functions permitted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • functions which support other events in the city and which are of demonstrable economic benefit to Belfast whether organised by the council or not. • functions which demonstrably enhance the city's image nationally or internationally as a desirable commercial, business or tourist destination. • functions designed to celebrate or commemorate a notable achievement or significant anniversary (25, 50, 100 years) by an organisation or body with close links to the city or province. • functions organised by recognised local community or voluntary sector groups for non-profit and non-political purposes.
3.3	<p>Functions not permitted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conferences, meetings, seminars, performances, wedding receptions, private parties or receptions and similar booking requests in the prestige function rooms. • functions, which have as their principal purpose the generation of commercial gain for the organisers. Charity-fundraising functions are managed by the Lord Mayor's Office. • functions which have no compelling links to the council or the city specifically and which could instead use local private sector facilities. • functions which have as their primary purpose the advancement of any political or religious cause or campaign or are otherwise potentially contentious or involve significant reputation risks for the council. • functions which involve exceptionally large or disruptive set-ups or pose a real and tangible risk to the fabric of the building or grounds.
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.4	Committee will recall that at its meeting on 24 th May 2024, it considered an update on the City Hall Income Generation Project. Committee was advised that charging for the use of the Council's function rooms will be considered as part of a later stage of this project. This will include looking at a review of the current pricing structure and the provision of hospitality.

	Pending this work being brought to Committee, delegated authority was given to the City Solicitor and Director of Legal & Civic Services to depart from the existing charging structure and negotiate room hire charges for commercial type events.
3.5	The standard charging structure will apply to the event listed in the Schedule at Appendix 1.
	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u>
3.6	None, any recommendations for hospitality will be met from existing budgets.
	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</u>
3.7	None.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 - Schedule of function requests received up to 9 May 2025.

This page is intentionally left blank

MAY 2025 CITY HALL FUNCTION APPLICATIONS

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED
Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC)	5 September 2025	NILGOSC's 75th anniversary lunch Reception, Lunch, Presentations, and entertainment. Numbers attending – 90	C	Room hire £450	Drinks Reception as significant anniversary
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust	25 November 2025	Belfast Trust Chairman's Awards 2025 – Awards ceremony to recognise the contributions and achievements of the staff in the Belfast Trust. Numbers attending – 300	C	Room hire £1250	
Telugu Cultural Society of Northern Ireland (TCSNI)	4 April 2026	Celebration of Ugadi 2026 "Beginning of a New Age" an evening of food and entertainment to celebrate New Year's Day for the people of the Deccan region of India. Numbers attending – 300 - 400	C	Current rate free as Voluntary Community Group	Yes, Tea and Coffee Reception as Voluntary Community Group
Queen's University Belfast on behalf of Civil Engineering Research Association of Ireland	18 June 2026	Conference Dinner and Awards Evening for CERA Conference for guests attending 3-day conference at Queens. Numbers attending: 220	A & B	Room hire £1250	
Sons of Ulster Shankill Road Flute Band	3 October 2026	60th Anniversary Celebration Drinks Reception, Dinner, Presentations, and entertainment. Numbers attending – 100	C	Current rate free as Voluntary Community Group	Drinks Reception as significant anniversary

This page is intentionally left blank



Subject:	Request for use of City Hall grounds for Belfast TradFest 2025
Date:	23 May 2025
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Aisling Milliken, Functions and Exhibition Manager

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	To consider request from TradFest for 5 day use of City Hall grounds between 28th July and 1 st August 2025.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is requested to approve the use of City Hall grounds between 28th July and 1st August 2025 for TradFest subject to the submission of an event management plan, risk assessment and the appointment of an event controller to ensure delivery of a safe public events.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Background Information</u></p> <p>Members will be aware that requests for the use of City Hall are normally dealt with under the authority delegated by the Committee to the Director of Legal and Civic Services using criteria agreed for this purpose. Occasionally however, it is necessary to place such requests directly before the Committee, and the request set out below falls into this category.</p> <p><u>The Proposed event – TradFest</u></p>
3.2	Belfast TradFest, described as “the pinnacle of world-class traditional music concerts, fiery pub sessions & Ireland’s fastest growing summer school of traditional music, is set to celebrate its 7th edition across Belfast UNESCO City of Music” from Sunday 27th July – Sunday 3rd August 2025.
3.3	TradFest is a registered charity and Belfast City Council funds the festival through it’s Cultural Multi-Annual funding, and organisers plan to use Belfast City Council branding for the site, if available.
3.4	As part of the festival, TradFest wish to host a 5-day family-friendly outdoor music stage on the grounds of Belfast City Hall from Monday 28th July to Friday 1st August, running daily from 1pm to 5pm. This vibrant stage will showcase the finest up-and-coming traditional music talent from Belfast and beyond. The event would take place from 1pm to 5pm each day and would be free to enter. There would be no catering, trading or sale of alcohol.
3.5	The proposed event would take place on the front west lawn only and areas such as the East Lawn, the Titanic Garden and Cenotaph will remain open to the public. Access to the City Hall building will not be affected. The organiser would provide an Event Management Plan, risk assessment, insurance, stewarding/marshalling staff & first aiders and would comply with the Council’s standard conditions for hire etc.
3.6	Sound levels from the outdoor stage would be monitored mindful of event proximity to the committee rooms, party rooms and Chief Executive’s offices.

	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u>
3.7	There would be no costs for the council as the various organisers would bear any/all stewarding and equipment costs etc themselves. The utilities costs on event day are of a very minor nature and the normal event support in the form of electrical and water provision in the grounds will be provided.
3.8	There are no concerns from an asset management point of view, although the organisers would be required to provide the usual insurances, indemnities, and obligations.
	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u>
3.9	There are no direct good relations, equality or rural needs implications arising from this report.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None

This page is intentionally left blank

Social Policy Working Group

Tuesday, 13th May, 2025

MEETING OF THE SOCIAL POLICY WORKING GROUP

HELD IN THE CONOR ROOM AND
REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

- Members present: Councillor Doherty (Chairperson);
Alderman Copeland; and
Councillors F. McAteer, I. McLaughlin and R. McLaughlin.
- In attendance: Ms. S. McNicholl, Deputy Chief Executive/Director
of Corporate Services;
Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic
Services;
Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;
Ms. C. Sheridan, Director of Human Resources;
Ms. N. Bohill, Head of Commercial and Procurement
Services;
Mr. K. Heaney, Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty;
Ms. C. Hutchinson, Strategic Planning and Policy Officer;
Ms. C. Christy, HR Manager (Development);
Mr. L. Murray, Strategic Category Manager;
Ms. C. Patterson, Policy and Programme Manager,
Inclusive Growth;
Ms. M. Robinson, Belfast Business Coordinator;
Ms. K. Murtagh, Enterprise and Business Growth Officer;
Mr. K. Quinn, Employability and Skills Officer; and
Mr. C. Mealey, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Smyth.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 11th February, 2025 were approved by the Working Group.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

Actions Update

The Working Group noted the Decision and Action Tracker.

Social Value Procurement Policy (SVPP)

SVPP - Review

The Working Group considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

To provide Members with an update on proposed amendments to the current Social Value Procurement Policy ‘SVPP’ and ask Members to approve and/or provide further feedback on the proposed approach i.e. publish a new Sustainable Procurement Policy.

2.0 Background

The Council has two procurement policies in place:

1. [Social Value Procurement Policy](#) - this external facing policy, introduced in June 2022, outlines the Council’s commitment and strategic approach to embedding social value into its procurement processes, supported by a two-step toolkit and officer training. It sets the expectations for suppliers and stakeholders in supporting the Council’s ambitions around inclusive growth and sustainability
2. [Procurement Policy](#) - this internal policy (currently being updated in line with the Procurement Act 2023) sets out the standards of behaviour, actions, and procedures expected of Officers when procuring goods, services, and works for the Council. It also includes defined requirements around sustainable and ethical procurement practices, ensuring that these principles are embedded in day-to-day procurement activity. It incorporates:
 - Sustainability aims aligned with the Belfast Agenda and Inclusive Growth Strategy
 - Ethical procurement expectations for both officers and suppliers, underpinned by the Council’s Code of Conduct
 - Compliance with legislative requirements (e.g. Modern Slavery Act, Fair Employment)
 - Guidance on local supplier inclusion for low-value quotations
 - Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply ‘CIPS’ Ethics Kite Mark accreditation and annual training for officers

Together, these policies ensure procurement activity reflects the Council's values of fairness, transparency, inclusion, and environmental responsibility.

Since these policies have been implemented, the Council has committed to a number of other strategies and action plans which will require extending the scope/ influence of the Council's procurement policies. These include:-

1. Climate Action Plan (and Corporate Plan) which sets out a number of procurement actions including:
 - Develop a sustainable/ low carbon procurement policy and supplier guidance documents to support a transition to an inclusive, net zero
 - and resilient future
 - Through sustainable procurement, aim to use local suppliers to the Council to reduce miles travelled within the confines of procurement legislation and Local Govt Act restrictions
 - Scope out a strategy to increase renewable and low-carbon energy use through corporate power purchase agreements
2. Single Use Plastics 'SUP' Policy (draft/ in development) which includes a number of procurement related actions to reduce the use of SUP in the Council's supply chains.
3. Sustainable Food Policy (draft/ in development) which includes a number of procurement related actions about how we procure food in a sustainable way.
4. Notice of Motion at Feb 25 SP&R and update paper at March 25 SP&R regarding developing a new ethical procurement policy
5. Race Equality Action Plan – to be reviewed when available

At April's S,P&R, members approved a review of the Social Value Policy to include wider ethical procurement considerations. As per the paper approved by members, this review would ensure an aligned 'sustainable procurement policy' is put in place setting out clear expectations of standards for suppliers regarding ethical, social value and environmental/low carbon considerations, having regard to the international guidance set out in this report, and how this might be factored into tender evaluations.

3.0 Sustainable Procurement

The term 'Sustainable Procurement' is widely accepted across organisations in the public and private sector to mean the

integration of ethical, social, economic and environmental criteria into an organisation's procurement processes.

Some examples include:

[Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply](#) defines it as *'Sustainable procurement supports the sustainability goals of the organisation and optimises the environmental, social, and economic impacts over the life cycle of the product or service.'*

Sustainable Procurement Task Force defined it as *'a process whereby organisations meet their needs for goods, services, works and utilities in a way that achieves value for money on a whole life basis in terms of generating benefits not only to the organisation, but also to society and the economy, whilst minimising damage to the environment.'*

[The International Organisation of Standardisation \(ISO\)](#) (ISO 20400 sustainable procurement accreditation) defines sustainable procurement/ development as *'integrating the goals of a high quality of life, health and prosperity with social justice and maintaining the earth's capacity to support life in all its diversity. These social, economic and environmental goals are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Sustainable development can be treated as a way of expressing the broader expectations of society as a whole.'*

A recent benchmarking exercise conducted by CPS when considering a new sustainable/ low carbon procurement policy, found that across the UK and Ireland 'sustainable procurement' is used as an overarching term that includes ethical, social, economic and, environmental/ low carbon considerations.

Some examples include:

- [The City of Edinburgh Council](#) - Sustainable Procurement Policy
- [Cambridge County Council](#) – Sustainable Procurement Strategy

In order to address current open actions as described in section 2, it is an opportune time to develop one externally facing procurement policy, positioned as a Sustainable Procurement Policy.

The most effective way to achieve this is to update/develop our SVPP and any associated toolkits and guidance.

3.0 Potential development/improvements of the current SVPP for the new Sustainable Procurement Policy

At this stage the following areas have been considered as key development/improvements areas:

Ethical Procurement

- Expand further on the visibility and scrutiny of our supplier's supply chains and associated business operations to ensure supply chain practices adhere to ethical standards. These standards typically include labour rights, environmental sustainability, fair trade practices, and human rights. This might include supply chain audits/mapping, associated reporting and application of contract remedies for any found unethical practices e.g. termination.

Social Value

- Build on the good work done to date with the SVPP but refine certain areas based on lessons learned to date e.g. short duration projects and review initiatives, points and weightings to ensure these are fit for purpose

Align the current social value initiatives, associated scoring and evaluation with developments in ethical and environmental/ low carbon procurement

Environmental/ Low Carbon

- Set out expectations from our suppliers on Scope 3 emission data reporting and how the Council will use this data
- Suppliers to publish and report progress on carbon reduction plans
- Develop a toolkit for Officers to use to improve consistency when including low carbon standards in specifications when procuring goods, services and works to help lower the Council's carbon footprint. This would include procurement related actions under SUP policy and Sustainable Food policy.

Current supplier guidance document and toolkit for Officers would be updated to incorporate these requirements.

All updates/additions will also be reviewed in line relevant legislation to ensure compliance i.e. Local Govt Act and Procurement Act.

4.0 Recommended approach

It is recommended that the SVPP and associated guidance and toolkit is updated, as outlined above, to create a new Sustainable Procurement Policy.

Benefits of doing so include:

- Alignment with definitions and wider understanding of what Sustainable Procurement incorporates and approaches by other GB and Irish councils
- Simplified approach and consistent message to our suppliers with one externally facing procurement policy
- Allows us to build on the positive outcomes the SVPP has delivered to date and refine/ develop these further
- Provides a clear message to our suppliers of the Council's approach to procurement and the associated ethical, social, economic and environmental standards expected
- Easier to manage and co-ordinate guidance and training for Officers
- Easier to monitor and manage outputs under the one policy
- Easier to manage future developments in line with sustainable procurement best practice and Council strategies and corporate plans.

In addition, the Council's internal facing Procurement Policy would be reviewed and aligned with the content of the Sustainable Procurement Policy.

5.0 Proposed timescales and next steps

The most complex area of work is in the environmental/ low carbon standards workstream which will take longer to finalise due to the level of work involved in researching and developing the low carbon toolkit including wider stakeholder engagement required. This is to ensure any standards included are achievable, affordable and will make a material impact to the Council's carbon footprint.

Interim policy updates could be adopted sooner and applied via work instructions to Officers whilst the Sustainable Procurement Policy is finalised should any be a priority during FY25/26 e.g. ethical procurement considerations.

The aim is for the Sustainable Procurement Policy to be drafted and implemented before the end of FY25/26 subject to any public consultation and Council ratification, if required.

Progress updates will be presented and discussed at each SPWG during 25/26.

Members are welcome to send through any feedback/ input to the Sustainable Procurement Policy content to Lewis Murray in CPS at any time for consideration.”

During discussion, the Head of Commercial and Procurement Services, in response to a Member’s question in relation to the Council’s internal Procurement Policy and the measures that were in place to ensure supplier compliance with legislative requirements, advised that further information in respect of best practice would be brought back to the Working Group.

In response to a Member’s query regarding ethical procurement and the timescales associated with the implementation of ethical procurement provisions within the current SVPP, the City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services advised that a report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Working Group to provide further detail on the issues raised.

After discussion, the Working Group agreed that a report on ethical procurement be submitted to a special meeting of the Working Group in June.

SVPP - Short Duration Projects

The Working Group considered a report that outlined a proposed amendment to the SVPP to provide officers with flexibility in applying social value to tender competitions for short duration contracts of six months or less.

The Working Group approved the recommended amendment to the SVPP.

SVPP - Delivery Report

The Head of Commercial and Procurement Services provided the Working Group with an update on the delivery of social value outcomes via open tender competitions awarded in accordance with SVPP for the reporting period 1st December, 2024 – 31st March, 2025.

Noted.

Belfast Business Promise

The Belfast Business Promise Programme Coordinator presented the Working Group with a progress update on the Belfast Business Promise (BPP) that included:

- **Accreditation:**
 - 173 pledges accredited to date;
 - 16 organisations had achieved ‘Member’ accreditation to date; and
 - 8 organisations had achieved ‘Ambassador’ accreditation to date.

- **Technical Panels** - Site visits scheduled June – August, 2025 and Technical Panels scheduled for August, 2025.
- **Belfast City Council Progress** - Achieved 'Ambassador' accreditation in May, 2025 and JAM card e-learning ongoing.
- **Staffing** - Officer posts extended December 2025.
- **Peer Support Networks:**
 - 'Work in partnership with our communities' – Ulster Bank, 4th June 2025;
 - Real Living Wage Accreditation - Belfast City Council, July 2025; and
 - 'Better on Board' – Translink, Autumn 2025.
- **Communications:**
 - Further development of website to enhance visibility and share resources across BBP Network;
 - BBP coverage in Belfast City Matters June magazine;
 - Digital Badges went live in April, 2025 with 8 organisations availing of offer to date including Labour Relations Agency, Mount Charles Group and West Belfast Partnership Board; and
 - BPP Newsletter went live in February, 2025.
- **JAM Card Bursary** - Up to 80 organisations to be supported (Micro, SME and VCSE) and BBP organisations undergoing JAM card e-learning.
- **Promise Learning Days** - 11th September and 27th November, 2025.

The Working Group thanked the Programme Coordinator and the BBP team for the work that had been undertaken and highlighted the success of the programme to date.

Noted.

Forward Work Plan

The Working Group considered a report in relation to the development of a renewed forward work programme.

The Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty reminded Members that the terms of reference for the Working Group were agreed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in 2021 and highlighted that it had been the key driver in helping the Council progress towards inclusive growth with notable achievements including:

- The first Council in Northern Ireland to secure Real Living Wage accreditation;
- The development and implementation of the Social Value Procurement Policy and Toolkit;
- The co-design and testing of the Belfast Business Promise;
- The identification of inclusive growth priority groups;
- The continued development of demand driven employment academies and the Labour Market Partnership;
- The on-going development of an Inclusive Growth Index and Inclusive Growth Toolkit to further embed inclusive growth across the Council; and
- The embedding of inclusive growth as a priority in the refreshed Belfast Agenda (2023 – 2028) and associated action plans.

He further highlighted that, as these were now in the delivery stage, the role of the Working Group had shifted towards a focus on monitoring progress and that, given a review of governance arrangements was currently being progressed, it was now an opportune time for the Working Group to reconsider its role and focus by developing a forward work programme to ensure the continued delivery of social value and inclusive growth ambitions.

It was recommended that, given a number of emerging priorities had been identified through discussions within the Working Group and Committees, officers further engage with the Members and their Party Groups to inform the development of a forward work programme which would seek to:

- Reflect on progress to date and identify how this could inform future focus;
- Identify strategic opportunities to continue to deliver Members' inclusive growth ambitions and add value; and
- Maximise the role of Social Policy Working Group in helping to shape relevant emerging policies and ensuring the agreed programme of work is delivered.

The Working Group agreed that a workshop be held to enable Members to provide feedback on the engagement with their Parties and inform the development of the Working Group's forward work programme.

Chairperson

This page is intentionally left blank