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BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

SUMMONS TO ATTEND THE MONTHLY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

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

Notice is hereby given that the monthly meeting of the Council will be held in the Council Chamber, City Hall, Belfast on Wednesday, 1st October, 2025 at 6.00 pm, for the transaction of the following business:

1. Summons
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Minutes of the Council (Pages 1 - 10)
5. Official Announcements
6. Strategic Policy and Resources (Pages 11 - 76)
7. People and Communities (Pages 77 - 96)
8. City Growth and Regeneration (Pages 97 - 114)
9. Licensing (Pages 115 - 118)
10. Planning (Pages 119 - 124)
11. Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee (Pages 125 - 130)
12. Climate and City Resilience (Pages 131 - 138)
13. Standards and Business Committee (Pages 139 - 140)

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

John Walsh

Chief Executive

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Council

MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the Council Chamber, City Hall
on Monday, 1st September, 2025 at 6.00 p.m., pursuant to notice.

Members present: The Lord Mayor, Councillor Kelly (Chairperson);
The High Sheriff, Councillor McAteer;
Aldermen Copeland, Lawlor,
McCullough and Rodgers; and
Councillors Abernethy, Anglin, Beattie, Bell, Black,
Bower, Bradley, Brennan, R. Brooks, T. Brooks,
Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Collins,
de Faoite, M. Donnelly, P. Donnelly, R.M. Donnelly,
Doran, D. Douglas, S. Douglas, Duffy, Ferguson,
Flynn, Garrett, Groogan, Hanvey, Long, Lyons,
Magee, Maghie, Maskey, McCabe, McCallin,
McCann, McDonough-Brown,
McDowell, McKay, McKeown, I. McLaughlin,
R. McLaughlin, Murphy, Murray, Nelson, Ó Néill,
Smyth, Verner, Walsh and Whyte.

Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

Apologies

An apology for inability to attend was reported on behalf of The Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Doherty; Alderman McCoubrey and Councillor McCormick.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Beattie declared an interest in the item under the heading “Department for Communities (DfC) Letter of Offer Community Support Programme (CSP) 2025/26” the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that he was associated with a group/organisation which had applied for or received funding.

Alderman McCullough and Councillors Black, Bradley, Doran, Duffy, McCabe and Verner declared an interest in the item under the heading “Department for Communities (DfC) Letter of Offer Community Support Programme (CSP) 2025/26” the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that their employers were recipients of funding.

Councillor T. Brooks declared an interest in the item “City Innovation programme update” within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that she was employed by Queen’s University.

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Councillor Canavan declared an interest in the item “Department for Communities (DfC) Letter of Offer Community Support Programme (CSP) 2025/26” the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that she was a Committee Member of an organisation in receipt of funding.

Councillor de Faoite declared an interest in the item “Planning Information” within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that he was a member of the Board of Governors of a primary school which had submitted a planning application.

Councillor M. Donnelly declared an interest in items “Department for Communities (DfC) Letter of Offer Community Support Programme (CSP) 2025/26” the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes and “End Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) - additional in year Local Community Fund allocation” within the People and Communities Committee minutes, in that his employer was associated with both items.

Councillor R.M. Donnelly declared an interest in the items “Minutes of Shared City Partnership Meeting on 4th August 2025” and “Requests for use of the City Hall and the provision of Hospitality” within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and the item “End Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) - additional in year Local Community Fund allocation” within the People and Communities Committee minutes, in that her employer had been associated with those items.

Councillor Ferguson declared an interest in the item “Requests for use of the City Hall and the provision of Hospitality” within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that he was associated with an organisation which had submitted an application.

Councillor Groogan declared an interest in the items under the headings “Department for Communities (DfC) Letter of Offer Community Support Programme (CSP) 2025/26” the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, “Department of Communities (DfC) Letter of Offer Community Support Programme 2025-2026” within the People and Communities Committee minutes and “ Vacant to Vibrant Programme” within the City Growth and Regeneration Committee minutes, in that her employer, Forward South, was a recipient of funding.

Councillor Groogan also declared an interest in the item “Minutes of Shared City Partnership Meeting on 4th August 2025”, within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, in that her employer was a voluntary sector partner and a PEACEPLUS recipient and “Artist Studio Organisational Grant 2025/26”, within the City Growth and Regeneration Committee minutes, in that a recipient was a friend of hers.

Councillor Murray declared an interest in the item “End Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) - additional in year Local Community Fund allocation” within the People and Communities Committee minutes, in that his employer had applied for funding.

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Minutes of the Council

Moved by the Lord Mayor (Councillor Kelly),
Seconded by Councillor R. Brooks, and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the meetings of the Council of 1st July, 2025, be taken as read and signed as correct.

Official Announcements

Condolences

The Lord Mayor, together with representatives from several political parties, extended sympathy to Councillor McCormick and his family on the recent passing of his mother-in-law.

The Lord Mayor paid tribute to Rev. Martin Smyth and offered her condolences to his family and friends in respect of his recent passing.

Councillor Murray extended sympathy to the families of Mia Keegan and Trae Keenan who had tragically died following their attendance at the Emerge Music Festival.

Councillor Black paid tribute to Mr. Jim McKee who had recently passed,

Retirement

The Lord Mayor congratulated Ms. Teresa Hughes on her retirement from the Council after almost 45 years of service.

Congratulations

Councillor Murray congratulated Belfast Pride on the recent successful Belfast Pride Festival.

Councillor S. Douglas congratulated Van Morrison on his 80th birthday and the Lord Mayor acceded to his request to write a letter of congratulations.

Condemnation

Councillor Nelson expressed his condemnation of the recent intimidation and violence which had taken place in relation to ethnic minority communities.

Councillor Collins condemned the arrests of anti-war protestors.

Upcoming Events

Alderman Lawlor highlighted the programme of events for the 125th anniversary celebrations of the Irish Guards.

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Councillor Flynn highlighted the Trans Pride event and expressed his support for the trans community.

Requests to address the Council

Ms. Sarah McCann

The Council agreed to receive a deputation from Ms. Sarah McCann in relation to the motion: Support for Endometriosis Patients.

Ms. McCann explained that she was a health journalist and an advocate, who lived with endometriosis. She outlined how patients in Belfast with endometriosis were struggling to receive diagnosis or access services, and were feeling overwhelmed, many of whom were turning to private healthcare at great personal and financial costs.

She stated that, in her role as a health journalist, she had spearheaded a campaign called 'End the Battle' which highlighted the challenges that patients with endometriosis were facing. She explained that as part of the campaign, she had undertaken a survey of patients and she outlined results, pointing out the difficulties those patients had faced.

Ms. McCann shared the experience of a patient who was the subject of a case study and had undergone three exploratory laparoscopy surgeries, each time with a different surgeon and each time having been told she did not have endometriosis. She explained that it was only when the patient had turned to private healthcare for her fourth surgery that she was given a diagnosis.

She explained that discussions about endometriosis were essential in order to highlight the changes that were required for patients, which included up-to-date education for medical professionals, access to multidisciplinary teams and tackling the stigma attached to symptoms for future generations.

The Lord Mayor thanked Ms. McCann for her deputation.

Benview Community Centre

The Council agreed to receive a deputation from Ms. Robyn Jordan and Ms. Julie Ann Kirk in relation to a new 5-year licence agreement for the use of a portion of Benview Community Centre as a play centre,

Ms. Kirk explained that she was a parent of a child to attend Benview Community Centre and that Ballysillan was a deprived community that relied on the extracurricular services provided at the centre.

She stated that the service had requested \$4,225.56 annually, which was a small amount that would make a significant impact on the local community.

Ms. Kirk outlined her personal situation and explained that whilst she has been fighting cancer, the service has provided a lifeline for her daughter through afterschool and summer scheme provision, and that the removal of the service would greatly disadvantage the local community.

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She urged the Council to reconsider its decision and provide the required funding for the service.

Ms. Jordan explained that she was also a parent of children who availed of the services provided at Benview Community Centre. She stated that without the service rental agreement between Benview Community Centre and the Council, the Ballysillan community would be negatively impacted through the removal of services which were the cornerstone of community life in the area.

She outlined her personal situation and how the service had contributed to the mental wellbeing of her son who had severe learning and social communication difficulties and allowed him to integrate into a community he wouldn't otherwise be a part of.

She stated that whilst services are offered in other centres, they were outreach programmes and that Benview Community Centre had operated as a dedicated play centre and Council staff hub, the loss of which would have a knock on effect on whole area and diminish community spirit.

She urged the Council to consider their children who lived in an already deprived area.

The Lord Mayor thanked Ms. Kirk and Ms. Jordan for their deputation to the Council.

Minutes of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Moved by Councillor Brennan,
Seconded by Councillor Bunting,

“That the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 3rd and 9th July, and 22nd August, 2025, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.”

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Verner,
Seconded by Alderman McCullough, and

Resolved – “That the minute under the heading “2025-26 Quarter 1 Finance Report” be amended to provide that the £948,064 underspend be committed to Fernhill Capital Works to support the emergence of restoration works, act as leverage for further funding to be secured and that a report on heritage and community tourism projects also be taken forward.”

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Amendment

Moved by Alderman McCullough,
Seconded by Councillor Doran,

“That the minute under the heading “30 Under 30 Climate Change-Makers Initiative 2025-6” be amended to provide that the Council contributes £8,750 plus VAT to the overall programme costs.”

On a vote, twenty-six Members voted for the amendment and thirty against and it was declared lost.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Doran,
Seconded by Alderman McCullough,

“That the minute under the heading “Benview Community Centre – New Licence” be amended to provide that a new 5-year licence agreement for the use of a portion of Benview Community Centre as a play centre and for use of storage container be approved”

On a vote, eighteen Members voted for the amendment and thirty-seven against and it was declared lost.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Nelson,
Seconded by Councillor Murphy, and

Resolved – “That the minute under the heading “Benview Community Centre – New Licence” be amended to provide that the decision be deferred and that officers would engage with Benview Community Centre to ensure that it was availing of all funding opportunities, and that service provision was not being affected.”

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Bunting,
Seconded by Alderman McCullough,

“That the minute under the heading “Draft Irish Language Policy – Update on Consultation” be amended to provide that the decision be deferred until all costs for implementation are available and open and transparent details are put out for consultation through a platform that will count responses only from those who can prove that they are a Belfast City Council resident or rate payer.”

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

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Amendment

Moved by Councillor T. Brooks,
Seconded by Councillor Hanvey, and

Resolved - "That the minute under the heading "Asset Management" be amended to provide that officers engage with the Client Manager (Physical Programmes), to consider the Blackstaff Greenway, in relation to the further report on the future use of Boucher Road Playing Fields."

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendments, the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 3rd and 9th July, and 22nd August, 2025, were thereupon approved and adopted.

Minutes of People and Communities Committee

Moved by Councillor R. Brooks,
Seconded by Councillor Bunting,

"That the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 5th August, 2025, be approved and adopted."

Amendment

Moved by Alderman McCullough,
Seconded by Councillor Doran,

"That the minute under the heading "Notice of Motion – Safeguarding Belfast's Playparks" be amended to provide that the Council affirms the full wording of the motion and commits to full consultation, once the framework is prepared."

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

Adoption of Minutes

The minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 5th August, 2025, were thereupon approved and adopted.

Minutes of City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Moved by Councillor I. McLaughlin,
Seconded by Alderman Lawlor,

"That the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 6th and 27th August, 2025, be approved and adopted."

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Amendment

At the request of Councillor de Faoite, the Council agreed that the minute under the heading "Translink - Belfast Grand Central Station Update" be amended to provide that the Council writes to the Minister for Infrastructure and Translink to request consideration of a scheme that would reduce fares to encourage the use of public transport and reduce traffic congestion during the Christmas period.

Amendment

At the request of Councillor Ferguson, the Council agreed that the minute under the heading "Vacant to Vibrant Programme" be amended to provide that a report be brought back to the Committee that would outline how many applicants remained without funding and the cost of approving those grant awards.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendment, the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 6th and 27th August, 2025, were thereupon approved and adopted.

Minutes of Licensing Committee

Moved by Councillor Doran
Seconded by Councillor Smyth, and

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

Minutes of Planning Committee

Moved by Councillor Murphy
Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin, and

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

Minutes of Climate and City Resilience Committee

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

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

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Minutes of Standards and Business Committee

Moved by Councillor Flynn
Seconded by Alderman Rodgers,

“That the minutes of the proceedings of the Standards and Business Committee of 21st August, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.”

Amendment

At the request of Councillor Bower, in respect of the item under the heading “Motion - Summer Scheme Providers to be inclusive of a wider range of disabilities and individual needs”, which had been withdrawn from the agenda, the Chief Executive informed the Council that the content of the proposed motion would be reflected in a report that had been requested by People and Communities Committee at its meeting in June, under the heading “Summer Schemes - Additional Needs Grants”.

Amendment

At the request of Councillor Collins, in respect of the item under the heading “Motion in Support of Leisure Workers”, the Chief Executive agreed to invite representatives from the NIPSA and UNITE Trade Unions to a future meeting of the Party Group Leaders.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendments, the minutes of the proceedings of the Standards and Business Committee of 21st August, 2025, were thereupon approved and adopted.

Lord Mayor
Chairperson

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Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 19th September, 2025

HYBRID MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

- Members present: Councillor Brennan (Chairperson);
Alderman McCoubrey; and
Councillors Beattie, Black, Bunting, Cobain,
de Faoite, R-M Donnelly, Ferguson, Garrett,
Long, Maghie, McDonough-Brown, I. McLaughlin,
R. McLaughlin, Murphy, Nelson, Ó Néill,
Smyth and Whyte.
- In attendance: Mr. J. Walsh, Chief Executive;
Ms. S. McNicholl, Deputy Chief Executive/Director
of Corporate Services;
Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and
Civic Services;
Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Property and Projects;
Mr. D. Martin, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;
Mr. T. Wallace, Director of Finance;
Mr. J. Girvan, Director of Neighbourhood Services;
Ms. C. Sheridan, Director of Human Resources;
Mr. K. Heaney, Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty;
Mr. J. Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance
Manager; and
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services and Governance
Coordinator.
- Interpreter: Mr. D. Mac Giolla Chóill

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 3rd July, 7th July and 22nd August were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that the minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st September, 2025, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor de Faoite declared an interest under item 4.e) Planning Information in that he was on the Board of Governors of Forge Integrated Primary School. As the item did not become the subject of debate, he was not required to leave the meeting.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
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In relation to Item 4.i) Social Supermarket Fund, Councillor Beattie declared an interest associated with a group/organisation which had applied for or received funding and left the meeting whilst the item was under consideration.

Restricted Items

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

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

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

Draft Irish Language Policy

The Chairperson reminded the Committee that, at its meeting in August, the Committee had agreed to invite relevant stakeholders to the meeting.

The Chairperson welcomed to the meeting Mr. P. Deeds, Deputy Chief Executive, Foras na Gaeilge; Mr. D. Holder and Ms. D. Kieve, Committee on the Administration of Justice; Ms. C. Nic Liam (Conradh na Gaeilge), Mr. C. Mac Giolla Bhéin (Fís an Phobail), Ms. F. Nic Thom (An Droichead/Fóram na nGael) on behalf of the Irish language stakeholder forum; and Mr. P. Quinn, and Mr. D. Cowieson, Belfast City Council Trade Union representatives.

Each deputation provided an overview of their consultation response and further feedback to the draft policy for consideration.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance and they retired from the meeting.

The City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services advised the Committee that approval was being sought of the draft Irish Language Policy (as amended), along with agreement on the proposed priorities for the associated two-year implementation plan.

She provided examples of potential logo designs and highlighted that the Committee was further requested to indicate its preferred option for the bilingual corporate logo design work which was ongoing and would subsequently be subject to consultation with the Joint Negotiating and Consultative Committee (JNCC).

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 19th September, 2025**

Proposal

During discussion, a Member made a proposal in relation to a number of amendments to be incorporated into the policy. However, following discussion and a number of comments from other Members, he revised his proposal and, accordingly, it was:

Moved by Councillor Ó Néill,
Seconded by Councillor R-M Donnelly,

That the Committee agrees:

- (i) to note the contents of the report, including the documentation presented to the Committee at its previous meeting;
- (ii)
 - to approve the draft Irish Language Policy as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, and agrees that the proposed amendments which had been tabled be considered at a Special Meeting of the Committee on Friday, 26th September;
 - approve the draft high level 2-year implementation plan as set out in Appendix 2 of the report, with the inclusion of Dunville Park;
 - agrees that the Committee receive quarterly updates in relation to the implementation of the policy;
 - notes that a recurring budget would be considered as part of the rate setting process to deliver the commitments set out within the Policy; and
- (iii) notes that detailed design work on a bilingual logo remained ongoing and would be presented to the Committee, subject to further engagement with Party Group Leaders, JNCC and the Stakeholders Forum.

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

The City Solicitor advised the Committee that, due to the additional engagement which would have to be undertaken on the proposed amendments to the policy, the report for the special meeting would be issued late.

**Update on Temporary Contracts
and Agency Workers**

The Committee considered an update on the number of employees on temporary contracts, secondments and the number of agency assignees.

During discussion, one Member requested further information on the duration of vacant posts and plans for recruitment.

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After discussion, the Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed that a report regarding a breakdown of the duration of vacant posts be submitted to a future meeting.

AI Update

The Committee was provided with an update on the corporate governance approach to the adoption of AI and the AI challenge Fund currently being developed by the City Innovation Office.

In response to Members concerns, the Deputy Chief Executive advised that an Ethics Framework in the adoption of AI would be a consideration in the work being undertaken.

After discussion, the Committee noted:

1. The development of governance processes as part of the controlled implementation of AI use cases in the Council and progress to date on the development of the AI policy;
2. The forthcoming AI Awareness Course;
3. The development of the Belfast Region City Deal Local Council AI Adoption Programme; and
4. The roll out of the “Inclusive Futures” seminar series.

Women’s World Cup

The Committee considered the information pertaining to a UK bid to host FIFA Women’s World Cup in 2035.

The Committee:

- Noted the update regarding the UK bid to host the FIFA Women’s World Cup in 2035, including: the official bid timelines, interim communications activity and co-ordination, potential resource required by the Host City; and
- Approved the Council continuing with partners as part of the BID application.

Assets Management

It was reported that the Committee’s approval was being sought on asset related disposal, acquisition, and estates matters.

In relation to a Member’s suggestion for the allocation of any capital receipts under the Former Grove Baths Site, the Chief Executive noted that this could be considered when further detail was brought back to Committee.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
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The Committee:

- i. **Former Grove Baths Site – Proposed Community and Commercial Use**
- approved entering into negotiations regarding the redevelopment of the former Grove Baths for community and commercial use.
- ii. **22-38 Gloucester Street – Proposed Vesting of Seymour Row**
- approved a vesting application in respect of Seymour Row to perfect and regularise the title.
- iii. **Corporation Street – Release of Restrictive Covenant**
- approved entering into negotiations with the Crown to acquire their interest in the Corporation Street Site.
- iv. **North Foreshore – Update on Proposed Anaerobic Digestion Site**
- approved the withdrawal of the offer of land for a proposed Anaerobic Digestion (AD) facility and the preparation for remarketing of the site.
- v. **The Gasworks Estate – Proposed amendment to user clause.**
- approved a variation to the existing user clause in the Lease between the Council and Lloyds Banking Group (formerly Halifax plc).
- vi. **The Waterfront Hall – Relocation of the knotted gun sculpture.**
- noted the proposed relocation of the Knotted Gun sculpture from Girdwood Community Hub to the Waterfront Hall and that officers consider a potential replacement at the site.

Financial Statements Update

The Director of Finance provided a verbal update on the Financial Statements for 2024/2025.

Proposal

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Murphy,
Seconded by Councillor Nelson and

Resolved - That the Committee agrees to the one-off funding request of £16,000 for Benview Community Centre, subject to due diligence.

The Committee

- noted the verbal update provided in relation to the ongoing audit work and delay in the publication of Financial Statements;

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- agreed to the request of funding of £16,000 for Benview Community Centre, subject to due diligence; and
- noted that the next Transformation and Efficiency Workshop would take place on 14th November.

Gasworks Engagement Forum

The Committee considered a report which sought approval for the establishment of a Gasworks Engagement Forum to act as a platform for engagement on the future of the Gasworks and the development of a co-designed plan for the future of the site.

The Committee:

- approved the establishment of a Gasworks Engagement Forum and the Terms of Reference for the Forum as attached at Appendix 1 to the report; and
- agreed to the scheduling of meetings of the Forum from October 2025.

Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann

The Committee was provided with a planning update to support the hosting of Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in Belfast in August 2026.

During discussion, Members requested further communication on the event, together with information on the events programme, board members and mapping of venues across the city. It was noted that questions on the event had also been submitted to the Director by Councillor Beattie in advance of the meeting.

The Committee:

- Noted the update on the Fleadh Cheoil including in relation to engagement with Comhaltas on governance;
- Agreed that officers formally engage and submit a bid document as part of the bidding process for the Fleadh in 2027; and
- Agreed that a report be submitted to the Special meeting on 26th September to provide details on the issues raised by the Committee, including the programme, board members, mapping of venues, and the questions which had been submitted by Councillor Beattie in advance of the meeting.

Matters referred back from Council/Motions

Notices of Motion Quarterly Update

The Committee was provided with an update on the progress of all Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance for which it was responsible for.

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During discussion, Members requested that two of the motions which had been recommended for closure, should remain open, namely:

- Pedestrian Animation (35) – so that Officers could investigate different options for the pedestrian crossing(s), and that data from the Department for Infrastructure could be requested in relation to any safety issues of the rainbow pedestrian crossing located at the Foyle embankment, together with an update on the pedestrianisation of Union Street; and
- Market Gardens and Urban Farming (49) - so that further information could be provided.

Accordingly, the Committee:

- Noted the updates to all Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance that the Committee was responsible for;
- Agreed to the closure of Notice of Motion 40;
- Agreed that Motions Pedestrian Animation (35), and Market Gardens and Urban Farming (49) remained open so that further updates could be provided; and
- Noted that a review of the Notice of Motion process would be incorporated into phase 1 of the governance review.

Notice of Motion – Nitrates Action Plan

The Committee was reminded that, at the meeting of the Standards and Business Committee on 24th June, the following motion has been adopted, which was moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Alderman Lawlor:

Nitrates Action Plan

“Belfast City Council notes the recent launch of a public consultation by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) on a new Nutrients Action Plan. The Council expresses deep concern that the consultation has been issued without adequate prior engagement with stakeholders, including local councils, environmental organisations, the farming community, and the public, particularly in light of the significant environmental, economic and social implications of such a plan.

The measures currently proposed could devastate agriculture, reduce livestock numbers, and undermine food security. We call on the Minister to immediately withdraw the current public consultation on the Nutrients Action Programme and to bring forward a policy based on genuine partnership rather than punitive policies which risk the viability of our agricultural industry.”

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A response had since been received from the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs which provided an update on the issues raised (copy available [here](#)).

The Committee noted the receipt of the correspondence and the information provided by the Minister.

Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues

**Shaping Sustainable Places
Consultation Draft Response**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To provide an update on the decision of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee in respect of the Council response to the DfC consultation on the proposed ‘Shaping Sustainable Places’ programme and to seek agreement on the elements of Council response relating to Council contribution and resource allocation.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- (i) Note the response to the DfC Shaping Sustainable Places consultation as agreed by the City Growth & Committee on 10 September 2025, on the basis that this would be subject to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee’s consideration to the elements of the response relating to Council financial contribution and resource allocation.**
- (ii) Agree the elements of the Council response relating to Council financial contribution and resource allocation.**
- (iii) Note that the response will be submitted to DfC on the 21 September, subject to Council ratification on the 1 October 2025.**

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Members are asked to refer to the report presented to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee on 10th September 2025 which can be found at Appendix A. The City Growth & Regeneration Committee approved a response to the DfC Shaping Sustainable Places consultation and noted that the response would be submitted to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee given the potential financial and

resource implications of the programme. This sets out that DfC launched a public consultation on the 23 June on their proposed 'Shaping Sustainable Places' programme (attached at Appendix C), with consultation responses required by the 21 September 2025. This programme is proposed to take a similar approach to the DfC led Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme, with DfC, DfI & DEARA working together to provide a long-term regeneration strategy for the region's villages, towns and city centres. The initiative aims to address issues like dereliction, vacancy, and declining footfall by investing in placemaking, adaptive reuse of buildings, and climate-resilient infrastructure.

- 3.2 Each government department (DfC, DAERA and DfI) are proposing to jointly fund a multi-year approach to enable councils across NI to deliver on departmental/council priorities. Pending approval through DoF, the partners intend to provide £5m each per annum of capital funding to a region wide funding pot for 10 years, totalling £150m with each Department contributing £50million over a ten-year period. At this stage it is not clear how the funding would be allocated per Council area, although some concepts for this are tested within the consultation.
- 3.3 The funding model proposed assumes a further minimum contribution of 10% (approximately £15 million) from Local Councils, which is important to clarify that such contributions cannot be presumed. It has been highlighted within the attached draft response (Appendix B) that Councils operate within defined governance frameworks and statutory processes regarding capital expenditure, and any financial commitment must be subject to formal approval. It is assumed that this will be assessed on a project-by-project basis.
- 3.4 The draft Council response, attached at Appendix B, as agreed by the City Growth and Regeneration Committee on 10 September 2025, broadly supports the proposed vision and principles of Shaping Sustainable Places, particularly its emphasis on:
- Place-based regeneration
 - Early and meaningful community engagement
 - Collaborative delivery models
 - Long-term, secured funding

These principles strongly align with the Belfast Agenda 2024–2028, which articulates a shared vision for Belfast as an inclusive, resilient, and thriving city.

3.5 Key Considerations Contained within the Draft Response

As set out in the report to the City Growth & Regeneration Committee on 10 September 2025; the following key considerations including potential finance and resource implications for Council are highlighted:

3.6

1) Clarification on Departmental aims and additionality

It remains unclear how this proposed programme will operate within existing constrained budgets and existing Executive level commitments. The draft response seeks clarification on whether this funding is additional to existing Executive level commitments/budgets/programmes, or whether Councils would be expected to deliver government priorities using this programme, i.e. will Councils be expected to consider, prioritise and deliver projects such as elements of the Eastern Transport Plan, Belfast Streets Ahead etc or will these remain within the Executive departments, and if so what are impacts of allocating budget to the Shaping Sustainable Places on the delivery timeframes of Executive strategic projects.

3.7 The scale of under investment in Belfast is significant, especially when considering that Belfast City Centre is the economic driver for the Region. Belfast currently has multiple major schemes pending funding, primarily via DfC and DfI, for example:

- Belfast Streets Ahead Phases 3 and 5 (DfC).
- Gateway projects at Shankill, Clifton and Fredrick Streets
- Belfast Cycle Network, BRT Phase 2 and other active infrastructure (DfI)
- Under the Bridges, Sailortown Bridge and emerging schemes linked to the Eastern Transport Plan

3.8 This is exacerbated by the lack of specific regeneration funding streams that are available to Belfast (and wider NI region) as compared to elsewhere in the UK. As set out in the report brought to City Growth & Regeneration Committee on the Place Based Growth Proposition for Belfast, the city has experienced a regeneration deficit as it historically has not attracted as much funding, investment or spend on regeneration and local growth as other cities in the UK.

3.9 A combination of funds not being applicable to the devolved administrations and Northern Ireland receiving relatively lower allocations from funds operating on a competitive basis means that Northern Ireland has amongst the lowest spend on

regeneration and local growth per head of population, compared to Scotland, Wales and English regions – nearly half the regional average spend per capita. This outcome is not reflective of need for regeneration in Belfast relative to other cities in England, Scotland or Wales or Northern Ireland more broadly. Arguably the need is greater in a Northern Ireland context. A number of specific regeneration funds available in the rest of the UK have not been available in Northern Ireland which has led to a clear deficit and a missed opportunity for growth and positive economic, regeneration, social and environmental outcomes.

- 3.10 The English Devolution White Paper, published in December 2024, 3.10 envisions a fundamental change of the relationship between Whitehall and local government in England – with the intent of tackling regional inequality by transferring authority and funding over key policy areas and funding, such as economic development, housing, planning, transport and skills. There is now a presumption in favour of devolution on foot of this White Paper and with the creation of new Strategic Authorities this means funding and legislative powers will be further devolved in other UK cities. The transfer of additional funding and power to these Strategic Authorities across the whole of England will allow Councils to set and deliver on priorities that better respond to local needs and drive growth.
- 3.11 Increased funding pots and flexibilities are to be afforded to those Strategic Authorities that progress within the devolution framework, with single-pot integrated settlements over 30 years and access to consolidated funding pots covering local growth, place, housing, and regeneration, non-apprenticeship adult skills and transport. These funding agreements provide a 30-year investment promise – by way of example, Cambridge and Peterborough will receive £30m per annum, North of Tyne £48m per annum and West Midlands £36m per annum.
- 3.12 Belfast is already facing a regeneration deficit in both powers and funding and could be left even further behind if there are not commensurate levels of funding as with other core cities. This could make it even harder for the city to attract the resources needed to unlock demand and growth.
- 3.13 It is therefore essential that Departments clarify whether this new funding stream will replace historic investment programmes or run alongside them and that recognition. Without this clarity, there is significant risk that the ambition of the programme will far exceed its funding capacity. In addition, the Council would ask that DfC, DfI and DAERA support them

in their ask for additional place based regeneration funding via Westminster commensurate with the approach and level of funding pots being afforded to other UK cities as a result of the Devolution White Paper proposals

3.14

iii) Council contribution and governance considerations

Whilst a minimum 10% contribution is assumed, the draft response makes it clear that financial contributions cannot be assumed and would be subject to Councils own governance and approvals processes.

3.15

iv) Delivery capacity and resources

Effective delivery of complex regeneration projects requires not only robust governance but also sufficient resourcing to navigate statutory approvals and technical processes. Where Councils are expected to take a leadership role, resources must extend beyond capital allocation and include dedicated funding for inhouse delivery teams, provision for a management fee to support project management functions, and specialist feasibility development support to prepare capital ready pipelines. To enable this, it is recommended that a portion of funding is ringfenced for early-stage activities including feasibility assessment, design development and meaningful community engagement, ensuring that projects are both viable and deliverable before significant capital spend is committed. It is also proposed that the requested 10% contribution could be assessed in terms of in-kind contribution in terms of staff and resource to deliver, although as above this will also be subject to Councils own governance and approvals process.

3.16

v) Support for competitive funding streams

The draft response supports the use of thematic competitive funding (e.g. heritage assets, climate resilience, and economic centres) as a means to catalyse targeted investment and unlock place-based economic potential. These thematic streams can stimulate local enterprise, attract co-investment, and accelerate regeneration outcomes when aligned with strategic priorities. However, it is important to highlight that competitive mechanisms must complement and not compromise the foundational funding required to

plan and deliver coherent programmes at scale. The assessment criteria needs to clearly set out how projects would be evaluated, with a particular focus on the economic impact of the investment to ensure the greatest delivery of benefit.

- 3.17 Members are asked to note the agreed response from the City Growth and Regeneration Committee as included within Appendix B of this report, and to approve elements of the response relating to Council contributions and resource allocation as identified above. The response will be submitted to DfC as draft and will be submitted subject to final Council ratification on the 1 October 2025.

3.18 Financial and Resource Implications

The Committee are asked to consider and agree the response to the Financial & Resource implications included within this response.

3.19 Equality or Good Relations Implications/
Rural Needs Assessment

Equality, Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment have not been undertaken in the drafting of this response, although they have been considered. Detailed assessments will be required should the programme come forward.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**30 Under 30 Climate Change-Makers
Initiative 2025-26**

The Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty provided the Committee with an update in relation to the approach to Belfast City Council for support for the 30U30 (30 under 30) Northern Ireland Climate Change-Maker’s programme. He advised that the programme was coordinated by the leading charity, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful and its partner Podiem. The collaborative, cross sectoral initiative, featuring world-class speakers and experts, would be supported by organisations such as the Garfield Weston Foundation, Pinsent Masons, Coca Cola and Danske Bank with a request for local authority involvement being addressed through this approach to Belfast City Council.

He explained that, now entering its 4th cohort, the 30 under 30 initiative was a climate focused initiative where young leaders from Northern Ireland had the opportunity to take part in an international learning programme. Following the culmination of an exceptionally successful programme in 2024-25 (supported by Belfast City Council) a new cohort of young leaders would be competitively selected for 2025-26 and there was a request to Belfast City Council to support the programme of activity they would undertake.

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He highlighted that most of the 30U30 modules were being delivered in Belfast City Centre and the vast majority of the participants would either reside or work within the Belfast City Council footprint. The cohort would be diverse with a broad range of backgrounds, sectors and interest/expertise areas represented. Within the pilot programme, over 55% of the group were female with a mix of those in education, employment and currently economically inactive.

Within the modular programme, participants would learn from globally renowned thought leaders and exemplars across a range of relevant topics. These topics had been carefully crafted to create a cohort of leaders who would return to their fields of expertise with the tools to become planet positive change-makers in the short/long term. Speakers and facilitators from the previous cohorts included globally renowned individuals such as: Sir Jonathon Porritt CBE; Richard Shotton; Professor Ian Robertson, Alice Thompson, Gerry Hussey; Philip Hesketh, René Carayol MBE.

The Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty provided information on the international element of the programme and the potential benefits to the Council.

Proposal

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

Resolved - That the Committee agrees to increase the contribution from £8,750 to £10,000 plus VAT to the overall programme costs.

Accordingly, the Committee noted the contents of the report and approved the contribution of £10,000 plus VAT to the overall programme costs.

Planning Information

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

Rolling Apprenticeship Programme

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the Council’s rolling apprenticeship programme.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 The Committee is aware that funding for an annual apprenticeship programme was secured via the annual estimating process and ratified at the March 2025 meeting of the Council. A recurring budget of £256,000 per annum was approved. This includes the 3 existing apprentices in Resources and Fleet and Digital Services.

3.2 from 2025/26 onwards. For new apprenticeships in the rolling programme, it has been confirmed that the majority of training costs at level 2, 3 and 5 can be funded via the Labour Market Partnership funding, allowing the majority of the full recurring budget to be used for apprentice salaries. In addition, Place and Economy's contractual arrangements can provide appropriate training providers without the need for additional procurement.

2025/2026 apprenticeship programme

3.3 At its meeting of 9 April 2025, CMT agreed that for 2025/26, given the tight timelines to recruit apprentices within the current financial year, that 5 Business Administration Level 3 apprentices would be recruited for year one of the rolling apprenticeship programme. Accordingly, Departments were asked to submit applications for a Business Administration apprentice from the corporate apprenticeship fund by 30 April 2025. In May 2025, CMT approved the employment of 5 Business Administration Apprentices in the following departments.

- Health & Safety Unit
- Communications, Marketing & External Affairs Department
- CNS (2)
- COS

3.5 The session provided an opportunity for participants to learn about the benefits of working for the Council and to understand the recruitment process which included guidance on completing an application form. Departmental representatives attended to provide an overview of the apprentice role within their respective department. People 1st the training provider also attended to provide in depth information on the NVQ qualification, what to expect and the assessment methods used to pass modules.

3.6 Attendees had an opportunity to speak with any speaker during and after the formal presentation. Forty-eight people attended the information session.

- 3.7 In total 124 applications were received and following virtual and in person skills testing, 58 people were invited to interview. Forty-nine people were interviewed, and 5 people have now been appointed to start their apprenticeship on 1 October 2025.
- 3.8 A full induction plan and programme of support is being developed to ensure that the new apprentices are properly inducted into their new roles. It is anticipated that by providing the necessary information at the outset, combined with ongoing peer support, that it will make the most of their apprenticeship experience with the Council. Apprentices will be supported to attain accredited qualifications as well as developing their skills and experience to prepare for their future careers and furthermore, have the potential to make the transition to full employment within the council should appropriate opportunities become available.

2026/27 apprenticeship programme

- 3.9 Departments will be asked to submit their bids for the 2026/27 apprenticeship programme in Quarter 3. Departments must ensure that a relevant course is identified, and a commitment from line managers to provide the extra supervision and support required to make the apprenticeship a success. Directors, or their nominees will be required to engage with CHR, Development Team to identify suitable courses before a bid can be submitted.
- 3.10 One of the criteria that will be used to assess bids from departments will be posts that have been identified as hard to fill from the previous year's recruitment data and where possible these roles will be approved for an apprenticeship where the business need is clearly demonstrated.
- 3.11 Areas of the business already supported through the programme are unlikely to succeed in future bids whilst the current apprenticeship is ongoing. CMT will be required to make the final decision on which apprenticeship bids are successful for 2026/27.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.12 Funding of £256,000 has been agreed for this programme in the 2025/26 rate setting process.

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

- 3.13 Recruitment for apprenticeship programmes is carried out in accordance with the Local Government Staff Commission's Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection."

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During discussion, one Member suggested the need for a pathway for City and Neighbourhood Services specialist skills such as tree preservation and biodiversity.

After discussion, the Committee noted the contents of the report.

Review of Code of Procedures on recruitment and selection consultation response

It was reported that the Commission had revised the Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection (the Code) to ensure compliance with current legislation and to demonstrate best practice.

The Director of Human Resources advised that the Commission had launched an 11-week consultation exercise with Councils, the NIHE and other key stakeholders to gather feedback on the proposed revisions. The consultation was open for responses from 10th July to 26th September, 2025.

She pointed out that, broadly, the structure of the Code remained the same. The significant changes were as follows:

- the removal of references to Procedures for the Recruitment and Selection of the Group Chief Building Control Officer;
- the removal of references to Procedures for the Recruitment and Selection of the Group Chief Environmental Health Officer; and
- the removal of duplication.

She highlighted that the Corporate HR department managed the recruitment and selection process, therefore, in formulating the Council's response to the consultation document, the views were that of the department (a copy of the draft consultation is available [here](#).)

The Committee agreed the Council's response to the Local Government Staff Commission Review of the Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection. The response would be submitted, subject to ratification at the October Council meeting

Night Mover Service

The Strategic Director of Place and Economy submitted for the Committee's consideration the following report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 The report sets out proposals from the Minister for Infrastructure and Minister for the Economy for collaborative funding of the Nightmover Service.**

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1** Members are asked to agree to provide funding of up to £92.3k, subject to confirmation of funding support from the Executive and further engagement with BIDS in relation to how they can support the proposal

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Background

In 2022 Council passed a motion relating to Nighttime transport calling on Translink to expand the provision of night-time services. This was subsequently integrated into the Belfast Agenda Action Plans.

As Members will be aware a Christmas Pilot Nighttime Service was operated in 2024, but in addition to support from Council there has been widespread support for business organisations, including in particular from the BIDS and Belfast's Night Czar, for the extension of this service across the year.

Translink have provided the following information in relation to the 2024 nighttime pilot.

- NI Railways: Over the December 2024 weekends the later last departures on Friday and Saturday nights carried over 12,000 passengers.
- Metro: In December Translink piloted 11 key routes as part of Late Night services on Friday and Saturday nights. Whilst providing good geographic penetration of the city some services were significantly more popular than others. Over the 8 nights of operation Metro carried around 1700 passengers on the special services and saw a swell in numbers using the last standard timetabled departures around 11.00pm.
- Ulsterbus : Translink operated a number of late-night services as part of the existing timetable. The services proved very popular averaging 30 passengers per departure. These additional services mirrored the popularity of existing late timetabled services to Derry-Londonderry and Newry with total Ulsterbus late services serving over 3300 passengers over the 4 weekends.

Research from Consumer Council for Northern Ireland found

‘Travelling at night is important to people, and the top three reasons for doing so are socialising, shopping and work. Travel at night therefore promotes social inclusion, particularly for vulnerable persons, and is vital to driving the night time economy.

However, the number of licensed taxi drivers has fallen by a quarter since 2013 and only a small number of Translink services run late at night. Regional media has reported on consumers fearing for their personal safety due to the lack of transport options ¹ and businesses saying they are losing trade because people are leaving early due to worries about getting home. ²

A strong theme that emerged from both consumers and stakeholders is that limited late night public transport services and the current shortage of taxi drivers is reducing people’s night time travel options. This is in turn causing people to choose to travel less at night.

In their letter to Ministerial Colleagues and the Council, Ministers identified that providing *‘this extended late-night weekend public transport service will provide a range of both economic and societal benefits, including:*

- Improved connectivity to communities outside of the City Centre, facilitating people to get home safely.
- Improved access to cultural activities in the City Centre.
- Reduced potential for public order issues in the City Centre on Friday and Saturday evenings, leading to reduced policing costs and reduced pressure on health services.
- Reduced potential for violence against women and girls.’

3.2 Proposal from the Ministers for Infrastructure and the Economy

Before the summer Council officials had positive discussions with relevant Ministers in relation to the increased calls for the extension of night-time public transport services. On 8 August the above Minister wrote to Council and Ministerial colleagues advising that *‘the extension of late night public transport services has the potential to deliver benefits for a number of Executive Departments, we are seeking your support for a joint cross-departmental/Council funding approach on the basis set out below’*

- DfI 14.6% (c.£94.9k) – as the Executive Department with responsibility for public transport.

- DfE 14.6% (c.£94.9k) – as the Executive Department with responsibility for developing the night-time economy.
- DfC 14.2% (c.£92.3k) – as the Executive Department with responsibility for developing local communities and our culture & arts sector.
- DoJ 14.2% (c.£92.3k) – as the Executive Department with responsibility for public order and policing.
- DoH 14.2% (c.£92.3k) – as the Executive Department with responsibility for health services.
- TEO 14.2% (c.£92.3k) – as the Executive Department with responsibility for our Strategy on preventing violence against women and girls.
- Belfast City Council 14.2% (c.£92.3k).

The resource funding would be required on a pro rata basis as the pilot scheme would span both the 2025-26 and 2026-27 financial years, with an anticipated start date of November 2025.

It is understood from Translink that the proposed nighttime service would operate on select Metro key routes, as well as 4 key Ulsterbus corridors that have no rail alternative on the basis of operating standard fares with the aim of '*leading to greater market stimulation and repeat business from customers*'.

Any decision of the Council at this stage would of course be subject to confirmation of funding from the Executive and consideration of the final details of the scheme.

4.0 Financial and Resource Implications

The costs of the proposal, which would be spread across 2 financial years, would be met from future underspends and existing reserves.

5.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment

None associated with this report.”

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Smyth,
Seconded by Councillor de Faoite,

That the Committee agrees to write to the Executive to devolve transport powers and the associated funding to the Council.

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

The Committee agreed to provide funding of up to £92.3k, subject to confirmation of funding support from the Executive and further engagement with BIDS in relation to how they could support the proposal.

**Attendance at Horizon 2020 UPSURGE
in person meeting in Breda, October 25**

The Committee considered a report which outlined the Council's intention to send two officers to the Horizon 2020 UPSURGE Project Group Meeting taking place on 1st – 2nd October in Breda, Netherlands which the Council was required to attend as a project partner.

The Committee:

- Noted that, Debbie Caldwell and Mura Quigley, Climate Team, would be attending the Project Group meeting 1st – 2nd October in Breda, Netherlands; and
- Noted that all costs associated with the attendance at the event were covered within the EU Horizon 2020 UPSURGE grant funding.

**Common Purpose NI Legacy
Sponsorship Proposal**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To bring forward for Members consideration, a recent request received seeking sponsorship support for the delivery of the Common Purpose's NI Legacy Programme which will take place in late January / early February 2026 (dates TBC).**

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- Consider and agree the request received to sponsor the delivery of the Common Purpose NI Legacy Programme (2026) to a total value of £10,000.

3.0 Key Issues

Background and Context

- 3.1 As Members will be aware, Common Purpose is a non-for-profit leadership development organisation which supports people**

and communities from all backgrounds, beliefs and experiences. In recent years (October 2021, January 2024 and January 2025) Council has worked with Common Purpose and provided funding to support the delivery of their NI Legacy Programme in Belfast, alongside a range of other organisations including Translink, Queens University and Power NI.

- 3.2 The most recent NI Legacy Programme delivered in January 2025 attracted 76 participants aged 18-25 from across Belfast and areas. The diverse group were made up of participants some of whom were in employment, some were NEET; some were studying, a few were volunteering; many were activists, whilst others finding their own causes. However, they found commonality in that they were living through the same generation and had a vested interest in Belfast and how it should look in the future.
- 3.3 The two-day programme provided multiple opportunities to engage, develop leadership skills and get new perspectives to help shape the future of Belfast. This included:
- Immersion visits to a range of businesses and organisations across the city including East Belfast Enterprise, Danske Bank, MSC Group, NOW Group, Tourism NI, Turnaround Project and Translink.
 - ‘Café Conversations’ with a range of strategic leaders including Maebh Reynolds (CEO and Founder, GoPlugable), Sara McCracken (Founder, The PR Club), Kayley Curtis (Production Coordinator, Makematic), Conor Forker (Youth Worker in Charge, Clonmore Youth Club), Diane Davis (Director, Minority Recognition Awards NI), Maeve Brennan (Programme Officer, Belfast Healthy Cities) to gain fresh perspectives and understanding.
 - Keynote Speeches and engagement sessions with Paul Murnaghan (Chair, BT (NI) Board) and Micky Murray, (The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mayor of Belfast)
 - Group planning and presentations to a panel of leaders including Jacqui Kennedy (Chief People Officer and Corporate Services Officer, Translink) and Caroline Young (Vice-President (Students and Corporate Services), Queen’s University Belfast) which enabled young people to reflect on their key priorities for change.
- 3.4 In addition to the above, the young people also engaged with Council’s Strategic Performance Team as part of the consultation process for our Performance Improvement Plan

2025/26. This enabled Council to capture views and feedback from young people which can often be overlooked.

- 3.5 with the majority of participants reflecting positive change as summarised below:
- 83% have greater confidence in their role as a leader
 - 92% feel more willing and able to impact Northern Ireland
 - 85% feel that they will be more open to diverse perspectives
 - 87% have identified shifts they want to make and have set goals to help them reach them
- 3.6 Appendix 1 'Impact Report' provides more information relating to the programme that was delivered in January 2025 and its impact on participants involved.

NI Legacy Programme 2026 (BCC Sponsorship Request)

- 3.7 Following the success of the previous three programmes, Common Purpose plans to bring forward a further programme to deliver in Belfast in late January / early February 2026. The new programme will engage new participants aged 18-25 with a renewed focus on engaging young people within inclusive growth cohorts across the city.
- 3.8 Common Purpose has approached Council and other partners across the city to seek sponsorship of £10,000 to support the delivery of the programme. Funding will help to support the organisation to offer the programme free of charge to young people across the city and engage up to 100 participants. This will help to remove barriers to participation and ensure that all those who wish to participate can do so.
- 3.9 Whilst the full agenda is still under development, the programme will aim to:
- Deliver individual learning outcomes for participants as they grow and develop their cultural intelligence.
 - Create valuable connections between peers and generations across the city.
 - Identify the tangible actions and outcomes to support young people to make a difference in their local areas.
- 3.10 As a potential sponsor Council will have the opportunity to:
- Secure 20 places for our younger members of staff and/or young people from inclusive growth cohorts across the city to enable them to benefit from the

learning, impact, inclusion, and networks that the programme provides.

- Engage and speak on the programme and to listen to and gain new perspectives from, the diverse eyes of the young leaders (including engagement with Lord Mayor).
- Include our branding on all marketing materials and related social media posts to further raise the profile of Council with young people.

3.11 To encourage and secure participation from inclusive growth cohorts, Council officers and Common Purpose will:

- Share the programme information via Council and Common Purpose social media.
- Provide programme details to members to share via own networks and within their local communities.
- Engage with established networks and stakeholders including Neighbourhood Officers, VCSE Panel representatives and Community Planning Partnership members to raise awareness of the opportunities available.

3.12 A further update will be provided to members upon Common Purpose securing the required funding to deliver the programme.

Financial and Resource Implications

3.13 The proposed £10,000 total funding will be sourced from the existing City and Organisational Strategy budget.

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

3.14 There are no equality or rural needs implications arising directly from this report as the initiative seeks to offer opportunities for young people of all communities and backgrounds”

The Committee:

- agreed the request received to sponsor the delivery of the Common Purpose NI Legacy Programme (2026) to a total value of £10,000; and
- agreed that a report regarding a conference sponsorship framework be submitted to a future Committee for consideration and, in the interim, no further requests for conference sponsorship be submitted to the Committee.

Social Supermarket Fund

The Director of Neighbourhood Services submitted for the Committee's consideration the following report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to seek members approval on the operation of the 26/27 scheme and provide an update on the operation of projects supported through the 24/25 Social Supermarket Fund (SSF).

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1** The Committee is asked to:

- Consider the recommended approach and assessment criteria for open call funding for the Social Supermarket Fund in 26/27 and grant approval to operate an open call for grant applications to the SSF in 26/27 as outlined in the report. Members are also asked to note the update on delivery of the Social Supermarket Fund in 24/25.

3.0 Main Report

Background

- 3.1** In response to recommendations in the Welfare Reform Mitigations report, the Department for Communities (DfC) has operated a Social Supermarket Pilot programme since October 2017. Funding was made available through the Community Support Programme (CSP) in 20/21 to expand the concept to all council areas. This fund is 100% funded by DfC and is based on a MOU with the department and council.
- 3.2** The aim of a social supermarket is to offer a sustainable response to food insecurity by seeking to help address the root causes of poverty rather than simply provide food. This is achieved by providing, in addition to food support, a referral network for wraparound support. Food supply should ideally come from donations, surplus, or purchased at a discount, however, funding can also be used towards the purchase of food vouchers.
- 3.3** In the years 21-24, Council worked with identified partners to develop models for delivery. For 24/25 and 25/26 schemes council granted approval for officers to seek applications through an open call process.

- 3.4** Following consideration at April and May meetings of SP&R, members agreed to roll over awards to organisations funded in 24/25 into 25/26 and asked officers to complete the following;
- to review the criteria beforehand and ensure that there was weighting added for organisations within areas of multiple deprivation;
 - to add into the criteria that those organisations applying must be able to demonstrate that they have experience of managing a scheme of this nature providing support to those struggling financially as a result of the cost-of-living crisis;
 - as best we can, will seek to ensure there is not proliferation of services close together; and that the scoring criteria be presented to party group leaders in advance of the applications opening or a special meeting of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee if needed.
- 3.5** Officers have amended the criteria for assessment based on this direction from members. Members may wish to consider the following points when reviewing the proposed scoring approach;
- 3.6** Each social supermarket project operates in a slightly different way. There are three main models of operation which are listed below;
- Large, well-established community organisations operating a social supermarket as well as wraparound services within their own facility as well as signposting people to other services.
 - Food banks that have evolved into social supermarkets and offer wraparound services as well as signposting to other services.
 - Community organisations providing food vouchers and wraparound services as well as signposting to other services.
- 3.7** Officers have sought to ensure that the proposed criteria provide an opportunity for projects that operate any of these models to access funding. Officers have also sought to ensure that the proposed criteria will provide an opportunity for new projects to apply by demonstrating experience in delivering community based interventions and support for individuals.
- 3.8** Members may also wish to consider that the location of an organisation does not always reflect the geographical area that

it covers and that while a weighting for organisations which are based in areas of deprivation is included, as directed by members, there is also an additional question where applicants have to demonstrate what need their project will meet.

- 3.9 Members asked that officers seek to ensure that there is not a proliferation of services in particular areas, there is no mechanism to prevent projects from the same geographic area applying for support through an open call process. Decisions on whether to award funding to particular services in certain areas have to be taken once the assessment process has completed and an outcome is available. However, in an effort to support collaboration and reduce duplication, the need section of the criteria includes a question in relation to other services providing support for individuals and how gaps/duplication have been identified.

3.10 Key elements for 26/27 application

It is recommended that the 25/26 Social Supermarket fund would operate on the following parameters, which are in line with previous schemes. These are;

- Applications would be open to any constituted group delivering eligible projects.
- Maximum level of award will be £50,000
- Only one application per organisation
- Allocation of funding to projects will be based on a quality score
- Applicants can apply for costs of up to 10% for management and delivery of the project – these must be fully costed and explained

3.11 Multi annual funding

Members will be aware that this fund is 100% funded by DfC through an annual Letter of Offer which is normally issued in the summer months. In an effort to provide additional stability for services and reduce the need to make applications on an annual basis. Members are asked to approve that the 26/27 application process would cover a 2 year period. Letters of offer would be issued on an annual basis and would include a caveat that they are subject to receipt of DfC funding.

3.12 Criteria for 26/27 programme

Members will be aware that Council recently agreed the terms for a new large Community Support grant. The new Community Support Plan large grant uses a 2 stage process, it is recommended that this is also applied to the Social

Supermarket Fund. Further detail on the proposed criteria is contained in Appendix 1.

Members are asked to consider the criteria and if content approve that this assessment model is used for open call applications in 26/27. Following council approval it is expected that calls for applications will open in mid October and close in December. Updates on the outcome of assessments will be brought to elected members in February 2026.

3.13 Update on 24/25 Social Supermarket Fund Projects

Members may wish to note that Belfast City Council supported 21 social supermarkets during the financial year 24/25. Most projects which received support were existing projects supported in 23/24 but a portion of funds was directed to support new projects and these included; Compass Counselling, Donegall Pass Community Forum, Footprints Women's Centre, Glencolin Community Association, Grace Women's Development, Street Soccer NI, West Belfast Partnership Board.

- 3.14 Further detail on the operation of the projects is provided in the attached appendices which also includes some feedback from those who benefited directly from support in 24/25. A total of 14,294 individuals were supported through projects in 24/25. Officers also facilitate quarterly networking meetings between social supermarkets to share best practice, provide information on areas of common interest and provide an opportunity to discuss and address emerging issues.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.15 All activity outlined in this report can be delivered through existing staff resources. Funding for 26/27 is conditional on receipt of DfC funding. If the DfC Letter of Offer is not received by April 26, officers will advise members that no budget is available to support successful projects.

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

- 3.16 None identified at present, delivery of previous schemes has been screened. Equality Screening of the 2026/27 grant application process will be completed when the assessment criteria have been agreed."

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 19th September, 2025**

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Cobain,
Seconded by Councillor I. McLaughlin and

Resolved - That the Committee agrees that an additional £100,000 be considered for the Social Supermarket Fund and a report be submitted to the Committee in October to detail how it could be resourced and allocated.

Accordingly, the Committee:

- agreed that an additional £100,000 be considered for the Social Supermarket Fund and a report be submitted to the Committee in October to detail how it could be resourced and allocated;
- agreed the recommended approach and assessment criteria for open call funding for the Social Supermarket Fund in 26/27 and granted approval to operate an open call for grant applications to the SSF in 26/27 as outlined in the report; and
- noted the update on delivery of the Social Supermarket Fund in 24/25.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

Physical Programme

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

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 The Council's Physical Programme currently includes over 200 capital projects with investment of £150m+ via a range of internal and external funding streams, together with projects which the Council delivers on behalf of external agencies. The Council's Capital Programme forms part of the Physical Programme and is a rolling programme of investment which either improves existing Council facilities or provides new facilities. This report presents requests for stage movement approvals under the Capital Programme.**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is requested to –

- **Capital Programme Movements -**
 - **Cremated Remains Burial Plots – Agree that the project is moved to *Stage 3 – Committed* and held at**

Tier 0 – Scheme at Risk pending further development of the project and a satisfactory tender return; and that necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate ‘framework’ arrangements) be initiated with a contract to be awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.

- **Belfast Zoo Improvement Works Phase 2 – Agree that the project is moved to *Stage 3 – Committed* with a maximum allocation of up to £950,000 to address serious H&S and welfare issues to be taken from the £1.4m agreed by Committee for capital works at the Zoo as part of the rates setting process in January 2025.**
- **Open Spaces and Streetscene (OSS) Machinery Replacement Programme – Agree that the project is moved to *Stage 2 – Uncommitted* to allow options to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course.**
- **Greening and Growing Project – Agree that the project is moved to *Stage 2 – Uncommitted* to allow options to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course.**
- **Workshop Plant Replacement Programme - Agree that the project is added to the Capital Programme at *Stage 1 – Emerging* to allow a business case to be developed.**
- **Fernhill House and Courtyard - Agree that the project is added to the Capital Programme at *Stage 1 – Emerging* to allow a business case to be developed.**
- **Lenadoon Greenway - Agree that the project is added to the Capital Programme at *Stage 1 – Emerging* to allow a business case to be developed.**

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

Physical Programme

- 3.1 Members will be aware that the Council runs a substantial Physical Programme. This includes the rolling Capital Programme – a multimillion regeneration programme of investment across the city which improves existing Council assets or provides new council facilities. The Property & Projects Department is happy to arrange a site visit to any projects that have been completed or are underway.**

Capital Programme - Proposed Movements

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

Project	Overview	Stage movement
Cremated Remains Burial Plots	Development of cremated remains plots at Roselawn.	Move to Stage 3 – Committed
Belfast Zoo Improvement Works Phase 2	To carry out essential Health & Safety works and enclosure upgrades in the Belfast Zoo	Move to Stage 3 – Committed with a maximum budget of £950,000 out of the £1.4m previously agreed by Committee in January 2025 as part of the rates setting process.
Open Spaces and Streetscene (OSS) Machinery Replacement Programme	Rolling programme to replace grounds maintenance machinery which is beyond its lifespan.	Move to Stage 2 – Uncommitted
Greening and Growing Project	Biodiversity improvement and sustainable food growing development project at GROW community garden, Waterworks.	Move to Stage 2 – Uncommitted
Workshop Plant Replacement Programme	Programme to replace workshop plant which exceeded 10 plus years and no longer fit for purpose.	Add as Stage 1 – Emerging
Fernhill House and Courtyard	Explore options for bringing the Courtyard at Fernhill back into active use space as an outdoor education/ activity space linked to the Access to the Hills project.	Add as Stage 1 – Emerging
Lenadoon Greenway	Proposed greenway to connect local residents with nearby green spaces and outdoor facilities, including Lenadoon Millennium Park, Half Moon Lake, Colin Glen Forest Park, Padraig Sairseil CLG Walkway and the wider Belfast Hills.	Add as Stage 1 – Emerging

3.3 Cremated Remains Burial Plots

In September 2023, this project was moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted on the Capital Programme with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course. The project is for the development of 622 cremated remains burial plots utilising shallow land within Roselawn cemetery which is unsuitable for full earth burials. Following survey and assessment work which was undertaken in Section P it has been agreed that the development of the plots for the repose of cremated remains is feasible from both a planning and technical perspective. Work is also underway on looking at the operational arrangements and pricing model. Members are asked to agree that the project is moved to *Stage 3 – Committed* and held at Tier 0 – Scheme at Risk, pending further development of the project and a satisfactory tender return; and that necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate ‘framework’ arrangements) be initiated. A contract will be awarded based on the most economically advantageous tender received and full commitment to deliver.

3.4 Belfast Zoo Improvement Works Phase 2

This project was moved to the Capital Programme at Stage 2 – Uncommitted in April 2025. The project is to carry out essential health and safety works and enclosures upgrades in the Belfast Zoo which are necessary for the Zoo to retain its licence. This will address the H&S and welfare issues for animals, keepers and the public as well as improvements to enclosures. The essential capital works identified include boundary fencing repairs in a number of critical areas, upgrades to existing animal enclosures to prevent incursions, replacement of the windows in a number of animal enclosures and replacement of the climbing within the ape house. Members will recall that £1.419,000 was agreed for capital works at the Zoo as part of the rate setting process in January 2025. Members are asked to agree that the project is moved to *Stage 3 – Committed* with a maximum allocation of up to £950,000 to address the serious H&S and welfare issues be taken out of the £1.4m previously agreed by Committee in January 2025.

3.5 Open Spaces and Streetscene (OSS) Machinery Replacement Programme

This project was added to the Capital Programme at Stage 1 – Emerging in June 2025, to replace grounds maintenance machinery to maintain service provision across the Council's estate. These machineries are beyond its economically viable life span and no longer financially viable to maintain in use for

the respective services. As per the three-stage approval process, a strategic outline case has been submitted. Members are asked to agree that the 'OSS Machinery Replacement Programme' project is moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted to allow the options to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course.

3.6 Greening & Growing Project

This project was added to the Capital Programme at Stage 1 – Emerging in August 2025. This project focuses on biodiversity improvement and sustainable food growing development funded through Shared Island Fund programme. It will be delivered at the GROW NI community garden at Waterworks, in partnership with Belfast City Council and Belfast Healthy Cities. As per the three-stage approval process, a strategic outline case has been submitted. Members are asked to agree that the Greening & Growing Project is moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted to allow the options to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course.

3.7 Workshop Plant Replacement Programme

The proposed 'Workshop Plant Replacement Programme' project aims to replace workshop plant which exceeded 10 plus years of working wear and tear and no longer fit for purpose. Members are asked to agree that the project is added to Stage 1 – Emerging to allow the business case to be developed.

3.8 Fernhill House and Courtyard

In November 2024, Members have received an overall Heritage Assets update including Fernhill House and Courtyard and agreed that the Council explores options for bringing the Courtyard at Fernhill back into active use as an outdoor education/ activity space linked to the Access to the Hills project and building on the success of the Forth Meadow Community Greenway and authorised officers to discuss this opportunity with potential partners. On 1 September 2025, the Council agreed to allocate approximately £900k to Fernhill House redevelopment. Members are asked to agree that the project is added to Stage 1 – Emerging to allow the business case to be developed.

3.9 Lenadoon Greenway

The proposed greenway aims to connect local residents with nearby green spaces and outdoor facilities, including Lenadoon Millennium Park, Half Moon Lake, Colin Glen Forest

Park, Padraig Sairseil CLG Walkway and the wider Belfast Hills. Members are asked to agree that the project is added to Stage 1 – Emerging to allow the business case to be developed.

3.10 Financial and Resource Implications

Financial Implications –

Belfast Zoo Improvement Works Phase 2 – capital allocation of up to £950,000 from the £1,4m previously agreed by Committee in January 2025 as part of the rates setting process for capital works at the Zoo.

Resource Implications – Officer time to deliver.

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

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

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Assets Management

The Committee:

- i) Clement Wilson Park – Lease Renewal**
 - Approved the lease renewal for a new 10-year lease at Lock 3, Lagan Navigation from the Department for Infrastructure.
- ii) Bullring, Lower Shankill – Update on Leasehold Interests**
 - Noted the update on the leasehold interests transferring from the Department for Communities, Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the Department of Infrastructure at The Bullring, Lower Shankill; and
 - Approved a new licence agreement with the Department for Infrastructure at the Bullring, Lower Shankill.

Update on Area Working Groups

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the South Area Working Group of 18th August, the North Area Working Group of 26th August, the West Area Working Group of 28th August and the East Area Working Group of 4th September, 2025.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 19th September, 2025**

Finance, Procurement and Performance

Contracts Update

The Committee:

- Approved the public advertisement of tenders as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 1) subject to the omission of the tenders in relation to *Provision of temporary agency workers (neutral vendor model)* and *Provision of temporary agency workers using call-off framework (where neutral vendor cannot provide a suitable candidate in a timely manner)*. The Committee agreed that the aforementioned two tenders be deferred so that further information could be provided at its meeting in October;
- Approved the award of STAs in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 2);
- Approved the modification of the contract as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 3) subject to the omission of the tender *Hire of Skips - CNS Q24.15*. The Committee agreed that the aforementioned tender be deferred so that further information could be provided at its Special meeting on Friday, 26th September;
- Approved an amendment to the current funding agreement with Visit Belfast as detailed in section 6.0; and
- Agreed that a report be submitted in relation to the governance and scrutiny of Contracts, to include detail on the effectiveness and social value of contracts.

Table 1: Competitive Tenders

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Est. Max Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services
Replacement boilers & associated works at Tropical Ravine Botanic Gardens	Up to 3 months	£150,000	S Grimes	Supply and installation of replacement boilers due to failure of 3No existing boilers – currently inadequate heating media to sustain the specialist flora located.
Supply and installation of Solar PV on roof for Donegal Pass Community Centre	Up to 2 months	£45,000	S Grimes	The solar panels will generate electricity to be used by the Community Centre reducing its energy consumption, electricity costs and CO2e emissions

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Fully Funded				
Provision of portorage and storage services	Up to 2 years	£90,000	N Largey	Service for the moving of various furniture and other items between BCC buildings. Service is not currently available within BCC. Dept considering in-house options but require a contract up to 2 years to ensure continuity of service whilst this review is conducted.
Accommodation/ hotel services (Bed and breakfast basis) to support the delivery of Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2026.	Up to 2 weeks	£220,000	D Martin	The contractual agreement between Council and Comhaltas includes the provision of hotel accommodation and business suite facilities to support the delivery of Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2026.

Table 2: Single Tender Actions

Title	Duration	Est. Max Contract Value	SRO	Description	Supplier	STA Reason
Corporate HR & Payroll system for Belfast City Council	Up to 3 years	£1,230,000	S McNicholl	Zellis were awarded the Corporate HR & Payroll system contract in 2016 following a competitive tender exercise using the Crown Commercial framework contract for Corporate Software Solutions. Implementation of this new HR & payroll system has	Zellis UK Ltd	3

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				<p>proven to be complex with some elements of the implementation still ongoing.</p> <p>A 3 year STA is therefore required to support the completion of the implementation, including potentially moving to a Cloud based solution with Zellis, and for the council to consider its longer term procurement options for software licensing & maintenance of the system.</p> <p>There are no other current procurement options available to appoint Zellis. This may change once the system is moved to a Cloud based solution.</p> <p>Zellis are the owners of the software. Software licensing & maintenance cannot be</p>		
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				provided by any other supplier.		
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Table 3: Modification to Contract

Title of Contract	Original Contract Duration & Value	Modification	SRO	Description	Supplier
Supply and delivery of paint and sundries – T2015	Up to 4 years 6 months & £132k	Additional 2 months and £6,000	S Grimes	The new tender (T2517) is at evaluation stage. The product testing stage of the evaluation is ongoing and award has been delayed as 1 st placed supplier failed this testing process as their products did not meet specification following testing. Testing process now started with 2nd place supplier. The testing process is critical to ensure we buy quality paint products to support operational maintenance teams and reduce associated costs. Con Mod approved Feb 2025 for additional 4 months and £6,000 and Jun 2025 for additional 3 months and £6,000	PPG Architectural

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Equality and Good Relations

**Minutes of Shared City Partnership
Meeting on 4th August 2025**

The Committee approved the minutes and recommendations from the Shared City Partnership Meeting held on the 8th September, including:

Presentation from The Executive Office - Asylum Dispersal Programme

- The Shared City Partnership noted the presentation and recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it noted the presentation.

Presentation from the Community Relations Council

- The Shared City Partnership noted the presentation and recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it noted the presentation.

Good Relations Verbal Update

- The Shared City Partnership agreed and noted the update and recommends to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that they also agreed and noted the verbal update.

Asylum Dispersal Programme – Update

- The Shared City Partnership noted the contents of the report and recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it also noted the contents of the report.

Peace Plus Local Community Action Plan (LCAP) Mobilisation Update

- The Shared City Partnership agreed the administration extension to 30th September 2028; and noted the contents of the report; and recommended that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approved the recommendation and noted the contents of the report.

Peace Plus Thriving and Peaceful Communities Thematic Update

- The Shared City Partnership recommended that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee noted the contents of the report.

Peace Plus Celebrating Culture and Diversity Thematic Update

- The Shared City Partnership recommended that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee noted the contents of the report.

Peace Plus Processes Update

- The Shared City Partnership agreed the updated Terms of Reference for the Performance and Finance Steering Group; and noted the contents of the report and recommended that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed the above recommendations.

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Update from Partnership Members

- Due to time there were no updates from members.

Any Other Business

- The Good Relations Manager informed Shared City Partnership, that during the meeting he had received an email from TEO regarding up to a further £27,000 subject to an application being submitted by 22nd September 2025. It was agreed that The Chair and Vice Chair would agree the submission due to the highlighted Time Constraints and a report be brought to SCP in October.

Operational Issues

**Minutes of Party Group
Leaders Consultative Forum**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum of 11th September, 2025.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Cost of Living
Working Group on 4th September 2025**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the Cost of Living Working Group of 4th September, 2025.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Castle,
Cavehill, Zoo and North Foreshore
Steering Group on 8th September 2025**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the Castle, Cavehill, Zoo and North Foreshore Steering Group of 8th September, 2025.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Audit and
Risk Panel on 9th September, 2025**

The Committee notes the key issues arising at the meeting and approved and adopted the minutes of the Audit and Risk Panel of 9th September, 2025 at appendix A of the report.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Disability
Working Group on 10th September 2025**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the Disability Working Group of 10th September, 2025.

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

The Committee approved the recommendations as set out below:

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
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NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE
Belfast Health & Social Care Trust	26 January 2026	Recognition & celebration event for Mental Health International Staff Nurses planned celebration event to mark the completion of a 2-year project overseeing the recruitment of international nurses from outside the UK & ROI. Numbers attending – 100	B	Room Hire £450
Family Comfort NI	30 January 2026	A formal celebration event to mark the 10th Anniversary of Family Comfort NI charity which began in 2016 as a support group for those who had experienced racial discrimination and inequality in the community Numbers attending - 60	C & D	Current rate free as charity
CTM Meetings and Events on behalf of Sandoz Group AG	10 February 2026	Awards evening with dinner and entertainment to support conference event in Belfast. Sandoz Group AG is a Swiss company that focuses on generic pharmaceuticals and biosimilar. Numbers attending – 140	A	Room Hire £1250
Confucius Institute, Ulster University	17 February 2026	Year of the Horse Chinese New Year celebration will welcome school children learning Mandarin, and stakeholders, to hear speeches and receive awards for art and Mandarin speaking competitions, as well as performances and lunch. Numbers attending – 250	A	Room Hire £450
ASG Comms	19 March 2026	NI Hummingbird Awards 2026 celebrating and showcasing excellence in equality, diversity, and inclusivity. Numbers attending – 150	B	Room Hire £450

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Royal British Legion	16 May 2026	Centenary celebrations for RBL, Cregagh, Wandsworth & Ormeau Branch in the form of formal dinner with speeches. Numbers attending – 60	C	<i>Event post April 2026 - Charge TBC</i>
SPAR International	24 May 2026	SPAR International 69th International Congress Welcome Reception is an informal welcome evening for conference delegates. SPAR is the largest independent supermarket retail network in the world. Numbers attending - 350	A & B	<i>Event post April 2026 - Charge TBC</i>
Delorean Owners Association	12 June 2026	Delorean Eurofest 2026 Opening Reception event with welcome drinks and buffet followed by presentations and speakers to mark 45th anniversary of iconic cars launch. Numbers attending – 250	A & B	<i>Event post April 2026 - Charge TBC</i>
European Political Science Society	19 June 2026	Social Conference Reception to support 16th Annual Conference of the European Political Science Association/Society being held at ICC Belfast. Numbers attending – 500	A & B	<i>Event post April 2026 - Charge TBC</i>
Ulster University	10 September 2026	Eurocall Conference Dinner 2026 guests will be international researchers and teachers who will be attending an academic conference Eurocall 2026 which focuses on the use of technology in language learning. Numbers attending - 250	A & B	<i>Event post April 2026 - Charge TBC</i>
Raidió Fáilte	11 September 2026	Fiche Bliain Ag Fás - In 2026, Raidió Fáilte will be celebrating 20 years as an Ofcom community-licensed radio station. This celebration event	C & D	<i>Event post April 2026 - Charge TBC</i>

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
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		with meal and performances is to mark this achievement. Number attending - 300		
Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB)	21 November 2026	Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) Northern Ireland Graduation 2026 is an event to mark the achievement of local Graduates receiving their Charterships. Numbers attending – 200	B & C	<i>Event post April 2026 - Charge TBC</i>
Belfast Health & Social Care Trust	4 December 2026	Regional Social Work Awards – biannual awards ceremony and meal regionally coordinated across multiple Social Work employers to recognise and celebrate the unique contribution that Social Work makes to improving the lives of service users, their families and carers. Numbers attending – 200	C & D	<i>Event post April 2026 - Charge TBC</i>
2027				
Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Past Members' Association	4 June 2027	50th Year Celebration of Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Past Members' Association with dinner, dancing, music and speeches. Numbers attending 150	C & D	<i>Event post April 2026 - Charge TBC</i>

**Use of City Hall Grounds –
Love Lamb Week September 2026**

The Committee approved the request to use City Hall grounds on Friday, 2nd September, 2026 by Ulster Farmer's Union for a promotional activity to highlight Love Lamb Week 2026.

Chairperson

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Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 26th September, 2025

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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

In attendance: Mr. J. Walsh, Chief Executive;
Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and
Civic Services;
Mr. D. Martin, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;
Ms. C. Sheridan, Director of Human Resources;
Ms. L. O'Donnell, Senior Manager, Culture and Tourism;
Mr. S. Leonard, Director OSSS and Resources and Fleet;
Mr. J. Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance
Manager; and
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services and Governance
Coordinator.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported on behalf of Alderman McCoubrey.

Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were reported.

Restricted Items

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

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

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

**Special Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 26th September, 2025**

Draft Irish Language Policy

The City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services submitted a report which addressed a number of proposed amendments to the draft Irish Language Policy that had been tabled at the Committee meeting on 19th September for consideration. She then outlined the response to each of these in turn.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Ó Néill,
Seconded by Councillor R-M Donnelly,

That the Committee:

- (i) Notes the contents of the report including the documentation presented to the Committee at its previous meetings in August and September -

[SP&R Committee - 22 August 2025](#)

[SP&R Committee - 19 September 2025](#)

- (ii) Notes that the policy as presented to Committee on 19th September was agreed subject to consideration of the proposed amendments tabled at the meeting;

- (iii) Agrees to the following proposed amendments:

- Under Paragraph 15 “Belfast City Council will adopt a new bilingual (Irish/English) corporate identity and logo, having due regard to international best practice for minority languages, to reflect this commitment”;
- The proposed amendments outlined in the report under paragraphs 14, 19 and 24 would be detailed in the Implementation Plan; and
- The development of an Educational Programme be included in the Implementation Plan and that a report be submitted to a future meeting in relation to the FLOURISH project.

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

The Committee also noted that a final version of the policy, taking into account the agreed amendments, would be appended to the minutes of the meeting for the purposes of ratification at Council.

Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann

The Committee considered a report and presentation that provided information on governance, engagement, planning and the delivery to support the hosting of Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in Belfast in August 2026.

**Special Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 26th September, 2025**

During discussion, the Strategic Director of Place and Economy advised that Members feedback in relation to ground footprint, accommodation, engagement with businesses, communities and inner city residents would be considered.

In relation to a Member's question regarding engagement with the Irish Language community in Belfast, the Director of the City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services advised that this could be considered under the Council's Irish Language Stakeholders Forum.

The Committee noted the plans associated with the hosting of the Fleadh and that monthly updates on the event would be provided to the Committee.

Contract Update - Hire of Skips

The Committee:

- noted the additional information provided and approved the original request - i.e. modification of the existing contract to include an extension of up to 3 months at a cost of up to £34,000; and
- agreed to proceed with an economic appraisal in respect of the in-housing of the skip haulage contract and approved a budget of up to £30k to conduct the study.

Standing Order 14 - Submission of Minutes

In accordance with Standing Order 14, the Committee agreed, as the meeting had been held later than seven clear days before the meeting of the Council, that the minutes of the meeting be submitted to the Council on 1st October, 2025, for ratification.

Chairperson

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Belfast City Council Irish Language Policy

Background

1. Belfast City Council ('the Council') published its first Language Policy in 2006. This outlines its commitment to using Irish and Ulster Scots in correspondence with members of the public should they so choose to do so to support the heritage and traditions of the various language communities living in the city.
2. Further to its original Language Policy, in 2018 the Council adopted a Language Strategy 2018 - 2023. In keeping with the Council's long-term vision for the city, as set out in the Belfast Agenda, the Strategy aspires to create a place where linguistic diversity is celebrated and respected, and where those who live, work and visit Belfast can expect to access what Belfast has to offer, using forms of language with which they are familiar and comfortable. The aims of the Strategy are to:
 - Address language and communication challenges and opportunities within the Belfast Agenda outcomes;
 - Establish a transparent set of principles for promoting, protecting and enhancing the linguistic diversity of the city;
 - Increase the profile of different languages along with awareness and understanding of associated cultures, heritage and traditions;
 - Engage with language communities to address language barriers and promote equality of opportunity through the development and integration of different languages into mainstream civic life;
 - Enhance good relations within the city through the promotion of linguistic diversity and to celebrate the significance of language in the history and culture of the city;
 - Address staff training and capacity building needs in relation to the role linguistic diversity has in the workplace and in the delivery of services.
 - Work in partnership to promote linguistic diversity across the city, to move toward our shared vision of inclusive growth, where no one is left behind.
3. In adopting the Language Strategy, the Council was mindful of international and domestic legal obligations and standards which are set out at Appendix 1. It was also informed by demand for the use of minority languages and feedback from wide-ranging consultation.

4. Irish language is part of the shared cultural wealth and heritage of everyone who lives in Belfast and is the first language of a growing community of our citizens in the city.
5. The European Charter on Minority Languages states that the adoption of special measures in favour of regional or minority languages aimed at promoting equality between the users of these languages and the rest of the population or which take due account of their specific conditions is not considered to be an act of discrimination against the users of more widely-used languages.
6. It is against this backdrop that the Council has developed its Irish Language Policy.

Purpose

7. The purpose of this Policy is to give a clear indication of the specific steps the Council will promote the Irish language within its own work and to support the growing community of Irish speakers in Belfast.

Policy aim

8. The aim of this Policy is to set out how the Council will promote the use of Irish language internally and in the wider Council area in accordance with the commitments outlined above and the specific steps it will take to doing this. It will do so in line with the six Guiding Principles for Promoting, Protecting and Enhancing Linguistic Diversity which were agreed by the Council's Strategic Policy & Resources Committee in June 2022. These are:
 - **Changing the perspective on languages in our city** to increase the profile of different languages along with awareness and understanding of associated cultures, heritage and traditions.
 - **Engaging with language communities** to increase equal opportunities and to enhance and protect good relations within the city.
 - **Improving organisational capacity** to address staff training needs and improve our language capabilities.

- **Working in partnerships with others** to promote linguistic diversity across the city to move towards our shared vision of inclusive growth, where no-one is left behind.
- **Identifying and implementing actions** in line with agreed priorities to promote, protect and enhance linguistic diversity.
- **Establishing efficient and effective solutions which** are proportionate to need, affordable and measurable.

Policy Statement

9. A person requesting service through the medium of Irish from the Council is entitled to the same standard of service as they would receive were they to request service in English, and for the availability of Irish language services to be made known to them at the outset of their dealing with the Council through active offer.
10. The Council will remove barriers to the use of Irish in public life.
11. The Council will promote the learning of Irish as a vibrant modern language
12. The Council will support the promotion of Irish language through its facilities, programmes and events.
13. The Council will take resolute action to promote and protect the Irish language across the Council area across its own public facing services.

Communications

14. The Council will develop a list of key strategic Council documents and publications to proactively be made available in Irish. The 10 most common front-facing forms (online and hard copy) will be identified and translated into Irish for immediate use. The Council commits to publishing information leaflets, marketing and promotional materials bilingually in printed form and online. In instances where consultations are being conducted and the subject matter has the potential to impact the use of the Irish language or the Irish language community themselves, consultation questionnaires, engagement sessions and associated documents will be conducted proactively through the medium of Irish/bilingually as part of the active offer.

15. Belfast City Council will adopt a new bilingual (Irish/English) corporate identity and logo, having due regard to international best practice for minority languages to reflect this commitment.
16. The Council will provide and promote interpretation and translation services across the Council.
17. The Council will codify the arrangements for the use of Irish in Council meetings through the Council's Standing Orders. Members and those addressing the Council in Irish will not be placed at a disadvantage for doing so. Members of the public addressing the Council will be given the option of addressing the Council in Irish at their earliest interaction with the Council.
18. The Council commits to publishing regular and often bilingual English / Irish content across all social media platforms. Information posts, marketing initiatives, community / service announcements will take place in Irish and in English. The relevant officer(s) will work in conjunction with the marketing team to develop a comprehensive strategy on how best to promote the Irish language across the Council's platforms. The Strategy will set out clear annual goals, increasing annually, around the % of social media posts produced.
19. The Council will develop and maintain a functioning bilingual (Irish/English) website. A choice of languages, English/Irish, will first appear on the Council home page and users will be asked which language they wish to view the site in. The Council website will also develop, host and regularly update a specific Irish language page, with information about the Irish language services available from Council, information on classes throughout the city and on Irish medium education.
20. The Council will promote Irish language events in the city and provide information in Irish about major upcoming events and the launch of any key strategic Council initiative.
21. The Council will provide staff with a code of courtesy for indigenous languages and provision of cultural awareness training.

Signage

22. The Council will adopt a dual-language approach to signage in all its facilities. These signs will also include pictorial and tactile (Braille) options where possible.
23. The Council will, as part of a rolling programme, prioritise the erection of dual language signage in all of its facilities through a categorisation approach as set out in Appendix 2. For the purposes of this policy the boundaries of the Gaeltacht Quarter will be expanded to include the Glen Road and Shaw's Road. For the purposes of this Policy the Gaeltacht Quarter is delineated in the map at Appendix 3.
24. For the purposes of this Policy, signs includes all informational and directional signage within facilities, signage and names outside of buildings and also signs at outdoor facilities such as parks and allotments. It also includes interactive displays, educational aids, information leaflets and other resources.
25. Translation for signage will be produced by an independent accredited Irish language translator and will be consistent across Council facilities, and will have regard to the proper use of standardised forms.
26. The erection of street signs in Irish are dealt with separately under the Council's Dual Language Street Signs Policy which was adopted in October 2022.

Responsibility

27. Overseeing the implementation of this Policy is the responsibility of the City Solicitor and Chief Executive. Progress in relation to delivery of the Policy will be reported to the Council's Language Strategy Working Group and Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. However, each Council Department is expected to play its role in supporting the delivery of the objectives of this Policy.
28. Managers will ensure cognisance is taken of the Irish Language Policy and the need to promote the Irish language at the earliest stages of any policy-development process elsewhere in the Council.
29. The Council's Irish Language Community Stakeholder Forum comprising representatives from Irish language groups and other interested parties from across

Belfast will be a key partner in the implementation of this Policy and the wider Language Strategy. This Forum will be provided with an annual progress report and given an opportunity to provide feedback on the implementation of the policy and wider Language Strategy. The Council will also liaise closely with Foras na Gaeilge and any Irish Language Commissioner once appointed.

Review

30. The Policy will be subject to review after 2 years.

31. This policy will be reviewed and updated in light of any direction given by central government in relation to the Irish language, and any best practice standards set by an Irish Language Commissioner once appointed.

Appendix 1

European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages ('ECRML')

The ECRML is a European treaty (CETS 148) adopted in 1992 under the auspices of the Council of Europe to protect and promote regional and minority languages in Europe. The Irish language is included in the Charter, which was ratified by the UK Government in 2001. The UK Government included the Irish language as one of three languages (Scottish Gaelic and Welsh being the other two) registered under Part III of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The UK Government signed up to specific undertakings for measures in areas including education, administrative authorities, media, culture, economic and social life and transfrontier exchanges.

Article 10 of the ECRML refers specifically to Administrative Authorities which includes Local Councils and sets out those provisions within the ECRML to which councils must adhere. The obligations under the ECRML include the following:

To ensure that users of Irish may submit oral or written applications in Irish to the administrative authority;

To allow the administrative authorities to draft documents in Irish;

To use Irish in debates in their assemblies, without excluding, however, the use of the official language(s) of the State;

To use or adopt, if necessary in conjunction with the name in the official language(s) of traditional and correct forms of place-names in Irish. To ensure that users of Irish can submit a request for public services in Irish. To allow the use or adoption of family names in Irish upon request. In order to comply with the above councils are obliged to provide translation or interpretation as required.

Article 12 details the following obligations:-

- With regard to cultural activities and facilities, especially libraries, video libraries, cultural centres, museums, archives, academies, theatres and cinemas as well as literary work and film productions, vernacular forms of cultural expression, festivals and the cultural industries, including inter alia the use of new technologies –the Parties undertake, within the territory in which such languages are used and to the extent that the public authorities are competent, have power or play a role in this field:

- to encourage types of expression and initiative specific to regional or minority languages and foster the different means of access to works produced in these languages;
- to ensure that the bodies responsible for organising or supporting cultural activities of various kinds make appropriate allowance for incorporating the knowledge and use of regional or minority languages and cultures in the undertakings which they initiate or for which they provide backing;
- to promote measures to ensure that the bodies responsible for organising or supporting cultural activities have at their disposal staff who have a full command of the regional or minority language concerned as well as of the language(s) of the rest of the population;
- to encourage direct participation by representatives of the users of a given regional or minority language in providing facilities and planning cultural activities.

The European Charter is based on a concept of non-discrimination, that is, the majority language group is not discriminated against by the implementation of actions designed to promote and protect the minority indigenous languages.

“The Parties undertake to eliminate, if they have not yet done so, any unjustified distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference relating to the use of a regional or minority language and intended to discourage or endanger the maintenance or development of it. The adoption of special measures in favour of regional or minority languages aimed at promoting equality between the users of these languages and the rest of the population or which take due account of their specific conditions is not considered to be an act of discrimination against the users of more widely-used languages”

Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

Unlike the European Charter (which focuses on languages) the Council of Europe's Framework Convention focuses on linguistic minority groups. It does not place any directly enforceable obligation on local councils but includes a number of provisions in relation to minority languages.

Much of the discourse in recent years in relation to the Irish language in Northern Ireland has focused on the issue of minority rights and that Irish speakers are a distinct minority group within Northern Ireland. The Framework Convention, to which the United Kingdom

is a signatory, makes particular reference to the rights of minorities in terms of the use of minority language. The relevant provisions are set out below:

Article 10

“The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to use freely and without interference his or her minority language, in private and in public, orally and in writing. In areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers, if those persons so request and where such a request corresponds to a real need, the Parties shall endeavour to ensure, as far as possible, the conditions which would make it possible to use the minority language in relations between those persons and the administrative authorities.”

Article 11

“The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to use his or her surname (patronym) and first names in the minority language and the right to official recognition of them, according to modalities provided for in their legal system. The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to display in his or her minority language signs, inscriptions and other information of a private nature visible to the public. In areas traditionally inhabited by substantial numbers of persons belonging to a national minority, the Parties shall endeavour, in the framework of their legal system, including, where appropriate, agreements with other States, and taking into account their specific conditions, to display traditional local names, street names and other topographical indications intended for the public also in the minority language when there is a sufficient demand for such indications.”

The Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities monitors the compliance of signatory nations with the Framework. One of the themes commented on throughout their reporting is how the use of the minority language in publicly visible signage can add to a sense of belonging for the minority language community.

“Multilingual cultural and touristic signage offers considerable potential for the use of topographical names in minority languages as it uses these languages and toponyms in a field (heritage preservation) that is appreciated in all parts of

society, raises awareness of the cultural contributions made by national minorities and has a practical function.”

Bulgaria, 4th, 2020, para. 141

“The display of bilingual or trilingual signposts as a demonstration of the diverse character of the region, traditionally and at present.”

Croatia, 4th, 2015, para. 66

-“Such bilingualism carries for persons belonging to national minorities as an affirmation of its presence as an appreciated and welcome part of society.”

Latvia, 3rd, 2018, para. 130

-“The Advisory Committee recalls the important symbolic value of bilingual topographical indications as affirmation that the presence of linguistic diversity is appreciated and that a given territory is shared in harmony by various linguistic groups.”

Netherlands, 3rd, 2019, para. 116

“...significant symbolic value for integration that bilingual or trilingual signposts, or the re-introduction of historical place names, carry for the population as an affirmation of the long-standing presence of national minorities as appreciated and welcome part of society.”

Georgia, 2nd, 2015, para. 85

The commentary above shows the positive impact of the use of minority languages in signage and how this can improve community relations and respect.

Belfast/Good Friday Agreement

Strand three of the Agreement contains a series of commitments in respect of economic, cultural and social issues, including a general provision relating to minority languages:

“All participants recognise the importance of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to linguistic diversity, including in Northern Ireland, the Irish language, Ulster-Scots and the languages of the various ethnic communities, all of which are part of the cultural wealth of the island of Ireland.”

The Agreement commits the British Government to take resolute action to promote the language, to facilitate and encourage the use of the language in speech and writing in public and private life where there is appropriate demand and to seek to remove restrictions which would work against the maintenance and development of the language.

The St. Andrews Agreement 2006

The St. Andrews Agreement included a commitment to an Irish Language Act “based on the experience of Wales”. The introduction of this Act has been significantly delayed, however, the 2020 New Decade, New Approach agreement does include a commitment to legislate for the Irish language.

Foras na Gaeilge Guidance Document - Irish languages services in the new councils

In light of the review of public administration, in 2014 Foras na Gaeilge published a guidance document for the new local councils relating to best-practice in Irish language provision and protection. The document suggest the following areas of action in order for councils to be in line with international best practice:

- Branding
- Documents
- Council staff (audit & training and awareness)
- Correspondence
- Services for Irish language media
- Social media
- Council websites
- Translation and interpretation services
- Signage
- Support for schools
- Support for the public
- Development of an Irish language policy

Council of Europe's 3rd Monitoring Report on the UK's implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

(Paragraph 147) - "The Advisory Committee was disconcerted to hear that some representatives of the authorities consider that promoting the use of the Irish language is discriminating against persons belonging to the majority population. Such statements are not in line with the principles of the Framework Convention... It also reiterates that... implementation of minority rights protected under the Framework Convention [is] not be considered as discriminating against other persons."

(Paragraph 126 & 158) - "The Advisory Committee has been informed that, in some instances, the need for keeping good relations has been used as justification for not implementing provisions in favour of persons belonging to minorities, such as the erection of bilingual signs... Additionally, it finds it problematic that the official policy is to limit the erection of such signs to certain areas where the issue would not raise controversies. The Advisory Committee is concerned that this approach is not in line with the spirit of the Framework Convention... the aim of which is to value the use of minority languages... with a view to promoting more tolerance and intercultural dialogue in society."

Committee of Experts 5th Monitoring Report on UK Compliance with UK undertakings of ECRML

"In July 2020, COMEX published their 5th monitoring report which measures the UK Government's compliance with their undertakings to Irish under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Language. They published 20 recommendations which would constitute the fulfilment of those undertakings in their entirety. Among those recommendations, there were recommendations to;

h. Ensure that users of Irish may submit oral or written applications in Irish to local branches of the national authorities, the authorities of Northern Ireland, local authorities and public service providers.

Introduce simultaneous translation facilitating the full use of Irish in the Northern Ireland Assembly and in local councils.

k. Facilitate the adoption and use, by local and regional authorities as well as public service providers, of place names in Irish.

The vast majority of these recommendations remain unfulfilled or unresolved; through the adoption of a progressive, Irish language policy, the council have a chance to align with recommendations set out by international experts.”

Department for Communities Guidance Document for Local Authorities on the implementation of the European Charter for Regional Minority Languages (2016)

“The adoption of special measures in favour of regional or minority languages aimed at promoting equality between the users of these languages and the rest of the population or which take due account of their specific conditions is not considered to be an act of discrimination against the users of more widely-used languages.”

Human Rights Commission - ‘Minority Language Rights: The Irish language and Ulster Scots, Briefing paper on the implications of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, European Convention on Human Rights and other instruments’

“... the Commission has drawn attention to the fact that there is no “right to be (sic) offended” by another party exercising a right. This is a general principle of freedom of expression (European Convention on Human Rights -ECHR Article 10, which must be read in conjunction with ECHR Article 14 on non-discrimination on grounds that include language). The Commission is aware of arguments that there are ‘sensitivities’ regarding the Irish language. In general restricting use or promotion of Irish to accommodate the ‘sensitivities’ of others would be incompatible with freedom of expression.”

Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure: Report on Consultation for Draft Irish Language Act (2015)

"ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT ON EQUALITY

4.4 The available evidence suggests that those speaking and possessing some knowledge of Irish are more likely to be Catholic, nationalist, young, without a disability, with dependants and single. There were no differences in relation to

gender and racial group. No data is available in relation to sexual orientation.

4.5 It's DCALS view that establishing Irish language legislation will have a positive impact on Irish speakers and therefore indirectly on Catholics, nationalists, single people, younger people, people without a disability and people with dependants. In DCALs view there are no discriminatory or adverse impacts.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT ON GOOD RELATIONS

4.6 DCAL considered that the introduction of an Irish Language Bill has the potential to improve good relations, as it will give the Irish language more equality and accessibility platform for all sections of the community."

New Decade, New Approach Agreement (2020)

The New Decade, New Approach Agreement was reached in 2020 in order to restore power sharing at Stormont. One of the key components of this was an agreement to bring forward legislative protection for the Irish language. This included a provision for the appointment of an Irish Language Commissioner who will develop a set of best practice language standards which will apply to public authorities in relation to the promotion of Irish and the use of Irish in their services.

Recommendations for an Irish Language Strategy – Report of the Expert Advisory Panel

The New Decade, New Approach Agreement also committed to the development of an Irish Language Strategy, as distinct from an Irish Language Act. The aim of the Strategy would be to enhance and protect the development of the Irish language over the next twenty years. To this end, the Department for Communities commissioned an Expert Advisory Panel Report on an Irish Language Strategy as the first stage in a policy development process.

The Expert Advisory Report makes a range of recommendations about the Irish language and public services including:

- That comprehensive Irish language legislation is enacted;
- That local authorities develop Irish language policies and strategies;

- That Irish speakers are available to avail of government services through the medium of Irish and that these should be of the same standard as the service provided in English;
- That all public bodies take resolute action to promote Irish internally in their work and to maximise the amount of services available through Irish;
- That publicly available forms are available in Irish;
- That public bodies have bilingual Irish/English corporate identity;
- That public buildings have bilingual Irish/English signage inside and outside the building;
- That the use of Irish is maximised on the public-facing websites of public bodies;
- That key corporate documents are made available in Irish;
- That Council's provide a simultaneous translation service and anything said in Irish in meetings is accurately reported in Irish in reports and minutes;
- That local authorities should have due regard to the needs of Irish speakers when developing local development plans;
- That local authorities adopt street naming and townland policies in line with international best practice;
- That local authorities undertake tourism and cultural initiatives through Irish.

Appendix 2

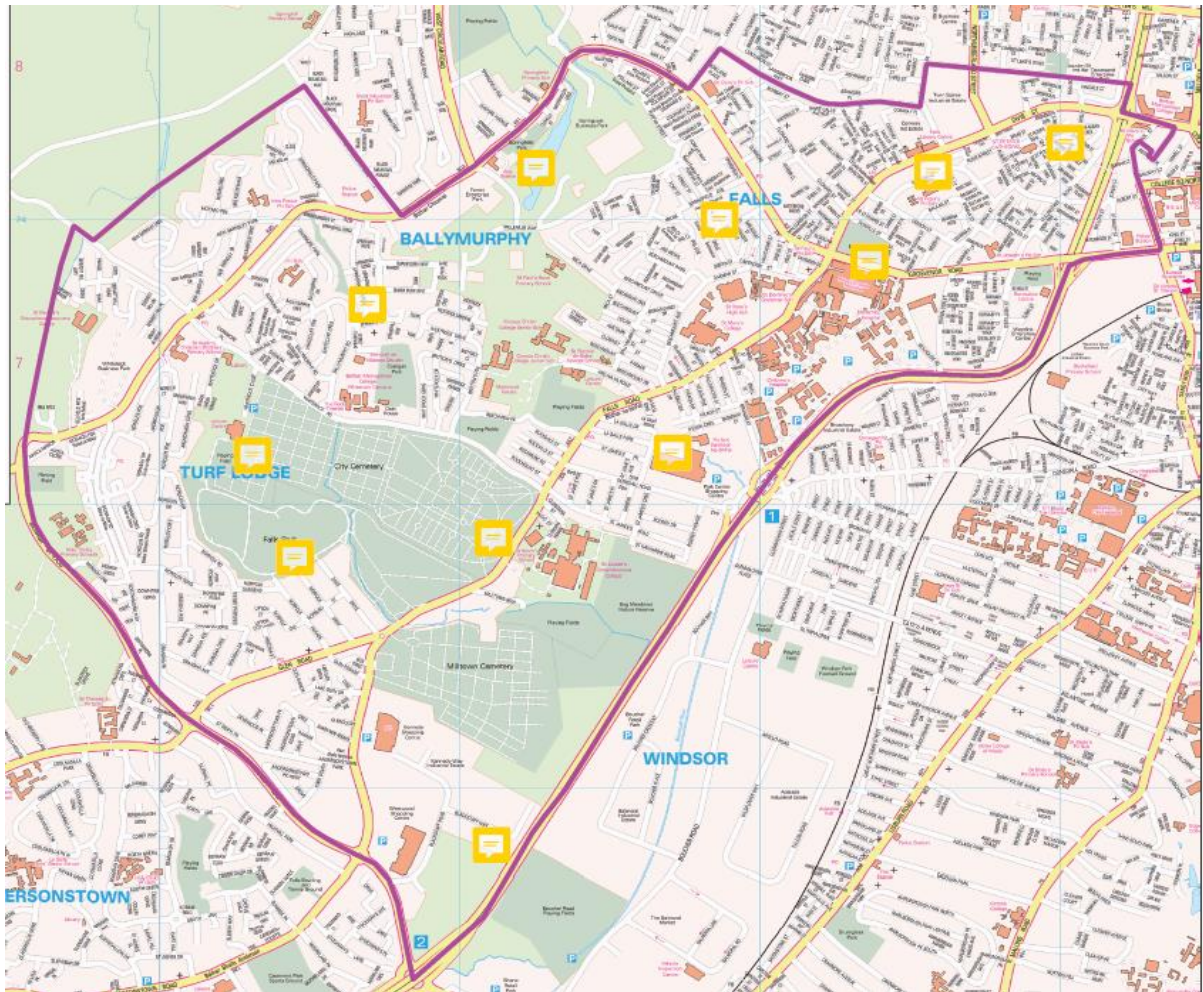
Categorisation of Council Facilities for Signage

Category	Priority Level	Types of Facilities	Factors defining priority
1 (a)	Top Priority, to be completed first	<p>All BCC Facilities in the Gaeltacht Quarter;</p> <p>Parks, Playgrounds, Walks, Pitches & Local Leisure Centres in close proximity to Gaelscoils;</p> <p>City-Centre Facilities (City Hall, 2RA, Belfast Stories etc).</p> <p>City-Wide Family Resources (Belfast Zoo; Belfast Castle etc).</p> <p>City-wide resources being upgraded or New Facilities being built will automatically come into this category</p> <p>City Centre Public Realm Signage (street signposts)</p> <p>*Where a facility ie a park, includes other Council facilities, all BCC facilities on that site will be upgraded at the same time (Example: Waterworks Park, Playground, MUGA Pitch, Community Gardens, Walk, Toilets).</p>	<p>Census Demographics (Some ability in Irish %) more than 15% "have some ability" as per Ward</p> <p>Proximity to Gaelscoil / Irish language group</p>
1 (b)	To be completed after all Category 1(a) facilities have been upgraded	<p>a) Remaining facilities in Wards agreed for Category 1 (Car-parks, Public toilets, Open-Spaces, Greenways / Hills, Graveyards, Community Centres, Recycling Centres / stations etc.)</p>	<p>Census Demographics (Some ability in Irish %) more than 15% "have some ability" as per Ward</p> <p>Proximity to Gaelscoil / Irish language group</p>
2 (a)	Medium-term urgency	<p>a) Parks, Playgrounds, Walks, Pitches & Leisure Centres in Wards with people between 15%-5% with "some ability in Irish" in 2021 Census</p>	Census Demographics (Wards: Some ability in Irish 15%-5%)
2 (b)	Medium-term urgency (2)	<p>Parks, Playgrounds, Walks, Pitches & Leisure Centres in Wards/areas with people between 10%-</p>	Census Demographics (Wards: Some ability in Irish 15%-10%)

		15% with "some ability in Irish" in 2021 Census but which may form part of a larger area where there is little knowledge of Irish	
2 (c)	Long-term priorities	a) Remaining facilities in Wards identified for Category 3 (Car-parks, Public toilets, Open-Spaces, Greenways / Hills, Graveyards, Community Centres, Dumps, Recycling Centres / stations etc.)	Census Demographics (Wards: Some ability in Irish 15%-5%)
3	Non-priority Facilities, to be actively considered when requiring a refurbishment	a) Facilities (excluding city-wide resources) in Wards with less than 5% of people with "some ability in Irish" as per 2021 census. b) Bins	Census Demographics (Wards: Some ability in Irish: Less than 5%)

Appendix 3

Map of Gaeltacht Quarter



People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 9th September, 2025

MEETING OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor R. Brooks (Chairperson);
Alderman S. Copeland; and
Councillors Abernethy, Black, Bower,
Bradley, Bunting, Canavan, Cobain, Collins,
M. Donnelly, R-M Donnelly, Doran, Flynn,
Garrett, Magee, Maghie, McKeown and Verner.

In attendance: Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and
Civic Services;
Mr. D. Sales, Strategic Director of City and
Neighbourhood Services;
Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;
Mr. S. Leonard, Director of Resources, Fleet,
Open Spaces and Streetscene;
Mr. J. Girvan, Director of City and Neighbourhood
Services; and
Mr. B. Flynn, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

There were no apologies received.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 6th August were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st September.

Declarations of Interest

The Chairperson (Councillor Brooks) declared an interest in item 5 (a) re: 'Invite to Parliamentary Launch of Nature and Towns and Cities' in that she had attended the aforementioned event in her capacity as Chairperson. Councillor Brooks left the meeting whilst the item was under consideration.

Deputations

Stranmillis Neighbourhood Association

The Committee acceded to a request from representatives of the Stranmillis Neighbourhood Association to receive a deputation at its meeting in October to outline a range of issues in relation to the Pilot Opening Hours Scheme at Botanic Gardens.

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Lagan Valley Regional Park

The Committee agreed to receive, at its meeting in October, a deputation from representatives of the Lagan Valley Regional Park to consider matters related to the organisation's governance and sustainability.

Belfast Healthy Cities

In accordance with its decision of 14th January, the Committee welcomed Ms. C. Brooks and Ms. J. O'Hagan, representatives of Belfast Healthy Cities, who were in attendance to provide an update on the outcomes of the European Healthy Cities Network Annual Business Meeting in Bursa, Türkiye, which had taken place from 17th to 19th June.

Ms. Brooks reported that the event had provided an opportunity to examine how cities throughout Europe had addressed similar challenges to those faced by Belfast. The event included a range of site visits and presentations which had explored health policies, climate resilience, equity, and urban innovation. She explained that Belfast Healthy Cities had made a presentation on its 'Greening the City' initiative as part of the conference. The meeting, she added, had been themed, 'Resilient Healthy Cities: Creating Sustainable Urban Futures for All' and had explored six key subthemes, namely: prosperity; planet; participation; people; place and peace. The aim of the event had been to help cities understand how environmental and social exposures – such as pollution and a lack of green spaces – affected mental health and cognitive development.

The representatives of Belfast Healthy Cities answered several questions which had been posed by Members and, after discussion, the Chairperson thanked the representatives for the information which had been provided.

Noted.

Notice of Motion – Support for Leisure Workers

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the above-mentioned motion to enable it to be considered within the context of a report to be submitted to a future meeting that would provide a comparison of the costs incurred by the Council in both outsourcing and insourcing its leisure provision.

Review of Funding Levels for the Summer Scheme Fund

The Committee was informed that the Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 21st August, had referred the undernoted notice of motion, which had been proposed by the High Sheriff (Councillor McAteer), and seconded by Councillor Bower, to the Committee for consideration.

“To ask Council officers to review the funding levels for the summer scheme fund and to provide costings for an updated level of funding to allow providers to adequately run schemes.”

The High Sheriff outlined the principal aspects of the motion. She referred to the important recreational opportunity which summer schemes provided to children and their

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families and how the ability to deliver such schemes had been impacted upon by the rising cost-of-living. She requested that officers re-examine the current level of funding provided to groups and to consult with service users and providers to identify issues that were affecting their ability to deliver summer schemes within existing budgets.

A further Member suggested that any report submitted should examine the possibility of delivering summer schemes on a multi-agency basis, with organisations such as the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust etc., being approached with a view to collaborating in the delivery of services, such as transport, on a collective and more cost effective basis.

The Committee agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting that would address the motion and consider the range of comments made by Members in this regard.

Restricted Items

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

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

The Committee was advised that the content of the ‘restricted’ reports and any associated discussion should be treated as ‘confidential information’ and that such information could not be disclosed as per Paragraph 4.15 of the Councillors’ Code of Conduct.

Financial Report – Quarter 1 2025/26

The Committee considered a report regarding its Quarter 1 financial position.

After discussion, the Committee noted the contents of the report and the associated financial reporting pack.

Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Working Group

The Committee considered and adopted the minutes of the meeting of Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Working Group of 7th August, and the following recommendations contained therein:

- approved the continuation of the pilot guided walks and volunteering in Friar’s Bush Graveyard and facilitate guided walking tours of Balmoral Cemetery;
- approved the decision to adopt and publish the draft Bereavement Service Standards;

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- approved the decision to permit members of the Muslim Community to place a monument and interpretative panel that would recognise unmarked Muslim graves in the City Cemetery;
- approved the decision to allocate £600 to support the promotion of public tours during European Heritage Open Days; and
- approved that the Trooperslane site be excluded from the Expression of Interest process for the provision of a cemetery and that officers revisit the expansion of the Roselawn site for future burial provision.

Parliamentary Launch of ‘Nature Towns and Cities’

(Councillor Cobain, Deputy Chairperson, in the Chair).

The Committee granted retrospective approval for the attendance of the Chairperson at the above-mentioned event, which had taken place at the Houses of Parliament on the previous evening. It was noted that the invitation to the Chairperson had been received subsequent to the Committee’s meeting in August, hence retrospective approval had been necessary.

All-Party Reference Group on Older People

(Councillor Brooks, Chairperson, in the Chair).

The Committee noted the contents of the minutes of the All-Party Reference Group on Older People of 10th June and agreed that an invitation be extended to representatives of the Alzheimer’s Society to present at a future meeting.

Forth Meadow Greenway, Parks and Open Spaces Pilot Opening Hours Scheme

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 In August this committee considered a report on the findings of the two consultation exercises on the possible extension of the opening hours of the Forth Meadow Community Greenway (FMG) and five other park sites. This report provides an update on information the committee requested following consideration of that report.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to note further information in relation to the lighting schemes for 5-pilot park sites and the proposed timeframe for trialing 24hr opening of FMG.

3.0 Main report

- 3.1 Members will recall that at P&C Committee on 5th August 2025 officers provided an update on the key findings of the Forth Meadow Community Greenway Opening Hours (FMG) and Opening Hours Pilots (5 park sites) consultation exercises; and in relation to both - noted residents feedback, including views on opening hours preference for each greenway section/ park site, programming and further physical enhancements.
- 3.2 Members agreed to trial the 24-hour opening of the FMG. Members requested further information to be brought back on trialing extended gate opening hours along the Greenway for a one-year period. Members deferred consideration of the 5 Opening Hours Pilots to allow further information to be submitted on each park to the Committee. This paper is to be considered by way of update to that request.

Opening Hours Pilots (5 sites) - Next Steps

- 3.3 Ensuring park safety through artificial lighting and additional security was highlighted by residents as a requirement to extended opening hours at all park sites (Botanic Gardens, Belmont Park, Falls Park, Ormeau Park, Woodvale Park), and in particular those currently not benefitting from lighting (Botanic Gardens, Ormeau Park, Belmont Park).
- 3.4 Members are reminded that the installation of any new lighting infrastructure requires significant capital investment. Further to Members discussion in August' P&C Committee, officers can confirm that artificial lighting at the park sites have been included within the 'Park Improvement Programme' which is currently a Stage 1- Emerging under the Capital Programme which has enabled feasibility monies to be allocated. This feasibility support will now allow studies to be progressed to develop costed options for each park site to include lighting and other safety measures and will be informed by ecological assessments and further engagement. There is no timetable for the work at present however officers are aware that members would like to see this work completed as soon as possible and are working with colleagues in Physical Programmes to expedite this work. Once this has been completed for each park officers will bring proposals back to members that will also include animation plans, security /patrolling measures including costings.

Forth Meadow Community Greenway Next Steps

- 3.5 In considering optimal timeframe for trialing of extended/ 24-hour gate opening hours along the Greenway for a one-year period, Members are reminded that additional security and warden staff are currently being considered as part of Council's Park Warden

Review. Officers plan to take a proposal to a future meeting of this committee on the future.

- 3.6 Members will recall that at P&C Committee on 10th October 2023 in seeking to promote and enhance the usage of newly established or refurbished park properties it was agreed that an 'annual programming budget of £15,000 is allocated to all new Parks. Taking account of the scale of the FMG and two large park sites within one of its 5 sections (Falls Park and Springfield Park / Dam) potentially 6 separate animation plans would therefore be required at a cost of £90,000.
- 3.7 Officers are proposing to commence the pilot in April 2026 as this would allow time to develop operational and animation plans over the coming months and have them ready to implement in parallel to the pilot ensuring increased participation and positive and safe use of the FMG. These plans will be developed in consultation with colleagues in Community Provision to consider any additional diversionary monies are required to support sites which continue to be impacted upon by ASB. Similar to other Council parks sites at community interfaces – a 'Forth Meadow Community Greenway Gate Closure Protocol' will be in place throughout the pilot which can be activated for any of the gates in response to a security assessment by the PSNI.
- 3.8 At the end of the consultation period there will an opportunity to carry out a further consultation exercise to gauge community perception in advance of formalising opening hours into the Greenways By-Laws. Learning from Forth Meadow Greenway extended opening hours 1 year pilot will also help inform operational requirements to facilitate later opening hours across the 5 park sites from a park warden service and security perspective.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.9 There is currently no revenue budget in place to support both the required animation of and the additional patrolling of the Greenway during the pilot phase. Growth bids for both will be submitted into the revenue estimates process for 26/27.
- 3.10 Lighting at the park sites have been included within the 'Park Improvement Programme' which is currently a Stage 1-Emerging under the Capital Programme. Feasibility monies are now in place to allow costed lighting options to be developed.

During discussion, a Member referred particularly to the consultation exercise which had been undertaken with local residents regarding the proposed scheme at Woodvale Park. She pointed out that it had been evident that there existed significant

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opposition to the proposals and, as such, no further consultation should be undertaken and that the park be removed forthwith from the terms of the Pilot Opening Hours Scheme.

A further Member suggested that officers should commence engagement with the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) to progress the work associated with the Lagan Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge at the Ormeau Park/Gasworks site. In addition, such discussions should explore potential collaboration on the development of additional through routes across Ormeau Park and funding options for such a development, given that it would complement accessibility to the bridge on its completion.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and it was moved by Councillor McKeown, seconded by Council Abernethy, and agreed:

- that Woodvale Park be removed from the terms of the Pilot Opening Hours Scheme;
- that officers would engage with DfI to progress the work associated with the Lagan Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge at the Ormeau Park/Gasworks site, together with exploring collaboration on the development of through routes and accessibility to the aforesaid bridge; and
- that officers would meet with a range of local community groups to discuss the pilot scheme at Botanic Gardens.

**Department for Infrastructure Consultation re:
Grant Support for Inspection Requirements**

The Committee approved a [consultation response](#) in respect of the above-mentioned exercise and agreed that it be forwarded in advance to the Department for Infrastructure, subject to its adoption or amendment by the Council on 1st October.

Drinking in Public Byelaws and Powers

The Committee considered the following report:

1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek retrospective approval from Members for the attached draft response to the Department for Communities who are seeking the Council's views on the proposed commencement of Articles 68-72 of the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008.**

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members:**

- note the contents of this report;

- agree the draft response to DfC, attached as Appendix 1; and
- note the Committee's 2018 response to DfC on this issue, attached as Appendix 2.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Background

In late 2023 the Department for Communities ('DfC'), and Department of Justice ('DoJ'), undertook a joint public consultation on potential amendments to the legislative framework and powers to deal with anti-social behaviour ('ASB'), including drinking-in-public.

The Consultation sought views on:

- the areas that should be designated in which drinking-in-public is prohibited, and the reasons for their designation;
- whether powers should be provided to police officers and/or authorised council officers to request a person to stop drinking and issue a fixed penalty notice if they fail to do so;
- whether the powers provided should include a power of seizure and/or disposal of alcoholic drinks and if that seizure and/or disposal power should apply to open and/or closed containers;
- the situation the powers may be used in; and
- which legislation should be in place to provide these powers.

Belfast City Council did not provide a response to this consultation.

3.2 Members may be aware that a similar consultation exercise about ASB was conducted by the DoJ in 2018 in which they sought views, among other things, on the commencement of Articles 68-72 of the 2008 Order.

On 5 June 2018 Committee agreed on the response, in which it was recognised that any legislative framework should reflect the wide range of powers available across Northern Ireland to ensure maximum effectiveness.

As noted in paragraph 3.3 below, the proposed commencement of Articles 68-72 now includes an 'opt in' power for councils to require individuals to stop drinking alcohol in a designated area and surrender any alcoholic drinks in their possession.

3.3 In April 2025 DfC published a summary of responses to the most recent consultation, which clearly indicated that the current

legislative framework to tackle drinking-in-public and associated ASB needs to be updated to ensure it is fit for purpose, with an overwhelming majority of respondents agreeing that an explicit power to seize and dispose of alcohol should be available in certain circumstances.

3.4 Following the consultation period, DfC sought the Council's view on the proposed commencement of Articles 68-72 of the 2008 Order, with the following amendments:

- to provide a specific power to police officers allowing the seizure and disposal of open and closed containers of alcoholic drinks in designated areas and in certain public order situations. It is not proposed that council officers would be provided with this power.
- to extend the powers conferred on police officers requiring individuals to stop drinking alcohol in a designated area, and surrender any alcoholic drinks in their possession, to council officers. Anyone refusing will be committing an offence and may be issued with an FPN. However, it should be noted that this will be a power which councils may use, and each council district will be provided with the option to "opt in".

3.5 Members are asked to agree this response.

3.6 Financial and Resource Implications

There are no financial or resource implications connected to this report.

The Committee adopted the recommendations as set out. Both the draft response to DfC ([Appendix 1](#)); and the 2018 response to DfC in the matter ([Appendix 2](#)) were made available on the Council's website.

Requests to Host Events in Parks and Open Space

The Committee granted authority for the hosting of the undernoted events, subject to the applicants adhering to - and meeting with - all of the stipulations as set out within the report:

- VC Glendale - Falling Leaves – Irish National League Race – Falls Park (11th and 12th October, 2025);
- Sound of Belfast and Factory sessions – Tropical Ravine (6th November, 2025);
- Row on Row Remembrance 2025 – Pitt Park (3rd to 11th November, 2025);

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- CIYMS - Orange Grove Athletics – Boxing Day Run – Belmont Park (26th December, 2025);
- 5 Kilometre Autism NI Walk – Ormeau Park (18th January, 2026);
- Darkness into Light – Ormeau Park (9th May, 2026);
- Darkness into Light – Waterworks (9th May, 2026); and
- Wellfest – Ormeau Park – (12th and 13th September, 2026).

Surveys for Dual Language Street Signs

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 To consider a proposal to re-survey 20 streets being processed under the dual language street signs policy which were affected by postal issues and to consider an extension to survey response times which may be impacted by delivery schedule changes.**

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to agree to: -**

- The re-survey of 20 streets where residents’ returns have been impacted by a postal service issue; and
- To extend the survey response times to 21 days from the current 14 days for all applications going forward to reduce impact of delivery schedule changes for second class post (Initially one month on policy implementation)

3.0 Main Report

Re-survey of 20 Streets

- 3.2 The Director of Planning and Building Control provided an update to members at the People and Communities Committee on 5th August regarding an issue which affected the return of dual language street sign surveys using prepaid envelopes.**
- 3.3 An account suspension applied to BCC Royal Mail account between 15th April 2025 and 17th July 2025 has impacted a number of survey returns being processed and delivered to BCC by Royal Mail. It is unclear and we have been unable to ascertain to date when this suspension resulted in letters being held by Royal Mail. During our account suspension the Royal Mail Delivery Centre held 375 surveys. In addition, a number of surveys**

had been internally transferred to their National Returns Centre for return to sender (residents).

- 3.4 Whilst we have received all the survey returns held by the Royal Mail Delivery Centre and are continuing to receive surveys from the National Returns Centre we are unable to obtain accurate numbers for the surveys which were sent back to residents. A small number of residents have contacted BCC directly to advise they had received their survey back. This involved the surveys of Rosetta Avenue, Skegoneill Avenue and Victoria Road.
- 3.5 Officers have been closely monitoring the returns and have been able to identify 20 Streets which have been impacted by this issue. Given the unknown number of surveys that have been returned to residents and the inability to obtain accurate figures from Royal Mail, officers consider the only option to ensure fully accurate survey results would be to conduct a re-survey of these streets. This re-survey has been extended to any streets where we consider there is the potential for results to have been affected by residents returns. This analysis took into consideration streets we have received held mail from the Delivery Centre and National Returns Centre, and those streets where surveys were returned to the residents.
- 3.6 The list of these streets and the number of surveys involved in the re-survey are listed in Table 1 below which will follow the same process as the original survey.

Return will be by prepaid envelope for all surveys in line with existing processes.

Street	No of Surveys to be Re- Issued
Lagmore Downs	152
Upper Dunmurry Lane	173
Rosetta Avenue	87
Wellesley Avenue	122
Skegoneill Avenue	242
Victoria Road	173
Burmah Street	70
Delhi Street	123
Lismain Street	53
Sunningdale Gardens	145
Donegall Park Avenue	205
Mill Valley Gardens	22
Alexandra Gardens	47
Appleton Park	130

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Oldpark Road	757
Woodland Avenue	34
Lagmore View Crescent	45
Cliftondene Gardens	93
Colinvale	244
Bearnagh Drive	187
Total Number of surveys	3104

- 3.8 As part of the re-survey, correspondence will be included providing an explanation to residents of the reason for the re-survey and that any existing returns from the original survey expressing a preference in respect to the proposal will not be counted.

Review with Royal Mail

- 3.9 Officers have used the information available at present in the proposal above. The account has now been confirmed as operational, and a review is ongoing internally within BCC. To facilitate this, we are working to establish a senior contact within Royal Mail to discuss this matter to ensure that this issue cannot happen in the future, it is proposed that a further update report will be brought once this review is complete.
- 3.10 Royal Mail second class postal services have changed their delivery schedules which include discontinuing Saturday deliveries and implementing a weekday rotation schedule. These changes took effect on July 28, 2025.

The breakdown of these changes is as follows:

- Second-class letters will no longer be delivered on Saturdays.
 - Second-class mail will be delivered on a two-week rotating schedule: Week 1: Monday, Wednesday, Friday; Week 2: Tuesday, Thursday.
- 3.11 The revised dual language street signs policy indicates that replies should be received with one month. At a meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 24th March 2023 it was agreed to reduce the response times for surveys to 14 days. However, given the reduced delivery schedules 14 days may now not be sufficient to allow all residents to have their preferences lodged within time.
- 3.12 Members are asked to consider the proposal to increase this time period to 21 days for all surveys moving forward, which officers believe will have minimal impact on the processing of applications and should not create any delays.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.13 The cost for the re-survey of the 20 streets will be covered by existing budgets. Dedicated existing staff working on the current process will process the new surveys.**
- 3.14 There are no costs or resource implications associated with increasing the survey response times to 21 days.**

Proposal

Moved by the Chairperson (Councillor Brooks),
Seconded by Councillor Dornan,

That the Committee agrees that the period of time permitted to allow for the receipt of responses for dual language surveys be extended to 28 days.

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

Accordingly, the Committee agreed to adopt the recommendations as set out in the report, that being:

- to re-survey the 20 streets where residents' responses had been impacted upon by a postal service issue, and
- to extend the survey response time to 21 days, from the current 14 days, for all applications henceforth to reduce the impact of delivery schedule changes for second class post (initially one-month on policy implementation).

Resources and Fleet Waste – Update

The Committee considered the following report:

1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 To provide an update to People and Communities Committee on the work being conducted in relation to the overfilled bins and bin liner collection issues (Bin Safety Campaign).**

2.0 Recommendations

The Committee is requested to note the contents of this report.

3.0 Main report

- 3.1 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 in relation to the campaign.

- 3.2 It should be noted that Corporate Communications have supported and continue to provide support and resource to Resources and Fleet the Service through the external and internal communications and awareness raising elements of the plan. The Project team engage with Corporate Communications regularly around the campaign, resident feedback and progress.
- 3.3 The Project Team and their Resource Advisor colleagues within Waste Management have produced an engagement plan based on the Implementation and Communications Plan approved by Council.
- 3.4 Monday 4 August – 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. Resource Advisor Teams on ground raising awareness and messaging.
- 3.5 Monday 29 September – planned start date for the beginning of Red tagging collecting strictly to policy phase. Overfilled containers will be tagged and will not collect, and instances reported. Temporary additional Special Waste Collection Operational teams (SWCO) to be engaged Resource Teams, OSS and Enforcement Teams will be deployed to targeting remaining hot spot areas.
- 3.6 Project Team progress as at time of writing of this update report:
- Overfilled and lined Bins – Domestic and Commercial Waste
- 3.7 The following actions are ongoing or scheduled to be conducted as detailed. Summary of data and metrics around the campaign are below for reference.
- Additional Resource Advisor Staff have been deployed and began operating in Urban Belfast from Monday 21st July. In terms of direct communications by the Resource Advisor Team and Waste Management colleagues, all is going to plan. 890 streets equating to 34342 urban households have received direct communications around the campaign.
 - The Project team have continued to hold weekly briefings with operations managers and assistant managers and their

crews. Further briefings are planned at the end of August around the collection to policy (red) phase. These briefings will include Customer Hub colleagues, OSS and relevant FAQs will be reviewed and updated.

- Red tags (domestic) and red stickers (commercial) have been ordered and delivered – these will form part of the briefings above and be circulated to stakeholders including the customer hub.
- A new Special Waste Operations Team (SWOT) will be required from the end of September when we collect to policy. It is envisaged that these posts will be in situ for 15th September, for training, in advance of the red collecting to policy phase on Monday 29 September.
- Translations - the 5 versions required have been printed and are in hand for staff on the ground, including Outreach Teams.
- Performance/Campaign impact – In the first 2 days of the campaign, we experienced some teething problems. This did lead to small instances of non-collection at a number of sites and location which were corrected very quickly. After day 3, operationally, the campaign began to bed in well with crews on the ground and has also highlighted or magnified some of the “business as usual” issues at some of collection sites and areas e.g. overfilled euro bins and lidless euro bins at apartments. These issues are relatively small in number and being noted in issues log and issues managed case by case by Waste Collection and via colleagues in Waste Management. Issues raised to date are either resolved or in hand and we expect to see more of these as we go through the campaign.
- The comms and engagement on the ground is having an impact. Resource Advisor home visits are up significantly as are orders for boxes and bins. Increases in orders and requests for service show a positive trend around better recycling messaging. The WM section is keeping close track of container stocks and orders coming in. Levels are currently comfortable in the context of increased demand and further orders are in progress to replenish stocks. Waste Management will continue to monitor this closely.
- At the time of writing this report, 4 full weeks data has been gathered. Graph 1 below shows tag use/consumption for the first 4 weeks of the amber phase. The average rate of tagging vs number of collections during the period equates to less than 2% overall. The project team are content with

progress to date and will continue to monitor the data, which is summarised in more granular detail in Table 1.

- The Service introduced the quick report of workplace violence to crews at the start of the campaign and as of 29 August 2025, there were no reports made.
- Customer Hub Feedback - There was a spiked increase in customer contact at the start of the amber tagging period due to teething issues with tags in some areas, however returned to normal levels quickly when resolved with only 14 service requests attributed to the bin safety campaign logged on CRM Dynamics during the month of August. A small number of residents have reported that they were not aware of the campaign prior to receiving a tag on their bin.
- Two comments have been recorded about the campaign to date, with residents raising concerns about bins stored on streets/entries being overfilling by neighbours and bins being returned to their bin collection point by crews. The use of Report it app by squads to report matters impacting the collection of bins continues to be critical to assist the hub with handling customer contact.
- It is anticipated that customer contact will increase when the red tagging commences and the customer hub are working with Resource and Fleet Collections to ensure preparedness for the handling of enquiries this is expected to generate.

Graph 1 – summary of amber tag use cycle 1 and cycle 2 (4 weeks)

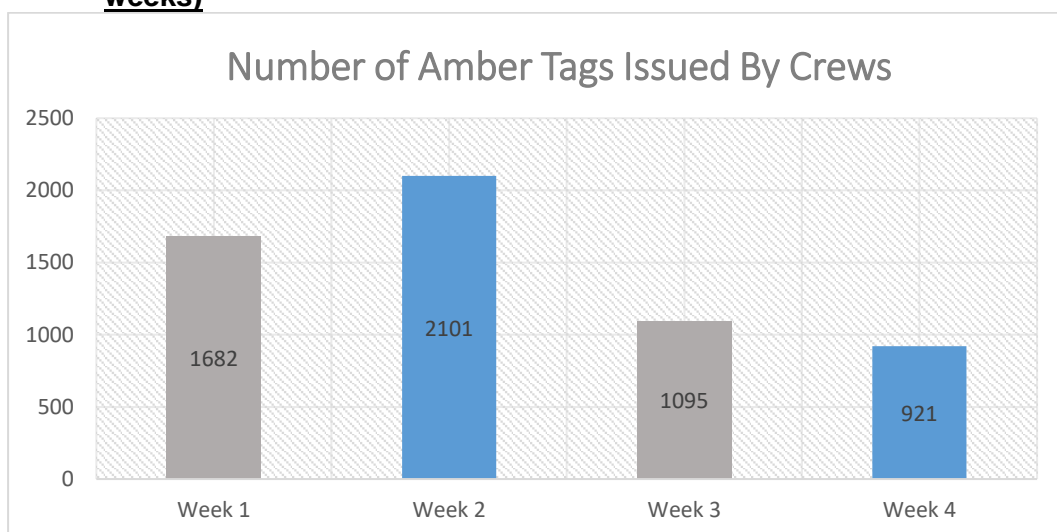


Table 1 – headline summary of campaign metrics

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Number of Amber Tags Issued By Crews	1682	2101	1095	921
Percentage of Bins Emptied Tagged	2.08%	2.59%	1.35%	1.14%
WPV Reports	0	0	0	0
Total number of houses posted	19587	23917	28104	34342
Number of Black Bins Ordered	134	162	109	71
Number of Boxes Ordered	564	479	321	215

- 3.8 Corporate Communications summary of campaign feedback so far includes - Social media content has already reached over 300,000 views, with widespread media coverage achieved. This has included TV news on both BBC and UTV. The most successful post alone generated 245,000 views and 1,175 interactions (comments, likes, and reactions).
- 3.9 Corporate Communications will continue to share regular reminder posts. As we move closer to the red tagging stage at the end of September, messaging will be adapted to highlight what red tags signify and why they are important. We plan to issue another media note ahead of the red tagging phase to generate a fresh wave of coverage.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.10 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Equality or Good Relations Implications

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

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

**Kerbside Glass Collection Expansion
Scheme – Agreement on Additional Streets**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to inform members of phase two of the kerbside glass expansion scheme.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are requested to approve the street list which will make up phase two of the kerbside glass expansion scheme, as outlined in the report.**

3.0 Main report

- 3.1 In 2024, the Resources and Fleet Service was successful in obtaining capital funding under the DAERA Household Waste Collaborative Change Programme with regard to the expansion of its kerbside glass collections scheme.**
- 3.12 This funding, combined with the Council's capital programme, resulted in the implementation of phase one of this scheme which delivered a Lorna glass collection scheme to 23,000 households from Q4 2024/25. While initial scheme participation data is below expectations, the tonnage captured is on target, with approximately 35 kg/hh/pa equating to around 800 tonnes of glass per annum. The Service is also working on contingency measures for vehicle breakdown to ensure a more consistent approach to kerbside collections across the city.**
- 3.13 The Service is now planning for phase two of the project which involves a further expansion to another 23,000 households. The Implementation phase involves the recruitment of collection crews, procurement of containers for both individual households and apartment blocks, procurement and leasing of vehicles, communication of the scheme to the selected households, assessment of apartments (if any within the selected areas) and finally delivery of containers followed by first collections.**
- 3.14 The scheme roll-out commences with a letter drop to households within the agreed phase two catchment area. This letter will outline the key aspects of the initiative along with practical information such as collection day, frequency, accepted materials and start date. Within seven days of receiving the letter, households will be issued with a kerbside box and lid for the presentation of their glass containers at the kerbside. An information leaflet will also be included within the kerbside boxes reminding residents on the salient points of the scheme. Kerbside collections will then commence within ten working days of receiving the kerbside box.**
- 3.15 Given the lead times associated with a number of these activities, in particular the purchase and receipt of containers, and mindful of the potential clash with collections arrangements for the Christmas 2025 season, it is envisaged**

that project implementation will commence in January and will be completed by March 2026.

- 3.16 Detailed route planning is still being finalised. Members are requested to approve the street lists so that further detailed planning can be completed. Members will also note that the agreement of phase two will by default result in the final phase three being those households still not receiving a kerbside glass scheme and subject to financial approval via the rates setting exercise, the final roll-out will include these households in the 26/27 financial year.

4.0 Financial and Resource Implications

- 4.1 The capital costs associated with phase two of the glass kerbside expansion scheme will be met by both the Council's capital programme and DAERA's Household Waste Recycling Collaborative Change Fund. Revenue costs will be met through the Service's revenue estimates."

The Committee adopted the recommendations as set out. A full list of the streets included in the expansion of Phase 2 of the Scheme can be found in the [attached link](#).

Proposals for Dual Language Street Signs

The Committee agreed to the erection of a second street nameplate in Irish at Brooke Crescent, Juniper Park, Elimgrove Street, Deerpark Mews, Joy Street, Castle Street and Chapel Lane.

Proposals for the Naming of New Streets

The Committee approved the naming of Rileys Place and Keegan Way.

Items Raised in Advance by Members

Replacement Keys for Alley Gates

At the request of Councillor Canavan, the Committee agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting that would examine the costs incurred in providing replacement keys to local residents.

**Control of Invasive Species in
Council Parks and Open Spaces**

At the request of Councillor Flynn, the Committee agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting that would outline the Council's policy for the management and removal of invasive plant species, in particular Himalayan Balsam, and how such work might be undertaken in partnership with local communities.

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**Proposed Community Consultation on the
Renaming of Balfour Avenue Playground**

At the request of Councillor R. M. Donnelly, the Committee agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting in this regard.

Chairperson

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 10th September, 2025

MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

- Members present: Councillor I. McLaughlin (Chairperson);
The High Sheriff, Councillor McAteer;
Alderman Lawlor; and
Councillors Black, Bunting, de Faoite, S. Douglas,
Duffy, Groogan, Hanvey, Lyons, McCabe,
McCallin, McKay, R. McLaughlin, Meenehan,
Murray, Nelson and O'Neill.
- In attendance: Mr. D. Martin, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;
Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and
Development;
Mr. K. Forster, Director of Economic Development;
Ms. L. Toland, Senior Manager, Economy;
Ms. L. O'Donnell, Senior Manager, Culture and Tourism;
Ms. C. Cassin, Markets Development Manager;
Mr. F. Grant, Operations Development Manager;
Ms. E. Clark, Belfast 2024 Programme Manager; and
Mr. C. Mealey, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor McCormick.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 6th and 27th August, 2025, were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st September, 2025, subject to the following amendments:

- the minute under the heading "Translink - Belfast Grand Central Station Update" was amended to provide that the Council writes to the Minister for Infrastructure and Translink to request consideration of a scheme that would reduce fares to encourage the use of public transport and reduce traffic congestion during the Christmas period; and
- the minute under the heading "Vacant to Vibrant Programme" was amended to provide that a report be brought back to the Committee that would outline how many applicants remained without funding and the cost of approving those grant awards.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

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Request to Present

St. George's Market Traders

The Committee acceded to a request from representatives on behalf of St. George's Market traders to present at a future meeting.

Restricted Items

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

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

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

Vacant to Vibrant Programme

The Committee was provided with an update on the Vacant to Vibrant Programme and the associated recommendation from the assessment panel.

The Director of City Regeneration and Development highlighted that, subject to the Committee's approval of the assessment panel's recommendation, the city-wide fund would now be completely expended and closed to further applications. She advised that officers would continue to seek additional funding to extend the scheme.

The Committee:

- i. noted the update in relation to the Vacant to Vibrant Programme which would be supporting up to 72 businesses/organisations to locate or expand into long term vacant units;
- ii. agreed the recommended city-wide grant award as outlined within the report; and
- iii. noted that the city-wide fund was now completely expended and closed to further applications, and that officers would continue to seek additional funding to extend the scheme.

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Housing-Led Regeneration Update

The Director of City Regeneration and Development submitted for the Committee's consideration a report which provided an update on a number of strands of the housing-led regeneration programme of work.

The Director reminded Members that, following the signing of the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) in April 2025, which formalised the Overarching Business Plan (OBP) and the Joint Venture (JV) governance arrangements, the Private Sector Partner (PSP) had submitted a proposed Seed Site Development Programme. She reported that the Council had a contractual obligation to consider and approve the Development Programme within the agreed timeframe. She advised that the prioritisation and programme for the seed sites had been developed through a process of site prioritisation followed by the establishment of a development programme for each site, which included key milestones and longstop dates. In relation to the development proposals for each of the sites, the Director advised that the Initial Site Specific Business Plans (ISSBP) would be brought back to the Committee for approval.

The Committee was provided with an update in respect of the Strategic Site Assessment (SSA) Phase 2 sites, which highlighted that the PSP had identified a potential site which could be considered as an Additional Opportunity Site. It was reported that there might be an opportunity to bring forward additional SSA Phase 2 sites, and that further updates would be brought back to the Committee and the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, as appropriate.

The Director also provided an update, as requested by the Committee at its meeting in June 2025, on the current position of the Strategic Site Assessment Phase 1 sites which summarised the work that had been undertaken to date and next steps.

The Committee was informed that there continued to be an ongoing requirement to retain specialist commercial and financial related property advice as the JV moved through the delivery process, and that a report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in relation to these services.

The Committee:

- i. noted the progress made through the governance process for the approval of the Seed Site Development Programme submitted by the PSP;
- ii. agreed the prioritisation of the Seed Sites as detailed in the report;
- iii. noted that the Initial Site Business Plans would be brought back to the Committee for approval in respect of the detailed development proposals for each of the sites;
- iv. noted the key milestone and longstop dates that contractualised key event dates in the PSP Development Programme and provided the Council with the ability to remove exclusive development rights

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that were currently granted under the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA);

- v. noted the requirement for ongoing specialist financial and commercial property services from the appointed provider;
- vi. agreed that the key appointment of the specialist financial and commercial property services provider would be noted in a Contract Report to be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee;
- vii. noted the potential to include one of the SSA Phase 2 sites, as agreed through the City Growth and Regeneration Committee and the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, as an Additional Opportunity Site, and that the PSP would consider inclusion of the asset for redevelopment along with another seed site, with further proposals to be brought back through the Site Specific Business Plan;
- viii. noted the potential opportunity for additional SSA Phase 2 sites to be brought forward through the PSP, with further engagement and updates to be brought back to the Committee;
- ix. noted the update in relation to a seed site's development brief, the continued progression of workstreams alongside the Department for Communities, and the advancement of the scheme through the appointed Housing Association; and
- x. noted the update in relation to the SSA Phase 1 sites.

Sandy Row/Grosvenor Road Revitalisation Update

The Director of City Regeneration and Development provided the Committee with an update in relation to the Sandy Row Revitalisation Scheme and the proposed Grosvenor Road Revitalisation Scheme.

During discussion, a Member highlighted the potential impact of the works associated with Belfast Grand Central Station on the independent businesses located on Great Victoria Street.

After discussion, the Committee:

- i. noted the update on the Department for Communities funded Sandy Row Revitalisation Scheme and the proposed Grosvenor Road Revitalisation Scheme; and
- ii. agreed to write to the Minister for Communities to request that consideration be given to the provision of support for independent

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businesses on Great Victoria Street impacted by the works associated with Belfast Grand Central Station.

Belfast 2024 Evaluation

The Strategic Director, Place and Economy, and the Belfast 2024 Programme Manager presented to the Committee a draft closure report which summarised the Belfast 2024 programme activities, outputs, evaluation results, lessons learned and legacy plans.

During discussion, Members thanked the officers for the work that had been undertaken in delivering the cultural programme.

The Strategic Director and the Programme Manager answered a range of questions from the Members in relation to the impact of the programme, lessons learned, communication and public engagement, and legacy plans going forward.

After discussion, the Committee noted the outputs, outcomes and feedback from the Belfast 2024 programme, and the legacy opportunities that had emerged from the programme of work.

Markets Quarterly Update

The Director of Economic Development provided the Committee with an update on the performance of St. George's Market for Quarter 1 2025/26, the Markets Storage Policy and the Markets Rights Policy. He also outlined, for the Committee's consideration, a request for a markets licence for a Dilly Dally Festive Makers Market to be held in Carlisle Memorial Church in November, 2025.

The Senior Manager, Economy, provided the Committee with an overview of the Markets Rights Policy and outlined a recommended new approach and fee structure for licenses under the policy.

During discussion, the Director of Economic Development, the Markets Development Manager, and the Senior Manager, Economy, answered a range of questions from the Members on the Markets Storage Policy, the Christmas Continental Market and external markets.

In relation to the Markets Storage Policy, a Member highlighted the need for further engagement to take place with market traders in relation to any update to the policy and suggested that it would be beneficial to the Committee for a further report to be submitted which would outline potential options in respect of the Council's engagement and communication with traders.

Accordingly, the Committee:

- i. noted the update against priority business plan activities and the financial performance of St George's Market for Quarter 1, 2025/26;

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- ii. approved a proposed new approach and fee structure for licences under the Markets Rights Policy, with effect from 1st November, 2025;
- iii. approved a licence for a Dilly Dally Festive Makers Market at Carlisle Memorial Church on 22nd November, 2025; and
- iv. agreed to defer consideration of the Markets Storage Policy update to enable a further report to be submitted which would outline options in respect of the Council's engagement and communication with traders.

Financial Reporting - Quarter 1 2025/26

The Strategic Director of Place and Economy submitted for the Committee's consideration a report which provided an update on the Committee's financial position for Quarter 1 of 2025/26.

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

Belfast Bikes Quarter 1 2025/26 Performance Update

The Director of Economic Development provided the Committee with an update on the performance of the Belfast Bikes Scheme for Quarter 1 of 2025/26.

The Committee noted the update provided in respect of the Belfast Bikes Scheme performance for Quarter 1 2025/26.

Belfast Zoo Quarter 1 2025/26 Performance Update

The Strategic Director of Place and Economy provided the Committee with an update on the performance of Belfast Zoo for Quarter 1 of 2025/26.

The Committee noted the update on the performance of Belfast Zoo for Quarter 1 2025/26.

Positioning Belfast to Compete

Major Events Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is

- **To provide an update on Fleadh Cheoil**
- **To provide an update on Oireachtas**
- **To provide an update on festive lighting**

- To provide an update on America 250
- To provide an update on New Years Eve

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to

- Note the update regarding Fleadh Cheoil
- Note the update regarding Oireachtas festival
- Note and approve costs associated with Festive lighting scheme
- Note the update regarding America 250
- Note the update regarding New Years Eve

3.0 Main report

3.1 Fleadh Cheoil

August SPR committee considered a report on the strategic case for the Fleadh and its significant economic impact and return on investment. Members were updated on the financial plan associated with hosting the Fleadh and the Committee approved the draft outline expenditure budget for Fleadh Cheoil 2026.

Following consideration of the proposed governance arrangements, including detailed proposals in relation to governance of Finance Risk, Members agreed not to establish a Members Working Group but that a further report should be brought back to the Committee on governance, following engagement with Comhaltas, and on the use of delegated authority.

SPR Committee Members were also advised that an engagement plan is being developed to ensure early engagement with stakeholders and local communities which is essential to ensure inclusivity and impact. This will include a city stakeholder group which will help to inform the work undertaken in relation to programme development and operational planning and will be closely aligned with the work of the marketing and communications group.

Following attendance at Wexford 2025 a dedicated Party Group Leader session has been scheduled to discuss lessons learned and to update on key areas of work.

A number of core work packages are currently under way, being overseen by the internal Programme Board and the Fleadh Executive Committee, including;

- Implementation of all governance structures (subject to further report to SPR Committee)
- Financial plan, funding & sponsorship
- Audit & risk
- Lessons learned from Wexford
- Brand, marketing and communications
- Operations and logistics planning
- Ground footprint
- Traffic management planning
- Core programming
- Venue mapping
- Licencing
- Planning
- Accommodation
- Volunteering
- Visitor servicing

3.2 Oireachtas na Samhna 2025

Planning is well under way for the Oireachtas with final technical site visits occurring early September. Core venues remain as ICC, Ulster Hall, City Hall and the Europa.

Dedicated brand work has been developed and is being utilised across all partner marketing. Exhibition space within ICC has been identified for BCC which is being led by language officer aligned to ongoing work for the language action plan. Visit Belfast will also avail of exhibition space to facilitate visitor servicing.

Officers have been working with core venues to ensure there is a provision of Irish language speaking staff on front of house duties and integration into announcement systems

Through the ongoing work of the programme board, Oireachtas have facilitated an ongoing engagement to encourage participation and competition entries as well as a Schools engagement programme.

Additional support packages of work in partnership with Visit Belfast are focused on visitor management with the addition of translated city maps, a familiarisation video, web content and industry front of house briefings.

Key programme highlights include;

Wednesday 29th October

Official opening – ICC Belfast

Media awards – Belfast City Hall

Thursday 30th October

Competition schedule commence – ICC Belfast

Live Broadcasts – TG4, RTE and BBC NI – Multiple venues

Club Celi and festival club - Europa

Friday 31st October

Competition schedule -ICC Belfast

Live Broadcasts – TG4, RTE and BBC NI - Multiple venues

Festival club - Ulster Hall

Saturday 1st November

Park run

Competitions – ICC Belfast

Festival club - Ulster Hall

Sunday 2nd November

Final live broadcast

3.3 Festive lighting

Officers have conducted a number of site visits with the supplier to identify any adjustments to the core lighting scheme to allow for ongoing building works, access to wayleaves and power sources.

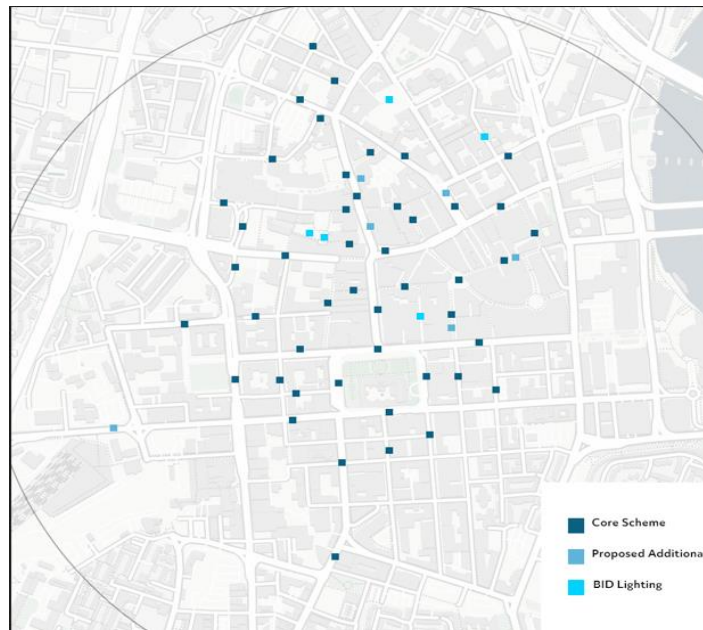
As part of this work a number of potential additional sites have been identified to enhance the core scheme and address areas where there has previously been limited lighting; namely additional infrastructure in: Royal Avenue trees, Ann Street, Arthur street, Bank Square and Bridge Street

This is at an additional cost of £47,531 to the core scheme.

Festive lighting budget allocation is £300,000, with management support previously facilitated through BCCM.

Council have been in ongoing discussions with the BIDs about future provisions of the management of the scheme but for 2025 this will remain as council led delivery.

In addition to this officers have engaged with the BIDs to identify additional areas that the BIDs will support through allocation of their own funding for Callender Street, Blackstaff Square, Transport hub, Writers Square and Hill Street. Discussions are on going about potential for co-funding of some of the additional features.



As part of the development work contractors have identified an ongoing issue with the power sources linked to DFI lighting columns. Where they do not currently meet safety standards the points require a full upgrade at a cost of £400/ point, this is a one off upgrade required to ensure a compliant and safe installation with BS7671. This impacts the majority of columns in use for the festive pole mounted features.

The remedial works to bring the rest of the city up to standard and safety against the core scheme is a total of £77,600 and to facilitate additional scheme elements would cost £29,000 – totalling £106,600.

Discussions have been held with DFI officers and they have advised that while DFI own the columns the infrastructure that lighting power supplies are drawn down from are within BCC ownership and therefore upgrade costs fall to BCC. This allows for access to isolate the power supply for festive

lights therefore if a fault occurs only the festive light elements are impacted.

Wayleaves

BCC estates team are continuing to engage with business owners to complete the development of new wayleave agreements to support the scheme. All new wayleaves have been issued with circa 20% returned and ongoing dialogue being facilitated with all key partners. Discussions are well advanced and are being supported by the BIDs to access the appropriate building owners.

3.4 America 250

Following agreement at Committee last month in relation to options to support the marking of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the US Declaration of Independence in 2026, Officers are engaging with stakeholders in relation to planning and activities aligned to America 250.

Tourism Ireland

Tourism Ireland's approach to the 250th commemoration of the founding of the United States of America is pivoted around a number of key themes i.e. food and drink, music, history/heritage, and key attractions or experiences.

Tourism Ireland alongside Tourism Northern Ireland has undertaken a scoping exercise in respect to what sectoral stakeholders may be able to contribute to an overall tourism programme for the 250th commemoration centred around key sites, local anniversaries and marketing opportunities to drive US footfall into the region.

Tourism Ireland will also undertake a digital promotions campaign through e-mail, articles on US websites which will include videos, and instate market opportunities. In terms of media outreach, they will look to undertake:

- Inviting American celebrities who have an Ulster Scotch heritage to come over to Northern Ireland and investigate their roots
- Focused familiarisation trips
- Bespoke food tours for media
- Working on our musical strengths to attract inward visitors
- Targeting the travel trade market via themed webinars outlining key opportunities such as the

Fleadh 2026 in Belfast and Ulster American Folk Park's 50th anniversary as components to consider.

Public Records Office NI (PRONI)

PRONI staff coordinate the US NI Cultural Working Group on behalf of the Department for Communities. DfC will coordinate the communications strategy on finalised components. Work is currently taking place to agree the delivery mechanism for the publicly announced small grants programme which is anticipated to go live in Autumn 2025.

Details shared regarding potential programming included:

- National Museums events centred around key dates and music festivals
- Hillsborough Royal Palace visitor engagement initiatives which may include a joint loan of an original copy of the Declaration of Independence to be co-hosted by HRP and PRONI
- Series of public lectures in PRONI Offices

Ulster Scots Agency

The Ulster Scots Agency is considering a number of avenues to commemorate the 250th anniversary:

- Publications: refresh of the Pioneers Trail map and conversion into booklet format;
- Digital projects: applications have been invited regarding a landmark digital project to narrate the role of Ulster Scots/Scots-Irish in American Independence
- Art: potential for a public art trail in a number of local authorities which have an Ulster Scots-US connection
- Gallery: extension of the Visitor Centre gallery to include a special US 250 exhibition with a long-term ambition of including a permanent loan of a copy of the Declaration of Independence. The Agency has also commenced discussions with Dublin's EPIC Museum with a view to using the Ulster Scots impact on the foundations of America to drive footfall to Belfast.
- Talks: Outreach events to highlight the role of Scots Irish in America's history
- Music: a strategic and signature event which pivots around Belfast-Boston-Nashville relationships. Initial concept is in regard to a weekend event centred around 4 July using American artists who also have a link to Belfast/NI e.g. Getty Music. This could act as a hook

to attract inward visitors from both Sister Cities and present a cultural offering around an economic mission, should Belfast City Council agree to develop such a programme. Given the scale of such an event, the Agency would also propose city dressing on NI-US 250 within its communication and promotional channels

Linenhall Library

Linenhall Library has expressed willingness to develop and house an exhibition and are prepared to do so around a theme identified by BCC e.g. links between city's emigrants which had economic impact on founding of the US.

Our Sister Cities

Research on the State Commission websites for both our Sister Cities shows that both have small grants programmes to commemorate the Semi quincennial (Massachusetts has assigned funding, whilst Tennessee is seeking applications). Initiatives appear to be centred around museums and heritage sites.

Officers will liaise with the Department for Communities and with stakeholders with a view to bringing back a further report.

3.5 New Years Eve

The Millennium Celebrations was a significant celebration across the globe and was celebrated in Belfast with an event outside City Hall. It was felt at the time that there was some merit in continuing to provide an event in subsequent years, this included two years of a Radio One Dance Party and a small concert at City Hall.

However, this particular event was discontinued for a number of reasons:

- Appetite – while there will always be some voicing of the wish for a New Years event in the City, there are questions over the appeal of attending a late concert in mid-winter.
- Cost of staging this event was significant, both in respect of suppliers charging high 'holiday' rates but also artists. Costs a decade ago were circa £250k for an audience of 3,000-4000, and with event delivery costs rising significantly post-pandemic, the cost of an New Years Eve event could be north of £400,000.

- **The opportunity cost to Council is very significant.**

As part of the development of the cultural strategy recommendations were that Council did not host an outdoor New Years Eve event and as Members are aware there is no budget for supporting NY celebrations in 2025 and there are already considerable pressures on both the Culture Tourism and Events Teams. Officers will however engage with city partners to understand their plans for New Year 2025 and a report on this will be brought back to the committee.

As part of the agreed work in relation to the events action plan officers are continuing to benchmark and assess the costs and impact of hosting NYE celebrations for future years.

4.0 Financial and Resource Implications

- 4.1 The Fleadh will be delivered in accordance with draft expenditure budget and agreed financial plan. Remaining financial resources will be met from within existing departmental budgets and officers are continuing to work with partners to reduce the financial burden on council.**

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

- 5.1 The cultural strategy, A City Imagining has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) and a Rural Needs Assessment (RNA). The Fleadh will be subject to a further equality screening and officers are engaged with the equality unit on progressing this.”**

The Senior Manager, Culture and Tourism, provided the Committee with an overview of the updates for each of the major events. She also highlighted the recent Maritime Festival, which was held on 6th and 7th September, 2025. It was reported that a full post-event update would be provided to the Committee in due course.

During discussion, the Senior Manger answered questions from the Members in relation to the Festive Lighting Scheme, the Oireachtas na Samhna and New Year’s Eve.

In response to a Member’s question on the Festive Lighting Scheme, the Senior Manager stated that, whilst the core infrastructure for the 2025 lighting would remain similar to previous years, the ambition would be to expand and enhance the scheme going forward for future years. She advised that festive lighting visuals would be circulated to Members in due course.

In relation to America 250, a number of Members highlighted that, as part of the celebrations to mark the 250th anniversary of the signing of the United States Declaration of Independence, it was important to recognise and acknowledge historical issues such

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as the slave trade and the anti-slavery movement, and also the impact of the colonisation of North America on indigenous peoples. A Member also suggested that as part of the engagement in relation to America 250, the outreach be broadened to include those of Irish heritage.

A further Member welcomed the update in relation to America 250 and requested that the Committee be provided with regular updates on both America 250 and New Year's Eve.

The Committee:

- i. noted the update on the Fleadh Cheoil; Oireachtas na Samhna; America 250; New Year's Eve; and the Festive Lighting Scheme;
- ii. approved costs associated with the Festive Lighting Scheme;
- iii. agreed that it be provided with regular updates in relation to New Year's Eve and America 250; and
- iv. agreed that, as part of officers' engagement with stakeholders in relation to activities to mark America 250, consideration be given to the acknowledgement of the historical links to the slave trade and the anti-slavery movement; recognition of the impact that the colonisation of North America had on indigenous peoples; and to broadening the outreach to include those of Irish heritage.

Regenerating Places and Improving Infrastructure

Belfast Place Based Growth Proposition Update

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the Belfast Regeneration Place Based Growth Proposition.

The Committee also considered correspondence from the Department for Communities in response to its request for an update on what consideration had been given to the transfer of regeneration powers to local government.

During discussion, a Member welcomed the update provided within the report, however, expressed disappointment in respect of the Department for Communities response, which stated that any further transfer of regeneration powers would require a fundamental review of the position across several Departments, consideration by the Executive and the introduction of primary legislation, and advised that there was currently no plans to take this forward.

The Committee noted:

- i. the update on the Belfast Place Based Growth Proposition, which included the Belfast Business Case for Place-Based Investment;

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- ii. the update on the strategic engagement with the UK Government and the Northern Ireland Executive, which included a forthcoming joint Ministerial meeting with the Executive as part of a strategic engagement programme aligned to the Belfast Place Based Growth Proposition and would seek to secure place based and regeneration investment funding;
- iii. the continued role for Members in terms of political party engagement at local, MP and ministerial level; and
- iv. a response received from the Department for Communities to correspondence from the Committee which requested an update on what consideration had been given to the transfer of regeneration powers to local government.

Shaping Sustainable Places Consultation Response

The Committee considered a report which provided an overview of the Department for Communities consultation on its proposed 'Shaping Sustainable Places Programme'. The report also outlined a draft Council response to the public consultation.

The Committee:

- i. noted the Department for Communities (DfC) public consultation on its proposed 'Shaping Sustainable Places' programme;
- ii. approved a response to the DfC Shaping Sustainable Places consultation, subject to comments from the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee;
- iii. noted that the response would be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee meeting on 19th September, 2025, given the potential financial and resource implications of the programme; and
- iv. noted that the response would be submitted to the Department for Communities on the 21st September, 2025, with the caveat that it would be subject to Council ratification on the 1st October, 2025.

**Department for Infrastructure Transport Strategy 2035 –
Consultation Response**

The Committee considered a report which provided an overview of the Department for Infrastructure's consultation on its draft 'Transport Strategy 2035'. The report also outlined a draft Council response to the public consultation.

The Committee:

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- i. noted the main highlights of the Department for Infrastructure's draft 'Transport Strategy 2035'; and
- ii. approved a response to the draft 'Transport Strategy 2035' consultation; and
- iii. noted that the response would be submitted to the Department for Infrastructure by the deadline of 16th December, 2025, subject to Council ratification on 1st October 2025.

Growing Business and the Economy

**Feedback on Outcomes of the Belfast Health
and Work Steering Group**

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the work of the Belfast Health and Work Steering Group, which was established through the Belfast Labour Market Partnership.

The Committee noted the key recommendations of the Belfast Health and Work Steering Group, and the next steps and implications for the work of the Council and its partners.

Correspondence

US Film Tariff – Responses

The Committee noted responses from the Executive Office, the Minister for the Economy and the UK Department for Culture, Media and Sport in relation to potential US tariffs on films produced outside of the US.

Rent Controls - Department for Communities Response

The Committee noted a response from the Department for Communities in relation to rent controls.

Strategic and Operational Issues

Notices of Motion Quarterly Update

The Committee considered a report which provided a quarterly update on the Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance that it was responsible for, in line with the agreement of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that all Committees receive regular updates.

The report outlined that there was currently eight Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance for which the Committee was responsible for, and recommended the closure of the following two motions:

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Category 1 Recommended Closures:

- **Rent Controls; and**
- **Proposed US Tariff on Films Made Outside of the US.**

The report also provided an update on the six motions which remained open.

The Committee:

- i. noted the updates to all Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance that the Committee was responsible for, as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report; and
- ii. agreed to the closure of the following two Notices of Motion, as outlined in 3.3 and Appendix 1 of the report:
 - Rent Controls (ID 309); and
 - Proposed US Tariff on Films Made Outside of the US (ID 450).

Issues Raised in Advance

Rosetta Quietway (Councillor de Faoite to raise)

Councillor de Faoite reminded the Committee that, in April 2023, he had proposed a motion, which was subsequently passed by the Council, which recognised that many neighbourhoods across the city suffer from congestion, poor air quality, commuter traffic, under investment in active travel measures and road safety issues, and called on the Department for Infrastructure to engage with the Council, relevant local organisations and residents to deliver a 'Rosetta Quietway' to help tackle some of those issues within the area. He expressed his concern and frustration at the lack of progress in relation to the delivery of a quietway for the Rosetta area.

He highlighted that, at its meeting on 4th September, 2025, the East Belfast Area Working Group had received a presentation from the EastSide Partnership on the Connswater Greenway, which also included discussion regarding the potential to expand and deliver additional greenway and quietway networks across East Belfast and the city. He stated that, given the continued congestion and road safety issues, Rosetta, Lisnasharragh District Electoral Area (DEA), was a prime location to deliver a quietway to help reduce congestion and provide a cleaner and greener neighbourhood for residents.

At the request of Councillor de Faoite, the Committee agreed that Council officers would seek to facilitate, alongside local Councillors for the Lisnasharragh DEA and the EastSide Partnership, an engagement session with the Department for Infrastructure to explore options in respect of the potential to deliver a 'Rosetta Quietway'.

Chairperson

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Licensing Committee

Wednesday, 17th September, 2025

MEETING OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Doran (Chairperson);
The High Sheriff (Councillor McAteer);
Aldermen McCullough and Rodgers, and
Councillors Abernethy, Bradley,
T. Brooks, Bunting, M. Donnelly,
P. Donnelly, D. Douglas, McCann, McCusker,
McDowell, McKay, McKeown, Smyth and Whyte.

In attendance: Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;
Mr. S. Hipkins, Building Control Manager;
Mr. K. McDonnell, Solicitor (Regulatory and Planning); and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors Anglin and Carson.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 20th August were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st September.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

Welcome

The Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, welcomed Mr. S. Hipkins to the meeting. Mr. Hipkins had recently been appointed as Building Control Manager.

Non-Delegated Matters

Notices of Motion - Annual Update

The Licensing Committee was provided with a report containing an overview of the progress which had been made on each of the four motions for which it was responsible.

The Committee was asked to approve the recommendation to close the motion on AirBnB/short-term let accommodation. The motion called upon the Council to write to the NI Executive asking it to consider putting in place an appropriate regime for the management of short-term lets in Northern Ireland. Correspondence was sent on two separate occasions to the Department for the Economy and Tourism NI highlighting the

**Licensing Committee,
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concerns of the Committee and the need for legislation. Tourism NI had responded to advise that it had undertaken a review of the certification of visitor accommodation and would examine options for future regulation of visitor accommodation. The Members were advised that any changes which were considered following the review would require new or amended legislation which would take time.

During discussion, a number of Members stated that, while they were content that the motion would be closed, they were cognisant of the need to address the over proliferation of such accommodation in certain areas and that a significant level of work was still to be undertaken in respect of the regulation of short term lets, particularly by the NI Executive and Tourism NI in order and to ensure that residents living nearby such accommodation were not adversely impacted as a result.

A Member stated that they were concerned to learn that Tourism NI had been issuing certificates for accommodation which did not have the necessary planning permission in place. The Director of Planning and Building Control advised the Committee that she would raise this issue with Tourism NI. She also confirmed that she would continue to keep the Committee informed on any progress with the regulation of short term let accommodation.

A further Member welcomed the work which the Council had carried out in respect of circulating information in relation to renting rooms in a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO).

After discussion, the Committee:

- noted the updates to all Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance for which the Committee was responsible; and
- agreed to close the motion on Airbnb Accommodation, however, noted that the issues still remained and that the Committee would continue to receive regular updates in respect of the regulation of such accommodation.

Delegated Matters

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

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)
Licences Issued Under Delegated Authority

The Committee noted a list of applications which had been approved under the Council's Scheme of Delegation during August, 2025.

Licences Issued Under Delegated Authority

The Committee noted a list of applications for licences which had, since its last meeting, been approved under the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

**Licensing Committee,
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Withdrawn Item

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

- Application for the Provisional Grant of an Amusement Permit at 51 Rosemary Street and consideration of Objection.

Designation of Street Trading Site - Glen Road

The Director of Planning and Building Control advised the Committee that, under the provisions of the Street Trading Act (NI) 2001, the Council had the power to designate or rescind the designation of specific streets or parts of streets as being suitable for stationary street trading by licence holders.

If a street or the commodity to be offered had not been designated under the Act the Council could not issue a licence for street trading from a stationary position in that street.

The Committee was required to consider an application which had been received for the creation of a new designated street to accommodate the stationary street trading site outside 44e Glen Road.

Subject to any amendments, permission was being sought to allow the publication of the statutory 28-day notice of the proposed designation resolution and to commence consultation.

The main steps the Council must undertake included:

- a) Giving public notice of the proposed resolution in two or more local newspapers;
- b) Consulting with the PSNI, the Department for Infrastructure and any other persons it considered appropriate; and
- c) Considering any representations relating to the proposed resolution which it had received.

A further report would be brought before the Committee at a future meeting detailing the outcome of the process of consultation. At that stage, Members would be able to determine the designation of the street along with any restriction on the commodity to be sold and any recommendations regarding the restriction on the times of trading.

The Committee granted permission to allow the publication of the statutory 28-day notice of the proposed designation resolution for a new Street Trading Site on the Glen Road and to commence consultation with statutory bodies and other persons who might have an interest in the proposal.

Chairperson

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Planning Committee

Tuesday, 16th September, 2025

HYBRID MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Members present: Councillor Murphy (Chairperson);
Aldermen Lawlor, McCullough and Rodgers;
Councillors Abernethy, Brennan,
T. Brooks, Carson, Doran, D. Douglas,
S. Douglas, Garrett, Groogan, Hanvey,
Magee, McCabe, McCann and Whyte.
- In attendance: Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;
Mr. K. McDonnell, Solicitor (Regulatory and Planning);
Mr. E. Baker, Planning Manager (Development
Management);
Mr. D. O’Kane, Planning Manager (Plans and Policy); and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies for inability to attend were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 12th August were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st September, 2025, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Committee Site Visits

Report on Site Visits scheduled

The Committee noted the site visits.

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
Tuesday, 16th September, 2025**

Pre-emptive Committee Site Visits

The Committee agreed to undertake a site visit to the following application sites:

- Pre-emptive Committee Site Visit: LA04/2024/1576/F
- Demolition of existing buildings at no. 733 and no. 735 Antrim Road to facilitate proposed residential (social housing) development comprising of 2no. buildings containing 34no. units (4no. 2p/1b wheelchair apartments and 30no. 3p/2b 'CAT 1' Active Elderly apartments) with associated in-curtilage parking and landscaping - 733-735 Antrim Road;
- Pre-emptive Committee Site Visit: LA04/2024/2145/F
- Creation of a new Adventure Park comprising a community / visitor hub building including café, creche, flexible exhibition / community space, ancillary office space and maintenance yard. Development includes community gardens, bmx track, crazy golf, dog park, walking/running/cycle paths, outdoor amphitheatre, bio diversity zones, and recreational facilities. Associated landscaping and infrastructure (drainage, lighting, car / coach parking, WC block etc). - Lands at North Foreshore / Giant's Park Dargan Road; and
- Pre-emptive Committee Site Visit: LA04/2024/0015/F
- Erection of 53 residential units (including 43 dwellings and 10 apartments) including creation of access, internal roads, landscaping and associated works (amended description and plans). - Lands at Cabin Hill, Upper Newtownards Road.

Notification of Provision/Removal of Parking Bays

The Committee noted the Notice of Provision of Parking Bay in relation to:

- 33 Lower Windsor Avenue;
- 13 Sydenham Drive;
- 35 Nevis Avenue;
- 49 Ponsonby Avenue;
- 217 Cliftonville Road;
- 33 Mount Prospect Park;
- 246 Cliftonville Road;
- 27 Ballysillan Drive; and
- 150 Mount Merrion Avenue.

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
Tuesday, 16th September, 2025**

Notification from Statutory Bodies: Traffic Control Measures

Belfast Transport Hub

The Committee noted the Notice of Proposed Traffic Control Measures at Belfast Transport Hub.

Notification from Statutory Bodies: Pedestrianisation

Hill Street

The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Infrastructure to request information on how the pedestrianisation of Hill Street would be managed, what signage would be in place and why the proposed pedestrianisation was not running from Talbot Street.

Planning Appeals Notified

The Committee noted the appeals decisions.

Planning Decisions Issued

The Committee noted the planning decisions issued in August, 2025.

Live Applications for Major Development

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

Committee Decisions that have yet to issue

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

Miscellaneous Reports

Local applications subject to objections from NI Water

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

Notices of Motion - Annual Update

The Committee noted the updates to all Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance that Planning Committee was responsible for; and agreed to the closure of Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance, numbers 236 and 374.

Planning Applications

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
Tuesday, 16th September, 2025**

LA04/2024/0948/F - Redevelopment of listed buildings and lands to the rear for a residential development comprising 20no. townhouses and 6no. apartments with associated landscaping, parking and site works - Derelict lands at and to the rear of nos. 34-36 The Mount

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

- Principle of housing in the location;
- Housing density;
- Affordable housing;
- Housing mix;
- Adaptable and accessible accommodation;
- Design and placemaking;
- Impact on heritage assets;
- Climate change;
- Residential quality and impact on amenity;
- Open space;
- Access and transport;
- Environmental protection;
- Flood risk and drainage;
- Waste-water infrastructure;
- Waste management;
- Natural heritage; and
- Section 76 planning agreement

He explained that the application provided for 100% social housing comprised of two and three bedroom units and was supported by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

He stated that DfC Historical Environment Division had offered no objection to the renovation of the critical risk Listed Building.

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

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. J. Mawhinney (MBA Planning) to the meeting.

Ms. Mawhinney explained that the applicant had designed a previous scheme at the application site which had been approved by the Committee in 2021, and that he had again developed a proposal that was respectful of the sensitivities of the site in terms of heritage interests and preservation of the amenity of neighbouring residents.

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
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She stated that the design encompassed the needs of the area in terms of housing tenure and type which had been developed alongside Choice Housing and was supported by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

She concluded by stating that the proposal would bring employment of around 80 professional and construction work jobs during the development period, with a total investment of £6.5m and was a long-term solution for an otherwise vacant piece of land that would enhance the character and amenity of the area.

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

**LA04/2025/1140/F and LA04/2025/0976/LBC -
Alterations to shopfront - 35-39 Royal Avenue**

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with an overview of the application Full and Listed Building Consent for alterations to the shopfront at 35-39 Royal Avenue.

He referred the Committee to the following key issues for consideration:

- The principle of the development at the location;
- Impact on the listed building; and
- Impact on the Belfast City Centre Conservation Area.

He reported that DfC Historic Environment Division (HED) and the Council's Conservation Area Officer had been consulted and offered no objections to the proposal, subject to conditions.

He stated that, having regard to the development plan, relevant planning policies and consultation responses, the application was considered acceptable.

The Committee approved full and listed building consent and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and to deal with any other matters that might arise, provided they were not substantive.

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
Tuesday, 16th September, 2025**

**LA04/2025/0607/F - Amendments to previously
approved application (LA04/2023/4093/F).
Proposal includes raising of ridge, fenestration
changes to side and Juliet balcony to front. –
5 Squires Hill Road**

The Planning Manager outlined the application for the Committee and explained that the application sought full planning permission for amendments to a previously approved application.

He stated that, having regard to the policy context, the proposal was considered to be acceptable, and it was recommended that planning permission be granted.

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

Restricted Items

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

Quarter 4 Finance Report - 2024/2025

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

Quarter 1 Finance Report - 2025/2026

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

**Draft Supplementary Planning Guidelines (SPG) -
DOA-01: Sailortown, Greater Clarendon and City
Quays Draft SPG and DOA-07: Cathedral and NE
Quarter Draft SPG**

The Committee agreed to the publication for public consultation of draft Development Opportunity Areas (DOAs) Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) which relate specifically to DOA_01 Sailortown, Greater Clarendon and City Quays and DOA_07 Cathedral and NE Quarter.

Chairperson

Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee

Monday, 15th September, 2025

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

Members present: Councillor Hanvey (Chairperson);
Alderman Sonia Copeland; and
Councillors Bell, Bower, Brennan, R. Brooks,
Canavan, de Faoite, S. Douglas, Ferguson, Flynn,
Maghie, McCabe, McCallin, McCann,
McDowell, McKay, Ó Néill, Verner and Walsh.

In attendance: Mr. D. Martin, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;
Mr. K. Forster, Director of Economic Development;
Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Property and Projects;
Ms. C. Haughey, Principal Auditor, Audit Governance and
Risk Services;
Mr. A. McKinley, Internal Auditor, Audit Governance and
Risk Services;
Mr. R. McConnell, Chief Executive, ICC Belfast
Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. (BWUH Ltd.);
Mr. I. Bell, Director of Finance, Risk, and Corporate
Services, ICC Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd.
(BWUH Ltd.); and
Mr. C. Mealey, Committee Services Officer.

(Councillor Flynn in the Chair)

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 16th June, 2025, were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that the minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st July, 2025.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Capital and Maintenance Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1** Members have requested regular updates on capital and maintenance works at the ICC Waterfront and Ulster Hall. This paper provides an update since the last report to Committee.

2.0 Recommendations

Members are asked to note the update on capital and maintenance works at the Waterfront and Ulster Halls.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Waterfront Hall Chiller Units

Members will be aware that this project is at *Stage 2 - Uncommitted* on the Capital Programme. Approval has been received to proceed with the detailed design. The Consultants are continuing to work on the designs, and have also been exploring heat recovery options with the Energy Management Team. It is anticipated the designs will be complete by end September 2025. Once the business case is complete the project can be taken forward to the next stage.

3.2 Waterfront Hall Smoke Curtains

Members are reminded that this project is at *Stage 1 - Emerging* on the Capital Programme. The Consultants have now completed the modelling exercise. The results of the CFD model were positive and are currently being reviewed by the Fire Officer and Building Control with a view updating the current Fire Strategy. It is anticipated that minimal works will be required and will relate primarily to decommissioning of the existing smoke curtain.

3.3 Ulster Hall – Lighting Scheme

This project involves the installation of an LED lighting display on the façade of Ulster Hall capable of changing colour similar to City Hall's Illuminate scheme. The lighting project at the Ulster Hall was added as a Stage 1 – Emerging project to the Capital Programme in April 2025 by the SP&R Committee. Design and delivery costs are being funded by DfC and the Linen Quarter BID. It is anticipated that the contractor will be appointed in October with the works to take place in February/March 2026. Concurrent to this while the scaffolding is up for the installation of the lighting system the front of the

Ulster Hall (both sides of the main entrance and the metal canopy) will be redecorated.

4.0 Financial and Resource Implications

Financial – None at this time; *Resources* – Officer time to deliver as required.

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

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

The Director of Property and Projects also provided the Committee with an update in relation to the 'Knotted Gun' sculpture, which was currently on display within Girdwood Community Hub in North Belfast. She reminded Members that the sculpture was gifted to Belfast by the Olsson Family, owners of Stena Line, to symbolise peace and non-violence, and that the family had recently requested that the sculpture be displayed in a location with a higher footfall. The Director reported that the Waterfront Hall had been identified as a potential new location for the sculpture, and that further engagement would take place with Stena Line and Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall (BWUH) Ltd. in respect of the potential relocation. She advised that an update on the potential relocation would be reported to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

The Committee noted the update provided on the capital and maintenance works at the Waterfront and Ulster Hall.

Restricted Items

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

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

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

Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee
Monday, 15th September, 2025

Annual Report and Financial Statements
for the year ended 31st March 2025

The Committee noted the BWUH Ltd. Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March, 2025.

2025/26 Quarter 1 Performance Update

The Chief Executive, BWUH Ltd., and the Director of Finance, Risk, and Corporate Services, BWUH Ltd., provided the Committee with an update in respect of BWUH Ltd.'s performance for Quarter 1 of 2025/26.

The Director of Finance, Risk, and Corporate Services provided the Committee with an overview of the financial figures for Quarter 1 of 2025/26, which included the overall actual income and expenditure figures against targets. He also outlined the occupancy rates for both the Waterfront and the Ulster Hall in Quarter 1.

The Chief Executive presented the Committee with a business update including detail on BWUH Ltd.'s work in relation to:

- **Local community** – recent announcement by BWUH Ltd. that it had selected Dementia NI as its charity partner for 2025; continued support for local communities and businesses to help tackle issues such as food poverty, and help raise suicide prevention awareness;
- **Sustainability** - continued focus on the reduction of carbon emissions through a waste management strategy and further implementation of the Re-usable Cup Scheme;
- **Event Curation** – new event 'Sip and Savour' to celebrate local distilleries and brewers and an event in August to mark the 80th birthday of Van Morrison;
- **Apprenticeships** – continued support of local apprenticeships; and
- **Business Plan** – Five-Year Business Plan launched on 15th September, 2025, in the Waterfront Hall.

The Chief Executive also highlighted BWUH Ltd.'s work in respect of VIP memberships, social seating, community pricing, reprogramming and grassroots initiatives.

During discussion, the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance, Risk, and Corporate Services answered a range of questions from the Members in relation to social seating, community pricing, accessibility and neurodiverse spaces.

The Committee noted BWUH Ltd.'s performance update for Quarter 1 2025/26.

Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee
Monday, 15th September, 2025

Internal Audit Update

The Committee was provided with an update on the outcome of the 2024/25 internal audit of BWUH Ltd., which included a summary of the key findings and highlighted that an action plan would be implemented to address the issues identified.

The Committee noted the update in relation to the internal audit of BWUH Ltd.

Review of Governance Arrangements

The Committee was provided with an update in relation to a recent review of the governance arrangements between the Council and BWUH Ltd., which was undertaken by the Council's Audit, Governance and Risk Services.

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting in December 2024, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee had agreed that the governance arrangements between the Council and BWUH Ltd. be added to the assignments to be undertaken by Audit, Governance and Risk Services. The Principal Auditor advised that the independent review had now been completed and outlined the key issues and areas for improvement which had been identified.

The Committee noted the update in relation to Audit, Governance and Risk Services Review of the governance arrangements between the Council and BWUH Ltd., including key issues and areas for improvement.

Reserved Matters

The Director of Economic Development submitted for the Committee's consideration a report which outlined a number of reserved matters, which required approval of the Council.

He provided the Committee with an overview of the following reserved matters which BWUH Ltd. had sought approval:

- to enter into a contract with MCI;
- to enter into a five-year contract with Aruba Systems;
- to appoint a Chairperson to its Board of Directors; and
- to appoint the role of a Facilities Manager.

During discussion, the Strategic Director of Place and Economy, the Director of Economic Development, and BWUH Ltd.'s Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Risk, and Corporate Services, answered a range of question from the Members in relation to the above-mentioned reserved matters.

After discussion, the Committee approved:

- i. that BWUH Ltd. enter into a contract with MCI;
- ii. that BWUH Ltd. enter into a 5-year contract with Aruba Systems;

Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee
Monday, 15th September, 2025

- iii. the appointment of a Chairperson to the BWUH Ltd. Board of Directors; and
- iv. that BWUH Ltd. appoint the role of a Facilities Manager, and agreed that, in accordance with Standing Order 48(a), the aforementioned decision would not be subject to call-in, on the basis that an inability to immediately implement the decision would result in a breach of statutory duty.

Chairperson

Climate and City Resilience Committee

Thursday, 11th September, 2025

MEETING OF THE CLIMATE AND CITY RESILIENCE COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor M. Donnelly (Chairperson);
The Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Doherty;
Aldermen Copeland and McCoubrey; and
Councillors R. Brooks, T. Brooks, Collins, P. Donnelly,
S. Douglas, Ferguson, Groogan,
Lyons, Magee, McCann, Meenehan and Walsh.

In attendance: Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;
Ms. D. Caldwell, Climate Commissioner;
Ms. C. Shortt, Monitoring, Learning & Reporting Officer; and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology for inability to attend was reported from Councillor Murray.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 7th August were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st September.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

Presentations

Shared Island Unit

Mr. E. Duffy and Ms. A. Murphy, Shared Island Unit (Department of the Taoiseach), were welcomed to the meeting.

Together they outlined that the Shared Island Initiative aimed to deepen cooperation and reconciliation across the island of Ireland. It emphasised building consensus around a shared future, leveraging the principles of the Good Friday Agreement, and fostering North-South and East-West relationships. The initiative was supported by the Irish Government's Programme for Government 2025 and the National Development Plan 2026-2030, with a €2 billion Shared Island Fund allocated for strategic projects until 2035. Key elements included cross-border investment, research on economic, social, and cultural issues, and dialogue through events such as the Shared Island Youth Forum and the Shared Home Place programme.

**Climate and City Resilience Committee,
Thursday, 11th September, 2025**

The Members were advised that recent announcements had highlighted significant funding for projects such as sustainable tourism, arts and cultural heritage, nature restoration, and cross-border research. Examples included €50 million for tourism destinations such as Carlingford Lough and Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Geopark, €16 million for research on topics such as cybersecurity and Parkinson's disease, and €9 million for bioeconomy demonstration projects. Belfast-specific initiatives included feasibility studies for cross-border partnerships, electric vehicle charging infrastructure for local sports clubs, and climate action projects in collaboration with Cork.

The Shared Island Research Programme had produced numerous reports analysing cross-border issues, such as trade, education, healthcare, and energy infrastructure. The studies aimed to provide evidence-based insights to inform policy and foster collaboration. The Shared Home Place programme, announced in 2025, focused on connecting communities through heritage and culture, exploring shared histories, and celebrating traditions. Funding for that initiative would begin in 2026, supporting projects that reflected themes like built heritage, cultural heritage, and Ireland's global connections.

Together they outlined that the Shared Island Civic Society Fund promoted practical North-South cooperation through civic society partnerships. With €6 million allocated for 2025-2027, the fund supported projects which demonstrated collaboration between organisations from both sides of the border. In 2024, Belfast-based organisations were involved in 31 successful applications. The fund aimed to strengthen cross-border connections and foster mutual understanding, with annual calls for proposals managed by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

In response to a Member's question, Mr. Duffy explained that the work of the program continued without prejudice on the constitutional question, with the Good Friday Agreement guaranteeing it.

After discussion the Chairperson thanked the representatives for their presentation and they retired from the meeting.

Centre for Cross Border Cooperation

The Chairperson welcomed Dr. A. Soares, Director of the Centre for Cross Border Studies, to the meeting.

Dr. Soares explained that the Centre for Cross Border Cooperation (formerly known as the "Centre for Cross Border Studies") was established in 1999 as an independent organisation based in Armagh. Its mission was to empower citizens and build capacity to promote cooperation across the Northern Ireland-Ireland border, as part of the peace and reconciliation process. The Centre also fostered collaboration between Ireland, Great Britain, Europe, and beyond, aiming to enhance mutual understanding, prosperity, and well-being. It provided practical advice for individuals crossing the border for work, study, or retirement, and conducted research and analysis on policies and legislation from London, Dublin, Belfast, and Brussels to support decision-makers and cross-border practitioners.

**Climate and City Resilience Committee,
Thursday, 11th September, 2025**

The Centre's research focused on key areas such as labour markets, conditions for North-South and East-West cooperation, and economic inactivity in border regions. It actively engaged with stakeholders through initiatives like the Ad-Hoc Group for North-South and East-West Cooperation and meetings with legislative committees, including those related to the Windsor Framework. Additionally, the Centre built capacity for cooperation at community, local authority, and public body levels, while supporting cross-border mobility through its Border People platform, which provided information, fostered networks, and generated evidence-based research.

The Members were advised that funding had evolved significantly over the years, with support from EU programs like INTERREG, PEACE initiatives, and the PEACEPLUS program (2021-2027).

Dr. Soares highlighted opportunities for growth in green sectors like sustainable transport, aerospace, and offshore wind electricity generation. It also underscored the need for upskilling to address challenges in advanced manufacturing, automation, robotics, and AI-driven digital transformation.

In response to Members' questions, Dr. Soares outlined that an agreed definition of what a cross-border worker would be useful, in order that they could more closely determine the numbers and provide further practical research and support.

In response to a further Member's query, he explained that the Centre would be happy to work to bring local Councils and other organisations together and suggested setting a theme.

After further discussion, the Chairperson thanked Dr. Soares for his presentation and he retired from the meeting.

Public Body Reporting - Mitigation Report

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To highlight the information that will be submitted onto the DAERA Public Body Reporting platform by 31st October 2025.

2.0 Recommendations

- I. To approve the short-term actions to be reported to DAERA as the required 'proposals and policies' to mitigate against the effects of climate change.**
- II. To approve the amounts and sources of the council's greenhouse gas emissions to be reported to DAERA for the past 3 years.**

3.0 Main report

3.1 Section 42 of the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 requires DAERA to make new Regulations, which will place climate change reporting duties on specified public bodies. The regulations came into operation in early May 2024, 21 days after they are laid in the Assembly. The first report required under the regulations, is the mitigation report which must be submitted by 31st October 2025.

3.2 What will be required?

There are two types of reports which we will be required to provide under the reporting duties set by the Regulations: 1) 'climate change mitigation' reports; and 2) 'climate change adaptation' reports. The mitigation report is due by 31st October 2025 and is outlined below.

3.3 Climate change mitigation reports must include:

- a statement, in respect of each of the three preceding financial years, of the amounts and the sources of the council's greenhouse gas emissions;
- a statement of the council's proposals and policies for reducing those amounts and otherwise for mitigating the effects of climate change in the exercise of its functions;
- a statement of the time-scales (this will be our short, medium and long-term actions) for implementing those proposals and policies; and
- an assessment of the progress made towards implementing the proposals and policies set out in any previous climate change mitigation report (we will add this – however this will become more important in future years submissions).

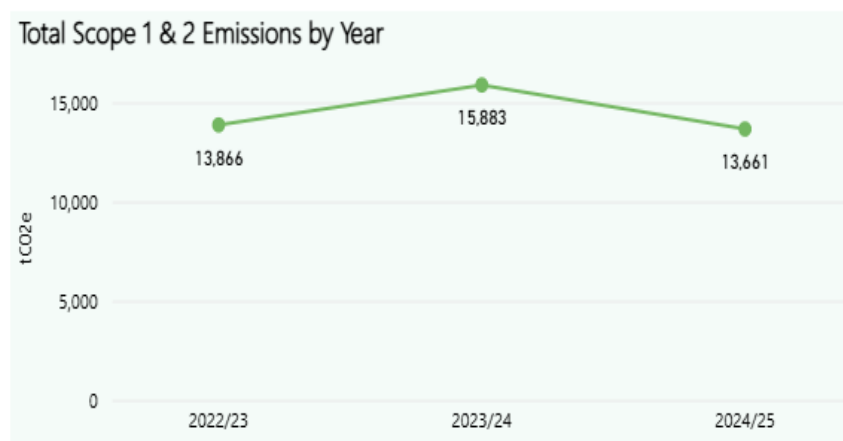
3.4 Greenhouse gas figures

The amount of greenhouse gases that the council emits annually is calculated using meter readings from our, gas and electricity usage. These figures then have a carbon factor applied to them to create an estimate for our greenhouse gas equivalent (CO₂e). The new DAERA reporting platform will require Public Bodies to input their raw data – for example KWh used of electricity. It will then apply a carbon figure to this within their system. We have mirrored this process using already published Welsh and Scottish models (DAERA have not published their model yet), and emission factors from the

Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) to obtain the Council's scope 1 and 2 emissions figures.

- 3.5 The estimated scope 1 and 2 emission figures are shown in the chart below. These figures may change depending on the finalised requirements from DAERA and any updated emission factors from Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ).

3.7



Proposals and policies for reduction

The Climate Action Plan (CAP) is a combined mitigation and adaptation plan. For the purpose of public body reporting, the short-term mitigation actions will be submitted to DAERA as our proposals and policies for carbon reduction. The short-term actions are listed below. Note that the short-term adaptation actions have been removed as they will form part of the adaptation report that is due to be submitted to DAERA in March 2026.

3.8

- Develop and launch an accessible climate data platform to track progress on delivering climate adaptation and mitigation actions (1.7)
- Develop a sustainable/ low carbon procurement policy and supplier guidance documents to support a transition to an inclusive, net zero and resilient future (1.12)
- Develop a sustainable food policy for the Council that addresses waste, sourcing, packaging, emissions measurement and an events protocol (1.14)
- Complete a second phase of building energy audits - (Andersonstown LC, Lisnasharragh LC, Templemore Av LC, Brook LC) and the Waterfront Hall (3.4)

- Develop the integration of whole life carbon assessments as standard practice in the Capital Programme (3.8)
- Launch a phased metering and retrofitting programme across BCC's top energy users based on the findings of the building level audits of Adelaide, Cecil Ward, City Hall and Duncrue (3.11)
- Scope out a strategy to increase renewable and low-carbon energy use through corporate power purchase agreements (3.15)
- Review the Business Travel Policy and develop the Sustainable Staff Travel Plan to encourage modal shift, active travel and more fuel-efficient driving for Council staff (4.1)
- Through sustainable procurement, aim to use local suppliers to the Council to reduce miles travelled within the confines of procurement legislation and Local Govt Act restrictions (4.4)
- Conduct a commercial assessment of Council land suitable for installing low emission vehicle (LEV) charging points (4.9)
- Commence work on repurposing staff parking spaces for cycle racks and integrate appropriate facilities to support active travel e.g. shower and changing facilities (4.10)
- Initiate an internal Council-level Waste Management Plan which aligns with the Waste Management Hierarchy and with an emphasis on green waste (5.3)
- Continue to progress the proposal for a single use plastics policy for the Council (5.4)
- Develop a mechanism to track and report on internal Council generated waste (5.7)

3.9 Internally, actions will be monitored and reported to the Climate Programme Board. Although the next mitigation report will not be required until 2028, a progress report will be developed for CMT and the Climate and City Resilience Committee on an annual basis to report on progress against each action, and the Council's emissions figures. Information collected will all be available on the Data Platform.

4.0 Financial & Resource Implications

4.1 There are no financial and resource implications.

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

5.1 Any good relations or equality implications will be identified as part of the Council's screening process.

6.0 Appendices

1. [The list of 40 public bodies that are required to report under the Act.](#)
2. [Climate change Act 2022 \(section 42\)](#)"

The Committee adopted the recommendations within the report.

**Requests to Present at a Future Meeting –
Councillor T. Brooks to raise**

At the request of a Member, the Committee agreed to invite representatives from the following groups to present at a future meeting:

- Three Sisters Gardening Community Group; and
- Community Garden Support.

Chairperson

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Standards and Business Committee

Tuesday, 23rd September, 2025

MEETING OF THE STANDARDS AND BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Flynn (Chairperson);
The High Sheriff (Councillor McAteer);
Aldermen Lawlor and McCullough; and
Councillors Bower, Bradley, de Faoite,
P. Donnelly, D. Douglas, Long, Lyons,
Magee, McCallin, McDowell, I. McLaughlin,
R. McLaughlin and Murphy.

In attendance: Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor and Director of Legal
and Civic Services;
Mr. J. Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance
Manager; and
Mr. B. Flynn, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 21st August were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st September.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Motions

The Committee considered the following motions which had been received in advance of the Council's meeting on 1st October:

Community Orchards

The Committee agreed that the motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Bower and seconded by Councillor McAteer be referred, in the first instance, to the People and Communities Committee.

**Standards and Business Committee,
Tuesday, 23rd September, 2025**

**Feasibility of a Dedicated Scrambler
Site and Programme**

The Committee agreed that the motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Doherty and seconded by Councillor de Faoite be referred, in the first instance, to the People and Communities Committee.

Chairperson