

Public Document Pack

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



**Belfast
City Council**

MEETING OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE COMBINED PACK

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet both online and in-person, in the Lavery Room - City Hall on Tuesday, 5th August, 2025 at 5.15 pm, 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) Financial Reporting - Quarter 4 2024/25 (Pages 1 - 8)
- (b) EVAWG - additional in year Local Community Fund allocation (Pages 9 - 16)

3. Matters referred back from the Council/Motions

- (a) Notice of Motion - Safeguarding Belfast's Playparks (Pages 17 - 18)
- (b) Notice of Motion - Support for Endometriosis Patients (Pages 19 - 20)
- (c) Notice of Motion - Stranded Dream Report - Anaka Women's Collective (Pages 21 - 46)

4. **Committee/Strategic Issues**

- (a) Dates and Times of Future Meetings in 2025 (Pages 47 - 48)
- (b) Notice of Motion Update - August 2025 (Pages 49 - 58)
- (c) Consultation Update - Proposed new rules for the sale and supply of puppies and kittens in Northern Ireland (Pages 59 - 174)
- (d) Forth Meadow Community Greenway Opening Hours and Opening Hours Pilots (5 Park Sites) - Consultation Findings (Pages 175 - 198)
- (e) Heritage Lottery Nature Towns and Cities Funding Award (Pages 199 - 214)

5. **Operational Issues**

- (a) Food Service delivery plan (Pages 215 - 238)
- (b) Belfast City Council 2025 Air Quality Progress Report (Pages 239 - 398)
- (c) Request for Events in our Parks (Pages 399 - 402)
- (d) Update Report on Overfilled bins and bin liners (Pages 403 - 434)
- (e) Department of Communities (DfC) Letter of Offer Community Support Programme 2025-2026 (Pages 435 - 450)
- (f) Dual Language Street Signs (Verbal Update)

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

- (a) Lagan Gateway - Pedestrian Crossing (Cllr de Faoite to raise)
- (b) Alley-gate Update (Cllr Doran to raise)
- (c) Targeted Upgrades to Enhance Park Accessibility (Cllr Brooks to raise)

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

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Subject:	Notice of Motion – Safeguarding Belfast’s Playparks
Date:	5th August, 2025
Reporting Officer:	David Sales, Strategic Director of City & Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Barry Flynn, Committee Services Officer.

Restricted Report	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" 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 bring to Members’ attention a motion in relation to ‘Safeguarding Belfast’s Playparks’ which the Standards and Business Committee considered at its meeting on 24th June.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>Members are asked to note that in accordance with Standing Order 13(i) that Notices of Motion which commit the Council to expenditure must be referred to the appropriate committee for consideration and report.</p> <p>At this time Members are only asked to note that the Notice of Motion has been received and that, if agreed, a subsequent report will be brought to Committee outlining a detailed consideration of the Notice of Motion and the potential costs implications.</p>
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	The Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 24th June, referred the following motion to the Committee for consideration:
3.2	<p><u>Safeguarding Belfast’s Playparks</u></p> <p>“Belfast City Council, hereinafter “this Council”, expresses its deep concern at the growing number of reports relating to indecent, threatening, and predatory behaviour in Council-owned playparks across Belfast. These spaces, intended for the happiness and well-being of children, are increasingly being compromised by individuals loitering without lawful purpose, in a manner that alarms parents and communities.</p>

	<p>This Council believes that every child has the right to play safely, and every parent has the right to peace of mind when bringing their children to a local park. Public spaces must reflect public values – including the protection of childhood innocence, the upholding of decency, and the moral duty to safeguard the vulnerable. Accordingly, this Council commits to the creation of a comprehensive ‘Safeguarding Belfast’s Playparks Policy’ – including, but not limited to, the following objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To prohibit loitering in and around children's playparks by any adult not accompanying a child, or without a legitimate purpose; 2. To conduct a full public consultation, both online and in person, to hear the views of residents, parents/guardians, and community organisations in directly shaping this policy; 3. To work with statutory bodies – including the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Home Office, and community organisations – to combat predatory sexual crime and anti-social behaviour in our public spaces.” <p>Proposer: Alderman McCullough</p> <p>Seconder: Councillor McCormick</p>
3.3	<p>The motion calls upon the Council to commit to the creation of a comprehensive Safeguarding Belfast’s Playparks Policy - The People and Communities Committee is responsible for the Council’s playgrounds and parks and accordingly the motion was referred to this Committee.</p>
4.0	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None at this stage as there is no commitment to proceed with the Notice of Motion. Details of any financial and resource implications will be reported at a subsequent meeting.</p>
5.0	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>This motion, if agreed, may have potential equality, good relations and rural needs implications and should be subject to our normal screening process as appropriate.</p>
4.0	<p>Documents Attached</p>
	<p>None.</p>



Subject:	Notice of Motion – Support for Endometriosis Patients
Date:	5th August, 2025
Reporting Officer:	David Sales, Strategic Director of City & Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Barry Flynn, Committee Services Officer.

Restricted Report	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" 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 bring to Members' attention a motion in relation to 'Support for Endometriosis Patients' which the Standards and Business Committee considered at its meeting on 22nd May.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>Members are asked to note that in accordance with Standing Order 13(i) that Notices of Motion which commit the Council to expenditure must be referred to the appropriate committee for consideration and report.</p> <p>At this time Members are only asked to note that the Notice of Motion has been received and that, if agreed, a subsequent report will be brought to Committee outlining a detailed consideration of the Notice of Motion and the potential costs implications.</p>
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	The Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 24th June, referred the following motion to the Committee for consideration:
3.2	<p><u>Support for Endometriosis Patients</u></p> <p>"This Council notes that 1 in 10 women suffer from endometriosis: the second most common gynaecological condition. Endometriosis is a chronic and life changing condition. Despite this, waiting times for endometriosis treatment in the North has been labelled 'shocking' by Endometriosis UK.</p> <p>Women often have to wait years for an NHS diagnosis and can be waiting up to 7 years for life changing surgery. The Department of Health figures show that the total</p>

	<p>number of women waiting for a gynaecology outpatient appointment here has more than double in seven years, yet the north remains the only part of the UK and Ireland without a specialist endometriosis centre available through the public health service. Those unable to afford private care are forced to wait years for NHS treatment, enduring avoidable pain that inhibits their quality of life. This Council will write to the Belfast Health Trust and the Health Minister to outline these concerns and request urgent investment to bolster NHS support and reduce waiting times for endometriosis patients.</p> <p>This Council also notes the wider lack of awareness around endometriosis and other female health related illnesses.</p> <p>This Council therefore commits to organising a public workshop in Belfast City Hall to help end the stigma around endometriosis. This Council will invite statutory health bodies, women's health campaign groups, elected members, Council staff and members of the public to attend and participate in this event, to raise awareness, and build support for patients of this illness."</p> <p>Proposer: Councillor Collins</p> <p>Seconder: Councillor Groogan</p>
3.3	<p>The motion calls upon the Council to write to the Belfast Health Trust and the Minister for Health to outline these concerns and request urgent investment to bolster NHS support and reduce waiting times for endometriosis patients. It also calls on the Council organise a workshop in the City Hall which would have resource implications. The People and Communities Committee is responsible for developing and delivering programmes, events and activities to promote health, safety and wellbeing at a local level and accordingly the motion was referred to this Committee.</p>
4.0	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None at this stage as there is no commitment to proceed with the Notice of Motion. Details of any financial and resource implications will be reported at a subsequent meeting.</p>
5.0	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>This motion, if agreed, may have potential equality, good relations and rural needs implications and should be subject to our normal screening process as appropriate.</p>
	Documents Attached
	None.



Subject:	Notice of Motion – Stranded Dreams report launched by Anaka Women's Collective
Date:	5th August, 2025
Reporting Officer:	David Sales, Strategic Director of City & Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Barry Flynn, Committee Services Officer.

Restricted Report	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" 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 bring to Members' attention a motion in relation to 'Stranded Dreams report launched by Anaka Women's Collective' which the Standards and Business Committee considered at its meeting on 22nd May.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>Members are asked to note that in accordance with Standing Order 13(i) that Notices of Motion which commit the Council to expenditure must be referred to the appropriate committee for consideration and report.</p> <p>At this time Members are only asked to note that the Notice of Motion has been received and that, if agreed, a subsequent report will be brought to Committee outlining a detailed consideration of the Notice of Motion and the potential costs implications.</p>
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	The Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 22nd May, referred the following motion to the Committee for consideration:
3.2	<p><u>Stranded Dream report launched by Anaka Women's Collective</u></p> <p>"This Council endorses the Stranded Dreams report launched by Anaka Women's Collective on the need for targeted education provision for young refugees and asylum seekers in Northern Ireland and agrees to write to the Ministers of Economy</p>

	<p>and Education to outline our support for the recommendations, including a pilot scheme for the Greater Belfast area.”</p>
3.3	<p>Proposer: Councillor Murray</p> <p>Seconder: Councillor Bower</p> <p>The motion calls upon the Council to endorse the Stranded Dreams report launched by Anaka Women’s Collective and agrees to write to the Ministers of Economy and Education to outline its support for the recommendations - The People and Communities Committee is responsible for improving lives at a local level and accordingly the motion was referred to this Committee.</p>
4.0	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None at this stage as there is no commitment to proceed with the Notice of Motion. Details of any financial and resource implications will be reported at a subsequent meeting.</p>
5.0	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>This motion, if agreed, may have potential equality, good relations and rural needs implications and should be subject to our normal screening process as appropriate.</p>
	<p>Documents Attached</p>
	<p>Appendix 1 - Stranded Dream Report - Anaka Women’s Collective</p>



STRANDED DREAMS

The need for targeted education provision for young refugees and asylum seekers in Northern Ireland



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"We feel frustrated, as we know we have the potential, but the system is holding us back. Despite the challenges, we are holding onto our dreams, Wyassam to study medicine and Hossam business. But without proper access to education and language support, our futures remain uncertain. We hope with support, we can achieve our goals and contribute to society."

Hossam and Wyassum, 20-year-old twin brothers from Sudan, who have been unable to access education since arriving in Belfast in January 2024.



INTRODUCTION

For teenagers and young adults who arrive in Belfast, fleeing war and persecution, the relief of a fresh start is often quickly overtaken by feeling abandoned by our education system. Their life goals, dreams and aspirations are stranded because they can't access opportunities to study, to integrate with peers and to contribute to a better future for themselves and the community they have made home.

In this short paper, we set out the experience and rights of these young people, benefits of implementing more appropriate provision, a survey of what's been tried and learnt and specific recommendations of what is required to meet their needs. Our proposals are founded on Anaka Women's Collective's work over three years supporting young people to find appropriate educational opportunities, input from educationalists and organisations and importantly the views of the young people themselves. They share their voices and stories throughout.

Education is compulsory in NI from age 5 to the end of the school year in which a child turns 16. The NI Department for the Economy has primary responsibility for further and higher education and skills development for people in Northern Ireland over 16, whether they were born here or elsewhere.

As we will set out, targeted action by the Department for the Economy is needed to support these young people to fulfil their huge potential and ambitions.

Meanwhile, the costs of failing to provide appropriate education are high for both the young people affected and for Northern Ireland's goal of creating an integrated, thriving economy and society. As an issue which cuts across departmental responsibilities, action by the Department for the Economy needs to be supported by the Department for Education, Education Authority, Department for Communities and the Executive Office, which holds overall responsibility for integration.

As the Programme for Government 2024-2027 states:

We want everyone to benefit from a fair and inclusive society where everyone flourishes, no one is left behind and everyone is made to feel welcome... we are committed to bringing forward actions to address the issues of integration and racism. [1] (p. 71)

This cannot be achieved for the hundreds of young people in or newly emerged from the immigration system who are currently frozen out of education without targeted, resourced and appropriate action by government. We set out the many innovative responses by the education and voluntary sectors – these offer valuable learning and show how a successful programme should operate, but such small-scale pilot schemes cannot be a substitute for meaningful statutory provision.

BACKGROUND

THE NUMBERS

It is hard to establish figures for how many newcomers between the ages of 16 and 24 are excluded from education and training. Other published data, though, allow us to piece together a sense of the scale of the issue. At the end of December 2024, there were 2,730 people receiving asylum support in Northern Ireland, [2] 1,940 of whom were based in the Greater Belfast area. [3]

Home Office figures released under the Freedom of Information Act show in 2023 and 2024, a total of 1,918 households in NI moved on from the asylum system after having been granted refugee status – though some will have subsequently chosen to move elsewhere in the UK.

In addition to those in the asylum system, other young migrants face similar challenges with access to education – here too numbers are difficult to establish. Across all ages, the 2021 census showed that 124,300 people in Northern Ireland (6.5% of the population) were born outside these islands – a number that is rising across all council areas. [4] Some 20,200 (1.1%) said they could not speak English well or at all. [5]

There has been a significant rise in the number of students from minority ethnic or newcomer backgrounds in Northern Ireland schools. [6] The NI Department for Education's annual school census for 2024-5 shows that there are 4,910 newcomer post-primary pupils – defined as those without a sufficient level of English to engage with the curriculum – 3.1% of the total enrolment [7].

This is a rise of more than 1,300 since the 2019-20 school year. We also know from our work with asylum seeking families that from the age of 13 or 14, a significant number of new arrivals try but fail to secure a school place – so do not appear in these enrolment figures at all.

In February 2025, NISRA statistics found a total of 22,000 young people from all backgrounds in Northern Ireland aged 16 to 24 are not in education, training or employment – we can assume a portion were born elsewhere. [8]

Each of these statistics suggests a growing number of newly-arrived young people in the immigration system resident in Northern Ireland and in need of education provision. With almost 5,000 post-primary school pupils designated as newcomer, it is reasonable to expect that the number of young people aged 16-24 is also in the thousands. A single charity, Anaka, is in touch with more than 200 young people in this age range excluded from education in Greater Belfast alone. Recent years have seen those seeking asylum and those granted refugee status dispersed across Northern Ireland.

Amlak is 18 and has been living in Belfast for 18 months: "Currently, I am studying ESOL Skills for Life, but this course doesn't provide the academic English I need, and it is not enough to apply to university. If I had received the right support, I would have mastered English by now and been closer to completing my GCSEs."

"Without proper support in schools or intensive programmes to help students learn the language quickly, we often fall behind our peers – not due to a lack of effort, but because of the language barrier. Education is a right for everyone. Language should not prevent anyone from reaching their full educational potential and achieving their dreams."

THE NEED

A 2023 survey carried out by PPR and Anaka amongst 35 Belfast asylum seekers aged 16-25 who were out of education revealed that 40% had completed high school before coming to Belfast and another 40% had attended high school but had yet to graduate. The remaining 20% had not had access to high school education before. Since arriving, less than 30% had been able to access English classes; two thirds described their level of English as beginner or pre-intermediate. [9]

The experience of fleeing war or persecution is hugely disruptive to the lives, education and wellbeing of these young people. Unfortunately, this often continues on arrival here. Some travelled as unaccompanied minors; others came with a parent or family group. Some spent years in limbo while seeking safety, reaching Northern Ireland after time in other countries. Most are claiming asylum as a result of civil unrest, with Afghanistan, Sudan, Yemen, Syria, Palestine and Somalia common countries of origin. Others are escaping human rights abuses, such as involuntary conscription or imprisonment in Eritrea or fear of the death penalty for their religious or political beliefs in Iran, Iraq or Kurdistan.

Once they reach Northern Ireland, young people in the asylum process may face many months or years before their claims are decided. During this time, they are housed in

temporary accommodation, often contingency hostels in former hotels. This could be for weeks or months, even though it has been judged unsuitable for more than emergency housing. [10]

Accommodation is often cramped, with families housed in one or two hotel rooms, and living on £8.86 each a week for transport, toiletries and other essentials. People are denied the right to work and they may be moved repeatedly. When refugee status is granted, families are moved at short notice from Home Office, often to NI Housing Executive temporary accommodation, potentially far away, disrupting schooling.

While children seeking asylum are entitled to attend school, often there are delays, lack of spaces and problems accessing uniform, transport or language support to make this possible. Those arriving in the second half of the academic year can face particular barriers to securing a place.

Education is currently compulsory, and there is a statutory obligation to provide it, until the end of the school year in which a young person turns 16. Education Minister Paul Givan has launched a consultation on extending compulsory education to 18: "Even though most young people currently remain in education and training until age 18, some, particularly some of our most vulnerable, do not. Regrettably, a young person's background remains a key factor in whether they progress to post-16 education." [11]



Yet even with the current age, the closer a young newcomer is to 15 or 16, the harder it is to find a secondary school place. [12] Once 16, they are told they aren't entitled to a school place, yet also informed that they are too young to enrol for further education. [13] Exclusion from school, whatever its source, is devastating for many young people who were on the cusp of graduating high school or enrolling in university in their home country and who see younger siblings attending school, learning and making friends, while they are isolated, with lives on hold.

The recently published evaluation of an education programme for young 16+ refugee and asylum seekers in Northern Ireland found:

These children find themselves in an indeterminate educational state due to their age, interrupted or little formal education, and English language proficiency. As a result, they cannot access formal secondary, further or higher education, and no alternative, sustained and bespoke government-funded provision has been made available... Any provision delivered has been considered scant, reactionary and piecemeal rather than planned. [14]

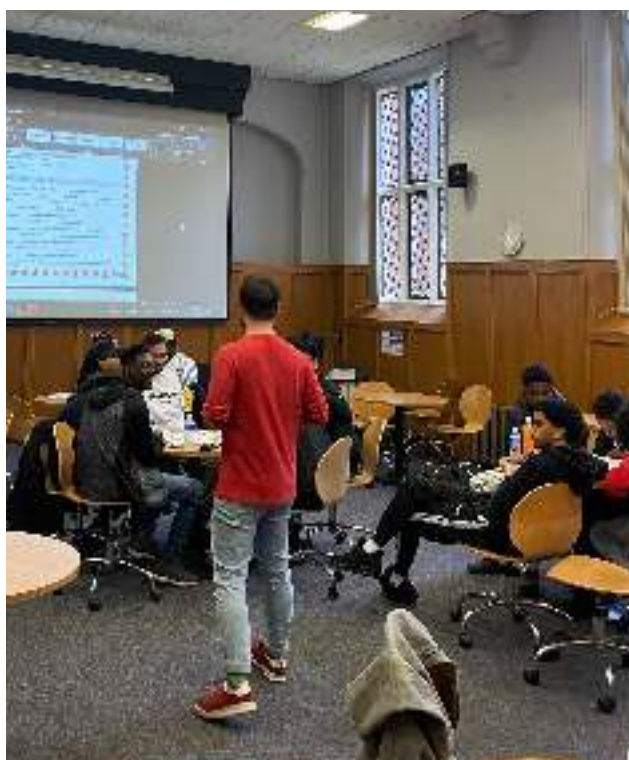
BARRIERS TO LEARNING

The young people involved in Anaka's education project have varied needs and experiences of education. Many have high aspirations and described themselves working towards a wide range of professions and roles. A minority speak good English and act as interpreters for their families. In a 2024 participatory research project carried out by young participants with Morgan Mattingly at Queen's University, they identified many barriers to accessing education: [15]

- English is a substantial barrier: two-thirds described their English as beginner or pre-intermediate and felt they could not access education at this level. Even those with good English found a lack of qualifications or academic English blocked them.
- A lack of provision and spaces in existing classes mean they can't improve their English. Several young people reported they couldn't even get on waiting lists for ESOL classes at Belfast MET as they were so over-subscribed. Waits of one to two years were reported – an inconceivable delay for a young person to even start their learning journey. Instead, they are directed to once-a-week community classes, which may also lack spaces and focus as they attempt to cater to mixed abilities and ages.
- Many of the available classes are too basic and progress at too slow a pace with just 1–5 hours a week. Some young people were advised it would take many years to attain the necessary English qualifications to allow them to pick up their education where they left off.
- Provision is not age-appropriate – 16-year-olds' only option may be a mainstream adult class, not with their peers, but with their parents and grandparents' generations. They reported feeling demoralised, uncomfortable and not challenged enough.
- ESOL courses are often designed around the needs of young European learners or adults, focusing on basic English for daily life, rather than equipping students for further study. Previous education or qualifications are not recognised, so many programmes assume no prior learning. Content needs adapted to be relevant, accessible and purposeful for this group of learners.

What emerges is a need for age-appropriate opportunities which offer intensive English support alongside other learning and skills to prepare young newcomers to access further and higher education.

Anaka's work and this proposal address young people aged 16–24 due to the specific needs of these learners and to accommodate the disruption to life and education experienced, which may take some time to overcome. This is both a moral imperative and an effective strategy. Focusing on this wider cohort will ensure any programme has the flexibility to address different needs and experiences and to ensure they are able to transition to mainstream education or employment, fulfil their potential and contribute to the economy and society of Northern Ireland as they wish to.



Rawan is 17 years old and from Syria. She arrived in Belfast from Denmark, where she attended school. She was enrolled here to study GCSEs but soon felt she had to drop out because of lack of support:

"I asked for support multiple times but received nothing. As time went on, I felt more and more isolated. I started looking for alternative ways to study and I am now studying Cambridge English B2 at Belfast MET. While my English has improved, I don't have a certificate from Denmark that allows me to enter university.

"A great solution for people like me would be to create a programme for students who have a good level of English but no official certificates. This programme should allow students to choose their subjects and, by the end of it, receive a qualification equivalent to GCSEs and A-Levels, so they can access university like everyone else.

"One of the few places that supported me after I left school was Anaka Women's Collective. Through their 16+ Education Programme, I have been able to connect with other students, find a supportive space, and work together for change.

"Despite all the obstacles, I refuse to give up. I know that one day, we will get everything sorted, and I will catch up to my dream of becoming a successful lawyer. But my goal is bigger than just my own success—I want to help change the system so that no one else has to go through what I did. I strongly believe that everyone should have equal access to education, regardless of their background."

WHY A TARGETED SCHEME IS NEEDED

STATUTORY AND HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS

While questions of immigration and refugee policy are reserved matters, responsibility for education, integration and language policy are devolved to the Northern Ireland Executive. Public bodies are obligated to meet the educational needs of young newcomers by a number of international standards:

- The Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 28 gives all children up to the age of 18 the legal right to education, without discrimination. [16]
- The 1951 UN Refugee Convention includes the legal right to decent work (Articles 17-19 and 24) and the right to education (Article 22), specifically that states "shall accord to refugees treatment as favourable as possible" in access to post-primary education. [17]
- Article 26 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states "everyone has the right to education" adding "technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit." [18]
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Article 13 ratified by the UK Government in 1976, also protects the right to education, applying equally to everyone regardless of birthplace or legal status. [19]



Domestically, the Northern Ireland Executive's own commitments – including in the Programme for Government, to "a fair and inclusive society where everyone flourishes" – require it to address the needs of this group of young potential learners. Policy and funding allocations to improve NI society, economy, mental and physical health cannot exclude or discriminate against those not born here.

The Department for the Economy's 2021 Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland emphasised the need to "open up educational pathways, empowering everyone in our society to reach their potential". It includes in its overarching goals addressing skills imbalances and supporting economic inclusion, to "support as many people as possible to reach the qualification levels that will offer viable and sustainable opportunities." [20]

Yet while it states the Department's intention to establish a lifetime guarantee of access to level 2 education (GCSE or equivalent) and a commitment to identify gaps in provision, none of the words refugee, migrant, asylum seeker or ESOL even appear in the Skills Strategy document – a gap that needs to be addressed.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

The UK Commission for the Integration of Refugees found if asylum seekers received free English classes from arrival and tailored employment support, the net economic benefit to the UK economy would be £1.2bn within five years. [21] The Commission argues this can only be achieved with action by devolved governments and local councils. It advocates that all children should be able to access school immediately, with pathways "for refugee and asylum seekers to meet their full educational potential by recognising qualifications and providing access to further and higher education".

People who come to Northern Ireland seeking safety and who are able to work can support themselves and their families financially, contribute to the Northern Ireland economy, including with tax and national insurance, and require less state support.

The University of Oxford's Migration Observatory found higher skilled migrants contributed more to the UK economy than low skilled, and that young workers could contribute more over their working life than those who arrived at an older age. [22] Suitable education will allow young people to access higher quality jobs at an earlier stage, and ultimately contribute more.

Refugee employment support organisation Breaking Barriers [23] identifies the following key gaps for newcomers accessing the jobs market and being able to support themselves:

- Lack of UK work experience, and gaps in CV due to lengthy asylum process
- Qualifications not recognised
- Language barriers
- Public misconceptions and discrimination
- Limited understanding of the local job market and lack of networks

A tailored programme to address these specific issues, particularly among young people on the cusp of adulthood, would allow them to have a full and long working life, contributing to the local economy for decades to come.

Conversely, failure to do so would risk substantial economic harm to these young people in terms of lost employment and development opportunities, alongside significant potential cost to the state in future years through factors dependency on benefits or poor health associated with unemployment and economic exclusion.



MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

Young participants in Anaka's education programmes have reported isolation, depression, anxiety and seeing no future for themselves due to lack of educational opportunities. Many of these young people have already fled violence, war and persecution to reach Northern Ireland – a lack of contact with peers and daily routine undermines any hope of normality and healing as they seek to overcome these traumatic experiences.

The potential mental and physical health impacts of an extended period without daily structure, social connection, meaningful activities or sense of agency, now or in the future, cannot be underestimated.

Further, young people who feel doors to education, training or employment closed to them are significantly more vulnerable to exploitation in the black market economy, grooming by criminal gangs, paramilitaries or human traffickers.

Those who have been able to secure a course said they felt more motivated, focused and less isolated than before. However, available programmes are short-term, loosely-structured, over-subscribed and under-resourced, often being run by volunteers themselves. Current inadequate provision – while providing a stop gap for some learners – is unable to restore the sense of dignity, direction and purpose which is fundamental to these young people's wellbeing.

Naim is 17 years old and from Palestine. She arrived in Belfast last year: "My friends and I were eager to begin our studies and integrate into a new environment, believing that the education system here would help us reach our goals and build a better future. Unfortunately, things did not go as expected.

"We waited a long time and were told to wait for the registration period at Belfast Met. When registration finally opened, we were all excited, but the process was incredibly brief—only 15 minutes for hundreds of people.

"It was a frustrating and discouraging experience, forcing us to wait once again. Without the right educational support, our dreams are delayed, and it feels like our potential is not being fully realized.

"We are calling for a faster and more accessible education system for people like us, immediate opportunities to avoid long delays and continue working towards our goals. I hope our voices will be heard and we can receive the support we need to achieve our dreams and help build a stronger future for generations to come."



SOCIAL & INTEGRATION BENEFITS

Access to English learning and knowledge about Northern Ireland life and systems are vital for integrating into community here. As already noted, the Programme for Government states: “we are committed to bringing forward actions to address the issues of integration and racism”, yet Northern Ireland has no agreed refugee integration strategy or English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) policy.

The benefits of both, to nations that have them, are undeniable. The New Scots Integration Strategy 2024 states:

Evidence shows that if people are able to integrate early, particularly into education and work and with appropriate housing, they have better health and wellbeing outcomes as well as being more able to make positive contributions in communities and economically. [24]

A 2023 review of Wales ESOL policy identified five centres where ESOL courses specifically for young adults were provided. The study found:

ESOL classrooms are in a unique position to play a greater role in fostering a sense of belonging, understanding and participation in Welsh society, yet teachers and providers need to be supported in facilitating this use of the ESOL classroom. A restrictive syllabus and / or a lack of appropriate teacher education can obstruct implementing an approach that facilitates the emotional and psychological wellbeing, in addition to language development that ESOL provision can bestow. [25]

The Draft NI refugee integration strategy, published for consultation in 2021, identifies a number of priority outcomes, including outcome 4: Refugees and Asylum Seekers are supported to achieve their full potential. [26] To deliver this, it sets out these goals – which cannot be achieved without tailoring support to the specific needs of young refugees and asylum seekers:

- “Provide support for employment, including ensuring ESOL is available in a timely manner for all who need it and education, training and volunteering opportunities are accessible.”
- “Ensure asylum seeker needs are identified and recognised in the proposed ESOL strategy, and that the direction proposed takes into account their unique and specific needs and circumstances.”
- “Ensure pathways to work strategies take account of the circumstances and needs of refugee and asylum seekers.”

Indeed, the Independent Review of Education in Northern Ireland (Dec 2023) noted that better integration of young newcomers into education could have positive impacts on learning for all students:

Experience elsewhere – particularly in London – is that young newcomers are often highly aspirational and play a significant role in raising standards of attainment in schools. However, a first step is obviously to ensure that proper provision is in place for them to learn English. [27]

Conversely, failure to support newcomers of all ages to learn English and fully integrate into Northern Ireland society will undermine community cohesion and create the conditions for ongoing fracture, distrust and tension within fragile communities.

WHAT'S BEEN TRIED

The lack of responsive statutory provision has left voluntary groups and education providers trying to meet needs with little funding or support. This summary of previous programmes and what was learnt from each shows the breadth of dedication among academics and across the community and voluntary sector to fill this gap. Yet the piecemeal nature of the response to date is a result of the absence of a matching level of engagement by the state.

CONWAY EDUCATION CENTRE YOUNG PERSON'S STEPPING STONES PROJECT 2021-2022

Conway Education Centre has a long history in community-based education and has been at the forefront of providing learning opportunities for newcomers of all ages. Recognising the lack of provision for young learners aged 16+, they piloted an intensive course for 12 young people aged 16-19 supported by a grant from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. The overall aim was to offer a tailored, learner-centred approach which promoted confidence, resilience and mental health while facilitating their successful transition to mainstream education, training or employment.

For four days a week over an academic year, the programme offered sessions in a wide range of topics covered in the early years of post-primary education. Classes included science, history, geography, digital literacy and creative arts, but with interactive, flexible approaches accessible to young people with varied levels of English and previous educational experiences.

This Content and Language Integrated Learning approach meant that students improved their English at the same time as to enhancing their knowledge in a range of subjects and growing their confidence and engagement with learning.

A fundamental element was personal and social education, provided in collaboration with charity Extern. These sessions were vital to promote the young participants' mental health, confidence and resilience, creating the conditions for academic progress.

Results showed significant improvement in learners' overall wellbeing and English language development and a link between these factors. The programme has been shared as an example of best practice in inclusive and sustainable practices in refugee education [28] and offers a successful, homegrown model for more comprehensive provision for all newcomer young people here. Despite this, the programme ceased when funding ended.



ALL SAINTS COLLEGE YEAR 12 AND POST-16 GCSE PROGRAMME

2022-2023

All Saints College secondary school developed a programme for 10 students aged 15-17 who arrived part way through the two-year GCSE course, had some English and were living in contingency housing, or who had already completed year 12, but did not reach grade D in English or Maths; they received extra support to focus on these core skills and improve their results.

The programme offered GCSE English and Maths, with extra teaching time in both, a GCSE in a home or second language where available, an OCR certificate in Art and Design, physical education and careers guidance. Participants received school uniform through the school's PTA and were included in pastoral care services. Some also accessed other courses and extracurricular activities. A review of the programme found: [29]

- Participants in the first group performed well and received qualifications up to A* and Distinction; three went on to take mainstream A Levels at the college.
- The second cohort did not improve outcomes dramatically, pointing to a need for earlier intervention and varied pathways including vocational course.
- English as an additional language support with a focus on academic English was vital
- Extra class time in English and Maths was necessary and paid off
- Pupils benefitted greatly from becoming part of the school community and could access a range of other practical and wellbeing support
- One pupil withdrew due to ongoing issues related to trauma – highlighting the need to include trauma support in wraparound provision to allow young people to succeed.
- The programme was only possible due to additional funding from the Education Authority and despite its successes, ceased when funding ended.

ANAKA & THE KIND ECONOMY LEARNING PROJECT

2023-PRESENT

Through their work to support women and families in the immigration system, Anaka Women's Collective became aware of an increasing number of young adults unable to access any educational opportunities. To fill the vacuum, in summer 2023, Anaka organised a network of volunteer, qualified teachers in the asylum system here to offer Saturday classes for young people 15 and over. [30]

The classes started with 30 young students and quickly rose to around 60, teaching English, maths and computer skills in three classes. The programme also included activities, trips and history classes.

This hastily-organised, small-scale intervention, operating without funding, gave many young participants their first opportunity to learn here, to connect with peers and in some cases to leave their cramped hotel rooms for meaningful activity.

Anaka and the Kind Economy project began supporting the young people to raise awareness of the lack of educational provision for this age group, and to involve the young people in defining what provision would meet their needs. They opened opportunities for the young people to speak with a range of educational providers, political representatives, officials at council, Education Authority and NI government level, unions, the media and more. They worked on a project with prominent author and artist Oliver Jeffers, who drew the young people and their aspirations for an exhibition in the Long Gallery at Stormont and featured on the BBC and in the Irish News to press for more appropriate provision.

By gathering the young people regularly and involving them in advocating for more appropriate provision, their mental health, self-confidence, social skills and motivation noticeably improved.

A number of the programmes which followed were influenced by this work, though none has yet gone far enough to adequately meet the needs and rights of the young participants.

Anaka has also run a number of other short-term programmes, including a summer school in 2024 with two volunteer teachers at English A2 and B1 level, focusing on grammar, writing, speaking, vocabulary, reading, Irish history, storytelling and dictionary use. More than 40 young people participated.



Rana, now aged 19, arrived in Belfast at 17 years old from Sudan: "Due to instability and safety concerns in Sudan, my family and I had to leave. I had already completed high school in Sudan and was preparing to start university to study business administration.

"But when I arrived, I was shocked by the reality—there was no clear educational pathway for someone my age. My English was weak, and I had missed the registration period for Belfast Met College because I arrived in October. Schools would not accept me due to my age.

"My only option was to seek out informal learning opportunities through organizations and churches, hoping to continue my education in any way possible.

"Then, I found Anaka Women's Collective. They made an incredible effort to provide us with what we needed, offering English and mathematics classes, as well as preparation for the B1 Cambridge exam. Their constant support gave us a sense of belonging - we knew we weren't alone in this struggle. They actively raised awareness about the challenges we face and advocated for our right to access formal education.

SELF PROGRAMME, QUB TESOL AND APPLIED LINGUISTICS DEPARTMENT

2023-PRESENT

The Self-Expression, Education, and Living for the Future (SELF) programme is a collaboration between Anaka and the MSc Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and Applied Linguistics course at Queens University Belfast. It was initially piloted as a voluntary project with Masters students and expanded to include PhD students with teaching experience. A programme building on the pilot received grant funding from The Economic and Social Research Council and Queen's University Belfast.

SELF offers weekly one and a half hour sessions with a high volunteer teacher to participant ratio. Young participants join in with presentations and discussions, choosing topics, leading discussions, engaging in group work and feeling they have some agency in shaping what and how they learn.

Attendance and engagement have been high, and Anaka staff members with experience of the asylum system have joined the sessions, offering support, continuity and familiarity with students' context and experience.

The young people reported they valued being in a university setting and mixing with peers in higher education, saying it motivated them and boosted their self-confidence after extended periods out of formal education. QUB student volunteers also reported benefits of participation including teaching experience:

Participating as a volunteer for SELF has really shown me the need for these students to have a place, to find community while they learn a new language and live in a new place. I love seeing the students participate and get excited about language in safe space together. It's very important for them to have this. (Annie, volunteer teacher)

I was very happy to participate in helping such talented and inspiring individuals. I really admire their resilience, and hard work in adapting to a new language and culture (...) I also found a deep appreciation for translanguaging and being able to use Arabic to assist them in their English learning. (Hawra, volunteer teacher)

While the SELF team continue to work towards some formal accreditation for the sessions in the coming academic years, at present accreditation is still a major barrier to continuing education.



BELFAST MET & OTHER FE COLLEGES

Historically, all-age beginners ESOL courses at NI's largest further education college, Belfast MET have been one of the only educational opportunities available to young people in the Greater Belfast area. In reality, however, these courses can be so over-subscribed that they are not in fact 'available' at all for many.

In August 2024, when young Anaka participants gathered for support with applying when online registration opened, within 15 minutes the online system had closed. They were later told that 400 applications were received in that short time, with many participants being unable to register or even get on a waiting list – a devastating outcome for the young people, some of whom had waited months for the chance to enrol.

In addition to this, the lack of suitability of these programmes for young learners has already been set out above. While entry-level ESOL courses are so over-subscribed, more advanced English classes are often inaccessible because of lack of availability of assessments, lack of formal qualifications and lack of access to foundation courses. Indeed, an ESOL Skills for Life certificate is often not considered a sufficient qualification to access many other further education courses.

In 2024, The Belfast Met launched the ESOL for Transitions programme tailored for young people in the asylum system aged 16 to 19. This promising programme offered 5 days a week included a fast track ESOL course and qualification, support with maths, digital and personal development, pastoral support and guidance over a seven-month period. Again, places were so scarce that most young people could not access the provision. Yet the learning from this model should be incorporated into plans for universal provision for this age group.

Northern Ireland's five other further education

colleges all provide ESOL courses across their multiple campus and at up to five different levels. Yet all courses are offered part time with around 3 hours of teaching a week; none address the need for a more holistic and intense course of study to open pathways into full time education for these keen young learners.

BELFAST CITY COUNCIL WITH REFUGEE LANGUAGE

2023-2024

When Anaka approached Belfast City Council for support with running programmes for 16+ young people and highlighted the lack of provision, the council responded with a funded programme to unlock more English teaching provision for those with intermediate English. It was a collaboration between the council, which provided funding, Refugee Language, who supplied a suitable teacher, Queen's University which provided a space for the three-hour weekend classes, and Belfast MET and the council who funded exam fees.

The key success of this programme was that it included funding for exams and qualifications for participants. 30 young people took part, with 15 taking the Cambridge University B1 English exam and 10 passing. A number of these young people were able to progress to take the B2 English course at Belfast MET.

Reem is 21 and arrived in Belfast in November 2022: "I thought I would have better opportunities, but the reality has been very different. The system makes it extremely difficult to access education, and the process is much slower than I expected."

"I tried many times to enrol in Belfast Met College, but I was always told to wait—sometimes for a whole year! When I finally started studying, I was placed in Entry 1 and 2, which took me two years to complete. This was a long time just to improve my English, and it delayed my progress. If I had received the right support, I could have already applied for university by now."



GLASGOW CLYDE COLLEGE 16+ PROGRAMME

Glasgow Clyde College 16+ programme was designed initially to meet the needs of unaccompanied young people but widened to provide 'Routes to Learning' lessons for this age group generally. The basis of the course is that before young people can begin to think about future education, they need to gain both confidence and qualifications in English, in a trauma-informed setting.

The course is full time, five mornings a week over 2 years with separate classes provided for different English levels. Teaching includes outdoor learning and technology skills, focusing on identifying strengths and talents of the young people and creating a nurturing and peer group approach.

After 12 years, the programme was documented to inspire other providers. In their "Routes to Learning Handbook" it states:

As well as being able to access ESOL courses, this group of young people need to learn with their own peer group. Not only is this pedagogically appropriate it also gives the young people an opportunity to build social relationships and connections with each other.

Given their level of vulnerability and need this group also need extensive guidance and support as well as an age and context appropriate curriculum. [31]

LEICESTER COLLEGE

Leicester College offers a holistic ESOL programme for 16 to 18-year-olds, aimed at helping them gain access to further education or employment opportunities. The course includes modules in English, maths, ICT, office skills, guidance, citizenship, history and science, alongside exposing them to a range of vocational skills.

As a first step, students' English and maths abilities are assessed and students are placed at one of five levels. During the course, weekly assessment allows the student to progress to the next level when they are ready. Teaching is accompanied by a programme of sports, educational visits, organised work experience and employability support. At the end of the highest level of this course, they can access higher-level ESOL or other academic courses, or move into employment. [32]

OUR PROPOSAL

Based on the learning from these small-scale, pilot programmes in Northern Ireland and elsewhere, and the experiences and views of young people, below we set out what provision is necessary to meet their needs and rights. We propose a two-year flexible, rolling programme for those 16-24, allowing newly-arrived young people to start quickly and to accommodate their varied needs and the challenging situations they have endured.

The programme should offer three levels of English taught at recognised A1, A2 and B1 levels, and the opportunity for progression for those starting out with minimal English. While English classes should be streamed, it is important young people are integrated for other classes, to foster peer support, social connections and wellbeing.

The focus should be '**ESOL Plus**': an intensive programme to help young people achieve appropriate English skills to progress to further or higher education, training or employment, along with opportunities to study varied topics and subjects, and take part in activities to orientate them to learning and life in Northern Ireland, build their confidence and resilience. An accredited course is vital to help young people overcome the lack of recognition of previous education and allow this programme to become a gateway to further study.

Anaka's 16+ participants want to study full time, or four days a week – they are hard-working and keen to overcome setbacks and barriers to achieve their goals quickly.

This core course needs wraparound provision, including:

- Additional support with maths, science and other academic subjects, including creative arts and outdoor learning, to give participants the opportunity to use English in a variety of topics and settings.
- Per feedback from Anaka participants, more background on life in Northern Ireland, our history, culture, government and systems. Including a module with talks, visits and learning for life and work in Northern Ireland over the two-year programme would also support integration, not only for participants, but also ripple out to their families and wider communities.
- Opportunities to build peer support among the young participants and to connect with local young people through exchanges, visits and joint projects– which would make a significant contribution to integration.
- Recognising the trauma experienced by many of these young people and to support retention and completion of the programme, provision for personal and social education, trauma interventions, counselling and wellbeing activities.
- Support with study skills, careers advice, gaining work experience and coaching in applying for jobs and interviews – opportunities available to their peers attending secondary school in Northern Ireland.

While such a programme will meet the needs and ambitions of many more young newcomers, some will not be ready to engage due to their level of English, the trauma they are dealing with or their additional educational needs. Pre-entry support should be available for those who need it to prepare them to successfully take part in this programme.

Special Educational Needs assessment and support must be available for these young people even beyond statutory education age, as they have missed the opportunity to have their needs appropriately identified and met before the age of 16.

IMPLEMENTATION

Given the small numbers, this programme should be delivered in partnership with existing educational settings such as colleges and university campuses. This also normalises these spaces for young people with lived experience of the asylum system and in turn, integrates these young people with their peers who are also studying for their future.

Referrals should come from frontline agencies supporting those in the immigration system, such as Anaka Women's Collective, Red Cross, Home Office accommodation providers and social services.

The scheme needs to be free for participants and funded by the Department for the Economy, as part of their duty to develop skills and help Northern Ireland's people overcome barriers to employment. Statutory funding should cover teaching, accreditation, materials and additional programme costs such as wellbeing support and careers advice. The Home Office could also be asked to contribute through refugee integration funding.

Support with public transport costs or free travel cards are also necessary to allow the programme to be truly accessible to participants, who have very limited means and may need to travel to find their nearest centre.

Since 2022, all children and young people up to the age of 21 in Scotland can apply for free bus passes, while Wales piloted a scheme to offer free bus and train passes to people seeking international protection.

Given the concentration of young refugees and asylum seekers in Belfast it should be piloted here, though with a goal of rolling it out in other parts of Northern Ireland. A substantial pilot programme would begin to address provision for young people in Belfast while also allowing the Executive to co-design it with their input, to explore how best to implement it Northern Ireland wide and the budget needed to make it available to all young people who need it.



RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR NI EXECUTIVE

- In 2025, establish a working group from government, academia, the education sector, the community and voluntary sector and including representatives of the young people themselves, to explore possibilities for implementing the above proposal.
- Involve the Stormont Education Committee in this process and activate the NI Assembly Research and Information Service (RAISE) in gathering and analysing relevant information.
- Design and run a pilot project in the Greater Belfast area by the start of 2026-7 academic year, accommodating a minimum of 45 young people.
- Explore NI funding sources as well as possibilities for allocating Home Office funding (integration and other) to build on and roll out this pilot beyond Belfast.
- Reach out to other devolved governments for information and advice on their own initiatives.
- Report publicly every six months on progress made to date.

FOR EDUCATORS

As we've set out, addressing this gap in provision primarily lies with the NI Executive. However, we offer the following recommendations for those already teaching young newcomers, based on the learning and experience of the programmes outlined:

- Recognise the skills, knowledge and ability of these young people and avoid seeing them exclusively through the lens of their English ability. Many of the young people supported by Anaka were achieving top scores before circumstances forced them to flee, turning their lives and education upside down. English could be a third or fourth language for some, and operating in multiple languages is a skill and an asset that should be valued.
- A rigid focus on narrow and traditional qualifications will perpetuate exclusion from education of young people willing to learn. Therefore, it is important education criteria for courses are more flexible in considering the qualifications of young people and in particular look for equivalents to GCSE English, such as International GCSEs, qualifications in English as a Second or Additional language and more.
- Learning from the programmes detailed, education providers should offer additional support with English when newcomer students enrol on other courses, attend to their wellbeing and personal development and use varied teaching methods and learner-centred approaches to meet the diverse needs of students.
- The value of collaboration with the community sector has been key to the success of several of the programmes outlined, as well as involving people with lived experience of the asylum system in planning and delivering courses. Not only do they offer firsthand experience and bilingual skills, as staff or volunteers they are powerful role models to young participants.
- As the newcomer population grows in Northern Irish schools, teacher training courses should include more content on the needs, experience and strategies to support young people to learn and thrive in the classroom, playground and school community. Training and professional development in this area should also make this knowledge available to current teachers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper is dedicated to the many resilient, brave and aspirational young people who have overcome great challenges to make their home in Northern Ireland and despite many obstacles, continue to seek to make life better for themselves, their families and the wider community. It has been compiled by Chris McCartney with Areeg Fareh and Saher Idris (Education Project Organisers at Anaka Women's Collective) and with the immense support, input and feedback of Asma Haroun (Anaka), Paige Jennings (PPR), Declan Flanagan, Juana Simpson, Mel Engman, Sultan Turkan, Morgan Mattingly and Pauline Kersten.

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Anaka is a Belfast-based collective of women, many with lived experience of the asylum system, who organise to support each other, share skills, address their needs collectively and advocate for their rights. Anaka Education Project supports families to access education in Northern Ireland and address barriers for women and their children to fulfil their potential. The Education Project is funded by Belfast Charitable Society, Anaka is grateful to the Society for making this report possible, and their other funders; The Community Foundation Northern Ireland, LFT Charitable Trust and Necessity.

Add your voice to the campaign for equal access to education for young people at the QR code or <https://www.nlb.ie/take-action/stranded-dreams>

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Instagram: @anakacollective
Facebook: Anaka Women's Collective
X: [@AnakaCollective](https://twitter.com/AnakaCollective)



STRANDED DREAMS

MAY 2025





Subject:	Dates and Times of Future Meetings in 2025
Date:	5th August, 2025
Reporting Officer:	Barry Flynn, Committee Services Officer
Contact Officer:	As above.

Restricted Report	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" 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 advise the Committee on its request to consider amending the dates and times of its meetings.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is requested to note the information provided.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.2	Members are aware that meeting dates are considered and agreed by the Committee each November in advance of the upcoming year. At the meeting of the Committee on 3rd June, it was requested that a report be submitted in August to examine the feasibility of moving monthly meetings to the second Tuesday, or an alternative date, should the Council meet on the first Monday of the month.
3.3	That request had been made since some Members were obliged to attend lengthy meetings on successive days, which posed issues particularly for those Members with child-minding or caring responsibilities.
3.4	During 2025, the Committee was/is scheduled to meet on the day following Council on five occasions - February, May, June November and December. At this stage of the year, there are no suitable dates available to reschedule the November and December meetings.
3.5	The Committee should note that the schedule of meetings for 2026 will be presented in due course. Officers are seeking to identify suitable dates within that schedule to ensure that the Council and Committee meetings do not take place on successive evenings.
4.0	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u>
	None.
5.0	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u>
	None.
Page 47	
	Documents Attached
	None



Subject:	Notices of Motion Update – August 2025
Date:	5 th August 2025
Reporting Officer:	David Sales, Strategic Director of City & Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Teresa Gallen, Acting Executive Support 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	The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance allocated to the People and Communities Committee.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>It is recommended that People and Communities Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notes the updates to all Notices of Motion / Issues Raised in Advance that People and Communities Committee is responsible for as referenced in Appendix 1; and • Agree to the closure of 12 Notices of Motion / Issues Raised in Advance, as referenced in Appendix 1 and noted in paragraph 3.5 below.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>Members will recall that the previous Notices of Motion update was presented to People and Communities Committee in August 2024.</p>
3.2	<p>This report provides an overview of the progress on those Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance which remained open following the February 2025 update, and those Motions and Issues which have since arisen.</p>
3.3	<p>Notice of Motion Updates</p> <p>There are currently 36 active Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance which the People and Communities Committee is responsible for. An update on those Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance which remain active on the live database is attached at Appendix 1.</p> <p>Closure of Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance</p> <p>At SP&R Committee on 20th November 2020, it was agreed that Notices of Motion could be closed for one of two reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Category 1 - Notices of Motion which contained an action that has been completed. All Notices of Motion within this category contained a specific task that has since been complete. It is worth noting that, when Committee agree to action a Notice of Motion, there are sometimes additional actions agreed alongside the Notice of Motion. As these are not technically part of the Notice of Motion, they are taken forward through normal committee decision making processes. The Notice of Motion can therefore be closed, but additional actions related to it will continue to be progressed and reported to the committee. These additional actions are not contained in this report but will be noted in the live database moving forward. • Category 2 - Notices of Motion have become Council policy or absorbed in to a strategic programme of work. These Notices of Motion did not contain a specific task that could be complete. Instead, they were more strategic in nature and required changes in Council policy and/ or strategy for long term outcomes. Those listed within this category have all been agreed by Committee and are now either Council policy or are currently being implemented through a Council strategy that is managed by a Standing Committee through the corporate planning process. <p>Following an update of those Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance on the live database, it is recommended that Members approve the following Motions/Issues for closure.</p>

Category 1 Recommended Closures:**Cleansing Task Force (Ref 255)**

The last meeting of the Cleanliness Task Force was on the 8th May 2024, however, multi operational task force meetings have taken place with the last meeting held on the 28th May 2025. An action from the Belfast agenda was that we seek to consolidate the Multi Agency Operational (Tasing) Group and FCC Leadership Group into 'City Centre Leadership Coordination Group' chaired by the Chief Executive. The first meeting of this group took place on the 24th June 2025. Given the establishment of the new group, which will address the issues covered by the Cleanliness Taks Force, it is recommended this motion be closed.

Corey Jack Memorial Park (Ref 286)

An updated report was presented and agreed to People & Communities Committee on the 8th April 2025, and it was agreed to rename Glenbryn Play Park as 'Corey Jack Aughey Memorial Park' and a dedicated memorial bench commemorating Corey Jack placed within the park. This motion is now closed.

Secure Needle/Drug Waste Bins (Ref 345)

A report was presented and agreed to People & Communities Committee on the 8th April 2025 that a 'Sharps Bin' be located within the Council owned carpark in Little Donegall Street. Work has commenced on the installation, and it will be complete by the end of the month. It is therefore recommend to close this motion.

Signage at Finaghy Community Centre (Ref 353)

DFI agreed to the additional signage for Finaghy Community Centre at Finaghy Road South, and this has been installed. This issue is now closed.

Signage at Ruby Murray Park (Ref 362)

A report was agreed at People & Communities Committee in March 2025 and the signs and Tree are now in place. This issue is now closed.

Books for Refugee Children Living Across Belfast (Ref 389)

At April P&C Committee it was noted that officers had consulted with two direct service providers, namely, The Book Trust and the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust's Family Help Clinic, both of whom provided support to refugee families. Accordingly, it was recommended that authority be granted to enter into a formalised agreement with the aforementioned organisations to deliver appropriate reading materials, at a cost not to exceed £2,000. Committee granted the authority sought and therefore this issue is closed.

Erection of Memorial Tree – Ruby Murray Village (Ref 428)

An updated report was presented and agreed to People & Communities Committee on the 4th March 2025 and the signage and tree are in place. This issue is now closed.

Family Parking at GLL Leisure Centres (Ref 430)

Car parking spaces is a condition of planning and there is no specific legal requirement that leisure centres must provide dedicated family car parking spaces. This issue is now closed.

Returning of Black Bins to Properties (Ref 445)

This was included as part of the Waste Update Report which was taken to People & communities on the 6th May 2025 which advised the Council has no enforcement powers. This issue is now closed.

Category 2 Recommended Closures:**Creating Better Access into the Hills (Ref 145) & Belfast Hills 'Call to Action' Document (Ref 161)**

	<p>Both these motions were included in a Physical Programme update report to SP&R in June and it was agreed that it is added to the Capital Programme and moved to Stage 3 – Committed and held at Tier 0. A separate part of the motion is also covered under the PeacePlus Capital Programme withing Physical Programmes. As this motion is being considered under the Capital Programme it is recommended the motions are closed.</p> <p>Memorial at Former Workhouse Burial Site – Donegall Road (Ref 436) As this is not Council property, it was raised by an Elected Member at the South Area Working Group, and it was agreed that it will be considered as a potential Capital Programme through Property & Projects and SP&R committee. It is therefore recommend that this issue is now closed.</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u> There are no additional financial implications required to implement these recommendations.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> There are no equality, good relations or rural needs implications contained in this report.</p>
4.0	Appendices
	Appendix 1: Notices of Motion Live Database – P&C Committee

Ref	Type	Meeting Date	Motion Title	Proposed by	Reporting Officer	Status	Status Update - August 2025
15	Notice of Motion	04/02/19	Recycling in Colin Neighbourhood	Cllr Seanna Walsh	David Sales	Ongoing	At the last update it was agreed to transfer this Notice of Motion to Place & Economy, a meeting has been scheduled in August to discuss and progress.
22	Notice of Motion	01/07/19	Glyphosate-Based Weed killer	Cllr Fiona Ferguson	Stephen Leonard	Ongoing	Internal protocol in the final stages of development which will adhere to legislative requirements. A further update will be provided when then are in place.
30	Notice of Motion	02/09/19	Rewilding our Wards	Cllr Matt Garrett	Stephen Leonard	Ongoing	£150k funding (£50k Urban Meadows & £100kBiodiversty Measures) agreed by Member from C&NS departmental reserves to progress a number of urban meadow/biodiversity projects across all four quadrants of the city. Site selection methodology under development with detail of recommended sites to be presented at Area Working Groups and Committee after the Summer with a view to delivery later this financial year.
76	Notice of Motion	01/07/20	Littering	Cllr Aine Groogan	Stephen Leonard	Ongoing	The pilot has been extended until the end of the summer period and a update report will be presented to committee later in the year.
145	Notice of Motion	07/01/21	Creating Better Access into the Hills	Cllr Michael Donnelly	Jim Girvan	Recommend Close	This was included in a Physical Programme update report to SP&R in June and it was agreed that it is added to the Capital Programme and moved to Stage 3 – Committed and held at Tier 0. A separate part of the motion is also covered under the PeacePlus Capital Programme withing Physical Programmes. As this motion is being considered under the Capital Programme it is recommended the motion is closed.
146	Notice of Motion	07/01/21	30 by 30 Biodiversity Campaign	Cllr Brian Smyth	Stephen Leonard	Ongoing	LBAP - out for procurement by the end of July, with applications reviewed and a successful appointment of a consultant made by the end of August for a 6 month contract with a draft report to be presented to officers in late February of 2026. This will be reviewed, and an update report presented to committee.

161	Notice of Motion	01/03/21	Belfast Hills "Call to Action" document	Cllr Matt Collins	Jim Girvan	Recommend Close	This was included in a Physical Programme update report to SP&R in June and it was agreed that it is added to the Capital Programme and moved to Stage 3 - Committed and held at Tier 0. A separate part of the motion is also covered under the PeacePlus Capital Programme withing Physical Programmes. As this motion is being considered under the Capital Programme it is recommended the motion is closed.
255	Notice of Motion	24/05/22	Cleansing Task Force	Cllr Ciaran Beattie	David Sales	Recommend Close	The last meeting of the Cleanliness Task Force was on the 8th May 2024, however, multi operational task force meetings have taken place with the last meeting held on the 28th May 2025, before the establishment of the new City Centre Leadership Group which are chaired by the Chief Executive, the first meeting took place on the 24th June 2025. Given the establishment of the new group, which will address the issues covered by the Cleanliness Taks Force, it is recommended this notice of motion be closed.
270	Notice of Motion	23/08/22	Herbicide Reduction Policy	Cllr Anthony Flynn	Stephen Leonard	Ongoing	A draft herbicide reduction protocol is currently being worked through with officers and our policy team. Once agreed it will be rolled out operationally with a monitoring process in place.
286	Notice of Motion	24/11/22	Corey Jack Aughey Memorial Park	Cllr Dale Pankhurst	Stephen Leonard	Recommend Close	P&C Report 8/4/2025 - Discretion used and it was agreed, propose to close the motion.
288	Notice of Motion	24/11/22	Imagination Library	Cllr Seamas De Faoite	Jim Girvan	Ongoing	Officers met with proposer and are progressing with outlined approach. Further meetings required with delivery partners and following this an update report will be brought to committee.
321	Notice of Motion	27/06/23	Playful Belfast City Streets	Cllr Ross McMullan	David Sales	Ongoing	Alliance members are considering how best to progress this Motion and will update officers in due course.
328	Notice of Motion	29/08/23	Urban Wildflower Meadows	Cllr Ronan McLaughlin	Stephen Leonard	Ongoing	Site visits have been undertaken and in conjunction with OSS managers discussions are ongoing with regards to site selection which have been circulated for comments. Once site selection agreed they will be presented to Area Working groups and if approved, work will commence in the Autumn.
345	Notice of Motion	24/10/23	Secure Needle/Drug Waste Bins	Cllr Brian Smyth	Jim Girvan	Recommend Close	The motion below has been address, we agreed at P&C in April 2025 to install the sharps bin in Little Donegal Street Carpark. The base has been installed and the blue badge bay and family bays have been moved away from the location. The contractor will complete the work by the end of July. Propose to close.

352	Notice of Motion	28/11/23	Tiny Urban Forests	Cllr Brian Smyth	Stephen Leonard	Ongoing	Trialling a small scale Miyawaki tree planting method cannot take place until the next tree planting season which begins in November 2025 through to March 2026 and by that time, we also hope to be in a position to establish the Tree Warden scheme, recruitment is currently underway and the post funded on a fixed term arrangement by our colleagues in the Climate/Resilience section.
353	Issue Raised in Advance	05/12/23	Signage at Finaghy Community Centre	Cllr Micky Murray	Jim Girvan	Recommend Close	DFI agreed to the additional signage for Finaghy Community Centre at Finaghy Road South, and this has been installed. This issue is now closed.
354	Issue Raised in Advance	05/12/23	Engagement with LCCC re residents in the Collin area using the Cutts Recycling Centre	Cllr Michael Donnelly	Stephen Leonard	Ongoing	Discussed at a Special P&C workshop on the 5th August along with other issues and an update report to be presented later in the year.
362	Issue Raised in Advance	06/02/24	Signage at Ruby Murray Park	Cllr Micky Murray	David Sales	Recommend Close	Signage for Ruby Murray Park was agreed by People and Communities Committee in March 2025. It is recommended that this Issue is now closed.
363	Issue Raised in Advance	06/02/24	Biodiversity in Council Parks and Open Spaces	Cllr Anthony Flynn	Stephen Leonard	Ongoing	£50k annual budget in place to support development of associated baseline ecological studies, including delivery of element of site specific actions identified within. The quotation is in the final stages of checks and will be advertised in August with the successful consultant being appointed in September/October.
368	Notice of Motion	28/03/23	Graffiti - Development of Memorandums of	Cllr Gary McKeown	Stephen Leonard	Ongoing	An update report will be tabled at September P&C Committee.
371	Issue Raised in Advance	12/03/24	Request to invite South Belfast Youth League representative to present at a future meeting	Cllr Ruth Brooks	Jim Girvan	Ongoing	As the proposer of this request, Cllr Brooks is to confirm a suitable time to invite the South Belfast Youth League to attend P&C Committee.

380	Issue Raised in Advance	09/04/24	Communication Boards	Cllr Sarah Bunting	Stephen Leonard	Ongoing	Further to consultation with Mitchell House and Glenveagh schools a preferred communication board has now been added to council's play equipment supply contract. In addition to boards installed under this year's PIP two more were installed at Taughmonagh and Tommy Patton playgrounds. In April 2025, £50k of capital funding was reallocated via UKSPF monies to supply / install more communication boards. Officers estimated an additional £120k is required to provide citywide coverage (98no. remaining playgrounds). A Stage 2 Outline Business Case, seeking additional capital support, will be tabled at August's Finance Oversight Board, with Stage 3 approval for a total of £170k expected in September 2025. When approvals are in place Officers will procure the required number of boards to support a citywide installation programme (98no. playgrounds). Following placement of purchase orders / delivery period, installations are planned to commence, via our Measured Term Contract, in December 2025. Installation phase is expected to take around 9 months.
387	Issue Raised in Advance	02/05/24	Provision of toilet facilities at Falls Park	Cllr Michael Donnelly	Stephen Leonard	Ongoing	Signage improved in a number of Parks including Falls Park and access to pavilion for toilet use. A further update will be provided in due course.
389	Issue Raised in Advance	02/05/24	Books for Refugee Children living across Belfast	Cllr Christine Bower	Jim Girvan	Recommend Close	It was reported that officers had consulted with two direct service providers, namely, The Book Trust and the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust's Family Help Clinic, both of whom provided support to refugee families. Accordingly, it was recommended that authority be granted to enter into a formalised agreement with the aforementioned organisations to deliver appropriate reading materials, at a cost not to exceed £2,000. The Committee granted the authority sought, therefore recommend close.
401	Issue Raised in Advance	10/09/24	Update Report requested on Dog Litter Bins	Cllr Ruth Brooks	Stephen Leonard	Ongoing	A Dog Fouling report was presented to P&C on 3rd June 25 which gave an update on some issues raised in the motion, however specific asks are still be investigated and an update on these will be presented to committee later in the year.
405	Issue Raised in Advance	08/10/24	Pitch Bookings at Sally Gardens Playing Fields	Cllr Matt Garrett	Jim Girvan	Ongoing	List of users compiled and reasons for no-show/cancellations to be presented to committee in September.

414	Issue Raised in Advance	05/11/24	Communication Boards within Parks	Cllr Sarah Bunting	Stephen Leonard	Ongoing	Further to consultation with Mitchell House and Glenveagh schools a preferred communication board has now been added to council's play equipment supply contract. In addition to boards installed under this year's PIP two more were installed at Taughmonagh and Tommy Patton playgrounds. In April 2025, £50k of capital funding was reallocated via UKSPF monies to supply / install more communication boards. Officers estimated an additional £120k is required to provide citywide coverage (98no. remaining playgrounds). A Stage 2 Outline Business Case, seeking additional capital support, will be tabled at August's Finance Oversight Board, with Stage 3 approval for a total of £170k expected in September 2025. When approvals are in place Officers will procure the required number of boards to support a citywide installation programme (98no. playgrounds). Following placement of purchase orders / delivery period, installations are planned to commence, via our Measured Term Contract, in December 2025. Installation phase is expected to take around 9 months.
422	Notice of Motion	07/01/25	Vital Role of Trees	Cllr Hedley Abernethy	Stephen Leonard	Ongoing	Officers are currently reviewing and an update report will be tabled at Committee later in the year.
424	Issue Raised in Advance	14/01/25	Bin Collections over the Christmas Period	Cllr Micheal Donnelly	Stephen Leonard	Ongoing	Corporate Com & CNS to meet with Elected Member to discuss proposal in relation to this.
428	Issue Raised in Advance	04/02/25	Erection of Memorial Tree - Ruby Murray Village Green	Cllr Tracy Kelly	Stephen Leonard	Recommend Close	Update Report to P&C in March 2025 and agreement for the tree and signage was granted. Propose to close.
429	Issue Raised in Advance	04/02/25	BCC Animal Welfare Services - Capacity and Emergency Access Arrangements	Cllr Nicola Verner	Siobhan Toland	Ongoing	The Committee noted information which had been provided by Councillor Verner and the Director of City Services agreed to appraise members of the outcome on the ongoing legal processes regarding animal welfare services in N.I.

430	Issue Raised in Advance	04/02/25	Family Parking at GLL Leisure Centres	Cllr Jenna Maghie	Jim Girvan	Recommend Close	There is no specific legal requirement that leisure centres must provide dedicated family car parking spaces. There is no family carparking bays at any of Belfast City Council leisure centres. A condition of planning for a carparking at leisure centres specifies the amount of car parking spaces required for centre users and disabled persons parking who must have dedicated parking bays. Family parking at leisure centres is only approved through the planning process which is subject to a condition of planning. It is proposed this issue is now closed.
435	Issue Raised in Advance	04/03/25	FIDO - Dog Fouling Removal Vehicle	Cllr Claire Canavan	Stephen Leonard	Ongoing	An update was included as part of dog fouling and bin infrastructure which was present to P&C Committee on the 3rd June, however, further information is to be reported back on the Fido machines and this will be presented later in the year.
436	Issue Raised in Advance	04/03/25	Memorial at Former Workhouse Burial Site - Donegall Road	Cllr Gary McKeown	Siobhan Toland	Recommend Close	This matter was raised at SAWG by elected members and will be considered as a potential capital programme through P&P & SP&R. Request to close.
443	Issue Raised in Advance	08/04/25	Council Dog Warden Service	Cllr Ruth Brooks	Stephen Leonard	Ongoing	Some aspects of this motion were included in a report taken to P&C on 3rd June 26 and have been forwarded for consideration by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee's efficiency workshop. However, there are some specific asks that still need to be addressed and an update on these will be presented to committee later in the year.
444	Issue Raised in Advance	08/04/25	One Million Trees' Initiative	Cllr Jenna Maghie	Stephen Leonard	Ongoing	An update report to be brought back later in the year.
445	Issue Raised in Advance	08/04/25	Returning of Black Bins to Properties	Cllr Gary McKeown	Stephen Leonard	Ongoing	An update was provided in the Waste Update report taken to People & Communities on the 6th May 2025. This issue is now closed.



Subject:	Public Consultation response on proposed new rules for the sale and supply of puppies and kittens in Northern Ireland.
Date:	5 August 2025
Reporting Officer:	Sobhan Toland, Director of City Services
Contact Officer:	Helen Morrissey, City Protection Manager

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

☐

No

☒

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

Insert number

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

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

☐
☐
☐
☐

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

☐

No

☒

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To make Members aware that The Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has launched a public consultation on proposed new rules for the sale and supply of puppies and kittens in Northern Ireland. The consultation was launched on 2 nd June 2025 and closes, for councils, on Monday 15 th September 2025.
1.2	<u>SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSALS</u>
1.3	<p>All persons seeking to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sell; • give away; or • otherwise transfer ownership <p>of a puppy or kitten (under six months old) will be required to apply to their local council to be entered onto the Register of Sellers and Suppliers of Puppies and Kittens. Registration will be valid for one year and will have conditions attached.</p>
1.4	<p>Applicants will be required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pay a fee, which will be set by the council and will be nil for the first year (for any non-businesses); • prove that they are the keeper of the mother of the puppies, by producing proof of a valid dog licence for the puppies' mother, or by producing proof of a valid licence to keep a dog breeding establishment or a pet shop where the mother of the puppy is kept; • declare that they are the keeper of the mother of the kittens; and • comply with the conditions of registration.
1.5	<p>Councils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will not be required to carry out an inspection; • will have powers to suspend, vary or revoke a registration; • will have powers to inspect an address; and • will have powers to take samples from animals for traceability purposes.
1.6	Whilst Council would welcome any legislation to improve animal welfare, we do not agree that Councils or other bodies should be required to take on this new legal requirement for puppies and kittens to be registered without a more robust and transparent assessment of the regulatory and financial impacts being assessed and laid out as part of the consultation with Councils or the impacts on rate payers

2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to agree the proposed consultation response as attached in Appendix 5 and to agree to officers forwarding the response to the Department by the closing date of 15 th September 2025 and advising it remains draft and subject to full Council ratification after the call in period of the September Council.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (the Department) is seeking views on a proposal to introduce a registration system for persons selling, giving away, or otherwise transferring ownership of puppies and kittens aged under six months old.
3.2	A key objective of the Department is to end third-party sales of puppies and kittens. A third-party sale is a sale that occurs when the seller has not bred the animal themselves but has obtained the puppy or kitten from a breeder so that they can sell it onwards.
3.3	Whilst we welcome any legislation to improve animal welfare, we do not agree that councils (or other organisations), should be required to take on this new legal requirement for puppies and kittens to be registered without a more robust and transparent assessment of the regulatory and financial impacts being assessed and laid out as part of the consultation with Councils / rate payers.
3.4	It is suggested that other alternative organisations should also be explored around the delivery of this new requirement, not excluding the Department themselves. for e.g. USPCA and other animal charities. We also advocate that a centralised register is created and maintained for NI hence one Department (DAERA) or central lead organisation would help facilitate this role . It is noted that the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine are responsible for a registration scheme in ROI.
3.5	Furthermore, it is our view that other reforms need to be addressed prior to the introduction of the proposed registration regime, and that the review of dog breeding legislation and the regulation of rescue and rehoming centres remain the priority.
3.6	Other key points made in the response:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers from Councils have met with DAERA to strongly advise of our concerns of the difficulty of enforcing the proposed legislative provisions, eg the possible need for inspections, response to complaints, and possible litigation, criminalising individuals where there are no animal welfare offences. Council feels and legislation is especially difficult to enforce in relation to cats/kittens given their roaming nature . • Enforcement responsibilities being devolved to local Government without a more robust, transparent and appropriate assessment to rate payers of the corresponding resources, funding assessment and transfer from DAERA , powers or legal protections. • Costs impacts include need for investment by rate payers in a new IT system, new administration costs and recurring costs, a business support role around servicing a public facing register, new staff costs etc • Ongoing litigation with the Department on the withdrawal of funding for Animal Welfare to Councils. • Councils are still dealing with the new legislation on XL bully safeguards and incurring non budgeted and on going costs, which the Department expected to be absorbed by rate payers, the legislation still impacts on day to day Dog Warden service capacity.
3.7	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The Department has completed a Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) (See Appendix 2). There are significant concerns about the potential financial and resource implications of these proposals and our concerns have been highlighted throughout our response to the consultation.</p>
3.8	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>The Department has completed an Equality and Disability Screening Exercise (See Appendix 3) and a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) (See Appendix 4). We have made comments on both in our responses to Questions 15 and 16.</p>
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1 – Consultation on new rules</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Regulatory Impact Assessment</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Equality and Disability</p> <p>Appendix 4 – Rural Needs Impact Assessment</p> <p>Appendix 5 – DRAFT Response – Consultation</p>

Consultation on new rules for selling and supplying puppies and kittens

2nd June 2025



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Depairtment o'

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk



This pack is also available on the DAERA website at:

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations>

On request, we can arrange to provide other formats of this document, such as:

- Paper Copy
- Large Print
- Braille
- Other Languages

To request a copy of this document in one of these formats, please contact the Animal Welfare and Dog Control Policy team by emailing: animal.welfare@daera-ni.gov.uk



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Ministerial Foreword



I am pleased to launch this public consultation on proposed new rules for selling, giving away, and otherwise transferring ownership of puppies and kittens, in Northern Ireland.

Enhancing animal welfare is one of my top priorities. To ensure that our pet dogs and cats receive the best possible start in life, I am committed to introducing changes that will promote their well-being and provide assurances on their welfare and origin to prospective new owners.

Having carefully considered the numerous appeals for a ban on the sale of puppies and kittens by intermediaries who do not breed the animals (commonly referred to as Lucy's Law), I have also evaluated the evidence underpinning the need to examine all aspects of both the act of giving away, or selling, a puppy or kitten.

While licensed dog breeding establishments and many responsible dog and cat owners adhere to ethical practices when selling puppies and kittens, there are instances where less-responsible individuals breed these animals in poor welfare conditions. These young animals often endure distressing journeys to unsuspecting purchasers who are unaware of the origins of their new pets. Concerns have been raised that many young animals sold by third parties develop health issues and behavioural problems due to early separation from their mothers and exposure to unfamiliar environments, potentially involving multiple journeys. This can result in an increased risk of disease and inadequate socialisation for the puppies and kittens, which may persist throughout their lives.

Therefore, I want to introduce an innovative, yet simple system for selling, giving away, or otherwise transferring ownership of puppies and kittens in Northern Ireland.

To achieve this, my Department is proposing that anyone who sells, gives away, or otherwise transfers the ownership of puppies and kittens must first apply to their local council to be entered into a Register of Sellers and Suppliers of Puppies and Kittens. Although councils would have powers to carry out an inspection of premises for the purposes of granting



registration, they would not be obliged to do so. Using Northern Ireland's current dog licensing system, councils would be able to establish that the owner of the puppies holds a valid dog licence for the puppies' mother. Finally, it is also my intention that councils will publish a list of sellers and suppliers of puppies and kittens who have registered with them.

Animal welfare will be at the heart of the new system, as the system will aid transparency and make it easier to identify individuals who are operating in ways which compromise animal welfare. Furthermore, it will aim to drive responsible pet ownership by encouraging neutering to avoid unplanned pregnancies, therefore helping to reduce the numbers of dogs and cats and the associated pressures on councils and rescue and rehoming organisations.

I encourage anyone who feels they can contribute to respond to this consultation so that together, we can improve the welfare of our puppies and kittens when going to new homes.

Andrew Muir, MLA

Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs



Chapter 1: Introduction





Chapter 1: Introduction

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (the Department) is seeking views on a proposal to introduce a registration system for persons selling, giving away, or otherwise transferring ownership of puppies and kittens aged under six months old.

A key objective of the Department is to end third-party sales of puppies and kittens. A third-party sale is a sale that occurs when the seller has not bred the animal themselves but has obtained the puppy or kitten from a breeder so that they can sell it onwards.

The consultation is aimed at anyone who has an interest in animal welfare, stakeholders who work within the animal welfare sector, councils which have responsibility for enforcement of companion animal welfare, and any person or organisation involved in the breeding, sale, or transfer of ownership of puppies and kittens. The list of consultees (**Appendix 1**) is not, however, meant to be exhaustive and responses are welcomed from anyone with an interest in, or views on, the matters covered by this consultation paper.

The consultation paper is divided into four chapters. Chapter two provides some background to selling pet animals in Northern Ireland, and the legislation in place in other jurisdictions. Chapter three details the Department's proposals (a summary can be found at **Appendix 2**) and sets out a series of questions on these proposals. Chapter four outlines the procedure for providing responses to the paper. Equality, rural needs screening, and regulatory impact exercises have been carried out and can be found at:

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations>.

The Department welcomes any comments that consultees might have on any of these exercises.

Councils

The Department has engaged with local councils on the proposals outlined in this document and acknowledges the concerns raised including the resource implications and extension of enforcement responsibilities to include cats. Therefore, the Department would specifically invite detailed feedback from councils relating to the administration and enforcement of the current proposal, as well as any additional or alternative measures which could be put in place to deliver the objectives of improving the welfare of puppies and kittens and realise the benefits outlined in Chapter Three.



The consultation is being conducted using the online survey tool Citizen Space and will commence on **2 June 2025**. It will run for 12 weeks, closing on **25 August 2025**.

Following analysis of the responses received, the Department will consider and publish a summary of the responses. Subject to the nature of those responses, the Department will then take the steps to introduce legislation to require a registration system for all persons selling, giving away, or otherwise transferring ownership of puppies and kittens in Northern Ireland. Please note that responses from groups will be considered as one response.



Chapter 2: Background





Chapter 2: Background

Getting a puppy or kitten in Northern Ireland

Anyone can sell, give away, or transfer the ownership of, a puppy or kitten in Northern Ireland. Some people operate a licensed dog breeding establishment and sell the puppies they breed, and others sell the offspring of the family pet. The People's Dispensary for Sick Animals PAW Report 2024 indicates that (from a sample of 2,371 owners): 33% obtained their dog from breeders; 25% from private sellers; 17% from rescue and rehoming centres; and 16% from a friend, family, or neighbour.

Since the introduction of Lucy's Law in England¹, Scotland and then Wales, which each ban the third-party sales of puppies and kittens, there has been significant interest in examining how puppies and kittens are sold or acquired by new owners in Northern Ireland. There have also been extensive calls to end third-party sales of puppies and kittens in Northern Ireland.

Rationale for change

While it is recommended that the citizens of Northern Ireland carefully consider and conduct research before acquiring a new puppy or kitten², in practice, many make impulsive decisions when confronted with an adorable animal, purchasing it without further deliberation. On many occasions the purchaser will not have any information about the person selling the animal, or the animal itself. At times, this transaction will have a happy ending, as the seller has looked after the animal well, and the purchaser will have gotten a healthy, well-adjusted, and happy animal. Other times, however, the seller may not have given the puppy or kitten a good start in life and might not even have looked after its basic welfare needs.

In some cases, the seller might not even have bred the puppy or kitten, and the purchaser will not really know where it came from. These transactions can have a different ending, as the puppy or kitten might be sick, and might have significant developmental issues.

Research shows that sub-optimal purchasing behaviours such as not viewing a puppy in-person, before purchase, leave owners vulnerable to unscrupulous breeders and dealers whose main goal is profit, and will have produced puppies with little concern for the health and welfare of the puppies they produce, or the dogs they use for breeding.

¹ [Ban of third party sales of pups and kittens, known as 'Lucy's Law', confirmed - GOV.UK](#)

² [What you need to know before you buy a puppy | nidirect: The Pup Contract - for responsible pup breeding and buying.](#)



If a person cannot get a puppy from a rescue and rehoming organisation, they are encouraged to use licensed, and responsible, breeders.

Sourcing directly from the breeder will mean that the puppy or kitten will likely have spent the important early formative weeks with its mother. It is likely that the licensed, or regular, breeder will have made sure the mum is healthy and well, and that the puppy, or kitten, got the best start in life. For example, they may have made sure the puppies were: weaned appropriately; vaccinated and wormed; and socialised properly. Where a person is selling the offspring of the family pet, even though they are not a licensed, or regular, breeder, they too will likely have given the puppy or kitten the best start in life, as far as they know how to.

On the other hand, puppies purchased from someone who did not breed the animal themselves, may have experienced poor welfare conditions, for example: weaned too early; not properly vaccinated or wormed; not socialised; and separated from their mother too soon. They may also have been subjected to multiple journeys before they reach their new owner.

Some buyers may mistakenly believe that their puppy comes directly from a reputable breeder, when in reality it was bred under poor conditions and trafficked through multiple people. This makes it nearly impossible for the final buyer to trace the genetic lineage of the puppy, thereby leaving them unaware of its heritage and potential disease risks.

In summary, acquiring puppies from third-party individuals who are not the breeders themselves may increase the likelihood that the puppies or kittens did not have the best start in life. Similarly, some sellers who bred the puppy themselves may not meet the minimum standards of animal welfare.

The laws about selling pets in other jurisdictions

Prior to 2018, the systems in place across England, Scotland, and Wales were similar to the system currently in place in Northern Ireland. That is, separate pieces of legislation set out the rules for petshops, and dog breeding establishments.

England

In England, the Licensing of Activities Involving Animals (England) Regulations 2018 introduced a new single system based around licensable activities, one of which being selling animals as pets in the course of a business. Since then, a licence is required by anyone selling animals as pets in the course of a business, either directly to the public or to any other business that will later sell them as pets, and they must adhere to licence conditions such as not selling puppies or kittens aged under eight weeks.



Lucy's Law was introduced, from 2020, and provides that a person who is licensed to sell animals as pets, is also banned from selling any puppies or kittens that they did not breed. This particular provision takes its name from Lucy, a rescue dog which had suffered from the effects of intensive breeding and mistreatment on an illegal breeding establishment.

Scotland

Since 2021, Scotland has also operated a system of licensing activities involving animals under the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (Scotland) Regulations 2021. Selling animals as pets in the course of a business requires a licence and the licence conditions are comparable to those in place in England.

Wales

Similar legislation applies in Wales for selling animals as pets in the course of a business; however, the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (Wales) Regulations 2021 enacts a Lucy's Law which differs slightly from that in place in England and Scotland, in that the puppy or kitten must be sold from the premises where the animal was bred.

Republic of Ireland

In the Republic of Ireland, the Animal Health and Welfare (Sale or Supply of Pet Animals) Regulations 2019, require sellers or suppliers of six or more pet animals in a calendar year to be entered into the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) Register of Sellers and Suppliers of Pet Animals, and premises used in connection with the sale and supply of pet animals must be entered into the DAFM Register of Premises.



Chapter 3: Proposals





Chapter 3: Proposals

The Department wishes to afford a high degree of protections for puppies and kittens, that are sold or supplied in Northern Ireland. To do this, the Department wishes to deliver a version of Lucy's Law which includes measures that would not only ban third-party sales of puppies and kittens but would also make new rules for all people who decide to sell, give away or otherwise transfer ownership of a puppy. While keeping the welfare of our puppies and kittens at its heart, the proposed system will also generate transparency and accountability in the marketplace and enable prospective purchasers to identify where their pet was bred, and by whom.

The Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 sets out the enabling powers regarding any new animal welfare legislation and also specifies that the Department is responsible for enforcement in terms of farmed animals; the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) in terms of animal fighting; and councils in terms of non-farmed or companion animals. Therefore, for the proposed new rules about the sale and supply of puppies and kittens, local councils will be the enforcement and regulatory body.

Proposed requirement to register with council

It is proposed to require anyone wishing to sell, give away, or otherwise transfer the ownership of puppies and kittens, to apply to their local council to be entered into a Register of Sellers and Suppliers of Puppies and Kittens. Council operated dog-pounds and registered animal rescue and rehoming charities would be exempt from this requirement, as too, would anyone giving puppies or kittens to a registered animal rescue and rehoming charity. Registration will mean that, for the period of one year, the registered person can sell, give away, or otherwise transfer the ownership of all the puppies and kittens bred by him/her, which were born at the registered address during that year.

This registration requirement will extend to:

- businesses, including dog breeding establishments and petshops; and
- anyone not operating as a business.

The Department considers that extending the requirement to people not operating as a business will help prevent any potential loopholes for unscrupulous persons to declare that they are not operating as a business and are therefore exempt from the new registration requirements.

The registration would be valid for a period of 12 months, and will be made public.



Question 1

Do you agree that any person who wishes to sell, give away, or otherwise transfer the ownership of puppies should be required to register with their local council?

Question 2

Do you agree that any person who wishes to sell, give away, or otherwise transfer the ownership of kittens should be required to register with their local council?

Proposed exemptions

Registered rescue and rehoming charities

Rescue and rehoming organisations play a vital role in rehabilitating unwanted or abandoned puppies and kittens and finding new, responsible owners for these animals. The Department recognises that it is essential that these organisations should be able to continue this work unimpeded. Therefore, it is proposed that any person who gives the puppy or kitten to a rescue or rehoming organisation which is registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland would be exempt from the proposed registration requirement.

Council-operated dog pounds

Councils have powers to establish and maintain dog pounds, and to deal with unwanted and unclaimed straying dogs. Council-operated dog pounds offer several benefits, both for the community and for the animals they care for. For those dogs that cannot be reunited with their owners, council-operated dog pounds facilitate giving dogs new homes, while also helping to reduce the number of excess animals in the community. The Department recognises the operation of this type of dog pound is a matter for councils, and therefore, it is proposed that council-operated dog pounds would be exempt from the proposed registration requirement.



When a buyer changes their mind

Anyone giving puppies or kittens to an animal rescue and rehoming registered charity would be exempt from the requirement to register with their council. Any person who has acquired a puppy or kitten, either from a registered seller or supplier, from a Council-operated dog pound, or from an animal rescue and rehoming registered charity, and then shortly thereafter, decides that they no longer want to keep it would not be eligible to register with their local council as a seller or supplier, as they did not breed the animal themselves and would therefore be unable to meet all the registration conditions. They could explore giving the puppies or kittens to a registered animal rescue and rehoming charity, or they could potentially seek to return the animal to the person they purchased it from. Alternatively, they could sell, give away, or otherwise transfer the ownership of the puppy or kitten once it reached the age of six months old.

The Department considers it is necessary to restrict the options available to legally move a puppy or kitten under six months old to prevent any loopholes for third-party sellers.

Question 3

Do you agree with the proposed list of exempted groups who will be exempt from the proposed new rules?

If not, which groups do you believe should be exempted?



Proposed registration fee

It is proposed that a person who wishes to be entered into the council's Register of Sellers and Suppliers of Puppies and Kittens must pay a fee.

Fee for pet owners

The Department recognises that some pet dog and cat owners might find they are faced with an unexpected pregnancy or an unplanned litter, and will not wish to keep the offspring. It is proposed that, for these pet owners:

- the first year of registration will be free of charge. It is considered that this will encourage those pet owners to take action to prevent any further unplanned pregnancies by getting their dog or cat neutered; and
- the second year of registration will attract the fee. The fee will be payable for any second application to be entered into the Register of Sellers and Suppliers of Puppies and Kittens.

Fee for businesses

For all persons who hold a dog breeding licence or a petshop licence, and are therefore in the business of selling animals, it is proposed a fee should be paid for registration in the Register of Sellers and Suppliers of Puppies and Kittens.

It is proposed that each council should have the ability to set an appropriate fee to recoup the costs of administration, service delivery and enforcement using the principle of “full cost recovery”. It is considered that the ability to define fees at a local level is essential to ensure that councils can recover associated expenditure, reducing the risk of subsidies from local ratepayers, and that businesses do not pay more than necessary.

Question 4

Do you agree that the first year of registration should be free of charge, except for businesses?



Proposed application process

Any person wishing to be entered onto the Register of Sellers and Suppliers of Puppies and Kittens will have to apply to their local council to be registered. Anyone subsequently entered into the council's Register of Sellers and Suppliers of Puppies and Kittens, will only be able to sell, give away, or otherwise transfer ownership of their animals, from the registered address. The mother of the animals must also be at the registered address.

Links to council dog licence records

Registrations will be linked to the current dog licensing system. Northern Ireland is in a unique position of being the only jurisdiction in the UK that requires owners of dogs to obtain a yearly licence to keep their dog. Anyone wishing to sell, give away, or otherwise transfer ownership of their dog's puppies will therefore already be legally obliged to hold a dog licence for the puppies' mother.

Making use of the dog licensing system can ensure that the puppies are only being sold from their place of birth, by the person who owns the mother and has bred from her.

Council role: no requirement to inspect premises

It is considered not practical to visit every house/premises from which a person wishes to sell or supply puppies or kittens, and therefore it is proposed that there will be no mandatory inspection of houses/premises, prior to successful registration.

It is proposed that there will be no requirement for local councils to inspect the applicant's premises before entering a person into the Register of Sellers and Suppliers of Puppies and Kittens, but rather they will be required to verify that:

- the applicant who wishes to sell puppies holds a valid dog licence, or block licence, for the pup's biological mother, and that the biological mother is licensed to the address where the puppies were born and will be sold from;
- the dog breeding establishment or petshop that wishes to sell puppies holds a valid licence to keep a dog breeding establishment or petshop, and that the biological mother is licensed to the address where the puppies were born and will be sold from;
- the applicant who wishes to sell kittens, is at an address where the biological mother is kept and where the kittens were born and will be sold from.



Verification will include obtaining the licence numbers regarding the dog licence, dog breeding establishment licence, and petshop licence. As microchipping of dogs is mandatory, it will also include obtaining microchip numbers regarding the puppies.

Anticipated impact of proposed registration system

Anyone who sells puppies and kittens in Northern Ireland, will be required to be registered with their council. Where that person also sells puppies and kittens in other jurisdictions, they will be required to comply with the legislation in place in that jurisdiction.

Question 5

Do you agree that a person who sells, gives away, or otherwise transfers the ownership of puppies and kittens, should be required to do so at the address where the puppies and kittens, and the biological mother are kept?

Proposed conditions for registration

The Department proposes that any person entered into the Register of Sellers and Suppliers of Puppies and Kittens must meet the following conditions:

- the registered person cannot sell, give away, or otherwise transfer the ownership of puppies or kittens **which they did not breed at the registered address**;
- the registered person cannot sell, give away, or otherwise transfer the ownership of puppies or kittens **that are unweaned**, weaned at an age at which they should not have been weaned, or **aged under eight weeks** old;
- a puppy or kitten may only be shown to a prospective purchaser or new owner if it is **together with its biological mother**. There will be an exemption if the biological mother has died;
- the sale of, giving away of, or otherwise transfer of ownership of a puppy or kitten must take place in person and when the puppy or kitten is in the presence of its biological mother and must be **completed in the presence of the prospective purchaser** or new owner at the **registered address**. Exemptions will be in place to accommodate for a change of address;



- the purchaser or new owner **must be provided with specified information** on caring for a puppy or kitten, and with information on dog licensing requirements;
- the registered person must **keep and maintain a register** for all the dogs and cats, including puppies and kittens, on the premises, which must include:
 - the animal's date of birth;
 - the animal's sex;
 - details of any veterinary treatment;
 - the puppy's microchip number;
 - the kitten's microchip number (if applicable), or identification details;
 - the date of the sale, giving away, or otherwise transfer of ownership of the puppy or kitten; and
 - the name, address, and telephone number of the new owner.
- Where an animal is undergoing any medical treatment—
 - this fact must be clearly indicated—
 - in writing next to it, or
 - (where appropriate) by labelling it accordingly, and
 - it must not be sold, given away, or otherwise transferred to a new owner.

The Department considers that these are minimum conditions necessary to allow an inspector to assess compliance or investigate any traceability issues and that they are therefore proportionate.

Question 6

Do you agree with the conditions of registration, as listed above?



Proposed conditions for advertising puppies and kittens

It is proposed that any advertisement for the sale, giving away, or other transfer of ownership of a puppy or kitten must:

- include the registration number;
- specify the council that entered the person into the Register of Sellers and Suppliers of Puppies and Kittens;
- include a recognisable photograph of the puppy or kitten being advertised;
- display the age of the puppy or kitten being advertised;
- state the puppy or kitten being sold, given away, or otherwise transferred to a new owner is resident in Northern Ireland;
- state the puppy or kitten being sold, given away, or otherwise transferred to a new owner was born in Northern Ireland; and
- contain a warning about the life-changing decision that buying / getting a new puppy or kitten is.

The Department anticipates that the addition of advertising requirements will enable prospective buyers or new owners of puppies or kittens to verify the legitimacy of the sale, giving away of, or otherwise transfer of ownership prior to purchasing an animal, and it will further aid local councils in identifying any fraudulent activity, for example, selling, giving away, or otherwise transferring ownership without first being entered onto the council Register of Sellers and Suppliers of Puppies and Kittens.

Question 7

Do you agree that any advertisement for the sale of, giving away of, or other transfer of ownership of a puppy or kitten must include the information as listed above?



Proposed online publication of Register of Sellers and Suppliers of Puppies and Kittens

It is proposed that local councils will be required to publish a Register of Sellers and Suppliers of Puppies and Kittens, and are therefore legally able to sell, give away, or otherwise transfer ownership of puppies and kittens, including the following information:

- registered person's name and address;
- registration number;
- date on which registration was granted;
- date registration was renewed;
- date registration will expire;
- animals the registered person is registered to sell, give away, or otherwise transfer ownership of (i.e. kittens, puppies, or both); and
- if the registration has been suspended.

The Department considers the publication of a register, which would be available online, would provide the public with assurance that their new puppy or kitten came from a suitable breeding environment, as anyone selling, giving away, or otherwise transferring ownership of these animals whose details are not included on the register would be considered an illegal breeder.

Question 8

Do you agree that an online, public Register of Sellers and Suppliers of Puppies and Kittens should publish the detail, as listed above?



Offences

Under the proposed legislation it would be an offence not to be registered with the council prior to selling, giving away or otherwise transferring ownership of a puppy or kitten under six months old. It would also be an offence to breach any of the conditions of registration. The relevant local council would be able to take enforcement action. The maximum penalty available for the most serious of offences is a fine of £5,000 and/or six months imprisonment.

Expected outcomes

Animal Welfare

The proposed legislation will help promote positive change in the lives of Northern Ireland's puppies and kittens, and potentially their parents. Any person selling, giving away, or otherwise transferring the ownership of puppies and kittens will be required to comply with specified conditions, such as sales to be completed in the presence of the purchaser on the registered premises, and the puppy or kitten must be with its mother. These conditions are designed to help breeders to improve the conditions of their animals, and get young animals off to the best start in life.

Protection of vulnerable animals

The proposed legislation will help protect Northern Ireland's puppies and kittens, including those who are vulnerable. Registered sellers and suppliers will be empowered to sell only puppies and kittens that they have bred themselves at the registered premises, and will be prohibited from selling sick animals. In addition, they will be required to comply with specific conditions that promote animal welfare, such as providing appropriate living conditions, and ensuring they receive adequate veterinary care. They will also be required to comply with specific conditions relating to how any online advertisements should look, so as to give the prospective new owner as much information as possible about the purchasing decision they are about to make.

Protecting the public

The proposed legislation will help protect prospective pet owners who do not want to support a cruel industry, but are duped by someone offering a cute puppy or kitten, available immediately.



Where the transfer of the animals happens in a car park, or, as in recent times, in a house portrayed as a family home but which is actually a short term rental, the true conditions of where the animal has been bred, and condition of the animals, may not become apparent immediately. If it has been poorly bred there can be complications which are not only costly but emotionally stressful for owners. Additionally, even when prospective owners do realise the puppy has come from a so-called illegal puppy farm, many wish to rescue the puppy from the situation.

Where a prospective purchaser is researching online, the requirement for the seller / supplier to include specified information in the advertisement, will provide an added layer of protection to reassure the purchaser of the legality of the seller/supplier. It will also provide a further reminder to the new owner, of the importance of the purchasing decision they are about to make.

A public register of persons registered as sellers and suppliers of puppies and kittens will mean that the public will be directed to the right place, thereby reducing sales via third-party persons. It will inform the public, and raise awareness, about the importance of acquiring pets from responsible sources, and deter individuals from purchasing animals from unregistered, and therefore illegal, sellers/suppliers.

Traceability

The proposed legislation will help prospective pet owners identify responsible breeders and sellers. It will help them identify where their new pet has come from, and feel confident in knowing that the seller/supplier is a responsible breeder. That is, if the seller/supplier is not on the Register, it is anticipated that the purchaser will simply walk away from the transaction, and might even report suspected illegal activity. If the seller/supplier is on the Register, they will be subject to registration requirements that are designed to help purchasers know where their puppy/kitten has come from, and to give them confidence that the seller/supplier is operating in compliance with the law.

The proposed policy will also drive compliance with current dog licensing requirements. Dog owners who do not currently obtain the required annual licence to keep their dog, would be forced to obtain that licence before they were able to be entered into the Register of Sellers and Suppliers of Puppies and Kittens.

Responsible pet ownership

For the potential buyer, the proposed legislation has the potential to raise awareness about getting puppies and kittens from responsible sources. Even when viewing an online advertisement about a new puppy or kitten they are interested in, they will be reminded of the



life-changing decision they are about to make.

For the seller/supplier, the proposed legislation will act as a deterrent to accidental litters. Where a person's dog or cat has an accidental litter and they register with the council in order to sell or supply the offspring, if the person then decides not to neuter the animal and it then has a second accidental litter, they will be required to pay a fee for each subsequent year they wish to sell or supply offspring. Where owners decide to neuter their pet, this will help control pet overpopulation and reduce the number of animals that end up in shelters.

Identifying illegal breeders

In practice, this proposal will mean the matter of selling puppies and kittens will be much more open and transparent, and all purchasers wishing to get a puppy or kitten will be able to establish that someone who does not hold the required registration status is selling or supplying the animals illegally.

The sale of the puppy or kitten must be completed in the presence of the purchaser on the registered premises, and the animal must be with its mother. This will enable councils to identify premises in their districts which are used for breeding and selling puppies and kittens.

The requirement for advertisements to include the number of the seller/supplier's registration and to specify the council that issued the registration, enables prospective buyers to verify the legitimacy of the sale. In addition, this will provide councils with another tool to enable them to identify any fraudulent activity.

Councils will be empowered to inspect premises if they deem necessary, including in response to a complaint about potential illegal activity. This will help disrupt the activities of illegal breeders and ultimately improve animal welfare.

Impact outside of Northern Ireland

The proposed legislation will apply to Northern Ireland, and therefore will have an impact on sales, give-aways, and transfers of ownership, which take place in Northern Ireland.

The Department has received calls to end the sales in England, of puppies born in Northern Ireland. However, the proposed legislation will not affect the sale, giving away, or otherwise transferring ownership, of puppies and kittens born in Northern Ireland, where they are taken to another jurisdiction for sale/supply. Regulation of these selling activities will be the responsibility of authorities in those jurisdictions.



Conclusion

The Department recognises that regulation alone will not stop all third-party sales. That is going to take a concerted effort by members of the public, future dog owners, responsible breeders and enforcement agencies to work together to identify anyone, either registered or unregistered, who is putting financial gain before the welfare needs of their dogs and cats.

However, this proposal clearly sets out the welfare standards with which anyone seeking to sell, give away or otherwise transfer ownership of a puppy or kitten, must comply. More importantly, they provide the powers to allow action to be taken where those standards are not met. Council inspectors will also have clear standards for applying strong enforcement powers that will allow them to take action to prosecute anyone who is without being registered or breaching condition/s of that registration. In addition, the new enforcement powers and tough penalties will act as a deterrent to those taking part in third-party sales, sending out a clear message that no such activities will be tolerated.



Chapter 4: How to Respond and When





Chapter 4: How to Respond and When Responses

You can respond to this consultation online by accessing the consultation at the following link:
<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations>

If you wish to respond in writing, you can request a copy of the written response template by e-mailing Animal.Welfare@daera-ni.gov.uk or telephoning 028 7744 2140.

Written responses should be sent to:

E-mail: Animal.Welfare@daera-ni.gov.uk

Postal address: Animal Welfare and Dog Control Policy Branch
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
Jubilee House
111 Ballykelly Road
Ballykelly
Limavady
BT49 9HP

When responding, please state whether you are doing so as an individual or representing the views of an organisation. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please make it clear who the organisation represents, and where applicable, how the views of its members were assembled.

Closing date

Responses should be submitted by **25 August 2025**.



Confidentiality

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

The Department will publish a synopsis of responses to the consultation. This will include a list of names of organisations that responded but not personal names, addresses or other contact details.

The Department cannot automatically consider information supplied to it in response to a consultation to be confidential. However, it does have a responsibility to decide whether any information provided by you in response to a consultation, including information about your identity, should be made public or be treated as confidential. If you do not wish information about your identity to be made public, please include an explanation in your response. Please be aware that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, except in very particular circumstances. Please note, if your computer automatically includes a confidentiality disclaimer, it won't count as a confidentiality request.

Should you respond in an individual capacity, the Department will process your personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, and the Data Protection, Privacy and Electronic Communications (Amendments etc) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. This means that your personal information will not be disclosed to third parties should you request confidentiality.

For further information about confidentiality of responses please contact the Information Commissioner's Office (see its website at: <https://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk/>).



Appendix 1: List of Consultees

This consultation document has been sent to statutory consultees and the following organisations:

- Association of Dogs and Cats Homes (ADCH)
- Association of Veterinary Surgeons Practising in Northern Ireland
- British Veterinary Association Northern Ireland
- Canine Breeders Northern Ireland
- DoneDeal
- Facebook
- Find your paws
- Freeads
- Friday-Ad
- Gumtree
- Naturewatch Foundation
- Northern Ireland Companion Animal Welfare Group (NICAWG)
 - Assisi Animal Sanctuary
 - Causeway Coast Dog Rescue
 - Cats Protection
 - Dogs Trust
 - Mid Antrim Animal Sanctuary
 - People's Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA)
 - Rainbow Rehoming Centre
 - Rosies Trust
 - Ulster Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals (USPCA)
- North Coast Cat Rescue
- Northern Ireland Veterinary Association
- Petify
- Pets4Homes
- Preloved
- The Kennel Club
- The Pet Advertising Advisory Group (PAAG)
- The Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE)
- VetNI



Appendix 2: Summary of Proposals

All persons seeking to:

- sell;
- give away; or
- otherwise transfer ownership

of a puppy or kitten (under six months old) will be required to apply to their local council to be entered onto the Register of Sellers and Suppliers of Puppies and Kittens. Registration will be valid for one year and will have conditions attached.

Applicants will be required to:

- pay a fee, which will be set by the council and will be nil for the first year (for any non-businesses)
- prove that they are the keeper of the mother of the puppies, by producing proof of a valid dog licence for the puppies' mother, or by producing proof of a valid licence to keep a dog breeding establishment or a petshop where the mother of the puppy is kept;
- declare that they are the keeper of the mother of the kittens; and
- comply with the conditions of registration.

Councils:

- will not be required to carry out an inspection;
- will have powers to suspend, vary or revoke a registration;
- will have powers to inspect an address; and
- will have powers to take samples from animals for traceability purposes.



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department o'

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Title: Provision of additional animal welfare protections to Northern Ireland's puppies and kittens which are intended to be sold, given away, or otherwise transferred to new owners.	Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA)	
	Date: 15 May 2025	
	Type of measure: Secondary Legislation	
Lead department or agency: Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA/the Department)	Stage: Initial	
	Source of intervention: Domestic NI	
Other departments or agencies: N/A	Contact details: Animal Welfare and Dog Control Policy Branch	
	Animal Welfare and Dog Control Policy Branch DAERA Jubilee House 111 Ballykelly Road Limavady BT49 9HP	
	Animal.welfare@daera-ni.gov.uk	

Summary Intervention and Options

<p>What is the problem under consideration? Why is government intervention necessary? (7 lines maximum)</p> <p>The third-party sale of puppies and kittens (under six months of age) poses several significant problems including; poor animal welfare; increased risk of illness and disease; poor social and environmental skills due to a lack of socialisation; customer deception; encouraging irresponsible breeding (focus on profit rather than welfare of the puppy or kitten) as well as ethical concerns. Despite frequent and high-profile education and information campaigns on sourcing from a reputable breeder, people continue to unwittingly purchase puppies from rogue breeders and from sellers who did not breed the animal themselves. Some purchasers do not really know where their new pet came from, and in terms of the animals themselves, young animals sold in this way go on to suffer welfare issues, the effects of which continue for the rest of their lives. Unlike the rest of the UK, sales of puppies and kittens in Northern Ireland are largely unregulated. This intervention is necessary to afford these animals additional animal welfare protections, leading to better outcomes for both the animals and their new owners.</p>
<p>What are the policy objectives and the intended effects? (7 lines maximum)</p> <p>Objectives of registration of those who sell, give away, or otherwise transfer ownership of puppies and kittens:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the end of third-party sales of puppies and kittens; • the establishment of conditions which will promote improved welfare of puppies and kittens; • greater transparency and accountability; and • improved traceability. <p>The intended effect is to ensure that anyone who wishes to sell, give away, or otherwise transfer the ownership of puppies and kittens must register with their council, and will see their details published on a public register.</p>

What policy options have been considered, including any alternatives to regulation? Please justify preferred option (further details in Evidence Base) (10 lines maximum)

Scoping of options

In total 9 options were considered, and these fell into 4 categories: do nothing; introduce a registration system; introduce a licensing system; and introduce a ban on third-party sales.

(NB, sales/sell/selling includes sales, giving away, or otherwise transferring ownership of puppies and kittens).

1. do nothing;
2. amend current pet shops legislation. Require hobby breeders, which are dog breeders who do not fall into the definition of a 'breeding establishment' (which is set out in current dog breeding establishments (DBEs) legislation, and which are licenced by their local council), and cat breeders (which are currently unregulated) to obtain a petshop licence, and specify all petshop licence holders are to meet new conditions IRO sales of puppies and kittens;
3. amend current dog breeding establishments (DBE) legislation. Require dog breeders who do not fall into the definition of a dog 'breeding establishment', and cat breeders, to obtain a breeding establishment licence, Specify licence holders to meet conditions IRO sales of puppies and kittens;
4. introduce new legislation to require all persons who sell, give away, or otherwise transfer ownership of puppies and kittens to obtain a 'sellers licence';
5. introduce new legislation setting out rules for all sales of puppies and kittens, which would apply to all licensed DBEs, pet shops, and also to hobby breeders and cat breeders. This would not involve a licensing or registration system;
6. introduce new legislation to require DBEs licence holders to meet new conditions regarding sales, and which would require unregulated 'hobby' breeders, and cat breeders, to register with councils;
7. introduce new legislation to regulate all animal activities, commencing with sales of puppies and kittens;
8. make new legislation to require anyone who sells a puppy or kitten, to prove that they keep the mother;
9. make new legislation to require anyone who sells a puppy to prove that they keep the puppy's mother, and introduce a cat seller's licence.

Based on matters including clarity for sellers/suppliers of puppies and kittens; enforceability; and level of burden; the preferred option was initially identified as option 4: introduce new legislation to require all persons who sell, give away, or otherwise transfer ownership of puppies and kittens to obtain a licence from their local council. Following engagement with councils, and giving cognisance to the enforcement burden, the final option was then identified as introduce new legislation to require all persons who sell, give away, or otherwise transfer ownership of puppies and kittens to apply to their local council to be registered, and the council register to be made public.

Selection of preferred options

Option 1 (Do nothing) – this option involves no change to the current arrangements, and to continue to allow the sale of puppies and kittens in Northern Ireland to go unregulated.

Option 2 – (Preferred option) – this option involves making legislation to introduce a registration scheme, which will mean that anyone who intends to sell, give away, or otherwise transfer the ownership of puppies and kittens in Northern Ireland must apply to be entered onto their local council's Register of Sellers and Suppliers of Puppies and Kittens, pay a fee to be so registered, have their details published, and be required to comply with specified conditions. Registration will be valid for one year, and the registered address will be the only one from which the seller/supplier will be able to sell/supply puppies and kittens from. In addition, in terms of puppies, the registered address must be the same as the address quoted on the yearly dog licence pertaining to the puppies' mother. Councils will have powers to set the registration fee in their districts, as well as powers of enforcement. It is proposed that councils will be empowered to set the appropriate fee based on full cost recovery. This will allow councils to have greater flexibility and responsiveness to local needs and economic conditions. As the new registration system beds in, and enforcement costs become more apparent, councils can adjust fees to reflect the actual costs of providing these services, ensuring that they are adequately funded and sustainable. It is considered that councils might collectively decide to set fees which would be standard for everyone across Northern Ireland or, alternatively, they might each decide to set their own individual fees. The effect of this might be that there could be differing fees across Northern Ireland council districts as each council determines what the fee should be in order to deliver the service in its district. However, it is expected that the cost of delivering the service will be similar across the councils, and therefore the fees will not differ widely.

Will the policy be reviewed? It will be reviewed	If applicable, set review date: This will be reviewed on an ongoing basis by the Department.
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Cost of Preferred (or more likely) Option		
Total outlay cost for business £m	Total net cost to business per year £m	Annual cost for implementation by Regulator £m
0		0

Does Implementation go beyond minimum EU requirements?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Is this measure likely to impact on trade and investment?	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Are any of these organisations in scope?	Micro Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Small Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
	Medium Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Large Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

The final RIA supporting legislation must be attached to the Explanatory Memorandum and published with it.

Approved by: Date:

ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT (Option 1: Do nothing)

Costs (£m)	Total Transitional (Policy) (constant price) Years	Average Annual (recurring) (excl. transitional) (constant price)	Total Cost (Present Value)
Low	Optional	Optional	Optional
High	Optional	Optional	Optional
Best Estimate	No transitional costs	No average annual recurring costs	No total costs

Description and scale of key monetised costs by 'main affected groups' Maximum 5 lines

There would be no monetised costs for this option. People who sell, give away, or otherwise transfer the ownership of puppies and kittens would experience no change to how they currently operate. Those who purchase/obtain puppies and kittens would also experience no change. There would be no additional role for councils.

Other key non-monetised costs by 'main affected groups' Maximum 5 lines

There would be no non-monetised costs for this option. People who purchase/obtain puppies and kittens would experience no change and remain susceptible to rough breeders and sellers. There would be no additional role for councils.

Benefits (£m)	Total Transitional (Policy) (constant price) Years	Average Annual (recurring) (excl. transitional) (constant price)	Total Benefit (Present Value)
Low	Optional	0 Optional	Optional
High	Optional	Optional	Optional
Best Estimate	No benefits as no action taken		0

Description and scale of key monetised benefits by 'main affected groups' Maximum 5 lines

Monetised benefits to this approach cannot be quantified. People who sell, give away, or otherwise transfer the ownership of puppies and kittens would experience no change to how they currently operate and would be able to continue to make profit from the unregulated activities. Those who purchase/obtain puppies and kittens would also experience no change. There would be no additional role for councils.

Other key non-monetised benefits by 'main affected groups' Maximum 5 lines

Non-monetised benefits to this approach cannot be quantified. People who sell, give away, or otherwise transfer the ownership of puppies and kittens would experience no change to how they currently operate and would be able to continue to avoid time spent meeting administrative requirements. Those who purchase/obtain puppies and kittens would also experience no change, and would not be reminded to purchase/obtain animals responsibly. There would be no additional role for councils.

Key Assumptions, Sensitivities, Risks Maximum 5 lines

Assume no impact on council enforcement action, as there are no changes requiring additional activities. This remains a topical issue and it attracts significant interest on a regular basis. There is therefore a risk of reputational damage to the Department, if it does not take action in this area.

BUSINESS ASSESSMENT (Option 1: Do nothing)

Direct Impact on business (Equivalent Annual) £m		
Costs:0	Benefits:0	Net:0

Cross Border Issues (Option 1: Do nothing)

How does this option compare to other UK regions and to other EU Member States (particularly Republic of Ireland) Maximum 3 lines

The other devolved administrations (England, Scotland, and Wales) have licensing systems for those who sell animals as pets, as part of a business, and they ban third-party sales of puppies and kittens. The Republic of Ireland has a registration system for people (and premises) who sell 6 or more pet animals in a calendar year. This is managed by Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the register is published.

Summary: Analysis and Evidence

Policy Option 2

Description: Preferred Option: **Introduction of registration of sellers and suppliers of puppies and kittens.**

(I.e. make legislation to introduce a registration scheme, which will mean that anyone who intends to sell, give away, or otherwise transfer the ownership of puppies and kittens in Northern Ireland must apply to be entered onto their local council's Register of Sellers and Suppliers of Puppies and Kittens, pay a fee to be so registered, have their details published, and be required to comply with specified conditions. Registration will be valid for one year. Councils will have powers to set fees, as well as powers of enforcement.)

ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT (Option 2: Preferred Option Introduction of a registration of sellers and suppliers of puppies and kittens)

Costs (£m)	Total Transitional (Policy)		Average Annual (recurring)	Total Cost
	(constant price)	Years	(excl. transitional) (constant price)	(Present Value)
Low	Optional		£261,589 Optional	£261,589 Optional
High	Optional		£2,467,174 Optional	£2,467,174 Optional
Best Estimate	16,000		£629,186.50	£645,186.50

Description and scale of key monetised costs by 'main affected groups' Maximum 5 lines

Main affected groups are those who sell, give away, or otherwise transfer ownership of puppies and kittens. Depending on how councils set the yearly fee, it is considered that, potentially:

- 36,513 sellers/suppliers of puppies and 12,500 sellers/suppliers of kittens could be required to pay £50 (£2,450,650); £5 (£245,065); £12.50 (£612,662.50); or nil. The fee would be zero, in their first year of registration as a seller/supplier of puppies and kittens.
- 57 pet shops, and 45 dog breeding establishments¹ could be required to pay £162. (£16,524). This fee would be applicable from the first year.

If HMRC use the public council register of sellers and suppliers of puppies and kittens as an information source, illegal suppliers could face tax bills of £1,850,000.

The consultation will welcome evidence on costs.

¹ [Layout 1](#)

Other key non-monetised costs by 'main affected groups' Maximum 5 lines

Persons who sell, give away, or otherwise transfer the ownership of puppies and kittens will have an administrative burden as they will be required to register with their council, and they must thereafter keep records of all animals.

Businesses will have a similar burden, but as they are already required to obtain a licence for their business, and keep records, this burden will not be novel.

Councils will be required to maintain a public-facing register, and appropriately trained staff.

Benefits (£m)	Total Transitional (Policy)		Average Annual (recurring) (excl. transitional) (constant price)	Total Benefit (Present Value)
	(constant price)	Years		
Low	£0 Optional		£1,350,000 Optional	£1,350,000 Optional
High	£0 Optional		£4,500,000 Optional	£4,500,000 Optional
Best Estimate	£0		£1,377,000	£1,377,000

Description and scale of key monetised benefits by 'main affected groups' Maximum 5 lines

Cannot accurately be quantified. Potential purchasers who are able to avoid inadvertently obtaining sick puppies or kittens, could potentially save vet fees of £1,500 to £5,000 per person, per animal. Using the figure above, of 900 puppy buyers, this would equate to a range of from £1,350,000 to £4,500,000 across Northern Ireland.

Other key non-monetised benefits by 'main affected groups' Maximum 5 lines

Businesses and citizens entered onto the new Register of Sellers and Suppliers of Puppies and Kittens will have the tools (i.e. their registration) to demonstrate to potential purchasers that they are a responsible breeder and seller, who puts the welfare of their animals at priority level. Purchasers will benefit from obtaining a puppy or kitten that has enjoyed a good start to life.

Key Assumptions, Sensitivities, Risks Maximum 5 lines

It is considered likely that there will be a cost for councils in securing either a new IT system, or enhancements to their current dog licensing systems that would facilitate collection and storage of the new registration system data, and the creation of a public-facing Register of Sellers and Suppliers of Puppies and Kittens. It is assumed that councils might decide to operate on a single NI-wide basis, or on an individual council basis, in terms of fee setting. There is a risk that operating on an individual council basis will mean varied fees across NI, but it is assumed that there will be a broadly similar approach.

BUSINESS ASSESSMENT (Option 2: Preferred Option Introduction of a registration of sellers and suppliers of puppies and kittens)

Direct Impact on business (Equivalent Annual) £m				
Costs:£0.64518650	Benefits:£1.377	Net:£0.7318135		

Cross Border Issues (Option 2: Preferred Option Introduction of a registration of sellers and suppliers of puppies and kittens)**How does this option compare to other UK regions and to other EU Member States (particularly Republic of Ireland)** Maximum 3 lines

The other devolved administrations (England, Scotland, and Wales) have a licensing system for those who sell puppies and kittens as part of a business, and a ban on third-party sales. The Republic of Ireland (ROI) has a registration system for those who sell 6 or more pet animals in a calendar year, and their premises. This is managed by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the register is published.

Evidence Base

Problem under consideration, and rationale for intervention

Third-party sales are sales made by a person who did not breed the puppies or kittens him/herself, but rather obtained them from someone else for the purpose of selling onwards. The Department has received calls for a ban on third-party sales of puppies and kittens, similar to the one introduced in England, since 2021.

The Department explored whether current legislation made provision about sales of puppies and kittens.

- *Dog Control:* The Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order 1983 makes it an offence to own an unlicensed dog. It is also an offence for a person to give or sell a dog to another person who has not first obtained a yearly licence for the dog, and it is an offence for a person to obtain a dog without having first acquired a licence for that dog. The penalty for each of these offences is a fine of up to £1,000. The Department noted that council dog summary statistics, provided by councils and collated and published on the DAERA website, indicated that as at March 2024 there are 139,674 licensed dogs in NI. The Department also noted that the Pets Dispensary for Sick Animals PAW Report 2024, from a sample of 2,371 owners, indicated that 33% obtained their dog from breeders; 25% from private sellers; 17% from rescue and rehoming centres; and 16% from a friend, family, or neighbour.
- *Dog Breeding Establishments:* The Welfare of Animals (Dog Breeding Establishments and Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013 protects the welfare of all dogs and pups in commercial breeding establishments and requires the establishments to be licensed by local councils. A licence is needed if a person keeps three or more breeding bitches; and also, either breeds, advertises for sale, or supplies three or more litters of puppies (in any 12-month period); or advertises a business of breeding or selling of puppies. Licences have conditions attached, some of which relate to change of ownership requirements. It is an offence to operate a dog breeding establishment without a licence. It is also an offence to contravene any condition of a licence to keep a dog breeding establishment. The penalty for these offences is a fine not exceeding £5,000 and/or imprisonment for a period of up to six months.
- *Pet shops:* The Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 provides for licensing, by the Department, of pet shops. A person keeping a petshop must comply with conditions, including those set out in the Pet shops Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000. Conditions include record keeping relating to details of each animal's source and date of sale. Keeping an unlicensed petshop and failing to meet the conditions of a petshop licence, are offences which each carry a penalty of up to three months imprisonment and/or a fine of up to £2,500. The Department established that none of the 57 pet shops in Northern Ireland sell canines or felines.

The Department explored legislation in other jurisdictions and noted that, unlike in NI, where there are rules for people who breed pups commercially but no rules for people who sell puppies and kittens, throughout Great Britain there are rules for both breeders and sellers. The pieces of legislation in place across Great Britain makes significant provision about rules for selling animals as pets, as part of a business.

The Department considered that intervention is required, as evidence has shown that previous media campaigns alone, are not sufficient deterrents as unsuspecting purchasers still obtain their puppy or kitten from someone who has not bred the animal themselves, and has not met the welfare needs of the animal. Despite frequent and high-profile endeavours to advise the public on sourcing a puppy from a reputable breeder, and despite the freely available Puppy Contact² which helps people buy and breed puppies responsibly, correspondence received by the Department, and media reports, indicate that people continue to unwittingly purchase puppies from rogue breeders who have given no attention to the welfare needs of the animals they sell. The purchasers then face long-term problems as the dogs go on to suffer from disease, illness, and behavioural problems later in life. Evidence suggests that rogue traders operate on a large-scale commercial basis, posing as small-scale private sellers. Their dogs and puppies are kept in poor conditions before being moved onwards, through a third-party, often to purchasers in Great Britain. Examples of this evidence are available through the DAERA-led Paws for Thought enhanced portal checks. For instance, in December 2023, an official found 58 dogs in a van (along with a cat which was being legitimately transported to its owner in England), as part of a puppy smuggling operation.

The Department carried out desktop research and explored a wide range of research materials relating to the experience of the animals. A Royal Veterinary College publication³⁴ indicates that sub-optimal purchasing behaviours such as not viewing a puppy in-person before purchase, viewing a puppy via video calls and/or photographs, and not collecting the puppy from inside the breeders' property, leave owners vulnerable to purchases from unscrupulous breeders and dealers, including puppies sourced by illegal importation and/or

² [The Puppy Contract - for responsible puppy breeding and buying.](#)

³ [RVC research reveals persistent illegal puppy selling post-pandemic - News - VetCompass - Royal Veterinary College, RVC](#)

⁴ [Is UK Puppy Purchasing Suffering a Long COVID Effect? Ongoing Negative Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic upon Puppy Purchase Motivations and Behaviours in 2021](#)

reared on puppy farms. A Kennel Club publication⁵ reports that irresponsible and/or illegal breeders, whose main goal is profit, produce large numbers of dogs with little concern for the health and welfare of the puppies they produce, or the dogs they use for breeding. A report entitled 'What Patterns in Online Classified Puppy Advertisements Can Tell Us about the Current UK Puppy Trade', May 2023⁶ reports that 'the UK puppy trade has moved almost entirely online, and production levels have risen, feasibly fuelled by unethical breeding, poor husbandry/handling practice, and reduced overheads. As a result, breeding stock and puppies may have suffered potentially fatal physiological and long-term psychological issues. Surveys of veterinary professionals report an increase in sick puppies purchased online, whilst the British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) reports an epidemic of canine inherited disease.'. The 'Puppy acquisition: factors associated with acquiring a puppy under eight weeks of age and without viewing the mother'⁷ noted that owners who viewed only one of their puppy's parents had two and a half times increased odds of being referred to an animal behaviourist for a behavioural problem than owners who saw both parents, and owners who saw neither parent had nearly four times increased odds of being referred. It further noted how early life experiences (such as maternal care, genetics, environment, attachment and socialisation) can impact physiological and behavioural development. Puppies separated from maternal care at six weeks (but not their littermates) showed greater weight loss, distress, disease susceptibility and mortality up to six months of age compared with puppies that had remained in maternal care until 12 weeks of age, and puppies separated from maternal care between 30 and 40 days (i.e. just over 4 weeks and 5 weeks) were significantly more likely to display destructive behaviour, excessive barking, fearfulness on walks, noise reactivity, possessiveness towards food and toys, and attention-seeking compared with 70 puppies that remained in maternal care until two months (i.e. 60 days, or just over 8 weeks) of age. A publication 'On the origin of puppies: breeding and selling procedures relevant for canine behavioural development'⁸ noted that small-scale and occasional breeders provided the most enrichment, both social and non-social, by, for instance, providing more outdoor access for pregnant dams and puppies or by providing access to visitors more freely. A publication entitled 'Puppy factory farms: two cases, European Congress AWBM, 22 October 2016, Cascais Portugal'⁹ looked at puppy breeding in both a large scale factory farm and a family business. It noted that, in the large scale factory farm, the puppies presented signs of deprivation syndrome due to the lack of environmental and/or social relationships. It also noted that, in the family business, the 11 out of the 25 puppies died in a few days affected by congenital malformations due to close breeding. A British Veterinary Association publication¹⁰ highlights the importance of purchasing direct from the breeders.

The Department has also faced increasing calls to similarly ban the third-party sales of kittens, by way of correspondence cases, and engagement with animal welfare organisations, including Cats Protection. Cats Protection advise¹¹ that cats shouldn't be separated from their mothers until they are at least eight to nine weeks old and it encourages the public to visit a kitten, and see it with its mother, before agreeing to purchase it. It is suggested that this helps ensure the kitten has actually been bred by the seller/supplier, and is not illegally imported or brought from a kitten farm; which, in some scenarios, can result in serious health or behavioural problems. These recommendations are set out in 'The Kitten Checklist'¹². The checklist was developed by The Cat Group, a collection of nineteen professional organisations dedicated to feline welfare, and endorsed by The Canine and Feline Sector Group.

Policy objective

Objectives of a requirement to register for those who sell, give away, or otherwise transfer ownership of puppies and kittens are:

- the end of third-party sales of puppies and kittens;
- the establishment of conditions which will promote improved welfare of puppies and kittens;
- greater transparency and accountability; and
- improved traceability.

Options considered, and their costs and benefits

The Department considered legislation currently in place in NI. This involved exploring legislation in place in Northern Ireland relating to licensing of dogs (unique in the UK), dog breeding establishments, and pet shops; and the animal welfare legislation. The Department considered legislation relating to third-party sales of puppies and

⁵ [Avoiding puppy farmers | The Kennel Club](#)

⁶ [\(PDF\) What Patterns in Online Classified Puppy Advertisements Can Tell Us about the Current UK Puppy Trade](#)

⁷ [Puppy acquisition: factors associated with acquiring a puppy under eight weeks of age and without viewing the mother - Kinsman - 2020 - Veterinary Record - Wiley Online Library](#)

⁸ [On the origin of puppies: breeding and selling procedures relevant for canine behavioural development - Dendoncker - 2019 - Veterinary Record - Wiley Online Library](#)

⁹ [\(PDF\) Puppy factory farms: two cases](#)

¹⁰ [Dog breeding defects emerge as top concern for vets](#)

¹¹ [Getting a cat - Help & Advice | Cats Protection](#)

¹² [the-kitten-checklist.pdf](#)

kittens in place in England, Scotland, and Wales, and explored the requirements in other places such as the Republic of Ireland (ROI), Queensland (Australia), Texas (USA), Belgium, Denmark, France, Sweden, and the Netherlands.

In total 9 options were considered, and these fell into 4 categories: do nothing; introduce a registration system; introduce a licensing system; and introduce a ban on third-party sales.

Although the Department has received calls for legislation like that in England, Scotland, and Wales, the options developed for Northern Ireland (as set out below) differ slightly. Local Authorities in England, Scotland, and Wales, are each required to carry out a Business Test to determine if a person is selling animals as pets as part of a business. As an example, things to be considered by a Local Authority might include: distribution and selling activities; time period from when animals are bought to when they are re-advertised for sale; volumes of sales; and regularity of advertisements. It was considered that this would place an inappropriate heavy burden on the enforcement body (councils) and would also carry a risk of persons successfully hiding their activities and evading requirements. It was also noted that, unlike England, Scotland, and Wales, Northern Ireland is unique in that it requires anyone who keeps a dog to obtain an annual dog licence from their local council for that dog. The Department explored options that would enable this dog licensing requirement to be linked to the new policy.

Options considered:

(NB, sales/sell/selling includes sales, giving away, or otherwise exchanging ownership of puppies and kittens)

In summary, based on matters including clarity for those who sell, give away, or otherwise transfer the ownership of puppies and kittens, enforceability, and level of burden, the preferred option was identified as option 4: introduce new legislation to require all persons who sell, give away, or otherwise transfer ownership of puppies and kittens to obtain a licence.

Option 1: do nothing

This Option, which would see no costs but also no benefits, was ruled out because the rolling-out of messaging campaigns has not proven significantly successful in deterring rouge breeders and sellers. Although the messaging campaigns have raised the profile of welfare of puppies and kittens that are sold, it remains the case that it is difficult to spot a breeder/seller who is posing as a pet owner selling the offspring of his/her family pet. Although maintaining the status quo would mean no additional enforcement requirements, it would mean that third-party sales of puppies and kittens would continue unfettered, and it would mean that puppies and kittens that are sold, given away, or otherwise transferred to new owners, will remain at risk of poor welfare outcomes. It is noted that Option 1 could mean that the Department might face negative press from all corners, disappointed in the fact that there will be no change.

Option 2: amend current pet shops legislation. Require hobby breeders, which are dog breeders who do not fall into the definition of a 'breeding establishment' (which is set out in current dog breeding establishments (DBEs) legislation, and which are licenced by their local council), and cat breeders (which are currently unregulated) to obtain a petshop licence, and specify all petshop licence holders are to meet new conditions IRO sales of puppies and kittens.

Regulations are in place requiring anyone who keeps a petshop to first obtain a licence from the Department, at a cost of £20.00 per year. This Option would mean anyone who sells, gives away, or otherwise transfers the ownership of puppies (and is not within the scope of current dog breeding legislation) and anyone who sells, gives away, or otherwise transfers the ownership of kittens would be deemed to be a petshop, and would therefore be brought within the scope of petshop licensing requirements.

It was noted that the definition of pet shops explicitly excludes premises where pedigree animals are bred and sold, and so it was considered that this option might create a loophole in this regard. Any loophole will attract criticism and there will be an administrative cost in responding to the criticism and attempting to close any loophole. It was further noted that the fee of £20.00 is already considered to need review, and might not therefore provide for cost-recovery. However, a benefit of this option is that it would build upon legislation already in place and might require less time progressing through legislative routes. Costs of this option are that there would be an additional administrative role, and enforcement role, for the Department regarding processing increased applications for a petshop licence. In addition, citizens of Northern Ireland would face new licensing requirements, which would bring with them the requirement to pay a fee of £20.00.

This Option was ultimately ruled out because it would mean that all persons selling, giving away, or otherwise transferring the ownership of puppies and kittens would potentially be required to invest in infrastructure as set out in the current pet shops legislation, for example, relating to animal enclosures, housing, and management. This was considered to be an excessively disproportionate way of dealing with the issue.

Option 3: amend current dog breeding establishments (DBE) legislation. Require dog breeders who do not fall into the definition of a dog 'breeding establishment', and cat breeders, to obtain a breeding establishment licence, and specify licence holders to meet conditions IRO sales of puppies and kittens.

Regulations are in place requiring anyone who keeps a dog breeding establishment to first obtain a licence from their local council. A licence is required by anyone who keeps 3 or more breeding bitches; and who also either breeds/advertises/supplies 3 or more litters in any twelve month period; or advertises a business of breeding or selling puppies. The licence is yearly, and the fee is based on number of breeding bitches kept. The minimum fee is £150.

This Option would mean that the anyone who sells, gives away, or otherwise transfers the ownership of puppies would be treated as a dog breeding establishment, regardless of the number of breeding bitches that they kept, and would therefore require a licence from their local council. This Option would also see anyone who sells, gives away, otherwise transfers the ownership kittens being brought into the licensing system, and therefore requiring a licence from their local council.

A benefit of this option is that it would build upon legislation already in place and might require less time progressing through legislative routes. Costs of this option are that there would be an additional administrative role, and enforcement role, for councils regarding processing increased applications for a licence to keep a dog breeding establishment. Another cost might be related to the clarity of the new rules. The legislation in place is focused completely on dogs, and there might be a misconception that the new rules do not apply to cats. This could attract negative comments, and there could be an administrative cost incurred in replying to the comments. In addition, citizens of Northern Ireland would face new licensing requirements, which would bring with them the requirement to pay a fee, set at a minimum of £150.

This Option was ruled out as it would potentially require persons to invest in infrastructure as set out in the current dog breeding establishments legislation, namely regarding matters such as accommodation construction and size; and temperature and lighting. It was also considered difficult to include provision regulating selling, giving away, or otherwise transferring ownership of kittens through legislation widely known as dog breeding legislation as it might cause confusion, and carry the risk that cat owners might think it would not apply to them. In short, this was considered to be a disproportionate, and potentially confusing, way of dealing with the issue.

Option 4: introduce new legislation to require all persons who sell, give away, or otherwise transfer ownership of puppies and kittens to obtain a 'sellers licence'.

This Option was initially deemed to be the preferred option. The introduction of a licence to sell, give away, or otherwise transfer the ownership of puppies and kittens, coupled with a public register of licence holders, has the potential to be straightforward and clear in its intent, and would mean that all people in Northern Ireland who sell, give away, or otherwise transfer the ownership of these young animals, should easily be able to produce their licence so as to reassure the purchaser that the puppy or kitten has been bred at the specified premises, has stayed with its mother as appropriate, and has enjoyed good welfare experiences. The Option also includes the ability for councils to set a fee as they each deem appropriate, and therefore has the potential to progress towards full cost-recovery.

There are several costs associated with this option arising from the additional administrative role for councils to process applications for a Seller's Licence; the additional role for councils regarding the creation and upkeep of a register of people holding a Seller's Licence; and the administrative and financial costs to Northern Ireland citizens who will be required to follow the licensing requirements, and pay the associated fee. A benefit of this option was, due to the fee being set at nil for non-businesses for the first year (in recognition that owners might be faced with an accidental pet pregnancy), it was considered that the reality of paying a fee for a second accidental litter, the option might increase pet owners to neuter their pets where they don't intend to breed from them (as advised in the DAERA Codes Of Practice).

This option was ultimately not progressed as the enabling legislation means that a licensing system would require mandatory inspection of premises by councils. A mandatory inspection of all premises was considered to be an excessively disproportionate way of dealing with the issue.

Option 5: introduce new legislation setting out rules for all sales of pups and kittens, which would apply to all licensed DBEs, and also to hobby breeders and cat breeders. This would not involve a licensing or registration system.

This Option would mean that new legislation would set out a requirement for anyone selling, giving away, or otherwise transferring ownership of puppies and kittens to adhere to specified rules. The rules would be set out in the legislation. There would be no requirement for the puppy/kitten owner to obtain a licence, or to register with councils. There would be no change in the daily activities of breeders or sellers, or indeed purchasers.

The cost of this option would be an additional enforcement role for councils, as they responded to reports of people not complying with this requirement. A benefit for councils is that the additional enforcement role would be minor as it would not be required to licence or register anyone. Another cost of this option might be the limited impact the legislation might have, compared to the calls for robust action.

This Option was ruled out because it meant that the breeder/seller did not have to obtain a licence, and did not have to be registered, and therefore it did not enable a purchaser to easily identify breeders/sellers that complied with the rules.

Option 6: introduce new legislation to require DBEs licence holders to meet new conditions regarding sales, and which would require unregulated 'hobby' breeders, and cat breeders, required to register with councils.

Regulations are in place requiring anyone who keeps a dog breeding establishment to first obtain a licence from their local council. A licence is required by anyone who keeps 3 or more breeding bitches; and who also either breeds/advertises/supplies 3 or more litters in any twelve month period; or advertises a business of breeding or selling puppies. The licence is yearly, and the fee is based on number of breeding bitches kept. This Option would mean that the licence conditions would be revised to include new rules about the sales made by these breeding establishments. This Option would also mean that hobby breeders, and people who sell kittens, would be required to register with their local council.

There are several costs associated with this option arising from the additional enforcement role for councils regarding ensuring compliance with the new breeding licence conditions regarding sales. It would also place an administrative burden on councils to process applications from hobby dog breeders, and cat breeders, to be placed on a register of sellers. In addition, there is an administrative and financial cost to Northern Ireland citizens who will be required to follow the registration requirements, and pay the associated fee. Another cost of this system is related to a potential loophole: it will not be clear to a purchaser whether the seller should be licensed or registered, and this could give rise to illegal activities going undetected.

The Option was ruled out because of the risk that it would not be seen by rogue breeders/sellers as a sufficient deterrent to their activities.

Option 7: introduce new legislation to regulate all animal activities, commencing with sales of pups and kittens

This Option would mean that a system licensing activities involving animals would be introduced to NI, similar to the systems in place in England, Scotland, and Wales. Due to the time left in the current mandate, the only activity to be licensed would be selling puppies and kittens and pets, and future mandates could potentially explore the revocation and replacement of the current legislation about dog breeding, pet shops, and horse-riding, with a single licensing system.

There are several costs associated with this option arising from the additional administrative role for councils to process applications for a licence to sell puppies and kittens; and the administrative and financial costs to Northern Ireland citizens who will be required to follow the licensing requirements, and pay the associated fee.

This Option was ruled out because although it would be quite similar to the systems in place across Great Britain, it was considered to be without guarantee of completion in current, and future, mandates. It was considered that other options under consideration might achieve the same goal, but carry less risk of non-completion.

Option 8: make new legislation to require anyone who sells a puppy or kitten, to prove that they keep the mother.

This Option would utilise dog licensing provisions already currently in place. The 1983 Order currently requires a person to have a dog licence for their dog. Where that dog has puppies and the person intends to sell them, the 1983 Order also requires that the seller must first see that the purchaser has obtained a licence for the dog they are about to purchase. This Option would mean that messaging around this requirement was deployed so that sellers and purchasers were aware of the current requirements. It was considered that anyone selling a puppy would be able to prove that he/she is the owner of the bitch who produced that puppy, and that they are not a third-party seller. Legislation and messaging could also provide that the purchase must take place in the presence of the mother, and the dog licence for that mother must be produced. Also, the sales must only take place at the premises where the mother resides (i.e., the registered address on the dog licence).

In terms of kittens, this Option would also mean that the Department would make regulations under sections 11 and 12 of the 2011 Act to introduce a requirement that anyone who sells kittens cannot sell kittens he/she did not breed himself at his/her premises, and that he/she is the owner of the kittens' mother.

This Option was ruled out because it was noted that the 1983 Order requirement for the seller of dogs to first see that the purchaser has already obtained a licence for the dog they are about to purchase is not routinely enforced. It was also considered that enforceability might be a significant issue. Finally, this Option was also ruled out because it meant that the breeder/seller did not have to meet any new responsibilities (such as obtain a licence or

register), and, given the fact that these breeders/sellers currently ignore good practice and, in some cases, the obligation to obtain a licence to keep a dog breeding establishment, it did not enable a purchaser to easily identify breeders/sellers that complied with the rules.

Option 9: make new legislation to require anyone who sells a puppy to prove that they keep the puppie's mother, and introduce a cat seller's licence

This Option would utilise provisions already currently in place. The 1983 Order currently requires a person to have a dog licence for their dog. Where that dog has puppies and the person intends to sell them, the 1983 Order also requires that the seller must first see that the purchaser has obtained a licence for the dog they are about to purchase. This Option would mean that messaging around this requirement was deployed so that sellers and purchasers were aware of the current requirements. Legislation could also provide that the purchase must take place in the presence of the mother, and the dog licence for that mother must be produced. Also, the sales must only take place at the premises where the mother resides (i.e., the registered address on the dog licence). This Option would also introduce a cat seller's licence for anyone who intended to sell kittens.

There are several costs associated with this option arising from the additional enforcement role for councils to respond to reports that a puppy seller did not adhere to the new requirements; the additional administrative role for councils to deal with applications to be a licensed kitten seller; and the costs to Northern Ireland citizens who will be required to follow the licensing requirements, and pay the associated fee.

This Option was ruled out because it meant that the breeder/seller of puppies would not have to meet any new responsibilities (such as obtain a licence or register), and, given the fact that these breeders/sellers currently ignore good practice and, in some cases, the obligation to obtain a licence to keep a dog breeding establishment, it did not enable a purchaser to easily identify breeders/sellers that complied with the rules. It was considered that this Option would create uneven systems in that it would create the licensing of kitten sellers and there would be little to no change for puppy sellers.

Final Options

Initially, Option 4, introduce new legislation to require all persons who sell, give away, or otherwise transfer the ownership of puppies and kittens to obtain a licence was determined to be the preferred option. However, it was noted that, under the 2011 Act, a licensing system would bring with it a mandatory inspection by councils. Mindful of council feedback at a February 2025 workshop, where councils expressed concern about enforcement, option 4 was deemed to be no longer the preferred option as it carried with it, significant burdens for councils. The final option was deemed to be introduce new legislation to require all persons who sell, give away, or otherwise transfer the ownership of puppies and kittens to apply to their local council to be entered into the council Register of Sellers and Suppliers of puppies and kittens.

The introduction of a registration system, of those who sell, give away, or otherwise transfer the ownership of puppies and kittens, coupled with a public register of registered people, has the potential to be straightforward and clear in its intent, and would mean that all people in Northern Ireland who sell, give away, or otherwise transfer the ownership of these young animals, should easily be able to produce their registration confirmation so as to reassure the purchaser that the puppy or kitten has been bred at the specified premises, has stayed with its mother as appropriate, and has enjoyed good welfare experiences. Purchasers will also be able to consider a public-facing register of sellers and suppliers, and will therefore be able to avoid any person not on the register.

While the public council register of sellers and suppliers of puppies and kittens will detail sellers, by virtue of the Lucy's Law condition of registration which will limit them to selling only puppies and kittens that they breed themselves at the premises, it will also shine a light on dog breeding establishments; including those which ignore current dog breeding establishments licensing requirements (known as illegal puppy farms). The public council register of sellers and suppliers will compliment those dog breeding establishments which currently abide by the licensing requirements, as the transparency will foster trust and credibility among potential buyers, as they can easily verify the legitimacy and reputation of the breeders.

Monetised and non-monetised costs and benefits of preferred option (including administrative burden)

Costs to sellers/suppliers of preferred option: registration

The Department does not hold information on the numbers of people or pet shops that will become sellers/suppliers of puppies and kittens. Nor does it hold information on licensed Dog Breeding Establishments. The cost to these people and businesses of registering with their local council as sellers and suppliers of puppies and kittens, is unknown at this juncture. However, the following figures have been calculated from a range of sources, to provide initial, illustrative, estimations.

Initial direct costs

Anyone who is required to register as a seller or supplier of puppies and kittens is not expected to face set-up costs as the operations they use now will remain the same under the proposed policy and there is no requirement, for example, to install new facilities. While registration brings with it mandatory conditions, they relate to matters relating to the welfare of their animals, for example, only sell or supply puppies and kittens aged eight weeks or over. However, registered persons will be required to maintain a register for all dogs and cats, and puppies and kittens, on the registered premises; and will be required to provide the purchaser with information on caring for a puppy or kitten. Again, these conditions do not require installation of new equipment. The Department does not hold any information on the impact of this requirement. However, it is expected to be minimal as businesses will already hold records relating to their animals, and non-businesses who produce, for example, one litter per year will face minimal requirements. In this particular scenario, it is considered that records do not have to be electronic.

Ongoing direct costs

Anyone who is required to register as a seller or supplier of puppies and kittens will face an annual registration fee, for every year they are required to be registered.

Potential puppy sellers/suppliers (non-business): in April 2023 to March 2024, councils issued 133,677 dog licences, and 60,652 of these were neutered¹³. Of the 73,025 un-neutered dogs, if half are female, and capable of breeding, then this means that 36,513 dogs might produce puppies. If 100% of these dogs produce a litter, and 100% of owners sell the puppies, 36,513 people would have to register as a seller or supplier (however, it is noted that some owners will have more than one dog and litter but only require one registration. It is also noted that the actual total dog population in Northern Ireland will be higher, as not every owner obtains the necessary licence. Sellers and suppliers would face a registration fee, for each year that they intend to sell/supply puppies, and the cost of the annual registration fee will be determined by their local councils. This fee will only be applicable from year two of being a registered seller/supplier of puppies, as for non-businesses the fee for the first year of registration is zero. This fee of zero in the first year of registration, for non-businesses, is in recognition of the fact that pet owners may face an accidentally pet pregnancy.

Potential kitten sellers/suppliers: A Cats Protection Report, about Cats and Their Stats Northern Ireland 2024¹⁴, states there are 250,000 owned cats in NI, and 90% are neutered. Of the 25,000 un-neutered cats, if half are female, and capable of breeding, there are 12,500 cats that could produce kittens. If 100% of these cats produce a litter, and 100% of owners sell the kittens, then 12,500 people could be impacted by the proposed requirement to register as a seller or supplier (however, it is noted that some owners will have more than one dog and litter, but only require one registration). They would face a registration fee, for each year that they intend to sell/supply kittens, and the cost of the annual registration fee will be determined by their local councils. This fee will only be applicable from year two of being a registered seller/supplier of puppies, as for non-businesses the fee for the first year of registration is zero. This fee of zero in the first year of registration, for non-businesses, is in recognition of the fact that pet owners may face an accidentally pet pregnancy.

Pet shops: there are 57 pet shops in NI, none of which sell canines or felines. If all these decide to sell puppies and kittens, all 57 will be impacted by the proposed requirement to register as a seller or supplier of puppies and kittens. They would face a registration fee, for each year that they intend to sell/supply puppies and kittens, and the cost of the annual registration fee will be determined by their local councils. This fee will be applicable from the first registration.

Dog breeding establishments: A USPCA publication¹⁵ indicates there are 45 licenced dog breeding establishments in NI. All 45 would be impacted by the proposed requirement to register as a seller or supplier. They would face a registration fee, for each year that they intend to sell/supply puppies, and the cost of the annual registration fee will be determined by their local councils. This fee will be applicable from the first registration.

Fees/costs: there is no indication as to how councils might set their individual registration fees. If councils decided to set the fee on a full cost-recovery basis, the fee might vary across councils, as each council might have differing costs.

The Department has explored the fees, for similar systems in England, Scotland, and Wales, and (from a random selection) noted that fees range from £162 to £315. It is noted however that these fees relate to people selling animals as pets in the course of a business, includes an amount to cover the inspection costs (which will not be applicable in NI), and does not include dog breeding establishments. Therefore, for the purposes of this illustration, the lower amount of £162 is used.

¹³ [Council Dog Summary Statistics 2024/25 | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#)

¹⁴ [cats-report-northern-ireland-2024-v2.pdf](#)

¹⁵ [Layout 1](#)

- Should councils decide to each set the registration fee at £162, then the 57 pet shops will be required to pay an annual registration fee of £162. Should councils decide that the fee for a dog breeding establishment should be the same as the fee for a petshop, then the 45 licenced dog breeding establishments would be required to pay an annual registration fee of £162. (57 pet shops + 45 DBEs x £162 per year each = £16,524 per year, total cost to NI's pet shops and dog breeding establishments).
- If councils decide that non-businesses should pay a fee equal to half of businesses, potentially 36,513 people would pay £50 each (i.e. totaling £1,825,650). On the other hand, if councils decided that the fee should be equal to the lower range of the dog licence fee, potentially 36,513 people would pay £5 (i.e. totaling £182,565). Or, if councils decide the fee should equal the upper range of the dog licence fee, potentially 36,513 people would pay £12.50 (i.e. totaling £456,412.50). As mentioned, this fee will only be applicable from year two of being a registered seller/supplier of, as for non-businesses the fee for the first year of registration is zero.
- If councils decide that the fee for sellers/suppliers of kittens should be the same as the fee for non-businesses that sell/supply puppies, potentially 12,500 people would pay either £50 (£625,000), £12.50 (£156,250), or £5 (£62,500). As mentioned, this fee will only be applicable from year two of being a registered seller/supplier, as for non-businesses the fee for the first year of registration is zero.
- For the purposes of this exercise, the Department has used the middle figure of £12.50 per registration, to estimate the ongoing direct cost. This means that the costs are estimated at £612,663 for non-businesses.

Councils may wish to set a scale of fees. For businesses it might depend on the scale of the business, and for non-businesses it might depend on whether person is in receipt of income-related benefits. It is also noted that councils may wish to set the fee at nil.

Costs to councils (preferred option: registration)

Under animal welfare legislation, councils are responsible for enforcement relating to companion/pet animals. Councils will therefore be the registering authority under the proposal. The Department does not hold any information on the council resources which will be used to exercise its role to administer and enforce the new rules.

Initial direct costs

There potentially could be no initial set up costs, as councils already have in place a system for electronic recording the receipt of applications for dog licences, and the issue/granting of dog licences. It is considered that there may be potential for utilising this system for the recording of the proposed registration system. However, it is considered more likely that there will be a cost for councils in securing the system enhancements that would facilitate collection and storage of the additional data; for example system amendments to capture additional information regarding prohibited breeds cost £16,000.

There will be costs for setting up a public-facing Register of Sellers and Suppliers of Puppies and Kittens, either on an individual council basis or on a single NI-wide basis.

Ongoing direct costs

There may be ongoing costs for maintaining electronic records relating to registered sellers and suppliers. There will be ongoing costs for maintaining a public-facing Register of Sellers and Suppliers of Puppies and Kittens. The Department is aware that the register in Republic of Ireland is updated with new applicants every two weeks.

Initial and ongoing indirect costs

There may be costs including staff training, and administrative activities, following implementation of the new procedures.

An example of an ongoing direct cost is if a council is made aware of an advertisement of puppies or kittens for sale/supply that is not in compliance with the conditions of registration, it might take investigatory action. Another example is if a council is aware that a registration is about to end, the council might decide to issue a renewal reminder notice. A third example is the issuing of revocation of registration notification letters to individuals reported to the council and subsequently found to be in breach of the regulations.

Benefits for sellers and suppliers from preferred option: registration

Responsible sellers will be protected from illegal operators, whose practices not only prevent new owners from getting a happy and healthy puppy or kitten, but also thwart the best efforts of responsible sellers. This is because any seller or supplier of puppies and kittens will have to be registered with their council and have their details held

in a public-facing register. The matter of selling puppies and kittens will therefore be much more open and transparent, and all purchasers wishing to get a puppy or kitten will be able to establish that someone who does not hold the required registration status is selling or supplying the animals illegally.

Benefits for government, and other bodies, from preferred option: registration

HMRC

The public-facing register of Sellers and Suppliers will shine a light on the full-scale of the trade in NI, and highlight individuals who are potentially posing as one-off sellers and suppliers but who are in fact undertaking the activity on a regular and commercial basis, making significant income from their activities. This has the potential to recoup lost tax revenue as those persons are brought to light.

The Department does not hold information on the scale of lost tax revenue, but notes that the USPCA publication reports that 'between 2015 and 2019 HMRC seized more than £5 million from individuals involved in the illicit breeding and sale of pups across the United Kingdom. This was in respect of unpaid taxes. This is another indicator of the huge profits emanating from this trade'. Therefore, using a basic calculation, this might equate to at least £312,500 per year in NI. It is expected that the true figure is much higher.

The Department notes that the UK Government website indicates that HMRC ordered one dealer in Northern Ireland to pay £185,000 in tax¹⁶. In addition, the Department is aware that 10 cockapoo pups were recovered by the Belfast Harbour police after being transported illegally. The retail value of these pups was estimated at over £8,000. Again, this is an example of fraudsters selling puppies on a mass scale and for a huge profit and failing to declare their sales, thus avoiding paying tax.

It is not possible to quantify the scale of illegal/irresponsible breeders and sellers. However, referring to the USPCA publication, which indicates that it has knowledge of more than 30 unlicensed dog breeding enterprises operating across Northern Ireland, even if only 10 of these had a tax bill similar to the one mentioned above, that would equate to a saving of at least £1,850,000.

Councils and pet owners

New owners who get their new puppy or kitten from a registered breeder, will potentially be spared thousands of pounds in vet fees as the puppy or kitten will have been bred and sold in good welfare conditions. Being in this position will mean that they will have no need to report illegal activity to their local council.

In terms of quantifying this potential saving, using the Pets Dispensary for Sick Animals PAW Report 2024, which indicated that 25% of people got their dog from private sellers, combined with the potential 36,513 people who might register as a seller or supplier, this could indicate the potential for 9,000 private sellers. If one tenth of these were operating in an illegal capacity, that could leave at least 900 Northern Ireland puppy buyers left holding a sick animal, and likely to consider making a complaint to their local council that the seller caused unnecessary suffering, or was operating an illegal dog breeding establishment. The ensuring enforcement activity would be a significant drain on council resources.

The Department notes that in 2020, Defra 'Petfishing' research¹⁷ found that 54% of the vets they surveyed said that the poor conditions of puppy or kitten farms can lead to illnesses and complications which would incur treatment costs of over £1,500 in the first year of the animal's life, and in some severe cases, the costs could rise to £5,000 or even result in the pet being euthanised. Research carried out for The Kennel Club's 'Be Puppywise' campaign found that almost a third (31%) of puppies get sick or die in their first year, and four in ten owners (40%) fear they bought from a puppy farm after spending little time researching. Therefore, using this information, and the figures above, it suggests that 1 out of every 3 people that have recently bought a puppy could spend between £1500 to £5000 on veterinary fees. Thwarting this activity would therefore create potential for savings of £1,500 to £5,000 per person, per animal. Using the figure above, of 900 puppy buyers, this would equate to a range of from £1,350,000 to £4,500,000 across Northern Ireland.

In terms of benefits for councils, the Department notes an example of a successful prosecution against an illegal puppy farmer in Armagh¹⁸ which saw the defendant ordered to pay the council's legal fees and court costs, which amounted to £330, as well as the £2,560 in costs incurred by the council for the care of the rescued dogs. So, in total, the council was paying nearly £3000 (before repayment) for one case of illegal breeding. Thwarting this activity would therefore create potential for savings of £3,000 per case. Again using the figure above, of 900 puppy buyers, this would equate to savings of £27,000.

Wider impacts, from preferred option: registration

¹⁶ [Millions raised from tax evading dog breeders - GOV.UK](#)

¹⁷ [Coverage of new campaign on responsible pet ownership – Defra in the media](#)

¹⁸ [49 dogs kept in squalor seized from illegal puppy farm in Armagh](#) [Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council](#)

It is considered that the current state, namely no regulation of sellers and suppliers of puppies and kittens, means that the market is currently distorted, as illegally bred, and irresponsible bred, puppies and kittens mean that the sellers and suppliers are gaining maximum profit and leaving buyers open to higher veterinary costs, and councils and legal systems burden with the cost of dealing with these illegal and irresponsible sellers and suppliers.

Proper regulation will mean that all sellers and suppliers will be subject to the same rules, and this will mean that they are all operating in a level playing field, and in a much more stable market. Implementing a registration scheme for sellers and suppliers of puppies ensures that all transactions are recorded and monitored. This helps in maintaining a transparent marketplace where all participants are accountable for their actions. By requiring registration and adherence to specific rules, it becomes easier to identify and take action against illegal breeders and sellers. This will help curb the black market.

In short, by implementing and enforcing uniform requirements for all sellers and suppliers of puppies and kittens, the marketplace can become more transparent, accountable, and fair, ultimately benefiting both consumers and legitimate businesses.

Risks and assumptions

The following assumptions have been made.

- Commercial breeders, licensed by councils, meet the welfare requirements set out in regulations. Puppy sales are to establishments in Great Britain, and to drop-in/ad-hoc purchasers in NI.
- Puppy farm breeders ignore legislative requirements. They sell to ad-hoc purchasers via online sales, including to purchasers in Great Britain.
- Hobby breeders sell their pups to drop-in/ad-hoc purchasers in NI, and/or to people they know (e.g. friends, neighbours).

It is also assumed that implementing and enforcing uniform requirements for all sellers and suppliers of puppies and kittens will bring all sellers and suppliers into focus, and this will help thwart illegal breeders. It is also assumed that reports of sales and supplies by those persons not on the council register, will increase as awareness of the issue increases.

It is also noted that there remains a risk that potential new owners will either be unaware of the new register of sellers and suppliers that they should refer to, or will be aware of the register but still choose to get a puppy or kitten from an unregistered seller or supplier.

Overall impact

The proposed policy, which mandates uniform requirements for all sellers and suppliers of puppies and kittens, brings with it significant benefits that outweigh the costs. By creating a transparent, accountable, and fair marketplace, it helps protect consumers and legitimate businesses while counteracting the practices of illegal breeders, sellers and suppliers. Although risks remain, such as disregard to be recorded in the Register of Sellers and Suppliers of Puppies and Kittens, the overall impact is positive, fostering better welfare standards for Northern Ireland's puppies and kittens, and increased reporting of illegal sales. The proposed policy advocates for the betterment of Northern Ireland's animal welfare landscape.

Equality & Disability Duties Screening Template

December 2023 version



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Sustainability at the heart of a living,
working, active landscape
valued by everyone.

Screening flowchart and template (taken from Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 - A Guide for public authorities April 2010 (Appendix 1)).

Introduction

Part 1. Policy scoping – asks public authorities to provide details about the policy, procedure, practice and/or decision being screened and what available evidence you have gathered to help make an assessment of the likely impact on equality of opportunity and good relations.

Part 2. Screening questions – asks about the extent of the likely impact of the policy on groups of people within each of the Section 75 categories. Details of the groups consulted and the level of assessment of the likely impact. This includes consideration of multiple identity and good relations issues. This section also includes two questions related to the Disability Duties.

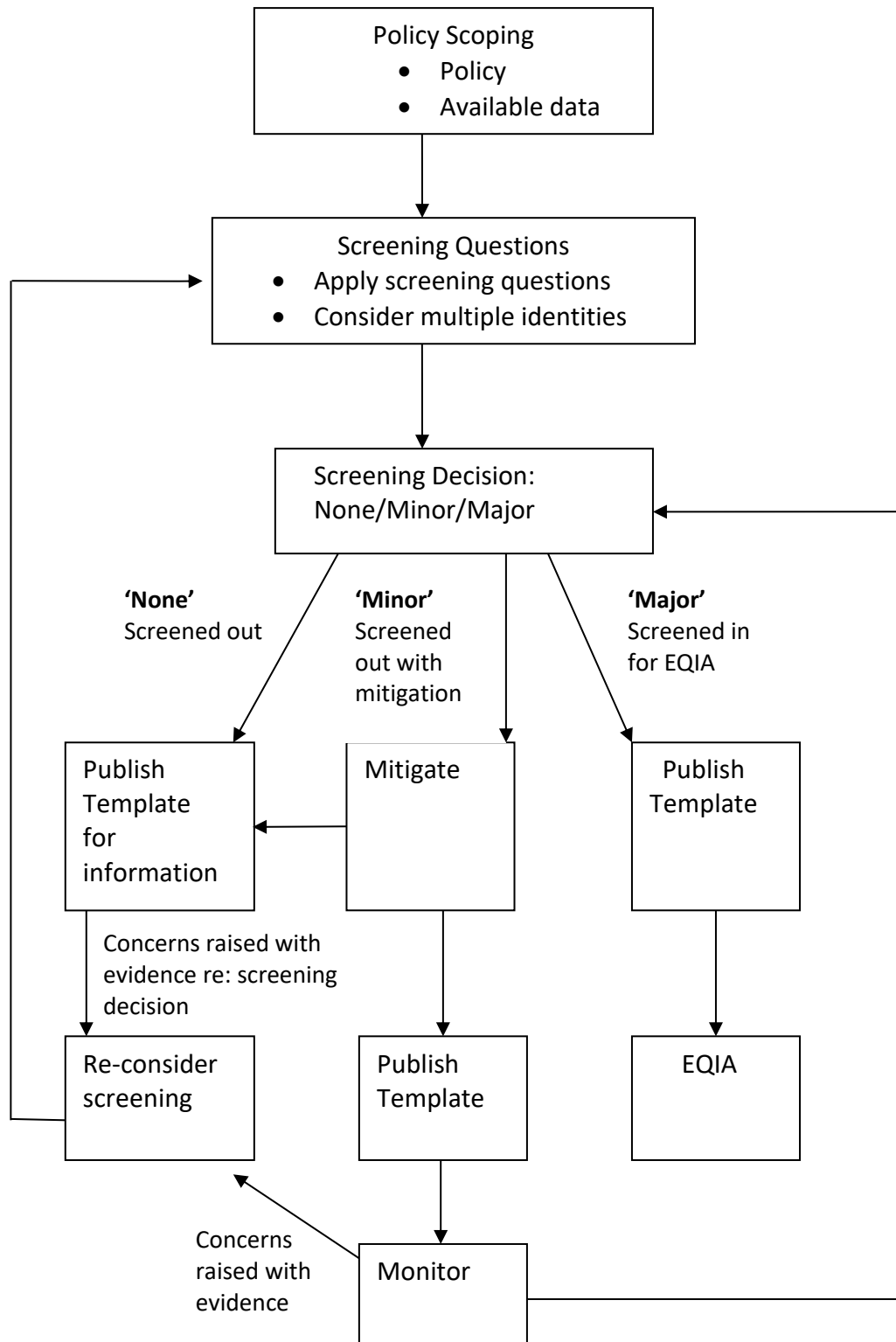
Part 3. Screening decision – guides the public authority to reach a screening decision as to whether or not there is a need to carry out an equality impact assessment (EQIA), or to introduce measures to mitigate the likely impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

Part 4. Monitoring – provides guidance to public authorities on monitoring for adverse impact and broader monitoring.

Part 5. Consideration of Human Rights – please note this is not a Human Rights Screening form but rather a prompt that impacts on Human Rights should be considered.

Part 6. Approval and authorisation – verifies the public authority’s approval of a screening decision by a senior manager responsible for the policy.

A screening flowchart is provided below.



Part 1. Policy scoping

The first stage of the screening process involves scoping the policy under consideration. The purpose of policy scoping is to help prepare the background and context and set out the aims and objectives for the policy, being screened. At this stage, scoping the policy will help identify potential constraints as well as opportunities and will help the policy maker work through the screening process on a step by step basis.

Public authorities should remember that the Section 75 statutory duties apply to internal policies (relating to people who work for the authority), as well as external policies (relating to those who are, or could be, served by the authority).

Information about the policy

Name of the policy

Regulations made under the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, to provide additional animal welfare protections to Northern Ireland's puppies and kittens that are intended to be sold, given away, or otherwise transferred to new owners.

Is this an existing, revised or new policy?

New policy.

What is it trying to achieve? (intended aims/outcomes)

The overarching objective of the proposed policy is to improve the welfare of puppies and kittens by making new rules for selling and supplying these animals in Northern Ireland, including banning third-party sales.

Currently, aside from licensing regulations that govern dog breeding establishments and pet shops—which mandate that records of sales and supplies be maintained—the sale and supply of puppies and kittens in Northern Ireland remains unregulated. The new policy will require all individuals and businesses intending to sell or supply a puppy or kitten to register annually with their local council. A registration fee will be imposed, initially for businesses in the first year, and for non-businesses starting from the second year. It is proposed that the Register of Sellers and Suppliers of Puppies and Kittens will be made available online.

Conditions will be attached to registration, including, persons can only sell/supply puppies and kittens they bred themselves, at the registered address; and they cannot sell/supply unweaned, or sick, puppies or kittens. A puppy or kitten may only be shown to a prospective new owner if it is with its biological mother; and the new owner must be provided with information on caring for the animal. The registered seller/supplier must maintain a register of all the dogs and cats, including pups and kittens.

The policy aims to tackle problems associated with third-party sales of puppies and kittens, including poor animal welfare; increased risk of illness and disease; customer deception; and irresponsible/illegal breeding. This policy will protect puppies and kittens, and their new owners. It will help improve the welfare of puppies and kittens, and it will also help purchasers

and new owners identify responsible and legal sellers/suppliers and it will protect them from potentially high costs related to dealing with sick animals; and long-term health or behavioural issues.

In short, the proposed policy aims to afford these animals additional animal welfare protections, leading to better outcomes for both the animals and their new owners. The proposed legislative change will ensure that the law affords sufficient protection for puppies and kittens which are destined for sale, being given away, or otherwise transferred to new owners, and that they are provided with the same level of protection as they are afforded elsewhere in the United Kingdom.

Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy? ☐ Yes ☒ No (select as appropriate)

If so, explain how.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.

Who owns and who implements the policy?

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.

Implementation factors

Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the policy/decision? ☐ Yes ☒ No (select as appropriate)

If yes, are they (please select as appropriate)

Financial ☐

Legislative ☐

other, please specify:

Main stakeholders affected

Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the policy will impact upon? (please select as appropriate)

Staff ☐

Service users ☐

Other public sector organisations ☒

Local councils are responsible for enforcing the 2011 Act in respect of canines and felines. The proposed policy will therefore fall to councils to enforce.

Voluntary/community/trade unions ☐

Other, please specify

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

What are they?

Who owns them?

N/A

Available evidence

Evidence to help inform the screening process may take many forms. Public authorities should ensure that their screening decision is informed by relevant data. The Commission has produced this guide to [signpost to S75 data](#).

What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories.

Please ensure all data used is the most current and up to date available. You should verify this by contacting the Departmental Statisticians.

Religious belief evidence/information:

There is no evidence to suggest that the revised policy will impact negatively on people in this category.

Political Opinion evidence/information:

There is no evidence to suggest that the revised policy will impact negatively on people in this category.

Racial Group evidence/information:

There is no evidence to suggest that the revised policy will impact negatively on people in this category.

Age evidence/information:

There is no evidence to suggest that the revised policy will impact negatively on people in this category.

Marital Status evidence/information:

There is no evidence to suggest that the revised policy will impact negatively on people in this category.

Sexual Orientation evidence/information:

There is no evidence to suggest that the revised policy will impact negatively on people in this category.

Men & Women generally evidence/information:

There is no evidence to suggest that the revised policy will impact negatively on people in this category.

Disability evidence/information:

There is no evidence to suggest that the revised policy will impact negatively on people in this category.

Dependants evidence/information:

There is no evidence to suggest that the revised policy will impact negatively on people in this category.

Needs, experiences and priorities

Taking into account the information referred to above, what are the

different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories, in relation to the particular policy/decision?

Specify details of the needs, experiences and priorities for each of the Section 75 categories below:

Religious belief

None

Political Opinion

None

Racial Group

None

Age

None

Marital status

None

Sexual orientation

None

Men and Women Generally

None

Disability

None

Dependants

None

Introduction

In making a decision as to whether or not there is a need to carry out an equality impact assessment, the public authority should consider its answers to the questions 1-4.

If the public authority's conclusion is **none** in respect of all of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then the public authority may decide to screen the policy out. If a policy is 'screened out' as having no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations, a public authority should give details of the reasons for the decision taken.

If the public authority's conclusion is **major** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then consideration should be given to subjecting the policy to the equality impact assessment procedure.

If the public authority's conclusion is **minor** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality categories and/or good relations categories, then consideration should still be given to proceeding with an equality impact assessment, or to:

- measures to mitigate the adverse impact; or
- the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

In favour of a ‘major’ impact

- a) The policy is significant in terms of its strategic importance;
- b) Potential equality impacts are unknown, because, for example, there is insufficient data upon which to make an assessment or because they are complex, and it would be appropriate to conduct an equality impact assessment in order to better assess them;
- c) Potential equality and/or good relations impacts are likely to be adverse or are likely to be experienced disproportionately by groups of people including those who are marginalised or disadvantaged;
- d) Further assessment offers a valuable way to examine the evidence and develop recommendations in respect of a policy about which there are concerns amongst affected individuals and representative groups, for example in respect of multiple identities;
- e) The policy is likely to be challenged by way of judicial review;
- f) The policy is significant in terms of expenditure.

In favour of ‘minor’ impact

- a) The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;
- b) The policy, or certain proposals within it, are potentially unlawfully discriminatory, but this possibility can readily and easily be eliminated by making appropriate changes to the policy or by adopting appropriate mitigating measures;

- c) Any asymmetrical equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups of disadvantaged people;
- d) By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

In favour of none

- 1) The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations.
- 2) The policy is purely technical in nature and will have no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.

Taking into account the evidence presented above, consider and comment on the likely impact on equality of opportunity and good relations for those affected by this policy, in any way, for each of the equality and good relations categories, by applying the screening questions given overleaf and indicate the level of impact on the group i.e. minor, major or none.

Screening questions

1. **What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories?** Please provide details of the likely policy impacts and determine the level of impact for each S75 categories below i.e. either minor, major or none.

Details of the likely policy impacts on *Religious belief*:

None

What is the level of impact? Minor ☐ Major ☐ None ☒

(select as appropriate)

Details of the likely policy impacts on *Political Opinion*:

None

What is the level of impact? Minor ☐ Major ☐ None ☒

(select as appropriate)

Details of the likely policy impacts on *Racial Group*:

None

What is the level of impact? Minor ☐ Major ☐ None ☒

(select as appropriate)

Details of the likely policy impacts on *Age*:

None

What is the level of impact? Minor ☐ Major ☐ None ☒

(select as appropriate)

Details of the likely policy impacts on *Marital Status*:

None

What is the level of impact? Minor ☐ Major ☐ None ☒

(select as appropriate)

Details of the likely policy impacts on *Sexual Orientation*:

None

What is the level of impact Minor ☐ Major ☐ None ☒

(select as appropriate)

Details of the likely policy impacts on *Men and Women*:

None

What is the level of impact? Minor ☐ Major ☐ None ☒

(select as appropriate)

Details of the likely policy impacts on *Disability*:

None

What is the level of impact? Minor ☐ Major ☐ None ☒

(select as appropriate)

Details of the likely policy impacts on *Dependants*:

None

What is the level of impact? ☐ Major ☐ None ☒

(select as appropriate)

2. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories?

☐ Yes ☒ No (select as appropriate)

Detail opportunities of how this policy could promote equality of opportunity for people within each of the Section 75 Categories below:

Religious Belief - If Yes, provide details:

N/A

If No, provide reasons:

There is no impact envisaged on, or opportunity to promote equality of opportunity for people within this category. However, the responses to the consultation will be monitored to inform the position.

Political Opinion - If Yes, provide details:

N/A

If No, provide reasons:

There is no impact envisaged on, or opportunity to promote equality of opportunity for people within this category. However, the responses to the consultation will be monitored to inform the position.

Racial Group - If Yes, provide details:

N/A

If No, provide reasons:

There is no impact envisaged on, or opportunity to promote equality of opportunity for people within this category. However, the responses to the consultation will be monitored to inform the position.

Age - If Yes, provide details:

N/A

If No, provide reasons:

There is no impact envisaged on, or opportunity to promote equality of opportunity for people within this category. However, the responses to the consultation will be monitored to inform the position.

Marital Status - If Yes, provide details:

N/A

If No, provide reasons

There is no impact envisaged on, or opportunity to promote equality of opportunity for people within this category. However, the responses to the consultation will be monitored to inform the position.

Sexual Orientation - If Yes, provide details:

N/A

If No, provide reasons:

There is no impact envisaged on, or opportunity to promote equality of opportunity for people within this category. However, the responses to the consultation will be monitored to inform the position.

Men and Women generally - If Yes, provide details:

N/A

If No, provide reasons:

There is no impact envisaged on, or opportunity to promote equality of opportunity for people within this category. However, the responses to the consultation will be monitored to inform the position.

Disability - If Yes, provide details:

N/A

If No, provide reasons:

There is no impact envisaged on, or opportunity to promote equality of opportunity for people within this category. However, the responses to the consultation will be monitored to inform the position.

Dependants - If Yes, provide details:

N/A

If No, provide reasons:

There is no impact envisaged on, or opportunity to promote equality of opportunity for people within this category. However, the responses to the consultation will be monitored to inform the position.

3. To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

Please provide details of the likely policy impact and determine the level of impact for each of the categories below i.e. either minor, major or none.

Details of the likely policy impacts on *Religious belief*:

None

What is the level of impact? Minor ☐ Major ☐ None ☒
(select as appropriate)

Details of the likely policy impacts on *Political Opinion*:

None

What is the level of impact? Minor ☐ Major ☐ None ☒
(select as appropriate)

Details of the likely policy impacts on *Racial Group*:

None

What is the level of impact? Minor ☐ Major ☐ None ☒
(select as appropriate)

4. Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

Detail opportunities of how this policy could better promote good relations for people within each of the Section 75 Categories below:

***Religious Belief* - If Yes, provide details:**

N/A

If No, provide reasons:

There is no available evidence to indicate such opportunities. However, the responses to the consultation will be monitored to inform the position.

***Political Opinion* - If Yes, provide details:**

N/A

If No, provide reasons:

There is no available evidence to indicate such opportunities. However, the responses to the consultation will be monitored to inform the position.

***Racial Group* - If Yes, provide details:**

N/A

If No, provide reasons:

There is no available evidence to indicate such opportunities. However, the responses to the consultation will be monitored to inform the position.

Additional considerations

Multiple identity

Generally speaking, people can fall into more than one Section 75 category. Taking this into consideration, are there any potential impacts of the policy/decision on people with multiple identities? If so, please detail below.

(For example; disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; and young lesbians, gay and bisexual people).

Provide details of data on the impact of the policy on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

There is no available evidence to indicate potential impacts on such people. However, the responses to the consultation will be monitored to inform the position.

DAERA also has legislative obligations to meet under the **Disability Discrimination Order**. Questions 5 - 6 relate to these.

Consideration of Disability Duties

- 5. Does this proposed policy or decision provide an opportunity for DAERA to better promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?**

The proposed policy would apply equally to all stakeholders. It is not anticipated that it will provide an opportunity to promote positive attitudes towards people with a disability. However, the responses to the consultation will be monitored to inform the position.

- 6. Does this proposed policy or decision provide an opportunity to actively increase the participation by disabled people in public life?**

The proposed policy does not provide an opportunity to actively increase the participation by disabled people in public life. However, the responses to the consultation will be monitored to inform the position.

Part 3. Screening decision (Please delete as appropriate)

“Screened out” without mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

The policy will apply to all persons who sell/supply puppies and kittens, equally. An Equality and Human Rights Screening Exercise has been undertaken, which assessed evidence relating to s75 considerations, including equality of opportunity and good relations, and Disability Duties and Human Rights. The exercise has concluded that the policy would apply equally to all stakeholders.

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment the public authority should consider if the policy should be mitigated or an alternative policy be introduced - please provide details.

N/A. No mitigations or alternatives are needed. The policy will apply to all persons who sell/supply puppies and kittens, equally.

If the decision is to subject the policy to an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

N/A

All public authorities' equality schemes must state the authority's arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted by the authority on the promotion of equality of opportunity. The Commission recommends screening and equality impact assessment as the tools to be utilised for such assessments. Further advice on

equality impact assessment may be found in a separate Commission publication: [A Practical Guide to Equality Impact Assessment](#)

Mitigation

When the public authority concludes that the likely impact is ‘minor’ and an equality impact assessment is not to be conducted, the public authority may consider mitigation to lessen the severity of any equality impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations.

Can the policy/decision be amended or changed or an alternative policy introduced to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations? ☐ Yes ☒ No (select as appropriate)

If so, give the reasons to support your decision, together with the proposed changes/amendments or alternative policy.

N/A

Timetabling and prioritising

Factors to be considered in timetabling and prioritising policies for equality impact assessment.

If the policy has been ‘screened in’ for equality impact assessment, then please answer the following questions to determine its priority for timetabling the equality impact assessment.

On a scale of 1-3, with 1 being the lowest priority and 3 being the highest, assess the policy in terms of its priority for equality impact assessment.

Priority criterion	Rating (1-3)
Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations	N/A
Social need	N/A
Effect on people’s daily lives	N/A
Relevance to a public authority’s functions	N/A
Total score	N/A

Note: The Total Rating Score should be used to prioritise the policy in rank order with other policies screened in for equality impact assessment. This list of priorities will assist the public authority in timetabling. Details of the Public Authority’s Equality Impact Assessment Timetable should be included in the quarterly Screening Report.

Is the policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities? ☐ Yes ☒ No (select as appropriate)

If yes, please provide details.

N/A

Part 4. Monitoring

Section 75 places a requirement on DAERA to have equality monitoring arrangements in place in order to assess the impact of policies and services etc; and to help identify barriers to fair participation and to better promote equality of opportunity. Please note the following excerpt from The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland in relation to monitoring:

A system must be established to monitor the impact of the policy in order to find out its effect on relevant groups. The results of ongoing monitoring must be reviewed on an annual basis. The public authority is required to publish the results of this monitoring. And they must be included in the public authorities' annual review on progress to the Equality Commission. The Equality Scheme must specify how and where such monitoring information will be published. It is therefore essential that monitoring is carried out in a systematic manner and that the results are widely and openly published.

If the monitoring and analysis of results over a two year period show that the policy results in greater adverse impact than predicted, or if opportunities arise which would allow for greater equality of opportunity to be promoted, the public authority must ensure that the policy is revised to achieve better outcomes for the relevant equality groups.

Further advice on monitoring can be found at: [ECNI Monitoring Guidance for Public Authorities](#)

Outline what data you will collect in the future in order to monitor the impact of this policy or decision on equality, good relations and disability duties.

Equality:

The Department will consider all comments generated from the public consultation.

Good Relations:

The Department will consider all comments generated from the public consultation.

Disability Duties:

The Department will consider all comments generated from the public consultation.

Part 5. Consideration of Human Rights

- 7. The Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998 brings the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into UK law and it applies in N Ireland. Indicate below by deleting Yes/No as appropriate, any potential adverse impacts that the policy or decision may have in relation to human rights issues.**

See Annex A for brief synopsis on each of the Human Rights Articles & Protocols.

Right to Life	Article 2	Yes /No
Prohibition of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment	Article 3	Yes /No
Prohibition of slavery and forced labour	Article 4	Yes /No
Right to liberty and security	Article 5	Yes /No
Right to a fair and public trial	Article 6	Yes /No
Right to no punishment without law	Article 7	Yes /No
Right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence	Article 8	Yes /No
Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion	Article 9	Yes /No
Right to freedom of expression	Article 10	Yes /No

Right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association	Article 11	Yes /No
Right to marry and to found a family	Article 12	Yes /No
The prohibition of discrimination	Article 14	Yes /No
Protection of property and enjoyment of possessions	Protocol 1 Article 1	Yes /No
Right to education	Protocol 1 Article 2	Yes /No
Right to free and secret elections	Protocol 1 Article 3	Yes /No

8. Please explain any adverse impacts on human rights that you have identified.

No adverse impact on human rights have been identified.

9. Please indicate any ways which you consider the policy positively promotes human rights.

No ways to positively promote human rights have been identified.

Part 6 - Approval and authorisation

Before signing off this screening template please confirm that you have completed all the actions listed below.

I can confirm that all the actions listed below have been completed -

- I have explained any technical issues in plain English (easily understood by a 12 year old)
- I have used the most relevant, current & up to date data available
- I have added evidence and explained my assessments in full
- I have provided a brief note to justify my decision to 'Screen In' or 'Screen Out'
- A copy of this screening template and the final decision has been sent to the Equality Unit for their consideration before it has been forwarded for sign-off

Screening assessment completed by (Staff Officer level or above) -

Name: Brenda Kelly

Grade: DP

Branch: Animal Welfare and Dog

Date: 18 April 2025

Control Policy Branch

Signature: please insert a scanned image of your signature.



Screening decision approved by (must be Grade 3/Deputy Secretary or above) -

Name: Brian Dooher

Grade: Gd3

Branch: VSAHG

Date: 15 May 2025

Signature: please insert a scanned image of your signature.



Note: A copy of the Screening Template, for each policy screened should be ‘signed off’ and approved by a senior manager responsible for the policy, made easily accessible on the public authority’s website as soon as possible following completion and made available on request.

Please save the final signed version of the completed screening form in the CM container (AE2-19-11940) below as soon as possible after completion and forward the CM link to Equality Branch at equality@daera-ni.gov.uk. The screening template must be saved to the container in **HTML format** (not PDF) in order to comply with accessibility requirements. The screening form will be placed on the DAERA website and a link provided to the Department’s Section 75 consultees.



Strategic
Management DAERA/

For more information about equality screening, contact:

DAERA Equality Unit

Capacity, Capability, Equality & Diversity Branch

Jubilee House

111 Ballykelly Road

LIMAVADY

BT49 9HP

Email: equality@daera-ni.gov.uk

Tel: 028 7744 2027



Annex A

Synopsis of Human Rights Act Articles & Protocols

ARTICLE 2

Right to life

1. Everyone's right to life shall be protected by law. No one shall be deprived of his life intentionally save in the execution of a sentence of a court following his conviction of a crime for which this penalty is provided by law.
2. Deprivation of life shall not be regarded as inflicted in contravention of this Article when it results from the use of force which is no more than absolutely necessary:
 - a. In defense of any person from unlawful violence;
 - b. In order to effect a lawful arrest or to prevent the escape of a person lawfully detained;
 - c. In action lawfully taken for the purpose of quelling a riot or insurrection.

ARTICLE 3

Prohibition of torture

No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

ARTICLE 4

Prohibition of slavery and forced labour

1. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude.
2. No one shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour.
3. For the purpose of this Article the term “forced or compulsory labour” shall not include:
 - a. Any work required to be done in the ordinary course of detention imposed according to the provisions of Article 5 of this Convention or during conditional release from such detention;
 - b. Any service of a military character or, in case of conscientious objectors in countries where they are recognised, service exacted instead of compulsory military service;
 - c. Any service exacted in case of an emergency or calamity threatening the life or well-being of the community;
 - d. Any work or service which forms part of normal civic obligations.

ARTICLE 5

Right to liberty and security

1. Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person. No one shall be deprived of his liberty save in the following cases and in accordance with a procedure prescribed by law:
 - a. The lawful detention of a person after conviction by a competent court;
 - b. The lawful arrest or detention of a person for non-compliance with the lawful order of a court or in order to secure the fulfilment of any obligation prescribed by law;
 - c. the lawful arrest or detention of a person effected for the purpose of bringing him before the competent legal authority on reasonable suspicion of having committed an offence or when it is reasonably

- considered necessary to prevent his committing an offence or fleeing after having done so;
- d. the detention of a minor by lawful order for the purpose of educational supervision or his lawful detention for the purpose of bringing him before the competent legal authority;
 - e. The lawful detention of persons for the prevention of the spreading of infectious diseases, of persons of unsound mind, alcoholics or drug addicts or vagrants;
 - f. The lawful arrest or detention of a person to prevent his effecting an unauthorised entry into the country or of a person against whom action is being taken with a view to deportation or extradition.
2. Everyone who is arrested shall be informed promptly, in a language which he understands, of the reasons for his arrest and of any charge against him.
3. Everyone arrested or detained in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 1(c) of this Article shall be brought promptly before a judge or other officer authorised by law to exercise judicial power and shall be entitled to trial within a reasonable time or to release pending trial. Release may be conditioned by guarantees to appear for trial.
4. Everyone who is deprived of his liberty by arrest or detention shall be entitled to take proceedings by which the lawfulness of his detention shall be decided speedily by a court and his release ordered if the detention is not lawful.
5. Everyone who has been the victim of arrest or detention in contravention of the provisions of this Article shall have an enforceable right to compensation.

ARTICLE 6

Right to a fair trial

1. In the determination of his civil rights and obligations or of any criminal charge against him, everyone is entitled to a fair and public hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial tribunal established by law. Judgment shall be pronounced publicly but the press and public may be excluded from all or part of the trial in the interest of morals, public order or national security in a democratic society, where the interests of juveniles or the protection of the private life of the parties so require, or to the extent strictly necessary in the opinion of the court in special circumstances where publicity would prejudice the interests of justice.
2. Everyone charged with a criminal offence shall be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law.
3. Everyone charged with a criminal offence has the following minimum rights:
 - a. To be informed promptly, in a language which he understands and in detail, of the nature and cause of the accusation against him;
 - b. To have adequate time and facilities for the preparation of his defense;
 - c. To defend himself in person or through legal assistance of his own choosing or, if he has not sufficient means to pay for legal assistance, to be given it free when the interests of justice so require;
 - d. To examine or have examined witnesses against him and to obtain the attendance and examination of witnesses on his behalf under the same conditions as witnesses against him;

- e. To have the free assistance of an interpreter if he cannot understand or speak the language used in court.

ARTICLE 7

No punishment without law

1. No one shall be held guilty of any criminal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a criminal offence under national or international law at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the criminal offence was committed.
2. This Article shall not prejudice the trial and punishment of any person for any act or omission which, at the time when it was committed, was criminal according to the general principles of law recognised by civilised nations.

ARTICLE 8

Right to respect for private and family life

1. Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.
2. There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

ARTICLE 9

Freedom of thought, conscience and religion

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.
2. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs shall be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order, health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

ARTICLE 10

Freedom of expression

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. This Article shall not prevent States from requiring the licensing of broadcasting, television or cinema enterprises.
2. The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for

preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary.

ARTICLE 11

Freedom of assembly and association

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.
2. No restrictions shall be placed on the exercise of these rights other than such as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. This Article shall not prevent the imposition of lawful restrictions on the exercise of these rights by members of the armed forces, of the police or of the administration of the State.

ARTICLE 12

Right to marry

Men and women of marriageable age have the right to marry and to found a family, according to the national laws governing the exercise of this right.

ARTICLE 14

Prohibition of discrimination

The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status.

Protocol 1

ARTICLE 1

Protection of property

Every natural or legal person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions. No one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest and subject to the conditions provided for by law and by the general principles of international law.

The preceding provisions shall not, however, in any way impair the right of a State to enforce such laws as it deems necessary to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest or to secure the payment of taxes or other contributions or penalties.

Protocol 1

ARTICLE 2

Right to education

No person shall be denied the right to education. In the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions.

Protocol 1

ARTICLE 3

Right to free elections

The High Contracting Parties undertake to hold free elections at reasonable intervals by secret ballot, under conditions which will ensure the free expression of the opinion of the people in the choice of the legislature.

For further information:

Equality Unit,
Equality & Diversity Branch
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)
Jubilee House
111 Ballykelly Road
Ballykelly
Limavady
BT49 9HP

Tel: 028 7744 2027

Email: equality@daera-ni.gov.uk



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

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Appendix I - Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) Template

SECTION 1 - Defining the activity subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016

1A. Name of Public Authority.

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

1B. Please provide a short title which describes the activity being undertaken by the Public Authority that is subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.

Regulations made under the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, to provide additional animal welfare protections to Northern Ireland's puppies and kittens which are intended to be sold, given away, or otherwise transferred to new owners.

1C. Please indicate which category the activity specified in Section 1B above relates to.

Developing a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Adopting a	Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Implementing a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Revising a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Designing a Public Service	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Delivering a Public Service	<input type="checkbox"/>		

1D. Please provide the official title (if any) of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service document or initiative relating to the category indicated in Section 1C above.

Introduction of regulations made under the Welfare of Animals Act (NI) 2011, to provide additional animal welfare protections to Northern Ireland's puppies and kittens which are intended to be sold, given away, or otherwise transferred to new owners.

1E. Please provide details of the aims and/or objectives of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service.

The aim of the proposed policy is to introduce a registration requirement for persons who sell, give away, or otherwise transfer ownership to new owners, puppies and kittens (i.e. canines and felines aged less than 6 months).

1F. What definition of 'rural' is the Public Authority using in respect of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?

Population Settlements of less than 5,000 (Default definition).

☒

Other Definition (Provide details and the rationale below).

☐

A definition of 'rural' is not applicable.

☐

Details of alternative definition of 'rural' used.

N/A

Rationale for using alternative definition of 'rural'.

N/A

Reasons why a definition of 'rural' is not applicable.

N/A

SECTION 2 - Understanding the impact of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

2A. Is the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service likely to impact on people in rural areas?

Yes ☒ No ☐ If the response is **NO** GO TO Section **2E**.

2B. Please explain how the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas.

Any person who intends to sell, give away, or otherwise exchange the ownership of puppies and kittens (i.e. canines and felines aged less than 6 months), will first be required to apply to their local council to be registered on a Register of Sellers and Suppliers of puppies and kittens. This will include people who operate as a business, and those who operate in a non-business capacity. He/she will be required to submit an application form, pay the required fee, and supply specified details, such as the address the animals were born at, and will be sold from. Upon granting of registration, he/she will be entered onto the councils Register of Sellers and Suppliers of puppies and kittens, and will required to adhere to specified conditions such as showing the puppies and kittens to prospective buyers, and rules about sales. Rules relating to sales made include, the registered person cannot sell, give away, or otherwise exchange the ownership of puppies and kittens he/she did not breed himself at the registered address; he/she cannot sell puppies and kittens that are aged under 8 weeks; and the sale of any puppy and kitten must be completed in the presence of the purchaser on the premises. Registration is valid for one year.

2C. If the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas differently from people in urban areas, please explain how it is likely to impact on people in rural areas differently.

N/A. The policy will impact on people in rural areas in the same way as it will impact on people in urban areas.

2D. Please indicate which of the following rural policy areas the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to primarily impact on.

Rural Businesses	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rural Tourism	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education or Training in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health or Social Care Services in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poverty in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deprivation in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Crime or Community Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Development	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agri-Environment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please state)	<input type="text"/>

If the response to Section 2A was YES GO TO Section 3A.

2E. Please explain why the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is NOT likely to impact on people in rural areas.

SECTION 3 - Identifying the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas

3A. Has the Public Authority taken steps to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas that are relevant to the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?

Yes ☒ No ☐ If the response is **NO** GO TO Section **3E**.

3B. Please indicate which of the following methods or information sources were used by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.

Consultation with Rural Stakeholders	<input type="checkbox"/>	Published Statistics	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consultation with Other Organisations	<input type="checkbox"/>	Research Papers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Surveys or Questionnaires	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Publications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other Methods or Information Sources (include details in Question 3C below).			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

3C. Please provide details of the methods and information sources used to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas including relevant dates, names of organisations, titles of publications, website references, details of surveys or consultations undertaken etc.

The Department does not hold any information regarding location of Northern Ireland's licenced dog breeding establishments, nor does it hold information about location of citizens who sell, give away, or otherwise transfer the ownership of puppies and kittens. The USPCA Puppy Dog Fortunes, report on the puppy trade in Northern Ireland (<https://www.uspca.co.uk/media/uploads/uspca-puppy-dog-fortunes.pdf>) reports that there are at least 45 licensed breeders across Northern Ireland, and that there are illegal/unlicensed breeding establishments across both rural areas and urban areas. The Department has also carried out desktop research on online advertisements regarding puppies for sale. Research indicates advertisements relate to areas across NI, ranging from large urban areas, smaller towns, and rural areas alike.

3D. Please provide details of the social and economic needs of people in rural areas which have been identified by the Public Authority?

The social and economic needs of people in rural areas in relation to this policy do not differ from the social and economic needs of people from urban areas.

IRO sellers and suppliers, all people will be required to apply to their local council, and their details will be held in a public-facing register, identifying them as a registered seller/supplier of puppies and kittens.

IRO new owners, at present, people who wish to buy/obtain a new puppy or kitten are susceptible to sellers/suppliers operating in an illegal/black-market capacity. The new owners are left dealing with sick animals and high vet fees arising from dealing with illnesses and complications which occur due to the poor conditions that the animals were bred in. This is NI-wide, and the Department is not aware of different needs of people in rural areas.

The Department will consider any evidence of a particular need of people in rural areas that may be brought to its attention during the public consultation process.

If the response to Section 3A was YES GO TO Section 4A.

3E. Please explain why no steps were taken by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas?

SECTION 4 - Considering the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas

4A. Please provide details of the issues considered in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.

The social and economic needs of people in rural areas in relation to this policy do not differ from the social and economic needs of the people from urban areas.

SECTION 5 - Influencing the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

5A. Has the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, been influenced by the rural needs identified?

Yes ☐ No ☒ If the response is **NO** GO TO Section **5C**.

5B. Please explain how the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, has been influenced by the rural needs identified.

N/A

If the response to Section **5A** was **YES** GO TO Section **6A**.

5C. Please explain why the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or the delivery of the Public Service, has NOT been influenced by the rural needs identified.

No rural needs have been identified. The Department will take account of any needs that might be identified during public consultation.

SECTION 6 - Documenting and Recording

6A. Please tick below to confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained by the Public Authority and relevant information on the Section 1 activity compiled in accordance with paragraph 6.7 of the guidance.

I confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained and relevant information compiled. ☒

Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:	Brenda Kelly
Position/Grade:	DP
Division/Branch	Animal Welfare and Dog Control Policy Branch
Signature:	B KELLY
Date:	24 April 2025
Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:	NEAL GARTLAND
Position/Grade:	GRADE 5
Division/Branch:	AHWPDP
Signature:	N GARTLAND
Date:	15 MAY 2025

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DRAFT CONSULTATION RESPONSE

New Rules for Selling and Supplying Puppies and Kittens

About you

Q1. What is your name? Helen Morrissey

Q2. What is your email address? morrisseyh@belfastcity.gov.uk

Q3. Are the views and opinions in your response personal or expressed on behalf of an organisation?

Personal

Organisation ☒ X

If the views and opinions expressed are on behalf of an organisation, please provide the name of the organisation below.

Belfast City Council (*'the Council'*)

Q4. Please indicate if you are happy for your response to be published.

Yes ☒ X

No

Q5. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please indicate if you are content for the name of the organisation to be associated with your response.

Yes ☒ X

No

Not Applicable

Proposed requirement to register with local council

Q6. Do you agree that any person who wishes to sell, give away, or otherwise transfer the ownership of puppies should be required to register with their local council?

Yes

No **X**

Comments

The Council is aware that this is the first of a number of proposed changes to Animal Welfare (AW) legislation where The Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has indicated the allocation of additional responsibilities to Councils.

The Council is of the opinion that other reforms need to be addressed prior to the introduction of the proposed registration regime, and that the review of dog breeding legislation and the regulation of rescue and rehoming centres remain the priority.

Whilst Council Officers welcome any legislation to improve animal welfare, the Council does not agree that councils should be required to take on this new legal requirement for puppies to be registered.

The Council recommends that other alternative organisations be explored further to facilitate this new requirement e.g. DAERA, USPCA and other animal charities. We also advocate that a centralised register is created and maintained for NI. It is noted that the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine are responsible for a registration scheme in ROI.

At prior engagement meetings there was no indication that the new functions will be self-funding. The Council is of the view that there has not been sufficient engagement with councils, particularly on fees and full cost recovery.

The proposal reflects a concerning and growing trend whereby central government seeks to devolve enforcement responsibilities to local government without a corresponding transfer of resources, powers or legal protections. Councils cannot continue to absorb additional responsibilities by default, particularly where they fall outside our core remit and expertise.

DAERA has withdrawn funding from Councils for the AW function. Belfast City Council employs 2 Animal Welfare Officers (AWOs) and 1 Administrative Assistant. The Council's Dog Warden Service has 14 FTE staff. Both teams of staff are fully employed fulfilling their current duties.

DAERA recently introduced the XL Bully legislation which has already significantly added to the workload of Council Dog Warden teams, again without any additional funding for ongoing costs. It must be stressed that any further intentions by DAERA to make councils responsible for future changes in AW legislation, without adequate funding on an ongoing basis, will have significant financial implications for the Council.

The AW Service operates a computer software system which is solely for the AW function. The AW Service is not linked to the dog warden function and operates as an independent unit. The Dog Warden software system for dog licensing and receipt of service requests has no connection with the AW software system. Any new proposed registration system would need significant investment to allow for registration, annual renewal and management of payments. In addition, the system would need to be able to facilitate a public register. The Council has concerns as to how this additional IT upgrade would be financed via the proposed self-funding model.

Although inspection is not anticipated as part of the scheme – any complaints and associated enforcement will require inspections to be carried out by suitably trained staff.

Initial direct costs will be required to implement a computer system for recording registration details for puppies, generate a publicly facing register and manage the fees associated with registration.

Additional staff resource will also be required i.e. Administrative Support and Enforcement Officer(s) and all associated costs including a vehicle(s), training, IT equipment, protective clothing etc.

Ongoing costs will be required to maintain the computer system and vehicle(s) and also staff salaries including employer costs.

Q7. Do you agree that any person who wishes to sell, give away, or otherwise transfer the ownership of kittens should be required to register with their local council?

Yes

No **X**

Comments

The Council is aware that this is the first of a number of potential changes to Animal Welfare legislation where DAERA proposes to allocate additional responsibilities to Councils.

Officers are of the opinion that other reforms need to be addressed prior to the introduction of the proposed registration regime, and that the review of dog breeding legislation and the regulation of rescue and rehoming centres remain the priority.

Whilst council officers welcome any legislation in improving animal welfare, the Council does not agree that councils should be responsible for the new legal requirement for kittens to be registered.

The Council recommends that other alternative organisations be explored further to facilitate this new requirement e.g. DAERA, USPCA and other animal charities. We also advocate that a centralised register is created and maintained for NI. It is noted that the

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine are responsible for a registration scheme in ROI.

The Northern Ireland Dogs Advisory Group, on behalf of all 11 Councils provided feedback at a DAERA Workshop in February 2025. As advised at that time, councils strongly believe that it would be difficult to enforce the proposed legislative provisions in respect of cats.

Councils are of the opinion that the roaming/wandering behaviour of cats means that they may have several owners, or no known owner at all. As cat microchipping is not yet mandatory in Northern Ireland, it is anticipated that officers would have difficulty proving ownership, in the absence of a valid microchip. It is the view of the Council that cats should be either excluded from the proposals, or both the registration and microchipping of cats should be placed with a charity.

DAERA has withdrawn funding from Councils for the Animal Welfare function. Belfast City Council employs 2 AWOs and 1 Administrative Assistant. The AW Service operates a computer software system which is solely for the AW function. Any new proposed registration system would need significant investment to allow for registration, annual renewal and management of payments. In addition, the system would need to be able to facilitate a public register.

Although inspection is not anticipated as part of the scheme, any complaints and associated enforcement will require inspections to be carried out.

The current staff resource of AWOs and administrative support would not be capable of taking on this new legislative requirement. Additional AWOs and administrative staff would be required, including vehicles and other assets.

Councils are particularly not in favour of the proposed requirement to register for the purpose of "giving away" kittens, as it is believed that this may lead to criminalising individuals who are simply trying to give away their pet's offspring to a friend or neighbour etc.

Proposed exemptions

Q8. Do you agree with the proposed list of exempted groups who will be exempt from the proposed new rules?

Yes

No **X**

If not, which groups do you believe should be exempted?

While we agree in principle that certain groups may be exempted from the proposed new rules, the following comments should be considered -

Rescue and Rehoming Charities

The Council appreciates the role of rescue and rehoming charities in sourcing a new home for abandoned puppies or kittens and as such are of the opinion that those who are operating as legitimate rescue and rehoming charities should be exempted from the proposed requirements. We are however mindful of the potential for unscrupulous organisations posing as charities and therefore feel that this exemption would apply solely to those who are registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.

Council Operated Dog Pounds

We are satisfied that Council owned and operated pounds may be exempted from the proposed new rules, as existing controls are already in place in such premises and it is widely known and accepted that they will rehome/give away puppies to other animal charities. We do however feel that where contractors are employed to provide kenneling services on behalf of councils, that the requirements should apply to them.

Persons who give puppies/kittens to a rescue and rehoming organisation with charitable status.

We are satisfied that anyone giving puppies or kittens to an animal rescue or rehoming registered charity may be exempt from the requirement to register with their local council. Equally, we agree that any person who has acquired a puppy or kitten either from a registered seller or supplier, from a council dog pound, or from a registered rescue or rehoming charity, and then shortly thereafter, decides that they do not want to keep it, would not be required to register. In such circumstances, this person did not breed the animal themselves, and therefore could not meet the registration conditions.

We agree that it is necessary to restrict the options available to legally move a puppy or kitten under 6 months old, to prevent any loopholes for third party sellers.

Proposed registration fee

Q9. Do you agree that the first year of registration should be free of charge, except for businesses?

Yes

No **X**

Comments

The Council is of the opinion that a centralised register should be created and maintained for NI.

The Regulatory Impact Assessment makes various assumptions on the number of puppies and kittens being sold annually in NI and the potential income generated extrapolated from such figures.

The document states "*The Department does not hold information on the numbers of people or pet shops that will become sellers/suppliers of puppies and kittens. Nor does it hold information on licensed Dog Breeding Establishments. The cost to these people and businesses of registering with their local council as sellers and suppliers of puppies and kittens, is unknown at this juncture*"

While it is appreciated that a "first year free" approach for pet owners would encourage owners to take action to prevent further unplanned pregnancies by getting their pet neutered, the Council is of the opinion that implementation of the proposed registration scheme would require significant funding prior to being launched, and that this must be reflected in any proposed registration fee from the outset to ensure full cost recovery for the new registration organisation.

Fee setting must be balanced, the council has concerns that where costs are too prohibitive, activity could be driven underground, hence any short fall in full cost recovery needs to be borne by DAERA.

It is considered that any fee must be set at a realistic level to ensure that all cost considerations are accounted for. The fee should be set in legislation and should be on a sliding scale based on the number of pets

In addition, it is essential that any fee associated with the registration scheme must be inflation linked and subject to a periodic review to account for any subsequent amendments.

Proposed application process (council role)

Q10. Do you agree that a person who sells, gives away, or otherwise transfers the ownership of puppies and kittens, should be required to do so at the address where the puppies and kittens, and the biological mother are kept?

Yes ☒ X

No

Comments

Yes, the Council supports this requirement on owners to promote responsible purchasing and rehoming practices. However, any requirements need to deter different dogs being presented as the biological mother.

Proposed conditions for registration

Q11. Do you agree with the conditions of registration, as listed in the consultation document?

Yes ☒ X

No

Comments

While we agree with the proposed conditions of registration in principle, the following comments should be duly considered:

Condition 1 - The registered person cannot sell, give away or otherwise transfer the ownership of puppies or kittens which they did not breed at the registered address.

AGREE

Condition 2 - The registered person cannot sell, give away or otherwise transfer the ownership of puppies or kittens that are un-weaned, weaned at an age which they should not have been weaned, or aged under eight weeks old.

AGREE

Condition 3 – A puppy or kitten may only be shown to a prospective purchaser or new owner if it is together with its biological mother. There will be an exemption if the biological mother has died.

AGREE

Condition 4 - The sale of, giving away of, or otherwise transfer of ownership of a puppy or kitten must take place in person and when the puppy or kitten is in the presence of its biological mother and must be completed in the presence of the potential purchaser or new owner at the registered address.

AGREE

Condition 5 - The purchaser or new owner must be provided with specified information on caring for a puppy or kitten and with information on dog licensing requirements.

AGREE – However, onus should not be on rehoming organisations to provide this information to new owners and DAERA should provide templates for this prescribed information.

Condition 6 - The registered person must keep and maintain a register for all the dogs and cats, including puppies and kittens, on the premises.

AGREE - However we feel that the word "register" should be changed to "record", as in reality in the majority of instances, this may simply relate to one litter.

The Council agree that the proposed conditions are the minimum necessary to allow for compliance to be assessed.

While it is appreciated that the proposals do not require mandatory inspection, and there will be no onus to visit every house/premises from which a person wishes to sell or supply puppies or kittens, it is highly unlikely that the relevant registration organisation would not have to carry out inspections.

The Council believes that this would be necessary to confirm and verify that the biological mother is present, and feel that the conditions, as listed, will always generate the requirement for a visit to the property/premises from which puppies/kittens are being sold or supplied to ensure confidence in welfare and husbandry standards for the public. Inevitably this will add additional responsibilities to the relevant registration organisation.

The Council believes that an additional condition relating to a cap on the number of puppies/kittens that can be sold/transferred/given away etc. in one 12-month period would be an effective and useful provision.

An education/promotional campaign should form part of the implementation plan, with a clear focus on educating both the public on responsibly sourcing a pet and pet owners/businesses on the requirements for registration.

Proposed conditions for advertising puppies and kittens

Q12. Do you agree that any advertisement for the sale of, giving away of, or other transfer of ownership of a puppy or kitten must include the information, as listed in the consultation document?

Yes ☒ X

No

Comments

The Council agrees with the requirements, as laid out in the consultation document. However, we feel that point 7 should be reworded. Rather than the advertisement containing a "warning" about the life changing decision that buying/getting a new puppy or kitten is, it may be more appropriate to provide an informative for prospective new owners around their commitment/responsibilities.

It is recommended that DAERA provide a template advertisement, for use by those intending to sell, give away or transfer a puppy or kitten.

Proposed online publication of Register of Sellers of Puppies and Kittens

Q13. Do you agree that an online, public register of sellers and suppliers of puppies and kittens should publish the detail, as listed in the consultation document?

Yes ☒ X

No

Comments

The Council agrees in principle with the proposal that an online public register should include all information as listed in the consultation document and feel that this would be beneficial for prospective buyers in terms of providing assurance. The Council strongly advise that a central register should be created and maintained for NI and as referred to earlier be administered by DAERA.

We would however highlight that due consideration must be given to potential GDPR issues, particularly around "hobby" or "accidental" breeders, and the publication of their home addresses. While we do not necessarily have concerns around disclosure of commercial addresses, we are mindful of potential health and safety risks associated with publishing private addresses.

It is understood that the requirement to register will automatically mean a person's details will be publicly available. Is this a legal requirement or is there an option to "opt out" i.e. could the addition of names and addresses to a public register be voluntary?

Impact Assessments

Q14. Do you have any comments to make in relation to the Regulatory Impact Assessment, and its conclusions, or any additional information regarding impacts/costs?

Yes ☒ X

No

Comments

Council Officers have attended two events with DAERA officials on the above proposals and have highlighted significant concerns regarding the potential implications for councils given that Animal Welfare funding has been withdrawn by DAERA. DAERA have however continued to issue the first of a number of consultations with the intention of allocating new duties to councils without clear funding being identified.

The Council is of the opinion that additional reforms need to be addressed prior to the introduction of the proposed registration regime, and that the review of dog breeding legislation and the regulation of rescue and rehoming centres remain the priority.

The Council is of the view that this first consultation from the Animal Welfare Policy Reform requires further engagement with DAERA. We do not believe that councils should automatically be the registration organisation. The options for other organisations e.g. charities to register puppies and kittens and maintain a register should be further explored including a centralised register for NI. DAERA should also be considered as an option for maintaining such a register, in a similar manner to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine in ROI.

The Regulatory Impact Assessment sets out the options for generating funding through a registration fee. The document states "The Department does not hold information on the numbers of people or pet shops that will become sellers/suppliers of puppies and kittens. Nor does it hold information on licensed Dog Breeding Establishments. The cost to these people and businesses of registering with their local council as sellers and suppliers of puppies and kittens, is unknown at this juncture"

Various assumptions have been made on the number of puppies and kittens being sold annually in NI and the potential income generated, extrapolated from such figures.

This is speculative and given the fact that DAERA are proposing a zero fee in the first year of registration for non-businesses, it is hard to provide any assurance on the likely income that could be generated.

Initial direct costs will be required to implement a computer system for recording registration details for puppies & kittens, generate a publicly facing register and manage the fees associated with registration.

DAERA is aware that the register in Republic of Ireland is updated with new applicants every two weeks.

Additional staff resource will also be required i.e. Administrative Support and Enforcement Officer(s) and all associated costs including a vehicle(s), training, IT equipment, protective clothing etc

Ongoing costs will be required to maintain a computer system and vehicle(s) and also staff salaries including employer costs.

The Council is not in favour of the proposal to include kittens and feel that this would pose significant difficulties for practical enforcement. As advised during the Workshop held in February 2025, councils highlight how the roaming nature of cats may mean that they have several owners, or no known owner at all. As cat microchipping is not yet mandatory, staff would have difficulty proving ownership of a cat without a valid microchip. Councils believe that cats should be excluded from the proposals / placed with a charitable organisation such as Cats Protection.

Councils appreciate that with the original "Option 4", a Licensing system would bring with it mandatory inspection. As provided via feedback at the DAERA Workshop in February 2025, councils highlighted significant concerns around additional burdens, and expectations around enforcement.

Whilst we appreciate that moving from a licensing scheme to a registration scheme removes the mandatory inspection requirement, concerns remain that in practical terms, an inspection would likely still be required in the vast majority of cases, as it is considered the only means of checking compliance with the relevant conditions.

The Council is not in favour of the provision for a registration requirement for "giving away" puppies or kittens as it is believed that it may lead to criminalising individuals who are simply trying to give away their pet's offspring to a friend or neighbour. It is however appreciated that the inclusion of "giving away" may avoid potential loopholes for unscrupulous owners/organisations.

There are concerns that the prosecution of individuals who were ignorant to the law could lead to negative press, particularly where no animal welfare offences have been committed.

Q15. Do you have any comments to make in relation to the Rural Needs Impact Assessment, and its conclusions?

Yes ☒ X

No

Comments

The Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Rural Needs Impact Assessment and its conclusions. From the perspective of animal welfare and rural community life, it is important to highlight the significant role that kittens and puppies play in the social fabric and emotional well-being of rural residents.

Pets, particularly young animals like kittens and puppies, are not only beloved companions but also contribute to reducing rural isolation and supporting mental health. In many rural areas, where access to social infrastructure may be limited, these animals offer companionship to elderly residents, families, and children, fostering a sense of care and routine.

Moreover, responsible breeding and rehoming practices for kittens and puppies are often supported by small rural businesses and community networks. Therefore, policies that impact veterinary services, transport, licensing, or animal welfare directly influence rural pet ownership and the local economy.

The Council encourages the assessment to give further consideration to the indirect but meaningful impact of any proposals on rural households that care for animals, particularly young pets. Ensuring accessible, affordable, and well-regulated services for pet owners is a rural need that should not be overlooked.

Q16. Do you have any comments to make in relation to the Equality and Disability Screening, and its conclusions?

Yes ☒ X

No

Comments

We are of the opinion that the Equality and Disability screening does not accurately reflect the reality of the impact of the proposals. On page 6 in the section entitled Main stakeholders affected it states that “Local councils are responsible for enforcing the 2011 Act in respect of canines and felines. The proposed policy will therefore fall to councils to enforce.”

This statement is wholly inaccurate as the 2011 Act is only enforced by councils in relation to the **welfare** of animals and not the sale of animals. Furthermore, Dog Breeding Establishments are managed under a different piece of legislation which Animal Welfare Officers do not enforce. This was highlighted previously to DAERA in the review of Animal Welfare which included a reference to feral cats.

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Subject:	Forthmeadow Community Greenway Opening Hours Consultation and Opening Hours Pilots (5 park sites) Consultation – Key Findings
Date:	5th August 2025
Reporting Officer:	Stephen Leonard, Director Resources, Fleet and Open Spaces & Streetscene
Contact Officer:	Eiméar McCullough, Lead Officer - OSS

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 <input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	To update Members on key findings of two community consultation exercises - Forthmeadow Community Greenway Opening Hours Consultation, and Opening Hours Pilots (5 park sites) consultation exercise and agree next steps.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>Members are asked to note key findings for both consultation exercises and consider and approve next steps as follows.</p> <p><u>Forthmeadow Greenway</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Note resident feedback and opening hours preference for each section/site - Note comments on programming or further physical enhancements to the FMG - Consider trialling alternative gate opening hours (24/7 or other) for any of section/sites within the Greenway for a one-year period; or alternatively agree to officers formalising standard dawn-to-dusk opening hours into the Greenways By-Laws <p><u>Opening Hours Pilots</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Note resident feedback on each of the 5 park sites, including combined feedback on Falls Park from both consultation exercises - Note the need for artificial lighting and additional security to ensure park safety were highlighted as barriers/concerns to extended opening hours across all five park surveys.
3.0	Main report
3.1	Members will recall that at P&C Committee on 14 th January 2025 [see Appendix 1] officer's updated on planned consultation exercise into residents views on the opening hours of the Forth Meadow Greenway, as well as a separate consultation exercise - Opening Hour Pilots at 4 park sites (Botanic gardens, Falls Park, Ormeau Park and Woodvale Park). The inclusion of a further site, Belmont Park, was agreed at this time.
3.2	Since its construction the Forthmeadow Community Greenway, as well as the 5 Park sites that are the focus of the Opening hours consultation follow Council's standard 'dawn (7.30am at earliest) to dusk (10pm at latest)' opening hours pattern with times changing throughout the seasons as daylight lengthens or shortens. This report sets out the findings of both consultation exercises on extending Greenway gates/ parks opening, and sets out associated recommendations for Member's further consideration and agreement.
3.3	<p><u>Forthmeadow Community Greenway Opening Hours Consultation</u></p> <p>Officers ran an open survey on Council's Your Say platform from 15th January to 27th February 2025 and held three drop-in sessions in late January at Highfield Community Centre, Springfield Park (Dam) and Falls Park Bowling Pavilion. The aim of the consultation was to capture residents' views on 24 hour /7 day a week (24/7) opening of 14 gates across the Greenway that connect on to its main lit spine, as well as any other suggestions relating to the opening hours of individual gates. It was also an opportunity to</p>

3.4	get view on concerns/ barriers to supporting and suggested programming/activities and further physical improvements required to facilitate extended hours of use.								
3.5	<p>The consultation was promoted through Council's social media pages and communications to a range of stakeholders including local resident groups, environmental groups, community groups and elected members. In addition to the erection of posters (that included QR codes linking to the survey) in the local community facilities and at entrances to the Greenway, at Member's request, an additional leaflet drop took place within residential areas in proximity to the Greenway. Whilst only two of the drop-in sessions were well attended, the online survey inviting views on 24/7 opening of 14 gates on the Greenway that connect directly onto its lit spine/pathway, attracted 156 responses.</p> <p><u>Findings</u></p> <p>Consultation feedback confirmed community preference for existing operational hours pattern to be retained for all sections, with the exception of Glencairn Park to Forthriver Linear Park Section (Forthriver Crescent and Forthriver Road gate) where views on 24/7 opening were mixed. The overwhelming reason given by respondents for not supporting of 24/7 opening was anti-social behaviour and safety concerns.</p>								
3.6	14 alternative suggestions were made in relation to opening the various sections of the Greenway 24/7. These included retaining existing dawn to dusk opening (5), and closing later in the evening [during wintertime] 9pm (4), 9/10pm (1) and 8pm (3). 85 comments on programming or further physical enhancements were received ranging from cycling, (dog) walking/ running groups to enhanced lighting to improve safety and exercise/outdoor gym facilities.								
3.7	An overview of the consultation findings for each section are summarised in the table below, and a detailed analysis of feedback on each gate within is within ' Appendix 1 – Forthmeadow Greenway Consultation – Detailed Analysis '								
3.8	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Section Gates Consulted Upon</th><th>Consultation Finding</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Section 1 - Glencairn Park to Forthriver Linear Park</td><td>Overall respondents were not opposed to both pedestrian gates consulted upon remaining open 24/7 (over 56% in favour or undecided for each gate); however out of those recorded as living in close proximity to this Section (5 minutes' walk or less away) – half (50%) were against Forthmeadow Crescent gate remaining open 24/7.</td></tr> <tr> <td>Section 2 - Ballygomartin Road to Springfield Road</td><td>Respondents overall, and those living in close proximity to the section, were marginally against the two pedestrian gates consulted upon in this part of the Greenway remaining open 24/7. (48% of respondents overall & 56% of those living 5 mins walk away from the Section were against)</td></tr> <tr> <td>Section 3 – Springfield Park (Dam) to Falls Park</td><td> <p><u>Springfield Dam</u></p> <p>Respondents overall, including those living in close proximity to Springfield Dam, were against the three pedestrian gates and one vehicular gate within the site remaining open 24/7.</p> <p><u>Falls Park</u></p> <p>Respondents overall, including those specifically living in close proximity to Falls Park, were against the two pedestrian and one vehicular gate consulted on within the Falls Park site remaining open 24/7.</p> <p><i>Note: Falls Parks gate opening hours were subject of both consultation exercises.</i></p> </td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Section Gates Consulted Upon	Consultation Finding	Section 1 - Glencairn Park to Forthriver Linear Park	Overall respondents were not opposed to both pedestrian gates consulted upon remaining open 24/7 (over 56% in favour or undecided for each gate); however out of those recorded as living in close proximity to this Section (5 minutes' walk or less away) – half (50%) were against Forthmeadow Crescent gate remaining open 24/7.	Section 2 - Ballygomartin Road to Springfield Road	Respondents overall, and those living in close proximity to the section, were marginally against the two pedestrian gates consulted upon in this part of the Greenway remaining open 24/7. (48% of respondents overall & 56% of those living 5 mins walk away from the Section were against)	Section 3 – Springfield Park (Dam) to Falls Park	<p><u>Springfield Dam</u></p> <p>Respondents overall, including those living in close proximity to Springfield Dam, were against the three pedestrian gates and one vehicular gate within the site remaining open 24/7.</p> <p><u>Falls Park</u></p> <p>Respondents overall, including those specifically living in close proximity to Falls Park, were against the two pedestrian and one vehicular gate consulted on within the Falls Park site remaining open 24/7.</p> <p><i>Note: Falls Parks gate opening hours were subject of both consultation exercises.</i></p>
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3.15	<p>capital investment, and that any requests for lighting schemes to be considered for any sites must be directed through to Council's Capital Programme for progression through standard stages. This will also be an opportunity for ecological assessments to be carried out in respect to potential gate/route options, and for wildlife friendly lighting options and any associated path improvements that may be required to be explored.</p> <p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There is currently no revenue budget in place to support any potential animation and patrolling of the Forthmeadow Community Greenway or any of the pilot parks should their opening hours be extended. There is currently no budget in place to fund any requests for lighting schemes at the park sites or any other physical enhancements along FMG. These would be required to be taken through the Council's capital process.</p>
3.16	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessments</u></p> <p>There are no Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessments associated with this report. Both consultation exercises have been equality screened.</p>
4.0	Appendices
	<p>Appendix 1 – 14th January 2025 P&C Committee report, Update on two planned consultation exercises - Forthmeadow Community Greenway Opening Hours and Opening Hours Pilots (4 park sites)</p> <p>Appendix 2 - Forthmeadow Greenway Consultation – Detailed Analysis</p> <p>Appendix 3 - Parks Opening Hours Consultation – Detailed Analysis (5 sites)</p> <p>Appendix 4 - Falls Park Combined Analysis</p>

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Subject:	Update on two planned consultation exercises - Forthmeadow Community Greenway Opening Hours and Opening Hours Pilots (4 park sites)
Date:	Tuesday 14 th January 2025
Reporting Officer:	Stephen Leonard, Operational Director of Resource, Fleet and OSS
Contact Officer:	Eiméar McCullough, Lead Officer - OSS

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

☐

No

☒

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Some time 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 Members on the agreed programmes for Forthmeadow Community Greenway's opening hours consultation exercise and Opening Hours Pilots consultation exercise for 4 Belfast Parks.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	Members are asked to note the content of the report. .
3.0	Main report
3.1	Members will recall that at P& C Committee on 4 th June 2024 [see Appendix 1] officer's advised of intention to progress a consultation exercise to obtain views on the opening hours of the Forth Meadow Greenway. Officers also advised that a separate consultation exercise on Opening Hour Pilots at 3 park sites (Ormeau Park, Falls Park, and Woodvale Park) would also take place. At that meeting Members requested that consideration be given to including Belmont Park in this exercise.

3.2	<p>This report sets out key dates for both these exercises, the first of which is commencing imminently. It is anticipated that an update on both consultations and associated recommendations will be brought back to Members at the start of the new financial year for consideration.</p> <p><u>Forthmeadow Community Greenway Opening Hours Consultation</u></p>								
3.3	<p>The key dates of this consultation exercise are set out below. Activities include an online survey (Yoursay) and drop-in information sessions which will be promoted via social media and posters in the local areas which will include QR codes linking to the survey. In parallel key community stakeholders will be encouraged to feed into the process and parallel engagement with PSNI will also take place.</p>								
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3.5	<p>Both the online survey and information sessions will provide an opportunity to inform residents and users on the gates proposed for 24/7 opening in each section of the Greenway and capture their views - including any other suggestions relating to the opening hours of individual gates they have.</p>								
3.6	<p><u>Opening Hour Pilots - Background</u></p> <p>An Opening Hour Pilot initiative exploring extended 24-hour summer opening hours at 3 parks sites in the city (Ormeau Park, Falls Park and Woodvale Park) was initially agreed at in 2020 however was not delivered as planned due to the COVID pandemic and recovery period due to restrictions impacting officer's ability to carry out consultation at that time as well as internal resourcing pressures. [see Appendix 2 & 3]</p>								
3.7	<p><u>Opening Hour Pilots (Woodvale Park, Falls Park) Consultation</u></p> <p>The key dates of this consultation exercise are set out below. Activities include an online survey (Yoursay) and drop-in information sessions which will be promoted via social media and posters in the local areas which will include QR codes linking to the survey. In parallel key community stakeholders will be encouraged to feed into the process and parallel engagement with PSNI will also take place. Members should note that the opening hours consultation for Falls park will build upon the FMG consultation.</p>								
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ormeau Park Bowling Pavilion - Wednesday 26th February (4-8pm) - Drop in session for Belmont (Date TBC)
3.9	<u>Ormeau Park & Belmont Park</u> <p>Although both Falls Park and Woodvale Park now benefit from sufficient lighting infrastructure on their path networks Ormeau Park & Belmont park do not. Members are reminded that the installation of any new lighting infrastructure would require significant capital investment, and that any requests for lighting scheme that may emerge through programme of work must be directed through to Council's Capital Programme for progression through standard stages.</p>	
3.10	<p>Members will recall however, that a unique opportunity presents to consider synergies with the Department for Infrastructure's (DfI) forthcoming delivery of a pedestrian/ cycle bridge over the Lagan River over the next few years, connecting the adjacent river back to the city centre via the Gasworks, in tandem with other anticipated cycling network improvements.</p>	
3.11	<p>Despite the absence of lighting within Ormeau Park & Belmont Park officers are confident that progressing this consultation will provide a valuable opportunity to gather community and stakeholder views on the potential introduction of park lighting and how it would be used; as well as initial views on potential gate/route options that could be lit and potential extension to opening hours. The outcome of the consultation will inform any capital scheme that may be considered for development in the future; along with ecological studies of the Parks.</p>	
3.12	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u> <p>There is currently no revenue for animation to support the introduction of extended opening hours of the Forthmeadow Community Greenway. Furthermore, it is not clear at this stage what the budget implications would be in relation to any future extended opening pilot however it is anticipated will come at additional cost to the Council. These costs are not currently in revenue or capital estimates. Following the consultation phase a report to Members will provide further information on this.</p>	
3.13	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessments</u> <p>There are no Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessments associated with this report.</p>	
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached	
	<p>Appendix 1 – 11th June 2024 P&C Report, Parks Opening Hours Pilot and Forthmeadow Community Greenway Consultation</p> <p>Appendix 2 - 3rd March 2020 P&C Committee report, 'Proposed Improvements to Parks and Open Spaces - Opening Hours Pilot'</p> <p>Appendix 3 - 10th Nov 2020 P&C Committee report, 'Proposed Improvements to Parks and Open Spaces'</p>	

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Appendix 2 - Forthmeadow Greenway Opening Hours Consultation – Detailed Analysis

Section 1 - Glencairn Park to Forthriver Linear Park	
Section Gates Consulted Upon	Consultation finding overview
Two pedestrian gates: - Forthriver Crescent gate - Forthriver Road gate	Respondents overall were in favour of both these gates remaining open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (24/7), however out of those recorded as living in close proximity to this section (5 minutes' walk or less away – half (50%) were against Forthmeadow Crescent gate remaining open 24/7.
Gates Analysis	
Forthriver Crescent gate:	
Of the 154 responses received on the Forthriver Crescent gate, 56% were either in favour or undecided on the gate remaining open 24/7 (29% and 27% respectively); whilst 44% were against the gate remaining open 24/7. 24 respondents lived in close proximity to the section (5 minutes' walk or less away) - 50% (12) of these local residents were either in favour or undecided on the gate remaining open 24/7 (46% and 4% respectively) and 50% (11) were against.	
Forthriver Road gate:	
Of the 151 responses received on the Forthriver Road gate, 58% were either in favour or undecided on the gate remaining open 24/7 (30% and 28% respectively); while 42% were against the gate remaining open 24/7. 23 of the respondents stated that they lived in close proximity to the section (5 minutes walk or less away) - 48% (11) of these local residents were in favour of the gate remaining open 24/7 and 52% (12) were against.	
Alternative opening hour suggestions	
One suggested alternative later 9pm closing time	
Comments in response to question 'if not, why not supportive of opening 24/7?'	
51 comments received referencing ASB concerns	
Section 2 - Ballygomartin Road to Springfield Road	
Gates	Consultation Finding Overview
Two pedestrian gates: - West Circular Road gate - Innovation Factory roundabout gate	Respondents overall, and those specifically living in close proximity to the section, were marginally against the gates in this section remaining open 24/7.
Gates Analysis	
West Circular Road gate:	
Of the 154 responses received on the West Circular Road gate, 52% were either in favour or undecided about the gate remaining open 24/7 (31% and 21% respectively) and 48% were against. 45 respondents lived in close proximity to the section (5 minutes walk or less away) - 44% (20) of these local residents were either in favour or undecided on the gate remaining open 24/7 (40% and 4% respectively) and 56% (25) were against.	

Appendix 2 - Forthmeadow Greenway Opening Hours Consultation – Detailed Analysis

Forthspring Park gate:	
<p>Out of the 153 responses received on the West Circular Road gate, 50% were either in favour or undecided on the gate remaining open 24/7 (29% and 21% respectively) and 50% were against.</p> <p>45 respondents stated that they lived in close proximity to the section (5 minutes walk or less away). 40% (18) of these local residents were either in favour or undecided on the gate remaining open 24/7 (36% and 4% of cohort respectively) and 60% (27) were against.</p>	
Alternative opening hour suggestions	
6 suggestions for alternative opening hours including dawn opening (4) and later 8pm closure and 9pm closures.	
Comments in response to question ‘if not, why not supportive of opening 24/7?’	
56 comments referenced ASB, and 3 the need for improved lighting for safety.	
Section 3 – Springfield Park (Dam) to Falls Park	
Gates	Consultation Finding Overview
<u>Springfield Park (Dam)</u> Springfield Park (Dam) Three pedestrian gates: -Springfield Road gate, -Springdale Gardens gate (Biopox Factory), -Clovelly Street gate (Innovation Factory Junction) One vehicular gate: -Springfield Road gate	Respondents overall, including those specifically living in close proximity to the section, were against the gates in this section remaining open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (24/7)
<u>Falls Park</u> Two pedestrian gates: -Whiterock Leisure Centre gate, - Falls Road gate One vehicular gate: -Falls Road leading to carpark	Respondents overall, including those living in close proximity to the section, were against the gates in this section remaining open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (24/7)
Gates Analysis - Springfield Park (Dam)	
Springfield Road vehicular access gate:	
<p>Out of the 153 responses received on Springfield Road Vehicular access gate, 45% were either in favour or undecided on the gate remaining open 24/7 (27% and 18% respectively) and 55% were against the gate remaining open 24/7.</p> <p>47 respondents stated that they lived in close proximity to the section (5 minutes' walk or less away) - 30% (14) of these local residents were either in favour or undecided on the gate remaining open 24/7 (28% and 2% respectively) and 70% (33) were against.</p>	
Springfield Road pedestrian gate:	
<p>Out of the 155 responses received on the Springfield Road pedestrian gate, 49% were either in favour or undecided on the gate remaining open 24/7 (32% and 17% respectively) and 51% were against.</p>	

Appendix 2 - Forthmeadow Greenway Opening Hours Consultation – Detailed Analysis

47 respondents who stated that they lived in close proximity to this section (5 minutes' walk or less away). 36% (17) were in favour of the gate remaining open 24/7 and 64% (30) were against.
Springdale Gardens gate (Biopox Factory):
Out of the 154 responses received on the Springdale Gardens gate adjacent the Biopox Factory, 49% were either in favour or undecided on the gate remaining open 24/7 (31% and 18% respectively) and 51% were against.
47 respondents lived in close proximity to the section (5 minutes' walk or less away) - 36% (17) of these local residents were either in favour or undecided on the gate remaining open 24/7 (34% and 2% respectively) and 64% (30) were against.
Clovelly Street gate (Innovation Factory Junction)
Out of the 153 responses received on the Clovelly Street gate by the Innovation Factory Junction), 45% were either in favour or undecided about the gate remaining open 24/7 (30% and 20% respectively) and 50% were against.
46 respondents lived in close proximity to the section (5 minutes' walk or less away) - 35% (16) of these local residents were in favour of the gate remaining open 24/7 remaining open 24/7 and 65% (30) were against.
Alternative opening hour suggestions
3 suggestions for alternative opening hours including earlier dawn opening (1) and later 9pm closure (2).
Comments in response to question 'if not, why not supportive of opening 24/7?'
60 comments received referencing ASB including gathering youths and safety concerns, and one need for increased lighting for safety.
Gates Analysis - Falls Park
Whiterock Leisure Centre gate:
Out of the 156 responses received on Whiterock Leisure Centre gate, 42% were either in favour or undecided about the gate remaining open 24/7 (29% and 13% respectively); while 58% were against.
21 respondents lived in close proximity to the section (5 minutes' walk or less away) - 38% (8) of these local residents were in favour of the gate remaining open 24/7 and 62% (13) were against.
Falls Road pedestrian gate:
Out of the 154 responses received on Falls Road pedestrian gate- 42% were either in favour or undecided about the gate remaining open 24/7 (28% and 14% respectively); while 58% were against.
19 respondents stated that they lived in close proximity to the section (5 minutes' walk or less away). 37% (7) of these local residents were in favour of the gate remaining open 24/7 and 63% (12) were against.
Falls Road vehicular gate:
Out of the 154 responses received on Falls Road pedestrian gate- 45% were either in favour or undecided about the gate remaining open 24/7 (29% and 16% respectively) and 55% were against.
21 respondents lived in close proximity to the section (5 minutes' walk or less away) - 38% (8) of these local residents were either in favour or undecided about the gate remaining open 24/7 and 62% (13) were against.

Appendix 2 - Forthmeadow Greenway Opening Hours Consultation – Detailed Analysis

Alternative opening hour suggestions:	
3 suggestions for alternative later opening hours (8pm, 9pm and 9/10pm).	
Comments in response to question ‘if not, why not supportive of opening 24/7?’	
68 comments received referencing ASB including gathering youths and safety concerns	
Section 4 - Bog Meadows Nature Reserve	
Section Gates Consulted upon	Consultation Finding - Overview
Section 4 - Bog Meadows Nature Reserve One vehicular gate: -Milltown Row gate at Ulster Wildlife offices Two pedestrian gates: -Milltown Row pedestrian gate at St Gall's GAC pitch -Donegall Road (Broadway) pedestrian gate	Respondents overall, including those stating that they lived in close proximity to the section, were against the gates in this section remaining open 24/7; however the 31 residents recorded as living in close proximity to this section (5 minutes' walk or less away) – were marginally (52%) in favour or undecided about the Donegall Road (Broadway) gate remaining open 24/7.
Gates Analysis	
Milltown Row vehicular gate:	
Out of the 156 responses received on the Milltown Row vehicular access gate adjacent to Ulster Wildlife office, 40% were either in favour or undecided on the gate remaining open 24/7 (25% and 15% respectively) and 60% were against. 22 respondents lived in close proximity to the section (5 minutes' walk or less away). 27% (6) of these local residents were either in favour or undecided about the gate remaining open 24/7 and 73% (16) were against.	
Milltown Row pedestrian gate:	
Out of the 155 responses received on the Milltown Row pedestrian gate at St Gaul's GAC, 40% were either in favour or undecided on the gate remaining open 24/7 (29% and 16% respectively) and 60% were against. 22 respondents lived in close proximity to the section (5 minutes' walk or less away) - 27% (6) of these local residents were either in favour or undecided about the gate remaining open 24/7 and 73% (16) were against.	
Donegall Road (Broadway) gate:	
Out of the 152 responses received on Donegall Road (Broadway) pedestrian gate, 41% were either in favour or undecided on the gate remaining open 24/7 (26% and 15% respectively) and 59% were against. 31 respondents lived in close proximity to the section (5 minutes' walk or less away) - 52% (16) of these local residents were either in favour or undecided about the gate remaining open 24/7 and 48% (15) were against.	
Alternative opening hour suggestions	
One suggestion for alternative later opening hour of 8pm.	
Comments in response to question ‘if not, why not supportive of opening 24/7?’	
79 comments were received referencing ASB including gathering youths, safety concerns and one highlighting the section as a ‘high profile area for trouble’.	

Appendix 2 - Forthmeadow Greenway Opening Hours Consultation – Detailed Analysis

Activities or physical enhancements (85 comments in total)
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Cycling – 8 comments2. Dog walking groups and dog fouling bins enhancements – 7 comments3. Exercise enhancements including outdoor (13) including gyms (6) and yoga4. More plants and flowers including meadow– 4 comments5. Enhanced lighting to facilitate activities and safety – 13 comments6. Family events – 5 comments7. Walking and running (including groups and wildlife walks) – 178. The need of park wardens – 4 comments

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Appendix 3 - Parks Opening Hours Consultation – Detailed Analysis (5 sites)

Belmont Park Analysis
<p>The majority of consultation respondents were in favour of extending opening hours at Belmont Park with the most popular opening hour pattern being open 24 hours, 7 days a week (24/7).</p> <p>Of the 51 responses received on the Belmont Park Opening Hours consultation - 76% were either in favour or undecided on extending the Park's opening hours (71% and 6% respectively) and 23% were against.</p> <p>17 respondents lived in close proximity to the section (5 minutes' walk or less away) - 77% (13) of these local residents were either in favour or undecided on extending the Park's opening hours (71% and 6% respectively) and 24% (4) were against.</p>
Alternative opening hour suggestions
<p>28 respondents favoured 24/7 opening of the park.</p> <p>One suggestion of a 10pm [wintertime] closing time was made for the park.</p>
Rationale for not supporting extended opening hours
<p>15 comments were received in response to question 'if not, why not supportive of extended opening hours'. These included reference to concerns of ASB (9); safety if opened late; lack of lighting (2); impact of lighting on wildlife (2); and extended opening hours would have no impact as the park is already accessible (2).</p>
Suggested programmed activities, and further physical enhancements necessary to facilitate extended opening hours
<p>A total of 50 comments were received to this question. Suggested programming/activities included walking (3), dog walking (4) and increased community engagement in general (1). Suggested physical enhancements included lighting to ensure safety (32); cycling facilities (3); exercise enhancements (2); toilet provision (1); and play park improvements (1).</p> <p>Other/ operational comments included the need for park warden presence (1) and increased cleansing (1) as necessary if opening hours were to extend.</p>

Appendix 3 - Parks Opening Hours Consultation – Detailed Analysis (5 sites)

Botanic Gardens Analysis
<p>The majority of consultation respondents were in favour of extending opening hours at Botanic Gardens with the most popular opening hour pattern being 24 hours 7 days a week (24/7).</p> <p>Of the 652 responses received on the Botanic Gardens Park Opening Hours consultation, 73% were either in favour or undecided on extending the Park's opening hours (70% and 3% respectively) and 27% were against.</p> <p>281 respondents lived in close proximity to the section (5 minutes' walk or less away) - 74% (206) of these local residents were either in favour or undecided on extending the Park's opening hours (70% and 4% respectively) and 27% (75) were against.</p>
Alternative opening hour suggestions
<p>236 respondents favoured 24/7 opening of the park. 7 suggestions were received for alternative opening times for the park. These included: later [wintertime] closing time of 6pm (1); 6.30pm (2); and winter extension in general (1); earlier dawn [summertime] opening (2); and 10pm evening closure (1).</p>
Rationale for not supporting extended opening hours
<p>195 comments were received in response to question 'if not, why not supportive of extended opening hours'. These included reference to concerns of ASB (168); impact on wildlife/biodiversity (33); safety if opened late (31); and lack of lighting (7).</p>
Suggested programmed activities, and further physical enhancements necessary to facilitate extended opening hours
<p>A total of 644 comments were received to this question. Suggestions for programming/activities included: walking/running (15); family events (9); and increased community engagement in general (20). Suggested physical enhancements included lighting to ensure park safe (379); toilet provision improvements (10); exercise enhancements (9); accessible gates/paths (8); cycling provision (6); additional seating (4); and play park enhancement (1).</p> <p>6 comments specifically referenced extended opening hours to facilitate commuting to and from work.</p> <p>Other/operational comments on requirements included the need for security or CCTV to monitor the park (134) and park wardens and PSNI presence (101) along with increased cleansing (14) and a coffee van/hut (4) if the opening hours were to be extended. There was some concern about impact of lighting on wildlife with suggestions that wildlife assessment to be completed if lighting installation being considered (6) and/or 'red' bat friendly lighting used on Comber Greenway be installed (4).</p>

Appendix 3 - Parks Opening Hours Consultation – Detailed Analysis (5 sites)

Falls Park Analysis
<p>The majority of consultation respondents were in favour of extending opening hours at Falls Park with the most popular opening hour pattern being open 24 hours 7 days a week (24/7).</p> <p>Of the 47 responses received on the Falls Park Opening Hours consultation, 70% of respondents were in favour or undecided on extending the Park's opening hours (60% and 10% respectively) and 30% were against.</p> <p>18 respondents lived in close proximity to the Section (5 minutes' walk or less away) - 72% (13) of these local residents were either in favour or undecided on extending the Park's opening hours (50% and 22% respectively) and 28% (5) were against.</p>
Alternative opening hour suggestions
<p>13 respondents favoured 24/7 opening of the park.</p> <p>1 suggestion were received for alternative opening times for the park. These included: Later [wintertime] closing time of 8/9pm.</p>
Rationale for not supporting extended opening hours
<p>12 comments were received in response to question 'if not, why not supportive of extended opening hours'. These included reference to concerns of ASB (5); safety if opened late (5); lack of lighting (1); and that it would not have an impact as the park can already be accessed (1).</p>
Suggested programmed activities, and further physical enhancements necessary to facilitate extended opening hours
<p>A total of 46 comments were received to this question.</p> <p>Suggestions for programming/ activities included: and increased community engagement in general (2). Suggested physical enhancements included lighting to ensure park safety (21); exercise enhancements (4); toilet provision improvements (5); additional seating (2); dog run (1); and play park enhancement (2).</p> <p>Other/operational comments on requirements if opening hours were extended included the need for increased park wardens and PSNI presence (21); increased cleansing (2); and dog warden presence (1).</p>

Appendix 3 - Parks Opening Hours Consultation – Detailed Analysis (5 sites)

Ormeau Park Analysis
<p>The majority of consultation respondents were in favour of extending opening hours at Botanic Gardens with the most popular opening hour pattern being open 24 hours 7 days a week (24/7)</p> <p>Of the 593 responses received on the Ormeau Park Opening Hours consultation, 84% were either in favour or undecided on extending the Park's opening hours (70% and 3% respectively) and 16% were against.</p> <p>Specifically 291 respondents stated living in close proximity to the section (5 minutes' walk or less away). 82% (239) of these local residents were either in favour or undecided on extending the Park's opening hours (77% and 5% respectively) and 18% (52) were against.</p>
Alternative opening hour suggestions
<p>272 respondents favoured 24/7 opening of the park. 5 suggestions were received for alternative opening times for the park. These included: Later [wintertime] closing time of 6pm (1) and 10pm (3); and one suggestion of dawn opening [summertime].</p>
Rationale for not supporting extended opening hours
<p>116 comments were received in response to question 'if not, why not supportive of extended opening hours'. These included reference to concerns of ASB (83); impact on wildlife/biodiversity (19); safety if opened late (17); lack of lighting (11); and that it would not have an impact as the park can already be accessed (1).</p>
Suggested programmed activities and further physical enhancements necessary to facilitate extended opening hours
<p>A total of 677 comments were received to this question.</p> <p>Suggestions for programming/ activities included: walking/running (14); family events (3) and increased community engagement in general (16). Suggested physical enhancements included lighting to ensure park safety (449); exercise enhancements (29); coffee van/hut (12); accessible gates/paths (9); toilet provision improvements (7); cycling provision (5); additional seating (3); play park enhancements (1); and a community garden (1).</p> <p>66 comments specifically referenced extended opening hours in the park facilitating commuting to and from work.</p> <p>Other/operational comments on requirements if opening hours were extended included the need for security or CCTV to monitor the park (99); the need for park wardens and PSNI presence (158); and increased cleansing (10). Some additional concerns noted about impact of lighting on wildlife (10), with suggestions that wildlife assessment (3) to be completed if lighting installation being considered (8) and/or 'red' bat friendly lighting used on Comber Greenway be installed (9).</p>

Appendix 3 - Parks Opening Hours Consultation – Detailed Analysis (5 sites)

Woodvale Park Analysis
<p>The majority of consultation respondents were against extending opening hours at Woodvale Park.</p> <p>Of the 308 responses received on the Ormeau Park Opening Hours consultation, 35% were either in favour or undecided on extending the Park's opening hours (77% and 3% respectively) and 65% were against.</p> <p>173 respondents lived in close proximity to the section (5 minutes' walk or less away) - 30% (51) of these local residents were either in favour or undecided on extending the Park's opening hours (24% and 6% respectively) and 70% (122) were against.</p>
Alternative opening hour suggestions
<p>38 respondents favoured 24/7 opening of the park. 2 suggestions were received for alternative opening times for the park. These included later [wintertime] closing time of 9pm and one suggestion of dawn/sunrise opening [summertime].</p>
Rationale for not supporting extended opening hours
<p>205 comments were received in response to question 'if not, why not supportive of extended opening hours'. These included concerns in relation to ASB (192); safety if opened late (14); and parking (1); and that it would increase dog fouling (1).</p>
Suggested programmed activities and further physical enhancements necessary to facilitate extended opening hours
<p>A total of 310 comments were received to this question.</p> <p>Suggestions for programming/ activities included: walking/jogging (25); dog walking (11); family events (8); and increased community engagement in general (8).</p> <p>Suggested physical enhancements included increased lighting to ensure park safety (105); exercise enhancements (28); dog park (2); coffee van/hut (8); toilet provision improvements (18); cycling provision (1); dog run (1); and play park enhancement (4).</p> <p>Other/operational comments on requirements if opening hours were extended included the need for security or CCTV to monitor the park (28); the need for further park warden and PSNI presence (49); and increased cleansing (5).</p>

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<u>Falls Park</u>	
<p>Overall circa 58% of the 203 respondents for both consultation exercises were against changes to opening hours of specific gates and park in general.</p> <p>A total of 203 responses were received on Falls Park across both consultation exercises - the 'Forth Meadow Greenway Opening Hours Consultation' which proposed 24/7 opening of 4 gates within park that connect onto the lit spine/ pathway as part of (156 responses), and the higher-level 'Parks Opening Hours Consultation' survey on Falls Parks which explored views on extending opening hours at the site (47 responses).</p> <p>The majority of respondents to the Forthmeadow Greenway Consultation exercise overall were against 24/7 opening of each of the three gates that connect onto the lit spine/ pathway that were consulted upon (over 56% against, for each of the 3 gates), which corresponded with the views of 'local residents' living in close proximity to the section (5 minutes' walk or less away); whereas 70% of the Falls Park Opening Hours Consultation survey respondents were in favour or undecided on extending the Park's opening hours in principle (60% and 10% respectively) and only 30% were against it. This also mirrored the views of the 18 respondents stated living in close proximity to the section (5 minutes' walk or less away).</p>	
Alternative opening hour suggestions	
Four suggestions for alternative later opening hours were made across both consultation exercise - 8pm, 8/9pm, 9pm and 9/10pm [in the winter season].	
Rationale as to why not supportive of extended opening hours including 24/7 opening	
68 comments were received in response to Forthmeadow Greenway Consultation's ' <i>If you are not sure or are not in favour of 24/7 opening of park gates, why?</i> ' question – all of which referenced ASB, gathering youths and safety concerns. 12 were comments were received to the same question in the Falls Park Opening Hours Consultation survey which included concerns about ASB (5); safety if opened late; lack of lighting (1); on street parking (1); and that extended opening hours would have no impact as the park is already accessible (1).	

Suggested programmed activities and further physical enhancements necessary for extended opening hours – (Park Opening Hours Consultation)	
Programming/activities	Suggestions included: dog walking (4); walking/running (8); family events; and increased community engagement (2)
physical enhancements	Suggested included further lighting to ensure safety and facilitate activities (21); toilets (5); exercise enhancements (4); and additional seating (2).
Other (operational)	Need for park warden and PSNI presence (21), dog warden presence (1) and overall cleansing in hours of operational increased (2) were raised as necessary if opening hours were to be extended.

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Subject:	Heritage Lottery Nature Towns and Cities Funding Award
Date:	5 th August 2025
Reporting Officer:	Stephen Leonard, Director Resources, Fleet and Open Spaces & Streetscene
Contact Officer:	Edel Gowdy, Lead Officer, Open Space & Streetscene & Orla Maguire, Biodiversity Officer

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

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 inform members of the committee that in July 2025, Belfast City Council, in partnership with Ulster Wildlife, has been awarded £850,514 through the Nature Towns and Cities initiative, a UK-wide programme led by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Natural England, and the National Trust.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	Members are asked to note the contents of this report and agree to the signing of the letter of offer and to note that a further report would be submitted for approval outlining the scope of the project.
3.0	Main report
	Background and Context
3.1	In October 2024, invitations were issued for local authorities and other partners to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) for funding to build capacity and partnerships, peer networks to share learning and practical solutions and schemes to attract new investment.

	<p>The total funding pot across the UK is £15 million with a funding limit of £250,000 - £1,000,000 per application.</p>
3.2	<p>Ulster Wildlife in partnership with BCC and other key stakeholders submitted an Expression of Interest. The National Lottery Heritage Fund received 276 Eols with a total ask of £170 million. Across the UK 37 projects were successful at the EOI stage, 3 in NI including the Belfast bid.</p>
3.3	<p>In July 2025 the project was awarded £850,514 through the initiative. This is 92% of the total approved Project cost of £924,418, with in kind contributions from BCC and Ulster Wildlife totalling £73,904 (£59,531 BCC and £14,373 UW) made up of in kind staff time to manage the project and oversee recruitment.. A project overview is provided below. A more detailed report will be brought back to committee demonstrating how this project will fit into the overall Biodiversity programme over the next three years, along with further detail on resourcing and governance.</p> <p><u>Project overview:</u></p>
3.4	<p>Belfast City Council, in partnership with Ulster Wildlife and other key stakeholders, will develop a shared, co-designed vision and associated set of plans and mechanisms for nature's recovery for the city of Belfast and key surrounding areas, including Lagan Valley Regional Park and the Belfast Hills. The project will build on existing initiatives, such as the Future of Northern Ireland's Urban Green Spaces' report, work undertaken on Nature Recovery Networks (NRNS) and Belfast 2024.</p>
3.5	<p>The Project has four key elements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The current evidence base will be strengthened through evaluating existing datasets, identifying gaps and shortfalls. An online GIS/mapping platform will spatially map all existing and proposed nature and climate projects, using the ArcGIS package. Work on Biodiversity Net Gain readiness will also be commissioned. 2. Across existing green and blue spaces, paths towards alternative management practices will be explored to enhance existing parks and open spaces, moving from a horticultural focus to a nature and climate emphasis. 3. Opportunities will be explored to 'green the grey' within the built environment, focussing on areas of need under the Belfast Equal Justice Initiative. This will be achieved by implementing the use of Nature-based Solutions, such as Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems to design proposals to better connect nature and people. A best practice guidance document with recommendations for opportunities across Belfast will be produced. 4. The project will evaluate corporate investment opportunities and bolster volunteer sustainability and capacity building through evaluating need, developing training and related upskilling opportunities to enhance organisational sustainability.

3.6	Finance and Resource implications Provision has been made within the project to cover staffing requirements associated with this project. Resources are available within existing budgets to cover the in kind costs associated with project oversight and recruitment.
3.7	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment There are no known equality or good relations implications associated with this report.
4.0	Appendices
	Appendix A - Letter of Offer Appendix B - Supporting Information

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Appendix A

Grant Notification Letter

Date: 8th July 2025

Our Ref: HZ-24-00311

Stephen Leonard
Belfast City Council
Belfast City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS

and

Peter McEvoy
Ulster Wildlife
10 Heron Road
Belfast
County Antrim
BT3 9LE

Dear Stephen Leonard and Peter McEvoy

#NTC Belfast: Breaking through Barriers to Connect People and Nature

Congratulations! Your Application has been assessed, and I am pleased to confirm that we are offering you a Delivery Grant of up to £850,514. This is 92% of the total approved Project cost of £924,418, which is to be used towards the Delivery Phase of the above Project, the details of which are set out in the Approved Purposes included in this letter.

Although the Application was submitted in the name of **Belfast City Council** we have awarded the Grant to you jointly. Ulster Wildlife Trust needs to confirm, by signing the Permission to Start Form, that they have received the Application and all supporting documents and agree to be bound by the Grant Contract as if they had been named as an original applicant.

The percentage above is your Grant Percentage. As your Approved Project Costs include non-cash contributions and/or volunteer time, we have also calculated the percentage of cash that we will be contributing towards the Project. We describe this as the Payment Percentage and for your Project this will be 100%. More information on this can be found in the Receiving a Grant guidance.

Your Grant Contract details

Your Delivery Grant Contract is made up of:

- this Grant Notification Letter
- the Standard Terms of Grant
- any Additional Grant Conditions
- the signed Permission to Start Form

Project Reference Number: HZ-24-00311

Grant Amount Awarded: £850,514

Grant to be paid to:

Belfast City Council of Belfast City Hall, Belfast, BT1 5GS

Grant awarded jointly to:

Ulster Wildlife Trust, of 10 Heron Road, Belfast, County Antrim, BT3 9LE

Registered Charity No. 101848

Company No. NI012711

Your Project

What your project will do

The Approved Purposes which are set out below summarise your Project as you described it in your Application. The Approved Usage, if applicable, summarises how the heritage property or asset we have funded will be used following completion of the Approved Purposes as set out in your Application. We have agreed to support your Project according to the Approved Purposes, and we will use them to monitor your Project and track how you are progressing. The Approved Usage of any heritage asset will apply after your Project Completion Date.

Approved Purposes

- Belfast City Council, in partnership with Ulster Wildlife and other key stakeholders, will develop a shared, co-designed vision and associated set of plans and mechanisms for nature's recovery for the city of Belfast and key surrounding areas, including Lagan Valley Regional Park and the Belfast Hills. The project will build on existing initiatives, such as the Future of Northern Ireland's Urban Green Spaces' report, work undertaken on Nature Recovery Networks (NRNS) and Belfast 2024. Key stakeholders include Maritime Mile, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, Education Authority and Department for Infrastructure.
- The Project has four key elements:

1. The current evidence base will be strengthened through evaluating existing datasets, identifying gaps and shortfalls. An online GIS/mapping platform will spatially map all existing and proposed nature and climate projects, using the ArcGIS package. Work on Biodiversity Net Gain readiness will also be commissioned.
 2. Across existing green and blue spaces, paths towards alternative management practices will be explored to enhance existing parks and open spaces, moving from a horticultural focus to a nature and climate emphasis, including for the Pitches Strategy and playground refurbishment.
 3. Opportunities will be explored to 'green the grey' within the built environment, focussing on areas of need under the Belfast Equal Justice Initiative. This will be achieved by implementing the use of Nature-based Solutions, such as Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems to design proposals to better connect nature and people. A best practice guidance document with recommendations for opportunities across Belfast will be produced.
 4. The project will evaluate corporate investment opportunities and bolster volunteer sustainability and capacity building through evaluating need, developing training and related upskilling opportunities to enhance organisational sustainability.
- Three new staff will be appointed for up to 3 years each - a f/t Project Manager, a f/t Conservation/Evidence Officer and a p/t Community Engagement Officer.
 - A project steering group will be established, comprising staff from each of the partners who have appropriate expertise and representatives from Belfast City Council (BCC), Ulster Wildlife, Belfast Hills Partnership, Lagan Valley Regional Park and National Trust. It will develop Terms of Reference and report to BCC Strategic Departmental Management Team with major updates brought to BCC People and Communities Committee.
 - Acknowledge funding using Nature Towns and Cities branding in all printed media, website and social media output, and in all formats. [Nature Towns and Cities grant acknowledgement requirements | The National Lottery Heritage Fund](#).
 - Attendance and participation in regular online network events and cohort learning sessions, to contribute to cohort working and to attend in-person visits to learn from other projects. This is anticipated to be a day a month for the duration of your project.

Approved Usage

Approved Usage is not applicable for your Project.

What the money is for

The attached Appendix 1 sets out the Approved Project Costs to which The National Lottery Heritage Fund has agreed to contribute, along with any partnership funding you are receiving. If

you spend less on your Project than the Approved Project Costs, we will reduce the final Grant payment. The amount we reduce the final payment by will be in proportion to our Grant contribution.

When we pay the Grant

We will agree a timetable for grant payment requests at your Delivery Phase start-up meeting. We will pay you the Grant subject to you complying with:

- the Standard Terms of Grant set out in Appendix 2
- the Additional Grant Conditions set out below
- the conditions and requirements set out in the Receiving a Grant guidance

Additional Grant Conditions

In addition to our Standard Terms of Grant you must observe the following Additional Grant Conditions during of the Delivery Phase of your Project:

1. You must repay to us immediately any Grant that we have paid you (and we will stop any future instalments of the Grant) if you bring the Nature Towns and Cities programme, or any of the Nature Towns and Cities partners into disrepute

2. Local Authority Grantee

a. Within 28 days of the date of the Grant Notification Letter, you must send us a certified copy (signed to confirm it is a true copy) of the document recording your decision (or the decision of the relevant properly constituted committee, executive or authorised officer) authorising you to accept the Terms of Grant, together with a statement containing the information set out below.

The statement must include the following information:

i. the power (statutory or otherwise) you have and which you have used to accept the Terms of Grant;

ii. an extract of that part of your policy framework under which you have accepted the terms of grant;

iii. the executive arrangements under which your decision to accept the Terms of Grant was made;

iv. the considerations that you took into account in using the powers and the procedure under which any consultation took place and the decision was made;

v. the authority under which the Declaration forming part of the Application has been signed on your behalf.

b. You must (if we think it is necessary) confirm your decision in whatever way we direct. Within seven days of confirming, you must send us evidence of this.

c. We may withdraw the Grant (after considering the matters referred to above) if we are not satisfied that the Terms of Grant are valid and binding on you.

d. Within 21 days of sending us the document and information needed under paragraph 1.1 (or evidence of the confirmation of the decision in line with paragraph 1.2), we may ask that you get the written opinion of a barrister, in a form satisfactory to us, asking for his or her opinion on whether:

i. the powers you are relying on in accepting the Terms of Grant do allow you to enter into these arrangements;

ii. you have followed correctly all procedural requirements in using those powers and have acted in a reasonable and proper way; and

iii. you have taken account of only, and all, relevant considerations in using those powers.

You must send us the barrister's opinion and make sure that it is addressed to us as well as to you. You must also make sure that the barrister confirms we may rely on his or her opinion for our own purposes.

e. You acknowledge that neither any documents or information that you send us, nor the fact that we may then have paid you part of the Grant, will affect our right to rely on the promise in paragraph f below.

f. You promise that:

i. you have the authority to accept the Terms of Grant;

ii. in using that authority you have acted in good faith, in a reasonable and proper way, for a proper purpose, without

breaking any procedural requirement and in considering only (and all) relevant considerations; and;

iii. your decision to accept the Terms of Grant is one that any reasonable local authority (applying the laws that are relevant to it) could have reached.

Subsidy Control

As a public body we are responsible for complying with the Subsidy Control Act 2022. If we have confirmed that we consider your Delivery Grant to be a Subsidy you agree to comply with paragraph 16 of the Standard Terms of Grant.

Grant Expiry Date

You must complete the Approved Purposes of your Delivery Phase and submit your Completion Report and Final Payment Request and Evaluation Report by 31st July 2028.

Term of the Grant Contract

The Standard Terms of Grant and the Additional Grant Conditions will last for the duration of your Project.

Documents defining the Project

The following documents define the Project for which the Grant is offered:

- this Grant Notification Letter
- your Application dated 14th April 2025
- documents submitted by you in support of your Application including all correspondence we have sent you and all correspondence we have received from you

Withdrawal of the Grant

We may withdraw the Grant if:

- you have already started work on the Delivery Phase of your Project before we have given you Permission to Start
- you do not start work on your Project within six months of the date of this letter

Your Delivery Phase Project

You will need to develop and deliver your Project in line with the proposals set out in your Application. We will contact you shortly to arrange a start-up meeting for your Delivery Phase, where we will agree a timetable for project updates and grant payment requests. More information on this can be found in the Receiving a Grant guidance.

What you need to do next

You should now read the:

- [Nature Towns and Cities Receiving a Grant guidance on our website - Receiving your grant: Nature Towns and Cities £250,000 to £1million](#)
- Appendix 2: [Standard Terms of Grant](#)

You are required to:

- obtain our Permission to Start the Project
- submit Progress Reports at intervals agreed at Permission to Start
- provide a Completion Report and Final Payment Request and an Evaluation Report when you have finished your Project
- procure goods, works and services in accordance with the Receiving a Grant guidance

Obtaining Permission to Start your Project

We will only give you our Permission to Start when the pre-conditions set out in this Grant Notification Letter have been satisfied. You will need to complete and submit the Permission to Start within six months of the date of this letter. You will shortly receive an email asking you to sign into your online account and provide information we need to allow you to start your Project.

You will also be required to provide details of two legal signatories, one each for Belfast City Council and Ulster Wildlife. Please also note:

- More information will be provided on the Nature Towns and Cities cohort working and a Programme-wide Evaluation at an introduction event in August 2025, to which you should refer before planning your own project evaluation.
- Nature Towns and Cities has its own **acknowledgement guidelines** to which you should refer on our website: [Nature Towns and Cities grant acknowledgement requirements | The National Lottery Heritage Fund](#).

For us to pay your Grant by bank transfer (BACS), we need to see a copy of a recent bank statement (from within the last three months), or a cheque or paying-in slip for the relevant account, showing the bank's name and address. We will ask for this when you provide your bank details at the next stage. We will let you know when and how to do this.

We wish you every success with your Project. Please contact Angela Lavin if you have any queries after reading this letter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Angela Lavin', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Angela Lavin

Senior Investment Manager (NI)

Appendix 1: Approved Project Costs

A. Delivery Phase costs

Capital costs

Cost Heading	Description	Cost	Vat	Total
Digital outputs	Mapping platform/GIS licenses	£1,406	£281	£1,687
Professional fees (capital)	Commissioned pieces of work (x4)	£166,667	£33,333	£200,000
Total Costs		£168,073	£33,614	£201,687

Activity costs

Cost Heading	Description	Cost	Vat	Total
New staff	Staff salaries, PPE, Phones,	£428,023	£348	£428,371
Training for staff	Annual training budget for 2.5 staff	£2,625	£525	£3,150
Travel and expenses for staff	Staff mileage and study visits	£13,750	£2,750	£16,500
Event Costs	Annual get-togethers, celebration conference, training events, study visits, consultation workshops	£122,083	£24,417	£146,500

Equipment and materials (activity)	Training and survey materials	£10,000	£2,000	£12,000
Total Costs		£576,481	£30,040	£606,521

Other costs

Cost Heading	Description	Cost	Vat	Total
Recruitment	Advertisement of roles	£450	£50	£500
Publicity and promotion	Publicity, including production of case study videos	£5,833	£1,167	£7,000
Evaluation	External independent project evaluation	£18,771	£3,754	£22,525
Contingency	3% contingency	£10,234	£2,047	£12,281
Non-cash contributions	In kind staff time	£73,904	£0	£73,904
Total Costs		£109,192	£7,018	£116,210

B. Delivery Phase income

Income Heading	Description	Secured	Total (£)
Non cash contributions	In kind staff time from UW and BCC	No	£73,904
Grant			£850,514
Total Income			£924,418

Appendix B - Supporting Information

Nature Towns and Cities - Start up Meeting

#NTC Belfast: Breaking through Barriers to Connect People and Nature HZ-24-00311

Date: 6 August 2025

Time: 2.30 – 4pm

Venue: Belfast City Council Offices, Adelaide Exchange, 9-21 Adelaide Street,
Belfast, BT2 8DJ

Attendees:

Victoria Bradford Keegan, Programme Partner, The National Trust (joining virtually)
Angela Lavin, The National Lottery Heritage Fund
Orla Maguire, Belfast City Council
Rosemary Mulholland, Ulster Wildlife
Nina Schonberg, Ulster Wildlife

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Programme Context – Programme Partner member, Victoria Bradford Keegan (10mins, followed by any programme-wide related questions)
3. Grant Notification Letter, Budget, Terms and Conditions of Grant and Approved Purposes
4. The “Give us more project information” task
5. Permission to Start Requirements (Timetable, Cashflow, Project Management, Procurement, Statutory Consents)
6. Grant Reporting and Payment Drawdowns, inc Contingency use
7. Project Risk
8. Evaluation
9. Grant Acknowledgement
10. Comms/PR
11. AOB

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Subject:	Food Service Delivery Plan 2025-2026
Date:	5 th August 2025
Reporting Officer:	Siobhan Toland, Director City Services
Contact Officer:	David Cuthbert, City Protection 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
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1.1	The Food Standards Agency, in their monitoring and oversight role, require all NI District Councils to prepare an annual Food Service Delivery Plan which sets out the Council's key functions and planned activities for delivery of food hygiene, food standards and other food safety related responsibilities.
1.2	This report presents Belfast City Council's draft Food Service Delivery Plan for the 2025/26 year and seeks Committee approval of the draft plan so that it can be submitted to the Food Standards Agency for review.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is requested to approve the draft Belfast City Council Food Service Delivery Plan 2025-2026.
3.0	Main Report
	Background
3.1	The Council's Food Safety Unit works with local businesses to build compliance with Food Law and to ensure that food produced and sold in Belfast is safe and can be trusted. This not only protects the consumer and public health, but also protects and enhances the reputation of the City, our local businesses and their competitiveness, thereby supporting economic growth.
3.2	Food related illness costs the local economy, individual businesses and the consumer-people may suffer from food poisoning and food related illness, potentially resulting in hospital admissions for some patients, and costing the Belfast economy through work related absences and consumer claims.
3.3	To protect consumers, the Council is required to implement a programme of planned food hygiene and food standards inspections for food businesses across the city. These inspections are programmed based on food safety risks presented by the businesses. Food sampling programmes are also delivered throughout the year, and the Council responds to and investigates food complaints as well as cases of food borne illness.
3.4	The Food Hygiene Rating Act (NI) 2016 requires businesses to display their food hygiene rating, improving the opportunities for consumers to make informed choices and encouraging improved compliance. Currently at least 97% of food businesses are rated as 3, 4 or 5 (broadly compliant or better).
3.5	An important element of the Food Safety service includes work to ensure allergen requirements placed on food business are being adhered to, protecting consumers who have food allergies from harm (it is estimated that around 2 million people living in the UK have a food allergy). Following a number of high profile cases resulting in fatalities, legislation was introduced requiring additional labelling for food that is prepacked for direct sale (PPDS) i.e., food that has been packed on the same premises from which it is being sold. Council officers monitor compliance and offer support to businesses during inspections.
3.6	The Council's imported food control function continues to facilitate trade while ensuring food safety and public health is protected by undertaking official controls at Belfast Port. From the 1 st October 2023 the Windsor Framework introduced the Northern Ireland Retail Movement Scheme (NIRMS "green lane" scheme) to facilitate qualifying traders to move retail goods from GB to NI. Whilst DAERA oversee the NIRM's arrangements, both DAERA and local Councils undertake official controls on other food products arriving at NI ports that are destined for, or at risk of entering the EU (red lane). For Belfast City Council this includes controls on fish products, high risk food not of animal origin, plastic kitchenware from China

	<p>and Hong Kong, and organic products. Whilst the UK and EU have announced intention to negotiate a Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement in the future, in the meantime they have restated their commitment to full and timely implementation of the existing agreements in advance of any future SPS arrangement. The Port Health service continues to work closely with the Food Standards Agency, DAERA, DEFRA, other government departments, local businesses and other stakeholders to ensure adequate arrangements are in place to facilitate trade and protect consumers.</p> <p>Key Issues - Food Service Delivery Plan</p>
3.7	<p>Each year, the Council produces a Food Service Delivery Plan which sets out the activities, techniques and approaches to be taken during the year to support businesses in ensuring food safety, food standards and to promote informed healthy choices. The Plan provides the basis on which the Council's regulatory activities are monitored and audited by the Food Standards Agency, and it is a requirement that it is presented to the Council for approval.</p>
3.8	<p>The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has a key role in overseeing local authority regulatory activities to ensure that official controls are delivered. Powers to enable the FSA to monitor and audit local authorities are contained in the Food Standards Act 1999. A detailed Framework Agreement on local food law enforcement has been produced by the Agency, in conjunction with local authority representative bodies, to provide guidance on how regulatory service plans should be structured and what they should contain. The Belfast City Council Food Service Delivery Plan for 2024/25 has been drafted in line with the framework requirements.</p>
3.9	<p>The Framework Agreement described above requires that Food Service Delivery Plans should be submitted to the relevant Member forum, in this case the People and Communities Committee, for approval. This is to ensure local transparency and accountability. The Food Service Delivery Plan for 2025/2026 is included in Appendix 1.</p>
3.10	<p>Members should note that during the Covid pandemic (between 2020 and 2022), food hygiene and food standards inspection programmes were significantly impacted, as visits were paused due to business closures during periods of lock down, and subsequent restrictions on social distancing etc. The FSA worked with Local Authorities across England, Wales and Northern Ireland during 2022/23 to develop recovery plans for food safety services, setting priorities for service recovery at that time.</p>
3.11	<p>Belfast City Council's Food Safety team successfully achieved the key service recovery milestones and objectives in 2022/23 and 2023/24, these were designed to focus interventions on the highest risk businesses, bringing these back into the routine inspection programme. In 2024/25, further significant progress has been made towards returning to normal inspection frequencies for the vast majority of businesses across the range of high, moderate and low risk categories. Whilst a small backlog of inspections remains, Officers are working to eliminate this over the 2025/26 year.</p>
3.12	<p>The Food Standards Agency introduced a modernised Food Standards delivery model in 2024/25. This has resulted in changes to the risk scoring matrix for such inspections to take account of allergen compliance, and results in some businesses being categorised in higher risk categories and requiring more frequent inspections. Officers will continue to assess the impact of these changes going forward in 2025/26.</p>
3.13	<p>For food hygiene delivery, it is understood that following feedback from a pre-consultation exercise in 2023, FSA have decided to indefinitely postpone implementation of reforms to the Food Hygiene delivery model.</p>

<p>3.14</p> <p>3.15</p> <p>3.16</p>	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The Food Standards Agency provides some grant funding to help support these services on an annual basis to all District Councils in NI. This funding is allocated based on population size of each District as well as the profile of food businesses located within each area. In 2025/26 the funding allocated to Belfast City Council is approximately £340,500. Additional funding is provided by DAERA and FSA for delivery of the imported food function at Belfast Port.</p> <p>The remaining resources required for this core service are included within the City and Neighbourhood Services existing budgets and no additional resources are anticipated.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>None</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Appendices</p>
<p>4.1</p>	<p>Appendix 1 – Food Service Delivery Plan 2024-2025</p>

Appendix 1

BELFAST CITY COUNCIL CITY & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES DEPARTMENT SERVICE PLAN FOR FOOD LAW ENFORCEMENT 2025 - 2026

This service plan for food law enforcement describes the techniques and approaches to be taken by Belfast City Council during 2025 – 2026 to ensure food is safe and food is what it says it is. The Council will mix and balance the four common approaches to enforcement:

- Demand driven
- Education driven
- Inspection driven
- Intelligence driven

Food safety is a priority for the Council's regulatory service, with staff in Food Safety, Port Health and Business Support providing the majority of the service.

1 – Service Aims and Objectives

1.1 Aims and objectives

The key aims and objectives of the food service are to:

1. Protect consumers and ensure food produced, imported through or sold in Belfast is safe to eat and meets the necessary legal standards
2. Support the local economy, including the regeneration and investment in the City Centre by minimising the cost of food related illness and supporting individual businesses through clear advice, guidance and good regulation which are effective, risk based and proportionate.
3. Respond to all complaints or service requests within target response times and meet the needs of local people through effective delivery of quality and customer centric services.
4. Help consumers and businesses understand about safe food and help to ensure that consumers have the information they need to make informed choices.

1.2 Links to corporate objectives and plans

The Belfast Agenda 2024 sets out the vision for Belfast to become a City which will drive a successful economy, a magnet for investment and a great place to live for everyone. It reflects the priorities of community planning partners and the public.

The Food Safety Service has an important contribution to make to the achievement of the city's priorities, particularly by supporting the economy and creating a safe city. The service also helps the Council in its efforts to stimulate the local economy, supporting other key strategies including the Bolder Vision for Belfast which aims to create a more attractive, accessible, safe and vibrant city.

In promoting food safety the Food Safety Service also contributes to delivering the cross-government Food Strategy, published in June 2022, setting out a joint vision for the UK food system in 2030 and the Food Standards Agency's Strategy for 2022-2027.

The Service, by improving food safety in the City, plays an important role in promoting Belfast to visitors and tourists.

2. Background

2.1 Profile of the Local Authority

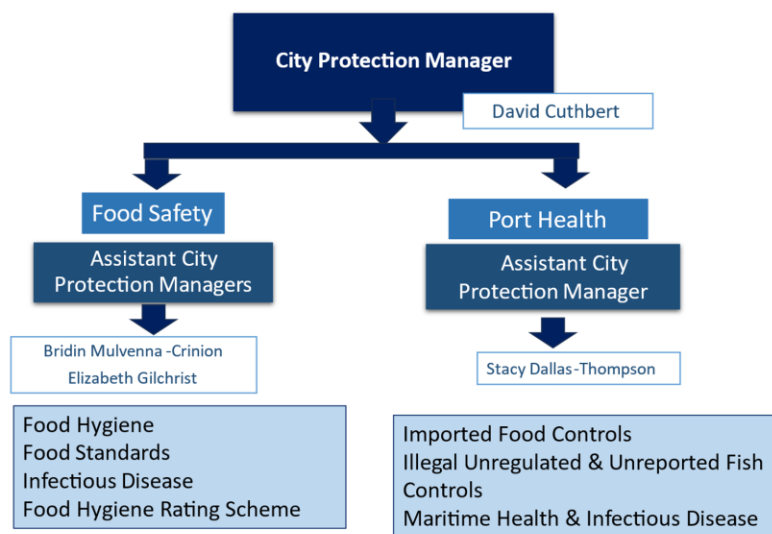
The Council is the largest of the 11 Councils in Northern Ireland with almost 3000 employees. The Council has 60 Councillors over 10 election wards. It serves a population of 348,000 (with a daytime population of over 400,000). The area is predominantly urban in nature with the Council offices being located in the city centre. The city is the major centre for both employment and entertainment with two thirds of the population of Northern Ireland being within 50 km of the city.

Within the city boundary is the Port of Belfast, a significant port within the United Kingdom. Around two thirds of Northern Ireland's seaborne trade, and a quarter of that for Ireland as a whole, is handled at the port.

2.2 Organisational Structure



Business Portfolio



City Services

2.2.1 Appointed laboratories for analysis

The Northern Ireland Public Health Laboratory based at Belfast City Hospital, provides specialist services in food microbiology and pathology. The Council has appointed Eurofins Food Testing Ireland Ltd as Public Analysts to provide specialist analysis and advice on food composition, labelling and chemical and physical contaminants of food. The Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute at Newforge Lane, Belfast, is employed for the identification of pests associated with food and food premises.

2.3 Scope of the Food Service

Belfast City Council carries out all functions relating to food safety and food standards matters, including the following:

- Registration and approval of food premises
- Inspection of food premises including manufacturing, catering and retail premises in accordance with a range of legislation and guidance, and taking into consideration the Council's Regulation and Enforcement Policy
- Implementation of the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme including publication of food hygiene inspection results on the national website
- Dealing with potential food hazards including food alerts
- Inspection of foodstuffs and the formulation and implementation of sampling programmes for analysis in relation to composition and labelling and/or microbiological examination.

- Investigation of complaints relating to food and hygiene of food premises and investigation of cases of suspected food poisoning
- Providing advice and information on food safety matters
- The provision of specialist food safety education programmes, and signposting to other commercially available training services
- Food safety promotional activities
- Provision of practical food safety and port health training to environmental health students
- Investigation of incidents of statutorily notifiable food and water related illnesses on behalf of the Director of Public Health of the Public Health Agency
- Inspection of third country (non-EU) imported food of non-animal origin
- In partnership with the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs the operation of the Port of Belfast Border Inspection Post and the inspection of Products of Animal Origin.
- Enhanced screening of Maritime Declaration of Health documents for all vessels arriving in Belfast.
- Inspection of vessels (ships – including passenger ferries) arriving at the Port to ensure compliance with International and United Kingdom health and hygiene requirements including food safety and control of infectious diseases and to issue Ship Sanitation Certificates as required.
- Enforcement of legislation relating to import control of Organic products
- Enforcement of legislation to control illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing in order to ensure food safety and protect marine ecosystems
- The issuing of attestations and export health certificates required for the export of consignments of non-animal foods and fish from NI to third countries

The service is currently provided by members of staff employed by Belfast City Council. All staff involved in the inspection of food and food premises meet the qualification and competency requirements of the Food Law Code of Practice and the FSA competency framework.

2.4 Demands on the Food Service

2.4.1. Food Safety Service

Belfast City Council has 3540 food businesses within the City.

A profile of premises classified in accordance with the FSA monitoring returns are given below.

TYPE OF ESTABLISHMENT	NO. OF PREMISES
Primary Producers	16
Manufacturers & Packers	168
Importers/Exporters	41 (including shipping agents)
Distributors/Transporters	74
Retailers	730
Restaurant/Caterers	2511

11 manufacturing premises and 7 cold stores in the city are approved under EC Reg 853/2004.

The majority of food premises in the city are caterers or retailers reflecting the fact that Belfast is a major regional centre for shopping, entertainment, business and tourism. However, within the City there are a number of major manufacturers including 2 major bakeries, 2 flour mills, 7 cold stores, 5 meat preparations and other meat products premises, an animal fat rendering plant, and 5 fish processors approved under EC Regulations which manufacture and process food for distribution throughout Northern Ireland and Great Britain and export to the Republic of Ireland.

An External Temporary Storage Facility (ETSF formerly known as Enhanced Remote Transit Shed – ERTS) is a warehouse designated by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), where goods are temporarily stored pending clearance by HMRC, and prior to release into free circulation. ETSFs are periodically examined to ascertain if foods are stored.

As shown above there are a large number of distribution centres located in the city many of which distribute across Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Seven of these premises specialise in ethnic foods of non-EU origin and are monitored to ensure imported food controls are being adhered to.

It is estimated that over 5% of Belfast's food businesses, across a range of business types, are owned by people whose first language is not English. Whilst this adds significantly to diversity and customer choice, it requires particular effort from the service to ensure equal access to advice and information, including the facility for the translation of documents and provision of interpreters for on-site visits and meetings.

The Council's food safety services are delivered from the Cecil Ward Building, 4-10 Linenhall Street, Belfast, usually between the hours of 0830 and 1700, Monday to Thursday, and between 0830 and 1630 on Fridays. The Port Health services are delivered from the Port Health Unit at Corry Place, Belfast Harbour Estate, delivering the import food control service on a 24 hour, 7 days a week basis.

Out of hours work is undertaken as necessary, such as for businesses that only open late at night and/or at weekends and for additional Port health work such as ship inspections.

An Environmental Health Officer is on standby outside normal office hours, to deal with urgent notifications from the FSA and also infectious disease incidents at the discretion of the Public Health Agency (PHA). A Port Health Officer is on standby out of office hours to deal with issues arising in the Port. This service extends 24 hours per day for 365 days per year.

Historically there has been a continued increase in the number of large outdoor events which have significant catering facilities associated with them, such as farmers' and continental markets, festivals and concerts. These events sometimes require evening, weekend and Bank Holiday visits to monitor food hygiene standards. We will continue to strengthen relationships with promoters and organisers this year in order to ensure that adequate attention is given to planning for food safety. Significant events this year include the Christmas Continental Market, St Patricks Day, Feile, Orangefest, Mela, Belsonic and Vital music festivals, among others.

2.4.2. Port Health Service

The Port Health service operates a 24-hour service to deliver the additional responsibilities resulting from the UK's exit from the EU for imported food checks on some foods arriving from

UK. Windsor Framework arrangements agreed by the UK Government commenced from 1st October 2023, and the Council is working alongside our partners in DAERA, DEFRA and FSA to apply the relevant statutory requirements. In May 2025, the UK and EU Governments announced their intention to negotiate a Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) agreement. Once agreed, this will reduce the need for some checks, however in the meantime, the UK and EU have committed to full implementation of the existing arrangements.

The Port Health team comprises 4 shift-based teams who operate a 24/7 service, in addition to a small team of 4 daytime officers deliver imported food controls for goods arriving from other 3rd countries, ship sanitation inspections, infectious disease duties, public health nuisances and some food hygiene work within the Port.

It is intended that a further review of the Port Health function will be undertaken once the operating and funding models for delivery of Windsor Framework obligations and any future SPS agreement are clarified and progressed in the coming years. An appropriate and sustainable longer term service model, including sustainable financing arrangements is required and we continue to advocate for this with key partners, including FSA, DAERA and DEFRA.

The Port Health Unit is currently located in office and inspection facilities at 5 Corry Place within the harbour estate. These facilities were approved in January 2010 by the Food Standards Agency on behalf of the European Union as a Designated Point of Entry into the EU for the carrying out of official controls on high-risk products of non-animal origin imported from outside the EU. The facility is also approved as a Border Inspection Post for the examination, sampling and clearance of third country imports of products of animal origin and is operated by the Council in conjunction with DAERA (Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs). It is also approved as a First Point of Introduction for certain food contact materials. Whilst the Corry Place facility was sufficient for the Council's service requirements up until December 2020, following introduction of the Windsor Framework, capacity limitations at the facility mean that delivery of increased inspection workloads will require additional purpose-built inspection accommodation in the future. DEFRA are currently constructing a new purpose-built inspection facility at Belfast Port which is expected to be completed and operational in summer 2025.

2.5 Enforcement Policy

The Council has prepared a Regulation and Enforcement Policy which was formally adopted by the Council in December 2011. The purpose of this policy is to secure an efficient and effective approach to all regulatory and enforcement activities carried out by Belfast City Council. The policy is consistent with the principles set out in the Government's Better Regulation Agenda and with the principles of the Enforcement Concordat and it is also intended to improve compliance with legislation while minimising the burden on businesses, individuals, organisations and the Council. The policy sets out the principles which will enable the Service to ensure consistent and open enforcement and is considered when determining appropriate enforcement action. Management controls are in place to ensure that all decisions on enforcement are consistent with this policy.

In preparing the Policy, the Council has considered the Regulator's Compliance Code and the "Statement of Intent" between the Local Better Regulation Office, the Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment, and District Councils.

The Regulation and Enforcement Policy is available on the Council's website and can be accessed at www.belfastcity.gov.uk. Businesses are advised of the existence of the policy

together with how it can be obtained on all standard letters and reports left following the inspection of premises.

3. Service Delivery

3.1 Food Premises Interventions

The Council plans and delivers a risk-based Food Premises Intervention Programme based on the requirements of the Food Law Code of Practice. The frequency and type of intervention planned aims to concentrate resources on the worst offenders and higher risk businesses whilst at the same time reducing the burden on the better businesses.

There are 1253 premises due a food hygiene intervention plus a backlog of 543 from previous years. At the start of April 2025 there were 279 premises due a food standards intervention plus a backlog of 42 from 2024-2025.

3.2 Food Hygiene Intervention Strategy

As per the Food Law Code of Practice the following premises have been prioritised for inspection in 2025-2026:

Risk category	Inspection planned
A	4
B	130
C	534
D	421
E	116
Unrated at 1 st April 2025	48
Backlog C	1
Backlog D	371
Backlog E	171

3.3 Food Standards Intervention Strategy

As per the Food law code of practice the following premises have been prioritised for inspection at the start of April 2025 in 2025-2026:

Risk category	Inspection planned
A	22
B	116
C	93
Unrated at 1 st April 2025	48
Backlog B	42

Food Standards Delivery Model

On 22 May the food service upgraded their MIS database to incorporate the new FSA Food Standards Delivery Model (FSDM). The introduction of FSDM has amended the food standards risk categories as well as the food standards inspection frequencies. As of 22 May 2025 there are now 724 premises due a food standards intervention plus 446 now identified as outstanding a food standards intervention. This gives a total of 1170 premises due a FSDM intervention compared to a total of 321 premises due standards intervention at start of April 2025. Due to the significant increase in premises now due a standards intervention it is unlikely that the food service will be able to complete all interventions within 2025-2026 and therefore it is anticipated that there will be a further backlog of food standards interventions at the end of the year. Interventions will be carried out on a risk based and intelligence led approach based on available resources as per FSA guidelines.

Total FSDM interventions due 2025-2026 including backlog:

Risk Category	Inspection planned
PI1	1
PI2	62
PI3	8
MR1	53
MR2	589
MR3	199
LR1	64
LR2	12
LR3	0

3.4 Alternative Enforcement Strategy (AES)

Normally those food businesses which present the lowest risk to public health will be subject to an alternative approach to inspection. This AES consists of a Food Safety Hygiene and Standards Self-Assessment Questionnaire which is posted out to the businesses along with tailored advice and information. Completed questionnaires are reviewed to monitor compliance and confirm that there have been no significant changes to the business or a change in ownership. Premises that do not provide the necessary information or indicate a significant change to their activities may be subject to an inspection.

The introduction of FSDM has reduced the number of premises eligible for food standards AES.

3.5 Revisits

In line with the statutory Food Law Code of Practice all food businesses that fail to comply with significant statutory requirements shall be subject to appropriate enforcement action and revisit to verify compliance. As a minimum they will receive a written warning letter. It is anticipated that approximately 200 revisits following food hygiene inspections shall be completed and approximately 120 revisits following food standards inspections.

3.6 Revisits for FHRS rerating

Under the requirements of the Food Hygiene Rating Act (NI) 2016 additional revisits will be carried out on request to 're-rate' an establishment, subject to criteria being met and a fee of £150 being paid. Approximately 70 rerating inspections are anticipated for 2025-2026.

3.7 Food Complaints

The Council will investigate food complaints received from members of the public or food businesses in line with the service's response times for urgent and non-urgent service requests. In determining the appropriate course of action, the Council will take into consideration any reports received from the Home, Originating or Primary Authorities and the food business identified as the cause of the complaint and will have regard to the Council's Regulatory and Enforcement Policy. For 2025/26 the Council estimates that it will receive approximately 560 complaints relating to food or the hygiene of food premises.

3.8 Home Authority Principle and Primary Authority Scheme

The Home Authority Principle and Primary Authority Scheme is not a legal requirement in NI. We will take cognisance of any relevant advice given by the Home or Primary Authority.

While the Council does not enter into formal written home authority partnerships with any business, it has established a close liaison with the majority of businesses, including the Education Authority, for whom it informally acts as a Home Authority on behalf of the other 11 District Councils. Our remit extends to providing advice, guidance and the follow up of non-compliances in relation to policy or procedures identified by our own officers or by officers from the other District Councils. Advice is also provided during programmed inspections and other visits.

On request the Council will investigate all matters referred to it by other local authorities and where appropriate will provide a written response to requests for information. For 2025/2026 the Council estimates that it will receive over 200 requests for information from other Local Authorities.

The Council liaise closely with the Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and carry out work on their behalf under a number of MOU's and SLA's. This includes work relating to egg, beef and poultry meat labelling and traceability and the issuing of export health certificates and attestations for trade to non-EC countries.

3.9 Advice to Business

The Council is committed to the improvement of standards in food businesses and advice to businesses is an important dimension of that strategy. Advice is given through site-visits, provision of compliance tools such as the Butchers' HACCP Pack, and the Safe Catering (HACCP) Pack, the Council's website, dealing with enquiries and requests for advice, through correspondence, meetings with trade groups, distribution of printed materials, and educational and online training programmes. The service will continue to support all businesses with the implementation and maintenance of Food Safety Management Systems based on HACCP principles, in conjunction with a graduated approach to enforcement.

In order to promote a positive image and promote the reputation of the Council the unit publishes articles in City matters and interlink.

It is estimated that 500 new businesses will receive advice in the year.

Our system of recording service requests, response times and actions help plan, improve and monitor this part of the service. It is estimated that in addition to complaints relating to food or premises a further 1200 requests for service will be received this year.

The Port Health Service is an active member of the local shipping community, having extensive business contacts with the Maritime Coastguard Agency, Belfast Harbour Commissioners, N.I. importers, customs, clearance agents, hauliers, shipping companies, ferry operators and stevedores. Advice is given on Port Health related matters, including food safety, to the shipping community on a regular basis and when requested help and advice is given to local importers and members of the general public on the importation of third country foodstuffs including products of animal origin. The Port Health service has also engaged together with DAERA, FSA and other Councils with trade and businesses to provide advice and assistance in relation to additional requirements following Brexit, and the service continues to receive requests for information and advice in this regard.

3.10 Food Sampling

The Food Safety Unit has prepared a Food Sampling Policy outlining its general approach to chemical and microbiological sampling as well its approach in specific situations. This approach recognises the important role of sampling in protecting public health and product quality, detecting fraudulent activities and unhygienic practices and to ensure that food standards are maintained.

Food sampling programmes are produced annually for both chemical and microbiological samples, after consultation with the Public Analyst and the Food Examiner. The programme has regard to national, regional and local co-ordinated sampling surveys.

Several areas of intelligence are used to identify priority sampling and premises. Such intelligence may include Incident reports sent to FSA, Food Alerts, FSA Annual Incident report, RASFFs, Food standards complaints; UK Food Surveillance System annual reports, FSA Imported Food Annual Reports & Food Fraud Database bulletins.

In 2025/2026 we aim to sample 300 for chemical analysis and 1000 products for microbiological examination.

3.11 Port Health – Imported food inspections and sampling

The Unit receives up to 15 manifests for containerised shipping cargoes per day and also for up to 77 roll on-roll off ferry sailing arrivals at Belfast Port each week. From these manifests Council officers identify vessels and their cargoes. Cargo manifests are scrutinised, and all third country imported foodstuffs are identified to ensure compliance with import processes and food safety legislation.

Documentary, identity and physical checks, including sampling, are carried out on all third country products of animal origin in accordance with the EC veterinary checks regime. Following introduction of the NI Protocol and Windsor Framework, this has extended to relevant food products arriving from GB (red lane).

EU legislation requires that specified import conditions will apply to certain imported consignments of third country products of non-animal origin. These products all require a documentary check, and a proportion will be subject to identity and physical checks (including

sampling) at a level laid down in the legislation. Products not subject to the specific legislation will be risk assessed and appropriate checks, including sampling, carried out to ensure compliance with relevant imported food legislation. When possible, the Unit carries out imported food sampling programmes devised by the Food Standards Agency or the E.U.

A sampling plan for this year is based on trade volumes and commodities. Samples taken will include mandatory samples required by imported food legislation as well as surveillance samples guided by the UK's National Monitoring Plan. We anticipate the numbers of samples to be taken from imported food consignments in 2025/2026 to be in the region of:

- Microbiological 45
- Chemical 250

The International Health Regulations (2005) require that all ships must be inspected at an authorised port such as Belfast and where necessary a Ship Sanitation Certificate issued for the prevention and control of public health risks. The unit also responds to Ship Sanitation inspection requests from ships that operate out of Larne Port. Certificates are valid for a period of 6 months. As the number of inspections are dependent upon requests from Ships Agents, the volume of inspections vary each year. In 2024/2025 we carried out 103 ship sanitation inspections, which is an increase from the previous year in which 85 ship sanitation inspections were completed.

Food hygiene and food standards inspections of Passenger Ferries registered with and operating out of Belfast are undertaken. Some of these ferries are large food businesses producing up to 7500 meals per day. We will inspect between 2 and 4 ferries in 2025-2026.

The unit also regularly inspect External Temporary Storage Facilities (formerly known as ERTS), fishing vessels operating out of Belfast and other vessels in dry dock for repair. Food Hygiene and Standards inspections are also carried out at George Best City Airport as well as ensuring the safety of water delivered to aircraft.

3.12 Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related and other Infectious Disease

The Council will attempt to investigate all notifications of infectious disease received from the Public Health Agency (PHA), within one working day of receipt. Specifically trained and competent environmental health officers within the Food Safety and Port Health Unit are authorised by the PHA for the investigation of notifications.

Investigation of outbreaks of food related infectious disease is conducted in liaison with the Consultant in Public Health Medicine of the PHA, and in accordance with the existing Outbreak Control Plans and protocols.

The Council estimates that it will receive 150 notifications of food related infectious disease during the year, with an additional 100 alleged food poisoning complaints from the public.

The Port Health Division will respond immediately it is notified of any complaint or incident of food poisoning or food related infectious disease occurring on board a ship or premises within the Port of Belfast or relating to a passenger using Belfast City Airport.

3.13 Food Safety Incidents

The FSA receives and issues information about foods within the supply chain which have been found to be unsafe or do not meet legal requirements. These include notifications about Product Withdrawals, Product Recalls and Allergy Alerts. Where necessary, the FSA will issue direction to councils to take specific action to protect consumers.

All notifications that require action are recorded on our database with details of the actions taken recorded against the relevant premises.

The Council estimates that it will receive 100 notifications from the FSA during the year that will require investigation and further action to protect public safety.

3.14 Rapid Alert System for Feed and Food (RASFF).

With EU Exit, the UK has lost access to certain EU information systems including full access to the RASFF. As a result, the Food Standards Agency has developed the Risk Likelihood Dashboard to create a platform to enable more efficient and effective collation and sharing of relevant data for stakeholders involved in protecting public health in relation to imported food and feed. The Risk Likelihood Dashboard provides intelligence from consolidated data sources including historic TRACES data, RASFF Portal, refusals from other 3rd countries. Local Authorities can still create RASFF notifications but have view only of RASFF notifications. Belfast City Council have access to the Risk Likelihood Dashboard and use it routinely to identify potential risks with imported foods and target surveillance accordingly.

If a consignment/product is to be rejected or destroyed due to a direct or indirect risk to human health, an incident report and rapid alert notification must be completed and forwarded to the FSA Food Incident Branch after consultation with FSA Northern Ireland for onward notification to the European Commission. It is likely that 5-10 notifications will be generated in 2025/2026.

3.15 Liaisons with Other Organisations

The Food Safety and Port Health Unit has extensive liaison in place with a wide range of other organisations:

- Food Standards Agency NI (FSANI) through enforcement stakeholder meetings, the Northern Ireland Food Managers Groups (NIFMG), and numerous other formal and informal meetings.
- The Public Health Agency (MOU exists) in relation to the investigation of sporadic cases and outbreaks of food related infectious disease.
- NIFMG reporting to Environmental Health NI
- Association of Port Health Authorities. The Senior Environmental Health Officer (Port Health) is a member Port Health Liaison Network.
- The Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs in relation to the operation of the Border Inspection Post.
- Merchant Navy Welfare Board (NI)
- HM Customs and Excise nationally and locally in relation to imported food controls.
- Planning Service to review related applications.
- Department for Infrastructure Water Quality Liaison Group.
- Safe Food through projects and working groups on the Island of Ireland
- The Northern Ireland Area Medical Advisory Committee - Infectious Disease Sub-Group.
- Belfast Resilience-Harbour Working Group

- Maritime Coastguard Agency
- Belfast Harbour Commissioners
- The Education Authority for NI School Meals Service
- NI Takeaway association

Close liaison is maintained with the Council's Building Control Service, Pest Control and Waste Management Service, as well as with the other regulatory units.

3.16 Promotion of Food Safety

The Council carries out educational and promotional activities as an integral part of its food safety duties. In addition to this, specialist promotional activities are carried by the Food Safety Unit.

Educational and promotional activities planned for 2025/2026 include the following:

Promotional Activity	Estimated Resources
Maintain and promote and manage the Food Hygiene Rating scheme	30 hours
To provide an Imported Food/Port Health training day and recruitment promotional sessions for year 3 and 4 students on Environmental Health and other food related courses.	50 hours
To publish at least one article in City Matters	5 hours
To develop relevant advice / information for businesses to assist them to comply with enforcement / legislative requirements	30 hours
Promote EH as a profession within local schools	10 hours

4.0 Resources

4.1 Financial allocation

Details of the budget for the delivery of the Council's food service in 2025-2026 are within the City and Neighbourhood Service's revenue estimates and were approved by Council in February 2025.

4.2 Staffing allocation

4.2.1 Food Safety and Port Health Unit

The full staffing compliment in the Food Safety & Port Health Unit has the equivalent of 19 full-time staff engaged in food safety work. All officers hold specific qualifications and are assessed for competencies as required by the Code of Practice and are authorised for duties in accordance with the Council's documented procedure. (See table below).

Position	Hours (Full or Part Time)	Authorisation	FTE
Food Safety			
City Protection Manager	FT	None	0.1
Assistant City Protection Manager	FT	Full including Approvals	0.7
Assistant City Protection Manager	FT	Full including Approvals	0.7
Senior EHO	PT	Full including Approvals	0.8
Senior EHO	PT	Full including Approvals	0.8
Senior EHO	FT	Full including Approvals	1
Senior EHO	FT	Full including Approvals	1
Senior EHO	FT	Full including Approvals	1
EHO *	FT	Full including Coldstore Approvals	1.0
EHO	FT	Full	1.0
EHO	FT	Full	1.0
EHO	FT	Full	1.0
EHO	FT	Full	1.0
EHO	FT	Partial	1.0
EHO	PT	Full	0.5
EHO	FT	Partial	1.0
EHO	FT	Vacant (career break)	1.0
Technical Officer	PT	Full	0.8
Technical Officer	FT	Full	1.0
Technical Officer	FT	Full	1.0
Technical Officer	FT	Full	1.0
Senior EHO	1	Vacant (seconded to Port Health)	1
		Total FTE	19.4
		Total Allocated FTE hours**	28091.20
		Total Occupied FTE (minus vacancies & long term absence) (16.9 FTE)	24471.20

*1 EHO has been off long term for over 3 months in 25-26

**FTE = 200 working days @ 7.24 hr per working day = 1448 hours per FTE

Port Health/Imported food			
City Protection Manager	FT	None	0.1
Assistant City Protection Manager PORT (daytime)	FT	Full with Approvals inc Port Health	0.7
Senior EHO PORT (daytime)	FT	Full inc Port Health	0.7
Senior EHO PORT (daytime)	FT	Full inc Port Health	1.0
EHO PORT (daytime)	FT	Full with approvals inc Port Health	1.0
Team Leader EHOs x4 (shift based)	FT	Port health	4.0
EHOs x10 (shift based)	FT	Port Health – 2 posts vacant	10.0

Technical Support Officer x8 (shift based)	FT	1 post vacant Limited to regulatory support activities	8.0
Port Health Support Assistants (shift based)	FT	2 posts vacant	8.0

Current short-term vacancies that cannot be covered by temporary contracts are on occasion covered by agency staff.

The Port Health shift-based staff (including Team Leader Environmental Health Officers, Environmental Health Officers, Technical Support Officers and Port Health Support Assistants) are employed on a temporary basis for Port Health to carry out required official controls on goods from GB following temporary funding from FSA.

*Full Authorisation: authorised by Belfast City Council to enforce the provisions of The Food Safety Order (Northern Ireland) 1991 and any Orders or Regulations made thereunder or relating to the foregoing or having effect by virtue of the European Communities Act 1972.

4.2.1a Estimate of Resource (Time) Requirements

Food Hygiene/Food Standards

Activity	No Tasks	Time/task	Total Hours
Cat A inspections Hygiene	4	5.5	22
Cat B inspections Hygiene	130	5	650
Cat C inspections Hygiene including backlog	535	4	2140
Cat D inspections Hygiene including backlog	792	4	3168
Cat E inspections Hygiene including backlog	187	1.5	280.5
AES Category E Hygiene	100	0.5	50
Unrated and unplanned events (Hygiene)	500	5	2500
PI1 1 month	1	5	5
PI2 3 months	62	5	310
PI3 6 months	8	5	40
MR1 12 months	53	4	212
MR2 24 months	589	4	2356
MR3 36 months	199	2.5	497.5
LR1 48 months	64	2	128
LR2 60 months	12	1	12
AES Standards	50	0.5	25
Unrated and unplanned events (Standards)	500	5	2500
Revisits	320	1	320
Advisory and other visits	75	1	75
Micro sampling	1000	1	1000

Chemical sampling	300	2	600
Food Complaints	560	7	3920
ID investigations	150	2.5	300
Food Alerts For action	100	2	200
Prosecutions	5	74	370
Other Service Requests	800	7	5600
Staff Development	19	30	570
Working groups and initiatives with other external partners and stakeholders including NIFMG and Sub-Groups, FSA, APHA	-	-	200
Management of service and staff	-	-	2,500
Staff meetings	-	-	240
Projects e.g., web development, procedures, campaigns	-	-	50
Mandatory Food Hygiene Rating Scheme	-	-	30
		Total activity hours	30871

There are 28091.20 FTE Hours allocated to the service however due to current vacancies & long-term absence the actual FTE hours available are 24471.20. The anticipated activity hours are 30871. This identifies that even if the total allocated FTE was available, the service would not have sufficient FTE resources to deliver the food safety service. The occupied FTE available is not capable of meeting all necessary demands on the service for 2025-2026. This also shows the significant impact of the changes to inspection frequencies of the food standards delivery model. Food Safety service will continue to prioritise activities to maximise the most efficient and effective service delivery. It should also be noted that in-year changes to risk ratings may result in multiple inspections for same premises in one year. Such changes are not always possible to predict.

Port Health

Activity	No Tasks	Time/task	Total Hours
Inspect all shipping and ferry Manifests	4300	0.5	2150
To screen Maritime Declaration of health documentation to monitor compliance with International Health Regulations and infectious disease	2000	0.5	1000
To inspect vessels for the issue of Ship Sanitation Certificates.	140	6.00	840
Documentary & phys. checks, including sampling, of foodstuffs imported from outside EU.	* (Estimated 40,000)	* (varies depending on task)	

*This estimate reflects documentary, identity and physical checks on products of animal origin (fish and fish products), high risk food not of animal origin, plastic kitchenware, organic products and IUU Catch Certificates undertaken in 2024/25 and is likely to be subject to further development and resource planning in 2025/26 as statutory requirements, systems and processes are further developed/updated, and businesses adjust to the new arrangements. The duration of tasks and degree of officer time varies according to commodity types and is under regular review with partners including FSA and DAERA as part of the annual resource allocation arrangements that are currently in place.

4.3 Staff Development Plan

The development needs of the Food Safety and Port Health Unit are identified as part of the Council's business planning process, competency assessment and through personal development planning. Relevant local training is identified by the Northern Ireland Food Managers Group and subgroups, the Food Standards Agency Northern Ireland and the Public Health Agency. Training needs are also reviewed during the year to take into account staff changes and other issues identified. In-house briefing sessions are delivered regularly as part of monthly Unit meetings.

Competency requirements required by the Food Law Code of Practice are re assessed for all Officers annually and all deficiencies addressed in year.

Food Safety Training Plan 2025-2026

The priority training areas agreed between NIFMG and FSA and shall be provided as low-cost training. The key areas have been identified as follows:

- FHRS National Consistency Exercise
- Evidence Gathering
- Interview Skills and Tasking & Making Statements
- Root Cause Analysis
- Changes to international incident reporting & RASFF since EU Exit
- Food Standards Delivery Model
- Food Crime Intelligence
- Approvals
- Public analyst training on food sampling
- Nutrition and Health Claims on Food Supplements
- Microbiology sampling for food officers

There is also access to online courses provided by the FSA, Safefood, as well as refresher training via ABC Food Law. Port Health staff also avail of training on imported food controls via the Better Training for Safer Food programme.

5.0 Quality Assessment

The following arrangements are in place to ensure the quality of services provided by the Food Safety and Port Health Unit:

5.1 Internal Monitoring Arrangements

Procedures have been drawn up and implemented to monitor the quality of work of officers assigned to the Food Safety & Port Health Unit which cover all aspects of the Standard and help ensure procedures are fully implemented. Current procedures include:

- Regular individual meetings with lead officers
- Use of procedure notes
- Use of standardised inspection report forms, letters and phrases
- Review of post-inspection paperwork
- Monitoring of inspections, visits and actions by documentation checks and accompanied visits
- Post complaint investigation monitoring
- Approved premises file review and monitoring
- Internal auditing of adherence to procedures
- Monthly meetings of the Food Safety Teams
- Seminars / exercises and training as required

5.2 External monitoring and verification

The Border Inspection Post is audited annually by DAERA, and the food service is periodically subject to both FSA and EU audits.

The inland food safety team are subject to audit internally and externally.

6.0 Review

6.1 Review against the Service Plan

Performance against the unit's business plan is reviewed periodically. This includes a quarterly review by the Unit Management Team. Summary performance information on the previous years' service plan will be reported with each Food Service Delivery Plan. The report shall also identify any variance together with areas of improvement.

Performance report on Food Service Delivery Plan for 2023-2024

1. Departmental Plan Targets

Performance Indicator	Target 2024-2025	Achieved 2024-2025
% Premises deemed broadly compliant	95%	97%

2. Other relevant performance Information update for 23/24

Performance Indicator	Target 2024/25	Achieved % 2024/25	Explanation of variance and improvements for 2024/25
% Of the food hygiene programme	100%	73%	Priority inspections due in 2024/25 were completed, and progress made in

complete (including backlog from previous year)			addressing backlog, variance due to large number of premises in backlog remaining due from previous years. Continuous prioritisation of inspections and working to reduce backlog from Covid pandemic. Almost 80% of backlog was completed.
% of the food standards programme complete	100%	91%	Continuing to prioritise higher risk standards inspections. With 95% of backlog completed
% Of food complaints resolved within 8 weeks	75%	96%	Target exceeded
Micro Samples Taken	1000	95% (950 samples)	Year on Year increase since Covid Pandemic; using available resources
Chemical Samples Taken	300	133% (399 samples)	Target Exceeded
% Of urgent food complaints responded to within target (1 working day)	100%	97%	slight decrease due to additional pressures on service
To investigate notifications of gastrointestinal illness within 24 hours and report to PHA within 24 hours.	90% returned within target	100%	Exceeded Target
	90% contacted within target	100%	Exceeded Target
% Of manifests examined for imported food stuffs	100%	100%	Target Met
Number of imported food consignments examined	This target was reported in the Food Service Delivery Plan in previous years, however volumes since 2021/22 have fluctuated significantly and are expected to change further as the Windsor Framework is implemented (final phase from 1st July 2025). We will work with FSA and partners to identify suitable targets as the systems and processes, and trade volumes become established, and the operations at newly constructed inspection facilities bed in after summer 2025.		

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Subject:	Belfast City Council 2025 Air Quality Progress Report
Date:	5 th August 2025
Reporting Officer:	Siobhan Toland, Director of City Services
Contact Officer:	Alastair Curran, Environmental Protection Manager

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes ☐ No ☒

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

Insert number ☐

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

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision
After Council Decision
Sometime in the future
Never

☐
☐
☐
☐

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes ☒ No ☐

1.0	Purpose of Report / Summary of Main Issues
1.1	Members will be aware that the council is required, as a consequence of the cycle of reporting for Northern Ireland, established via Table 1-2 of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance LAQM.TG(22), to provide either an annual Progress Report or Updating and Screening Assessment (USA) to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), detailing the status of ambient air quality for the Belfast City Council area, together with progress on implementation of the local air quality management regime, and on achieving or maintaining ambient air pollution concentrations below the respective air quality objective levels for human health, as detailed within the 2007 Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and Air Quality Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003.
1.2	Members are advised that for 2025, the council was required to provide a Progress Report to DAERA by 30 th June 2025. An extension to the submission deadline until mid-August 2025 has, however, been obtained to allow the 2025 Progress Report to be considered at the People and Communities Committee and for any necessary revisions to be made, prior to the Progress Report being submitted to DAERA for technical appraisal. Accepted 2025 Progress Reports will be made available to the public later this year on the DAERA NI Air website, via the following weblink: https://www.airqualityni.co.uk/reports/district-council-reports-1
1.3	By way of clarity, Defra have advised that Progress Reports are intended to provide continuity within the local air quality management system, filling gaps between the three-yearly requirement to undertake an Updating and Screening Assessment, whereas Updating and Screening Assessments are intended to identify any significant changes in local ambient air quality that may have occurred since the previous rounds of Review and Assessment were completed.
1.4	Accordingly, Members are advised that this Committee report serves to provide context to, and an overview of the Belfast City Council 2025 Air Quality Progress Report.
2.0	Recommendation.
2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee is requested to review the attached Belfast City Council 2025 Air Quality Progress Report (Appendix A) and to recommend that the Report be submitted to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs' (DAERA) independent technical appraisers by the revised submission deadline of mid-August 2025.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	Members are advised that to ensure standardisation of approach, and in accordance with requirements detailed within LAQM.TG(22), the Belfast City Council 2025 Air Quality Progress Report has been developed by populating the Defra 2025 Northern Ireland Progress Report Template.
3.2	<p>Accordingly, the Defra 2025 Northern Ireland Progress Report Template requires councils to report on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New ambient air quality monitoring data, to include a summary of all monitoring undertaken and a comparison of monitoring results with the air quality objectives (Section 2); New local developments that are of a scale or function such that may have an effect on ambient air quality (to include road traffic or other transport sources, industrial sources,

	<p>commercial and domestic sources, and new developments that comprise fugitive or uncontrolled sources) (Section 3);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent planning applications that the council has been consulted upon by the Planning Authority, where some form of planning condition or other control may have been necessary in order to manage ambient air quality impacts (Section 4); • Planning policies designed to manage ambient air quality (Section 5); • Local transport plans and policies (Section 6); • Climate change strategies (Section 7); • Progress with implementation of the Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021 – 2026 (Section 8) and; • Conclusions and proposed actions (Section 9).
3.3	<p>Members will be aware that Belfast City Council continues to maintain four Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) across the city, declared for exceedances of nitrogen dioxide annual and 1-hour mean objectives, and encompassing major arterial road transport routes into and out of the city. Details of these AQMAs and their declarations are provided within 'Section 1.4 Summary of Previous Review and Assessments' of the 2025 Progress Report.</p>
3.4	<p>With regard to new ambient air quality monitoring data, the Committee is advised that Section 2 of the 2025 Progress Report presents and considers new monitoring data for the 2024 monitoring year. During 2024, the council continued to operate four automatic roadside monitoring sites for nitrogen dioxide at Stockmans Lane, the A12 Westlink at Roden Street, the Ormeau Road and the Upper Newtownards Road at Ballyhackamore. There is a further automatic urban background monitoring site operated by the Environment Agency, located in Belfast city centre at Lombard Street. There were no exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide annual, or 1-hour mean objectives recorded at any of these monitoring sites during 2024. Indeed, monitored annual mean nitrogen dioxide concentrations during 2024 were comfortably below the 40 μgm^{-3} objective level at all of these monitoring sites, with the highest nitrogen dioxide annual mean concentration of 33.3 μgm^{-3} recorded at the Stockmans Lane roadside monitoring site. Moreover, annual and 1-hour mean concentrations have now been below the respective objective levels for a number of years at all of these sites, as evidenced in Table 2.3 of the 2025 Progress Report.</p>
3.5	<p>In addition to its automatic monitoring sites for nitrogen dioxide, the council has also placed 80 nitrogen dioxide diffusion tubes at 72 human health receptor locations across the city during 2024. 2024 monitoring data for these diffusion tubes is summarised in Table 2.5 of the 2025 Progress Report, along with preceding years historical data, where available, in Table 2.6.</p>
3.6	<p>During 2024, there was only 1 monitored exceedance of the 40 μgm^{-3} nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective, recorded at diffusion tube monitoring site No. 106 (41.3 μgm^{-3}), situated adjacent to new residential student accommodation, located at the junction of the M3 Motorway off slip with Nelson Street and the A12 Westlink. However, when this annual mean concentration was corrected for distance to the façade of the residential student premises, the resultant annual mean concentration of 31.4 μgm^{-3} was determined to be in compliance with the 40 μgm^{-3} nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective. Members will appreciate that for the purposes of local air quality management, regulations state that exceedances of ambient air quality objectives should be assessed in relation to the quality of air at locations that are situated outside of buildings or other natural or man-made structures, above or below ground,</p>

	and where members of the public are regularly present. Accordingly, examples of where air quality objectives should apply are detailed in Box 1.1 of LAQM.TG(22).
3.7	Diffusion tube monitoring site No. 70 at Henry Place, located further along the A12 Westlink, which had exceeded the 40 μgm^{-3} nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective in previous monitoring years, returned a 2024 annual mean nitrogen dioxide concentration of 39.1 μgm^{-3} ; in compliance with the objective. Other elevated monitored nitrogen dioxide annual mean concentrations in 2024 were recorded at Stockmans Lane roundabout (36.2 μgm^{-3}) and further along Stockmans Lane (35.2 μgm^{-3}). These sites were also in compliance with the 40 μgm^{-3} annual mean objective. All other roadside and kerbside diffusion tube monitoring sites across the city were generally within the nitrogen dioxide annual mean concentration range of 20 – 30 μgm^{-3} during 2024.
3.8	No monitored exceedances of any of the objectives for other ambient pollutants, under consideration within the 2025 Progress Report were recorded across the city during 2024, including for particulate matter (PM ₁₀ and PM _{2.5}), sulphur dioxide (SO ₂) and benzene (C ₆ H ₆).
3.9	Accordingly, and on the basis of our 2024 monitoring data, the council is content that there are no requirements to either extend or amend the boundaries of any of our four AQMAs at this time.
3.10	Within Section 3 of the 2025 Progress Report, we have considered relevant new local developments across the city, to include new road traffic and other transport sources, new industrial sources, new commercial and domestic sources, and new developments with fugitive or uncontrolled emissions. We have consequently concluded that for 2024, there are no new, or newly identified local developments, which may have an appreciably adverse impact upon ambient air quality within the Belfast City Council area.
3.11	Within Section 4 of the 2025 Progress Report and in terms of planning applications considered, screening or detailed ambient air quality impact assessments were requested for 16 major developments proposed during 2024, that in the council's view, had the potential to have an adverse impact upon ambient air quality. Table 4.1 of the 2025 Progress Report provides summary details of those planning applications, together with information on any actions taken or mitigation measures introduced.
3.12	Section 5 of the 2025 Progress Report provides an overview of local planning policies that may be applied to manage ambient air quality for the city, including the Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP), and associated supplementary planning guidance.
3.13	Section 6 of the 2025 Progress Report provides details of local transport plans and associated strategies that may have an impact on local ambient air quality, including the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) Eastern Transport Plan (ETP) 2035. DfI have acknowledged that a review of economic, social and environmental challenges for the new eastern plan area has confirmed that a number of key overarching themes, reiterated throughout local, regional and national policy documents, are to be reflected within the ETP 2035, including that pollution from vehicles contributes to poor local ambient air quality and the construction of roads and railways can harm the built or natural environment.

3.14	Section 7 of the 2025 Progress Report provides details of local climate change strategies and initiatives that may also have beneficial impacts upon ambient air quality, including formation of a Climate and City Resilience Committee, launch of the Belfast Local Area Energy Plan and delivery of the 2025 Climate Action Plan, as well as details of specific initiatives such as implementation of Phase 1 of the Belfast 'One Million Trees' Programme, which sets a target of planting one million trees across the city by 2035.
3.15	<p>Section 8 of the 2025 Progress Report provides details of progress with implementation of the Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026.</p> <p>https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/documents/belfast-city-air-quality-action-plan-2021-2026</p> <p>Updates have been provided by our competent or relevant authority partners, and by other city bodies and partner organisations on actions taken to improve ambient air quality across Belfast during the Action Plan years of 2021-2026.</p>
3.16	Finally, Section 9 of the 2025 Progress Report provides overall conclusions and proposed actions. In terms of conclusions drawn from 2024 monitoring year data and monitoring data for preceding years, and mindful of recommendations arising from previous DAERA appraisal reports, including the 20 th November 2024 appraisal report concerning our 2024 Updating and Screening Assessment, that the council should move to revoke AQMA No.2 Cromac Street and Albertbridge Road, AQMA No.3 Upper Newtownards Road and AQMA No.4 Ormeau Road, council air quality officers have referred to the minutes of agenda item '7f Air Quality Updating and Screening Assessment 2024' of the People and Communities Committee meeting of 3 rd December 2024.
3.17	Accordingly, and on the basis of the Committee decision in respect of agenda item 7f, the 2025 Progress Report advises that with regard to revoking our AQMAs, at this stage, the council has decided not to move to revoke any of its Air Quality Management Areas, and instead to continue to monitor within its AQMAs and in other city locations in order to work towards further improving ambient air quality, having regard to air quality guidelines for ambient air quality as recommended by the World Health Organisation, in its 2021 Global Air Quality Guidelines: particulate matter (PM _{2.5} and PM ₁₀), ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide publication.
3.18	Members are reminded, however, that with respect to revoking AQMAs, Section 3.57 of LAQM.TG(22) advises that, <i>'the revocation of an AQMA should be considered following three consecutive years of compliance with the relevant objective as evidenced through monitoring. Where nitrogen dioxide monitoring is completed using diffusion tubes, to account for the inherent uncertainty associated with the monitoring method, it is recommended that revocation of an AQMA should be considered following three consecutive years of annual mean nitrogen dioxide concentrations being lower than 36 µgm⁻³ (i.e. within 10% of the annual mean nitrogen dioxide objective). There should not be any declared AQMAs for which compliance with the relevant objective has been achieved for a consecutive five-year period'</i> .
3.19	In addition, the 2025 Progress Report advises that the current air quality monitoring network provides an appropriately detailed representation of ambient air pollution levels for the city and, as a consequence, it is considered that the network does not need to be expanded further at this time. The Progress Report further advises that on an annual basis, council air quality officers will, however, review monitoring locations and relocate monitoring sites to better reflect relevant human health exposure.

3.20	In terms of forward actions, the 2025 Progress Report advises that the council will continue to monitor implementation of the Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026 via at least annual meetings of the Air Quality Action Planning Steering Group, and that we will next report progress with ambient air quality to DAERA via our 30 th June 2026 Progress Report.
3.21	The 2025 Progress Report finally advises that whilst the current Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026 will continue to deliver further improvements in ambient air quality within our AQMAs and across the city until its conclusion during 2026, it is the council's intention, in late 2026, to engage with competent authorities and our city partner organisations concerning development of a new 5-year Air Quality Action Plan for the city covering the period 2027 – 2032.
3.22	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There are no financial or resource implications for the council in the production of this Belfast City Council 2025 Air Quality Progress Report. The Report has been developed from within existing Scientific Unit air quality staff resources.</p>
3.23	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are no Good Relations Implications or Rural Needs Assessment implications associated with this Belfast City Council 2025 Air Quality Progress Report.</p>
4.0	Appendices
	<p>Appendix A - Belfast City Council 2025 Air Quality Progress Report</p> <p>In fulfilment of Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 Local Air Quality Management. 30th June 2025.</p>



Belfast
City Council

Air quality

Belfast City Council

2025 Air Quality Progress Report

In fulfilment of Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002

Local Air Quality Management

30 June 2025

Information	Belfast City Council
Local Authority Officer	Eliza Barszczewska-Lyner
Department	City and Neighbourhood Services
Address	The Cecil Ward Building 4-10 Linenhall Street Belfast BT2 8BP
Telephone	028 9027 0428
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Report Reference Number	N/A
Date	30 June 2025

Executive Summary

Belfast City Council has completed this 2025 Progress Report in accordance with the provisions of Part III of The Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 and the Northern Ireland Local Air Quality Management Policy Guidance document LAQM.PGNI (09).

In undertaking this report, council Air Quality Officers have completed a review of recent ambient air quality monitoring data across the city in order to identify locations where new or existing exceedances of Air Quality Strategy Objectives and European Commission Limit Values are occurring. The review has also identified those locations where ambient air quality has improved, and exceedances are no longer occurring.

In addition, a Detailed Assessment for the city was completed during 2023. This project was undertaken mainly to address the emerging pollutant of concern, fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), but it also considered nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate matter (PM₁₀) concentrations, all in terms of national and European air quality standards and objectives, and the 2021 World Health Organisation (WHO) '[Global Air Quality Guidelines](#): particulate matter (PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀), ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide' publication.

There are four Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) presently declared across the city for a combination of exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) annual and hourly mean Air Quality Strategy objectives, associated principally with emissions from road transport. A review of monitoring data for these Air Quality Management Areas, and for the city generally, indicates that there have been further improvements in ambient nitrogen dioxide concentrations across Belfast over recent years, notwithstanding the residual impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on transport and other emissions.

Moreover, the conclusions of the council's 2023 Detailed Assessment confirmed that based upon predicted / modelled annual mean nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate matter (PM₁₀) concentrations for a 2028 forward projection year, all annual mean and shorter-term average concentrations are predicted to be below the UK AQOs for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and

particulate matter (PM₁₀) at locations of relevant human health exposure within the Belfast City Council area.

For a base year of 2019 (pre-Covid), there were no predicted exceedances of UK AQO for particulate matter throughout the city; the only exceedances of UK AQOs were predicted in relation to annual mean nitrogen dioxide concentrations at sensitive receptor locations within, or near to the boundaries of the existing Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) along the M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink corridor (AQMA 1) and East Bridge Street / Cromac Street (AQMA 2).

The Detailed Assessment's conclusion was therefore that consideration should be given to revocation of the Ormeau Road AQMA (AQMA No. 4) and the Upper Newtownards Road AQMA (AQMA No. 3). More information concerning the detailed assessment was provided within our 2023 Progress Report and 2024 Updating and Screening Report.

In addition, the council has noted DAERA's recommendations, included within its appraisal letter of 20th November 2024, in relation to the outcome and conclusions of the council's 2024 Updating and Screening Assessment (USA). The Department recommended that the council should progress with the revocation of AQMA No. 2, Cromac Street and Albertbridge Road, AQMA No. 3 Upper Newtownards Road and AQMA No. 4 Ormeau Road, due to continual compliance with the 40 µgm⁻³ NO₂ annual mean objective. DAERA additionally highlighted that the M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink corridor AQMA No. 1 could be amended to revoke the designation for the 200 µgm⁻³ 1-hour mean NO₂ objective, as compliance has been achieved for the past 5 years. The council was recommended to consider these actions prior to the next Progress Report.

At this stage, however, the council has decided not to move to revoke any of its Air Quality Management Areas, and instead to continue to monitor within its AQMA and in other city locations in order to work towards further improving ambient air quality, having regard to air quality guidelines for ambient air quality as recommended by the World Health Organisation, in its 2021 Global Air Quality Guidelines: particulate matter (PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀), ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide publication.

Monitored levels of benzene (C₆H₆) and sulphur dioxide (SO₂) remain well below the respective objective concentrations and show no reason for concern at this time. There have been no monitored exceedances of Air Quality Strategy objectives for any pollutant other than nitrogen dioxide (only within AQMA 1) in recent years across the city, and no new emission sources have been identified that would have the potential to alter this position.

Numerous new developments have commenced throughout Belfast during 2024. These developments were identified as an aspect of the planning process and where necessary, Air Quality Impact Assessments were requested. The air quality impacts for these developments were then assessed, and any necessary development specific ambient air quality mitigation measures were identified and requested by way of planning conditions, as part of the planning process.

Additionally, the council, its competent authority partners, Translink, Belfast Harbour and other significant transport organisations and partners from across the city continue working towards implementation of the various air quality improvement measures detailed within the Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026.

The aim of the current Air Quality Action Plan is to continue to reduce nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) emissions from transport sources and to promote and enable a shift towards more sustainable modes of transport in order to achieve compliance with UK Air Quality Strategy objectives for NO₂. Where necessary, an additional aim of the Action Plan is to identify, develop and implement mitigation measures to address concentrations of fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) across the city. Chapter 8 (Table 8.1) provides information on progress with the 2021-2026 Belfast Air Quality Action Plan.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Description of Local Authority Area

Belfast is the capital city of Northern Ireland and as such, the city, and its wider metropolitan area, is the largest settlement in the region and the second largest city on the island of Ireland with an estimated population in 2025 of around 348,005. The city lies at the head of Belfast Lough in the lower reaches of the Lagan Valley and is flanked by the Black Mountain to the west and the Castlereagh Hills to the east. The Belfast City Council district area sits at the heart of the growing population of the wider Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area, which also comprises part of the surrounding areas of Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, North Down and Ards District Council, Antrim and Newtownabbey District Council and Mid and East Antrim District Council.

In terms of historical ambient air quality issues, Belfast used to experience sustained elevated levels of sulphur dioxide (SO₂) and particulate matter (PM₁₀), associated principally with the widespread use of solid fuel for domestic heating. However, through the introduction of the Council's smoke control programme in the late 1960s, the Clean Air (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 and more recent availability of natural gas to domestic, commercial and industrial sectors, concentrations of particulate matter (PM₁₀) and sulphur dioxide (SO₂) have declined substantially to the extent that we do not experience exceedances of any air quality strategy objectives, or indeed European Commission limit values, for either of these pollutants. Accordingly, the number of locations where we monitor these ambient pollutants has been reduced over recent years in accordance with the government's risk and exposure-based approach to local air quality management.

Although Belfast city does not experience exceedances of any air quality strategy objectives for particulate matter (PM₁₀), we are aware of growing concerns around the effects of fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) on human health. Therefore, although not included within regulations at present for Northern Ireland councils, Belfast City Council has proactively opted to report PM_{2.5} monitoring data as part of this Progress Report. Moreover, we are aware of the recent evidence from national studies showing that domestic solid fuel burning contributes more than previously thought to particulate emissions. At the end of 2017, Defra

issued a practical guide on open fires and wood burning stoves. This guide (updated in April 2022) provides steps that should be taken to reduce the health impacts of burning solid fuel. This guidance can be found on the Defra smoke control webpage:
https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/library/reports?report_id=948.

The contribution from solid fuel combustion to fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) concentrations has been also recognised within the UK Clean Air Strategy 2019 and the Clean Air Strategy NI Public Discussion Document, DAERA, November 2020. Therefore, Belfast City Council decided to undertake a detailed assessment for the city, for particulate matter (PM₁₀), fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) pollutants. This project commenced in February 2021 and was concluded in March 2023. It comprised additional ambient air quality monitoring (using Zephyr small sensor air quality monitors), development of an emissions inventory database for the city and detailed atmospheric dispersion modelling. The outcomes of this detailed assessment were presented within 2023 Progress Report and 2024 Updating and Screening Report and are variously referred to within this 2025 Progress Report.

Over recent years, emissions of nitrogen oxides, associated principally with road transport, have become more prominent. This is a similar situation to that experienced in many other major cities and conurbations across the United Kingdom. Accordingly, as a result of the first round of the review and assessment process, which was completed in 2004, Belfast City Council opted to declare four Air Quality Management Areas across the city. We published our first Air Quality Action Plan for the city back in 2006 and it was completed substantially in 2010, with around 90% of planned actions delivered to schedule. Of the outstanding 10% of actions, it was considered that the majority of these would have had limited additional impact within our Air Quality Management Areas.

In order to address the remaining 'hot spot' areas of elevated nitrogen dioxide, the council along with relevant partners developed a 2015-2020 Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) for the city that contained a manageable number of proven air quality mitigation measures. This AQAP concluded at the end of 2020. A final review of the implementation of the various mitigation measures included within the 2015-2020 AQAP was undertaken and reported by the council to the Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) as part of the council's 2023 Progress Report, submitted to DAERA in June 2023.

Whilst previous AQAPs have delivered continuing improvements in ambient air quality across the city, a limited number of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) hotspots still remain. Moreover, fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) has emerged as an additional ambient air pollutant of concern for the city.

Accordingly in 2021, the council, competent authorities and other partner organisations developed a new Air Quality Action Plan for the city; the Plan was approved by DAERA and Defra's independent technical appraisers in February 2022 and may be viewed on the Belfast City Council website as follows:

<https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/documents/belfast-city-air-quality-action-plan-2021-2026>

The aim of the Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026 is to continue to reduce nitrogen dioxide emissions from transport sources and to promote and enable a shift towards more sustainable modes of transport in order to achieve compliance with UK Air Quality objectives for nitrogen dioxide. Where necessary, an additional aim of this Action Plan is to identify, develop and implement mitigation measures to address concentrations of fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) across the city.

Chapter 8 (Table 8.1 Action Plan Progress) of this 2025 Progress Report provides information on progress with the 2021-2026 Belfast Air Quality Action Plan.

1.2 Purpose of Progress Report

This report fulfils the requirements of the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) process, as set out within Part III of The Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002, the Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland 2007 and the relevant Northern Ireland Policy and Technical Guidance documents. The LAQM process places an obligation on all local authorities to regularly review and assess ambient air quality within their areas, and to determine whether or not air quality objectives are being achieved or are likely to be achieved by the respective 'to be achieved' date. Where exceedances are considered likely, the local authority must then declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and prepare an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) setting out the measures that it and competent authorities intend to put in place in pursuit of the objectives.

For Local Authorities in Northern Ireland, Progress Reports continue to be required in the intervening years between three-yearly Updating and Screening Assessment reports. Their purpose is to maintain continuity in the LAQM process. They are not, however, intended to be as detailed as Updating and Screening Assessment Reports, or to require as much effort. However, if a Progress Report identifies the risk of exceedance of an Air Quality Objective, the Local Authority should undertake a detailed assessment immediately, and not wait until the next round of Review and Assessment.

1.3 Air Quality Objectives

The air quality objectives applicable to LAQM in Northern Ireland are set out in the Air Quality Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003, Statutory Rules of Northern Ireland 2003, No. 342, and are detailed in the following Table 1.1. This table shows the objectives in units of microgrammes per cubic metre ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$), and milligrams per cubic metre (mg/m^3) for carbon monoxide, with the number of exceedances in each year that are permitted (where applicable).

Table 1.1 – Air Quality Objectives included in Regulations for the purpose of LAQM in Northern Ireland.

Pollutant	Air Quality Objective		Date to be achieved by
	Concentration	Measured as	
Benzene	16.25 µg/m ³	Running annual mean	31.12.2003
	3.25 µg/m ³	Running annual mean	31.12.2010
1,3-butadiene	2.25 µg/m ³	Running annual mean	31.12.2003
Carbon monoxide	10 mg/m ³	Running 8-hour mean	31.12.2003
Lead	0.50 µg/m ³	Annual mean	31.12.2004
	0.25 µg/m ³	Annual mean	31.12.2008
Nitrogen dioxide	200 µg/m ³ not to be exceeded more than 18 times a year	1-hour mean	31.12.2005
	40 µg/m ³	Annual mean	31.12.2005
Particulate matter (PM ₁₀) (gravimetric)	50 µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 35 times a year	24-hour mean	31.12.2004
	40 µg/m ³	Annual mean	31.12.2004
Sulphur dioxide	350 µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 24 times a year	1-hour mean	31.12.2004
	125 µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 3 times a year	24-hour mean	31.12.2004
	266 µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 35 times a year	15-minute mean	31.12.2005

1.4 Summary of Previous Review and Assessments

As part of its continuing review and assessment process, Belfast City Council completed a 2nd and 3rd stage review and assessment of air quality throughout the city in early 2004. This assessment concluded that modelled and monitored exceedances of short and longer-term objectives for both nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate matter (PM₁₀) were occurring in the city and would be likely to continue to do so in some locations beyond 2010. Consequently, in August 2004, the council, in consultation with other relevant and competent authorities, declared four Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA), comprising of the M1 Motorway and A12 Westlink corridor; Cromac Street to the junction of Short Strand, Woodstock Link and the Albertbridge Road; the Upper Newtownards Road; and the Ormeau Road.

The M1 Westlink / A12 Westlink corridor AQMA was declared on the basis that annual and hourly-mean nitrogen dioxide concentrations would exceed 31st December 2005 Air Quality Strategy objectives. In addition, particulate matter (PM₁₀) annual and 24-hour mean concentrations were predicted also to exceed relevant objectives at this location. The three other Air Quality Management Areas were declared on the grounds that the annual mean nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) objective would be exceeded at these locations during 2005 and beyond. A subsequent source apportionment study, completed for each of the Air Quality Management Areas, indicated that the principal source of the exceedances was emissions associated with road transport.

Current Air Quality Management Areas are described and depicted in more detail as follows:

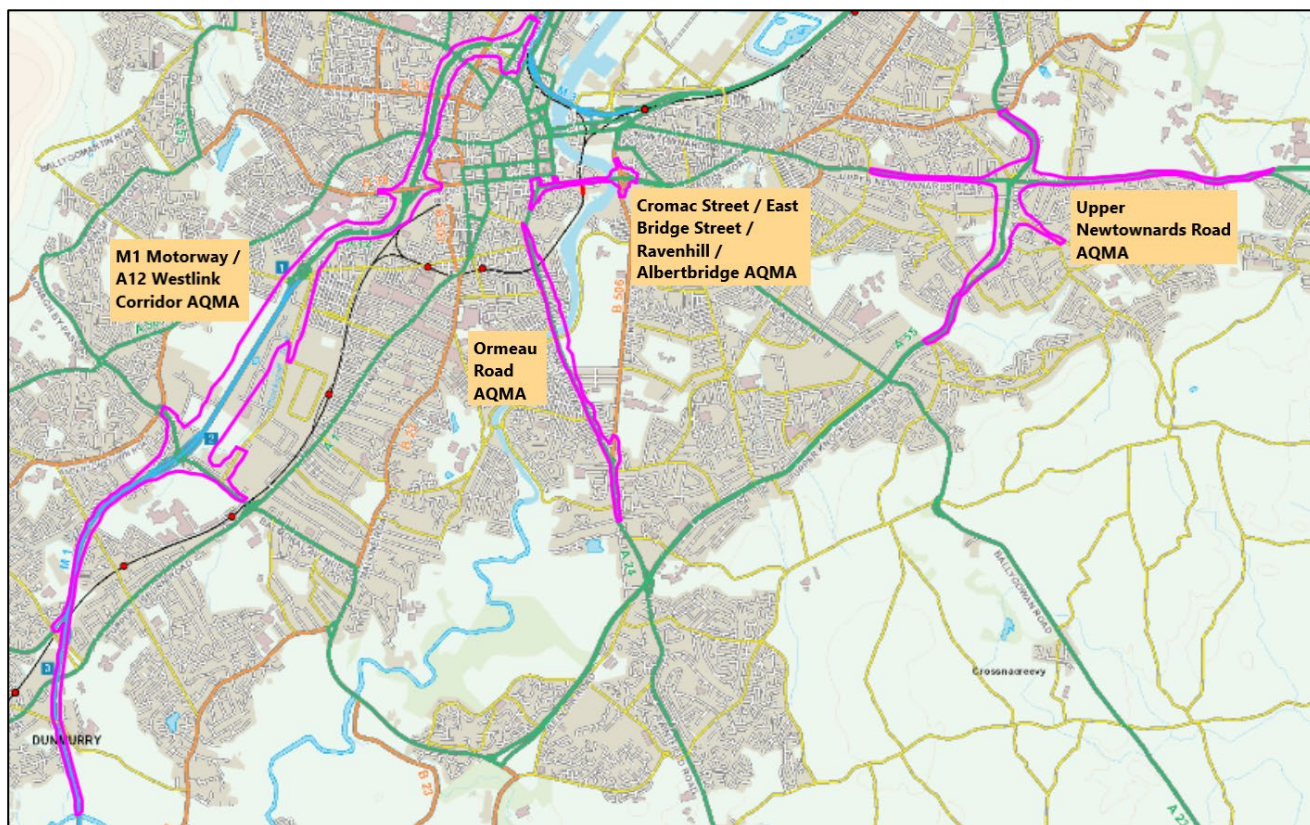
1. The M1 / Westlink corridor from the Belfast City boundary at Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park to the end of the Westlink at the junction with Great George's Street and York Street including Stockman's Lane and Kennedy Way. This area was declared for predicted exceedances of both the nitrogen dioxide and particulate material annual mean air quality strategy objectives, as well as exceedances of the particulate matter 24-hour mean objective and the nitrogen dioxide 1-hour mean objective. This AQMA was revoked for exceedances of particulate matter objectives in September 2015, but remains of concern in respect of the annual mean air quality objective for nitrogen dioxide.

2. Cromac Street to the junction with East Bridge Street and then from East Bridge Street to the junction with the Ravenhill and Albertbridge Roads and Short Strand. This AQMA was declared for predicted exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide annual mean Air Quality Strategy objective.
3. The Upper Newtownards Road from the North Road junction to the Belfast City boundary at the Ulster Hospital, incorporating the Knock Road to the City boundary at Laburnum Playing Fields and Hawthornden Way. This AQMA was declared for predicted exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide annual mean Air Quality Strategy objective.
4. The Ormeau Road from the junction with Donegall Pass to the city boundary at Galwally. This area was declared for predicted exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide annual mean Air Quality Strategy objective.

The boundaries of these Air Quality Management Areas are denoted in pink in the following Figure 1.1 and have been set to take account of atmospheric dispersion modelling uncertainties.

Please note that the Belfast City Council boundary was revised in 2015 as a consequence of the reform of local government in Northern Ireland. The above-mentioned AQMAs were declared on the basis of the previous council boundary.

Figure 1.1– Map(s) of AQMA Boundaries



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A further detailed air quality review and assessment was completed by Belfast City Council in 2010, informed by the outcome of the 2009 Updating and Screening Assessment. Accordingly, the 2010 Detailed Assessment considered the potential for exceedances of nitrogen dioxide objectives at a number of further locations across the city, including at the junction of the Sydenham Bypass with the Lower Newtownards Road, Shaftesbury Square, Donegall Road and Albertbridge Road, and at locations throughout the city centre. Although atmospheric dispersion modelling studies, undertaken as part of the detailed review and assessment process, did suggest exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective at some of the above-mentioned locations, the review and assessment identified that there was no relevant public exposure at these locations during 2010. As a result, the 2010 Detailed Air Quality Review and Assessment for Belfast City Council concluded that there was no need to declare further Air Quality Management Areas or to expand or revoke the existing AQMAs. This conclusion was accepted by DAERA.

Ambient air quality monitoring results, as presented in previous annual progress and updating and screening assessment reports, had identified sustained improvements in particulate matter (PM₁₀) concentrations within the M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink Air Quality Management Area, confirming that it had been in compliance with the particulate matter (PM₁₀) objectives for a number of years. This resulted in the M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink AQMA being revoked for exceedances of particulate matter 24-hour and annual mean objectives in September 2015.

The current stage (Round 9) of the Review and Assessment process requires that a Progress Report be completed for submission by 30th June 2025. This report therefore addresses the requirements of the August 2022 Defra LAQM.TG(22) technical guidance publication in identifying any significant changes that have occurred since the previous round of Review and Assessment, which may have the potential to adversely affect local ambient air quality.

For reference and additional background information, historical Belfast City Council air quality review and assessment reports are listed in the following table, and are also available to download from the Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (DAERA) for Northern Ireland 'Northern Ireland Air' website via the follow weblink:

<https://www.airqualityni.co.uk/reports/district-council-reports-1>

Table 1.2 – Historical Belfast City Council Air Quality Reports

• Belfast - Updating and Screening Assessment - 2024 - Published: 10 th September 2024
• Belfast City Council 2023 Air Quality Progress report - Published: 10 th January 2024
• Belfast City Council 2022 Air Quality Progress Report - Published: 15 th February 2023
• 2021 Updating and Screening Assessment for Belfast City Council - Published: 1 st October 2021
• Belfast - Progress Report - 2020 - Published: 11 th November 2020
• Belfast - Progress Report - 2019 - Published: 11 th November 2020
• Belfast - Updating and Screening Assessment - 2018 - Published: 17 th December 2018
• Belfast - Progress Report - 2017 - Published: 17 th November 2017
• Belfast - Progress Report - 2016 - Published: 21 st October 2016
• Belfast - Updating and Screening Assessment - 2015 - Published: 21 st October 2016
• Belfast - LAQM Progress Report - 2014 - Published: 14 th November 2014
• Belfast - LAQM Progress Report - 2013 - Published: 1 st April 2013
• Belfast - Updating and Screening Assessment report - 2012 - Published: 3 rd October 2012
• Belfast - Progress Report - 2011 - Published: 30 th April 2011
• Belfast - Detailed Assessment - September 2010 - Published: 30 th September 2010
• Belfast - Progress Report - 2010 - Published: 30 th April 2010
• Belfast - Updating and Screening Assessment - 2009 - Published: 30 th April 2009
• Belfast - Joint Air Quality Progress and Action Plan Progress Report - 2007 - Published: 30 th April 2007
• Belfast - Detailed Assessment - April 2007 - Published: 30 th April 2007
• Belfast - Joint Air Quality Progress and Action Plan Progress Report - 2008 - Published: 10 th June 2008
• Belfast - Updating and Screening Assessment - 2006 Appendix - Published: 31 st July 2006
• Belfast - Updating and Screening Assessment - 2006 - Published: 31 st July 2006
• Belfast - Health Impact Assessment of the Draft Air Quality Action Plan for Belfast - Published: 1 st May 2006
• Belfast - Progress Report - Published: 1 st September 2005

2 New Monitoring Data

2.1 Summary of Monitoring Undertaken

2.1.1 Automatic Monitoring Sites

Belfast City Council operates four automatic monitoring stations across the city in order to help inform its air quality management processes and to provide real time information to the public in relation to air pollution levels across the city centre and within our Air Quality Management Areas.

Accordingly, to ensure that the data from our sites is both accurate and representative, the monitors at each site are calibrated on a bi-weekly (Stockman's Lane AURN site) or on a four-weekly basis by the council's technical staff, in accordance with the procedures detailed in the Defra Automatic Urban and Rural Network (AURN) local site operators' manual. In addition, data management, quality assurance and quality control and service and maintenance support are provided by appointed contractors. The data from our sites is made available to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and is reported on the 'Northern Ireland Air' website in near real time (<https://www.airqualityni.co.uk/>). Under the current LAQM regime, and for the purpose of LAQM reporting, pollutant concentrations should be reported to an accuracy of 1 decimal place; automatic monitoring data presented in this report relates to the calendar year (i.e. January – December). 2024 data capture levels exceeded the Department's 75% data capture threshold for the calculation of annual statistics at all council sites. Further information regarding our QA/QC procedures and processes has been provided in Appendix A to this report.

In addition to the council's automatic monitoring sites, the UK Environment Agency and DAERA operate an AURN urban background monitoring site at Lombard Street in Belfast City Centre. Unfortunately, during 2024, data capture levels at the Belfast Centre site were below the Department's 75% data capture threshold for the calculation of indicator statistics for nitrogen dioxide (60%); consequently, it was necessary to annualise the data from this

monitoring site as per the requirements of Box 7-9 of LAQM.TG (22). For measurements made in UK automatic networks, a data capture target of 90% is applied.

In relation to correction of our automatic monitoring data, this process is generally of principal concern with regard to the treatment of particulate matter monitoring data. In 2019, the Belfast Centre site employed Filter Dynamics Measurement System (FDMS) equipped Tapered Element Oscillating Microbalances (TEOMs) for particulate matter (PM₁₀) monitoring up until September 2019, whereupon the FDMS equipped TEOMs were replaced by a Palas Fidas 200, which complies with Defra's UK PM Pollution Climate standard. Government equivalence tests have determined that both of types of equipment meet the equivalence criteria, and on that basis, no correction factors need to be applied to this monitoring data.

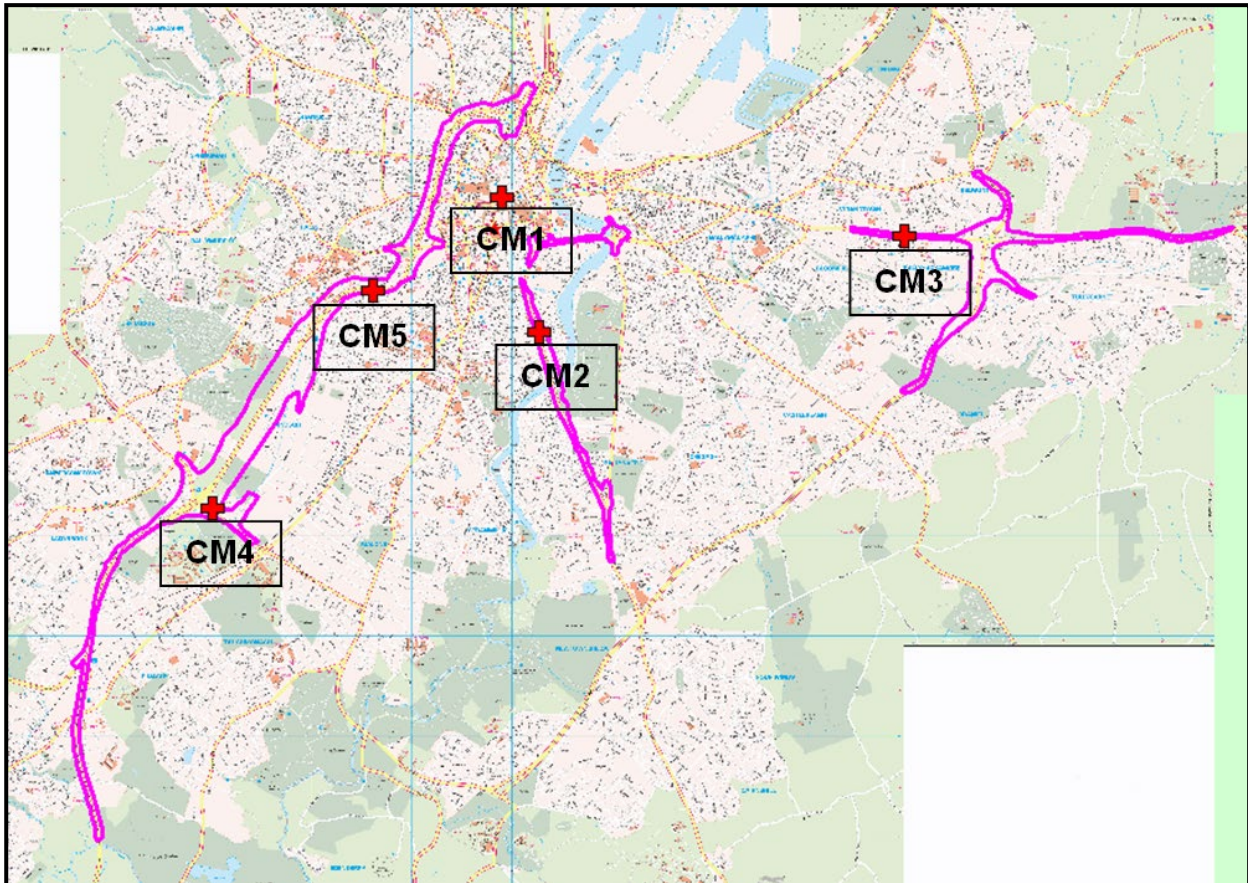
The Stockman's Lane site is equipped with a Beta Attenuation Monitor (BAM) with a heated inlet for monitoring particulate matter (PM₁₀). Government technical guidance highlights that a BAM, equipped with a heated inlet, also meets the equivalence criteria for PM₁₀ monitoring, provided that the results are corrected for slope. This correction involves dividing measured concentrations by a factor of 1.035. It should be noted that the data presented on the DAERA Northern Ireland Air website and in this report have already been corrected to the reference equivalent.

During 2019, Belfast City Council replaced ageing NOx API M200A analysers at two of its monitoring sites, namely the Upper Newtownards Road and Stockman's Lane with more modern T200 variants. In addition, the unheated BAM 1020 particulate matter (PM₁₀) analyser at Stockman's Lane was also replaced with a heated inlet variant in order to continue to collect high quality data and to achieve >90% data collection rates throughout the year. In 2020, the council also replaced a further aged API M200 NOx analyser at the Ormeau Road site.

During 2022, we progressed with the upgrade of our analyser communication systems (including modems) at our four monitoring sites. AQMSs were consequently updated from GSM modems to 4G IP Routers and the T200 analysers were converted to use NumaView software.

A location map showing automatic monitoring site locations across the Belfast City Council area is presented in the following Figure 2.1, with further site-specific monitoring details provided in Table 2.1.

Figure 2.1 – Map of Automatic Monitoring Sites



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Table 2.1 – Details of Automatic Monitoring Sites

Site ID	Site Name	Site Type	X OS Grid Reference	Y OS Grid Reference	Inlet Height (m)	Pollutants Monitored	In AQMA?	Monitoring Technique	Relevant Exposure? (Y/N with distance (m) from monitoring site to relevant exposure)	Distance to Kerb of Nearest Road (m) (N/A if not applicable)	Does this Location Represent Worst-Case Exposure?
CM1	Belfast Centre AURN site Lombard Street	Urban Background	333898	374358	4.0	Nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide, ozone and particulate matter (PM ₁₀ and PM _{2.5})	N	Chemiluminescence, UV Fluorescence, IR Absorption, UV Absorption, Light-Scattering Monitor (Palas Fidas 200)	Y (Monitoring site is located in a city centre pedestrian precinct)	26 m	Y
CM2	Belfast Ormeau Road	Roadside	334272	373012	1.3	Nitrogen dioxide	Y	Chemiluminescence	Y (6 m)	3 m	Y
CM3	Belfast Upper Newtownards Road	Roadside	337911	373972	1.3	Nitrogen dioxide	Y	Chemiluminescence	Y (7 m)	2 m	Y
CM4	Belfast Stockman's Lane	Roadside	331010	371252	3.0	Nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter (PM ₁₀)	Y	Chemiluminescence Beta Attenuation Monitor	Y (10 m)	3 m	Y
CM5	Belfast Westlink Roden Street	Roadside	332609	373434	2.6	Nitrogen dioxide	Y	Chemiluminescence	Y (17 m)	5 m	Y

2.1.2 Non-Automatic Monitoring Sites

The government's risk and exposure-based approach to local air quality management means that Belfast City Council's principal focus has been on addressing citywide ambient nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) levels over recent years. Accordingly, in order to understand how nitrogen dioxide levels are varying across the city and in addition to our automatic analysers, the council operates a range of passive diffusion tubes for nitrogen dioxide at a range of both background and roadside locations across the city.

The NO_x diffusion tube monitoring network has changed considerably since the declaration of the Air Quality Management Areas in 2004. In 2024, the extensive council monitoring network comprised 80 diffusion tubes throughout the city at 72 locations, which generate annual mean NO₂ data to assist in the review and assessment process and to aid developers in conducting air quality impact assessments, where deemed necessary.

The council regularly reviews its monitoring locations and relocates or discontinues tubes from areas of sustained low nitrogen dioxide concentrations. In 2024, we removed 8 tubes (Nos. 28, 86, 91, 93, 94, 110, 113 and 116) from the network, due to consistently low concentrations recorded or changes to 'relevant exposure' locations; and we added 4 new tubes (Nos. 117, 118, 119 and 120) close to busy roads with relevant exposure (residential properties). All locations are detailed in Figure 2.2 and Table 2.2.

Nitrogen dioxide diffusion tubes comprise a small clear plastic tube containing a chemical reagent supported on stainless steel grids that absorb the pollutant directly from the surrounding ambient air. In this case, triethanolamine is used as the reagent to monitor levels of ambient nitrogen dioxide. Belfast City Council's diffusion tubes are exposed for successive four or five-week periods, in general accordance with the Defra Diffusion Tube Monitoring Calendar (<https://laqm.defra.gov.uk/air-quality/air-quality-assessment/diffusion-tube-monitoring-calendar/>) and, as a result, they provide a good general indication of average nitrogen dioxide concentrations, thereby allowing a comparison with the annual mean objective.

To ensure that experimental error is minimised in the preparation and analysis of its nitrogen dioxide diffusion tubes, Belfast City Council has appointed Gradko International Ltd. to supply, analyse and report data for its diffusion tubes. Gradko employs a 20%

triethanolamine (TEA) solution for monitoring ambient nitrogen dioxide and adheres to the requirements of the government's 'Diffusion Tubes for Ambient NO₂ Monitoring: Practical Guidance for Laboratories and Users' publication.

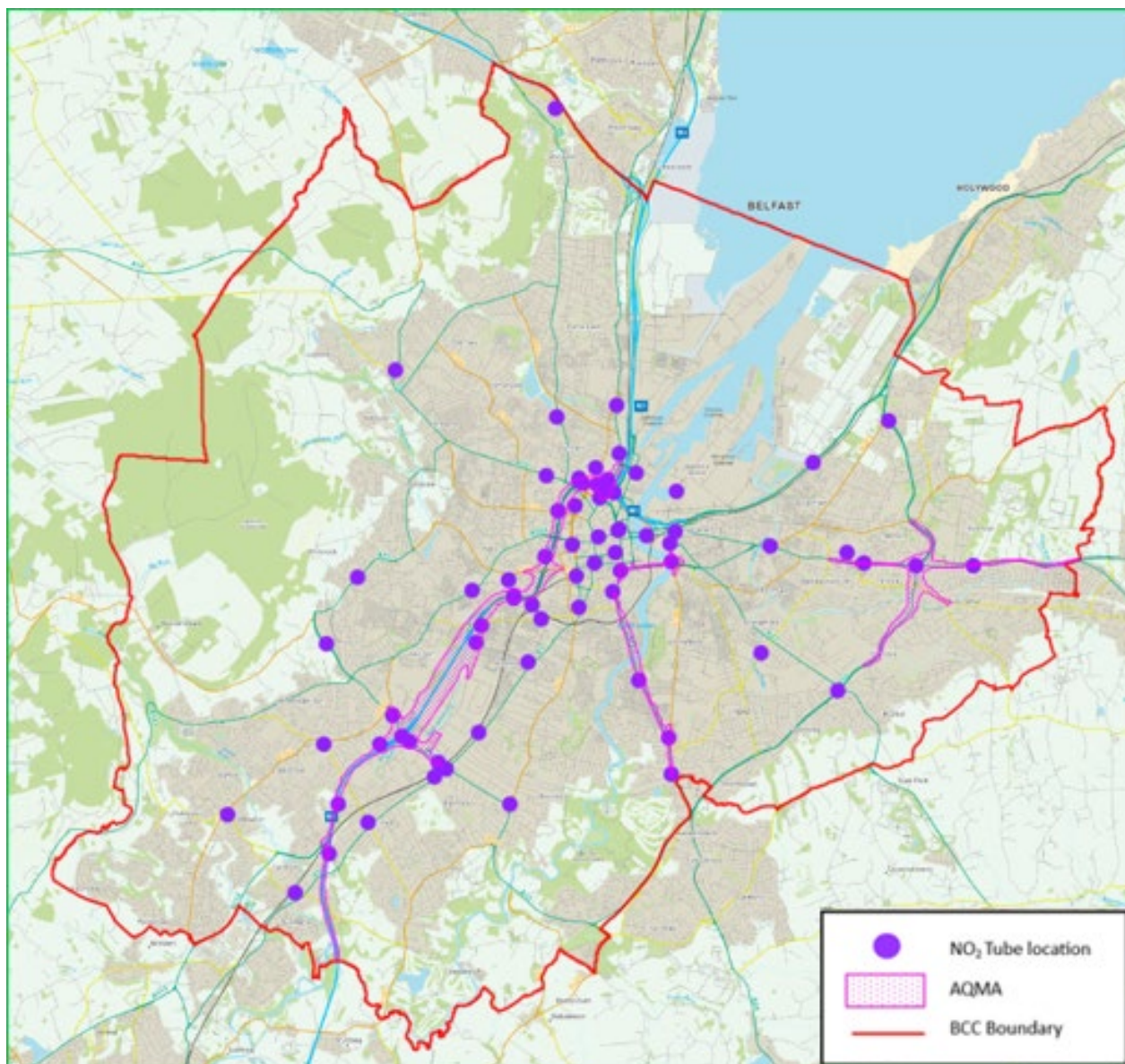
To further ensure that its diffusion tube monitoring data is as accurate as possible, the council co-locates a number of diffusion tubes with reference method compliant chemiluminescent nitrogen dioxide analysers at the Lombard Street, Upper Newtownards Road, Westlink/Roden Street and Stockman's Lane monitoring sites. This process allows a bias adjustment factor (with a 95% confidence interval as an estimate of the uncertainty on the bias adjustment factor) to be calculated and used to correct the diffusion tube monitoring data.

In the case of the diffusion tube data presented in this report, the monitoring data has been corrected using a local bias adjustment factor derived from three of the above-mentioned co-location studies (Upper Newtownards Road, Westlink / Roden Street and Stockman's Lane monitoring sites). The Lombard Street site (Belfast Centre) was unable to be considered as part of the 2024 co-location study due to the relatively low nitrogen dioxide automatic data capture rate (60%).

The bias calculation and data scaling were undertaken using Defra's new Diffusion Tube Data Processing Tool. Outputs from the spreadsheet for treatment of Belfast City Council's 2024 diffusion tube monitoring data are included in Appendix A to this report.

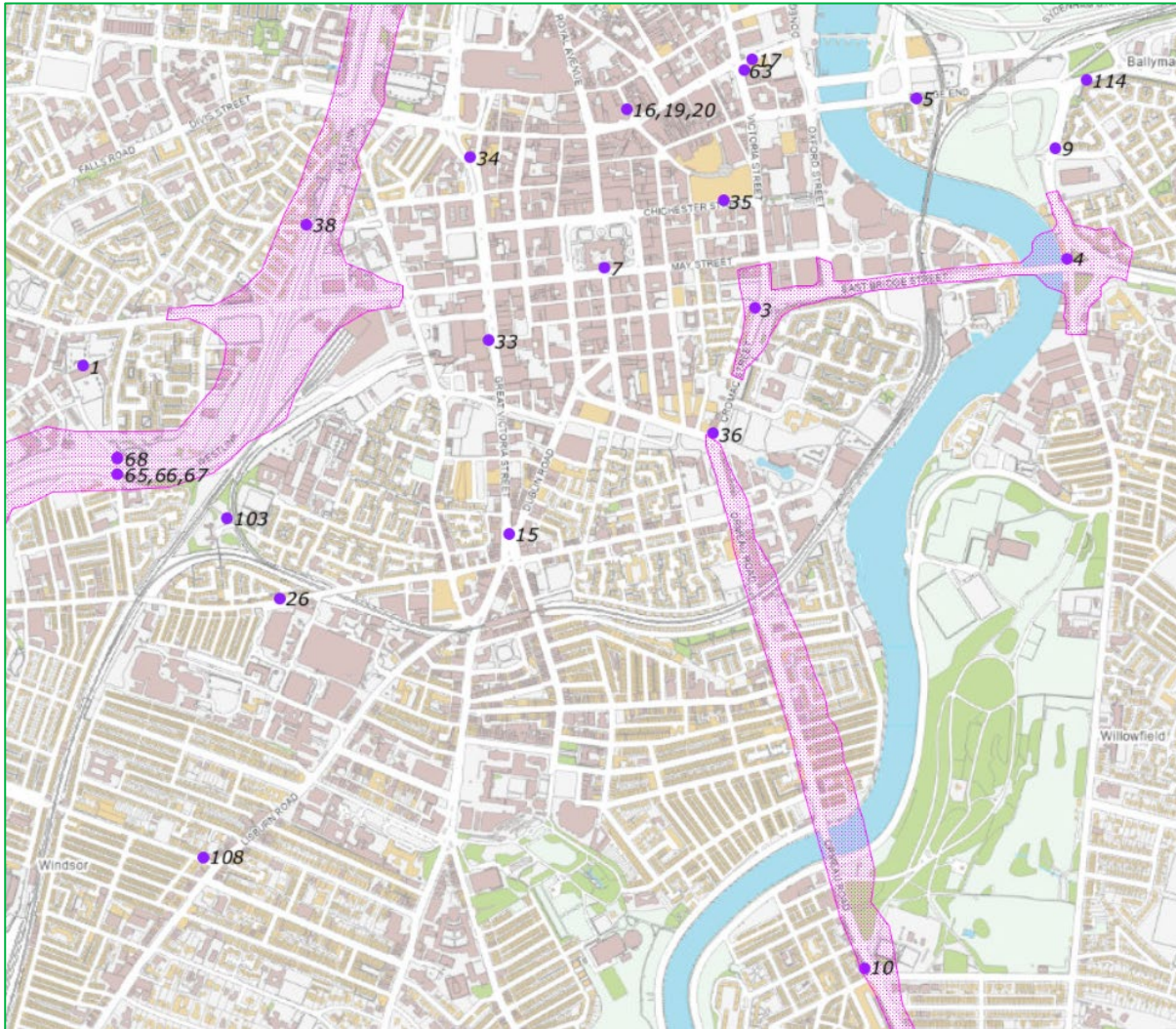
Figure 2.2 – Maps of Non-Automatic Monitoring Sites

Belfast City Boundary



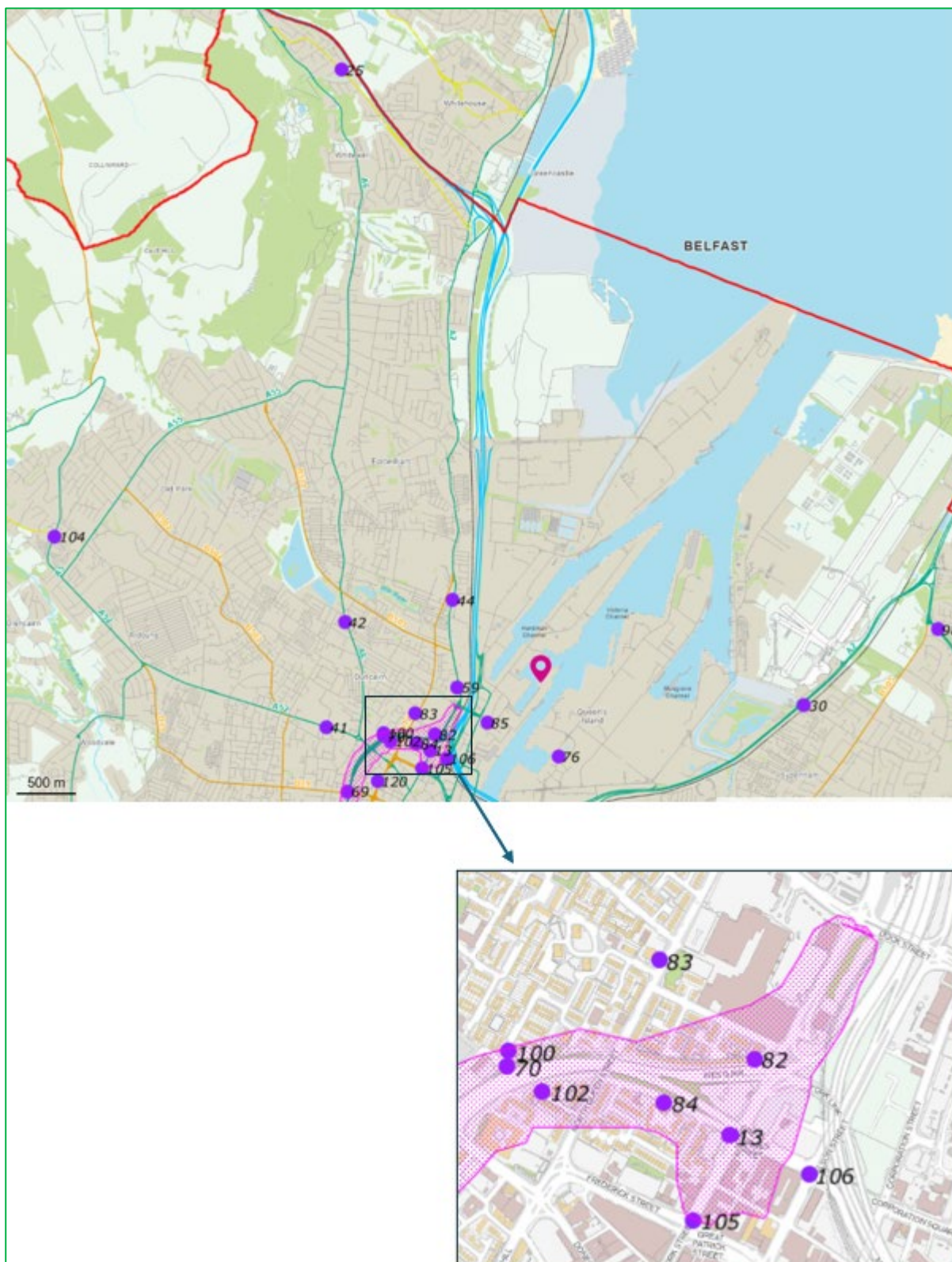
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Belfast City Centre



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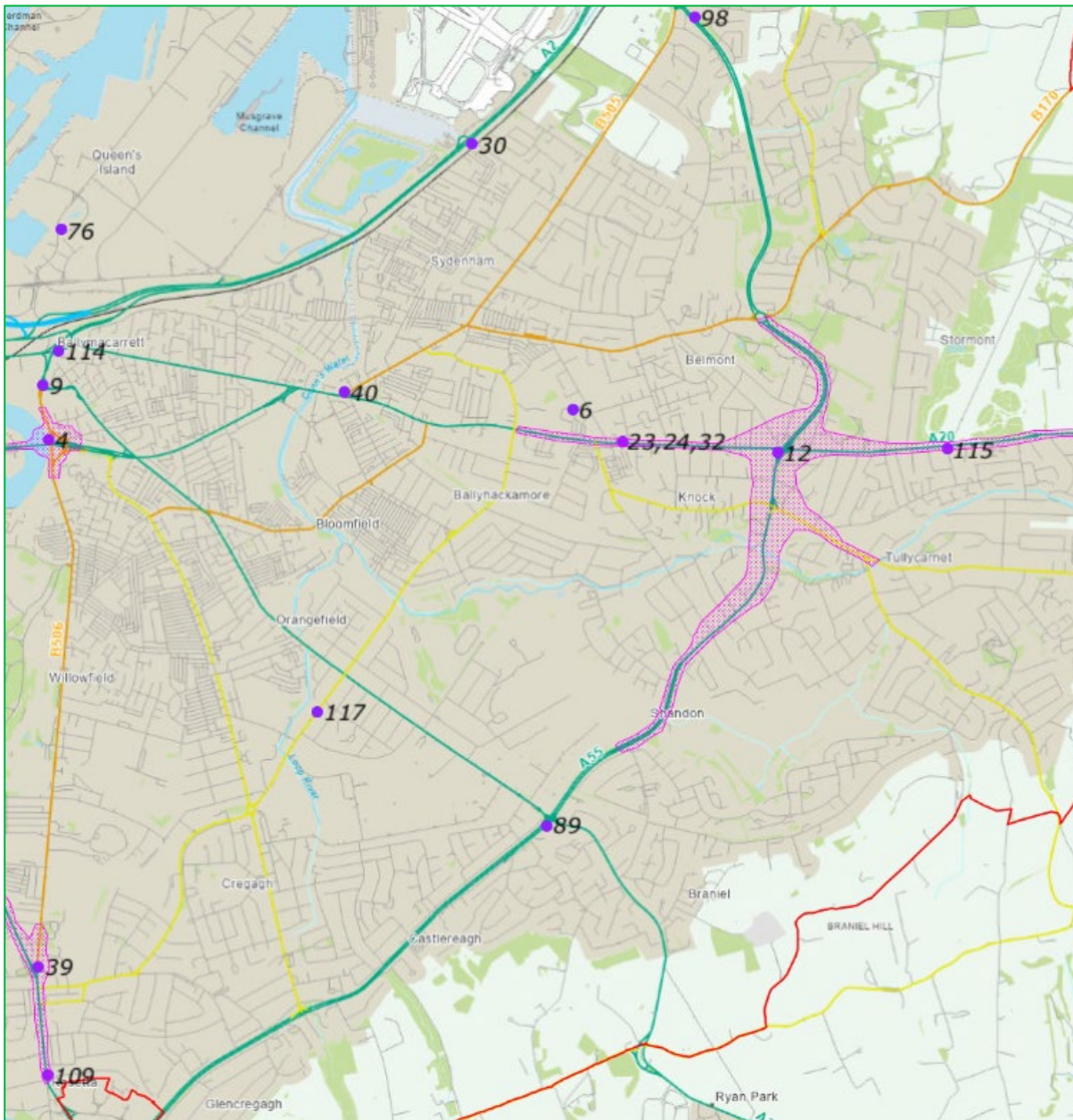
North Belfast



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East Belfast



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Table 2.2 – Details of Non-Automatic Monitoring Sites

Tube ID	Site Name	Site Type	X OS Grid Ref (Easting)	Y OS Grid Ref (Northing)	Pollutants Monitored	In AQMA? Which AQMA?	Distance to Relevant Exposure (m)	Distance to Kerb of Nearest Road (m)	Tube Co-located with a Continuous Analyser	Height (m)
1	Royal Victoria Hospital	Urban Background	332522	373708	NO ₂	No	68.0	82.0	No	3.2
2	Black's Road	Roadside	329780	369528	NO ₂	Yes - AQMA 1	26.0	2.0	No	2.7
3	61 Cromac Street	Roadside	334220	373853	NO ₂	Yes - AQMA 2	12.0	2.5	No	3.0
4	Albertbridge Road	Roadside	335013	373979	NO ₂	Yes - AQMA 2	10.0	1.5	No	3.0
5	Queen's Bridge	Roadside	334630	374385	NO ₂	No	10.0	1.5	No	3.0
6	58 Earlswood Road	Urban Background	337681	374133	NO ₂	No	3.0	65.0	No	3.0
7	Donegall Square South	Roadside	333840	373956	NO ₂	No	173.0	6.0	No	3.0
9	Short Strand	Roadside	334983	374260	NO ₂	No	24.0	1.0	No	3.0
10	301 Ormeau Road	Roadside	334499	372186	NO ₂	Yes - AQMA 4	0.1	7.5	No	3.0
12	Knock Road	Roadside	338718	373918	NO ₂	Yes - AQMA 3	17.0	1.5	No	2.5
13	Great George's Street	Kerbside	333981	375102	NO ₂	Yes - AQMA 1	9.0	0.5	No	3.0

Tube ID	Site Name	Site Type	X OS Grid Ref (Easting)	Y OS Grid Ref (Northing)	Pollutants Monitored	In AQMA? Which AQMA?	Distance to Relevant Exposure (m)	Distance to Kerb of Nearest Road (m)	Tube Co-located with a Continuous Analyser	Height (m)
14	Lisburn Road	Roadside	332063	371376	NO ₂	No	3.0	3.5	No	2.7
15	Shaftesbury Square	Kerbside	333600	373283	NO ₂	No	10.0	1.0	No	2.7
16, 19, 20	Lombard Street	Urban Background	333898	374358	NO ₂	No	167.0	26.0	Yes	4.0
17	Albert Clock	Roadside	334213	374485	NO ₂	No	3.0	3.0	No	3.1
21, 22, 56	Stockmans Lane	Roadside	331009	371251	NO ₂	Yes - AQMA 1	14.0	2.5	Yes	3.0
23, 24, 32	Ballyhackamore	Roadside	337930	373972	NO ₂	Yes - AQMA 3	35.0	2.0	Yes	3.0
25	Whitewell Road	Roadside	333230	380877	NO ₂	No	5.0	2.0	No	2.7
26	Donegall Road	Kerbside	333018	373120	NO ₂	No	2.5	1.0	No	2.7
30	Station Road	Roadside	337168	375485	NO ₂	No	19.0	2.0	No	2.7
31	Upper Malone Road	Roadside	332544	370283	NO ₂	No	12.0	2.5	No	3.0
33	Great Victoria Street	Roadside	333548	373772	NO ₂	No	210.0	1.5	No	3.2
34	College Square East	Roadside	333501	374236	NO ₂	No	3.0	3.0	No	3.0
35	Chichester Street	Roadside	334140	374126	NO ₂	No	3.0	3.0	No	3.5

Tube ID	Site Name	Site Type	X OS Grid Ref (Easting)	Y OS Grid Ref (Northing)	Pollutants Monitored	In AQMA? Which AQMA?	Distance to Relevant Exposure (m)	Distance to Kerb of Nearest Road (m)	Tube Co-located with a Continuous Analyser	Height (m)
36	Cromac Street / Ormeau Avenue	Kerbside	334114	373536	NO ₂	Yes - AQMA 2	3.0	0.5	No	2.5
37	Broadway	Roadside	332100	373015	NO ₂	Yes - AQMA 1	6.0	1.0	No	3.0
38	Albert Street	Roadside	333085	374065	NO ₂	Yes - AQMA 1	6.0	16.0	No	3.0
39	Ormeau Road (junction with Ravenhill Road)	Roadside	334957	371298	NO ₂	Yes - AQMA 4	5.5	3.0	No	3.0
40	Upper Newtownards Road / Holywood Road	Roadside	336516	374226	NO ₂	No	24.0	2.0	No	3.0
41	Crumlin Road	Roadside	333101	375295	NO ₂	No	20.0	3.0	No	3.0
42	246 Antrim Road	Roadside	333258	376186	NO ₂	No	6.0	2.0	No	2.7
44	Shore Road (Ivan Street)	Roadside	334177	376375	NO ₂	No	2.5	5.0	No	3.0
59	York Street	Roadside	334214	375638	NO ₂	No	5.0	3.5	No	2.7
63	Queen's Square / Victoria Street	Roadside	334193	374457	NO ₂	No	0.1	7.0	No	2.7
65, 66, 67	Westlink AQMS	Roadside	332610	373434	NO ₂	Yes - AQMA 1	22.0	5.0	Yes	2.6
68	Opposite Westlink AQMS	Kerbside	332610	373474	NO ₂	Yes - AQMA 1	74.0	1.0	No	2.5

Tube ID	Site Name	Site Type	X OS Grid Ref (Easting)	Y OS Grid Ref (Northing)	Pollutants Monitored	In AQMA? Which AQMA?	Distance to Relevant Exposure (m)	Distance to Kerb of Nearest Road (m)	Tube Co-located with a Continuous Analyser	Height (m)
69	Peter's Hill	Kerbside	333281	374755	NO ₂	Yes - AQMA 1	48.0	1.0	No	3.5 (above the canyon)
70	Henry Place	Kerbside	333588	375224	NO ₂	Yes - AQMA 1	17.0	1.0	No	3.5 (above the canyon)
74	Ardmore Park	Roadside	329923	370300	NO ₂	No	7.0	2.0	No	2.7
76	Titanic Quarter	Roadside	335073	375049	NO ₂	No	5.0	1.5	No	2.7
77	Poleglass (Cloona Park)	Roadside	328237	370138	NO ₂	No	5.0	3.0	No	2.7
82	Molyneaux Street	Roadside	334023	375238	NO ₂	Yes - AQMA 1	2.5	11.0	No	2.7
83	North Queen Street	Roadside	333857	375412	NO ₂	No	9.5	3.0	No	2.7
84	Great George's Street / Portland Place	Roadside	333866	375160	NO ₂	Yes - AQMA 1	5.5	4.0	No	2.7
85	Sailor Town / Dock Street	Roadside	334468	375340	NO ₂	No	15.0	4.0	No	2.7
87	RVH Falls Road	Roadside	331964	373558	NO ₂	No	6.0	3.0	No	2.7
88	Dunmurry Lane	Roadside	329273	368947	NO ₂	No	4.0	2.0	No	2.7

Tube ID	Site Name	Site Type	X OS Grid Ref (Easting)	Y OS Grid Ref (Northing)	Pollutants Monitored	In AQMA? Which AQMA?	Distance to Relevant Exposure (m)	Distance to Kerb of Nearest Road (m)	Tube Co-located with a Continuous Analyser	Height (m)
89	Upper Knockbreda Road	Kerbside	337547	372019	NO ₂	No	23.0	0.5	No	2.5
90	Tates Avenue / Glenmachan Street	Roadside	332028	372759	NO ₂	Yes - AQMA 1	8.0	2.5	No	2.5
92	Andersonstown Road	Roadside	329707	371200	NO ₂	No	10.0	2.0	No	2.5
95	Balmoral Avenue	Roadside	331568	370818	NO ₂	No	8.5	2.5	No	2.7
96	Upper Lisburn Road (Kings Hall)	Roadside	331379	370712	NO ₂	No	4.5	3.5	No	2.7
97	Monagh Bypass	Roadside	329737	372743	NO ₂	No	6.5	3.0	No	2.7
98	Knocknagoney (2 Garnerville Park)	Roadside	338297	376131	NO ₂	No	7.0	2.0	No	2.7
100	Henry Place 2	Roadside	333589	375251	NO ₂	Yes - AQMA 1	-9.0	27.0	No	2.5
101	Stockmans Lane Roundabout	Roadside	330900	371316	NO ₂	Yes - AQMA 1	4.5	3.0	No	2.5
102	North Queen Park	Roadside	333650	375180	NO ₂	Yes - AQMA 1	-7.0	15.0	No	2.5
103	Blythefield Park (Bentham Drive)	Urban Background	332885	373323	NO ₂	No	40.0	15.0	No	2.5
104	Ligoniel Crossroads	Roadside	330800	376914	NO ₂	No	13.0	1.5	No	3.0

Tube ID	Site Name	Site Type	X OS Grid Ref (Easting)	Y OS Grid Ref (Northing)	Pollutants Monitored	In AQMA? Which AQMA?	Distance to Relevant Exposure (m)	Distance to Kerb of Nearest Road (m)	Tube Co-located with a Continuous Analyser	Height (m)
105	Ulster University	Kerbside	333918	374952	NO ₂	Yes - AQMA 1	6.5	1.0	No	2.5
106	M3 (student accommodation)	Kerbside	334120	375033	NO ₂	No	6.0	1.0	No	2.5
107	Springfield Road	Roadside	330220	373746	NO ₂	No	5.0	2.5	No	2.5
108	Lisburn Rd and Tates Avenue Junction	Roadside	332825	372465	NO ₂	No	2.7	2.5	No	2.5
109	444 Ormeau Road	Roadside	335005	370749	NO ₂	Yes - AQMA 4	7.0	3.0	No	2.5
111	73a Owenvarragh Park	Roadside	330562	371205	NO ₂	Yes - AQMA 1	3.0	2.0	No	2.5
112	1 Stockmans Lane	Roadside	331440	370918	NO ₂	Yes - AQMA 1	8.0	2.0	No	2.5
114	Strand Walk	Kerbside	335061	374433	NO ₂	No	11.0	1.0	No	2.5
115	Stormont	Roadside	339583	373935	NO ₂	Yes - AQMA 3	8.0	2.5	No	2.5
117	52 Ladas Drive	Roadside	336378	372596	NO ₂	No	7.0	1.5	No	2.5
118	Finaghy Road North	Roadside	330367	370009	NO ₂	No	7.0	1.5	No	2.7
119	28 Kennedy Way	Roadside	330763	371636	NO ₂	Yes - AQMA 1	20.0	1.5	No	2.7

Tube ID	Site Name	Site Type	X OS Grid Ref (Easting)	Y OS Grid Ref (Northing)	Pollutants Monitored	In AQMA? Which AQMA?	Distance to Relevant Exposure (m)	Distance to Kerb of Nearest Road (m)	Tube Co-located with a Continuous Analyser	Height (m)
120	Carrick Hill	Roadside	333539	374844	NO ₂	No	-2.0	5.0	No	2.5

** Please note that the various site IDs relate to current monitoring locations across the city. Over the preceding years, some sites may have relocated or monitoring discontinued. For these reasons, site IDs may be non-sequential.*

2.2 Comparison of Monitoring Results with Air Quality Objectives

2.2.1 Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂)

Automatic Monitoring Data

Tables 2.3 and 2.4 summarise recent monitoring data from the council's nitrogen dioxide automatic analysers for 2024 and preceding years from 2020. In all cases, exceedances of the Air Quality Strategy Objectives are highlighted in bold. In addition, trends in annual mean monitoring data for nitrogen dioxide are summarised in Figure 2.3.

All automatic monitoring sites in Belfast measured NO₂ annual mean concentration below 40 µg/m³ during 2024. Moreover, there were no NO₂ 1-hour means above 200 µg/m³ recorded in Belfast during 2024.

Belfast Centre (Lombard Street) AQMS

The Belfast Centre AURN site is an urban centre / urban background site situated in a substantially pedestrianised area of Belfast City Centre. Urban background sites are located such that the pollution levels monitored are not influenced significantly by any single source or street, but rather by the integrated contribution from all sources upwind of the station e.g. by all traffic, combustion sources etc. Accordingly, there were no exceedances of any nitrogen dioxide air quality objectives recorded at the Belfast Centre AURN during 2024, with the annual mean being 18 µg/m³; less than half of the 40 µg/m³ annual mean objective value. As 2024 automatic data capture levels at the Belfast Centre site were however below the Department's 75% data capture threshold for nitrogen dioxide (60%), annualisation of data from this site was required and undertaken in accordance with LAQM.TG(22) guidance. The highest nitrogen dioxide hourly mean in 2024 was 90 µg/m³; substantially less than the 200 µg/m³ AQO value (18 exceedances permitted per annum).

Ormeau Road AQMS

The Belfast Ormeau Road monitoring site experienced extensive problems with air conditioning during 2012 and 2013, which prevented the monitoring equipment from working to full capacity. As this was a recurring problem, a decision was made towards the end of 2013 to upgrade the site infrastructure. Taking account of procurement requirements and

liaison with NIE, this upgrade took a considerable length of time, to the point that data capture from this site was such that it was considered unreliable to report for 2013. In addition, we would express some reservations about the reliability of the 2012 monitoring data, as it does not appear to follow established trends. Following the site upgrade however, the annual mean concentrations have remained reasonably constant at 27 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in 2014, 27 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in 2015, 28 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in 2016, 25 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in 2017, 26 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in 2018 and 24 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in 2019. Since the Covid-19 pandemic (2020), the annual mean results (including 2024 – 17.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) at this location are markedly lower when compared to preceding years. However, they still appear to be representative, given that all nitrogen dioxide monitoring sites have demonstrated a similar downward trend, due to behavioural changes caused by the pandemic.

The above monitoring data demonstrates that nitrogen dioxide concentrations at the Ormeau Road monitoring site have been significantly below the annual mean air quality objective since 2014. Moreover, dispersion modelling undertaken as part of Belfast City Council Detailed Assessment for the city (finalised in 2023) predicted that 2019 (base year) and 2028 (future year) annual mean NO_2 concentrations within AQMA 4, which covers Ormeau Road from the junction with Donegall Pass to the Belfast City boundary at Galwally, would be below the UK AQO level at all locations of relevant human health exposure.

At this stage, however, the council has decided not to move to revoke the Ormeau Road Air Quality Management Area, and instead to continue to monitor within this AQMA and in other city locations in order to work towards further improving ambient air quality, having regard to air quality guidelines for ambient air quality as recommended by the World Health Organisation, in its 2021 Global Air Quality Guidelines: particulate matter ($\text{PM}_{2.5}$ and PM_{10}), ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide publication.

Upper Newtownards Road AQMS

From the data presented in Table 2.3, it can be seen that annual mean concentrations of nitrogen dioxide along the Upper Newtownards Road have remained in the range 20 – 27 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ since 2019, meaning that the nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective is being consistently achieved along the Upper Newtownards Road. As noted above, and since 2020, there has been a marked reduction in nitrogen dioxide concentrations, again due to significant reductions in traffic numbers, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions.

2024 nitrogen dioxide annual mean results ($20.6 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) are lower than pre-pandemic annual mean data and significantly below the $40 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ annual mean objective level.

In addition, the Knock Road non-automatic roadside diffusion tube, located at the junction of the Upper Newtownards Road, Hawthornden Way and the Knock Road (Upper Newtownards Road AQMA worst case location) recorded exceedances of the annual mean objective in previous years up until 2016. The 2017 calendar year was the first year when the annual mean concentration at the Knock Road junction fell below the air quality objective ($36 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$), which was still the case in 2024 ($23.4 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$). Consequently, there have not been any monitored exceedances of the air quality objectives for NO_2 identified within this AQMA over the last eight monitoring years.

Moreover, it should be noted that the Belfast Rapid Transit Glider commenced operation along this route from September 2018. In order to facilitate operation of the Glider, a bus lane was established on the Upper Newtownards Road, Albertbridge Road and East Bridge Street, which operates from 07.00 to 19.00, Monday to Saturday inclusive. Glider operations together with introduction of the associated bus lane are likely to have had a beneficial impact on traffic movements and pollution levels along the Upper Newtownards Road, Albertbridge Road and East Bridge Street.

The abovementioned nitrogen dioxide monitoring data for this Upper Newtownards Road AQMA No. 3, and the outcome of the council's detailed assessment, which also confirmed that modelled 2019 (base year) and 2028 (future year) annual mean NO_2 concentrations within AQMA No. 3 would be below the annual mean objective, indicate that this AQMA may be revoked.

At this stage, however, the council has decided not to move to revoke the Upper Newtownards Road Quality Management Area, and instead to continue to monitor within this AQMA and in other city locations in order to work towards further improving ambient air quality, having regard to air quality guidelines for ambient air quality as recommended by the World Health Organisation, in its 2021 Global Air Quality Guidelines: particulate matter ($\text{PM}_{2.5}$ and PM_{10}), ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide publication.

Stockman's Lane AQMS

Unfortunately, despite completion of significant structural improvements to the M1 Motorway and A12 Westlink corridor, nitrogen dioxide concentrations at Stockman's Lane have historically remained high. 2020 was the first year however, when the annual mean concentration ($33 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) fell below the objective level of $40 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, likely due to Covid-19 travel restrictions. Whilst reductions in nitrogen dioxide annual mean concentrations at the Stockman's Lane site had been following a relatively consistent declining trend (the 2019 nitrogen dioxide annual mean was $45 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, which is a ~8% reduction from the 2018 annual mean of $49 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$), the Covid-19 pandemic had an obvious impact on the 2021 and 2022 annual mean concentrations. The 2021 annual mean ($36 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) and 2022 annual mean ($36.4 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) nitrogen dioxide concentrations were about 20% lower than the 2019 (pre-pandemic) levels. The 2023 annual mean ($35.6 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) and 2024 annual mean ($33 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) concentrations continue this downward trend. Although concentrations recorded at this automatic station are now much lower than the $40 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ annual mean objective, one roadside diffusion tube (Diffusion tube No 101 - Stockman's Lane Roundabout), located near to the Stockman's Lane AQMS, recorded a 2024 NO_2 annual mean concentration of $36.2 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. The 2024 nitrogen dioxide annual mean concentration at this diffusion tube monitoring location was therefore marginally above the $36 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (i.e. within 10% of the NO_2 annual mean objective for NO_2 passive diffusion tube monitoring) threshold, established in Box 3-2 AQMA Process Diagram of LAQM.TG(22) for revocation of an AQMA.

Despite these welcome and declining nitrogen dioxide annual mean monitoring results in the area of Stockmans Lane, modelling results from the council's Detailed Assessment have also suggested elevated nitrogen dioxide levels at this location. Therefore, the council will continue its monitoring at this location (within the M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink Corridor Air Quality Management Area) to identify any potential further exceedances and to better establish nitrogen dioxide concentrations and trends.

There were no NO_2 1-hour mean concentrations above $200 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ recorded at this AQMS location during 2024; the maximum hourly mean nitrogen dioxide concentration in 2024 was $137 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.

A12 Westlink / Roden Street AQMS

The 2024 nitrogen dioxide annual mean ($27.1 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) monitored at the A12 Westlink / Roden Street site has not changed significantly since 2021. Although slightly higher than in 2020

(24 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$), it is still noticeably lower than the 2019 pre-pandemic level (34 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) and comfortably below the annual mean objective of 40 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. Also, there were no NO_2 1-hour means above 200 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ recorded at this AQMS location during 2024; the maximum hourly mean nitrogen dioxide concentration in 2024 was 114 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.

The nitrogen dioxide annual mean air quality objective has not been exceeded at the A12 Westlink / Roden Street monitoring site since 2011. However, one roadside diffusion tube, located at Henry Place, further along the Westlink corridor, has recorded exceedances of the annual mean objective over the last few years, including during 2023 (43.0 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$). 2024 was the first year when the monitored annual mean concentration (39.1 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) was slightly below the objective level at this location, although still above the 36 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ threshold, established in Box 3-2 AQMA Process Diagram of LAQM.TG(22) for revocation of an AQMA. The council will therefore continue monitoring within the Westlink Corridor / M1 Air Quality Management Area (AQMA 1) to identify further improvements in nitrogen dioxide concentrations.

Historically, modelled and monitored exceedances of the 1-hour mean objective for nitrogen dioxide were encountered only in the vicinity of the M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink corridor. As a result, this is the only Air Quality Management Area within Belfast that has been declared on the basis of exceedances of the 1-hour objective.

From ambient nitrogen dioxide monitoring data for the Stockman's Lane and A12 Westlink / Roden Street monitoring sites, as summarised in Table 2.4, it can be seen that the number of exceedances of the hourly mean objective has substantially decreased over recent years, both now demonstrating compliance with the 200 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ objective, not to be exceeded more than 18 times per year - since 2013. In fact, there have been no recorded nitrogen dioxide 1-hour mean concentrations greater than 200 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ at either monitoring site since 2019.

DAERA, in their letter of 20th November 2024, concerning the appraisal of the council's 2024 Updating and Screening Assessment highlighted that there have been no exceedances of the 1-hour NO_2 objective recorded within any declared AQMA for the last five years presented within the 2024 USA. DAERA and their technical assessors therefore advised the Council to consider revocation of the 1-hour NO_2 designation for the M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink AQMA.

At this stage, however, the council has decided not to move to revoke the M1 Motorway and A12 Westlink corridor Air Quality Management Area (No. 1) for exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide 1-hour mean objective, and instead to continue to monitor within this AQMA and in other city locations in order to work towards further improving ambient air quality, having regard to air quality guidelines for ambient air quality as recommended by the World Health Organisation, in its 2021 Global Air Quality Guidelines: particulate matter (PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀), ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide publication. The council notes that the WHO air quality guidelines for nitrogen dioxide that were not re-evaluated and remain valid include the 200 µg/m³ guideline value that is assessed over a 1-hour averaging time period.

Table 2.3 – Results of Automatic Monitoring for NO₂: Comparison with Annual Mean Objective

Site Name	Site Type	Within AQMA? Which AQMA?	Valid Data Capture for Monitoring Period % ^a	Valid Data Capture 2024 % ^b	Annual Mean Concentration (µg/m ³)				
					2020*	2021*	2022*	2023*	2024 ^c
Belfast Centre (Lombard Street)	Urban Background	N	60%	60%	19 ^c	21	21.1	18.8 ^c	18.1 ^c
Belfast Ormeau Road	Roadside	Y (CM2)	99%	99%	17	18	18.8	18.0	17.5
Belfast Upper Newtownards Road	Roadside	Y (CM3)	99%	99%	20	21	22.2	21.0	20.6
Belfast Stockman's Lane	Roadside	Y (CM4)	99%	99%	33	36	36.4	35.6	33.3
Belfast Westlink / Roden Street	Roadside	Y (CM5)	99%	99%	24	28	27.9	28.5	27.1

^a i.e. data capture for the monitoring period, in cases where monitoring was only carried out for part of the year

^b i.e. data capture for the full calendar year (e.g. if monitoring was carried out for six months the maximum data capture for the full calendar year would be 50%)

^c Means should be “annualised” as in Boxes 7.9 and 7.10 of LAQM.TG(22), if valid data capture is less than 75%

* Annual mean concentrations for previous years are optional

Figure 2.3 – Trends in Annual Mean NO₂ Concentrations Measured at Automatic Monitoring Sites

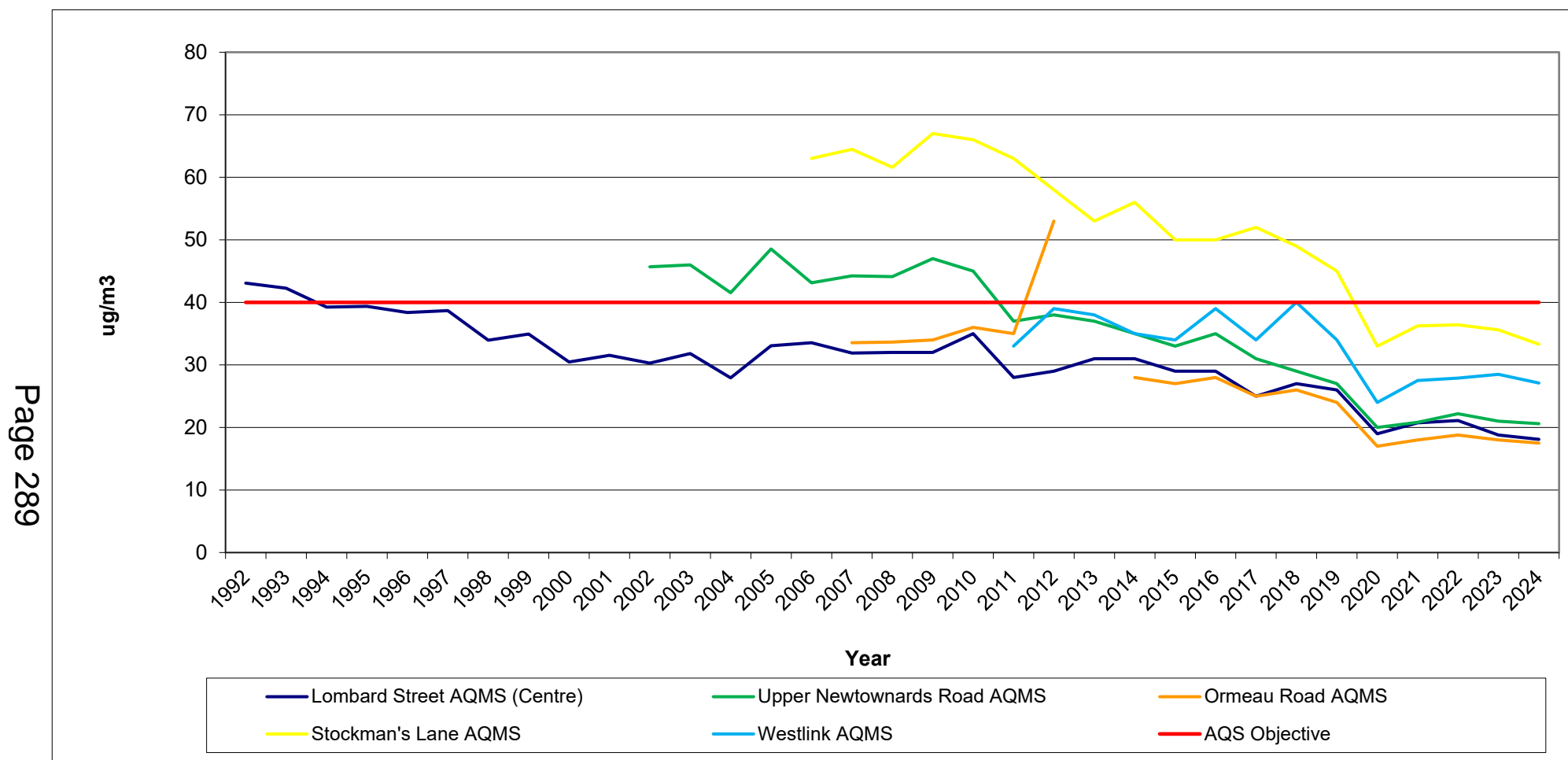


Table 2.4 – Results of Automatic Monitoring for NO₂: Comparison with 1-hour Mean Objective

Site ID	Site Type	Within AQMA?	Valid Data Capture for Monitoring Period % ^a	Valid Data Capture 2024 % ^b	Number of Hourly Means > 200µg/m ³				
					2020* ^c	2021* ^c	2022* ^c	2023* ^c	2024 ^c
Belfast Centre (Lombard Street)	Urban Background	N	60%	60%	0 (86) ^c	0	0(93) ^c	0(84) ^c	0(82) ^c
Belfast Ormeau Road	Roadside	Y	99%	99%	0	0	0	0	0
Belfast Upper Newtownards Road	Roadside	Y	99%	99%	0	0	0	0	0
Belfast Stockman's Lane	Roadside	Y	99%	99%	0	0	0	0	0
Belfast Westlink / Roden Street	Roadside	Y	99%	99%	0	0	0	0	0

In bold, exceedance of the NO₂ hourly mean AQS objective (200 µg/m³ – not to be exceeded more than 18 times per year)

^a i.e. data capture for the monitoring period, in cases where monitoring was only carried out for part of the year

^b i.e. data capture for the full calendar year (e.g. if monitoring was carried out for six months the maximum data capture for the full calendar year would be 50%)

^c If the data capture for full calendar year is less than 85%, include the 99.8th percentile of hourly means in brackets

* Number of exceedances for previous years is optional

Diffusion Tube Monitoring Data

In order to obtain a better understanding of how concentrations of nitrogen dioxide are varying across the city over time, and to investigate those locations where previous rounds of the review and assessment process have highlighted areas of concern, Belfast City Council has placed 80 diffusion tubes at 72 relevant receptor locations across the city. Data from these diffusion tubes for 2024 have been summarised in Table 2.5 alongside historical data, where it is available, in Table 2.6.

In terms of the outcome of the 2024 nitrogen dioxide diffusion tube monitoring, it is noted that concentrations at most locations are broadly comparable to, or slightly lower in comparison to 2022 and 2023 results. Moreover, they are still significantly lower than 2019 pre-pandemic concentrations.

Since the 2024 Updating and Screening Assessment Report, council officers have removed 8 tubes (Nos. 28, 86, 91, 93, 94, 110, 113 and 116) from the network, due to sustained low concentrations or changes to 'relevant exposure' locations; and we have added 4 new tubes (Nos. 117, 118, 119 and 120) close to busy roads with relevant exposure (residential properties). All locations are detailed in Figure 2.2 and Table 2.2.

Only one exceedance ($41.3 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) of the $40 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ annual mean air quality objective was recorded during 2024, at a location next to the junctions of the M3 Motorway / M2 Motorway / Nelson Street and the A12 Westlink (Diffusion tube No. 106).

Diffusion tube monitoring site No. 106 is located immediately next to a dominant road transport NO_2 pollution source and at a worst-case location (complex junction), adjacent to recently completed residential premises. Nevertheless, the Diffusion Tube Processing Tool has predicted an annual mean NO_2 concentration of $31.4 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ at the façade of the residential premises, indicating that no exceedance of the $40 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ annual mean objective was likely at this relevant receptor location during the 2024 monitoring year. The distance adjustment has been calculated using the Diffusion Tube Data Processing Tool and presented in Appendix A.

In addition, for the 2024 monitoring year, there were only three diffusion tube sites (DT70 Henry Place, DT106 M3, and DT101 Stockman's Lane Roundabout) located at roadside / kerbside locations, where annual mean nitrogen dioxide concentrations were above the

36µg/m³ (within 10% of the annual mean objective of 40µg/m³) threshold for revocation of an AQMA.

A summary of fall-off with distance calculations from the Diffusion Tube Data Processing Tool are presented in Table A.4 (Appendix A)

Table 2.5 – Annual Results Summary

Diffusion Tube ID	X OS Grid Ref (Easting)	Y OS Grid Ref (Northing)	NO ₂ Mean Concentrations (µg/m³)												Simple Annual Mean (µg/m³)			Comment
			Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Raw Data	Bias Adjusted (0.82) and Annualised	Distance Corrected to Nearest Exposure	
1	332522	373708	20.5			16.4	16.0	9.9	12.4	15.0	18.1	23.2	24.2	20.5	17.6	14.4	-	
2	329780	369528		41.2	31.6	36.8	31.2	33.3	32.1	33.9	32.7	37.2	40.0	41.4	35.6	29.0	-	
3	334220	373853	27.0	34.4	32.2	30.8	31.0	23.0	24.2	23.5	33.2	29.8	34.8	29.6	29.5	24.0	-	
4	335013	373979	24.7	28.8	28.7		27.3	20.1	20.2	19.2	28.9		30.3	28.7	25.7	20.9	-	
5	334630	374385	25.3	26.6	30.3	30.0	30.8	20.8	24.3	20.1	33.9	27.9	30.7	31.1	27.7	22.5	-	
6	337681	374133		18.2	12.7	12.3	11.1	8.1	8.4	8.2	11.3	12.7	18.3	16.1	12.5	10.2	-	
7	333840	373956	25.9	33.8	32.0	31.2	34.8	22.2	23.5	22.9	36.0	31.6	33.3	31.5	29.9	24.4	-	
9	334983	374260	34.9	40.9	37.1	42.3	36.9	33.0	33.6	29.3	40.2	39.2	41.0	36.6	37.1	30.2	-	
10	334499	372186	27.3	32.2	25.3	27.7	23.1	22.7	22.1	22.7	25.4	28.7	29.4	28.1	26.2	21.4	-	
12	338718	373918	30.9	32.7	31.2	28.6	27.9	23.7	25.0	24.2	28.6	26.0	36.0	29.3	28.7	23.4	-	
13	333981	375102		43.1	51.8		50.2	32.0	37.4	29.0	46.1	46.5	41.2	35.5	41.3	33.7	-	

14	332063	371376	26.9	33.9	27.9	26.6	25.4	19.5	19.2		27.9	26.4	29.8	31.6	26.8	21.9	-	
15	333600	373283		34.5	33.2	31.4	31.8	21.7	26.2	24.6	34.9	33.5	34.9		30.7	25.0	-	
16	333898	374358	26.3	26.7	24.2	21.3	21.3		17.1	15.2	26.3	24.2	25.1	23.9	-	-	-	Triplicate Co-location Site with 16, 19 and 20 - Annual data provided for 20 only
19	333898	374358	22.8	28.4	25.7	18.5	23.1		16.6	17.2	26.0	23.5	26.4	26.2	-	-	-	Triplicate Co-location Site with 16, 19 and 20 - Annual data provided for 20 only
20	333898	374358	25.8	27.7	26.0	21.0	24.0		17.0	16.1	24.0	25.4	24.4	25.1	23.1	18.8	-	Triplicate Co-location Site with 16, 19 and 20 - Annual data provided for 20 only

17	334213	374485	26.7	33.8	36.6	32.3	35.0	21.6		30.4	33.9	40.6	42.9	36.3	33.7	27.4	-	
21	331009	371251	42.9	43.3	41.8	44.1	42.4	42.5	41.7	39.8	43.0	46.4	50.0	41.6	-	-	-	Triplicate Co-location Site with 21, 22 and 56 - Annual data provided for 56 only
22	331009	371251	39.0	43.5	42.4	44.8	42.4	45.6	42.5	42.1	46.0	49.5	48.1	36.8	-	-	-	Triplicate Co-location Site with 21, 22 and 56 - Annual data provided for 56 only
56	331009	371251	38.1	44.2	39.8	44.9	40.5	44.1	40.5	42.5	42.6	48.6	47.8	39.1	43.2	35.2	-	Triplicate Co-location Site with 21, 22 and 56 - Annual data provided for 56 only
23	337930	373972	24.8	27.5	20.9	23.9	22.1	18.7	17.0	19.1	25.8	26.1	28.8	23.3	-	-	-	Triplicate Co-location

																		Site with 23, 24 and 32 - Annual data provided for 32 only
24	337930	373972	27.6	27.5	21.2	23.8	22.2	14.6	18.2	16.4	26.4	24.7	29.1	26.3	-	-	-	Triplicate Co-location Site with 23, 24 and 32 - Annual data provided for 32 only
32	337930	373972	44.9	27.6	21.3	23.9		20.1	18.4	19.1	24.9	21.8	28.6	25.8	23.7	19.4	-	Triplicate Co-location Site with 23, 24 and 32 - Annual data provided for 32 only
25	333230	380877	20.2	21.0		21.8	26.1	16.6	18.7	13.1	23.9	25.6	27.1	17.9	21.1	17.2	-	
26	333018	373120	28.0	32.5	31.9	29.9	30.3	23.6	25.0	20.6	32.2	31.3	34.7	29.0	29.1	23.7	-	
30	337168	375485	23.5	24.0	16.7	19.4	18.5	16.2	15.8	12.0	21.3	15.9	24.3	20.8	19.0	15.5	-	
31	332544	370283	30.9	34.2	35.9	30.2	31.2			21.5	32.3	31.4	33.3	23.2	30.4	24.8	-	

33	333548	373772	37.3	42.1	34.0	39.7	35.6	36.0	36.5	27.5	38.6	36.9	42.3	39.4	37.2	30.3	-	
34	333501	374236	31.7	35.3	37.7	32.9	34.8	22.0	27.9	24.3	36.0	36.9	36.6	30.2	32.2	26.2	-	
35	334140	374126	32.9	39.5	40.6	38.1	38.6		30.7	29.2	39.7	38.0	43.4	36.5	37.0	30.2	-	
36	334114	373536	30.2	34.4	32.4	36.1	32.6	26.7	27.4	22.6	35.7	35.5			31.4	25.6	-	
37	332100	373015	42.3	41.5	35.8		33.3	33.2	33.1	23.9	35.2	41.9	42.5	35.5	36.2	29.5	-	
38	333085	374065	29.1	31.2	40.0	34.4	35.7	15.8	25.6		37.9	36.5	32.9	26.2	31.4	25.6	-	
39	334957	371298	26.6	32.1	23.3	28.7	23.2	22.8	21.0	25.4	26.0	26.9	31.9	32.1	26.7	21.8	-	
40	336516	374226	26.7	34.5	22.4	20.7	20.5	15.5	18.4	17.3	24.3	27.7	32.9	25.7	23.9	19.5	-	
41	333101	375295	29.2	29.2	31.0	25.9	26.0	20.8	19.6	19.9	26.0	29.4	32.4	26.3	26.3	21.4	-	
42	333258	376186	27.1	34.3	33.8		30.5	19.8	24.1	23.2	21.8	27.4	29.5		27.2	22.1	-	
44	334177	376375	23.1	30.3		52.8	26.3	14.5	22.0	21.1	28.0	34.9	33.0	25.2	28.3	23.1	-	
59	334214	375638	32.0				36.6	20.7		26.6	33.9	40.5	36.6	32.4	32.4	26.2	-	
63	334193	374457	31.5	31.9	35.6	31.7	33.9	24.7	26.8	22.5	37.3	32.8	34.0	31.4	31.2	25.4	-	
65	332610	373434	36.1	36.4	41.5	37.3	39.3	26.4	28.7	22.8	43.8	30.5	34.0	30.9	-	-	-	Triplicate Co-location Site with 65, 66 and 67 -

																		Annual data provided for 67 only
66	332610	373434	36.6	37.9	45.9	39.0	40.0	25.9	30.2	23.0	40.6	33.1	32.6	30.5	-	-	-	Triplicate Co-location Site with 65, 66 and 67 - Annual data provided for 67 only
67	332610	373434	35.3	34.9	43.7	38.2	39.7	26.6	31.8	21.3	45.5	32.2	31.6	28.4	34.2	27.9	-	Triplicate Co-location Site with 65, 66 and 67 - Annual data provided for 67 only
68	332610	373474	42.2	45.3	38.8	36.0	36.2	30.9	34.8	28.2	33.6	23.4	45.3		35.9	29.3	-	
69	333281	374755		38.3	50.3	41.7	40.2	23.5	31.5	28.2	41.9	46.2	38.4	39.6	38.2	31.1	-	
70	333588	375224	49.1	63.9	53.6	44.5	37.6		36.6	40.9	33.3	64.1	49.4	54.9	48.0	39.1	24.5	
74	329923	370300	28.2	34.9	26.5	29.1	22.5	22.6	21.0	22.1	25.1	30.7	32.1	32.0	27.2	22.2	-	
76	335073	375049	25.7	26.2	21.9	23.3	22.1	16.1	17.0	16.6	25.7	23.7	26.2		22.2	18.1	-	

77	328237	370138	26.2	26.9	22.0	21.3	18.6	19.2	17.2	17.0	19.0	22.5	26.1	23.8	21.6	17.6	-	
82	334023	375238	34.9	37.5	41.3	31.7	34.4	22.2	25.1	26.5	33.4	35.4	36.8	31.7	32.6	26.5	-	
83	333857	375412		44.9	38.2	31.2	29.2	21.4	26.2	25.1	30.5		39.8	39.8	32.6	26.6	-	
84	333866	375160	54.1	34.1	36.2	32.3	32.5	22.8	25.2	20.8	37.8	30.9	32.8	28.3	32.3	26.3	-	
85	334468	375340	30.2	32.2	31.9	30.5	29.4	21.6	23.6	20.1	29.7	28.0	31.9	28.4	28.1	22.9	-	
87	331964	373558	32.5	34.2		28.7	30.4	23.2		21.8	26.1	32.7	37.9	30.9	29.8	24.3	-	
88	329273	368947	24.8	24.8	24.4	19.3	21.0	14.1	13.1	13.7	21.6	25.8	25.9	21.6	20.8	17.0	-	
89	337547	372019	31.2	29.8	24.7	29.5	27.2	23.2	20.2	19.7	29.5	26.1	29.1	25.6	26.3	21.5	-	
90	332028	372759	45.4	46.9	37.6	36.4	34.0	30.0	30.4	35.2	35.2	46.6	44.1	39.4	38.4	31.3	-	
92	329707	371200	30.5	30.6	30.3	27.2	26.4	20.1	20.5	21.2	27.3	32.0	34.3		27.3	22.3	-	
95	331568	370818	34.9	34.3	39.3		37.8	30.3	26.7	25.4	37.5	37.5	37.3	32.9	34.0	27.7	-	
96	331379	370712	27.2	27.2	23.2	20.5	20.3	15.3		16.5	26.2	23.6	25.2	24.5	22.7	18.5	-	
97	329737	372743	21.9	24.9	23.1	21.0	24.3	19.2	20.4	20.7	21.3	27.5	27.3	21.0	22.7	18.5	-	
98	338297	376131	39.6	41.1	31.7	41.9	37.8	36.6	34.4	30.8	39.7	34.6	41.2	37.0	37.2	30.3	-	
100	333589	375251		36.8	34.0	27.3	27.7	19.7	21.2	27.6	24.5	40.7	38.9	29.9	29.8	24.3	26.8	

101	330900	371316	44.6	51.8	43.9	47.1	41.1	45.6	36.4	39.2	47.6	45.9	44.7	44.7	44.4	36.2	30.9	
102	333650	375180	35.1	34.9	33.0	31.7	28.4		11.6	20.6	33.3	30.0	33.9	29.0	29.2	23.8	26.6	
103	332885	373323	29.2	27.4	27.0	23.1		18.2	17.4	11.9	22.5	22.6	27.7	23.8	22.8	18.6	-	
104	330800	376914	19.1	17.3	17.9	14.3	15.4	11.3			16.9	17.1	19.4	14.2	16.3	13.3	-	
105	333918	374952	32.6	36.2	39.0	32.8	38.3	22.0	28.6	25.2	45.5	30.3			33.1	26.9	-	
106	334120	375033	48.7	50.9	50.2	56.2	56.9	48.5	46.6	31.3	60.8	56.4			50.6	41.3	31.4	
107	330220	373746		26.1	26.0	21.0	24.4	15.2	16.8	17.8	23.5		26.6	20.3	21.8	17.8	-	
108	332825	372465	37.8	36.1	38.3	37.5	39.4	29.5		21.7	44.1	28.4	33.6	33.0	34.5	28.1	-	
109	335005	370749	33.9	34.0	29.6	31.2	30.7	22.5	24.7	20.9	36.5	29.9	31.2	31.8	29.7	24.2	-	
111	330562	371205	30.0	28.4	27.4	21.3	22.3	13.0	17.6	17.9	22.5	28.4	28.8		23.4	19.1	-	
112	331440	370918	44.0	44.3	36.1	42.1	39.1	36.3	33.6	32.4	43.9	46.0	45.8	37.7	40.1	32.7	-	
114	335061	374433	23.8	47.8	44.2		47.6	37.0	40.6	37.9	43.5	45.6	44.9	41.2	41.3	33.6	-	
115	339583	373935			14.6	14.4	12.9	11.4	10.7	9.4	14.8	14.0	17.3	19.6	13.9	11.3	-	
117	336378	372596	29.8	28.3	18.0	18.4		15.1	13.4	13.4	21.5	21.7	25.1	25.5	20.9	17.1	-	
118	330367	370009		35.0	33.8	31.8	69.5	21.2		22.8	33.8	34.5	37.6	29.4	34.9	28.5	-	

119	330763	371636		40.3	36.3	38.1	39.9		29.8	24.3	35.4	38.2	40.9	33.4	35.6	29.1	-	
120	333539	374844		33.4	30.8	25.7	27.4	16.2	20.3	14.5	29.1	29.9	29.6	26.2	25.7	21.0	21.9	

In bold, exceedance of the NO₂ annual mean AQS objective of 40µg/m³

Underlined, annual mean > 60 µg/m³, indicating a potential exceedance of the NO₂ hourly mean AQS objective

^a Means should be “annualised” as in Boxes 7.9 and 7.10 of LAQM.TG(22), if full calendar year data capture is less than 75%

^b If an exceedance is measured at a monitoring site not representative of public exposure, NO₂ concentration at the nearest relevant exposure should be estimated based on the [NO₂ fall-off with distance calculator](#), and results should be discussed in a specific section. The procedure is also explained in paragraphs 7.82 to 7.85 of LAQM.TG(22)

Table 2.6 – Results of NO₂ Diffusion Tubes (2020 to 2024)

Site ID	Site Name	Site Type	Within AQMA?	Annual Mean Concentration (µg/m ³) - Adjusted for Bias ^a				
				2020 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.79)	2021 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.79)	2022 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.81)	2023 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.80)	2024 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.82)
1	Royal Victoria Hospital	Urban Background	No	17.6	18.1	16.6	15.9	14.4
2	Black's Road	Roadside	Yes - AQMA 1	33.3	30.7	31.5	30.5	29.0
3	61 Cromac Street	Roadside	Yes - AQMA 2	22.4	24.5	26.2	25.1	24.0
4	Albertbridge Road	Roadside	Yes - AQMA 2	20.5	20.8	21.0	20.5	20.9
5	Queen's Bridge	Roadside	No	20.7	23.1	24.4	23.0	22.5
6	58 Earlswood Road	Urban Background	No	10.8	12.3	10.7	10.8	10.2
7	Donegall Square South	Roadside	No	22.8	23.4	25.5	26.8	24.4
9	Short Strand	Roadside	No	30.5	32.8	31.7	30.7	30.2
10	301 Ormeau Road	Roadside	Yes - AQMA 4	21.6	23.5	23.2	23.3	21.4
12	Knock Road	Roadside	Yes - AQMA 3	24.8	26.0	25.2	25.8	23.4
13	Great George's Street	Kerbside	Yes - AQMA 1	32.8	36.3	35.1	36.5	33.7
14	Lisburn Road	Roadside	No	23.5	22.4	23.1	22.6	21.9
15	Shaftesbury Square	Kerbside	No	25.1	26.4	26.7	27.1	25.0
16, 19, 20	Lombard Street	Urban Background	No	19.5	21.1	21.0	20.9	18.8
17	Albert Clock	Roadside	No	26.5	28.1	28.7	28.6	27.4
21, 22, 56	Stockmans Lane	Roadside	Yes - AQMA 1	29.9	33.4	37.8	36.4	35.2

Site ID	Site Name	Site Type	Within AQMA?	Annual Mean Concentration (µg/m ³) - Adjusted for Bias ^a				
				2020 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.79)	2021 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.79)	2022 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.81)	2023 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.80)	2024 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.82)
23, 24, 32	Ballyhackamore	Roadside	Yes - AQMA 3	18.9	19.8	19.8	19.7	19.4
25	Whitewell Road	Roadside	No	16.1	19.0	18.6	19.0	17.2
26	Donegall Road	Kerbside	No	21.9	24.8	24.0	24.7	23.7
30	Station Road	Roadside	No	16.6	17.2	17.1	16.6	15.5
31	Upper Malone Road	Roadside	No	22.8	26.3	23.9	25.5	24.8
33	Great Victoria Street	Roadside	No	24.9	28.3	29.5	30.8	30.3
34	College Square East	Roadside	No	22.1	27.5	27.9	28.0	26.2
35	Chichester Street	Roadside	No	27.8	32.1	33.2	30.2	30.2
36	Cromac Street / Ormeau Avenue	Kerbside	Yes - AQMA 2	21.4	23.4	24.1	23.9	25.6
37	Broadway	Roadside	Yes - AQMA 1	27.9	30.2	33.1	32.6	29.5
38	Albert Street	Roadside	Yes - AQMA 1	20.8	22.8	24.5	26.3	25.6
39	Ormeau Road (junction with Ravenhill Road)	Roadside	Yes - AQMA 4	26.0	26.7	27.1	22.1	21.8
40	Upper Newtownards Road / Hollywood Road	Roadside	No	18.9	20.2	20.0	18.5	19.5
41	Crumlin Road	Roadside	No	20.6	23.2	22.7	22.4	21.4
42	246 Antrim Road	Roadside	No	25.1	26.5	25.9	26.1	22.1
44	Shore Road (Ivan Street)	Roadside	No	21.3	23.9	23.2	23.2	23.1
59	York Street	Roadside	No	26.8	29.7	30.8	30.1	26.2

Site ID	Site Name	Site Type	Within AQMA?	Annual Mean Concentration ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) - Adjusted for Bias ^a				
				2020 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.79)	2021 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.79)	2022 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.81)	2023 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.80)	2024 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.82)
63	Queen's Square / Victoria Street	Roadside	No	25.3	34.3	32.4	26.3	25.4
65, 66, 67	Westlink AQMS	Roadside	Yes - AQMA 1	27.8	30.1	28.8	29.4	27.9
68	Opposite Westlink AQMS	Roadside	Yes - AQMA 1	33.6	31.8	36.0	35.2	29.3
69	Peter's Hill	Kerbside	Yes - AQMA 1	30.6	32.3	30.5	30.7	31.1
70	Henry Place	Kerbside	Yes - AQMA 1	41.1	45.7	42.0	43.0	39.1
74	Ardmore Park	Roadside	No	24.3	23.3	25.7	23.4	22.2
76	Titanic Quarter	Roadside	No	18.1	17.2	18.3	17.5	18.1
77	Poleglass (Cloona Park)	Roadside	No	18.3	18.1	19.3	18.2	17.6
82	Molyneaux Street	Roadside	Yes - AQMA 1	26.7	28.3	29.6	29.4	26.5
83	North Queen Street	Roadside	No	26.5	28.8	26.7	28.4	26.6
84	Great George's Street / Portland Place	Roadside	Yes - AQMA 1	25.5	26.9	26.7	26.9	26.3
85	Sailor Town / Dock Street	Roadside	No	22.9	23.9	23.2	24.2	22.9
87	RVH Falls Road	Roadside	No	24.1	28.1	27.2	26.3	24.3
88	Dunmurry Lane	Roadside	No	17.7	19.2	18.8	18.4	17.0
89	Upper Knockbreda Road	Kerbside	No	23.0	24.2	24.3	23.3	21.5
90	Tates Avenue / Glenmachan Street	Roadside	Yes - AQMA 1	20.5	21.0	27.8	33.0	31.3

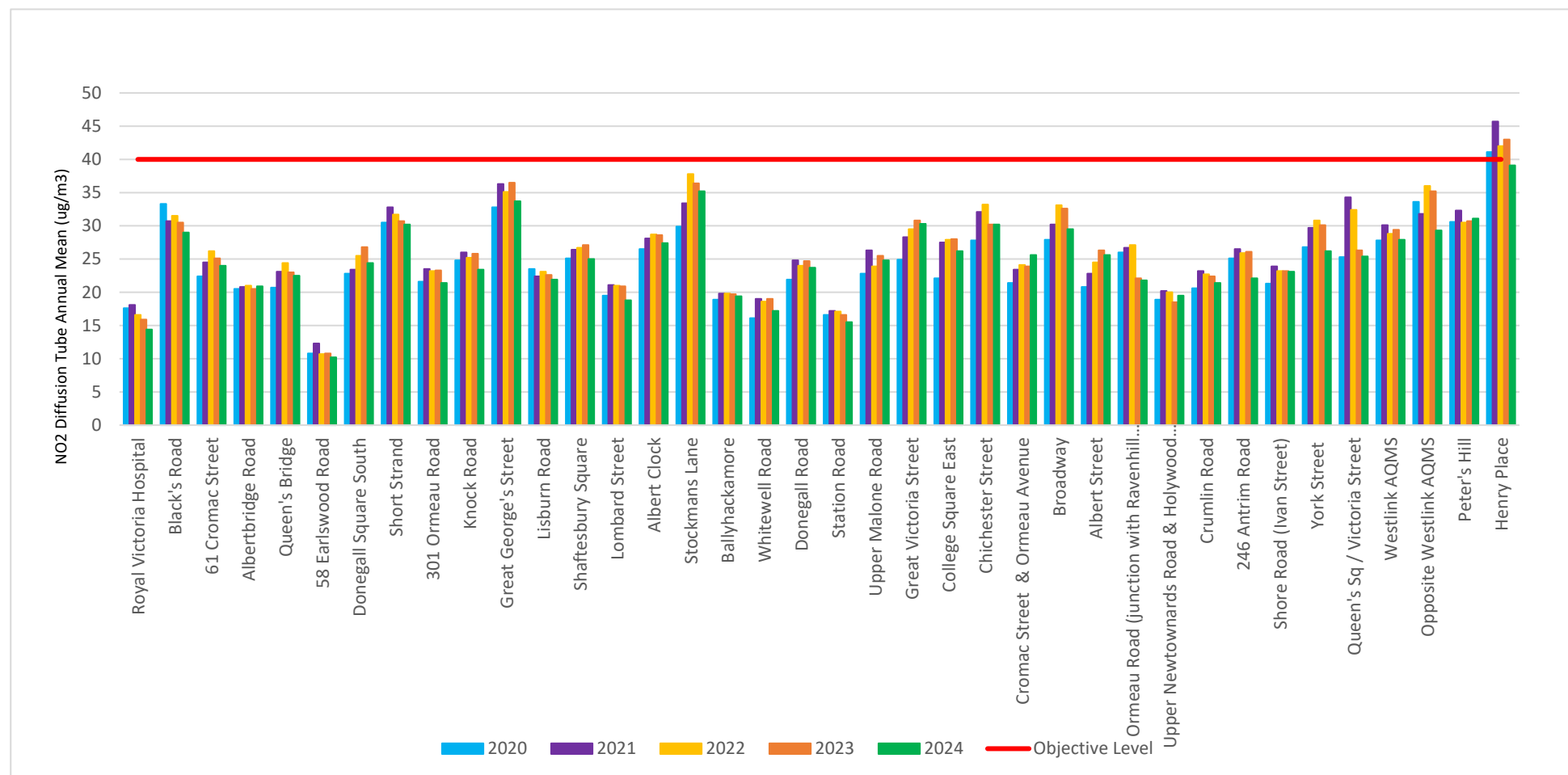
Site ID	Site Name	Site Type	Within AQMA?	Annual Mean Concentration (µg/m³) - Adjusted for Bias ^a				
				2020 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.79)	2021 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.79)	2022 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.81)	2023 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.80)	2024 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.82)
92	Andersonstown Road	Roadside	No	22.5	25.0	22.8	22.0	22.3
95	Balmoral Avenue	Roadside	No	25.5	28.1	28.9	28.6	27.7
96	Upper Lisburn Road (Kings Hall)	Roadside	No	20.1	20.3	19.5	18.4	18.5
97	Monagh Bypass	Roadside	No	16.4	18.0	18.4	19.1	18.5
98	Knocknagoney (2 Garnerville Park)	Roadside	No	31.4	33.5	32.0	31.1	30.3
100	Henry Place 2	Roadside	Yes - AQMA 1	<u>N/A</u>	26.9	28.8	26.0	24.3
101	Stockmans Lane Roundabout	Roadside	Yes - AQMA 1	<u>N/A</u>	32.6	39.2	36.3	36.2
102	North Queen Park	Roadside	Yes - AQMA 1	<u>N/A</u>	28.3	25.4	24.9	23.8
103	Blythefield Park (Bentham Drive)	Roadside	No	<u>N/A</u>	20.2	19.8	19.2	18.6
104	Ligoniel Crossroads	Roadside	No	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	13.5	13.0	13.3
105	Ulster University	Kerbside	Yes - AQMA 1	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	29.8	30.3	26.9
106	M3 (student accommodation)	Kerbside	No	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	45.8	42.3	41.3
107	Springfield Road	Roadside	No	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	20.8	19.6	17.8
108	Lisburn Rd and Bates Avenue Junction	Roadside	No	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	31.7	29.2	28.1
109	444 Ormeau Road	Roadside	Yes - AQMA 4	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	24.2	24.2
111	73a Owenvarragh Park	Roadside	Yes - AQMA 1	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	19.5	19.1
112	1 Stockmans Lane	Roadside	Yes - AQMA 1	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	32.8	32.7

Site ID	Site Name	Site Type	Within AQMA?	Annual Mean Concentration ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) - Adjusted for Bias ^a				
				2020 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.79)	2021 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.79)	2022 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.81)	2023 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.80)	2024 (Bias Adjustment Factor = 0.82)
114	Strand Walk	Kerbside	No	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	35.6	33.6
115	Stormont	Roadside	Yes - AQMA 3	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	17.6	11.3
117	52 Ladas Drive	Roadside	No	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	17.1
118	Finaghy Road North	Roadside	No	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	28.5
119	28 Kennedy Way	Roadside	Yes - AQMA 1	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	29.1
120	Carrick Hill	Roadside	No	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	21.0

In bold, exceedance of the NO₂ annual mean AQS objective of 40 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$

^a Means should be “annualised” as in Boxes 7.9 and 7.10 of LAQM.TG(22), if full calendar year data capture is less than 75%

Figure 2.4 – Trends in Annual Mean Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations Measured at Diffusion Tube Monitoring Sites



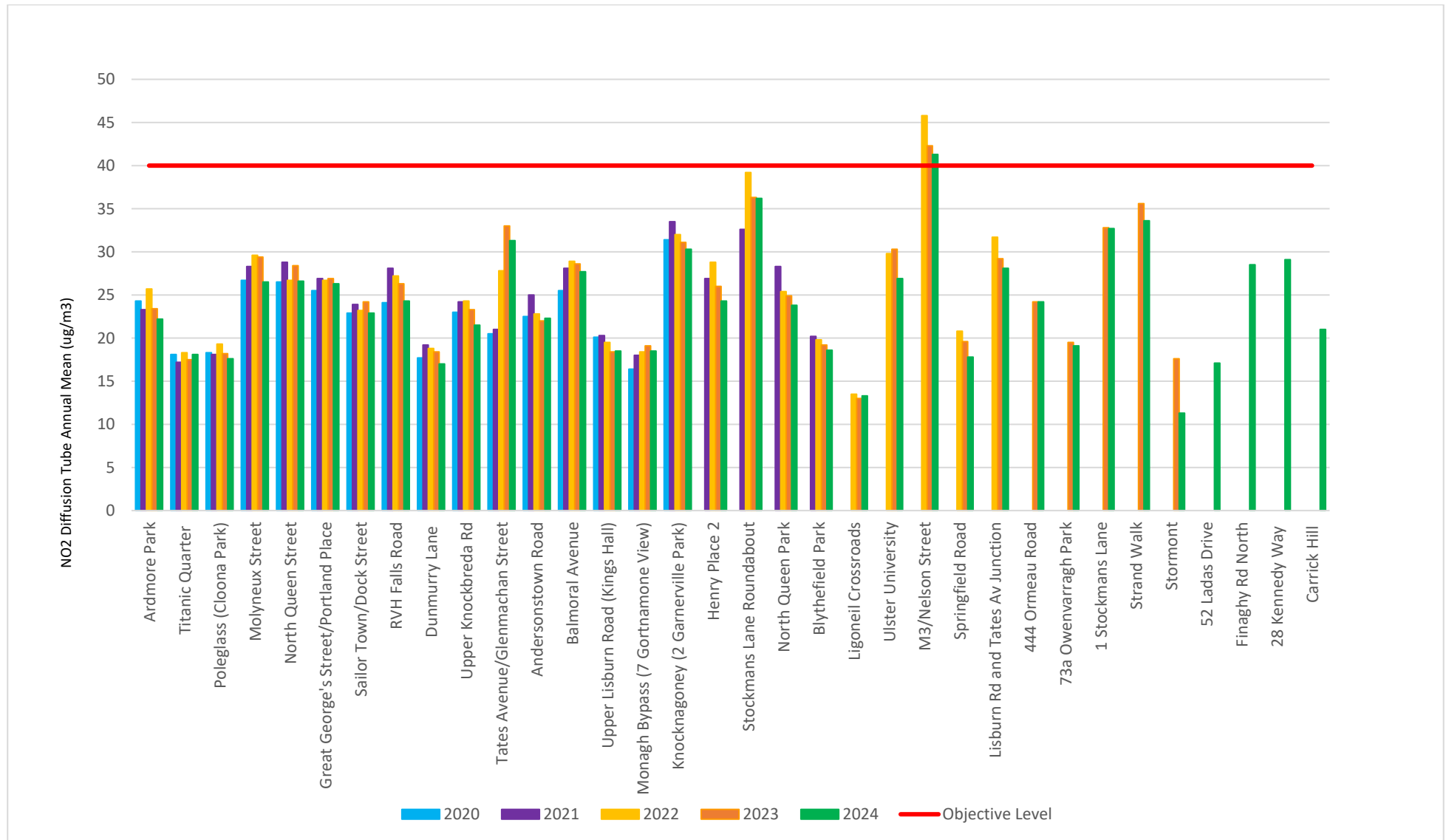
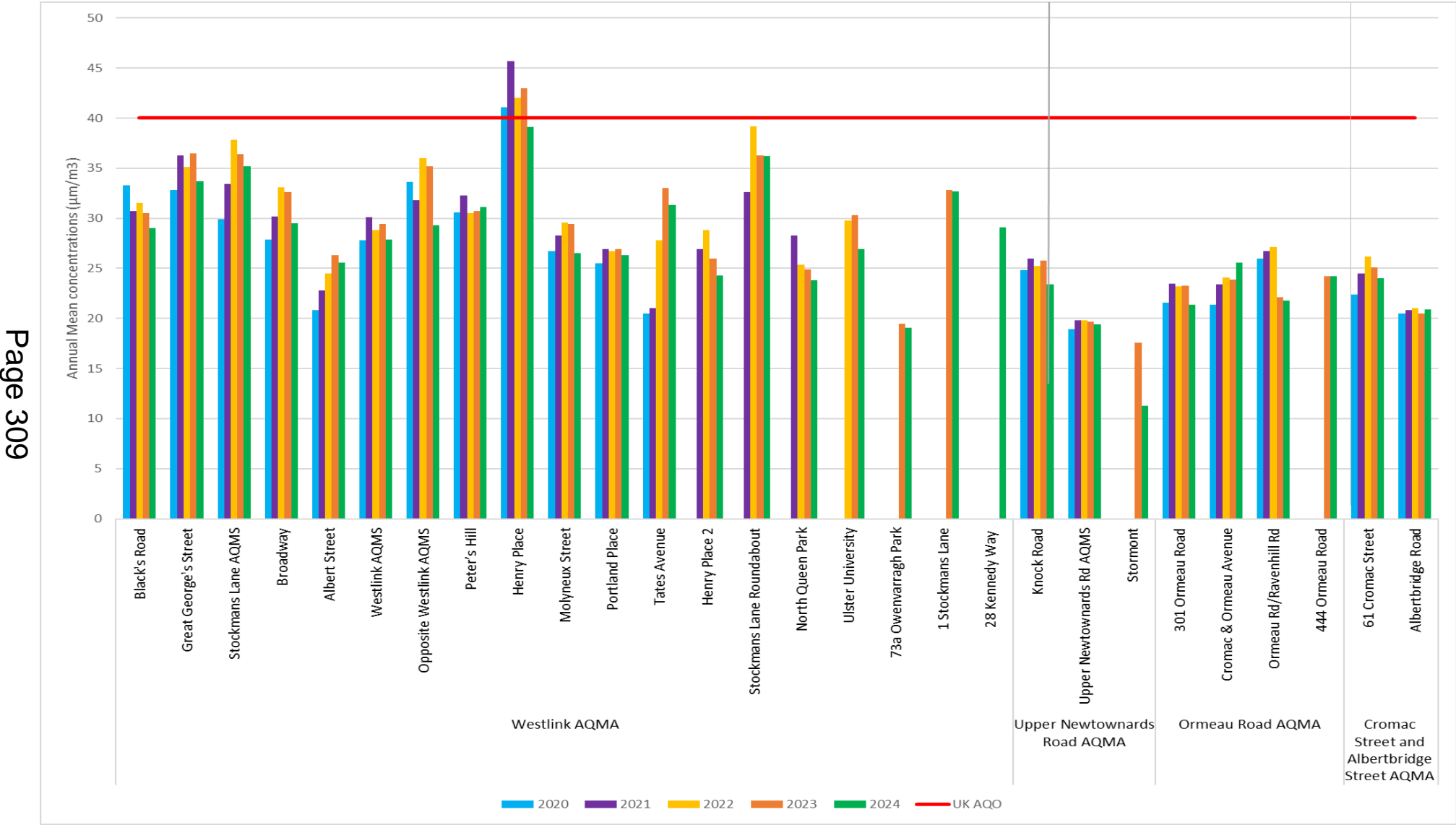


Figure 2.5 – Trends in Annual Mean Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations Measured at Diffusion Tube Monitoring Sites within AQMAs



2.2.2 Particulate Matter (PM₁₀)

As a result of a historic reliance upon solid fuel for domestic heating, Belfast used to experience frequent exceedances of the 24-hour and annual mean objectives for particulate matter (PM₁₀) across the city. However, with completion of the city's smoke control programme and the widespread availability of natural gas to all sectors, emissions of particulate matter have decreased significantly since around 2000. As a result, the council was able to decommission its Belfast Clara Street particulate matter monitoring site in east Belfast in 2007.

However, as domestic and industrial emissions were addressed, so emissions of particulate matter from road transport along the M1 Motorway and A12 Westlink corridor gained in prominence. Upon completion of the council's first review and assessment of air quality in 2004, it was concluded that the M1 Motorway and A12 Westlink corridor should be declared as an Air Quality Management Area on the basis of modelled and monitored exceedances of the 24-hour and annual mean objectives for particulate matter.

As highlighted in the subsequent 2006 Air Quality Action Plan for Belfast, a range of structural improvements, designed to relieve traffic congestion, were completed for the M1 Motorway and A12 Westlink corridor. As a result, monitored levels of particulate matter began to decline within this Air Quality Management Area (Figure 2.6)

In terms of exceedances of the 40 µg/m³ particulate matter annual mean objective, there have been no exceedances of the annual mean objective within this AQMA since 2008. Monitoring data from the Belfast Westlink site at Roden Street, which was established in 2010 and is located within the M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink Air Quality Management Area, indicated no exceedances of particulate matter objectives up until 2014 whereupon PM₁₀ monitoring was discontinued at this site. Particulate matter monitoring continues however at the Stockman's Lane site.

Reflecting upon the particulate matter 24-hour mean objective data, as summarised in Table 2.8, the data has remained comfortably below the objective at all monitoring sites during recent years.

On the basis of historical monitoring data, which demonstrated sustained improvements in particulate matter, the council revoked the M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink Air Quality Management Area for exceedances of the particulate matter annual and 24-hour mean objectives in September 2015.

2024 results, with an annual mean of $18.0 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ recorded at the Stockman's Lane site are similar to previous several years' results - with and without Covid-19 restrictions. It is considered that more information is required to accurately investigate the impact of the Covid-19 lockdowns on particulate matter concentrations; the consistency in annual means recorded at the Stockman's Lane could be due to increased levels of 'working from home' during the pandemic, which may have resulted in increased domestic combustion processes, replacing commercial combustion particulate matter emissions, which are likely to have been reduced due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Nevertheless Figure 2.6 shows that the 2024 levels of PM_{10} recorded at Stockman's Lane ($18.0 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) and Belfast Centre ($12.8 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) sites are similar to several previous years. Overall, there were no exceedances of the 24-hour and annual mean objectives for particulate matter (PM_{10}) in Belfast.

Moreover, during 2023, Belfast City Council completed a Detailed Assessment for the city, for PM_{10} , $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ and NO_2 pollutants. Detailed atmospheric dispersion modelling was undertaken for a 2019 base year and for a 2028 forward projection year for PM_{10} .

The outcome of the detailed assessment for PM_{10} indicated that there were no predicted exceedances of the relevant PM_{10} AQOs in either the 2019 base year or 2028 forward projection year. The outcome and conclusions of this 2023 Detailed Assessment are in accordance with the conclusions of previous Updating and Screening Assessments, Progress Reports and Detailed Assessments undertaken by the council in respect of PM_{10} .

Table 2.7 – Results of Automatic Monitoring for PM₁₀: Comparison with Annual Mean Objective

Site ID	Site Type	Within AQMA?	Valid Data Capture for Monitoring Period % ^a	Valid Data Capture 2024 % ^b	Confirm Gravimetric Equivalent (Y or N/A)	Annual Mean Concentration (µg/m ³)				
						2020* ^c	2021* ^c	2022* ^c	2023* ^c	2024 ^c
CM1 Belfast Centre (Lombard Street)	Urban Background	N	100	100	Y	12	13	13.9	12.6	12.8
CM4 Belfast Stockman's Lane	Roadside	Y (Westlink)	97	97	Y	17	19	18.2	16.6	18.0

In bold, exceedance of the PM₁₀ annual mean AQS objective of 40 µg/m³

^a i.e. data capture for the monitoring period, in cases where monitoring was only carried out for part of the year

^b i.e. data capture for the full calendar year (e.g. if monitoring was carried out for six months the maximum data capture for the full calendar year would be 50%)

^c Means should be “annualised” as in Boxes 7.9 and 7.10 of LAQM.TG(22), if valid data capture is less than 75%

* Annual mean concentrations for previous years are optional

Figure 2.6 – Trends in Annual Mean PM₁₀ Concentrations

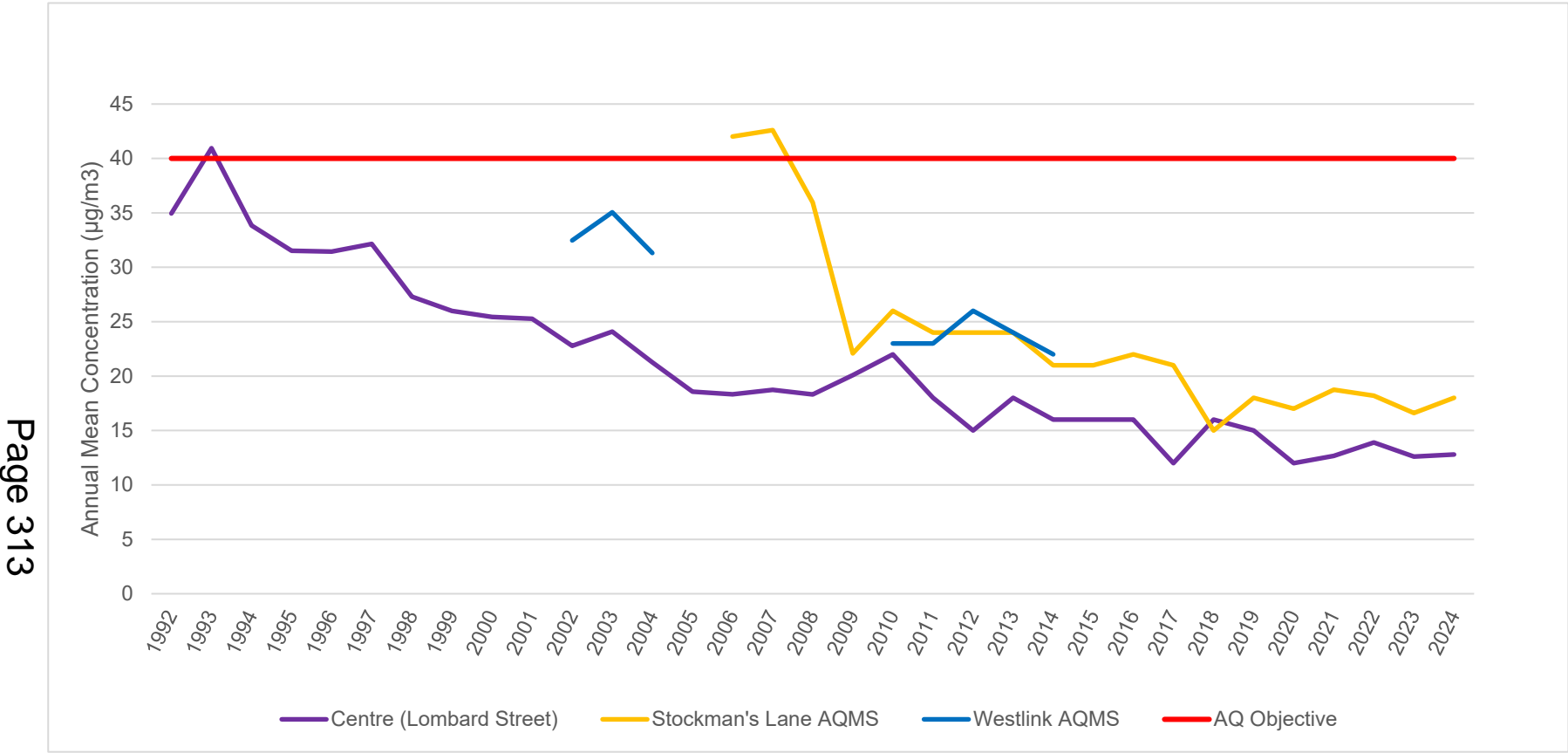


Table 2.8 – Results of Automatic Monitoring for PM₁₀: Comparison with 24-hour Mean Objective

Site ID	Site Type	Within AQMA?	Valid Data Capture for Monitoring Period % ^a	Valid Data Capture 2024 % ^b	Confirm Gravimetric Equivalent (Y or N/A)	Number of Daily Means > 50µg/m ³				
						2020* ^c	2021* ^c	2022* ^c	2023* ^c	2024 ^c
CM1 Belfast Centre (Lombard Street)	Urban Background	N	100	100	Y	1	0	4	1	0
CM4 Belfast Stockman's Lane	Roadside	Y (Westlink)	97	97	Y	1	1	7	0	1

In bold, exceedance of the PM₁₀ daily mean AQS objective (50 µg/m³ – not to be exceeded more than 35 times per year)

^a i.e. data capture for the monitoring period, in cases where monitoring was only carried out for part of the year

^b i.e. data capture for the full calendar year (e.g. if monitoring was carried out for six months the maximum data capture for the full calendar year would be 50%)

^c if data capture for full calendar year is less than 85%, include the 90.4th percentile of 24-hour means in brackets

* Number of exceedances for previous years is optional

2.2.3 Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂)

As a result of a historic reliance upon solid fuel for domestic heating, Belfast City used to experience frequent and widespread exceedances of the 15-minute, 1-hour and 24-hour mean objectives for sulphur dioxide (SO₂). However, with completion of the city's smoke control programme and the widespread availability of natural gas to all sectors, levels of sulphur dioxide have decreased dramatically since 2000. There have been no exceedances of any sulphur dioxide objective within the city since 2002. Sustained low levels of sulphur dioxide have meant that the council, in consultation with Defra, has been able to terminate ambient monitoring at all locations with the exception of the Belfast Centre AURN site at Lombard Street. No Air Quality Management Areas have been declared for sulphur dioxide across Belfast.

Recent sulphur dioxide monitoring data from the Belfast Centre site is summarised in Table 2.9. As indicated, no exceedances of any objective were observed during 2024.

Table 2.9 – Results of Automatic Monitoring for SO₂: Comparison with Objectives

Site ID	Site Type	Within AQMA?	Valid Data Capture for Monitoring Period % ^a	Valid Data Capture 2024 % ^b	Number of: ^c		
					15-minute Means > 266 µg/m ³	1-hour Means > 350 µg/m ³	24-hour Means > 125 µg/m ³
Belfast Centre (Lombard Street)	Urban Background	N	97	97	0	0	0

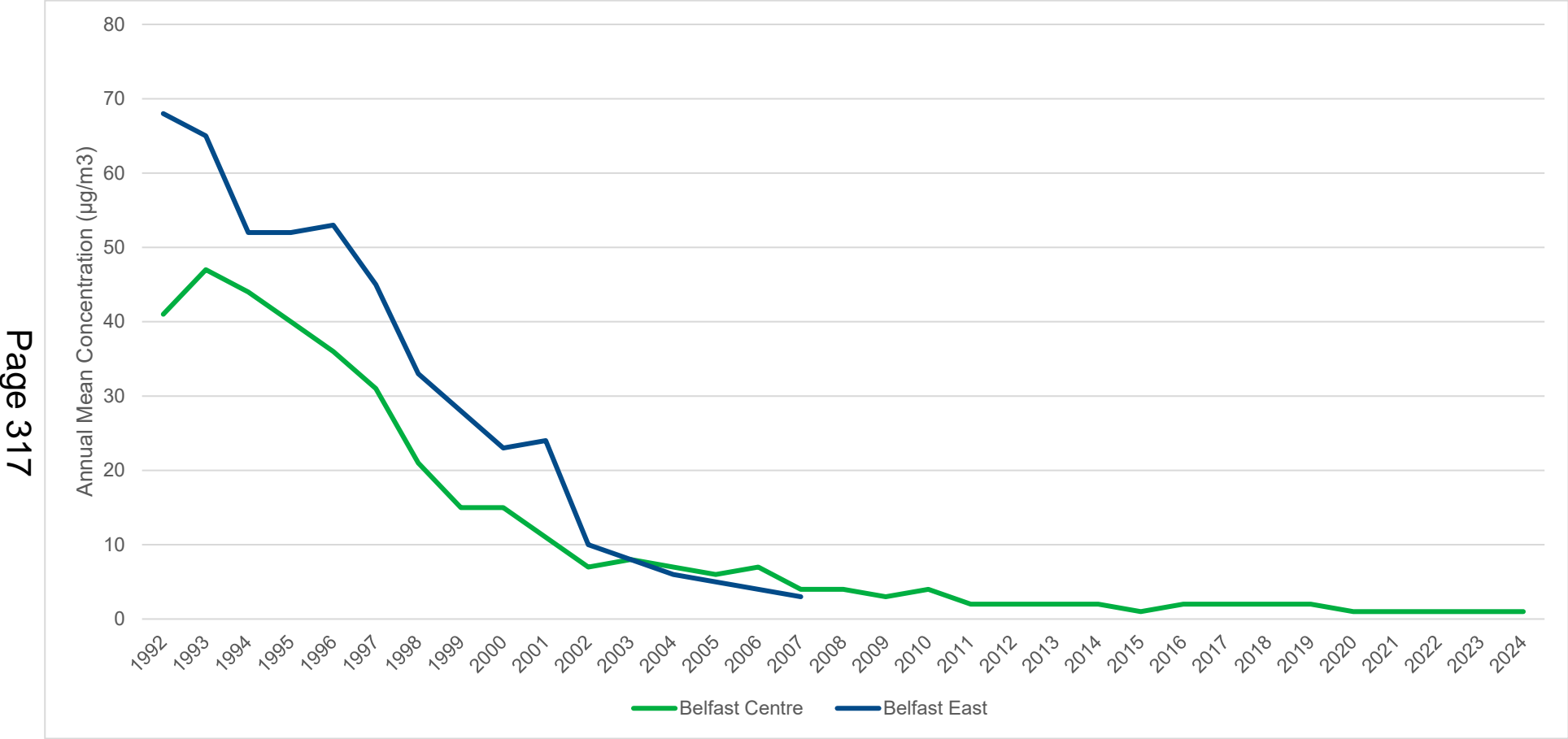
In bold, exceedance of the relevant AQS objective (15-min mean = 35 allowed/year; 1-hour mean = 24 allowed/year; 24-hour mean = 3 allowed/year)

^a i.e. data capture for the monitoring period, in cases where monitoring was only carried out for part of the year

^b i.e. data capture for the full calendar year (e.g. if monitoring was carried out for six months the maximum data capture for the full calendar year would be 50%)

^c if data capture for full calendar year is less than 85%, include the relevant percentile in bracket (in µg/m³): 15-min mean = 99.9th; 1-hour mean = 99.7th; 24-hour mean = 99.2th percentile.

Figure 2.7 – Trends in Annual Mean Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂) Concentrations



2.2.4 Benzene

Benzene concentrations have been monitored at the Belfast Centre Lombard Street and Belfast Roadside sites since 2002. The Belfast Centre site monitors benzene exposure for the City Centre, whilst the Belfast Roadside site monitored benzene concentrations on the Upper Newtownards Road. Whilst monitoring concluded at the Belfast Upper Newtownards Road site in October 2007, no exceedances of the 2010 Air Quality Strategy objective (3.25 µg/m³ running annual mean) nor the 2010 EU Limit Value (5 µg/m³ annual mean) for benzene have been recorded in Belfast since 2002.

Previous rounds of review and assessment and monitoring results going back to 2018, and provided in Table 2.10 below, confirm that there have been no exceedances of the running annual mean of 3.25 µg/m³ for benzene within Belfast over recent years.

Table 2.10 – Benzene Annual Mean Concentrations for the Belfast Centre Site 2020 – 2024

Site ID	Site type	Within AQMA? Which AQMA?	Valid Data Capture 2024 %	Running annual mean concentrations (µg/m ³)				
				2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Belfast Centre (Lombard Street)	Urban Background	N	96	0.37	0.39	0.38	0.42	0.39

2.2.5 Other Pollutants Monitored

Fine Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5})

Fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) concentrations have been monitored at the Belfast Centre AURN site since 2008. Although it is not a statutory requirement for NI local authorities to report on PM_{2.5} levels, as this pollutant is not in scope of LAQM regulations, Belfast City Council has nevertheless included PM_{2.5} results for 2024 within this progress report - Table 2.11 and Figure 2.8 below.

The annual mean for this pollutant in 2024 was 7.4 µg/m³, which is substantially below the UK air quality annual mean objective of 20 µg/m³, to be achieved by 2020.

Although Belfast does not experience monitored exceedances of any air quality strategy objectives, we are aware of growing concerns around the effects of the PM_{2.5} fraction on human health. Therefore, although not included in Regulations at present for Northern Ireland councils, Belfast City Council has proactively opted to monitor and assess ambient PM_{2.5} concentrations within Belfast.

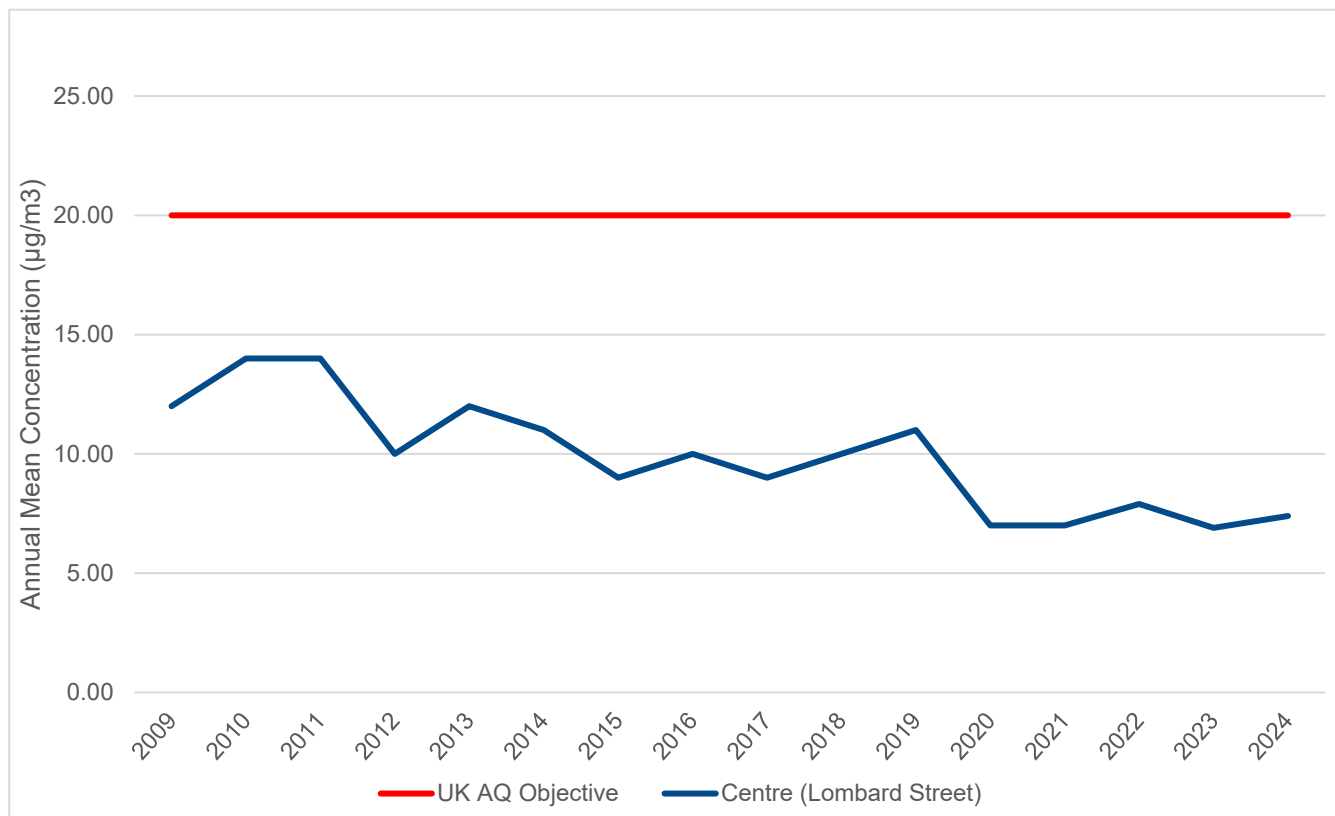
Moreover, Belfast City Council has recently completed a Detailed Assessment for the city, for PM₁₀, PM_{2.5} and NO₂ pollutants. Detailed atmospheric dispersion modelling was undertaken for a 2019 base year and for a 2028 forward projection year for PM_{2.5}. The dispersion modelling was validated, verified and adjusted using data from Belfast City Council various automatic particulate monitors as well as additional PM_{2.5} monitoring undertaken by Zephyr small sensor air quality monitors.

The detailed atmospheric dispersion modelling indicated that there were no sensitive receptor locations where predicted 2019 annual mean PM_{2.5} concentrations were greater than 20µg/m³. The highest predicted annual mean PM_{2.5} concentration in 2019 was 14.1µg/m³, at a non-residential location. For 2028, there are similarly no predicted annual mean PM_{2.5} concentrations greater than 20µg/m³ and therefore unlikely to be locations of exceedance of the UK annual mean PM_{2.5} AQO.

Table 2.11 – PM_{2.5} Annual Mean Levels for the Belfast Centre Site 2020-2024

Site ID	Site type	Within AQMA? Which AQMA?	Valid Data Capture 2024%	Annual mean concentrations (µg/m ³)				
				2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Belfast Centre (Lombard Street)	Urban Background	N	100%	7.0	7.0	7.9	6.9	7.4

Figure 2.8 – Trends in Annual Mean PM_{2.5} Concentrations at Belfast Centre Monitoring Site.



Additional ambient air quality monitoring

Since 2021, Belfast City Council has also carried out an additional monitoring, using Earthsense Zephyr air quality monitors, across the city as part of the Detailed Assessment and School Streets Monitoring projects. The Zephyr monitor is an indicative grade air quality analyser and is used to monitor NO₂ using electrochemical sensors, and PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} using optical particle counting sensors giving real-time results every minute. This additional non-LAQM monitoring methodology and results are summarised within Appendix B.

2.2.6 Summary of Compliance with AQS Objectives

Belfast City Council has examined the results from monitoring within its district. Concentrations of ambient pollutants, as prescribed in the Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, outside of existing Air Quality Management Areas, are all below the respective objectives at relevant receptor locations. It is therefore the council's considered view that there is no need to proceed to a Detailed Assessment at this time.

Moreover, a Detailed Assessment for the city for NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} concluded in March 2023, indicated that there were no predicted exceedances of any AQOs in relation to particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) for a 2019 base year and for a 2028 forward assessment year. In relation to NO₂, there were no predicted exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide UK annual mean objective for the 2028 (forward assessment year) however, there were some predicted exceedances of the 40 µg/m³ nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective at a number of sensitive receptor locations during 2019. However, all of these receptors are located within, or near to the boundaries of the existing Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) along the M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink corridor (AQMA 1) and East Bridge Street / Cromac Street (AQMA 2).

During 2023, new diffusion tube monitoring sites were established in order to investigate the detailed assessment predicted exceedances of the annual mean nitrogen dioxide objective. On the basis of this additional monitoring (no exceedances recorded in 2023), the conclusions of the Detailed Assessment, and new 2024 monitoring described in this Progress Report, Belfast City Council is content that there is no requirement to extend / amend the boundary of any AQMA at this time.

The council will however continue to monitor ambient conditions across the city in order to confirm that recent improvements in air quality are sustained and that those locations where poorer air quality persist are identified and addressed.

3 New Local Developments

3.1 Road Traffic Sources

The following road traffic sources, which may have an impact on air quality, have been considered since the last Updating and Screening Assessment:

- Narrow congested streets with residential properties close to the kerb.
- Busy streets where people may spend one hour or more close to traffic.
- Roads with a high flow of buses and/or HGVs.
- Junctions.
- New roads constructed or proposed since the last Updating and Screening Assessment.
- Roads with significantly changed traffic flows.
- Bus or coach stations.

Belfast City Council confirms that as there have been no significant changes to any of the above-mentioned sources since the 2024 Updating and Screening Assessment, and there is no need to proceed to a Detailed Assessment.

We would advise, however, that the new Belfast Transport Hub, located adjacent to Great Victoria Street, is now operational, although the Department for Infrastructure and Translink are continuing to finalise construction works at the Hub. Known as Grand Central Station (<https://www.translink.co.uk/bgcs>), the new transport hub provides a new integrated public transport interchange for Belfast comprising a new station concourse, 26 bus stands, 8 railway platforms, bus maintenance and parking, a bus access bridge, cycle and taxi provision, car parking, a new public square, public realm improvements, highway improvements and infrastructure improvements.

Belfast City Council confirms that the abovementioned development ([LA04/2017/1388/F](#)) was considered through the Department for Infrastructure's strategic planning consultation process; an Air Quality Impact Assessment, submitted for the proposed station development, as an aspect of a wider Environmental Statement, demonstrated that the development will not have a significant adverse impact on ambient air quality and relevant human health receptors.

3.2 Other Transport Sources

The following additional transport sources, which may have an impact on air quality, have been considered since the Updating and Screening Assessment:

- Airports.
- Locations where diesel or steam trains are regularly stationary for periods of 15 minutes or more, with potential for relevant exposure within 15m.
- Locations with a large number of movements of diesel locomotives, and potential long-term relevant exposure within 30m.
- Ports for shipping.

Belfast City Council confirms that as there have been no significant changes to any of the above-mentioned sources since the 2024 Updating and Screening Assessment, there is no need to proceed to a Detailed Assessment.

3.3 Industrial Sources

The following industrial sources, which may have an impact on air quality, have been considered since the 2024 Updating and Screening Assessment:

- Industrial installations: new or proposed installations for which an air quality assessment has been carried out.
- Industrial installations: existing installations where emissions have increased substantially, or new relevant exposure has been introduced.
- Industrial installations: new or significantly changed installations with no previous air quality assessment.
- Major fuel storage depots storing petrol.
- Petrol stations.
- Poultry farms.

Within Northern Ireland, the permitting of prescribed industrial activities under The Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013, as amended, is undertaken by both local authorities and the Industrial Pollution and Radiochemical Inspectorate (IPRI) of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural

Affairs. IPRI has responsibility for the permitting of what are defined as Part A and B processes whereas district councils permit Part C processes for emissions into the air.

IPRI have confirmed that there were no new or substantial changes to emissions for 2024 for the Belfast City Council area from those sites regulated by the Inspectorate.

Belfast City Council therefore confirms that there have been no other changes to any of the above-mentioned sources since the 2024 Updating and Screening Assessment, and there is consequently no need to proceed to a Detailed Assessment.

3.4 Commercial and Domestic Sources

The following commercial and domestic sources, which may have an impact on ambient air quality, have been considered since the last Updating and Screening Assessment:

- Biomass combustion plant – individual installations.
- Areas where the combined impact of several biomass combustion sources may be relevant.
- Areas where domestic solid fuel burning may be relevant.
- Combined Heat and Power (CHP) plant.

Belfast City Council confirms that the above installations are considered as a part of the council's planning process. Where necessary, an Air Quality Impact Assessment is requested to demonstrate that the development proposal will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on local ambient air quality or on relevant human health receptors. Further information on planning applications, which have required an Air Quality Impact Assessment, is provided in Section 4 of this report.

The Assessments submitted to date have demonstrated that the proposed developments will not have a significant adverse impact on ambient air quality in the vicinity of the development sites. Moreover, domestic background sources (which include domestic, commercial, and institutional space heating) were estimated as part of BCC Detailed Assessment, which was concluded in 2023, and reported in the last year's Updating and Screening Assessment.

Accordingly, it is considered that there is no need to proceed to a new Detailed Assessment for commercial and domestic sources.

3.5 New Developments with Fugitive or Uncontrolled Sources

The following new developments with fugitive or uncontrolled sources, which may have an impact on air quality, have been considered since the last Updating and Screening Assessment:

- Landfill sites.
- Quarries.
- Unmade haulage roads on industrial sites.
- Waste transfer stations, etc.
- Other potential sources of fugitive particulate matter emissions.

Belfast City Council confirms that as there have been no significant changes to any of the above-mentioned sources or any new sources since the 2024 Updating and Screening Assessment, there is no need to proceed to a Detailed Assessment for fugitive or uncontrolled sources.

Belfast City Council confirms that there are no new or newly identified local developments, which may have an impact on air quality, within the Local Authority area. Belfast City Council further confirms that all the following sources have been considered:

- **Road traffic sources**
- **Other transport sources**
- **Industrial sources**
- **Commercial and domestic sources**
- **New developments with fugitive or uncontrolled sources.**

4 Planning Applications.

During 2024, Belfast City Council considered numerous planning applications for developments that had the potential to negatively impact upon ambient air quality.

Detailed or screening ambient air quality impact assessments were requested for all of the following proposed developments that in the council's view had the potential to have a negative impact on ambient air quality or to introduce new human health receptors into an area of existing poor ambient air quality. A summary of Planning Applications and Air Quality Impact Assessments (AQIA) submitted or requested during 2024, in support of larger or more significant developments is presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 - Major New Developments which had the potential to have a negative impact on ambient air quality in the 2024 period.

Location	Development Description	Actions Taken
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 associated works. Ref: LA04/2024/0126/f	An AQIA was submitted and reviewed; based on the information provided in relation to combustion sources and the Environmental Protection UK and the Institute of Air Quality Management, Land-use Planning & Development Control: Planning for Air Quality (January 2017) guidance, this Service had no concerns in relation to the ambient air quality impact of the operational phase of this development proposal. However, It was noted that construction phase was not considered as part of Air Quality Screening Assessment. The following informative was applied to the response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction dust management measures shall be developed in accordance with the provisions of the Institute of Air Quality Management publication Guidance on the Assessment of Dust from Demolition and Construction (v2.2 2024). These dust management measures shall be implemented throughout the duration of the construction phase of the development. The proposal is under consideration.
Lands west of Donegall Quay, east of Tomb Street, south of Corporation Square	Proposed building ranging between 5 - 10 storeys (20.60m - 42.35m) including offices (Class B1a), ground floor retail (Class A1), community and cultural (Class D1) and restaurant uses, and licensed restaurant at upper level with external terrace, rooftop plant area, landscaping, servicing, public realm improvements, and all associated site works. LA04/2023/4613/F	An AQIA was submitted and revised; this Service advised: <i>'estimated road transport emissions, as a result of the proposed development, are likely to have a 'negligible' impact on nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter concentrations in the local area.</i> However, the following advice was applied to the response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> in the event that any centralised combustion sources (boilers, CHP, generators or biomass) are proposed and there is a risk of impact at relevant receptor locations as per the criteria detailed within the Environmental Protection UK and Institute of Air Quality Management, Land-use Planning & Development Control: Planning For Air Quality (January 2017), this Service would request that updated Air Quality Impact Assessment will be required. The proposal was granted on 24/07/2024.
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 / storerooms, including car parking provision, cycle parking, refuse storage, landscaping, and associated site and access works. Ref: LA04/2024/0369/F	An AQIA was submitted and reviewed; the assessment demonstrated that the proposed development will not have adverse impact on air quality in the vicinity of the site and that future occupants of the development will not be exposed to air quality concentrations exceeding UK Air Quality Objectives' The following condition was applied to the response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> in the event that any substantial centralised combustion sources (boilers, CHP, generator or biomass) are proposed and there is a risk of impact at relevant receptor locations as per the criteria detailed within the Environmental Protection UK and Institute of Air Quality Management, Land-use Planning & Development Control: Planning For Air Quality (January 2017), this Service would request that an updated Air Quality Impact Assessment will be required. The assessment shall include details of the combustion plant to be installed, to include emission rates and flue termination heights of the proposed combustion systems and it must demonstrate that there will be no exceedances of Air Quality Strategy objectives at relevant human receptor locations. A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) was also requested by this Service. The proposal is under consideration

Lands to the northeast of Olympic House, east of Queen's Road and south of Belfast Metropolitan College, Belfast.	Erection of Purpose-Built Managed Student Accommodation development with additional use of accommodation by further or higher education institutions outside term time, comprising 4 no. blocks of accommodation with building heights ranging from 5 to 9 storeys and up to 35,850 sqm gross external floorspace, café, associated communal facilities including landscaped courtyards, internal bin stores and cycle stores, PV array, disabled parking, public realm provision, associated site works and extension of Titanic Boulevard to form new junction with Hamilton Road. Ref: LA04/2024/0681/F	An AQIA was submitted and reviewed, with a response provided on 02/09/2024. It was concluded that estimated transport emissions, as a result of the proposed development, are likely to have a negligible impact on nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter concentrations in the local area. The AQIA additionally advised that 'the heating and cooling systems and associated emissions for the Proposed Development are not likely to be significant'. The following condition was applied to the response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the event that any centralised combustion sources (boilers, CHP, generator or biomass) are proposed and there is a risk of impact at relevant receptor locations as per the criteria detailed within the Environmental Protection UK and Institute of Air Quality Management, Land-use Planning & Development Control: Planning For Air Quality (January 2017), this Service requires that an updated Air Quality Impact Assessment to be submitted to planning service for review and approval in writing. <p>The proposal was granted on 02/12/2024.</p>
Location: Lands at, 13 Barrack Street, Belfast, BT12 4AH	4No. townhouses. (Amended Site location and drawings). Ref: LA04/2022/0777/O	The proposed residential development lies adjacent to the Westlink corridor, where transport related pollutants' concentrations are of principal concern. Therefore, this Service initially advised that this development has a potential to introduce new receptors into an area of poor air quality. The submitted AQIA has sufficiently demonstrated that the proposed development will not have adverse impact on air quality in the vicinity of the site and that future occupants of the development and nearby receptors will not be exposed to air quality concentrations exceeding UK Air Quality Objectives. Outline planning permission was granted on 16/09/2024
14 Dublin Road, Belfast	Proposed 14 storey (plus basement) purpose-Built Grade A Office premises with retail/restaurant unit at ground floor, including external landscaped terrace areas, public realm works, and all associated site works Ref: LA04/2023/4366/F	An AQIA was submitted and reviewed, with a response provided on NIPP dated 13/02/2024 stating, <i>that estimated transport emissions, as a result of the proposed development, are likely to have a negligible impact on nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter concentrations in the local area. Moreover, the proposal is unlikely to include any substantial centralised combustion system.</i> <i>However, no information concerning heating and hot water provisions has been provided/confirmed within the submitted AQA</i> The following conditions were applied to the response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the event that any centralised combustion sources (boilers, CHP, generator or biomass) are proposed and there is a risk of impact at relevant receptor locations as per the criteria detailed within the Environmental Protection UK and Institute of Air Quality Management, Land-use Planning & Development Control: Planning For Air Quality (January 2017), this Service would request that an updated Air Quality Impact Assessment be submitted in writing to the Planning authority for review and approval. Where the Air Quality Impact Assessment indicates exceedances of air quality objectives, appropriate mitigation measures shall be presented, and these mitigation measures shall be installed and retained thereafter. <p>A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) was also requested by this Service.</p> <p>Planning permission was granted on 13/05/2024</p>
14 Dublin Road, Belfast, BT2 7HN	Erection of 17 storey Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) with additional use of accommodation outside term time comprising 459 no. units with communal facilities, internal and external communal amenity space and ancillary accommodation Ref: LA04/2023/4373/F	An AQIA was submitted and reviewed, with a response provided on NIPP dated 13/02/2024; this Service was able to conclude that estimated transport emissions, as a result of the proposed development, were likely to have a negligible impact on nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter concentrations in the local area. However, the AQA assessment has seemingly considered mostly the impact from road transport emissions on human health receptors; consequently, the following conditions were applied to the response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the event that any centralised combustion sources (boilers, CHP, generator or biomass) are proposed and there is a risk of impact at relevant receptor locations as per the criteria detailed within the Environmental Protection UK and Institute of Air Quality Management, Land-use Planning & Development Control: Planning For Air Quality (January 2017), this Service would request that an updated Air Quality Impact Assessment be submitted in writing to the Planning authority for review and approval. Where the Air Quality Impact Assessment indicates exceedances of air quality objectives, appropriate mitigation measures shall be presented, and these mitigation measures shall be installed and retained thereafter. <p>The proposal was granted on 10/05/2024</p>
18-50 Shankill Road, Belfast, BT13 2BD	Demolition of existing structure on site and construction of 24hr Petrol Filling Station (6no. pump) with associated canopy; 1no. control room/store; service facilities (air/water/AdBlue pump); tanker stand; 1no. pump house; car wash (drive thru and manual facilities);	An AQIA and other supportive information provided was reviewed by the AQO. This Service was able to conclude that the proposed petrol station development was unlikely to give rise to a significant adverse impact on local air ambient quality or give rise to exceedances of relevant objectives. Planning permission was granted on 06/09/2024

	new 1.2-3m block wall to the rear and side of the site; alteration of existing entrance; creation of a new exit and all other associated site and access works. (amended plans and description) Ref: LA04/2023/4201/F	
38 Boucher Road, Belfast, BT12 6HR	Proposed development to create a private medical facility (a hospital within Class C3) comprising of the change of use of part of retail warehouse and the extension of the building to create a private medical facility with a significant element of overnight residential care together with all associated ancillary development. LA04/2024/0714/F	The submitted AQIA advised that there is a significant reduction in vehicles' number predicted as a result of this proposal. Moreover, Transport Assessment submitted as part of this application confirms that the proposed development will result in less trips upon the surrounding road network than the extant approval. However, a standby generator was proposed as part of this development; consequently, the following condition was applied to the response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the event that any centralised combustion sources (boilers, CHP, biomass or generators) are proposed and there is a risk of impact at relevant receptor locations as per the criteria detailed within the Environmental Protection UK and Institute of Air Quality Management, Land-use Planning & Development Control: Planning For Air Quality (January 2017), this Service would request that an updated Air Quality Impact Assessment be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority prior to the installation of the plant. The assessment shall include details of the combustion plant to be installed, to include emission rates and flue termination heights of the proposed combustion systems and must demonstrate that there will be no exceedances of the Air Quality Strategy objectives at relevant human receptor locations, associated with operation of the proposed combustion plant and with the overall development. Planning permission was granted on 11/03/2025.
Lands comprising existing Fanum House, Norwood House and adjacent lands, No's 96-110 Great Victoria Street, Belfast, BT2 7BE	Demolition of the existing buildings on the site and construction of a new Purpose-Built Managed Student Accommodation development across 4 blocks of 6 to 18 stories in height, comprising of 560 student rooms, including landscaped roof terraces, associated amenity, site and access works Ref: LA04/2024/0664/F	Based on information presented in the AQIA, Transport Assessment, and reflecting upon the council's monitoring in the proposed development vicinity, this Service was able to conclude that estimated transport emissions associated with the proposed development in combination with existing local road traffic are unlikely to give rise to a significant adverse impact on local air ambient quality or give rise to exceedances of relevant objectives. However, AQIA assessment has seemingly considered mostly the impact from road transport emissions on human health receptors; development.' Accordingly, this Service recommended the following condition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the event that any substantial centralised combustion sources (boilers, CHP, generator or biomass) are proposed and there is a risk of impact at relevant receptor locations, as per the criteria detailed within the Environmental Protection UK and Institute of Air Quality Management, Land-use Planning & Development Control: Planning For Air Quality (January 2017), an updated Air Quality Impact Assessment shall be submitted to the Planning Authority, for approval in writing, which includes details of the combustion plant to be installed, emission rates and flue termination heights of the proposed combustion systems. The assessment must demonstrate that there will be no exceedances of Air Quality Strategy objectives at relevant human receptor locations. Planning permission was granted on 13/12/2024
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 Ref: LA04/2024/0626/F	Based on information presented in the AQIA, Transport Assessment, and reflecting upon the council's monitoring in the proposed development vicinity, this Service had no ambient air quality concerns regarding the operational phase of the proposed 1 Havelock House residential redevelopment. EH response dated 21.1024. Under consideration
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) Ref: LA04/2023/4281/O	A simple assessment of operational phase emissions has been undertaken by comparing the development against the screening criteria outlined in <i>Environmental Protection UK and the Institute of Air Quality Management, Land use Planning & Development Control: Planning for Air Quality (January 2017)</i> guidance. Based on information presented within the AQIA this Service was able to conclude that the proposed development will not have adverse impact on air quality in the vicinity of the site and that future occupants of the development will not be exposed to air quality concentrations exceeding UK Air Quality Objectives. However, the following condition was requested in relation to construction phase: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prior to commencement of development on site, including demolition, site clearance or site preparation, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) shall be produced by any appointed main contractor. The CEMP shall include measures to control noise, dust and vibration during the demolition and construction phase, demonstrating the use of 'best practicable means' (BPM). The CEMP shall include a rationale for, and details of, the chosen piling methodology and demonstrate that

		<p>noise and vibration levels will not have an adverse impact on nearby premises. The CEMP must also have due regard to Parts 1 and 2 of BS 5228:2009+A1:2014 Code of practice for construction hours of work, noise and vibration control measures on construction and open sites. The CEMP shall include the dust management measures, as detailed within Chapter 5 (Table 21) of Crestwood Environmental Ltd Air Quality Assessment, Queen Street PBSA, Belfast, 11 October 2024 and have regard to the IAQM, 'Guidance on the assessment of dust from demolition and construction version 12.1', dated August 2023. The CEMP shall include arrangements for communication and liaison with nearby sensitive receptors throughout the construction phase.</p> <p>Planning permission was granted on 30/05/2025</p>
Royal Victoria Hospital 274 Grosvenor Road, Belfast, BT12 6BA	<p>New 2 storey regional radiopharmaceutical facility, with associated single storey ancillary services accommodation, bin store, and emergency generator and oil tank storage. Amendment to existing car parking layout.</p> <p>Ref: LA04/2023/3649/F</p>	<p>This Service reiterated the following condition which was suggested in its previous response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the event that any combustion sources (including centralised combustion plants: boilers, CHP, biomass or generators) are proposed and there is a risk of impact at relevant receptor locations as per the criteria detailed within the Environmental Protection UK and Institute of Air Quality Management, Land-use Planning & Development Control: Planning For Air Quality (January 2017), this Service would request that an Air Quality Impact Assessment be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority prior to the installation of the plant. The assessment shall include details of the combustion plant to be installed, to include emission rates and flue termination heights of the proposed combustion systems and must demonstrate that there will be no exceedances of the Air Quality Strategy objectives at relevant human receptor locations, associated with operation of the proposed combustion plant and with the overall development. <p>Planning permission was granted on 07/11/2024</p>
Stormont Hotel, 587 Upper Newtownards Road BT4 3LP and adjacent properties at Castlview 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).	<p>LA04/2024/0570/F: 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.</p> <p>LA04/2024/0569/O: Outline planning permission for assisted living retirement apartments.</p>	<p>AQIA and TA were submitted in support of these applications; both air quality and transport assessments advised that the proposed change of use will result in a nett decrease in traffic volumes at the proposed development site when compared with the extant site uses. Furthermore, consultants advised that In terms of space heating, the outline proposal is to utilise direct electric heating for both hot water (hot water cylinder with an immersion) and heating. Consequently, the proposal is unlikely to include a substantial centralised combustion system. However, the following condition was requested in relation LA04/2024/0570/F:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the event that any substantial centralised combustion sources (generators, boilers, CHP or biomass) are proposed as part of this development and there is a risk of impact at relevant receptor locations as per the criteria detailed within the Environmental Protection UK and Institute of Air Quality Management, Land-use Planning & Development Control: Planning For Air Quality (January 2017), this Service may request that an updated Air Quality Impact Assessment be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority prior to the installation of the plant. The assessment shall include details of the combustion plant to be installed, to include emission rates and flue termination heights of the proposed combustion systems and it must demonstrate that there will be no exceedances of Air Quality Strategy objectives at relevant human receptor locations. <p>Under consideration</p>
The Royal Belfast Academical Institution College Square East, Belfast, BT1 6DL	<p>Construction of a new South Wing of the RBAI Campus to include multi-purpose dining hall, 15 general classrooms, a drama suite, a 25m swimming pool, a Board Room suite, living accommodation for the School Steward with PV panels on roof and new, small extension to the Soane Building, to provide improved accessibility and upgraded WC facilities, with associated refurbishment and re-modelling of first and second floor classrooms to the southern end of the Soane Building, the development of landscaped zones including the under-croft area at the Common Hall and new boundary treatment at Durham Street and demolition of the existing dining hall, swimming pool, school steward's house and W-Block.</p>	<p>Based on AQIA, Transport Assessment and Design and Access Statement this Service was able to conclude that estimated transport emissions, as a result of the proposed development, are likely to have a negligible impact on nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter concentrations in the local area. Moreover, the proposals will not involve the use of fossil fuels (oil and gas); consequently, heating/hot water systems emissions for the Proposed Development are not likely to have a significant impact.</p> <p>Planning permission was granted on 22/11/2024</p>
Former Belfast Metropolitan College Campus, Whiterock Road, Belfast, BT12 7PG	<p>Proposed mixed use development comprising of 62No. social housing units (mix of dwellings and apartments) and a new children's</p>	<p>Based on AQIA and TA submitted as part of this application this Service was able to conclude that estimated transport emissions, as a result of the proposed development, are likely to have a negligible impact on nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter concentrations in the local area. However, no information regarding heating or hot water provisions was provided. Consequently, this Service requested that consideration is given to the following condition:</p>

	<p>centre, car parking, landscaping, open space and all associated site and access works.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the event that any substantial centralised combustion sources (generators ,boilers, CHP or biomass) are proposed as part of this development and there is a risk of impact at relevant receptor locations as per the criteria detailed within the Environmental Protection UK and Institute of Air Quality Management, Land-use Planning & Development Control: Planning For Air Quality (January 2017), this Service may request that an Air Quality Impact Assessment be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority prior to the installation of the plant. The assessment shall include details of the combustion plant to be installed, to include emission rates and flue termination heights of the proposed combustion systems and it must demonstrate that there will be no exceedances of Air Quality Strategy objectives at relevant human receptor locations. <p>Planning permission was granted on 25/03/2025</p>
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5 Air Quality Planning Policies

Most developments across the city are subject to the local development planning and the planning process, which provides an opportunity to identify and prevent potential air quality problems from arising in the first place.

In June 2009, and in view of the need for a consistent approach to air quality management as part of the planning process, Belfast City Council launched its '*Air quality and land use planning: A Belfast specific guidance note for developers and air quality consultants*' document. The document outlines what the council's Environmental Protection Unit, as an internal consultee to the Belfast Planning Service, will look for in forming its opinion on a proposed development and its potential impact on ambient air quality.

Since production of this Belfast specific guidance document, Environmental Protection UK (EPUK) and the Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM) have produced their 2017 guidance document entitled, '*Land-Use Planning & Development Control: Planning For Air Quality Guidance from Environmental Protection UK and the Institute of Air Quality Management for the consideration of air quality within the land-use planning and development control processes*'. The council's Environmental Protection Unit now refers to the qualifying criteria set out in this document in order to determine when an Air Quality Impact Assessment is required.

Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP)

Belfast City Council is currently developing its [Local Development Plan \(LDP\)](#) that outlines how land across the city will be used and developed in the future. The LDP is comprised of two development plan documents - the Plan Strategy and the Local Policies Plan.

The LDP [Plan Strategy](#) was adopted in May 2023 and includes a clear commitment to enhance environmental quality, where possible, and in assessing development proposals, it will ensure the consideration of a wide range of environmental factors including ambient air quality. The Council has also published a suite of [Supplementary Planning Guidance](#) (SPG) documents which seek to support, clarify and / or illustrate by example policies within the LDP. Where relevant to a particular development proposal, SPG can be taken into account as a material consideration when determining planning applications. New SPG on

Environmental Quality may be prepared during the plan period (up to 2035) – this will be dependent on business need and whether any new regional policy or guidance is published in due course.

In terms of ambient air quality, one of the Plan Strategy's visions is for '*Building a smart connected and resilient place*'. The Plan therefore encourages the expansion of green infrastructure networks for walking and cycling to encourage active travel and improve air quality and promote increased use of public transport, whilst retaining appropriate provision for cars.

In terms of strategic policies, **SP3 – Improving health and wellbeing** advises that the council will support development that maximises opportunities to improve health and wellbeing, and that development will not be permitted where it will result in significant harm to life, human health or wellbeing. Justification and amplification include that the provision of good quality green open space, linked to a green and blue infrastructure network, will help to improve ambient air quality and provide respite beneficial for enhancing mental health. Improving connectivity between residential and employment areas, which are well served by a range of sustainable travel modes, would encourage active travel and reduce air pollution. This will deliver significant community health benefits.

SP6 - Environmental resilience states that the council will support development where it helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and is adaptable in a changing climate to build environmental resilience. Justification and amplification include that the policy aims to build environmental resilience and support the transition to a low carbon future. It embeds the [Regional Development Strategy](#) (RDS) policy to reduce our carbon footprint and facilitate mitigation and adaptation to climate change, whilst improving ambient air quality.

SP7 – Connectivity states that the council will support connectivity to and within the city by sustainable transport modes, such as public transport, walking and cycling. Land for sustainable transport infrastructure projects will be safeguarded and opportunities to protect and enhance existing provision will be maximised. Justification and amplification include that Belfast has a major transport challenge due to a large 'travel to work' catchment area. A significant number of commuters using private vehicles cause congestion on the key city corridors, leading to increasing air pollution and resulting in the designation of four Air Quality Management Areas, where pollution levels exceed EU standards. There is

consequently a need to improve sustainable transport links with commuter towns and the strategic transport routes shall be protected, as important trade links that contribute to the economic health of the city.

SP8 – Green and blue infrastructure network states that the council will support the development of a green and blue infrastructure network, designating and safeguarding sites and accesses required for the green and blue infrastructure network across the plan area. Justification and amplification include that this policy recognises the opportunity to plan for a green and blue infrastructure network across the plan area, to address the significant challenges of poor health due to an inactive lifestyle, poor connectivity, air pollution and climate change.

Moreover, **Plan Policy ENV1 – Environmental quality** states that planning permission will be granted for development that will maintain and, where possible, enhance environmental quality, and protects communities from materially harmful development. Development must not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, including the following considerations:

- Ground contamination;
- **Air quality;**
- Water quality;
- Noise; and
- Light pollution.

The Policy further advises that the council will also require development to address the following:

- a) Existing land contamination and ensuring that development does not cause contaminated land or pollute water;
- b) Local air quality, particularly nitrogen dioxide and particulates (including in Air Quality Management Areas);**
- c) Protection of the city's designated quiet areas and quiet times of day for businesses (daytime) and residents (night-time); and
- d) The need to limit the city's contribution to light spillage and 'sky glow'.

Justification and amplification in respect of ambient air quality includes that the presence of air pollution can lead to an adverse impact on human health. Air pollution is also known to

adversely affect ecosystems such as water quality, soils, plants and animals. The RDS acknowledges that there is a need to reduce air pollution from transport by the use of more energy efficient transport. The planning system also positively contributes to improving air quality and minimising its harmful impacts. Belfast City Council has declared four Air Quality Management Areas where there are exceedances of nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter objectives. These are: the M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink corridor; Cromac Street / Albertbridge Road; the Upper Newtownards Road; and the Ormeau Road.

Any ambient air quality issue that relates to land use and development is a material planning consideration and factors to be considered include:

- The severity of impacts on ambient air quality;
- Ambient air quality in the area surrounding the proposed development;
- The likely use of the development, i.e. the length of time that people are likely to be exposed at that location; and
- The positive benefits provided through other material considerations.

The Belfast City Council Adopted Plan Strategy documents may be accessed via the following weblink:

[https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/Planning-and-building-control/Planning/Local-development-plan-\(1\)/Local-development-plan/Adoption-of-Plan-Strategy-documents](https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/Planning-and-building-control/Planning/Local-development-plan-(1)/Local-development-plan/Adoption-of-Plan-Strategy-documents)

The LDP Local Policies Plan is currently being prepared and it will set out the Council's local policies and site-specific proposals in relation to development and use of land in Belfast. It will contain local policies, including site specific proposals, designations and land use zonings required to deliver the council's vision, objectives and strategic policies, as set out in the Plan Strategy.

6 Local Transport Plans and Strategies

The Department for Infrastructure are currently preparing a new transport plan which will set the framework for making transport policy and investment decisions up until 2035. The Eastern Transport Plan (ETP) 2035, previously known as the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP), covers five council areas and will also support the preparation of the Local Development Plans for these councils.

The new ETP encompasses the following 'five councils':

- Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council (ANBC);
- Ards and North Down Borough Council (ANDBC);
- Belfast City Council (BCC);
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC); and
- Mid and East Antrim Borough Council (MEABC)

ETP 2035 aims to ensure that the transport network meets the needs of the people and businesses living, working and visiting the ETP area, both now and into the future.

To date key deliverables such as the Vision, Objectives and Guiding Principles have been developed in collaboration with stakeholders. Also, public engagement exercise to launch the ETP, which sought feedback on the draft vision and objectives, took place between 4 September 2023 and 30 October 2023.

Following consideration of the responses from the public engagement exercise and through wider feedback, the vision and objectives have been agreed as:

Deliver an integrated and re-balanced transport network in favour of sustainable, efficient modes, which connects communities creating an accessible, inclusive, safe and prosperous economic region by delivering carbon reduction, improving air quality, enhancing the built and natural environment and facilitating healthy and sustainable travel choices over unnecessary private car travel.

More information on the Eastern Transport Plan (ETP) 2035 can be found here: <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/eastern-transport-plan-etp-2035>

Work on testing schemes, proposed measures and associated evaluation has progressed throughout 2024 and 2025 for the City Centre, and the wider Metropolitan Area.

A draft of the Belfast City Centre Chapter and the Metropolitan Area Chapter of the ETP is anticipated to be available in advance of the LDP Local Policies Plan publication for Belfast City Council with public consultation anticipated to commence in Autumn 2025 (subject to Ministerial approval)

7 Climate Change Strategies

Belfast City Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and established an All Party Working Group on the Climate Crisis, now replaced by a Climate and City Resilience Committee to provide political leadership. In 2021, Belfast City Council appointed a Belfast Climate Commissioner within the organisation who heads up a Climate Team. The Climate Commissioner co-chairs the city's Our Planet Board which provides community oversight of the commitment in the Belfast Agenda to create a sustainable, nature-positive city and delivery of an associated programme of work. The programme of work covers three key areas:

- Re-naturing the city and increasing resilience to climate change
- Creating a sustainable circular economy
- Innovating to net zero

In 2024, the Belfast Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP), was launched to provide a roadmap for Belfast to achieve net-zero carbon emissions and transition to a sustainable, affordable energy system. It outlines pathways and steps for decarbonisation, supporting wider socio-economic goals like job creation and prosperity for residents. The LAEP is a key tool for prioritising and driving energy and heat projects within the city.

Within Council, a Climate Programme Board oversees the delivery of the 2025 Climate Action Plan and a £1 million climate fund. The Climate Action Plan aims to close the gap between BCC's current climate action and its ambition to be a net zero and resilient Council. it sets out a range of actions that will be undertaken by Belfast City Council to build resilience and reduce emissions across its estate and operations. The plan is informed by a climate

risk assessment and annual emission monitoring which is reported on annually and via the Council's public body reporting obligation. All short-term actions have been mainstreamed into the Corporate Annual Delivery Plan for 2025-26. Going forward, the plan will be reviewed annually with priority actions brought forward by Departments for inclusion in the Council's Annual Delivery Plan Ensures that the Climate Action Plan supports the delivery of the Annual Delivery Plan and that climate actions are resourced as part of the annual planning cycle.

Highlighted Council action to date includes:

- Implementation of phase 1 of the Belfast One Million Trees Programme, which sets a target of planting one million trees in the city by 2035.
- Delivery of the Upsurge demonstrator.
- The Belfast Retrofit Delivery Hub in 2022.
- Development of a (draft) Low Emission Vehicle (LEV) Strategy, with the aim of assisting elected members and Council officers in procuring public charge points to enable residents, visitors, and businesses to transition to electric vehicles (and to shift away from private car use to alternative modes of travel) to reduce emissions (2024).
- Delivery of 22 internal climate projects including energy audits, installation of metering and monitoring in our buildings and the development of a digital twin for City Hall, recycling pilots, baselining of species rich grasslands and other initiatives.
- Annual disclosure to the Carbon Disclosure Project, the UK Scorecards, Global Sustainable Destination Index etc have consistently resulted in high scores which has established Belfast as a climate leader globally. For example, Belfast has retained an A-grade in the global Carbon Disclosure Project framework, recognition for the work undertaken to date in the city (2024). Belfast is also accredited as a Sustainable Food Place.
- Development of a single use plastics policy for the Council.
- Development of an accessible climate data platform to track progress on delivering climate adaptation and mitigation actions.
- Completion of a feasibility study, market readiness assessment, business model development, route to market, for a low carbon heat network.

Current development work strands include delivering the Council's Climate Action Plan, the Belfast Local Energy Action Plan, the One Million Trees project, the UPSURGE project, and

the Pathfinders project. The Council is also supporting and facilitating the development of a sustainable food strategy, and preparation of mandatory Public Bodies Duties Report, which will commence in October 2025. A climate data platform has been developed and we are developing a portal to encourage the uptake of solar across the city and installation of solar PV and battery systems in the Markets area. We are also developing a partnership approach to a cross tenure neighbourhood retrofit pilot (and are part of a twinning project with Galway) and we continue support the creation of an exemplar net zero park to develop, test and commercialise green technology. A detailed overview of our current work is provided below.

- **Public body reporting, benchmarking and public disclosure**
 - Preparing departments for data collection required for Public Body Reporting under the Climate Change Act.
 - Preparing a mitigation report (Oct 2025) and adaptation report (March 2026) for submission to DAERA in line with Public Body Reporting requirements.
 - Collating climate data for annual disclosure to the Carbon Disclosure Project.
 - Project and Council Climate Action Scorecards and Northern Ireland Business in the Community Environmental Bench Marking Survey (NIBItC).
- **Managing a £1m Climate Fund**
 - Coordinating, monitoring and evaluating existing climate projects and conducting a stage review of the Council's Climate fund.
- **Building capacity of Council to respond to climate change across its estates and operations**
 - Delivering the CAP.
 - Commissioning training for Council staff and elected members on climate, sustainability and related specialist topics.
 - Reviewing 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.
 - Updating the BCC Climate Risk Assessment in line with the new mandatory Public Body Reporting requirements (under the UK Climate Change Act).
 - Developing the scope for a climate risks and opportunities assessment for Belfast.
 - Facilitating the coordination of the delivery of LGD programme requirements under NICCAP3.
- **Testing and demonstrating nature-based solutions**

- Developing a demonstrator site at Botanic Gardens and testing nature-based solutions through the UPSURGE project and identifying and target funding opportunities to scale up nature-based solutions across the city, targeting areas most in need and using UPSURGE as a Living Lab through the TalX Project
- **Making the City's food system more sustainable**
 - Developing a city-wide Sustainable Food Strategy, with associated delivery and monitoring arrangements
 - Developing a sustainable food policy for the Council that addresses waste, sourcing, packaging, emissions measurement and an events protocol
 - Continuing to coordinate the climate elements of the Belfast sustainable food partnership and participating in the UK and NI Sustainable Food Places initiative
 - Working with community based groups to develop an urban growing and an urban greening project to demonstrate opportunities for biodiverse cities.
- **Delivering the LAEP**
 - Commissioning Community opportunities assessment of a heat network and preparing an Impact assessment
 - Initiating pre-procurement market engagement for a low carbon Heat Network for Belfast City Centre
 - Developing and carrying out an engagement plan with potential heat network off takers. Ensuring 'the city' is informed of the potential for a Belfast Heat Network & future phase
 - Supporting the development of a neighbourhood retrofit pilot (led by social housing providers) through the Belfast Retrofit Delivery Hub
 - Developing a Solar Portal for the City
 - Completing a supply chain analysis for Solar PV within Belfast to understand the market ability to respond to PV demand at scale
 - Installing Solar PV on Donegall Pass Community centre (DBP)
 - Developing a pipeline of investable local energy projects arising from the Local Area Energy Plan, with a focus on a heat network and solar PV
- **Developing a net zero neighbourhood framework**
 - Completing the Horizon Europe funded UP2030 project which aims to embed net zero in urban planning

- **Promoting a whole system, integrated approach to delivery through stakeholder engagement and partnerships**
 - Providing regular updates to elected members through Council Committees (SP&R, Climate and City Resilience etc.) and respond to NOM.
 - Providing regular updates to CMT, City Regeneration and Development Programme Board.
 - Providing updates and secretariat services to the Climate Programme Board, the Our Planet Board / Strategic Oversight Group, the Net Zero Delivery Group, the Retrofit Hub / Retrofit Steering Group, the BCC Heat Network Working Group, the Sustainable Food Partnership, and the Data group

The council is also an active member of the Local & Central Government Climate Change Working Group led by DAERA and SOLACE, the Sustainable Development Forum, Local Government Climate Action Network, the Stormont All Party Working Group Climate, Belfast Emergency Planning Group, Greening the City Advisory Group, Green Arts Collective, Healthy Cities and the Resilient Cities Network, and regularly speaks at conferences and events. We routinely engage with a range of Cities on climate issues including Cork, Galway, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Newcastle, Fife, etc.). We also provide inputs into a range of cross departmental initiatives including Culture 2024, Grey to Green, Belfast Stories and the Belfast Business Promise.

8 Implementation of Action Plans

In 2006, Belfast City Council, along with relevant partner organisations, launched its first Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) for the city, designed to address areas of air quality concern, safeguard good air quality and to achieve national air quality strategy objectives and EU limit values by 2010. Around 90 percent of that action plan was completed by the 2010 deadline but, although the air quality limit values and objectives for particulate matter have now been achieved across the city, limit values and objectives for nitrogen dioxide continue to be exceeded and give cause for concern in a few remaining ‘hot spot’ locations.

In mid-2012, the Council commenced development of a new Air Quality Action Plan for the city to address the remaining NO₂ hotspots. Concentrations of PM₁₀ were complying with annual and daily mean objectives at this time within the M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink corridor AQMA.

The Council published a second AQAP for the city in 2015, which concluded at the end of 2020. A final review of the implementation of various mitigation measures included within the 2015-2020 AQAP was undertaken and reported by the Council to the Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) as part of the Council's 2020 Air Quality Progress Report, submitted to DAERA in June 2020.

Whilst the second AQAP continued to deliver improvements in ambient air quality within our AQMAs and across the city, a limited number of transport related nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) hotspots remained. Moreover, fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) had emerged as an additional air pollutant of concern. Consequently, in 2021, the Council with partner organisations developed a new [5-year Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026](#) for the city.

The aim of this new AQAP is to continue reducing emissions from transport sources and to promote and enable a shift onto more sustainable modes of transport to achieve compliance with the air quality objectives for nitrogen dioxide. An additional aim of the Plan is to identify, develop and implement mitigation measures, where necessary, to address concentrations of PM_{2.5} across the city.

A summary of mitigation measures proposed as part of the new AQAP is provided within Table 8.1 of this Progress Report. Belfast City Council monitors implementation of the Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026 via annual meetings of the Action Planning Steering Group and reports on its progress via Progress Reports and / or Annual Status Reports.

Table 8.1 – Action Plan Progress

No.	Measure	Category / Classification	Lead Authority	Description	Implementation Date	Estimated Completion Date	Air Quality Benefits	Progress to Date
1.	Zero Emission Public Transport	Promoting Low Emission Transport / Public Vehicle Procurement	Translink	Introduce circa 100 new zero-emission buses to the Greater Belfast area.	Nov 2020 to April 2022	Dec 2022	Replaces circa 100 diesel buses with zero emission vehicles.	Roll out of 103 Zero Emission Vehicles for the Belfast Metro has been completed.
2.	Zero Emission Public Transport	Promoting Low Emission Transport / Public Vehicle Procurement	Translink	Develop Programme to decarbonise the bus fleet in the Greater Belfast area.	Nov 2022 to Dec 2025	Dec 2030	To remove all diesel buses in Belfast Metro and replace with a zero-emission fleet by 2030.	Zero Emission bus fleet replacement programme is on course for completion by 2030. Circa 1/3 of all Belfast Metro services are now operated by zero emission buses.
3.	Bus Fleet Improvement	Vehicle Fleet Efficiency / Vehicle Retrofitting Programmes	Translink	Through vehicle modification, deliver minimum Euro 6 emission standards for all buses and coaches operating in Belfast.	Oct 2020 to Dec 2022	Dec 2022	Significant reduction in NOx and particulate matter emissions.	Euro 6 emission upgrade project has been completed for Goldline services and the Belfast Metro.
4.	Decarbonisation of the rail network	Promoting Low Emission Transport / Public Vehicle Procurement	Translink	Transition of all rail rolling stock to a net-zero traction power by 2040.	New Trains 4 – 2030 New Trains 5 – 2035 New Trains 5 - 2040	Dec 2040	Ultimately, zero emission on the rail network by end of 2040.	Initial Technical Study and Rail Decarbonisation Strategy completed in 2023. Detailed feasibility study for Belfast to border route completed in 2024.

No.	Measure	Category / Classification	Lead Authority	Description	Implementation Date	Estimated Completion Date	Air Quality Benefits	Progress to Date
								New Trains 4 Feasibility Study due for completion in mid-2025.
5.	Future Ticketing System	Transport Planning and Infrastructure / Public Transport Improvements	Translink	<p>Contactless payment on all bus and rail services by 2024.</p> <p>Account-based ticketing on all bus and rail services by 2026.</p>	2018	2026	<p>Provide greater ease of use, improved integration and best value for customers, thereby encouraging modal shift to public transport and a reduction in emissions from cars.</p>	<p>Contactless payment rolled out on all Metro services in 2022.</p> <p>Installation of ticket vending machines with contactless payment acceptance at all rail stations completed in 2024. Roll out of contactless payment on all Ulsterbus services completed in 2024.</p> <p>Next steps are to implement account-based ticketing on Ulsterbus, Glider and NI Railways services by 2026.</p>
6.	Belfast Transport Hub (Belfast Grand Central Station)	Transport Planning and Infrastructure / Public Transport Improvements	Translink	Major new multi-modal transport hub for Belfast.	Main works construction commenced in Q1 2022.	June 2026	Provide a new integrated transport hub, including facilities for active travel to encourage and facilitate increased modal shift towards sustainable transport.	Belfast Grand Central Station is now operational for both bus and rail services. Construction works are ongoing in the surrounding street works and public realm areas, supporting the

No.	Measure	Category / Classification	Lead Authority	Description	Implementation Date	Estimated Completion Date	Air Quality Benefits	Progress to Date
								enhancement of Active Travel infrastructure in Belfast.
7.	Promote Public Transport	Promoting Travel Alternatives / Other – Promoting Public Transport	Translink All BCC stakeholders	<p>Undertake engagement across companies, organisations and agencies to incentivise reduced use of the private car and greater use of public transport.</p> <p>Provide information at our stations, on Personalised Travel Planning, Corporate Commuter Initiatives (CCIs), providing best value fares information and promotional activity to attract modal switch onto public transport.</p> <p>Promote the use of low and zero emission buses with the development of new branding and messaging to highlight their benefits.</p>	Nov 2020	Ongoing	<p>Modal shift from car use to public transport/active travel will reduce emissions.</p>	<p>Engagement ongoing throughout 2024 and 2025 to date across a broad range of stakeholders promoting benefits of public transport, encouraging active, sustainable travel and modal shift from the private car. Programme of Personalised Travel Planning, Best Value Fares and Corporate Commuter Initiatives delivered.</p> <p>Ongoing promotion during 2024 and 2025 of low and zero emission buses, including branding and marketing / communications campaigns.</p>
8.	Belfast Rapid Transit (BRT) Phase 2	Transport Planning and Infrastructure / Public Transport Improvements	A Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) Infrastruct	The Belfast Rapid Transit Phase 2 (BRT2) project is the further development of the Belfast Rapid Transit system north to Antrim and	Utilising the £35m from Belfast Region	Delivery of the remainder of the project, and the	BRT will have a beneficial impact on modal shift, traffic movements and direct pollution levels along the	DfI Minister Kimmins made an announcement on 25 th February 2025 outlining

No.	Measure	Category / Classification	Lead Authority	Description	Implementation Date	Estimated Completion Date	Air Quality Benefits	Progress to Date
9.	Bus & Rail based Park & Ride / Interchange	Alternatives to Private Vehicle Use / Bus and Rail based Park & Ride	DfI Translink	<p>ure project being developed by DfI</p> <p>Newtownabbey and south to Lisburn and Castlereagh and an extension of the existing CITI route to serve Queen's University and City Hospital – bus priority measures, enhanced facilities & new vehicles. One of 3 infrastructure projects being taken forward by DfI as part of BRCD</p>	City Deal, alongside an additional £13m of departmental funding, it is hoped to deliver the first phase of works, as outlined in the Minister's Assembly statement of 25th February 2025, by the 2027/28 financial year.	associated timescales for this work, would be dependent on securing the necessary funding to address the £100m shortfall.	route. For example, the Glider vehicles are demonstrating a 90% reduction in NO ₂ and particulate matter emissions relative to the oldest vehicles in the Metro fleet.	the next steps for the Belfast Rapid Transit Phase 2 project with a particular focus on those elements that are being taken forward with the £35 million funding from Belfast Region City Deal along with the additional investment of £13 million for the O'Neill Road Park and Ride. Once the OBC has been approved by the Department of Finance, we will move to the detailed design stage of the project.
				<p>1500 additional Bus & Rail Park and Ride spaces by 2023 across NI.</p> <p>Promotion of active travel links.</p>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newtownards P&R - 450 spaces. Planning application submitted; land acquired. Delivery dependant on business case approval and full funding. Moirs P&R – additional 460 spaces. Planning permission granted; funding profiled within

No.	Measure	Category / Classification	Lead Authority	Description	Implementation Date	Estimated Completion Date	Air Quality Benefits	Progress to Date
Page 346								<p>Translink Capital Plan. Opening by 2027.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ballymena P&R - 390 additional spaces. Planning permission granted. Awaiting revised Letter of Offer for funding. Opening by 2027 dependant on funding. • Mossley West P&R - 255 spaces in addition to existing site at the train station, to replace overflow at Tannery. Planning permission granted. Awaiting revised Letter of Offer for funding. Opening by 2027 dependant on funding. • Tillysburn Park & Ride (450-500 spaces) Officials are currently considering appropriate delivery mechanisms for Park & Ride sites, including Tillysburn and these considerations are still ongoing.

No.	Measure	Category / Classification	Lead Authority	Description	Implementation Date	Estimated Completion Date	Air Quality Benefits	Progress to Date
10.	Bus Route Improvements	Transport Planning and	DfI Translink	Bus priority on all key Metro corridors in Belfast equivalent	April 2020	March 2025	By converting general traffic lanes to bus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cairnshill extension (358 spaces) now on hold due to reduced P&R usage and uncertainty of future demand. It is deemed more appropriate to reconsider the Departments requirements in the context of the BRT2 Project, the development of which will assess the projected future demand for P&R in this vicinity. • Sprucefield Park & Ride new access and (40 spaces) extension delayed. Due to delay in gaining planning permission the Business Case has expired, and costs have risen significantly. This will need to be reviewed before taking this scheme forward.
								The aim is to have bus priority measures

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No.	Measure	Category / Classification	Lead Authority	Description	Implementation Date	Estimated Completion Date	Air Quality Benefits	Progress to Date
		Infrastructure / Bus Route Improvements		<p>to that provided on the BRT Glider corridors.</p> <p>Bus stop 'balancing' to reduce stop/start.</p>			<p>lanes, journey times are reduced and consequently fuel consumption and emissions are reduced.</p> <p>By better balancing the location and number of bus stops, dwell times are reduced, reducing idling, stop/start and associated emissions.</p>	<p>introduced on routes to complement the roll-out of the zero-emission vehicles. Castlereagh Road extended bus lanes were delivered in March 2023.</p> <p>Additional bus lanes installed on Howard St, Great Victoria St, Bruce St, Dublin Rd and North St as part of BGCS construction phase mitigation. Monitoring data on impacts being collected by DfI / Translink to inform case for retention.</p> <p>Officials are currently undertaking a study of the Shore Road, Belfast corridor with a view to providing enhanced bus priority measures.</p>
11.	Park and Ride	Alternatives to Private Vehicle Use / Bus and Rail based Park & Ride	DfI Translink	The current Park & Ride Strategic Delivery Programme aims to deliver circa 2,000 additional spaces by 2025 (dependent on budget allocation)	2013	2025	This extension to the programme will have positive impacts on improving air quality for Belfast by providing alternative transportation for commuters travelling	DfI progressing business cases for Comber, Downpatrick, Dungiven and Tillysburn park and rides. Delivery is dependent upon

No.	Measure	Category / Classification	Lead Authority	Description	Implementation Date	Estimated Completion Date	Air Quality Benefits	Progress to Date
							into the city rather than relying upon the private car.	statutory approvals and funding. Tillysburn Park & Ride (450-500 spaces) Officials are currently considering appropriate delivery mechanisms for Park & Ride sites, including Tillysburn and these considerations are still ongoing.
12.	Improved walking and cycling connectivity to public transport interchanges	Transport Planning and Infrastructure / Other - Active Travel Network Improvements	DfI Translink	Enhance walking and cycling infrastructure to bus and rail stations, halts and Park and Ride sites.	2021	Ongoing	Improve infrastructure to make it easier and more attractive to walk and cycle to and from public transport interchanges, thereby reducing car usage and associated emissions.	Translink and DfI are working in partnership to improve integration between Active Travel and Public Transport. Secure cycle shelters have been introduced at some train stations. Translink will deliver additional cycle storage at 21 halts / stations by end 2025.
13.	Bicycle Strategy for NI Belfast Cycling Network	Transport Planning and Infrastructure / Cycle Network	DfI Sustrans	The Bicycle Strategy will be followed with a Belfast Cycling Network to guide the development and operation of cycling infrastructure across the city for the next 10 years.	2017	Published 2022	Increased levels of cycling could reduce congestion, improved air quality, reduce noise pollution and contribute to a cleaner environment.	Delivery plan published in March 2022. Implementation ongoing.

No.	Measure	Category / Classification	Lead Authority	Description	Implementation Date	Estimated Completion Date	Air Quality Benefits	Progress to Date
				A public consultation on the draft Belfast Cycling Network was held in early 2017. A consultation report was published in 2018.				
14.	Blue / Green Infrastructure Funding	Transport Planning and Infrastructure / Other – Blue and Green Infrastructure	DfI	<p>Capital grant funding for Councils to construct greenways.</p> <p>The following greenway projects have been allocated a grant over the 2020/21 and 2021/22 period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lagan Gateway greenway (BCC) - Forth Meadow greenway (BCC) - Strathfoyle greenway (DC&SDC) - Strabane North greenway (DC&SDC) - Banbridge Riverside lighting (ACB&CBC) 	2020-2022 depending on available Budget allocation	March 2022	Greenways have the potential to bring significant benefits to us all in terms of more physically active lifestyles, active travel, improved mental and physical health and wellbeing, social inclusion, tackling climate change, the strengthening of the local economy and tourism.	The Blue Green Infrastructure Fund concluded in 2023. 50% capital funding towards council led greenway delivery is available through the Department's Greenways and Active Travel enabling measures grant scheme
15.	Green Recovery	Traffic Management / Strategic Highway Improvements	DfI	<p>Temporary reallocation of road space to aid social distancing and active travel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pedestrianisation of Hill Street/Gordon Street - Reallocation of parking spaces for extended footway use - Pop-up cycle lanes to connect main hospitals for key workers – Dublin Road, Donegall Road and Grosvenor Road 	2020/21	Ongoing	Increased levels of walking and cycling could reduce congestion, improved air quality, reduce noise pollution and contribute to a cleaner environment.	Pedestrianisation of Hill Street / Gordon Street – Officials are currently preparing for further engagement with key stakeholders to aid the development of a suitable proposal for Hill Street / Gordon Street in advance of formal consultation.

No.	Measure	Category / Classification	Lead Authority	Description	Implementation Date	Estimated Completion Date	Air Quality Benefits	Progress to Date
Page 351								<p>Further progress on this matter will be subject to the satisfactory completion of the legislative process.</p> <p>Reallocation of parking spaces for extended footway use – the reallocation of road space for sustainable and active travel will be considered as part of the Eastern Transport Plan</p> <p>Pop-up cycle lanes to connect main hospitals for key workers (Dublin Road, Donegall Road and Grosvenor Road) - the Department has reviewed the use of pop-up cycle lanes and published its findings, which has shown support for the concept. Work is now being undertaken to develop designs suitable for taking forward to consultation with the</p>

No.	Measure	Category / Classification	Lead Authority	Description	Implementation Date	Estimated Completion Date	Air Quality Benefits	Progress to Date
								intention of formalising the current arrangements.
16.	Belfast Multi-Modal Transport Model	Traffic Management / Other	DfI	<p>It is expected that the Multi-Modal Transport Model will be enhanced and updated as part of the development of the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (now Eastern Transport Plan) in conjunction with the Belfast City Council Local Development Plan.</p> <p>However, this is currently 'in abeyance' in light of the COVID emergency and the programming of work for the Transport Plans. A key use of the model will be in transport and land-use option generation and testing. The transport model will provide forecasts of traffic flows and speeds to enable the estimation of air quality using separate detailed atmospheric dispersion modelling software held by Belfast City Council.</p>	2022	Complete. Potential for future update.	<p>This model will provide the capability to estimate the likely changes in air quality arising from changes in population and employment (BCC Planning inputs) and different transport investment options (DfI).</p> <p>Note that the decision to develop this model is currently 'in abeyance' in light of the COVID pandemic and the continuing impact on travel patterns.</p>	<p>Update of the Belfast Multi-Modal Strategic Transport Model (BSTM2) has progressed in line with the development of the Eastern Transport Plan (formerly termed the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan) from mid-2022 to the present date. As part of this progress, the Transport Model has been augmented with input supply and demand data; updated to a 2019 base year with an additional 2023 Present Year Validation update; and integrated growth forecasts from TEMProNI tool and the BCC local development plan zonings.</p> <p>Investment in BSTM2 allows for future scenarios to be modelled and tested as</p>

No.	Measure	Category / Classification	Lead Authority	Description	Implementation Date	Estimated Completion Date	Air Quality Benefits	Progress to Date
								part of the Eastern Transport Plan.
17.	<div>Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP)</div> <div>Ministerial decision taken in 2023 to change name from BMTP to Eastern Transport Plan (ETP)</div>	Transport Planning and Infrastructure / Other	DfI	<div>A new ETP will be prepared to integrate with the Belfast City Council LDP. The ETP will assess total transport demands arising from planned developments and the achievement of a range of agreed objectives. The new ETP will become the extant Transport Plan and will include a range of schemes covering road, rail, bus, cycling and pedestrian networks.</div> <div>Whilst the contents of the new ETP cannot be assumed in advance, it is expected to include substantial demand management measures to restrict the use of private cars in the city centre and for commuting purposes in particular. These measures are expected to complement and reinforce any measures delivered as part of the Belfast City Council Parking Strategy and Action Plan.</div>	2023 estimated in line with LDP programme	2030 in line with LDP assumed	It is expected that the balance of measures in the ETP will impact positively on ambient air quality.	<div>Work on the ETP has progressed since 2023 in line with Local Development Plan (LDP) timetables. Key deliverables such as the Vision, Objectives and Guiding Principles have been produced. Progress has included wide council and stakeholder engagement with the project publicly launched in September 2023.</div> <div>Work on testing schemes, proposed measures and associated evaluation has progressed throughout 2024 and 2025 for the City Centre, and the wider Metropolitan Area.</div> <div>A draft of the Belfast City Centre Chapter and the Metropolitan Area Chapter of the</div>

No.	Measure	Category / Classification	Lead Authority	Description	Implementation Date	Estimated Completion Date	Air Quality Benefits	Progress to Date
								ETP is anticipated to be available in advance of the LDP Local Policies Plan publication for Belfast City Council with public consultation anticipated to commence in Autumn 2025 (subject to Ministerial approval)
18.	Electric Vehicles	Promoting Low Emission Transport / Procuring Alternative Refuelling Infrastructure to Promote LEV, EV recharging, gas fuel recharging	DfI	<p>DfI is assisting the current public charge point network operator as it seeks to replace approx. 60 charge points i.e. 30 charge posts and a further 5 Rapid charge points to upgrade and improve the reliability of the existing public network.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department officials are engaging with OZEV and the Energy Saving Trust (EST), who administer the On-street Residential Charge Point Scheme (ORCS), in particular, with reference to councils in Northern Ireland. As part of the work being carried out on the transport elements of the Executive Energy Strategy the Department is considering how to chart a pathway to support vehicle electrification and seek to 	2015	Ongoing	There are significant benefits to both the environment and to the driver in the use of electric vehicles.	<p>Of the six priority actions the Department set out in its EV Infrastructure Task plan, four have now been completed, or are in the implementation phase. This improves the network of EV charging infrastructure. The remaining two actions have been amalgamated into the Department's plans for the needs of the strategic road network.</p> <p>Northern Ireland joined the Vehicle Emissions Trading Schemes in January 2025. A consultation on flexibilities for</p>

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No.	Measure	Category / Classification	Lead Authority	Description	Implementation Date	Estimated Completion Date	Air Quality Benefits	Progress to Date
				<p>address financial and non-financial barriers to the uptake of EVs in Northern Ireland, taking into account the wider UK policy, legislative and funding environment as part of a wider clean transport strategy.</p> <p>The Department is developing a charging infrastructure plan, in partnership with key stakeholders from government, public, private and third sectors to develop the charging network.</p>				<p>manufacturers was held in early 2025 and legislative changes will be made over the course of the year. These will allow greater flexibilities for manufacturers to meet the annual targets set within the Vehicle Emission Trading Schemes.</p>
19.	Lagan Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge	Transport Planning and Infrastructure / Cycle Network	A Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) Infrastructure project being developed by DfI	<p>If confirmed in the final Belfast Region City Deal, the proposed bridge, is one of 3 infrastructure projects being taken forward by DfI as part of BRCD. It will span the River Lagan from the Gasworks to the Ormeau Embankment aiming to improve accessibility to the city centre for residents and communities east of the River Lagan. The Bridge also aims to encourage both people from the city centre and local communities to use Ormeau Park for recreational use.</p>	Procurement commenced June 2024	2027	<p>Increased levels of walking and cycling could reduce congestion, improve air quality, reduce noise pollution, and contribute to a cleaner environment.</p>	<p>An Outline Business Case has been approved, with planning permission and other statutory approvals in place. Technical consultants were appointed in October 2022 to complete the preliminary design, prepare procurement documents, and manage the procurement competition.</p> <p>The procurement competition to complete</p>

No.	Measure	Category / Classification	Lead Authority	Description	Implementation Date	Estimated Completion Date	Air Quality Benefits	Progress to Date
								<p>the detailed design and construct the bridge was advertised on the 4 June 2024 with construction planned to commence in autumn 2025</p> <p>Completing the work is then expected to take up to 24 months from date of contract award.</p>
20.	<p>Promoting travel alternatives:</p> <p>Behavioural change programmes</p>	Promoting Travel Alternatives / Promotion of Cycling, Walking, Schools and Workplace Travel Plans	<p>PHA, DfI and DAERA, Belfast City Council, EU Interreg (delivered by Sustrans)</p> <p>Cycling UK/ Sustrans/ European</p>	<p>Sustrans works in a range of settings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools with the Active School Travel Programme; Workplaces with the Leading the Way Programme; Communities – to promote walking and cycling as a mode of transport. <p>In addition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active Travel Hub in CS Lewis Square, east Belfast and more recently Whiterock Community Centre in west Belfast – provides a base for range of interventions with community groups, individuals and workplaces. Project to encourage walking and cycling in new Forthmeadow Greenway 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>2015</p> <p>2016</p> <p>2017</p>	<p>Ongoing – Currently, all these programmes are underway, with a review of extension.</p> <p>The Communities ' project was ceased by PHA in 2023</p>	<p>Changing people's travel habits – swapping the car for walking, cycling and public transport.</p> <p>Active Travel Hubs are visible in the community to provide info & encourage travel alternatives.</p>	<p>Sustrans continues to deliver the Active School Travel Programme, which is co-funded by the PHA and DfI.</p> <p>Active Travel Challenge - annual month-long initiative in June promotes all forms of sustainable transport – walking, cycling and public transport. The Challenge is delivered by Sustrans and partners with Translink, DfI and PHA. More</p>

No.	Measure	Category / Classification	Lead Authority	Description	Implementation Date	Estimated Completion Date	Air Quality Benefits	Progress to Date
			Cycling Federation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applied to run Active Travel Hub at Cathedral Gardens 				workplaces have signed up than ever.
			Sustrans	<p>Cycle-friendly Employer Accreditation Scheme – Cycling UK run this in N. Ireland with support from Sustrans.</p> <p>Pedal Perks cycling discount scheme offered by range of businesses to encourage cycling to premises.</p>	2018		<p>Provide facilities to encourage active travel e.g. cycle parking; changing facilities; mileage incentives.</p> <p>Incentivises active travel to shops and facilities.</p>	<p>There is no government funding for the Active Travel Hub in east Belfast. Whiterock Hub in west Belfast (opened in March 2023) has been closed. There is a Plan to open a Hub at Grand Central Station but there is currently no resource funding.</p> <p>Forthmeadow Greenway project has been completed.</p> <p>DAERA's Air and Environmental Quality Team (AEQ) delivered Clean Air Day presentations to primary schools across NI in May/June 2024.</p> <p>Belfast City Council also carries out an air quality awareness campaign every June as part of the Clean Air Day initiative.</p>

No.	Measure	Category / Classification	Lead Authority	Description	Implementation Date	Estimated Completion Date	Air Quality Benefits	Progress to Date
21.	<p>Transport planning and infrastructure:</p> <p>Build safe protected cycling infrastructure</p>	Transport Planning and Infrastructure / Cycle Network	DfI Sustrans	<p>Walking and Cycling Index, Belfast – produced every 2 years in collaboration with DfI. Provides evidence of support for cycling and progress to date, includes a public survey of attitudes to cycling.</p> <p>Belfast Cycling Network – published in June 2021, the Strategy sets out government plans to develop cycle routes in Belfast. The Bicycle Strategy will be followed with a Cycling Network for Belfast to guide the development and operation of cycling infrastructure in the city for the next 10 years. A public consultation on the draft Belfast Cycling Network was held in January 2017 and in early 2018, a consultation report was published.</p> <p>Safe Routes to School campaign – to enable children to walk and cycle rather than being driven.</p> <p>Strategic plan for Greenways – Paths for Everyone. Funding pot for Councils to develop</p>	<p>2015</p> <p>2017</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>2016</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Report published June 2021</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Safety is biggest barrier to people cycling. Traffic-free greenways enable more people to walk or cycle. Urban greenways used by commuters as well as leisure trips.</p>	<p>Walking and Cycling Index continues to be funded by DfI. Most of the funding is provided through the Freshfield Foundation via Sustrans.</p> <p>Implementation of Belfast Cycling Network is covered under item 13. Greenway delivery is covered under item 14.</p> <p>Consultation on a draft Active Travel Delivery Plan (ATDP), including network plans for every settlement in NI with a population greater than 5,000 and prioritised routes within those towns and cities, closed on 28th February 2025. DfI is reviewing consultation responses with the aim of presenting a final plan for Ministerial consideration in the autumn. Routes to schools are one of the</p>

No.	Measure	Category / Classification	Lead Authority	Description	Implementation Date	Estimated Completion Date	Air Quality Benefits	Progress to Date
				greenways. Sustrans can assist Councils with community consultation and feasibility plans.				key destinations prioritised within the draft ATDP.
22.	Traffic management	Traffic Management / Strategic Highways Improvements, reduction of speed limits, 20 mph zones	DfI Sustrans	<p>Introduction of 20 mph speed limits</p> <p>School Streets – closing area around schools to traffic. This is a proposed pilot scheme, which has proved successful and popular in GB.</p> <p>Low Traffic Neighbourhoods – implement car-free areas.</p>	2019 TBC	Ongoing	<p>As above, as we saw in lockdown less traffic encourages people to walk or cycle. Traffic restraint measures necessary to reduce volume of traffic and polluting vehicles.</p> <p>Update on 20 mph speed limits:</p> <p>A DfI review of the part time 20mph initiative has recommended a modest and targeted third tranche of schemes. This will supplement the 233 schemes already in place at schools across NI.</p>	
23.	Dust monitoring	Other / Air Quality Monitoring and Assessment	Belfast Harbour Commissioners	Monitor particulate matter from bulk cargoes in Port operational areas of Belfast Harbour Estate and implement mitigation measures.	Commenced	Ongoing	Identify areas of high concentration for action.	Monitoring ongoing. High concentration areas identified.

No.	Measure	Category / Classification	Lead Authority	Description	Implementation Date	Estimated Completion Date	Air Quality Benefits	Progress to Date
								Operational controls in place.
24.	AQ Modelling	Other / Air Quality Monitoring and Assessment	Belfast Harbour Commissioners	Complete Baseline Air Quality Modelling of the Belfast Harbour Estate.	Commenced	2022	Establish theoretical baseline & identify areas for attention.	Completed.
25.	NO ₂ Monitoring	Other / Air Quality Monitoring and Assessment	Belfast Harbour Commissioners	Conduct monthly diffusion tube monitoring of NO ₂ at 18 sites within the Belfast Harbour Estate.	Commenced	Ongoing	Establish baseline of NO ₂ levels & identify areas for attention.	Completed. Monitoring ongoing
26.	Real Time AQ Monitoring stations	Other / Air Quality Monitoring and Assessment	Belfast Harbour Commissioners	Implement real time Air Quality Monitoring for air pollution at 5 locations within the Belfast Harbour Estate.	2021	Ongoing	Accessible Air Quality information/ potential link to SMART traffic controls.	Completed. 5 real time AQ sensors installed. Ongoing data validation for NO ₂ and particulate matter (PM ₁₀ and PM _{2.5}). New sensor procured in 2025 for co-location monitoring and validation.
27.	Strategy	Policy Guidance and Development Control/Other	Belfast Harbour Commissioners	Publish a Harbour Air Quality Strategy.	2021	Ongoing	Public commitment to improve Air Quality.	Completion of AQ Strategy will be informed by CACHE Project outcomes. CACHE project concluded early 2025, Air Quality Strategy now under development, aligned to 2025-2029 Advance Regional

No.	Measure	Category / Classification	Lead Authority	Description	Implementation Date	Estimated Completion Date	Air Quality Benefits	Progress to Date
								Prosperity Strategy and pending Port Masterplan.
28.	Low / zero carbon fuels	Promoting Low Emission Transport / Company Vehicle Procurement	Belfast Harbour Commissioners	Replace the light vehicle fleet with electric/alternative fuels.	2021	2027	Reduced air emissions from vehicles.	30% of fleet has been electrified. Capital provisions are in place to complete transition by 2027. Residual ground fleet included in HVO transition plan.
29.	EV Charging	Promoting Low Emission Transport / Procuring Alternative Refuelling Infrastructure to Promote LEV, EV recharging, gas fuel recharging	Belfast Harbour Commissioners	Work with tenants to encourage installation of EV charging points.	2021	2025	Reduced air emissions from vehicles.	Continue to facilitate connections from tenants that have provided requests. Completed strategic EV scaling review with Royal Haskoning DHV to inform future direction (BHC). Partnered with Weev for first phase of installation works at Harbour Office which is now complete. Second phase planned for July 2025.
30.	Car sharing	Alternatives to Private Vehicle Use / Car & Lift Sharing Schemes	Belfast Harbour Commissioners	Introduce a Car Sharing Scheme for tenants.	2021	Ongoing	Reduced air emissions from vehicles (subject to relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions).	Re-focused on autonomous last-mile connectivity at Queens Island, aligned to

No.	Measure	Category / Classification	Lead Authority	Description	Implementation Date	Estimated Completion Date	Air Quality Benefits	Progress to Date
								Queens Island Strategic Transport Master Plan.
31.	Active Travel	Promoting Travel Alternatives / Promotion of cycling and walking	Belfast Harbour Commissioners	Encourage active travel, including walking and cycling to; from and within the estate for local journeys.	2021	Ongoing	Reduced air emissions from vehicles.	Being considered as a part of the Queens Island Strategic Transport Master Plan.
32.	SMART traffic control	Traffic Management / Other	Belfast Harbour Commissioners	Queens Road Mobility project / SMART traffic system.	2021	2023	Reduced air emissions from vehicles.	Completed
33.	Integrated commuter plans	Promoting Travel Alternatives / Workplace Travel Planning	Belfast Harbour Commissioners	Integrated commuter plans to reduce private car use including first and last mile connectivity.	2022	2025	Reduced air emissions from vehicles.	Being considered as a part of the Queens Island Strategic Transport Master Plan.
34.	Cycle lanes	Transport Planning and Infrastructure / Cycle Network	Belfast Harbour Commissioners	Additional cycle lanes and crossing points.	2020	2025	Reduced air emissions from vehicles.	Integrated into all future infrastructure projects.
35.	Green corridors	Transport Planning and Infrastructure / Other – Blue and Green Infrastructure	Belfast Harbour Commissioners	Introduce Green spaces and screening / corridors.	2021	Ongoing	Absorb vehicle emissions.	Biodiversity Action Plan being updated to include expansion of screening and corridors. City Quays Gardens completed.
36.	Shore-side power	Promoting Low Emission Plant / Shift to installations using low emission fuels for	Belfast Harbour Commissioners	Assess feasibility of shore power – cruise/ferry vessels.	2021	Ongoing	Reduced air and GHG emissions from vessels.	Feasibility assessment continuing, based on vessel operator requirements. Targeting cruise ships, aligned to new

No.	Measure	Category / Classification	Lead Authority	Description	Implementation Date	Estimated Completion Date	Air Quality Benefits	Progress to Date
		stationary and mobile sources						deepwater quay construction - starting in financial year 2025.
37.	Decarbonise port cranes & HGV's	Promoting Low Emission Plant / Shift to installations using low emission fuels for stationary and mobile sources	Belfast Harbour Commissioners	Substitute hydrocarbon fuels with low carbon alternatives – cranes/plant & HGV's.	2021	Ongoing	Reduced air and GHG emissions from port plant & equipment.	HVO transition into landside asserts began on 31 st March 2025 and is being phased over two years.
38.	Decarbonise work & pilot boats	Promoting Low Emission Plant / Shift to installations using low emission fuels for stationary and mobile sources	Belfast Harbour Commissioners	Trial alternative marine fuels - Work and Pilot Boats.	2022	2025	Reduced air and GHG emissions from vessels.	Completed – all pilot, work and police boats running on HVO.
39.	Commercial incentive	Promoting Low Emission Plant / Other - Feasibility Study	Belfast Harbour Commissioners	Assess feasibility of Clean Vessel Incentive Scheme.	2022	2023	Reduced air and GHG emissions from vessels.	Initial assessment carried out. No immediate plans to implement.
40.	Ship planning	Other – Vessel Management	Belfast Harbour Commissioners	Optimise Vessel Passage Plans & Berth Utilisation.	2020	Ongoing	Reduced air emissions from vessels.	Completed. Port Management Information Systems (PMIS) in use.
41.	Zero carbon vessel	Promoting Low Emission Plant / Shift to installations using low emission fuels for	Belfast Harbour Commissioners	Introduce electric/hybrid workboat.	2021	Ongoing	Reduced air emissions from vessels.	Ongoing collaboration with Artemis Technologies on development of electric foiling workboat / pilot boat. Pilot boat,

No.	Measure	Category / Classification	Lead Authority	Description	Implementation Date	Estimated Completion Date	Air Quality Benefits	Progress to Date
		stationary and mobile sources.						Hibernia, introduced in April 2024, running hybrid engines and HVO for near-zero emissions in interim.
42.	Driver ECO Skills	Vehicle Fleet Efficiency / Driver Training and ECO Driving Aids	Belfast City Council	Driver ECO Training & Refresher Driver ECO Training & Monitoring by GPS.	From 2020/21 onward	Ongoing	Reduced fuel consumption. Reduced air emissions.	All new Drivers are trained in ECO Driving techniques as part of the induction process and during refresher training as undertaken were deemed appropriate.
43.	Promoting Cleaner commercial vehicles	Promoting Low Emission Transport / Company Vehicle Procurement- Prioritising uptake of low emission vehicles	Belfast City Council	Replacing older commercial EU4 / EU5 vehicles above 3.5 tonnes with EU6 cleaner standard.	From 2020/21 onward	Ongoing	Reduced fuel consumption. Reduced air emissions.	<p>We continue to replace EU4-EU5 above 3.5 tonnes weight with EU6 cleaner standard vehicles.</p> <p>We replaced 84 vehicles in 2024 / 25 to EU6 standard and have plans to replace a further 23 vehicles in 2026/27 to EU6 standard.</p> <p>From January 2023, some 200 vehicles have been transitioned to HVO cleaner bio bulk fuel (50% of the fleet size) based at the</p>

No.	Measure	Category / Classification	Lead Authority	Description	Implementation Date	Estimated Completion Date	Air Quality Benefits	Progress to Date
								Duncrue Complex. In terms of HVO consumed, this would equate to approximately 80% of all fuel purchased. Fuel Sense software fitted to EU6 RCVs to prevent harsh acceleration and enhance fuel efficiency.
44.	Vehicle Emission Testing	Vehicle Fleet Efficiency / Testing Vehicle Emissions	Belfast City Council	All fleet vehicles tested annually to manufacturers approved EU standard.	From 2020/21 onward	Ongoing	Ensuring vehicles meet their EU approved Standard.	All 255 vehicles in 2024 / 25, presented for their Annual GVC Test, have passed their emission test criteria.
45.	Promoting Electric Commercial panel vans	Promoting Low Emission Transport / Company Vehicle Procurement	Belfast City Council	Replacing older commercial panel vans up to 3.5 ton with Electric.	From 2020/21 onward	Ongoing	Reduction in the commercial panel van fleet carbon footprint.	Some 31 light vehicles under 3.5 tonne weight have been replaced with electric models up until 31-03-25.
46.	Promoting Vehicle Electric Bin-lifts	Promoting Low Emission Transport / Company Vehicle Procurement	Belfast City Council	Replacing Refuse Collection Vehicles with rear electric bin-lifts.	From 2020/21 onward	Ongoing	Refuse Collection Vehicle fuel consumption reduction.	There are currently some 31 RCVs narrow tracks fitted with OmniDEL rear electric twin bin-lifts. A further 4 are due to be received by 31-03-26, making 35 in total, with a further 28 RCVs with standard rear twin-bin lifts to be

No.	Measure	Category / Classification	Lead Authority	Description		Implementation Date	Estimated Completion Date	Air Quality Benefits	Progress to Date
									replaced with OmniDEL rear electric twin-bin lift models, as and when capital funding becomes available.
47.	Frank and Honest Belfast Bikes scheme.	Transport Planning and Infrastructure / Public Cycle Hire Scheme	Belfast City Council	Public bike hire scheme in Belfast city centre – 300 bikes and 30 docking sites originally in 2015 in public places, including Titanic Quarter, the Gasworks, Queen's University and York Street. This has now increased to circa 60 docking stations.		From 2015 onward	Ongoing	Cutting congestion and improving air quality.	<p>Expansion of further eight stations delivered.</p> <p>New operator appointed. New scheme including 100 e-bikes will go live in late summer 2025.</p> <p>The current operator, NSL Ltd, will continue to operate the Belfast Bikes scheme until Beryl takes over later this year.</p> <p>Beryl will replace the infrastructure for the 60 on-street docking stations in a phased approach to accommodate an initial suite of 400 new bikes.</p>
48.	Local Development Plan	Policy Guidance and Development Control / Other Policy	Belfast City Council	Number of planning permissions granted on zoned Open Space. Policy: OS1	Belfast City Council Planning decisions and liaising with CNS.	From 2023 onwards	2035	To limit the net loss of zoned open space for uses other than those ancillary or compatible with open space use.	The LDP Plan Strategy was adopted on 2 nd May 2023 and its policies have taken effect from that date.

No.	Measure	Category / Classification	Lead Authority	Description		Implementation Date	Estimated Completion Date	Air Quality Benefits	Progress to Date
Page 367			Belfast City Council	Number of planning permissions that secure Green and Blue Infrastructure improvements, including through Developer Agreements. Policy: SP8 GB1	Belfast City Council through Major Planning decisions (BCC) and S76 Agreements.		2035	75% of major permissions contributing to G & B Infrastructure improvements.	Monitoring of the Plan Strategy is underway, and the outcomes will be published in an Annual Monitoring Report submitted to the Department for Infrastructure once the LDP Local Policies Plan has been adopted.
			Belfast City Council	The number of applications granted for renewable energy development. Policy: ITU4	BCC monitoring major planning decisions with Development Management		2035	Increase in number of renewable energy schemes.	
			Belfast City Council	Proportion of journeys by sustainable modes– active travel, bus rail & BRT. Policy: TRAN1 TRAN3 TRAN4 TRAN5 TRAN9	Travel survey for Northern Ireland (TSNI) (DfI).		2035	An increase in the proportion of journeys made by sustainable modes	

No.	Measure	Category / Classification	Lead Authority	Description		Implementation Date	Estimated Completion Date	Air Quality Benefits	Progress to Date
Page 368			Belfast City Council	Number of new dwellings permitted annually outside settlement limits. Policy: DC policies	Housing Monitor and Planning decisions (BCC).		2035	To sustainably manage the number of new dwellings in the countryside.	
			Belfast City Council	Number of non-residential proposals permitted annually outside settlement limits. Policy: DC policies	Planning decisions (BCC).		2035	To sustainably manage the amount of new non-residential development in the countryside.	
49.	Additional Air Quality Monitoring	Other / Air Quality Monitoring and Assessment	Belfast City Council	Additional NO ₂ and particulate matter monitoring using Small Sensors and Diffusion Tube Technologies to assess air quality within Belfast City Council area.		Ongoing	Ongoing	To provide more detailed and real time information on ambient air pollution levels across the city.	Eight small scale air quality sensors (Earthsense Zephyr) monitor NO ₂ , PM ₁₀ and PM _{2.5} throughout the city. There are also currently 80 diffusion tubes installed across the city to specifically monitor NO ₂ . Council officers continue to review air quality monitoring data, to determine where new diffusion tube or other sensors may need to be

No.	Measure	Category / Classification	Lead Authority	Description	Implementation Date	Estimated Completion Date	Air Quality Benefits	Progress to Date
								installed to fill any monitoring information gaps. Monitoring results are reported as part of the council's annual Progress or Updating and Screening Assessment Reports.
50.	Detailed Air Quality Assessment for Fine Particulate Matter (PM _{2.5}) and Nitrogen Dioxide (NO ₂) for the Belfast City Council area	Other / Air Quality Monitoring and Assessment	Belfast City Council/ DAERA	The purpose of this project is to generate, through the application of ambient monitoring and atmospheric dispersion modelling, detailed information on fine particulate matter (PM _{2.5}) and nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂) concentrations within the city boundary in order to ascertain whether UK air quality objectives, European Commission limit values or WHO guideline values are being achieved in relevant human health receptor locations.	February 2021	March 2023	The outcome of the modelling study may serve to assist in the development of mitigation policies and measures to better address PM _{2.5} and NO ₂ concentrations across the city.	The Detailed Assessment project was finalised in March 2023. Outcomes of the project were summarised and reported within the 2023 Progress Report, 2024 Updating and Screening Assessment and have been referred to within the 2025 Progress Report. The various Detailed Assessment project reports were formally considered by the People and Communities Committee at agenda item 12 of its meeting of 13 th June 2023.
51.	Enforcement within Smoke Control areas and	Other / Enforcement Charges and	Belfast City Council	Belfast City Council will undertake greater enforcement within the city's smoke control	Ongoing	Ongoing	Reduced smoke emissions and greater levels of compliance	Enforcement within Smoke Control Areas is

No.	Measure	Category / Classification	Lead Authority	Description	Implementation Date	Estimated Completion Date	Air Quality Benefits	Progress to Date
	education concerning the use of polluting fuels.	Public Awareness		areas, and it will develop and deliver an awareness campaign to educate Belfast residents of the adverse air quality impacts of using polluting fuels within their homes.			within Smoke Control Areas	continuously monitored. Belfast City Council also provides information on its website in relation to Smoke Control Areas within Belfast City: https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/bins-and-environment/pollution/pollution#143-4 A public information initiative concerning smoke control areas was delivered in autumn 2022 through the council's social and other media channels. A recent awareness campaign was carried out on 19 th June 2025 (Clean Air Day), publicising Smoke Control Areas within Belfast, as well as other measures that individuals can take to improve ambient air quality in the city. The campaign also provided links to air quality
					Awareness Campaign August 2022	Ongoing	Greater awareness about polluting fuels and their adverse ambient impacts on air quality.	

No.	Measure	Category / Classification	Lead Authority	Description	Implementation Date	Estimated Completion Date	Air Quality Benefits	Progress to Date
								information on the council's website.

9 Conclusions and Proposed Actions

9.1 Conclusions from New Monitoring Data

Belfast City Council has presented a range of monitoring data within this 2025 Progress Report that addresses a range of pollutants prescribed within the UK Air Quality Strategy. Although these pollutants are routinely measured across the city, the council's focus remains principally upon addressing the existing Air Quality Management Areas and those areas of the city centre where traffic volumes and congestion might lead to further exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide annual mean and hourly objectives. There were no monitored exceedances for any of the Air Quality Strategy objectives for sulphur dioxide, benzene and particulate matter during 2024.

Nevertheless, 2024 monitoring data for nitrogen dioxide confirms continued elevated concentrations within the M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink corridor Air Quality Management Area (AQMA 1) and one exceedance of the annual mean objective at a diffusion tube (DT 106) monitoring location, next to the M3 Motorway off-slip junction with Nelson Street and the A12 Westlink (directly adjacent to the boundary for AQMA 1), and beside a recently completed residential development. Defra NO₂ distance correction calculations for this location (DT 106) have however, predicted a nitrogen dioxide annual mean concentration of 31.4 µg/m³ at the building façade, which indicates that no exceedance of the 40 µg/m³ annual mean objective is likely at this relevant residential receptor location (Appendix A).

There were no other exceedances of nitrogen dioxide objectives recorded within or adjacent to AQMA 1. Moreover, the 2024 nitrogen dioxide annual mean concentration (27.1 µg/m³) monitored at the A12 Westlink / Roden Street automatic monitoring site (within AQMA 1) has not changed significantly since 2021 and remains comfortably below the annual mean objective of 40µg/m³. In addition, nitrogen dioxide concentrations recorded at the Stockman's Lane automatic monitoring site, also situated within AQMA 1, have decreased significantly since 2020 and are now below the annual mean objective level of 40 µg/m³. The current 2024 annual mean (33.3 µg/m³) has not significantly varied when compared to the 2020 annual mean (33.0 µg/m³). (2020 - 33 µg/m³, 2021 – 36 µg/m³, 2022 – 36 µg/m³, 2023 – 36 µg/m³ and 2024 – 33 µg/m³).

Although concentrations recorded within AQMA 1 are lower than $40 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, they are still considered to be elevated. Two roadside diffusion tube monitoring locations, both situated within AQMA 1, recorded a NO_2 annual mean concentration of $36.2 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (DT101 - Stockman's Lane Roundabout); and $39.1 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (DT70 - Henry Place) – both within 10% of the annual mean NO_2 objective. We note the LAQM.TG(22) comment at Section 3.53 Amendment and Revocation of AQMAs, which advises that where NO_2 monitoring is completed using diffusion tube, to account for the inherent uncertainty associated with the monitoring method, it is recommended that revocation of an AQMA should be considered following three consecutive years of annual mean NO_2 concentrations being lower than $36 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (i.e. within 10% of the annual mean NO_2 objective).

Moreover, results from the council's Detailed Assessment, finalised in 2023, also suggested localised monitored (by small sensor air quality monitor) and modelled exceedances of the annual mean objective along the A12 Westlink corridor. We note the LAQM.TG(22) comment that due to the inherent uncertainties of dispersion modelling, consideration should be given to predicted concentrations being 10% below the relevant objective before an amendment or revocation of an AQMA is completed.

As a consequence, the council will continue its monitoring within the M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink corridor Air Quality Management Area (AQMA 1) to identify any further exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide objectives and nitrogen dioxide concentrations and trends.

Ambient monitoring data for the Stockman's Lane and A12 Westlink / Roden Street monitoring sites, as summarised in Table 2.4, demonstrate that the number of exceedances of the hourly mean objective (NO_2) has substantially decreased over recent years, both demonstrating compliance with the $200 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ objective, not to be exceeded more than 18 times per year - since 2013. In fact, there have been no recorded 1-hour mean concentrations greater than $200 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ at either monitoring site since 2019. As a consequence, DAERA included recommendations, within its appraisal letter (20th November 2024), concerning the council's 2024 Updating and Screening Assessment, to revoke this AQMA 1 in relation to 1-hour mean NO_2 objective.

There were no other monitored exceedances of Air Quality Strategy objectives for nitrogen dioxide within the council area, including other AQMAs, during 2024.

Monitoring data for the Ormeau Road site (AQMA 4) demonstrates that nitrogen dioxide concentrations have been significantly below the annual mean air quality objective since 2014. Moreover, dispersion modelling undertaken as part of 2023 Detailed Assessment predicts that annual mean NO₂ concentrations within this AQMA 4, which covers the Ormeau Road from the junction with Donegall Pass to the Belfast City boundary at Galwally, are below the UK AQO level at all locations of relevant exposure during the 2019 assessment base year and 2028 forward projection year.

The magnitude of the decrease in nitrogen dioxide levels along the Upper Newtownards Road (AQMA 3) has been beyond the year-on-year reductions that might have been reasonably predicted using Defra's forward projection factors; even before Covid-19. Moreover, from the monitoring data in Table 2.3, it can be seen that annual mean concentrations of nitrogen dioxide along the Upper Newtownards Road have remained in the range 20 – 22.3 µg/m³ since 2020, meaning that the nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective is being consistently achieved along the Upper Newtownards Road. 2024 annual mean results (20.6 µg/m³) recorded at the automatic monitoring site are lower than pre-pandemic annual mean concentrations and significantly below the 40 µg/m³ objective level. Moreover, there have not been any monitored exceedances of air quality objectives for NO₂ identified within this AQMA for the last eight years and dispersion modelling (2019-base year and 2028-future year) undertaken as part of the 2023 Detailed Assessment predict that annual mean NO₂ concentrations within AQMA 3, are below the UK AQO level at all locations of relevant exposure.

The council also notes DAERA's recommendations, in relation to AQMA 2: *the council should also 'consider the revocation of the Cromac Street and Albertbridge Road AQMA due to continual compliance with the NO₂ annual mean objective*. Annual mean NO₂ monitoring concentrations recorded within AQMA 2, have been below 36 µg/m³ since 2020.

At this stage, however, the council has decided not to move to revoke any of its Air Quality Management Areas, and instead to continue to monitor within its AQMAs and in other city locations in order to work towards further improving ambient air quality, having regard to air quality guidelines for ambient air quality as recommended by the World Health Organisation, in its 2021 Global Air Quality Guidelines: particulate matter (PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀), ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide publication.

Moreover, although Belfast city has not experienced exceedances of any air quality strategy objectives for particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) for many years, to address growing concerns around the effects of fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) on human health we undertook a Detailed Assessment for the city. This project was finalised in 2023. The Detailed Assessment (using additional monitoring data and dispersion modelling) indicated that the annual mean PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} AQOs were achieved at all monitoring locations, including at an additional six small sensor air quality monitoring locations. Moreover, modelled annual mean PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} concentrations for the 2019 (base year) and 2028 (future year) are predicted to be well below the UK AQO concentrations at locations of relevant exposure throughout the city.

Finally, Belfast City Council confirms that no new Air Quality Management Areas need to be declared for the city at this time.

9.2 Conclusions relating to New Local Developments

Of the planning applications and various air quality impact assessments received and reviewed during 2024, it was concluded that the proposed developments would have no significant adverse impact on existing local ambient air quality. In addition, no significant changes in local circumstances have been identified within Belfast, which would require detailed consideration. As a consequence, it is not considered necessary to proceed to a 'Detailed Assessment' based on new local developments or potential sources.

9.3 Proposed Actions

In conclusion, this 2025 Progress Report has not identified the need to proceed to a Detailed Assessment for any ambient pollutant under consideration.

However, the council would advise that a Detailed Assessment for the city, for particulate matter (PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}) and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) pollutants was undertaken and finalised in spring 2023. The decision to undertake a Detail Assessment was based on recent evidence from national studies confirming that domestic solid fuel burning contributes more than previously thought to particulate emissions. The project also allowed the council to investigate fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) concentrations across the city as this pollutant is not currently in regulation for the purposes of local air quality management. The project commenced in February 2021 and was finalised in March 2023; its key outcomes were

presented within our 2023 Progress Report, 2024 Updating and Screening Report and have been referred to within this 2025 Progress Report.

Furthermore, Belfast City Council has already highlighted that it operates an expansive air quality monitoring network across the city, predominantly for nitrogen dioxide. In 2023, we added a further seven diffusion tubes to the network to address the outcomes of 2023 Detailed Assessment, and to confirm modelled NO₂ concentrations within and in the vicinity of our existing AQMAs.

In 2024, we amended our NO_x tube monitoring network; 8 tubes were removed from the network, due to sustained low annual mean nitrogen dioxide concentrations or changes to 'relevant exposure' locations; and 4 new tubes were installed close to busy roads with relevant exposure (residential properties).

Overall, in 2024 there were only three diffusion tube monitoring sites (DT 70 Henry Place, DT 106 M3, and DT 101 Stockman's Lane Roundabout), all located at roadside/kerbside locations, where annual mean nitrogen dioxide concentrations were above 36 µg/m³ (within 10% of the annual mean objective of 40 µg/m³).

The council is therefore content that current monitoring locations provide an appropriately detailed representation of pollution levels for the city and, as a consequence, we consider that the network does not to be expanded further at this time. We will however continue, on an annual basis, to review our monitoring locations and to relocate monitoring sites to better capture relevant exposure, and we will discontinue monitoring from areas of continued low concentrations, significantly below air quality objective levels.

Moreover, as part of the council's Detailed Assessment project for particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide, five new monitoring locations, employing small sensor air quality monitoring equipment, were installed in July 2021, providing a more detailed analyses of particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide concentrations across the city. The council took over ownership and operation of the monitors in May 2022 and has added further monitors in the

intervening time period. 2024 monitoring data and sensor locations are presented within Appendix B.

In 2024, we relocated some of these small sensor monitors for the purposes of a new School Streets monitoring project. The purpose of this project is to undertake ambient monitoring in the vicinity of schools, with a view to helping to inform the designation of 'school streets'. The designation of 'school streets' has been proposed as Action 22 of the Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026 by DfI and Sustrans.

(<https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/documents/belfast-city-air-quality-action-plan-2021-2026>).

We are continuing with the 'school streets' monitoring project through 2025 and beyond as required and as informed by the associated monitoring data.

To ensure that we continue to collect high quality air quality monitoring data, we maintain and update, where necessary, our ambient air quality monitoring equipment. In 2019 / 2020, Belfast City Council replaced its ageing API NO_x analysers at three monitoring sites with T200 variants: the Upper Newtownards Road, Stockman's Lane and Ormeau Road. The non-heated Met One Instruments BAM 1020 PM₁₀ particulate matter analyser, located at the Stockman's Lane site, was also upgraded to a new heated inlet instrument. The only analyser, which has not been yet replaced, is the API Model 200E NO_x analyser, located at Westlink/Roden Street site, which still continues to perform satisfactorily and remains supported by the manufacturer.

During 2022, we updated the communication system (including modems) to 4G at all four of our monitoring sites. Moreover, the T200 analysers at the Upper Newtownards Road, Stockman's Lane and Ormeau Road monitoring sites were converted over to operate NumaView software.

With regard to our four Air Quality Management Areas, a review of the monitoring data within the AQMAs and for the city in general indicates that there have been improvements in annual mean nitrogen dioxide levels across the city over recent years.

Moreover, the detailed assessment for the city, for particulate matter (PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}) and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) pollutants was concluded in March 2023. It is considered that the detailed atmospheric dispersion modelling, in addition to monitoring data, provides sufficient evidence to give consideration to revocation of AQMA2, AQMA3 and AQMA4.

At this stage, however, the council has decided not to move to revoke any of its Air Quality Management Areas, and instead to continue to monitor within its AQMAs and in other city locations in order to work towards further improving ambient air quality, having regard to air quality guidelines for ambient air quality as recommended by the World Health Organisation, in its 2021 Global Air Quality Guidelines: particulate matter (PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀), ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide publication.

In terms of forward actions, the council will continue to monitor implementation of the Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026 via at least annual meetings of the Air Quality Action Planning Steering Group, and we will report progress to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) via our various Action Plan Progress Reports and via submission of our 2026 Progress Report.

The primary aim of the current Air Quality Action Plan is to continue to reduce NO₂ emissions from transport sources and to promote and enable a shift towards more sustainable modes of transport in order to achieve compliance with UK Air Quality Objectives for NO₂. Where necessary, an additional aim of this Action Plan is to identify, develop and implement mitigation measures to address concentrations of fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) across the city.

In addition, the recommendations of the 2023 Detailed Assessment, with regard to nitrogen dioxide, are that local actions aimed at road traffic are likely to remain the most effective action for reducing ambient concentrations at nitrogen dioxide hotspot locations in the city. Fleet composition projections indicate that the next few years will see accelerated uptake of low-emissions / zero-emissions vehicles and that efforts should continue to be made to support the improvement of the vehicle fleet alongside the continued incentivisation of other transport modes and active travel options.

For PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}, the Detailed Assessment recommended that targeted actions to reduce public exposure to PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} should focus on those sources that contribute to the domestic background sector, as source apportionment has indicated that this sector accounts for more than 25% of the total modelled particulate matter concentrations across the city.

These above-mentioned recommendations are consistent with the objectives of the Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026.

We anticipate therefore that the current Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026 will continue to deliver improvements in ambient air quality within our AQMAs and across the city until its conclusion in 2026. Nevertheless, it is our intention, during late 2026, to engage with competent authorities and our city partner organisations concerning development of a new 5-year Air Quality Action Plan for the city covering the period 2027 – 2032.

10 References

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Belfast City Council, 2021, Air Quality Action Plan 2021 – 2026, November 2021.

<https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/documents/belfast-city-air-quality-action-plan-2021-2026>

Defra, Local Air Quality Management: Technical Guidance 2022

<https://laqm.defra.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/LAQM-TG22-August-22-v1.0.pdf>

Automatic Urban and Rural Network (AURN) LSO Manual

<https://uk->

[air.defra.gov.uk/assets/documents/reports/cat09/2408131427_AURN_LSO_Manual_Part A Version 1.3 July 2024 Issue1_2.pdf](https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/assets/documents/reports/cat09/2408131427_AURN_LSO_Manual_Part_A_Version_1.3_July_2024_Issue1_2.pdf)

Defra 'Workplace Analysis Scheme for Proficiency (WASP) NO₂ diffusion tubes proficiency tests'. <https://laqm.defra.gov.uk/air-quality/air-quality-assessment/qa-qc-framework/>

The Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2002/3153/contents/made>

DAERA Northern Ireland Air – Air Quality in Northern Ireland website

<https://www.airqualityni.co.uk/>

PAS 4023:2023 Selection, deployment and quality control of low-cost air quality sensor systems in outdoor ambient air – Code of practice

<https://www.bsigroup.com/siteassets/pdf/en/insights-and-media/insights/brochures/pas-4023.pdf>

11 Appendices

Appendix A: Quality Assurance / Quality Control (QA/QC) Data

Appendix B: Non-LAQM Monitoring (Zephyrs) Results 2024

Appendix A: QA/QC Data

QA/QC Diffusion Tube Monitoring

The council's 2024 passive nitrogen dioxide monitoring network comprises 80 diffusion tubes situated throughout the city at 72 locations. The monitoring has been completed in accordance with Defra's *Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance document LAQM.TG(22)* and Defra's 2024 Diffusion Tube Monitoring Calendar.

In 2024, Belfast City Council appointed Gradko International Ltd. to supply, analyse and report data for its diffusion tubes. Gradko employs a 20% triethanolamine solution for monitoring ambient nitrogen dioxide and adheres to the requirements of the government's '*Diffusion Tubes for Ambient NO₂ Monitoring: Practical Guidance for Laboratories and Users*' publication.

Government provides an additional layer of surety for local authorities operating nitrogen dioxide diffusion tubes through the independent analytical proficiency-testing scheme, the AIR PT scheme.

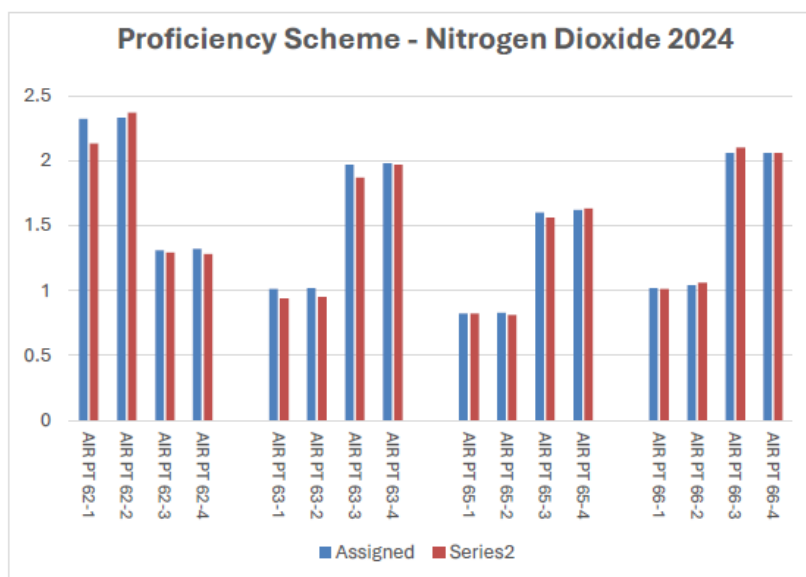
AIR PT is an independent analytical proficiency-testing (PT) scheme, operated by LGC Standards and supported by the Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL). AIR PT is a scheme, commenced in April 2014, which combines two long running PT schemes: LGC Standards STACKS PT scheme and HSL WASP PT scheme. As part of this scheme, laboratories are provided with a number of test samples that are designed to test their proficiency in undertaking chemical analyses of diffusion tubes.

For the 2024 sampling period, Gradko's analytical performance was assessed as follows:

AIR PT Nitrogen Dioxide Proficiency Scheme Results 2024

Methods: GLM 7 – CARY 60 Spectrophotometer

AIR PT Proficiency Scheme - Nitrogen Dioxide 2024					
Date	Round	Assigned value	Procedure GLM 7		
			Measured concentration	z-Score	% Bias
Feb-24	AIR PT 62-1	2.32	2.13	-0.94	-8.2%
Feb-24	AIR PT 62-2	2.33	2.37	0.22	1.7%
Feb-24	AIR PT 62-3	1.31	1.29	-0.2	-1.5%
Feb-24	AIR PT 62-4	1.32	1.28	-0.4	-3.0%
Jun-24	AIR PT 63-1	1.01	0.94	-0.92	-6.9%
Jun-24	AIR PT 63-2	1.02	0.95	-0.92	-6.9%
Jun-24	AIR PT 63-3	1.97	1.87	-0.68	-5.1%
Jun-24	AIR PT 63-4	1.98	1.97	-0.07	-0.5%
Aug-24	AIR PT 65-1	0.82	0.82	0.00	0.0%
Aug-24	AIR PT 65-2	0.83	0.81	-0.32	-2.4%
Aug-24	AIR PT 65-3	1.6	1.56	-0.33	-2.5%
Aug-24	AIR PT 65-4	1.62	1.63	0.12	0.6%
Oct-24	AIR PT 66-1	1.02	1.01	-0.13	-1.0%
Oct-24	AIR PT 66-2	1.04	1.06	0.26	1.9%
Oct-24	AIR PT 66-3	2.06	2.10	0.26	1.9%
Oct-24	AIR PT 66-4	2.06	2.06	0	0.0%



Diffusion Tube Annualisation

Based on 2024 monitoring data, annualisation was required only for one non-automatic diffusion tube monitoring sites: DT59 -York Road (67% data capture). This tube was annualised using automatic monitoring data from Derry Rosemount and Ballymena Ballykeel automatic monitoring stations, both of which had >85% required data capture. The Belfast Centre (Lombard Street) AURN background site had only 60% data capture for nitrogen dioxide during 2024.

The annualisation was undertaken using the Defra Diffusion Tube Processing Tool. Calculations are provided Table A.4.

Diffusion Tube Bias Adjustment Factors

Belfast City Council has applied a local bias adjustment factor of 0.82 to its 2024 diffusion tube monitoring data. A summary of bias adjustment factors used by Belfast City Council over the past five years is presented in Table A.1.

The council co-locates a number of diffusion tubes with reference method compliant chemiluminescent nitrogen dioxide analysers at the Lombard Street, Newtownards Road, Westlink/Roden Street and Stockman's Lane monitoring sites. This process allows a bias adjustment factor (with a 95% confidence interval as an estimate of the uncertainty on the bias adjustment factor) to be calculated and used to correct the diffusion tube monitoring data. In the case of the diffusion tube data presented in this report, the monitoring data has been corrected using a local bias adjustment factor derived from three co-location studies: Newtownards Road, Westlink / Roden Street and Stockman's Lane. As highlighted above, the Belfast Centre (Lombard Street) AURN site had only 60% data capture (DC) in 2024; consequently, this monitoring data was considered to be poor overall data capture and excluded from the local bias adjustment calculation.

The local bias adjustment factor was calculated using the Defra Diffusion Tube Processing Tool. Calculations are presented within Table A.4.

For those local authorities that do not wish or are unable to undertake a triplicate diffusion tube colocation study, government publishes a database of bias adjustment factors derived

from other local authority co-location studies throughout the United Kingdom. These factors are used subsequently to calculate a combined bias adjustment factors for a range of nitrogen dioxide diffusion tube laboratories.

The latest factors were published in March 2025 and the 2024 derived bias adjustment factor for Gradko Laboratories for a 20% solution of triethanolamine is 0.84. This factor is only slightly higher than the council's 2024 locally derived bias adjustment factor of 0.82. The council therefore considers the locally derived factor to be acceptable and of the good precision; consequently, Belfast City Council has applied a local bias adjustment factor of 0.82 to its 2024 monitoring data.

Table A.1 - Bias Adjustment Factor

Year	Local or National	If National, Version of National Spreadsheet	Adjustment Factor
2024	Local	-	0.82
2023	Local	-	0.80
2022	Local	-	0.81
2021	Local	-	0.79
2020	Local	-	0.79

NO₂ Fall-off with Distance from the Road

Only one nitrogen dioxide annual mean exceedance was recorded during 2024 at a location next to the M3 Motorway off slip / A12 Westlink at Nelson Street (41.3 µg/m³). This M3 Motorway off slip / Nelson Street diffusion tube was added to the councils' monitoring network in 2022 due to the introduction of new relevant human health exposure at a residential development. This monitoring site is located next to a dominant strategic network road transport pollution source and situated at a worst-case exposure location.

Defra NO₂ distance calculations have been applied to the above location to predict annual mean concentrations at the nearest human health receptor location. The Diffusion Tube Processing Tool has predicted an annual mean concentration of 31.4 µg/m³, which indicates that no exceedance was likely at this relevant human health receptor location (Table A.2) during 2024.

Also, as distance correction should be considered at any monitoring site where the annual mean concentration is greater than 36 µg/m³, and the monitoring site is not located at a point of relevant exposure, diffusion tubes: 70, 100-102, 106 and 120 also required a distance correction to their 2024 monitoring data. A summary of fall-off with distance calculations from the Diffusion Tube Data Processing Tool is presented below in Table A.2.

Table A.3 - Non-Automatic NO₂ Fall off With Distance Calculations (concentrations presented in µg/m³)

Site ID	Distance (m): Monitoring Site to Kerb	Distance (m): Receptor to Kerb	Monitored Concentration (Annualised and Bias Adjusted)	Background Concentration	Concentration Predicted at Receptor	Comments
70	1.0	18.0	39.1	14.0	24.5	
100	27.0	18.0	24.3	14.0	26.8	Warning: your monitor is more than 10m further from the kerb than your receptor - treat result with caution.
101	3.0	7.5	36.2	14.0	30.9	
102	15.0	8.0	23.8	14.0	26.6	Warning: your monitor is more than 10m further from the kerb than your receptor - treat result with caution.
106	1.0	7.0	41.3	16.0	31.4	
120	5.0	3.0	21.0	15.0	21.9	

QA/QC of Automatic Monitoring

Belfast City Council operates four automatic monitoring stations across the city in order to help inform its air quality management processes and to provide real time information to the public in relation to air pollution levels across the city centre and within our Air Quality Management Areas.

Accordingly, to ensure that the data from our sites is both accurate and representative, the monitors at each site are calibrated on a biweekly (Stockman's Lane AURN site) or on a four-weekly basis by the council's technical staff in accordance with the procedures detailed in the Defra Automatic Urban and Rural Network (AURN) local site operators' manual.

For our automatic nitrogen dioxide analysers, we complete a two-point calibration using internal zero and a nitric oxide span gas of certified concentration. We obtain our calibration gases under contract from BOC Ltd. who also provide similar gases to government operated AURN monitoring stations. By considering instrument operating parameters and the results of successive calibrations, we can make a determination regarding the ongoing performance of our analysers.

Where an instrument is found not to be operating within normal parameters, we would refer the matter promptly to *Enviro Technology*, who provided service and maintenance support for our equipment throughout 2024. In addition, data management support, including data collection, scaling, reporting and ratification, was provided by *AQDM*.

The data from our sites is made available to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs and is reported via the 'Northern Ireland Air' website in near real time.

Finally, in 2024 Ricardo provided quality assurance and quality control support (QAQC) for the council's monitoring equipment to ensure compliance with the requirements of the National Air Quality Strategy as detailed within the Defra Technical Guidance Document LAQM.TG(22). Ricardo engineers visited our sites on an approximately six-monthly basis and compared the performance of our analysers against a range of laboratory grade standards. Ricardo subsequently provided a series of calibration and scaling factors that were used to correct our 2024 automatic monitoring data.

Automatic data presented within this report relates to the calendar year (i.e. January – December). 2024 ratified data capture levels exceeded the Department's 75% data capture threshold for the calculation of annual statistics at all council operated sites.

PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} Monitoring Adjustment

Particulate matter is monitored at two AURN monitoring sites within Belfast: Belfast Centre (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) and Stockman's Lane (PM₁₀).

The Belfast Centre site employs a Palas Fidas 200, which complies with Defra's UK PM Pollution Climate standard. Government equivalence tests have determined that this type of equipment meets the equivalence criteria, and on that basis, no correction factor needs to be applied to this monitoring data.

The Stockman's Lane site is equipped with a Met One Instruments Beta Attenuation Monitor (BAM) with a heated inlet for monitoring particulate matter (PM₁₀). Government technical guidance highlights that a BAM, equipped with a heated inlet, meets the equivalence criteria for PM₁₀ monitoring, provided that the results are corrected for slope. This correction involves dividing measured concentrations by a factor of 1.035. It should be noted however that the data presented on the Defra and Northern Ireland Air websites, and included within this Progress Report, has already been corrected to the reference equivalent.

Automatic Monitoring Annualisation

Defra operates an urban background monitoring site (Belfast Centre) at Lombard Street. Unfortunately, in 2024, data capture levels at the Belfast Centre site were below the Department's 75% data capture threshold for nitrogen dioxide (60%). Annualisation of data from this site was therefore required.

In order to complete the annualisation process, councils are required to identify two to four nearby, long-term background continuous monitoring sites for nitrogen dioxide. The data capture for each of these sites should ideally be at least 85%.

Apart from Belfast Centre site, there are only two other long-term, continuous, urban background monitoring sites in Northern Ireland, which measure nitrogen dioxide; namely Ballymena Ballykeel and Derry Rosemount. Both sites achieved the required 85% data capture in 2024 and as the result, were identified as acceptable sites to be used in "annualisation process" for the Belfast Centre site nitrogen dioxide data.

Two individual adjustment ratios and average ratios have been calculated and the results are provided in in Table A.3.

NO₂ Fall-off with Distance from the Road

No automatic NO₂ monitoring locations within Belfast City Council required distance correction during 2024.

Table A.4 – Annualisation Summary (concentrations presented in µg/m³)

Site ID	Annualisation Factor Ballymena Ballykeel	Annualisation Factor Derry Rosemount	Annualisation Factor <Site 3 Name>	Annualisation Factor <Site 4 Name>	Average Annualisation Factor	Raw Data Annual Mean	Annualised Annual Mean	Comments
DT59	0.9977	0.9894			0.9935	32.39	32.18	-
Belfast Centre	0.8987	0.8655			0.8821	20.46	18.05	-

Table A.5 – Local Bias Adjustment Calculations

	STEP 3a Local Bias Adjustment Input 1	STEP 3b Local Bias Adjustment Input 2	STEP 3c Local Bias Adjustment Input 3
Periods used to calculate bias	11	12	12
Bias Adjustment Factor A	0.88 (0.84 - 0.94)	0.8 (0.76 - 0.84)	0.77 (0.74 - 0.81)
Diffusion Tube Bias B	13% (6% - 20%)	25% (20% - 31%)	30% (23% - 36%)
Diffusion Tube Mean ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	22.9	34.2	43.2
Mean CV (Precision)	4.5%	3.6%	3.3%
Automatic Mean ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) (for periods used to calcul.	20.3	27.3	33.3
Data Capture (for periods used to calculate bias)	100%	99%	99%
Overall Data Capture	100%	99%	99%
Adjusted Tube Mean ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	20 (19 - 22)	27 (26 - 29)	33 (32 - 35)
Overall Diffusion Tube Precision	Good Overall Precision	Good Overall Precision	Good Overall Precision
Overall Continuous Monitor Data Capture	Good Overall Data Captur	Good Overall Data Captur	Good Overall Data Captur
Combined Local Bias Adjustment Factor	0.82		

Notes:

A single local bias adjustment factor has been used to bias adjust the 2024 diffusion tube results.

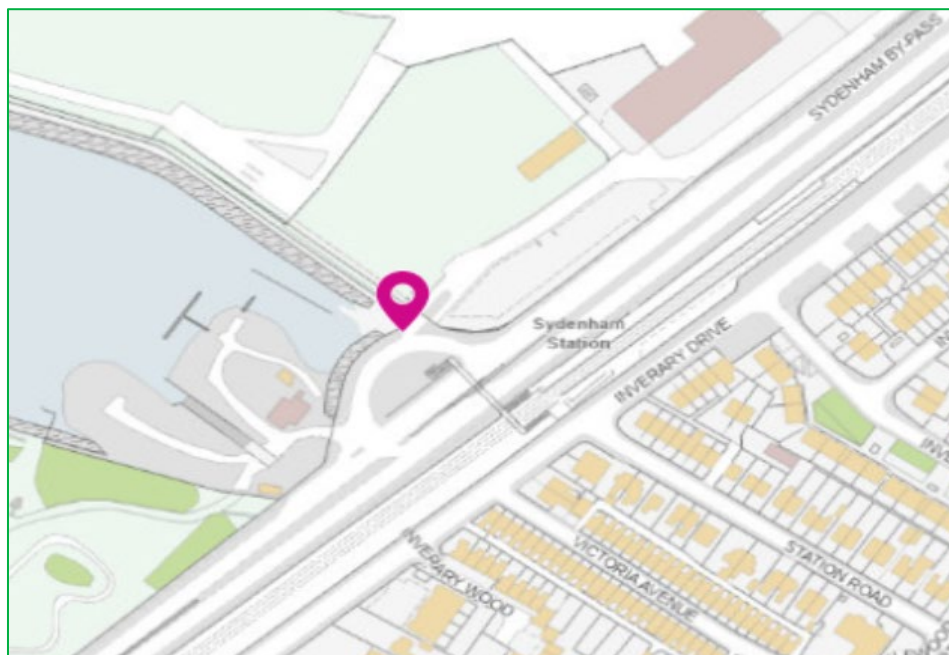
Appendix B: Non-LAQM Monitoring (Zephyrs) Results 2024

During 2024, Belfast City Council carried out nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) monitoring using Earthsense Zephyr air quality monitors at eight locations, four of which are permanently sited, and four, which are being utilised for an ongoing primary school 'school streets' project in collaboration with Sustrans and DfI. The four permanent monitors are located at the A2 Sydenham By-Pass adjacent to George Best Belfast City Airport; at Clara Street in East Belfast; at Lombard Street in the City Centre (for the proposed collocation with reference grade analyses) and at the A12 Westlink at Henry Place, which was in place up until 17th July 2024 whereupon it was removed for maintenance and has since been relocated at a monitoring site further along the A12 Westlink corridor adjacent to Barrack Street.

Figures B.1 to B.4 show the location of each Zephyr monitor in local grid co-ordinates and list the duration of monitoring completed during 2024.

Figure B.1 – City Airport Zephyr Location

1. City Airport: X: 337112, Y: 375535. 11 months, 26 days of monitoring.



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Figure B.2 – Clara Street Zephyr Location

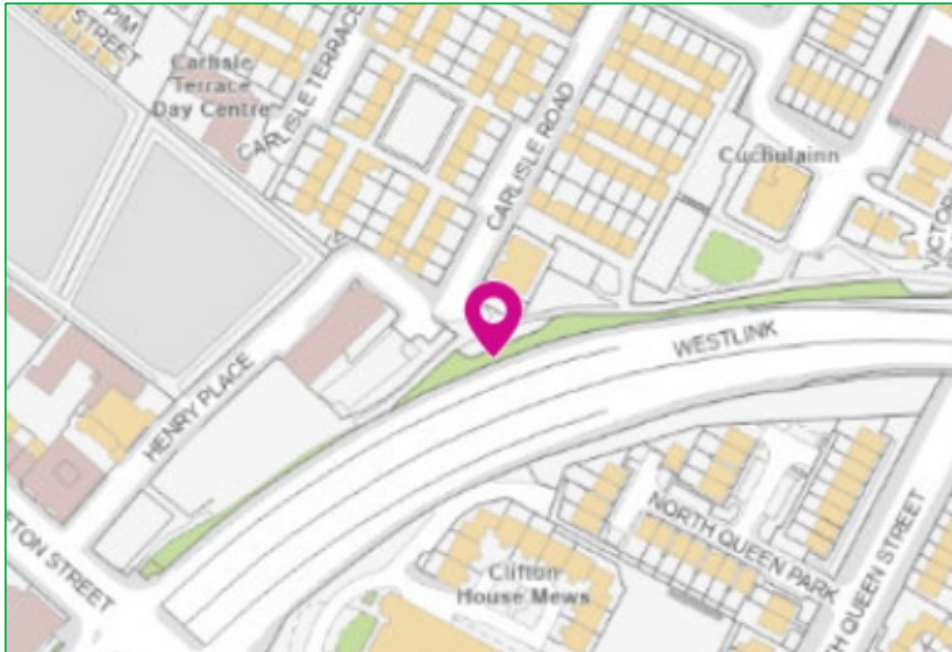
2. Clara Street: X: 336032, Y: 373469. Full calendar year of monitoring.



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Figure B.3 – Westlink Zephyr Location

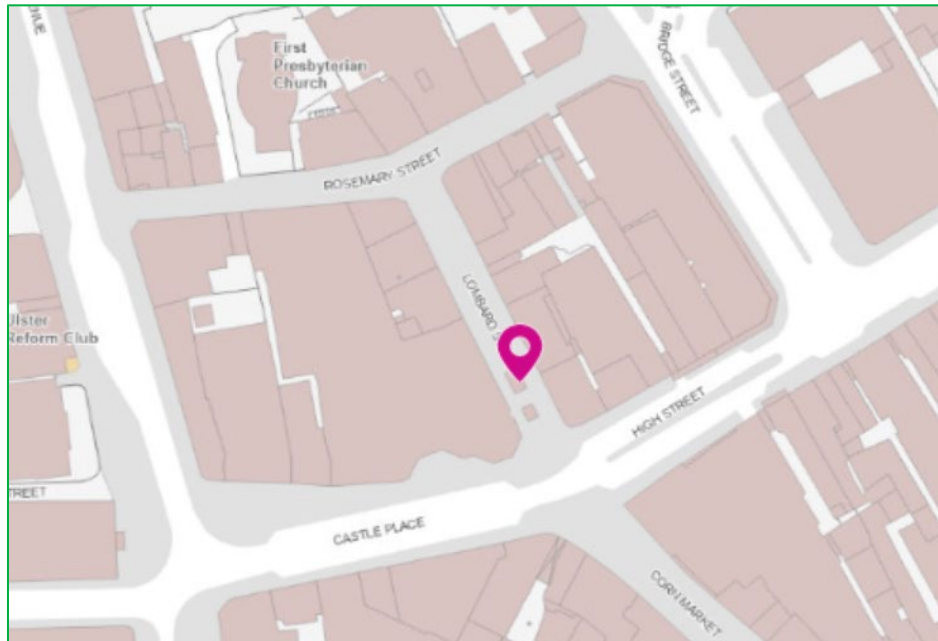
3. Westlink: Henry Place location, X: 333590, Y: 375223. 7 months 16.5 days of monitoring



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Figure B.4 – Lombard Street Zephyr Location

4. Lombard Street: X: 333902, Y: 374502. 11 months, 26 days of monitoring.



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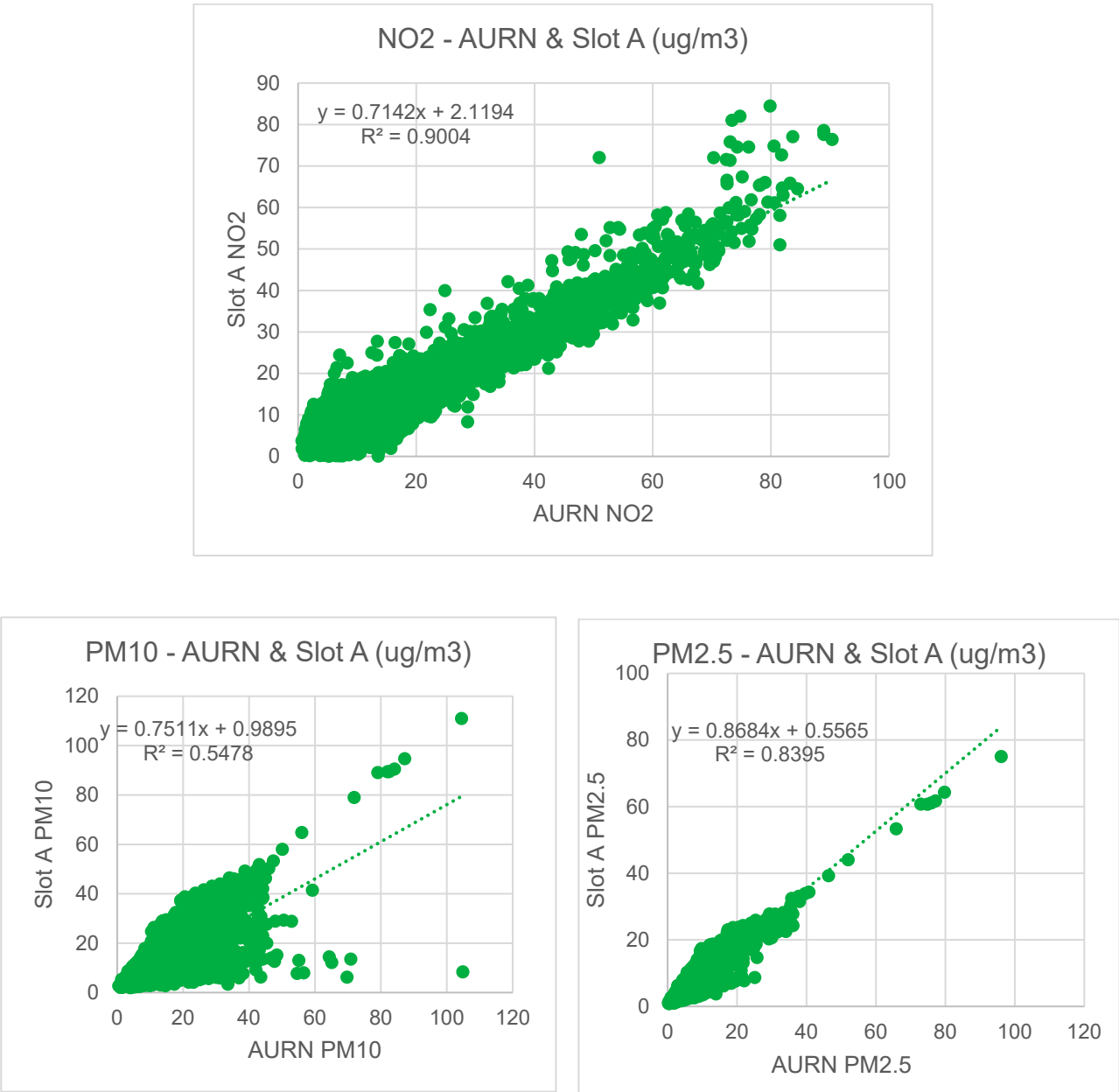
The Zephyr analyser is an active indicative grade analyser and is used to monitor NO₂ using electrochemical sensors, and PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} using optical particle counting sensors giving real-time results every minute. Zephyr monitors recently obtained MCERTS Performance Standards as an Indicative Ambient Particulate Monitor, which gives additional confidence in the performance of the monitors.

In the absence of a standardised QA/QC methodology, council officers have followed the US Environment Protection Agency guidance available on Defra's website: <https://www.epa.gov/air-sensor-toolbox/how-use-air-sensors-air-sensor-guidebook#pane-1>

Moreover, we have also followed recommendations for the selection, deployment, maintenance and quality assurance processes contained within the following document: *PAS 4023:2023 Selection, deployment and quality control of low-cost air quality sensor systems in outdoor ambient air – Code of practice* (December 2023).

Prior to installation, all our Zephyr monitoring units were tested by the manufacturer against EU reference analyser standards. In addition, and in order to validate the performance of the abovementioned units for NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}, council officers have co-located a Zephyr sensor with reference grade analysers at Belfast Centre AURN site. The raw data produced by the Earthsense Zephyr analysers has been corrected using data from the respective reference grade analysers. The correction process helps to account for known bias and unknown interferences from weather and other pollutants. The calculated adjustment factors for 2024 have been applied to all Zephyr analysers. Figure B.5 below presents linear regression corrections calculated using Zephyr and reference grade analyser data.

Figure B.5 - Linear regression equation (NO₂, PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}) - Zephyr (Slot A) and Belfast Centre AURN reference monitor for the 2024 monitoring year.



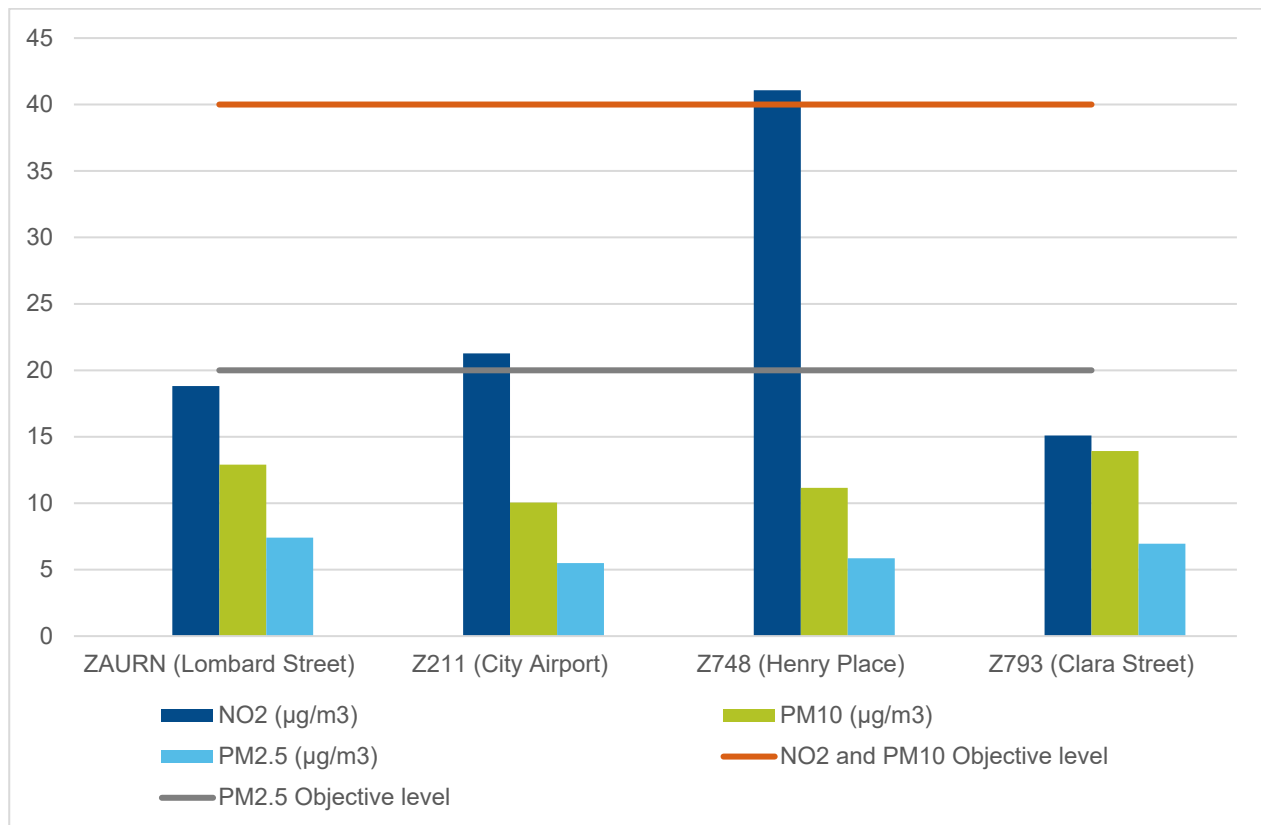
Annual scaled 2024 Zephyr monitoring results are presented in the following Table B.1 and Figure B.5.

Overall, there were no monitored exceedances of statutory AQS objectives during 2024 at any Zephyr monitoring site, with the exception of the A12 Westlink / Henry Place site, where monitored NO₂ concentrations were in excess of 40 µg/m³ annual mean objective: 41.8 µg/m³. We would note however, that this sensor is located on the fence directly adjacent to the carriageway (worst case exposure scenario); moreover, diffusion tube (DT70), situated also at this location, monitored an annual mean concentration of 39.1 µg/m³ in 2024, slightly below the objective level.

Table B.1 - 2024 Annual Scaled Zephyrs Results

Site ID	Site Name	NO ₂ (µg/m ³)	PM ₁₀ (µg/m ³)	PM _{2.5} (µg/m ³)
ZAURN	AURN (Lombard Street)	18.82	12.90	7.41
Z211	City Airport	21.27	10.05	5.5
Z748	Westlink (Henry Place)	41.08	11.16	5.86
Z793	Clara Street	15.09	13.93	6.95

Figure B.6 - 2024 Annual Scaled Zephyr Results



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Subject:	Request for Events in our Park
Date:	5 th August 2025
Reporting Officer:	David Sales, Strategic Director of City & Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Stephen Leonard, Director Resources, Fleet and Open Spaces and Streetscene

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 N/A</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? N/A</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: 100%; background: linear-gradient(to bottom, transparent 49%, #ccc 49% 49%, #ccc 49% 51%, transparent 51%);"></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/Summary of Main Issues
------------	---

1.1	The Committee is asked to note that Council has received a request from All Nation Church, address of National Boxing Stadium, South Circular Road, Dublin 8, Ireland – to host a “March for Jesus” at Ormeau Park, Saturday 23 rd August 2025.
1.2	“March for Jesus” is a non-political, family-friendly celebration of the Christian faith. It seeks to bring together churches from across the island of Ireland to publicly worship, pray for peace, and proclaim hope. All Nation Church piloted a similar event in Dublin which attracted 20,000 attendees.
1.3	All Nation Church are requesting the use of Ormeau Park as the assembly point for the event and will rally peacefully through to City Hall where the event will conclude.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to grant authority to the applicants for the proposed event on the dates noted; subject to the completion of the appropriate event management plans and satisfactory terms being agreed by the Director of City & Neighbourhood Services and on the condition that the Event Organisers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. resolves all operational issues to the Council’s satisfaction; II. meets all statutory requirements including Public Liability Insurance cover, Health and Safety, and licensing responsibilities; and III. shall consult with adjoining public bodies and local communities as necessary. <p>Please note that the above recommendations are taken as a pre-policy position in advance of the Council agreeing a more structured framework and policy for ‘Events’, which is currently being taken forward in conjunction with the Councils Commercial team.</p> <p>Members are asked to note that the event will take place before full ratification of the committee decision at September’s full council meeting.</p>
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>If agreed, the event organisers will be required in advance of the event to submit an event management plan for approval by the Council and all relevant statutory bodies. This will include an assessment of how the event will impact upon the surrounding area and measures to mitigate these impacts. Notification of Parades request will be required to be presented to the council along with a Traffic Management order.</p>
3.2	<p>All Nation Church – March for Jesus – Ormeau Park – Saturday 23rd August 2025</p> <p>Council have received a request from All Nation Church for their Rally on Saturday 23rd August 2025 to commence from Ormeau Park on to the Ormeau embankment and progressing down</p>

	the Ravenhill Road to City Hall, where the rally will conclude. Returning to Ormeau Embankment to access parked coaches.
3.3	<p>The proposed route for the event is as follows:</p> <p>The rally departs Ormeau Park 2:00 PM, and proceed peacefully via Ormeau Embankment, down Ravenhill Road to City Hall, where the event will conclude. City Hall have been notified of the rally by the All Nation Church. Some participants of the rally will be making their return journey back to Ormeau Embankment to access buses. Time to be confirmed by event organiser.</p>
3.4	There will be a family-friendly crowd of 5,000-10,000 participants. Final numbers will be determined by All Nation Church, through outreach and engagement with churches across Ireland. All Nation Church piloted a similar event in Dublin which attracted 20,000 attendees.
3.5	All Nation Church have contracted Wor. Bro. Paul R McMichael, County Grand Secretary of the Orange Order to assist with the logistics of the Rally from Ormeau Park to City Hall.
3.6	The PSNI have been informed along with an 11/1 parade notification being submitted.
3.7	<p>The event organiser will meet with the PSNI to ascertain the need for the closure of Ormeau embankment and to facilitate the parking of coaches of the attendees of the rally.</p> <p>Event Organisers will liaise with neighbouring Asian Supermarket and Ozone Complex, in order to allow full access to both sites, if the embankment is required to be closed.</p>
3.8	The Key dates for the request are:
3.9	<p>Set Up - 11.00am, Saturday 23 August 2025</p> <p>Main Event - 12noon - Gathering at Ormeau Park, Grass area and hardstanding surface beside Ozone complex, Saturday 23 August 2025</p> <p>Rally commences – 2.00pm, Saturday 23 August 2025</p> <p>De Rig – 5.00pm, Saturday 23 August 2025 (time to be confirmed by event organiser)</p>
4.0	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There are no known financial or resource implications at this time</p>
4.1	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are no known implications with this request.</p>

5.0	Appendices
	None



Subject:	Update Report on Overfilled Bins and Bin liners
Date:	5 th August 2025
Reporting Officer:	Stephen Leonard, Director Resources, Fleet and Open Spaces and Streetscene
Contact Officer:	John McConnell, City Services Manager (Resources and Fleet)

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/Summary of Main Issues
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1.1	To provide an update to members on the work being carried out in relation to the overfilled bins and bin liner collection issues.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is requested to note the contents of this report.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Key Issues</p> <p>Members will recall this matter was discussed in June and members requested that updates were presented to P&C Committee at the August and September meetings. This report provides an update to members on progress to date.</p>
3.2	It should be noted that Corporate Communications have supported and continue to provide resource to Resources and Fleet through the communications and awareness raising elements of the plan. A summary of that activity is in Appendix A.
3.3	The Project Teams and their Resource Advisor colleagues within Waste Management have produced an engagement plan (Appendix B) based on the Implementation and Communications Plan approved by Council. Key Dates to be noted are as follows:
3.4	<p><u>Monday 4 August</u> – the beginning of Amber tagging bedding in period for 8 weeks. Collections continue as normal (i.e. overfilled bins and bins with liners still collected) with warning tag placed on bins and reporting by crews. Enhanced Resource Advisor Teams on ground raising awareness and messaging. Report it App data will be used to inform the engagement and targeting of resources on the ground. It will also be used to measure the impact of the programme during both the amber and red collecting to policy stages.</p>
3.4	<p><u>September P&C Committee</u> – Further update report to members on the impact of the amber phase and the comms and engagement plan. This update will include a summary of the reporting data and highlight problem areas.</p>
3.5	<p><u>Monday 29 September</u> – planned start date for the beginning of Red tagging collecting strictly to policy phase. Overfilled containers will be tagged and will not be collected, and instances reported. Temporary additional clear up teams to be engaged Resource Teams, OSS and Enforcement Teams will be deployed to targeting remaining hot spot areas.</p> <p>Project Team progress as at time of writing of this update report:</p>
3.6	<p><u>Overfilled Bins – Domestic Waste</u></p> <p>The following actions are ongoing or are on schedule to be carried out as detailed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to strengthen the presence of educational and communications on the ground, additional Agency Resource Advisors have been recruited. Staff have received their full day of induction and training and advised on the work required, campaign details and timeframes around communications and engagement.. • The Additional Resource Advisor Staff have been deployed and began operating in Urban Belfast from Monday 21st July. It is envisaged that this early messaging and later engagement will soften the landing of the bedding in and collecting to policy periods.

- Briefing information and FAQs have been prepared and issued to internal stakeholders w/c 21st July. For example, this includes a 2-page collection crew brief with graphics and scenarios.
- Customer Hub have been made aware of timings, comms and sequencing around the campaign and have agreed a bank of FAQs to support any customer engagement around the proposed changes.
- Corporate Comms are preparing a member briefing pack with FAQs supplied. It is planned that these are to be issued on Tuesday 29 July alongside the main press release.
- The Project team have held briefings with operations managers and assistant managers and their crews.
- Community Outreach team are involved and have compiled a list of locations, areas and activity (e.g. Fresher's week) to support the campaign messaging w/c 21st July. Corp Comms have been included in this and will align their social media messaging to these events and amplify as appropriate. Campaign material has been provided to the Outreach Team to support their engagement.
- Campaign materials, letters, leaflets and posters have been printed and issued to the Resource Advisor Team to support resident engagement.. Example letter included in Appendix C. Engagement will be refined into the hotspot areas where overfilled bins are problematic based on reporting in the amber and red periods. Posters have also been delivered to all community centres and Household Recycling Centres to support the campaign.
- Trade Unions have been updated at the recent Resources and Fleet TU and Resources and Fleet Health and Safety fora. Messaging sent via Firetext to all teams on the ground w/c 21st July to align with other internal messaging and briefings.
- Internal Communications are running an Interlink piece in August and some messaging in community centre screens to inform staff of the campaign, many of whom are residents of Belfast themselves.
- Recent Summer City Matters had a 2-page piece around good bin behaviour and better recycling. The Autumn/Winter edition will also include a piece around the campaign and collecting to policy approach planned from 29th September. The project team have supplied this to Corporate Communications to include in the Autumn/Winter edition.
- Amber and Red Notification tags. An initial order of 40,000 amber tags has been placed, following a procurement exercise, which were circulated to crews and internal stakeholders w/c 21st July. This aligns with crew briefings etc planned for the bedding in period starting 4th August. Red tags will be ordered at end of August in time for Red Tag/Collecting to policy briefings with Waste Collection Operations Management.
- It is recognised that an additional hot spot area response team will be required from when we collect to policy. Planning has commenced to ensure that these posts will be in situ for the collecting to policy phase.
- The Resources Officer and team have been charged with compiling a distribution list of all agents, housing associations and management companies to advise on campaign and the application of the collection policies relating to all containers, including euro bins which are common at apartment blocks. This communication is based on campaign materials and letter to households and it is planned this will be issued w/c 28th July. The team have also arranged for some of the new campaign materials to be translated into alternative language formats to support households

	<p>whose first language may not be English. The Corporate contract for this service has expired and requires renewal, so the team have went out to quotation for this which may delay the arrival of the translations which ideally would have be in place in advance of 4th August.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste Management Operations have increased stock levels of recycling containers in anticipation of increased demand as a result of the campaign. As the focus is on Urban Belfast, recycling box stock, in particular, has been increased to meet demand for additional or replacement containers. The project team will monitor the impact on orders and work with WM operations to ensure container supply is able to meet demand.
3.7	<p><u>Overfilled Bins – Commercial Waste</u></p> <p>Ongoing and future activities are as follows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A dedicated data gathering exercise is currently being conducted by the Project Officer with crews/rounds and customers to determine an average % of commercial customers presenting overfilled bins. This is due to be completed by 31st July and will inform any additional resource requirements needed for Support Services to support the Commercial Waste team. A4 sized Amber and red stickers will be introduced as majority of customers use large euro bins and tags would be missed. These will reflect the same domestic messaging adapted for commercial customers. These have been designed and ordered to align with crew briefings. Commercial Waste timings will align with domestic actions. Support Services have been provided with a template letter to issue to all customers (approximately 3000) advising them of the campaign, the timelines involved and how to avoid overfilled bins. This letter was issued on the 25th July so customers will receive this info w/c 28 July onwards. Further work to refine a reporting procedure for commercial crews when collecting to policy i.e. no report it app use for commercial crews due to no integration with CREST so an alternative will be required to photograph and report Overfilled Bins from 29th September. The Project Team continue to work with Support Services and Comwaste Operations to resolve this issue.
3.8	<p><u>Bin Liners – Domestic Waste</u></p> <p>Activities in relation to Bin Liners are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All public messaging around bin liners has been incorporated into the wider messaging around the campaign and aligned to the same timeframes for overfilled bin policy. In terms of engagement with cleaning providers, all companies that could be identified as operating in Belfast in April 2025 were contacted. Only one provider, based in Newtownabbey replied with queries. All others were content with the information and approach and didn't think the policy would negatively impact their operations. A future generic update email has been drafted to update these providers and will be issued week commencing 28th July. Within the email there will be an offer to receive

	<p>physical or digital campaign materials, should they feel that this will be of assistance to their client base.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Project Officer will continue to engage with the individual company around their outstanding queries.
3.9	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There are no financial implications associated with this report. All costs will be covered from within existing revenue estimates.</p>
3.10	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessments</u></p> <p>There are no equality or good relations implications associated with this report.</p>
4.0	Appendices
	<p>Appendix A – Corporate Comms timeline</p> <p>Appendix B – Engagement Plan</p>

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Appendix A – Corporate Comms timeline

‘Improving bin behaviour’ – timeline for communications activity

Timeframe	Action	Update	M&C actions																		
w/c 7 July	Printing of all comms materials Distribution pattern in place Translated materials sorted	A3 posters, A2 posters, pull-up stands – away to Reprographics 08/07/25	Focus on July bin collections and anticipated disruption																		
	<table><tr><th>Material</th><th>Volume</th><th>Location</th></tr><tr><td>A3 poster</td><td>300 (150 of each)</td><td>Community centres Community venues (libraries etc)</td></tr><tr><td>A2 poster</td><td>32 (16 of each)</td><td>Recycling centres (via sandwich boards at key points)</td></tr><tr><td>A5 flyer</td><td>65000</td><td>Letterboxes Outreach Team at events</td></tr><tr><td>Letter</td><td>62500</td><td>Letterboxes</td></tr><tr><td>Pull-up stand</td><td>4</td><td>Outreach Team at events</td></tr></table>	Material	Volume	Location	A3 poster	300 (150 of each)	Community centres Community venues (libraries etc)	A2 poster	32 (16 of each)	Recycling centres (via sandwich boards at key points)	A5 flyer	65000	Letterboxes Outreach Team at events	Letter	62500	Letterboxes	Pull-up stand	4	Outreach Team at events	10,000 A5 flyers/letters (Wed) to be done in-house – away to Reprographics 08/07/25 Reprographics are also getting quotes for remaining volumes 08/07/25 – to be sent to print ASAP (aiming to have back by 21 July due to July break) Emailed Policy team to check distribution methods used previously – 08/07/25 Materials sent to Waste to begin to translations – 08/07/25 Bin tags printed – Darren progressing post call-in 08/07/25	Review web content online - add in 'leaving your bin out' section re: tagging dates
	Material	Volume	Location																		
	A3 poster	300 (150 of each)	Community centres Community venues (libraries etc)																		
	A2 poster	32 (16 of each)	Recycling centres (via sandwich boards at key points)																		
	A5 flyer	65000	Letterboxes Outreach Team at events																		
	Letter	62500	Letterboxes																		
Pull-up stand	4	Outreach Team at events																			
w/c 14 July (16-18 July)	Door stepping comms (focusing on urban areas)	Materials to be provided for this period by Fri 18 July	Focus on July bin collections and anticipated disruption																		

w/c 21 July	<p>Distribution of A3 posters and A2 posters to community centres, community venues and recycling centres</p> <p>Distribution of A5 flyers and pull-up stands to Outreach Team</p> <p>Printing and distribution of remaining A5 flyers and letters to door knocking team</p>	<p>Aiming to have all printed materials back to us by w/c 21 July to allow door knocking to continue as planned</p> <p>Distribution of posters etc needs to be completed by Friday 25 July (Waste to sort once plan in place). Postal comms will complete in August at some stage.</p>	<p>Social media – we are out and about distributing materials – collections are changing, other languages available</p> <p>Elected members – email with graphics and what we want them to do with them, key messages, FAQs and contact info (then supply email to Waste to issue out)</p>
w/c 28 July	<p>Public messaging begins before 4th August amber tagging starts</p> <p>(Local media, social media and website homepage and Google search terms)</p>		<p>Media release</p> <p><i>Need a photo set up with relevant P&C Member</i></p> <p>Social media boosted posts</p> <p>Lines to take prepped for media Questions</p> <p>Internal story <i>Focused on staff advocates</i></p>
Aug-September	<p>Reinforcement of messaging (social media, website)</p> <p>Informed by pinch points in operation</p> <p>Informed by Outreach Team activity at various events during Aug/Sept</p>		<p>Video content creation</p> <p><i>Focus on various aspects of recycling and bin presentation</i></p> <p>Digital and MPU ads</p>
w/c 29 September	<p>Red tagging begins</p>		<p>Reminder – media release</p> <p><i>Focus on problem areas or reminder</i></p>

			of key messages City Matters <i>Production period starts – winter edition</i>
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Appendix B – Engagement Plan

Communications and Engagement Plan for Urban Belfast - Better Resource Management and Bin Safety

Objective

To implement a focused communications and engagement campaign in urban Belfast to support the bin safety project. This is aimed at enhancing resident awareness of responsibilities surrounding the health & safety issues regarding bins (liners & closed lids) in conjunction with general awareness of improved waste storage and management practices.

Target Audience

Domestic homes in urban Belfast initially, focusing on areas under contract with Bryson Recycling (circa 58,000 dwellings). This approach will allow us to focus the resource on the more densely populated areas of the city where space for containers tends to be more limited. It is anticipated that the urban areas will feature many of the hot spot/non-compliant areas in terms of the bin safety project which we will begin to communicate to residents from August 2025.

There is also a secondary benefit to this approach in relation to the route balancing project in focusing the resource on Urban Belfast. The engagement will stimulate tonnage and set out for Bryson Recycling primarily which are managed under contract. Alongside this communications and engagement piece, route balancing will be undertaken for our City Council crews and routes. Communications and engagement in blue and brown bin areas will no doubt stimulate demand for bins and increased set out and participation, so it is important that the engagement happens after balancing has been undertaken.

Apartments and those sites with communal collection points will be communicated to through management companies, agents and housing associations as these stakeholders are responsible for collective presentation and storage of containers. Residents in these sites are generally not responsible for presentation of shared containers. The Resource Advisor team will develop a mailing list for communal sites

and messaging issued to those stakeholders directly and digitally. This will include communications and FAQs tailored to apartment owners and agents.

Depending on the success of this initiative, there is scope to retain the resource for a longer period to cover suburban areas of the city (circa 95,000 homes) and hotspots therein.

Team Composition

A dedicated team of six agency doorstep Resource Advisors to complement the existing team of 6, responsible for communications and engagement with households directly on issues around waste and recycling. The team will be trained and equipped to deal with most doorstep queries and able to signpost residents as appropriate e.g. regarding assisted lifts, assessed bins and orders for containers.

Teams will be mixed, and Resource Advisors (RAs) will undertake communications and engagement work in pairs in line with risk assessments around doorstep canvassing.

This frontline focus will generate more queries for the team in the form of orders for containers, assessments and signposting the assisted lift service. The team can also provide alternative formats (i.e. translations, braille, audio CDS, large print etc as appropriate), on request. A communications and engagement log will be maintained identifying number of households receiving doorstep information, those canvassed, hit rate at the street and route level, orders placed, and queries handled, and this can form part of the regular waste updates to Members.

Costs expected for the additional resource have been approved and include some metrics around engagement potential and coverage per day.

Productive time - 340 minutes	Number	
No of households @ 3 mins/door/day	113	doors
Team of 6	680	doors
Engagements per week	3400	doors
*16 weeks	54,400	doors
Size of Urban collection area (inc. apartments)	58,000	doors

Campaign Duration/Timeline

Estimated duration of the initial campaign is four months, with potential for extension to suburban areas based on successful outcomes. This tenure may be extended subject to financial approval as required once the bin safety campaign has begun in early August and crews begin collecting to policy from October 2025 onwards.

A key area in the bin safety campaign will be around crew reporting at a street level to allow placement of resources into problematic areas and hotspots as required. The additional 6 x RAs will focus on the structured engagement plan while existing permanent staff continue with day-to-day operations and support those hotspot areas when we begin collecting to policy from October 2025. Permanent staff will be significantly more familiar with the problem areas from experience and familiar with signposting and supporting from other teams and units in the council.

The RA data will be reviewed daily to ascertain problem areas. RAs can assess the areas physically and the Project Team working with the Resources Officer (RA Line Manager) can highlight, identify, and monitor the hot spot areas and take an appropriate approach for each area. Each area will be different and have different needs so each hot spot will be reviewed in context of the issues reported by crews and observed by staff on the ground.

Timeline

W/C 7 July - Recruit and induct additional Resource Advisors

W/C 16 July - Begin postal comms to urban households. Continue postal comms until all households have been communicated with

W/C 4 August - Beginning of bedding in Phase – Amber tags. RIA data will start to be populated

W/C 11 August -Review data and begin to identify problematic/hot spot areas

W/C 18 August – Profile hot spots and begin to deploy Resource Advisors to engage with households in those areas. Continue this until end of September.

W/C 29 Sept – Beginning of collecting to policy period – Red Tags. Continue to monitor RIA data and review engagement approach.

This may also involve additional temporary operational waste collection teams to 'top' bins for short periods whilst resident engagement takes place in persistent problem areas. Continue to monitor approach and number of households/areas that remain problematic.

Communications and Engagement Strategy

1. Preparation Phase

Resource Advisor Recruitment:

- Requisition completed and approved by the Director at end of June. 6 additional staff requested for 16 weeks. The exercise will require this additional resource/funding to augment existing team with their existing day to day workloads. This will be put through the Matrix process with a view to recruiting for induction after 9 July (post call in period). Should fewer than 6 come forward for the temporary work, the Service may need to review the 6 staff for 16 weeks scenario. 4 staff for 24 weeks will cost the same so the requisition may need to be amended depending on availability of agency assignees.

Resource Advisor Training:

- Conduct comprehensive training with all Resource Advisors, focusing on the bin safety project details, resource management education, Training will include scenarios and questions for residents to ask at the doorstep.

Communications and Utilization of Existing Materials:

- Incorporate developed literature (in hand) and social media messaging into the training. Advisors should be well-versed in how to effectively communicate the required messaging around bin safety, recycling, and resident behaviours. A letter will also need to be produced to catch the resident's attention, signpost to support and drive the changes in behaviours required to ensure safe operations for crews. 5 versions required for each weekly collection day (Monday to Friday).

Resource Distribution:

- Equip each advisor with the necessary promotional materials, including leaflet (see appendix A) and letter explaining confirming their recycling/food waste collection schedule, the fair usage policy, recycling information, and contact details for further assistance. Translations are available and can be provided or arranged on request, this will include alternative formats such as large print, Braille, Audio CD etc.

2. Implementation Phase

Zonal Working/Communications and Engagement:

- Urban Belfast will be divided into five zones, aligned with collection days (Monday to Friday). Each advisor team will focus on a specific zone, promoting effective communication and distribution of the message. Three teams will be active initially so will do a day each i.e. Team A focuses on Monday collections, Team B on Tuesday collections etc. Once each team finishes their assigned zone, they will move on to the next available zone. The project team will produce and map these

zones in advance of the inductions so that staff are familiar with the areas in which they will be working.

Teams will keep a record of their activity in each zone and street. These records will be maintained by the Resource Officer. Depending on speed of communications and engagement and the hit rates acquired, teams may have time to cover areas where engagement was low or poor a second time using this record to target households not engaged with on the first pass.

Bryson Recycling provide weekly recycling and food waste services for the council under contract in these areas. Their crews will be more directly impacted by any increased set out, participation and tonnage because of changes to resident behaviour. There may be an increased demand for containers (55l boxes, lids, food waste caddies and food waste bins). There may also be an upsurge in requests for black bins for those properties without a bin. Waste Management are aware of the work being undertaken and will aim to ensure we have the stock to cope with increased requests.

If the campaign is extended into Suburban Belfast, there will be an impact on recycling and brown bin crews and an increased demand for 240l blue bins, 140l/240l brown/food waste bins. Again, the engagement can be managed and planned to ensure additional containers are in stock and available on demand.

3. Engagement Approach

Communications distribution

Distribute informative practical literature that outline:

- Messaging around bin safety campaign.
- Key recycling guidelines.
- Details about one bin per household policy for black bins.
- Common materials accepted for recycling.
- Consequences of overfilled bins to create awareness around the bin safety campaign.

Social Media Promotion/Online

Leverage existing social media messaging and BCC online resources to promote campaign initiatives and encourage community interaction, sharing updates, and resources online.

Face to Face Engagement at the doorstep – tailored to the hotspot areas based on RIA reports

Resource Advisors will visit domestic homes in hot spot areas, engaging those residents in a friendly way around waste, recycling and updates around closed lids, use of liners and multiple bins. Staff will encourage discussion about responsible resource management practices and the one bin per household policy, stressing the importance of proper bin usage.

Interactive Discussion

Foster open dialogues with residents, addressing their questions and concerns, and collecting their feedback about waste management practices in their area. Staff will signpost or provide support to residents that need support. Residents can discuss the assisted lift service, additional capacity, or messaging in different formats with staff on the doorstep. Issues that cannot be resolved at the doorstep will be escalated appropriately.

4. Follow-Up and Feedback

Engagement Tracking

Monitor communications and engagement efforts by tracking the number of households communicated and interacted with in each zone and street and evaluating resident feedback to provide an assessment of campaign impact.

Ongoing Community Communication

- Use social media platforms and newsletters to share success stories, continued education, and reminders related to waste management responsibilities. Outreach Team activities aligned to support the campaigns and improved resident behaviours.

5. Future Expansion

Evaluation of Campaign Success

At the conclusion of the 4-month urban communications and engagement, analyse feedback, recycling rates, and participation levels to gauge success factors.

Planning for Suburban Engagement

Develop a phased strategy for extending the team and outreach efforts into suburban areas. By this stage, there should be a significant RIA data set to draw from allowing an approach targeted to areas that need additional support or canvassing.

Outcomes and Goals

Short-Term

- ✓ Raise awareness of recycling responsibilities and the one bin policy among urban residents.
- ✓ Foster positive interactions and support community involvement in responsible resource management.
- ✓ Promotion of bin safety campaign messaging – outcomes to residents and areas of lids not being closed.
- ✓ Provide a pathway and processes to resolve an ongoing safety issue for crews.
- ✓ Reduce the prevalence and frequency of hot spot areas identified based on RIA crew feedback during the bedding in phase.

Long-Term

- ✓ Cultivate a culture of proactive resource management and responsible waste disposal within urban Belfast, leading to reduced instances of overfilled bins, pests, litter, and fly tipping/dumping.
- ✓ Prepare for a successful extension of the campaign to suburban domestic properties, ensuring consistent messaging and practice across both urban and suburban communities.
- ✓ Deliver better environmental and cost outcomes for ratepayers.
- ✓ Support compliance with increased recycling rates.
- ✓ Divert more materials from energy recovery and move these materials higher up the waste hierarchy.
- ✓ Support local jobs and the economy.

This communications and engagement plan prioritizes effective education and involvement of the residents of urban Belfast in better resource management and recycling practices. With a structured 4-month campaign as part of the bin safety project to foster better responsibility and community engagement in Urban areas, the campaign should reduce the “noise” associated with a large citywide campaign around bin safety and bin liners. Messaging will include the one bin per household (fair usage policy) message in advance of work being undertaken to communicate this to domestic residents and support our crews in terms of fair and balanced routes. This project will be undertaken later in 2025/26.

Appendix A – Communications leaflet (also available, on request, in other languages, and formats):



Belfast
City Council

Leaving bins out for collection

Including new bin tags from May 2025



Follow these
tips if you have
recycling or
wheelie boxes
at home too.

On your collection day, make sure your bin:



Is out by 7am



Is brought back
in by 7pm*



Has your house
number marked on it



Is not overfilled and
the lid is fully closed



Doesn't have
a bin liner



Has no extra bags
or waste beside it

Following these steps will keep our staff safe when emptying bins and support cleaner streets and communities.

From May 2025, if your bin lid isn't closed, or you have used a bin liner, we will add an amber tag to your bin to remind you about these rules.

From June 2025, if you continue to line or overfill your bin, we will add a red tag and will not empty your bin until you remove the liner and make sure the lid is fully closed.



If you get someone to
clean your bin remind
them not to use liners!

Bin too full?

- Sort your waste properly and recycle as much as you can - this will save space in your general waste bin and make sure the lid closes fully
- Flatten down large items and bags
- Use our recycling and civic amenity sites
- Book a free bulky waste collection (for larger household items)

Got a question?

Call 028 9027 0230
Visit www.belfastcity.gov.uk/bins



* This is to avoid other rubbish being placed in your bin. If your bin has not been emptied and we have not added a tag to tell you why, report it online at belfastcity.gov.uk/bins or call 028 9027 0230, and leave your bin out again by 7am the next day.



Belfast City Council

Make sure you put the right items in each bin/box. If you don't, they will not be emptied. You'll need to remove these items before your next collection.

By using all your recycling bins/boxes as much as you can, you can stop your general waste bin from getting too full and make sure the lid closes fully.

If you overfill your general waste bin and the lid doesn't close fully, it will not be emptied. You'll need to remove some items and make sure the lid closes fully for us to empty it.

Sorting your household waste



Recycling bin, boxes or wheeler box
 Always empty and rinse items first.

- Aerosol cans
- Aluminium foil (clean)
- Biscuit tins
- Cardboard food boxes
- Cartons (including TetraPak)
- Cardboard (dry and clean)
- Plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays
- Envelopes (remove the plastic window)
- Food and drink tins and cans
- Newspapers, magazines and catalogues
- Paper
- Soft back books
- Toilet roll tubes

Glass can also be placed in recycling boxes and wheeler boxes.

No glass in blue bins please - use bottle banks or recycling centres instead.



Compost bin

- Food waste - place in your caddy first and then put in your compost bin
- Grass cuttings
- Hedge trimmings
- Leaves, twigs and small branches
- Plants, flowers and weeds
- Cold ashes
- Paper napkins
- Shredded paper
- Takeaway pizza boxes (torn up)
- Wet paper and wet cardboard
- Bottle corks



Food waste bin

- Fruit and vegetable peelings
- Eggshells
- Teabags and coffee grounds
- Bones
- Bread, cake and pastries
- Meat, fish and cheese
- Rice, beans and pasta
- Any other leftover food (no liquids)



General waste bin

- Disposable nappies
- Period products
- Medical waste
- Tissues and wipes
- Broken glass
- Bubble wrap
- Crisp bags
- Callophane wrapping
- Styrofoam
- Plastic cutlery
- Takeaway drink cups
- Dog poo (bagged)
- Tablet blister packs

No food waste, batteries, vapes or small electrical items in general waste bins please.



Bottle banks
 Find your nearest at belfastcity.gov.uk/bottlebanks



Recycling centres

- Batteries
- Vapes
- Small electrical items
- Clothes and other textiles
- Hard plastics
- Tools
- Paint pots
- CDs and books
- Ink cartridges

View the full list at belfastcity.gov.uk/recyclingcentres

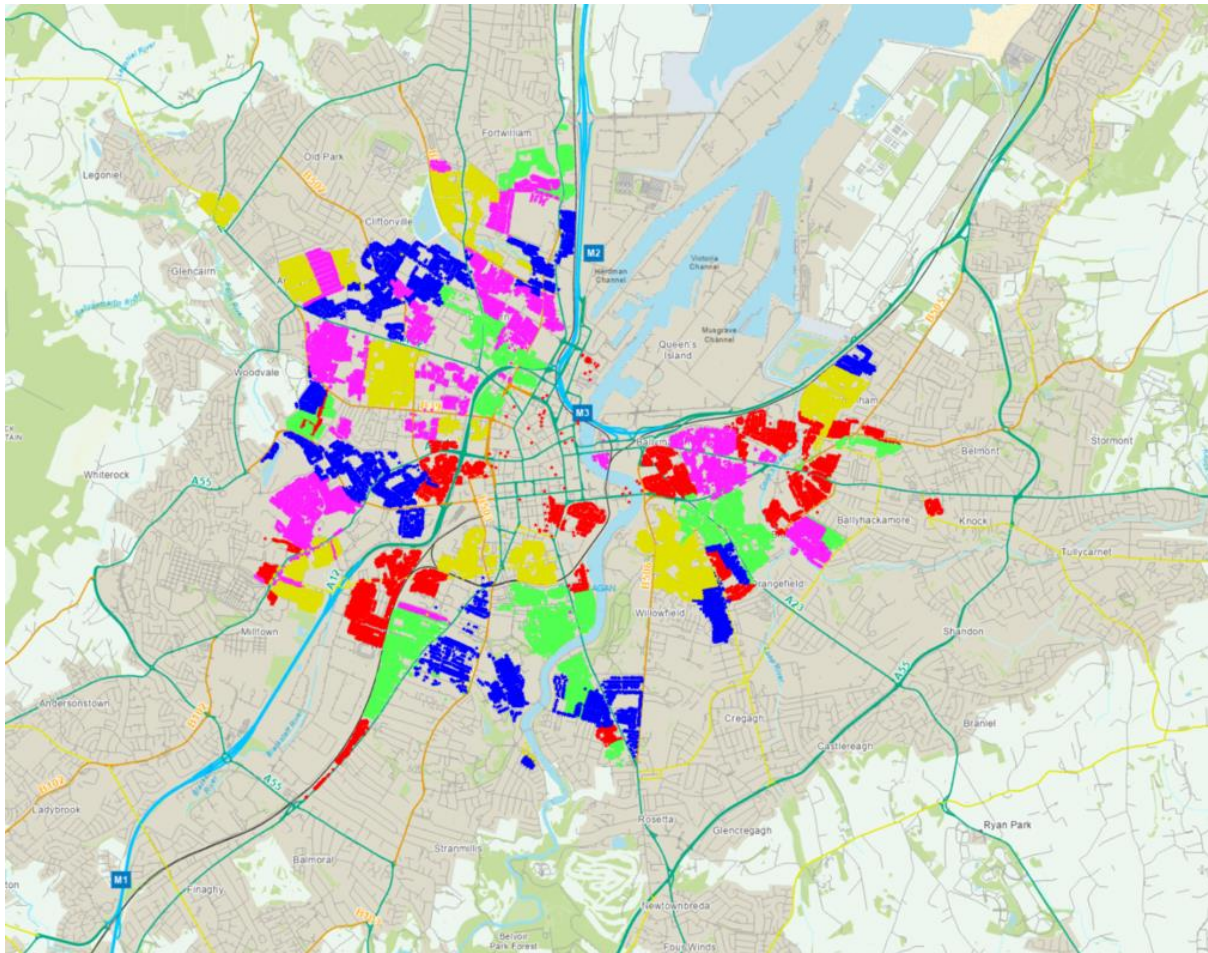


Bulky waste collection
 For larger household items. Book **FREE** online at belfastcity.gov.uk/bulkywaste

Need help?
 Call 028 9027 0230
 Visit belfastcity.gov.uk/bins
 for more help with sorting your waste. You can also order new bins/boxes and report damaged or stolen bins/boxes.



Engagement areas in Urban Belfast by collection round/day.





Your reference: DT/BM

Our reference: Wednesday

Date: As Posted

Dear Resident,

Important changes: Safe bin collection

We're writing to let you know about important changes to bin collections in Belfast, aimed at improving safety for our crews and the community.

What's changing?

To improve safety, all collection vehicles will be fitted with sensors that prevent the emptying of overfilled bins. This follows a tragic incident in the UK last year and is part of a wider effort to protect our staff. Some of our refuse collection vehicles already have these sensors, and all will be upgraded over the next few years. Once installed, crews will not be able to override the system.

Why these changes are needed

Our crews are increasingly encountering two key issues:

1. **Overfilled bins (lid not closed):**
These pose a serious safety risk. Bins can fall during lifting, spill litter onto streets, or cause injury to staff.
2. **Large bin liners:**
Some residents use large liners to keep bins clean. However, these can snag during emptying, causing spills or making bins fall—again putting our crews at risk.

What this means for you

- **From 4 August:**
Bins that are overfilled or lined will receive an **amber warning tag**. Crews will still empty them but will tag them and report the issue to our Customer Hub.
- **From 29 September:**
These bins will **not be collected**. They'll receive a **red tag**, and you'll need to wait until your next scheduled collection after correcting the issue. If you continue to present an overfilled bin without the lid closed from this date, it will not be collected.

It is your responsibility to ensure your bin is not overfilled and does not contain a large liner.

How you can help

Here are some tips to manage your waste more effectively:

- **Recycle right:**
Know what goes where. Check our website or the leaflet included with this letter. Please place your containers at the kerbside by 7am. Your recycling and food waste are collected every week on a **Wednesday**.
- **Reduce and reuse:**
Before throwing something away, consider if it can be reused, donated, or repurposed.
- **Use the right bin:**
Only non-recyclable waste should go in your black bin. **No food waste** is allowed in black bins—use your food caddy instead.
- **Need help?**
Every household is different. If you need support, a Resource Advisor can visit your home. We can also provide information in different languages or formats if requested.

Ordering bins and containers

You can order recycling containers **free of charge** online. If you need a black bin, you can also order one online or through our Customer Hub. Please note, general waste bins have a [charge](#) and every property should have a black bin.

We're committed to making Belfast cleaner, safer, and more sustainable. Your cooperation helps protect our crews and keeps our city looking its best.

For questions or more information, contact our Customer Hub at 02890 270230 or visit www.belfastcity.gov.uk/bins.

Thank you for your support.

Kind regards,

The Recycling Team

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Appendix B – Engagement Plan

Communications and Engagement Plan for Urban Belfast - Better Resource Management and Bin Safety

Objective

To implement a focused communications and engagement campaign in urban Belfast to support the bin safety project. This is aimed at enhancing resident awareness of responsibilities surrounding the health & safety issues regarding bins (liners & closed lids) in conjunction with general awareness of improved waste storage and management practices.

Target Audience

Domestic homes in urban Belfast initially, focusing on areas under contract with Bryson Recycling (circa 58,000 dwellings). This approach will allow us to focus the resource on the more densely populated areas of the city where space for containers tends to be more limited. It is anticipated that the urban areas will feature many of the hot spot/non-compliant areas in terms of the bin safety project which we will begin to communicate to residents from August 2025.

There is also a secondary benefit to this approach in relation to the route balancing project in focusing the resource on Urban Belfast. The engagement will stimulate tonnage and set out for Bryson Recycling primarily which are managed under contract. Alongside this communications and engagement piece, route balancing will be undertaken for our City Council crews and routes. Communications and engagement in blue and brown bin areas will no doubt stimulate demand for bins and increased set out and participation, so it is important that the engagement happens after balancing has been undertaken.

Apartments and those sites with communal collection points will be communicated to through management companies, agents and housing associations as these stakeholders are responsible for collective presentation and storage of containers. Residents in these sites are generally not responsible for presentation of shared containers. The Resource Advisor team will develop a mailing list for communal sites and messaging issued to those stakeholders directly and digitally. This will include communications and FAQs tailored to apartment owners and agents.

Depending on the success of this initiative, there is scope to retain the resource for a longer period to cover suburban areas of the city (circa 95,000 homes) and hotspots therein.

Team Composition

A dedicated team of six agency doorstep Resource Advisors to complement the existing team of 6, responsible for communications and engagement with households directly on issues around waste and recycling. The team will be trained and equipped to deal with most doorstep queries and able to signpost residents as appropriate e.g. regarding assisted lifts, assessed bins and orders for containers.

Teams will be mixed, and Resource Advisors (RAs) will undertake communications and engagement work in pairs in line with risk assessments around doorstep canvassing.

This frontline focus will generate more queries for the team in the form of orders for containers, assessments and signposting the assisted lift service. The team can also provide alternative formats (i.e. translations, braille, audio CDS, large print etc as appropriate), on request. A communications and engagement log will be maintained identifying number of households receiving doorstep information, those canvassed, hit rate at the street and route level, orders placed, and queries handled, and this can form part of the regular waste updates to Members.

Costs expected for the additional resource have been approved and include some metrics around engagement potential and coverage per day.

Productive time - 340 minutes	Number	
No of households @ 3 mins/door/day	113	doors
Team of 6	680	doors
Engagements per week	3400	doors
*16 weeks	54,400	doors
Size of Urban collection area (inc. apartments)	58,000	doors

Campaign Duration/Timeline

Estimated duration of the initial campaign is four months, with potential for extension to suburban areas based on successful outcomes. This tenure may be extended subject to financial approval as required once the bin safety campaign has begun in early August and crews begin collecting to policy from October 2025 onwards.

A key area in the bin safety campaign will be around crew reporting at a street level to allow placement of resources into problematic areas and hotspots as required. The additional 6 x RAs will focus on the structured engagement plan while existing permanent staff continue with day-to-day operations and support those hotspot areas when we begin collecting to policy from October 2025. Permanent staff will be

significantly more familiar with the problem areas from experience and familiar with signposting and supporting from other teams and units in the council.

The RA data will be reviewed daily to ascertain problem areas. RAs can assess the areas physically and the Project Team working with the Resources Officer (RA Line Manager) can highlight, identify, and monitor the hot spot areas and take an appropriate approach for each area. Each area will be different and have different needs so each hot spot will be reviewed in context of the issues reported by crews and observed by staff on the ground.

Timeline

W/C 7 July - Recruit and induct additional Resource Advisors

W/C 16 July - Begin postal comms to urban households. Continue postal comms until all households have been communicated with

W/C 4 August - Beginning of bedding in Phase – Amber tags. RIA data will start to be populated

W/C 11 August -Review data and begin to identify problematic/hot spot areas

W/C 18 August – Profile hot spots and begin to deploy Resource Advisors to engage with households in those areas. Continue this until end of September.

W/C 29 Sept – Beginning of collecting to policy period – Red Tags. Continue to monitor RIA data and review engagement approach.

This may also involve additional temporary operational waste collection teams to ‘top’ bins for short periods whilst resident engagement takes place in persistent problem areas. Continue to monitor approach and number of households/areas that remain problematic.

Communications and Engagement Strategy

1. Preparation Phase

Resource Advisor Recruitment:

- Requisition completed and approved by the Director at end of June. 6 additional staff requested for 16 weeks. The exercise will require this additional resource/funding to augment existing team with their existing day to day workloads. This will be put through the Matrix process with a view to recruiting for induction after 9 July (post call in period). Should fewer than 6 come forward for the temporary work, the Service may need to review the 6 staff for 16 weeks scenario. 4 staff for 24 weeks will cost the same so the requisition may need to be amended depending on availability of agency assignees.

Resource Advisor Training:

- Conduct comprehensive training with all Resource Advisors, focusing on the bin safety project details, resource management education, Training will include scenarios and questions for residents to ask at the doorstep.

Communications and Utilization of Existing Materials:

- Incorporate developed literature (in hand) and social media messaging into the training. Advisors should be well-versed in how to effectively communicate the required messaging around bin safety, recycling, and resident behaviours. A letter will also need to be produced to catch the resident's attention, signpost to support and drive the changes in behaviours required to ensure safe operations for crews. 5 versions required for each weekly collection day (Monday to Friday).

Resource Distribution:

- Equip each advisor with the necessary promotional materials, including leaflet (see appendix A) and letter explaining confirming their recycling/food waste collection schedule, the fair usage policy, recycling information, and contact details for further assistance. Translations are available and can be provided or arranged on request, this will include alternative formats such as large print, Braille, Audio CD etc.

2. Implementation Phase

Zonal Working/Communications and Engagement:

- Urban Belfast will be divided into five zones, aligned with collection days (Monday to Friday). Each advisor team will focus on a specific zone, promoting effective communication and distribution of the message. Three teams will be active initially so will do a day each i.e. Team A focuses on Monday collections, Team B on Tuesday collections etc. Once each team finishes their assigned zone, they will move on to the next available zone. The project team will produce and map these zones in advance of the inductions so that staff are familiar with the areas in which they will be working.

Teams will keep a record of their activity in each zone and street. These records will be maintained by the Resource Officer. Depending on speed of communications and engagement and the hit rates acquired, teams may have time to cover areas where engagement was low or poor a second time using this record to target households not engaged with on the first pass.

Bryson Recycling provide weekly recycling and food waste services for the council under contract in these areas. Their crews will be more directly impacted by any increased set out, participation and tonnage because of changes to resident behaviour. There may be an increased demand for containers (55l boxes, lids, food waste caddies and food waste bins). There may also be an upsurge in requests for black bins for those properties without a bin. Waste Management are aware of the

work being undertaken and will aim to ensure we have the stock to cope with increased requests.

If the campaign is extended into Suburban Belfast, there will be an impact on recycling and brown bin crews and an increased demand for 240l blue bins, 140l/240l brown/food waste bins. Again, the engagement can be managed and planned to ensure additional containers are in stock and available on demand.

3. Engagement Approach

Communications distribution

Distribute informative practical literature that outline:

- Messaging around bin safety campaign.
- Key recycling guidelines.
- Details about one bin per household policy for black bins.
- Common materials accepted for recycling.
- Consequences of overfilled bins to create awareness around the bin safety campaign.

Social Media Promotion/Online

Leverage existing social media messaging and BCC online resources to promote campaign initiatives and encourage community interaction, sharing updates, and resources online.

Face to Face Engagement at the doorstep – tailored to the hotspot areas based on RIA reports

Resource Advisors will visit domestic homes in hot spot areas, engaging those residents in friendly way around waste, recycling and updates around closed lids, use of liners and multiple bins. Staff will encourage discussion about responsible resource management practices and the one bin per household policy, stressing the importance of proper bin usage.

Interactive Discussion

Foster open dialogues with residents, addressing their questions and concerns, and collecting their feedback about waste management practices in their area. Staff will signpost or provide support to residents that need support. Residents can discuss the assisted lift service, additional capacity, or messaging in different formats with staff on the doorstep. Issues that cannot be resolved at the doorstep will be escalated appropriately.

4. Follow-Up and Feedback

Engagement Tracking

Monitor communications and engagement efforts by tracking the number of households communicated and interacted with in each zone and street and evaluating resident feedback to provide an assessment of campaign impact.

Ongoing Community Communication

- Use social media platforms and newsletters to share success stories, continued education, and reminders related to waste management responsibilities. Outreach Team activities aligned to support the campaigns and improved resident behaviours.

5. Future Expansion

Evaluation of Campaign Success

At the conclusion of the 4-month urban communications and engagement, analyse feedback, recycling rates, and participation levels to gauge success factors.

Planning for Suburban Engagement

Develop a phased strategy for extending the team and outreach efforts into suburban areas. By this stage, there should be a significant RIA data set to draw from allowing an approach targeted to areas that need additional support or canvassing.

Outcomes and Goals

Short-Term

- ✓ Raise awareness of recycling responsibilities and the one bin policy among urban residents.
- ✓ Foster positive interactions and support community involvement in responsible resource management.
- ✓ Promotion of bin safety campaign messaging – outcomes to residents and areas of lids not being closed.
- ✓ Provide a pathway and processes to resolve an ongoing safety issue for crews.
- ✓ Reduce the prevalence and frequency of hot spot areas identified based on RIA crew feedback during the bedding in phase.

Long-Term

- ✓ Cultivate a culture of proactive resource management and responsible waste disposal within urban Belfast, leading to reduced instances of overfilled bins, pests, litter, and fly tipping/dumping.
- ✓ Prepare for a successful extension of the campaign to suburban domestic properties, ensuring consistent messaging and practice across both urban and suburban communities.
- ✓ Deliver better environmental and cost outcomes for ratepayers.

- ✓ Support compliance with increased recycling rates.
- ✓ Divert more materials from energy recovery and move these materials higher up the waste hierarchy.
- ✓ Support local jobs and the economy.

This communications and engagement plan prioritizes effective education and involvement of the residents of urban Belfast in better resource management and recycling practices. With a structured 4-month campaign as part of the bin safety project to foster better responsibility and community engagement in Urban areas, the campaign should reduce the “noise” associated with a large citywide campaign around bin safety and bin liners. Messaging will include the one bin per household (fair usage policy) message in advance of work being undertaken to communicate this to domestic residents and support our crews in terms of fair and balanced routes. This project will be undertaken later in 2025/26.

Appendix A – Communications leaflet (also available, on request, in other languages, and formats):

Belfast City Council

Leaving bins out for collection

Including new bin tags from May 2025

Follow these tips if you have recycling or wheelie boxes at home too.

On your collection day, make sure your bin:

- Is out by 7am
- Is brought back in by 7pm*
- Has your house number marked on it
- Is not overfilled and the lid is fully closed
- Doesn't have a bin liner
- Has no extra bags or waste beside it

Following these steps will keep our staff safe when emptying bins and support cleaner streets and communities.

From May 2025, if your bin lid isn't closed, or you have used a bin liner, we will add an amber tag to your bin to remind you about these rules.

From June 2025, if you continue to line or overfill your bin, we will add a red tag and will not empty your bin until you remove the liner and make sure the lid is fully closed.

If you get someone to clean your bin remind them not to use liners!

Bin too full?

- Sort your waste properly and recycle as much as you can - this will save space in your general waste bin and make sure the lid closes fully
- Flatten down large items and bags
- Use our recycling and civic amenity sites
- Book a free bulky waste collection (for larger household items)

Got a question?
Call 028 9027 0230
Visit www.belfastcity.gov.uk/bins

* This is to avoid other rubbish being placed in your bin. If your bin has not been emptied and we have not added a tag to tell you why, report it online at belfastcity.gov.uk/bins or call 028 9027 0230, and leave your bin out again by 7am the next day.



Belfast City Council

Sorting your household waste

Make sure you put the right items in each bin/box. If you don't, they will not be emptied. You'll need to remove these items before your next collection.

By using all your recycling bins/boxes as much as you can, you can stop your general waste bin from getting too full and make sure the lid closes fully.

If you overfill your general waste bin and the lid doesn't close fully, it will not be emptied. You'll need to remove some items and make sure the lid closes fully for us to empty it.



Recycling bin, boxes or wheelee box

Always empty and rinse items first.

- Aerosol cans
- Aluminium foil (clean)
- Biscuit tins
- Cardboard food boxes
- Cartons (including TetraPak)
- Cardboard (dry and clean)
- Plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays
- Envelopes (remove the plastic window)
- Food and drink tins and cans
- Newspapers, magazines and catalogues
- Paper
- Soft back books
- Toilet roll tubes



Compost bin

- Food waste – place in your caddy first and then put in your compost bin
- Grass cuttings
- Hedge trimmings
- Leaves, twigs and small branches
- Plants, flowers and weeds
- Cold ashes
- Paper napkins
- Shredded paper
- Takeaway pizza boxes (torn up)
- Wet paper and wet cardboard
- Bottle corks



Food waste bin

- Fruit and vegetable peelings
- Eggshells
- Teabags and coffee grounds
- Bones
- Bread, cake and pastries
- Meat, fish and cheese
- Rice, beans and pasta
- Any other leftover food (no liquids)



General waste bin

- Disposable nappies
- Period products
- Medical waste
- Tissues and wipes
- Broken glass
- Bubble wrap
- Crisp bags
- Callophane wrapping
- Styrofoam
- Plastic cutlery
- Takeaway drink cups
- Dog poo (bagged)
- Tablet blister packs



Bottle banks

Find your nearest at belfastcity.gov.uk/bottlebanks



Recycling centres

- Batteries
- Vapes
- Small electrical items
- Clothes and other textiles
- Hard plastics
- Tools
- Paint pots
- CDs and books
- Ink cartridges

View the full list at belfastcity.gov.uk/recyclingcentres



Bulky waste collection

For larger household items. Book online at belfastcity.gov.uk/bulkywaste

FREE



Glass can also be placed in recycling boxes and wheelee boxes.

No glass in blue bins please - use bottle banks or recycling centres instead.



No food waste, batteries, vapes or small electrical items in general waste bins please.

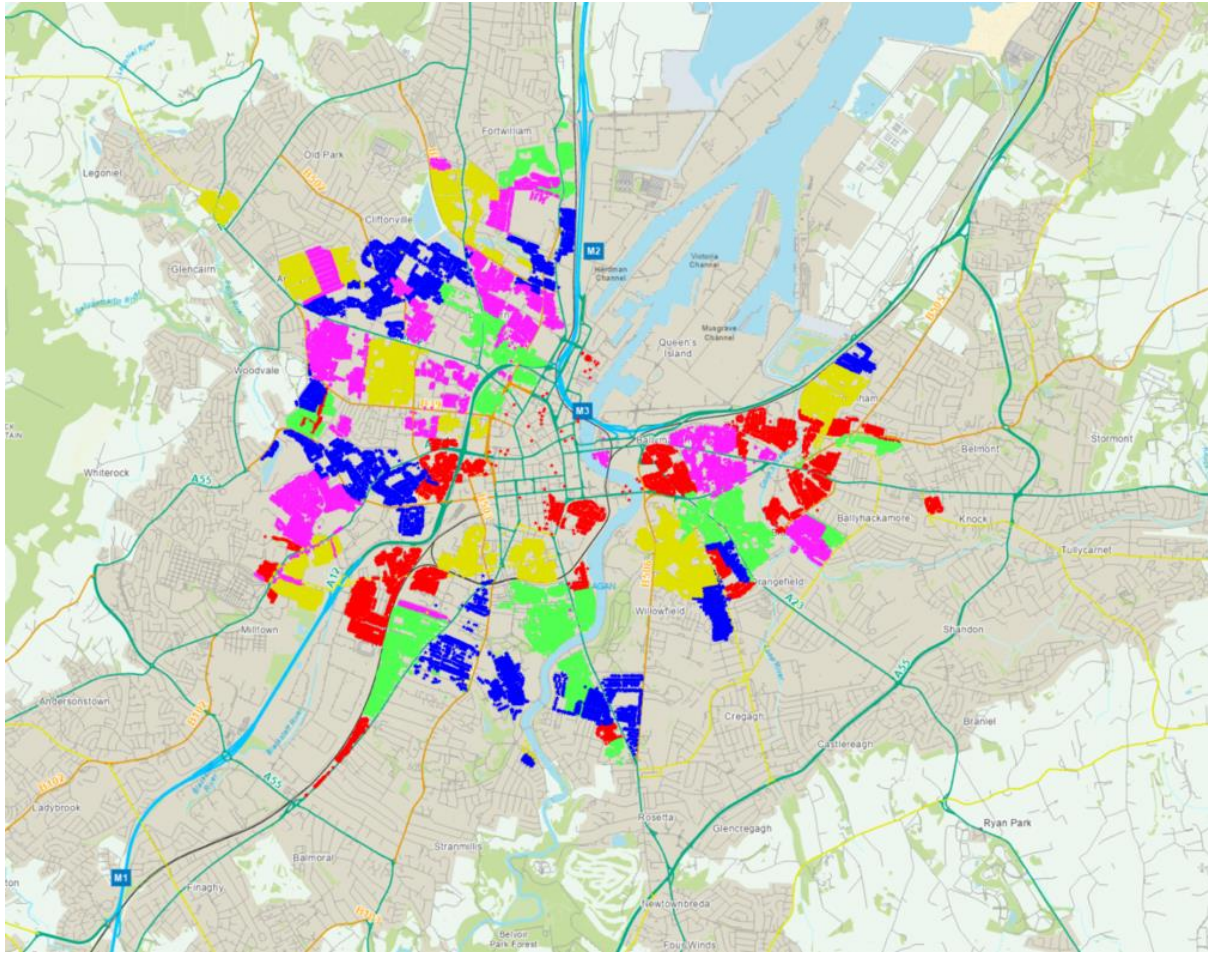
Need help?

Call **028 9027 0230**

Visit belfastcity.gov.uk/bins for more help with sorting your waste. You can also order new bins/boxes and report damaged or stolen bins/boxes.



Engagement areas in Urban Belfast by collection round/day.





Your reference: DT/BM

Our reference: Wednesday

Date: As Posted

Dear Resident,

Important changes: Safe bin collection

We're writing to let you know about important changes to bin collections in Belfast, aimed at improving safety for our crews and the community.

What's changing?

To improve safety, all collection vehicles will be fitted with sensors that prevent the emptying of overfilled bins. This follows a tragic incident in the UK last year and is part of a wider effort to protect our staff. Some of our refuse collection vehicles already have these sensors, and all will be upgraded over the next few years. Once installed, crews will not be able to override the system.

Why these changes are needed

Our crews are increasingly encountering two key issues:

1. **Overfilled bins (lid not closed):**
These pose a serious safety risk. Bins can fall during lifting, spill litter onto streets, or cause injury to staff.
2. **Large bin liners:**
Some residents use large liners to keep bins clean. However, these can snag during emptying, causing spills or making bins fall—again putting our crews at risk.

What this means for you

- **From 4 August:**
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We're committed to making Belfast cleaner, safer, and more sustainable. Your cooperation helps protect our crews and keeps our city looking its best.

For questions or more information, contact our Customer Hub at 02890 270230 or visit www.belfastcity.gov.uk/bins.

Thank you for your support.

Kind regards,

The Recycling Team

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Subject:	Department for Communities (DfC) Letter of Offer Community Support Programme (CSP) 2025/26		
Date:	5 August 2025		
Reporting Officer:	Jim Girvan, Director Neighbourhood Services		
Contact Officer:	Nicola Lane, Neighbourhood Services 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 type="checkbox"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Information relating to any individual Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) Information in connection with any labour relations matter Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 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 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: 40px; margin-top: 20px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin-top: 20px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin-top: 20px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin-top: 20px;"></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/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	<p>The main purpose of this report is;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform Members that Council has received the Letter of Offer for the Community Support Programme 2025/26 from the Department for Communities (DfC). The Department has provided an uplift of 9% across certain elements of the programme. • Advise Members that the Chief Executive has accepted the Letter of Offer, subject to Council approval and seek approval for him to accept subsequent Letters of Variance on behalf of the Council. • Seek members' approval to issue further payments to funded organisations upon their completion of monitoring and relevant administrative checks. • Seek agreement from members on the option to allocate the additional funding provided based on the detail provided in the report.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>Members are asked to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the CSP funding allocation of £2,939,450.49 presented in the Letter of Offer from the DfC for the 2025/26 financial year. • Note that the Chief Executive has accepted the Letter of Offer, subject to Council approval and seek approval for him to accept subsequent Letters of Variance on behalf of the Council. • Agree option relating to the Community Support General additional funding. • Agree option for the reprofiling of the budget for Advice and Tribunal services. • Agree the proposed additional funding allocation for: Community Support General, Advice Grant, Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension-Tribunal Representation and Welfare Reform Mitigations- Face to Face Advice. • Note the additional funding to Social Supermarket projects based on previous committee decisions. • Approve that officers progress funding payments where appropriate, following completion of due diligence requirements based on the proposals.
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Background</u>
3.1	Members will be aware that the Department for Communities (DfC) provides an annual grant to Council through its Community Support Programme (CSP) Letter of Offer. This funding provides an element of the budget towards Capacity Building, Revenue for Community Building grant, Summer Scheme Grant as well as Generalist Advice.
3.2	The CSP also provides 100% funding for other elements of activity such as Social Supermarkets, Welfare Reform Mitigations and Integrated Advice Partnership Fund (debt related services)
3.3	At the March Committee, Officers advised that the Community Support Programme (CSP) Letter of Offer for 25/26 had not yet been received by Council from DfC. At that stage, Members granted approval for officers to progress funding agreements and provide 50% payments for the Capacity Building, Revenue for Community Building grants and Generalist Advice.
3.4	Council received the CSP 2024/25 Letter of Offer from DfC on 13 June 2025. There is an increase to this year's funding across several new and existing elements. Table 1 below presents a breakdown of the allocation for 2025/25 in comparison to 2024/25.

Table 1

Belfast City Council	2025/26	2024/25
Community Support General	£993,199.04	£911,191.78
Advice Grant	£727,984.03	£667,875.26
Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension Tribunal Representation - Appeals	£84,302.81	£77,342.02
Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension Face to Face Advice	£268,704.81	£246,518.17
Social Supermarket	£777,811.14	£711,627.57
Integrated Advice Fund Partnership (2024-2026)*	£87,448.66	£160,804.82
CSP Grand Total (Per Year)	£2,939,450.49	£2,775,359.62

*Please note that the Integrated Advice Fund Partnership (IAP) is allocated over a two-year period thus there is no uplift in 2025/26. Members agreed the funding awards for IAP at Committee in April 2025.

Additional Funding by CSP Heading

Table 2 illustrates the additional 9% uplift and available budgets under each heading.

Table 2

CSP Heading	Additional Funds 2025/26
1. Community Support General	£82,007.26
2. Advice Grant	£60,108.77
3. Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension Tribunal Representation- Appeals	£6,960.79
4. Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension Face to face Advice	£22,186.64
5. Social Supermarket	£66,183.57

Proposed Allocation of Additional Funds

It is proposed that additional funding for elements 1-4 should be allocated using the approaches outlined below. Further detail is provided in Appendices 1-3

1. Community Support General

Members are asked to consider and agree their preferred option for allocating the additional funding provided under the Community Support General heading (£82,007.26) as outlined in Table 3. Further detail on the organisations funded through Capacity and Revenue awards is provided in Appendix 1

Table 3

Option	Description	Pro	Con
1	Allocate all the additional funding £82,007.26 to the	Capacity grant funding enables the provision of training, development and support programmes provided by	Revenue organisations do not have access to these additional funds.

		43 Capacity funded groups. Each group will receive a non-recurrent payment of £1,907.15	43 organisations to smaller organisations within communities. The funding contributes to staff and programme delivery running costs. As employers Capacity funded groups have seen an increase in staff related costs this past year particularly in relation to National Insurance Contributions. They have also seen an increase to the costs running costs of their programmes. At Committee in March 2025, members agreed to double the funding allocation received by Revenue funded groups from a maximum of £20,629 in 2024/25 to £41,258 2025/26. Capacity funded organisations did not receive an uplift.	
	2	Allocate the funding to Revenue and Capacity funded groups. 130 organisations will receive a non-recurrent payment of £630.83	Revenue and Capacity organisations will receive additional funding to meet their running costs and provide services.	This option does not take into account the difference in the annual level of funding to both Revenue and Capacity applicants.
	3	Use the funding to offset the council allocation that was used to double the revenue awards in 25/26.	This would offset the significant council investment that was made to double revenue awards in 25/26.	This option would not provide an additional support to funded organisations.
3.9	<p>Appendix 1 provides a revised allocation for Capacity and Revenue based on options 1 and 2 above.</p> <p>Members will be aware that this is the final year of awards of Capacity and Revenue Grants 2023-2026 in its current form. An open call for our new Large Grant grant programme 2026-2029 will be launched at end of July/beginning of August.</p> <p><i>2. Advice Grant and Provision for Appeals.</i></p>			
3.10	<p>Members will recall the Council agreed to provide £270,000 on a recurrent basis for the provision of an Appeals and Tribunal Service in the City. At Council in July, members agreed to extend the provision of the Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service (BCTS) provided by Ligoniel Improvement Association on behalf of the Belfast Advice Group (BAG) to the end of March 2026. Members also agreed that future services will be procured and for Officers to begin the process with the contract awarded and provider in place for April 2026.</p> <p>This year DfC provided an allocation of £84,302.81 towards the provision of Appeals and Tribunal Services. Including Council's contribution of £270,000 the total available budget is</p>			

3.11	<p>£354,302.81. BCTS requested £242,000 which was agreed by Council in July. Thus, there is a potential underspend in the budget of £112, 302.81.</p> <p>Funding relating to Advice and Appeals is a specific element of the Community Support Programme and ringfenced for the provision of related services. The review of Advice services which council completed in December 23 highlighted the rising delivery and staffing costs experienced by advice organisations, this additional funding will support organisations to address these issues. Members may also wish to note that the DfC regional review of advice services is ongoing. Members are asked to consider the reprofiling of the budget and agree a preferred option presented in Table 4 below.</p>														
3.12	<p>Table 4</p> <table> <tr> <th>Option</th><th>Description</th><th>Pro</th><th>Con</th></tr> <tr> <td>1</td><td>Redistribute the £112,302.81 providing an uplift for Generalist Advice and Appeals to the five area-based Advice Consortia using Council's allocation model. (Table 5 below)</td><td> <p>Council currently funds 5 Area based Advice consortia that includes 14 independent advice providers in 19 locations and additional cover via extensive outreach provision.</p> <p>Providers have expressed concerns regarding the growing costs relating to staff such as National Insurance Contributions and operating overheads.</p> <p>Staff retention has posed a significant problem for advice providers. Due to short-term contracts and lower salary compared to other agencies such as Housing Associations</p> <p>Providers have also discussed the growing need for the provision of services that meet the needs of more complex cases and also of a growing population who do not have English as a first language.</p> <p>An additional non-recurrent allocation for this year will provide the Advice providers with sufficient resources to maintain their current level of staff, meet increased overheads and provide additional resources to meet the growing demand for services on complex cases as well as for people who require additional support such as translation services.</p> </td><td> <p>The demand for services and complexity of dealing with multiple needs is growing. This greatly impacts on the level of service provision. The additional funding is short-term for 2025/26 on a non-recurrent basis. Next year the provision will return to its current level thus the service capacity of the organisations will reduce. Providing funding for 1 may lead to a higher dependency of the providers on Council funding and of people on the service. A demand that may be inflated with the provision of additional support this year.</p> <p>The providers may use some funding to increase its staff salaries and off set NIC. This increase may lead to an unmanageable cost next year</p> </td></tr> <tr> <td>2</td><td>Redistribute the £112,302.81</td><td>As Above</td><td>As Above</td></tr> </table>			Option	Description	Pro	Con	1	Redistribute the £112,302.81 providing an uplift for Generalist Advice and Appeals to the five area-based Advice Consortia using Council's allocation model. (Table 5 below)	<p>Council currently funds 5 Area based Advice consortia that includes 14 independent advice providers in 19 locations and additional cover via extensive outreach provision.</p> <p>Providers have expressed concerns regarding the growing costs relating to staff such as National Insurance Contributions and operating overheads.</p> <p>Staff retention has posed a significant problem for advice providers. Due to short-term contracts and lower salary compared to other agencies such as Housing Associations</p> <p>Providers have also discussed the growing need for the provision of services that meet the needs of more complex cases and also of a growing population who do not have English as a first language.</p> <p>An additional non-recurrent allocation for this year will provide the Advice providers with sufficient resources to maintain their current level of staff, meet increased overheads and provide additional resources to meet the growing demand for services on complex cases as well as for people who require additional support such as translation services.</p>	<p>The demand for services and complexity of dealing with multiple needs is growing. This greatly impacts on the level of service provision. The additional funding is short-term for 2025/26 on a non-recurrent basis. Next year the provision will return to its current level thus the service capacity of the organisations will reduce. Providing funding for 1 may lead to a higher dependency of the providers on Council funding and of people on the service. A demand that may be inflated with the provision of additional support this year.</p> <p>The providers may use some funding to increase its staff salaries and off set NIC. This increase may lead to an unmanageable cost next year</p>	2	Redistribute the £112,302.81	As Above	As Above
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2	Redistribute the £112,302.81	As Above	As Above												

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> providing an uplift for Generalist Advice and Appeals to the five area-based Advice Consortia using Council's allocation model. (Table 5 below) up to £85,302.81 and allocating the remaining £27,000 towards the procurement process ensuring that contingencies are in place to effectively transition from current funding to contracted service provision e.g. costs to transfer service user records and systems from the current to the new provider. Grant permission to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to make further allocations to the generalist advice services should the budget provision of up to £27,000 not be used. 	<p>This is the final year of the current arrangement for the Tribunal Service. From April 2026 the service will be provided by a contracted organisation following a procurement process. It is envisaged that the provider will be secured by December 2026. The current provider has extensive case records and systems in place for maintaining the records. The provider is also dealing with an extensive caseload that may take longer to complete beyond the 31 March 2026.</p> <p>This allocation will provide Council with an opportunity to manage the transition from the current funding arrangements to the new contract. It may cover items such as transfer of Casefiles and systems, current caseloads, issues relating to GDPR.</p>	<p>Its £27,000 that can be used for direct service provision.</p>
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In relation to the Advice Grant, DfC has provided an uplift of £60,108.77 for the provision of Generalist Advice Services. Members are asked to consider allocating the uplift based on Council's current advice grant funding model.

Table 5 below presents the level of additional funding each Area Based Advice Consortia will receive this year for the uplift and budget reprofile options. The additional funding is non-recurrent.

Table 5

Area Consortium	Council's Funding Allocation Model	Advice Grant Uplift	Additional Budget Reprofile Option 1	Additional Budget Reprofile Option 2
Central	9%	£5,381.69	£9,953.06	£7,560.13
East	14%	£8,628.51	£16,229.47	£12,327.66
North	26%	£15,556.90	£29,063.05	£22,075.67
South	15%	£9,259.96	£17,299.22	£13,140.11
West	35%	£21,281.71	£39,752.01	£30,199.34

	Appendix 2 provides details of the revised allocation for each Consortium based on uplift plus Options 1 and 2																		
3.13	<p>3. Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension Tribunal Representation- Appeals</p> <p>Members are asked to note the increase of £6,960.79 towards the provision of tribunal and appeals and agree the allocation be used for the Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service.</p>																		
3.14	<p>4. Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension Face to face Advice</p> <p>The funding relating to the WRME Face to Face Advice is funded 100% by DfC. The Department allocates the funding of £268,704.81 as follows for 2025/26.</p>																		
3.15	<p>Table 6</p> <table><tr><th>Organisation</th><th>% Of Total Allocation</th><th>Uplift Allocation</th></tr><tr><td>Advice Space</td><td>46.74%</td><td>£125,585.24</td></tr><tr><td>Advice Space (EBIAC)</td><td>13.32%</td><td>£35,779.89</td></tr><tr><td>Falls Community Council (NDA)</td><td>13.32%</td><td>£35,779.89</td></tr><tr><td>Ballynafeigh Community Development Association</td><td>13.32%</td><td>£35,779.89</td></tr><tr><td>North Belfast Advice Partnership (LIA)</td><td>13.32%</td><td>£35,779.89</td></tr></table> <p>The allocation is made to specific organisations covering the geographical areas aligned with the advice consortia. Should an organisation not be able to use all or part of this allocation, the area consortium will be able to bid for the available funds. All decisions relating to expenditure reprofiling, monitoring and reporting is made by the Department.</p> <p>Members are asked to note DfC’s allocation relating to Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension.</p>	Organisation	% Of Total Allocation	Uplift Allocation	Advice Space	46.74%	£125,585.24	Advice Space (EBIAC)	13.32%	£35,779.89	Falls Community Council (NDA)	13.32%	£35,779.89	Ballynafeigh Community Development Association	13.32%	£35,779.89	North Belfast Advice Partnership (LIA)	13.32%	£35,779.89
Organisation	% Of Total Allocation	Uplift Allocation																	
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Ballynafeigh Community Development Association	13.32%	£35,779.89																	
North Belfast Advice Partnership (LIA)	13.32%	£35,779.89																	
3.16	<p>5. Social Supermarket Funding</p> <p>In May 25 Council agreed to provide bridging support to 2024/25 funded groups from 01 April – 30 June 25, up to a maximum amount of £13,738 per group. In June, council further agreed that grants to the 24/25 scheme would be rolled over until 31 March 2026 except to those organisations which received funding in 2024/25 but did not apply for funding in 2025/26.</p> <p>Council also granted delegated authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to make further allocations based on the agreed option, if further funding becomes available. The total amount of funding required for 25/26 to make the awards approved by council is £752,109.67 with DfC allocating £777,811.14 in the current year. Members will be aware that DfC fund Social Supermarkets at 100%, this provides additional funding of £25,701.47 for 25/26 Social Supermarkets. Given the low value of these additional funds, the Director has used his delegated authority to provide an equal allocation to all 19 groups who have been awarded funding in 25/26. This would equate to £1,352.71 which could be used to meet increasing demands for the services that social supermarkets provide.</p>																		
3.17	<p>Members will note that the criteria for funding Social Supermarkets will be reviewed by September 2025 and Officers will bring a report to Committee in advance of the open call for 26/27.</p>																		
3.18	<p><u>Financial Implications</u></p> <p>All awards listed in the appendices can be made in line with existing budgets for 2025/26 . Members should note that the Capacity and Revenue awards which are multi annual awards from 23/26.</p>																		

3.19	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications and Rural Needs Assessment</u> This will be considered throughout, and any appropriate issues highlighted to Members. Any amendments to existing scheme or new scheme will be considered in the context of any equality/good relations and rural needs considerations.
4.0	Appendices
4.1	Appendix 1: Options for Capacity and Revenue Funded Groups Awards 2025/26 Appendix 2: Allocation Approach for Advice, Tribunal Service and Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension (Face to Face) and Awards. Appendix 3: Social Supermarket Funding Awards 25/26

Appendix 1

Capacity and Revenue Funded Groups Awards 2025/26

Capacity Funded Organisations

Organisation	Grant Allocation	Option 1 Additional £1,907.15 per group	Option 2 Additional £630.83 Per Group
All Nations Ministries	£48,931.00	£ 50,838.16	£ 49,534.83
Ardoyne Youth Enterprises	£22,541.00	£ 24,448.16	£ 23,144.83
Ashton Community Trust	£50,629.00	£ 52,536.16	£ 51,232.83
Ballynafeigh Community Development Association	£50,629.00	£ 52,536.16	£ 51,232.83
Belfast Interface Project. (BIP)	£50,420.00	£ 52,327.16	£ 51,023.83
Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre	£47,275.00	£ 49,182.16	£ 47,878.83
Boys & Girls Clubs	£49,876.00	£ 51,783.16	£ 50,479.83
Cara-Friend	£50,629.00	£ 52,536.16	£ 51,232.83
Charter NI	£45,138.00	£ 47,045.16	£ 45,741.83
Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum	£45,818.34	£ 47,725.50	£ 46,422.17
Colin Neighbourhood Partnership	£36,026.54	£ 37,933.70	£ 36,630.37
Conradh Na Gaeilge	£50,629.00	£ 52,536.16	£ 51,232.83
East Belfast Community Development Agency	£50,629.00	£ 52,536.16	£ 51,232.83
Engage With Age	£31,143.00	£ 33,050.16	£ 31,746.83
Falls Community Council	£50,629.00	£ 52,536.16	£ 51,232.83
Falls Partnership Initiative	£40,629.00	£ 42,536.16	£ 41,232.83
Fóram na nÓg	£44,583.72	£ 46,490.88	£ 45,187.55
Greater Shankill Community Council	£50,629.00	£ 52,536.16	£ 51,232.83
Horn Of Africa People's Aid Northern Ireland (HAPANI)	£50,629.00	£ 52,536.16	£ 51,232.83
Lenadoon community forum	£34,077.00	£ 35,984.16	£ 34,680.83
Ligoniel Improvement Association	£42,375.64	£ 44,282.80	£ 42,979.47
Loughview Community Action Partnership (LCAP)	£10,329.00	£ 12,236.16	£ 10,932.83
Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group (LORAG)	£50,629.00	£ 52,536.16	£ 51,232.83
Market Development Association	£31,729.00	£ 33,636.16	£ 32,332.83
Northern Ireland Youth Forum	£20,529.00	£ 22,436.16	£ 21,132.83
Poleglass Community Association @ Sally Gardens	£49,099.00	£ 51,006.16	£ 49,702.83
Roden Street Community Development Group	£50,629.00	£ 52,536.16	£ 51,232.83
Sailortown Regeneration Group	£50,629.00	£ 52,536.16	£ 51,232.83
Short Strand Community Forum	£50,629.00	£ 52,536.16	£ 51,232.83
Small Steps	£50,464.59	£ 52,371.75	£ 51,068.42
South Belfast Partnership Board	£32,088.42	£ 33,995.58	£ 32,692.25
Southcity Resource And Development Centre.	£50,629.00	£ 52,536.16	£ 51,232.83
St James Forum	£46,629.00	£ 48,536.16	£ 47,232.83
Taughmonagh Community Forum Ltd	£50,029.00	£ 51,936.16	£ 50,632.83
TechDesk CIC	£48,129.00	£ 50,036.16	£ 48,732.83

The HUBB Community Development Resource Centre	£29,629.00	£ 31,536.16	£ 30,232.83
The West Belfast Partnership Board	£50,229.00	£ 52,136.16	£ 50,832.83
Training for Women Network	£46,444.00	£ 48,351.16	£ 47,047.83
University Of Atypical For Arts And Disability	£50,629.00	£ 52,536.16	£ 51,232.83
Upper Springfield Resource Centre	£38,561.76	£ 40,468.92	£ 39,165.59
Volunteer Now	£48,820.28	£ 50,727.44	£ 49,424.11
Whiterock Children's Centre/Whiterock Creche Association	£21,379.00	£ 23,286.16	£ 21,982.83
Women's Resource And Development Agency	£50,629.00	£ 52,536.16	£ 51,232.83
Total	£1,872,358.29	£1,954,366.17	£1,898,322.98

Revenue Funded Organisations

Organisation	Grant Allocation 2025/26	Option 2 Additional £630.83 Per Group
African And Caribbean Support Organisation Northern Ireland (Acsoni)	£ 31,458.00	£ 32,088.83
An Droichead	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Annadale & Haywood Resident Association	£ 28,150.80	£ 28,781.63
Ardmonagh Family & Community Group	£ 27,258.00	£ 27,888.83
Ardoyne Association	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Arts For All	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Ballymac Friendship Trust	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Ballysillan Community Forum	£ 33,858.00	£ 34,488.83
Belfast Activity Centre	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Belfast South Community Resources	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Belvoir Community Hub	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Belvoir Players Amateur Dramatic Society	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Benview community Centre	£ 41,246.00	£ 41,876.83
BLACKIE RIVER COMMUNITY GROUPS	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Bloomfield Community Association	£ 35,993.22	£ 36,624.05
Brassneck Youth	£ 32,686.00	£ 33,316.83
Cancer Lifeline	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Chinese Welfare Association NI	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
City Life Projects	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Concerned Residents Of Upper Ardoyne (CRUA)	£ 12,958.00	£ 13,588.83
Conway Youth Centre	£ 23,058.00	£ 23,688.83
Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Cumann Chluain Árd	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Cumann Cultúrtha Mhic Reachtain	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Divis Joint Development Committee	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Donegall Pass Community Forum	£ 41,074.86	£ 41,705.69

EastSide Partnership	£ 39,018.00	£ 39,648.83
Falls Residents Associations	£ 16,711.20	£ 17,342.03
Falls Women's Centre	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Feile An Phobail	£ 37,258.00	£ 37,888.83
Footprints Womens Centre	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
FORTHSPRING INTER COMMUNITY GROUP	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
GEMS Northern Ireland Limited	£ 38,258.00	£ 38,888.83
Glen Community Parent Youth Group	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Glenbank Community Association	£ 28,258.00	£ 28,888.83
GLENCAIRN RESIDENTS GROUP	£ 15,258.00	£ 15,888.83
Glencolin Residents Association	£ 13,496.00	£ 14,126.83
Glór na Móna	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Grace Women's Development Limited	£ 33,611.92	£ 34,242.75
Greater Turf Lodge Residents' Association	£ 13,785.68	£ 14,416.51
Greater Village Regeneration Trust - TREE Project	£ 37,218.00	£ 37,848.83
Greenway Women's Group	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Hannahstown Community Association	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Holy Trinity Centre	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Indian Community Centre (Belfast) Ltd	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Ionad Uíbh Eachach	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Kids Together Belfast	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Lagan Village Youth And Community Group	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Lagmore Community Forum	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
LIGONIEL FAMILY CENTRE	£ 17,418.00	£ 18,048.83
Lower Oldpark Community Association	£ 30,548.42	£ 31,179.25
Lower Shankill Community Association	£ 7,258.00	£ 7,888.83
Manor Street Cliftonville Community Group	£ 27,258.00	£ 27,888.83
Marrowbone Community Association	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
MIDLAND SOCIAL & RECREATIONAL ASSOCIATION	£ 26,058.00	£ 26,688.83
Mornington Community Project	£ 30,128.00	£ 30,758.83
MOUNT EAGLES COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION	£ 32,358.00	£ 32,988.83
NBWISP (North Belfast Womens' Initiative & Support Project)	£ 31,682.00	£ 32,312.83
Newstart Education Centre	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Oasis Caring In Action Ltd	£ 38,258.00	£ 38,888.83
PIPS Suicide Prevention Ireland	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Raidió Fáilte Teo	£ 40,990.00	£ 41,620.83
SCOIL NA FUISEOIGE	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Shankill Women's Centre	£ 27,258.00	£ 27,888.83
Small Wonders Childcare	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Solas	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Spectrum Centre	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Springfield Charitable Association Ltd	£ 7,258.00	£ 7,888.83
St Comgalls	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83

Star Neighbourhood Centre	£ 33,658.00	£ 34,288.83
Suicide Awareness & Support Group	£ 40,470.00	£ 41,100.83
Sunningdale Community Centre	£ 7,258.00	£ 7,888.83
Tackling Awareness Of Mental Health Issues (TAMHI)	£ 7,258.00	£ 7,888.83
TAGIT T/A Tullycarnet Boxing Club	£ 7,258.00	£ 7,888.83
Tar Anall	£ 23,158.00	£ 23,788.83
TAR ISTEACH	£ 39,912.00	£ 40,542.83
The Parent Rooms	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
The Vine Centre	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Upper Andersonstown Community Forum	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Upper Springfield Development Trust: Newhill Youth & Community Centre	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Walkway Community Association	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Wandsworth Community Association	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Whiterock Westrock Residents Association	£ 7,258.00	£ 7,888.83
Willowfield Parish Community Association	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
Windsor Women's Centre	£ 41,258.00	£ 41,888.83
WOMEN'STEC	£ 19,258.00	£ 19,888.83
York Road Civil Defence Management Committee	£ 35,858.00	£ 36,488.83
Total	£ 2,975,042.10	£ 3,029,924.31

Appendix 2 Allocation Approach for Advice, Tribunal Service and Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension (Face to Face) and Awards.

Generalist Advice Funding

Advice Funding 2025/26 - Advice Consortia Allocation

Consortia and Members	Generalist Advice 2024/25 Allocation Including CSP Uplift	Option 1 Budget Reprofile £112,302.81	Option 2 Budget Reprofile £85,302.81
Central Consortium: (Total)	£101,009.34	£110,962.40	£108,569.47
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice Space (Lead) Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre 	£70,706.54 £30,302.80	£77,673.68 £33,288.72	£75,998.63 £32,570.84
East Consortium: (Total)	£164,705.95	£180,935.42	£177,033.30
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice Space (Lead) East Belfast Independent Advice Centre 	£82,352.98 £82,352.97	£90,467.71 £90,467.75	£88,516.65 £88,516.65
North Consortium: (Total)	£294,948.40	£324,001.45	£317,024.07
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Vine Centre (Lead) Ardoyne Association Ballysillan Community Forum Ligoniel Improvement Association Tar Isteach Advice Space 	£114,727.91 £42,315.45 £21,041.67 £9,152.48 £26,998.72 £80,712.17	£126,028.85 £46,483.61 £23,114.32 £10,054.02 £29,658.16 £88,662.49	£123,314.82 £45,482.59 £22,616.55 £9,837.50 £20,019.47 £86,753.14
South Consortium: (Total)	£ 175,562.32	£192,861.54	£188,702.44
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ballynafeigh Community Development Association (Lead) South City Resource and Development Centre Advice Space 	£94,452.50 £70,751.63 £10,358.19	£103,759.48 £77,723.22 £11,378.84	£101,521.88 £76,047.10 £11,133.45
West Consortium: (Total)	£ 403,487.02	£443,245.04	£433,686.36
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falls Community Council (Lead) Advice Space (Suffolk & Andersonstown) Advice Space (Shankill) Advice Space (Falls) Neighbourhood Development Association Springfield Charitable Association Upper Springfield Development Trust 	£58,979.84 £62,920.64 £56,602.14 £39,872.73 £52,712.71 £72,293.89 £60,105.06	£64,791.48 £69,120.60 £62,179.50 £43,801.63 £57,906.81 £79,417.45 £66,027.58	£63,394.24 £67,630.00 £60,838.58 £42,857.03 £56,658.04 £77,704.79 £64,603.68

Total	£ 1,139,713.03	£1,252,015.84	£1,225,015.64
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Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension Tribunal Representation- Appeals

The total allocation received by Council from the CSP in relation to the WRME Tribunal Representation and Appeals goes directly to fund the Belfast Citywide Tribunal Services. It is proposed that this additional funding of £6,960.79 be used to support the Citywide Tribunal Service.

Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension Face to Face Advice

The funding relating to the WRME Face to Face Advice is funded 100% by DfC. The Department allocates funding as follows for 2024/25

Organisation	% Of Total Allocation	Uplift Allocation
Advice Space	46.74%	£125,585.24
Advice Space (EBIAC)	13.32%	£35,779.89
Falls Community Council (NDA)	13.32%	£35,779.89
Ballynafeigh Community Development Association	13.32%	£35,779.89
North Belfast Advice Partnership (LIA)	13.32%	£35,779.89

Appendix 3 Social Supermarket Funding Awards 2025/26

Name of Project	24/25 Award	Bridging Amount (25%)	Jul25 to Mar26 Total	Jul25 to Mar26 first 75%	Jul25 to Mar26 second 25%	Total Award 2025/26
Ashton Community Trust	£50,000.00	£12,500.00	£37,500.00	£28,125.00	£9,375.00	£50,000.00
Belfast & Lisburn Women's Aid	£30,000.00	£7,500.00	£22,500.00	£16,875.00	£5,625.00	£30,000.00
Blackie River Community Groups	£50,000.00	£12,500.00	£37,500.00	£28,125.00	£9,375.00	£50,000.00
Boring Wells / The Larder	£50,000.00	£12,500.00	£37,500.00	£28,125.00	£9,375.00	£50,000.00
Compass Counselling	£11,800.00	£2,950.00	£8,850.00	£6,637.50	£2,212.50	£11,800.00
Disability Action	£35,000.00	£8,750.00	£26,250.00	£19,687.50	£6,562.50	£35,000.00
Donegall Pass Community Forum	£37,112.00	£9,278.00	£27,834.00	£20,875.50	£6,958.50	£37,112.00
Footprints Women's Centre	£37,273.15	12,500.00	37,500.00	28,125.00	9,375.00	£50,000.00
Forward South Partnership	£49,500.00	£12,375.00	£37,125.00	£27,843.75	£9,281.25	£49,500.00
Glencolin Residents Association	£10,000.00	£2,500.00	£7,500.00	£5,625.00	£1,875.00	£10,000.00
Grace Women's Development	£1,250.00	£312.50	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£312.50
Hanwood Trust	£30,000.00	£7,500.00	£22,500.00	£16,875.00	£5,625.00	£30,000.00
HereNI	£16,449.17	£4,112.29	£12,336.88	£9,252.66	£3,084.22	£16,449.17
In This Together	£50,000.00	£12,500.00	£37,500.00	£28,125.00	£9,375.00	£50,000.00
LORAG	£44,000.00	£11,000.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£11,000.00

Loughview Community Action Partnership	£49,936.00	£12,484.00	£37,452.00	£28,089.00	£9,363.00	£49,936.00
South City Resource Centre	£50,000.00	£12,500.00	£37,500.00	£28,125.00	£9,375.00	£50,000.00
Street Soccer NI	£22,000.00	£5,500.00	£16,500.00	£12,375.00	£4,125.00	£22,000.00
Upper Springfield Development Trust	£50,000.00	£12,500.00	£37,500.00	£28,125.00	£9,375.00	£50,000.00
Vine Centre (NBAP)	£49,500.00	£12,375.00	£37,125.00	£27,843.75	£9,281.25	£49,500.00
West Belfast Partnership Board	£49,500.00	£12,375.00	£37,125.00	£27,843.75	£9,281.25	£49,500.00
Total	£773,320.32	£196,511.79	£555,597.88	£416,698.41	£138,899.47	£752,109.67

DfC 25/26 funding allocation for SSMs: £777,811.14

Total awards 25/26 £752,109.67 This amount is based on Grace Women's and LORAG receiving only bridging funding

Remainder 25/26 to be allocated: £25,701.47