

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



**Belfast
City Council**

**MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
REPORTS TO FOLLOW (1)**

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet both online and in-person, in the Lavery Room - City Hall on Friday, 20th February, 2026 at 9.30 am, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

2. **Restricted Items**

- (d) St Brigids GAC Management Agreement at Musgrave Park (Pages 1 - 6)

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

- (f) Correspondence received from Minister of Justice - Standalone Hate Crime Bill (Pages 7 - 12)
- (a) Contracts Update (Pages 13 - 22)

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

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Subject:	Correspondence received from Minister of Justice - Standalone Hate Crime Bill
Date:	20th February, 2026
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Eilish McGoldrick, Democratic Services and Governance Co-ordinator

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	To note the correspondence received from the Minister of Justice in relation to the need for a standalone Hate Crime Bill.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the correspondence as set out in the report.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p>Key Issues</p> <p>The Committee will recall that, at its meeting on 21st November, the Members of the Committee were provided with an update on the results of a formal public consultation on draft byelaws for the city centre and further engagement.</p>
3.2	During discussion, the Committee agreed that, to deal with some of the obstructive, threatening and abusive behaviour in the city centre, it write to the Justice Minister to outline the need for a standalone Hate Crime Bill and highlight the requirement for an additional class of offenses, noting that the change model in sentencing did not go far enough.
3.3	Subsequently, Democratic Services wrote to the Minister for Justice and a response has been received at Appendix 1.
3.4	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
3.5	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – Response from the Justice Minister.

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE MINISTER

Minister's Office Block C,
Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
Ballymiscaw
Belfast
BT4 3SG
Tel: 028 9076 5723
DOJ.MinistersOffice@justice-ni.gov.uk

Our Ref: COR-1046-2025

Your Ref: EMJM181225

Ms Eilish McGoldrick
Democratic Services and Governance Coordinator
Belfast City Council
Via email: mcgoldricke@belfastcity.gov.uk

9 January 2026

Dear Eilish,

Thank you for your letter of 18 December. I share the concern of Committee Members regarding obstructive, threatening and abusive behaviour in Belfast city centre.

One of my priorities as Justice Minister has been to improve support and legislative protections for victims of hate crime. Proposed new legislative provisions in this Assembly mandate will modernise hate crime law in Northern Ireland and provide a more robust system to sanction offenders. These provisions will be delivered through a Sentencing Bill, that I plan to introduce to the Assembly in early 2026, and a Victims and Witnesses of Crime Bill - planned for introduction in spring 2026.

The loss of two years of Assembly business time and the constraint on resources left insufficient time and resource to accommodate the introduction of a stand-alone Hate Crime Bill in the current mandate. The staged approach which I adopted was specifically

to ensure that the key recommended provisions from Judge Marrinan's review of hate crime will be in place before they would have had I remained wedded to a stand-alone Hate Crime Bill which would have fallen into the next mandate, given the restricted legislative programme in this short mandate. Thankfully, it also does no injury to the efficacy of the provisions themselves.

The statutory aggravation model to be included in the Sentencing Bill will become the core method of prosecuting hate crimes in Northern Ireland, allowing all existing criminal offences to be aggravated by hostility based on membership or perceived membership of a protected group. Increased sentences will be allowed, within existing sentence ranges, for aggravated offences. It will also recognise intersectionality for current protected groups by allowing recording of hostility towards more than one protected group in a single offence.

Additional support for victims and witnesses will be included in the Victims and Witnesses of Crime Bill which will include provisions to allow automatic eligibility for consideration of special measures (such as giving evidence by video link) and protection from in-person cross-examination by the defendant in hate crime cases. These measures aim to help improve the quality of the evidence given by the victim or witness and give the victim greater certainty from the outset that they would not have to face the accused in court.

Regarding the issues being considered by the Council Committee, the Department recognises the importance of freedom of expression, as well as the challenges associated with it when speech becomes hateful. The remainder of Judge Marrinan's recommendations, including freedom of expression and stirring up offences will be considered in the next mandate, to allow policy development work and consultation required in advance of legislation being drafted to take place.

Legislation alone will not stop manifestations of prejudice and hate in our society. Addressing hate and prejudice requires a cross-government approach and my

Department is engaged in ongoing work with other Departments to tackle the enabling factors of hate crime and align respective strategies and policies - for example, to connect the TEO Racial Equality Strategy and Together: Building a United Community with the Department's work on Community Safety. This work can help enhance efforts to tackle inequalities, promote good relations and strengthen social cohesion.

Yours sincerely



NAOMI LONG MLA
Minister of Justice

Please ensure that you quote our reference number in any future related correspondence.

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Subject:	Contracts Update
Date:	20 February 2026
Reporting Officer:	Sharon McNicholl, Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Corporate Services
Contact Officer:	Noleen Bohill, Head of Commercial and Procurement Services

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

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
	The purpose of this report is to:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek approval from members for tenders, contract modifications to contract term and Single Tender Actions (STA) over £30,000 • Inform members on a Meet the Buyer Event being held on Wednesday 25th March 2026
2.0	Recommendations
	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the public advertisement of tenders as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 1) • Approve the award of STAs in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 2) • Approve the modification of the contract as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 3) • Note the Meet the Buyer Event being held in City Hall on Wednesday 25th March 2026 (Section 7.0)
3.0	Competitive Tenders
	<p>Section 2.5 of the Scheme of Delegation states Chief Officers have delegated authority to authorise a contract for the procurement of goods, services or works over the statutory limit of £30,000 following a tender exercise where the council has approved the invitation to tender.</p> <p>Standing Order 60(a) states any contract that exceeds the statutory amount (currently £30,000) shall be made under the Corporate Seal. Under Standing Order 51(b) the Corporate Seal can only be affixed when there is a resolution of the Council.</p> <p>Standing Order 54 states that every contract shall comply with the relevant requirements of national and European legislation.</p> <p>The Committee is asked to approve the public advertisement of tenders as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 1).</p>
4.0	Single Tender Actions (STAs)
	<p>The Council's current Single Tender Action (STA) process, which has been in place since 2020, provides assurance that the Council continues to comply with its obligations under the Procurement Act 2023 'the Act' and internal governance arrangements including required controls and approvals. It mirrors the Act setting out the exceptional and specific circumstances when a STA can be used (see STA/ Direct Award Reasons Table in Appendix 1).</p> <p>To support Officers understanding and to build capability, CPS offer support training and guidance on the STA process.</p> <p>In line with Standing Order 55 the Committee is asked to approve the award of the STAs in Appendix 1 (Table 2).</p>

5.0	Modification to Contract
	The Committee is asked to approve the following modification of the contract as per Standing Order 37a as set out in Appendix 1 (Table 3).
6.0	Tender pipeline
	<p>To support transparency and assist supplier planning, Members should note that Future Tendering Opportunities are published bi-annually on the Councils website. The current update Tendering opportunities covers future tendering opportunities up to 31st March 2027.</p> <p>Note: CPS consult with Departments to help populate this procurement pipeline and are reliant on Departments sharing their available procurement plans.</p>
7.0	BCC Meet the Buyer Event
	<p>A 'Meet the Buyer' event will take place in Belfast City Hall on Wednesday 25 March, 9am-1pm, organised by Belfast City Council, in partnership with InterTradelreland.</p> <p>Businesses from across Ireland are being invited to hear about upcoming procurement opportunities available within the public sector in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Open to businesses, social enterprises and voluntary and community organisations across the island of Ireland, the event will highlight a wide range of public procurement opportunities with the council, other local authorities, and other public bodies such as Translink, NI Water, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, Education Authority, Housing Executive, Construction and Procurement Delivery (CPD), and Office of Government Procurement.</p> <p>Attendees can chat directly to buyers and a range of support organisations such as InterTradelreland, Federation of Small Business and Belfast Chamber to hear more about upcoming opportunities, how the procurement process works and get practical advice and support on how to find and submit tender bids.</p> <p>In addition to supporting businesses across the island of Ireland to access public sector opportunities, the event will also provide internal benefits to the Council through direct engagement with the supplier market. Officers will gain insight into market capacity, innovation and barriers to participation, supporting more effective procurement planning and specification design. This proactive engagement aligns with best practice in public procurement and will contribute to improved competition, value for money and delivery of social value outcomes/</p> <p>Registration is planned to open Thursday 19th February.</p>

8.0	Financial & Resource Implications
	The financial resources for these contracts are within approved corporate or departmental budgets.
9.0	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment
	None
10.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table 1 - Competitive Tenders • Table 2 - Single Tender Actions • Table 3 - Modification to Contract

Table 1: Competitive Tenders

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Est. Max Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services	On published pipeline (Y/N)	Prior Committee approval (Y/N) If Y name Committee & Date	External Funding (Y/N)
Hire of marquees and equipment for Belfast City Council Events	Up to 3 years	£380,000	D Sales	BCC requires the hire of marquees to provide cover for traders, exhibitors, performers and for general public during our annual programme of events. Marquess will be used for music, dance, flower shows and for trading.	Y	N	N
Technical Research and Guidance	Up to 3 years	£72,300	P Gribben	Provides in-depth technical research and guidance to help Digital Services advance the initiatives/projects that support execution of the Digital strategy.	N	N	N
Supply, delivery and fitting of hydraulic hoses on vehicles and mobile plant	Up to 3 years	£100,000	D Sales	Essential parts and specialist fitting service to support the Council's Fleet Management Unit.	Y	N	N
Wavenet Mitel Software Assurance and Support	Up to 2 years	£220,000	S McNicholl	Support and software assurance for all Mitel servers and software including licencing which provide telephony services for all BCC sites including the Customer Hub.	N	N	N
Provision of coordination of services for delivery of Culture Night Belfast for 2026 & 27 with the cultural sector	Up to 21 months	£300,000	D Martin	Services to help support the delivery of Culture Night in 2026 and 2027 (subject to necessary approvals)	N	CGNR committee	N

Appendix 1

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Est. Max Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services	On published pipeline (Y/N)	Prior Committee approval (Y/N) If Y name Committee & Date	External Funding (Y/N)
						in February 2026.	
Augment the City	Up to 1 year	£51,500	S McNicholl	Develop the Augment the City use case, utilising the existing Small Cell Indoor Public 5G connectivity in Belfast City Hall. This project will run for one year under the agreed trial terms and conditions and support model.	N	SP&R Committee January 2026	N
Procurement and installation of 26 SMART compactor litter bins	One off Purchase	£93,444	S Leonard	To replace standard black litter bins within the City Centre. This is part of our litter bin replacement programme and is an extension of the SMART bin pilot at City Hall and vicinity. Replacing the current ones which are rented.	N	N	N
Supply and Delivery of Uniforms, Footwear and PPE	Up to 5 years	£1,500,000	S Grimes	This is a recurring contract for supply and delivery of specific uniforms, footwear and various PPE to BCC stores that are required throughout BCC for services to carry out their daily operations.	Y	N	N
Food Village operator to support the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann	Up to 2 years	Income based contract	K Forster	Operator required to co-ordinate and manage a number of local food and drink vendors to support delivery of the	N	SP&R Committee January 2026	N

Appendix 1

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Est. Max Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services	On published pipeline (Y/N)	Prior Committee approval (Y/N) If Y name Committee & Date	External Funding (Y/N)
				Fleadh 26 with option to cover Fleadh 27, if required.			

Table 2: Single Tender Actions

Title	Duration	Est. Max Contract Value	SRO	Description	Supplier	STA Reason
Purchase of 6 x 7.5-ton column lifts	One off Purchase	£37,000	D Sales	Replacement lifts must be compatible with existing lifts and associated systems. The supplier the sole sales agents, authorised repair agents and the only company who carry out warranty work on behalf of Steril Koni UK on the Koni lift range installed in Ireland.	Search Workshop Supplies Ltd	3.
Delivery and off-loading of Forcing and Bedding Bulbs	Up to 5 years	£180,000	D Sales	A competitive tender process was undertaken for this requirement; however, no bids were received, leaving no provider to meet the Council's operational needs. Historically, this service has been delivered through quotation exercises, with Green Gardens consistently providing the required works to the necessary standard and best VFM.	Green Gardens	1.
Annual engagement of the Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation (IRRV)	Up to 3 years	£144,000	T Wallace	Specialist advice on rating matters including challenge to BCC assessments in the Valuation List (on going challenges include BWH/UH, Markets); advice on rate implications of investment projects (2 Royal Avenue, student housing, build to rent);accuracy of BCC valuations in valuation list and advice for Business Rate Reform consultations	IRRV	3.

Appendix 1

				The supplier is the only available provider of these services		
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Table 3: Modification to Contract

Title of Contract	Original Contract Duration & Value	Modification required	SRO	Description	Supplier
Sustainable Food Partnership Support Q22-24	Up to 12 months & £29,000	Additional 3 months and £10,250	J Tully	There is a need for a further 3 months of Belfast Food Partnership support by the contractor so that there can be a sufficient handover of the work to a new Food Systems Coordinator who started in post in the Council in December 2025 and to finalise delivery of Sustainable Food Strategy. Due to recruitment challenges, there was a delay in them starting and therefore there is a need for further support from the contractor for the Sustainable Food Programme. Quotation now exceeds £30,000. Fully Funded.	Food Ethics Council

STA/ Direct Award Reasons

STA Number	Full description
1. Switching to a Direct Award	Switching to a Direct Award: No response or no suitable response following advertised procurement exercise.
2. Single Supplier for Art or Artistic Performance	Single Supplier for Art or Artistic Performance: the creation or acquisition of a unique work of art or artistic performance
3. Single Supplier Absence of Competition for Technical Reasons	Single Supplier Absence of Competition for Technical Reasons: only a particular supplier can supply the goods, services or works required and there are no reasonable alternatives to those goods, services or works

Appendix 1

STA Number	Full description
4. Single Supplier Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)	Single Supplier Intellectual Property Rights (IPR): only particular supplier can supply the goods, services or works required due to that particular supplier having IPR or other exclusive rights and there are no reasonable alternatives to those goods, services or works.
5. Urgency	Urgency: Where the goods, services or works to be supplied under the public contract are strictly necessary for reasons of extreme and unavoidable urgency which is not attributable to any act or omission of and could not have been foreseen by the council, and as a result the public contract cannot be awarded on the basis of a competitive tendering procedure using the reduced 10 day period for 'urgent procurements'
6. Prototypes and Development	Prototypes and Development: the production of a prototype, or supply of other novel goods or services (i.e. goods or services designed or developed at the request of BCC), for the purpose of testing the suitability of the goods or services, researching the viability of producing or supplying the goods or services at scale and developing them for that purpose, or other research, experiment, study or development.
7. Additional or Repeat Goods Services or Works	Additional or Repeat Goods Services or Works: Extension or Partial Replacement concerns the supply of goods, services or works by the existing supplier (includes supplier that the council no longer has a contract with) which are intended as an extension to, or partial replacement of, existing goods, services or works in circumstances where a change in supplier would result in the council receiving goods, services or works that are different from, or incompatible with, the existing goods, services or works, and the difference or incompatibility would result in disproportionate technical difficulties in operation or maintenance.
8. Commodity	Commodity: Supplies quoted and purchased on a commodity market
9. Advantageous time-limited	Advantageous time-limited: Supplies or services on particularly time-limited advantageous terms e.g. supplier winding up its business activities
10. Additional or Repeat Goods Services or Works	Additional or Repeat Goods Services or Works: Similar to Existing Goods Services or Works, concerns the supply of goods, services or works by the existing supplier (includes supplier that the council no longer has a contract with) that are similar to existing goods, services or works where the existing goods, services or works were supplied under a public contract that was awarded following a competitive procedure within the period of five years ending with the day on which the transparency notice is published, and the tender notice or any tender document in respect of the earlier contract set out the Council's intention to carry out a subsequent procurement of similar goods, services or works in reliance on this direct award justification, and any other information specified in Section 95.
11. Other	Other: Reason not in line with Procurement Act 2023

Appendix 1

STA Number	Full description
12. To Protect Life	To Protect Life: where a Minister of the Crown has by Regulations provided that specified contracts may be awarded to protect human animal or plant life or health or protect public order or safety
13. Schedule 2– Exempted Contract	Schedule 2– Exempted Contract: Requirement not considered procurement spend but use of STA process to document and approve spend. https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/54/schedule/2