

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



**Belfast  
City Council**

17th November, 2020

## **MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet via Microsoft Teams on Friday, 20th November, 2020 at 9.30 am., for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

SUZANNE WYLIE

Chief Executive

### **AGENDA:**

#### **1. Routine Matters**

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

#### **2. Restricted Items**

- (a) Medium Term Financial Plan and Efficiency Programme (Pages 1 - 8)
- (b) Finance Update (Pages 9 - 36)
- (c) Unit Fees for St George's Market (Pages 37 - 40)
- (d) Update on the Operational Recovery of Council Services (Pages 41 - 54)
- (e) Destination Hub – Update on Outline Business Case (Pages 55 - 62)
- (f) Recruitment of Senior Posts (Pages 63 - 66)

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

- (a) Motion - Secured Serviced City Centre Civic Bicycle Parking Facilities (Pages 67 - 68)
- (b) Motion: Climate Change Act - Further Response from Minister of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (Pages 69 - 74)
- (c) Motion: Moratorium on Licences for Fracking and Exploration and Extraction of Fossil Fuels - Response from Ministers for the Economy and Infrastructure (Pages 75 - 82)

4. **Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues**

- (a) Update on City Region Growth Deal (Pages 83 - 96)
- (b) Inclusive Growth - Social Value Policy (Pages 97 - 100)
- (c) Final Resilience Strategy for Belfast (Pages 101 - 208)
- (d) Update on Consultation and Engagement (Pages 209 - 232)
- (e) EU Successor Funding Northern Ireland - Position Paper for SOLACE NI (Pages 233 - 248)
- (f) Update on Community Planning Partnership (Pages 249 - 260)

5. **Physical Programme and Asset Management**

- (a) Update on Area Working (Pages 261 - 282)
- (b) Assets Management (Pages 283 - 298)

6. **Finance, Resources and Procurement**

- (a) Update on Contracts (Pages 299 - 306)
- (b) Commercial and Procurement Service - Pricing Policy (Pages 307 - 358)

7. **Equality and Good Relations**

- (a) Minutes of the Meeting of the Shared City Partnership (Pages 359 - 388)
- (b) Equality and Diversity - Equality Screening and Rural Needs Outcome Report (Pages 389 - 396)
- (c) Diversity Action Plans (Pages 397 - 410)

8. **Operational Issues**

- (a) Minutes of the Meeting of the Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum (Pages 411 - 416)

- (b) Minutes of the Meeting of the Working Group on the Climate Crisis  
(Pages 417 - 422)
- (c) Minutes of the Meeting of Active Belfast Limited Board (Pages 423 - 446)
- (d) Schedule of Meetings 2021 (Pages 447 - 448)
- (e) Change of Date of Council Meeting (Pages 449 - 450)

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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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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Motion – Secured Serviced City Centre Civic Bicycle Parking Facilities</b>
<b>Date:</b>	20th November, 2020
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Walsh, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

## Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

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No

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If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

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## Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

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No

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<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To consider a motion on Secured Serviced City Centre Civic Bicycle Parking Facilities which was referred to the Committee by the Council at its meeting on 2nd November.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is requested to consider the motion and to take such action thereon as may be determined.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p>At the Council meeting on 2nd November, the following motion was proposed by Councillor Smyth and seconded by Councillor McKeown:</p> <p><i>“The Coronavirus pandemic has forced us all to rethink how we live our lives. However, as we seek to build back better, it is essential that we do this in a safe, sustainable way. Supporting cycling infrastructure in Belfast is key to this, enabling people to get around our city in a way which is good for health and good for the environment.</i></p>

	<p><i>However, given the regular theft of bicycles in the city centre, it is important that we take steps to provide facilities to enable people to feel secure when they travel there by bicycle.</i></p> <p><i>Therefore, the Council agrees to the creation of secured, serviced city centre civic bicycle parking facilities, and will reallocate car parking space or other appropriate property in the city centre for this purpose, and work with partners to enable this to happen.”</i></p>
3.2	In accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the motion was referred without debate to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.
3.3	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
3.4	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>None</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	None



Subject:	<b>Motion: Climate Change Act – Further Response from the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs</b>
Date:	20th November, 2020
Reporting Officer:	John Walsh, City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

## Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

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No

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If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

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## Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

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No

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<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	To consider a further response from the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in relation to a motion on a Climate Change Act.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the response.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b><u>Key Issues</u></b></p> <p>The Committee will recall that the Council, at its meeting on 1st September, passed the following motion:</p>

	<p>“This Council welcomes the environmental commitments in the New Decade New Approach Deal. This council is deeply concerned that the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs did not support an Assembly Motion to develop a Climate Change Act for Northern Ireland.</p> <p>This Council notes that Northern Ireland has fallen behind other parts of the UK in progressing reduction of emissions. A Climate Change Act can help us realise the ambition of the Belfast Agenda to create an environmentally sustainable City. This Council calls on the Minister to immediately prioritise the development of a Climate Change Act with legally binding and ambitious sectoral emission-reduction targets and a just transition to protect jobs through upskilling in less carbon intensive sectors.”</p>
3.2	A response was subsequently received from Minister Poots and was presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 23rd October.
3.3	In his response, the Minister had stated that he had written to the independent expert on UK Climate Change Committee (CCC) for advice on what would be Northern Ireland’s equitable contribution to the UK’s net zero emissions target, to ensure that its greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets were credible and evidence-based.
3.4	He had stated further that, unfortunately, the CCC was not in a position to respond to his request until after it had provided advice on the UK’s sixth carbon budget, which would be published in December, 2020.
3.5	In the interim, his officials had provided him with proposals on an options appraisal for a Climate Change Bill in Northern Ireland. The Minister would consider those options along with the advice provided from the CCC and would present his findings to the Northern Ireland Executive to agree a way forward.
3.6	The Committee, at its meeting on 23rd October, noted the Minister’s response and agreed that a further letter be forwarded to him seeking an update on the work which was being undertaken by his Department to address increasing carbon emission levels, including the mechanisms for monitoring, reporting and enforcement, the role of the Chief Inspector of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency in this work, and any assessment of carbon emissions which had been undertaken at a local level.
3.7	A response to that letter has now been received from the Minister, a copy of which is attached.
3.8	The Minister begins by pointing out that reducing carbon emissions requires a collective approach from Government and society and that it is the responsibility of Northern Ireland Departments to take action to reduce emissions in those areas under their control. He explains that the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs is responsible for emissions in the Agriculture, Land Use and Land Use Change and Forestry and Waste sectors and that it is taking forward or supporting a number of programmes of work which will directly contribute towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Several examples of these programmes are provided within the response.
3.9	The Minister then goes on to review the latest greenhouse gas emission figures for Northern Ireland and for its proportion of total UK emissions, both overall and in relation to the agriculture sector and points out that that sector is recognised by the CCC as being one of the most difficult ones in which to achieve reductions.

3.10	<p>Minister Poots then outlines the role of the Chief Inspector of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and concludes by referring to the Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) Regulations and the EU Emissions Trading Scheme in the context of the monitoring and reporting of emissions.</p> <p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p> <p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Document Attached</b>
	Copy of response from the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

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**Henry Downey**  
Democratic Services Officer  
Belfast City Council  
Legal and Civic Services Department  
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Our reference: CORR-1995-2020  
Date: 12 November 2020

Dear Henry

## **CARBON EMISSIONS LEVELS**

Thank you for your letter of 3 November acknowledging my response of 8 October 2020 in regards to the motion passed by Belfast City Council on the issue of developing a Climate Change Act for Northern Ireland.

You have requested an update on the work being undertaken by my Department to address increasing carbon emission levels. Taking action to reduce emissions requires collective action across all of government and all of society. It is the responsibility of all NI departments to take action to reduce emissions for areas that they have responsibility for. My department takes responsibility for emissions in the Agriculture, Land Use and Land use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) and Waste sectors. My Department is taking forward or supporting a number of programmes of work which will directly contribute towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions. These include the rewetting of peatlands, the development of a Green Growth Strategy and the planting of trees under 'Forests for our Future' which I launched in March 2020.

In the latest available figures (2018) NI's greenhouse gas emissions were estimated to be 19.4 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (MtCO<sub>2</sub>e). This was a decrease of 2.5% compared to 2017. The longer term trend showed a decrease of 20.0% compared to 24.3 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e from the 1990 base year. In terms of a proportion of total UK emission levels, NI emissions made up 4.3% of total UK emissions in 2018. This has risen from a rate of 3.1% in 1990 but is lower than the peak of 4.4% in 2016. However the makeup of emissions in each region are unique and it is difficult to compare emissions between countries. For example the agriculture sector makes up 27% of NI emissions and only 10% of overall UK emissions. It is recognised by the UK Climate Change Committee that the agriculture sector is one of the most difficult sectors to reduce emissions from.

The role of the NIEA Chief Inspector is to enforce various pieces of legislation designed to protect the Environment and Public Health and therefore contribute to emissions reductions.

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

One of the main pieces of legislation, the Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) Regulations 2013, encourages energy efficiency through the implementation of best available techniques. The EU Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) is another mechanism which contributes to emissions reductions. It is a market force driven scheme where installations have to buy allowances for every tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> that they emit. The NI installations in the ETS scheme regulated by the Chief inspector account for around 18% of total NI emissions. As part of these schemes, installations have to monitor and report emissions.

I trust that you find this helpful.

Yours sincerely



**EDWIN POOTS MLA**  
**Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs**

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Subject:	<b>Motion - Moratorium on Licences for Fracking and Exploration and Extraction of Fossil Fuels - Responses from the Ministers for the Economy and Infrastructure</b>
Date:	20th November, 2020
Reporting Officer:	John Walsh, City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

## Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes ☐ No ☒

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

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## Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes ☒ No ☐

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	To consider responses from the Ministers for the Economy and Infrastructure in relation to a motion on a Moratorium on Licences for Fracking and Exploration and Extraction of Fossil Fuels.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
1.2	The Committee is asked to consider the responses and take such action thereon as may be determined.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
	<b><u>Key Issues</u></b>
3.1	The Committee will recall that the Council, at its meeting on 1st October, passed the following motion:

	<p>“This Council recognises that we are in a climate emergency and, being aware of the environmental and public health damage caused by fracking and the exploration and extraction of hydrocarbons, agrees to write to the Minister for the Economy and to the Minister for Infrastructure to establish their respective intentions regarding (i) the issuing of exploratory licences and (ii) the removal of Permitted Development Rights for hydrocarbon exploration which are currently provided for under Part 16 of the Planning Order (Northern Ireland ) 2015.</p> <p>The Council also calls upon the Northern Ireland Executive to place an immediate ban on all petroleum licensing and deny permitted development rights to any company seeking to prospect for oil and or/gas.”</p>
3.2	Responses have now been received from the Minister for the Economy and the Minister for Infrastructure, copies of which are attached.
3.3	The Minister for the Economy, within her response, points out that the policy governing the issue of Permitted Development Rights for hydrocarbon exploration is the responsibility of the Department for Infrastructure and that she has, therefore, no comment to make on that matter. However, she confirms that that section of the motion dealing with the issuing of exploratory licences and calling upon the Northern Ireland Executive to place an immediate ban on all petroleum licensing does fall within her remit.
3.4	She explains that, on 13th October, in response to a Private Member’s motion on Onshore Petroleum Licensing and Drilling, she had outlined in the Northern Ireland Assembly her position on a moratorium or ban on petroleum development, as well as her intentions regarding the handling of two current petroleum licence applications. The full transcript of that debate can be accessed by clicking on the following link and scrolling down to page 28: <a href="http://data.niassembly.gov.uk/HansardXml/plenary-13-10-2020.pdf">http://data.niassembly.gov.uk/HansardXml/plenary-13-10-2020.pdf</a>
3.5	Minister Mallon, within her response, recognises, like the Council, that there is a climate emergency and stresses that she is continually examining ways in which to address it. She refers to the fact that, on 5th October, she had announced her intention to bring forward a package of changes to permitted development rights, including the removal of permitted development rights for petroleum (oil and gas) exploration. Her proposals would be presented to the Infrastructure Committee in the coming weeks for scrutiny.
3.6	The Minister goes on to point out that her Department also has a responsibility for regional planning policy, including the Strategic Planning Policy Statement provisions that <i>“there should be a presumption against the exploitation of unconventional hydrocarbon extraction until there is sufficient and robust evidence on all environmental impacts.”</i> She confirms that her position on this issue, like those of her predecessors, is unchanged, and that, in her view, that remains an appropriate precautionary approach.
3.7	The Minister then highlights the need to note that any proposals for development, involving unconventional hydrocarbon extraction are likely to be determined by her Department as regionally significant development. Such proposals would, she explains, be assessed on their individual merits and would take into account Strategic Planning Policy Statement provisions, the views of consultees and all other material planning considerations, including health and environmental impacts. She concludes by pointing out that there are currently no such planning applications before the Department for Infrastructure for consideration.

	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p> <p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents attached</b>
	Copies of responses from the Minister for the Economy and the Minister for Infrastructure.

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**From the Office of the Minister  
Diane Dodds MLA**



Mr Henry Downey  
Democratic Services Officer, Belfast City Council  
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Our Ref: CORR-4824-2020

Your Ref: HD/JT

26 October 2020

Dear Mr Downey,

**Petroleum licensing - Belfast City Council Moratorium**

Thank you for your letter dated 19 October 2020 seeking my response to the motion which was passed at a meeting of Belfast City Council on 01 October 2020.

As you will no doubt be aware, policy on the issue of Permitted Development Rights for hydrocarbon exploration is the responsibility of my Executive colleague, the Minister for Infrastructure. I therefore have no comment to make on that matter.

The section of the motion seeking my intention in respect of the issuing of exploratory licences and calling on the Northern Ireland Executive to place an immediate ban on all petroleum licensing does fall within my Department's remit. On 13 October 2020, in response to a Private Members Motion on Onshore Petroleum Licensing and Drilling in the Northern Ireland Assembly, I outlined my position with regard to a moratorium or ban on petroleum development, as well as my intentions with respect to the handling of two current petroleum licence applications.

The full transcript of the debate is available at the link below (see page 28 onwards)  
<http://data.niassembly.gov.uk/HansardXml/plenary-13-10-2020.pdf>.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Diane Dodds', with a horizontal line underneath.

**DIANE DODDS MLA**  
Minister for the Economy

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Department for

**Infrastructure**

An Roinn

**Bonneagair**

[www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk](http://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk)

**From the office of the Minister for Infrastructure  
Nichola Mallon MLA**

Henry Downey  
Democratic Services Officer  
Democratic Services Unit  
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Email: [Private.office@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Private.office@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk)

Your reference:  
Our reference: CORR-2782-2020  
Date 06 November 2020

[downeyh@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:downeyh@belfastcity.gov.uk)

Dear Mr Downey

## **LICENCES FOR FRACKING AND EXPLORATION AND EXTRACTION OF FOSSIL FUELS**

Thank you for your letter of 19 October 2020 regarding Belfast City Council's motion on a Moratorium on Licences for Fracking and Exploration and Extraction of Fossil Fuels.

Like the Council I also recognise there is a climate emergency and am continually looking at what I, as Infrastructure Minister, can do to address it. As you may be aware, on 5 October I announced my intention to bring forward a package of changes to permitted development rights (PDR), including the removal of PDR for petroleum (oil and gas) exploration. I will be bringing the proposals to the Infrastructure Committee for scrutiny in the coming weeks.

My Department also has responsibility for regional planning policy, including the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) provisions that *"there should be a presumption against the exploitation of unconventional hydrocarbon extraction until there is sufficient and robust evidence on all environmental impacts."* My position on this issue is unchanged from my predecessors and I consider that this remains an appropriate precautionary approach.

It is important to note that any proposals for development involving unconventional hydrocarbon extraction are likely to be determined by my Department as regionally significant development. Such proposals would be assessed on their individual merits, taking account of the SPPS, the relevant Local Development Plan (LDP), the views of statutory consultees and all other material planning considerations, including health

and environmental impacts. There are currently no such planning applications before my Department for consideration.

The issuing of exploratory licences is a matter for the Department for the Economy.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Mallon', written in a cursive style.

**NICHOLA MALLON MLA**  
**Minister for Infrastructure**



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Update on City Region Growth Deal</b>
<b>Date:</b>	20th November, 2020
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	This report is to provide the Committee with an update on the progress of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD).
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. the programme overview, the update in respect of each of the pillars , the progress that has been made in Outline Business Case (OBC) development and the important stage that the programme is now approaching;</li> <li>ii. the update in respect of the BRCD Council Panel and the minutes of the BRCD Council Panel held on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020; and</li> </ul>

	<p>iii. the recent successful bid to the Apprenticeship Challenge Fund and approve the approach to work in partnership with BRCD partners to deliver this collaborative project as outlined in section 3.14.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
	<b>Programme Overview</b>
3.1	<p>In September, the SP&amp;R Committee were advised of work completed by the BRCD partners to review their projects in the context of the Covid-19 crisis and also received an update on the work of the Executive and Advisory Boards to ensure that the Programme is aligned with the Economic Recovery Strategy. In addition, the Committee received an update on the digital task and finish group which had been set up to identify short-term measures to boost digital skills and support digital transformation as an immediate response to the crisis; a further update on this work is included in this report.</p>
3.2	<p>OBCs are now progressing towards completion. In light of the difficult financial climate facing all public bodies, and the importance of ensuring that the scale of ambition aligns with affordability and available finances, the focus at this stage is on resolving key issues and challenges particularly in respect of budget profiling and scalability. Robust financial planning will be critical and will need to include consideration of plans for long-term revenue financing, so that the transformative investments included within the BRCD can proceed with confidence.</p>
3.3	<p>As previously reported, the timeline for developing OBCs for all the capital projects that were outlined in the Heads of Terms has understandably had to be reviewed. Work on Draft OBCs is continuing at pace and will be considered by respective Advisory Boards in advance of consideration of the Executive Board in December. Partners remain determined to have a deal in place so that funding can begin to flow from 1 April 2021 and discussions are ongoing between Partners and the NI and UK Governments in relation to agreeing a “phased” deal to enable a ‘Deal Document’ to be signed off by the end of the financial year.</p>
3.4	<p>Communication and engagement continues to be a priority both at a project and programme level. The Committee was advised in February this year that specialist support was being commissioned to assist with strategic engagement activity - including both business and political engagement. Although this work was delayed somewhat due to the Covid crisis it is envisaged that, given recent advancements, strategic engagement with key stakeholders will begin over the coming months.</p>

	<b>Investment Priorities</b>
	<b>Tourism and Regeneration</b>
3.5	<p>Intensive engagement has taken place with partners to consider and address the impact of Covid-19 on this programme of investment. With the exception of one project within Antrim and Newtownabbey, all tourism and regeneration projects remain on schedule to submit final OBCs by the end of November. Members are reminded that the OBC for the Belfast Destination Hub will be the subject of a separate paper at today's meeting. The OBCs for regeneration projects also continue to reflect and respond to the new challenges facing town and city centres in light of the pandemic. It is intended that a collective recommendation for this Pillar will be submitted to the Executive Board in December for review.</p>
3.6	<p>A strategic narrative for the Tourism and Regeneration is currently being finalised. Once complete, this will provide a strong communications tool for both the Pillar and the Programme.</p>
	<b>Innovation</b>
3.7	<p>Final engagement workshops with the UK and NI Governments for the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre (AMIC), Global Innovation Institute (GII) and Institute for Research Excellence in Advanced Clinical Healthcare (i-REACH) OBCs were held in October. The workshops were positive, demonstrating the significant progress made, with detailed feedback received from all parties. Feedback from NI Government departments on The Centre for Digital Healthcare Technology (CDHT) OBC has been received and further feedback from the UK Government is imminent. A first draft OBC for the Screen Media &amp; Innovation Lab (SMIL) is progressing and is due to be submitted to the Innovation Pillar Board during November. The innovation projects have been significantly rescaled and are now broadly in line with the funding available to support this Pillar. Significant detailed work has been taking place in order to obtain agreed solutions to the initial revenue challenges of these projects and these solutions will be reported alongside the OBCs. Work has also taken place to ensure that any potential duplication is minimised and that projects both within the BRCD and across other NI City Deals is aligned as much as possible, recognising, for example, the very different stages of the deals.</p>
	<b>Digital</b>
3.8	<p>Detailed development of the Digital Innovation Programme Business Case has been taking place during recent months. The business case will prioritise a flexible 'funds-based' approach with the increased use of Challenge Funds alongside an Infrastructure Enabling fund which will support connectivity infrastructure as well as physical enabling infrastructure towards the</p>

	<p>development of the Belfast Smart District. Detailed and complex work continues to look at a governance structure to manage and administer these funds. Significant industry and government engagement has also taken place in recent months, with engagement with DfE, Invest NI and a positive session with UK Government in October. In addition, engagement continues with the Industry Reference Group, created by the Digital Innovation Commissioner.</p> <p><b>Infrastructure</b></p> <p>3.9 Significant progress has been made in developing OBCs, for the Newry Southern Relief Road, Lagan Pedestrian &amp; Cycle Bridge and Belfast Rapid Transit Phase 2. OBCs/IOBCs have now all been reviewed by the Department for Infrastructure Economists. Both the Lagan Pedestrian &amp; Cycle Bridge &amp; Newry Southern Relief Road have now been submitted to the Department of Finance for review. The Belfast Rapid Transit Phase 2 IOBC remains under review by economists and will be submitted to Department of Finance following review. Given the early stage of development of some of these projects there are very high levels of optimism bias included in the financial case, creating affordability challenges across the programme. The approach to Employability and Skills integration for all 3 projects has been incorporated in the OBCs/IOBCs and further information in relation to employment figures has been provided to the BRCD Team to inform the Employability and Skills programme.</p> <p><b>Employability and Skills (E&amp;S)</b></p> <p>3.10 The Employability &amp; Skills Programme continues to be refined with proposals developed under the 'employability', 'skills' and 'digital' thematic areas. An overall proposition document which outlines the full ambition of the E&amp;S pillar is also in development in draft form and includes details of the Programme and the role of partners in preparing for emerging employment opportunities and in promoting inclusive growth through their organisations. The Proposition will be further refined following additional engagement with partners across councils, colleges, universities and government departments which is planned for later this month. This will be followed by further industry engagement in early December. It is anticipated that a final E&amp;S Proposition will be submitted for approval to the Executive Board in February.</p> <p>3.11 As previously reported to the Committee, in May the BRCD partners established a digital task and finish group to identify short-term measures that could boost digital skills and support digital transformation in light of the immediate impact of Covid-19. This group worked closely with industry and government to identify a small number of interventions that could help to improve digital literacy, skills and capability. Digital Futures was one of the resulting interventions emerging from this work. Funded by the Department for the Economy as part of</p>
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	<p>the Skills Intervention Programme, and delivered by a number of FE Colleges across the region, more than 250 applicants applied for the 55 places available. Over the next 6 months the Programme will offer the successful graduates opportunities to explore career pathways in Cloud Computing, Data Analytics and Cyber Security. Each of the three programmes has now commenced and employer engagement is underway to match participants to internships which are expected early in 2021.</p>
3.12	<p>Work to advance further interventions developed through the task and finish group is also continuing. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhancing existing digital transformation support for small businesses and exploring the potential to provide capital grant funding to enable them to invest in digital transformation through the NI Executive's Growth &amp; City Deal Complementary Fund;</li> <li>- Improving access to digital literacy support for residents across the region and exploring innovative new approaches to employment pathways into the digital sector for non-graduates and those from under-represented client groups.</li> </ul>
3.13	<p>With ambitions for up to 20,000 new and better jobs over a spectrum of skill levels and across a range of sectors, work of the E&amp;S pillar has included development of a skills programme to align with, and add value to, existing interventions. An emerging priority of this programme is to increase the awareness and accessibility of apprenticeships for both employers and individuals. One of the city deal ambitions in this area is to create an Apprenticeship Hub to establish a centralised resource to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improve the visibility of apprenticeship provision; creating compelling content to stimulate employers to explore apprenticeship pathways; to support co-ordination across apprenticeship providers and to provide a virtual support environment for employers and apprentices;</li> <li>- Facilitate the future proofing of apprenticeship provision by developing new apprenticeship pathways within priority growth sectors aligned to BRCD investment; and;</li> <li>- Develop new innovative models of delivery, in partnership with government departments, to address barriers to participation aligned to under-represented client groups, key sector needs and/or the needs of smaller employers.</li> </ul>

3.14	<p>A recent funding opportunity emerging through the Department for Economy's Apprenticeship Challenge Fund enabled a collaborative bid to be submitted on behalf of the BRCD partners to advance the development of this Hub. A successful funding application has now been secured with up to £100k of resources to undertake developmental work in the design of a virtual apprenticeship platform and enable exploratory work to be undertaken within high value sectors on the development of new apprenticeship pathways. The overall project will be managed by the BRCD Team, with delivery of the project undertaken directly through the Council as well as through Further Education and University Partners. On this basis the Council will enter into legal agreements with our BRCD partners to deliver the component elements of the contract they are best placed to deliver.</p>
3.15	<p><b>BRCD Council Panel</b></p> <p>Members will be aware that the BRCD Council Panel provides a forum for members from all six partner councils to meet to jointly discuss issues, progress and benefits of the BRCD. Each council is represented on the Forum by four members and, as previously agreed by this Committee, the four BCC nominees are the party group leaders (or their nominees) from the four largest parties.</p>
3.16	<p>A virtual meeting of the Panel was held on the 30<sup>th</sup> September and hosted by Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council (minutes attached at Appendix 1). At this meeting the Panel received a detailed update on progress across the programme and Members considered how the programme might help support a sustainable, resilient recovery from the Covid crisis. Members also discussed key challenges facing the programme including the difficulty of communicating effectively in the current environment and how partners could help rebuild momentum and improve communications and engagement. The next meeting will be held on 25th November 2020 and will be hosted by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council.</p>
3.17	<p><b>Next Steps</b></p> <p>The completion of OBCs is now of critical importance in order to continue momentum for the Deal so that it can start to deliver, with a Deal Document being completed before the end of the financial year. To meet this deadline it will be essential to agree a phased deal, with those projects which are most developed being included in the first phase, allowing further time for other projects to undertake additional development work to enable them to demonstrate their value and impact. Work is also now ongoing in earnest with Department of Finance and partner Finance Directors to support profiling, affordability &amp; deliverability across the Deal. This work will continue to intensify as OBCs are finalised and as the Financial Agreement and Plan</p>



	elements of the Deal Document are drafted. Given the advanced stage of the programme and the finalisation of OBCs, strategic engagement with key stakeholders is crucial and core briefing material will be developed over the coming weeks.
3.18	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>All costs associated with the BRCD are within existing budgets.</p>
3.19	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>The Approach taken to develop the City Deal has been subject to independent equality screening and rural proofing and states that:</p> <p><i>‘BRCD is inherently inclusive, affording an opportunity for the region to grow in a way that will benefit the economy of Northern Ireland as a whole, thereby enhancing the lives and well-being of its citizens. If during further development of the programme it becomes apparent that there may be an adverse impact on certain groups or communities then the partnership commits to carrying out further Section 75 work and including screening and EQIAs as and when appropriate.’</i></p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Document Attached</b>
	Minutes of the BRCD Council Panel of 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2020.

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## BRCD Council Panel

<b>Subject:</b>	Minutes of Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) Council Panel
<b>Date:</b>	12:30 pm, 30 September 2020
<b>Councillors in attendance:</b>	<p>Councillor Uel Mackin – Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council (Chair)</p> <p>Alderman Mark Cosgrove – Antrim &amp; Newtownabbey Borough Council</p> <p>Alderman Phillip Brett – Antrim &amp; Newtownabbey Borough Council</p> <p>Councillor Stephen Ross – Antrim &amp; Newtownabbey Borough Council</p> <p>Councillor Glenn Finlay – Antrim &amp; Newtownabbey Borough Council</p> <p>Councillor Robert Adair – Ards &amp; North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Alderman Alan McDowell – Ards &amp; North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Councillor Richard Smart – Ards &amp; North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Councillor Stephen Dunlop – Ards &amp; North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Alderman Brian Kingston – Belfast City Council</p> <p>Councillor Carl Whyte – Belfast City Council</p> <p>Councillor Ronan McLaughlin – Belfast City Council</p> <p>Councillor Eric Hanvey – Belfast City Council</p> <p>Councillor Sorcha Eastwood – Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council</p> <p>Alderman Allan Ewart MBE – Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council</p> <p>Alderman Billy Ashe MBE – Mid &amp; East Antrim Borough Council</p> <p>Councillor Timothy Gaston – Mid &amp; East Antrim Borough Council</p> <p>Alderman Audrey Wales MBE – Mid &amp; East Antrim Borough Council</p> <p>Councillor Robin Stewart – Mid &amp; East Antrim Borough Council</p> <p>Councillor Charlie Casey – Newry, Mourne &amp; Down District Council</p> <p>Councillor Robert Burgess – Newry, Mourne &amp; Down District Council</p> <p>Councillor Pete Byrne – Newry, Mourne &amp; Down District Council</p> <p>Councillor Willie Clarke – Newry, Mourne &amp; Down District Council</p>
<b>Officers:</b>	<p>David Burns – Chief Executive, Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council</p> <p>Jacqui Dixon – Chief Executive, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council</p> <p>Anne Donaghy – Chief Executive, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council</p> <p>Stephen Reid – Chief Executive, Ards and North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Marie Ward – Chief Executive, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council</p> <p>Suzanne Wylie – Chief Executive, Belfast City Council</p> <p>Ronan Cregan – Deputy Chief Executive, Belfast City Council</p> <p>Damien Martin – BRCD Programme Director, Belfast City Council</p> <p>Jayne Brady – Belfast Digital Innovation Commissioner, Belfast City Council</p> <p>Donal Rogan – Director of Service Transformation, Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council</p> <p>Susie McCullough – Director Regeneration, Development and Planning, Ards and North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Padraic Murphy – Programme Co-ordinator, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council</p> <p>Sinead Lavery – Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council</p> <p>Shelley Baldrick – Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council</p> <p>Nicola Rowles – Interim Director of Development, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council</p> <p>Amanda Smyth – Head of Regeneration and Business Development, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council</p> <p>Conor Mallon – Director of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council</p> <p>Stephen Wallace, Ruth Rea, Theresa Slevin – BRCD Programme Office</p>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>
1.1	Cllr Mackin welcomed the members of the BRCD Council Panel to the meeting and Suzanne Wylie outlined the key areas of focus for the meeting.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Apologies</b>
2.1	Apologies were received from: Alderman Michael Henderson (Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council)
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>
3.1	Cllr Mackin asked Councillors if they had any interests to declare in relation to the agenda. No interests were declared.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>
4.1	<p>Cllr Adair raised concern regarding the level of detail within the minutes and also queried the accuracy in relation to the last sentence in Section 8 regarding a decision to host an engagement session with MLAs. Damien Martin (DM) confirmed that the vote related to whether all MLAs or the Belfast Region MLAs should be invited to the session and it was agreed that Belfast Region MLAs should be invited.</p> <p>Cllr Gaston raised concern that the last meeting of the panel was over 8 months ago and repeated his concern in relation to the representation of councillors on the Executive Board. The Chair proposed to come back to the issue of councillor representation on the Executive Board later in the meeting.</p> <p>Alderman Cosgrove proposed that the minutes from the last meeting were agreed. Seconded – Ald Brian Kingston.</p> <p><b>Members agreed the minutes.</b></p>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>BRCD Programme Report</b>
5.1	<p>Damien Martin (BRCD Programme Director) provided an update on the progress to date across the BRCD programme namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The delays to the timeline for deal development due to Covid-19 crisis, however the ambition remains for funding to flow from April 2021, with Deal Document completed in advance of this date.</li> <li>• The progress that has been made in Outline Business Case (OBC) development, with OBCs due to be completed for most projects in the next two months.</li> <li>• Due to the direct impact of the Covid crisis and the delays in the completion of OBCs, planned work on strategic engagement, including both business and political engagement has been delayed.</li> <li>• The key role that the BRCD could play in supporting the economic recovery across Northern Ireland.</li> </ul>

David Burns, (Chief Executive, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council) outlined the key issues and challenges facing the programme namely:

- Financial Climate – whilst BRCD represents a big opportunity to boost the economy, the challenges for Councils in relation to the financial commitment required is acknowledged.
- Covid-19 – has presented challenges specifically in relation to the Tourism and Regeneration projects and the phasing and delivery of these needs consideration.
- Investment Climate – leveraging of private sector investment is a key priority of BRCD but this is more challenging in the current climate.
- Timing and Momentum – concerns about the potential for further delays in considering business cases, due to the pressures for example on the UK and NI Government departments, and the associated impact on partner and private sector confidence.
- Collaboration – the need to improve collaboration across City and Growth Deals whilst recognising that the BRCD is significantly more advanced than other Deals;
- Engagement – the need to progress political and business engagement, whilst recognising the challenges facing the business community at the moment and that the BRCD is a medium to long term programme.

Cllr Casey noted the amount of work that has been completed to date and the amount of work that remains but highlighted the need for the projects to be delivered as soon as possible to deliver a much needed boost for local areas, particularly in light of the current economic climate. A query was raised in relation to the ability of some projects to advance at an earlier stage. DM noted that all BRCD Partners are working hard to get OBCs completed, but it was acknowledged that some projects may be ready sooner than others. However, Partners are confident that a process can be managed that delivers for all Partners- accepting the long-term nature of the programme and that all projects will not happen at the same time. DM highlighted the potential for a Digital Transformation proposal to the complementary fund as a potential early win for all Partners.

Alderman Wales queried how the money will flow and if there will be an agreed budget for projects.

DM reported that the NI Governance and Funding arrangements have been agreed and funding will flow through an accountable body, with the exception of the DfI funding. By the end of the OBC process it is expected that each project will have an allocated budget.

Alderman Ewart noted the increased DfI project budgets, concerns regarding the continued increase in project costs during project development and queried whether all OBCs were required before money could flow for any project. DM noted the very early stage of development of the DfI projects and the large amounts of Optimism Bias included due to this and reported that it seemed unlikely that the programme would be able to fund all of the DfI projects at their current scale. DM acknowledged that longer timescales could result in increased costs but noted the multiple processes for the OBCs to progress through to get approval for expenditure. DM noted that there needs to be an understanding of the individual project budget requirements

	<p>within the OBCs before collective decisions can be made, for example on the allocation of funding between the Infrastructure and Tourism and Regeneration pillars. However, it should nevertheless be possible to develop a phased approach that would allow the most advanced projects to progress whilst further development work continues on the other projects.</p> <p>Cllr Whyte reported the current feelings of negativity within the business sector and that greater communication of BRCD and the economic boost it will provide should be communicated to improve awareness. DM noted that the OBCs are the key to unlocking the Deal and that completing the OBCs had been the priority over the last few months. However, DM agreed that it is now time to start focusing on the communication and engagement.</p> <p>Suzanne Wylie highlighted the complexity of the funding arrangements for the programme, which includes funding from UK Government, NI Executive, 6 Councils and 2 universities and the need for each funding body to be content on the robustness of the OBCs, which results in multiple approval processes for the OBCs. It was also noted that the funding will be spread over at least 10 years, with the UK Government funding being provided in a flat profile.</p> <p>Cllr Stewart queried what would happen if a project fails to progress. David Burns reported that BRCD partners are working hard with the Departments to ensure that the OBCs are robust and scalability of projects is being explored to assist affordability.</p> <p><b>Members were content to note the content of the report and the answers provided.</b></p>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Covid-19 and the role of BRCD in recovery</b>
6.1	<p>Suzanne Wylie (Chief Executive, Belfast City Council) and Jayne Brady (Belfast Digital Innovation Commissioner) presented on the role of the BRCD in our economic recovery. The key points highlighted included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NI and its economy have been significantly and extensively affected by Covid-19</li> <li>• There is a risk of compounding inequality and the BRCD commitment to inclusive growth is more important than ever to maximise job creation and retention</li> <li>• BRCD has commitment of funding and will play a key role in our economic recovery</li> <li>• OBCs have been revised to ensure Covid has been considered in their development</li> <li>• There is a recognition that investments in tourism are long-term in nature and align with the expected return of international visitors to pre-pandemic levels in 2-3 years</li> <li>• UK Government has recognised the need to double investment in R&amp;D and to redress the imbalance in funding for regions like Northern Ireland</li> <li>• The BRCD investments build on the strongest and most resilient sectors, delivering digital Innovation &amp; skills capability that is now so critical to businesses</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Digital Task and Finish Group have agreed a number of interventions that can be delivered to support those most impacted by Covid and includes delivery of a reskilling programme funded by the Department of the Economy, which will be delivered in advance of BRCD funding, but was developed through the partnership created by BRCD.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Chairperson thanked Suzanne Wylie and Jayne Brady for their presentation.</b></p>
<b>7.0</b>	<b>NI City &amp; Growth Deals: Governance and Funding Arrangement</b>
7.1	<p>David Burns, (Chief Executive, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council) highlighted the key points from the NI City and Growth Deals: Governance and Funding paper which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The NI Executive agreed the NI Governance and Funding arrangements and confirmed match funding for the NI City and Growth Deals in May.</li> <li>In May, the NI Executive also agreed to the establishment of a complementary fund of £100million for the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD), Mid &amp; South-West Growth Deal and Causeway Coast and Glens Growth Deal. The terms for this fund have not been agreed but Partners will be working collaboratively on potential ideas that will bring collective benefit to the three regions.</li> <li>One potential small scale proposal for the complementary fund, involves establishing a flexible support fund, providing small scale capital grants for small businesses seeking to invest in digital technology as part of an overall digital transformation plan.</li> <li>SOLACE have created a Working Group which will consider emerging cross-deal proposals for the complementary fund.</li> </ul> <p>Alderman Wales queried how quickly the complementary fund could be accessed to provide support to local businesses struggling due to Covid-19. David Burns noted that Partners were working with Departments to determine the process for access to the funding but understood that subject to business case approval there is potential for some funding to flow at an early stage.</p>
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Schedule of Meetings</b>
8.1	<b>The schedule of meetings was agreed.</b>
<b>9.0</b>	<b>Press Release</b>
9.1	<b>The BRCD Council Panel agreed the press release in relation to the meeting.</b>
<b>10.0</b>	<b>AOB</b>

10.1	<p>Cllr Gaston raised a concern in relation to the representation of councillors on the Executive Board and proposed that one member from each Council should attend the Executive Board with the Chief Executive.</p> <p>Seconded - Cllr Adair</p> <p>Cllr McLaughlin stated that he was of the view that the Executive Board was not the appropriate place for political representatives, given that each Council has their own accountability and reporting processes and that Councils are contributing only 10% of funding to the overall BRCD.</p> <p>Cllr Brett queried whether the Panel had the authority to change the representation on the Executive Board as the governance arrangements had been agreed by the NI Executive and UK Government and indicated that he did not believe the proposed councillor representation on the Executive Board would be appropriate.</p> <p>Cllr Casey stated that he did not support councillor representation on the Executive Board as councillors are kept updated through the Chief Executives and Council reporting processes.</p> <p>Alderman Cosgrove indicated that he did not believe that political representation as proposed was appropriate, particularly given the level of Council contribution to the BRCD funding.</p> <p><b>The Chair moved to a vote on the proposal and the proposal fell.</b></p> <p>Cllr Gaston requested increased engagement of councillors on the work of the BRCD moving forward.</p>
10.2	<p>Cllr Adair proposed that a meeting with the BRCD MLAs is organised.</p> <p>Seconded – Alderman Wales</p> <p><b>The Chair moved to a vote on the proposal, and the proposal was approved.</b></p>
11.0	<p><b>Date, time and location of next meeting</b></p> <p><b>Wednesday 25 November at 12:30 pm</b></p> <p><b>Mid and East Antrim Borough Council</b></p>





<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Inclusive Growth - Social Value Policy</b>
<b>Date:</b>	20th November, 2020
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Walsh, City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Noleen Bohill, Head of Commercial and Procurement Services Christine Robinson, Head of Strategy, Policy and Partnerships

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the development of a Social Value policy for the Council, as part of the Inclusive Growth Strategy.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is recommended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. note the work in relation to social value that is currently being undertaken;</li> <li>ii. note the date for the forthcoming Members' Social Value Working Group engagement workshop (section 3.6); and</li> <li>iii. ensure that a representative is nominated from each political party to the task and finish Social Value Working Group for Members.</li> </ul>

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	Members agreed a Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Beattie in January 2019 on the development of a social value strategy to further social, environmental and economic goals of Belfast City Council and subsequently in January 2020 to establish a task and finish Social Value Working Group.
3.2	Since Members received the last update in January 2019, work has been progressing, led by a cross departmental officer working group to develop a social value policy and supporting framework. Whilst seeking to achieve a best value outcome for the ratepayer, from our procurement activities, the policy also aims to maximise the impact of council's expenditure to get the best possible social outcome thereby making a positive difference to the people and communities in Belfast.
3.3	There is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to deliver and achieve social value. Research shows that even in cities and regions where social value considerations in procurement have been applied for some time, providers and commissioners continue to learn about how best to achieve and evidence it. The emerging approach that officers have been developing includes a Toolkit to determine appropriate and proportionate social value criteria within a contract. The toolkit also provides a consistent approach to enable the measurement, monitoring and reporting of social value commitments within Council contracts and to, in as far as possible, deliver social value at scale. It is being designed to align with the five long-term outcomes or 'conditions of wellbeing' and associated commitments within the Belfast Agenda that people identified that they wanted by 2035.
3.4	<p>The scope of the policy also reflects council's wide ranging role and recognises that social value can be delivered not solely through its procurement power. Other aspects to the policy, which will also contribute towards social value objectives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transparency &amp; pre-market engagement - We will publish and regularly update our procurement pipeline to help suppliers prepare for future tendering opportunities;</li> <li>• Supplier Guidance &amp; Training – We will develop detailed guidance for potential bidders to Council contracts so that they are better able to accommodate social value commitments and to identify ways in which they can increase the economic, social and environmental value of their work;</li> <li>• Reserved contracts – We will use reserved contracts, where appropriate, to support social enterprises and co-operatives;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic development function – We provide support to local businesses, particularly social enterprises whose primary objective is to achieve social and/or environmental benefit; and</li> <li>• Physical development &amp; built environment – We will consider social value at the design stage for future capital projects, seeking for example to maximise opportunities for energy efficiency and use of natural resources.</li> </ul>
3.5	<p>A draft Social Value Framework is being developed, which sets out the social value initiatives, linked to the Belfast Agenda outcomes, which may be applied to each tender. This will include a number of ‘social value points’ assigned for each social value initiative or measure. It is now timely that the Social Value Procurement Member Working Group is established to consider this policy. We are now seeking representation from all 8 political parties, before the draft Social Value Policy is brought to Committee. A workshop for the Working Group will be scheduled this month. It is hoped that the draft policy will be subject to public consultation in the new year.</p>
3.6	<p>Following Council approval, it is proposed to undertake a public consultation, targeting key stakeholders. It is also proposed that as the policy establishes meaningful criteria sitting at the heart of contractual relations which will have measurable/ reportable outcomes, monitoring reports will be brought to Committee on an annual basis.</p>
3.7	<p>Members will also be aware that the development of the Social Value Policy and the accompanying Framework is one strand of work designed to make a contribution to our Inclusive Growth ambitions. Work is also being progressed in relation to the Belfast Inclusive Growth City Charter and while the project is still within the engagement phase, it is intended that ‘social value procurement’ will be one of the three pillars to the charter. As such, the timing enables the council to demonstrate its leadership as an exemplar of progressive procurement.</p>
3.8	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>There are no direct financial implication arising from this report.</p>
3.9	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>There are no direct equality implications contained in this report.</p>
4.0	<p><b>Documents Attached</b></p>
	<p>None</p>

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Final Resilience Strategy for Belfast</b>
<b>Date:</b>	20th November, 2020
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Grainia Long, Commissioner for Resilience
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Claire Shortt, Statistics and Research Officer

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To provide the Committee with an overview of conclusions arising from the public consultation and engagement on the draft Resilience Strategy, to outline the changes made to the document as part of the finalisation process and seek its approval for the document.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to note the changes made to the document taking account of the public consultation, and consider for approval, to enable it to proceed to full Council, in advance of a virtual launch in December.</p> <p>Members should note that as a city-wide document containing commitments from external partners, the document has already been considered and endorsed by the Resilience and Sustainability Board.</p>

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	The Belfast Agenda commits the city to the development of a Resilience Strategy to ‘take a targeted approach to addressing those issues which pose the greatest risk to the city and its economy’. The commitment aligned Belfast with a number of cities globally, who are invested in long-term risk management. A highly inclusive process, involving over 1000 individuals was commenced eighteen months ago, and a draft Resilience Strategy was published for formal consultation in January 2020. Importantly, the workstreams arising through the strategy process were co-designed by city partners as part of their work on the Resilience and Sustainability Board.
3.2	<p>An extension to the consultation was agreed due to the effect of Covid-19 on partner organisations and their staff. Between January 2020 and July 2020, a period of formal consultation was entered into, incorporating a number of elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- an online survey on the Belfast City Council consultation portal,</li> <li>- standalone submissions forwarded to the Resilience Unit,</li> <li>- and a citywide and thematic engagement undertaken on our behalf by Urban Scale Interventions. This included on street engagement at a kiosk in Castle Place, workshops in local neighbourhoods, an interactive ‘resilience tree’ located in public places, and online thematic workshops with young people and older people.</li> </ul>
3.3	Over 1,300 people took part, 75 written submissions were received. The consultation was almost complete when the lockdown began, at which point all engagement activity moved online, and the completion for the online consultation was extended.
3.4	<p>Following the consultation, two workshops were held with members of the Resilience and Sustainability Board, with the aim of discussing feedback, shaping the strategy and aligning with member’s programmes. Members of the R&amp;S board met on 10<sup>th</sup> November and formally endorsed the strategy.</p> <p><u>Main Themes arising from the Public Consultation</u></p>
3.5	The draft Strategy was developed through an inclusive process, whereby we spoke with over one thousand people, and was based on huge amounts of publicly available data and evidence. Unsurprisingly therefore, the public consultation found a high level of agreement with the shocks and stresses identified;

- Consultees welcomed the principle of a resilience strategy; a document that sets out long term risks for the city, and agreed it should be kept 'up to date' and refreshed every two years
- Predictably, a large number of consultees felt the final document should reflect the impact of Covid-19 on the city, and should draw conclusions on what this could mean for our future.
- It was also proposed that 'mental ill health' and 'use of prescription drugs' should be treated separately and that 'car dependency' should be included in the focus on 'carbon intensive systems'.
- There was substantial support for the principle of 'multiple problem solvers' and the suggestion that we need to find levers to solve several problems at once. Consultees agreed with the three areas of focus identified- there was particular support for the need to include children and young people more in the decisions that affect their lives.
- Generally, there was a view that we need to separate out the 'assessment' of risks, from the 'solutions' and that the document should not try to do too much. Overall, consultees agreed that the biggest long-term challenge for the city was environmental/climate related. On this basis, they agreed that the three 'multiple problems solvers' should try to achieve a single 'resilience goal' and be narrowly focused on the transition to a zero-emissions economy. That means, in practical terms, that the focus on children and young people should be directed towards their involvement in climate action. This was dealt with in detail in the workshops and there was general agreement with the approach.
- A significant number of respondents asked for the section on inequality to be drawn out further, and addressed as a 'stress' in its own right, rather than as part of 'Economic Recovery Capacity'.

#### Changes to the Document

- Taking into account the feedback above, the strategy now encompasses two distinct sections: (1) a Resilience Assessment, an analysis of the strategic risks to Belfast, taking account of the views of citywide stakeholders and (2) an Ambitions Document: Climate Plan for Belfast, setting out the resilience goal and priorities being delivered by the Resilience and Sustainability Board. It is the intention of the Resilience and Sustainability Board (R&SB) that the Resilience Assessment be reviewed and refreshed every two years to ensure a proactive approach to the management of strategic risks. The R&SB

	<p>will be the governors of this document along with support from the Belfast Climate Commission.</p> <p>The ambitions document will also need to be refreshed as new opportunities for multiple problem solvers (leavers that can respond to several risks at once) arise. This will be the responsibility of the R&amp;S Board to update and deliver.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- As per feedback received, we have included 'Poverty and Inequality' as a 'stress' and worked directly with Belfast Health and Social Care Board to develop a new section on 'Public Health Shocks'. We have merged 'car dependency' into the section on 'carbon intensive systems' and separated 'Mental Ill-Health' from 'Use of Prescription Drugs'.</li> <li>- The document has been updated to reflect statistical returns published in this calendar year (2020) to ensure the strategy is as up to date as possible</li> <li>- The 'Resilience Assessment' includes a 'next steps' section, which outlines the structure for focusing on the 'shocks' and stresses' across the Community Planning Partnership Boards</li> <li>- Reference has been made in the document to digital inequality as a core issue emerging following Covid-19 and the transition to online platforms at scale, for the delivery of services (including health and education services)</li> </ul>
3.6	<p>It is worth noting that a number of the ambitions, as stated in the draft version, are already under way. The One Million Trees project, the development of A Belfast City Council Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Plan, the establishment of the Resilience and Sustainability board are a few of the 'multiple problem solvers' that are already well on track.</p> <p><b>Further Engagement</b></p>
3.7	<p>There will be a further short document created in response to all those who took the time to engage during the consultation. Due to the transfer away from Citizen Space to the new Engagement Hub - consideration will need to be given on how to do this in an impactful way.</p>
3.8	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>The strategy contains a number of significant programmes which have been included as 'ambitions' for the city. Some of these programmes are already fully funded, and others are predicated on securing long-term finance. Approval of the document does not commit Council, or members of the Resilience and Sustainability Board to funding specific projects. On this basis, there are no direct additional financial and resource implications.</p>



### **Equality or Good Relations Implications and Rural Needs Assessment**

3.9

Throughout this process, the Resilience Team, and the Resilience and Sustainability Board has taken account of obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard to the desirability to promote good relations between the relevant groups as set out in the legislation. The team also ensured that needs and implications for residents living in rural areas were assessed throughout.

The purpose of the Resilience Assessment and the programmes in the Ambitions Document are to reduce inequalities in the city. Evidence from a number of cities globally has demonstrated the adverse impact which widening inequalities can have on a city's resilience.

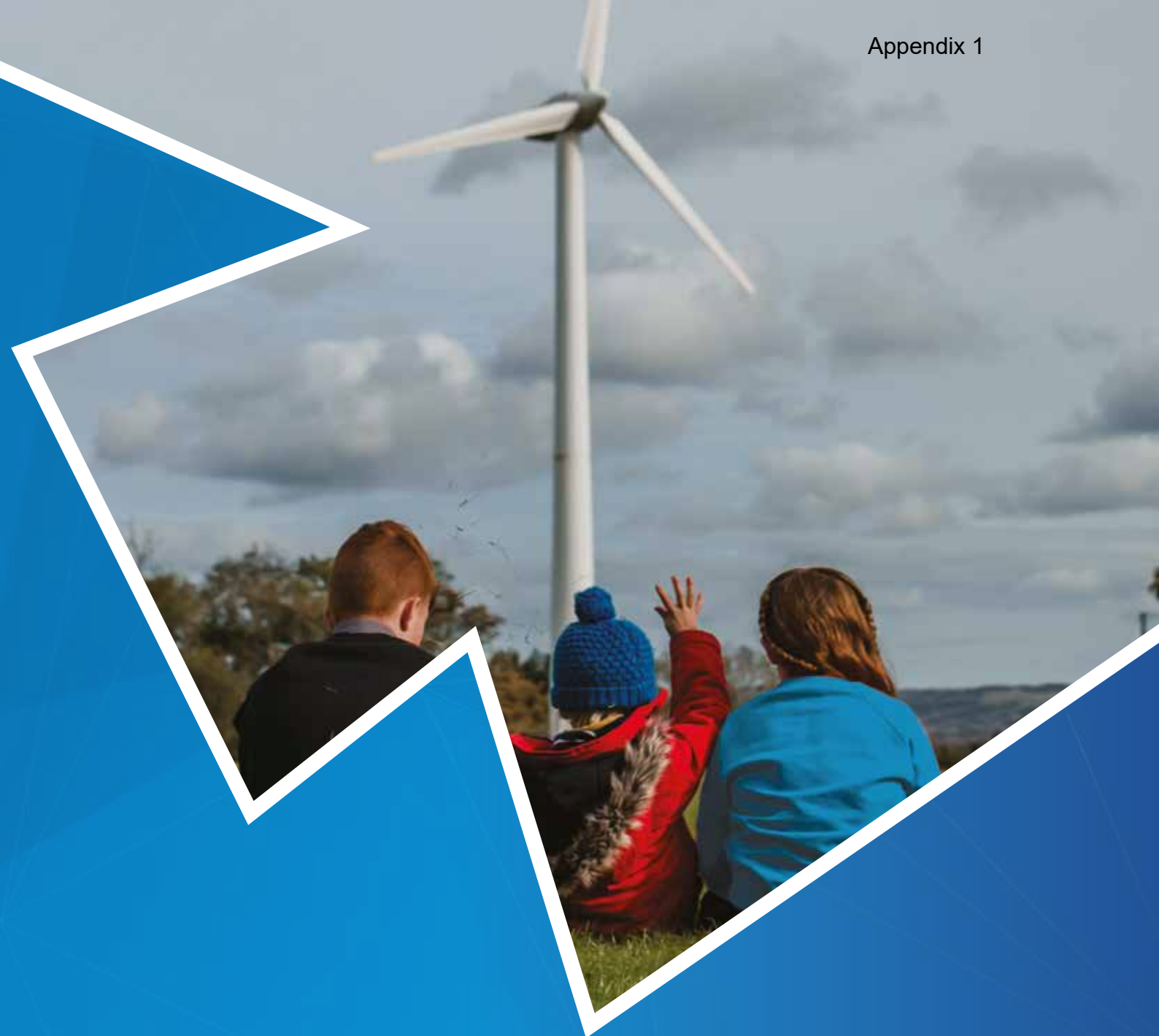
The Resilience Assessment and the Ambitions Document were screened to assess their implications for equality categories under Section 75. More than 100 official (NISRA) datasets were reviewed throughout the process to understand the impacts of relevant policy interventions for each of the categories. The screening process did not identify adverse impacts for any specific equality categories; however, we sought to test this further during comprehensive consultation with all equality categories during January – June 2020, and both the equality screening and rural needs impact were hosted on Citizen Space and comments sought during the formal consultation.

The consultation found one example where there was a *perception* that one group could be impacted differentially. Some responses suggested that a focus on children and young people could be at the expense of older people. We have addressed this issue in two ways in the document (1) by emphasising what the international evidence demonstrates, that positive urban planning for children impacts positively on the rest of the population (2) by emphasising that our focus on children and young people is to ensure their participation in decision on climate action in the city.

Importantly, we received a submission from the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, which has strongly informed the final document.

In conclusion, no significant adverse implications for groups have been identified. Furthermore, each 'Foundation Programme' in the 'Ambitions Document' will themselves be

	screened for their equality implications and be subject, where required, to an Equality Impact Assessment.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	<p>Appendix 1 - Resilience Assessment</p> <p>Appendix 2 - Ambitions Document: A Climate Plan for Belfast</p>



# FUTURE PROOFED CITY RESILIENCE **BELFAST** ASSESSMENT

December 2020

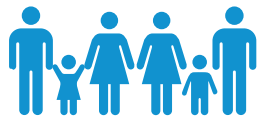
[www.belfastcity.gov.uk/resilience](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/resilience)

Page 107



**BELFAST**

# CITY FACTS: BELFAST



**BELFAST  
POPULATION**

**343,542**  
2019 MID-YEAR ESTIMATE

**33%** AGED 25  
OR UNDER

BELFAST  
ACCOUNTS  
FOR

**18%**

OF THE  
POPULATION

AND ALMOST

**30%**

OF ALL JOBS IN NI



**103**

RESIDENTIAL  
UNITS  
COMPLETED  
IN CITY  
2019/20

**£575**

FULLTIME  
MEDIAN GROSS  
WEEKLY PAY  
2019



**44%**

HOUSEHOLD WASTE  
RECYCLED AND  
COMPOSTED



**11,500** STREET  
TREES



**77.3%** OF THE POPULATION LIVE  
WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE  
OF A PARK OR PLAY AREA

**9.2°C**

AVERAGE  
ANNUAL  
TEMPERATURE



**68%**



OF HOUSEHOLDS HAVE ACCESS TO ONE OR MORE CARS

BEFORE COVID-19...



**53%**

OF ALL JOURNEYS  
TAKEN BY CAR



**29%**

OF ALL JOURNEYS  
TAKEN BY FOOT

**2%**



JOURNEYS PER PERSON BY BIKE

**18.2%**

OF POPULATION  
AGED 16-64  
HAVE NO  
QUALIFICATIONS

**35.6%**

OF THE WORKING  
AGE POPULATION IS  
EDUCATED TO NVQ  
LEVEL 4 AND ABOVE



**80%**

OF BUSINESSES ARE  
MICRO (0-9 EMPLOYEES)



**21%**

OF THOSE CLAIMING  
UNEMPLOYMENT  
BENEFITS ARE AGED  
18-24



DURING

**COVID-19**

**11,132 POSITIVE CASES**

AS OF 14 NOVEMBER 2020

**223**

**DEATHS**

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# **FUTURE PROOFED CITY** **BELFAST** RESILIENCE ASSESSMENT

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December 2020







# FOREWORD FROM THE COMMISSIONER FOR RESILIENCE

**Finalising the first Resilience Strategy for Belfast, while the city endures the effects of a global pandemic, is a poignant reminder of why cities need to prepare for risk, no matter how unlikely they appear to be. COVID-19 has taught us many things about how cities respond to crises, of the value of community networks, and the importance of good connectivity.**

Put simply, the pandemic has exposed our weaknesses. Our lives have changed immeasurably as a result of a global shock, but the impact will be felt differently nationally, and locally, and those impacts will be determined by the scale and nature of existing vulnerabilities. Put simply, the pandemic has exposed our weaknesses. We now face the challenge and opportunity to put resilience at the heart of our re-build.

The draft Resilience Strategy, published in January 2020, presented a series of potential shocks and stresses for the city of Belfast. It is not an exhaustive list. Each one by itself represents a risk to the city. However, it is the relationship between these risks, and the scenarios that may emerge if several occur at once, that presents the greatest challenge for Belfast. I made several conclusions about Belfast's exposure to risks. In particular, the potential impacts of climate change on the city. I highlighted the city's lack of preparedness and the lack of a coherent city-wide approach to climate change. I suggested the identification and development of 'multiple problem solvers' - levers which can respond to and resolve several risks at once.

The arrival of the pandemic resulted in an extension of the public consultation on the strategy. The passage of time has enabled us to start work on many of the priorities identified in the draft document. We have therefore, made excellent progress this year in developing a series of measures on climate adaptation, climate mitigation and levers to support a green economy. We have established two important city-wide structures to take this work forward; a Resilience and Sustainability Board to drive delivery of this strategy and the Belfast Climate Commission, to act as a think-tank and advisor for the city's climate action. I am extremely grateful to my co-Chairs and to the members of both boards for their commitment and dedication during such a difficult year. We have managed to accelerate our work in this area, and as a result our final Resilience Strategy looks

markedly different from the draft- because so many programmes and priorities have commenced and begun to deliver outcomes for the people of Belfast.

**"Belfast is emitting 1.5 million tonnes of carbon a year. At this rate, we will have used up our carbon by 2030."**

*Belfast Mini Stern*

This document has two distinct sections: (1) a Resilience Assessment, an analysis of the strategic risks to Belfast, taking account of the views of city-wide stakeholders and (2) an Ambitions Document, setting out the vision and priorities being delivered by the Resilience and Sustainability Board. I am delighted that we now have a strategy and a set of city partners now working with a singular focus on the transition to a zero-emissions economy.

In a relatively short period of time, the city has moved from lack of preparedness for climate change to one of proactivity, partnership working and ambition. The challenges set out in the draft strategy have been embraced by city-partners. It is to their credit that Belfast is now better prepared for the future, and over time, its people will increasingly be better protected. This is the essence of resilience work.

This final strategy has been amended and improved based on the contribution of residents from across Belfast. Communities have demonstrated their interest in, and understanding of the importance of a long-term focus on risks, and have shown their commitment to projects and programmes that will future-proof their city. I have personally benefited from listening to people from across Belfast, and have no doubt that the ambitions in this document are much more likely to succeed because of them.



*Grainia Long*

**Grainia Long**  
Commissioner for Resilience  
December 2020

# FOREWORD FROM CHAIR OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Welcome to Belfast's draft Resilience Strategy. For the first time, partner organisations across the city have worked together to identify the strategic risks that we face, today and into the future. Furthermore, we have collectively agreed an ambitious goal **to transition to an inclusive, zero- emissions economy in a generation**. Achieving this will require urgent action, and I am delighted that our city partners have committed to thirty programmes, to be delivered collaboratively to future proof our city, and make us climate resilient.

There has rarely been a more important time for Belfast to build its resilience. A major public health crisis, and a combination of economic pressures, climate related events, and social change are taking globally and impacting locally. To improve our readiness and ultimately ensure our recovery, we must have a sophisticated understanding of the risks we face.

The strategy has been informed by more than a thousand conversations, and many hours of data crunching- we are grateful to everyone who has contributed.

Only by working together across the city- communities, schools, nursing homes, businesses and agencies- can we really be ready to face complex challenges, from pandemics to economic shocks and climate change. I am grateful to members of the city's Resilience and Sustainability Board for the leadership they have shown in developing this strategy, and I look forward to seeing the positive effects arising from delivery.



*Christina Black*

**Councillor Christina Black**  
Chair  
Strategic Policy and  
Resources Committee



**Belfast**  
City Council



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## SHOCKS AND STRESSES FOR BELFAST IN 2020

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Infrastructure capacity	22	Population change	44
Condition of existing Stock	26	Carbon intensive systems	46
Public Health	28	Climate change	50
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Urban resilience is the capacity of cities to survive, adapt, and develop no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience.
- The Belfast Agenda, the city's community plan, included a commitment to take a targetted approach to issues which pose the greatest risk to the city, its economy and its people.
- In doing so, Belfast has been an active member of the Resilient Cities Network, working globally to reduce vulnerabilities, and making cities better prepared for the future.
- This strategy delivers on the Belfast Agenda commitment. It includes an overview of the major risks facing the city. The 'Resilience Assessment' outlines the shocks and stresses that could make the city more vulnerable and could weaken our capacity to resist and to recover from future challenges.
- It is the intention of the Resilience and Sustainability Board that the Resilience Assessment be reviewed and refreshed every two years to ensure a proactive approach to the management of strategic risks.
- The second half of the document outlines our ambitions: one goal, three 'multiple problem solvers', and 30 programmes for delivery.
- A genuine collaboration between city partners and residents, this strategy will drive progress to deliver the city's goal to transition to an inclusive, zero-emissions, climate-resilient economy, in a generation. It commits Belfast to a step-change in this decade, reflecting the scale of climate breakdown and its implications for Belfast.

## OUR GOAL

To transition to an inclusive, zero-emissions, climate-resilient economy in a generation.



## SHOCKS



## STRESSES



We have identified three 'multiple problem solvers' - where we tackle several shocks or stresses at once. A strategic focus on each of these areas will build the city's resilience, over time. They are:



## AREAS OF FOCUS



The strategy contains 30 transformational programmes, agreed by city partners, to prepare the city for this century. This includes an important focus on how we fund and manage risk.

A child is wearing a VR headset, looking upwards. The background is a vibrant blue with a cityscape and a bridge visible through the VR lens. The child is wearing a white shirt and a dark vest. The overall scene is futuristic and immersive.

1

# CONTEXT

# DELIVERING THE BELFAST AGENDA

## The Belfast Agenda vision for 2035

"Belfast will be a city re-imagined and resurgent. A great place to live and work for everyone. Beautiful, well connected and culturally vibrant, it will be a sustainable city shared and loved by its citizens, free from the legacy of conflict. A compassionate city offering opportunities for everyone. A confident and successful city energising a dynamic and prosperous city region. A magnet for talent and business and admired around the world. A city people dream to visit."

The Belfast Agenda commits the city to the appointment of a Commissioner for Resilience to work with partners to develop a strategy to take a targeted approach to addressing those issues which pose the greatest risk to the city, its economy and its people.

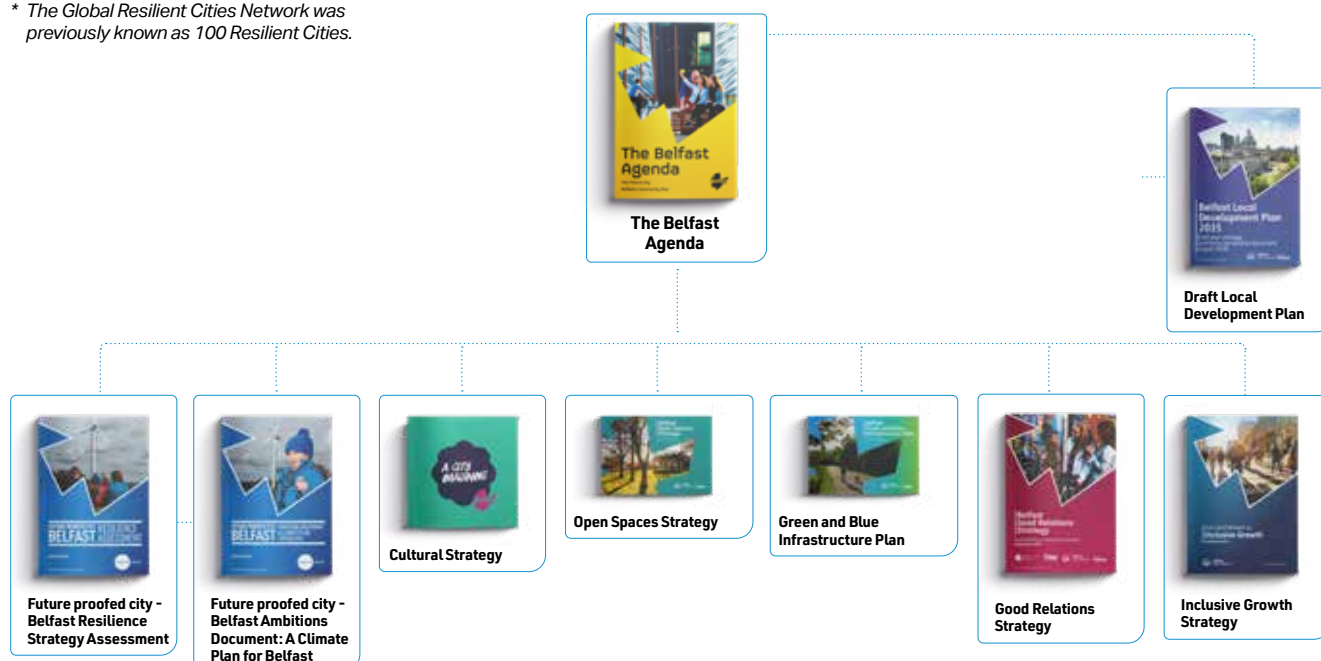
Since 2018, Belfast has been a member of 100 Resilient Cities, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. GRCN\* is

\* The Global Resilient Cities Network was previously known as 100 Resilient Cities.



global network of cities, all focused on identifying and reducing urban threats - either immediate shocks or systemic vulnerabilities. It comprises Belfast's biggest global network to date. Since the establishment of the 'Resilient Belfast' team, Belfast is working alongside cities like Barcelona, Sydney, Cape Town and San Francisco to solve urban problems, and strengthen the fabric of the city. This work has culminated in the production of this Resilience Strategy, which includes a range of commitments to de-risk the city, making us more adaptable, prepared for the unpredictable and increasingly our capacity to thrive. This Strategy will help the city to mitigate risks to deliver Belfast Agenda.

This Resilience Strategy is one of several documents that aim to deliver the Belfast Agenda and its core objective of inclusive growth.





# WHAT IS URBAN RESILIENCE?

**Urban resilience is the capacity of cities to survive, adapt, and develop no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience.**

Being a resilient city does not mean the city is without risk - urban resilience refers to cities that are exceptional at predicting, managing and responding to risk. Resilient cities are highly adaptive.

Working alongside one hundred cities globally, Belfast has been learning the benefits of a focus on preparing for immediate and longer term risks.

**"Belfast's capacity to withstand and embrace disruption and change in the coming decades is critical to its economic, social and environmental future."**

Our vision in the Belfast Agenda could be undermined, if we do not learn to adapt to and cope with shocks, such as floods or cyber attacks. COVID-19 has highlighted the city's existing vulnerabilities, and the impact of the pandemic puts the achievement of our Belfast Agenda priorities at risk, unless we take coordinated action, as a city. Furthermore, some stresses such as climate change can be 'risk multipliers', exacerbating existing weaknesses.

Belfast's economic resilience is a good case in point. The capacity of a city to respond to economic shocks is a strong indicator of its resilience.

**"Building Belfast's economic resilience - its ability to adapt to and cope with economic shocks - is essential."**

Resilience thinking is not a luxury but a necessity for cities. It is about putting in place holistic and integrated measures to enable cities to adapt, survive, and thrive regardless of the stresses or shocks they face.

Singapore Resilience Strategy

Belfast's capacity to respond to the recession of 2008-10 has been weak - demonstrated by its low levels of productivity since 2007 and when compared with other cities, it has shown weak levels of 'good growth' since the financial crash.

Furthermore, the impact of economic growth has traditionally been unevenly spread throughout the city, prompting a city-wide focus on 'inclusive growth' in the Belfast Agenda. Building Belfast's economic resilience - its ability to adapt to and cope with economic shocks - is essential.

This may mean building new forms of capacity to take on different types of pressures, to withstand them and recover from them.

Whether impacted by an adverse weather event or an economic recession, the following systems all determine how a city bounces back. However, evidence would suggest that the number and diversity of local community and voluntary groups in the city, and their inter-connectedness, has been a highly valuable social asset in the initial response to the COVID-19 pandemic and has arguably strengthened the city's capacity to cope with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. This resilience strategy emphasises the city's assets as well as its vulnerabilities, and evidence in relation to both has informed the document throughout.

## The seven qualities of a resilient city



### Reflective

Using past experiences to inform future decisions



### Resourceful

Recognising alternative ways to use resources



### Inclusive

Prioritise broad consultation to create a sense of shared ownership in decision making



### Integrated

Bring together a range of distinct systems and institutions



### Robust

Well-conceived, constructed and managed systems



### Redundant

Spare capacity purposefully created to accommodate disruption



### Flexible

Willingness, ability to adopt alternative strategies in response to changing circumstances

# CHARACTERISTICS OF A RESILIENT BELFAST



We will be **risk aware** - with a strong understanding of exposures that (1) make us vulnerable (2) could knock us off course



We will ensure there is **capacity 'in the system'** to respond to shocks



We will **de-risk investment** by improving our management of risks at a city level



We will have **collective agreement at a policy level** on the 'top risks' and coherence around a plan!



We will **integrate networks** so we are better able to withstand shocks



We will include resilience indicators in how we **measure the performance of our city**



We will demonstrate **strong resistance to shock** - often through resilient infrastructure - i.e. integrated into all capital projects



We will **demonstrate improved learning** from shocks



We will develop **multiple problem solvers** - approaches that solve several problems at once



# RESILIENCE CHALLENGES IN THIS DECADE



## 2020 COVID-19

The global pandemic struck the people of Belfast in the Spring of 2020. As of 25 October 2020, 178 people had lost their lives due to COVID-19.

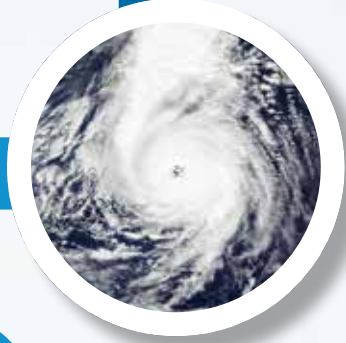


## 2017/18

### Major storms

Ex-Hurricane Ophelia in 2017, Storms Ali, Callum and Desmond in 2018

There were a range of storms bringing high winds in 2017 and 2018 and causing electricity outages and damage to infrastructure. Schools, businesses and public services were affected.



## 2018

### Fire at Bank Buildings

On 28 August a fire destroyed Bank Buildings, a listed building in the heart of Belfast City Centre. 14 businesses within the cordon were unable to reopen for over four months. Pedestrian and vehicle access across the City Centre was affected causing a significant drop in footfall in the area.



## 2014

### Coastal flooding

The threat of tidal inundation to Belfast City Centre and over 4000 homes across the City led to the deployment of 45,000 sandbags and the pre-planned closure of basements and businesses in the Harbour area. Millions of pounds of damage was caused to infrastructure around the coastline of NI.



## 2012

### Flooding

Flooding occurs on an annual basis affecting properties and infrastructure. There was significant flooding in 2012, 2009, 2008 and 2005 with thousands of homes being internally flooded.



## 2012/13

### Flag protests and civil unrest

Following a vote to change the number of days the Union Flag is flown at Belfast City Hall, there followed a period of almost daily protests. There were resulting impacts for the performance of the local economy.



## 2010/11

### The big freeze

Five weeks of extremely low temperatures led to widespread impacts on infrastructure including homes, schools and businesses. Frozen pipes cracked during the thaw causing so many leaks that mains water supplies were significantly depleted. 40,000 premises lost water supplies and over 60,000 premises became subject to rotational supplies.



# METHODOLOGY

**A well-established methodology - adopted by 100 cities globally - was used to develop this strategy, and build the city's resilience capacity.**

The City Resilience Framework (CRF) was developed by our strategic partner ARUP and helps identify the complex and interdependent issues that contribute to a resilient city. The CRF is used by all partners in the 100RC network and facilitates cooperation between cities. Our relationship with ARUP has led to the development of a city risk and asset audit, a climate change risk assessment and a study that will help us to develop our strategy for child friendly neighbourhoods.

A number of steps in working towards our goals and vision were put in place. Each step carefully considered and carried out as we:

Mapped our city's vulnerability and risk against potential actions.



Engaged with partner citywide in Belfast to gather evidence and formulate possible solutions.



Commissioned a city risk and asset audit by Arup to quantify and identify shocks and stresses.



Accessed and analysed multiple data sources to inform decisions, test assumptions and steer our initial conclusions. This also involved commissioning our own studies.



Informed our thinking by requesting from Arup a Climate Change Risk Assessment and a study on developing our strategy for child friendly neighbourhoods.



Engaged across our city over three months on our strategic areas of focus to engage and attract feedback.

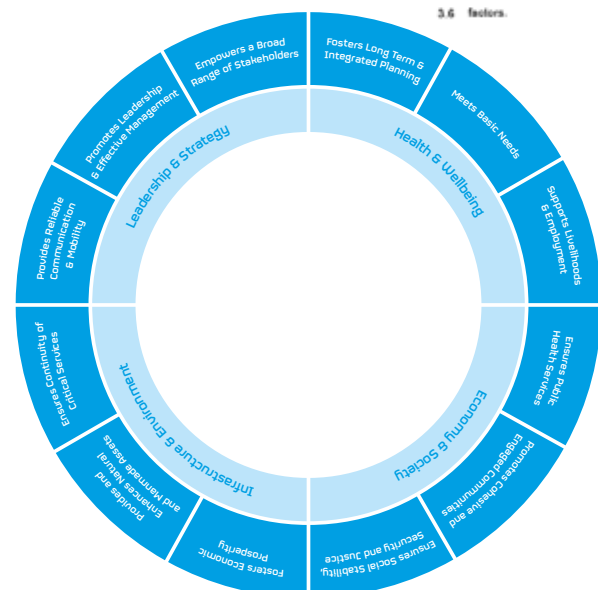


Working in partnership with Urban Scale interventions we engaged with more than 1,000 people across the city. This included public area based events, focused workshops, on street engagement through the tea kiosks in the city centre and online thematic workshops with youth and older people. The online public consultation also created 62 responses and we received 12 written submissions.

With these seven steps, we have embarked on the next stage of the journey towards a resilient Belfast.

## STEP 1

### City Resilience Framework identified areas of city resilience



\*Enlarged version available on pg86

**STEP****2****Citywide engagement****18 workshops involving 547 people****35 focus groups involving 480 people****140 people interviewed on a one-to-one basis****STEP****3****Review of city assets and risks****City assets****Perceptions****City risks****Strengths****STEP****4****Data analysis****Spaces to play for children****Population change****Economic**  
Vulnerabilities, cyber, exclusion, inequalities, automation of industry, business start-ups**Poverty**  
Children and young people**Connectivity**  
Economic corridor, digital, physical**Transport**  
Cheaper, cleaner, integrated, greener**Housing****Climate change**  
Extreme weather and air quality**Segregation**  
Housing, education system, division**Civic pride**  
One city, city story**Cyber threat****Health**  
Dependence on prescription drugs, mental health, nutrition, obesity**Risk of returning to violence****Prevalence of cars****Infrastructure**  
Investment and capacity**City centre**  
Retail, housing, dereliction**UK Exit**  
Impact on Belfast**Financing the city**  
City revenue**Politics**  
Leadership, decision making structures**Fossil fuel dependency****STEP****7****Citywide consultation on a draft strategy**

Direct engagement with 1,223 people through our consultation partnership with Urban Scale Interventions and receipt of more than 80 written responses.

**STEP****6****Identified multiple problem solvers**

These shocks and stresses make the city more vulnerable and could weaken our capacity to resist and recover from future challenges.



Climate adaptation and mitigation



Participation of children and young people



Connected, zero-emissions economy

**STEP****5****Agreed our resilience goal**

Transition Belfast to an inclusive, zero-emissions, climate resilient economy in a generation.

# CASE STUDY IN URBAN RESILIENCE

1



## Fire at Bank Buildings, August 2018

**Belfast experienced an acute shock in 2018 when a culturally historic building, known as Bank Buildings which housed Primark, a global retail chain, was severely damaged by a fire that started on 28 August 2018 and continued to burn for three days. Located right in the heart of the city centre on a major junction, the fire tested multiple aspects of the city's resilience.**

One hundred firefighters successfully prevented the fire from spreading to nearby businesses, shops and restaurants, and no one was killed or injured. However, a significant proportion of the building's internal structure was burnt away, either collapsed or was severely damaged with the external facades subject to further damage. In the immediate weeks following the fire, the building's physical fabric remained very vulnerable and posed a threat to public health and safety.

On engineering advice, a safety cordon was established to protect the public. While the cordon closed 22 business in close proximity, the impact was felt much further across the City Centre. The cordon effectively created four cul-de-sacs in the heart of the central retail district in which footfall significantly reduced. Anecdotal evidence from local traders reported decreases in sales levels between 20% and 70% amongst the hardest hit areas. There

was considerable concern that the continuation of the situation would lead to fundamental long-term changes in consumer habits within the city centre.

Pedestrians, buses and vehicles had to be rerouted in response to the cordon. This significantly added to the impact on footfall, and to pressures already being felt by the retail sector during a challenging year. The cordon acted as a barrier and restricted pedestrian and vehicular access through Castle Place junction, and as a result pedestrians were required to undertake significant diversions using alternative, longer routes to navigate the City Centre. In addition, buses were unable to penetrate into the centre of the City and were subject to significant delays and revised timetabling.

The building was a Category B1 Listed Building located within the City Centre Conservation Area. Immense in size, it was within metres of other buildings close by. Major challenges existed for the owner to assess the damage to the building and make decisions regarding the building's future. In late October, Primark successfully applied to the City Council for listed building consent to take down, record and assess for restoration purposes the uppermost parts of the building. By the following April, a series of ballast-filled shipping containers had been erected around the building to enable the commencement of a long-term restoration project.



For the Belfast City Council, the immediate primary concern from the beginning was the safety of people in the city, and to reduce as much as possible the impact on businesses and trade. It established a City Recovery Group made up of partners across the city to coordinate the city's recovery efforts. It held clinics with businesses directly affected, and held ongoing conversations with businesses through the Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in the city. A #YourBelfast media campaign in the immediate weeks following the fire aimed to remind people that Belfast was open for business.

A 'Rewards App' was developed to encourage people to spend in the local area and a 'yellow dot' trail guided pedestrians around the cordon to sustain footfall in the city. A major revitalization programme was undertaken to 'light up' the city at Christmas via a series of installations to encourage people to spend time in the city. A combination of cultural events and playful installations, dressing up city streets impacted by pedestrianisation worked in combination to give the city centre an energized feel in the busy retail period.

In the New Year, the ongoing pedestrianisation of the area was taken as an opportunity to provide a pop-up play park for children, with seating areas, planters and art to help make the area attractive.



## Conclusion

A fire in a building of its size and central proximity amounted to a major shock for the city. It posed significant challenges to the city's resilience. It tested the city's economic resilience and emphasised the importance of strong and supportive citywide networks. It prompted a debate on the role of heritage in the city. Poignantly, the sight of a burnt-out building in the city centre reminded many people of a time when Belfast experienced regular security alerts and fires. It highlighted the city's exposure to retail risks, and reminded decision makers in the city of the importance of an 'experience economy' and how critical it is that we build a vibrant city centre where people work, live and play. Perhaps most tellingly of all, the sight of children playing in a pop-up park next to the Bank Buildings appeared to inspire the public of the importance of play in the city. The park's removal, following the reduction of the cordon has prompted important debate about the importance of play in our city.

A satellite image of a coastline, likely Belfast, is visible on the left side of the page. A large blue curved shape overlays the right side of the image, containing the text. The number '2' is inside a white circle at the top of this blue shape.

## 2

# STRESSES AND SHOCKS FOR BELFAST: 2020

This strategy does not attempt to comprise a final comprehensive list of all the risks that Belfast faces. Like other global cities, it represents the starting point to build our resilience and will be updated to reflect new challenges and opportunities.

### **What is a stress?**

A stress is a slowly moving phenomenon that weakens the fabric of a city.

### **What is a shock?**

A shock is a sudden, sharp event that can immediately disrupt a city.



## SHOCKS



## STRESSES



# INFRASTRUCTURE CAPACITY



**The issue of the city's infrastructure emerged as a major theme in the workshops, focus groups and data analysis undertaken to develop this strategy. Existing infrastructure has been adversely impacted by a period of underinvestment, which is having a negative impact on the city's economic and climate resilience.**

In October 2020, an independent Ministerial Advisory Panel on Infrastructure produced a report which summarised the views of over 100 individuals and organisations on current infrastructure planning and delivery in Northern Ireland. The conclusions strongly mirror those expressed in the development of this document:

- Strategic infrastructure projects frequently suffer time delay and cost overruns.
- Over-reliance on the Barnett funding allocation to fund our public infrastructure is stifling growth and innovation.
- Crucial parts of our infrastructure are at a critical point and there is clear evidence that this is having a negative impact on other major investment decisions.
- We struggle to see beyond our political and financial timeframes which, by their nature, are too short term for effective infrastructure planning.
- Our neighbours on these islands have ambitious infrastructure plans for the next 20-30 years.
- Lack of longer-term planning and appropriate market management often results in legal challenges which cause major delays.
- The population of NI is projected to increase by 8% by 2041, with the 65+ age brackets increasing to 25% of the population. There is little evidence that we are planning sufficiently for this demographic change.
- The current system operates in silos with limited co-operation between central and local government, and with the private sector.
- There is a general failure to identify potential synergies to collaborate or secure economies of scale by working more closely together within NI, or with other bodies outside NI facing up to these very same challenges.
- We are lagging behind in terms of our environmental performance, and urgently need a step change to address climate change and meet our ambitions in respect of the wider UK 2050 net zero targets.

- There is a regional imbalance and urban-rural divide in terms of infrastructure provision. This needs to be addressed to ensure inclusive growth and to improve the quality of life and wellbeing for everyone in NI.
- External factors such as COVID-19, Climate Change and Brexit are dramatically impacting the economic landscape of NI (and will continue to do so for years to come); we must ensure we are nimble, able to capitalise on the growth opportunities that will arise

To inform the development of this strategy, our strategic partner Arup undertook a high level assessment of the city's assets.

The study identified key areas for intervention to improve infrastructure provision within the local authority area, and these findings were borne out in our consultation and engagement sessions with stakeholders:

- The importance of enhanced connectivity across the River Lagan through a series of bridges.
- The need for extended public transport network, particularly through BRT Phase 2 and improved walking and cycling networks.
- Significant pressure on waste water treatment capacity in the city and implications for the city's economy.
- Targeted enhanced digital connectivity, particularly in locations of target growth sector investments.

Separately, Belfast City Council commissioned the Belfast Infrastructure Study to identify the range of infrastructure challenges in the city. The outcome of the study will continue to inform this strategy, both in terms of future versions and implementation.

This strategy has also been informed by a number of relevant reports from the National Infrastructure Commission which advises the UK government; and reports from the UK Committee on Climate Change, on the risks associated with a range of climate scenarios for NI infrastructure.

It should also be noted that the 'New Decade New Approach' document recognises several infrastructure classes requiring intervention, and commits to prioritised investment. The Ministerial Advisory Panel on Infrastructure recommended to the Minister the establishment of an independent Infrastructure Commission for Northern Ireland. Properly established and resourced, such a Commission would resolve many of the issues associated with infrastructure planning and delivery in the city, and across the region.





## Drainage Infrastructure Capacity

**A fit for purpose wastewater and drainage system is a critical asset to any city. It mitigates the effects of flooding, enables climate resilience and contributes to public health and the economy.**

Connection to drainage and wastewater infrastructure is a condition of planning consent for development and therefore underpins sustainable economic development in every city. Furthermore, the capacity of a city's drainage system has a direct impact on prevalence of flooding. Put simply, a fit-for-purpose drainage and wastewater system with sustainable levels of investment is critical for a city's economic, social and climate resilience.

Significant investment has been necessary for several years to improve the drainage and wastewater assets that serve Belfast. In 2015, the Living with Water Programme Board was initiated to develop a Strategic Drainage Infrastructure Plan for Belfast. This aims to provide integrated sustainable solutions which will alleviate the risk of flooding, enhance the living environment and sustain economic growth. The board, which operates as a collaboration between organisations, has been working to set out:

- The scale of flood risk to Belfast.
- The deterioration of Belfast Lough's water quality due to pollution from diffused sources, including agriculture, and from sewerage system overflows and Waste Water Treatment Works discharges.
- The scale of investment needed.
- The potential wider benefits of the proposed approach to investment planning.

Belfast's wastewater treatment system faces a number of significant issues, which could impact on the city's resilience - in particular its ability to adapt to, and mitigate climate change. Capacity risks can also impact on economic resilience, given the relationship between infrastructure and the health of the economy.

Northern Ireland Water publishes information on wastewater systems which are operating at or near capacity. Its August 2019 online report stated that Belfast Waste Water Treatment Works is predicted to reach capacity in 2021. Furthermore, it reported that 'In addition to the wastewater treatment works (WwTW), wastewater network capacity issues are emerging due to sewer network modelling activities being undertaken at Belfast (Glenmachan sub catchment), Kinnegar (Sydenham sub catchment), Newtownbreda, Whitehouse, Dunmurry. As a result of this, new connections are being declined in parts of the catchment.' The issue was further emphasised by

the Chair of Northern Ireland Water in the company's 2018/19 Annual Report which referred to the potential adverse impact of underfunding for economic development across NI.

The 'New Decade, New Approach' document also recognises that wastewater infrastructure is at or nearing capacity in many places in NI.

The capacity issues identified above represent a substantial risk to the city's resilience. Out of sewer flooding, inefficient operation of the existing system and treatment works with inadequate storm storage capacity all present challenges to the operation of the city and could inhibit the scale and nature of future development, at a time when housebuilding at scale is required. These risks are heightened over time as the system continues to deteriorate and as our climate changes.



### How a resilient city values water

Belfast currently has ready access to a plentiful supply of drinking water. However, all cities building their climate resilience should be aware of the potential for water shortages. The Climate Change Risk Assessment for Northern Ireland has identified the potential risks to humans and to agriculture and wildlife from drought. These factors, combined with the lack of capacity in our wastewater treatment system, suggests a strong case for a city-wide focus on valuing our water supply and on water conservation.



## Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDS)

Infrastructure integrated into urban places which provide a drainage function, are widely recognised as playing a crucial role in ensuring water resilience at a city-level. The Belfast Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy is a helpful document in setting out guidance for city partners to drive a proactive approach to SuDS. At the time of writing, the Department for Infrastructure is finalising a substantial set of proposals for sustainable drainage across the city. Investment in sustainable drainage of this kind, over this decade, is essential to meeting the city's climate ambitions and boosting its resilience.

## Conclusion

Belfast is one of hundreds of cities globally that face the competing challenges of driving sustainable economic development and population growth, delivering city centre densification while preparing for a changing climate and rapid decarbonisation. The UK National Infrastructure Commission has rightly recognised these significant challenges, as have global institutions such as the World Bank and the World Economic Forum. Infrastructure is increasingly understood as a key growth driver in cities. This can sometimes result in perceived tensions between infrastructure planning and economic growth strategy. It should not be the case. Competitive, resilient cities have shown that sustainable and inclusive economic growth is possible when infrastructure planning enables growth. Lack of infrastructure capacity should not hinder or dictate economic strategy - to do so would expose a city to a range of risks, and ultimately weaken its resilience. On this basis, investment in Belfast's infrastructure capacity will be a major determinant of the city's resilience, and its capacity to transition to a low carbon economy. This will require reconsideration of how infrastructure is funded in the future. It is almost certain to necessitate new funding models to better plan for growth capacity and climate resilience in the coming years.

# CONDITION OF EXISTING HOUSING STOCK



## Conditions in existing NIHE social housing

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive is the strategic housing authority for NI and its housing stock in Belfast numbers almost 26,000 units. Investment in, and maintenance of existing stock is a core priority for any landlord, however it has wider impacts for the city. A well maintained social housing stock ensures the long-term health and wellbeing of its population. It enhances social capital and if well planned, can have a significant positive impact on reduction of carbon emissions in a city.

**“Well maintained social housing stock ensures the long-term health and wellbeing of its population.”**

Northern Ireland Housing Executive stock in Belfast has traditionally benefited from significant ongoing investment, and therefore until relatively recently has been able to maintain its stock condition. However, a number of studies have recently shown that the condition of NIHE stock has deteriorated, arguably to a point where it represents a risk to the wider city.

In 2014, the Department for Social Development and the NIHE jointly commissioned Savills to undertake an Asset Commission to understand the scale and nature of investment required in the NIHE stock. Savills carried out a comprehensive exercise to assess the current and future repairs and maintenance liabilities of NIHE's properties and related assets. Savills found:

- The stock has deteriorated during the last 5 years... projections of costs moving forward have therefore increased and will continue to do so without sufficient investment.
- Just under 44% of the stock (37,974 units) is in asset groups with an average net present value ("NPV") per unit which is negative [i.e. the rental income collected from these properties is not sufficient to maintain the properties and service residents over the next 30 years].
- The total cost at today's prices [of the investment required in the NIHE stock] is £6.7bn.
- There is significant investment [circa £1.5bn] required during the next 5 years. In addition to the financial challenge this presents, there is also a significant practical challenge in terms of the

capacity of the market to deliver such a large programme...a 3 year lead in time is likely to be required before the levels of investment identified can be delivered on the ground and current investment programmes are concluded'. This "delay" will result in an increase in liability [from £1.5bn] in the 5 years that follow...'

Worryingly, the 2014 report predicted that 'The situation has worsened since 2009, and is likely to worsen again in the next five years in the absence of increased investment (made at the right time in the right place) combined with the application of modern asset management principles.'

Six years on, it appears that these warnings were prescient - the step change required to improve stock conditions has not occurred, so much so that the NIHE has publicly acknowledged that it may have to de-invest in homes. This would amount to a significant and adverse challenge to the city of Belfast, which requires a continual and ongoing supply of good quality social housing to meet its social and economic needs. Furthermore, the current condition of NIHE properties could make decarbonisation a much more significant challenge for the city.

A recent statement by the Minister for Communities acknowledged the scale of investment needed, and that two years have passed since the previous analysis of the scale of the investment challenge.

In her words, 'the current situation is most certainly worse and the scale of the investment even greater. New investment requirements have materialised since 2018: the consequence of the Grenfell Tower disaster and the ambition to reach a position of carbon neutralisation in our homes by 2050.' In response, the Minister has announced her intention to change the status of the NIHE to enable it to borrow to fund investment, and with proposals to come forward in 2021/22.



## Housing conditions and health outcomes

Housing conditions have a profound impact on health outcomes. Belfast's aging population, the condition of its housing stock- across all tenures, and projected patterns of extreme weather (warmer summers and colder, wetter winters) present key health challenges across the city. Older people and those with chronic health conditions are more at risk from cold weather and tend to live in greater fuel poverty. A sustained, collaborative and targeted approach is necessary.

The Health and Social Care Board is leading the Belfast Warm and Well Initiative, bringing together partners to take an evidence based approach to prevention, risk identification, data sharing, service coordination training. However, a strategic approach to improving energy efficiency and housing conditions, e.g. ensuring high standards of ventilation and insulation across all tenures in the city is also necessary in this decade, to avoid exacerbating existing health conditions and prevent avoidable deaths each year.

## Housing conditions in the private sector

Poor housing conditions, and in particular energy inefficient housing, exist across all tenures and can fundamentally impact health and wellbeing of residents, as well as wider society goals. Importantly, the UK Climate Change Committee has referred to UK homes as 'not fit for the future' given their levels of energy inefficiency. Health research has proven the negative impact that poor housing conditions can have on health- particularly for those with underlying conditions. Belfast's housing stock - particularly in the private rented sector- requires retrofit and modernisation to eradicate fuel poverty and meet the city's climate ambitions. Future legislative change is required to set a target on energy efficiency of our buildings, and implementation 'Belfast's Net Zero Carbon Roadmap' will be a critical driver towards these ambitions. The Northern Ireland Executive's future economic strategy - which will require a jobs-led approach to growth will be a critical lever. Belfast's Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission has produced a 'thinkpiece' recommending investment, at scale, in community based retrofit programmes, to improve the energy efficiency of homes, reduce fuel poverty and sustain local employment. This strategy has continually stressed the integration of climate and economic strategy to meet the city's Belfast Agenda priorities- retrofitting of homes is an excellent opportunity to achieve several outcomes at once.

## Conclusion

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive has commented publicly on the risks associated with its investment requirements- and the need for £3bn of investment across its entire stock in the next five years. The consequences of not meeting these requirements could include de-investment

in homes. The implications of de-investment in social housing at a time of existing housing stress, income deprivation and climate related challenges represent a significant and urgent risk to the city.

# PUBLIC HEALTH



**Belfast's experience of the Covid-19 pandemic, which first affected the city's residents during the public consultation on the strategy, has given a unique insight into the city's systemic vulnerabilities. While pandemics were not previously identified as a likely shock to the city, community planning partners had noted global research (World Economic Forum, 2019) which found that environmental degradation across the world makes viral pandemics more likely in future.**

At the time of writing, there remains a substantial public health risk, and therefore we are far from understanding the long-term social, economic and environmental impacts of Covid-19 for Belfast.

Nevertheless, the pandemic has reminded cities such as Belfast of two important principles; firstly, that good health is a central element of a city's resilience to shocks and stresses of all kinds, and secondly, that cities must take a number of steps to be resilient to public health crises. We have taken account of both of these lessons, and improved the strategy on this basis.

Evidence from Belfast suggests a number of key characteristics that are important to note, when considering the health of the population, and its resilience to shocks and stresses:

## Health inequalities remain a significant concern

The Department of Health's 'Health Inequalities Annual Report 2020' highlighted that Belfast's health inequalities were worse than the NI average in 32 out of 41 outcomes measured; most notably in relation to male life expectancy, drug related mortality and alcohol specific mortality.

- Male life expectancy in Belfast's most deprived areas is 71.7 years; 4.6 years less than the average (76.3 years). Female life expectancy is 3.6 years less than the average (81.1 years).
- Inequality gaps for suicide remain persistently high.
- However, the 2020 report identified a narrowing of inequality gaps in 15 of the 40 outcomes measured.

## Demographic change must be a key feature of health planning for the city

- Belfast was the first Age Friendly City in Northern Ireland and has a reputation as a leader in healthy ageing beyond the UK. This strongly contributes to the resilience of the city. Active Ageing with employment for older groups and opportunities for physical activity and reduced social isolation supported by inclusive transport infrastructure, walkability, green areas will help make an ageing population a positive asset for the city rather than a challenge to its resources. The number of people with dementia will also increase significantly and the work being led by community organisations to develop Dementia Friendly Neighbourhoods will contribute significantly to its resilience by ensuring that those with dementia and their carers have ready access to all the social assets within their communities who understand their needs.
- As set out in the section on 'population change', Belfast's population is ageing. The number aged over 65 will increase by one third with over 20,000 more people in this age group by 2041. People aged 45 now will be over 65 in 2041 requiring a focus on their health as well as those who are older now.





## The relationship between housing, transport and infrastructure policy and health outcomes is critical to the city's resilience

- The resilience of the city, as demonstrated during the pandemic, depends on having resilient local neighbourhoods where leadership has been evident. Evidence is also emerging globally of the importance of integration of housing, transport and infrastructure services to build greater resilience into the design of resilient neighbourhoods. Such neighbourhoods should be well-connected with walkable or cycle-friendly routes throughout, with a mix of inter-generational, cross-tenure housing, with a layout offering shared space to create a sense of safety and belonging as well as good relations and social inclusiveness.
- The Strategy recognises mental health as a systemic stressor in the city which can be amplified if crises are not well-managed. The pandemic is likely to see a sharp rise in mild to moderate conditions arising from social isolation and loneliness as well as economic recession. Isolation and loneliness is recognised as a significant public health issue, affecting as many as 1 in 10 adults. The creation of socially inclusive neighbourhoods through support for social assets and creative physical planning, building on the upsurge of interest in volunteering in response to the pandemic could reduce demand for more specialist services.

## Conclusion

Belfast's future resilience to shocks and stresses will depend on the underlying health of its people. This therefore requires a singular focus on ensuring the population is as active and healthy as possible. Opportunities should be proactively considered, through the Community Planning Partnership structures to ensure that housing, health and infrastructure delivery can contribute to, and demonstrate positive health outcomes at a local level.

**"The strategy will put the city in a much better position to meet critical threats to the health of our citizens and protect the most vulnerable."**

Iain Deboys,  
Assistant Director for Contracting and ECRs  
and Commissioning Lead, Health and Social Care Board, Belfast



# FLOODING AND EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS

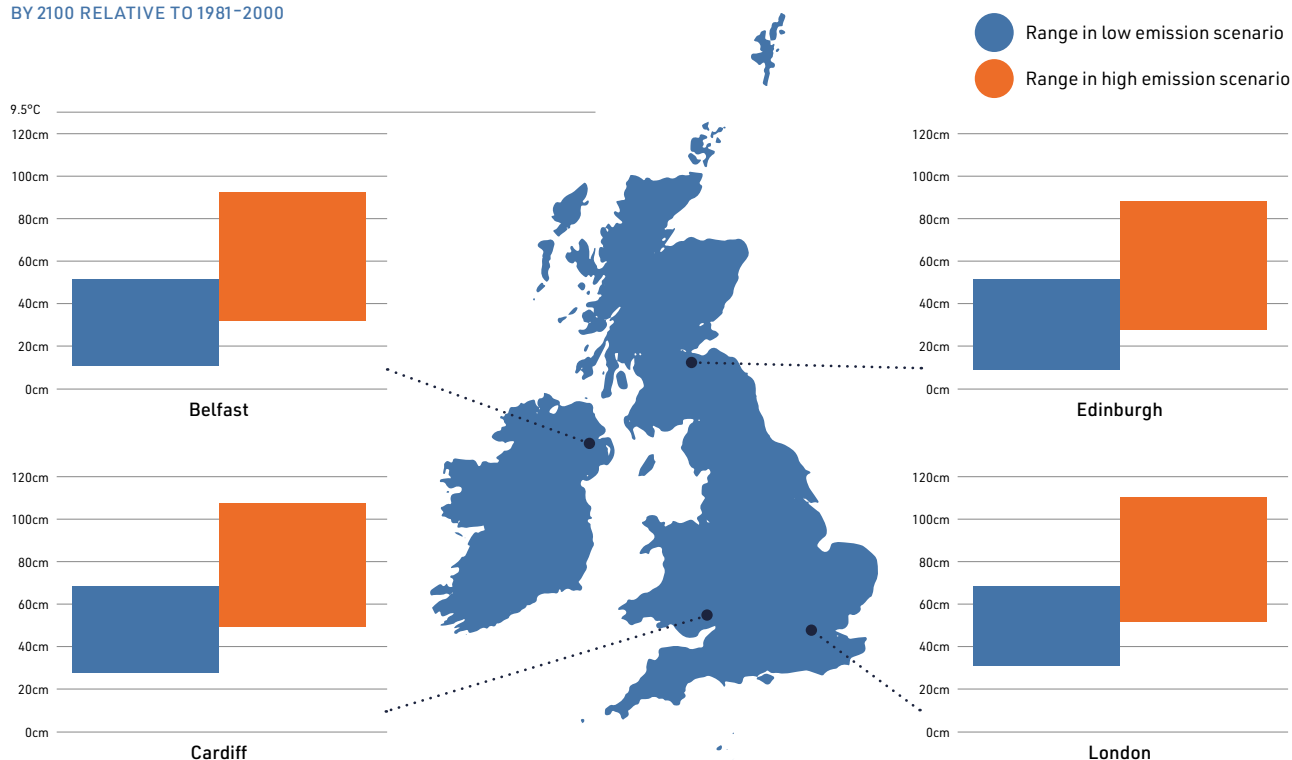


**To be a resilient city, Belfast must be able to withstand the impact of flooding and extreme weather events.**

The effect of climate change will be profound and with ongoing risk management and risk assessment, Belfast will be resilient in understanding potential impacts, infrastructure preparedness and economic consequences.

## Sea level rise

BY 2100 RELATIVE TO 1981-2000



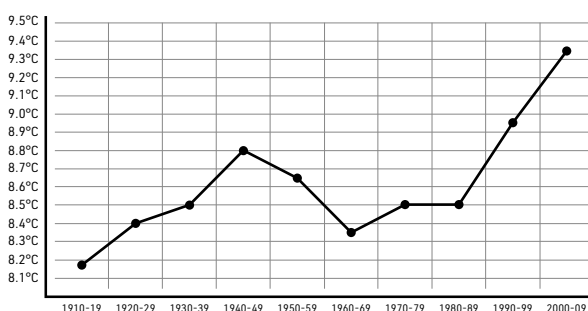
Source: UK Met Office

## Changes to our weather

Climate change is causing many extreme weather events to become more intense and frequent, such as heat waves, droughts, and floods. In the summer of 2020 wildfires caused fire fighters to be called to numerous incidences that impacted residents of north Belfast. The image below shows the trend in temperatures in NI since 1910.

Cities are already responding to the financial impact of extreme weather events. The Glasgow City Region has estimated that the cost of four typical weather events between 2012 and 2017 cost the city region £44.5m.

### NI mean temperatures





## Flood risk in Belfast

Belfast is located within the River Lagan catchment and at the mouth of Belfast Lough. It is a city with very close proximity to water, and where water resilience is critical to the operation of the city. Belfast makes up a large proportion of the geographical area estimated to be at "Significant risk of flooding in NI.

The Northern Ireland Flood Risk Assessment (2018) is a critical source, and identifies Belfast as one of twelve Areas of Potential Significant Flood Risk (APSFR) in Northern Ireland.

Several tributary rivers flow from the hills surrounding Belfast, into the city to the River Lagan and Belfast Lough, all of which have the potential to flood during periods of heavy prolonged rainfall.

Belfast is therefore at risk of flooding from a number of sources including tidal (the sea), fluvial (rivers) and surface water (pluvial) unable to drain away quickly into the combined storm and combined sewerage network, much of which was built in the late 19th and early 20th century.

The fact that Belfast has a mainly combined network means there is additional pressure on the system every time the city experiences heavy downfalls. As the city grows, additional pressure on the capacity of the network could increase the risk of flooding.

Belfast has a history of flood events and major damages are caused by both fluvial and pluvial events. The five highest tidal surges have been recorded since 1994, most recently in early January 2014.

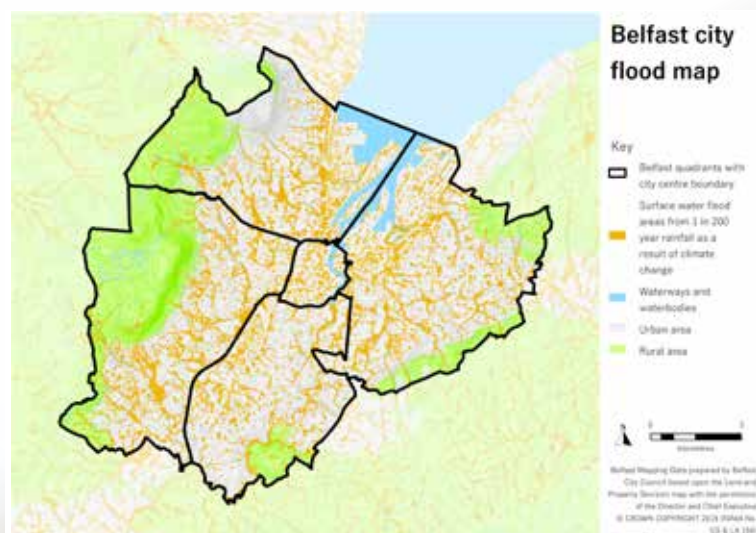
"The economic consequences of flooding for the city are well-known."

**"The NI Flood Risk Assessment (2018) predicts that the city is the most economically impacted of all areas of risk in Northern Ireland with Aggregated Annual Average Damages (AAADs) of approximately £16m."**

Coastal and pluvial flood risks are both sensitive to climate change. The impact of climate change causing sea level rise will increase the number of properties at risk of tidal flooding in the city to over 3,400 (2,640 Residential and 770 Commercial) by 2065 and over 7,900 (6,050 Residential and 1,860 Commercial) by 2115.

The Belfast Tidal Flood Alleviation Scheme is a landmark project that will provide a long term approach to tidal flood risk management for Belfast. Much of the city centre is between 1m to 2m below extreme tide levels, so a weather event of magnitude would cause serious disruption to the local economy, the transport network, and the social fabric of the city.

To understand the risks associated with climate change, Arup undertook a high-level risk assessment of existing city infrastructure. The study looked to three points in the future (2040, 2060 and 2080) for four key climate hazards: sea level rise, extreme heat, drought and extreme cold. The two key hazards with the biggest projected impact for Belfast are (1) sea level rise and flooding and (2) extreme heat. Arup found that many assets in the city are already at risk of flooding which is projected to be exacerbated by sea level rise and an increase in winter rainfall. The planned new flood defences will provide some protection but residual risk is projected to remain.



## Conclusion

The forthcoming tidal flood alleviation scheme provides a mitigation against worsening flood levels in the future, therefore it is expected to provide some improvement to the city's overall climate resilience. However, there remains significant work ahead to ensure the city's existing infrastructure is climate resilient. Sea level rises and flood risk, coupled with extreme heat will have significant implications for

the city's infrastructure, as with many other cities. Evidence from cities globally has demonstrated the negative impact this can have on the local economy, the transport network and the social fabric of a city. Belfast must therefore carefully plan the future of its infrastructure to ensure climate resilience is prioritised.

# CYBER RESILIENCE



**A resilient city is reliant on its digital infrastructure, data and associated cyber security. As cities increase their digital dependency, their exposure to attack grows. A resilient Belfast will be able to deliver its essential services in the event of any breach.**

As Belfast grows, and becomes increasingly reliant on a digital eco-system to achieve its ambitions, its ability to mitigate and manage data and cyber security risks will be essential. Experience from other cities with a sophisticated data infrastructure shows that as cities increase their digital dependency, their exposure to attacks also grows (McKinsey, 2018). A smart Belfast must therefore be a secure and resilient Belfast. Being a cyber-resilient city means more than just being secure- it means being capable of delivering essential services in the event of a breach.

A security breach has the potential to disrupt the city; however, cyber-crime has increasingly affected communities and individual households too. Cyber-crime knows no borders and while authorities have experienced increasing levels of sophistication in mode of attack in recent years, low-level basic opportunistic attacks remain prevalent.

**“ Being a cyber-resilient city means more than just being secure - it means being capable of delivering essential services in the event of a breach. ”**

A significant cyber incident can affect the functions of the city - organisations and the public need to consider the impact which a major incident will have, what measures are needed and how to recover. Cyber security planning should be part of routine risk management and should be embedded in the structures and objectives of every organisation and business.

The National Cyber Security Centre, which is part of GCHQ, is a well-established source of information regarding escalating volumes and types of threat. While this is extremely valuable at a national level, at a city level more work is required to develop more cross-sector plans to future proof our digital environment.

## Development of digital infrastructure and connectivity

Secure digital infrastructure is critical to the fabric of any modern city- to support its social and economic goals. In recent years, Belfast has improved its digital

connectedness - however it must retain this advantage through (1) a strategic approach to the development of a smart/digital city (2) sustained investment in the growth of its digital infrastructure (3) significant focus on the security and resilience of our digital infrastructure assets.

A number of key reports have recently made a similar case. Matrix, the Northern Ireland Science Industry Panel, formed a sub panel of experts in the Digital ICT sector to look at the opportunities within the sector and produce a capability assessment and foresight study into NI's Digital Information and Communications Technology sector. Its 2016 report made a number of significant recommendations that - while focused at a NI level - remain highly relevant to driving Belfast's economic resilience:

- Develop and deliver a coordinated Digital Strategy to bring together the key stakeholders and initiatives required to transform NI into a fully digitized and Smart society and appoint a Chief Digital Officer to build a digital society.
- Develop a 3-5-10 year Skills Investment Plan for the Digital ICT sector.
- Ensure that NI has an exemplar digital infrastructure within and between urban areas to secure NI as an exemplar smart, connected region.
- Provide an integrated, agile platform, based on open standards which expose appropriate data and service APIs to nurture the development of an innovative ecosystem.
- Ensure that the cyber security sector is supported and developed.

Belfast is well placed to build its cyber resilience, in part due to the development of cyber security expertise in the city. CSIT, the Centre for Secure Information Technologies at Queen's University is recognised for its world class research, and its work to enable new value and venture creation and ensure an entrepreneurial approach in the area of cyber security. It facilitates 'NI Cyber' a cluster of companies based in NI that are developing world-leading cyber security technologies for customers worldwide.

Belfast City Council has prioritised a 'smart cities' approach to digitising and connecting the city, to achieve its economic and social ambitions, and in turn contributing to the city's resilience. Smart Belfast brings together our universities, businesses, local government and citizens to collaborate, innovate and experiment using cutting-edge technologies and data science.

The Matrix report was instrumental in informing the

Belfast Region City Deal Innovation and Digital Pillar, which will deliver a number of its recommendations at a city-region level.

- The Regional Innovators Network (RIN) will create a unified environment in which the districts across the Belfast City Region are able to work together to develop and deliver a response to the regional needs for spaces within which entrepreneurs and SMEs can develop new products and services, and work with the larger businesses in the region.
- The Infrastructure Enabling Fund (IEF) will support the deployment of advanced and resilient connectivity infrastructure across the Belfast region.
- The Smart District & Regional Testbed Network consists of key locations across the Belfast Region that will act as hubs for development of advanced digital and physical infrastructure and will foster early adoption of new digital products and services at large scale.
- The Digital Innovation Platform and Partnership (DIPP) is a shared physical and digital environment where academic research community, tech entrepreneurs and industrial partners will come together to address key challenges in business and society through the application of the Internet of Things (IoT) and data science.

Consumer protection on cyber security is also critical to cities, like Belfast, that are becoming increasingly digitally connected. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has produced helpful guidelines for Consumer IoT security that aim to strengthen the security of consumer smart devices sold in the UK and define the security requirements for the Internet of Things (IoT). These standards will allow configured devices for Smart City initiatives to be better protected.



### Belfast's objectives to ensure cyber and digital resilience should be:

- To make Belfast unattractive to cyber criminals - through resilience and recovery.
- To build an eco-system of supported city partners.
- To build a pipeline of skills and education.

Belfast Region City Deal is a 'once in an generation' opportunity to build Belfast's resilience by increasing its digital connectivity.

### The Infrastructure Enabling Fund (IEF) will:

- Support the deployment of advanced and resilient connectivity infrastructure across the Belfast Region.
- Catalyse digital innovation towards increased productivity and inclusive economic growth.
- Manage the deployment of advanced wireless and fibre network infrastructure over the lifetime of the City Deal comprising of 4G LTE, Wi-Fi, IoT, optical and 5G technologies.
- Develop next-generation infrastructure to support the provision of a range of connectivity services, and will be critical for businesses within the Belfast region to catalyse their growth by having access to the latest communication technologies.
- Provide high value sectors in the City Region with the digital infrastructure needed to test the application of new and emerging digital technology and solutions.

This will provide a significant boost to our economic resilience. Critically, the Digital and Innovation Pillar of the City Deal will be implemented in an integrated way- to ensure that the outputs and outcomes arising from the City Deal are directed and driving inclusive economic growth in the City Region. However, it places even greater emphasis on the importance of secure and resilient infrastructure.

## Conclusion

There is no single coordinating body for the identification and management of cyber risk at a city level. While some individual organisations have developed cyber resilience plans to varying degrees of sophistication, this remains ad hoc, and with very little support for small organisations, and little focus on business continuity following a potential cyber or digital attack. Furthermore, there has been no single published account of the potential cost implications of a cyber-security threat to the city.

Protecting the city from cyber threats should be considered the collective responsibility of senior leaders across the city. This strategy advocates closer working relationships across organisations in Belfast- with academia and the private sector - sharing threat information and good practice and collaborating to make it more difficult for cyber threats to succeed.



# UK EXIT



**On 31 January 2020 the United Kingdom left the European Union and the Withdrawal Agreement concluded with the EU became law. The 'transition period', provided for in the Withdrawal Agreement, comes to an end in December 2020. At the time of writing (October 2020), trade negotiations to establish the UK's future trading relationship with the EU remain ongoing. These negotiations on the UK's trading relationship will have enormous implications for Belfast's economy and for the wider region.**

A number of studies have been undertaken to assess the future impact of UK Exit on NI, however there is no published central government assessment of the potential impacts of UK Exit for the city of Belfast or for similar UK cities. Earlier this year, a previously confidential study undertaken by the UK government detailing 142 areas of life in NI that will be impacted by Brexit was published by the House of Commons Exiting the EU Select Committee. The document is instructive in outlining the range of policy and practice areas - beyond trade and customs checks - that would be affected by a managed UK Exit. Furthermore, it highlights the scale and nature of formal and informal cooperation between the two jurisdictions on the island of Ireland, some of which may be impacted by a managed exit, and some adversely impacted by an unmanaged exit (i.e. departure without a deal).

**It is extremely likely that unsuccessful trade negotiations between the UK and the EU would represent both a short-term shock to the city of Belfast, and have longer term implications for the operation of the economy.**

## Conclusion

The UK's decision to leave the EU has long term implications for the city of Belfast. Significant re-framing of our relationship with cities in Europe is required; work to sustain levels of investment in a new trading landscape will also take time; and its funding relationships with key EU bodies requires careful planning into the future. For these reasons, UK Exit from the EU will remain a significant area of focus and of risk management for the city.



# ECONOMIC RECOVERY CAPACITY



**Economic resilience refers to a city's resistance to and recovery from an economic shock. Improving resilience therefore includes a focus on the vulnerabilities that either make an economic shock more likely, or that exacerbate a crisis.**

Following the global financial crash (2008-09), policy makers began to pay greater attention to the cost of crisis in a city- sometimes referred to as 'GDP at Risk', which can profoundly damage long-term economic development. The OECD, for example, has developed a set of indicators to help cities help policy makers detect vulnerabilities early on and monitor country-specific risks. Like several other cities, Belfast has made economic resilience a core priority, committing the city in the Belfast Agenda to take a targeted approach to addressing those issues which pose the greatest risk to the city and its economy.

As a city with important economic relationships globally, Belfast is susceptible to global economic trends and headwinds. Our focus on economic resilience seeks to ensure (1) strong resistance - when economic shocks happen, we are prepared and can ensure the shock has a temporary impact; and (2) have with greater capacity to adapt and recover, and to maintain progress towards our inclusive growth ambitions.

## Resilience to what?

The World Economic Forum Global Risks Report is a credible and often cited source of information on immediate and longer term risks faced by cities and states globally. Published annually, it allows for tracking of risks over time.

In 2020, its report identified immediate risks emerging globally; a 'synchronised economic slowdown', continued warmer temperatures globally, expected increases in cyberattacks, and growth in protests around the world against systems that exacerbate inequality. The report was published in January 2020, as Covid-19 was confined to a small number of countries and had not yet been declared a 'pandemic'.

Since early 2020, global economic forecasts have worsened, and in the UK economic forecasts suggest a prolonged shock as a result of the pandemic. At the time of writing (October 2020) the Bank of England has warned of an 'unusually uncertain' outlook. HM Treasury comparison of independent forecasts predicts an average GDP drop of 10% for 2020, an average unemployment rate of 7.3% for 2020, and average public sector net borrowing for 2020/21 to sit at £343bn.

## An unsettled world, global risks and Belfast

For the first time in the history of the WEF Global Risks Perception Survey, environmental concerns dominate the top long-term risks globally. These risks are set against a worsening macro-economic outlook, which has been emerging for some time, i.e. before the impact of Covid-19. The 2020 report makes a number of observations that are relevant to Belfast; risks to economic stability and social cohesion, climate change and accelerated biodiversity loss, consequences of digital fragmentation, and health systems under pressure.

For Belfast, proactively managing the impact of these global risks locally is challenging, but essential. The impacts for Belfast could be:

- A potential slow-down of growth in investment and Foreign Direct Investment in the city, if property funds look outside of the UK due to uncertainties arising from the impact of UK Exit from the EU.
- Increased costs for businesses and potential major shocks for industry depending on the nature of the UK's future trading relationship with the EU, and particular arrangements for NI.

- Supply chain shocks - in particular costs associated with accessing supplies depending on the nature of UK withdrawal from the EU.
- Currency volatility and its impact on exports.
- Economic shock arising from Covid-19, followed by a prolonged global slow down could choke off the slow recovery being experienced by the city since the financial crash.
- Slowdown in scale of transition to low carbon technologies thereby reducing potential to take advantage of opportunities to be gained.

As a city with significant exposure to the impact of the UK's exit from the European Union, and with underlying existing economic vulnerabilities, Belfast must prioritise how it builds resistance to economic risks, as quickly as possible.

This strategy and the establishment of an Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission is aimed at institutionalising an approach to managing long term economic risks thus boosting the city's economic resilience.

## Belfast's existing economic resilience

In 2018, the UK Core Cities Network commissioned Cambridge Econometrics to investigate the economic resilience of cities. In preparing this strategy, through our membership of the Core Cities network, we supplemented this study to include an assessment of Belfast's economic resilience, including relative to other core cities. The study concluded that:

**"Belfast requires a series of measures to strengthen its resistance to, and recovery from, economic shocks."**

Belfast had lower resistance and lower recovery capacity than the Core City average measured against twelve other UK cities. Its recovery capacity has been particularly low, being rated as the weakest of all the cities except Liverpool. This is despite the data showing that Belfast's resistance is strengthened somewhat by the share of public services in the city's economic output.

This finding underscores that the policy levers required for economic resilience are different to those that focus on economic growth. The high dependency on the public sector as a contributor to the city's economy has a positive impact on the city's resistance to shocks;

however, it can also have a negative impact on the city's ability to develop sustainably.

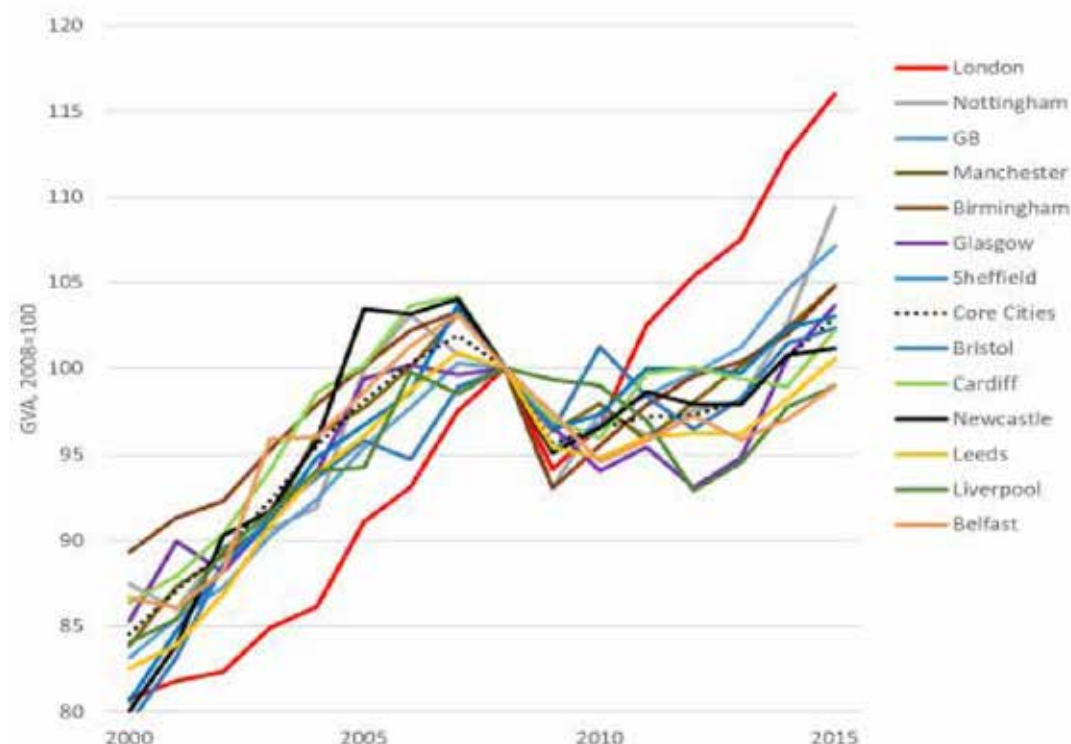
Belfast requires a series of measures to strengthen its resistance and recovery to economic shocks. This is particularly important because the way cities recover from shocks can have permanent impacts on their long term economy. For example, if people who are economically inactive fail to feel the benefits of a return to growth, this can result in a widening of income inequality further reducing resistance to the next shock.

### Factors affecting Belfast's economic resilience

Despite its importance, there is no single global standard or set of indicators for measuring economic resilience.

In this section we examine two particular aspects of Belfast's economic resilience - income inequality and competitiveness and recommend the development of a series of indicators to measure the city's economic resilience in the future.






#### Core cities compare Belfast with the GB average





## Belfast city's competitiveness

A recent study of the city's competitiveness (Bakertilly Mooney Moore 2019) identified a number of areas of vulnerability for the city of Belfast, and summarised them in the graphic below. Importantly, the study found that Belfast's decline relative to other cities is due to their resurgence, i.e. other cities' out-performing Belfast.

Theme	Current average ranking	Three year change	Five year change
 Productivity	4/12	→	→
 Population and demography	9/12	→	↓
 Sustainable and inclusive growth	6/12	→	↓
 Quality of life	6/12	→	↑
 Physical knowledge and infrastructure	5/12	↓	↓

### The study concluded the following:

- Belfast's demographic profile is impacting its competitiveness and its ability to achieve its city objectives. Belfast has a smaller labour pool which is growing slower than its competitors. Retaining the city's population and replacing those who leave is a major challenge. These factors may potentially impact the city's attractiveness to investors and is at odds with the performance of other cities.
- Belfast has a significant skills challenge. It has too few highly skilled workers and too many with no qualifications. While the figures are improving, it lags significantly behind other UK and European cities. This is impacting the city's competitiveness and the prosperity of its citizens, creating inequalities within the Belfast economy and making the achievement of inclusive growth more challenging. While a range of initiatives have been delivered to improve the skills base, significant issues remain and while much of the policy responsibility sits with the NI Executive, initiatives such as the Belfast Region City Deal present an opportunity for the City to play a bigger role, over both the short term and the long term.

- Belfast (and NI as a whole) still has the largest proportion of economically inactive of all UK cities (and regions). As well as the implications for the individuals affected, it also results in a drag on the local economy's performance and competitiveness. To improve Belfast's competitiveness, this is an area which must be addressed.
- While there is a sense of an emerging entrepreneurial ecosystem, supported by a buoyant knowledge economy and a growing private sector, key indicators still highlight that Belfast lags behind its peers in relation to creating and growing successful businesses. Providing a supportive environment which is conducive to business creation will be key to improving Belfast's competitiveness. This is also a key focus of the Belfast Region City Deal, which presents a significant opportunity to provide further foundations to support enterprise, innovation and entrepreneurship
- Belfast has momentum across a range of indicator, it has also dropped down the rankings across others - namely in Broadband provision. There is evidence that other cities are seeking to enhance their competitiveness by investing in policy areas that have made Belfast successful. This poses a threat to Belfast and may take away from Belfast's competitive offer. The city should not rest on its laurels and should seek to build on its strengths to maintain and enhance advantages where they exist.

The Belfast Agenda, the city's community plan, sets out a series of measures aimed at reducing and removing some of Belfast's economic challenges- in particular through a sustained focus on population growth, jobs creation and development. This pro-growth approach is underpinned by a focus on inclusive growth, reducing inequality over time. This mirrors the approach taken by a number of global cities with similar challenges, and assuming the right policy levers are applied, could be transformative for the city of Belfast.

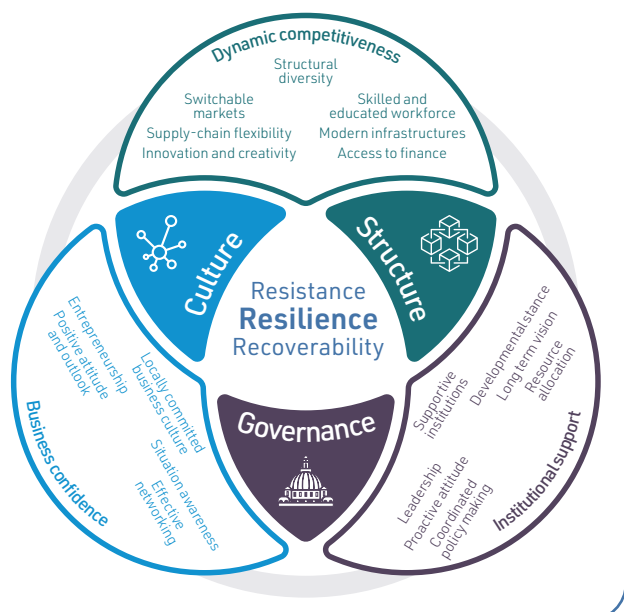
Encouragingly, the potential for greater resilience is intrinsic to the ambitions within the Belfast Agenda. Their realisation could address a number of challenges for the city referenced in this document, such as providing critical mass to maintain or support services and infrastructure.





## Building our economic resilience

Building economic resilience for sustainable growth requires an integrated and simultaneous focus on several aspects of the city's economy. The Cambridge Econometrics Study produced the following helpful Venn diagram:



## Indicators to measure and strengthen economic resilience

This strategy proposes the agreement of a citywide series of indicators to measure Belfast's economic resistance and recovery capacity. These may include the following:

- 1 ..... Levels of private and household debt
- 2 ..... Flexibility of labour market
- 3 ..... Skills among working age population
- 4 ..... Ratio of FDI and indigenous investment
- 5 ..... Public Sector as a contributor to economic output
- 6 ..... Export Intensity
- 7 ..... Income and wealth inequality
- 8 ..... Employment and economic activity
- 9 ..... Integrated local economic networks
- 10 ..... Presence of strong economic strategy and leadership
- 11 ..... Levels of trust
- 12 ..... Dependence on carbon

## Building on the city's economic strengths

As set out in the previous pages, Belfast faces a number of challenges associated with its weak recovery capacity. However, its economic resilience has been significantly boosted in the last decade as new growth sectors have emerged, and thrived. These include significant recent growth in the ICT sectors, Fin Tech, Life & Health sciences, global business services and across emerging sectors such as cyber security, Reg Tech and Legal Tech. More recently, Belfast has also attracted a significant number of internationally recognised global investors.

Alignment of city partners around a number of growth priorities, has led to the establishment of a number of new city structures. For example, the Belfast Digital Innovation Partnership brings together local government, universities, Belfast Harbour and Catalyst- the city's community of innovators- to harness digital innovation with the objective of achieving a step-change in increasing the city and the region's productivity. The work ensures a strategic focus on commercialising the outputs of the city's research base, weaving digital innovation into every aspect of the city's economy with the goal of creating new and better jobs.

Investment in companies across the city has remained strong throughout the decade. Between 2015/16 and 2019/20 Invest NI, the Economic Development Agency for Northern Ireland, provided £198M of support to businesses based in Belfast (£110M to local companies/ £88M to externally owned companies), securing over £1.144bn of investment and assisting in the promotion of 10,126 jobs.

As a result of this investment and a strategic approach to development of growth sectors, Belfast can now boast of becoming a leading city across a number of key industries. It is currently (2020) Europe's leading FDI destination for new software development\*, is ranked as the No 2 'Second Tier' city for Business Friendliness and is one of the top 10 digital economies of the future\*\*.

Continuing to improve the city's economic resilience is a critical priority for the city's Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission, established to develop an economic strategy for Belfast and to ensure continuation of a strategic focus on key growth sectors. The Belfast Region City Deal offers a timely and important lever for the city to invest heavily across those industries to support job creation, skills development and sustainable economic output.



## Conclusion

The financial crash and global recession of the previous decade exposed Belfast's weak recovery capacity. This will be further impacted by the economic shock arising from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. In many respects, Belfast had only just begun to recover from the previous crash, when COVID-19 hit. To better prepare for future economic cycles, a sustained focus on economic resilience, as part of a wider inclusive

growth strategy is required. Many global cities, are now placing a particular emphasis on economic resilience and Belfast can learn from existing global practice. This strategy recommends that we commence this work by (1) identifying and agreeing a series of city-wide indicators to measure economic resilience (2) making it a core aspect of the work of the Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission.





# POVERTY AND INEQUALITY



**High levels of poverty and income inequality can severely reduce a city's resilience. At a household or individual level, lack of access to additional resources in times of unpredictability means much greater vulnerability in a crisis. Substantial research now exists to show the disproportionately adverse impact of climate related shocks on poorer neighbourhoods, for example, following periods of economic shock, people without jobs and on fixed low incomes often do not benefit from a return to growth as quickly as wealthier households.**

A significant proportion of the population will face financial difficulty. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) said that one in four (25%) adults stated that the coronavirus was affecting their household finances, with 75% reporting reduced income. The survey also indicated that an increasing proportion of households have needed to use savings to cover living costs, with evidence of having to borrow money or use credit causing concern for some households.

Initial analysis indicated that those in the lowest earning income deciles are much more likely to be furloughed or laid off compared to those at the top of the income distribution. Therefore, the least well off are more likely to lose their jobs or suffer from reduced income, thus widening inequality. (JUEPC)

COVID-19 makes it clear that cities are only as resilient as they are inclusive. World Bank Cities'

Belfast's resistance to and recovery from shocks, and its wider resilience will therefore be determined by the success of its achievements to drive inclusive growth.

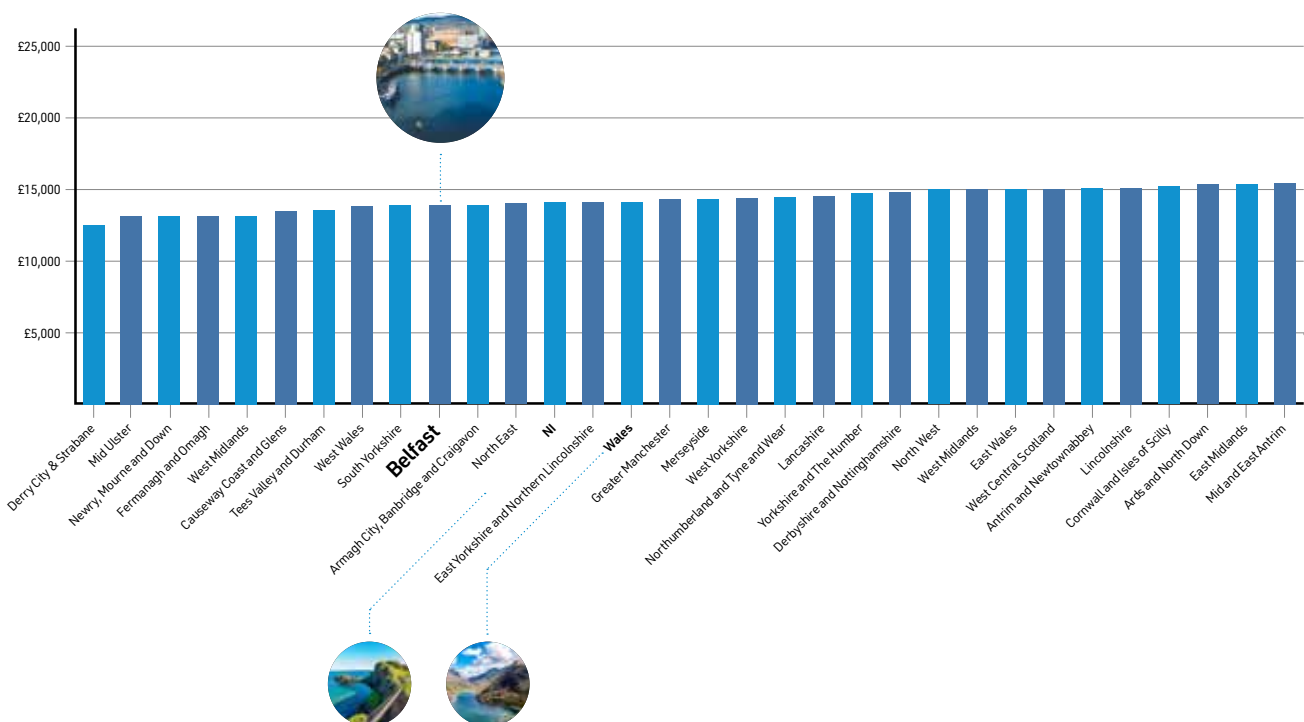
The draft Local Development Plan describes the social context in Belfast as 'a tale of two cities',

**"Belfast is home to some of the most affluent communities in NI, however it is also home to some of the most deprived communities."**

There is a need for the LDP to increase equality of opportunity and contribute to the breakdown of the physical and psychological aspects of division.'

This assertion is based on a range of data sources- including the Income Deprivation Domain (in The Northern Ireland Deprivation Measures), which identifies the proportion of the population living in households whose equivalised income is below 60% of the NI median. Belfast is split into 174 spatial areas known as Super Output Areas (SOAs). Belfast contains two of the ten most deprived SOAs in NI - and 4 out of the 10 least deprived, in terms of income.

## Gross disposable household income



A 2016 NICVA study on income inequality found that 'it is possible to say that Belfast is the most unequal part of NI, as it has a high proportion of people in the bottom of the income distribution (25%) and a high proportion at the top (18%).'

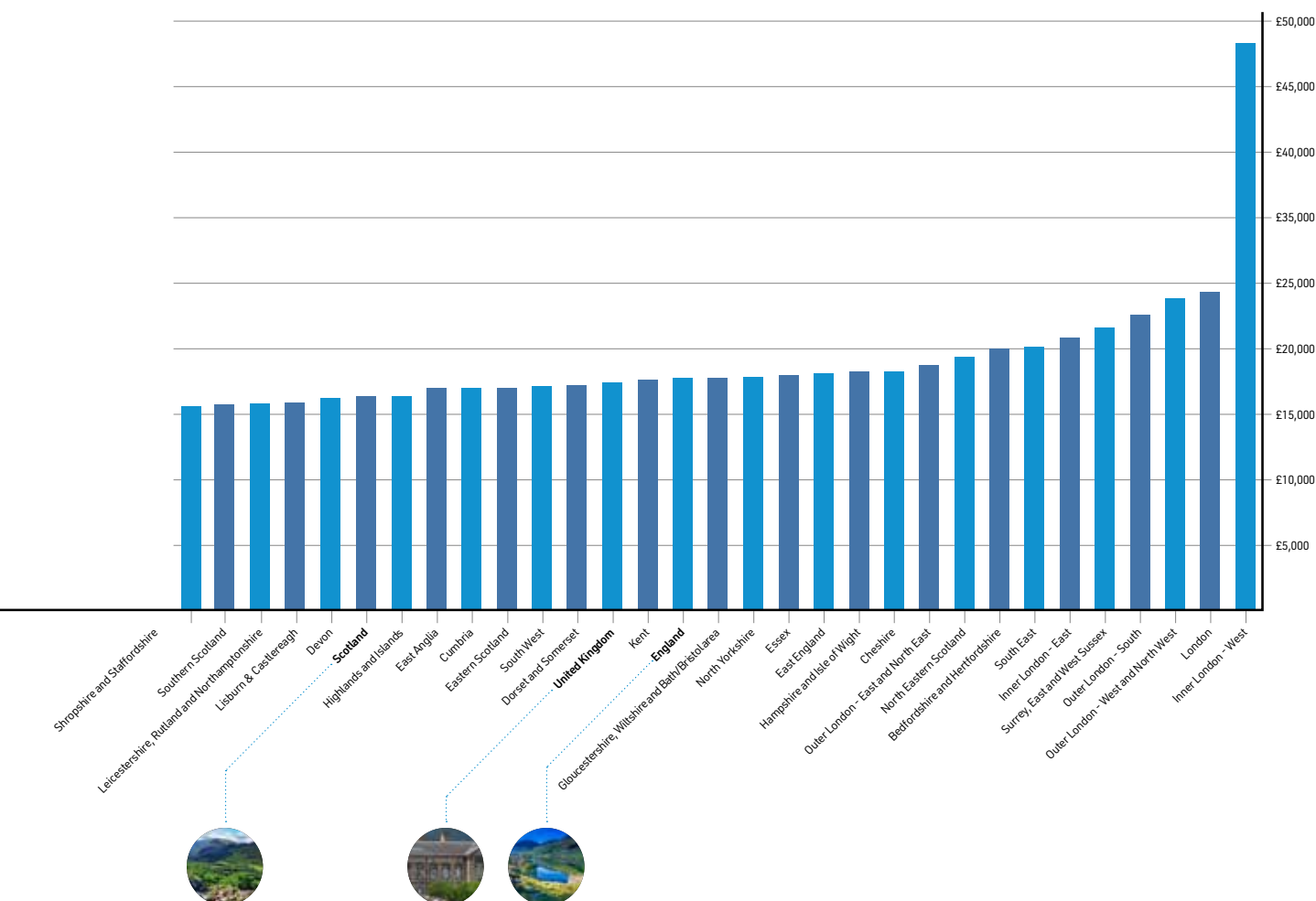
While income and wealth inequality in Belfast is high, the city also compares poorly to others in terms of absolute levels of income. Twenty-one of the top 20% most deprived SOA's in NI are in Belfast. However, 14 of these have remained in the top 20% since 2005. Even more notable is the fact that a number of SOA's moved out of the top 20% in the 2010 measures and then re-entered again in the latest 2017 measures.

While income inequality clearly requires a sustained focus, there is an equally strong argument for a greater understanding of the impact of wealth inequality. Wealth inequality rarely receives as much policy attention as income inequality, yet the gap between public and private capital is a strong driver of divisions in society. It is not clear whether a single city study into wealth inequality has been done in Belfast.

**"While overall private wealth has increased in the UK, public wealth has waned and the gap between both has widened."**

Data on economic performance confirms the benefits to be gained from reduced wealth and income inequality, and less division generally. Economic activity has close correlations with levels of trust- economies with high levels of trust, have higher levels of trade and activity that adds economic value. There is a case for a focus on community wealth and asset based welfare to find ways to reduce wealth inequalities in the city.

Coupled with political polarization, inequality erodes a country's social fabric in an economically damaging way: as cohesion and trust diminish, economic performance is likely to follow.



# POPULATION CHANGE



**Resilient cities are those with thriving populations - well planned levels of sustainable development, to match cities' long term ambitions. Belfast's economic resilience is therefore dependent on sustainable levels of population growth, particularly among its younger and its working age populations.**

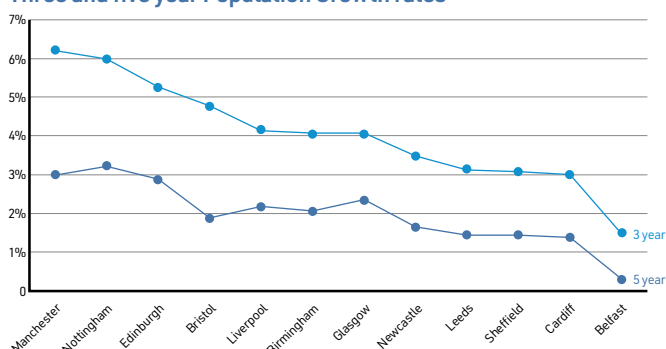
Population projections are important because they give us a perspective on how the future might look, if certain trends continue. However, because they are trend-based, they cannot take account of policy changes which might occur, and the impacts of these interventions. Most cities globally are planned on this basis - population projections are developed centrally based on past trends, however, local planning policies aim to change these trends over time.

This strategy uses population projections because they provide critically important information on how past trends might impact on the future. However, as this section concludes, future policies will determine whether these projections are realised.

In 2019, Belfast had a population of 343,542 making it, by this measure, one of the largest cities in the UK overall. It has a lower population than the Scottish capital Edinburgh (518,000) but has a similar population to the Welsh capital Cardiff (364,248), Newcastle (300,196) and Nottingham (331,069).

As part of Belfast's competitiveness study, the city's projected population growth rates was compared with 12 others. The study found that Belfast had the lowest projected population growth rate for the next three and five years.

## Three and five year Population Growth rates



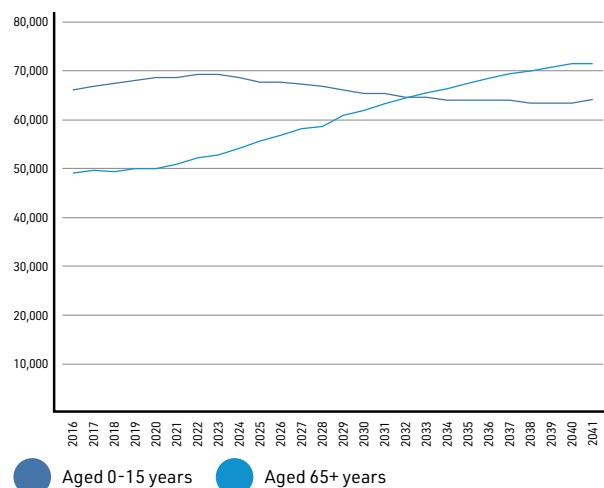
When data on growth in working age population was compared, Belfast has one of the lowest labour pools of the twelve cities. Perhaps most worrying of all, Belfast has seen relatively low growth in its working age population since 2013 (0.8%) and a decline since 2015 (-0.2%) which leaves it ranked lowest of the 12 comparator cities.

## An Aging Population

Over the decade mid-2016 to mid-2026, the population of children (i.e. those aged 0 to 15 years) in Belfast is expected to grow by just 2.4%.

Furthermore, over the same decade, the population in Belfast aged over 65 is projected to increase by 15.2%. In 2033, the number of older people aged 65+ in Belfast will surpass the number of children under 15. Each of these trends presents distinct challenges for the city- and for its economic resilience in particular.

### Children 0-15 and older people 65+

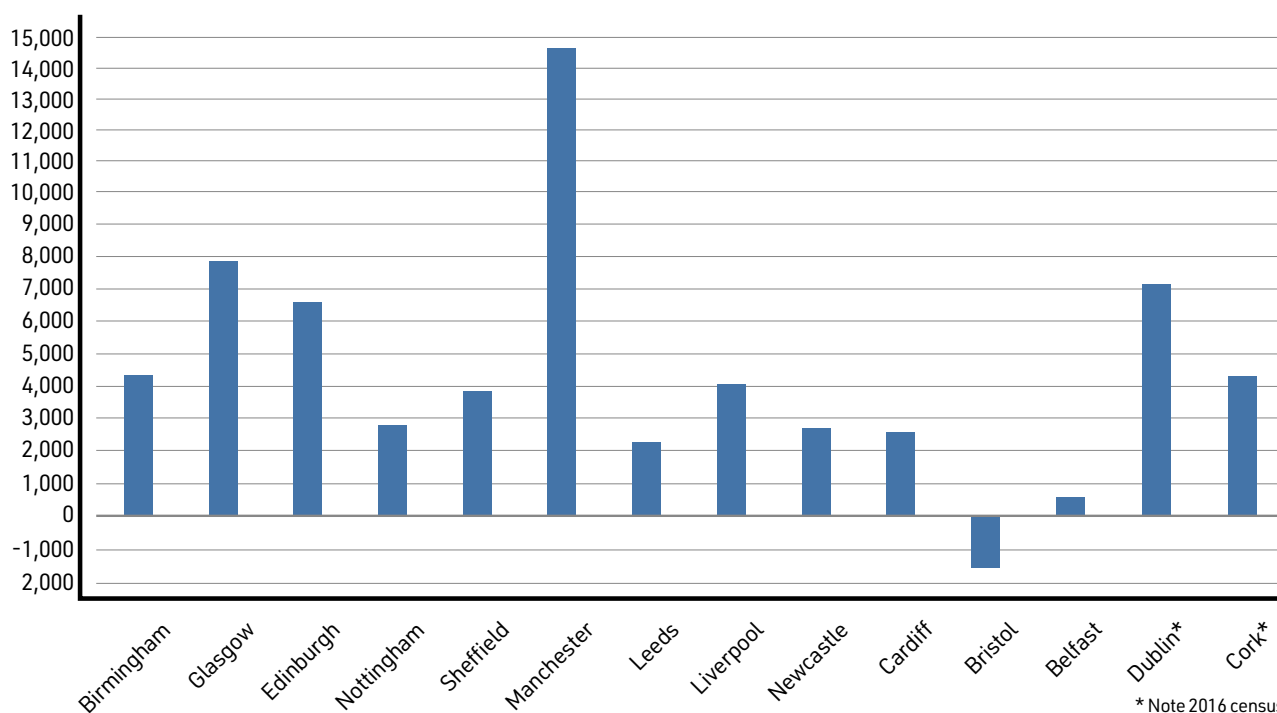


## Migration and people leaving our city

Migration flows are a strong indicator of how a city is perceived internationally. Belfast has recently realised negative net migration - i.e. more people leaving than arriving. This is highly unusual. When ranked alongside twelve other UK cities as part of the Competitiveness Study, Belfast was unique in this respect.

Environmental migrants forced to flee their current homes due to rising sea levels, drought and unpredictable weather events around the world is something that may impact UK cities in future years.

### Migration due to climate change, 2019 mid-year estimates



## Conclusion

Official population projections for Belfast demonstrate the challenges faced by the city. However, it is important to stress that a focus on projections alone can mask the drivers that led us to the present position. Resilient cities are highly reflective and adaptive - they plan for sustainable development based on a sophisticated understanding of the relationship between economic and social trends, on what has succeeded or failed in the past and what has worked elsewhere.

Growing its population - and in particular the number of young people and working age people is critical to

the city's economic resilience. For this reason, the policy goals in the Belfast Agenda - 'to be home to an additional 66,000 people', and underpinned by its draft Local Development Plan Strategy are crucial to the city's future economic resilience.

Many other cities globally have demonstrated the capacity of local planning policies to reverse or shift population trends and it is essential that decision makers in Belfast do the same. Given the impact of Belfast for the regional economy, there is a strong case for pursuit of these policies to receive regional priority.



# CARBON INTENSIVE SYSTEMS: DEPENDENCY ON FOSSIL FUELS



**Belfast is a net importer of energy, relying heavily on traditional coal, gas and oil to heat and power homes and buildings in the city and on petrol and diesel for virtually all of its transport needs. A third of the domestic sector relies exclusively on oil for space heating.**

This heavy fossil fuel reliance, generating high levels of demand for what is an expensive form of energy, presents a significant challenge to the city's long-term resilience.

**"Balancing security of energy supply for economic growth with a supply of affordable energy so all households can live in healthy warm environments with environmentally sound sources of energy."**

Belfast's dependence on energy will increase. The International Energy Agency has previously projected that energy demand in cities globally will increase by 57% by 2030 - energy demand and energy security therefore represent a major challenge for all global cities including Belfast. This makes the transition to low carbon sources of energy an even greater priority for the city.

The so-called 'energy trilemma' is a well-known phenomenon within cities. It relates to balancing security of energy supply for sustainable economic growth with a supply of affordable energy so all households can live in healthy warm environments with environmentally sound sources of energy in response to a changing climate.

A 2017 Northern Ireland Affairs Committee report on the electricity sector was blunt in its assessment that NI has struggled to achieve this balance. It called for an urgent update of the Strategic Energy Framework - the policy framework on energy, to give certainty to investors, and enable long term policy clarity and planning for energy. It also recommended a permanent advisory body on energy.

Belfast is a net importer of electricity. The security of this supply is considered both on a NI basis and an All Island basis. SONI (the Northern Ireland Transmission System Operator) jointly (with the Republic of Ireland Transmission System Operator, Eirgrid) annually published a Generator Capacity Statement and Annual 10 year Transmission Forecast Statement. These consider the expected electricity demand and the level of generation capacity that will be required in NI and on the whole island over the next ten years. Within this they consider a number of realistic scenarios. Their current statement highlights that current capacity needs are met however some scenarios indicate further capacity is needed for 2026 and beyond. The need for a second

North South Interconnector to increase security of supply is also highlighted. Planning approval for the interconnector has now been granted by the Minister for Infrastructure in Northern Ireland enabling this critical project to advance.

Generators are provided with clear information on how they are compensated within the current single electricity market on the Island of Ireland. This design includes capacity auctions for generation capacity four years in advance of the need. However generators also require long-term policy clarification from the NI Executive to provide further surety and reduce their risk leading to reduction in costs for consumers going forward.

Belfast is also a net importer of gas. The security of supply for gas is considered on a NI basis by the Gas market Operator within NI.

Nevertheless, we have a good story to tell when it comes to renewable electricity. From October 2018 to September 2019, 44.9 per cent of total electricity consumed in Northern Ireland was generated from renewable sources. This exceeded the original target of 40% by 2020. Decarbonisation of the energy system, however, will require a step change in the level of renewable generation if net zero carbon targets are to be met. Demand for electricity may also increase through the electrification of heat and transport. These are dependent on an enabling policy environment, which will not be in place until a new Northern Ireland Energy Strategy is implemented, expected to be in 2021 or later.

## Towards a New Energy Strategy for NI

The Department for the Economy has begun the process of developing a new energy strategy, which it intends 'to decarbonise the Northern Ireland energy sector by 2050 at least cost to the consumer.' Encouragingly the department also recognises that any new strategic direction for energy in Northern Ireland must consider the existing energy mix and how it will be reshaped, as well as considering energy demand reduction. The move to decarbonise our energy systems was given further impetus when the Minister for the Economy announced that 'Clean Energy' is one of four growth sectors for targetted investment in her 'Rebuilding a Stronger Economy' document, published to support economic recovery following the Covid-19 pandemic. Clearly, in a relatively short space of time clean energy has emerged as an area of strategic focus in Northern Ireland, and as the region's capital, Belfast will have a critical role to play



## Belfast's big energy bill

The 'Mini Stern' for Belfast, commissioned by the Belfast Climate Commission, and undertaken by Professor Andy Gouldson at Leeds University, found:



- Belfast spent a total of £296m in 2019 on energy across the city. However, Belfast's energy bill is forecast to grow to £466m by 2050.
- If it invested in all of the profitable energy efficiency and low carbon options, total energy bills would be cut by £286m per year in 2050, creating jobs, improving air quality and the liveability of the city.
- Households in the area would save £46m a year from their energy bill.
- Belfast's industry could cut its fuel costs by £9m a year.
- This would mean the area's carbon emissions would fall by 23% over and above what is already expected.

**"Cutting the city's carbon footprint makes really sound sense economically and socially as well as environmentally. Belfast could cut its future energy bill in half whilst at the same time reducing fuel poverty, creating jobs, making its homes more comfortable and slashing its carbon emissions. The case for action is so strong that rather than asking why would we do this, people in the city should be asking why wouldn't we."**

Andy Gouldson  
Professor of Environmental Policy, University of Leeds  
Author of Belfast Net Zero Carbon Roadmap (Mini Stern)



## Waste and the circular economy

In January 2018, as part of its national climate mitigation and adaptation policy, China banned the import of foreign waste, including almost 9 million tons of plastic scrap, to reduce pollution and strain on its national environmental systems.

This ban exposed poor resilience in the domestic recycling capacity of many states that had traditionally exported to China. Plastic waste built up in the United Kingdom, Canada and several European states. In the first half of 2018 the United States sent 30% of the plastic that would previously have gone to China to landfill. According to the World Economic Forum, 'as the impact of environmental risks increases, it will become increasingly difficult to treat those risks as externalities that can be ignored or shipped out. Domestic and coordinated international action will be needed to internalize and mitigate the impact of human activity on natural systems.'

Successful cities manage the impact of growth sustainably and ensure that it does not limit the quality of life of future generations. Waste management is therefore a key factor in the resilience of the city. Belfast City Council is prioritising the management of urban waste, to create a quality materials product with the aim of supporting jobs via a circular economy.

The council's forthcoming Corporate Plan from 2020 to 2024 will prioritise new waste collection arrangements under the 10 Year Waste Framework Strategy. Through the Resourceful Belfast programme, the council aims to maximise economic potential by creating social enterprises; and will develop a strategy which will ensure waste is managed effectively and investigate the economic potential of the circular economy to increase skills, jobs and inclusive growth.





## Risk to health and enjoyment of the city: air quality

The quality of urban air is a critical factor in the quality of life enjoyed by city residents, as well as a key health determinant. The World Health Organisation describes air pollution as 'the largest environmental risk factor for ill health' and estimates that in 2012 around 1 in 8 deaths were attributed to exposure to air pollution, and this is echoed by the UK Clean Air Strategy, published in early 2019.

### Cities that have been successful in enhancing air quality have tended to take a multi-faceted approach:

1. Setting evidence-based targets for reduction in harmful levels of pollutants- often exceeding national level targets
2. Dramatic reduction in fossil fuel dependent road transport and in combustion of fossil fuels- a sustained modal shift in travel and transport
3. Providing clear and easy to access public information on air quality levels, to enable informed decision making by the public on their travel routes
4. Well-resourced public education campaigns to help individuals and organisations understand how they could reduce their contribution to air pollution
5. Excellent partnerships between city government, health policy makers and innovators to identify new solutions to a systemic problem.

## Belfast Smart Cities Urban Health Programme

The Urban Healthy Living pilot was funded by UK Space Agency's 'Space for Smarter Government Programme' which adapts satellite-enabled air pollution monitoring to support public health programmes and healthcare delivery in an urban setting.



The project demonstrated the use of a space-enabled technology for traffic related air pollution monitoring and aimed to spur innovative interventions in healthy living and disease prevention. Using a blend of technology, the project produced air pollution models that were visualised on 3D maps, making complex information accessible. UHL also prototyped a routing map that could allow clinical patients to better self-manage their respiratory conditions by selecting the routes and modes of transport that limit their exposure to pollutants.

The project's research led to some important conclusions which are highly relevant for policy makers and city planners; that air pollution hovers long after traffic dissipates, and that weather is a determining factor. Those with COPD and asthma are much more severely affected by air pollution levels, and air pollution is increasingly linked with non-respiratory diseases including diabetes and reduced cognitive function.

## Conclusion

Belfast's economy is a high-carbon one- which will impact its resilience in the coming decades, as other cities transition to low-carbon futures. The speed and means of Belfast's energy transition will be critical to its economic future. However a timely and well managed transition has the potential to significantly boost inclusive growth in the city, to create jobs and to reduce fuel poverty.

When work commenced to prepare a resilience strategy in 2018, there were no formal citywide structures or plans in place across Belfast with either a focus on climate mitigation or climate adaptation. Data on the potential implications of climate change is still not held centrally (i.e. at a city wide level).



## How prevalent is car use in Belfast?

- Belfast remains a car oriented city with 68% of households having access to at least 1 car.
- 53% of journeys made in Belfast between 2015-17 were car journeys, and just 11% were by public transport. This compares poorly to other similar UK and global cities.
- Relatively few households were close to a train station. 60% said it would take them 44 or more minutes or that it was not feasible to walk.
- Belfast's daytime population increases by 25% to accommodate people who travel to Belfast to work.
- Congestion levels in Belfast place the city in the TomTom Traffic Index Top 25 Global Congested Cities.
- 158,237 vehicles registered in Belfast 2019.
- 1,172 electric vehicle registrations in Belfast in the first quarter of 2020 (less than 1% of all registrations in 2019).

## Conclusion

The fact that the car remains the predominant feature of Belfast's transport infrastructure and network is a major risk factor for the city, and increasingly inhibits its resilience. While the city's transport infrastructure is functioning successfully in lots of ways, the prevalence of road infrastructure in the city, the numbers of daily car journeys and their impact on movement in the city and the dependency on fossil fuels for car use present major challenges for the city as it transitions to a low carbon economy. The draft LDP Technical Supplement makes the point succinctly, 'Belfast is a city that has historically been dependent on the private car and the streetscape has evolved to cater to these demands, resulting in road infrastructure that is over sized, over complicated and a barrier to non-motorised accessibility'.

The policy framework for transport at the city level, the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan was developed in 2004 for implementation to 2015. While many aspects of the plan remain relevant, there is a strong case, as Belfast sets targets for decarbonisation, to refresh the city's policy ambitions for sustainable transport.

Belfast's future resilience is dependent on its transition to a low carbon economy. This will only be possible with a material shift in the balance of its travel choices away from cars and towards sustainable public transport, walking and cycling as advocated in the approach to future growth in the LDP.

There are welcome signs of progress towards reducing the city's dependency on the car. Changes to mobility following Covid-19 may result in longer-term patterns towards sustainable forms of travel. The appointment of a Walking and Cycling Champion by the Department for Infrastructure presents a welcome opportunity to promote active travel across the city.

Research from cities across Europe, where the dominant mode of transport is walking, cycling or public transport demonstrates the health benefits and the transformational impact modal shift can have on peoples' satisfaction with their city. A step change in sustainable forms of transport would deliver two major city objectives at once- making Belfast a city that attracts and retains young people, and encourage them to live in the city centre. It would significantly increase the city's climate resilience and drive decarbonisation, making Belfast a much more attractive city in which to live.



# CLIMATE CHANGE



2

Climate change presents a grave risk to the planet, and as such, its effects on cities will be profound, and many will be permanent. How we design cities, how we live in them and enjoy our city lives will change significantly in the decades to come. Work on this strategy had just commenced in 2018, when the IPCC produced its seminal report which concluded that global warming should not go above 1.5 degrees beyond pre-industrial levels. The report recommended significant acceleration in global efforts to reduce carbon, and was instrumental in shaping the UK government's decision to set a net zero carbon target for the UK by 2050.

In preparing this strategy, climate change was the predominant issue raised by stakeholders in our focus groups and workshops. Children and young people across Belfast raised it as a priority issue for them.

Lack of preparation for climate change emerged as a major feature of discussion in our workshops and focus groups. This was echoed in Northern Ireland Climate Change Risk Assessment, which found:

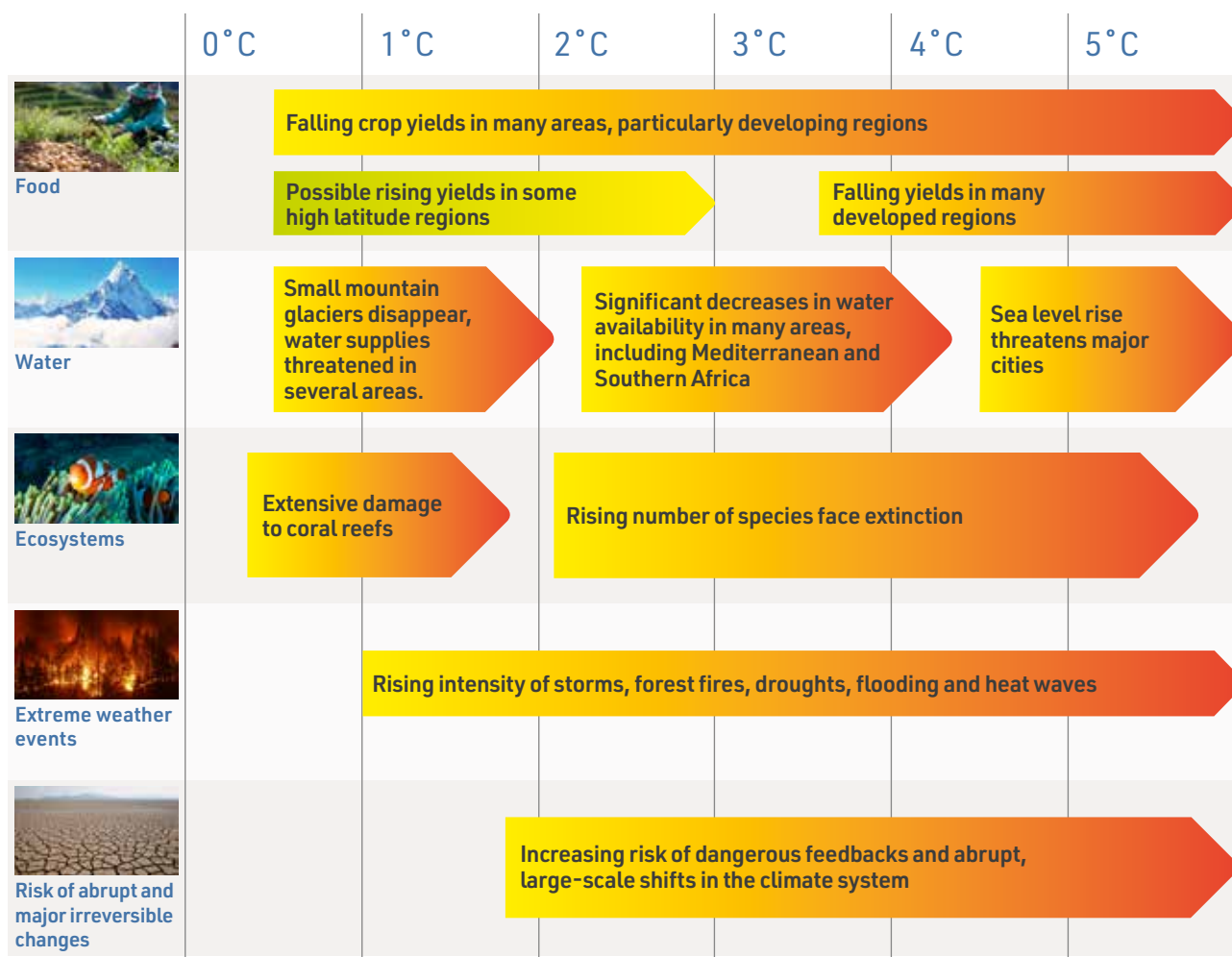
'There is no published account of what has been achieved by efforts in recent years to improve the resilience of infrastructure systems in NI to flood risk.'

Most sectors do not report on the resilience of their assets, networks and services. This is particularly the case with the non-regulated sectors and for local infrastructure, especially minor road networks and highways.

Few sectors systematically describe the disruption that has been caused by flooding, and the actions that have been taken as a result.

## Global temperature change

Relative to pre-industrial



## Assessing climate risks to Belfast

While no comprehensive city-wide risk assessment has yet to be undertaken, the Climate Change Risk Assessment undertaken at a NI level, is relevant, and we would expect that the risks identified below are likely applicable to Belfast. It found that

- Climate change poses risks to NI's soils, farming, freshwater resources, natural carbon stores, marine ecosystems, wildlife and habitats. It argued that more action is needed to build resilience to these risks. It also highlighted that more evidence is needed to fully understand other climate change risks that are likely to be important for NI's natural environment, including potential changes in agricultural and forestry productivity and land suitability and impacts on freshwater and marine ecosystems.
- Infrastructure in NI is exposed to a range of climate hazards. Impacts on some assets have the potential to cascade on to others as part of interdependent networks. Flooding poses the greatest long-term risk to infrastructure performance from climate change, but the growing risks from heat, water scarcity and slope instability caused by severe weather could be significant.
- The CCRA Evidence Report suggests that there are potential health benefits from warmer winters in NI, but more action is needed to manage current risks to people from cold temperatures through addressing fuel poverty. There are several risks that might be important for NI but there is not enough evidence to assess to what extent adaptation action is already underway to manage the risks. Such areas include risks to communities from flooding and sea level rise, extreme weather impacts on the healthcare system, risks to building fabric from moisture, risks to culturally valued buildings, and risks to health from overheating buildings, poor air quality and pathogens. For these risks, more research in NI is urgently needed.
- Flooding and extreme weather events which damage assets and disrupt business operations pose the greatest climate change risks to businesses in NI now and in the future. This could be compounded by a lack of adaptive capacity.
- Climate change will impact upon on water security, agricultural production and economic resources around the world. These impacts can in turn exacerbate risks from conflict, migration, and humanitarian crises abroad, with implications for the UK. The main risks arising for the UK from climate change overseas are through impacts on the food system, economic interests abroad, and increased demand for humanitarian aid.

- The high-level climate risk assessment undertaken by Arup to inform this strategy concluded that Belfast is already suffering as a result of climate hazards- that extreme weather is impacting Belfast's infrastructure and this impact is likely to significantly increase in the future. The vulnerability of existing infrastructure will be exacerbated with changing climate risk and is likely to involve more periods of extreme heat and winter rainfall. It recommended a comprehensive climate risk assessment is undertaken to inform a future Climate Plan for the city.

## The importance of science based targets

Assessing climate risks to Belfast comprehensively has been difficult because of lack of available data and analysis. Unsurprisingly therefore, this strategy recommends that considerable work is undertaken swiftly, to understand the scale and nature of climate related risks, to inform how to make Belfast climate resilient. Research is also required to ensure science based targets inform our ambitions for decarbonisation.

Risk assessment is not just important to enable the city to prepare for climate change, it is critical to understanding economic risks. The Glasgow City Region's Risk Assessment identified that the annual economic cost of climate change in Glasgow City Region is estimated to be £400 million each year by the 2050s; around 1% of current GVA . Given Belfast's existing level of economic resilience, the city can ill-afford to be unprepared for an equivalent level of GVA at risk.

## An inclusive approach to climate planning

As the Committee on Climate Change noted, 'Low income households are particularly susceptible to climate change impacts, though they might also benefit the most from the positive implications of climate change.'

**"NI has the highest proportion of properties at risk of flooding that are in deprived areas (27%)."**

CCRA 2017, NI Summary Report t

For this reason, it is critical that climate adaptation and mitigation targets are genuinely inclusive and aim to ensure the most vulnerable are protected, and that the economic benefits from decarbonisation are felt by those most impacted by fuel poverty. A core aim of any climate mitigation plan must be a significant reduction, or virtual elimination of fuel poverty.

Furthermore, given the level of interest in the issue of climate change by the city's children and young people, it is critical that city-wide climate planning is participative and includes their voices and opinions on the future of their city.

## A Zero Carbon Roadmap for Belfast

The Belfast Climate Commission, a partnership between Belfast City Council and Queen's University Belfast is committed to ensuring a science based approach to climate planning across the city. Working with Leeds and Edinburgh, Belfast's first Net Zero Carbon Roadmap has been produced, to identify the sources of Scope 1 and 2 emissions, and to set out cost effective and innovative stretch measures needed to reach net zero carbon by 2050.

### The document concludes the following:

- Belfast's share of the global carbon budget- to keep to 1.5 degrees of warming is 16 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>
- Belfast is emitting 1.5 million tonnes of carbon a year. At this rate, the city will have used up its carbon budget by 2030.
- Belfast's carbon emissions have declined by 42% since 2000, but this needs to be increased to an 80% reduction by 2030, and a 100% reduction by 2050.
- Targeted measures in transport and housing would make significant progress towards the 2030 target, reducing the city's energy bill by £286 million a year, boosting employment in the city. These cost effective measures are set out in detail in the report.
- Innovative stretch options are also outlined, demonstrating the transformation that is required and possible, to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

**"I am delighted that Belfast has a resilience strategy to address global challenges. I commend Belfast City Council for including the voices of local people throughout the consultation phase and look forward to seeing the positive impact the strategy will have on the lives of people in Belfast."**

Michele Bryans,  
EastSide Greenways Manager, EastSide Partnership, Belfast



## Developing a climate plan for Belfast

Cities that are climate resilient- ready for the impact of climate change- are those which have developed a comprehensive approach in an integrated and joined-up way. The Community Planning Partnership model for Belfast is the right model through which to build a city-wide collaboration of agencies and organisations to help plan the city's preparedness for climate change and to drive decarbonisation.

The city's Resilience and Sustainability board is working collaboratively to ensure the following:

- A single adaptation and mitigation plan is developed, using comprehensive risk assessment and science based targets to ensure robust commitments, including targets for arriving at net zero carbon as a city, and agreeing a carbon budget.
- That adaptation strategies are joined up with emergency planning structures in the city, and with NI wide targets and strategies and with city region strategies
- That future strategic developments in the city are informed by climate adaptation and mitigation targets
- That the recommendations from the Committee on Climate Change regarding NI's emissions are heeded; for example, to significantly improve levels of tree planting; to find ways to incentivise transition to low-carbon heating of homes and retrofit of housing stock; more rapid deployment of electric vehicles, tighter conventional vehicles standards, and transport behaviour change.
- Fundamentally, a city-wide climate adaptation and mitigation plan, developed in partnership with the city's statutory community partners and others should result in a comprehensive series of commitments to prepare for climate change and decarbonise. This should inform and influence decisions on strategic developments in the city. As the Committee on Climate Change notes 'The cost-effective path to decarbonisation in NI requires action across all sectors of the economy and a joined-up approach.'

## Conclusion

The effects of climate change on Belfast will be profound. A comprehensive risk assessment is urgently required to better understand the economic, social and environmental risks expected for Belfast at a local level, to enable effective adaptation planning.

Climate change represents the biggest medium term risk to the city of Belfast - to its people and its economy. Given our levels of economic resilience, the scale and nature of spatial division in the city, levels of fuel poverty and deprivation, Belfast's resilience is dependent on how we prepare. A step change is now required across a range of city partners to develop a comprehensive climate adaptation and mitigation plan, which will include science based targets and aim to achieve an inclusive approach to decarbonisation. While the net effects of climate change are not sufficiently understood, it is highly likely that there will be economic upsides to decarbonisation, and therefore this is a once in a generation opportunity to radically reduce fuel poverty and help drive inclusive growth.

## HOUSING SUPPLY IN THE CITY

**Economically resilient cities tend to have vibrant city centres, which act as economic drivers for the rest of the city, while also being a focal point for culture, tourism and connectivity. Climate resilient cities are increasingly investing in greater levels of densification within city centres to reduce urban sprawl and remove dependency on carbon intensive forms of travel.**

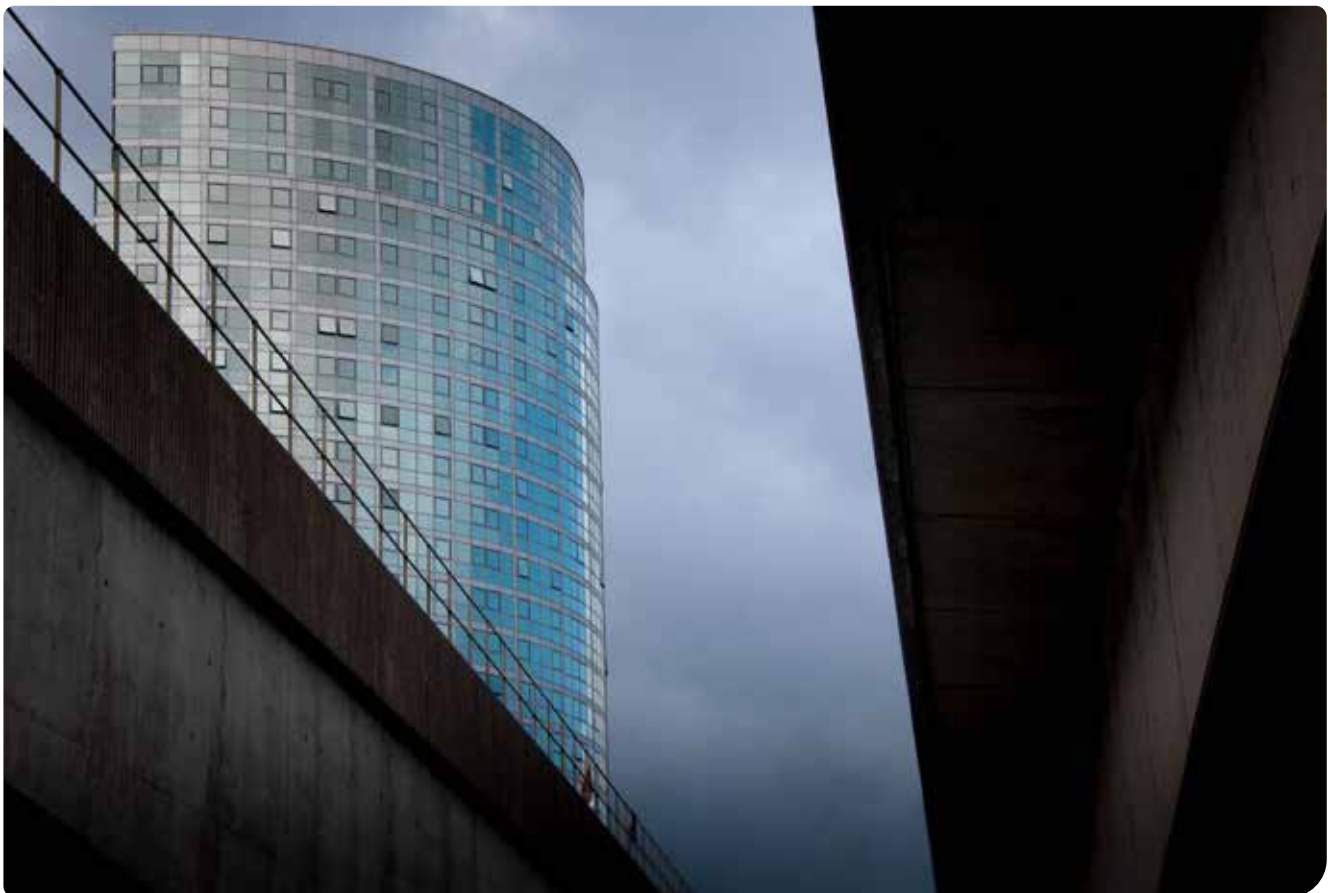
Belfast's city centre has experienced a revival in recent years with increased investment and regeneration. The development of a Regeneration and Investment Strategy has made the city centre an area of strategic focus, and has resulted in masterplanning of strategic sites in the city, e.g. Belfast Inner North West, and the Linen Quarter. Importantly, targets to increase the 'rates base', are intended to enable further investment in the city. Furthermore the city council established a City Centre Investment Fund to identify strategic opportunities to develop the city. This has boosted Belfast's economic resilience and made it much more capable of being prepared for shocks in the future.

A step change in the city's resilience would be achieved by the development of residential housing at scale in the city core. Prioritised as an area of focus in the Belfast

Agenda, the city's community plan, a new generation of housebuilding would transform Belfast City Centre and complement existing ongoing regeneration and development.

Progress in recent years in this area has been too slow- with just 103 new homes completed in the city in 2019/20. This pace of completions significantly undermines Belfast's competitiveness and reduces opportunities for sustainable economic growth. Thriving cities need a ready supply of people living in the city core to contribute to a mixed economy and to make the city an attractive place to visit and invest.

While the existing economic headwinds for Belfast make large-scale residential development challenging, land values in Belfast are competitive, relative to other UK city centres. The right housing product at the right point in the economic cycle could prove successful. Examples from other cities include creative use of public subsidy (land or finance) through joint ventures with private or social partners to build at scale. Financial models might include borrowing against future receipts to fund a greater number of products, including shared ownership or 'key worker' housing.





## Social and affordable housing need

Lack of supply in the city core represents just one of several city-wide housing challenges. Social housing comprises almost 25% of all housing in the city, and therefore plays an important role in the city's economy, and contributes to the health and well-being of the population. However, housing need in Belfast has been consistently high in recent years, impacting the economic resilience of the city, with significant social consequences. Total applicants as at end of September 2020 for Belfast City Council area is 11,288 with 8,545 applicants in housing stress. The 2019 Northern Ireland Housing Executive Investment Plan proposes a 'new build requirement' of 4,421 social homes from 2018-23 and intermediate housing demand of 550 for the decade from 2019.

Thriving, successful and inclusive cities require effective housing systems, that provide safe, decent and affordable housing for everyone. Belfast has a strong history of high quality, well-managed social housing provision. The city's future economic and climate resilience is therefore dependent on a supply of social and affordable housing, to ensure genuinely inclusive growth.

## Conclusion

Significant success has been achieved in making Belfast city centre an attractive investment proposition and this has yielded results for the local economy and the city more generally. However the city's future economic resilience and sustainable levels of growth require a permanent city centre population. Housebuilding at scale, which gives priority to good design and includes family housing is critical to the economic resilience of the city.

A new generation of homes should include a mix of tenures to accommodate households on a range of incomes. Lessons should be learned from other cities that have successfully applied cross-subsidy models to build social, affordable, shared ownership and key-worker housing alongside market rent and market sale.

Furthermore, smart and low-carbon housing respectful of the city's existing built heritage which encourages and incentivises use of public transport, would have additional benefits to the city including reduced air pollution.



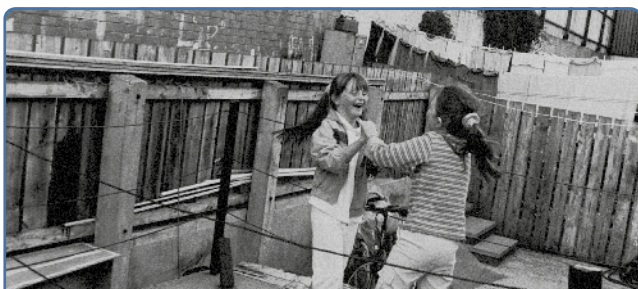
# SEGREGATION AND DIVISION



**The signing of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement in 1998 was a milestone in the city's history. Since then, the creation of new institutions, implementation of key aspects of the peace agreement and dramatic reductions in conflict related violence in the city have created the conditions for a for a more resilient Belfast. As the Good Relations Strategy for Belfast City Council sets out, 'we have come a long way as a city over the past 20 years...but there is much more to be done'.**

In developing this strategy, the issue of division emerged repeatedly as a perceived inhibitor to the city's resilience. In our stakeholder engagement, many individuals contended that until Belfast was truly a connected city, we would continue to be vulnerable to many risks.

**"We have come a long way as a city over the past 20 years...but there is much more to be done."**



## Existing levels of segregation in Belfast

It is important to state that conflict is no longer the overriding risk factor for Belfast. However, the legacy of conflict has manifested in division, which continues to directly impact on the city and to undermine its urban resilience.

- Division between communities remains prevalent with low levels of trust and high levels of residential, educational, physical and social segregation in many areas.
- Belfast contains the highest number of interface areas in the region where segregation remains high. Inter-community tensions are reducing but continuing. There are estimated to be around 97 security barriers and forms of defensive architecture across residential areas in Belfast.
- Many people within our society still think of Belfast in binary terms - of a society made up of two communities; Catholic and Protestant. In many ways this binary view and its influence on public service decision making has accentuated division in our society by duplicating services and hampering the connectivity between people and communities. (GR Strategy).
- Physical and psychological barriers between communities make travel around parts of the city difficult. This has resulted in people avoiding certain areas perceived to be unsafe.

The data bears this out. Several studies exist that demonstrate that conflict in cities significantly lowers their overall resilience to key risks- such as climate-related impacts , or food security. The existence of conflict or the threat of conflict exacerbates shocks and stresses, often making them more complex or expensive to solve.

If the residents of Belfast continue to think, travel and live in a binary way- the city's ability to respond to significant risks is weakened considerably.

The provision of parallel services adds to the cost of public services, reducing capacity in the system to respond to unexpected shocks.

Crisis management tends to be less effective when systems are disjointed or separate. Resilience requires integrated systems and cities, where a single decision is rolled out universally and speedily.

When cities are well networked, capacity can be shared - sometimes human capacity- e.g. moving people across cities during times of extreme weather events.

This is made more difficult and sometimes more expensive in cities where residential segregation is prevalent.

Lack of trust between communities, particularly those living in close proximity, means they are less likely to support each other - this adds to a city's vulnerability in times of crisis.

## Conclusion

Belfast's resilience is weakened because unlike other cities, it is not a socially cohesive unit. Yet cohesion and integration are critical in a crisis. Furthermore, separation reduces efficiency and wastes resources. For example, thousands of additional journeys are taken in Belfast each day because of its separate education system. In such a carbon intensive and car oriented city, this significantly adds to our CO2 emissions and makes responding to climate change more difficult, and potentially more expensive.

Climate change will present profound risks to all cities globally, during this century. Cities that can build their capacity to maintain essential services, recover from shocks and continually adapt are more likely to survive. Divided cities will be much more exposed to risk.

It is not a coincidence that Belfast's Resilience Strategy and its Good Relations Strategy have both prioritised 'connectedness' as a major problem to be solved. If Belfast is to thrive in the face of unexpected challenges, it must do so as a united, socially cohesive city.



# MENTAL ILL-HEALTH



**A healthy city is a resilient city. An abundance of data now exists that proves that cities that invest heavily and consistently in health and wellbeing of their populations - particularly in their children and young people - feel the benefits beyond social impacts, but also on their economic performance over the longer term. The Belfast Agenda rightly prioritises the reduction in health inequalities and encouragingly, the city's community planning structures are focusing attention on a range of health related urban 'problems' for example on reducing avoidable winter deaths.**

We have identified the issue of mental ill-health and use of prescription drugs as a major challenge for Belfast because of the regularity in which it emerged in our discussions with city partners.

In fact, the issue of mental ill-health was one of the most talked-about issues by stakeholders across the entire development of this strategy. It was just as likely to emerge in discussions on the economy as it was in discussions on societal challenges. Perhaps this should not be a surprise.

There is now a growing body of research examining the impact of cities on levels of anxiety and mental health. In 2019, Europe's first 'Urban Psychology Summit' was held to explore the links between urban renewal policy choices and serious mental and physical health impacts.

Four key findings emerged:

- Experience of place determines much of our development and wellbeing, and we should not separate the policies for one from the other.
- The discipline of psychology is missing from public policy debates and decisions at a city level.
- Cities have the unique potential to support the development of a positive shared identity for its population.
- Given rapidly rising urbanisation and worsening mental health, a stronger focus should be urgently placed on understanding more about the psychological impact of place upon people, and people upon place.

This emerging research suggests that Belfast is not alone in experiencing increased levels of anxiety and mental-ill health among its population. In developing this strategy, stakeholders repeatedly emphasised their perception of a prevalence of mental illness across all age groups.

Prescription drugs are also playing a role in making some people less healthy, rather than more so.

**"A growing number of young children presenting with anxiety, stress and in some cases trauma."**

These two areas of focus featured overwhelmingly in our conversations with health and social care professionals.

## Belfast's mental health challenges



Data on mental health points to a significant challenge for the city and its people.

- NI has a suicide rate of 27.3 per 100,000 for men and 9.2 for women. The comparison to England is stark where the rate is 14.0 for men and 4.6 for women, with 307 deaths by suicide in NI in 2018.
- Since the 1990s, the absolute number of deaths from suicide in NI have doubled (in 1993 there were 151, now the figure is 307). In Scotland, they have decreased by a quarter from 912 in 1993 to 680 now.
- Belfast Health trust has the highest overall suicide rate of any trust in NI. (Source: NISRA/Samaritans UK).
- Anecdotal evidence from our conversations with practitioners across the city would suggest that people are presenting to health and social care services with anxiety, stress or more serious forms of mental-ill health at an increasingly younger age.
- One organisation reported that a recent review of their case files demonstrated a growing number of young children presenting with anxiety, stress and in some cases trauma.
- One-to-one conversations with mental health practitioners confirmed their view that Belfast is experiencing growing levels of mental ill-health, and a small number suggested further work is required to understand the relationship between today's presentations and the conflict.

# USE OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS



2

## Data on dispensing of medical prescriptions paints a worrying picture of the health and well-being of the population.

In 2018, for a city with a population of 341,900 people, 8 million prescriptions were dispensed - an average of 23 prescriptions per person across the city. This figure is 9% higher than in 2012.

Drugs related deaths are also on the increase. In 2017, 136 people died as a result of drug taking, an increase of 60% on the decade before. Men are much more likely than women to die as a result of drug taking.

Health outcomes for drug-related mortality, male life expectancy at birth and teenage births were much worse than the NI average. The gap is also widening between the most deprived and least deprived areas of Belfast in relation to drug related mortality, smoking during pregnancy and respiratory admissions.

The NI Outcomes Framework monitors the self-efficacy scores of the population as a measure of confidence. Self-efficacy is a person's beliefs about their capability to produce results or effects. Those with high self-efficacy have confidence in their abilities and produce sustained efforts to achieve goals. Those with low self-efficacy often doubt their capabilities, are less ambitious and give up on their aims when challenged.

In Belfast, half of our year 9-12 pupils have a low self-efficacy but are satisfied with their life (2019). This is significantly larger than it was in 2016 and worrying that so many children are lacking in confidence.

## Conclusion

Belfast is already a World Health Organisation Healthy City and considerable progress continues to be made to improve health outcomes for its population. Because of the dominance of the issue of mental ill-health and prescription drug use in our workshops, and what the data suggests, we have highlighted the issue as a major challenge. Furthermore, there is a strong case for better understanding the impact of cities and indeed of place on our mental health, and greater involvement of the discipline of psychology in how we design, plan and manage our city.



# THE GOVERNANCE AND FINANCING OF RISK



**Stable governance is an essential prerequisite for any resilient city. Compared to some global cities where decision-making is marred by conflict or corruption, Belfast has well-defined political and administrative structures, underpinned by law, and with modern modes of accountability.**

However, the complexity of challenges faced by cities demands governance in which comprehensive policy reform, supported by strategic long-term financing is the norm, and whereby the relationship between central and local government is mature and collaborative. These characteristics are not sufficiently in place in NI, which leads to significant implications for its regional capital.

The 2019 competitiveness study commissioned by Belfast City Council made a number of prescient comments regarding growth in the city. 'It is difficult to quantify the impact that NI's governance structures (and indeed lack thereof) have on Belfast's competitiveness but it is evident that other competitor cities, with a larger arsenal of policy levers, have delivered faster growth across key competitiveness areas.

This section examines the particular characteristics of governance in Belfast and makes some observations intended to improve the governance and financing of risk.

- Governance in NI is more regionally centralised than other parts of the UK. From a city perspective, this is particularly relevant, as resilient cities require robust urban policy- with clear strategic objectives and the levers to deliver them. In NI, a much greater range of responsibilities sits at central government level when compared with powers of local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales. Strategy and delivery is spread across a range of arm's length bodies, usually working to a regional remit. Further devolution of powers from central government to local government has been slow, and inhibits real partnership and collaboration between central and local government, which is often necessary to unlock external investment at a city level. The draft Programme for Government (2016-2021) contains just one proactive 'city policy' - an ambition to strengthen Belfast as the regional economic driver but is not accompanied by a tangible plan. The draft PfG outcomes framework are lacking indicators at a city level, and no single government department or body has responsibility for cities. Furthermore, the 'New Decade, New Approach' document, agreed by the political parties as part of the re-establishment of the Northern Ireland

Executive in 2020, made no specific references to distinct governance arrangements for cities. However, it did contain several welcome references to City Deals, which in some parts of the UK have led to significant additional powers being devolved to city level structures. Nevertheless, urban policy in NI is immature and ill-developed. This, coupled with a highly centralised system of governance, and a fragmented spread of powers and obligations across arm's length bodies, makes the building of Belfast's long term resilience more challenging.

- Lack of urban policy was, for some time, compounded by the long-term absence of Executive Government in NI. A recent report by the Institute of Government examined some of the implications for NI of governing without ministers. It noted the work of the Northern Ireland Civil Service in carrying out departmental functions and running public services on a day-to-day basis. However, it was definitive in its assessment that long term public sector reform is virtually impossible without Ministers, pointed to a growing list of outstanding policy decisions and concluded that it is the people of NI who suffer the consequences of a lack of political leadership.
- The return of Executive government in January 2020 has enabled several major policy programmes to be reconsidered by ministers. However, at the time of writing, several of immediate priorities agreed for 2020 remain unimplemented. Nevertheless, the response of the NI Executive to COVID-19 has demonstrated what can be achieved through coherent, cross-Executive planning and implementation.
- The length of the suspension hampered long term reform, and NI is likely to be impacted by this, for several years to come, when it was needed. Several of the 'shocks and stresses' identified in this strategy have emerged or been accelerated due to lack of public service reform in NI or due to how services and infrastructure are financed (see below). Tackling these issues will require long term vision, collaboration between central and local government and the private and NGO sectors, and a shift in risk appetite to enable untried policy reform to commence. Ensuring a resilient recovery from the economic and social impacts of COVID-19, coupled with the effects of the UK's decision to leave the EU requires systemic, cross government planning of the long-term implications of a reformed relationship with the European Union and the long-term trading relationship between NI and the rest of the world. Without ministers, substantive decisions on how NI transitions to a low-

carbon economy have not commenced, whereas regions and cities elsewhere are gaining competitive advantage from large scale investment in innovation.

- However, it should be noted that policy reform, even when ministers are in place, is often difficult. As the IoG notes, 'the politics of NI and its distinctive constitutional arrangements militate against effective policy making on long-term issues. These particular characteristics of NI's governance potentially weaken our resilience to stresses over the long term and may incentivise 'shorttermism'. There is therefore a strong case for reviewing and reforming how difficult, complex and contentious decisions are made - at a regional and a city level. Some regions and cities have identified new structures, such as citizens assemblies to make recommendations to government on contentious issues. In other instances, independent commissions are established to focus on a particular complex issue. In the long term, when ministers are returned, new structures to aid and advise them through difficult policy decisions, and preferably with a strong civic voice, are needed. Lessons should be learned from other countries that have prioritised the development of a vibrant policy community and strong civic participation.
- Despite the difficulties associated with power sharing and during the suspension of the Northern Ireland Executive, political parties continued to work together effectively at local government level. Councils across NI have been developing and delivering community plans - critical documents to inspire and drive cross agency collaboration at a city-wide level. In Belfast, the Community Planning Partnership has taken strong ownership of 'Belfast Agenda', and meaningful collaboration is taking place across agencies on issues relevant to the city. For example, the 'Living Here' board is currently progressing a cross-agency project to reduce winter deaths in the city. This sharing of risk and reward has also been seen working very effectively across local councils in the Belfast city region, working collaboratively with universities and colleges to successfully bid for a Belfast City Regional Deal, which could leverage £1bn in funding across the city region.
- The affordability of building resilience is a major challenge for the city, though Belfast is not alone in struggling to finance future risks. In its 2019 Risk Report, the World Economic Forum warned that 'Robust risk financing strategies will be required, both to fund investment in adaptation and to pay for recovery when floods occur'.

However, as has been documented, some of the risks to the city of Belfast are not currently solvable at a city-level, because governance and finance is centrally held. The city is reliant on NI central government to develop funding models for infrastructure. If Belfast is to succeed

in meeting those highly complex challenges, the city and the NI Executive must work in partnership to find new forms and models of finance as other cities have done. Councils are increasingly reliant on the district rate for their funding, and this fact should be reflected in the decisions taken on future financial structures.

The 'New Decade, New Approach' document makes a welcome commitment to a multi-year budget to underpin a multi-year Programme for Government. However, whether this results in the kind of reformed approach to long term planning necessary, remains to be seen.

- Improvements to how government is financed should include reform of the existing 'short-termism' applied to financing at a regional level. Unlike in the UK where three-to-five year spending rounds are the norm, NI departmental allocations are chiefly managed on an annual basis. This has obvious implications for how major programmes are designed and delivered.
- Perhaps most challenging and importantly of all are the decisions to be made in how major long term infrastructure is funded. This must be a major area of priority for the Executive and must include local government as a partner in the process. The Institute of Government report makes an interesting, if controversial, point regarding the level of regard shown to value for money in NI. It points to examples of where NI has continually extracted finance from the UK taxpayer or the EU and suggests this readiness to accept external funding disincentivises difficult decisions from being taken. Whatever the reasons for not having well planned financial models in place, as levels of infrastructure investment increasingly become a chronic risk for the city, decisions must be taken on how best to make up the shortfall, while also building in resilience for the future. This is a major risk for the future, and must be tackled urgently.
- The development of this strategy has identified a number of areas of risk which could be dealt with effectively at a city level. Stronger city-wide economic levers would be beneficial in enabling the city to plan for its future. The RSA's City Growth Commission concluded that 'innovative, competitive and resilient economies are built on stable institutions that engender trust between trading partners, encourage investment in infrastructure and public services, and build socially productive communities'. This is a complex area and will require collaboration across central and local government and agencies, e.g. The Department for Infrastructure, Belfast City Council, Northern Ireland Water, Translink etc. At the very least, agencies and organisations in Belfast should work together to arrive at a single figure for the cost of building the necessary infrastructure to make the city resilient for this century, and identify the 'GDP at Risk' figure of not funding it

effectively. They should then work together with the NI Civil Service to explore and identify new financial models that would encourage investment in long term infrastructure and other necessary capital projects, in a coordinated and joined up way.

- Thinking beyond NI's internal partnerships, the decision of the UK to leave the EU re-emphasises the importance of 'city to city diplomacy' for Belfast. The quality of its relationships with other cities in Europe and globally will be a key determinant of its potential to attract investment, encourage trade and build partnerships. Its membership of Eurocities, and of the Resilient Cities network is important, and so too is its 'sister cities' programme, however this work must be brought to the fore as a core driver of its growth strategy. There is sufficient global research, from the OECD and elsewhere to make the case for a focus on cities to be driven by central government. The Northern Ireland Executive should take greater responsibility for the future of its cities and design a new form of governance to drive collaboration between NICS, Belfast City Council and agencies across the city. This should inspire a renewed focus on how cities have enormous potential to be engines of sustainable growth and places for innovation, creativity and well-being.

## Conclusion

Governing a post-conflict city with continued high levels of segregation is a daily challenge, and therefore continuity of stable local government in this context should be considered a success. However, Belfast's governance needs to be increasingly designed for future challenges- and for dealing with complex challenges that are taxing all cities, such as sustainable recovery from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, energy transition and creating a low-carbon economy. There is a strong case for reviewing and enhancing the powers and obligations of local government to ensure they are fit for purpose given the complex challenges ahead.

Robust urban policy is needed at Northern Ireland Executive level if Belfast is genuinely to be a driver for sustainable economic growth not just at city level, but at city region level.

Long term financial planning and new financial models for funding city infrastructure are critical if Belfast is to be genuinely resilient to climate change and to future economic cycles. A review of investment opportunities should be undertaken to explore opportunities for funding infrastructure at a city level, potential partnering with local government and new accountability frameworks.

Agencies and organisations in Belfast should work together to arrive at a single figure for the cost of building the necessary infrastructure to make the city resilient for this century, and identify the 'GDP at Risk' figure of not funding it effectively. They should then work together to explore and identify new financial models that would encourage investment in long term infrastructure and other necessary capital projects, in a coordinated and joined up way.



# NEXT STEPS

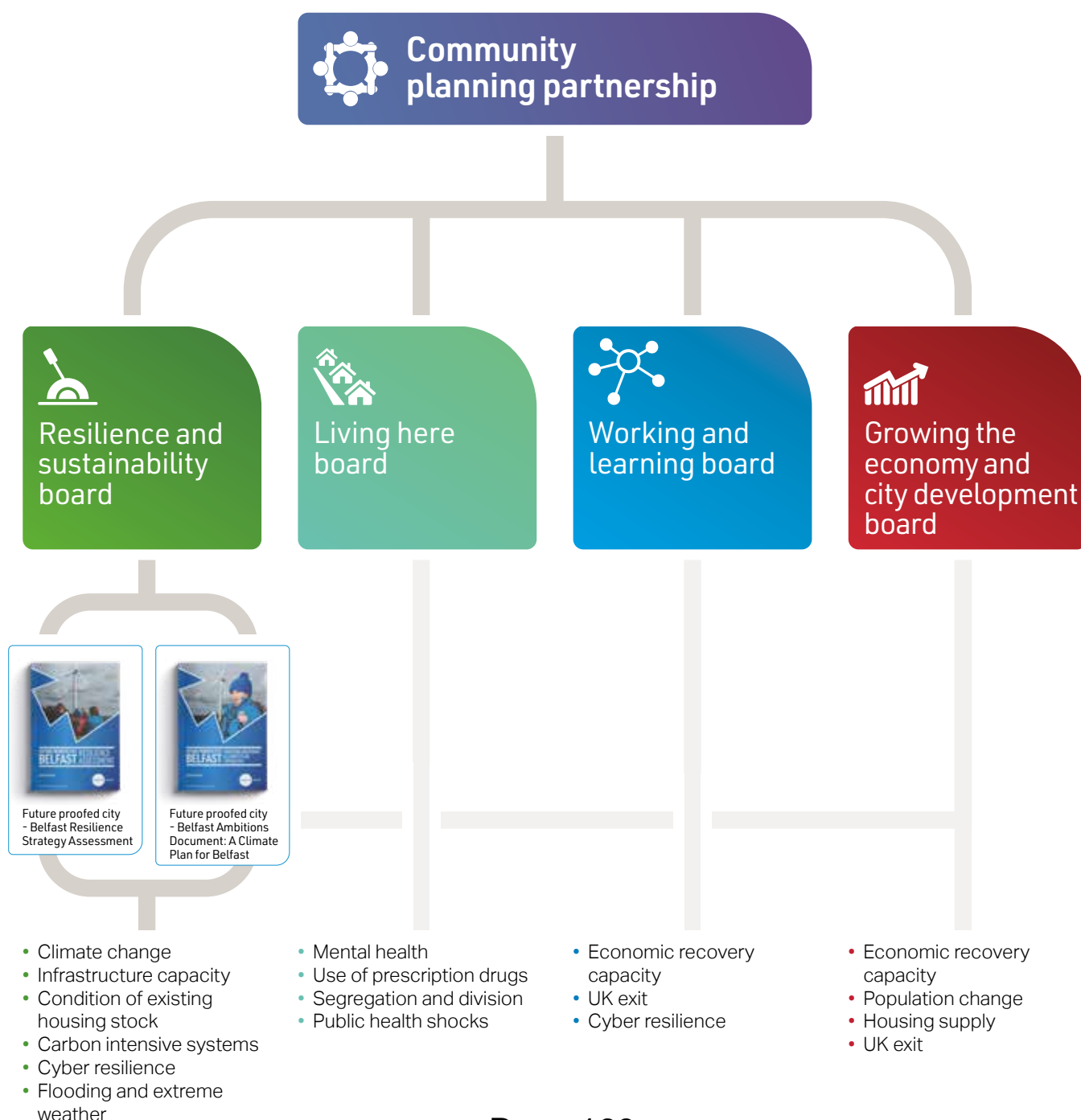
**The shocks and stresses outlined in the Resilience Assessment identify a range of risks to the city of Belfast. The Community Planning Partnership Board will oversee how these risks are managed, collaboratively, into the future.**

This document will be reviewed and revised every two years, based on available official data and inclusive engagement across city partners. The process will be overseen by the Resilience and Sustainability Board, with support from officers in Belfast City Council. Each board

will take forward the management of specific 'shocks and stresses' as set out below. In a small number of cases, responsibility sits across both boards.

The issue of 'Poverty and Inequality' being central to the Inclusive Growth ambition within Belfast Agenda, will remain a core responsibility of the Community Planning Partnership Board.

To make contact with the team at Belfast City Council, email [resilient@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:resilient@belfastcity.gov.uk)



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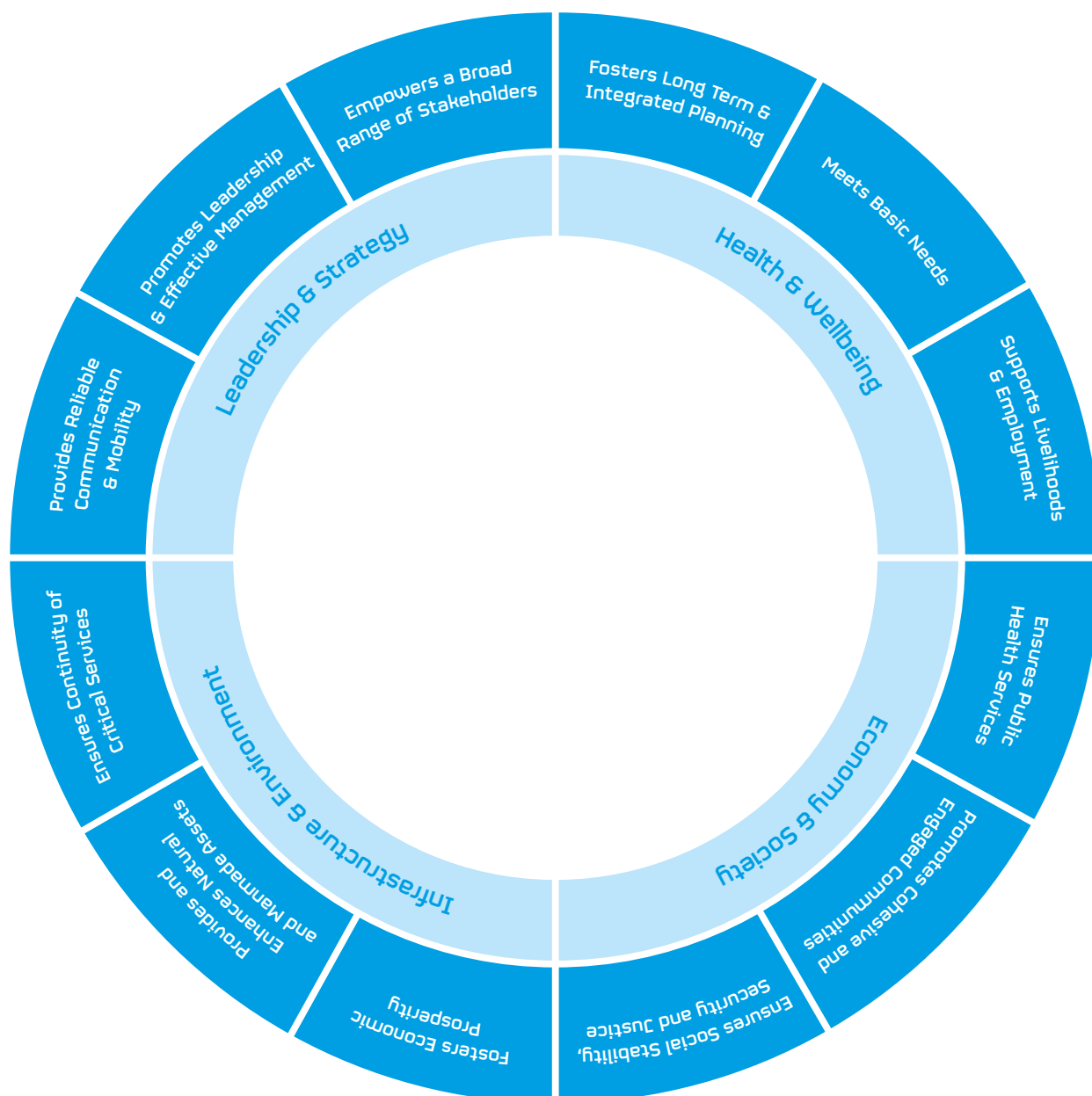
# APPENDICES

## City Resilience Framework identified areas of city resilience





## City Resilience Framework identified areas of city resilience



As part of our commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations, we want to ensure that everyone is able to access the documents we produce. This document is available in different languages and formats and we can provide others on request, please contact: Richard McLernon, Project Coordinator, Commissioner for Resilience on 028 9050 2091.



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 Belfast City Council





# **FUTURE PROOFED CITY** **BELFAST**

## **AMBITIONS DOCUMENT: A CLIMATE PLAN FOR BELFAST**

December 2020

[www.belfastcity.gov.uk/resilience](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/resilience)

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# **FUTURE PROOFED CITY BELFAST**

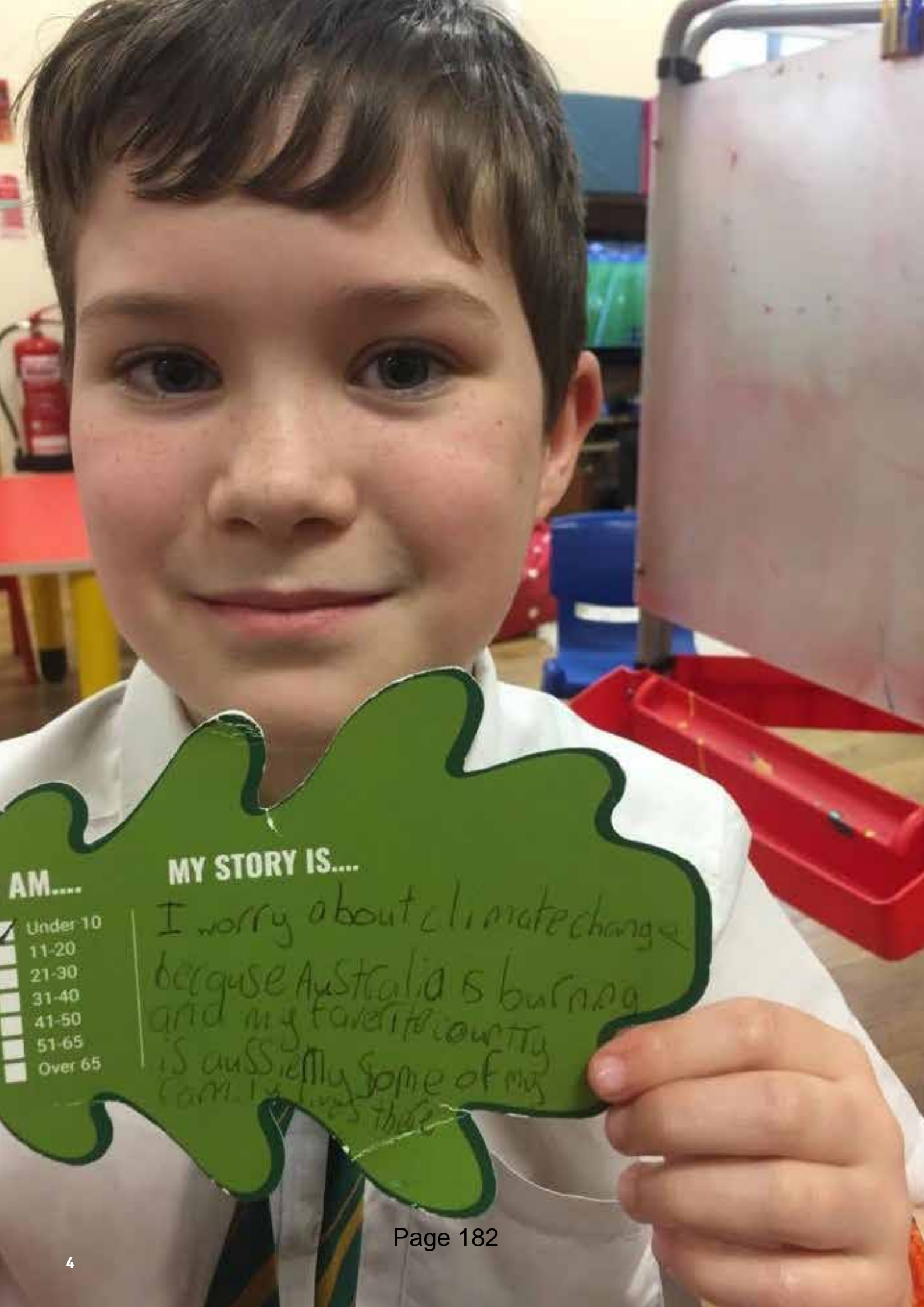
## **AMBITIONS DOCUMENT: A CLIMATE PLAN FOR BELFAST**

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**December 2020**







**MY STORY IS....**

I worry about climate change  
because Australia is burning  
and my favorite country  
is aussie. Some of my  
family live there

# INTRODUCTION

**Belfast's Resilience Assessment identified a wide-range of shocks and stresses for the city, improving our knowledge of existing and emerging risks. Coordinated response to these risks is being taken forward by city partners, working collaboratively through the city's Community Planning Partnership Board, and delivering the priorities set out 'Belfast Agenda'.**

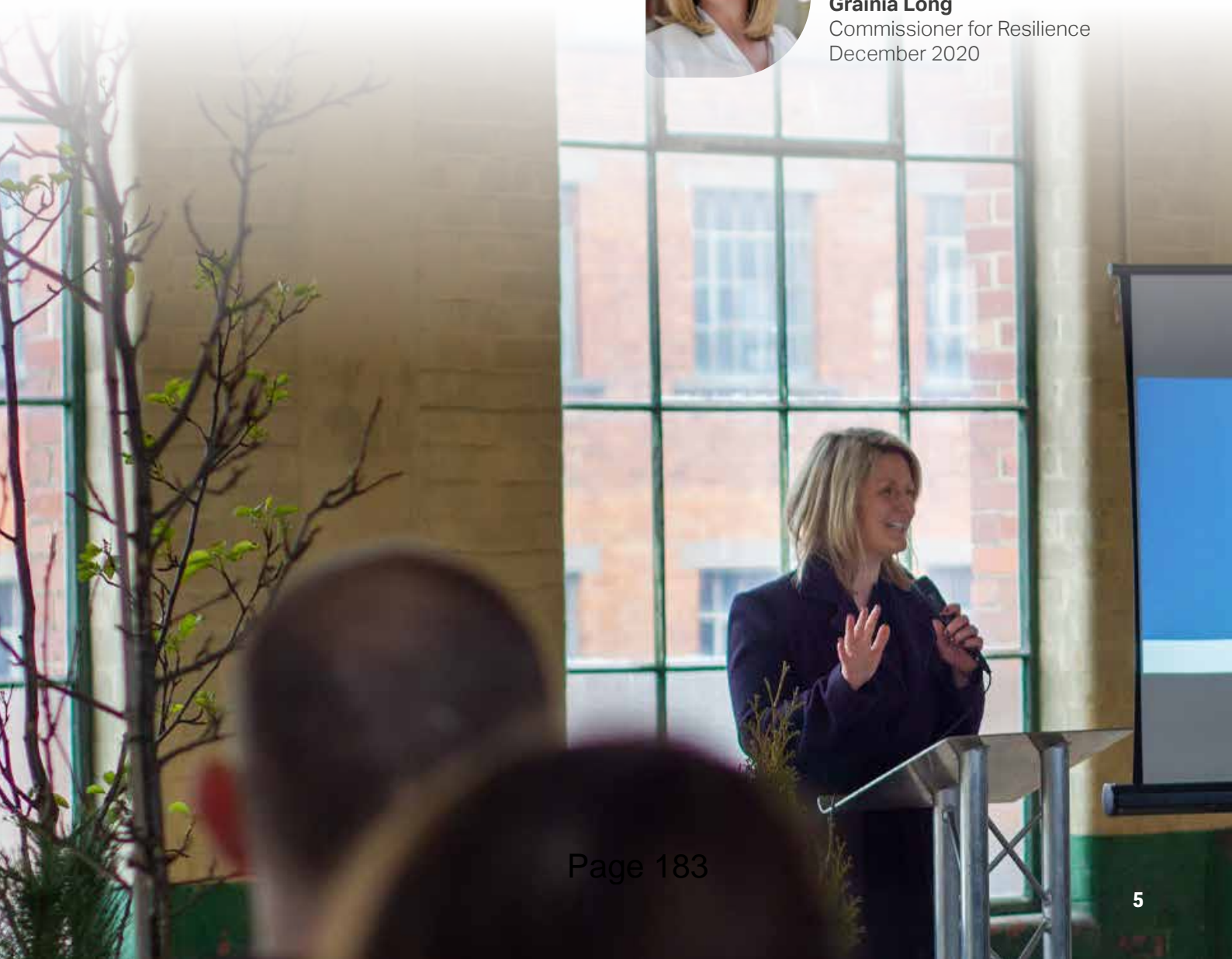
Public consultation on the draft Resilience Strategy found strong agreement with the shocks and stresses identified. However, there was also consensus that climate change presents acute risks for the city, and that we need a singular focus to prepare Belfast for its effects.

This 'ambitions document' outlines a 'Resilience Goal' for the city, and with a determined focus on climate adaptation, climate mitigation and the green economy. It sets out 30 'foundational programmes'- these are decade-long interventions which will have a positive impact, at scale, across the city. The programmes have been endorsed by the city's Resilience and Sustainability Board, and will be taken forward in a collaborative way by city partners in this decade. We have retained the emphasis on 'multiple problem solvers'- actions that solve several risks at once- and in particular ensuring that children and young people play a central role in climate action in their city.



*Grainia Long*

**Grainia Long**  
Commissioner for Resilience  
December 2020





# FOREWORD FROM CHAIR OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Belfast Agenda, the city's community plan, is clear in its purpose- for Belfast to be a sustainable city. Meeting that vision has required the development of this document- the city's first 'climate plan' – a document which sets out a clear goal, to transition Belfast to an 'inclusive, zero-emissions, climate- resilient economy in a generation'. Across Belfast, partner organisations have not only help identify the risks that face our city but they have also agreed that the ultimate goal for the city should be to **transition to an inclusive, zero-emissions economy in a generation**.

This is the first time that Belfast has taken an integrated and collaborative approach to the development of a climate plan, and I am particularly pleased at the level of partnership working involved.

I would like to thank all the members of the Resilience and Sustainability Board who have agreed to work together to deliver thirty programmes, at scale, to meet our goal. We all welcome the variety of programmes that have been designed to be '**multiple problem solvers**' and look forward to witnessing the transition of Belfast into a more climate ready city. This plan is a first of many for Belfast and its timing is important for us all to drive the city forward in its green recovery.

Working together will help us to ultimately deliver the goal and enable city partners across all sectors to deliver these ambitious programmes. We are delighted to be involved from the beginning of this project and we are grateful for the commitment of city leaders, communities, organisations, universities and of course our residents who have supported the development of this plan. I believe this document positions Belfast as a city which can demonstrate its commitment to tackling the climate crisis, in the interests of all our residents- today's and tomorrow's.



*Christina Black*

**Councillor Christina Black**  
Chair  
Strategic Policy and  
Resources Committee



**Belfast  
City Council**

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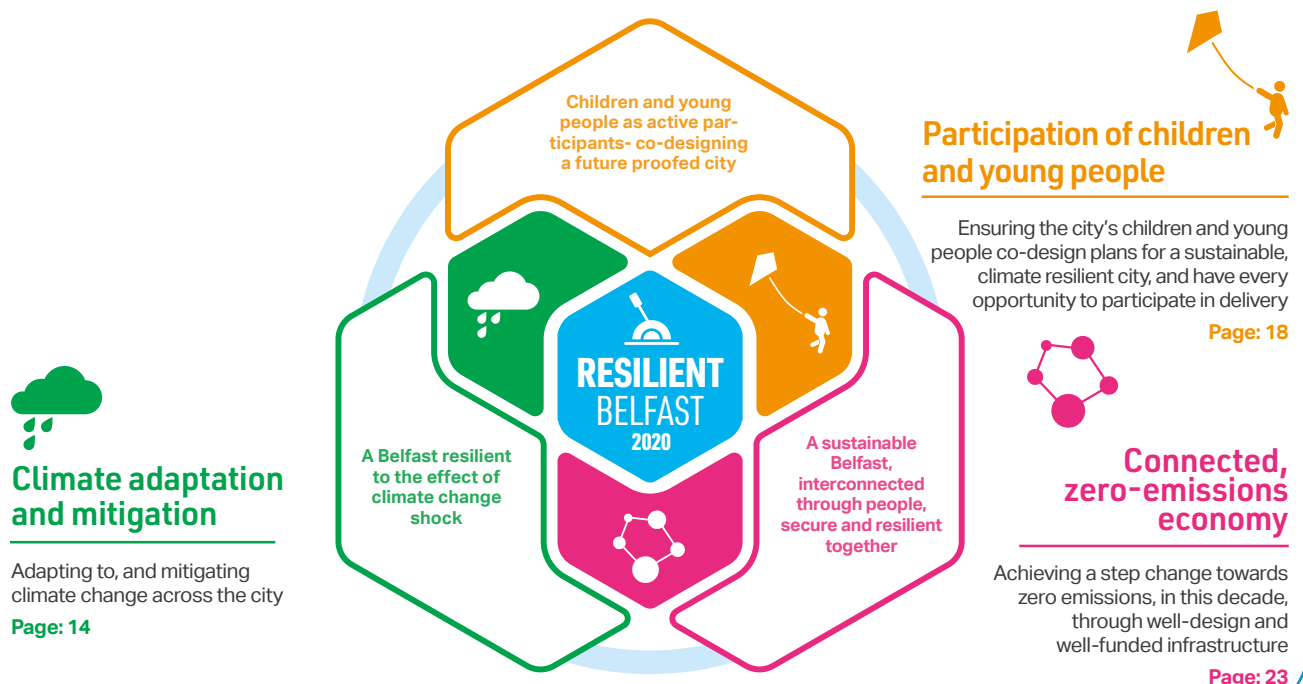
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# RESILIENCE GOAL



Our goal is to transition Belfast to an inclusive, zero-emissions, climate resilient economy in a generation.

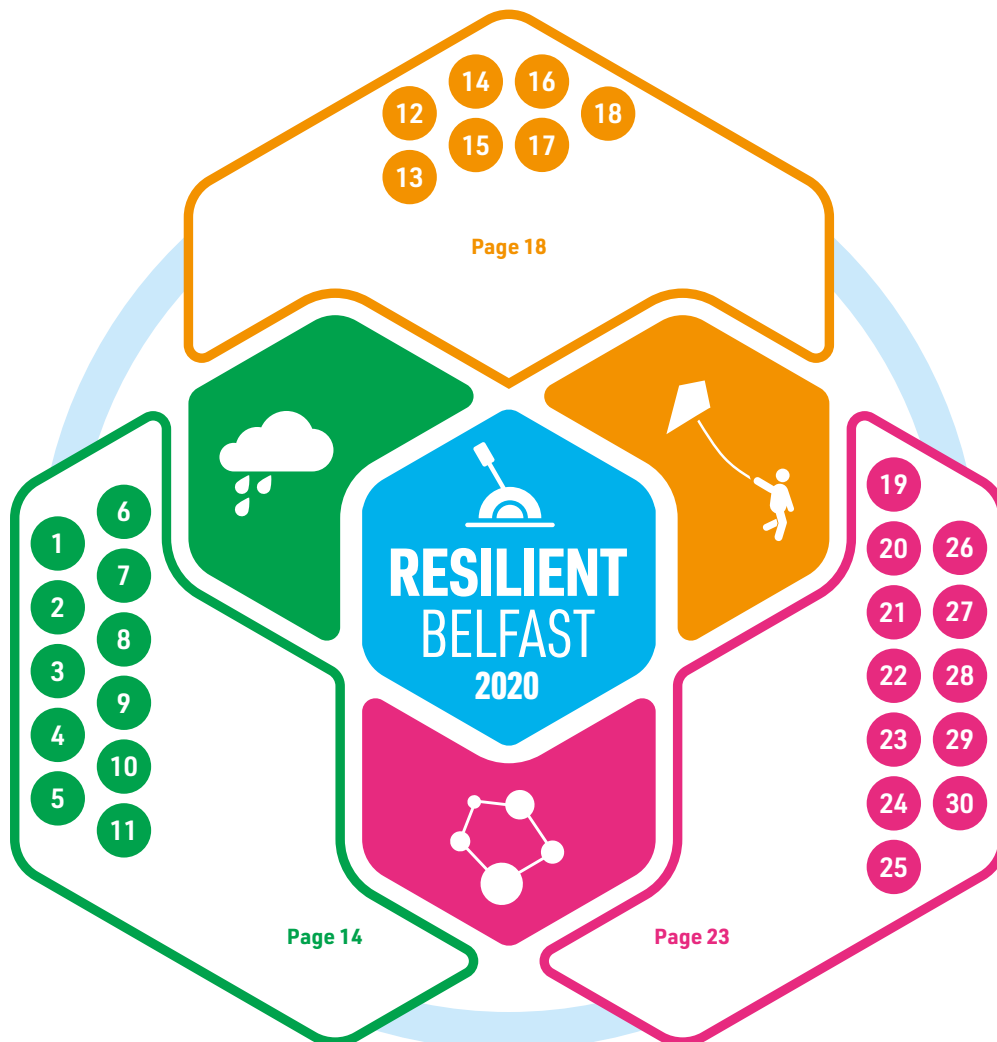




# MULTIPLE PROBLEM SOLVERS

We have identified a series of levers aimed at resolving several risks at once. These 'multiple problem solvers' provide focus and direction towards our transition to an inclusive, zero emissions climate resilient economy.

# MULTIPLE PROBLEM SOLVERS





# DELIVERY OF UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



**Belfast's Resilience Strategy has been informed by, and is aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.**

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an historic global agreement to eradicate extreme poverty, fight inequality and injustice and leave no one behind. Agreed by world leaders at the UN in 2015, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) succeed

the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The SDGs are universal with all signatories- including the UK- expected to contribute to them internationally and deliver them domestically.

**Belfast's Resilience Strategy contributes to the delivery of these important global goals.**

## United Nations: Sustainable Development Goals



# LEGEND KEY



## Area of focus

- Climate action
- Children and young people
- Connected, zero-emissions economy

## Stress or shock

- ST1 Economic recovery capacity: inequality and competitiveness
- ST2 Population change
- ST3 Dependency on fossil fuels and carbon intensive systems and prevalence of car use
- ST4 Housing supply in the city
- ST5 Segregation and division
- ST6 Climate change
- ST7 Mental Ill-health
- ST8 Use of prescription drugs
- ST9 Governance and financing of risk
- SH1 Infrastructure capacity
- SH2 Condition of existing NI Housing Executive stock
- SH3 UK Exit
- SH4 Flooding and extreme weather events
- SH5 Cyber resilience
- SH6 Public Health shocks

## United Nations: Sustainable Development Goal

- No poverty
- Zero hunger
- Good health and well-being
- Quality education
- Gender equality
- Clean water and sanitation
- Affordable and clean energy
- Decent work and economic growth
- Industry, innovation and infrastructure
- Reduced inequalities
- Sustainable cities and communities
- Responsible consumption and production
- Climate action
- Life below water
- Life on land
- Peace, justice and strong institutions
- Partnerships for the goals

## Quality of resilience

- Reflective
- Resourceful
- Inclusive
- Integrated
- Robust
- Redundant
- Flexible



# CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION



**The effects of climate change present the greatest economic, social and environmental risks to the city of Belfast, in this decade and beyond'. The city's future economic growth must therefore be inclusive, sustainable and low-carbon.**

**"The economic cost of flooding could be profound. Belfast is 'predicted to be the most economically impacted, with aggregated annual average damages of approximately £16m.'"**

NI Flood Risk Assessment, 2018

- Belfast must be 'climate ready' i.e. prepared for changes to the city's weather, to our water, and to our biodiversity arising from climate change. The city must prevent economic shocks arising from climate change, and a widening of inequality due to its effects. It must urgently build community resilience to respond to the impacts of climate change, and ultimately transition to a zero emissions economy.
- Belfast is facing a climate crisis. A harbour city, and already an area of significant flood risk, our proximity to water and the increasing presence of water in our city as the climate warms is a significant risk. Pockets of poor air pollution and our dependence on cars as a form of transport, coupled with the prevalence of hard infrastructure throughout the city highlight a series of interconnected challenges, which if left unchecked will leave the city exposed.
- Our ability to respond to a changing climate will fundamentally impact on the city's economic prosperity in the years to come. The prevalence of extreme weather events will require additional city resources; the design, development and location of future developments will be impacted by climate events and our attractiveness as a destination to live work and enjoy will all be impacted by our ability to prepare for, respond and absorb climate related shocks and stresses.
- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warned in 2018 that cities have twelve years to make rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society in order to limit global warming to 1.5°C. Belfast must heed that warning and make climate resilience an urgent and strategic focus for the entire city.

- Furthermore, our dependence on energy will increase. While immediate energy demand scenarios are currently uncertain due to the impact of COVID-19, the Belfast Mini Stern demonstrates the scale of the city's long-term economic dependence on energy - it predicts that Belfast will spend c.£466 million per year in 2050.' Belfast therefore faces two energy challenges- to decarbonise rapidly while building the city's energy independence. Doing so provides an immense economic return to the city, as set out in the Mini Stern.

**"Belfast is emitting 1.5 million tonnes of carbon a year. At this rate, we will have used up our carbon by 2030."**

Belfast Mini Stern

- The 'foundational programmes' endorsed by the city's Resilience and Sustainability Board are strongly informed by the city's 'Mini Stern', by consultation with city partners and with communities, and are intended as a step change in the city's approach to climate adaptation and mitigation.

## 1 New city-wide structures to collaborate on climate action



Belfast has established two permanent new structures to drive partnership and collaboration to build the city's climate resilience and drive climate action. The Belfast Climate Commission is a 'thinktank' which ensures the right evidence and analysis is available to decision makers. The Resilience and Sustainability Board is a permanent feature of the Community Planning structures for the city. The board is a genuine partnership between agencies and organisations on climate action in Belfast, and over time will ensure integration of systems to increase the city's efficiency and effectiveness.

## 2 Delivery of Recommendations in Belfast's Mini Stern: A Net Zero Carbon Roadmap for Belfast



Working with Leeds and Edinburgh, Belfast's first Net Zero Carbon Roadmap has been produced, to identify the sources of Scope 1 and 2 emissions, and to set out cost effective and innovative stretch measures needed to reach net zero carbon by 2050. Through the Belfast Climate Commission and the Resilience and Sustainability Board, recommendations within the roadmap will be delivered to enable Belfast to reach its goal.

## 3 Climate change risk assessment



We have commissioned Arup (our 100 Resilient Cities strategic partner) to undertake a high level climate change risk assessment- to provide us with an assessment of the potential impact of climate change on the city's infrastructure. This work has identified significant areas of risk for the city, and areas of focus for climate planning into the future.

## 4 Belfast City Council Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Plan



Belfast City Council will publish its Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Plan in 2021, based on data from an internal sustainability review, an energy review and the development of climate adaptation priorities. The document will be the first comprehensive and integrated plan by the council on climate adaptation and mitigation.

## 5 Belfast Harbour - Green Port



Belfast Harbour's ambition is to become one of the 'greenest' ports in the world. Its strategic goals include achieving net zero carbon emissions in Belfast Harbour before 2030, through decarbonisation of our operations and nature based solutions. Its partnership-based action plans will protect and enhance our marine biodiversity and wider environment. With the help of digital innovation, it will help facilitate a circular economy and improve air quality standards throughout its estate. As a socially responsible Green Port, Belfast Harbour's vision is to work with others as a green developer and support our port community, customers and tenants as together we build a sustainable future for all.

## 6 Queen's University Environmental Solutions Centre



We will explore the feasibility of establishing a city-wide support organisation drawing on the on model of Adaptation Scotland to provide advice and support to help public sector, businesses and communities understand what climate change will mean for them, and the best way to plan for its impact. City partners will work collaboratively to support the establishment of an interdisciplinary Environmental Solutions Centre at QUB, a collaboration between academics working on environment and sustainability research. The goal of the centre is to provide solutions to decarbonise economies and radically reduce greenhouse gas emissions to achieve net zero and to provide solutions that reverse the loss of biodiversity worldwide. Queen's has co-designed the centre with key partners in industry, local and regional government and civil society. The centre will focus on data analytics and synthesis and will deliver solutions through co-defined interdisciplinary working groups bringing together stakeholders from across a broad spectrum of relevant partners, and will be a critical asset to the city in its progress to reach net zero.

## 7 Sustainable District



Belfast Linen Quarter BID, working collaboratively with city partners, will establish the city's first 'Sustainable District' bringing together business, the public sector and the private sector to collaborate and innovate on energy, water and waste efficiency, decarbonisation and sustainable practices, to accelerate the city's transition to a climate-resilient economy.

The vision is to co-create a prosperous, inclusive, climate-resilient district founded on a circular, zero-carbon economy. Work programmes will include system re-design to develop sustainable products & services; Sustainable waste management; a district-wide green energy contract, to accelerate the move to renewables; New approaches to public realm that reduce car use and increase cycling and walking and a strategy for improved air quality.

## 8 Belfast Region City Deal



The Digital Innovation Pillar of the Belfast Region City Deal prioritises resilience and sustainability, with a core commitment to triple bottom line delivery in all of its programs taking into account social, economic and environmental sustainability factors. Specific programs will target funding of innovation in energy transition, integrated transport solutions and building technology, in this decade. The Belfast Digital Innovation ambition will also focus on development of platforms such as digital twins, built on committed 5G/ IoT deployments within the city and which coupled with Belfast's leading expertise in cyber and AI technologies, will ensure that our innovation excellence is targeted to ensure our strategic city assets such as housing, energy, transport, water and telecommunications are resilient by design. Opportunities will therefore be sought to invest in enabling infrastructure to meet the city's ambitions while also emphasising skills and business growth at scale.

## 9 One Million Trees



Inspired by an original idea from the Belfast Metropolitan Residents Group, city partners will plant one million trees across Belfast by 2035. Launched in late 2020, and designed as a major programme to support climate adaptation across the city, it is a collaboration between public, private and voluntary sector partners, and will make a substantial contribution to the DAERA 'Forest of the Future' regional tree planting programme.

## 10 Local Development Plan: a Critical Lever for Resilience



Belfast's draft Local Development Plan (LDP) provides a robust statutory framework to enable Belfast's transition to an inclusive, zero emissions, climate-resilient economy. The draft plan provides a 15-year framework to support the city's ambitions, providing the delivery of sustainable development, facilitating growth and allocating sufficient land to meet the needs of the city. Core objectives of the draft LDP include the promotion of a green and active place and building a smart, connected and resilient city. The draft LDP is therefore a critical lever in the delivery of this strategy's objectives.

## 11 Sustainability and Food



In developing this strategy, we have had insufficient time to look in detail at the city's food needs into the future, however this is a priority for strategy implementation. Working with partners across the city, a workstream examining the climate impacts and opportunities for an ongoing and city wide programme of healthy and sustainable food will be critical to Belfast's resilience.



# CASE STUDY: CLIMATE ACTION



## Cape Town: water resilience and avoiding day zero

**Cape Town made international headlines in 2017 when they faced the prospect of an imminent “Day Zero”, a scenario in which the city government would have to turn off the water distribution networks to conserve water, in response to experiencing the driest three-year period since the 1930’s. The city’s normal recourse was to increase water restrictions but more action was needed.**

Capetonians mobilised to take remarkable action. Lawns and water sensitive plants were replaced with less water reliant alternatives. Residents invested in water saving devices such as low-flow taps and shower heads. Community organisations developed their own response strategies. Some corporations went off-grid, turning to groundwater or desalination. The local government worked tirelessly with businesses to share information, hear concerns, plan and became much better at partnering. This collective response would eventually drive down water consumption by over 50%. Day Zero was called off in 2018 and later removed as a possibility for 2019 and again in 2020..

Positively, behaviours have changed permanently as residents’ water-saving and efficiency behaviours endured, even as restrictions were gradually lessened. Water consumption is unlikely to ever return to pre-drought levels. Cape Town’s achievement is evidence of the positive impact that partnering with residents and stakeholders at all levels can have on a city’s governance and operations.

# PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



**The participation of children and young people in decisions that affects their lives is of critical importance in the design of a sustainable city. Our resilience goal, to transition to an inclusive, zero emissions, climate-resilient city in a generation is not possible unless we involve children and young people in strategy design, and ensure their participation in its delivery.**

**We consider this value so important that it is one of three areas of focus, or 'multiple-problem solvers' as we restructure our economy and society, as climate change advances.**

In this section, we include several 'foundation programmes' which place children at the centre of decisions on climate adaptation and mitigation in Belfast.

35% of Belfast's population is aged 25 and under. Young people are a major asset for the city, especially given the shocks and stresses outlined earlier, e.g. the risk of population decline, outward migration, and how we build our economic resilience.

A young population provides Belfast with a bright economic future, with a source of future talent. If young people are properly involved in the decisions that affect their lives, they could also help to shape a transformed sustainable economy for the city. Our conversation with children and young people as part of this strategy consultation, found that sustainability and inclusion were key priorities for them, and would frame the choices they take about where to live in the future.

Poor air quality and the prevalence of cars are considered among the biggest barriers to child-friendliness and a key factor affecting independent mobility among children. Less mobility means reduced access to and experience of the city and fewer possibilities to take advantage of the city's opportunities. Designing a sustainable and child-friendly city is also critical to attracting today's skilled and talented workforce to the city, particularly those with children. Cities like Rotterdam and Vancouver have taken ambitious steps to make urban environments attractive to families, retaining skilled workers and driving the local economy.

We have been inspired and encouraged by action taken in New Zealand (particularly Christchurch), in Wales, where there is a strong policy focus on 'Future Generations', and by Medellin in Colombia, which has invested in a Children and Young Persons' 'Unit' in the city government.

A city's design has an immense impact on the health and wellbeing of children. Sustainable healthy cities are also child-friendly cities. Designing a city in the best interests of children is therefore critical to Belfast's resilience.

The physical environment in which children live is a key determinant of their health, behaviour and development. Research and practice from other cities shows that a strategic focus on connectivity - walking, cycling and play - can improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people. Conversely, high-density traffic, poor air quality and a lack of public space can directly discourage people from being physically active, in turn, impacting on their health prospects. Child-centred urban planning is critical to achieving Belfast Agenda priorities on inclusive growth, and importantly to achieving a step change in life expectancy.

The focus of this strategy, to transition to a zero emissions city, is also intended to make the city more attractive for children and young people, improving liveability and increasing their social and economic opportunities.

During the formal consultation on this draft strategy, we listened to and considered the views of more than 367 children and young people, and their views have strongly informed the content of our final document.





## A snapshot of how young people participated in the process:



The Commissioner for Resilience met 60 Belfast Youth Forum members.



32 young people took part in two online sessions with the Lord Mayor.



Belfast climate strikers gave talks, came to the kiosk and attended online engagement sessions.



40 primary school children engaged through story telling sessions at two after schools clubs.



90 young people gave us their #ResilientBelfast stories and pictures.



40 children took trees home to plant across the city.



87 attendees at a 'Planning Resilient Futures' student conference.



Resilient discussion with 25 university students.



367 young people involved to date.

## Some common themes which emerged were:

- Young people's high levels of anxiety about the potential impacts of climate change on the poorest and most vulnerable communities in Belfast.
- Many children and young people said they felt 'helpless' to the impacts of climate change- that decision makers were not making the crisis a core priority.
- Children's attitudes towards transport are very different to adults – they often do not see owning a car in the future as important or even necessary.
- The value placed by young people on their ability to live in a healthy city - many expressed this as a 'right' and in particular referred to the health impacts of air pollution, which should be made a city priority.
- Many young people emphasised the importance of urgency in delivery of change, saying that not everything has to be perfect before it is done.
- They welcomed the centrality of children and young people to the strategy and the potential for ongoing and meaningful involvement to the future design of climate policy and strategy in the city.
- Many young people felt their knowledge of the climate crisis and what is required is stronger than the decisions makers in the city, and their involvement is necessary to ensure we take the right approach now.
- They cautioned against their involvement being seen as 'tokenistic' and challenged decision makers to demonstrate their commitment by resourcing this work.
- They expressed real concern about other 'shocks and stresses' referred to in the strategy- particularly mental ill-health and digital inequality.



**In developing this strategy, we have adopted the seven key principles developed by Arup in its Designing for Urban Childhoods report:**

- 1** ..... The quality of life experienced by urban populations, and particularly by children, will determine our global future.
- 2** ..... Child-friendly urban planning is a vital part of creating inclusive cities that work better for everyone.
- 3** ..... Focusing on the needs of children can help act as a unifying theme for the promotion of progressive ideas and ambitious actions.
- 4** ..... Children's infrastructure can help to enhance the economic value and long-term viability of the urban environment.
- 5** ..... Providing multifunctional, playable space - beyond the playground - can enable everyday freedoms and create a public realm for all ages to enjoy together.
- 6** ..... Interventions at the neighbourhood scale offer the greatest potential to create a children's infrastructure network that allows safe and enjoyable journeys.
- 7** ..... Decision makers should be opportunistic and strategic, and integrate child-friendly thinking into all aspects of city making.

## **12 A Permanent Platform for Involving Children and Young People on Climate Change**



Led by the Belfast Climate Commission, and co-designed by children and young people, we will develop a model for ensuring the participation and involvement of young people, in future climate planning. The model will be developed in 2021, and will initially be developed to ensure their involvement in the UN Climate Conference COP26, but will be used annually to involve children and young people in decisions on the city's future.

## **13 Quality of urban childhood**



Working with partners across the city, Belfast City Council will put in place a series of indicators to measure the quality of 'urban childhood' in Belfast. This will include measuring the amount of time children spend playing outdoors, their level of contact with nature and their ability to get around independently. These will inform decisions by organisations working across Belfast to improve urban childhoods and urban resilience more generally'.

## 14 Ulster University Architects for Change Programme



The 'Architects of Change' programme puts students from Ulster University's School of Architecture and the Built Environment at the heart of developing and delivering a training programme to business leaders across the region. Leading academics will work with students on strategies for smart cities, zero emission definition and delivery aiming to address how gaps in knowledge and skill can be addressed through training.

This training programme will support business leaders to access the relevant knowledge to deliver environmentally, socially sustainable practice within their organisations. Participants will receive mentoring, materials and consultancy from the University to ensure growth beyond the life of the training. Longer term, the project will deliver innovative concepts for design, planning, construction and management of climate resilient, net zero emission buildings and communities. It will help shape Belfast as a smart, green city; improving the health and wellbeing of citizens, users and communities.

## 16 City centre public realm play spaces



Working with its city partners, Belfast City Council will invest in a network of city centre public realm play spaces. This should include permanent spaces in the city centre and a network of temporary/pop-up play spaces across the city. This should include multifunctional use of space and re-use of existing infrastructure such as schoolyards, community hubs and car parks for community activities after hours. Belfast City Council wants to create a colourful, playful city that appeals to people of all ages. Working with city partners, Belfast City Council will build on its development of play spaces and invest in a network of city centre public realm that support diverse, interesting and inclusive family-friendly spaces. This could include permanent spaces in the city centre, embedding incidental play within the public realm and a creating network of pop up play spaces across the city. We will create multi-functional spaces through the re-use of existing infrastructure such as schoolyards, vacant spaces, community hubs and car parks for community activities after hours.

## 15 A Playful City



Belfast City Council will work to establish Belfast as 'A Playful City' by 2023, our designated year of culture, by bringing together the goals within its City Regeneration Strategy, its Cultural Strategy and its Resilience Strategy.

## 17 Ulster University MSc in Planning and City Resilience



Committed to producing leaders in planning for resilient, inclusive and healthy cities, Ulster University has launched an MSc in Planning and City Resilience. Using the city as a laboratory, studies can explore sustainable development, social and climate justice, inclusive planning and partnerships, and smart interventions.

## 18 Public transport



To achieve our priorities on climate resilience, city connectivity and urban childhoods, it is recommended that city partners should agree to an ambition to provide all children and young people have access to free public transport in Belfast - by an agreed year in the next decade. In achieving this goal we will enable a number of our objectives.



## CASE STUDY: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



### Paris: OASIS Schoolyards: battling heat and building resilience

**The densest capital in Europe, Paris has only 14.5m<sup>2</sup> of green space per inhabitant. This increases both the urban heat island effect and the risk of storm water flooding. With space at a premium the city had to consider existing assets it could leverage to tackle its resilience challenges of heat waves, flooding, declining social cohesion, and limited green space.**

In 2017, the Paris Resilience Strategy envisioned the renovation of the city's network of 761 schools into green islands or "oases" of cooler temperatures and community solidarity. In 2018, Project OASIS (Openness, Adaptation, Sensitisation, Innovation and Social Ties) brought together twelve city departments to begin a pilot with three schools participating. After extensive engagement with pupils, parents and the education community, renovation work began which included replacing asphalt with porous material, improving storm water drainage, increasing green space, modernizing water management, installing cooling fountains and water sprayers and creating natural and artificial shade structures. The project gained European recognition winning the 2019 Urban Innovation Actions award and a further €5m of EU-co funding.

Paris aims to scale this concept to approximately 700 schools by 2050. The Oases are expected to decrease average surface temperatures by 10%, reduce daytime air temperatures up to 3°C and increase water absorption capacity from 4 to 16mm. These new breathing spaces at the heart of neighbourhoods, designed by users, will improve the living environment, cope with the climate emergency, and reinforce social cohesion.

# CONNECTED, ZERO-EMISSIONS ECONOMY



**Resilient cities are well connected cities. Our vision of Belfast is as an inter-connected city, with secure, resilient infrastructure that meets its economic, social and environmental goals. A city that values sustainable forms of transport.**

Connected cities have well-developed networks of people, communities, industries and institutions all working collaboratively towards common goals. Investment in resilient infrastructure is critical to ensuring and enabling inclusive growth - connecting people and communities with markets, and with affordable easy access to high quality jobs and services. Resilient infrastructure is essential for place-making, good relations and building healthy and sustainable cities. Industrial strategy requires reliable, accessible and competitively-priced infrastructure to attract foreign direct investment and to create jobs.

**“It has never been more important for a city-region to be connected and have high levels of connectivity. Investment in infrastructure must facilitate and enable the growth of those businesses and sectors which have the potential to close the productivity gap.”**

Belfast has made huge strides since the Belfast/ Good Friday agreement towards being a connected city. However, much more progress is required to build ‘one city’, where our connections reduce our vulnerabilities and strengthen our capacity to withstand risks. The potential to be gained from an ‘infrastructure revolution’ for the city was highlighted in the Belfast Region Infrastructure Investment Framework - commissioned by the Belfast Region City Deal partners as part of their work to present a case to the UK Treasury for investment in the City Region. The Framework recognised the economic potential to be gained from a step change in investment in key infrastructure classes to boost growth in the region, and in turn enhance economic resilience.

This requires a shift in mindset - so that infrastructure is understood as vital to our economic and social interests, and responsibility for building, maintaining and investing in infrastructure goes beyond central government to a range of partners across the city.

It also requires a transformation in how we move around our city. Car dependency is undermining our resilience- by requiring more and more hard infrastructure that builds our exposure to climate risks rather than reducing them. Belfast must make a strategic shift away from the car as the predominant mode of transport, and this will in turn boost our climate resilience, and make our city a healthier, cleaner more enjoyable Belfast.

**“Strategic city-wide focus on connectivity has the potential to boost Belfast’s resilience - its capacity to withstand shocks and adapt to future risks.”**

The Good Relations Strategy for the city makes similar and important commitments on the need for a genuinely connected city, ‘...The way we have done things in the past needs to adapt to help us reach the ambitions we have set ourselves in the Belfast Agenda. We need social innovation; changing the way we plan, deliver and consume services and how and where we access them, how we travel within the city, how we educate our young people, how we view and use local spaces, and how we interact with one another across the city. These are all critical to achieving these ambitions.’



This strategy seeks to complement and underpin delivery of the Good Relations Strategy. The following recommendations are aimed at supporting the strategy in practice.



## 19 Sustainable drainage



Ensuring sustainable drainage is critical to any city's climate resilience. Led by Department of Infrastructure and working with delivery partners across Belfast, the draft Sustainable Drainage Infrastructure Plan is a critical programme of work, to be delivered in this decade and to ensure Belfast has a network of sustainable drainage systems to meet its existing and future growth.

## 20 A Zero Emissions city bus fleet by 2030



The transition to zero emissions public transport is a priority for the city. Translink, the city's main public transport provider, has an ambitious target to decarbonise its entire Belfast bus fleet by 2030. In addition, Translink plans to target a 50% reduction in GHG emissions, per passenger km, by 2030. Working in partnership with DFI and a range of regional partners, Translink is exploring opportunities to decarbonise rapidly through use of zero and low emissions vehicles and renewable energy.

Translink will procure and place into service 103 zero emission double deck buses consisting of both Hydrogen Fuel Cell and Battery Electric vehicles by the end of 2022. This programme will deliver clean air, environmentally friendly public transport ultimately being powered by sustainably produced hydrogen and electricity.

## 21 Delivering Belfast's Net Zero Carbon Roadmap: Buildings



Belfast's 'Mini Stern' - the Net Zero Carbon Roadmap for the city identifies buildings and transport as key emitters of carbon. Targetted intervention in housing, to meet the targets set out in the roadmap is necessary. Housing organisations in the city will explore financial options required to meet the targets by 2030 and 2050 respectively, and set interim milestones to report on progress on a five yearly basis.

## 22 A Bolder Vision for Belfast



A Bolder Vision for Belfast was collaboratively developed by Belfast City Council, Department for Communities and Department for Infrastructure and provides the blueprint for creating a more attractive, accessible, safe and vibrant city centre that will improve economic, societal, health and environmental wellbeing for all. Underpinned by four Visioning Principles it delivers an ambitious and challenging framework for 13 'What ifs?', transformational projects identified through stakeholder engagement, data and analysis. It is a high-level Vision, requiring change among all stakeholders and citizens, and is intended to inspire potential solutions to shape a dynamic, sustainable and connected 21st century city.

## 23 Electric vehicle infrastructure



By 2030, in parallel with the city's ambitions to decarbonise the city's bus fleet, Belfast will have delivered a network of electric vehicles to support transition.

## 24 Investment in existing NIHE stock



Investment solutions to improve NIHE stock will be critical to the city's resilience. It is important that these solutions are part of a wider city-wide approach to decarbonisation and retrofit of existing stock, as is taking place in other cities, with similar resilience challenges.

## 25 Developing a Hydrogen Eco System



To accelerate the city's transition to a net zero carbon economy, city partners across energy, waste, housing, water and transport will develop a network of hydrogen powered infrastructure in this decade. This will include hydrogen for transport, for logistics and mobility and for buildings.

## 26 Belfast Destination Hub - A Low Carbon Exemplar for the City



The Destination Hub will be a landmark signature experience in the heart of our city centre that speaks to the essence of this vibrant place. Supported by the Belfast Region City Deal, this major cultural attraction will invite visitors to explore the many stories of the city and its people through an immersive, multi-gallery experience. The Hub will be a cultural beacon for the city, an anchor for the wider Belfast experience and an area of orientation for visitors into Northern Ireland. Importantly, its design will be a bold demonstrator of intent on Belfast's ambitions to be a net zero emissions, climate-resilient city.

## 27 Sustainable Tourism



Belfast has joined the GDS (Global Destinations Sustainability) Movement, the world's leading benchmarking and performance improvement programme for tourism destinations.

A partnership between Visit Belfast, and Belfast City Council, the city will take part in the GDS Index for the first time in 2020 in order to inform and accelerate sustainable tourism development and bring a co-ordinated focus to the sustainable tourism agenda across the city region.

This is the beginning of Belfast's commitment to build back better; informing the city's vision for sustainable tourism and the future 10 year action plan for tourism in the city region. The end goal is for Belfast become a more regenerative, flourishing and sustainable place to visit, meet and thrive.

## 28 Training and skills for an inclusive low-carbon economy



Working with its education partners, Belfast City Council will explore the development of a major programme of training and skills for a generation of professionals to lead our transition to an inclusive low-carbon economy. Inspired by the Canadian Academy for Sustainable Innovation, we will aim to set a target to provide thousands of professionals with the skills, knowledge, and experience to manage our move to a sustainable future by 2050.

## 29 Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission



The city's Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission is a collaboration between Belfast City Council, Belfast Harbour, Ulster University and Queen's University. The Commission was established to develop an integrated, inclusive and long-term growth plan for the city. Its recommendations span a decade long-focus on how to build a job-led transition to an inclusive zero emissions economy.

## 30 Fuel Poverty



As we transition to a low carbon economy, we are aiming to make the city more energy efficient and energy self-sufficient. We should therefore agree the eradication of fuel poverty as a city-wide ambition.

# CASE STUDY: CONNECTED, ZERO-EMISSIONS ECONOMY



## Melbourne: Melbourne Urban Forest: bringing a city together to enhance its natural assets

**With a rapidly growing population anticipated to reach 8million by 2051, metropolitan Melbourne's urban footprint is both expanding outward and becoming denser shrinking the city's green space, intensifying the urban heat island and contributing to flooding and run off during storms.**

Resilient Melbourne in partnership with The Nature Conservancy developed a comprehensive urban forestry strategy: Living Melbourne: Our Metropolitan Urban Forest which seeks to ameliorate the shocks and stresses associated with extreme heat, fire and flooding. With the help of private sector engagement to map canopy cover in the city, the Living Melbourne Strategy set a goal of increasing all sub-regional canopy cover levels by 20-30% by 2050. With this goal set, the Resilient Melbourne team along with Melbourne's 32 councils developed a cohesive roadmap for improving biodiversity and urban forest cover.

Implementation of the urban forest strategy, estimated to cost AUS\$570M, is expected to bring economic benefits currently valued at AUS\$4.95 billion per year, a figure expected to rise as the canopy cover increases.

Nature is an immensely valuable asset for driving urban resilience. Exposure to nature reduces stress and the incidence of mental illness while also strengthening community bonds by providing spaces to congregate and enjoy physical activities thus also addressing public health and social inequality.



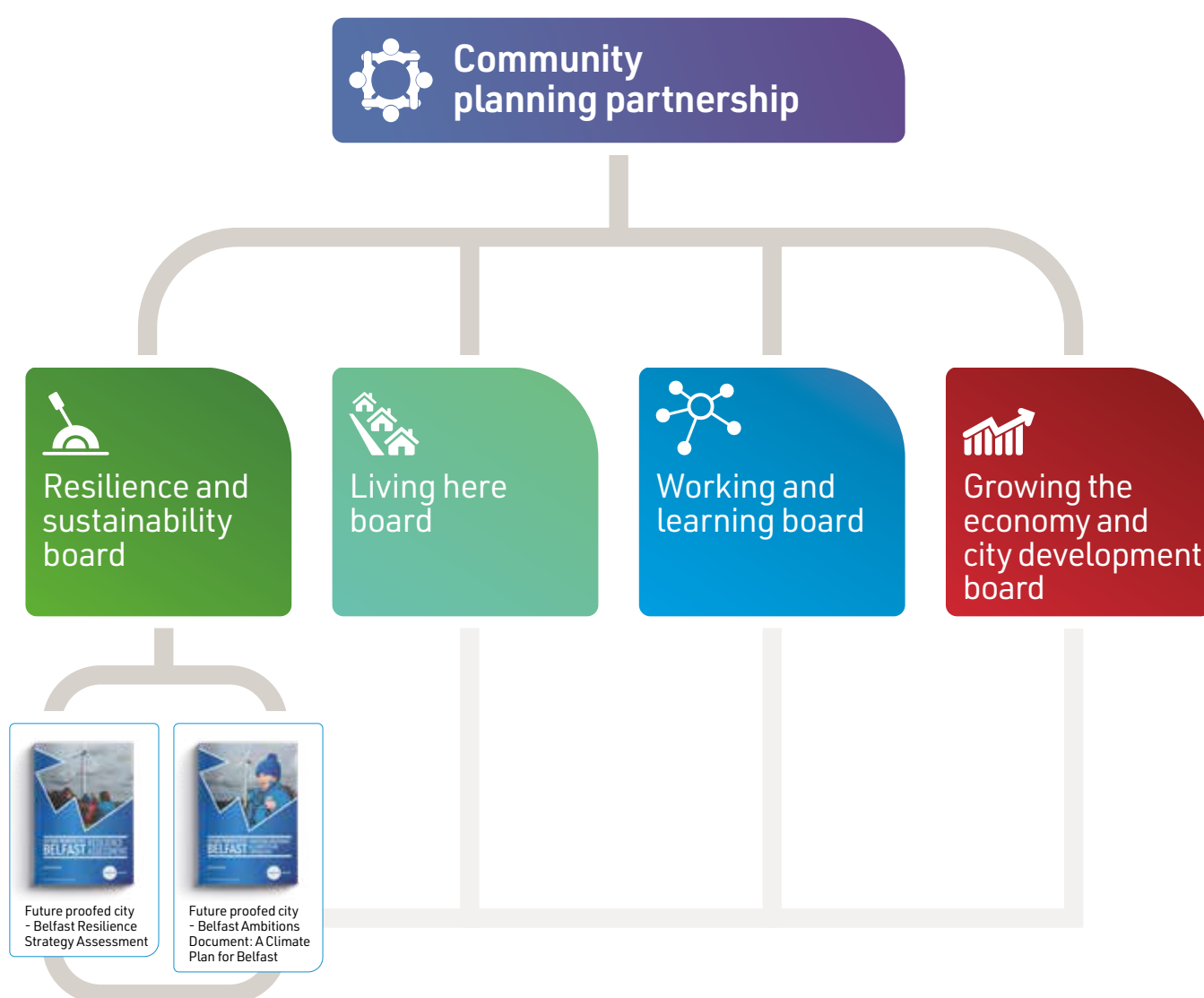
# NEXT STEPS

# NEXT STEPS

**Delivery of our ambitions will be overseen by the Resilience and Sustainability Board, and other Community Planning Partnership Boards, and in doing so will develop relevant delivery and resource plans.**

Individual city partners will take responsibility for delivery of key aspects of the strategy's ambitions.

To make contact with the team at Belfast City Council, email [resilient@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:resilient@belfastcity.gov.uk)





# RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY BOARD MEMBERS

Eastside Partnership  
Visit Belfast  
Belfast Harbour  
West Belfast Partnership Board  
Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA)  
Department of Finance  
Health and Social Care Northern Ireland (HSCNI)  
Translink  
NI Water  
Department for the Economy (DfE)  
Ulster University (UU)  
Department for Infrastructure (DfI)  
Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE)  
Belfast Metropolitan College  
Invest NI  
Utility Regulator  
Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI)  
Greater Shankill Partnership  
Linen Quarter BID  
Local Government Civil Contingencies  
Include Youth  
Action Mental Health

Logos  
to be  
included

As part of our commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations, we want to ensure that everyone is able to access the documents we produce. This document is available in different languages and formats and we can provide others on request, please contact: Richard McLernon, Project Coordinator, Commissioner for Resilience on 028 9050 2091.



**Belfast City Council**  
City Hall  
Donegall Square South  
Belfast  
BT1 5GS

 [www.belfastcity.gov.uk/resilientbelfast](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/resilientbelfast)

 [resilient@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:resilient@belfastcity.gov.uk)

 028 9050 2091

 @belfastcc

 @belfastcitycouncil

 Belfast City Council





<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Update on Consultation and Engagement</b>
<b>Date:</b>	20th November 2020
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy
<b>Contact Officers:</b>	Christine Robinson Strategy, Policy and Partnership Manager Patricia Flynn, Strategic Policy and Planning Officer

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To update the Committee on progress with deployment of the Council's new digital civic engagement platform and the supporting framework for consultation and engagement.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. note the update on proposed civic engagement (with immediate emphasis on obtaining citizen input on city recovery from Covid-19) utilising the new online Engagement HQ platform;</li> <li>ii. agree that the biennial doorstep resident survey planned for this winter, be deferred for at least 6 months; and</li> <li>iii. agree the revised consultation and engagement framework (attached at appendix 2)</li> </ul>

3.0	<b>Key Issues</b>
3.1	<p><b>Background</b></p> <p>The Local Government (NI) Act 2014 reinforced the Council's duty to consult, and since then the Council has been working hard to improve its approach to consultation and engagement and has made considerable progress in terms of capacity building and ICT. This work has included procurement of a new digital engagement platform and further development of a revised Corporate Consultation and Engagement Framework to support our approach.</p>
3.2	<p><b>New Engagement Platform and Civic Engagement on City Recovery</b></p> <p>To enhance the Council's capabilities to utilise more innovative participatory tools using online/digital engagement with citizens, at earlier stages and on a more ongoing basis, we have invested in a new digital platform. The formal procurement stage has now been completed and the 'Engagement HQ' platform is currently being configured for Council use, (alongside development of necessary management and operational protocols) in advance of going live by early December 2020. This platform will provide a number of new tools to support early, transparent and ongoing dialogue, and will help address areas identified for improvement that have emerged from associated work on the corporate Consultation and Engagement Framework to underpin Council's approach.</p>
3.3	<p><b>Roles of Elected Members in supporting deployment of the new platform</b></p> <p>Elected Members are asked to note that the following support will be required in deployment and future development/roll out of the new digital platform:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fronting engagement projects through short introductory video clips/soundbites</li> <li>• Promoting and profile raising of the platform and current projects through Members own networks and communication channels in communities</li> <li>• Inputting to the design of engagement activities at development stages (e.g. via Party Leaders forum, Area Working Groups, SP&amp;R Committee as appropriate)</li> </ul>
3.4	<p><b>Proposals for platform launch and next steps</b></p> <p>The new platform will be launched publicly in early December, with the focus on the first engagements on the city's recovery from Covid-19 creating new opportunities for dialogue with citizens, to input their comments, ideas and views on what they think is needed for the city and its communities to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic.</p>
3.5	<p>The topics/areas of engagement, and tools for citizen participation, being worked up as part of the platform's early deployment include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A stronger future Belfast (city recovery)</li> </ul>

3.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A featured set of engagement activities will seek citizen participation and engagement on city recovery. This will form the main emphasis of communications activity promoting the initial launch of the new platform. The proposed tools/engagement activities being drafted will be framed to emphasise community/neighbourhood aspects of interest to residents. The tools that will be used for this initial engagement are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community stories (good news stories from within communities to highlight the positive experiences/learning from responses to Covid-19)</li> <li>▪ Ideas generation (ideas for current and future focus in city recovery)</li> <li>▪ A covid-19 survey (to seek views of residents on Covid impacts and inform recovery planning)</li> <li>▪ Quick poll (snap virtual poll on immediate Covid concerns)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Building on initial engagement above, it is intended that future engagement phases on city recovery will utilise the platform to support focused engagement work at area level (N, S, E, W) as part of work to develop area based recovery plans. This engagement process, and subsequent activities/methods of engagement activity will be designed in collaboration with key stakeholders over the coming months.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate/Resilience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A hub on the work climate adaptation and mitigation to seek citizen input on relevant aspects of the programme. An early activity could include engagement on 1 million trees programme, potentially utilising the place mapping tool for residents to suggest possible locations around the city for tree planting.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• VCSE Sectoral Panel and citywide network <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A dedicated portion of the site for VCSe stakeholders engaging with the city's community planning process. This will host key information on the work of the VCSe Sectoral Advisory Panel and will include engagement tools to allow feedback from stakeholders across the wider VCSE sector network.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>The areas above provide an indication of the engagement themes at initial launch and example screen shots showing what the platform will look like are provided in Appendix 1. Over time, new engagement themes/topics will be added to support the engagement needs of the Council, and the Community Planning Partnership where appropriate, to promote earlier and more ongoing forms of participation and engagement with citizens.</p>
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	<p><b>VCSE Sectoral Advisory Panel</b></p> <p>3.7 Members will be aware that the recently established VCSE Sectoral Advisory Panel plans to host an online sectoral conference on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020, titled <b>‘Putting community wellbeing at the heart of community planning’</b>. Aimed at participants from across the city’s VCSE sectors, the conference agenda is being developed by the VCSE Sectoral Advisory Panel, and will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductory comments from the Minister for Communities</li> <li>• Presentations from keynote speakers including the Future Generations Wellbeing Commissioner of Wales, Scottish Improvement Service Chief Executive, and Suzanne Wylie, Belfast City Council Chief Executive and Chair of Community Planning Partnership.</li> <li>• Breakout workshop discussions for VCSE participants to shape the VCSE Panel's approach and engagement with the sector over the coming year.</li> </ul> <p>3.8 The newly established VCSE Sectoral Advisory Panel will also be engaged over the coming weeks to test and refine the engagement tools (while also providing opportunity to input their views) in advance of the wider public launch.</p> <p><b>Resident Survey</b></p> <p>3.9 The Council undertakes a resident survey every two years, the primary purpose of which is to provide reliable and representative perception data to monitor progress and inform priority setting. Unlike online consultations, which are self-selecting, our resident survey uses a representative sample of Belfast residents based on age, gender and DEA and is collected via doorstep interviews. This ensures that the data is both valid and reliable, which enables consistency and accuracy for trend and performance comparisons. This data is used to help track direction of travel with respect to the Belfast Agenda and corporate plan; we also report a number of these indicators to the NI Audit office as part of our performance improvement duty. The survey was due to commence in November with results available by March 2021. However, due to Covid-19 we are proposing to delay the survey by approximately 6 months, in the first instance, and subject to further review thereafter. It is hoped that fieldwork will be undertaken around summer time so that these performance indicators can feed into the refresh of the Belfast Agenda. In the interim we will also examine the ongoing need for the survey. Ongoing engagement with residents around priorities will continue using the new engagement platform.</p> <p><b>Revised Belfast City Council Consultation and Engagement Framework</b></p> <p>3.10 Last year, Members agreed to move forward with a public commitment to consultation and engagement in the form of a corporate consultation and engagement (C&amp;E) framework. The</p>
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	<p>framework is not a programme of engagement events or consultations, but instead provides the policy context in which we will do this i.e. how we will plan, deliver and utilise our C&amp;E activity. It sets out our vision for engagement and the principles and standards that we will aspire to meet. It provides clarity and transparency, and will be supported by an ongoing action plan and officer toolkit designed to help improve the consistency, quality and value of our engagement.</p>
3.11	<p>The draft framework was subject to a 12-week public consultation between December 2019 and March 2020. Key results from this consultation are presented below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All respondents (100%) agreed that it was “important that Belfast City Council has a clear policy on consultation and engagement”</li> <li>• 90% agree with our definitions of consultation and involvement; three quarters (75%) agreed with our definition of engagement and 58% agreed with our proposed vision for consultation engagement</li> <li>• On average, more than 80% agreed with each of our proposed standards</li> <li>• On average, around three quarters (range 67% -83%) agreed with each of our proposed aims and aspirations, with value for money and keeping people informed attracting the highest levels of support.</li> </ul>
3.12	<p>We also sought feedback on the draft equality screening and rural needs assessment and invited any further comments. Suggested areas for improvement included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a shorter and more concise vision</li> <li>• Enabling ongoing conversations rather than just informing and consulting, with greater openness and transparency around decisions</li> <li>• More emphasis on valuing engagement and in particular the input from the community</li> <li>• One respondent highlighted the need for resources to support meaningful engagement, whilst another queried our use of the term “people”. In relation to equality, one respondent suggested that if wanted to make our engagements more accessible, then we needed to look at the language we used and avoid “jargon”.</li> </ul>
3.13	<p><b>Finalising the C&amp;E Framework and Next Steps</b></p> <p>We have revised the draft framework and updated our action plan to reflect public feedback. The finalised framework is attached at appendix 1 for approval. Next steps are summarised as follows:</p>

	<table><tr><td><i>Framework</i></td><td>Present to SP&amp;R for formal adoption. Promote new framework internally and update on website.</td></tr><tr><td><i>Civic engagement</i></td><td>Develop and implement options to enhance our community engagement, focussing initially on an online engagement platform</td></tr><tr><td><i>Capacity building</i></td><td>Develop continuous programme of support and capacity building for officers, including an officer toolkit, C&amp;E champions and internal networking and professional development.</td></tr><tr><td><i>Consultation</i></td><td>Implement feedback protocol /process for all public consultations. Align citizen space consultations to new engagement platform and review ongoing use.</td></tr></table>	<i>Framework</i>	Present to SP&R for formal adoption. Promote new framework internally and update on website.	<i>Civic engagement</i>	Develop and implement options to enhance our community engagement, focussing initially on an online engagement platform	<i>Capacity building</i>	Develop continuous programme of support and capacity building for officers, including an officer toolkit, C&E champions and internal networking and professional development.	<i>Consultation</i>	Implement feedback protocol /process for all public consultations. Align citizen space consultations to new engagement platform and review ongoing use.
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<i>Consultation</i>	Implement feedback protocol /process for all public consultations. Align citizen space consultations to new engagement platform and review ongoing use.								
	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p>								
3.14	<p>There are no direct financial implication arising from this report. Costs associated with the implementation of the action plan, including the enhanced civic engagement platform and wider capacity building, have been factored into council budgets. Future and ongoing budget implications will be monitored as part of the action plan implementation and learning. Financial and human resource issues relating to ongoing C&amp;E will be brought to CMT as they arise.</p>								
	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p>								
3.15	<p>There are no direct equality implications contained in this report. An equality screening and rural needs assessment was undertaken as part of the framework development. Whilst, it is clear that some sections of the community face greater barriers to involvement, the framework aims to help address these and ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to participate. Equality and inclusion is an underlying principle within the framework and our action plan, which includes steps to improve civic engagement and capacity building for officers, will seek to mitigate any barriers to participation. The enhanced participant management and analytical tools of the new platform will also help us understand better who is engaging with us and where we may need to target our efforts.</p>								
4.0	<p><b>Documents Attached</b></p>								
	<p>Appendix 1: Engagement HQ platform overview (working draft screenshots)</p> <p>Appendix 2: Revised Consultation and Engagement Framework</p>								

## Appendix 1: Engagement HQ Platform Screenshots (Draft)



Screenshot 1:

Draft front  
'landing page' for  
the new  
Engagement HQ  
platform

### Get involved and have your say

We are committed to ensuring your voice is heard when it comes to the decisions that affect you, your neighbourhood or your city. Through our engagement platform, we want to give everyone the opportunity to get involved and help shape the future of Belfast. This is your chance to have your say on all sorts of issues, activities and projects in Belfast or your local area.

**Speak up and get involved. We'd love to hear from you.**

You can fill in our surveys without having to register or sign in, but you will need to register to get involved in the online conversations and discussion.

[Register](#)

### Featured projects and engagements



October 16, 2020

#### Covid-19: building a stronger future

Share your ideas and thoughts on how we can work together to build a stronger future



October 16, 2020

#### Inspiring Stories: Covid-19

How is your community pulling together? Share your story, ideas or thanks to help inspire others

### Get involved - our engagement platform and networks



#### Our engagement platform

Explains how you can get involved and have your say. Learn about your privacy and moderation.

[View Project](#)



#### Our engagement platform

Explains how you can get involved and have your say. Learn about your privacy and moderation.

[View Project](#)

### Talk to our team



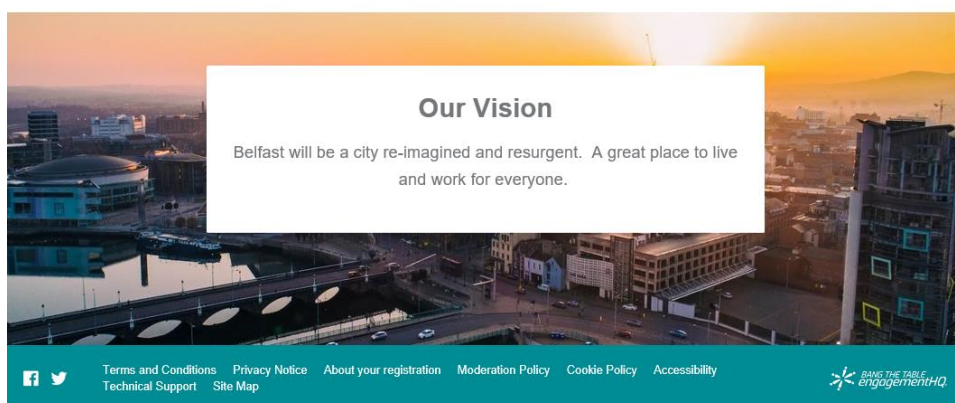
#### Your Say Belfast

Strategy, Policy and Partnership Team  
[policy@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:policy@belfastcity.gov.uk)



#### Community Planning

Strategy, Policy and Partnership Team  
[communityplanning@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:communityplanning@belfastcity.gov.uk)





Home » City Recovery » A stronger future city: vibrant and resilient

## A stronger future city: vibrant and resilient



COVID-19 has brought new challenges for our health, for society and for the economy. Individuals and communities have pulled together to follow public health guidance and restrictions, and to support each other during this difficult and unprecedented time.

Belfast's response to the pandemic reflects who we are as a city - caring and resilient with a strong community spirit and a warmth and sense of humour that shines through. We want that to build on that and look ahead to how we can help our city recover and bounce back even stronger.

We recently published a framework setting out what Belfast City Council is doing to address immediate challenges while building towards a stronger future. 'Belfast: Our Recovery' sets out our extensive plan detailing how we want to support communities, businesses and vulnerable people over the coming period as the city emerges from Covid-19.

To help us plan for the future together, we want to have a conversation with you so that you can help shape our plans and Belfast's future.

- What are the most important things the Council, its Partners and/or the community can do to help Belfast recover and build a stronger city with vibrant and resilient neighbourhoods?
- What do we need to focus on right now while the Pandemic is continuing?
- How can you and your community play your part?

Please share your ideas with us on the ideas boards below. Alternatively, if you would prefer to share your views privately, you can answer the same questions in our online survey.

**This engagement exercise will close on 11 January 2021**

**YOUR IDEAS** **COVID-19 SURVEY**

All unpublished Brainstormer items are shown as "Draft". Only admins will be able to see it in the preview mode.

### Helping Belfast to recover and build a stronger future - Draft

7 days ago

Even though the pandemic is continuing at present, we want to prepare and take the actions necessary to ensure the city recovers once the Pandemic is over - so that local people feel the greatest possible benefit of improvements in economic and social wellbeing, as quickly as possible.

Please tell us your ideas for action and impact - what do you think the Council, its Partners, and/or the community can do in the coming months and years to help overcome the challenges of the Pandemic, to improve the quality of life and wellbeing for everyone in Belfast?

[Start by submitting an idea](#)

### What do we need to focus on right now, while the pandemic continues? - Draft

7 days ago

The Pandemic is continuing at present and impacts continue to be felt in our communities by businesses and residents alike, affecting people's finances, employment, health and social wellbeing.

Please tell us what you think are the most important things we should be focusing on right now to help you, your community and the city through this difficult time.

**Please do not share any personal information about yourself or anybody else here. For example only use first names, not full names.**

[Start by submitting an idea](#)

### What can you and others in your community do? - Draft

about 1 month ago

Everyone in Belfast has a part to play their part to help the city and its communities get through this difficult period, and to come out the other side stronger.

Living through restrictions placed on everyday life at times over the past few months has been difficult for everyone, taking personal responsibility and following safety advice and guidance has changed the way we live our lives.

We also know many individual people, groups and organisations in our communities, and across Belfast, have already done lots to support each other during this pandemic.

Please tell us what you think are [Continue reading](#)

[Start by submitting an idea](#)

#### Who's Listening

##### Your Say Belfast

Engagement Team

Email [policy@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:policy@belfastcity.gov.uk)

##### Belfast Agenda Team

Strategic Hub

Email [communityplanning@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:communityplanning@belfastcity.gov.uk)

##### City Recovery Team

City & Neighbourhoods Department

Email [cns@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:cns@belfastcity.gov.uk)

This widget will be active and subscriptions will be enabled once the project is published

#### STAY INFORMED

Subscribe for project updates

[Subscribe](#)

#### Quick Polls

No Quick Polls for this project

#### Related Project: Covid-19 Our Stories

No Related Projects for this project

#### Belfast Our Recovery

<https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/ourrecovery>

Ideally also insert the PDF or who to email to request a copy

## Screenshot 2:

## City Recovery Engagement (DRAFT): Ideas tool, Survey and quick poll

The engagement page intro can include a short video message from Elected Member e.g. Lord Mayor

A quick poll question asking about peoples biggest concern at present will be visible once webpage is 'live'







**Screenshot 3:**  
**Community stories engagement tool (DRAFT)**

Banner image will be updated (this is an example one)

[Home](#) » [City Recovery](#) » [Community Stories - covid 19](#)

## Community Stories - covid 19



Have you got a good news story to tell about you and your community during the Covid-19 Pandemic?

We want to build on Belfast's strengths and capture the good things that have come out of the challenges faced by our city.

Time and again people have commented that one of Belfast's greatest strengths is its people and its sense of community. We know many in our communities have been heartened by the resilience, community spirit, compassion, kindness and friendships that has shone through as people have pulled together to look out for each other.

We want to acknowledge people's efforts and build on that community spirit moving forward. Help us capture the inspiring stories from your community. Use this space to thank organisations or people in your community who helped, or to highlight things that we could build on to make our community stronger in the future.

**Please do not share any personal information about yourself or anybody else here. For example only use organisational names or first names, do use people's not full names.**

### STORIES

#### Inspiring stories

Use this space to highlight the good news stories to come from covid-19.

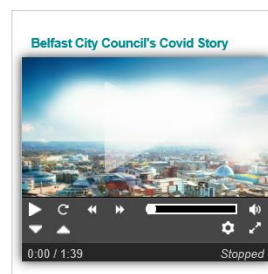
- Do you want to thank or acknowledge people, organisations or community groups in your area?
- Do you want to share uplifting stories of community spirit or the little things that have helped you or your community through the pandemic?
- Do you want to tell your story of how covid-19 has affected you?

Now you can - just remember not to share people's personal details like their full name or address.

Please do not use your full name or other information that can identify you. You can upload videos or photos, but be careful to respect people's privacy or get their permission first.

[Start your story by providing a title](#)

There are no stories to display. Why don't you share one?



Video clip showing examples of Covid-19 responses from our Council services



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[Technical Support](#) [Site Map](#)



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# Consultation and Engagement Framework

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**November 2020**



**Belfast**  
City Council

## Purpose of the Framework

**Belfast City Council is committed to listening to what our residents have to say about the services we provide or what they want to see happen in the city and their local area. We recognise that to effectively shape and improve our city, neighbourhoods and services, then meaningful consultation and engagement is crucial. We believe that listening to and involving people will lead to better, more responsive services and improved quality of life for all.**

We have developed a consultation and engagement framework to guide how we listen, consult and involve people. This, together with our toolkit, will help ensure that our consultation and engagement is meaningful and effective; that it makes a difference.

### *Why the Framework is needed*

If we want the public to be more involved in our consultations and engagements, then we need to build trust and confidence in our systems and continually improve how we do things. We believe that helping people understand why we consult and engage and what they can expect from us is the first step in building that trust and confidence. We also believe that setting out best practice principles and standards will help us improve and consistently deliver good practice. Therefore, this framework sets out our vision for consultation and engagement and the principles and standards that we will strive to meet. More importantly, by putting civic engagement and participation at the heart of what we do, it will ensure our residents are more involved in the decisions or services that affect them.

#### **Legal Requirements, Equality and Best Practice**

The framework has been developed based on current legal requirements and best practice. Where there is a defined statutory process for consultation, then the statutory process will take precedence. For example, requirements to consult on spatial planning issues will be undertaken in line with the Planning Act (NI) 2011 legislation and associated statutory guidance.

It represents a further step towards embedding meaningful consultation into the council's planning and decision-making processes and supplements the commitments in our Equality Scheme and our responsibilities to consult under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Supported by an action plan and toolkit, the framework

## Our Vision for Consultation & Engagement

We are committed to listening to and involving local people in decisions and issues that affect them. Our vision for consultation and engagement is where:

### **Everyone feels that their opinion matters and that their voice can make a difference**

Making Belfast a good place to live, work or visit requires a collaborative effort so our approach to consultation and engagement aims to ensure that everyone, and especially those who live here, have an opportunity to influence:

- ✓ **Council services and priorities** – so they better reflect local need and provide best value for money
- ✓ **Local actions and decisions** – so they make the greatest impact and improve local **quality of life** now and for the future.

By everyone, we mean:



Underpinning this vision is our commitment to ensure that all voices have an opportunity to be heard, particularly those who may find it more difficult to participate because of disability, age, language, caring responsibilities or any other circumstance. Our consultation will be guided by the principles contained in the Equality Commissions guidance “Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for Public Authorities (April 2010)” and our Equality Scheme - chapter 3, ‘Our arrangements for consulting’.



## Aims and Aspirations

The framework is intended to help us to deliver our vision for consultation and engagement and ensure that all our consultation and engagement meets legal standards and good practice commitments. More specifically the framework aims to:

- Make our consultation and engagement processes **Meaningful and Fit for Purpose**
- Ensure our consultation and engagement is **Inclusive** and gives all people **Equal Opportunity** to contribute, enabling greater access and participation
- Build trust and confidence in council through **Fair, Open and Transparent** consultation and engagement
- Provide **Value for Money**, reducing costs and avoiding duplication
- Strengthen strategic planning through a consistent and continually improving use of consultation and engagement - **A 'One-Council' Coordinated Approach**

Our aspiration is to ensure that our consultation and engagement

1. **Values and respects people** and acts fairly – it has a meaningful purpose and values people's time and contributions
2. Gives people **equal opportunity** to contribute – it is clear, accessible and inclusive
3. Uses **fit for purpose** methods - it is well designed, visible and commensurate to need
4. **Keeps people informed** throughout – it gives people the information they need to participate and informs them of the outcome (key findings, decisions or actions).

These aspirations or principles form the basis of our framework and approach to consultation and engagement.

**Through this framework, we will endeavour to embed a culture of engagement so that it genuinely becomes part of what we do.**

## Definition - What do we mean by Consultation and Engagement?

The terms consultation and engagement are sometimes used interchangeably. But, whilst both processes seek the views, knowledge or guidance of others, there is a difference between them.

The Consultation Institute defines **consultation** as:

*“the dynamic process of dialogue between individuals or groups, based upon a genuine exchange of views, with the objective of influencing decisions, policies or programmes of action”*

In this framework, we define **engagement** as an activity or process that:

*“brings people together to help to understand and solve local problems, to influence and shape council policy or council services, or to address issues of common importance and to achieve positive change”*

Consultation is specific and time bound, with decisions made by the organisation initiating the consultation, in this case Belfast City Council. Engagement, on the other hand, describes the wider and longer term or ongoing process of **involving** people - in discussions, deliberations and action planning – on issues that affect them or which they care about. Effective engagement requires respectful dialogue between everyone involved and is aimed at improving understanding and, where appropriate, joint working so as to achieve more positive outcomes for all.


### **Our Definitions:**

**Consultation** - a process of dialogue - asking for and listening to the views of people and partners in order to inform or influence a specific council decision, policy, strategy or action.

**Engagement** - the processes we use to develop ongoing, mutually beneficial working relationships with our people and partners. For the purposes of this framework the term engagement means the purposeful and participative process which enables people to influence and shape council policy and local services or to improve local outcomes. It is the cornerstone of partnership working.

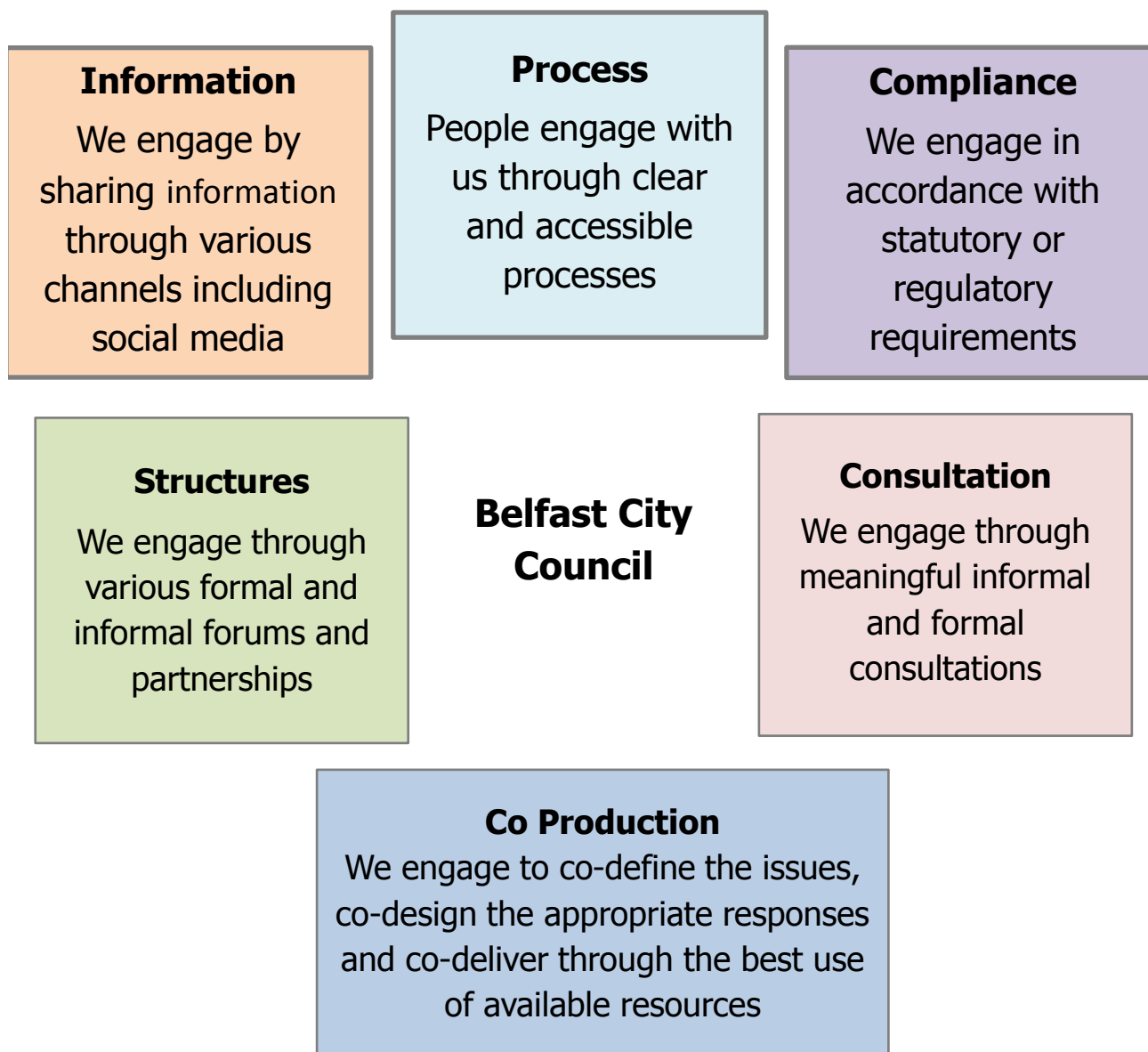
**Involvement** - People actively participating in and being involved with council and other local service providers in policy development, service planning and review or improving outcomes. Depending on the nature of the issue, decisions may be taken solely by council or may be shared.

The level of involvement will vary depending on the nature of each consultation or engagement. There is no fixed approach. To help explain the potential different levels of involvement, public bodies have adapted the 'ladder of public engagement' concept as illustrated below. Within this spectrum, there are many different methods available, and we must choose what is the most appropriate based on each individual case.

Level of Involvement		What's involved	Examples
<b>Empower</b>	High / Most involved	You do it; we stand back – enabling others to deliver programmes and services	Shaftsbury and Grosvenor community & recreation centres
<b>Collaborate</b>		We do it jointly – sharing decisions and working together to improve, design or services and programmes	District Policing & Community Safety Partnership Connswater Community Greenway
<b>Involve</b>		Involving people – working directly with people to understand needs and aspirations and/or to improve or design services and programmes	Forums and user groups such as 'friends of' groups and our youth, seniors and migrant forums. Engagement as part of our physical programme
<b>Consultation</b>		We want to know what you think in order to help us make a better decision – asking people for their views	Formal consultations and focus groups such as those undertaken as part of our Waste Collection Arrangements and Cultural Strategy
<b>Information-giving</b>	Low / Least involved	This is knowledge we want you to have - giving people information and telling them about our services	Council Website City Matters

## Our Consultation and Engagement Framework

Belfast City Council engages and involves people in a number of different ways.



Inherent within each of these approaches, is a commitment to equality and our duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

## Our Standards for Consultation

We recognise that there is no fixed approach or one right way to consult. Instead, we will adapt each consultation to suit its own each unique situation. To help us make the right decisions about how and when we consult, we have adopted five consultation standards. These underpin our vision and guide all our consultation activity.

### ***Belfast City Council – Our Consultation Commitments***

Our consultation standard set out what you can expect from Belfast City Council consultations. These are our commitments to you. In any consultation exercise we will:

**Explain** why we are consulting and how we are going to take people's views into account. We will consult openly and with integrity, providing the information people need to participate and ensuring that we consult and engage when there is scope for people to influence decisions and actions.

**Involve** the widest spectrum of the community. We will strive to give all people affected by or interested in the matter an opportunity to get involved. We will strive to give all people an equal opportunity to contribute especially under-represented, marginalised and 'seldom heard groups. Above all, we will respect people and act fairly, valuing people's time and contributions.

**Organise** consultation and engagement in ways that are convenient and accessible to the people whose views we are seeking and use the most appropriate and cost-effective mechanisms – fit for purpose consultation that is commensurate to need.

**Report** back and keep people informed throughout the process – providing information that is open and easy to understand. This includes reporting back on what people told us, the decisions that have been made and any actions that will be taken.

**Use** the findings to make informed decisions - consultation for a purpose and with an honest intention. We will interpret the findings fairly and make decisions or take actions that ultimately help to improve services, programmes or quality of life for local people.

We have developed a toolkit to help officers apply these standards. The toolkit, which will be updated periodically to reflect ne practice and learning, includes comprehensive advice on planning a consultation, has been developed



## Our Standards for Engagement

**Engagement brings people together to help to solve local problems, to influence and shape policy or council services or to address issues of common importance and bring about positive change.**

Whilst our consultation standards are equally applicable to engagement activity, we feel that additional guidance and support is needed to build and drive meaningful community engagement. We want communities to feel that they can influence and be part of the decisions that affect them. This means working with communities to help them deal with the issues they experience, involving them in the design and delivery of actions and interventions, and supporting them so they can lead on the issues that affect them. Good community engagement is a process which provides the foundation for:

- Shared understanding
- Improved decision-making
- Collaboration

Engagement good practice is continually evolving and we are committed to learning and maintaining good standards that work for our local communities. In the first instance, we will apply the National Standards for Community Engagement as developed by the Scottish Government and the Scottish Community Development Centre. The standards, which build on the OECD principles designed to strengthen government-citizen relations, are about being open and inclusive, with a focus on collaborative change, continuous improvement and relationship building. They comprise seven good-practice principles, supported by detailed performance statements that act as a checklist or reference point for best practice. The standards focus on:

- ❖ Inclusion
- ❖ Support
- ❖ Planning
- ❖ Working Together
- ❖ Methods
- ❖ Communication
- ❖ Impact

By applying these standards to our own community engagement, we aim to ensure that our engagement is meaningful and effective - where everyone feels respected and empowered and which delivers a positive outcome for all.

## The Belfast Agenda

We are responsible for leading and facilitating the community planning process for the Belfast district area. At its heart, community planning is about working in collaboration to deliver better outcomes for local people. We will work with our community planning partners to embed effective community engagement and ensure that is an integral part the Belfast Agenda and our community planning processes. The Belfast Community Planning Partnership is committed to strengthening how it engages and has plans to develop a Partnership Community Engagement Strategy to underpin how it will enhance civic voice through meaningful participation of communities, including the community, voluntary and social enterprise sectors.

We will continue to work with our partners to test and develop innovative engagement approaches and to develop case studies to guide and build good practice, both through our own consultation and engagement activity in relation to Council services, and through our partnership working.

### *Learning from best practice: Scottish National Standards*



Scottish Government funded, SCDC developed  
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## Keeping you informed

**Our framework commits us to keeping you informed. This means letting you know what is happening and telling you about the decisions that affect you and how you can have a say in those decisions. We will also let you know how we tool people's views into account and what happened as a result.**

We use a range of mechanisms to keep you informed. This includes, for example, tools like City Matters, our website and social media. Depending on the issue or matter, we may also produce specific leaflets or summary documents to help raise awareness and understanding. These will be available on our dedicated engagement platform or on the council website.

### Our Consultation and Engagement Platform

We are continually looking for ways in which to improve how we engage and involve people. As part of this, we have invested in digital technology and have created a dedicated on-line engagement platform. The aim of the platform is to make it easier for our residents and other stakeholders to find out about our engagements and to have their say. We will also use the platform to keep people informed by letting you know what people have said and what has happened as a result.

## Developing effective process

**Our framework is about giving all people a voice through clear, meaningful and inclusive processes. Whilst much of the framework deals with how we initiate, plan and deliver our consultation and engagement, we also want to make sure that we have sound processes in place that enables communities and individuals to initiate discussions and raise concerns.**

Our Elected Members play an important role in representing their constituents, including raising issues of concern with services and senior management team. However, in addition to this, we will also develop clear and open processes that enable people to contact council directly, such as through petitions or other mechanisms. We will explain clearly what the process is so that people understand how they can make their voice heard and what happens next.

## Meeting our commitments

**We have developed a number of supporting mechanisms to enable us to meet the commitments set out in this framework. Reviewed and updated on an annual review, it includes an annual action plan and officer toolkits and best practice guidance.**

### Toolkits and Guidance

We have developed a consultation and engagement toolkit for officers and engagement guidance for physical projects. This guidance and associated checklists will be reviewed regularly to ensure it reflects best practice and changing legislative guidance.

In addition, our Equality and Diversity Unit has developed an Equality and Diversity Toolkit, which provides detailed guidance for officers on our equality and diversity responsibilities. The unit also facilitates a number of equality and disability forums. These are reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure we continue to be open and inclusive. To find out more about these forums or to get involved please contact [equality@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:equality@belfastcity.gov.uk)

### Annual Review and Action Plan

As part of the development of the framework, we identified 4 key areas that we need to focus on if we are to improve our practice and deliver the aspirations within this framework. These will form the basis of our annual review and updated action plan:

Consultation & Engagement Framework
Year 1: Formal adoption and promotion of the framework Ongoing: Annual monitoring and review to assess new practice and ensure continuous improvement and innovation
Consultation
Year 1: Introduce mechanisms for feeding back the results and impact of consultations to participants Ongoing: Annual monitoring and review to ensure our consultation practice continue to meet legislative requirements and good practice
Engagement and Civic Voice
Year 1: Introduce mechanisms to enhance our civic and community engagement, with initial focus on an online engagement platform to support more open and inclusive dialogue Ongoing: Ongoing review and development of innovative and good practice civic engagement to ensure wider participation and involvement
Building Capacity
Continuous programme of support and capacity building for officers - officer toolkit, C&E champions and internal networking, training and professional development.

## Measures of Success

We want this framework to make a difference. We want people get involved in the decisions that affect them and we want it to have a positive impact on how people view the council. To help us assess whether it is making a difference, we will monitor the following:

How much did we do?	How well did we do it
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Number of public consultations per annum</li> <li>❖ Number of responses to our consultation per annum</li> <li>❖ Number of focus groups or engagement panel exercises per annum (face-to face or online)</li> <li>❖ Numbers involved in focus groups and panels per annum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ % of consultation exercises where results are fed back to participants</li> <li>❖ Participation by key groups (age, gender, background etc)</li> <li>❖ Number of FOIs / complaints relating to consultation and engagement process*</li> <li>❖ Officers holding Consultation Institute CPD or Advanced Practitioners</li> </ul>
Is anyone better off?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ % of residents who agree that the council consults with and listens to views of local residents</li> <li>✓ % of residents who agree that they are able to have a say in how services are run in their local area</li> <li>✓ % of residents who rate council highly in terms of (a) reputation and (b) trustworthiness</li> <li>✓ % of residents who agree that the council provides good customer service</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Source: BCC Resident Survey</p>	



## Tell us what you think

**We have put a lot of thought into this framework, but we are very much open to ideas and suggestions for improvement.**

This framework is about making sure that people have a voice on the issues that affect them and can influence the services we deliver. If you have any comments or suggestions, please get in touch with us using the contact details below.

*Does this make sense?*

*Are we on the right track?*

*What do we need to do to  
make it easier for people to get involved and have their say?*



### Contact us:

Strategic Policy, Planning and Partnership Team  
City Hall  
Belfast  
BT1 5GS



[policy@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:policy@belfastcity.gov.uk)



028 9050 0525



[www.belfastcity.gov.uk](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk)



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>EU Successor Funding Northern Ireland: Position Paper for SOLACE NI</b>
<b>Date:</b>	20th November, 2020
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy
<b>Contact Officers:</b>	Christine Robinson, Strategy, Policy and Partnerships Manager Mark Mulholland, Policy and Performance Analyst

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To update Members on a position paper produced for the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives in Northern Ireland (SOLACE NI), in relation to EU Successor Funding in Northern Ireland and the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF).
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Note this update on the Ekosgen/SOLACE NI position paper on EU Successor Funding; and</li> <li>b) promote this work across Political networks supporting the need for a partnership approach, which involves local government, in co-designing and shaping the SPF, which will address local needs.</li> </ul>

3.0	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	Ekosgen was commissioned in early 2020 by SOLACE NI to undertake a research study to explore the future of EU Successor Funding in Northern Ireland. The purpose of this study was to develop a local government sectoral position, to use as a basis for discussion and influence with central government departments, regarding the local introduction of the SPF.
3.2	Alongside the full report, a stand-alone Executive Summary has been produced ( <b>see attached Appendix</b> ). This document sets out the key principles and recommendations identified by local government, and will be used to engage the NI Executive Ministers, MLAs, MPs and relevant departments in terms of the future local design of the SPF.
3.3	As the UK has left the EU, the UK Government has begun the process of developing a replacement investment mechanism for the EU Structural Funds. The SPF will address regional disparity and structural economic challenges, and drive innovation, productivity, and sustainable economic development.
3.4	Northern Ireland has been a net beneficiary of the EU Structural funds and their impact on economic development has been significant – indeed in Northern Ireland we receive approx. 5% of the total UK allocation, while only representing 2.8% of the population. It is crucial that the spending power provided by EU funding is preserved through the SPF, and that the UK Government respects Northern Ireland’s previous status as a transition area for the purposes of EU funding in this new funding regime. This will ensure that our proportionate allocation of funding will continue and can be concentrated in areas to increase productivity and lessen economic inactivity. Such a commitment would also acknowledge and support Northern Ireland in moving forward as a post-conflict society.
3.5	The future scope and operation of the SPF as EU successor funding, will be crucial in shaping the future economic and social prosperity of Northern Ireland – by providing funding to support the foundations of prosperity, and contributing to eliminating inequalities and promoting inclusive growth for our local communities.
3.6	Members should note that, during engagement with local EU funded delivery organisations who manage and deliver programmes across our council areas, extreme concern exists regarding the lack of information and engagement undertaken to date in relation to the SPF. However, they were appreciative of the fact that local government are undertaking this work, and engaged them on this critical issue of successor funding.

3.7	It is intended to use this paper as a basis for councils having a role with central government in designing the SPF, using a place-based approach, to address local area needs. It is crucial that this new funding regime maintains alignment between the priorities of the NI Executive and those set out in local community plans to ensure that inequalities are being targeted and that local intelligence is used to focus the funding to plans and programmes that are needed.								
3.8	Members may also be aware that the Chief Executive recently attended an evidence session hosted by the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee on the SPF, on behalf of SOLACE NI and NILGA. It was notable during this session the lack of local consultation and work which has taken place in relation to the SPF in comparison with the other devolved administrations.								
3.9	During this session, the Chief Executive emphasised that for local government and local organisations the regime which is going to succeed EU structural funding is of critical importance. The design of this new funding programme if undertaken in a collaborative way between central government, local government and local delivery organisations, can create a new effective funding regime which will be transformative for our local areas and the region, aligned to the current growth and city deals and other current funding packages.								
	<b>Principles for a New Approach</b>								
3.10	The principles identified within the Ekosgen work which are necessary for designing a new approach to funding through the SPF are set out in the table below. These principles should be viewed as an integrated package of measures that work as a whole, rather than a menu of options.								
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Principles and Recommendations for a New Approach in Northern Ireland</th></tr> <tr> <th>Principle</th><th>Commentary</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>National Framework</td><td>SPF should set a national framework defining <i>high level</i> strategic direction, objectives and priorities and alignment with UK strategies.</td></tr> <tr> <td>Regional and sub-regional priority setting</td><td>There must be a commitment and processes at regional level to set strategic priorities. These should be developed in partnership and based on an evidence-based assessment of need. At a sub-regional level, there must be scope to identify and invest in activities that will address local priorities and reflect the local context. This must be an underpinning principle that all stakeholders sign up to. Ownership of sub-regional funded activities should rest with local partners.</td></tr> </tbody> </table>		Principles and Recommendations for a New Approach in Northern Ireland		Principle	Commentary	National Framework	SPF should set a national framework defining <i>high level</i> strategic direction, objectives and priorities and alignment with UK strategies.	Regional and sub-regional priority setting	There must be a commitment and processes at regional level to set strategic priorities. These should be developed in partnership and based on an evidence-based assessment of need. At a sub-regional level, there must be scope to identify and invest in activities that will address local priorities and reflect the local context. This must be an underpinning principle that all stakeholders sign up to. Ownership of sub-regional funded activities should rest with local partners.
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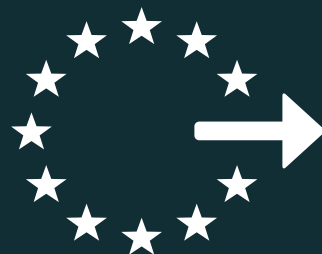
Outcomes based	Progress and achievements should be measured as outcomes and impacts, rather than activities and outputs. KPIs should be set that capture progress as well as final outcomes e.g. progress towards employment.
Flexible, single pot	<p>There must be an assumption of trust so that monies can be disbursed with as few restrictions as possible, balanced with the right degree of scrutiny.</p> <p>Monies should be provided in Northern Ireland with no restrictions on capital and revenue allocations or prescriptive allocations by theme. Spend should be based on identified need and a holistic approach covering, for example, investment in skills, business support, infrastructure, innovation and so forth.</p> <p>There should be a strategic approach to spend, combining all available funding sources to maximise value for money.</p> <p>Business support (including social enterprises) should be business-led and include support to invest in the workforce, in equipment, in processes, as well as advice, and specialist business development support.</p>
Maximum devolution of management and delivery	<p>Northern Ireland should work towards devolving management and delivery to sub-regions where there is sufficient capacity and capabilities.</p> <p>For some activities, there will be a rationale for clusters of areas and partnerships who could act as intermediate bodies, and a regional approach with flexibility for distinctive local need.</p> <p>Where appropriate, the approaches used successfully through the city and growth deals could be replicated.</p>
Attitude to risk	<p>Being overly risk averse can inhibit impacts and limits the opportunity to test and learn from new and innovative approaches.</p> <p>SPF at UK and regional levels should set an attitude to risk that allows for innovation and moves away from simply funding 'more of the same'.</p>
Fit for purpose systems and processes that are actively used	<p>Management, appraisal, monitoring and verification processes should be fit for purpose, not overly complex and proportionate to the level of funding and scale of activities. They should be used to review and drive performance.</p> <p>Additional layers and processes should not be added over time unless there is a clear rationale and demonstration of added value.</p>



		Management and monitoring systems and processes should be, as far as possible, harmonised with those of other funds and their activities. This will make for a more efficient use of project management and administration time and generate consistent data.
3.11	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p> <p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p>	
3.12	None associated with this report	
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>	
	<b>Appendix 1 – Executive Summary – EU Successor Funding in Northern Ireland: Position Paper for SOLACE NI</b>	

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# EU Successor Funding in Northern Ireland: Position Paper for SOLACE NI Executive Summary





# Introduction

ekosgen were commissioned in early 2020 by the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives in Northern Ireland "SOLACE NI" to undertake a research study to explore the future of EU Successor Funding in Northern Ireland. This Executive Summary provides a brief overview of the findings and sets out the recommendations for Northern Ireland.



# Context

**Now that the UK has left the EU, the UK Government has begun the process of developing a replacement investment mechanism for the EU Structural Funds. The Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) will address regional disparity and structural economic challenges, and drive innovation, productivity, and sustainable economic development.**

The Ministerial Statement of July 2017 strongly links the Shared Prosperity Fund to the UK Industrial Strategy, tackling inequalities between communities by raising productivity, and with an implied geographical focus on those economies which are furthest behind. In Northern Ireland, a refreshed economic strategy is underway, as well as a number of emerging strategies; for example skills and employability and rural development, all of which will align with the UK Industrial Strategy. A future SPF for Northern Ireland must take cognisance of and align to the priorities in these new strategies which will underpin the new Northern Ireland Programme for Government.

The UK SPF will be resourced within the context of the current spending review. At this stage we know the following from the UK Government:

- SPF is a successor to EU Structural Funds, not a continuation.
- There is no commitment to rolling forward current Structural Fund allocations by programme or area and no commitment to taking forward ERDF and ESF financial breakdown across priorities and themes.

- It will have a specific UK remit and be shaped by UK policy objectives, in particular, the Industrial Strategy, not EU Structural Funds heritage.
- It is not clear which Departmental budgets the UKSPF will be funded from.

The distribution and delivery of structural funds is overseen by government departments of the Northern Ireland Executive. Invest NI is the sole intermediate body for the entire Investment in Jobs Programme. Whilst local authorities also have a role in the management and delivery of programmes and initiatives and are match-funders for much of the activity, they do not act as accountable bodies. They do, however, have an important role to play going forward in co-designing (and managing aspects of) the SPF, and sharing their experiences and expertise with the Northern Ireland Executive as the SPF model emerges.

In addition to ensuring that the spending power provided by EU funding is preserved through the SPF, it is also essential that the UK Government respects Northern Ireland's previous status as a transition area for the purposes of EU funding in this new funding regime. This is significant as, although Northern Ireland accounts for only about 2.8% of the UK population, it receives 5% of the UK allocation of EU funds. This will ensure that funding will continue to be concentrated in areas to increase productivity and lessen economic inactivity. Such a commitment would also acknowledge and support Northern Ireland in moving forward as a post-conflict society.



# How Northern Ireland has successfully invested Structural Funds

Since 2000 over the last three EU programme periods Northern Ireland has received some €1,750 million of structural fund support. In the current 2014-2020 programme ERDF and ESF funding has amounted to €492.4 million. This investment is arguably more focused in Northern Ireland versus the rest of the UK, a strategic decision, to target structural funds at the areas or issues of greatest need and address evident market failure and structural economic disparity in Northern Ireland.

Achievements through the current programme (ERDF and ESF) include:

**900 more** Northern Ireland businesses are engaged in R&D.



There has been a 75% increase in the number of high-growth SMEs



**46,704 participants** have been supported through access to employment interventions and **11,038 participants** through social inclusion interventions.



**30,719** Apprenticeship NI participants have received ESF support.



In particular Local Economic Development (LED) delivery (through ERDF), and locally delivered employability (through ESF), have been a vital component of Northern Ireland's delivery. The 11 local authorities have demonstrated their capability in the management and disbursement of Structural Funds, from the point of view of procurement, audit, compliance, etc. and also in fulfilling the strategic role they hold in place-making.

They have managed the delivery of LED projects totalling over £14 million in eligible spend, in many cases in collaboration with partner Councils. The approach to delivering City and Growth Deal interventions is further demonstration of this capability and expertise.

Northern Ireland's Rural Development Programme (NIRDP) has supported rural economies over a number of years and is a significant source of funding; local authorities have delivered projects totalling £17.82 million to date. This type of investment will need to be supported by a similar fund if rural communities are to continue to thrive and grow. A successor to the NIRDP must be considered alongside discussions about the new SPF.

The SPF should be designed to unlock the potential, and improve the connectivity and accessibility of, Northern Ireland's rural areas, support rural businesses and close the gap between income levels in rural and urban areas.

Northern Ireland's local authorities are an important part of the delivery of Structural Funds. They act as a very effective link between the regional level operational programmes and the local level, providing important, geographically specific knowledge and interpretation so that local needs are met. They are also an important mechanism for establishing a growth pipeline of businesses for progression to intensive support through Invest NI.

EU Funding has also played an important investment role in supporting major capital projects that have been transformational to local economies. Examples include the Giant's Causeway visitor centre, which received nearly £6 million of ERDF funding. This visitor centre has acted as a magnet for tourism and a catalyst from which a range of people and industries have benefitted. The Waterfront Convention Centre also received significant EU funding investment, which has helped to create more business, attracting greater number of tourists, which has seen local investment in the development of hotels positively impacting the local economy.





# Limitations of the Structural Fund Approach

**Although Northern Ireland's local authorities have achieved many successes in their use of Structural Funds, the approach adopted to managing, overseeing and using the funding has many limitations, and has become more bureaucratic and unwieldy over time. Particular issues include:**

- A perceived lack of alignment between regional and local priorities, and priorities in urban and rural areas. Priorities need to be developed with the flexibility to respond to local need identified in Community Plans and outlined in the Executive's Programme for Government, and clusters of need, for example geographical clusters of local authorities, and/or thematic or sectoral clusters. A more place-based approach to planning and investment is required.
- The centralised approach adopted for decision making and managing EU funds has resulted in local authorities having less scope to deliver discretionary activity which is based on local priorities and need. This presents difficulties in delivering holistic packages of support that combine different structural and even other funds. Eligibility rules which exclude the funding of capital expenditure projects have also served to minimise the benefits which can be derived from other types of structural fund investment, for example, in business growth.
- Over-engineered application and administration processes, lengthy timescales for project approvals, and match-funding requirements have combined to reduce the overall impact and benefit derived from the Structural funds. These factors prevent some organisations from applying for funding and make others cautious of doing so; projects are designed to meet the funding criteria rather than being innovative and maximising benefits. Too much time and resource is spent on administration rather than those activities which will have an impact on the economy.
- A lack of robust and transparent monitoring of outcomes and impacts, as opposed to outputs, of structural fund investment at both regional and sub-regional level has worked against understanding where investment has made the most impact.





# Priorities for Northern Ireland

**The UK Government has stated that the SPF will tackle inequalities between communities and raise productivity in those parts of the country whose economies are furthest behind. This is key to the levelling up agenda and the aim for the Northern Ireland SPF will be to 'level up' within NI and between NI and other parts of the UK by taking a place-based approach to inclusive growth.**

The NI SPF is likely to focus on strengthening the foundations of productivity to ensure that people benefit from economic prosperity, i.e. it will both support economic growth and ensure that growth is inclusive. It is important that EU Successor funding continues to support rural development programmes. It is therefore incumbent on the UK Government and Northern Ireland Executive to ensure that rural funding is protected in the same manner as the arguably more urban-focused ERDF and ESF funds.

Addressing the potential impacts of COVID-19 in Northern Ireland will also be key. Research suggests

that productivity is down by 25-30%, GDP will reduce by 8.1% in 2020, the economy will contract by 7-10% and over 200,000 will be impacted. The SPF must recognise that the scale of the interventions will increase as a result of the pandemic and that many of the groups previously supported by European funds are likely to be adversely impacted by the economic consequences of the pandemic.

Protecting businesses from the potential negative impact of Brexit will also be a consideration, as is the opportunity that Brexit presents for Northern Ireland as an access to the single market. Priority areas for focus are likely to be skills and employment, business growth, innovation, places and infrastructure.

It is vital that the new UK SPF is properly resourced and Northern Ireland's future allocation must be at least equivalent to the current programme's level of funding, as well as being correctly targeted, and appropriately managed to secure the best possible outcomes for the whole country. This must then be reflected in the SPF for Northern Ireland.







# Developing a Shared Prosperity Fund to meet Northern Ireland's aspirations

**As the quantum of money available to Northern Ireland will be set at Westminster and provided as a block grant, it is vital that the money remains ring-fenced for the purposes set. It must be hypothecated so that it can be directed to activities that are additional and deliver value-added benefits for Northern Ireland and its sub-regions.**

The key factors which need to be considered in determining the SPF in Northern Ireland are as follows:

- Allocation should be built around the foundations of productivity, namely: ideas; people; infrastructure; business environment; innovation; and places.
- Community Planning, aligned to the Programme for Government, has a central role to play and should guide the shaping of SPF overarching priorities.
- SPF must demonstrate how the achievement of sub-regional priorities will contribute to regional objectives and how these then support UK level ambitions.
- SPF funding must align with, be able to support, and be supported by other strategic priorities and sources of finance.
- The SPF in Northern Ireland must be developed and co-designed through structured collaboration and co-production with partners including Invest NI, local authorities, education, health, the voluntary sector, and industry.
- Adopting a three-year funding period for projects with an annual review to enable issues to be identified, changes in context, and fine tuning to optimise performance.
- SPF nationally and regionally must have built in flexibility to respond to changing and unanticipated needs. This could be responding to COVID-19 recovery planning and the needs of particular groups such as young people, or of sectors, or of areas.
- There must be careful consideration of attitude and articulation to risk to encourage innovation and achieve the right balance between level of risk and potential returns.
- Supporting a business pipeline from new start to growth and high growth with a continuum of support that is integrated with other interventions and activities, such as skills development.
- SPF must recognise the importance of cross-border opportunities and initiatives including the opportunities of having a land-based 'border' with the single market, and have the flexibility to support these where appropriate.
- The level of management and administration should be commensurate with the spend and should recognise the existing mechanism and assurances in place with local government as a trusted partner.





## Allocation and management

**There is strong support in Northern Ireland to move to a transparent allocation system based on need and opportunity to support inclusive growth, achieve a balanced economy across all rural and urban areas, and close the productivity differences within the region, and between the region and other parts of the UK.**

Allocation of the SPF must be considered at three levels: national level e.g. for strategic infrastructure, regional level and local level for council and community interventions; without alignment to local priorities, rebalancing cannot be achieved and cannot reflect place-based development.

Relationships between the Managing Authority, local authorities, delivery partners and other relevant bodies should be based on partnership working, moving away from purely transactional relationships while maintaining clear lines of accountability. Devolution of SPF responsibilities such as project appraisal, management and delivery should be asset-based, recognising the strengths and capabilities of all organisations and where there may be a gap in capability and/or experience, addressing it through knowledge sharing and capacity building.

There is a need to recognise the value of community plans as multi-partner plans delivering Programme for Government priorities for local areas involving local, central and other relevant partners. SPF priorities and allocations need to link back to the

needs and issues outlined in these Plans and set regionally through the Programme for Government. There is a need for a true place-based policy co-produced between central and local government to inform allocations and investment on a broader scale.

Local authorities have an important role to play here as more than service providers, but hubs for local businesses and co-investors in local regeneration and business and community development programmes. Their role at the local level allows them to consider regional and local strategies to meet local need and opportunities working alongside and with local stakeholders and service providers and delivery agents.

There is a greater role for local government working with central government partners in the management and delivery of SPF moving forward. If approached in a spirit of co-design and complementarity new processes could be streamlined and better aligned without creating another layer of bureaucracy.

Whilst effective management and delivery are important, there is a need to measure performance too. A robust monitoring framework with indicators that assess actual outcomes and impacts, which can be compared and aggregated at different spatial levels and across types of activities, is needed with the aim of driving and managing performance and informing decision making.

## Opportunity and learning

**There is now the opportunity for all partners to use national and regional evidence to shape the new SPF so that it aligns with all strategies and funding streams and is directed at national and regional priorities. Use past experience to rethink and carefully design what the SPF will do, how it is managed, allocated, delivered, and monitored so that it is simple, fit for purpose, efficient and not unduly onerous.**

The real opportunity lies in addressing the inequalities in Northern Ireland and between Northern Ireland and other parts of the UK and as with other regions, to build on strengths, enhance productivity, and embrace green growth and the opportunity presented by its border with the EU single market.



## A new approach

The means by which the Shared Prosperity Fund will be managed and delivered is as important as the finance available. There is an opportunity to move away from the Structural Fund programme approach and its limitations, to more effective arrangements, which take account of how partnerships and policy have evolved over the last EU programme period in Northern Ireland.

The principles set out in the table below should be viewed as an integrated package of measures that work as a whole, rather than a menu of options.

Principles and recommendations for a new approach in Northern Ireland	
Principle	Commentary
<b>National Framework</b>	UKSPF should set a national framework defining high level strategic direction, objectives and priorities and alignment with UK strategies.
<b>Regional and sub-regional priority setting</b>	There must be a commitment and processes at regional level to set strategic priorities. These should be developed in partnership and based on an evidence-based assessment of need. At a sub-regional level, there must be scope to identify and invest in activities that will address local priorities and reflect the local context. This must be an underpinning principle that all stakeholders sign up to. Ownership of sub-regional funded activities should rest with local partners.
<b>Outcomes based</b>	Progress and achievements should be measured as outcomes and impacts, rather than activities and outputs. KPIs should be set that capture progress as well as final outcomes e.g. progress towards employment.
<b>Flexible, single pot</b>	There must be an assumption of trust so that monies can be disbursed with as few restrictions as possible, balanced with the right degree of scrutiny. Monies should be provided in Northern Ireland with no restrictions on capital and revenue allocations or prescriptive allocations by theme. Spend should be based on identified need and a holistic approach covering, for example, investment in skills, business support, infrastructure, innovation and so forth. There should be a strategic approach to spend, combining all available funding sources to maximise value for money. Business support (including social enterprises) should be business-led and include support to invest in the workforce, in equipment, in processes, as well as advice, and specialist business development support.
<b>Maximum devolution of management and delivery</b>	Northern Ireland should work towards devolving management and delivery to sub-regions where there is sufficient capacity and capabilities. For some activities, there will be a rationale for clusters of areas and partnerships who could act as intermediate bodies, and a regional approach with flexibility for distinctive local need. Where appropriate, the approaches used successfully through the city and growth deals could be replicated.
<b>Attitude to risk</b>	Being overly risk averse can inhibit impacts and limits the opportunity to test and learn from new and innovative approaches. SPF at UK and regional levels should set an attitude to risk that allows for innovation and moves away from simply funding 'more of the same'.
<b>Fit for purpose systems and processes that are actively used</b>	Management, appraisal, monitoring and verification processes should be fit for purpose, not overly complex and proportionate to the level of funding and scale of activities. They should be used to review and drive performance. Additional layers and processes should not be added over time unless there is a clear rationale and demonstration of added value. Management and monitoring systems and processes should be, as far as possible, harmonised with those of other funds and their activities. This will make for a more efficient use of project management and administration time and generate consistent data.





These recommendations are set within the context of the role that the SPF will play in Northern Ireland's economic development and the emerging strategies of the NI Executive and the developing Programme for Government. The principles and recommendations set out here would make SPF in Northern Ireland more effective and efficient than the current EU Structural Fund Programme.

The evidence sitting behind this Position Paper has been prepared through detailed research and extensive engagement with a wide range of organisations with regional and sub-regional remits. This ethos of co-production should continue.







<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Update on Community Planning Partnership</b>
<b>Date:</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> November 2020
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy
<b>Contact Officers:</b>	Christine Robinson, Strategy Policy and Partnerships Manager Jamie Uprichard, Community Planning Officer

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	This report provides the Committee with an update on the recent meeting of the Belfast Community Planning Partnership held on 27th October.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the key areas of work currently being progressed by the Community Planning Partnership (CPP), as outlined in the attached note of the CPP meeting

3.0	<b>Main Report</b>
	<p><b><i>Background</i></b></p> <p>3.1 The Belfast CPP (Strategic Board), chaired by the Council's Chief Executive, comprises the Council and its Community Planning Partners including a range of statutory and support partner organisations, including VCSE and business sectors. The Partnership's strategic level board provides joint oversight and leadership for the community planning process in the city, and for the delivery of the Belfast Agenda with partners.</p> <p>3.2 Focused work on progressing action plans and their delivery is jointly managed with partners through 4 delivery sub Boards, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Growing the Economy and City Development Board</li> <li>- Living Here Board</li> <li>- Working &amp; Learning Board</li> <li>- Resilience &amp; Sustainability Board.</li> </ul> <p>3.3 Belfast City Council is currently represented on the Partnership (at strategic board level) by the Chair of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, along with Elected Members nominated from each party (who are also members of an internal Council Community Planning Working Group), and the Council's Chief Executive, who chairs CPP meetings.</p> <p><b>Belfast Community Planning Partnership meeting 27<sup>th</sup> October 2020</b></p> <p>3.4 Following the postponement of a scheduled CPP meeting in March 2020 due to the Covid pandemic, the Community Planning Partnership met in an online meeting format on Tuesday 27 October 2020. This was therefore an especially important meeting at a crucial time in the community planning process, particularly in light of the Covid-19 impacts on the city and the publication of Council's Recovery Framework. A summary note of the meeting, outlining the items discussed and the decisions taken, is attached. Important points for Members to note from the discussion include:</p> <p>i) <b>Aligning focus on city recovery from Covid-19 alongside longer term Belfast Agenda Outcomes</b></p>

3.5	<p>Partners were briefed on the evolving context for City Recovery, including the Council's recent work to develop the Belfast: Our Recovery Framework. The Partnership agreed to progress key city priorities through the Delivery Boards and relevant task groups. Members will recognise that many of these areas of focus reflect the Belfast Agenda priorities that were previously identified for immediate focus in the Statement of Progress published by Council in November 2019. These key areas of work are now being adapted to take account of the impacts and new context due to the Covid-19 Pandemic i.e:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health inequalities – including drugs, alcohol and mental health, and work to address excess winter deaths (Warm and well programme)</li> <li>• Educational inequalities</li> <li>• Employability and skills</li> <li>• Neighbourhood regeneration – including focus on local area planning and engagement to support community recovery</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Sustainability and resilience, including addressing climate challenge</li> <li>• Creating a shared, safe and inclusive city, including development of an inclusive growth city charter</li> </ul> <p><b>ii) Enhancing Partner involvement in the Community Planning Partnership</b></p>
3.6	<p>Partners agreed that the Partnership's Delivery Boards should adopt a Co-Chair model to build the sense of co-ownership and collaborative working at all levels of the Partnership. This model has to date been adopted by the Resilience and Sustainability Board, and will now be considered by the other Boards for adoption going forwards.</p> <p><b>iii) Establishment of new Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sectoral Advisory Panel</b></p>
3.7	<p>The Partnership received an update from the Chair (Irene Sherry) and Vice Chair (Jim Girvan) of the newly established VCSe Sectoral Advisory Panel, noting the work, commitment and contribution of the Panel to date, and in particular the Panel's plans to build engagement across the city's VCSE sectors in the near future. Plans for the VCSe Panel's upcoming Community Conference on 30<sup>th</sup> November, titled 'Putting Community Wellbeing at the Heart of Community Planning' were outlined and Partners were encouraged to support this online event. Both the VCSe Panel and Community Planning Partners present at the meeting stressed the importance</p>



	<p>of the VCSe Panel and wider sector engagement model as key to the success of the city's community planning process, and ensuring inclusive involvement of communities in the future.</p> <p><b>City recovery from Covid and refresh of Belfast Agenda</b></p>
3.8	<p>Members will be aware of the Councils recently published Belfast: Our Recovery framework, setting out Council's proposed areas of focus for driving economic, social/community and environmental recovery over the next 1-2 years. While this framework does not replace other key city strategies (such as the Belfast Agenda) it is helping to frame engagement with partners and communities as we review our plans, to bring focus to what is needed to help the city recover and move forward.</p>
3.9	<p>Members should note that the Belfast Agenda will be updated and refreshed during 2021, to reflect the current city context, and to set an updated framework of priorities and shared goals for collective focus of city partners. This will build on the planned early engagement with communities due to take place over the next few months. Members will be engaged in this process as it develops in early 2021.</p> <p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p>
3.10	<p>There are no direct financial implication arising from this report. Costs associated with the implementation and facilitation of the Community Planning Partnership are currently being met within existing council budgets.</p> <p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p>
3.11	<p>There are no direct equality implications contained in this report.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Document Attached</b>
	<p>Note of the Belfast Community Planning Partnership meeting of 27th October.</p>

Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2020, 2pm – 4pm  
via MS Teams

## NOTE OF MEETING

### 1. Welcome

Cllr Christina Black, Chair of SP&R Committee welcomed the Community Planning Partnership to the call. Belfast Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Chair, Suzanne Wylie welcomed all partners to the meeting and outlined the main agenda items.

### 2. Chair's Business

Suzanne Wylie set the context for the meeting, noting the following:

#### i) Meeting introduction :

- Acknowledged last meeting (March 2020) was cancelled due to Covid-19, but also highlighted that significant partnership working has been ongoing through the Covid response phase – through Emergency planning and other partnership structures in the city.
- The CPPs delivery Boards have been meeting over recent months to consider the emerging impacts and priorities for partners, with a view to beginning to understand what the Partnership's priorities need to be over the coming months and beyond. This will be important as the Partnership seeks to build recovery as a city from adverse impacts on the economy and communities.
- Whilst acknowledging the significant impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Belfast, important to recognise the potential opportunities presented in recovery – it will be vital to accelerate and maximise the impact of recovery as much as possible, so that our residents and businesses feel this impact as soon as possible.
- Updated that the new Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Sectoral advisory Panel is now in place. Welcome was extended to new members (VCSE representatives) Irene Sherry (VCSE Sectoral Panel Chair) and Jim Girvan (VCSE Sectoral Panel Vice Chair). Suzanne Wylie along with the other Chairperson of the Belfast Agenda Delivery Board Chairs had met with all the VCSE Panel on Tuesday last week, noting the enthusiasm and desire to bring the sector's voice and input to make a real contribution and impact.

#### ii) Note on re-positioning the CPP

- Recognising progress of the Boards and establishment of the new VCSE panel, it was highlighted there is a need re-invigorate the role of the CPP strategic group. Proposal was made that going forward CPP meetings should be focused on taking strategic decisions and tasking of boards / working groups with activity/action or areas for development.
- A proposal to introduce a Co-chair model for the Delivery sub-Boards was suggested, to strengthen partnership working at Board level, noting the example of the Resilience & Sustainability Board which appointed Co-chairs at an early stage.
- The CPP acknowledged the vacant Chairperson role on the Living Here Board, following Nigel Grimshaw's departure from Belfast City Council. It was proposed that Ryan Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services take on this role on an interim basis for the Board's next meeting, in advance of the Board identifying a new Chair/Co-Chairs.
- The CPP also acknowledged that Grainia Long, Belfast Resilience Commissioner, and Chair of the Resilience and Sustainability Board is leaving the Council to take up a new role as Chief Executive of the NI Housing Executive.

#### ACTIONS AGREED/NEXT STEPS:

- Partners agreed the proposal for a Co-Chair model and tasked the Boards to consider further/implement;
- Partners agreed proposal for Ryan Black to take on role of Interim Chair of Living Here Board;
- Partners agreed the proposal for the Resilience & Sustainability Board discuss and consider future Chairperson role at their next meeting.

### iii) Recovery Planning

- Suzanne Wylie highlighted the challenging context of adverse economic and social impact facing the city due to Covid-19, noting the need for partners to continue to work together and plan how services respond to changing circumstances in the immediate term but also to be planning ahead for recovery. Key focus for the Partnership will be to work together with communities, to ensure Belfast recovers as quickly and as effectively, with as much impact for people as possible.
- Suzanne Wylie highlighted the Council's work to consider impacts on the city, and the Council's commitment to support those citizens, communities and businesses during these challenging times as set out in the Belfast Our Recovery framework published by the Council. This sets out where Council consider the city's focus needs to be over the coming months and beyond. This framework will help frame our work partners, both in delivering key interventions, but also to inform upcoming reviews of shared city plans, including the Belfast Agenda over the next year.
- Key element of this work to plan for recovery is a strong commitment to work with communities and engage citizens and the community sector, as well as businesses and others in planning recovery at community level.
- Building on work that has been discussed at the Living Here Board and here at the CPP on several occasions at previous meetings, this will be taken forward through the work being brought forward to co-design/develop with partners and local areas, 4x Area plans for North, South, East and West of the city. Initial focus will be on what is needed to help communities recover (social, economic, environmental) from Covid- focusing on local priorities.
- In advance of this process Belfast City Council will be doing some online public engagement via a new online platform before Christmas. This will create opportunities for citizens and other stakeholders including CVS, businesses to get involved in sharing ideas and discussions about what is important in their area for recovery. BCC team has already engaging community sector partners, including the new VCSE Panel to develop the approach.

### ACTIONS AGREED/NEXT STEPS:

- Partners agreed to establish a joint working group (report in via the Living Here Board) to take forward the work on Area Planning (Belfast City Council Community Planning team to issue an invitation following this meeting to partners to seek participation in this group).

## 4. Employability NI

Colum Boyle, Deputy Secretary, DfC and Deirdre Ward, Director of Work & Wellbeing Division DfC presented an update on DfC's Employability NI initiative including Local Inclusive Labour Market Partnerships (LILMPs) and how these might work in Belfast, drawing attention to the following key points:

- Partners were asked to commit to a project on 'demand / workforce planning', linking Long Term Unemployed / economically inactive to opportunities and jobs (key partners likely to include BHSCT and Belfast Harbour). This was previously looked at under W&L Board and will be revisited, ensuring all partners engage (looking at both job vacancies and other opportunities e.g. work placements). While the current focus is on lower skilled / inactive, there is also a need to look at opportunities for higher skilled vacancies and consider how pathways can be built to those opportunities for those with lower skills levels at present.
- Several sectors have continued to recruit even in recent months, e.g. social care/ healthcare and logistics. It was agreed to target the sectors that we know are likely to have these opportunities and to build an understanding of the scale / timeframes etc.
- Ongoing engagement is required with providers in the community/ voluntary and private sectors – ensuring that they were aware of what was happening but ensuring that they were engaged as appropriate and not involved in strategic level discussions where there may be conflicts of interest.
- Insights – key partners include DfC's Analytical Services Unit and QUB (who have been working with the council on employability insights to date).

The group were also informed that QUB, in partnership with DfE have designed 8 postgrad qualifications for people who have been furloughed or lost their job due to COVID that may want to reskill.

It was suggested that in order to have maximum impact and considering the challenges ahead, that the proposed work by DfC on employability is aligned to DfE's work on skills. In order to address the current challenges, DfE is supporting over 3,000 free places on fully-accredited short courses, delivered by the local further and higher education providers. The courses are open to those who have been impacted by coronavirus to help them retrain and improve their skills.

#### **ACTIONS TAKEN/NEXT STEPS:**

- Partners agreed the proposal to establish the Employability NI initiative and Local Inclusive Labour Mark Partnership model and align with community planning structure in Belfast.
- Partners also agreed
  - To consider the request to provide representation to an HR officer task and finish group which will collate a workforce planning exercise
  - To identify any data sources they hold which could be used to inform the Labour Market Intelligence; and
  - That the Employability NI initiative should commence stakeholder engagement in Belfast by attending a future meeting of the VCSE Sectoral Advisory Panel.

### **5. Educational Underachievement**

John Unsworth, Education Authority and Chair of Education Inequalities Subgroup provided an update on the current context with the educational sector and schools' recovery. This included an update on the focus of the Educational Inequalities Subgroup and the commitment required from partners:

- Data Development Agenda - DE, EA reps to meet with QUB to identify opportunities to address data gaps and provide analysis and insight that can inform future programming.
- Definition of Specific Interventions/Opportunities - The next meeting of the EI Subgroup will be convened in the coming weeks. At this meeting partners will be asked to consider and agree specific opportunities and interventions (short, medium and long term) for improving educational attainment. Partners were asked to bring ideas to the meeting and to consider how they can practically support and resource emerging initiatives.

#### **ACTIONS TAKEN/NEXT STEPS:**

- Partners agreed to:
  - endorse the recommendations as set out, including the development and implementation of specific programmes and interventions to address educational attainment challenges; as well as supporting data development agenda to inform future interventions; and
  - the programme of work EA Subgroup sub-group to be taken forward via the Working & Learning Board.

### **6. Drugs, Alcohol and Mental Health**

Gary McMichael (joint chair of Belfast Drug and Alcohol Co-ordination Team and Chief Executive of ASCERT) presented to the Partnership making a number of observations and recommendations including:

- The Strategic Leadership Group, comprising executive representation from a range of partners who has a direct or indirect role, to provide oversight of this work, reporting back to the CPP.
- Commitment was sought for key partners' involvement. An operational subgroup would be formed to develop and support the delivery of a resourced action plan – a copy of which will be circulate to partners, and that a resourced action plan would be developed and circulated to partners.
- CPP consideration and commitment to adopting a 'complex lives' approach similar to the approach adopted in Doncaster, whereby an interagency approach would be taken to support vulnerable people who may be affected by a range of issues impacting upon health and emotional wellbeing. The intention would be to develop an integrated Belfast action plan and work towards joint planning, pooled or coordinated commissioning/ funding and agreeing shared outcomes and measures of success.

- Potential support from colleagues from the Doncaster Complex Lives Alliance to support our work and act as a critical friend and input into our work.

#### **ACTIONS TAKEN/NEXT STEPS:**

Partners agreed to:

- Endorse recommendations that Strategic Leadership Group provide oversight of this work and report back to CPP.
- Operational Subgroup to be formed with representation from partners.
- Adopt the complex lives model – whole system approach, and develop an integrated Belfast Action Plan

### **7. Warm & Well Programme**

Iain Deboys, Health and Social Care Board, and Chair of Belfast Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership presented an update on the 'Warm and Well' Programme summarising:

- The evaluation of Phase I and recommendations for Phase II.
- Implementation of Phase 2 of programme (extending specific focus into South and East Belfast), seeking specific support from partners to deliver phase 2 and to utilise community assets.
- Seeking to mainstream elements of the programme and help inform emerging strategies, programmes and interventions e.g. Energy Strategy, Fuel Poverty Strategy, Affordable Warmth Scheme etc.
- Key messaging for engagement in engaging with departments including the unique opportunity to enhance alignment with government policy / strategy around including:
  - Energy – The Department for Economy has begun the process of developing a new energy strategy to de-carbonise the Northern Ireland energy sector by 2050 at least cost to the consumer.
  - Fuel Poverty – The Department for Communities are developing a new Fuel Poverty Strategy which will seek to support vulnerable people through direct support and interventions to increase energy efficiency in our homes.
  - Belfast Resilience Strategy – significant focus on climate mitigation and adoption and more to low carbon economy. Key area of focus identified is improving the energy efficiency of existing and new housing stock and moving to a low carbon housing stock. This will not only support environmental recovery but also support vulnerable people e.g. fuel poverty.

Partners welcomed the focus on considering the multiple determinants which impact upon vulnerable people and the need for a whole-system and streamlined approach to identifying those at risk and bringing together the range of services to support those who may be vulnerable and improve health and wellbeing.

#### **ACTIONS TAKEN/NEXT STEPS:**

Partners were asked to:

- Review policies to align with the Policy Ask;
- Help identify the vulnerable through their frontline teams – information and support available to assist partners
- Communicate the messages that:
  - Cold homes are a danger to health
  - Support is available through a single number
  - The flu vaccination is important for those at risk

### **8. Growing the Economy & City Development Priorities**

John Greer, Belfast City Council's Director of Economic Development provided an update on proposed priority areas of focus for the Growing the Economy and City Development Board, identified following a workshop and subsequent engagements with Partners. Proposed areas of focus included:

- Housing;



- Enterprise & Business Growth;
- Supporting tourism, arts, entertainment and hospitality;
- Access, Connectivity & Active Travel; and
- Future City Centre Programme.

Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and Development provided an update on housing outlining a proposed approach for bringing forward a programme of work around housing and delivering the growth ambitions set out within the Belfast Agenda.

The identification of housing as a priority for the Partnership was welcomed, especially considering the linkages across the Belfast Agenda. It was recognised that there was an abundance of activity and a dedicated delivery group would be helpful to pull it together in a coherent way for the city. The group were informed that planning was underway for the 2021 House Condition Survey which would provide important evidence to tackle energy efficiency and decarbonisation in the city's housing stock.

Lisa Toland, Senior Manager, Economy at Belfast City Council highlighted the ongoing development of the Enterprise Framework, seeking partners input to ongoing design and agreement that the Board shapes its design and delivery going forward.

#### **ACTIONS TAKEN/NEXT STEPS**

Partners agreed:

- the recommended priorities for the Growing the Economy and City Development (GtE&CD) Board;
- that the GtE&CD Board should take a lead role in driving forward the programme of work around housing and supporting the wider population growth ambitions whilst linking across all the Belfast Agenda boards to ensure wider opportunities are delivered;
- that a reconfigured Delivery Group (under GtE&CD Board) will be formed to develop, oversee and drive implementation of specific programmes of work; and
- the GtE&CD Board to identify opportunities to maximise collaboration between the public and private sectors to help deliver on the ambitious targets of the Belfast Agenda.

### **9. Draft Resilience Strategy**

Grainia Long, Belfast Resilience Commissioner, and Chair of Resilience and Sustainability Board provided a summary of the Belfast Resilience Strategy, updating the Partnership on the revised strategy document and its planned launch, scheduled for December 2020.

#### **ACTIONS TAKEN/NEXT STEPS:**

Partners agreed to

- Endorse the Belfast Resilience Strategy; and
- Note the request for Partners to lend support to the work programme of the Belfast Resilience and Sustainability Board as it enters the delivery phase by integrating with existing and forthcoming programmes and projects.

### **10. Next Steps / Close**

Suzanne Wylie thanked everyone for attending and for the contributions made by all presenters. Partners welcomed progression on a number of fronts and recommended the need to increase communicate to the general public and community planning partners.

It was agreed that slides and action based note of the meeting would be circulated to all partners.

The next meeting of the CPP has been scheduled for Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021 at 2pm.

**Attendance List:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
<b>Statutory Community Planning Partner organisations</b>	
Suzanne Wylie (Chairperson)	Belfast City Council
Cllr Aine Groogan	Belfast City Council
Cllr Stevie Corr	Belfast City Council
Cllr John Kyle	Belfast City Council
Cllr Mal O'Hara	Belfast City Council
Cllr Tina Black	Belfast City Council
Cllr Sarah Bunting	Belfast City Council
Cllr Kate Nicholl	Belfast City Council
Ailbhe Hickey	NI Housing Executive
Alan McKeown	Invest NI
Bryan Nelson	Belfast Health & Social Care Trust
Iain Deboys	Health and Social Care Board
Jim O'Hagan	Libraries NI
John News	Sport NI
John Unsworth	Education Authority
Jonathan Gamble	NI Fire and Rescue Service
Majella Corrigan	Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
Martin Graham	Tourism NI
Robert Clements	NI Housing Executive
<b>Support Partner organisations</b>	
Irene Sherry	VCSE Sectoral Advisory Panel
Jim Girvan	VCSE Sectoral Advisory Panel
Alastair Stewart	Queens University Belfast
Damien Duffy	Belfast Metropolitan College
Geraldine McAteer	West Belfast Partnership
Gerry Lennon	Visit Belfast
Helen Crickard	Forward South Partnership
Maurice Kincaid	EastSide Partnership
Nicola Verner	Greater Shankill Partnership
Seamus McAleavy	NICVA
Simon Hamilton	Belfast Chamber of Commerce
<b>NI Government Departments</b>	
Anthony Carleton	Department for Communities
Colum Boyle	Department for Communities
Deirdre Ward	Department for Communities

Also In Attendance
Gary McMichael (BDACT and Ascertain)
John Tully (Belfast City Council, Director of City and Organisational Strategy)
John Greer (Belfast City Council, Director of Economic Development)
Ryan Black (Belfast City Council, Director of Neighbourhood Services)
Grainia Long (Belfast City Council, Commissioner for Resilience)
Christine Robinson (Belfast City Council, Policy Strategy and Partnerships)
David Cuthbert (Belfast City Council, Community Planning)
Jamie Uprichard (Belfast City Council, Community Planning)
Kevin Heaney (Belfast City Council, Portfolio Management)
Brian Carr (Belfast City Council, Portfolio Co-ordinator)
Clare Mullen (Belfast City Council, Portfolio Co-ordinator)
Richard McLernon (Belfast City Council, Commissioner for Resilience Office)
Cathy Keenan (Belfast City Council, Economic Development)
Sinead O'Regan (Belfast City Council, Economic Development)
Tony Kearns (Belfast City Council, Economic Development)
Lisa Toland (Belfast City Council, Economic Development)
Cathy Reynolds (Belfast City Council, City Regeneration & Development)
Clare Hutchinson (Belfast City Council, Policy Strategy and Partnerships)
Kelly Gilliland (Belfast City Council, City and Neighbourhood Services Department)

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Update on Area Working</b>
<b>Date:</b>	20th November 2020
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Sinead Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Shauna Murtagh, Programme Manager

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To seek the Committee's approval of the minutes of the most recent round of AWGs and any additional recommendations to this Committee arising from the meetings.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>AWG Minutes</b> - Approve the most recent round of AWG minutes (<i>South – 26 October, West – 29 October, East – 5 November</i>) as attached.</li> <li>• <b>Physical Programme</b> – Agree the recommendations on allocations under the BIF Programme from the South AWG to three projects as laid out below in 3.2.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Locality Planning</b> - Agree the recommendation that the remaining budget in West Belfast is allocated to two projects as laid out below in 3.3.</li></ul>									
3.0	<b>Main Report</b>									
	<b><u>KEY ISSUES</u></b> <b>Area Working Group Minutes</b>									
3.1	Members agreed in June 2016 that the Area Working Group minutes would be taken into the SP&R Committee for approval going forward, in line with the Council’s commitment to openness and transparency and to ensure a consistent approach with other Member-led Working Groups. Members are asked to approve the most recent round of AWG minutes ( <i>South – 26 October, West – 29 October, East – 5 November</i> ) as attached.									
	<b>Project Updates</b>									
3.2	<p><b>South AWG</b> - Members are asked to approve the following allocations as recommended by the AWG at its meeting on 26th October.</p> <p><b>BIF Programme</b></p> <p>Allocation of the ringfenced BIF allocation for projects within the Sandy Row area (£1.35m) that had been previously aligned to Gilpins to the following project proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Café Culture</i> project in partnership with Urban Villages,</li><li>• <i>Sandy Row Open Space</i> project and;</li><li>• <i>BSCR IT Exam Centre</i> project.</li></ul> <p>The AWG recommended that these three projects are added to the BIF Programme as <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i>.</p>									
3.3	<p><b>West AWG</b> - Members are asked to note the following project updates and agree the movements as recommended by the AWG at its meeting on 29th October.</p> <p><b>BIF Programme</b></p> <p>Note the update provided on the Greater Shankill Community Council - Royal British Legion project proposal.</p> <p><b>Locality Planning Pilot Project</b></p> <p>Allocation of the remaining budgets within the Whiterock Locality Planning Pilot Project as follows:</p> <table><tr><th>Project</th><th>Group</th><th>Amount</th></tr><tr><td>Access to Hills Scoping Exercise</td><td>Upper Springfield Development Trust</td><td>£15,000</td></tr><tr><td>Housing Social Innovation Scoping</td><td>Falls Community Council</td><td>£15,000</td></tr></table>	Project	Group	Amount	Access to Hills Scoping Exercise	Upper Springfield Development Trust	£15,000	Housing Social Innovation Scoping	Falls Community Council	£15,000
Project	Group	Amount								
Access to Hills Scoping Exercise	Upper Springfield Development Trust	£15,000								
Housing Social Innovation Scoping	Falls Community Council	£15,000								

3.4	<p><b>East AWG</b> - Members are asked to note the following project updates as recommended by the AWG at its meeting on 5th November.</p> <p><b>BIF Programme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Lisnasharragh and Cregagh Community Schools project</i> - Note the progress to date from the Education Authority and that the project can be progressed.</li> <li>• <i>Castlereagh Presbyterian Church</i> – Note the progress to date and that a report will be brought to a future meeting in relation other funding streams, project outcomes and community benefits and congregation fundraising towards the project.</li> <li>• <i>Strand Arts Centre and Bloomfield Community Association</i> – Note that an update report will be submitted to a future meeting to include details on when DfC can make a funding decision and other possible funding streams for both these projects.</li> </ul>
3.5	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>Financial – BIF Programme – all projects already have in-principle ring-fenced allocations agreed by Committee</p> <p>Resources – Officer time in working with Groups</p>
3.6	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>No implications</p>
4.0	<p><b>Documents Attached</b></p>
	<p>Minutes of the South, West and East Area Working Groups</p>

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# **South Belfast Area Working Group**

Monday, 26th October, 2020

## **SPECIAL MEETING OF SOUTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP**

- Members present: Councillor McAteer (Chairperson);  
Councillors Bunting, Gormley, Groogan,  
T. Kelly, McKeown, Nicholl and Spratt.
- In attendance: Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;  
Mr. S. Leonard, Neighbourhood Services Manager;  
Ms. D. Smith, Neighbourhood Services Integration  
Manager;  
Mr. M. Doherty, Project Manager;  
Ms. S. Murtagh, Programme Manager; and  
Mr. G. Graham, Democratic Services Assistant.
- Also Attended: Dr. G. Busby, General Manager, (Belfast South  
Community Resources)  
Ms. L. Farrell, Programme Director of Urban Villages  
and Communities in Transition; and  
Mr. C. McGurk, Urban Villages and Communities in  
Transition.

### **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Kelly reported that her husband was a member of Belfast South Community Resources (B.S.C.R.). The Director confirmed that a decision had been taken previously, by the Area Working Group, in respect of an overall funding allocation for the area which had been endorsed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. She stated further that, as the Working Group was being asked to consider projects within the original allocation of funds, it was considered therefore that, under those circumstances, there was no conflict of interest in respect of the Member.

### **Site Visit to Sandy Row**

The Democratic Services Assistant reminded the Working Group that, at its previous meeting, it had considered undertaking a site visit to the Sandy Row area in order to view the development proposals under consideration for that area. The Working Group agreed that, since it was being provided with a presentation on those proposals and the fact that Covid-19 restrictions had been enhanced since its last meeting, it would no longer be appropriate, or safe, to undertake the aforementioned site visit.

### **Update on Sandy Row Projects**

The Director provided the Working Group with an overview of B.I.F. funding which had been agreed previously in June 2012 regarding the allocation of £1.35m in respect

of the Gilpin's Project. She stated that as that project was no longer viable, due to the lands being sold, it had been agreed by the Area Working Group and the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that the original allocation of funds would be ring-fenced to other projects within the Sandy Row area.

The Director referred to a number of emerging development proposals in relation to the Sandy Row area, including the Open Spaces and Sensory Garden projects. She referred also to the Coffee Culture and Social Enterprise projects, delivered in partnership with Urban Villages and which incorporated "Wee Ruby's" as part of that development proposal. The Director stated that the Council was involved already with the Coffee Culture project and that it had invested £100,000 provided under the Social Outcomes Fund (S.O.F.) The Members were informed that they would be provided with an update on the Exam Centre proposal undertaken by Belfast South Community Resources (B.S.C.R.)

The Project Manager provided the Working Group with a detailed map, outlining the proposed development plans for the Sandy area in respect of the Open Spaces project. He referred to a specific area of work which was included within the proposal, including the identification of pedestrian connections, the removal and replacement of neglected fencing including, amongst other things, the creation of green spaces and biodiversity enhancements. The Members were provided with an overview of how the area would potentially look like, after the development of the area was completed and informed that the approximate cost associated with the development proposal was £344,000.

In response to a question from a Member, in respect to the current stage of the project, the Director stated that the Working Group was being asked to consider that the development be agreed as an emerging project and, if endorsed, would proceed to a consultation stage with local residents, stakeholders and community organisations.

The Urban Villages Programme Director highlighted a number of investments, both long and short term, which was being proposed for the Sandy Row area, including some projects which had already been invested by Urban Villages. She reported that the investment total in the area, to date, was approximately £550,000 and included Blythfield Playing Fields, the Eco-Garden at Blythfield Primary School, an outdoor classroom including, amongst other things, an indoor parent meeting space and enhancements to the school entrance.

### **Cafe Culture Training Café**

The Working Group was informed that the Café Culture project had been promoted by B.S.C.R and would require the purchase and re-development of a derelict building, as part of the project proposal. The Members were informed that the project included also the development of private let apartments which would be located above the cafe and that the estimated cost of the development proposal was approximately £988,000, of which the Council had committed expenditure to the value of £100,000. The Working Group was informed that the project currently had a deficit in its funding to the value of £387,000, and that the Council was being asked to make an additional contribution towards that funding deficit.

The Ulster Villages Programme Director referred to a number of benefits which would emanate from the development proposal, including hands-on employability training and work-based training programmes. She highlighted the prospect of undertaking shared events and the potential to undertake cultural awareness training. The Members



were informed of the potential for the café to be a hub for Community integration in the area and to provide a tourism stop for such events as, historical walking tours. In relation to the development of the private apartments, she stated that the occupancy of the apartments would assist with the issue of vacancy and dereliction and that the café would provide a central focal point, inhibiting such issues as social exclusion.

The Director confirmed that the Council was acting as the delivery agent for the projects referred to and had been working closely with Urban Villages on the Café Culture project, which was at a more advanced stage than the other development proposals referred to. She stated that the Council had allocated £100,000, in principle, subject to other factors, including a due diligence exercise being undertaken. In response to a question from a Member, she confirmed that the Working Group was being asked to consider funding the project deficit from the B.I.F. fund allocation of £1.35m. She stated also that the Members might wish to agree funding, in principle, in respect of the Open Spaces proposal and agree to add this as an emerging project.

It was

Moved by Councillor Bunting  
Seconded by Councillor Kelly and

Resolved - That the Area Working agree to meet the funding deficit in regard to the Café Culture project as outlined, out of the ring-fenced B.I.F. allocation for projects, within the Sandy Row area.

The Working Group agreed also to allocate funding, in principle, to the Open Spaces development proposal, out of the ring-fenced B.I.F. allocation for projects, within the Sandy Row area.

Mr. McGurk stated that it was hoped to have approval of the business case, in respect of the Café Culture project, within the next two weeks and a subsequent letter of offer to the Council, as the delivery partner, prior to the appointment of a design team.

### **Belfast South Community Resources (B.S.C.R.)**

Dr. Busby provided the Working Group with an overview in regard to the background and establishment of B.S.C.R. He stated that B.S.C.R. had been established in 1997 as a volunteer group and had now a compliment of twelve employed staff, within its own premises. He provided an outline of the key objectives of that organisation including, amongst other things, to tackle educational under-achievement and barriers to reduce skills deficit for young people, thereby making them more attractive to the labour market. He referred to other key aims including, dealing with ant-social problems, economic decline and physical dereliction in the Sandy Row area.

Dr. Busby stated that B.S.C.R. had been funded under Economic Renewal and provided the Working Group with an overview of the outcomes attributed to B.S.C.R. since its creation. He referred specifically to the number of people, in the previous year, who had gained employment, including the numbers provided with career advice. He referred to the support given by that group to a number of local businesses, including the number of individuals who had attained formal qualifications through its education programme.

The Members were advised of some of the social enterprises undertaken by that group including, the sourcing and distribution of food parcels. He referred to the cross-community work undertaken as part of the Transitions Project, working with eight schools on such topics as mindfulness and a G.C.S.E. support programme. He referred also to the work undertaken in partnership, with other city-wide organisations.

Dr. Busby referred to the need for young people in the area to enhance their I.T. skills to allow them to compete for jobs which were available in, for example, the Weaver's Court commercial complex. He highlighted also the possibility of the South Belfast area becoming a future digital hub. Dr. Busby specified the close links which B.S.C.R. had formed with "Jam Media" and the success attained by the Exam Centre, in the delivery of formal qualifications, on behalf of a range of external organisations. He stated that the Exam Centre had provided local employment, within Sandy Row, and that its profits had been directed back to B.S.C.R. to permit future investment opportunities to be undertaken.

The Members were informed that the success of the Exam Centre, in securing additional clients, had created a capacity issue and referred to the possibility of extending the Exam Centre by utilising two vacant shop units, situated below the current premises. He stated that the Exam Centre was a self-funding social enterprise and that profits generated were invested back into the community. Dr. Busby informed the Working Group that the future expansion of the exam centre had been calculated at approximately £100,000.

A Member referred to the activities of B.S.C.R. in its attempts to deal with the issue of dereliction in the Sandy Row area and of its social enterprise credentials since its formation, in 1997. Dr. Busby highlighted the cross-community work which that organisation had undertaken with St. Malachy's school, in regard to its M.B.A. programme. The Area Working Group paid tribute to the work undertaken by B.S.C.R. in its endeavours to enhance the development and employment prospects for people, within the Sandy Row Community.

The external representatives from Urban Villages and B.S.C.R. left the meeting to permit the Area Working Group to consider the development proposals as presented.

The Area Working Group considered the proposals as presented. The Director confirmed that the Council was not being asked to fund the "Wee Ruby's" Social Enterprise Project" which was being taken forward by Urban Villages. She recommended however that, if the Area Working Group agreed to add the Exam Centre proposal as a Stage 1- Emerging Project, this would allow officers to work up the proposal in further detail. She recommended also that the Coffee Culture and Open Spaces proposal be added as Stage 1 - Emerging Projects, in line with the three stage approval process

After detailed discussion, it was

Proposed by Councillor Spratt  
Seconded by Councillor Kelly and

Resolved - That the Open Spaces Strategy, Coffee Culture and Exam Centre projects, be permitted to progress as Stage 1- Emerging Projects.

The Director agreed further to provide regular updates, to the Working Group, on the progress of the relevant projects.

### **ILAB Update**

The Neighbourhood Services Manager reminded the Working Group that, at the Special meeting of the People and Communities Committee in 2019, the Lower Ormeau and wider University area had been designated as, a special action area, under Community Planning. He stated that it had been agreed that, the Council would engage with relevant stakeholder and external organisations, in order to assist with the regeneration of that area. He informed the Members that the Department for Communities (DfC) had agreed to fund an I.L.A.B. to assist with the identification of problems, including, opportunities to regenerate the area referred to as being a special action area.

The Members were informed that it was the intention of the I.L.A.B. team to meet with the Working Group in order to agree what actions the Council considered to be a priority for the area and the actions which required to be undertaken, as part of that process. The Neighbourhood Services Manager provided the Working Group with information in respect of the I.L.A.B. structure and the processes involved to achieve the desired outcomes for the area. He referred to the fact that the process was independent, to ensure that all relevant stakeholders could participate and engage with the programme.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager referred to differing stakeholder views in regard to the future development of the area and cited the virtual I.L.A.B. challenge event, as a means to identify and resolve those competing views. He stated that the priorities, identified, from that process, would be submitted to the Strategic Insights Lab. He referred to the meeting, scheduled to take place on 30th November at which, the Working Group would be asked to identify its key priority issues. He stated further that, Council officers would feed into the 2 day Strategic Insights Board and that, following completion of the I.L.A.B. process, an action plan would be produced, which would identify the key priorities emanating from the consultation and stakeholder process. He confirmed that the I.L.A.B. team were committed to attending a future meeting of the Area Working Group, to provide feedback on the outcomes of the 2 day Insights Lab.

A Member raised the issue of a time -frame , in respect of completion of the I.L.A.B. process, and an assurance that the all relevant stakeholder and external participants would be permitted to engage in the process. The Neighbourhood Services Manager stated that, extensive efforts had been made to ensure that all interested parties had been invited to take part in the process. He stated further that, he would be happy to liaise directly with the Member, in order to address any representation concerns she might have. In response to a further question, he stated that the I.L.A. B. team were aware of previous studies undertaken in respect of the Lower Ormeau and wider University area. The Neighbourhood Services Manager stated also that, he would liaise with the I.L.A.B. team in regard to an implementation time-frame, but asked the Members to note that the time-frame might change, depending on Covid-19 restrictions.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

The Working Group agreed that its next meeting would be held on Monday, 30th November at 5.00 p.m.

Chairperson

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# West Belfast Area Working Group

Thursday, 29th October, 2020

WEST BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP  
HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

- Members present: Councillor Corr (Chairperson);  
The High Sheriff (Councillor Verner);  
Alderman Kingston; and  
Councillors Black, Carson, Matt Collins,  
Donnelly, Hutchinson,  
McLaughlin and Walsh.
- In attendance: Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;  
Mr. S. Lavery, Interim Neighbourhood Services Manager  
West;  
Mrs. A. McGlone, Neighbourhood Integration  
Manager; and  
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

## **Apologies**

Apologies were reported on behalf of Alderman McCoubrey and Councillors Baker, Beattie, Michael Collins, Garrett, Groves, Heading and Magennis.

## **Declarations of Interest**

The following Members declared an interest in relation to item 3 on the agenda, Whiterock Locality Planning, in so far as they either worked for or were associated with Groups which had been referred to in the update, as follows:

- Councillor Corr as an employee of the Falls Community Council (St. Comgall's); and
- Councillor McLaughlin as an employee of the Upper Springfield Development Trust.

## **Presentation – Greater Shankill Community Council – Royal British Legion Proposal**

Mr. John MacVicar and Mr. John Grace, representing the Greater Shankill Community Council, attended in connection with this item and were welcomed by the Chairperson.

Mr. MacVicar provided the Working Group with an overview of the history in respect of the Greater Shankill Community Council (GSCC) which was established in 1972. He advised that the role of the Community Council was to support groups, organisations and individuals in their efforts to advance community development and to improve the quality of life of residents, through the provision of support services, advice, and information and by encouraging networking and mutual support within groups and



organisations and to facilitate co-operation and collaborative action. He referred to the recent success of the organisation in bringing together a wide-ranging group of organisations and individuals to help and support the Greater Shankill community against the current Covid-19 pandemic.

Mr. MacVicar advised that the Community Council had close ties with the local Royal British Legion branch Oldpark/Cavehill, the branch and its members had used the Community Council's premises as a base for the last fifteen years. Over the past few years the GSCC had assisted in the branch in the process of buying the derelict site at Langley Street, putting outline sketch plans together and liaising with the local community in an attempt to seek community buy in for what would have been first and foremost a community hub. Unfortunately, despite the GSCC's best efforts and the efforts of members of the Royal British Legion there had been little buy-in from the local community.

He continued that, as discussions had evolved, a second approach had been discussed and considered at length and explained that this would entail utilising the premises of GSCC and the purchase by the Royal British Legion of 177/179 Shankill Road. It would include a complete refurbishment of the premises and include a front of house mini museum.

He then proceeded to outline the proposal in more detail and drew the Members' attention to the three design plans that had been circulated with the agenda. The Members noted that:

- the building would be DDA compliant, with accessible door and passageways and a lift to all three floors;
- the refurbishment would provide access to a suite of computers for residents to explore genealogy opportunities. This has been a growing development in the area and he explained that the GSCC had worked with local groups including SASH (Shankill Area Social History) and Row on Row - The Shankill Remembers; and
- this refurbishment would allow for an expansion of Advice Services to full time.

Mr MacVicar concluded by advising that should this project proceed, it would provide an opportunity for Belfast City Council to affirm its ongoing commitment to the Greater Shankill. He stated that they were seeking in the region of £300k of funding and they were confident that they could bring forward the proposed refurbishment within budget.

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

Noted.

### **Whiterock Locality Planning**

The Working Group considered the undernoted report:

#### **"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

**To provide members with an update on potential projects to be funded as part of Whiterock Locality Planning pilot project.**

## **2.0 Recommendations**

- To seek approval that the following projects receive funding from the remaining budgets within the Whiterock Locality Planning Pilot Project;

PROJECT	GROUP	AMOUNT
Access to Hills Scoping Exercise	Upper Springfield Development Trust	£15,000
Housing Social Innovation Scoping	Falls Community Council	£15,000

## **3.0 Main report**

### **3.1 Key Issues**

In November 2016, Belfast City Council agreed to undertake Locality Planning pilots to test how Community Planning might be applied at the local area level and to help inform future neighbourhood working. One of the areas chosen was within the Whiterock locality of West Belfast;

- 3.2 To support this work, Council also agreed to commission the Young Foundation to work with officers to test ideas on how to develop a 'social innovation model that could be considered as part of our emerging area planning model.
- 3.3 As part of this model, a Challenge Programme was developed with funding available in each locality planning area for up to four projects that can be delivered within the area with a maximum £15,000 per project.
- 3.4 Previously, to access this funding local groups involved in the locality planning process worked with the Young Foundation and Council officers to develop potential ideas which received a recommendation for funding.
- 3.5 This work was developed as part of our approach to neighbourhood working, which has now been superseded by what we are now calling Neighbourhood Regeneration, a presentation on this approach was delivered at the Area Working Groups in January. Further discussion on this process will follow at November's AWG, which will work towards further developing how we align programmes and services and work in specific geographical locations to improve outcomes for residents.
- 3.6 In January 2020 members also agreed that the Neighbourhood Services Manager would work with local residents, members and community groups to develop suitable ideas to for the area working group to consider

funding to be allocated as part of this process, subject to SP&R approval and Council ratification.

- 3.7 For the purposes of this report we want to provide a summary of the proposed projects that will be receive funding subject to members agreement and further oversight by officers.
- 3.8 It should be noted that this funding was not awarded through an open call; it was restricted to those projects that involved local residents and were developed by those who have been involved in the locality planning process. While, we do not have the Young Foundation to support this work, officers have continued to ensure any funding awarded is within the priorities of the original programme of work.

### **Proposed Projects**

#### **1. Access into the Hills from Mount Loney**

- 3.9 This project will work with residents, local community and statutory partners including the Belfast Hills Partnership to build on previous work, to explore a potential project that will develop a concept which will look at access point into the Black Mountain from the Old Whiterock Road.
- 3.10 As part of this work, consideration will be given to wider work being undertaken with regards to similar ideas within the wider geographical area, including work that is emerging internally as part of an overall strategy for Belfast Urban Greenways and the Forth Meadow Community Greenway. Some of the potential ideas that could be looked at through this scoping exercise includes a walkway that brings you up and across the Hatchet Field and then to the Divis summit and beyond.
- 3.11 This project and associated funding would be managed by Upper Springfield Development Trust, within Council financial procedures, with oversight being provided through council officers.

#### **2. Whiterock – Ballymurphy Housing Social Innovation Scoping**

- 3.12 In Whiterock and Ballymurphy communities there is a perception that the supply of social rented and affordable (for example, low cost home ownership) housing options are limited and that there is a need for two and three bed, small family units. There are also perceived issues that the process by which social housing is allocated can contribute to the community safety concerns being concentrated in certain locations within neighbourhoods.

- 3.13 Through this project we would like to skill up the local residents and community structures to ensure their views and ideas are included as part of the spatial planning on any local housing development and use the learning from this in terms of any good practice being used in other parts of the City. Any work developed and associated learning undertaken as part of this will be developed within the parameters of what is being developed as part of wider Citywide strategies agreed within the Belfast Agenda**
- 3.14 This project and associated funding would be managed by Falls Community Council, within Council financial procedures, with oversight being provided through council officers.**

**Next Steps**

- 3.15 Subject to approval, officers will work with members, residents and the local community and relevant partnerships to further develop the proposed projects and oversee the development of this work.**

**4.0 Financial and Resource Implications**

- 4.1 Resourcing for this project is already included in budget estimates.**

**5.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications**

- 5.1 Equality and good relations implications were considered as part of the Locality Planning process.”**

A Member welcomed the fact that the access to the Belfast Hills project was being revisited with the proposed scoping exercise and reiterated the need for linked up access to the hills to make them more accessible. He referred to the ongoing pandemic and how it had highlighted the need for access to green space for people’s physical and mental health.

A further Member suggested that he would like to see a feasibility study in regard to proposal being progressed.

The Interim Neighbourhood Services Manager advised that successful progression of the initiative would involve both extensive statutory and community ‘buy in’, therefore, initial engagement was required before progressing to an actual feasibility study.

The Working Group adopted the recommendations.

### **Area Working - verbal update**

The Working Group noted the Terms of Reference for the Area Working Groups which had been approved by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 20th September, 2019 and which had been recirculated with the agenda for information purposes.

The Interim Neighbourhood Services Manager then drew the Members' attention to the presentation in respect of the Neighbourhood Regeneration and Area Working Plan which had been presented to the Working Group at its January 2020 meeting and which again had been recirculated with the agenda as a recap of what the programme of work actually entailed.

He reminded the Working Group that this was a development plan for the city as a whole and captured in essence where the city needed to be in complimenting the themes within the Belfast Agenda.

He specifically reiterated the work involved in regard to the implementation of the Neighbourhood Regeneration and Area Working Plan, which would incorporate the following key strands:

- Belfast Agenda and Governance
- Integrated Service Delivery
- Capital Investment
- Evidence based decision making
- Local Development Plan
- City Regeneration
- Economic Development

The Working Group noted the need to integrate services and develop external partnerships in the pursuit of community engagement and Neighbourhood Regeneration. He specifically referred to the City and Neighbourhood Services approach to integrated service which included:

- Open Spaces and Streetscene
- City Protection
- Community Provision and
- Resources and Fleet.

During discussion, the Working Group referred to a range of issues which were relevant to West Belfast, including amongst other things - mental health, drug dependency, anti-social behaviour and unemployment. The Members reiterated that they were keen to discuss and progress these issues at a local level.

The Interim Neighbourhood Services Manager agreed with the Members and noted the strong political/corporate commitment and assured the Members that the work would be progressed hand in hand with communities as co-design and genuine partnership were at the core of progressing the area working initiative. He stated that the ultimate goal for all concerned was to ensure that Council's services and investments connected more at a local neighbourhood level, ultimately improving the quality of life for citizens in Belfast.



The Director referred to the links between Citywide Regeneration and the Council's local development plans and advised that this would be an evolving piece of work which would now also have to take into consideration both the Council's and communities emergence from the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Interim Neighbourhood Services Manager advised that more information would be submitted in respect of Area Recovery Planning to the November/December round of Area Working Groups.

The Working Group thanked both the Interim Neighbourhood Services Manager and Director for the update and also thanked the staff within the Council who had assisted with the initial emergency response to COVID-19.

Noted.

### **Requests for Capital Funding**

The Working Group referred to the undernoted table which detailed those community groups and organisations who had previously presented to the West Area Working Group seeking financial assistance:

<b>Project/ groups</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Notes/ comments</b>
<i>Requested for funding support</i>		
Conway Education Centre	To support on its plans to refurbish the building	Community led proposal. Noted Oct 2017
Good Shepherd Primary School	Adult learning centre and outdoor space project	Community led proposal. Noted April 2018
New Life City Church	Financial support towards the capital costs of its building	Community led proposal
St Galls GAC	Community space integrating sport	Community led proposal. Noted April 2018
St John's GAC	Redevelopment of the pitch	Community led proposal. Noted April 2018
St Joseph's Centre for the Deaf	Building refurbishment	Community led proposal
Townsend St Social Outreach Centre	Plans to refurbish and renovate its building	Community led proposal. Noted Jan 2018
An Culturlann	Financial support for the initial £800k required to purchase the building	Noted in Aug 2017
Brassneck Theatre Company	Possible match funding the Arts Council's contribution to help the organisation	Noted in Jan 2019
Sports and Leisure Swifts Football Club	Funding for the redevelopment of playing surfaces and facilities at Glen Road	Noted in Jan 2019

<i>Other support</i>		
Belfast Hills Partnership	Accessing and promoting the area further via path networks and walking routes at Belfast Hills Greenway - links with National Trust	Noted. Aug 2017
Ardmonagh Family Centre	Land acquisition	Community led proposal. Noted April 2018
Faite Feirste Thiar	Support to group's Action Plan	Community led proposal. Noted Feb 2018
Forbairt Feirste	Proposal to erect a glazed archive/observatory above the existing Coláiste Feirste handball building	Community led proposal
St Oliver Plunkett - Lenadoon Park	Upgrade- link to St. Oliver Plunkett FC	Community led proposal. Noted Feb 2018
Cherry Wildlife Garden Dunmurry	Possible additional works in the form of additional lighting and fencing at Twinbrook Wildlife Garden	Noted in Sept 2018. Recently discussed in Sept 20 meeting
Mount Eagles/ Lagmore Youth and Community Association	Presentation - request of possibility of adopting a land	Noted in Nov 2018. Recently discussed in Sept 20 meeting

The Members noted that this was a detailed and comprehensive list and further noted that some of the groups/organisations were no longer in existence or indeed their proposals now might have changed.

Detailed discussion ensued in respect of how the list could be updated. Several Members were cautious about approaching the groups as they felt any contact might give false hope that funding existed or was going to become available.

The Director reiterated that no new funding streams had been identified and urged caution in permitting organisations/groups to present at future meetings without making the Council's position in regard to funding clear.

Following discussion it was agreed that officers would revisit the list to try and establish what requests remained valid and agreed that an updated list would be submitted to a future meeting which could be considered further at this stage.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

The Working Group was advised that the next quarterly meeting of the Working Group was scheduled for Thursday, 26th November.

Chairperson

# East Belfast Area Working Group

Thursday, 5th November, 2020

## MEETING OF EAST BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Alderman Copeland (Chairperson)  
Aldermen Dorrian, Haire,  
Rodgers and Sandford; and  
Councillors Brooks, de Faoite, Flynn,  
Howard, Hussey, M. Kelly, Kyle, Long,  
McMullan, McReynolds, Mulholland  
Newton and Smyth.

In attendance: Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;  
Ms. C. Taggart, Neighbourhood Services Manager; and  
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

No apologies were reported.

### **Minutes**

The Working Group agreed that the minutes of the meeting of 8th October were an accurate record of proceedings.

### **Declarations of Interest**

Alderman Sandford declared an interest in Item 3b, Education Authority re: the Lisnasharragh Schools project, in so far as he was on the Board of Governors of Cregagh Primary School. He left the meeting during Members' discussion on that item and did not participate in the vote.

### **Presentations - Belfast Investment Fund (BIF)**

#### **Strand Arts Centre**

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. M. Turtle, Chief Executive, Mr. J. Hegan, Chair of Strand Arts Centre, and Mr. R. Gaston, Marketing & Fundraising Manager of Strand Arts Centre to the meeting.

Ms. Turtle provided the Working Group with an overview of the community, heritage and tourism project which sought to improve the arts infrastructure of the historic Strand Cinema in the east of the City.

The Members were provided with a detailed timeline of the progress which had been made to date in terms of project delivery, including that the RIBA Stage 1 report had been completed in February 2020.

The Working Group was advised of the confirmed funding to date and a number of sources of anticipated income for the project. Mr. Gaston advised the Working Group that, once the £1.8million funding from the Department for Communities (DfC) was

confirmed, and the designs were finalised, other funding sources would come on board. The Members were advised that the Arts Council had spoken with DfC last week regarding a bid. Mr. Hegan added that the Council's Belfast Investment Fund (BIF) was essential to the project.

A Member asked the representatives where the remaining £1.1million of funding would come from. In response, Mr. Gaston advised that there were a variety of Trusts and Foundations which would be approached, and that naming rights and projects such as a "name a seat" would also be utilised to raise the remaining funds.

In response to a further Member's question, regarding the predicted timescale for getting the required planning permission, the representatives stated that they had been in touch with planning officers in relation to the process and that it would take an estimated 6-9 months.

In relation to a further question in respect of whether they had undertaken any fundraising for the project themselves yet, they advised that they were waiting for confirmation of the £1.8million of funding from DfC which would open up more opportunities for the project. Mr. Gaston also advised that they would be grateful if the Council would consider releasing £150,000 out of its agreed £1.8million of funding, to allow the RIBA Stage to progress.

The Chairperson advised the representatives that no decision would be taken at the meeting, thanked them for their attendance and they left the meeting.

After further discussion, the Working Group agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting on the issues which had been raised in respect of the project, including an update from DfC in relation to when they would make a funding decision.

### **Bloomfield Community Association**

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. K. Purdy, Manager of Bloomfield Community Association, and Ms. C. Martin, a Committee member of BCA, to the meeting.

Ms. Purdy provided the Working Group with an overview of the projects that the Association carried out each year, including a holiday hunger programme, intergenerational projects and environmental projects.

The Working Group was advised that the current facilities were not fit for purpose and that they wanted to increase the number of children and young people that they could help.

Ms. Martin explained how the Bloomfield Community Association had helped her as a young person and how it had also been crucial in helping her child to become much more confident.

In respect of potential funding from the Department for Communities (DfC), Ms. Purdy advised the Members that DfC had advised that it was considering it within their 2021 budget but that everything had come to a halt due to the coronavirus. She added that she was seeking a meeting with the new Minister for Communities.

In response to a Member's question regarding how BCA were going to fundraise £180,000, Ms. Purdy explained that the coronavirus pandemic had impacted their plans to raise money in 2020.

The Chairperson advised the representatives that no decision would be taken at the meeting, thanked them for their attendance and they left the meeting.

After further discussion, the Working Group agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting on the issues which had been raised, including an update from DfC in relation to when they would make a funding decision, and in respect of other possible funding streams for the project.

### **Presentations - Outer BIF**

#### **Castlereagh Presbyterian Church**

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. T. Busby, Church Secretary, to the meeting.

Mr. Busby provided the Working Group with the details of the proposed works to the Church Hall at Castlereagh Presbyterian.

He explained that the Church had approached five other funders in respect of grants which might be available to the church, in terms of covering the funding deficit, and that the response had been positive.

In response to a Member's question, Mr. Busby explained that the congregation would like to contribute to the project, and that the Church had paid for the architect's fees.

The Chairperson advised Mr. Busby that no decision would be taken at the meeting, thanked him for his attendance and he left the meeting.

After further discussion, the Working Group agreed that the Director of Physical Programmes would submit a report to a future meeting in relation to whether the other funding streams that Mr. Busby had referenced were viable options, the project outcomes and community benefits and whether the congregation would be fundraising further amounts towards the project.

#### **Education Authority re: Lisnasharragh Schools project**

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. J. Bell, Senior Quantity Surveyor at the Education Authority, to the meeting.

Mr. Bell advised the Working Group that work had been ongoing in respect of the joint scheme, for Lisnasharragh Primary School and Cregagh Primary School, and that all approvals were now in place to progress both schemes. He explained that both schemes were similar in nature, both in size and value and that design development was due to commence next week.

He explained that the applications for planning permission would be submitted in the third week of September and that, in the mean-time, the technical design would be progressed to get it up to tender stage.

The Members were advised that the anticipated date for receiving planning for both schemes was mid-February 2021. Mr. Bell outlined that that would give them the ability to get the tender report in place by the end of March 2021, with a view to getting works on site by mid-April, 2021. The Working Group was advised that both schemes had a 16 week contract period, where both schemes were due to be completed by the end of August 2021, in time for the new school year.

It was highlighted that the most likely hold up in the progress of the project would be a delay in attaining the planning permission.

A number of Members welcomed the progress which had been made on the project.



(Alderman Sandford, as a Member of the Board of Governors of Cregagh Primary School, declared an interest in the item and left the meeting at this point and did not participate in the vote)

Moved by Councillor Long,  
Seconded by Councillor Brooks and

Resolved - That the Working Group notes the progress to date from the Education Authority and that it is content to progress the project.

#### **Date of Next Meeting**

The Director of Physical Programmes advised the Members that the next quarterly meeting of the Working Group was scheduled for 4th February, 2021.

She explained that the Director of Neighbourhood Services wanted to provide each Area Working Group with an update in relation to the future area programme in the next few weeks. The Working Group therefore agreed to hold a Special meeting, for the purpose of receiving an update from the Director of Neighbourhood Services, on Thursday, 3rd December at 3pm.

Chairperson



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Assets Management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Ormeau Park – Contractors Compound</li> <li>ii) Local Full Fibre Networks Programme – Agree to the transfer of additional fibre ducting assets / infrastructure from DfC to the Council</li> <li>iii) Grant of lease to Northern Ireland Electricity Networks</li> <li>iv) Port Health Unit, 5 Corry Place – Licence for Works</li> </ul>
<b>Date:</b>	20th November, 2020
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Sinead Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Pamela Davison and Celine Dunlop, Estates Team Leaders

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Members to asset related disposal, acquisition and Estates matters.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>

2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to -</p> <p><b>i) Ormeau Park – Contractors Compound</b></p> <p>approve the granting of a lease to GEDA Construction for a contractor's compound in Ormeau Park in connection with the Flood Alleviation Project works being carried out on the Ravenhill Road and surrounding areas .</p> <p><b>ii) Local Full Fibre Network Programme – Transfer of fibre ducting assets</b></p> <p>approve the transfer of additional fibre ducting assets/infrastructure from DfC to the Council to enhance the existing ducting network as part of the Public Sector Asset Reuse (PSAR) project under the overall LFFN Programme.</p> <p><b>iii) Grant of lease to Northern Ireland Electricity Networks</b></p> <p>approve the granting of a lease to NIE Networks for c.24 square metres of land at Templemore Baths for a term of 99 years from the date of the agreement at a peppercorn rent of £1 pa. The lease will also grant NIE Networks a right of way to carry out installation, repairs and maintenance works at the substation site.</p> <p><b>iv) Port Health Unit, 5 Corry Place – Licence for Works</b></p> <p>approve a Licence for Work at the Port Health Unit to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA). The Licence is required to facilitate DAERA's proposed construction works to the building to accommodate food checks required under NI protocol contingency plans.</p>
3.0	<p><b>Main Report</b></p>
	<p><b>i) Ormeau Park – Contractors Compound</b></p> <p><b><u>Key Issues</u></b></p> <p>Ormeau Park comprises approximately 140 acres of open space, children's play areas, 3G pitch, leisure services and car parking. Engineering consultants (GEDA Construction) acting for NI Water have approached the Council seeking a licence to use the former rugby pitch and ancillary lands shown in blue at Appendix 1 (Area A 3.943 acres and Area B 0.384 acres) as a contractor's compound in connection with the Flood Alleviation Project works being carried out on the Ravenhill Road and surrounding areas. GEDA propose to use these areas as a contractor's compound for the duration of the wider scheme and the lands will be required for a period of approximately 24 months with a likely commencement date of January 2021. The licence agreement will provide for betterment to the former rugby pitch, appropriate reinstatement, site security, protection of adjoining Council land and deal with insurance issues. Member's approval is sought to delegate authority to the Estates Unit and Legal Services to agree the detailed terms of the licence and associated costs.</p>

### **Financial and Resource Implications**

A suitable licence agreement will be agreed and finalised by officers from the Estates Unit and Legal Services at a rent to be agreed with GEDA Construction.

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

No specific equality or good relations implications. No specific rural needs impact.

## **ii) LFFN Programme – Transfer of fibre ducting assets / infrastructure**

### **Key Issues**

At its meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2020 the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee granted approval to the procurement of additional fibre ducting assets / infrastructure to enhance the existing ducting network as part of the Public Sector Asset Reuse (PSAR) project under the overall LFFN programme. The aims of the PSAR project were to increase the commercial availability of the fibre networks in the city centre whilst minimising impact to the public realm. It looked at the potential to open up new markets for city centre businesses by exploiting full fibre infrastructure and provide better and more cost effective access to broadband services for households in the city centre. It also investigated the potential use of any new telecoms infrastructure in relation to supporting smart cities initiatives and 5G roll out.

Digital Services engaged industry experts to conduct an analysis of the ducting network, and assess the viability of offering them out to the telecoms market. The results of the analysis suggest that demand will be high, but could be greatly enhanced by additional investment in the ducting network to make it more fit for purpose. This additional investment will cost no more than £190k, and will be funded from external sources.

The ducts in question are currently owned by DfC who have no interest in making any commercial use of them. DfC have confirmed that they will transfer ownership of the ducts to the Council at NIL cost. Appendix 2 shows the extent of the ducting that will transfer to the Council. This transfer will allow the Council to maximise the benefits to the area in terms of achievable revenues and ensures that strategy decisions are aligned with the socio-economic needs of the area. The ducting network will continue to grow with each subsequent phase of the Streets Ahead programme.

### **Financial and Resources Implications**

None associated with this report. Staff resources from the Estates Management Unit and Legal Services will be involved in the completion of the transfer from DfC to the Council.

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

None associated with this report.

### **iii) Grant of lease to Northern Ireland Electricity Networks**

#### **Key Issues**

The Council is undertaking the redevelopment of the Templemore Baths as part of its £105m Leisure Transformation Programme. The project involves the restoration of the existing building to create extensive interpretive space alongside a new extension that will house a new 25m pool, fitness suite and spa facilities. Works on site started in late October with completion expected in Autumn 2022. The redevelopment necessitates the provision of a new electricity sub-station by NIE Networks and the allocation of a 24 sq metre site within the grounds of the Complex (see Appendix 3). It is proposed that the Council grant NIE Networks a 99 year lease to permit the construction of the sub-station and provide access for electricity cables and future maintenance. .

#### **Financial and Resources Implications**

A suitable lease will be agreed and finalised by officers from the Estates Unit and Legal Services. The rent shall be a peppercorn of £1 pa.

#### **Equality and Good Relations Implications**

None associated with this report.

### **iv) Port Health Unit, 5 Corry Place – Licence for Works**

#### **Key Issues**

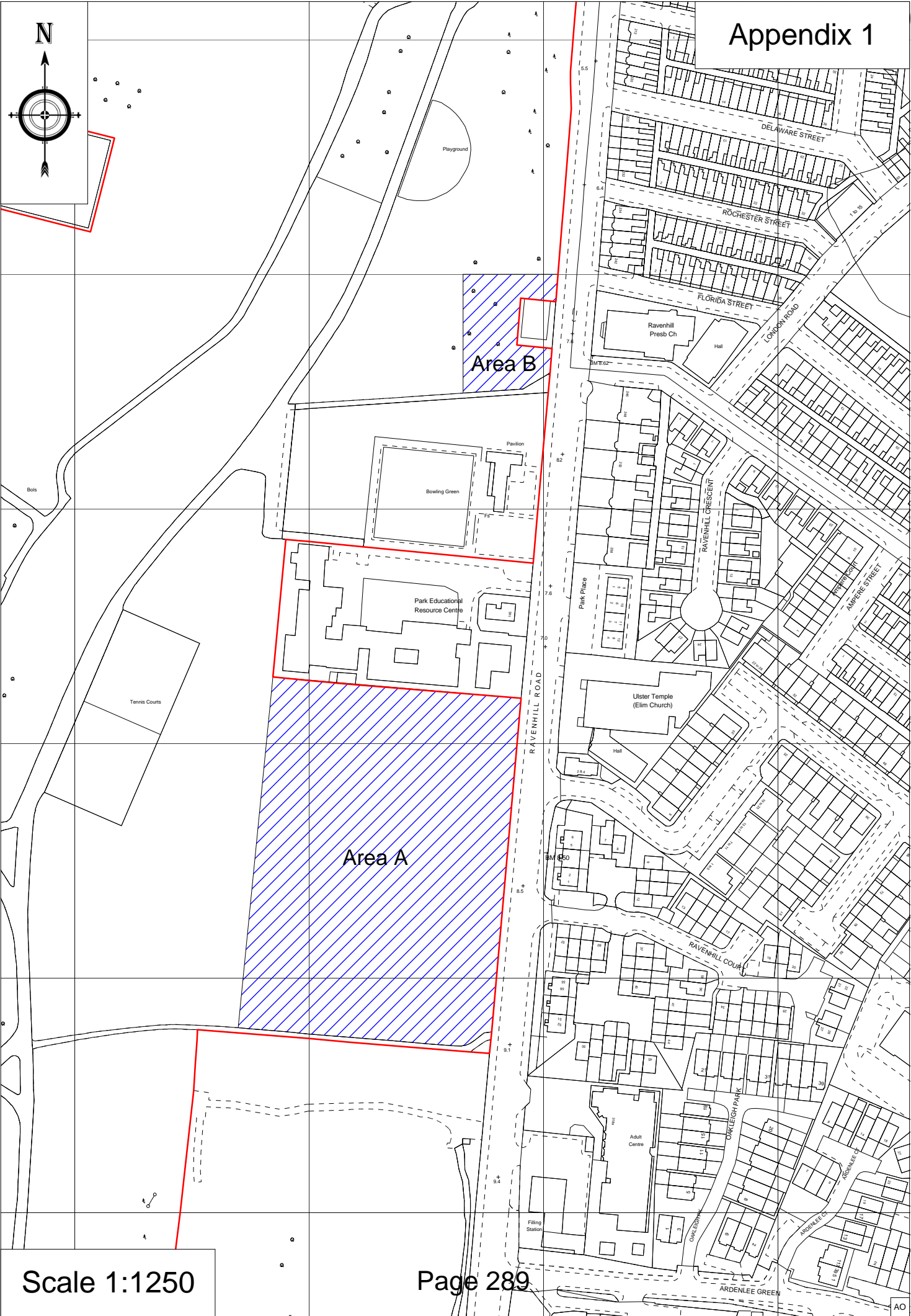
European Union legislation requires certain goods from non EU countries to be checked at first point of entry to ensure they are safe, meet regulatory requirements and cleared for import. Under the NI Protocol, at the end of the transition period on 1 January 2021, these requirements will continue to apply to goods entering Northern Ireland and will be extended to those imported from Great Britain. Council Environmental Health Officers are responsible for the sanitary checks on imports of fish, fishery products and foods not of animal origin. DAERA are responsible for all other sanitary and phytosanitary checks including live animals, other products of animal origin and plant health. The Council currently operate this service from the Port Health Unit, a specially adapted industrial premises located at 5 Corry Place within the Harbour Estate. The premises are held under Lease from Belfast Harbour Commissioners (BHC) and shown outlined red on the map attached at Appendix 4. The premises are currently used by both Council and DAERA officers to carryout checks on imported foods,

However, to enable the increased level of inspections by the Council and DAERA after the transition period, a much larger facility is required which must be approved by the European Union. DAERA have identified a site within the Harbour Estate for this purpose, however, the

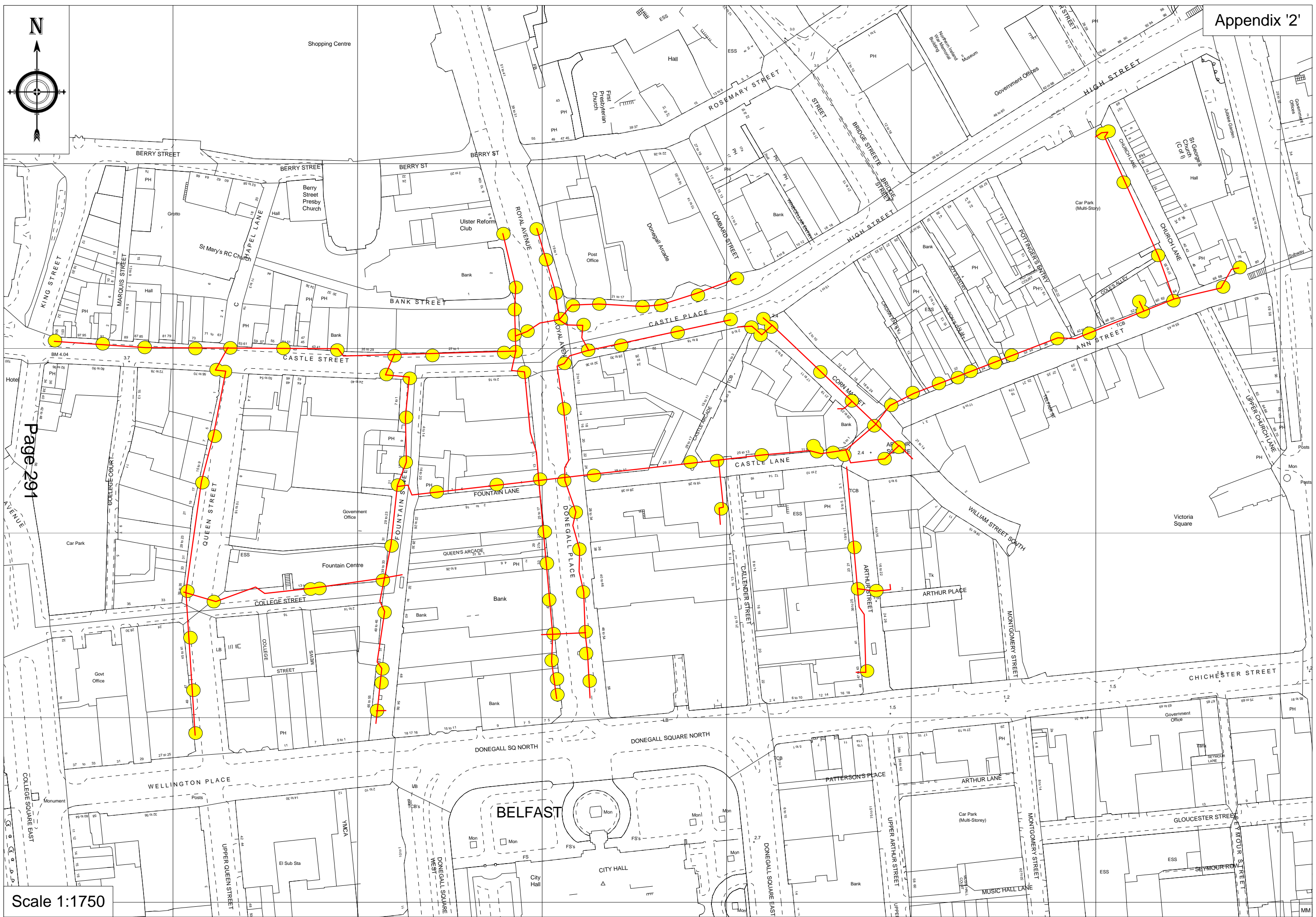


	<p>new premises will not be ready in time. Therefore, in the interim, DAERA propose expanding the existing Port Health Unit as a contingency facility until the new premises are fully operational. This proposal will require the upgrading of the facility to include temporary offices for the additional council staff and storage units to meet requirements, as shown in the drawing attached at Appendix 5. The Council's Lease will remain in place for the existing facilities and DAERA will enter into a separate Licence Agreement with BHC for the land required for the additional units and new pedestrian access.</p> <p>It is proposed that the works to the Council existing premises will be facilitated by way of a Licence for Works and that DAERA will reinstate the premises at the end of the contingency period. The works will also be subject to the consent of BHC. Members are asked to agree to the proposed Licence for Works and also to the granting of delegated authority for detailed terms to be agreed by the Estates Unit and Legal Services.</p> <p><b><u>Financial and Resources Implications</u></b></p> <p>Staff resources from the Estates Unit and Legal Services will be involved in the completion of the proposed Licence for Works and recovery of any associated costs. The cost of the works and their reinstatement at the end of the contingency period will be met by DAERA.</p> <p><b><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	<p>Appendix 1 – Ormeau Park Contractors Compound</p> <p>Appendix 2 – LFFN Programme - Map showing the extent of the existing fibre ducting assets / infrastructure currently owned by DfC that will transfer to the Council</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Templemore Baths - Site and Cable Easement</p> <p>Appendix 4 – Map showing extent of leased Port Health Unit outlined red.</p> <p>Appendix 5 – Drawing showing upgrade works proposed by DAERA coloured blue.</p>

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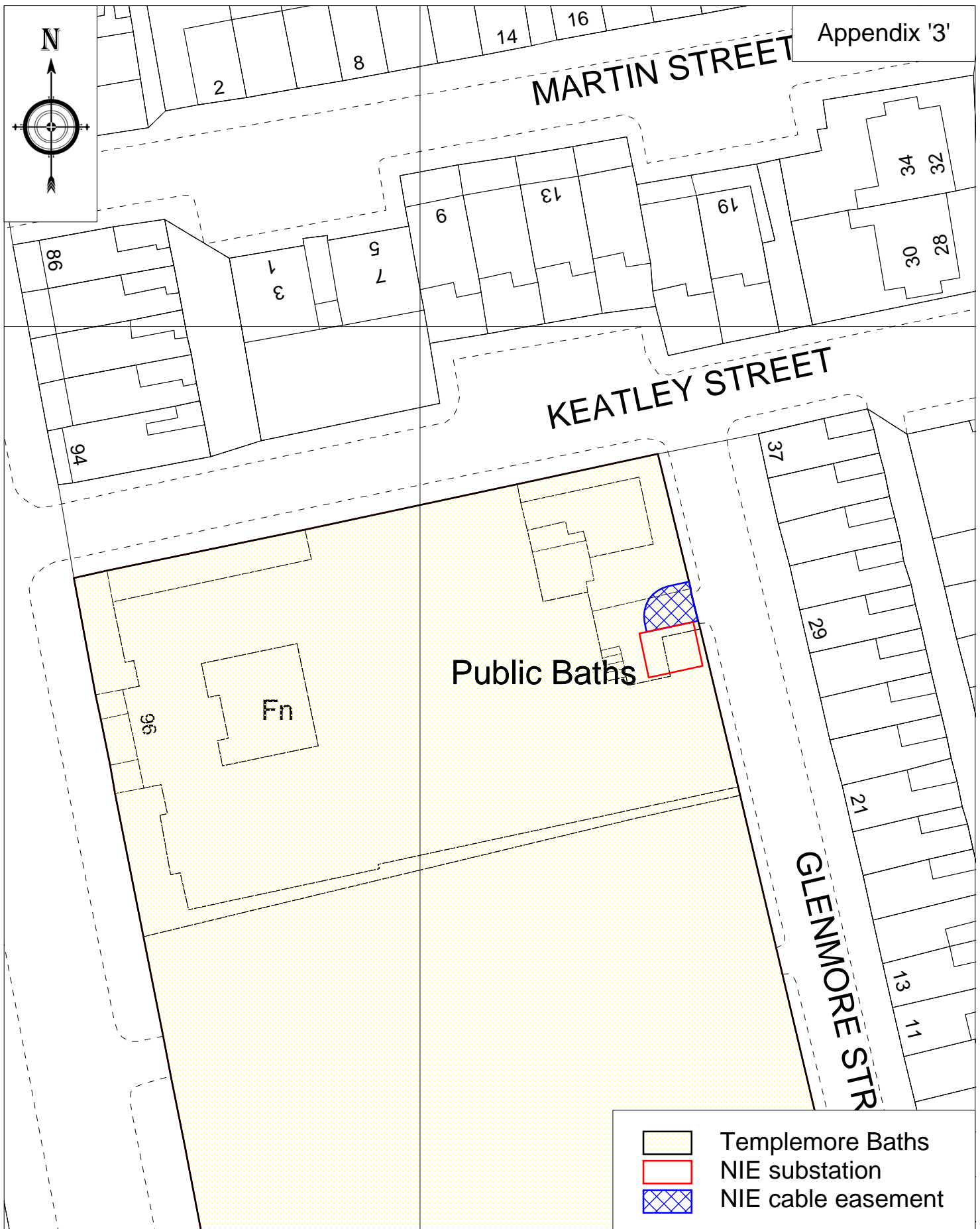





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-  Templemore Baths
-  NIE substation
-  NIE cable easement

Based on the Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland map with the permission of the Director & Chief Executive.  
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Scale 1:500

MAP REFERRED TO  
BELFAST CITY COUNCIL and NIE NETWORKS LTD  
LEASE at TEMPLEMORE BATHS

Produced by:-

Estates Management Unit,  
Belfast City Council,  
Physical Programmes Dept.,  
9 Adelaide Street,  
Belfast BT2 8DJ.

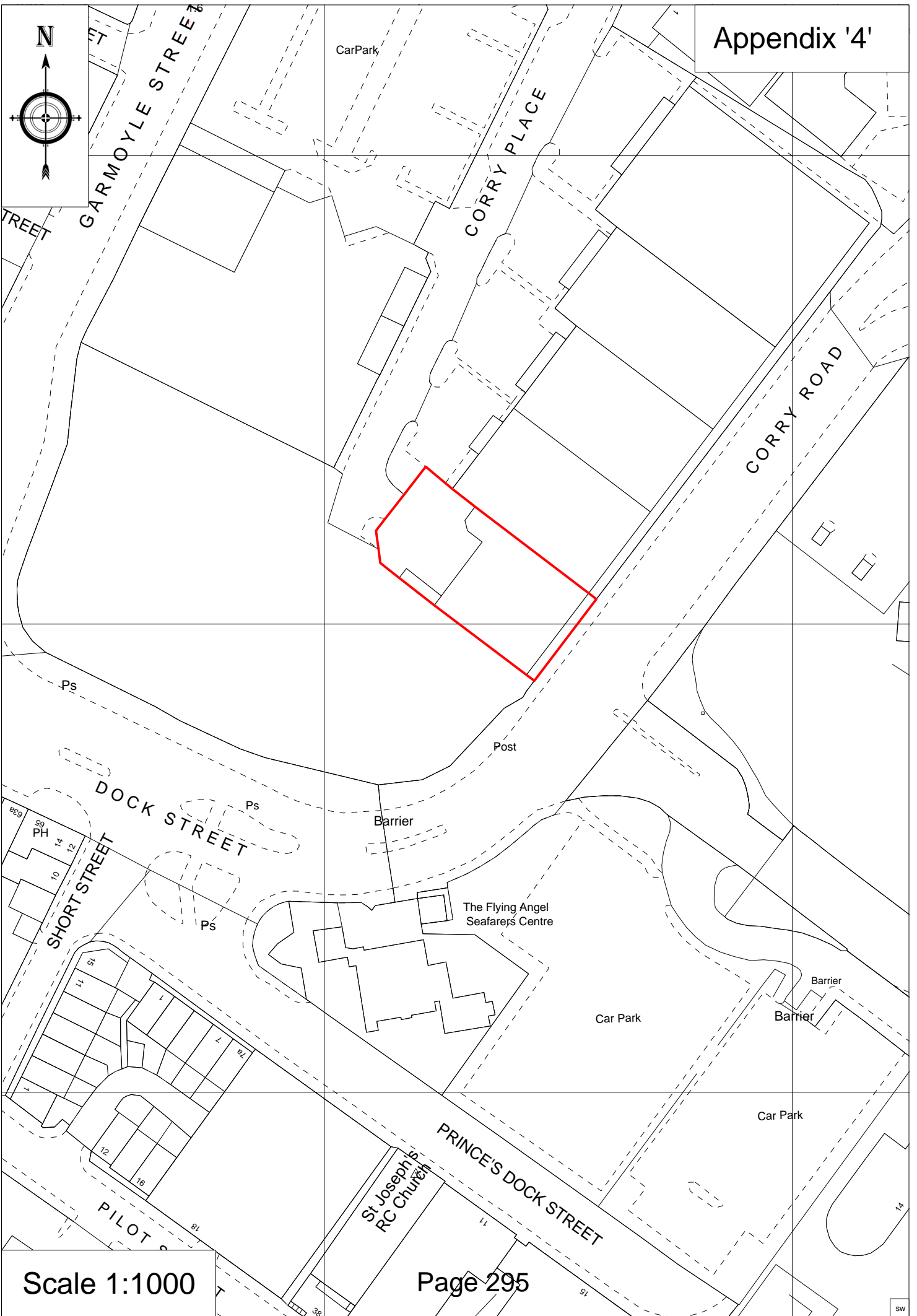
MM

Date:-

10/11/2020

Area - 24.51 sq m

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ALL NEW CONSTRUCTION INDICATED IN BLUE

### KEY TO DEMOLITION/CONSTRUCTION NOTES

NOTE: THE ASBESTOS REPORT CONFIRMS THERE IS NO ASBESTOS CONTAINING MATERIALS WITHIN THE EXISTING BUILDING

- (A)** TAKE DOWN EX BLOCKWORK & FORM NEW WEATHERED OPENING IN THE EXISTING CLADDING TO ACCOMMODATE THE NEW CONTAINERS
- (B)** RECONFIGURE EX INTERNAL DOWNPIPE TO EXIT THROUGH CLADDING AT HIGH LEVEL. DROP DOWN OUTSIDE OF CLADDING AND RE-CONNECT TO EX U/G DRAINAGE PIPEWORK
- (C)** RAISED CONTAINER UNITS SUPPORT BY NEW IN SITU RC RAFT BASE WITH MASONRY PIERS AS S.E SPEC
- (D)** NEW PROPRIETARY TEMPORARY MOBILE OFFICE UNIT WITH DISABLED RAMP & LEVEL ACCESS
- (E)** REPLACE EX SUB-STANDARD CHAIN WITH NEW 'ARMO' TYPE IMPACT PROTECTION BARRIER & 1.1m HIGH HANDRAIL WITH REMOVABLE SECTIONS AT DOCK LEVELLERS (AS FELIX O'HARE SPEC) SECURELY BOLTED TO EX CONC FLOOR
- (F)** NEW 900mm WIDE OPENING CUT THROUGH EX BRICK WALL TO ACCOMMODATE NEW GALV STEEL PEDESTRIAN ACCESS GATE WITH LOCK AND INTERNAL EOD
- (G)** NEW CONCRETE PEDESTRIAN PATH BETWEEN TREES FROM PATH TO GATE

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**NOTES**

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Update on Contracts</b>
<b>Date:</b>	20th November 2020
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Noleen Bohill, Head of Commercial and Procurement Services

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Committee for tenders and STAs over £30,000
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• approve the public advertisement of tenders as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 <b>(Table 1)</b>;</li> <li>• approve the award of STAs in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in Appendix 1 <b>(Table 2)</b>; and</li> <li>• note the award of retrospective STAs in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in Appendix 1 <b>(Table 3)</b></li> </ul>

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><u>Competitive Tenders</u></p> <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><u>Single Tender Actions (STAs)</u></p>
3.2	<p>The following STAs are being submitted for approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct award to enable an extension of up to 12 months for the provision of home security/ hazard assessment and repair service for elderly &amp; vulnerable. This extension to a fully funded contract is due to the constraints of Covid19, limited resources and other departmental work priorities meaning that the preparation of a new tender was not achievable.</li> <li>• Direct award for the provision of a case management system for City and Neighbourhoods Department to Civica for 2 years at a cost of £113,878 in order to determine how an upgrade of Civica will align with the Customer Focus Programme priorities.</li> </ul> <p>The following retrospective STAs were awarded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 4 month contract to compete an innovation and inclusive growth commission report articulating the direction of travel for growth and investments on the city for the next 30 years awarded to MCE Public Relations at a cost of £5,000;</li> <li>• A contract to upgrade the Occupational Health Service software awarded to Digital Scanning Services £4,530, for up to a year to ensure ongoing system support;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure continuity of essential service the continued hire of temporary accommodation, toilets and associated electrical generators and cabling at Roselawn Cemetery to Norspace at a cost of £109,582 (covering period from April 2020 to November 2021 if required);</li> <li>• A contract for the production management, design and installation of a Christmas lighting experience as an alternative to the traditional Christmas market awarded, due to the impact of Covid 19 to Lumerie for a period of 4 weeks at a cost of £29,500;</li> <li>• A contract for the provision of Christmas activity including a bespoke lighting trail as an alternative to the traditional Christmas market awarded, due to the impact of Covid 19, to AM Lighting for a period of 4 weeks at a cost of £29,500.</li> <li>• A 5 month contract for the provision of de-icing and snow clearance at various BCC sites and locations to McQuillan Outdoor at a cost of £96,000 required to ensure safe operation at council sites. The department advised that due to the constraints of Covid19, limited resources and other work priorities the preparation of a new tender was not achievable</li> </ul>
3.3	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>The financial resources for these contracts are within approved corporate or departmental budgets</p>
3.4	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>None</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Document Attached</b>
	<p>Appendix -</p> <p>Table 1 Competitive Tenders</p> <p>Table 2 Direct Award Contracts</p> <p>Table 3 Retrospective Direct Award Contracts</p>

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**Table 1 – Competitive Tenders**

<b>Title of Tender</b>	<b>Proposed Contract Duration</b>	<b>Estimated Total Contract Value</b>	<b>Senior Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Short description of goods/ services</b>
Development of a virtual apprenticeship platform for the Belfast Region City Deal	Up to 16 months	£65,000	A Reid	Development of a new online platform for apprenticeship provision across the Belfast City Region
Receipt, stock control and delivery of waste containers (T2134)	Up to 4 years	£520,000	S Toland / R Black	Support waste management section with distribution of bins and waste containers to rate payers.
Removal, transportation and emptying of skips and hooklift containers (T2074)	Up to 5 years	£1.2M	S Toland / R Black	Support service required at Council amenity sites.
Appointment of food samples Public Analysts. (Multi council framework contract)	Up to 4 years	£1.3M (covers all 11 NI councils)	S Toland / R Black	Legislative requirement for the purpose of examining and analysing food samples to determine compliance with food safety, compositional and labelling requirements.  Current estimated BCC spend £300,000 however this may significantly increase due to Brexit.  Other council estimated spend is £1m.
Research to undertake business surveys to support and influence future policy interventions across arrange of stakeholders	Up to 3 years	£150,000	A Reid	This is a longitudinal survey of businesses in Belfast to take place every six months. This work is being brought forward in conjunction with the Business Improvement Districts and Belfast Chamber who are making a financial contribution to the research. The survey will provide empirical data to understand what challenges Belfast based businesses are facing. The survey will also ask Businesses to provide a

				measure of their confidence around future investment and recruitment to gauge Business Sentiment. The fact that it is longitudinal allows to test broadly establish the efficacy of policies and interventions that have been brought to bear in the relevant timeframe.
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**Table 2- Direct Award Contracts (Single Tender Action)**

<b>Title of Tender</b>	<b>Supplier</b>	<b>Total Value</b>
Provision of home security/ hazard assessment and repair service for elderly & vulnerable (fully funded)	Bryson Energy	£120,000
Provision of a case management system for City and Neighbourhoods Department	Civica UK Ltd	£113,878

**Table 3 Retrospective Direct Award Contracts (Single Tender Actions)**

<b>Title of Tender</b>	<b>Supplier</b>	<b>Total Value</b>
Consultancy support for Innovation and Inclusive Growth commission Growth report	MCE Public Relations	£5,000
Occupational Health Service Software upgrade	Digital Scanning Services Ltd	£5,430
Continued hire of temporary accommodation, toilets and associated electrical generators and cabling at Roselawn Cemetery	Norespace	£109,852
Provision of animation as an alternative to the traditional Christmas market	Lumiere Ltd	£29,500
Provision of animation as an alternative to the traditional Christmas market	AM Lighting Ltd	£29,500
Provision of de-icing and snow clearance at various BCC sites/ locations (retrospective)	Patterson Outdoor Cleaning Solutions (McQuillan Outdoor)	£96,000





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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Commercial and Procurement Service - Pricing Policy</b>
<b>Date:</b>	20th November, 2020
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Noleen Bohill, Head of Commercial & Procurement Service (CPS) Michael Denny, Commercial Manager

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	The 3-year Transformational Strategy prepared by the Commercial and Procurement Service (CPS) is due to be presented to the Strategic Policy & Resources (SP&R) Committee in November.
1.2	This Strategy includes details of our first <b>Commercial Plan (see Appendix I)</b> , which formalises our future ambitions relating to commercialisation and income generation.
1.3	To support our specific ambition to generate additional income, the Commercial team within the CPS has developed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A corporate <b>Pricing Policy</b> – see Appendix II; and</li> <li>A <b>framework document, 'Setting Prices - Getting it Right'</b>, to guide Council officers when introducing pricing or increasing/decreasing prices – see Appendix III.</li> </ul>

1.4	The above policy and framework was presented to the SP&R Committee on 23 <sup>rd</sup> October.
1.5	At that meeting, the Committee agreed to defer any decisions relating to the above in order to allow the policy and framework to be considered alongside the Commercial Plan.
1.6	<p>The purpose of this report is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide members with an update on the pricing policy and framework;</li> <li>• Provide further details on the rationale for selecting the four priority projects in order to support the decision-making process; and</li> <li>• Obtain approval on related actions (detailed below).</li> </ul>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. approve the Commercial Plan and Pricing Policy, as detailed in Appendices I – III; and</li> <li>2. agree that the the following priority areas be researched in line with the above policy and framework (all findings and proposals to come back to the SP&amp;R Committee). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>Malone House</b> - explore possible alternative commercial uses for the building to maximise asset and reduce annual operating costs;</li> <li>b. <b>Events</b> - develop a Council-wide events policy &amp; procedures to include establishing transparent, fair and consistent pricing options;</li> <li>c. <b>Bulky waste</b> - explore potential pricing options for the bulky waste service to reduce annual operating costs; and</li> <li>d. <b>Pest control</b> - explore potential pricing options for the pest control service to reduce annual operating costs.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
	<b><u>Introduction</u></b>
3.1	<b>The Commercial Plan detailed at Appendix I</b> formalises our future ambitions relating to commercialisation and income generation.
3.2	Fundamentally, this is about integrating commercial activities and a commercial mindset into the core of how we operate as an organisation.

3.3	<p>The overarching aim of our Commercial Plan is to generate a greater financial return that contributes to the Council's investment plans and its efficiency programme, and assists to safeguard services that are delivered in our local communities.</p>
3.4	<p>To support our specific ambition to generate additional income, the Commercial team, in partnership with relevant individuals/departments, has commenced a strategic programme of work that includes (amongst other things):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing a Corporate <b>Pricing Policy</b> and associated procedures;</li> <li>• Developing a Council-wide <b>Advertising and Sponsorship Strategy</b>;</li> <li>• Supporting the development of an agreed <b>Asset Management Strategy</b>;</li> <li>• Identifying commercial best practice across other local authorities and organisations; and</li> <li>• Creating a framework to identify, develop and deliver existing and new (and innovative) income generating opportunities across the Council's commercial operations.</li> </ul>
3.5	<p>Alongside this, work has also commenced to enhance our commercial culture and competency, including the roll-out of a competency training programme and commercial awareness raising sessions.</p> <p><b><u>Corporate Pricing Policy</u></b></p>
3.6	<p>The charges and fees levied for our services represent an important source of income each year, which is used to support the delivery of our corporate objectives. Whilst charging for services is, therefore, a recognised feature within the Council, some demand-led services are provided at little or no direct charge to the user. The provision of services at low, or no, charge (or fee) means that all ratepayers are subsidising the cost of delivery.</p>
3.7	<p>The recent financial uncertainty created by the COVID-19 pandemic and 'Brexit' have now made it essential that the Council makes best use of pricing and charging opportunities and to recognise the importance of using pricing as a means of recovering the costs of delivering our services.</p>
3.8	<p>To support this, the Commercial team has developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A corporate <b>Pricing Policy</b>; and</li> <li>• A <b>framework document, 'Setting Prices - Getting it Right'</b>, to guide Council officers when introducing pricing or increasing/decreasing prices.</li> </ul>

3.9	<p>The key aims of the policy include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promoting consistency and fairness in the treatment of service users; and</li><li>• Striking a balance addressing the financial needs of the Council through optimisation of income and the social needs of customers.</li></ul>																																																				
3.10	<p>Any decision to vary or introduce charges must be aligned to strategic priorities and financial objectives. Council officers must adhere to the following principles set out in the policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Efficiency – charges are simple and not cumbersome to administer.</li><li>• Transparency – the nature and use of the service are understood by users.</li><li>• Effectiveness – the charges provide value for money.</li><li>• Clarity – users are clear about when and how charges apply.</li><li>• Equity – the charges are fairly applied across a range of users.</li><li>• Ethics – users with special needs are charged appropriate fees.</li></ul>																																																				
3.11	<p><b><u>Priority Projects</u></b></p> <p>We currently provide many <b>discretionary services (i.e. those that are not required to be provided by law but are provided at our discretion)</b> that all ratepayers are subsidising the cost of delivery. The table below provides some examples<sup>1</sup>:</p> <table><tr><th>Service</th><th>Expenditure</th><th>Income</th><th>Net Expenditure i.e. cost to the Council</th></tr><tr><td>Events<sup>2</sup></td><td>£1,464,026</td><td>£89,700</td><td>£1,374,326</td></tr><tr><td>Bulky Waste</td><td>£993,851</td><td>£19,534</td><td>£974,317</td></tr><tr><td>Zoo (including Shop)</td><td>£2,842,409</td><td>£1,902,035</td><td>£940,374</td></tr><tr><td>Pest Control</td><td>£289,702</td><td>£5,137</td><td>£284,565</td></tr><tr><td>Bike Scheme</td><td>£478,594</td><td>£245,254</td><td>£233,340</td></tr><tr><td>Belfast Castle</td><td>£450,397</td><td>£256,000</td><td>£194,397</td></tr><tr><td>Malone House</td><td>£332,626</td><td>£186,000</td><td>£146,626</td></tr><tr><td>Mary Peters Track</td><td>£137,040</td><td>£0</td><td>£137,040</td></tr><tr><td>Consumer Advice</td><td>£106,725</td><td>£0</td><td>£106,725</td></tr><tr><td>Home Safety</td><td>£178,976</td><td>£82,610</td><td>£96,366</td></tr><tr><td>Catering Services</td><td>£463,917</td><td>£399,280</td><td>£64,637</td></tr><tr><td>City Hall Tours</td><td>£53,400</td><td>£18,850</td><td>£34,550</td></tr></table>	Service	Expenditure	Income	Net Expenditure i.e. cost to the Council	Events <sup>2</sup>	£1,464,026	£89,700	£1,374,326	Bulky Waste	£993,851	£19,534	£974,317	Zoo (including Shop)	£2,842,409	£1,902,035	£940,374	Pest Control	£289,702	£5,137	£284,565	Bike Scheme	£478,594	£245,254	£233,340	Belfast Castle	£450,397	£256,000	£194,397	Malone House	£332,626	£186,000	£146,626	Mary Peters Track	£137,040	£0	£137,040	Consumer Advice	£106,725	£0	£106,725	Home Safety	£178,976	£82,610	£96,366	Catering Services	£463,917	£399,280	£64,637	City Hall Tours	£53,400	£18,850	£34,550
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3.12	<p>If approved, it will not be possible, in the current circumstances, to review all of the Council’s services and activities (such as those set out above) at this point in the context of the policy.</p>																																																				
3.13	<p>That being the case, it is recommended that the following four projects be examined in the first instance:</p>																																																				

<sup>1</sup> Based on budget figures for the 2019/20 financial year.

<sup>2</sup> Includes Events unit, Major Events, Sports Events and Grants.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Malone House</b> - explore possible alternative commercial uses for the building to maximise asset and reduce annual operating costs;</li> <li>• <b>Bulky waste</b> - explore potential pricing options for bulky waste service to reduce annual operating costs;</li> <li>• <b>Pest control</b> - explore potential pricing options for pest control service to reduce annual operating costs; and</li> <li>• <b>Events</b> - develop a Council-wide events policy and procedures to include establishing transparent, fair and consistent pricing options.</li> </ul>
3.14	Further details on each are included in Appendix IV.
	<b>Financial and Resource Implications</b>
3.15	This programme of work will be managed as part of the CPS's annual revenue budget.
	<b>Equality or Good Relations implications/Rural Needs Assessment</b>
3.16	No implications at this stage.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	Appendix I: Commercial Plan Appendix II: Corporate Pricing Policy Appendix III: 'Setting Prices - Getting it Right' guidance document Appendix IV: Four Priority Projects

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### **Our Commercial Plan**

#### **Introduction**

The reductions in public funding and the financial uncertainty created by the COVID-19 pandemic and 'Brexit' means that fiscal responsibility is ever more important. For us, recovering and rebuilding from the COVID-19 pandemic and adapting to a 'new' macroeconomic landscape, alongside challenges such as constrained financial resources, increasing demand, changing demographics, greater market competition and increasing customer expectations, means that **'doing nothing' is not an option.**

We recognise the above challenges and have, therefore, committed to adopting a broader, more 'commercially focused approach' that will ensure we become even more financially disciplined when it comes to the delivery of our services.

Whilst commercial related activity is not new to us as an organisation<sup>1</sup>, our first Commercial Plan, formalises our future ambitions relating to commercialisation and income generation. This plan will consolidate and provide a structured corporate framework for our existing, and all future, commercial activity. Fundamentally, this is about integrating commercial activities and a commercial mindset into the core of how we operate as an organisation, whilst also bearing in mind that we are, and will be for some time, continually adapting to a post-COVID-19 and post-Brexit landscape.

While there may be a temptation to view commercialisation as the 'silver bullet' to address the challenges we face (particularly in light of the financial resources required to 'recover' and 'rebuild' from the COVID-19 pandemic), it must be considered as one part of the solution, alongside delivering efficiencies (part of which will be delivered through our Procurement Plan), helping communities to become more sustainable and independent, managing demand and changing ways of working.

This plan, therefore, has clear links to the long-term vision for Belfast up to 2035, as set out in the Belfast Agenda, Belfast's first Community Plan, and aligns to the ambitions and commitments set out in our Corporate Plan and key strategies such as those relating to Inclusive Growth, our Medium Term Financial (MTF)<sup>2</sup> plans, Risk, Asset Management and Procurement.

This plan applies whenever we enter into or manage our commercial arrangements, generate income or make commercial decisions. Whilst there is an onus on us to deliver and manage our services with a commercial ethos, we recognise this must be done to a degree that is deemed politically appropriate.

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<sup>1</sup> We currently operate a range of commercial activities across a number of departments and services (in some cases this is done in partnership with our public and private sector partners).

<sup>2</sup> A key strand of this is the Efficiency Programme, which delivers annual cash efficiencies to support Elected Members' ambitions on the level of district rate to be set and to support the financing of new priorities.

## Drivers for Commercialisation

Importantly, we recognise that the benefits of pursuing commercialisation are not purely financial, but include the ability to support the delivery of wider social outcomes such as:

- Ensuring our resources are used sustainably to deliver positive social, economic and environmental outcomes to our local communities.
- Increasing transparency and accountability as to how we do business.
- Forging successful and trusted relationships with external partners.
- Building our capacity and capability by investing in the skills and resilience of our workforce and supporting skills/knowledge transfer, thereby reducing costs incurred from seeking external support.

## Our Strategic Aims

To define our Commercial approach:

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*“We will take an innovative and business-like approach to commercial activity to secure the delivery of high quality, sustainable and Value for Money services for our local communities. Through this, we will support the achievement of those ambitions set out in the Belfast Agenda”.*

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The overarching aim of our Commercial Plan is to generate a financial return that contributes to the Council’s investment plans, its efficiency programme and to ‘recovering’ and ‘rebuilding’ from the COVID-19 pandemic, and assists to safeguard services that are delivered in our local communities. To support this, we have identified five strategic aims, as follows:

### Commercial Plan - Strategic Aims



We recognise that our ability to deliver our Commercial Plan will, however, depend on a number of internal and external factors, such as:

- Our capability<sup>3</sup> and capacity to implement change and maximise opportunities;
- Openness and honesty about the existing performance of our activities and services;
- Receptiveness to alternative options for service delivery;
- The political appetite towards risk, including a willingness to possibly accept failure and to invest now for a return in the future;
- Our ability to measure success factors and learn from our mistakes;
- How well we use our powers and delegations;
- The number and type of assets which can be maximised (e.g. physical, human and intellectual);
- How, when and in what way, we recover and rebuild from the COVID-19 pandemic and adapt to a 'new' macroeconomic landscape; and
- The strength of our MTF Strategy.

## Our Priorities

To achieve our Commercial Plan, we have identified five priorities that we will focus on during the 3-year period:

### Commercial Plan – 3-year Priorities

1. Create a commercial culture – that is, behaving and acting in a more business-like way, when considering how we manage, operate, deliver and resource our services and products in order to deliver best value for communities and customers.

2. Ensure staff are equipped with the right skills to enable us to adopt some of the positive culture and behaviours that are associated with commercial organisations.

3. Develop and embed a corporate and coordinated approach to commercial activity, with an emphasis on effectiveness and adding value, improvement and efficiency and creating a working environment which encourages commerciality, creative thinking, innovative practice and the sensible management of risk.

4. Maximise charging, assets and investment opportunities to generate income and reduce costs.

5. Identify, develop and deliver existing and new (and innovative) income generating opportunities across the Council's commercial operations.

We have identified two thematic work streams that will assist us to deliver our five priorities. These are discussed in the following subsections.

<sup>3</sup> Including commercial acumen, skill sets and behaviours.

## 1. Enhancing our Commercial Culture and Competency

We have intentionally established the Commercial team to provide a strategic organisational approach to commercialisation, and to establish a commercial and business-like culture within the organisation.

We recognise that our corporate approach to commercial activity is still in its infancy. That being the case, we will ensure the Commercial team has sufficient financial resources to expand or 'scale-up', where necessary, to ensure that it can deliver our commercial ambitions. This includes developing and initiating:

- A **commercialisation communications and engagement plan** in order to raise awareness amongst all staff and Elected Members of our commercial approach. Key to this will be emphasising that the challenges we face means that we must have an overt focus on commercialisation. We will create various communication channels for individuals to engage with us on a rolling basis e.g. awareness raising sessions, 'ideas generation' workshops, features on our intranet, team briefs, commercial toolkits etc.
- A rolling **competency training programme** to ensure that our staff are provided (where necessary) with the requisite skills and expertise required to achieve our commercial aspirations e.g. such a programme may include topics such as developing a business case, options appraisal, market analysis, contract management, financial modelling and forecasting etc.
- Links with other local authorities that have adopted a commercial and business-like approach. This may be facilitated via existing networks, events and resources that are available from, for example, the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE)<sup>4</sup> and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)<sup>5</sup>.

Commercial activities cannot be viewed in isolation. We must take a commercial and business-like approach across all of our services if we are to ultimately thrive as an organisation. That is why embedding a commercial culture, as set out above, is so critical.

Where appropriate, we will empower our staff to take business-like decisions, manage risk and seize new opportunities. It is anticipated that individuals across the organisations will feel valued and involved in our new commercial approach. Our staff will receive relevant support, training and guidance, which we view as a value, not as a cost to our organisation.

## 2. Generating Income

Each year, we are required to produce a balanced revenue budget in order to meet our service expectations. As set out in our Corporate Plan, we had a planned investment of £202.85m for 2019-20. This planned investment is disaggregated, along with the corresponding projected income streams, in the following table:

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<sup>4</sup> Which facilitates the 'Local Authorities Commercialisation, Income and Trading Network'.

<sup>5</sup> Which provides access to commercial related accredited courses, e-learning tools and webinars.



Projected Expenditure and Income 2019-20 (source: Corporate Plan 2019-2023)		
Expenditure	£	%
Planning Committee	£7.73	4%
Strategic Policy & Resources Committee	£56.00	28%
People & Communities Committee	£92.90	46%
City Growth & Regeneration Committee	£24.69	12%
Capital Financing	£21.52	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>£202.85</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Income</b>		
District Rate (from householders and businesses)	£157.80	78%
Fees & Charges	£21.11	10%
Grants e.g. from the European Union and central government	£11.29	6%
Other e.g. rents and licences	£12.66	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>£202.85</b>	<b>100%</b>

However, Councils across Northern Ireland are becoming increasingly reliant on income from the district rate, as recognised in the most recent Local Government Auditor's Report<sup>6</sup>:

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*"Income levels vary considerably across each Council. Whilst overall the sector experienced a real-term increase in revenue based income in the five years to 2017-18, there was an overall real-term decline in income from service fees, charges and central government revenue funding. This trend indicates that Councils are increasingly reliant on income from the district rate. Given the increasing funding pressures, it is important that Councils continue to explore options to maximise the income generated from its services, including considering the potential."*

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The reductions in public funding and the recent financial uncertainty created by the COVID-19 pandemic and 'Brexit' have, unfortunately, compounded the financial issues facing local authorities.

We need, therefore, to consider our operating environment in a different way and reducing the level of subsidy<sup>7</sup> that is provided to support services is one possible option to improve financial sustainability.

To support our ambition to generate additional income, the Commercial team will be responsible for:

- Preparing a **corporate Charging Policy** and associated procedures. Whilst charging for services is a recognised feature of our existing activities and services, evidence from other Councils in Great Britain suggests that many services have traditionally been provided at little or no direct charge to the user. The provision of services at low, or no, charge has led to citizens often receiving heavily subsidised or free services in return for paying their Council rates. There is now an increased incentive for us to make best use of charging opportunities and to recognise the importance of using charging as a means of recovering the costs of delivering our services.
- Establishing a **comprehensive database of all the fees and charges** (to be updated annually) that are levied for the Council's services. The aim is to ensure that there is full visibility of the fees and charges across the entire organisation. Where necessary, the Commercial team will support

<sup>6</sup> Local Government Auditor's Report 2019 (Northern Ireland Audit Office, 18th June 2019).

<sup>7</sup> A service is subsidised when the income from that service (if any) does not meet all the costs of delivering that service and so there is a net cost which has to be funded from the Council. The net cost represents the amount of that subsidy.

the implementation of in-depth reviews of fees/charges where there are opportunities identified to generate greater Value for Money.

- Developing a Council-wide framework, in partnership with individuals/departments, to identify, prioritise and pursue existing and new (and innovative) commercial and income generating opportunities. Central to this will be the development of a '**prioritisation matrix**' for new commercial or income generating opportunities – this will ensure that ideas and projects can be scoped, appropriately resourced, developed and implemented (as appropriate).
- Identifying **commercial best practice** across other local authorities and organisations. This may include obtaining market insights and monitoring the commercial 'landscape' to explore new opportunities.
- Providing commercial advice and guidance to individuals/departments across the organisation. Whilst this plan will impact on all departments and services across our organisation, we recognise that 'a one size fits all' approach cannot be applied. Consequently, the nature and type of commercial advice and direction will vary across the organisation. For example, some services and activities already operate in a commercial way, therefore 'scaling up' may not require more than, for example, enhancing existing skills and capabilities. Alternatively, for some parts of the organisation, there may be a myriad of challenges (e.g. skills, capability and cultural) to address. For us, it is not about 'doing' commercial, but rather it is about 'being' commercial. This includes:

- Considering the whole life cost of policy decisions, including market impact and benefits realisation.
- Improving efficiency of service delivery – reducing costs and streamlining processes.
- Maximising Value for Money from contractual relationships.
- Making robust decisions on a consistent basis with evidence and a sound business case.
- Considering new and innovative ways of generating income.
- Taking an investment based approach to the use of financial resources, including assessing the return on investment in terms of financial return, delivery of the Council's priorities and added value to our communities.

- Developing, in partnership with others, alternative service delivery models, as appropriate. This may include shared services, partnership models or contracting out/in services (in-house versus out sourcing models). The most appropriate models for service delivery will be examined on a case-by-case basis, taking full account of the legal, risk and financial implications.
- Ensuring any new proposals receive the necessary support or 'buy-in' from the Corporate Management Team and other stakeholders, as appropriate.
- Developing, in partnership with the Marketing and Corporate Communications team, a Council-wide **Advertising and Sponsorship Strategy**. Whilst advertising and sponsorship related activities are undertaken across a number of departments and services, our intention is that a corporate strategy will provide a consistent and appropriate approach to advertising and sponsorship, one which reflects our vision, priorities and values and contributes to our commercialisation ambitions. Such a strategy will be proactively managed by the CPS team as an income stream and will relate to advertising and sponsorship opportunities associated with, for example, our assets, services, events etc.
- Working with relevant stakeholders across the organisation as part of the budget setting process to identify and maximise commercial opportunities in advance of a district rate being agreed.

- Working with the relevant individuals/departments to ensure that the Council's assets are strategically managed. This will include, amongst other things, provision of support and guidance to individuals/departments during the development of an agreed **Asset Management Strategy** for the Council.

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## Appendix II



**Belfast City Council**

**Commercial & Procurement Services**

**Pricing Policy**

**FOR INTERNAL PURPOSES ONLY**

# CONTENTS

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# 1. Introduction

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Charges (and fees) represent an important source of income each year which is used to support the delivery of Belfast City Council's (the Council's) objectives. Whilst charging for services is, therefore, a recognised feature, many services may have traditionally been provided at little or no direct charge to the user. The provision of services at low, or no, charge (or fee) has led to citizens often receiving heavily subsidised or free services in return for paying their Council rates. Subsidising services<sup>1</sup> is often driven by a desire to maximise take-up and to support the delivery of our wider strategic priorities.

However, the reductions in public funding and the financial uncertainty created by the 2020 coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the 2016 United Kingdom European Union membership referendum ('Brexit') has brought income generation and charging into sharper focus for us.

Our increasing reliance on income from the rate was recognised in the [Local Government Auditor's Report 2019](#).

*"Income levels vary considerably across each Council. Whilst overall the sector experienced a real-term increase in revenue based income in the five years to 2017-18, there was an overall real-term decline in income from service fees, charges and central government revenue funding. This trend indicates that Councils are increasingly reliant on income from the district rate.*

*Given the increasing funding pressures, it is important that Councils continue to explore options to maximise the income generated from its services, including considering the potential for more efficient service delivery such as online facilities and automated processes."*

This policy will ensure we make the best use of charging and pricing opportunities and recognise the importance of using charging as a means of recovering the costs of delivering our services.

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<sup>1</sup> A service is subsidised when the income from that service (if any) does not meet all the costs of delivering that service and so there is a net cost which has to be funded from the Council. The net cost represents the amount of that subsidy.

## 2. Legal Context

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The Council cannot introduce or raise charges indiscriminately. We need to carefully consider the legal position in setting charges and be clear that what we are doing is in accordance with our legal powers and duties.

[Part 11 of the Local Government Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2014](#) outlines the General Powers of Councils, which includes:

- Council's general power of competence;
- Boundaries of the general power;
- Limits on charging in exercise of general power;
- Powers to make supplemental provision; and
- Limits on power conferred by section 82(1).

While this provides a starting point, there are also individual pieces of legislation (or acts) that usually take precedence e.g. in relation to leisure services, burials and cremations etc.

This policy relates to fees and charges currently being levied by the Council and those which are permissible under the General Powers of Councils or the relevant legislation (or acts). It does not cover services for which the Council is prohibited from charging.

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*The Council's default position is that, other than in cases where charging is prohibited, a charge should at least be considered unless there is a compelling and evidenced-based case not to do so.*

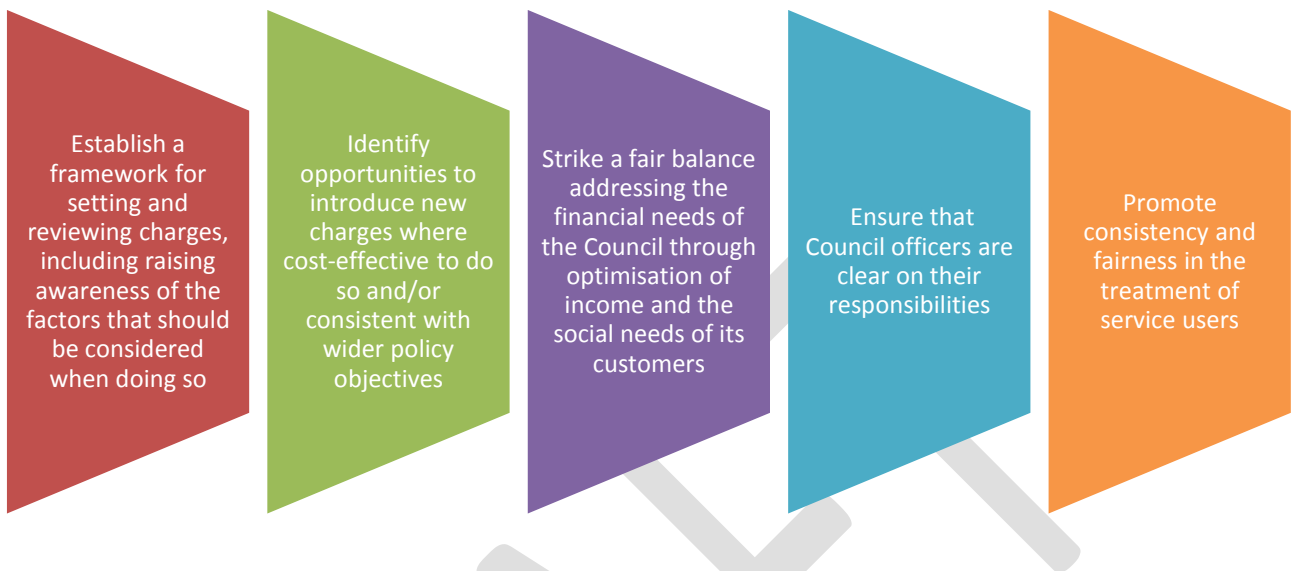
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### 3. Policy Aims

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The aims of this policy are set out below:

Figure 3.1: Policy Aims



All Council officers should adhere to this policy, along with the Council's Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation, when determining charges (or fees) as part of the budget-setting process and for any other ad hoc consideration of service charges. Where the Council is working in partnership with another organisation, this policy should, where possible, still be adhered to.

## 4. Guiding Principles

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Any decision to vary or introduce charges must be aligned with our strategic priorities and financial objectives. Council officers must adhere to the following principles.

Figure 4.1: Guiding Principles



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*Adopting these principles can help to address concerns and opposition to charging and income generation.*

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## 5. Establishing Prices

Council officers should follow the framework set out in the 'Setting Prices - Getting it Right' guidance document <<INSERT LINK HERE>> when introducing or increasing/decreasing charges (or fees).

A summary of the process is depicted below.

Figure 5.1: Establishing Prices – An overview

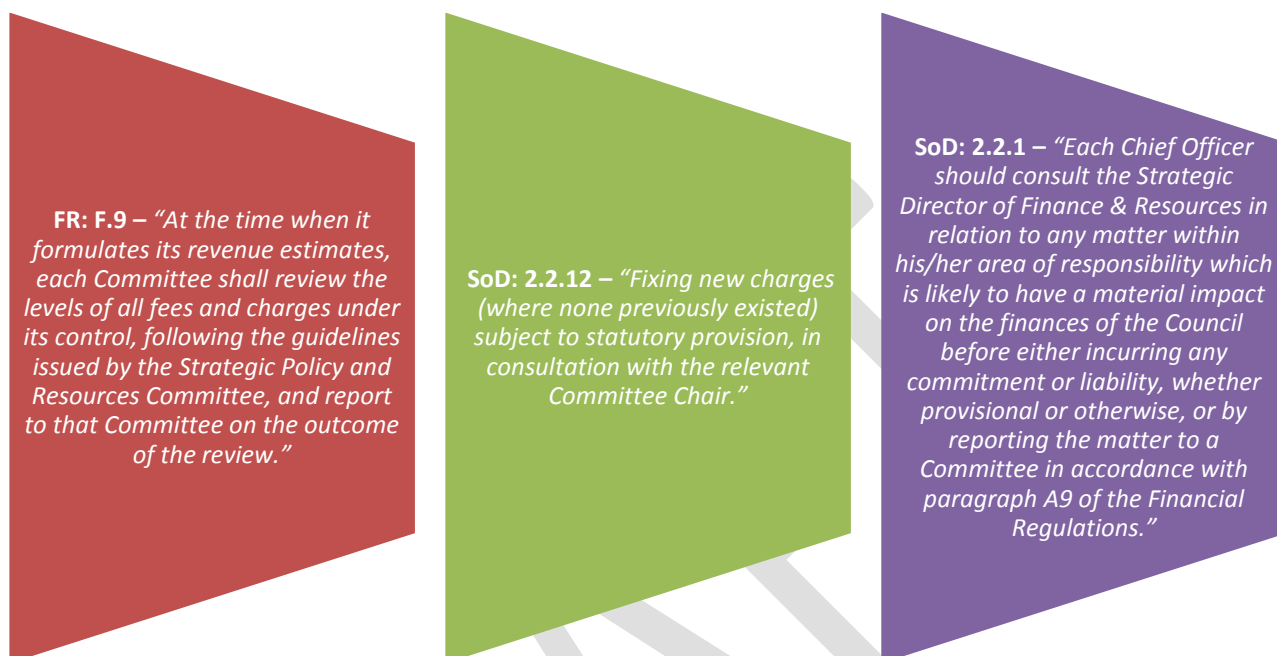


In the event that a decision is taken to introduce or increase/decrease a charge relating to a facility, activity or service, Council officers should adhere to all relevant guidance including Managing Public Money Northern Ireland (MPMNI) and Competition Law.

## 6. Governance and Risk

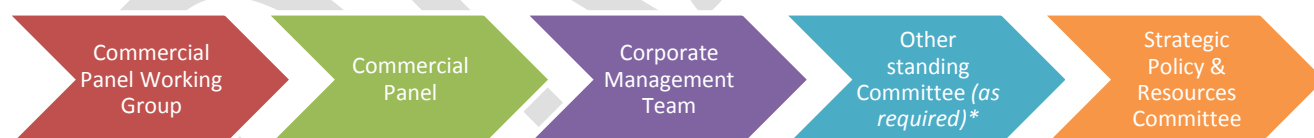
The Council's Financial Regulations (FR) and Scheme of Delegation (SoD) set out some details of the governance arrangements and approvals associated with charges and pricing, as illustrated below:

Figure 6.1: Charges and pricing references



At an organisational level, there is also an existing decision-making structure for commercial activity, as illustrated below.

Figure 6.2: Governance Structure



\* NB: each department's own governance arrangements may mean that some matters require approval by other standing committees on occasion. This can be facilitated as required, per the above diagram.

Any Council officer taking forward a proposal that involves the potential introduction or increase/decrease of a charge (or fee) outside of the budget-setting process should, unless otherwise advised by a member of the [Commercial Panel](#) or unless otherwise directed per the Council's Financial Regulations and/or Scheme of Delegation, seek to obtain approval through this structure.

This policy is subject to regular review as part of the Council's overall governance framework. This review will include consideration of ongoing alignment with other related corporate documents (e.g. the Corporate Plan and Commercial Plan) and any changes in legislation and/or corporate strategies. If a department wishes to vary from the principles set out within this policy, approval from the Commercial Panel will be required.

As a public body expending public funds, this policy is aligned with our published Risk Strategy, which states that risk management is an integral part of the Council's assurance framework. Good governance, transparency and robust decision-making are effective mechanisms to ensure the Council is risk aware.



## 7. Contact Details

---



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## 8. Policy Control

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**Policy title:** Pricing Policy

**Document version:** October 2020

**Departmental ownership:** Finance and Resources (F&R)

**Team ownership:** Commercial and Procurement Service (CPS)

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**Officer responsible or document authority:** Noleen Bohill, Head of CPS / Michael Denny, Commercial Manager

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**Belfast**  
City Council

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## Appendix III



**Belfast City Council**

**Commercial & Procurement Services**

**'Setting Prices - Getting it Right' - guidance document**

**FOR INTERNAL PURPOSES ONLY**

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# 1. Introduction

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Introducing or increasing/decreasing charges (or fees) is a complex exercise and needs to take into account many factors.

This document will take you, as a Council officer, through each of these factors. But first, there are some key questions that you should initially consider when establishing or amending charges or fees.

Figure 1.1: Key Questions



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*Importantly, charges should not be set in isolation.*

---

## 2. How does it fit with our Strategic Priorities?

Whether we decide to introduce or increase/decrease a charge is a significant strategic policy decision. At its most basic, introducing or increasing/decreasing charges will influence whether people use our services.

Whether we decide to introduce or increase/decrease a charge is a significant strategic policy decision. At its most basic, introducing or increasing/decreasing charges will influence whether people use our services. The diagram below illustrates some examples.

Figure 2.1: Charges influence whether people use our services

 <p>A strategic priority to enhance residents' health and wellbeing (which is one of the desired outcomes set out in the Belfast Agenda) may be adversely impacted by introducing or increasing charges on leisure or recreation activities/attractions, such as sports fields/pitches or swimming pools.</p>	 <p>City centre car parking charges may be set high to influence our sustainable transport aspirations but in doing so they may generate an income. This could potentially be reinvested in, for example, leisure or recreation activities/attractions.</p>	 <p>An image of quality and 'something to value' can be created by introducing a charge/fee. This can, in turn, have a significant impact on how people use a service and the corresponding benefit they may derive from it.</p>
--	--	---

*As the examples illustrate, charging is not just about generating income.*

### Questions to ask...



- Have you read the Council's Pricing Policy to ensure that the proposed introduction or increase/decrease of charges complies with it?
- Is there a clear rationale for introducing or increasing/decreasing a fee or charge e.g. increase/decrease demand, influence behaviour, enhance quality etc.?
- Do you understand the actual and potential income streams and the opportunities that exist?
- Will the introduction or increase/decrease of charges adversely impact upon the delivery of the Council's (or a specific department's) strategic priorities?



### 3. Are we legally allowed to charge?

The Council cannot introduce or raise charges indiscriminately. We need to carefully consider the legal position in setting charges and be clear that what we are doing is in accordance with our legal powers and duties.

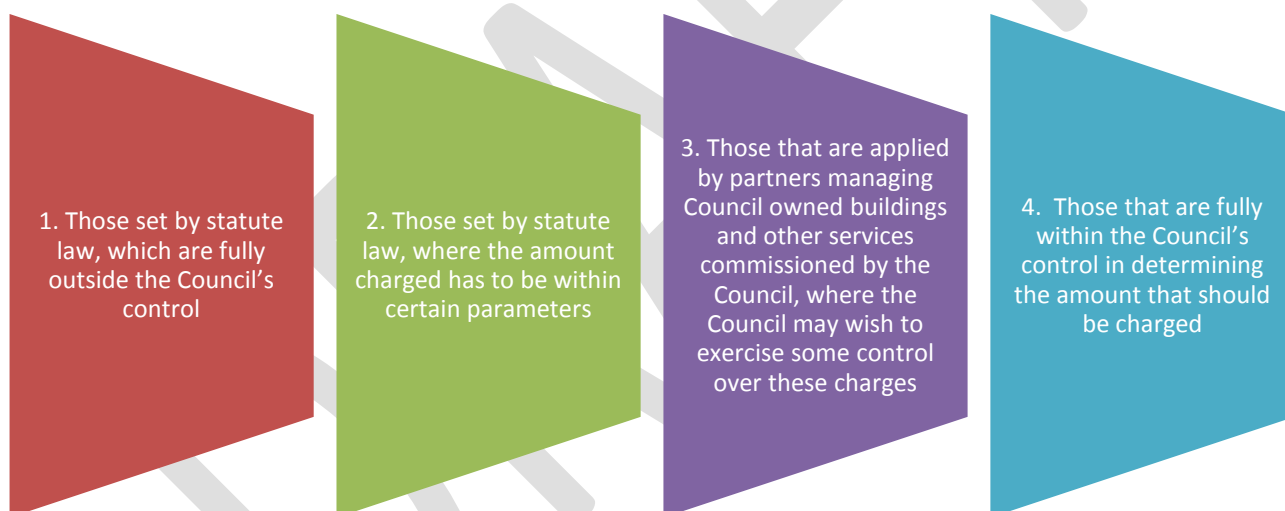
[Part 11 of the Local Government Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2014](#) outlines the General Powers of Councils, which includes:

- Council's general power of competence;
- Boundaries of the general power;
- Limits on charging in exercise of general power;
- Powers to make supplemental provision; and
- Limits on power conferred by section 82(1).

This provides a starting point, but you should be aware that there are also individual pieces of legislation (or acts) that usually take precedence e.g. in relation to leisure services, burials and cremations etc.

The Council's fees and charges fall into 4 main categories, as illustrated below:

Figure 3.1: Fees and charges - 4 main categories



#### Questions to ask...



- Do you need to seek opinion from Legal Services?
- Is the Council legally allowed to set, increase/decrease or introduce charges?
- Will the decision to introduce or increase/decrease charges adversely: affect individuals from an equality perspective; impact on the provision of services; and/or impact on the Council's ability to meet its statutory responsibilities?
- Do you know whether we can make a surplus?
- Have you considered how surpluses will be dealt with?



## 4. How do we determine the costs?

---

### Introduction

For many services, charges are based on precedents and do not reflect the actual cost of providing the service. Keeping charges low is often influenced by a conscious decision to support and encourage usage and to, for example, ensure those on low incomes are given the opportunity to access and use services.

However, only by fully understanding how much it costs to deliver a service can Council officers consider:

- What fee or charge could be set?
- What the strategic impact of our decision is likely to be on the service and those that use it?
- What level of subsidy is appropriate to provide for the service?

Some departments may apply a standard percentage increase in charges across all services (e.g. inflationary increases year-on-year), whilst others review and agree on changes on an individual service by service basis.

Treating all services exactly the same and setting flat rate increases in charges has the benefit of being easier to administer. Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that charges for similar services or activities should be consistent across the Council area.

However, such an approach does not provide adequate assurance that we have considered the potential impact of a decision strategically.

---

*Knowing the full cost of delivering a service is the starting point when building a case to seek approval to introduce or increase/decrease charges.*

---

### Direct and Overhead/Indirect Costs

Most crucially, Council officers need to understand the full costs involved in delivering the service under consideration, which typically includes direct and overhead/indirect costs, as depicted below:

Figure 4.1: Direct costs

#### Direct costs

Costs that can be readily and unequivocally attributed to a service/activity because they are incurred exclusively for that particular product/activity.

- Direct employee costs (including NICs and superannuation).
- Payments to third parties, contractors, service providers etc.
- Materials and supplies e.g. spare parts, inventory, fuel etc.
- Depreciation or lease costs of specific purpose buildings, vehicles, computer and other equipment used directly in delivery the service.

Figure 4.2: Overhead/indirect costs

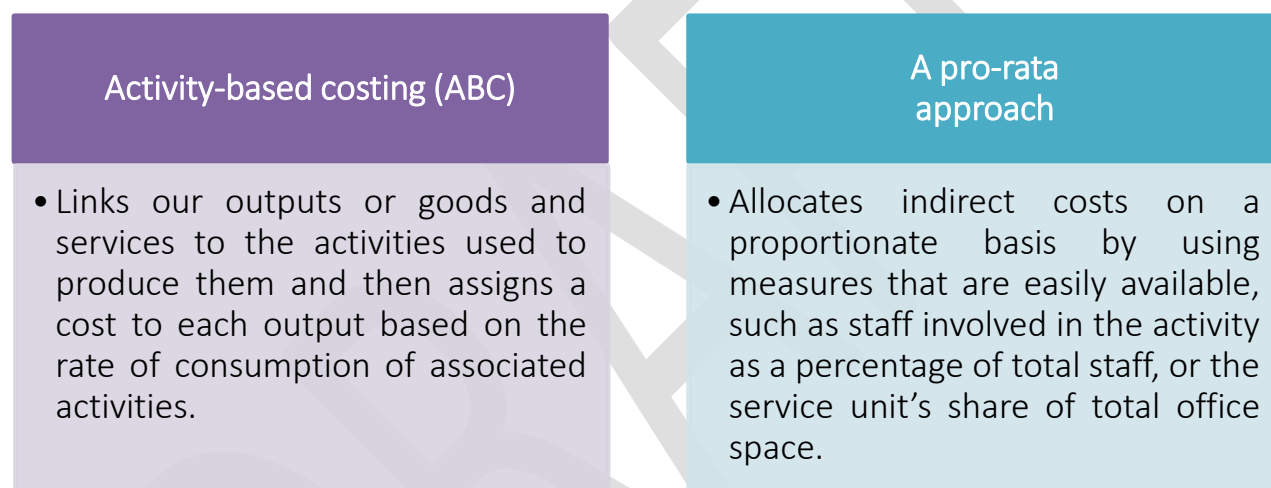
### Overhead / Indirect costs

Costs that are not directly attributable to an activity, but which are incurred in the provision of the service.

- HR, legal, ICT, property, finance, ICT and marketing and communications.
- Other employee costs.
- Materials and supplies.
- Office and accommodation costs.

Understanding overhead/indirect costs can be a challenge, but it is important to understand these if costs are to be fully recovered. That said, in the case of small-scale services, it may be appropriate to use estimates for allocating indirect costs rather than developing elaborate cost accounting systems. Internal overhead re-allocations/re-charges may also be applicable. Two widely used methods for allocating indirect costs are:

Figure 4.3: Two methods for allocating indirect costs



### Administering charges

Council officers need to also consider how charges will be collected, what an acceptable cost for administering and collecting income is, and how easy it will be to collect the charge.

For example, in practical terms, it may not be worthwhile to charge for services where the cost and complexities of the collection are more and/or take longer (or are waived where large-scale concessions apply) than was previously the case.

There are also a range of direct and indirect costs involved in collecting a charge e.g. administration, ticketing and equipment to collect charges, managing non-payment and arrears and bad debts etc. We may offer a wide range of payment choices and promote options that have the lowest transaction costs for customers and for us.

When introducing new charges/fees, there may be opportunities to both increase the use of digital, online and smartphone applications, as well as increase the use of external providers to improve efficiency further. Technology may also have a role to play in improving payment security and reducing transaction costs. Innovative ways to pay for services may include payment via authority websites, payment using mobile phones (e.g. for ticketless parking) etc.

## Questions to ask...

---



- Do you know how much it currently costs to deliver the service in full?
- Do you know how much the Council currently subsidises the service by?
- Is the Council seeking full or partial cost recovery (cost recovery relates to recouping a portion, or all, of the costs associated with delivering a service)?
- Do you need to seek assistance from your department's Business Support or Management Accounts?
- Do you know what the current demand for the service is?
- Is there sufficient capacity and/or resources to implement the fee/charge?
- Does the Council have the ability (technology, systems, human and financial resources) to implement and manage charges in areas not previously charged for?
- Does the cost of implementing collection systems outweigh the potential income that will be raised?



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## 5. Are there alternative providers and what do they charge?

Council officers should undertake benchmarking analysis with comparable services offered by other Councils (in Northern Ireland and/or Great Britain) and other service providers to compare their proposed charges and prices. This should serve as a starting point to inform your decision making and allow you to identify any significant variations and to take these into account when setting your charges.

A key principle is that proportionate effort should be applied. This means that the resources to be devoted to this exercise should be in proportion to the scale or importance of the objectives and resource consequences under consideration.

---

*A note of caution, this does not mean simply mirroring charges/fees elsewhere, as local circumstances are likely to vary.*

---

Importantly, Council officers should be aware of any unexplained inconsistencies and should be able to explain any significant variations in charging e.g. due to cost differentials, service quality or policy etc.

The phenomenon of **'me-too' pricing** can be a common reaction of some Council officers that prefer to copy others, rather than to take steps to understand how the users of their service(s) think and behave. Such narrow benchmarking can mean that opportunities are missed.

### Questions to ask...

---



- Are there competitors/alternatives to the Council who could provide the service?
- Is there potential to deliver services jointly with another Council or provider to reduce overheads?
- Have you benchmarked costs to determine the scope for increasing charges?
- Have you benchmarked the likely impact of introducing or increasing/ decreasing charges?
- Could the Council stop providing the service without this decision impacting adversely on its statutory responsibilities?
- Is there a commercial advantage for the Council providing this service?



## 6. How do we treat concessions?

Concessions are a means for us to offer discounted fees and prices to particular individuals or groups, without having to limit standard charges. Some groups are widely recognised as being eligible for concessions e.g. children, people 60+ years old, adults on low incomes, individuals with a disability, students etc. Others include community groups and service veterans.

This can help us to achieve our policy aims e.g. to promote social inclusion by encouraging minority or hard-to-reach groups to use services.

Charging and concessions should be considered together when designing pricing structures for a service.

---

*Importantly, policies for charging and for concessions should be consistent and integrated.*

---

The images below set out the typical considerations that may apply to you:

Figure 6.1



Figure 6.2



Figure 6.3

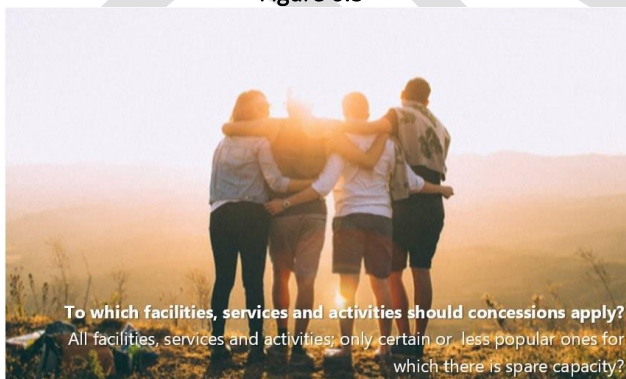


Figure 6.4



Figure 6.5

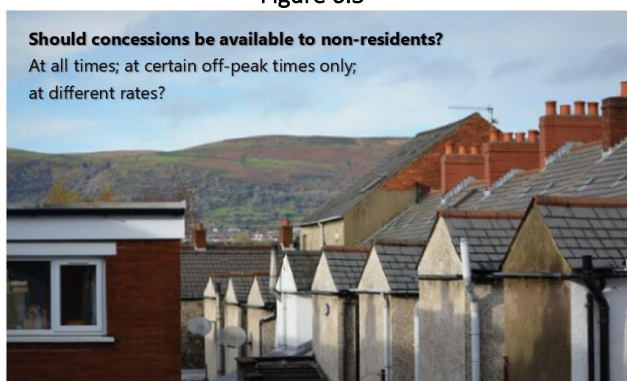


Figure 6.6

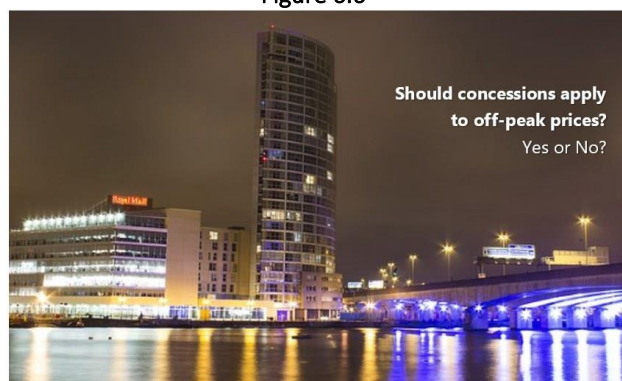


Figure 6.7



Equality of opportunity and the promotion of good relations are central to the Council's Corporate Plan and the implementation of the Belfast Agenda. As part of our continued commitment to these, and to aid compliance with our responsibilities as a public authority under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, Council officers should ensure that, where appropriate, Equality Screening and/or a Rural Needs Impact Assessment are conducted in line with the Council's policies and procedures.

## Questions to ask...



- Have you considered the use of concessions?
- Have you considered how to treat non-residents?
- Do you need to change eligibility?
- Have you communicated eligibility criteria to service users?
- Is there a requirement for Equality Screening and/or a Rural Needs Impact Assessment?



## 7. What will the impact be on services, users and citizens?

Traditional economic theory suggests that a service is subject to an 'elasticity of demand'. That is:

- Increasing prices will typically lead to a situation where there is a corresponding decrease in demand (alongside potential increases in income, if the charges are being introduced rather than being increased).
- Conversely, reductions in price will typically increase demand, potentially resulting in the service becoming financially unsustainable.

**There is, therefore, a careful balancing act.**

In determining the level of charge (and subsequently reviewing it), it is important that there is appropriate consultation with actual and potential service users in order that there is an understanding of the relationship between service use and charges.

Service users are more willing to pay charges where they see that they are getting Value for Money. Council officers may also need to take into account local socio-demographic factors, such as the level of social deprivation, average weekly earnings etc., as users' ability to pay is an important consideration in setting charges.

Council officers must ensure they can:

- Provide transparency and accountability of the charge introduced or increased/decreased.
- Explain the context of the charge e.g.
  - How it has been determined;
  - The basis upon which charges have been calculated;
  - Set out the context within which the charges are being considered; and
  - What the income will be used for.
- Demonstrate that the Council has considered the impact of charges on different members of the community.
- Provide thorough market research on what other Councils are doing, what they are charging and what other private and voluntary bodies are doing in the same or similar markets.
- Demonstrate that the end user is obtaining Value for Money.

There is a risk that by increasing charges without proper consultation, the Council may actually lose income by pricing users out of the market.

There may also be a reluctance among some Council officers to engage with service users and local communities on planned changes, especially where there are political sensitivities and perception of difficulties around the introduction of charges. Councils which have experienced a negative public or media reaction to new or increased charges are often reluctant to tackle the issue again, and consequently choose not to introduce or increase charges.

---

*Charging for a service could be controversial and unpopular. Taking the time to adequately consult with the market and stakeholders can often help to mitigate against such issues.*

---

## Questions to ask...

---



- Have you consulted with Elected Members, users, visitors, residents, third-sector partners and businesses within the area in relation to, for example, provision of the service, the introduction or increasing/decreasing of charges, changes to the eligibility criteria etc.?
- Will the decision result in an increase/decrease in usage i.e. levels of demand?
- Will the decision have a positive/negative impact on user's behaviour?
- Will the decision result in the service improving e.g. improvement in quality, quicker response times etc.?
- Do you know what the likely impact of the decision to introduce or increase/decrease charges will be on services, visitors/users, stakeholders, businesses and the authority in the medium to long term e.g. on household incomes, the local economy etc.?
- Do residents of the Council have the economic capacity to absorb an introduction or increase in charges?
- Is the Council decision likely to result in unintended consequences?
- Have you considered the political risks?



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## 8. How do we monitor and review activity?

The absence of monitoring and evaluation, particularly of the impact of charges on users, creates an 'information vacuum'. Consequently, it comes as no surprise that charging decisions, and the design of charges, can become dominated by 'myths' and 'misconceptions', as depicted by the examples below:

Figure 8.1: 'Myths' and 'misconceptions'





All charges under the Council's remit should be reviewed annually as part of the rate setting process. As part of the annual review, an appropriate increase or decrease should be included for factors such as inflation, the full cost of providing the service and any supporting services, current market rates, the Council's strategic policies etc.

The annual review should, where it is cost effective to do so, collect and use information on who is and is not using the service, and how service users and potential or non-users respond to changes in service charges. Any changes to Government policies in respect of charging should be adhered to and appropriate transitional arrangements put in place.

The decision regarding the level and basis of calculation of charges should be transparent and open to scrutiny. Any significant increases in charges should be introduced over a period of time to reduce the impact on service users.

Monitoring and evaluation does not have to be complicated or to involve expensive market research or consultants. Many departments may already collect useful information which will help them to see how users react to changes to charges or to the behaviour of competitors, such as information collected:

- As part of contract monitoring;
- Through one-off surveys; or
- Through computerised systems e.g. those at leisure/recreation provision that provides usage of a facility by type, by length of time, by day/frequency etc.

Nonetheless, it may be necessary to supplement the above with specific market research in order to probe aspects of user behaviour, including:

- To determine how important price is in the context of other factors;
- To identify how much users value different aspects of a service; or
- To understand how target groups behave and think.

---

*A Council that fails to review and revise charges is often delaying the inevitable and continuing to fail to address the issue could result in far worse outcomes such as service closure or greater price rises in the future.*

---

## Questions to ask...



- Can you collect the information you need to review the activity?
- Have you agreed on an appropriate timescale (at least annually) to review your decision to introduce or increase a fee or charge and is this happening?
- Have you agreed on an appropriate range of measures to be able to understand the impact of introducing or increasing/decreasing charges?
- Can you benchmark performance with other organisations?



## 9. What is the 'right' price to charge?

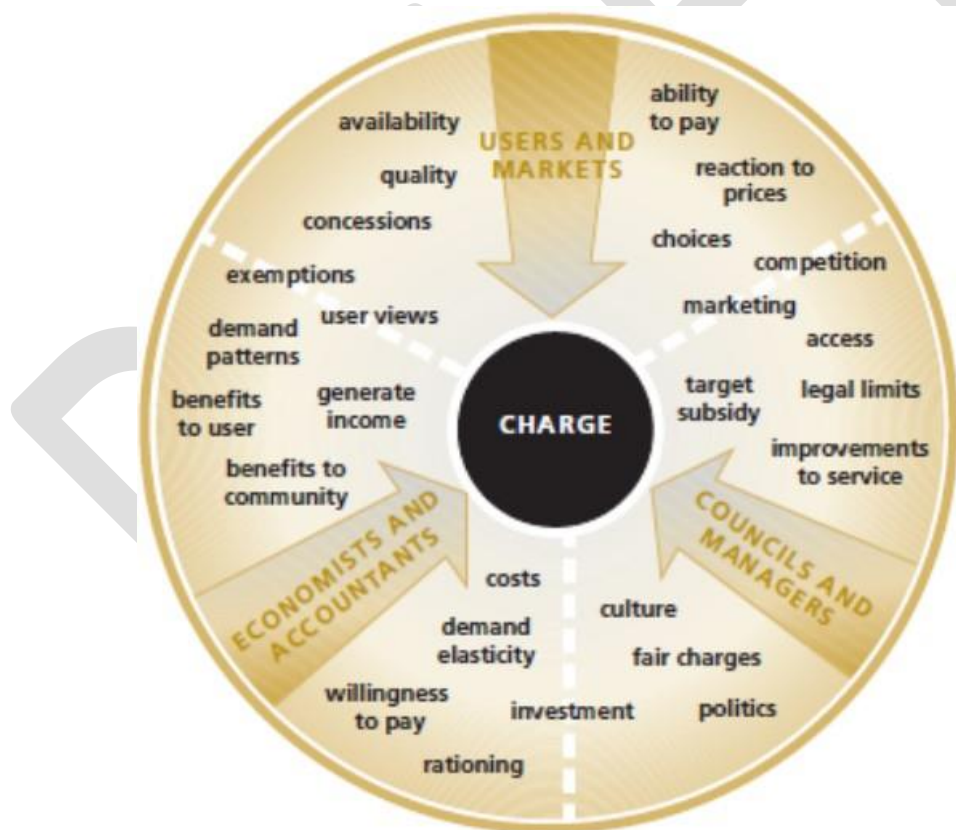
Each time a Council officer reviews its charges, they are faced with the same question - 'what is the right price?' i.e. what charge should be levied to the end user for the service provided.

This seemingly straightforward question masks a deceptively complex challenge. Experts in the private and public sector have been unable to provide simple answers or even a converging view on the problem. They come at the problem from different perspectives, all of which have their merits.

The nature of Councils brings additional complications that do not face a private sector organisation. We pursue a wide range of objectives. We have a unique role as both commissioners and providers of a wide range of services. For some services, we are the only provider and have a geographical monopoly. For others, we compete openly with the private sector for custom.

Council officers are faced with a difficult judgement about which factors (depicted in the diagram below) should be given most weight. They need to balance the pros and cons of different charging options, and to prioritise competing, often incompatible, objectives and priorities. These complications ultimately make it difficult for Council officers to decide what the 'right' price is.

Figure 9.1: What is the right price?



In general, charges are simply rolled forward relatively unchanged each year.

Despite the above, most charges are driven by the annual budget cycle. This typically results in an incremental approach to charging, which means we simply increase charges year-on-year in line with inflation. This is, on occasion, disrupted by crises, as we take action to attempt to meet a specific budget shortfall.

When charges are reviewed, this budget-driven approach means that the focus of the charge-setting tends to be based on the total income figure. The link, therefore, between charging and the objectives of service delivery are not made, with the result that decisions are made in isolation from their effects on users e.g. low-income users may be left facing charges that they simply cannot afford.

---

*The best charging models make it clear that services cannot be developed in isolation from the user.*

---

As outlined in this document, responses from user surveys and wider consultation, alongside other analysis such as benchmarking and understanding the full cost of the service, should help inform the determination of charges for specific services.



In cases where a material increase in the level of charge is proposed, it may be appropriate to give consideration to transitional arrangements. These may involve, for example, phasing in a change over a period of time to avoid undue financial hardship to particular groups. In such cases, the impact on the overall income received by the service should be clearly set out.

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# 10. Charging - Pros & Cons

The key pros and cons to charging are summarised below:

Figure 10.1: Pros and Cons

<div>Pros</div> <div>  </div>	<div>Cons</div> <div>  </div>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Charges can be linked to corporate policies such as the environment or the health and wellbeing of individuals.</li> <li>Charging has the power to affect the way that our services are delivered e.g. it can facilitate or deny access to services, change residents/users' behaviour and/or enable us (via any income generated) to develop and improve our services in response to the needs of users.</li> <li>There is a clear link between the payment of the charge and the consumption of the service.</li> <li>Charges are transparent. The customer knows the cost of availing of the service and can, therefore, judge whether it provides value-for-money.</li> <li>Conservation on the part of both the consumer and the local authority is encouraged.</li> <li>An image of quality and 'something to value' can be created by introducing a charge.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The perception of 'double taxation' i.e. Council taxes/rates plus charges.</li> <li>Charges are not always easily linked to individuals' ability to pay.</li> <li>On occasion, it is difficult to assess the true cost of the service and/or the actual level of consumption.</li> <li>On occasion, charges can be difficult to collect.</li> <li>Many consider it morally wrong to charge for public services.</li> <li>For some services that are generally used by a large cross-section of the community, it is often impractical or unacceptable to introduce charges.</li> </ul>

# 11. Recap of the process...

A summary of the process is depicted below.

Figure 11.1: Establishing Prices – An overview



## 12. Contact Details

---



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For more information or assistance with any queries, please feel free to get in touch with Michael.

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## 13. Feedback

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Please feel free to click on the image below to provide some feedback on the information and guidance provided in this document.



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**Belfast**  
City Council

<b>Project Title:</b> Malone House
<b>Net cost to the Council:</b> circa £147k
<b>Primary objective:</b> Maximise an existing Council asset and reduce annual operating costs
<b>Secondary objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance the character of the estate as an open public space and as a recreational/tourism product.</li> <li>• Bring an imaginative new feel to Malone House.</li> <li>• Offer value for money and a quality product.</li> </ul>
<b>Brief description:</b> <p>Barnett Demesne, once a private estate, opened to the public in 1951. As of 2020, the demesne, which is located at the Malone Road/Shaw's Bridge intersection in south Belfast, retains much of the character of the original estate. There are a number of lease/licence arrangements within the grounds of Barnett Demesne that are managed by Belfast City Council.</p> <p>The grounds of Barnett Demesne include, amongst other things, Malone House, which is a two-storey late Georgian mansion. Since June 1983, Malone House has become a venue for weddings, conferences, social functions, private dining and other events (e.g. exhibitions), while the surrounding grounds are popular with walkers and cyclists.</p> <p>Within Malone House, there are two dining areas (Malone Room and Barnett Restaurant), four function rooms and two bridal rooms. The catering operations at Malone House (which covers events, ceremonies and retail services in both the dining areas and function rooms) are provided by an external catering company (French Village Catering Ltd.). It operates under an agreed contract with the Council. Analysis of data for the period 26/3/18 - 31/3/19 indicates that the <u>occupancy or utilisation of the four main function rooms was between 19% and 35%.</u></p> <p>There is an opportunity to seek submissions, in the form of a publicly advertised 'Request for Information' (RFI), from suitably experienced and dynamic individual(s)/business(es) to take forward interesting and innovative proposals relating to operating Malone House (in a way that fits well with the character of the estate as an open public space and does not detract from the recreational/tourism use of the wider site). Indeed, the Council has received some informal proposals from interested parties, including non-profit organisations relating to Malone House.</p>

**Project Title:** Bulky Waste Collection Service

**Net cost to the Council:** circa £974k

**Primary objective:** Reduce annual operating costs

**Secondary objectives:**

- Support behavioural change amongst local communities e.g. supporting reductions in waste, incentivising reuse or recycling etc.
- Enhance customer experience e.g. by developing online functionality and capability.

**Brief description:**

The existing Bulky Waste Collection Service, covering the entire Council area, includes the collection of prearranged bulky waste goods (including white goods), along with fly tipped waste and alley clearances. In 2018, 38,340 service requests for prearranged bulky waste collections were completed. However, a significant proportion of these collections are not completed (for a variety of reasons, including waste not being presented for collection).

In addition, there has been a substantial increase in 'uncontrollable' costs, such as fuel, waste disposal (gate fees and landfill tax) and employee costs, in recent years.

Initial benchmarking analysis indicates that other Councils in Northern Ireland provide similar services, but, unlike Belfast City Council, each have associated pricing structures in place.

There is an opportunity to explore potential pricing options for the bulky waste service in order to, amongst other things, reduce annual operating costs.

**Project Title:** Pest Control

**Net cost to the Council:** circa £285k

**Primary objective:** Reduce annual operating costs

**Secondary objectives:**

- Enhance customer experience e.g. by developing online functionality and capability.
- Determine appropriate delivery model for in-house pest control (which is currently outsourced).
- Support behavioural change amongst local communities.

**Brief description:**

The existing Pest Control service, covering the entire Council area, offers visits to domestic households (free of charge) for the treatment of pests such as rats, mice, bedbugs, fleas and flies. In 2017, circa 5,000 domestic visits were completed.

However, a key issue for the service is that there is a significant proportion of no admissions for prearranged appointments. Consequently, there is a cost to the Council in terms of staff time, as the prearrange slot is lost productivity that could have been used for another visit.

Also, Belfast City Council is the only council in Northern Ireland that offers a free domestic pest control service.

Whilst Lisburn and Castlereagh Borough Council currently charges for a similar service, initial benchmarking indicates that no other Council in Northern Ireland offers this service. Instead, domestic residents are advised to engage with private sector providers.

There is an opportunity to explore potential future options for the pest control service in order to, amongst other things, reduce annual operating costs. In addition, the Council currently uses external contractors (rather than in-house resources) to undertake pest control in its buildings. There is also an opportunity for the most appropriate delivery model and possible associated fees/charges to be examined as part any future service provision.

**Project Title:** Council-wide events Policy

**Net cost to the Council:** circa £1.4m

**Primary objective:** Reduce annual operating costs

**Secondary objectives:**

- Align with best practice in terms of levying charges for commercial related events.
- Support the Council as it proactively seeks to host and/or facilitate future commercial-related events in the City.
- Create consistency in approaches to pricing across teams/department within the Council.

**Brief description:**

The Council is involved in a range of commercial related events, including those that are held in its parks and leisure facilities (e.g. Belsonic and Tenants Vital festivals) and those that have a tourism and cultural focus e.g. annual Maritime festival etc.

There is an opportunity to develop a Council-wide events policy & procedures to include establishing transparent, fair and consistent pricing options. It is anticipated that this will (amongst other things):

- Support the Council as it proactively seeks to host and/or facilitate future commercial related events in the City.
- Create consistency in approaches to pricing across teams/department within the Council.

Preliminary research suggests that other Councils in Great Britain have events policies in place, which includes clear details of the various fees and charges that are levied for commercial related events.





<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Minutes of Meeting of the Shared City Partnership</b>
<b>Date:</b>	20th November, 2020
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Ryan Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Nicola Lane, Good Relations Manager

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the key issues discussed at the Shared City Partnership meeting held on 9 <sup>th</sup> November.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is requested to approve the minutes and the recommendations from the Shared City Partnership Meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020 including:</p> <p><b>Peace IV</b></p> <p>To submit a request to SEUPB to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reduce the contact hours for all projects as outlined in the modifications in Appendix 2, with no impact on the allocated budget;</li> <li>• extend the Letters of Offer for all themes to 31st December 2022 with an extended delivery timeframe for project activity to September 2022. This</li> </ul>

	<p>request is subject to a full budgetary review. The timeframe will be re-assessed in 6 months;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reduce participant numbers as outlined and to delegate authority to Good Relations Manager and PEACE IV Manager to agree appropriate targets and proportionate budget amendments for projects; and</li> <li>• realign KPIs and budgets in line with modifications requested.</li> </ul> <p><b>Good Relations Action Plan 2020/2021</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that a budget of up to £10k be set aside for a diversionary programme in North Belfast and a budget of £5k for citywide initiatives which seek to inspire people from across the city to transform it for the peace and prosperity of all and need to move online with authority on spend in regard to the programmes being delegated to the Director of Neighbourhood Services or his nominee; and</li> <li>• that the budget of £5,000 would be set aside in relation to the Clean Space and Green Initiative</li> </ul> <p><b>Refugee Transition Guide</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to approve the update, reprint, translation and digital upload of the Refugee Guide along with the associated expenditure of £15,000.</li> </ul> <p><b>Notice of Motion – Racism Free Zone</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that a report in respect of the motion would be submitted to a future meeting.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
	<b><u>Key Issues</u></b>
3.1	The Shared City Partnership is a Working Group of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee consisting of Elected members and representatives from various sectors across the city. The minutes from the Partnership are brought before the Committee for approval on a monthly basis. The Partnership met for the first time since March 2020 on 5 <sup>th</sup> October.
3.2	<p>The key issues on the agenda at the November of the Partnership meeting were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Presentations by Projects funded under Safe and Shared Community</li> <li>➤ PEACE IV Updates</li> <li>➤ Update on PEACE IV Secretariat</li> <li>➤ Modification Paper</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Update on PEACE IV CYP Theme</li> <li>➤ Update on PEACE IV SSS Theme</li> <li>➤ Update on PEACE IV BPR Theme</li> <li>➤ Update on Good Relations Action Plan 2020/2021</li> <li>➤ Request to Update Refugee Translation Guide</li> <li>➤ Notice of Motion – Racism Free Zone</li> </ul>
3.3	More details regarding the above issues and recommendations are included in the minutes of the meeting attached in Appendix 1.
3.3	<b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b> All financial implications are covered through existing budgets
3.4	<b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b> The recommendations of the Partnership promote the work of the Council in promoting good relations and will enhance equality and good relations impacts.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	Appendix 1 - Minutes of the Shared City Partnership meeting of 9th November Appendix 2 - Copy of Peace IV Project Modification Requests

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## **SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP**

**MONDAY 9TH NOVEMBER, 2020**

### **MEETING OF SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

Members present: Councillor Kyle (Chairperson); and  
Councillors M. Kelly and  
Smyth.

External Members: Mrs. B. Arthurs, Community and Voluntary Sector;  
Mr. J. Currie, Community and Voluntary Sector;  
Miss. G. Duggan, Belfast City Centre Management;  
Mr. S. Hamilton, Chief Executive, of the Belfast Chamber  
of Trade and Commerce;  
Mrs. J. Hawthorne, Northern Ireland Housing Executive;  
Ms. J. Irwin, Community Relations Council;  
Superintendent. K. Moore, PSNI;  
Mr. M. McBride, Education Authority;  
Mr. M. McGinley, Good Relations, The Executive Office; and  
Ms. Ann Marie White, British Red Cross.

In attendance: Mr. S. Lavery, Interim Neighbourhood Services Manager;  
Ms. N. Lane, Good Relations Manager;  
Ms. D. McKinney, Programme Manager;  
Ms. L. Dolan, Good Relations Officer; and  
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

#### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported on behalf of Councillor Magennis and  
Mrs. O. Barron, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 5th October were taken as read and signed as correct.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

Mrs. B. Arthurs declared an interest in item 3, namely, Peace IV Updates, in that she  
is an employee of the Forward South Partnership, which acts as the delivery agent for one of  
the Peace IV projects.

#### **Schedule of Meetings 2021**

The Partnership approved the following schedule of meetings for 2021 and agreed that  
it should continue to meet at 1.30 p.m.:

- Monday, 11th January;
- Monday, 8th February;

- Monday, 8th March;
- Monday, 12th April;
- Monday, 10th May;
- Monday, 7th June;
- Monday, 9th August;
- Monday, 6th September;
- Monday, 11th October;
- Monday, 8th November; and
- Monday, 6th December.

### **Presentations by Projects funded under Shared and Safe Community**

The Partnership was reminded that, at its last meeting, it had agreed to receive presentations from representatives from the following organisations: East Belfast Community Development Agency, the Consortium working on the Refugee and Asylum Seekers Projects and Forward South Partnership to hear more about the invaluable work of these organisations and to help the Partnership understand the impact of the Covid pandemic on BAME communities. Accordingly they were welcomed to the meeting and presented in regard to their work over the pandemic.

#### **East Belfast Community Development Agency – Mr. J. Currie and Ms. A. Lojek**

Ms. Lojek commenced by providing an overview of the East Belfast Community Development Agency which included its mission and aims for the future. She explained that East Belfast had experienced a change in demographics and was now a very diverse area to live but whilst some ethnic groups had integrated well, others needed support and assistance. She detailed the many challenges that faced newcomers and highlighted that there was a new wave of Romanians, refugees and asylum seekers that all required support. In addition to this, she outlined that the existing local community also needed support as unfortunately there was lots of fear and cultural misunderstandings coupled with the changes that Brexit might bring.

The representative specifically referred to the Covid-19 support that had been implemented and detailed the range of community support that had been available during the pandemic, this included the East Belfast helpline which closed on 3rd July, online workshops and Hug in a Box parcels for those living with dementia. She referred to the signposting on the EBCDA website in respect of providing details regarding local community support and also detailing the specific help and assistance available in East Belfast in response to the pandemic. More information in respect of this was available on the EBCDA website [here](#)

#### **Covid 19 Response for the Refugee and Asylum Community - Ms. D. Wright and Mr. R. Doherty**

Ms. Wright, commenced by explaining that the Covid-19 Response for the Refugee and Asylum Community was a Partnership that had been established to ensure a food response during the Covid-19 pandemic. She advised that Belfast Roundtable was part of the Partnership along with Belfast Homeplus, NICRAS, Embrace, South Belfast Foodbank and Storehouse. It was part of a bigger partnership under the NI Refugee and Asylum Forum and aimed to ensure that vulnerable people's needs were met and not duplicated.



She detailed that help in the form of both funding and the provision of food parcels had been provided by the following organisations:

- Department for Communities;
- Belfast City Council;
- Minority Ethnic Development Fund;
- The Executive Office;
- Community Foundation NI;
- National Lottery; and
- Migration Exchange

The support from the various organisations had been invaluable but she explained that it had required a central point of contact to coordinate and ensure that the support was delivered to those in need, hence the formation of the response team.

Mr. R. Doherty from Homeplus then addressed the Partnership to outline some of the work undertaken. He advised that an asylum seeker had £37.00 a week to live off. At the start of the Covid-19 outbreak many of the existing support mechanisms for refugees and asylum seekers had been closed down due to social distancing measures. At this stage, with the use of volunteers and staff, the team had aimed to ensure that these vulnerable people had received not only received culturally appropriate food parcels but also support for loneliness and appropriate advice that was given via a manned telephone helpline.

The Partnership noted that support had been provided to 184 single asylum seekers, 171 families and also to 100 families who were refugees.

#### **Forward South Partnership – Mrs. B. Arthurs and Ms. M. Vartejanu**

Mrs. B. Arthurs advised that the Forward South Partnership (FSP) had also been working with the Covid-19 Response for the Refugee and Asylum Community and she commended the work had been undertaken with collaborative working.

Ms. M. Vartejanu advised that the FSB had been invited by Belfast City Council and the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust to administer and manage a citywide Covid-19 helpline which would enable Roma families to access appropriate support services in their own language, based on the need of the Roma Community. The helpline had been active from 22nd April and would remain operational until 31st December.

The Partnership was advised that the aim of the helpline was to ensure, through collaborative working with key stakeholders, that relevant advice was given to the Roma community during what was a critical time. She detailed that the project operated remotely by telephone 25 hours per week, Monday – Friday. It either offered free advice or signposted individuals in respect of food and supplies (nappies, milk vouchers and toiletries), housing matters, benefits and immigration advice.

The initiative had been hugely successful with 800 people having used the service up to 1st November, support had been provided in their own language and almost 150 users had returned to avail of the service each month. In addition, the service noted and identified trends and gaps that existed and tried to bridge these gaps accordingly.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Partnership, thanked the various representatives for their hard work and commitment during the pandemic and for the invaluable support and

assistance that they had provided to people within the BAME Communities within the Belfast City Council area.

Several of the presenters asked that their thanks be recorded to the Council for the financial and practical support that their organisations had received which had greatly assisted them in progressing their work stream.

The Partnership discussed the level of deprivation that continued to plague many of these communities and specifically referred to the fact that digital poverty had been extremely prevalent over the pandemic which had often prevented people from accessing up to date information.

The Partnership thanked the representatives for their informative presentations at which point they left the meeting. The Democratic Services Officer undertook to circulate the PowerPoint presentations and the video link to the Members of the Shared City Partnership.

### **Peace IV Updates**

#### **Update on Peace IV Secretariat**

The Partnership considered the following report:

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

**To provide the Shared City Partnership (SCP) with a progress report in respect of the Secretariat activity associated with the implementation of the PEACE IV Local Action Plan.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**The Partnership is requested to recommend to the Strategic Policy & Resources committee that they note the contents of the report.**

**3.0 Main report**

**3.1 Covid 19 Impact**

**The tighter government restrictions announced on 14 October significantly impacted planned delivery of project activity and the PEACE IV workplan. Where possible activity was moved online or rescheduled, details are reflected in the Thematic Update reports.**

**It should be noted that online activity has resulted in lower participant numbers due to barriers including access to equipment, lower attention span, ability to complete work in own home and privacy issues.**

**3.2 Project Modifications**

**The PEACE IV team continues to be in close contact with all delivery partners to determine the impact on project delivery and consider relevant project modifications. A separate report on Covid 19 Impacts and Project Modifications has been compiled for members to consider.**

In light of changing circumstances full budgetary review and financial modelling is being progressed to ensure budget availability for any extension request.

### **3.3 Underspend proposals**

SEUPB has confirmed approval for the St Comgalls proposal submitted to utilise the BPR underspend. Steps to mobilise the project via a procurement approach is progressing, it is anticipated that the tender call will open mid November 20 with appointment of a contractor in January 21.

Liaison with SEUPB regarding the necessary budget adjustments on eMS regarding the underspend is progressing.

### **3.4 Programme Workplan**

A final virtual tour of City Cemetery took place on 19 October with over 20 attendees. Due to tighter government restrictions, specifically guidance on non essential travel, the drive in cinema planned for 7 November has been postponed. A call for storytellers as part of the virtual 10x9 event on Peace has been issued. The 10x9 event is scheduled for 25 November and invitations will be issued to members in due course.

### **3.5 Verification and Audit**

An internal audit of the PEACE IV Local Action plan is to commence in December with preliminary information to be submitted to AGRS in November 20.

### **3.6 Financial & Resource Implications**

All PEACE IV costs are recoverable from the funding body subject to eligibility.

SEUPB has fully reimbursed all claimed expenditure up to and including Claim 23 (May-Aug 20) totaling £2,942,180.68  
The breakdown across themes is as follows:

- CYP: £935,588.49
- BPR: £1,086,458.99
- SSS: £920,133.20

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

The draft plan has been equality screened and discussed at the Equality Consultative Forum on 13 May 2015."

The Partnership agreed that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee be recommended to note the information contained within the report.

## **Modification Paper**

The Partnership considered the undernoted report:

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

To provide the Shared City Partnership (SCP) with an update on the current impact of the COVID 19 crisis on the PEACE IV Programme, outline activity and actions to date and highlight the key modifications required to progress implementation of the PEACE IV Local Action Plan.

### **2.0 Recommendations**

The Partnership is requested to recommend to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee that they note the contents of the report and consider the modifications as outlined subject to approval by SEUPB.

- To submit a request to SEUPB to:
  - Reduce the contact hours for all projects as outlined in the modifications in Appendix I, with no impact on the allocated budget.
  - Extend the Letters of Offer for all themes to 31 December 2022 with an extended delivery timeframe for project activity to September 2022. This request is subject to a full budgetary review. The timeframe will be re-assessed in 6 months.
  - Reduce participant numbers as outlined and to delegate authority to Good Relations Manager and PEACE IV Manager to agree appropriate targets and proportionate budget amendments for projects
  - Realign KPIs and budgets in line with modifications requested.

### **3.0 Main report**

**3.1** Implementation of the PEACE IV Local Action Plan continues to be adversely impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic and government restrictions. As such the Council will face significant pressures on the revenue and capital programmes under PEACE IV to ensure Council can meet its contractual obligations. SEUPB has indicated that an extended delivery timeframe will be approved they have advised there will not be any additional funding.

**3.2** The PEACE IV team and Delivery Partners have worked diligently throughout the pandemic to progress project activity, engage community groups and recruit participants using alternative approaches.

- 3.3 Modifications to project activity have been implemented over the last 7 months, including moving to online activity, smaller group sizes, reduced contact hours and amended activity, the ongoing government restrictions are significantly impeding recovery and project progress.
- 3.4 Project activity has gradually been recommencing, however the recent restrictions have resulted in the mitigations to progress previously postponed activity being suspended or delayed further. Most face to face community activity has either being replaced with online activity or delayed, in addition camp style / residential activity being deferred.
- 3.5 Where possible delivery partners continue to implement projects:
- project activity via online platforms, although limited
  - engagement / mentoring with some participants on a 1-1 basis is ongoing at a project level
  - administrative activities such as procurement is proceeding
- 3.6 However, it should be noted that participation levels in projects / sessions are significantly reduced. By way of example, participant levels for one project reduced from 80 to 13 when online delivery was implemented. Lack of equipment, low attention span, voluntary participation and privacy have been highlighted as rationales for these reduced levels. In addition, many community groups / organisation have suspended their activities and venues, normally used for community activity, remain closed.
- 3.7 Whilst SEUPB acknowledges that Council is 'in the eye of the storm' in delivering PEACE IV activity during this challenging time, modifications have been relatively limited and requests to reduce participant targets, particularly for the Children & Young People theme have been refused.
- 3.8 The Council's current Letters of Offer for all themes are to 30 June 2022 and PEACE IV staff contracts are in place to 31 December 2021.
- 4.0 **Project Impacts / Modifications**
- 4.1 Project delivery has been closely monitored on a monthly basis through contract management meetings, online activity reports and risk trackers as well as monthly thematic meetings with SEUPB.
- 4.2 Measures to enable social distancing such as larger buses, larger venues, smaller group sizes and more 1-1 engagement and facilitation has increased costs for delivery partners.
- 4.3 Following the recent government restrictions and working on the basis that some level of restrictions will remain in place for the next

6 months, delivery partners have submitted project modifications for consideration, as outlined in Appendix I.

- 4.4 The proposed modifications are submitted based on the activity and results that can realistically be achieved over the next 6-9 months (taking into account Government restrictions) and amendments required to enable the achievement of results as close to the original project as possible.
- 4.5 Given the broad scope of projects and differing stages in delivery, project modifications need to be considered on a case by case basis.
- 4.6 PEACE IV delivery agents are making every effort to engage and recruit participants, however as payment for several projects is based on deliverables, some partners are expending huge efforts and yet may not get fully reimbursed.
- 4.7 All delivery partners have provided a commitment to deliver as close to the contractual obligations as possible.
- 4.8 However it should be noted that several partners have advised they do not have the resources to continue delivery beyond the current contract period, principally 31 December 2021. As such, there will be no opportunity to make up the shortfall in targets incurred during 2020.
- 4.9 Other risks to implementation of the PEACE IV Local Action Plan, due to Covid 19 and the overstretched community infrastructure are:
  - Not achieving participation targets / results
  - Increased costs of delivery
  - Withdrawal by delivery agents
  - Potential ineligible spend

As government restrictions continue to change, the successful delivery of the programme remains indeterminate in a very challenging and the ever changing environment.

## 5.0 Recommendations

- 5.1 The proposed modifications are broad ranging and have been considered by the Thematic Project Managers and the PEACE IV secretariat taking into account the current PEACE IV Output Indicator Guidance and modifications approved to date.
- 5.2 On this basis it is recommended that Council submit a request to SEUPB to:
  - Reduce the contact hours for all projects as outlined in the modifications in Appendix I, with no impact on the allocated budget



- **Extend the Letters of Offer for all themes to 31 December 2022 with an extended delivery timeframe for project activity to September 2022. This request is subject to a full budgetary review. The timeframe and staff contracts will be re-assessed in 6 months.**
- **Reduce participant numbers as outlined and to delegate authority to Good Relations Manager and PEACE IV Manager to agree appropriate targets and proportionate budget amendments**
- **Realign KPI and budgets in line with modifications requested.”**

The Programme Manager advised the Members that some of the modifications requested were outside of the normal tolerances adopted by SEUPB, however, it should be noted that the tolerances had not been amended to reflect the impact of Covid-19.

The Partnership recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it adopt the recommendations.

#### **Update on Peace IV – Children and Young People (CYP) Update**

The Partnership was provided with an update on the progress to date in respect of the CYP theme, under the Peace IV Local Action Plan.

The Members were advised that under CYP1- Tech connects, the recruitment for delivery of Tech Camps by Giga Training through Digital Arts Academy during Halloween had taken place. Contingency plans to move the programme online had been required which resulted in lower levels of participation. They noted that engagement with schools had also progressed and that the Belfast Metropolitan College had commenced recruitment for an online Insight Programme which was scheduled to commence in early November.

In respect of CYP 2- Playing our Part in the City, the Members were advised that, as a result of Covid 19, the realignment of milestones and extension for Year 3 to March 2021 had been agreed. In addition, there had been a condensed delivery format of a week-long camp during Halloween which had been approved by the SEUPB. Recruitment was also continuing and the Members noted that new parents had engaged with the project.

Under CYP 3 - On the right track- The Members were advised that, unfortunately, the Government and Sporting Body restrictions had significantly impacted upon delivery. They noted that the realignment of milestones/payment schedule for the OCN element delivered by ACN had been approved by the SEUPB. On a positive note, a meet and greet had taken place with Mr. C. Frampton and Mr. P Barnes on 5th October.

The Officer reported that retendering for venues activity had closed on 9th October with one submission being received for Lot 7 County Dublin. No bids had been received for Lot 5 County Leitrim and Lot 6 County Navan. Subsequently, negotiated procedures/direct awards were under consideration.

With regard to the Personal Change element, the Partnership was informed that due to small participant numbers, Extern had continued to engage participants and delivery activity included educational visits, day activities and planning for residentials was underway.

Under CYP4- Young advocates, the Members were informed that discussions with community groups to recruit cohort 4 had been ongoing, with anticipated delivery via bubbles and blended learning. Subject to the level of recruitment, an option to pause the project activity was under consideration.

The Members were advised that under CYP 5-NIHE Local Area Network partner delivery, procurement for the delivery of activities was being prioritised. Engagement was ongoing, however, club closures, restrictions within Education Authority premises and overall restricted activity as a result of the pandemic was having a knock-on impact upon delivery and it was likely that an extension beyond December 2021 would be required.

The Partnership noted the update.

### **Update on SSS theme**

The Partnership considered the following report:

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

To provide the Shared City Partnership (SCP) with a progress report in respect of the Shared Spaces and Services (SSS) theme of the PEACE IV Local Action Plan.

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

The Partnership is requested to recommend to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee that they note the contents of the report.

#### **3.0 Main report**

##### **3.1 Key Issues**

Implementation of both the Shared Space & Services (SSS) capital and programming element is continuing on a phased basis with current work focused on Springfield Dam. Monthly management meetings to monitor the level of risk, progress and status of the project are ongoing – Appendix I Risk Tracker and Appendix II RAG report refers.

3.2 A very successful media campaign, including a video, to launch Forth Meadow Community Greenway took place on 20 October 2020 with extensive coverage on social media including BBC NI, Newsletter online, Belfast Live, Belfast Times, U105, MSN online. Newspaper coverage also included Daily Mirror, Newsletter and Shankill Mirror. A publication incorporating a map and details of the key sections is currently being developed and will be circulated to key stakeholders at the end of November. Appendix V refers.

#### **Capital Works – Forth Meadow Community Greenway**

##### **3.3 Springfield Dam**

Works are nearing completion however due to material shortages, the handover date has been delayed until the end of November 2020.

- 3.4 A closed call for applications for support under the Social Value Clause in the Springfield Dam contract was issued to 10 voluntary community organisations. 3 applications were received and assessed. Awards to two organisations to provide outreach work to address anti social behaviour have been approved and are progressing. The third application failed on eligibility. Support under the Social Value Clause will be for the period October 2020 to January 2021.

3.5 **PEACE IV Network Scheme – Capital Works**

The assessment process to appoint a contractor under a single party framework is now at the final stages and approvals from SEUPB will then be progressed. The proposed schedule for works is to commence with Section 1 Glencairn to Ballygomartin and then to Section 3 Springfield Road and Falls Park in 2021.

3.6 **Programming**

Implementation of programming aspects has progressed where possible.

3.7 **Pilot Youth Civic Education Project**

Final attendance records and evaluation have been submitted and the final payment is being processed, after which the project can then be closed.

3.8 **Lanark Way Fitness Project**

Clonard Neighbourhood Development Partnership, as project lead, have submitted the required attendance records and attitudinal surveys. A project evaluation is due before final payment can be processed and the project can be closed.

3.9 **Dialogue & Engagement Project**

A Webinar event to share the results of the recent online survey took place on 21 October. Participants had further opportunity to contribute to key questions on the use and management of the Greenway. 251 people responded to the online survey, 81% (204 people) identifying as local residents and 83% (209 people) saying that local residents should be involved in the management of the Greenway. Further details on the survey results on the use and management of the Greenway are outlined in Appendix III and IV. With ongoing restrictions around COVID 19, the final stage of the project is to be agreed along with completion of the final report/action plan and it is proposed that MDL is invited to the next meeting of the SCP to present the final report.

**3.10 Shared History, Heritage and Identity Content / Narratives for Shared Space**

Following a negotiated tender approach, approved by SEUPB, a contract award to a consortium of Mediation NI and the Osborne Partnership is progressing.

**3.11 Shared Space Volunteer Training**

Approval is being progressed with SEUPB to award contracts to Sustrans for the delivery of cycle and walking lead training.

Feedback from interested parties on the Ambassadors, Heritage and Nature Guides is being sought in order to determine the next steps.

**3.12 Springfield Dam activities**

The ever changing government restrictions have impacted the development and implementation of an animation programme to mark the opening of the Dam and encourage community usage. Discussions are ongoing with Council's Parks and Community Services department, community organisations and external providers regarding potential programme activity

**3.13 Financial and Resource Implications**

PEACE IV costs are recoverable from SEUPB, as the funding body, subject to eligibility of expenditure. Discussions with the key stakeholders regarding wider community benefit and contributions to the project are being progressed and prioritised.

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

The draft plan has been equality screened and discussed at the Equality Consultative Forum on 13 May 2015."

The Partnership agreed that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee be recommended to note the information contained within the report and agreed that MDL be invited to the next meeting of the Partnership to present its final report in respect of the management of the Greenway.

**Update on Peace IV - Building Positive Relations**

The Programme Manager provided the Partnership with an update on the progress to date in respect of the Building Positive Relations (BPR) under the theme of the PEACE IV Local Action Plan. She referred specifically to a number of projects including:

- BPR1-Cross Community Area Networks;
- BPR2- Creative Communities project;
- BPR3- Transform for Change Project;
- BPR4- Belfast and the World (BATW); and
- BPR5- Supporting Connected Communities.

As part of BPR1, the Programme Manager advised that all CCAN areas had been identified and approved and the project team had received positive responses from all key players within the CCAN areas in relation to participant recruitment. The ITT for the Good Relations Programme was anticipated to commence early 2021, subject to SEUPB consideration and approval prior to a public tender exercise. It was noted that the ITT for the Place Visioning Programme was currently under NIHE internal review.

Under BPR2, it was reported that the Arts/Heritage residency programme was anticipated to commence during November in the following areas: Woodvale/Ardoynes; Shankill/Clonard; Carlisle Circus; Divis/Lower Shankill; Football thematic cluster between Albert Foundry and St Malachy's Football Club.

The remaining 3 clusters had moved to a thematic basis, SEUPB approved, Inner East-East Belfast Women's groups; Colin/Dunmurry/Suffolk- LGBTQ+; Village/Broadway. Proposal had been submitted to the SEUPB seeking it to consider working with Cross community group of students from Malone Integrated College. It was anticipated that this programme would commence in Spring 2021.

Under BPR3, it was reported that 12 courses across 10 interface clusters had completed in year 1 with 128 participants verified as completed to date. Year 2 had commenced during mid-September with 110 currently registered in the following Cluster areas, Inner East/Short Strand; Lower Ormeau/Market; Falls/Shankill; Suffolk/Lenadoon; Upper Springfield Rd; Colin and North Belfast. The 7 identified Cluster areas in North Belfast had merged to create one large group due to the low uptake across all clusters. A second North Belfast Cluster was due to commence mid-November with 14 registered to date. The Partnership was advised that securing participation from Council staff and statutory sectors had increased, however, representation from political sectors had remained low which presented a continued challenge.

The Programme Manager reported that the delivery of collaborative project workshop, which was led by the Council, had been impacted by the pandemic. Workshops were currently underway in the Lower Oldpark/Manor Street; Falls/Shankill; Suffolk/Lenadoon; Crumlin rd/Ardoynes/Glenbryn. Efforts were ongoing to try and re-energise participation in Village/Westlink; Lower Ormeau/Market. Inner East/Short Strand's project (Kids Zone/Urban garden at this interface).

The Partnership noted that unfortunately the organisation of local community engagement events, citywide networking events and a cross border/UK study visit were all on hold due to the current government restrictions.

Under BPR4, it was reported that: Year 2 (2019) participant group (24 ppl) and Year 3 cohorts (Shankill Women's Centre Health and Wellbeing group (26ppl) and Ballynaveigh Community Development Association (14ppl), these were due to complete mid-November 2020. A third year 3 cohort were currently being sourced and it was anticipated that it would commence early 2021. Officers were hopeful that the organisation of two plays (commemorating Peace Day and Partition) would be able to be held during Spring 2021, this would be subject to the government guidelines in place at the time of the proposed events. The Partnership noted that the Project Co-Ordinator was currently liaising with TPM and BCC Good Relations staff in relation to centenary events in 2021.

The Partnership was advised that 38 participants had been successfully selected to participate on the EU trip to Belgium in late March. Council staff were currently finalising the arrangements and a pre-visit workshop had been scheduled to be held on the evening of

10th March in Belfast City Council. Again, these proposals would be subject to the Covid restrictions and government guidelines in place at this stage.

Under BPR5 – Supporting Connected Communities - LINC'S Projects, the officer advised that 34 core participants were currently active with 64 newly recruited participant's pre and during Covid -19. The delivery agent continued to engage with participants on a daily basis.

BPR5 – Traveller element of Supporting Connected Communities. The Programme Manager reminded the Partnership that this element of work was managed by the Council. She reported that a public recruitment exercise was currently underway for the recruitment of a Traveller Support Officer and it was hoped that the postholder would be in place before the end of 2020.

BPR5 – Roma elements of Supporting Connected Communities. The Partnership noted that assessment of the public tender, which had closed on 5th October, was currently underway.

Members welcomed the work that had progressed and stated that they recognised the difficulties that the current restrictions were having on the planned delivery of the projects. The Chair, on behalf of the Partnership, thanked the staff for their ongoing efforts and continued commitment to programme delivery.

### **Update on Good Relations Action Plan 2020/2021**

The Partnership considered the undernoted report:

#### **"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

- 1.1 Council received a Letter of Offer from The Executive Office (TEO) towards the 20/21 District Council Good Relations Programme (DCGRP) based on the action plan submitted to TEO in February 2020.**
- 1.2 Subsequently, a draft Revised Good Relations Action Plan for 2020/21 was approved by the Council in August 2020 and was noted by the Partnership at its October meeting.**
- 1.3 It was understood by Council and TEO that given the current environment, this would likely be the first of a series of revisions to the Belfast City Council Good Relations Action Plan in line with the direction of travel agreed by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 19 June 2020 and approved at Full Council on 1 July 2020. Further revisions to the plan will take in to account emerging community need as part of overall community recovery across Belfast and will be brought forward in due course in that context.**

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

##### **2.1**

- Members are requested to recommend to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee that a budget of up to 10k be set aside for a diversionary programme in North Belfast**



and that authority on spend on the programme be delegated to the Director of Neighbourhood Services or his nominee.

**3.0 Main report**

**Current Position**

- 3.1 Council submits an annual Good Relations Action Plan for consideration by TEO in February of each year; TEO then issues a Letter of Offer based on identified need in each Council area and the level of resource available. A Letter of Offer was received for approximately £570,000 on 15th June 2020. This will provide a total allocation of approximately £740,000 for the action plan which required amendment to reflect the level of resource available.
- 3.2 At the last meeting of the Partnership, Members endorsed the Council's approach to Community Provision Recovery and agreed that the budgets for Tranche 2 Good Relations Small Grants Scheme and St Patrick's Day be allocated to ongoing community provision recovery funding programme.
- 3.3 Members were also advised of a number of projects which had been funded through the Plan which were developed in response to community need, assist in addressing social and economic recovery and meet the priorities under T:BUC..

**Diversionary Programme – North Belfast**

- 3.4 The North Area Support Team has been engaging with a number of stakeholders across the area and incidents of anti-social behavior have been significant. These incidents have potential to raise community tensions in areas which are situated near interfaces or contested spaces. Support is being sought for a programme that will use a range of outdoor facilities to deliver activities and engagement involving sports coaching and workshops with young people who are at risk of becoming involved in ASB. This programme will be targeted towards young people from areas in north Belfast where there have been high levels of ongoing antisocial behavior such as Duncairn, Tigers Bay and New Lodge. This will include sports activities in football pitches and outdoor play areas owned by Belfast City Council and other sporting organizations as well as group work which will seek to build relationships and highlight the impacts and consequences of involvement in this type of behavior.
- 3.5 In recent months, different areas in north Belfast have experienced sustained high levels of antisocial behavior. A range of statutory organizations and community partners are working together to try to address this issue and several summer programmes were delivered. The situation has been more challenging because of the current COVID 19 crisis which has impacted on the availability of centre based activities for young people as organizations seek to deliver services in line with changing government restrictions.

- 3.6 There is a continued need to deliver services from November 20-March 21 to provide ongoing engagement opportunities. Given the restrictions on numbers who can engage in centre based activities, the provision of activity in more outdoor settings with fewer young people in each setting has been identified as an approach that will help to meet current gaps. This approach will seek to engage in or near where ASB activity is happening. Costs requested will be for facility hire, coaching/training and refreshments. A budget of up to £10,000 is requested to support this work across north Belfast. This will include a range of different areas in north which will allow the flexibility to deliver services in different areas as required.
- 3.7 In developing this programme, cognisance will be taken of the work being undertaken through the Education Authority, voluntary youth organisations and that supported through the DPCSPs to ensure there is no duplication.
- 3.8 This project fits within a number of TBUC priorities such as Children and Young People, Shared and Safe Communities and can be accommodated through Planned Intervention or the Interfaces Programme.

#### **Financial & Resource Implications**

**This request can be accommodated within the existing budget.**

#### **Equality or Good Relations Implications and Rural Needs assessment**

**Screening and a rural needs assessment has taken place for the Good Relations Strategy. The councils' District Council Good Relations Action Plan is one element of this strategy."**

In addition, the Good Relations Manager also advised the Partnership of the following matters:

Clean Space and Green Initiative – the officer sought permission to keep this in the budget for the forthcoming year, to a maximum of £5k.

Citywide Initiatives – the Partnership was advised that citywide festivals and events promoting good relations work would proceed online and she sought approval for a budget of £5k to be set aside to deliver this programme of work and that authority be delegated to the Director of Neighbourhood Services or his nominee.

The Partnership was also asked to note that Blue Zebra had been appointed to undertake the Strategic Project listed under the BCC4 Civic Engagement and Learning Programme. In progressing to the recovery phase, this would capture the experience and learning from Phase 1 of the Council's response, in order to assist it in understanding how the learning could contribute to peacebuilding and in delivering appropriate and effective interventions moving forward as a City.

She concluded by advising that the Council would be running an online event to commemorate the 2021 Holocaust Memorial Day, further details would follow in due course.

Members of the Partnership recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that:

- a budget of up to £10k be set aside for a diversionary programme in North Belfast and a further budget of £5k for citywide initiatives aimed at promoting good relations work and to assist with the move to online delivery. Authority in regard to the funding for the programmes be delegated to the Director of Neighbourhood Services or his nominee; and
- it agree a budget of £5k be set aside in relation to the Clean Space and Green Initiative.

### **Request to update Refugee Transition Document**

The Good Relations Manager advised that it was proposed that the Refugee Transition Guide be updated. She advised that the Refugee Asylum Forum, in 2011, had previously identified an information gap relating to the provision of advice for people who claimed asylum and were subsequently granted refugee status. Once a refugee was given a positive decision by the Home Office to stay in Northern Ireland, they had 28 days to leave the supported accommodation which had been provided to them as an asylum seeker. After 28 days not only must they leave their supported accommodation but in addition the benefits they received as an asylum seeker stopped. It was recognised that this situation could leave many people in a very difficult situation and even destitute unless they received quick and appropriate advice.

In response to this gap, the Council had commissioned the Law Centre to develop a guide which included comprehensive information in respect of the following:

- **Becoming a refugee:** UK law and practice as it related to those granted refugee status, humanitarian protection, discretionary leave or indefinite leave to remain;
- **Finding somewhere to live:** Information on temporary and permanent housing options, rights at each stage and how to access them;
- **Working:** Information regarding permission to work and advice on preparing for and accessing employment;
- **Accessing benefits:** The rights, entitlements and welfare benefits people are entitled to once they are granted permission to stay, including an easy to follow checklist documenting what people are entitled to and how to access such entitlements;
- **Family Reunification:** Information and advice on applying for family reunification;
- **Settling into life in Belfast:** Cultural and factual information on aspects of Northern Irish life that would assist with integration in Belfast;
- **Useful contacts:** Description and directory of other services / sources of information, including online guides specific to people granted refugee status, humanitarian protection, discretionary leave or indefinite leave to remain; and
- **Personal actions:** A personal information section for actions to be taken by the user and his /her advisor.

The guide had been used by advice workers and refugees and it was recognised as a model of good practice by the Department of work and Pensions. It was widely used and disseminated and had helped support the integration and inclusion of Refugees.

The Partnership was advised that the guide had been updated in 2017 and reprinted, however, lately organisations supporting refugees had indicated that a further update and reprint was now overdue to take account of changes in Universal Credit and wider support services for Refugees. It was felt that given the digital exclusion encountered by many in the Refugee community that a printed version was necessary.

The Good Relations Manager explained that, based on the previous guide and costs for print and translation, that a budget of £15,000 would be required. The Officer advised that this could be incorporated into the existing DCGRP budget.

A Member welcomed the fact that the guide was to be updated and she reiterated what a valuable a tool it was, not only to the refugee community but also to support organisations. She suggested that due to the fluid situation as a result of both the Covid 19 pandemic and Brexit that a smaller print run be undertaken initially which would enable the guide to be updated. Whilst she noted that a print run was necessary for those without digital access, she felt that a greater emphasis needed to be put into incorporating updated information more regularly, particularly in relation to changes to the Universal Credit system and felt that any such changes could be incorporated into the online version. In addition, she highlighted that many of the support organisations could access the guide digitally.

Members of the Partnership recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it approve the update, reprint, translation and digital upload of the Refugee Guide along with the associated expenditure taking into account the Member's comments.

### **Motion - Racism Free Zone**

The Partnership was advised that at the Council meeting on 1st October, the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Canavan and seconded by Councillor Garrett, had, in accordance with Standing Order 13(f) been referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for its consideration:

*"That this Council recognises that racism is a scourge across this society. This Council further recognises the positive contribution made: to society by those from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds; deplores the discrimination Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities face regularly; condemns racism in all its forms; and calls on this Council to work together with the sector; local BAME representative groups; schools and colleges; private businesses; and public enterprises to ensure that this Council area becomes a racism free zone."*

The Committee had considered and adopted the motion at its meeting on 23rd October and had agreed that a report on the issues raised within the motion be considered by the Shared City Partnership.

The Good Relations Manager advised that officers were still preparing the report and she asked the Members to note that it would be submitted to a future meeting of the Partnership for consideration and discussion.

In the absence of Councillor Magennis, who had been unable to attend the meeting, the Chairman relayed to the Partnership a statement which he had forwarded detailing his support for the motion.

The Partnership noted that a report in respect of the Motion would be submitted to a future meeting.

Chairperson

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## PEACE IV LOCAL ACTION PLAN – PROJECT MODIFICATION REQUESTS – OCTOBER 20

## Appendix 2

CYP Project	Delivery Agent	Achievement to Date	Modifications Approved to Date	Current Delivery Status	Modification Required / Rationale	Reduction in Hours	Reduction in Participants	Extension in Time frame	Budgetary Implications
CYP 1 Tech Connects Afterschool	GIGA Training	133/1152 completed  Engaged with schools for commencement in Dec 20	Moved to online activity	Due to Commence XMAS 20	As activity is fully online Due to low take up request is to extend extension to October 22	N/A	N/A	Contract is currently to Apr 22 A 6 month extension to Oct 22 would reduce pressure to achieve targets	None Extension will realign targets and payment schedule within existing contract
CYP 1 Tech Connects – Tech Camps	GIGA Training	As Above + further 13 participants currently engaged in online activity end Oct 20	Moved to online activity	Due to Commence end of Oct	As activity is fully online Due to low take up request is to extend extension to October 22	N/A	N/A	Contract is currently to Apr 22 A 6 month extension to Oct 22 would reduce pressure to achieve targets	None Extension will realign targets and payment schedule within existing contract
CYP 1 Tech Connects – Insights project	BMC	As Above	Moved to online activity	Due to Commence Nov 20	As activity is fully online Due to low take up request is to extend extension to October 22	N/A	N/A	Contract is currently to Apr 22 A 6 month extension to Oct 22 would reduce pressure to achieve targets	None Extension will realign targets and payment schedule within existing contract
CYP 2 Playing Our Part  Page 383	Active Communities Network (ACN)	153 CYP /640 + 30 parents completed + 180 recruited for 20 (Yr 2)	Some online activity approved Halloween Camp to enable condensed activity  Realignment of KPIs Yr1 (18/19) now 153 from 230 Yr2 (19/20) now 187 from 190 Yr3 (Dec 20-Mar 21) now 160 / 130 Yr4 Dec 21 now 140 from 90	Groups currently engaged in project via online activity.  5 day camp of Condensed activity for Halloween.	Request to - reduce contact hours and condense activity into 5 day camps/ weekend activity.  Residential activity may replace camps, subject to restriction.  Required to achieve contact hours and enable smaller group sizes	Reduction in Contact Hrs  Young People from 44 to 26 hrs  Parents from 30 to 24 hrs	No	Extend timeframes for achievement of KPI  Yr 2 KPI date from Dec 19 to Dec 20 Yr 3 KPI date from Dec 20 to Mar 21 Yr 4 KPI now Dec 21  No extended timeframe required Delivery Partner has indicated that project will be delivered within existing contract timeframe.	None – Payment schedule will be refined to realign with revised targets  Any savings from reduced contact hours is offset by smaller group sizes, increased facilitation, larger venue / transport to enable social distancing
CYP 3 On the Right Track Sports Project	Leisure / Sports inc OCN Training via ACN	533 / 1800 completed OCN  153 currently recruited and participating on project  Current programmes are at a much lower capacity due to Covid 19 Impacts	Reduction in contact hours  Cross border residential activity ceased temporarily.  Flexibility of replacing residential activity with day activities / trips  Current extension to Apr 22	Progressing in small pods for OCN delivery & replaced residential activity, with day activity.	Request to - Reduce contact hours to 26 hrs for all participant groups (with flexibility for 80% achievement) - Reduce participant numbers by 722to 1,078 - Extended delivery timeframe to September 2022  Reduced uptake / smaller group sizes necessary  Flexibility regarding day activities	Reduce contact hours to 26 hrs for all participants groups (80% achievement)	Reduction in participant numbers from 1800 to 1078  Need to realign annual KPIs  Participants; 893 Coaches 91 Young champions 94	Extended delivery timeframe from Apr 22 to Sept 22	None – Direct Delivery where costs on as incurred basis.  Extended delivery will be met within existing budgets.  Cost savings of residential activity may be offset by increased costs in day activities / transport / venues  Underspend in equipment costs may be utilised to extend programme delivery to proposed Sept 2022 end date

CYP 3 Personal Change	Extern	27/42 participants current recruited & participating (Yr 1 =12 / Yr 2 = 15)	Reduction in contact hours for Year 2 participants from 305 to 265 hours	Progressing in small face to face groups & 1-1 Mentoring.	Request to - Reduce contact hours for Yr 1 hrs due to being unable to continue activity and deliver residential activity to achieve required contact hours.  Some activity requires smaller group sizes	Reduce contact hours for Yr 1 participants from 305 to 265 hrs	No	No extended timeframe required. Delivery Partner has indicated that project will be delivered within existing contract timeframe	None  Costs savings from reduced contact hours is offset by increased facilitation and 1-1 mentoring.
CYP 4 Young Advocates	Co Operation Ireland	53/80 participants completed activity	Cohort 3 campaign moved to online activity/survey	Have been liaising with community partners to recruit new participants.	Request to: - Pause project delivery until February 21 - Condense contact hours into residential activity - Relocate cross border conference to Belfast in Sep 21  Modification is required to maintain original context of project with face to face activity and bringing groups together.	Not Required	Not Required  Recommended activity will comprise of condensed contact hours into residential activity  Realignment of deliverables – Cross border conference to be moved to Belfast Sept 21	No extended timeframe required.  Delivery Partner has indicated that project will be delivered within existing contract timeframe by Dec 21	None  Payment based on achievement of outputs as such schedule will be refined to realign with revised targets.
CYP 5 Local Area Networks	NIHE	263 / 900 participants recruited to project. Level of engagement with participants being confirmed	<b>Submitted 13/10/20</b>	Finalising budget to extend programme to Sept/ Dec 22 if feasible, & dependent on BCC being extended.	Request to - extend delivery period for 6 months to Sept 2022 - reduce target hours for core participants - amend target number of participants from 900 to 720 - reduce target hours for peer participants - allow flexibility to deliver elements in a condensed format  Curtailed of government restrictions has impacted the establishment of new networks, restricted the recruitment of new participants and the completion of cross-community contact hours  No appetite from participants to complete online	Reduce target hours for core participants from 200 hours to 160 hours Reduce target hours for peer participants from 30 to 26 hrs	Reduce target number of participants from 900 to 720	Extend delivery period for 6 months to Sept 2022  Allow flexibility to deliver elements in a condensed format	None Extended timeframe and all activity to be delivered within allocated budget with no additional funding required

BPR Projects	Delivery Agent	Achievement to Date	Modifications Approved to Date	Current Delivery Status / Activity of next 6-9 months	Modification Required / Rationale	Reduction in Hours	Reduction in Participants	Extension in Time frame	Budgetary Implications
BPR1 Cross Community Area Networks (CCAN)	NIHE	0/144 core participants 0/900 attendees Engaged with Groups to participate in project  Progressing procurement  Online recruitment discussions West Belfast 1 & 2 with key residents/ comm organisations  Exploratory discussions underway in North, East, South and South West with key residents/ comm organisations	Refined CCAN area	Appoint Good Relations delivery agent  Establish 6 CCANs  Recruit core participants  Delivery of good relations activity  Commence empathy audit process across 6 networks	Reduce participants from 1044 to 840 including Core participants from 144 to 120 Reduce wider participants from 900 to 720 Reduce contact hours for wider participants from 26 to 22 hours. Extend delivery timeframe from March 22 to Sept 22  <b>Covid 19 Impacts:</b> - Essential services prioritised by NIHE resulting in procurement delays. - Government restrictions has impacted F2F engagement with groups - Community groups /have suspended activities - Venues for community activity are closed.	Reduce contact hours for wider participants from 26 to 22 hours.	Reduce core participants from 144 (24 per CCAN) to 120 (20 per network)  Reduce wider participants in Place Shaping Programme from 900 (150 per CCAN) to 720 (120 per CCAN)	Extend delivery timeframe from March 22 to Sept 22	None Extension will realign targets and payment schedule within existing Partner Agreement.
BPR2 Creative Communities	BCC – Tourism, Culture, Arts & Heritage	0 / 264 participants 0 / 3600 attendees  Artists-in-Residence for 3 Cluster Areas : - Clonard / Mid Shankill - Carlisle Circus - Woodvale / Ardoyne  Procurement processes underway for 2 cluster areas:  - Divis / Lower Shankill - Football Thematic Cluster  Discussions with 3 clusters areas - Schools Thematic Cluster - East / South East Belfast - LGBTQ+ Thematic Cluster	Thematic Cluster agreed  Reduced participant nos from 400 to 264  Contact hours reduced from 90 to 60 hours  Extended delivery until Sept 22	Cluster Steering Groups liaise with appointed artist to co-design delivery timetable.  Participant recruitment and initial design work with established clusters due to commence by end of Oct	Extend Delivery timeframe to Sept 22	N/A		Extend Delivery timeframe to Sept 22	None – Direct Delivery where costs on as incurred basis.  Extended delivery will be met within existing budgets.  Realignment of targets / KPIs
BPR3 Transform For Change	NICVA	128 (Yr 1) /934 participants completed. 56 participants commenced (Yr 2) + 54 registered /EOI (end Oct 20)	Moved to online activity 30 hours made up of 20 hours online delivery and 10 hours participant guided learning	Delivery of 7 TLP's courses from Sept '20 – Jan'21 with a further 18 TLP's planned until Dec' 21.	Request to : Revised payment terms – management costs to be covered regardless of outputs.	Flexibility to achieve 70% of required contact hours – 21 / 30	480 participants to be achieved by 2021	None	Requested realigned payment terms

		<p>Collaborative projects resumed although reduced interest</p> <p>Kids Zone in East Belfast Cluster completed</p> <p>Events and trips remain on hold.</p> <p>External evaluation – S3 Solutions progressing.</p>			Reduce of 304 participants to 630.		Estimated total completion of 630 thereby reduction in participants of 304.		
BPR4 Belfast and the World	Corrymeela	<p>77/ 200 completed</p> <p>Yr 2/3 63 recruited.</p> <p>Online activity: 38 active; 22 mailings as no access to technology</p> <p>Engaged with virtual tours completed.</p>	<p>Reduce contact hours from 33 to 26 hrs</p> <p>Extend delivery of Yr 2 cohort to Nov 20</p>	<p>Trip to Dublin with Shankill Women's and Ballynafeigh cohorts subject to restrictions.</p> <p>Ligoniel group. Residential/ group session. Posting sessional material should face-to-face not be permissible due to limited access to technology.</p> <p>Ballynafeigh group: Group session. Will move to online and/or postal delivery if not suitable.</p> <p>Further promotion of open call for further cohort– low interest to date. Delivered on line.</p> <p>Focus grp for Wave Men's group to be organised. Will seek evaluation feedback online and/or postal should face-to-face not be suitable.</p> <p>Yr 4- promotion and recruitment. Will move to online delivery should restrictions impact on ability to convene for group work sessions.</p>	<p>Request to</p> <p>- reduce participant targets from 200 to 190 specifically relating to Yr 4 (2021) participant numbers from 50 to 40.</p>	N/A	<p>Reduce participant numbers for Yr 4 (2021) from 50 to 40</p>	<p>Extend timeframes for achievement of KPI</p> <p>Yr 2 KPI date from Dec 19 to Jan 21</p> <p>Yr 3 KPI date from Dec 20 to Mar 21</p> <p>Yr 4 KPI now Dec 21</p> <p>No extended timeframe required Delivery Partner has indicated that project will be delivered within existing contract timeframe.</p>	<p>No budgetary impact – realignment of Corrymeela internal budget to cover additional co-ordinator time of ½ day per week - costs of £3744</p>
BPR4 EU Study Visit	BCC – PEACE IV Team	<p>0/80 completed</p> <p>38 participants recruited</p>	<p>Deferred activity until Government Restrictions enables safe travel</p>	<p>Pre visit planning is completed.</p> <p>Ongoing engagement with cohorts</p>	<p>Request to extend delivery to Sept 22</p>	N/A	N/A	Extend to Sept 22	None – Direct Delivery where costs on as incurred basis.

				Monitoring Government Restrictions						Extended delivery will be met within existing budgets subject to a full budgetary review.  Extension will realign targets
BPR5 LINCS	Northern Ireland Alternatives	34 core participants active – 64 new participants recruited. 80 target		<p>Delivery agent continues to engage with core participants on a daily basis mainly through phone calls to provide ongoing support.</p> <p>NPF meetings held monthly. Delivery of Dialogue/Civic engagement/training in small group sessions</p> <p>Delivery of two Intercultural Family programmes online</p> <p>Delivery of one Shared Learning Seminar on line</p>		<p>Request to: Amend original target = 80 core participants for 3 year @35 hours pa - 105 hours to annual cohorts of 80 participants per year x 3 years =240 participants @26 hours per annum?</p> <p>Reduce original target of 8 Intercultural Family Programmes per annum: 200 attendees to 2 Intercultural Family Programmes per annum: 40 attendees (20 per programme)</p> <p>Reduce original target = 4 Shared learning Seminar's per year: 133 attendees with proposed new target = 1 Shared Learning Seminar: 20 attendees (20 per seminar)</p> <p>Difficulty engaging newcomers for long period of time due to priorities of housing / employment and transient nature.</p> <p>Government restrictions impacting the delivery of family programmes and shared learning – smaller scale events are required.</p>	<p>Reduction from 105 to 35 hrs per participant</p> <p>Realignment of contact hours across 3 different cohorts</p>	<p>Increase participant nos from 80 to 240</p> <p>Reduce attendees from 200 to 40</p>	<p>No extended timeframe required Delivery Partner has indicated that project will be delivered within existing contract timeframe.</p>	<p>None</p> <p>Modifications will realign targets and payment schedule within existing contract.</p>
BPR5 Roma	To be appointed	Procurement process under way.	N/A	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
BPR5 Traveller	BCC – Officer to be appointed	Recruitment underway	N/A	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
BPR Cinema-tography	Morrow Comms	<p>26/65 Social Media Clips</p> <p>Ongoing filming of activity for project / thematic films</p>	<p>Additional complementary services of 100 photographic stills and voiceover for SSS project.</p>	<p>BCC &amp; Delivery Partners to identify suitable filming opportunities.</p> <p>Likely to be reduction in filming due to reduced activity</p>		<p>Realign KPIs and Payment Schedule</p> <p>Extension to delivery timeframe to Sept/Dec 22 to be explored</p>	<p>Not Applicable to this contract</p>	<p>Not Applicable to this contract</p>	<p>To align with project delivery - Extension to Sept 22 to be explored</p>	<p>No budgetary impact – delivery to be within existing contract budget.</p>

SSS Project	Delivery Agent	Achievement to Date	Modifications Approved to Date	Current Delivery Status	Modification Required / Rationale	Reduction in Hours	Reduction in Participants	Extension in Time frame	Budgetary Implications
SSS Dialogue & Engagement	MDL	Virtual Workshops 1:1 Engagement Sessions Mentimeter Survey Preliminary Findings Webinar Presentation	Contract Start Date deferred to June 20	Ongoing engagement to address gaps Discussions with design team / contractor / physical programmes Identify best practice Drafting of Action Plan / Final report	Site visit is not possible – replace with online activity /survey / webinar  Potential contract extension for complementary services to Mar 22	N/A	N/A	Provision of complementary services may require extension in timeframe to Mar 22.	10% increase in contract value may be necessary. Additional cost will be met within existing budgets.
SSS Volunteering	Sustrans	Contract award being finalised	N/A	Due to Commence end of Oct	None at present. Amendments may be necessary to facilitate social distancing / online activity to be explored	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
SSS Intergenerational Project / Interpretative Panel	Mediation NI	As Above	Moved to online activity	Due to Commence Nov 20	As Above	Moved to online activity	Due to Commence Nov 20	As Above	Moved to online activity
SSS Capital – Springfield Dam	Quinns	Construction works at Springfield Dam	Demobilise / Remobilisation of works due to Covid. Compensation Events with additional costs of £25K approx. Extended completion timeframe now end Nov 20	Construction works ongoing	Note extended completion timeframe – Nov 20	N/A	N/A	Extended completion Nov 20	None –
SSS Capital – Greenway	Contractor to be appointed	Assessment process is ongoing with CPD involvement	N/A	N/A	Request to extend delivery to December 22  Delays in appointing contractors	N/A	N/A	Extend the delivery timeframe to December 22	None – All costs will be met within existing budget allocation





<b>Subject:</b>	Equality and Diversity - Equality Screening and Rural Needs Outcome Report - Q2 2020-21
<b>Date:</b>	20th November 2020
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Walsh, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Sarah Williams, Governance & Compliance Manager

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To provide the Committee with a summary of equality screenings and rural needs impact assessments for Quarter 2 - July to September 2020.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the report.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><u><b>Key Issues</b></u></p> <p>One of the main requirements of the Council's Equality Scheme is to carry out the screening of new and revised policies. This allows any impacts related to equality of opportunity and/or good relations to be identified and addressed.</p>

3.2	The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland also recommends that, once a policy has been screened and it has a major potential to impact on equality of opportunity and good relations, then it should be subjected to an EQIA. An EQIA is a thorough and systematic analysis of a policy, whether that policy is formal or informal and, irrespective of the scope of that policy or the size of the public authority. The primary function of an EQIA is to determine the extent of any differential impact of a policy upon the section 75 categories and to determine if the differential impact is adverse. An EQIA can assist in decision-making and improve policy making by adding to the evidence base available.
3.3	In addition, the Council has a statutory duty under the Rural Needs (NI) Act 2016 to consider rural needs in the development of new policies, plans or strategies or in any service design/delivery decisions and is required to ensure that annual reporting returns are submitted to DAERA.
3.4	An equality screening and rural needs impact assessment template is completed by the relevant officer, in collaboration with the Equality and Diversity Unit. On a regular basis, the Unit collates all completed templates into a screening outcome report and publishes onto the Council's website along with the relevant completed templates. The current screening outcome report for July to September 2020 is attached.
3.5	<b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b>  None
3.6	<b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b>  The actions outlined contribute to our legal compliance regarding the promotion of equality, good relations and rural needs.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Document Attached</b>
	Screening Outcome and Rural Needs Impact Assessment Report – Quarter 2 2020-21



**Belfast**  
**City Council**

**Equality Screening Outcome Report and Rural Needs Impact  
Assessment**

**Q2 – July to September 2020**

## Introduction

### Legislation – An Overview

#### Section 75 Statutory Equality Duties

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires the Council, when carrying out its functions in relation to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between nine categories of persons, namely:

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

Without prejudice to its obligations above, the council must also have regards to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

The Council's Revised Equality Scheme was formally approved by the Equality Commission in March 2015. The revised Scheme outlines how we propose to fulfil our statutory duties under Section 75. Within the Scheme, the council gave a commitment to apply the screening methodology below to all new and revised policies and where necessary and appropriate to subject new policies to further equality impact assessment.

- What is the likely impact of equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy/proposal, for each of the Section 75 equality categories?
- Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within Section 75 equality categories?
- To what extent is the policy/proposal likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

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

In keeping with the Council's commitments in its Equality Scheme, the Council has applied the above screening criteria to new policies and proposals. Screening identifies policies that are likely to have an impact on equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

Screening identifies the impact of the policy/proposal as major, minor or none.

- If major – an Equality Impact Assessment may be carried out.
- If minor – consider mitigation or alternative policy and screen out.
- If none – screen out and give reasons.
- Ongoing screening – for strategies/policies that are to be put in place through a series of stages – screen at various stages during implementation.

The council also committed within its Revised Equality Scheme to prepare and publish for information regular reports on its screening exercises. This is screening report providing details on all screenings undertaken from the period July to September 2020.

### **Rural Needs Impact Assessments**

The Council also has a statutory duty under the Rural Needs (Northern Ireland) Act 2016 to consider rural needs in the development of new policies, plans or strategies or in any service design/delivery decisions. The Council must therefore engage with rural stakeholders in relation to policy development when it is relevant and appropriate. The Equality and Diversity Unit is responsible for reporting to the Strategic, Policy and Resources Committee and for ensuring that annual reporting returns are submitted to DAERA.

## Consultation

The development of new policies and proposals will be supported by effective engagement processes to ensure that staff, service users and all interested parties are fully involved.

Planning for, and delivering safe and cost effective services requires close collaboration at many levels.

If you have any queries about this document, and its availability in alternative formats (including Braille, disk and audio cassette, and in other languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English) then please contact:

Lisa McKee  
Equality and Diversity Unit  
Belfast City Council  
City Hall  
Belfast  
BT1 5GS  
Direct Line 02890 270555  
or 028 90 320202 ext 6310  
email: [equality@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:equality@belfastcity.gov.uk) or [McKeeL@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:McKeeL@belfastcity.gov.uk)

## Screening Outcome

The screening outcomes are outlined in the table below. Three possible outcomes are recorded:

If **Major** – an Equality Impact Assessment may be carried out. **EQIA** - subject to further scrutiny under Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 to determine the impact upon those directly affected, which in turn will require informal and formal consultation with a wide range of stakeholders.

If **Minor** – consider mitigation or alternative policy and screen out.

If **None** – screen out and give reasons.



## Screening Outcome Options

Major= In

Minor= Out with mitigation

None= Out without mitigation

## Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs)

We have also added for notation purposes details of those EQIAs which are currently being undertaken by the Council.

## Rural Needs Impact Assessment Options

Does the policy, plan, strategy or service design/delivery impact on the social and economic needs of people in rural areas?

## Belfast City Council Equality Screening Outcome Report and Rural Needs Impact Assessment

This report includes published screenings and Rural Needs Impact Assessments for the period July to September 2020. Copies are available on request.

Description of Policy/Proposal	Rural Needs Impact Assessment	ECNI Screening Decision and Contact
Report it App	This App will be used by Cleansing staff to report missed bin collections and will improve service delivery for all residents of Belfast, both urban and rural	Screened Out – Mitigating Actions (minor impacts) Contact: Mark Challis ext 3764
Strategic Sites Assessment	This project will not impact on the social and economic needs of those living in rural areas	Screened Out – No EQIA necessary (no impacts) Contact: Simon Rees ext 2544
Development Brief: Inner North West – Northern Cluster Sites	This development brief relates to sites in Belfast City Centre and will not impact on those living in rural areas	Screened Out –No EQIA necessary (no impacts) Contact: Simon Rees ext 2544

<b>Description of Policy/Proposal</b>	<b>Rural Needs Impact Assessment</b>	<b>ECNI Screening Decision and Contact</b>
Good Relations Strategy	This strategy will apply to residents living in both urban and rural areas	Screened Out – Mitigating Actions (Minor impacts) Contact: Nicola Lane ext 6020
Relocation of Current Temporary Provision of Play Service on Glen Road Belfast	This will not impact on the social and economic needs of those living in rural areas	Screened Out – Mitigating Actions (Minor impacts) Contact: Anne Ross ext 3299
Forth Meadow Community Greenway	This project will not impact on the social and economic needs of those living in rural areas	Screened Out – Mitigating Actions (Minor impacts) Contact: Michelle Bagnall ext 3678
Inclusive Growth Strategy	This draft strategy aims to ensure that the success of the City reaches every citizen and there is no evidence to suggest there will be any differential impact on people in rural areas	Screened Out – Mitigating Actions (Minor impacts) Contact: Clare Hutchinson ext 4778



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Diversity Action Plans</b>
<b>Date:</b>	20th November 2020
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Christine Sheridan, Head of Human Resources

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To agree the proposed activity within the Gender Action Plan (GAP) and LGBT+ Action Plan for 2020-2021 and agree resources to deliver the plans.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to agree the GAP Year 2 (2020-21) and LGBT+ Action Plan (2020-21) and agree the necessary resources to deliver the plans.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
	<b>Background and context</b>
3.1	Our Equality and Diversity Framework runs from April 2017 to March 2021 and outlines how we will tackle inequalities and promote diversity in our city. It is built around four key priorities:

	<p>A. Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment</p> <p>B. Understanding our communities through data and consultation</p> <p>C. Delivering services accessible to all</p> <p>D. Developing a skilled and diverse workforce</p>
3.2	<p>The Framework includes a series of actions to be delivered to help achieve these priorities and under Priority A, Leadership, Partnership and Organisational Commitment, the Council has committed to developing and delivering a Gender Action Plan, LGBT+ Action Plan and a Race Action Plan.</p>
3.3	<p>In May 2018, the Women's Steering Group (WSG) agreed a three year GAP for delivery between April 2018 to March 2021. Refinement of the 2020/21 action plan by WSG has been delayed as a result of the initial response to the Covid 19 pandemic and ongoing recovery. However, a pared back plan for 20/21 has now been agreed with WSG and is being presented to CMT for approval before it is presented to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.</p>
3.4	<p>Some actions from the 19/20 plan not yet delivered, have been carried forward into this year, most notably the joint senior officer and elected member leadership development programme. In addition, an event to bring together both male and female employees to discuss gender issues in the workplace jointly and how these might be addressed, which was originally scheduled for March this year, is also included.</p>
3.5	<p>While some activity planned for the early part of the year has not happened because of Covid 19, it is hoped that it can now be progressed, and where feasible, be delivered remotely. The actions and the resources required to deliver them are set out in Appendix 1.</p> <p><b>LGBT+ Action Plan</b></p>
3.6	<p>Likewise the development of an LGBT+ Action Plan for 2020/21 was also delayed because of Covid 19. A draft plan has now been developed, in conjunction with the staff network "Proud", (see Appendix 2), and is also being presented, with costs, for approval. Actions include continued participation in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index, more LGBT+ awareness raising training and other activity to increase awareness around LGBT+ issues, visibility and support in the workplace.</p>

3.7	<p><b>Disability Action Plan</b></p> <p>The Committee should also note that under Section 49 of the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006, we are required develop and submit a Disability Action Plan (DAP) to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI). Development of the plan is led by the Equality &amp; Diversity Unit within Legal and Civic Services. The new Disability Action Plan 2019-22 was approved by SP&amp;R in October 2019 and sets out the key actions relating to disability.</p>
3.8	<p><b>The People Strategy</b></p> <p>One of the key themes in the emerging People Strategy will be Diversity and Inclusion and it is hoped that a more strategic approach to the management of our people and workforce development planning will ensure a that our diversity and inclusion activity is fully aligned to our corporate priorities and delivery of the Belfast Agenda, in particular our Inclusive Growth Strategy. A key action in the draft strategy is the development of a workforce minority ethnic inclusion plan and this will be progressed in coming months.</p>
3.9	<p><b>Financial and Resource Implications</b></p> <p>The cost of delivery of the proposed Gender Action Plan actions is estimated at £30,000. The cost of delivery of the LGBT+ Action Plan is £5,900. Both plans will be met from the existing Organisational Development budget. It should be noted that social distancing restrictions, should they continue, will impact on delivery of some activity, for example delivery of some may not be feasible or will only be feasible on a smaller or remote basis. It is envisaged that this may reduce costs overall. The plan also identifies the role that individual business units and departments have in delivery of the plan.</p>
3.10	<p><b>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</b></p> <p>The delivery of the Gender and the LGBT+ Action Plans will result in positive outcomes. The promotion of equality and diversity entails more than the elimination of discrimination, it requires proactive action. The actions contained within both plans will not only impact on internal operations but also have a positive impact externally on women and men and the LGBT+ community in our city area.</p>
4.0	<p><b>Documents Attached</b></p>
	<p>Appendix 1 – GAP Year 3 (2020-21)</p> <p>Appendix 2 - LGBT+ Action Plan (2020-21)</p>

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## GENDER ACTION PLAN 2018 – 2021

## Year 3 (Year 2020-2021)

<b>WOMEN IN THE COUNCIL</b> -to ensure that BCC organisational culture, policies and practices empower talent development at all levels, for elected members and officers and remove any form of discrimination		
Action	Who	Cost
Hold annual IWD event / celebrations for staff	HR IWD working group WNG	£6000
Deliver Women Leaders Programme (members and officers)	WSG HR External facilitator	£12000
Participate in NI Gender Diversity Charter assessment against annual targets and activities to obtain Silver accreditation	CX HR	£2500
Develop/ agree transgender guidance document for staff	HR LGB&T Network	Staff resources
Ensure effective promotion of BCC as an employer that values and supports equality and diversity (external website, job info to potential applicants, press releases etc.)	HR MarComms Staff network	Staff Resources
Develop and agree Menopause guidance for staff	HR WNG	Staff resources
Hold event/ workshop for both male and female staff to jointly explore/ discuss gender issues and identify any issues to be addressed	HR Staff networks	£1000
Retain ' platinum level' status of the Onus Domestic Violence charter by continuing to raise awareness of domestic violence and abuse issues, support staff experiencing domestic violence and abuse and ensure employees know what support is available	HR	£2000

Review, update and communicate maternity, paternity, and other parental-related guidance for staff as part of the review of the Work Life Balance Handbook	HR	Staff resources
<b>WOMEN IN THE COMMUNITY</b> -with the purpose of increasing the representation of women in leadership positions throughout communities across Belfast by ensuring that processes are in place to increase women's involvement in decision making in communities		
Fund annual external IWD event.	Equality Unit	£6500
Hold Transgender remembrance event	Head of HR LGB&T network	LGBT+ budget
Explore potential for mainstreaming Grow Lead Change programme with potential partners	HR Economic Initiatives	Staff resources
<b>WOMEN IN THE ECONOMY</b> -to ensure all council policies and strategies influence and facilitate the active and fair participation of both women and men in the economy		
Identify opportunities for pre-recruitment programmes targeted at females furthest removed from the labour market	HR	Staff resources
Identify employability partners to deliver employability/ outreach initiatives for women.  ( Link to City Deal proposals )	HR/OD Economic Initiatives	Staff resources
The Northern Ireland Female Enterprise Challenge - A collaborative programme between the 11 Local Councils, Invest NI, and Women in Business NI (WIB) to promote and support female enterprise. . This programme also includes sponsorship for the WIB conference.  Enterprise and Employability support for underrepresented groups – Belfast City Council programme of support to enable underrepresented groups (including females) to overcome the barriers to starting a business or accessing employment opportunities.	Economic Development	£6,200
	Economic Development	£90,000

<b>WOMEN IN THE CITY</b> -to ensure that the needs of women across the city are identified and used to influence and impact upon the regeneration of the city including social infrastructure design and community facilities provision		
As part of the ongoing baseline audit of all Council assets determine if Council assets are 'fit for purpose' in terms of the needs of all genders and that gender needs are looked at as part of the development of any new council asset	Property and Projects Department C&NS Place & Economy Dept	Staff resources  Potential cost if additional works required
Support the Raise your Voice Project against sexual harassment	HR Elected Members	Staff resources
As part of the ongoing area working /place shaping work and the Physical Investment Programme look at opportunities of how the needs of women can be better met across the city	Property & Projects Department Place and Economy C&NS A Strategic Hub External stakeholders	Staff resources Potential associated costs for future GAP
Work with City Partners on achievement of Onus Safe City status	BCC ONUS External partners	Staff resources

**TOTAL APPROXIMATE COSTS - £ 30,000k for year 3 (excl ED funded initiatives)**

**N.B. Where ongoing COVID 19 restrictions limit planned activity, online / remote delivery will be explored and used where possible.**

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## LGBT+ Action Plan 2020-21

Theme - Training and Development				
Outcomes	Actions required	Timing	Lead	Indicative costs
Increased awareness of LGBT+ bias	Source and deliver inclusion and awareness training	2020-21	HR/ Network Chair	£1000 total For 3 sessions
	Source and deliver awareness training on Trans and Bi issues	2020-21	HR/ Network Chair	£700 total For 2 sessions
LGBT employees feel comfortable to be their whole selves  Line managers understand key issues and their responsibilities	Deliver revised diversity induction training to ensure LGBT+ issues covered with all new staff and managers	2020-21	HR	Staff Resource
Better mental health	Deliver Mental Health First Aider course	2020-21	HR	LGTG funded programme

Theme – Promoting positive attitudes				
Outcomes	Actions required	Timing	Lead	Indicative costs
<p>All relevant policies are inclusive and use gender neutral language where possible</p> <p>Clear processes in place for staff to raise issues around discrimination/bullying/harassment based on gender and sexual orientation</p>	Review staff policies.	2020-21	HR	Staff Resource
Guidance available for trans employees and their managers and for staff delivering services to the trans community	Agree Transgender policy / guidance	2020-21	HR	Staff Resource

Theme – Promotion and ensure visibility of Network including senior champions				
Outcomes	Actions required	Timing	Lead	Indicative costs
Increased awareness of and participation in network	Promote Proud via Interlink/ Email	2020-21	Network Chair	Staff Resource/ Comms
Increased awareness about staff network and senior support	Articles profiling senior champion and allies	2020-21	Chair / Network	Staff Resource/ Comms
	Continue to distribute promotional material	2020-21	Network	n/a
Potential applicants aware BCC is an employer that values and supports equality and diversity	Ensure up to date info on external website, job info to potential applicants, press releases etc.)  Send all external job opportunities to NI LGBT+ organisations for circulation	2020-21	HR Comms Staff network	n/a
Visibility/Collaboration with other Networks	Joint Webinar involving all 3 Networks and their aims	2020-21	HR/Network	Staff Resource



Theme – Community Engagement				
Outcomes	Actions required	Timing	Lead	Indicative costs
Bigger and better participation in Pride and more visibility of BCC support for LGBT+ community  Visible support for LGBT Community	Virtual participation in Pride - to be agreed how	2020-21	Network	n/a
	Build participation with network members and staff	2020-21	Network	Staff Resource
	Fundraiser for Pride – possible collaboration with WNG and Disability Network	2020-21	HR/Network	Staff Resource
	What does Pride mean to me? – visual display via pictures and videos of what Pride means to Network members	2020-21	Network/Chair	Comms/Staff Resource
Increased awareness of issues faced by Trans community and awareness of need for remembrance	Hold annual Transgender Day of Remembrance event if possible or mark on line if necessary.	2020-21	Network/HR	£600
Improved awareness of issues faced by Trans Community	Celebrate Transgender Day of Visibility Light City Hall on Transgender Day of Visibility in March 2021	2020-21	Network/HR	£300
Theme – Social Networking				
Outcomes	Actions required	Timing	Lead	Indicative costs

Improved visibility, learning and positive outcomes	Facilitate an event between NI Stonewall organisations	2020-21	Network	£800
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Theme – Employee Lifecycle / Organisational Analysis				
Outcomes	Actions required	Timing	Lead	Indicative costs
Feedback from staff re LGBT issues	Carry out voluntary monitoring exercise for all staff ( when feasible )	2020-21	HR	Staff Resource/ Comms
Position in national benchmarking exercise	Annual Membership in Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme  Stonewall Equality Index - While Index not happening in 20/21 due to Covid 19 - take the opportunity to get familiar with new criteria and action plan for improvement	2020-21	HR and Staff network	£2500
Areas for improvement identified	Consider 19/20 Stonewall feedback and action plan for improvement	2020-21	HR / Network	Staff resource
Ensuring comprehensive info on staff is available and up to date.	Carry out voluntary monitoring exercise for all staff ( when feasible )	2020-21	HR	Staff resource
	Update application monitoring forms	2020-21	HR	Staff resource

Theme – Inclusive Workplace				
Outcomes	Actions required	Timing	Lead	Indicative costs
Gender neutral facilities for staff	Consider feasibility of gender neutral toilet in city centre offices.	2020-21	HR/Facilities Mgt	Corporate Maintenance Budget approval if work necessary
			<b>Total</b>	<b>£5900</b>

## **Minutes of Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2020**

### **Attendance**

#### **Members:**

Councillor Christina Black (Chair)  
Councillor Billy Hutchinson  
Councillor Michael Long  
Councillor Donal Lyons  
Councillor Mal O'Hara  
Alderman George Dorrian  
Councillor Fiona Ferguson  
Councillor Dean Pankhurst (Joined the meeting for Alderman Dorrian)

Apologies: Alderman Sonia Copeland, Councillor Ciaran Beattie

#### **Officers:**

Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive  
Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources  
John Walsh, City Solicitor  
Noleen Bohill, Head of Commercial & Procurement Service (for item 3)  
Siobhan Toland, Director of City Services for (Item 4)  
Wendy Langham, Programme Director Belfast Destination Hub (for Item 6)  
Alistair Reid, Director of Place and Economy (for Item 6)  
Grainia Long, Commissioner for Resilience (Item 7)  
Joanne Delaney, Portfolio and Programme Coordinator (secretariat)

### **1. Finance Update**

The Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Finance and Resources presented to members the Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 – 2023/24 and the impact of the Estimated Penny Product (EPP) on the District Rate Income for 2021/22 – 2023/24 and the challenges involved in the setting of the rate this year given the current complexities. The Director advised that the deadline for setting the district rate is likely to be extended given the degree of uncertainty to 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021. A report will be brought to the SP and R Committee in November.

Members were also updated on the ongoing work being carried out by Ulster University to undertake Rates income modelling projections for the near future in order to identify the impact of Covid-19 on District Rates income for each of the eleven District Councils and the Regional Rate. An update will be provided to Members as this work progresses.

## **2. Operational Recovery Update**

The Director of City Services provided an update to Members on organisational recovery and outlined current status of operational frontline services including an update on Malone House and Belfast Castle. Members were advised that the focus is on sustaining services given the majority of our services remain operational, including monitoring closely how resources are allocated across services. Members were updated on the role for Council in light of the new regulations and ongoing work with other bodies regarding enforcement of the 2020 Regulations.

The Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Finance and Resources provided an update around Furloughed and Casual staff. Members of the Forum raised a number of specific queries in relation to furloughed and casual staff in Belfast Waterfront & Ulster Hall and GLL, and a full update was provided by the Director.

## **3. Commercial Plan**

The Head of Commercial and Procurement Services provided an update for Members on the proposed Commercial Plan which will be presented to November SP&R, she outlined the future ambitions and proposals relating to commercialisation and income generation opportunities given the significant financial pressures being faced at present. Members also discussed the Corporate Pricing Strategy which will support the Commercial Plan that was deferred at October SP&R. A number of options were discussed on how best to take this work forward and the Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Finance and Resources advised that the report is seeking approval to carry out a review at this stage, a further report will be brought back once the review is carried out outlining any proposals.

## **4. Inner City Kerbside Sort – Options Appraisal**

The Director of City Services provided an update to Members on the Inner City Kerbside sort contract. August SP&R committee agreed to extend the current contract and to the commissioning of an options appraisal on the arrangements for future waste collections. Members were advised that an initial report on the collection options be presented to November committee but that further in depth work was required on financial considerations and implications of the proposed delivery models. This report would be brought back to a future meeting.

Members noted the report will also recommend an invite for a presentation, be extended to the Collaborate Circular Economy Network who represent business in NI that utilise recycled products collected by Councils.

## **5. Shared Prosperity Fund**

The Chief Executive provided an update on a position paper produced for SOLACE NI, in relation to EU Successor Funding in Northern Ireland known as the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) which will be presented to November SP&R. Members discussed the need to promote this work supporting the need for a partnership approach, which involves local government, in order to co-design and shape the funding to address local needs. Members discussed political engagement and how this might be brought forward, the Chief Executive to consider options outlined.

## **6. Belfast Destination Hub – OBC**

Members received a presentation on the Destination Hub a key project under the tourism and regeneration pillar of the Belfast City Region Deal (BRCD). The Programme Director outlined progress made with regard to the Destination Hub Outline Business Case (OBC) and advised a report would be presented to November SP&R to seek approval to submit the OBC to the BRCD Executive Board in December 2020 for consideration. Members highlighted their support for the project and some queries were raised in relation to the Operating Model. The Chief Executive advised that any Operating Model will be considered at the next stages, and Members will be kept fully informed. The Belfast Destination Hub will be presented at each project stage to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee as well as the City Deal decision making bodies.

## **7. Resilience Strategy**

The Commissioner for Resilience provided an overview of conclusions arising from the public consultation and engagement on the draft Resilience Strategy, she outlined changes made to the document informed by the consultation. She advised that the document has already been considered and endorsed by the Resilience and Sustainability Board and a report will be presented to November SP&R for approval.

## **8. Notice of Motions**

The City Solicitor discussed the proposal on a process for dealing with Notices of Motion previously considered by SP&R Committee. Members discussed in detail different options of managing the process of Notice of Motions, including aligning with the Council's corporate planning and policy frameworks. It was suggested by a Member that the Forum consider a working group to look at this issue in line with reviewing standing orders and the City Solicitor agreed to consider this option and that this issue needs further consideration.

Members also discussed current motions and the City Solicitor advised a report would be presented to November SP&R outlining status of each and a proposal on next steps. City Solicitor to circulate to Party Leaders and any comments submitted to the City Solicitor prior to November SP&R meeting.

## **9. Arc 21 – Correspondence**

The Chief Executive outlined the current status of the proposed arc21 Residual Waste Treatment Plant. Antrim & Newtownabbey council have sent correspondence in relation to the plant to all Council Chief Executives. Given the technical nature and the timescale in collating the response requested, a response is currently being prepared. The Chief Executive discussed the option of having a workshop for Party Group Leaders to discuss the wider issues involved with Arc 21 and it was agreed this would be arranged.

## **10. Planning Update**

The Chief Executive updated the Forum on the live planning applications and informed the Forum of the applications that were being presented to the Planning Committee in December.

## **11. AOB**

### **Wreath – Remembrance Sunday**

Members discussed a UVF wreath that was laid at the cenotaph in the Garden of Remembrance at City Hall on Sunday 8 November, Remembrance Sunday. The Chief Executive advised that the placing of the wreath was not laid as part of the official act of remembrance organised by the Council and had since been removed. The issue of memorials was also raised. Members agreed that going forward the process around these issues would



need to be treated sensitively, and Party Leaders would continue to discuss and review processes to ensure the situation does not arise again.

### **Investigation Timeframes**

The City Solicitor confirmed that the independent investigation being carried out by Peter Coll QC relating to Roselawn on 30 June was due to be completed end of November/early December.

### **St George's Market**

The Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Finance and Resources provided an update on the issue raised by Councillor Gormley at October SP&R committee in relation to St. George's Market and the potential for waiving fees for businesses operating from the units. The Chief Executive advised that a recent request was also received from St. George's Market Traders Committee to request that the Council review the stall fee waiver and extend this period for an additional three months. Both issues will be included in a report at November SP&R for Members consideration.

### **Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall**

Some Members raised an issue in relation to the process and subsequent decision around the financial pressures facing the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall and GLL at the November Council meeting. The Chief Executive and The Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Finance and Resources advised that Councillors who contacted senior officers would have been made aware that both organisations were working through complex staffing and financial issues and if possible, contingency options which may have to be put to the Council for approval. Given the nature of the situation and the challenging timeframe it was not possible to provide a full update to all Party Leaders, as would normally be the case, prior to commencement of the Council meeting. The Director of Finance and Resources stressed that Council Officers made no proposals but rather stated the requirement from each organisation.

### **Transgender Day of Remembrance - Trans flag to fly November 2020**

The City Solicitor outlined a request to seek permission for the Trans flag to fly on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2020 which was agreed by Members, City Solicitor to approve under delegated authority. A report to seek permission for 2021 onwards will be presented to SP&R committee.

### **Special Council Meeting re Food Poverty**

The Chief Executive advised that a request by Councillor Beattie has been submitted to the Lord Mayor to hold a special Council meeting in relation to Food Poverty.

### **Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund**

The Chief Executive provided an update on the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund. She advised that Officers continue to work through the process and criteria of the fund and a report will be brought to the next Forum meeting in advance of consideration at December SP&R.

### **Illuminate Process**

Councillor Long asked that Members reconsider a request to light up City Hall for World AIDS Day, 1st December as previously raised by Councillor Nicholl. Members noted that requests could not normally be accommodated during the Christmas period and that other requests had been declined for this period, however it was agreed a report would be brought to SP&R to reconsider on exceptional basis for this specific request.

### **November Council Meeting**

Councillor Ferguson sought clarification on some points in relation to standing orders and the November Council meeting. The City Solicitor to follow up with Councillor Ferguson.

## Working Group on the Climate Crisis

Monday, 9th November, 2020

### MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE CLIMATE CRISIS

- Members present: Councillor Smyth (Chairperson);  
Alderman Copeland;  
Councillors Baker, Bunting, de Faoite,  
Ferguson, Hutchinson and McReynolds.
- In attendance: Ms. G. Long, Commissioner for Resilience;  
Mr. A. Thatcher, Director of Planning and Building Control;  
Ms. N. Largey, Divisional Solicitor;  
Ms. C. McKeown, Sustainable Development Manager;  
Ms C. Shortt, Policy and Data Analyst;  
Mr. R. McLernon, Resilience Co-ordinator; and  
Mr. G. Graham, Democratic Services Assistant.
- Also attended: Councillor O'Hara.

### Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 19th October, 2020 were taken as read and signed as correct.

### Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

### Draft Final Resilience Strategy

The Commissioner for Resilience reminded the Working Group that the Draft Resilience Strategy had already been distributed for public consultation for a period of six months :- to communities, city partners and all Council departments. She stated also that the Policy and Data Analyst had endeavoured to ensure that the document was as current as possible, given the current changes in the external environment. The Members were informed that the level of engagement, as part of the extended consultation process, had been impressive. The Working Group was informed that a major purpose of the Resilience Strategy was to deliver the Belfast Agenda by preparing the city for the impact of climate change and reducing the city's Green House Gas emissions.

The Commissioner reminded the Working Group that the draft strategy was a city-wide document and she informed the Members of some of the changes that were required following completion of the consultation process and the passage of time. She referred to the collaborative work which had been undertaken, with a range of external agencies, in regard to the formulation of the strategy. The Commissioner explained that the strategy sat within the Community Planning processes and was comprised of three core elements namely;

- A Resilience Assessment;
- An Ambitions Document; and
- A Delivery Plan

The Commissioner outlined the constituent parts of each document and stated that it had been modified to reflect Public Health concerns following the Covid-19 pandemic and further emphasised the issue of inequality, which was contained within the document, as a separate and distinct 'stress'. She referred to a further change in the strategy document which had identified previously a link between poor mental health and dependence on prescription medication and which was unsupported by the data.

The Commissioner referred some of the stress factors experienced by the city including, amongst other things, our dependence on fossil fuels, a lack of adequate housing supply in the city, and the centralisation of power as part of our current governance arrangements. She referred to the role of the Community Planning Partnership Board in terms of dealing with those cross-cutting issues. The Members were advised of the change in the original strategy to achieve zero-carbon emissions, in a generation, rather than merely low-carbon emissions as a stated goal within the original strategy document.

The Commissioner stated that she was encouraged by the enthusiasm and participation displayed by children and young people in the implementation of the strategy, with its strong focus on connectivity and a zero-emissions economy. The Working Group was advised of the impact of multiple problem solvers, whereby the solution to one particular problem had provided benefits to other problems identified within the risk-matrix. She identified 30 separate programmes within the strategy document, at various stages of development, including the benefits of having a zero-carbon road map, in the form of a mini-stern. The Commissioner stated that a high-level climate risk assessment had been completed and that the Council was in the process of developing its own adaptation and mitigation plan, which would be active by 2021, subject to Council approval. She reported on the ambitious work undertaken by Belfast Harbour in terms of its de-carbonisation plans to de-carbonise their energy usage by 2025, and their objective to be the greenest port in Europe.

The Members were advised of the work undertaken by Queen's University in the development of a global environmental solutions centre, focused on bio-diversity and other environmental solutions. She referred to the incorporation of sustainability within the City Deal and the implementation of the 1 million trees project. She stated that it was her intention to bring a proposal, to a future meeting of the Working Group, on how young people could be involved in the forthcoming COP 26 U.N. climate change conference in Glasgow. The Commissioner reported on the sustainable drainage strategy, implemented by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI), which would be included within the Draft Resilience Strategy and stated also that Translink had ambitions to have its fleet of buses achieve zero-carbon emissions by 2030.

The Working Group was advised of the important goal associated with the eradication of fuel-poverty and the retro-fit of the housing stock, with particular reference to public housing stock. She highlighted the importance attached to ensuring that homes were adequately insulated and more efficient in terms of energy usage. The Commissioner provided the Members with an outline of the governance structure associated with the implementation of the 30 projects contained within the draft strategy.

A Member stated that she was pleased that the strategy had been separated into three distinct components and that the issue of inequality had been incorporated into the strategy. In response to a further question in respect of whether the concerns of older people had been

factored into the strategy, the Commissioner reassured the Member that older people had been considered, given that they were highly vulnerable to climate change in terms of their health and lack of mobility. She referred also to the collaborative work undertaken by the Health and Social Care Board in regard to excess winter deaths and the work undertaken to retro-fit homes and eradicate fuel-poverty.

A Member raised concerns in regard to connectivity within the city, with particular reference to the development of sustainable transport modes and the lack of progress in that regard. The Commissioner recognised that more work required to be undertaken with DfI in terms of sustainable transport. She stated that progress had been made in the sustainable transport and connectivity delivery process but recognised that the centralised governance structure, in respect of transportation, was an impediment to rapid change. The Commissioner reinforced the need to tackle fuel poverty, as a matter of priority, and referred to the impact that it had on food poverty as a consequence. She stated that the strategy had identified the issues raised by the Member as a problem and of her hope that the future development of district heating schemes for the city, in the future, could make a positive impact towards the eradication of both food and fuel poverty.

The Working Group noted the information which had been provided and adopted the Draft Resilience Strategy, subject to the approval of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. The Members thanked the Commissioner for her detailed and informative presentation and acknowledged the amount of work involved to achieve the targets set, both within the strategy, and enshrined in legislation.

#### **Oil and Gas Exploration Motion - Input from BCC Legal and Planning Department**

The Sustainable Development Manager provided the Working Group with background information in regard to a motion, on the subject of oil and gas exploration, which had been presented to the Council previously, by the Chairperson. She referred to the content within the motion, requesting that the Council look at all avenues to examine the impacts of its policies, both legal and otherwise, in terms of their impact on climate change. She referred to the motion in terms of its reflection on central government policy on areas such as, fracking, oil and gas extraction, including a moratorium on the issue of further licensing in regard to mineral extraction. In so doing, she stated that the motion proposed communicating with the Minister for the Economy in relation to the issuing of exploratory licenses and the removal of permitted development rights for exploration purposes.

The Sustainable Development Manager provided an overview of the legal and planning implications associated with the motion and invited both the Divisional Solicitor and the Director of Planning and Building Control to advise the Working Group on the implications and restrictions associated with the adoption of that motion. She outlined the implications of the motion in terms of both planning and the Council's Local Development Plan.

The Divisional Solicitor stated that the Council's main levers in respect of that proposal, was contained within both its planning policy and separately in its influencing role, within the Northern Ireland Executive, to affect change in those areas of oil and gas /mineral extraction. She provided the Working Group with an outline in relation to the hierarchy of the planning process and stated that the Council was currently involved with a public examination stage, in relation to its draft Local Development Plan, which would allow the Council to develop its own plans in regard to environmental protection. She stated that the issues referred to in the Member's motion required the adoption of a regional policy by the Northern Ireland Executive.

The Divisional Solicitor advised that the Council was limited to adhering to its own planning policy in relation to land under its jurisdiction and applying relevant planning policies.

She stated that, as the Council had declared a climate emergency, environmental concerns could be considered in any future planning policy relevant to its draft Local Development Plan (L.D.P.)

In response to a question from a Member in regard to the Council's authority to draft its own policy in relation to permitted development, the Divisional Solicitor advised that the Council, as a Planning Authority, was obliged to apply regional planning policy in regard to decisions impacting on oil and gas extraction within its jurisdiction. She stated that the Council would primarily be in a position to dictate its policy on those specific areas, where it was the owner of any land where development of this nature was being considered. The Director of Planning and Building Control joined the meeting at this point and confirmed that it was the intention of Minister Mallon to remove Permitted Development rights in relation oil and gas exploration, including fracking, but could not as yet provide a time-lime for that legislative change.

The Director in response to a further question in regard to the Council's draft Local Development Plan, confirmed that the Council was at the stage of submitting part 1 of the draft Local Development Plan to the Planning Appeals Commission (P.A.C.) The Director gave the Working Group a detailed overview of the work which had been undertaken, prior to the submission of its Local Development Plan, to the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) in August 2019. He stated that the next stage of that process involved the P.A.C. examining all of the policies and supporting evidence, in the form of an Independent Examination. He outlined the details of the Council's draft policy in regard to mineral extraction in terms of determining a defined need. The Director stated further that, under the Council's draft planning policy, any permission in respect of mineral extraction would be required to meet specific criteria and in so doing, ensure the protection of the environment, landscape and natural heritage. He referred also to the requirement to undertake Environmental Impact Assessments (E.I.A.) prior to any mineral extraction proposal being approved

The Members were advised that Part 2 of the planning policy provided a more detailed scrutiny of planning proposals which were no less stringent than stage 1 of the planning process. In response to the Director's comments, a Member expressed his satisfaction that the draft planning policy contained within the draft L.D.P. provided the necessary protection for both people and the environment in respect of mineral extraction. In response to a further question from a Member regarding planning applications being lodged and approved in advance of the Council's draft L.D.P. being adopted, the Director stated that the Council's existing planning policy was, in his opinion, sufficiently robust to ensure that the environment and landscape would be sufficiently protected in respect of any such proposal.

A Member raised a further question in regard to the Council's ability to support the rejection of a hydro-carbon exploration proposal, prior to it being enshrined in the Council's draft L.D.P. The Director in response stated that any such exploration proposal, in advance of the draft L.D.P. being approved, would be judged within the current planning policy context. He stated that the current policy did offer some protection to the landscape and physical amenities and, in so doing, dependant on the proposal under consideration, would still give the Council reasonable grounds to refuse such a proposal, if it was considered to be detrimental, on a number of physical factors, including heritage and the environment.

The Working Group noted the information which had been provided in the update by the Director and agreed to ascertain, from DfI, a timeline in respect of the potential change in respect of permitted development rights. He agreed also to provide the Working Group with an update on the progress in relation to the public examination process, relevant to future permitted development rights.

### **Update on NI Assembly All-Party Group on Climate Action- October 2020**

The Sustainable Development Manager provided the Members with an update in respect of the N.I. Assembly All-Party Group on Climate Action. She stated that, at its October meeting, 3 items had been discussed, namely the Climate Change Bill, a report on both the Climate Assembly and the pathways to de-carbonisation. She stated that the Group had considered the impact of carbon emissions in respect of transportation and the need to develop a regional transport strategy, given the impact of current vehicle usage and associated pollution. The Members were informed that the All-Party Group had requested also that the Housing Executive provide them with a report in regard to the retro-fit of buildings.

The Chairperson, who had been in attendance at the All-Party Climate Action meeting, stated that it had been very well attended and reinforced the need for the public to engage with the process. He referred specifically to the 1 million trees project which was an important environmental development and which provided both tangible and visible environmental benefits and which permitted the public to play a positive and practical role.

The Commissioner advised the Members in regard to a number of up and coming events, including the launch of the mini-stern. She referred also to the work undertaken by the Council, in conjunction with K.P.M.G. in relation to a sustainability review, as part of the Council's development of its own Climate Plan. She stated that the methodology for the review included the involvement of the All Party Working Group and that it was anticipated that, to that end, a workshop would be held on the 23rd November, 2020.

Noted.

The Chairperson, on behalf of the Working Group, thanked the Commissioner for Resilience in relation to the valuable work undertaken by, both her and her team, in terms of the efforts made to influence policy and inform the public on the adverse impact of climate change.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

The Working Group noted that its next meeting would be held on Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> November at a time as yet to be determined.

Chairperson



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## ACTIVE BELFAST LIMITED BOARD

Monday, 9th November, 2020

### MEETING OF ACTIVE BELFAST LIMITED BOARD

(Held remotely via Microsoft Teams)

#### Attendees

- Directors:** Mr. J. McGuigan (Chairperson)  
Councillor Carson  
Councillor McLaughlin  
Councillor Newton  
Mr. P. Boyle  
Mr. K. Ellison and  
Mr. C. Kirkwood.
- Officers:** Mrs. K. Gilliland, Neighbourhood Services Manager;  
Mr. N. Munnis, Partnership Manager; and  
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.
- GLL:** Mr. G. Kirk, Regional Director;  
Mr. J. Michael, Business Manager; and  
Mr. A. Walker, Partnership Manager.

#### Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillor Corr, Mrs. K. McCullough and Mr. G. Walls.

#### Request to attend the Meeting

Prior to the commencement of business, the Democratic Services Officer informed the Board that Councillor Matt Collins had submitted a request to join the meeting and to be granted access to the reports which were being presented.

He explained that, since this had been the first such request to have been received since the Board had been constituted, advice had been sought from the Council's Legal Services Section. That advice had indicated that it was ultimately a matter for the Board to decide whether or not it wished to accede to the Member's request.

A lengthy discussion followed, during which Mr. Kirkwood made the point that the Board should, in advance of the meeting, have been informed of Councillor Collins' request and the issues which he wished to raise. He stressed that, should the Board agree to admit him, it would set a precedent for future meetings and would be highly irregular in terms of governance and due diligence. He would, therefore, be opposing the request.

However, other Directors, whilst recognising that the request was highly unusual and irregular, pointed out that Councillor Collins, as an Elected Member, was entitled to represent those constituents who were employed by GLL and that the Council was committed to promoting transparency in all aspects of its work.

In response, Mr. Kirkwood stressed that, whilst he respected the role and position of Elected Members on the Council, they were, in the context of the Active Belfast Limited Board, registered Directors and were, therefore, bound by the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

At this point, the Democratic Services Officer confirmed that Councillor Collins had, shortly after the meeting had commenced, indicated that he wished to raise issues around casual staff employed by GLL.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor McLaughlin,  
Seconded by Councillor Carson,

That the Board:

- i. agrees that Councillor Matt Collins be admitted to the meeting once the final item of business has been dealt with but that he not be given access to the reports; and
- ii. authorises officers to work with their counterparts in the Legal Services Section to draft an appropriate protocol to deal with future requests from Elected Representatives or others to address the Board, including the release of reports in advance.

On a recorded vote, which had been requested by Mr. Kirkwood, on the basis that he wanted his opposition to be formally noted, six Directors voted for the proposal and one against and it was declared carried.

<b><u>For 6</u></b>	<b><u>Against 1</u></b>
Mr. McGuigan (Chairperson) Councillor Carson Councillor McLaughlin Councillor Newton Mr. Boyle and Mr. Ellison	Mr. Kirkwood

The Democratic Services Officer reported that Councillor Collins had, upon being informed of the Board's decision, pointed out that he had another meeting to attend and that he would be unable to wait until all of the business at this meeting had concluded. He had, therefore, requested the Board to give consideration to allowing him to join the meeting at an earlier stage in the proceedings.

After another lengthy discussion, during which Mr. Kirkwood reiterated the points which he had made earlier in the meeting, it was

Moved by Councillor McLaughlin,  
Seconded by Councillor Carson,

That the Board agrees that Councillor Collins be admitted to the meeting between the conclusion of the presentation by GLL of the report

on Covid-19 Lockdown and Recovery and discussions commencing, that he be advised to leave once that item had concluded and that he not be given access to the reports.

On a recorded vote, which had again been requested by Mr. Kirkwood, on the basis that he wanted his opposition to be formally noted, five Directors voted for the proposal and two against and it was declared carried.

<b><u>For 5</u></b>	<b><u>Against 2</u></b>
Councillor Carson Councillor McLaughlin Councillor Newton Mr. Boyle and Mr. Ellison	Mr. McGuigan (Chairperson) and Mr. Kirkwood.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 11th March were approved.

### **Matters Arising**

#### **2020-21 Price Review**

The Board noted that the schedule of prices for 2020/21 had been approved in April by the Council under delegated authority.

#### **GLL Staff Survey**

The Board noted that work on the production of a GLL annual staff satisfaction survey had been delayed due to Covid-19 and that an update would be provided at the meeting on 14th December, subject to the proposed annual reporting schedule being presented later in the meeting gaining approval.

#### **Active Belfast Limited Action Plan 2020 - 2025**

The Board noted that the draft Active Belfast Limited Action Plan 2020 – 2025, which should have been presented for approval at the meeting which had been cancelled in April due to Covid-19, would be considered later in the meeting.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

### **Director Attendance Statement**

The Board noted that, as all of its meetings since March had been cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic, there were no issues to report in terms of the non-attendance of Directors.

### **Future Agenda Items**

No agenda items were identified by Directors for future meetings.

(The GLL representatives were admitted to the meeting at this point.)

### **Performance and Contract Compliance**

The Board considered a report which set out the Key Performance Indicators, together with a supporting narrative, for the overall service and on a centre-by-centre basis for Quarters 3 and 4 of 2019/20, under the four strategic themes of Business, Innovation and Learning, Customer and Operations.

The Board acknowledged receipt of the Performance and Contract Compliance report for the aforementioned quarters and noted the information which had been provided.

### **Update on Covid-19 Lockdown and Recovery**

Mr. Kirk submitted for the Board's consideration a report which outlined the challenges which GLL had faced due to Covid-19 and its subsequent response for the period from March till December 2020, under the primary headings of Community Resilience, Usage and Impact, Staffing and LTP successes.

(Councillor Matt Collins joined the meeting at this point.)

During discussion, a Director expressed concern that Elected Members and Directors had not been informed by GLL of its intention to initiate a voluntary redundancy exercise and highlighted other examples which emphasised the need for improved communication. He welcomed the fact that the formula which GLL would be using to calculate its redundancy payments was now the same as that used by the Council and that the furlough scheme for contracted workers had been extended until the end of March, 2021.

Mr. Kirk accepted the point which had been made around the need for improved communication and undertook to ensure that it was improved moving forward.

Councillor Matt Collins also welcomed the fact that the current furlough scheme had been extended. He referred to the possibility that the current lockdown could be lifted by the coming weekend and sought clarification on how GLL would compensate, for example, swim coaches, who would be returning to work on reduced hours and moving off furlough.

Mr. Kirk reviewed the work which GLL had undertaken over the past six years to provide a first class leisure service across the City and referred to the new facilities and its award-winning staff. He explained that, unfortunately, it was now in a challenging position in that it had been unable to operate fully since the Covid-19 restrictions had been imposed. As things stood, around 100 contracted staff were currently on furlough and a significant number of casual staff had no duties to carry out, due to the current operating restrictions.

He pointed out that it was hoped that the situation would improve over this coming weekend with the potential lifting by the Northern Ireland Executive of Covid-19 restrictions which it had imposed for a four-week period from 16th October. He stated that

such a move would increase activity, however, given the trends witnessed in the response of other European countries to the pandemic, it could be some twelve to eighteen months before services were returned to full capacity. GLL had, therefore, decided to rationalise its service by initiating a voluntary redundancy exercise, which would free up capacity moving forward. In terms of its casual workforce, it had delivered a Fair Pay Payment covering the period from the start of lockdown until the end of October, which was based on a thirteen month calculation of a worker's average pay prior to March. He added that GLL would continue to support and protect those workers who had or would have a clearly defined role within the organisation.

Mr. Kirk then provided details around the impact of Covid-19 upon current membership figures and, in response to specific issues which had been raised by a Director:

- i. undertook to check that the changes to the Customer Service Advisor role had been accurately presented in a timely manner to the Trades Union forum;
- ii. confirmed that two days annual leave per month had been deducted from furloughed staff while absent from work on full pay;
- iii. confirmed that, contrary to the assertion which had been made by the Director, the 20% furlough pay top up had been funded by GLL and not by the Council; and
- iv. undertook to examine the issues raised around child safeguarding, arising from the introduction of cashless entry to centres.

The Board thanked the GLL representatives for their contribution, following which it noted the information which had been provided.

(Councillor Collins and the GLL representatives left the meeting at this point.)

### **Active Belfast Limited Reporting Schedule and Impact of Covid-19 Lockdown**

The Partnership Manager submitted for the Board's consideration the following report:

#### **"1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To update the Board on performance and contract compliance reporting and in particular the impact of the Covid-19 lockdown on the agreed governance and reporting schedule.**

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Board is requested to note the impacts of the Covid-19 lockdown as set out below.**
- 2.2 The Board is requested to formally record receipt of the update reports as set out below.**

- 2.3 The Board is requested to approve the proposed revised timeline to bring contract compliance and governance reporting up to date as set out below at 3.5.

3.0 **Main Report**

- 3.1 A number of papers within Board's annual schedule of reports are overdue as a result of the Covid-19 lockdown. Board meetings being cancelled between April and October 2020 meant that the following reports have not been presented:

**April 2020 Board Meeting (cancelled)**

- Policy and procedure alignment report (Equality and Diversity)
- Confirm receipt of ABL Director declaration of interest forms
- Review ABL annual plan action compliance for 2019/20
- Leisure Transformation Programme update
- Tier 2 Performance report – Marketing and Communications

**June 2020 Board Meeting (cancelled)**

- Q4 2019/20 KPI and contract compliance report
- Review of ABL Companies House returns
- GLL Annual Service report for 2019/21
- ABL annual plan quarterly action update
- Tier 2 Performance report – Group Exercise Programme Innovation & Development
- Tier 2 Performance report – Olympia LC USP Spa Performance

**August 2020 Board Meeting (cancelled)**

- Q1 2020/21 4X4 Quarterly KPI Balanced Scorecard
- Policy & procedure alignment report (Health & Safety)
- GLL Annual Service Plan for 2020/21
- Tier 2 Performance report – PHA Referral Programmes
- Tier 2 Performance report – 3G Pitch Utilisation & Business Performance

**September 2020 Board Meeting (cancelled)**

- ABL Annual Plan quarterly action update
- Q1 2020/21 KPI and contract compliance report
- GLL 6 monthly positive impact report
- Annual Aquatics Strategy action plan review
- Tier 2 Performance report – Underrepresented Target Groups
- BCC Sports Development Unit update



### **October 2020 Board Meeting (cancelled)**

- GLL Annual Schedule of Charges review proposal
- GLL Annual Marketing Plan for 2020/21
- Policy & procedure alignment report (HR)
- Review of ABL Companies House returns
- Leisure Transformation Programme update

3.2 It would be advantageous to set a target date for dealing with the report backlog, say by the January 2021 board meeting. In order to present the above reports for board consideration over the next three months while managing board time and GLL/BCC officer resources, an interim schedule will be necessary. This would be in addition to the normal flow of reports as set out in the annual contract compliance calendar.

3.3 The reports listed in the above backlog have been grouped to provide a timeline to bring the Board's contract compliance and governance commitments up to date by the end of January 2021. This will allow for the review of KPI's and performance reporting agreed under the ABL 2020-2025 Strategic Plan.

3.4 The proposed method of dealing with each set of overdue reports is set out in sections below under (a) Policy and Procedure Alignment, (b) Tier 2 Performance, (c) Seek board approval by email, (d) Cancelled reports and (e) Deferred reports.

**a) Policy and procedure alignment (3 reports)  
(Equality and Diversity, Health and Safety, Human Resources)**

It is proposed that these policy and procedure alignment reports are updated and signed off by the Board on 9th November. This will bring this element of the reporting schedule up to date and ready to recommence in line with the standard report schedule from December 2020.

Normal operations have, to a large extent, been suspended during lock down. However, daily contract management and strategic decisions have continued through direct liaison between GLL and BCC officers. We can be confident that previously agreed and reported GLL policies and procedures continue to be substantially in line with those of BCC.

Consequently, the following three statements are presented for board consideration and approval:

1. "As at 9th November 2020, BCC and GLL policies and operational procedures in relation to Equality

and Diversity are closely aligned with no significant variances or areas of concern to address.”

2. “As at 9th November 2020, BCC and GLL policies and operational procedures in relation to Health & Safety are closely aligned with no significant variances or areas of concern to address.”
3. As at 9th November 2020, BCC and GLL policies and operational procedures in relation to Human Resources are closely aligned with no significant variances or areas of concern to address.’

**b) Tier 2 Performance reports**

Tier 2 performance reports have been presented in sequence within the agreed schedule of reports to March 2020. Up to and including the Board meeting of 11th March 2020 all Tier 2 performance reports for 2019/20 were presented on time and subsequently noted by the Board.

Within the ABL 2020 – 2025 Strategic Plan a review of KPI’s and performance/governance reporting was to be considered for implementation from April 2020. Due to the cancellation of Board meetings this review did not happen but is presented for consideration in a separate paper (see agenda item 5).

Subject to decisions taken in relation to proposed changes to the board report schedule and KPI formats (Agenda item 5), the schedule of Tier 2 reports may change. Additionally, the business was closed down from April to July 2020 and only partially re-open between August and October. The Executive Office reintroduced further restrictions in mid-October with the initial intention that they would remain in place for a period of four weeks. In these exceptional business conditions normal operation has been impossible and any resulting data would not be comparable to previously reported performance and trends.

Consequently, it is proposed that the following six reports which were due to be presented between April and October be cancelled and that the Tier 2 report scheduled be resumed from December 2020:

- Tier 2 Marketing and Communications
- Tier 2 Group exercise
- Tier 2 Olympia Spa
- Tier 2 PARS
- Tier 2 3G Pitch utilisation and business performance

- Tier 2 Underrepresented target groups

**c) Seek board approval by email**

Given the limited board time and the number of overdue reports, it may be practical to circulate some by email.

In order to manage board time over the November, December and January meetings, the following reports will be distributed by email before the end of November. Each with a deadline of two weeks for return/comment. Each will then be confirmed and recorded at the next available board meeting within a report 'for information only'.

- Confirm receipt of ABL Director declaration of interest forms
- Review ABL annual plan action compliance for 2019/20
- GLL Annual Service report for 2019/20

**d) Cancelled Reports**

Due to lock down and the resulting exceptional business conditions, it is proposed that the following overdue reports be cancelled. Pending approval and implementation of the review of performance and contract compliance reporting (2020-2025 schedule), it is anticipated that normal reporting will resume from December 2020

- ABL annual plan quarterly action update (June and September)
- GLL 6 monthly positive impact report
- GLL Annual Marketing Plan for 2020/21

**e) Defer until December and January Board Meetings**

Some functions have necessarily been 'on hold' since March 2020. These include areas of the business that have been routinely reported to the Board. It is proposed that the following overdue reports be deferred:

**Defer until December 2020**

- Annual Aquatics Strategy action plan review
- BCC Sports Development Unit update
- GLL Annual Schedule of Charges review proposal

**Defer until January 2021**

- **Leisure Transformation Programme update (April and October)**

**3.5 The above proposals are intended to deal with the backlog of reports arising from the cancellation of board meetings between April and October 2020. In consideration of the resumption of meetings from November 2020 the revised report schedule, including proposed cancellations and deferrals, has been designed to bring reporting up to date by the end of January 2021. Additionally, subject to Board approval, a revised report schedule should be ready for implementation from quarter four of 2020/21 (January 2021)."**

During discussion, a Director referred to the policy and procedure alignment assurance statements for Health and Safety and Human Resources which the Board was being asked to approve in paragraph 3.4 (a) of the report. He stated that he was aware of disparities in the way in which the Council and GLL formulated and implemented their policies and procedures and highlighted, in particular, issues relating to GLL around Covid-19 health and safety risk assessments and voluntary redundancy payment calculations.

The Partnership Manager explained that, whilst he could not comment on issues which were specific to GLL, he could confirm that all decisions taken by it around health and safety, such as changes to protocols and the risk assessments which informed those, were scrutinised by the Council's Corporate Health and Safety Unit. He added that the Council's Head of Human Resources and their GLL counterpart met on a regular basis to address any human resource issues. The Board should, therefore, be assured that the policies and procedures, as presented, were closely aligned.

The Board adopted the recommendations contained within the report.

**KPI Scorecard Review/Annual Reporting Schedule 2020-2021**

The Partnership Manager submitted for the Board's consideration the following report:

**"1.0 Purpose of Report**

**1.1 To present a revised KPI scorecard and annual schedule of board reports for 2020/21 for approval.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Board is requested to approve the proposals set out in the KPI Scorecard review and Annual Board Report Schedule revision as set out below.**

### **3.0 Main Report**

- 3.1 The ABL Board Strategic Plan for 2020-2025 was approved on 9th December 2019 and subsequently ratified by the Council on 6th January 2020.
- 3.2 A draft action plan to track the strategic plan outputs was approved on 11th March 2020 with final sign off deferred until the next scheduled meeting on 20th April. Due to the Covid-19 lockdown in mid-March, the April board meeting and all subsequent meetings, were cancelled until resumption in November. Consequently final approval of the action plan is now required.
- 3.3 No Director comments or suggested edits were received in relation to the draft action plan. However, the lockdown may have influenced this response. To allow for a final review and sign off, the 11th March action plan report is re-presented for consideration at agenda item 7.
- 3.4 At the Board 'open forum' workshop on 24th February 2020 a review of KPI formats, general performance reporting and the annual schedule of board reports was agreed. It was further agreed that the review should specifically seek to ensure that KPI's should be relevant and meaningful and that the overall Board report schedule should be rationalised to better manage Board meeting time and allow for more open discussion and ad hoc presentations.
- 3.5 Proposals below are based on a general principle of limiting the number of formal reports presented to circa six per board meeting.
- 3.6 The following proposed KPI scorecard and annual board report schedule has been prepared with the above criteria in mind and is presented for consideration.
- 3.7 KPI scorecard and performance reports:

#### **2020/21 KPI Scorecard (reported for overall service and on a centre by centre basis)**

### **BUSINESS**

1	Financial	Expenditure cost recovery
2	Financial	Labour cost recovery
3	Financial	Cost per visit
4	Membership	Pay & Play membership net gain
5	Membership	Pre-paid membership net gain
6	Membership	Swim school membership net gain
7	Occupancy	Main Hall occupancy
8	Occupancy	Studio occupancy
9	Occupancy	Synthetic pitch occupancy

The above KPI's proposed for inclusion in the quarterly scorecard comprise nine measures. This represents a reduction of seven from the sixteen measure in the current 4x4 scorecard. The nine proposed measures have all been reported for the last two years. Consequently, valid YoY data comparisons would be available.

Data provided by remaining seven KPI's, removed from the current 2019/20 scorecard, will be picked up within the six monthly and annual reports proposed below.

**Six monthly management reports:**

- a) Customer communications update
- b) PHA referral programmes (as is)
- c) Six monthly ABL Strategic Plan action update
- d) Six monthly facility management & centre inspection report
- e) Six monthly BCC Sports Development Unit update
- f) Tier 2 Performance report – Community Engagement
- g) Tier 2 Performance report – Group Exercise Innovation and Development
- h) Tier 2 Performance report – PARs
- i) Tier 2 Performance report – 3G Pitch Utilisation & Business Performance
- j) Tier 2 Performance report – Underrepresented Target Groups

**Annual management reports:**

- a) Belfast Agenda outcomes report
- b) *Human Resources (Staff attrition, absence and PDP, contracted/casual staff hours, etc.)*
- c) Aquatics Strategy review
- d) Review of GLL membership architecture

**3.8 Ad Hoc reports**

The Board would continue to agree to ad hoc report requests as required. As per the existing protocol, at each meeting directors can propose the development of ad hoc reports for future meetings which are then subject to board approval for inclusion in the relevant meeting agenda.

**3.9 Contract compliance reports**

In addition to the performance and management reports set out above, the Board is required to approve a number of contract compliance reports. The contract compliance reports are included in the draft annual report schedule below at 3.10.

**3.10 Draft annual report schedule for 2020/21**

**(BOLD denotes contract compliance requirement)**

<b>Quarter 1</b>	
<b>April 2020</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy &amp; procedure alignment report (Equality &amp; Diversity) + (Health &amp; Safety)</li> <li>• ABL Strategic Plan six monthly action update</li> <li>• Confirm receipt of ABL Director declaration of interest forms</li> <li>• Six monthly facility management &amp; centre inspection report</li> <li>• Tier 2 Performance report – Community Engagement</li> </ul>
<b>June</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Q4 2019/20 KPI report</li> <li>• GLL Annual Service report for 2019-20</li> <li>• Tier 2 Performance report – Group Exercise Innovation &amp; Development</li> <li>• Annual GLL HR report (for previous year)</li> <li>• Annual Belfast Agenda outcomes report</li> </ul>

<b>Quarter 2 (BCC July recess – No ABL board meeting in July)</b>	
<b>August</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Q1 KPI report</li> <li>• GLL Annual Service Plan for 2021-22</li> <li>• Annual Aquatics Strategy action plan review</li> <li>• Tier 2 Performance report – PARs</li> <li>• Tier 2 Performance report – 3G Pitch Utilisation &amp; Business Performance</li> </ul>
<b>September</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Six monthly review of ABL Companies House returns</li> <li>• Tier 2 Performance report – Underrepresented Target Groups</li> <li>• Six monthly BCC Sports Development Unit update</li> <li>• Annual review of GLL membership architecture</li> <li>• Policy &amp; procedure alignment report (HR) + (Emergency Support &amp; PSNI/BCC Public Safety)</li> </ul>

<b>Quarter 3</b>	
<b>October</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GLL Annual Schedule of Charges review proposal for 2021-22</li> <li>• Six monthly ABL Strategic Plan action update</li> <li>• Six monthly facility management &amp; centre inspection report</li> <li>• Tier 2 Performance report – Community Engagement</li> </ul>
<b>December</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Q2 KPI report</li> <li>• ABL Audited Accounts report to 31 March 2020</li> <li>• GLL Annual Marketing Plan for 2021-22</li> <li>• Tier 2 Performance report – Group Exercise Innovation &amp; Development</li> </ul>

<b>Quarter 4</b>	
<b>January 2021</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ABL Annual plan proposal for following year</li> <li>• Review Annual KPI Report format and schedule for 2021-22</li> <li>• Review of GLL Annual Customer Survey outcomes</li> <li>• Tier 2 Performance report – PARs</li> <li>• Tier 2 Performance report – 3G Pitch Utilisation &amp; Business Performance</li> </ul>
<b>March</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Q3 KPI report</li> <li>• Six monthly review of ABL Companies House returns</li> <li>• GLL KPI targets for following year</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tier 2 Performance report – Underrepresented Target Groups</li> <li>• Six monthly BCC Sports Development Unit update</li> </ul>
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**3.11 Subject to approval of the above proposals and any amendments, a final Annual Performance and Contract Compliance Report Schedule for 2020/21 will be prepared and presented to the Board on 14th December for final sign off.”**

After discussion, it was

Moved by Mr. Ellison,  
Seconded by Mr. Boyle and

Resolved – That the Board agrees to adopt the recommendations contained within the report, subject to the annual management report on Human Resources referred to within paragraph 3.7 being presented in future on a quarterly basis.

**Active Belfast Limited Change of Membership/  
Companies House Returns**

The Board was reminded that, at its meeting on 11th March, it had accepted the resignation of Mr. Robert Stewart and had agreed to undertake a recruitment exercise, potentially in September/October, with a view to appointing up to three Directors to return the Board to its full complement of fifteen, as set out in the company’s articles of association.

The Partnership Manager reported that Mr. John Higgins had resigned from the Board on 8th June and that the Chairperson had forwarded to him a letter acknowledging the receipt of his resignation and recognising the contribution which he had made since his appointment in December, 2016. As this was the first meeting to take place since his notification had been received, the Board was being requested to formally accept his resignation. Companies House had, he added, been informed of both his and Mr. Stewart’s resignation.

He explained that the Covid-19 pandemic had resulted in a significant delay in the commencement of the recruitment process and that it was only in the initial planning stage. With that in mind, he invited the Board to give consideration to identifying a new timeframe for its implementation.

After discussion, the Board:

- i. formally accepted the resignation of Mr. J. Higgins;
- ii. agreed that the recruitments process to appoint up to a maximum of four new Directors should be delayed until the new year; and
- iii. agreed that a report be submitted to its next meeting outlining the various stages in the recruitment process and identifying ways in which the under-representation of various groups on the Board could be addressed.

### **Active Belfast Limited Action Plan 2020 - 2025**

The Board was reminded that, at its meeting on 11th March, it had approved a draft action plan in support of the recently approved Active Belfast Limited Strategic Plan for 2020-2025. The Board had agreed that the deadline for the final sign-off of the plan should be extended until its meeting on 20th April to allow for Directors to submit any additional comments.

The Partnership Manager reported that no comments had been received and that, as this was the first time that the Board had been able to meet since March, due to Covid-19, the action plan was being presented at this meeting for final approval. Accordingly, he recommended that the Board approve the Active Belfast Limited action plan for 2020 – 2025, as set out below:

Section 1: Governance						
Objective		Output		Action(s)	Lead	Timeline
1	Maintain board membership at 12 or more directors and ensure that Companies House records are accurate and up to date	1.1	Regular reports on attendance, resignations and tenure	Succession planning	Board	Ongoing
		1.2	Companies House returns	Timely returns managed through Advanced Accounting	Partnership Manager	Ongoing
		1.3	Director development	Introduce annual director performance appraisals	Chair	Annually. Consider completion during Q1 (April – June)
2	Comply with all obligations related to contract compliance	2.1	Deliver the agreed annual contract compliance reports and board activities	Yearly review of the annual contract compliance calendar  Control board meeting agendas to maximise time for open discussion	Board	By March annually
3	Ensure receipt of 'registration of director interests' on an annually basis	3.1	Receipt of returns from all directors	Issue declaration pro forma with return deadline	Partnership Manager	Issued annually in April with deadline for return by 30 April
4	Convene a minimum of eight board	4.1	Plan for enough meeting time to effectively deliver on all company	Schedule two board meetings per quarter	BCC Democratic Services	Annually in December for the following

	meetings per year		and board obligations			calendar year
		4.2	Plan for sufficient, discussion and director development time	Plan two 'open forum' meetings annually in February and September  Deliver one strategic planning workshop in November each year	Board	Ongoing

Section 2: Belfast Agenda						
Objective		Output		Action(s)	Lead	Timeline
5	Ensure that ABL priorities and activities are closely aligned with the Belfast Agenda	5.1	Clear and unambiguous alignment with the Belfast Agenda	Prioritise performance reports and GLL/ABL contract compliance activities	Board	By 1st April annually with mid-year review
6	Develop a clear set of outputs related to the Councils Leisure Transformation Programme	6.1	Citywide and centre by centre KPIs	Maintain a relevant suite of KPI's and performance reports	Board	Review annually in March
		6.2	Develop the boards understanding of the business impacts of opening new centres on both the greater Belfast market and internal BCC customer displacement	Allow sufficient time and resources for director development and open discussion	Board	Ongoing

Section 3: More People, More Active, More Often						
Objective		Output		Action(s)	Lead	Timeline
7	Build performance reporting strictly around growing participation, space occupancy and income generation	7.1	City wide and centre by centre performance reports	Review annually	Board and GLL	March annually
		7.2	Set challenging and measurable growth targets for each KPI and performance measure	Review annually	Board and GLL	April annually

		7.3	Maintain accurate facility capacity calculators	Review TLP capital build and building alterations where there is an impact on facility mix/capacity	Partnership Manager	Ongoing
8	Challenge GLL to develop plans with specific targets for attracting new customers/members	8.1	GLL product development plans	Review annually	GLL and Board	Annually in march
		8.2	GLL marketing and outreach plans	Review annually	GLL and Board	Six monthly. Consider May and November

Section 4: Health benefits						
Objective		Output		Action(s)	Lead	Timeline
9	Seek to develop ABL/GLL health outputs consistent with those set out in the Belfast Agenda	9.1	Annual KPI and performance reporting schedule	Annual review	Board	By September 2020 and annually thereafter
10	Agree specific targets with GLL for the development of programmes and activities to address known health inequalities	10.1	Programming	Review centre programmes to ensure appropriate time/space is allocated to health related activities, interventions and partnerships	Board/GLL	Six monthly. Consider April and October
		10.2	Targeted health interventions	Demonstrate assurance that PARS programme outputs are being met	Board and GLL	Quarterly. Ongoing
		10.3	Develop new partnership working	Agree targets for outreach and new partnership schemes (externally and internally funded)	Board/GLL	Annually
		10.4	Demonstrate positive impacts on physical, mental, medical,	Build into ABL performance reports	Board and GLL	Review annually and report as required in

			emotional and social	mechanisms and include QoQ and YoY progress		an agreed performance report schedule
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Section 5: Community engagement						
Objective		Output		Action(s)	Lead	Timeline
11	Ensure that GLL develop and demonstrate effective community outreach programmes	11.1	Seek and develop new community contacts	Develop an annual community engagement plan with defined outputs	GLL	Annually in December
		11.2	Programme centre activities attract and sustain new community based markets			
		11.3	User group retention and sustainability planning			
12	Seek evidence based rationale from GLL to underpin community engagement plans. Including community needs/wants analysis	12.1	Market research	Review of local provision and community feedback	GLL	Six monthly. Consider December and June
13	Support and encourage GLL to be dynamic in piloting new approaches, products and programmes	13.1	Evidence new activity interventions and outcomes	Maintain accurate programme data  Six monthly board reports	GLL	Ongoing  October and April

Section 6: Partnerships and pathways						
Objective		Output		Action(s)	Lead	Timeline
14	Develop strategic partnership opportunities for ABL	14.1	Seek partnership and activity /output alignment with relevant statutory agencies	Promote ABL representation on a broad range of inter-agency forums	Board	Ongoing
15	Challenge and support GLL to develop and demonstrate innovative, effective and sustainable partnerships with, for example, community groups, school, clubs, NGB's,	15.1	Focus on potential to drive growth in facility occupancy and participation particularly at off peak times	Develop annual plans with outputs	GLL	Annually in January

	statutory agencies, etc.					
16	Encourage GLL to develop new and participate in existing support service partnerships	16.1	Partner in athlete support, sports science, community health education, user advice workshops, etc.	Include in annual report schedule	Board	Annually in April

Section 7: New users and markets						
Objective		Output		Action(s)	Lead	Timeline
17	Continually explore and revisit inter-agency shared outputs	17.1	Research access routes to new customers and markets focusing on distinctly new customer groups separate from attracting returning ex users and existing members from other providers	Promote ABL board contact with or representation on a broad range of inter-agency forums	Board	Ongoing
18	Identify and agree Belfast Specific priority target groups	18.1	Set baselines and challenging targets for annual growth	Build into ABL KPI and performance reporting mechanisms	Board	Review annually and report as required in an agreed performance report schedule
19	Innovation and agility	19.1	Encourage GLL to innovative and respond with agility to changing market conditions.	Ongoing liaison directly with GLL  Build into open forum meetings and annual strategic planning workshop	Board  Board	Ongoing  Ongoing

Section 8: Deficit controls						
Objective		Output		Action(s)	Lead	Timeline
20	Support GLL in cost control measures while ensuring the highest possible quality of service	20.1	Financial reporting measures	Ensure reporting measures provide sufficient assurance	Board	In line with agreed KPI and performance reporting mechanisms. Review annually.

21	Support GLL in driving income. Particularly through business development rather than yield maximisation	21.1	Financial reporting measures	Ensure reporting measures provide sufficient assurance	Board	In line with agreed KPI and performance reporting mechanisms. Review annually.
22	Ensure that GLL includes market analysis and impact assessment within all proposals related to service modernisation	22.1	Centre facility mix, product design, opening hours, programmes, etc.	Ensure inclusion within GLL business planning and ABL report schedule	Board	Ongoing
		22.2	Pricing and membership architecture	Ensure inclusion within GLL business planning and ABL report schedule	Board	Ongoing

Section 9: Sports development strategic approach						
Objective		Output		Action(s)	Lead	Timeline
23	Ensure that sports development sits within the overall service	23.1	Develop a strategic approach	Director attendance at regular meetings with GLL and BCC sports development teams	Board	Ongoing
		23.2	Identify target sports	Meet to discuss and align with BC priorities	Board and BCC	By June 2020 and annually thereafter
		23.3	Establish effective club & NGB partnerships	Build into outputs for GLL and include in performance reporting mechanisms	Board and GLL	By June 2020 and annually thereafter
24	Encourage a close working relationship between GLL programme developers and BCC sports development unit	24.1	Evidence or regular meetings, shared initiatives and outcomes	Seek assurance of an ongoing effective relationship	Board	Six monthly reports. Consider October and April



Section 10: Aquatics Strategy delivery						
Objective		Output		Action(s)	Lead	Timeline
25	Ensure that the Aquatics Strategy for Belfast 2019-2030 'lives' within the service and is reflected in pool programming	25.1	Deliver on the Aquatic Strategy action plan  Track progress against the strategic objectives and priorities	Regular progress reports	Board	Consider six monthly

Section 11: Equality, diversity and good relations						
Objective		Output		Action(s)	Lead	Timeline
26	Ensure that BL and GLL activities are delivered in a manner consistent with BCC's equality, diversity and good relations policies	26.1	Provide assurance to BCC	Assess and report annually on relevant GLL/BCC policy alignments	Board	Annually in August

Section 12: Programming						
Objective		Output		Action(s)	Lead	Timeline
27	Ensure that GLL develops and demonstrates citywide pool programming aligned to the Aquatics Strategy and specific centre USPs	27.1	Statistical data	Build into outputs for GLL and include in performance reporting mechanisms	Board	In line with agreed KPI and performance reporting mechanisms. Review annually.
28	Support and empower GLL to agile in trying new programmes with the expectation of regular reviews and time table alterations	28.1	Regular update reports	Build into outputs for GLL and include in performance reporting mechanisms	Board	In line with agreed KPI and performance reporting mechanisms. Review annually.
29	Work on the understanding that programme balance, user demand and financial sustainability are recognised jointly as key drivers in programme development decisions	29.1	Strategic planning and Director development	Ensure that sufficient time is considered within board meeting agendas and meeting management	Board	Annual review

30	Ensure that performance reporting mechanisms reflects the priority given to programmed activities and group exercise in particular	30.1	Regular update reports	Build into outputs for GLL and include in performance reporting mechanisms	Board	In line with agreed KPI and performance reporting mechanisms. Review annually.
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Section 13: Pricing						
Objective		Output		Action(s)	Lead	Timeline
31	Ensure contract compliance in relation to pricing including the timely consideration of annual price reviews and the contractually agreed annual RPI linked price increased	31.1	Contract compliance report schedule	Ensure inclusion in the annual performance and contract compliance report schedule	Board	Annually in April
32	Ensure that the Council's concessionary pricing policies are consistently implemented across the leisure estate and that price does not become a genuine barrier to participation.	32.1	GLL annual review of pricing	Review GLL annual pricing review	Board	Annually in October
		32.2	Scrutinise for and challenge above RPI proposals	Review GLL annual pricing review	Board	Annually in October
33	Ensure that pricing decisions are consistent with the ambition to encourage and maintain growth in participation from traditionally underrepresented groups.	33.1	GLL annual review of pricing	Review GLL annual pricing review	Board	Annually in October
34	Encourage and support GLL in the application of agile pricing strategies that promote centre occupancy and participation as well as income generation.	34.1	GLL annual service pan	Ensure inclusion in GLL annual service pan	Board	Annually in December

The Board adopted the recommendation.

### **Schedule of Meetings 2021**

The Board approved the following schedule of meetings for 2021 and agreed that it should continue to meet at 4.30 p.m.:

- Monday, 11th January
- Monday, 8th March
- Monday, 12th April
- Monday, 7th June
- Monday, 9th August
- Monday, 6th September  
(to be replaced potentially with an open forum meeting)
- Monday, 25th October and
- Monday, 6th December.

### **Other Business**

No additional items of business were raised by Directors.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

The Board noted that its next meeting would take place remotely via Microsoft Teams on Monday, 14th December at 4.30 p.m.

Chairperson

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Schedule of Meetings 2021</b>
<b>Date:</b>	20th November, 2020
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Walsh, City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

## Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

☐

No

☒

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

☐  
☐  
☐  
☐

## Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

☒

No

☐

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To advise the Committee of the dates and times of the meetings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee between January and December, 2021.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is requested to approve the schedule of meetings as outlined and to agree to the holding of special meetings, if required, to consider the rate-setting process on dates to be determined by the Chairperson.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
	<b><u>Key Issues</u></b>
3.1	The monthly meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is normally held at 9.30 a.m. on the 3rd Friday of each month.

3.2	However, due to holiday periods and the timing of the monthly Council meetings and, in order to assist with the decision-making process, it has been necessary on occasions to move some of the meetings to later in the month.
3.3	Members will also be aware that a special meeting is normally scheduled in January, in case it is required for the consideration of the rate-setting process.
3.4	Given the current circumstances, it is likely that additional meetings may be required. If so, then these meetings would have to be arranged at short notice. The Committee is being asked, therefore, to agree to the holding of such meetings on dates and times to be determined in consultation with the Chairperson.
3.5	<p>The following dates have been identified for meetings of the Strategic Policy Committee for the period from January to December, 2021, with a commencement time of 9.30 a.m:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friday, 15th January (Rate setting, if required)</li> <li>• Friday, 22nd January</li> <li>• Friday, 19th February</li> <li>• Friday, 19th March</li> <li>• Friday, 23rd April</li> <li>• Friday, 21st May</li> <li>• Friday, 18th June</li> <li>• Friday, 20th August</li> <li>• Friday, 24th September</li> <li>• Friday, 22nd October</li> <li>• Friday, 19th November and</li> <li>• Friday, 17th December</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p> <p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	None



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Change of Date of Council Meeting</b>
<b>Date:</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> November, 2020
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Walsh, City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To consider a change to the normal date for the monthly Council meeting in January.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is recommended to agree to move the Council meeting in January from Monday, 4th to Thursday, 7th January.

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
	<u><b>Key Issues</b></u>
3.1	The Council's Standing Order 1 states that:



	<p><i>“Monthly meetings of the Council will be held on the first working day of each month except in August. Monthly Meetings shall not, however, take place on a Bank or Public Holiday, Friday, Saturday or Sunday, but shall be held on the next following weekday instead.”</i></p>
3.2	<p>In previous years, Members have commented that the date scheduled for the monthly meeting of the Council around the New Year holiday period means that some cannot attend due to holiday commitments. The same can be said for officers, some of whom are also on holiday around that time.</p>
3.3	<p>In 2021, the January meeting of the Council is scheduled to be held on Monday, 4th, the first working day following the New Year public holidays. There would not be any difficulty in moving this meeting to Thursday, 7th January at 6.00 p.m., as no other meetings are scheduled for that date.</p>
3.4	<p>It is, therefore, proposed that the January meeting of the Council should take place on Thursday, 7th at 6.00 p.m.</p> <p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p> <p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	None