

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



**Belfast  
City Council**

20th April, 2021

**MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet remotely via Microsoft Teams on Friday, 23rd April, 2021 at 9.30 a.m., 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 (Pages 1 - 18)
- (b) Malone House - Options Paper (Pages 19 - 46)
- (c) Appointment of Climate Commissioner (Pages 47 - 48)

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

- (a) Motion – Funding for the Citywide Tribunal Service (Pages 49 - 50)
- (b) Motion- Uplift on Universal Credit - Response from Minister for Welfare Delivery (Pages 51 - 56)

**4. Governance**

- (a) Freedom of the City – Frontline Workers and Covid-19 Response (Pages 57 - 60)
- (b) Council/Committee Meetings - Post 6th May, 2021 (Pages 61 - 66)

**5. Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues**

- (a) Review of the Belfast Agenda (Pages 67 - 74)
- (b) Update on Smart Belfast (Pages 75 - 80)
- (c) Heritage Trail Sign Policy – City Hall (Pages 81 - 84)
- (d) James Connolly Heritage Trail Sign (Pages 85 - 94)

**6. Physical Programme and Asset Management**

- (a) Update on Physical Programme (Pages 95 - 98)
- (b) Assets Management (Pages 99 - 106)
- (c) Update on Area Working Groups (Pages 107 - 130)

**7. Finance, Procurement and Performance**

- (a) Update on Contracts (Pages 131 - 134)

**8. Equality and Good Relations**

- (a) Revised Dual Language Street Signs Policy (Pages 135 - 150)
- (b) Language Strategy - Proposed Strategic Approach (Pages 151 - 184)
- (c) Minutes of the Meeting of the Shared City Partnership (Pages 185 - 202)

**9. Operational Issues**

- (a) Minutes of the Meeting of the Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum (Pages 203 - 206)
- (b) Minutes of the Meeting of the Social Value Working Group (Pages 207 - 214)
- (c) Requests for Use of the City Hall and the Provision of Hospitality (Pages 215 - 218)



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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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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6  
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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Motion – Funding for the Citywide Tribunal Service</b>
<b>Date:</b>	23rd April, 2021
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Walsh, City Solicitor/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 motion on Funding for the Citywide Tribunal Service which was referred to the Committee by the Council at its meeting on 1st April.
<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 1st April, the following motion was proposed by Councillor Ferguson and seconded by Councillor Matt Collins:</p> <p>“This Council notes with alarm that the Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service once again faces closure due to a lack of funding.</p> <p>The Council is deeply concerned with the lack of core funding offered to this service over the past year and notes that the recent Department for Communities budget did not include a necessary funding package to retain this vital service.</p>

	<p>The Council, therefore, calls on the Minister for Communities to immediately release core funding for the Citywide Tribunal Service of £256,769 per annum, in order to meet the growing need and pressure which the service faces and calls for an urgent meeting with the Minister, with a view to securing its long term future.</p> <p>Until then, the Council will provide £128,500 through its reserves, if necessary and refers the matter to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.”</p>
3.3	The Director of Finance and Resources will provide an update on the motion at the Committee meeting.
3.4	<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>
3.5	None
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	None



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Motion: Uplift on Universal Credit – Response from Minister for Welfare Delivery</b>
<b>Date:</b>	23rd April, 2021
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Walsh, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
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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 further response to a motion relating to Universal Credit, which was passed by the Council at its meeting on 7th January.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is requested to consider the response 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 7th January, the following motion, which was proposed by Councillor Heading and seconded by Councillor Lyons, was passed:</p> <p>“This Council recognises the positive impact of the £20 uplift on Universal Credit implemented in April 2020.</p> <p>The Council also recognises that, since March 2020, the unemployment claimant count has doubled to at least 60,000 in Northern Ireland and with a recession expected in the Spring only to worsen the situation for many households. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has failed to provide certainty that the £20 uplift on UC will remain beyond March 2021 meaning many families are potentially facing a loss of £1,040 a year to</p>

	<p>their incomes overnight. Charity Action for Children has warned that more than one in 10 families in the north are already having to choose between paying bills and eating meals. The Council calls on the UK government to put a protective shield around struggling families by ensuring March's Budget makes clear that Universal Credit will not be cut by £20 a week in the spring. Finally, the Council agrees to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer requesting they maintain the £20 uplift on Universal Credit in April 2021 and extending the £20 uplift to all legacy benefits."</p>
3.2	A response was received initially from HM Treasury, on behalf of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, a copy of which is attached at Appendix 1.
3.3	The Committee, at its meeting on 19th February, noted the response and agreed that a further letter be forwarded to the Chancellor highlighting the importance of the uplift payment, given the high levels of poverty in Northern Ireland, and urging him to extend it beyond March, 2021.
3.4	A response to that letter has now been received from Will Quince MP, Minister for Welfare Delivery, as the Minister responsible for this policy area. A copy of the response is attached at Appendix 2.
3.5	<p>The Minister points out that, since the start of the pandemic, the Government's priority has been to protect lives and people's livelihoods. With that in mind, the Chancellor announced in the recent Budget that the Government is extending the temporary £20 a week increase in Universal Credit for a further six months, until the end of September, taking it well beyond the end of this national lockdown. Eligible Working Tax Credit claimants will receive a one-off payment of £500. He concludes by stating that it is right that the Government should now shift its focus to supporting people back into work and that it has a comprehensive Plan for Jobs which the Budget builds upon.</p> <p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p>
3.6	None associated with this report.
	<b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b>
3.7	None
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Document Attached</b>
	<p>Appendix 1 - Response from HM Treasury</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Response from Minister for Welfare Delivery</p>



HM Treasury

1 Horse Guards Road  
London  
SW1A 2HQ

Louise McLornan  
Democratic Services Officer  
Belfast City Council,  
Legal and Civic Services Department  
City Hall  
Belfast  
BT1 5GS

21 January 2021  
Case Ref: LM 07012021

Dear Louise,

Thank you for your correspondence dated 19 January, regarding Universal Credit. The Treasury has received unprecedented amounts of correspondence since the start of the coronavirus outbreak in the UK. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has asked me to write to you directly.

The £20 per week increase to the Universal Credit (UC) standard allowance and Working Tax Credit (WTC) basic element forms just one part of a wide-ranging package of support the Government has provided to protect people's jobs and incomes, including income support schemes, mortgage holidays, support for renters, a £500 million local authority hardship fund, £500 payments to help people on low incomes to self-isolate under NHS Test and Trace, a £170 million COVID Winter Grant Scheme, and help with utilities.

To support families who rely on the safety net of the welfare system, we have also temporarily suspended the Minimum Income Floor for self-employed UC claimants, and increased the Local Housing Allowance rates for Housing Benefit and UC to the lowest third of local rents. The Government is spending £7.4 billion on its package of increased welfare support this year.

The increase to UC and WTC is specifically aimed at providing significant temporary support to low income families who may have seen their income fall as a result of the immediate impact of the crisis and is due to end in April 2021.

As the Government has done throughout this crisis, we will continue to consider the most appropriate forms of support as the public health and economic context develop. However, to illustrate, extending the £20 per week increase by a further 12 months would cost over £6 billion, equivalent to adding 1p on the basic rate of income tax plus a 3p increase in fuel duty.

Moving forward, the Government is focused on supporting people by helping them get into work and is making up to £30 billion available through the Plan for Jobs. This includes launching the £2 billion Kickstart Scheme to create hundreds of thousands of fully subsidised jobs for young people, and investing £8.6 billion in infrastructure, decarbonisation and maintenance projects to create jobs.

I hope this is helpful. If you have any questions about this reply, please email [public.enquiries@hmtreasury.gov.uk](mailto:public.enquiries@hmtreasury.gov.uk) quoting reference MC2021/01999.

Yours sincerely,

L Adams

Correspondence and Enquiry Unit  
HM Treasury





Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

Ministerial  
Correspondence **0207 340 4000**  
Caxton House  
Tothill Street **www.gov.uk**  
LONDON  
SW1H 9DA  
**ministers@dwp.gov.uk**

Your ref: HD/JT

Mr Henry Downey  
downeyh@belfastcity.gov.uk

Our ref: MC2021/25967

8 April 2021

Dear Mr Downey,

As you may know, your letter of 10 March to the Chancellor of the Exchequer about the £20 per week uplift to Universal Credit has been passed to this Department for reply. I am replying as the Minister with responsibility for this policy area.

Since the start of the pandemic, the Government's priority has been to protect lives and people's livelihoods. That is why the Chancellor announced in the recent Budget that the Government is extending the temporary £20 a week increase in Universal Credit for a further six months, until the end of September, taking it well beyond the end of this national lockdown. Eligible Working Tax Credit claimants will receive a one-off payment of £500. It is right that the Government should now shift its focus to supporting people back into work and we have a comprehensive Plan for Jobs which the Budget builds upon.

I hope you will find this reply helpful.

Kind regards,

**Will Quince MP**

**Minister for Welfare Delivery**

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Freedom of the City – Frontline Workers and Covid-19 Response</b>
<b>Date:</b>	23rd April, 2021
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Walsh, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Sandra Robinson, Protocol and Public Affairs Manager Eimear Henry, Senior Manager (Culture and Tourism)

<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	<p>The purpose of this report is to set out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- options available to deliver a public facing programme to recognise the work of the city's frontline during the Covid-19 pandemic.</li> <li>- options are set out to safely deliver a programme in the context of ongoing Covid-19 and inclusive of budget implications.</li> </ul>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the proposal within this report and agree the recommended option for a programme of events from May – October 2021.

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p>At the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee meeting on 22nd May 2020, it was agreed to award the Freedom of the City to healthcare workers and all those working tirelessly on the frontline to care for vulnerable citizens during the Covid-19 pandemic, with Members agreeing that a report outlining proposed arrangements for this to be submitted in due course. Therefore, this report sets out a proposed programme to include both a reflective event of commemoration as well as a citywide recognition event with community participation.</p> <p><b><u>Frontline Workers Freedom of the City</u></b></p>
3.2	<p>The Council has agreed to stage an event to recognise the contribution of all frontline workers during the Covid-19 crisis. Following consideration of the likely timeline for the return of live events in line with the roll out of the vaccination programme, this report sets out a recommended way forward.</p> <p><b>PROGRAMME OF EVENTS aligned to City Recovery and UNESCO City of Music bid</b></p>
3.3	<p>The concept would be to deliver a programme that would run from May 2021 through to autumn 2021. The beginning and end of the programme would be symbolically marked with an event. The final event would include the Freedom of the City ceremony.</p> <p><b>Strand one: Reflection through the Symbolism of Planting Trees</b></p>
3.4	<p>May 2021: Announcement/ launch of the programme with an appropriately reflective event to recognise the challenges the city has faced, including the loss of lives. It is proposed that this should be a tree planting event.</p>
3.5	<p>This element of the concept would entail symbolically marking the Freedom of the City with tree planting which would run alongside the wider programme of events, allowing for a physical memorial to the shared experience of the pandemic. Our public spaces have seen considerably higher usage and have been critical in supporting physical and mental wellbeing. This concept also ties in with ongoing Council strategies such as One Million Trees.</p>
3.6	<p>This strand of the programme would support the planting of a memorial tree in the grounds of Belfast City Hall, subject to appropriate planning considerations. It is proposed that a distinct evergreen variety be selected to provide a year round memorial. The planting of the tree in May this year would launch the Freedom of the City programme.</p>

3.7	<p><b>Strand two: Honouring the Contribution of City’s Frontline Workers and Communities</b></p> <p>The second strand of the programme will be developed around the theme of music. Music has played an important part in people overcoming the challenges of Covid-19 and creatively is the ideal art form to signal the beginnings of recovery. In addition, 2021 marks the submission of the city’s bid to be recognised as a UNESCO City of Music. We already have Committee approval to award 5 City of Music bursaries that will create 5 ‘musicians in residence’ for the city. It is envisaged that this cohort of artists would be joined by a further 5 musicians to deliver a Freedom of the City music programme. This residency programme would be launched in May and would be delivered across the city working with up to 10 different groups, all of them having had a particular experience of Covid. This could be a community group, a group of frontline workers, a school, a women’s group etc. Each ‘residency’ will produce their own version of ‘Mix the City’ - a unique music composition that tells their Covid story. All groups will then come together to create an overall composition that symbolises the city of Belfast – A Mix of the City.</p>
3.8	<p>By Autumn 2021 a Belfast Album would be created to be released. An official Freedom of the City event could then take place at the City Hall or alternative appropriate venue.</p>
3.9	<p>This main stage event would include profiled acts, breakthrough artists and a live performance of the new Belfast track with all the community participants. In addition, there would be a screening of a specially commissioned film that captures the city’s response to Covid and personal stories.</p>
3.10	<p>A series of satellite events could take place (with digital link-ups) to maximise community participation through a ‘music version’ of the clap for carers moment with a performance of Mix the City led by musicians on the main stage with audience participation across the city.</p>
3.11	<p>The overall programme would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Direct Community Participants: 150 via 10 groups</li> <li>– Core musician team of 10</li> <li>– Headline music acts at final event</li> <li>– Current Lord Mayor would launch initiative in May with incoming Lord Mayor participating in closing event in Autumn</li> <li>– Film produced capturing the individual ‘Belfast Stories’ of Covid. This could also contribute to Belfast Stories/Belfast Destination Hub Story Collection strand of work, as would the music commissioned</li> <li>– Potential to work with media partner</li> </ul>

3.12	<p><b>Covid-19</b></p> <p>Officers are aware of the implications on mass gatherings in the context of the current Covid-19 pandemic. The cultural, arts and events sector has been one of the many societal areas impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. Restrictions are likely to remain in place impacting the number of people permitted to gather indoor and outdoor. A timeline for the return of local, national and international events has not yet been set out however discussions are emerging around the likely return of events previously cancelled or postponed. This has obvious implications for the delivery of any chosen option. It is for this reason that any option with an 'event' element has been proposed for no earlier than September 2021. The date of this final event can continue to be flexible to ensure that Covid guidance and public safety remain at the forefront of all plans.</p>
3.13	<p>The proposed programme seeks to reflect the remarkable efforts of the city throughout the pandemic and has at its core an ethos of being both a caring and a creative city.</p>
3.14	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>The programme costs would be met from within existing budgets due to plans for a city event to mark the bid for UNESCO designation.</p>
3.15	<p><b><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></b></p> <p>The proposed programme of events is open to all and as such have the potential to promote good relations and equality by bringing together people from a wide range of backgrounds. City of Music Events are part of the cultural strategy for Belfast that has been subject to EQIA.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	None



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Council/Committee Meetings - Post 6th May, 2021</b>
<b>Date:</b>	23rd April 2021
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	John Walsh, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer; 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/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to propose arrangements for holding Council/Committee meetings following the expiry of the legislation permitting the hosting of remote meetings.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is requested to agree to changes to Standing Orders, as set out in the report, to enable the current arrangements for the hosting of remote meetings to continue.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<b><u>Background</u></b>
3.1.1	As Members will be aware, the Council has had to alter its normal decision-making processes during the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure that it is following Public Health Agency guidance

	on social distancing and essential travel, while maintaining continuity of critical services, and is currently holding Council and Committee meetings remotely via Teams.
3.1.2	The authority to meet remotely is governed by Section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020. The aim of this provision is allow local authority meetings to be held remotely, including remote access by members of the public, subject to the relevant national authority making the appropriate regulations.
3.1.3	The relevant legislation was made by the Northern Ireland Assembly - The Local Government (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of District Council Meetings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 – and came into effect from 1 <sup>st</sup> May, 2020.
3.2	<b><u>Key Issues</u></b>
3.2.1	The key issue is that, whilst regulations are currently in place, these expire on 6 <sup>th</sup> May, 2021 meaning that, without steps being taken, the Council and its Committees can no longer meet remotely to make decisions after that date and would be required to be physically 'present' to make decisions.
3.2.2	There is currently no provision to allow the Assembly to extend the regulations as they were enacted in exercise of the powers conferred by section 78 (3) of the Coronavirus Act 2020 – <i>“The regulations may make provision only in relation to local authority meetings required to be held, or held, before 7 May 2021.”</i>
3.2.3	This is a UK-wide issue and a number of organisations [the Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO) and Lawyers in Local Government (LLG) have been lobbying the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to change primary legislation to enable local authority remote meetings to take place beyond the current statutory deadline of 6th May 2021. The SoS has indicated that he has no plans to extend the date, as it requires primary legislation and there is no vehicle to do that in time for May.
3.2.4	Accordingly ADSO and LLG, in conjunction with Hertfordshire County Council, have commenced legal proceedings in the High Court to allow for the continuation of local authority meetings beyond 6 <sup>th</sup> May (as of 27/3/21 the claim has been issued in the High Court and they are awaited for the case to be listed for hearing).



3.2.5	However, that challenge is to the Local Government Act 1972 which applies to local authorities in England, so even, if successful, the Department of Communities will have to determine whether this applies to the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 which governs Council/Committee meetings and proceedings in Northern Ireland.
3.2.6	The Permanent Secretary to the Department for Communities has indicated that she is aware of the position and that the Department is working on the introduction of the legislative changes needed to ensure that powers to operate remotely are extended.
3.2.7	She has also stated that, due to legislative time pressures, it is possible that there may be a short period between the lapse of the current legislative cover and the introduction of changes when councils may need to consider other arrangements.
3.2.8	Therefore, in the absence of new legislation, the authority to hold remote meetings will expire on 6 <sup>th</sup> May, 2021 and members are being asked to consider changes to Standing Orders, which the City Solicitor is of the opinion fall within the legal powers of the Council and which will enable the current arrangements to be retained.
3.3	<b>Rationale</b>
3.3.1	Section 37 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 requires a council to make standing orders for the 'regulation of the proceedings and business' of the council. The provision also permits the variation of standing orders.
3.3.2	Section 17(3) of the Interpretation Act (NI) 1954 provides that, if legislation empowers or requires something be done, then all such powers as are reasonably necessary to enabling this or are reasonably incidental to that are also given. Section 31 of the same Act provides that legislation is to be applied to circumstances as they occur in the sense that the legislation is 'always speaking'.
3.3.3	The above legislation in combination provides the basis on which the council can, in the City Solicitor's opinion, vary standing orders to achieve essentially the same impact as the 2020 Regulations.

3.4	<b>Proposed Changes</b>
	<b>Remote Attendance</b>
3.4.1	<p>Meetings of the council are not limited to a meeting of persons all of whom, or any of whom, are present in the same place and any reference to a “place” where a meeting is held, or to be held, includes reference to more than one place including electronic, digital or virtual locations such as internet locations, web addresses or conference call telephone numbers.</p>
3.4.2	<p>A member of a council (“a member in remote attendance”) attends the meeting at any time if all of the following conditions are satisfied. Those conditions are that the member in remote attendance is able at that time—</p> <p>(a) to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard, and where practicable be seen by, the other members in attendance;</p> <p>(b) to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by, any members of the public in attendance in order to exercise a right to speak at the meeting; and</p> <p>(c) to be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by any other members of the public in attendance.</p>
3.4.3	<p>A Member, or a member of the public, attending a meeting or being in attendance includes that person attending by remote access.</p>
3.4.4	<p>Schedule 5 to the 2014 Act (meetings and proceedings) applies to meetings of the Council as follows—</p> <p>(a) any reference to being “present” at a meeting includes being present through remote attendance;</p> <p>(b) any reference to a “place” where a meeting is held, or is to be held, includes reference to more than one place including electronic, digital or virtual locations such as internet locations, web addresses or conference call telephone numbers; and</p> <p>(c) in addition to the publication of notice of the time and place at the offices of the council such notice of remote meetings will be published within the required time on the Council website.</p>

3.5	<b>Public access</b>
3.5.1	A meeting being “open to the public” includes access to the meeting through remote means including (but not limited to) video conferencing, live webcast, and live interactive streaming and where a meeting is accessible to the public through such remote means the meeting is open to the public whether or not members of the public are able to attend in person; and being “present” at a meeting includes access through remote means.
3.6	<b>Access to information</b>
3.6.1	Any information to which the public is entitled to access (agenda and unrestricted reports) will be made available on the Council’s website in addition to any duty for publication arising under the 2014 Act.
3.7	<b>Decision-making</b>
3.7.1	Any references in the 2014 Act to “members present and voting on the decision” includes a member being present through remote attendance.
3.8	<b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b>  No additional.
3.9	<b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b>  Any equality, good relations or rural needs assessments would be subject to the Council’s usual screening process.
4.0	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	None

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Review of the Belfast Agenda</b>
<b>Date:</b>	23rd April 2021
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Christine Robinson, Head of Strategy, Policy and Partnerships Jamie Uprichard, Community Planning Officer


<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
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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	The purpose of this report is update the Committee on the suggested approach and indicative timeline for a range of consultation and engagement activities to review the Belfast Agenda, where Members will have an opportunity to shape the refreshed Community Plan.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide feedback on the stages and proposed consultation and engagement milestones to review the Belfast Agenda; and</li> <li>note the role that Elected Members will play in refreshing the community plan detailed in section 3.8.</li> </ul>

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
	<b><u>Duty to review Community Plan</u></b>
3.1	Sections 69 and 70 of the Local Government Act 2014 set out the statutory requirements for the review of community plans which must be completed before the fourth anniversary of the date on which the Plan was published. This means that the first review of the Belfast Agenda is required by November 2021.
3.2	Current events and the disruption to normal working arrangements have understandably created a difficulty for community planning partnerships to meet these requirements in the manner initially envisaged. The Department for Communities have therefore written to the Chairs of community planning partnerships, recognising that as part of the ongoing response to COVID-19, actions to mitigate the impact of the pandemic, will inform a very large element of any review. The Department considers that this will be sufficient to meet the legislative requirements for Partnerships to formally confirm that a review of the community plan has been conducted.
3.3	While not statutory, the link between community plans and the Programme for Government creates practical difficulties as community plans will naturally wish to reflect any substantial change to the PfG Outcomes which may be decided by the Executive. The attached letter also includes a recommendation that Partnerships should therefore consider committing to carrying out a further review before April 2022, to facilitate the timetabling around the PfG.
	<b><u>Additional drivers for Change</u></b>
3.4	In addition to the legislative requirement to review the community plan, there is an imperative need to revise the areas the city will focus on in the short term to drive recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic. As the true effects emerge, we need to ensure our city economy and communities are able to rebuild in the coming months and years.
3.5	The Belfast Agenda was influenced by a set of shared values that have shaped its design. As part of its first formal review, we wish to reflect on lessons learned to date. We are driven by values of innovation and a focus on outcomes for people and we will identify what we need to do differently to make the next 4 years a success.
3.6	There is a growing literature providing recommendations for community planning including Dr Johann Gallagher's SIB report, "Towards a Programme of Support for Community Planning in Northern Ireland" and Carnegie UK Trust's recommendation (endorsed by

	<p>committee in March 2021) following the “Embedding a Wellbeing Framework in Northern Ireland” project. The review presents an excellent opportunity to embed many of these recommendation into our community planning processes and practices to deliver the required change we want for Belfast.</p>
3.7	<p><b><u>Defining the scope of the Review</u></b></p> <p>It is important to distinguish between the Belfast Agenda, the overarching city strategy document and the subsequent delivery action plans which identify a range of interventions the Partnership will take to contribute to the overall vision and outcomes. An updated city strategy document will contain the long-term vision and outcomes, population indicators and a new 4-year priority framework the Partnership should focus on. The Community Planning Partnership (CPP) will undertake a wide range of consultation and engagement activities to ensure the refreshed Plan will include the issues our communities want addressed within this recovery period.</p>
3.8	<p>It is important that new Delivery Action Plans are designed with the public and VCSE sectors (including elements of a bottom-up approach) to ensure communities have greater involvement in the process and together, we can make a meaningful difference to people’s lives. The actions will be based on a range of criteria such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery reflects partnership activity providing collaborative gain/not business as usual activity;</li> <li>• Designed to contribute to the Belfast Agenda outcomes; and</li> <li>• Include ‘area specific’ elements making the ‘Belfast Agenda’ more meaningful to local communities.</li> </ul>
3.9	<p><b><u>Key Principles agreed by the Belfast Community Planning Partnership</u></b></p> <p>At its meeting on 24th March 2021, the CPP considered initial plans for the review and agreed the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The core purpose of the refreshed Belfast Agenda is to improve outcomes for local people.</li> <li>• The Belfast Agenda should reflect all that is positive about the city and its people, whilst identifying the key challenges that need to be addressed through the work of the Partnership.</li> <li>• Our approach will be based on the principle of co-design. Statutory partners, Elected Members, Support Partners and the VCSE panel will all have a critical role to play to make this possible.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The refreshed Belfast Agenda will build on recent work across the city, including the work of Healthy North Belfast, the East Belfast Agenda the STEP project in South Belfast. (Seamless Transition through Education Project).</li> <li>• Where possible, we will use the data and evidence that partners hold to support and inform our partnership working.</li> <li>• The work of the CPP will focus on additionality and the collaborative gains that are made possible from our partnership working.</li> <li>• The review process will involve the participation of all partners, who will need to commit their resources to the review process and the agreed action plans.</li> </ul>
3.10	<p><b><u>Consultation and Engagement Milestones</u></b></p> <p>The CPP agreed to establish a dedicated sub-group from the Statutory Partners and VCSE Sectoral Advisory Panel to support the co-design and delivery of the new Belfast Agenda (and corresponding delivery plans) by March 2022. In doing so, it has also proposed to hold a series of consultation and engagement activities organised into stages for which there is a need to reach consensus on various aspects of the Plan. In keeping with the commitment set out within the council's Belfast: Our Recovery framework, the review of the Belfast Agenda will follow a co-design process. Specifically, we are suggesting the Partnership proactively engages communities to identify local challenges, priorities and opportunities. We want co-design to be the central principle for the review process to deliver improved outcomes for people living in Belfast. In summary, the co-design approach we adopt needs to be flexible to reflect the outcome of prior engagement ensuring we listen to and reflect the specific needs of each area of the city.</p>  <pre> graph LR     A[Review Launch (May 2021)] --&gt; B[Vision, Outcomes and Priority Framework Engagement (June 2021)]     B --&gt; C[Action Planning (September - November 2021)]     C --&gt; D[Consultation on Draft Plans (early 2022)]     D --&gt; E[Embedding Continuous Improvement (2022 onwards)]   </pre> <p>3.11 A Review Launch will aim to raise awareness of the Belfast Agenda and reinvigorate the community planning process with communities. It is assumed that lockdown measures will be in place for the foreseeable future and therefore, the majority of engagement activities will at least initially take place virtually/ online. The 'Your Say Belfast' engagement platform will</p>



<p>3.12</p> <p>3.13</p>	<p>be heavily utilised to make it easier for citizens to engage and have their say. The web-based system will provide a grouped space where all engagement activities will be located and critically where feedback on each stage will also be provided. However, if the situation improves, we will allow for face to face engagement later in the process.</p> <p>Very similar to the recent Programme for Government (PfG) consultation, we wish to move quickly to agree or reaffirm the long-term vision and outcomes, which were set in 2017, following extensive engagement. At this stage, we also wish to reach consensus on a 4-year priority framework which will identify the specific areas to be progressed by the Partnership. Again, similar to the PfG, this will identify priorities to address Health Inequalities, which may include for example a focus on mental health, emotional wellbeing or Alcohol and Drugs. From recent feedback and political priorities, it is also proposed that zero-carbon should become a 5<sup>th</sup> pillar of the agenda.</p> <p>It is vital that we recognise that the Partnership cannot focus on everything and therefore we need to gain consensus on the priority framework before we continue our engagement with an action planning and problem-solving phase. While we expect this stage will be informed by the co-design process, we expect it may take a local-area and/or citywide approach or some combination thereof. This stage will also present an opportunity for both partner organisations, BAPs and the VCSE Panel to present/host sector views or inputs for further in-depth Board consideration and analysis. This stage represents the greatest challenge as we seek to develop draft Delivery Action Plans which can be endorsed by the city and owned by Boards/ partner organisations. Note, it is intended that these plans will remain live documents moving forward being informed by continual engagement.</p>
<p>3.14</p> <p>3.15</p>	<p><b><u>Role of Elected Members</u></b></p> <p>It is proposed that elected members will be engaged at each stage highlighted in section 3.6 through the All Party Working Group on Community Planning. In addition, it is recommended that all elected members will have the opportunity to shape the priority framework and plans for the new 4 year period through Party Group briefings. In addition, elected members will also be supported by our Marketing and Communications team who will be provide ongoing support via a communications toolkit to enable them to engage their constituents to make their voices heard.</p> <p>While the specifics regarding engagement events will be finalised with partners, it is expected that there will be a series of thematic and/or local-area virtual workshops. This will provide a further role for elected members to provide a leading role within their communities to shaping the city's future plans.</p>

3.16	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>Any financial implications arising from this report will be covered from existing budgets. The review process will involve the participation of all community planning partners, who will need to commit their resources to the review process and the agreed action plans.</p>
3.17	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>It is recommended that the consultation and engagement activities to review the Belfast Agenda will take account of the draft Audit of Inequalities and include specific sessions with targeted harder to reach groups to ensure that equality implications are considered as part of the review process.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	DfC Letter of November 2020

The Chair  
Belfast City Council  
Community Planning Partnership

Causeway Exchange  
1-7 Bedford Street,  
BELFAST  
BT2 7EG

Email: [LCPD.Coordination@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:LCPD.Coordination@communities-ni.gov.uk)

Our ref: DO1-15-7828

18 November 2020

I am writing regarding the statutory requirements for the review of community plans. As you will know these are set out in Part 10 of the Local Government (NI) Act NI 2014<sup>1</sup>, explicitly in Sections 69 and 70. In accordance with Section 69 (1) a review must be completed before the fourth anniversary of the date on which the community plan was published. The publication date for the eleven community plans varied from late March to November 2017, so the review of plans will be due for completion by the relevant fourth anniversary date during 2021.

Current events and the disruption to normal working arrangements have understandably created a difficulty for partnerships to meet these requirements in the manner initially envisaged. The link between community plans and the Programme for Government (although not statutory) also creates practical difficulty since community plans will naturally wish to reflect any substantial change to the PfG Outcomes which may be decided by the Executive.

The periodic review of community plans, which by their nature are long term, is key to ensuring they deliver desired outcomes. We recognise that the ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated how much partnership working over the last period has been aided by the community planning process. The Minister believes that the collective leadership of central and local government alongside grass roots community organisations, working together, has never been more important. In this context it is clear that community plans and the structures and relationships which have evolved from the process are important and should be sustained.

All partnerships either have or are currently considering changes to the plans that are needed in light the COVID-19 pandemic, The Department considers that it will be sufficient to meet legislative requirements for Partnerships to formally confirm that a review of the community plan has been conducted and that Partners agree the plan continues to meet (or will meet in an amended form) the needs of the local community. In addition I would recommend that Partnerships should consider formally committing to carrying out a further review before April 2022, since reviews can occur at any time before the next legislative review date, i.e. before 2025. This secondary review would facilitate the timetabling around PfG.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2014/8/part/10>

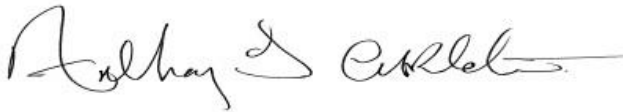
## **Appendix I – DfC Letter dated November 2020**

I would also reassure Partnerships that the review of the community plan does not need to follow any specific format, indeed it is likely that current work of partnerships in relation to actions to mitigate the impact of the pandemic, will inform a very large element of any review.

The Department will continue to liaise with officials from The Executive Office as they plan and take forward the new Programme for Government (PfG) and will ensure that community plans remain part of that process, recognising the contribution to delivering PfG Outcomes.

I am aware that several Partnerships have met remotely and continue to work together over recent months and I do hope that all Partnerships will be able to progress with this important work over the coming months.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anthony Carleton', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Anthony Carleton**

**Director Local Government & Housing Regulation**



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Update on Smart Belfast</b>
<b>Date:</b>	23rd April, 2021
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Deborah Colville, City Innovation manager Mark McCann, Programme Lead

<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 development of a world class 'Smart District' is about harnessing place-based digital innovation to support the city centre's recovery and the transformation of the wider city. In particular, the importance of advanced wireless connectivity has been identified to support Belfast's economic ambition and will form the backbone of the 'Belfast Smart District'.
1.2	The Council has been working with city partners and industry experts to consider how best to prepare a significant proposal to the Belfast Region City Deal's Infrastructure Enabling Fund that will stimulate investment and the rapid deployment of advanced wireless connectivity.

1.3	Following positive responses from key partners, it is proposed that the Council now proceeds to a detailed feasibility study to determine the optimal model for investment.
1.4	<p>The paper also provides short updates on two Smart Belfast initiatives:</p> <p>A request by the Northern Ireland Trusted Research Environment (NITRE) for Belfast City Council to participate in a proposed Northern Ireland pilot project to establish a citizen's panel which will consider issues associated with unlocking health data for innovation; and</p> <p>Belfast's success in being selected by the Intelligent Communities Forum as one of 21 'Smart Communities of 2021'.</p>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. note the work to date on advanced wireless infrastructure and its importance to the Belfast's economic and transformation/recovery ambitions;</li> <li>2. approve a feasibility study to determine the optimal model for investment in support of advanced wireless connectivity;</li> <li>3. approve Belfast City Council's role, working with government partners, in the design of a proposed NI citizen's panel to consider issues associated with unlocking health data for innovation; and</li> <li>4. note Belfast's award of 'Smart 21 Communities' by the Intelligent Communities Forum and its progress to the final of 'Intelligent Community of the Year'.</li> </ol>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	The Smart Belfast programme was established by Belfast City Council to foster collaborative innovation between the public sector, universities, business and the wider community. Over the past three years it has worked with partners to exploit the opportunities of emerging digital technologies such as AI and 5G for positive economic and societal impact. The approach has proven successful and has subsequently informed the content of the Digital pillar of the Belfast Region City Deal and its proposals for a world class Smart District and testbeds programme and Infrastructure Enabling Fund.
3.2	The underlying premise for the Smart District is that the powerful combination of digital technologies, collaborative innovation and place-based development can have a transformative impact on a city's wider economy and future services. A Smart District will not only attract businesses and investment, it can also act as a testbed for innovative solutions to major urban challenges such as mobility, energy, and sustainable neighbourhoods. A well-

	curated district provides a rich testing ground from planners, policymakers, researchers and innovators. Once proven, successful solutions can then be adopted at scale across a city.
3.3	The proposals for the 'Belfast Smart District' are currently in development and further details will be presented to Members in the coming months.
3.4	Advanced wireless networks (such as 5G) are a foundational technology for our smart district ambition. More broadly, such networks are expected the backbone for urban economies and modern city services. The ideal for any city seeking to stake a claim to digital innovation is to provide an environment in which these wireless technologies are not only deployed quickly – but are done in a fashion that is open and which supports rapid innovation in services.
3.5	In June 2020, independent industry expert consultants were commissioned to work with the Council to determine its role in supporting advanced wireless investment. In outline, the study recommended that there is a unique opportunity for city partners to bring physical assets together and to potentially utilise City Deal investment via the Infrastructure Enabling Fund to accelerate the deployment of advanced wireless connectivity. This would offer mobile operators, large or small, easier access to urban assets, and connectivity equipment to greatly reduce barriers to rapid deployment.
3.6	The approach would seek to attract co-investment from the private sector. And more broadly support a programme to reduce digital exclusion and grow the conditions for SME innovation, university research, and the deployment of the latest urban services.
3.7	A feasibility study and industry engagement programme is now required to build upon the recommendations to validate the finding and to develop a shared value proposition that would form the basis of a substantial business case to the BRCD Infrastructure Enabling Fund.
3.8	Members are asked to approve the commissioning of the feasibility study by suppliers with the relevant technical expertise.
	<b>Supporting the innovative use of health data in Northern Ireland</b>
3.9	Health and Social Care Services were recently tasked by the NI Department for Health to prepare a response for the Health Minister regarding the innovative use of health data. The current legislation in Northern Ireland is quite restrictive in relation to the 'secondary use' of health data. The Department is considering changes to the legislation to unlock the more

	innovative use of data by researchers, clinicians and industry. There are opportunities to enhance diagnostics, therapeutic, medical research and SME growth. Data challenges in relation to the local response to the Covid crisis have helped accelerate this agenda.
3.10	As part of this work, the Northern Ireland Trusted Research Environment (NITRE) has approached the Council's City Innovation Office to help gather evidence on the way forward. NITRE is working with health partners on a limited Northern Ireland pilot project which will commence in Spring 2021. The project will establish (in the first instance) a Belfast-focused Public Data Panel. The panel would bring together members of the public to consider the ethical, legal, technical, and economic issues and opportunities surrounding the innovative use of health data. Many of the issues associated with the project are similar to those associated with proposals for a Smart District. The panel will help co-design approaches and want to draw upon the work of the BCC team in relation to the ethical and trusted use of data in the city.
3.11	The proposal is still in draft stage, and NITRE are seeking the Council's in principle agreement to contribute to the project. Members are asked to approve the Council's involvement. There is no financial request from the Council.
	<b>Intelligent Communities Forum: Smart21 Communities award 2021</b>
3.12	Belfast has been selected by the Intelligent Communities Forum <sup>1</sup> (ICF) as one of 21 cities worldwide to receive the 'Smart 21 Communities' award (alongside cities such as Adelaide, Philadelphia and Moscow). ICF is a global network of cities and regions with a mission to help communities in the digital age find a new path to economic development and community growth.
3.13	Following this announcement, ICF will work with us to gather more information about our city. Seven cities will be selected to advance to the 'Top 7 Intelligent Communities' in June with one city being named the 'Intelligent Community of the Year' later in October.
	<b>Financial and Resource Implications</b>
3.14	The estimated cost for a full wireless feasibility study and market engagement exercise is approximately £180,000. This has been identified within the Council's City Deal development budget for 2020/2021.

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.intelligentcommunity.org/icf\\_names\\_the\\_smart21\\_communities\\_of\\_2021](https://www.intelligentcommunity.org/icf_names_the_smart21_communities_of_2021)



	The Council is being asked to contribute staff team time to the NITRE Data project, particularly from the City Innovation Team's Data Specialist.
	<b>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</b>
3.15	None.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	None.

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## STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE



**Belfast**  
City Council

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Heritage Trail Sign Policy – City Hall</b>
<b>Date:</b>	23rd April, 2021
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Walsh, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	John Walsh, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic 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	At the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 19th March, the Committee considered a request to permit the installation of an interpretative interactive sign on a bollard facing the north west lawn at City Hall. There is currently no policy to cover this type of request. Given that there are a number of cultural heritage type projects in development and a focus on community tourism, it was considered that there are likely to be further requests of this nature in the future. Members expressed some concern given the sensitivity of the City Hall as a listed building and were anxious to ensure that its setting and appearance would not be detrimentally impacted, notwithstanding the fact that no listed building consent is required for the installation of such signs. Some concern was expressed

	in relation to the installation of these signs against the front façade of City Hall, even though they are not attached to the building. The purpose of this report is to establish a potential policy regulating the installation of these signs at City Hall and within the curtilage of the grounds.
<b>2.0</b>	<b><u>Recommendation</u></b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to consider the proposed policy and/or make recommendations as it sees fit.
<b>3.0</b>	<b><u>Main Report</u></b>
3.1	Against the context of the City Hall being a listed building, it is clearly important to ensure that appropriate restrictions are put in place. Multiple signs placed on the bollards would be unlikely to enhance the appearance of the building. If Members were minded to permit the installation of these signs in City Hall grounds, it is recommended that no more than four could be placed on the bollards within the ground to the front of City Hall. It is recommended that they would be all uniform in size and shape, in the case of the current application 300mm and round. Under no circumstances would such a sign be permitted to be attached to the building. In respect of the east and west sides of the City Hall, it is recommended that no signs would be permitted. However, exceptionally, if an application were to be received related to the content of either of those sides of City Hall, that is the Cenotaph or the Titanic Memorial Gardens, then such an application could be considered but only one at each location.
3.2	All other applications for interactive signage, subject to approval, would be accommodated by the provision of an interactive screen at the entrance to the exhibition. In keeping with the EQIA carried out independently for the City Hall grounds, the ambition would be to ensure balanced content and inclusivity. Subject to the content promoted by interactive signage it is a potential means by which some element of rebalancing can be achieved in which a more contemporary image of the City can be portrayed. The content promoted by the interactive signage should have some relationship with the material and themes promoted by the City Hall Visitor Exhibition.
3.3	With any permission given to install such signage the Council would require it to be maintained and would reserve the right to remove it if it became unsightly. It would also reserve the right to remove it in any other exceptional circumstances.
3.4	At the Strategic Policy and Resources meeting on 19th March, Members requested information regarding potential interest from others who might wish to have a heritage trail

	<p>sign at or in City Hall. The Senior Manager, Culture and Tourism, has indicated that initial engagement with a number of organisations has demonstrated two separate categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Existing tours that are guided therefore can incorporate City Hall without having needing physical or digital infrastructure such as Best of Belfast by DC Tours. There is also an audio self-guided walking tour. There is the potential for these to be further enhanced.</li> <li>- The second category is largely heritage organisations that have an interest in building on an existing tour or developing a new trail.</li> </ul>
3.5	<p>While there is a good level of interest, plans are not progressed yet in terms of development and delivery of specific products. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Potential for a heritage trail including City Hall as part of the wider Belfast Jewish Heritage Project. Pre-Covid guided tours had demonstrated a level of interest in such a tour with clear connections between Sir Otto Jaffe and City Hall.</li> <li>- Ulster Scots Agency are also considering a number of potential heritage trails including Sir Edward Carson.</li> <li>- City Connections with Eastside Tourism and Fáilte Feirste Thiar are working on a visitor passport concept to tell the story of Belfast including the <i>Journey to Peace</i>. However, this is in earliest stages of development.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p>
3.6	<p>There are no financial or resource implications associated with this request save for the installation of an interactive screen.</p> <p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p>
3.7	<p>Any proposals will be subject to equality screening.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	None

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>James Connolly Heritage Trail Sign</b>
<b>Date:</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> April, 2021
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Walsh, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	John Walsh, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic 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	To consider further a request which has been received from Redhead Exhibition to install an interpretative interactive sign on a bollard facing the north west lawn at the City Hall, which was deferred by the Committee at its meeting on 19th March. This is part of a cultural heritage project funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and relates to a James Connolly Heritage Trail in Belfast, for which there are 13 proposed locations. The sign will be 300 mm in diameter, not 400 mm as stated in the letter requesting installation which is appended to this report.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to consider the request and indicate if it consents to this installation.

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	The sign is part of a heritage trail throughout the City focusing on James Connolly's Belfast 1911-1916. The sign would be the first of 13 located around the City on buildings and areas of historical significance, from City Hall out to Custom House steps, Sailortown, York Street, back to City Centre and then west to Conway Mill finishing at the Connolly family home opposite the City Cemetery on Falls Road. It will be permanently fixed to one of the black iron chain-linked posts on the west side of the main entrance (see appendix 2, not to-scale). The size of the sign is approx.300mm diameter (see draft design at appendix 3).
3.2	The sign is not a commemorative installation. Its aim is to provide a physical trigger point for delivery of an augmented reality (smartphone) app that will deliver dynamic interpretive content. Once triggered using the QR code on the sign, the lawns at City Hall will become a virtual interpretive space. Four panels will 'pop-up' (virtually) on the West lawn, and four on the East lawn. The panels will set the social, economic, political and cultural context of Belfast in 1911 when Connolly arrived to live and work in the City. The City Hall grounds is the ideal location to deliver this type of interpretive content. It is an ideal location for visitors to start the tour around the City, using the app for navigation and interpretation and also a printed map for guidance. The interpretative use of the grounds in this way can be seen as added value to the indoor Visitor Exhibition and outdoor space. The walking tour has a tourism and cultural focus, dovetailing with other new product development initiatives at the James Connolly Visitor Centre.
3.3	Redhead has indicated that the way in which this particular app works is very site-specific in terms of orientating the visitor with panels appearing on the west and east lawns.
3.4	However, given that there are likely to be a number of cultural heritage type projects, some of which will have City Hall as a focus, it will be necessary to consider how these types of installations can be managed in the future. In future it may be possible to have an interactive panel installed at the entrance to the Visitor Exhibition which would allow this type of app to be accessed.
	<b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b>
3.5	There are no financial implications.
	<b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</u></b>
3.6	The proposal will be subject to equality screening subject to your decision.



<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	<p>Appendix 1 – Letter of request from Redhead Exhibition</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Photograph showing proposed location</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Proposed design of sign</p>

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18 January 2020

Ms Suzanne Wylie  
Chief Executive  
Belfast City Council  
Belfast City Hall  
BT1 5 GS

Dear Suzanne

Ref: James Connolly Belfast Heritage Trail

Redhead Exhibition has been commissioned to design and install a James Connolly Heritage trail in Belfast that places a plaque at a number of sites of historical significance throughout the City. The trail will target local and international visitors and is being integrated into the City's tourism capital via Visit Belfast and other City tourism outlets.

The trail is being funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund through Áras Uí Chonghaile the James Connolly Visitor Centre and local tourism body Fáilte Feirste Thiar.

There are 12 proposed locations for the trail such as Custom House Steps (the scene of Connolly's first speech in the city), Corporation Street (where the offices of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union ITGWU were located), York Street (where Connolly worked with the millworkers) and naturally the family home on Falls Road opposite the City Cemetery.

The trail has been designed as a walking tour and will be supported by an innovative augmented reality app that facilitates the presentation of dynamic interpretive content via smartphone and tablet devices.

The tour will begin in the grounds of City Hall, a natural meeting and focal point. City Hall is also an ideal location to engage visitors with augmented reality content through the app that sets out the social, economic and political context of Belfast at that time.

To that end, the historical context augmented reality presentation at City Hall would focus on Belfast in 1912 as an industrial powerhouse, the development of the middle-class suburbs, the Home Rule debate, the establishment of the Ulster Volunteer Force and the Irish Volunteers and the arrival in the City of James Connolly the trade union pioneer.

The trail will have 12 historical plaques installed at the identified sites of historical significance and in support of the content as outlined above, we are requesting that one be facilitated in the grounds at Belfast City Hall. The plaque would be used by visitors to 'trigger' the app content and begin the navigation features for the walking tour.

The plaques will be circular in shape, 400mm in diameter and retain a consistent design across the various sites as proposed. Please see attached design and location proposal.

All costs for design, manufacture and installation of the plaques is being met by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and no request for funding is being made to the Council. However, we would request permission to install one of the plaques within the grounds at City Hall, being 'stop' 1 of 12 for the trail which is scheduled to be launched at the end of March.

There is also another plaque proposed for Gt. George's Street where Connolly's published articles in the *Shan Van Vocht* were printed. It would be ideal to locate this plaque on the railings of the adjacent BCC York Street carpark.

Please let us know if these requests can be facilitated and if appropriate with whom we should liaise with regard to the relevant permission and installation requirements.

Kind regards

Michael Lyons  
Assistant Director



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JAMES CONNOLLY  
BELFAST HERITAGE TRAIL

*James Connolly*

BELFAST CITY HALL  
HALLA NA CATHRACH BHÉAL FEIRSTE

When opened in 1906 Belfast was an industrial  
powerhouse. Connolly arrived here in 1911 to organise  
the City's workers.



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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Update on Physical Programme</b>
<b>Date:</b>	23rd April, 2021
<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	The Council's Physical Programme covers 170 current capital projects under a range of internal and external funding streams, together with projects which the Council delivers on behalf of external agencies. The Council's Capital Programme forms part of the Physical Programme and is a rolling programme of investment which either improves existing Council facilities or provides new facilities. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for Stage movements on the Capital Programme.

2.0	Recommendations									
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to agree the following movements under the Capital Programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>Boodles Dam</b> project (<i>Stage 3 – Committed</i>) proceed to contract award, with a maximum £560,000 budget allocated.</li><li>○ <b>Waterfront Hall Escalators</b> project moves to <i>Stage 3 – Committed</i> under the Capital Programme, with a maximum £1.1m budget allocated, subject to contract.</li></ul>									
3.0	Main Report									
3.1	<p>Members will be aware that the Council runs a substantial physical programme under a range of funding streams including the capital programme, BIF and LIF together with the projects that it is delivering on behalf of other agencies including the Executive Office, the Department for Communities and Department for Infrastructure. There are currently 170 live projects worth in excess of £120m, as well as 100+ early stage uncommitted projects and £300m+ of completed projects which still receive dedicated resourcing effort.</p> <p><b><i>Proposed Movements - Capital Programme</i></b></p>									
3.2	<p>Members agreed that all capital projects must go through a three stage process where decisions on which capital projects progress are taken by the Committee. This provides assurance as to the level of financial control and will allow Members to properly consider the opportunity costs of approving one capital project over another capital project. Members are asked to agree to the following movements on the Capital Programme:</p> <table><tr><th>Project</th><th>Overview</th><th>Stage</th></tr><tr><td><b>Boodles Dam Abandonment and Redevelopment</b></td><td>To safely decommission Boodles Dam and develop the site for amenity use (located at Ligoniel Park – off the Ligoniel Road)</td><td><b><i>Stage 3 – Committed:</i></b> <b>Proceed to contractor appointment with a maximum budget of £560,000</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Waterfront Hall Escalators</b></td><td>Upgrade of the Waterfront Escalators due to operational requirements</td><td><b><i>Move to Stage 3 – Committed</i></b> <b>with a maximum budget of £1.1m</b></td></tr></table>	Project	Overview	Stage	<b>Boodles Dam Abandonment and Redevelopment</b>	To safely decommission Boodles Dam and develop the site for amenity use (located at Ligoniel Park – off the Ligoniel Road)	<b><i>Stage 3 – Committed:</i></b> <b>Proceed to contractor appointment with a maximum budget of £560,000</b>	<b>Waterfront Hall Escalators</b>	Upgrade of the Waterfront Escalators due to operational requirements	<b><i>Move to Stage 3 – Committed</i></b> <b>with a maximum budget of £1.1m</b>
Project	Overview	Stage								
<b>Boodles Dam Abandonment and Redevelopment</b>	To safely decommission Boodles Dam and develop the site for amenity use (located at Ligoniel Park – off the Ligoniel Road)	<b><i>Stage 3 – Committed:</i></b> <b>Proceed to contractor appointment with a maximum budget of £560,000</b>								
<b>Waterfront Hall Escalators</b>	Upgrade of the Waterfront Escalators due to operational requirements	<b><i>Move to Stage 3 – Committed</i></b> <b>with a maximum budget of £1.1m</b>								
3.3	<p><b><i>Boodles Dam Abandonment and Redevelopment</i></b></p> <p>Members will be aware that in September 2019 the Committee agreed to move Boodles Dam to <i>Stage 3 – Committed</i>. It was held at pre-tender stage pending tender return and Planning approval. Members are asked to note that a satisfactory tender return has now been achieved and it is recommended that a maximum of £560,000 is now allocated to this project, subject contract. The Director of Finance and Resources has confirmed that this is within the</p>									

	<p>affordability limits of the Council. Members are also asked to note that Council officers are working closely with the Living With Water Team on project including discussions on a wider project on the Mill Race within the Park.</p> <p><i>Waterfront Hall Escalators</i></p>
3.4	<p>Members will be aware that the Waterfront Hall Escalators project was approved at the SP and R Committee meeting in August 2019 as a <i>Stage 1-Emerging</i> project. Members are asked to agree that the Waterfront Hall Escalators is moved through Stage 2 up to <i>Stage 3 – Committed</i>. Any project which is being moved to Stage 3 under the Capital Programme is required as part of the three stage approval process to complete an Outline Business Case. Members are asked to note that this has been completed and reviewed internally. As required by the stage approvals process at Stage 2, a tender exercise has also been carried out and a satisfactory tender has been returned. It is recommended that a maximum of £1.1m is now allocated to this project on this basis. The Director of Finance &amp; Resources has confirmed this is within the affordability limits of the Council.</p>
3.5	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>Financial – the Director of Finance and Resources has confirmed these projects are within the affordability limits of the Council.</p> <p>Resources – officer time to deliver as required.</p>
3.6	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>All capital projects are screened as part of the stage approval process.</p>
4.0	<p><b>Documents Attached</b></p>
	<p>None</p>

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<b>Subject:</b> <b>Assets Management</b>	<b>i) Land at Village Green</b> – proposed Licence for Works to Greater Village Regeneration Trust <b>ii) Sally Gardens</b> – Acquisition of land from the Department for Communities <b>iii) Old Golf Course Road</b> – Acquisition of land from the Department for Infrastructure
<b>Date:</b>	23rd April, 2021
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Sinead Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Pamela Davison, Estates 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 seek the Committee's approval in relation to asset related disposal, acquisition and estates matters.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee asked to approve - <b>i) Land at Village Green – proposed licence for works to Greater Village Regeneration Trust (GVRT)</b>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the granting of a licence to GVRT for the installation of planters and benches at Village Green and their ongoing maintenance for a period of two years.</li> </ul> <p><b>ii) Sally Gardens – Acquisition from the Department for Communities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the acquisition of c.0.053 acres of land from DfC</li> </ul> <p><b>iii) Old Golf Course Road – Acquisition from the Department for Infrastructure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the acquisition of c.0.0064 acres of land from the DfI</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b>i) Land at Village Green – proposed licence for works to GVRT</b></p> <p><b><u>Key Issues</u></b></p> <p>GVRT has been granted £16,535 under the Business Cluster and Community Grant scheme, part of the Revitalisation Fund, for various environmental improvements across four sites in the Donegall Road area. Its proposal includes improvements on Council land at Village Green, comprising installation of planters and benches. GVRT has agreed to maintain these for a period of two years. This will require a licence to regularise the use of the Council's site.</p> <p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>No licence fee is proposed as the environmental improvements will be of benefit to the Council owned site. Staff resources from the Estates Management Unit and Legal Services will be required in relation to the grant of the licence.</p> <p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>There are no equality, good relations or rural needs assessment issues associated with this report.</p>
3.2	<p><b>ii) Sally Gardens – Acquisition of Land from the Department for Communities</b></p> <p><b><u>Key Issues</u></b></p> <p>At its meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2020, the SP and R Committee granted approval to a 25-year Lease to Poleglass Community Association to include the existing Community Centre and proposed extension of the existing facility which is being funded by Urban Villages. There is a small area of land at the corner of the proposed extension of the existing facility which falls outside of Council ownership and which is currently owned by the Department for Communities. Appendix 1 shows the extent of the subject lands outlined in red (c.0.053 acres). In order to progress the Urban Villages project to extend the existing Community Centre, DfC has agreed to transfer ownership of the subject lands to the Council. Land and Property Services (LPS) have assessed the value of the subject lands to be £1 (nominal value).</p>

	<p><b><u>Financial and Resources Implications</u></b></p> <p>None. Staff resources from the Estates Management Unit and Legal Services will be involved in the completion of the land transfer.</p> <p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
3.3	<p><b>iii) Old Golf Course Road – Acquisition of land from the Department for Infrastructure</b></p> <p><b><u>Key Issues</u></b></p> <p>Members will be aware that the Council has developed a new play park at Old Golf Course Road. As part of the new play park, the Council built an access walkway across land owned by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). The Council initially sought a grant of Easement from DfI to access the new play park across their lands however, DfI's preference is to transfer ownership to the Council. Appendix 2 shows the extent of the subject lands outlined in red (c.0.0064 acres). Land and Property Services (LPS) have assessed the value of the subject lands to be £1,000.</p> <p><b><u>Financial and Resources Implications</u></b></p> <p>£1,000 for the transfer of the land from DfI to the Council. Staff resources from the Estates Management Unit and Legal Services will be involved in the completion of the land transfer.</p> <p><b><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
4.0	<p><b>Documents Attached</b></p>
	<p><b>Appendix 1</b> – Location map showing the extent of the land owned by the Department for Communities at Sally Gardens (outlined in red).</p> <p><b>Appendix 2</b> – Location map showing the extent of the land owned by the Department for Infrastructure at Old Gold Course Road (outlined in red).</p>

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Reservoir  
(covered)

Issues

Wind Turbine

Sinks

Church  
Of The  
Nativity  
(RC)

Community  
Centre

El Sub Sta

SALLY GARDENS LANE

BELL STEEL MANOR

Primary and Nursery  
School

St Kieran's  
Nursery Sch

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UPPER DUNMURRY LANE

KILWEE

CREDENHILL PARK

Scale 1:1000

Page 105

Area: 0.0064 acres

MM

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Update on Area Working Groups</b>
<b>Date:</b>	23rd April, 2021
<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 Area Working Group 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 AWG minutes (<i>South – 25 March</i>), as attached;</li> <li><b>Community Capacity Building and Community Infrastructure Needs in Balmoral DEA</b>– approve the recommendation that the CNS South Belfast Area Team draft a report</li> </ul>

	<p>and undertake a mapping exercise on the current provision of community capacity and infrastructure in the Balmoral District Electoral Area, its core functions and gaps in provision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lagan Gateway Project</b> – approve the recommendation on operation and management of the lock and associated areas by the Lagan Navigation Trust and note that recommendations were made to the People and Communities Committee in April regarding a naming competition for the new bridge and an art piece in partnership with UK Youth for Nature.</li> <li>• <b>Sandy Row Tourism Signage Project</b> – approve the recommendation that the Council acts as the delivery agent for the Belfast South Community Resources – Sandy Row Tourism signage SOF04 project.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
	<p><b><u>KEY ISSUES</u></b></p> <p><b>Area Working Group Minutes</b></p>
3.1	<p>Members agreed in June 2016 that the Area Working Group minutes would be taken into the Strategic Policy and Resources 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.</p> <p>Members are asked to approve the most recent round of AWG minutes, as attached, and the recommendations as outlined in paragraph 2.1 above.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	Minutes of the South Belfast Area Working Group

# **South Belfast Area Working Group**

Thursday, 25th March, 2021

## **MEETING OF SOUTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP**

### **HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

- Members present: Councillor McAteer (Chairperson); and  
Councillors Bunting, Gormley, Groogan,  
T. Kelly, Lyons, McDonough-Brown, McKeown,  
Nicholl and Spratt.
- In attendance: Mr. R. Black, Director of City and Neighbourhood  
Services;  
Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;  
Ms. A. Allen, Neighbourhood Services Manager  
(Social and Community Recovery);  
Mr. S. Leonard, Neighbourhood Services Manager  
(South)  
Ms. D. Smith, Neighbourhood Integration Manager;  
Mr. S. Conlon, Open Spaces and Street Scene Manager;  
Ms. S. Kalke, Project Sponsor; and  
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

No apologies were reported.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 4th January were approved.

### **Declarations of Interest**

The following Members declared an interest in respect of item 4a - Update on Community Provision Summer Micro Grant and Micro Medium Grant Funding, on the basis that the organisation named had received funding under the programme:

- Councillor Bunting - acted as Secretary to the Belvoir Area Residents' Group;
- Councillor Gormley – on the Board of LORAG;
- Councillor T. Kelly - her husband worked for Belfast South Community Resources; and
- Councillor McKeown – a member of Rosario Football Club.

As funding had already been approved, the Members were not required to leave the meeting whilst that item was being discussed.

### **Future Presentations**

The Working Group agreed to receive at future meetings a presentation from the following organisations:

- Atkins Engineering Consultants
  - on the Belfast Tidal Flood Alleviation Scheme;
- the Council's three strategic Covid-19 response partners in South Belfast, namely, Forward South Partnership (South Belfast Area Partnership)/LORAG (Inner South Neighbourhood Renewal Area)/South City Resource and Development Centre (South West Neighbourhood Renewal Area)
  - on their Covid-19 response and associated findings; and
- Forward South Partnership
  - on capacity building and health programmes being delivered in the Belvoir area, in the wider context of a meeting dedicated specifically to health/health outcomes in South Belfast.

### **Presentation - Social and Community Recovery**

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services informed the Working Group that the Council had, in September 2020, established a Social and Community Recovery Steering Group and two project teams to provide strategic and operational oversight of the delivery of key programmes and services within neighbourhoods and communities. This had provided an opportunity to increase awareness of activity across the Council, identify interdependencies, align and allocate resources, streamline governance and add value and to improve co-ordination and strategic oversight of its engagement with external partners. A programme pack had since been developed to provide an overview of significant activity being undertaken and to help co-ordinate activity.

He explained that the Council, in considering its approach towards social and community recovery, was required to take into consideration factors such as the way in which Covid-19 had changed the way in which citizens and the community/voluntary sector accessed services/facilities and collaborated with Council, with areas having different needs and expectations.

He then provided the Working Group with details of programmes which had been initiated by the Council to stimulate recovery, including, providing grant funding to build community capacity and support vulnerable people and families, the establishment of an £8m Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund and a Revitalisation Fund Business Grants Programme, skills development and re-skilling for employment and addressing health inequalities (mental health and wellbeing, poverty, social isolation, quality of life).



In terms of area recovery planning, he pointed out that the engagement process with communities over the next 8 - 12 months, which would be undertaken in partnership across the four areas of the City must:

- identify short-medium term priorities for Community Recovery to form the basis of four Area Recovery Plans;
- inform, shape and co-design future approaches to area working and inform relevant aspects of service provision and investment;
- inform the Community Planning Partnership's upcoming review of the Community Plan, the Belfast Agenda in 2021, and help to connect this with communities at a local level; and
- provide opportunities for local communities to engage, influence and co-design on key community planning priorities/themes (e.g. health inequalities)

The Director went on to explain that detailed work to plan the design and implementation of the community engagement process would be undertaken by a joint project team, comprising key partners, to be appointed by the Living Here Board. That would help manage resources and minimise engagement fatigue by working together with other partners. The approach would be flexible enough to meet the specific needs of each area, seeking to use existing infrastructure and focussing on adding value where possible. Detailed work to explore and define the engagement methods would be undertaken and could include online virtual discussions, enhanced webinars, surveys, co-design sessions, workshops and interactive discussions/idea generations. Wider community engagement on the process would take place when outline proposals had been drafted by joint project team for further feedback.

He provided the Members with information on key elements included within Area Plans in other local authorities and concluded by pointing out that Area Working Groups, Committees and the Community Planning Partnership would receive regular updates on the area planning process.

After discussion, the Working Group noted the information which had been provided.

### **Area Working**

#### **Update on Community Provision Summer Micro Grant and Micro Medium Grant Funding**

The Working Group considered the following report:

##### **"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues**

**To update the Working Group on the Summer Micro grant Funding and the Community Recovery Support Micro/Medium Grant Programmes.**

## **2.0 Recommendation**

- 2.1** The Working Group is asked to note the contents of the report.

## **3.0 Main Report**

- 3.1** Members may recall that, in July 2020, a package of financial investment was agreed to support recovery at a community level, which was in addition to the initial investment in communities as part of the COVID-19 emergency response. This investment took into account the lessons learned from the COVID-19 emergency response, in particular, feedback from community partners about the accessibility of funding.

### **Funding Approach**

- 3.2** The Summer Micro grant funding programme was opened by Council at the beginning of July 2020. The final budget was approximately £310,000, with a maximum allocation per organisation of £1,000. Only one application per organisation was considered.

Funding was administered in each geography of the city by the area teams, which had been created to deliver support for the Covid-19 emergency response efforts. In order to qualify for funding, activity delivered through microgrants was required to meet at least one of the following themes:

- **Children and Young People:** Summer activities and programmes to address the negative educational and wellbeing impacts of COVID-19 and support digital connectivity;
- **Civic Pride:** Communities are rightly proud of the huge volunteering effort and sense of neighbourliness and community spirit and want to develop that further;
- **Preventing Isolation:** the impact of COVID-19 on those shielding has been significant and a huge community effort is needed to support those individuals, with digital connectivity being an element of addressing this challenge;
- **Emotional Wellbeing:** There is widespread concern about the emotional wellbeing concerns of vulnerable individuals, families and communities; and
- **Anti-Social Behaviour:** Levels of anti-social behaviour, particularly in parks/open spaces,

increased due to increased use by people not at school/work and periods of good weather over the summer.

### **Funding Impact**

- 3.3 Micro grant funding has enabled 322 organisations across Belfast to deliver an extensive programme of activities with an approximate total allocation of £310,000. In South Belfast 63 applications were approved with a total of £60,485.60 allocated. Over 40 groups were in a position to deliver their planned activity and have returned their monitoring forms.
- 3.4 Programmes delivered in South Belfast focused on all 5 themes; Children and Young People and Emotional Wellbeing were the most common. Activity included:
- Activity Programmes for young people and youth diversionary projects;
  - Drama programmes and folk history and memory workshops with older people;
  - Physical activity and community sports programmes;
  - Literacy/Numeracy/ science workshops and back to school support;
  - Mental health, wellbeing, mindfulness and resilience programmes;
  - Environmental Programmes;
  - Digital inclusion programmes; and
  - Projects to support refugees and asylum seekers.
- 3.5 Further detail on projects supported in South Belfast has been circulated to Members.
- 3.6 Feedback from grant recipients has been extremely positive, those elements that were welcomed include:
- Higher than average turnaround time for the micro grants programme from receipt of application to payment of funds. In most cases, this was completed within 20 working days;
  - More accessible, streamlined process and reductions in unnecessary bureaucracy (in keeping with the Department of Finance Reducing Bureaucracy for the Voluntary and Community Sector Code of Practice 2015); and

- Each grant application had a single point of contact within the area teams. This has enabled more effective communication and resolution of issues when they arise.

This has been particularly important for new applicants or lower capacity groups.

### **Community Recovery Support Micro/ Medium Grants**

- 3.7 Feedback has informed our approach to further resourcing of community provision up to March 21 and beyond. Organisations have highlighted the significant challenges of delivering programmes within the current environment, especially with the tightening and easing of restrictions. Officers are mindful of this and we will seek to retain a flexible approach which supports communities to meet locally identified needs.
- 3.8 Two further rounds of funding were launched on 25th November.
- COVID-19 Community Recovery Support Fund Microgrant (up to £1,500)
  - COVID-19 Community Recovery Support Fund Medium Grant (up to £5,000)
- 3.9 Funding for both programmes comes from Belfast City Council, Department of Communities, The Executive Office and Belfast District Policing Community Safety Partnerships. In order to qualify for funding, activity delivered through micro and medium grants was required to meet at least one of the following themes:
- Children and young people
  - Civic pride
  - Preventing isolation
  - Emotional wellbeing
  - Antisocial behaviour
  - Health and wellbeing of staff or volunteers
  - Unexpected premises and PPE costs.

### **Funding Impact**

- 3.10 The Recovery Support Micro grant had 146 groups approved for funding across Belfast with £202,505 allocated. In South Belfast, 31 applications were approved with a total of £37,498.03 allocated.
- 3.11 The Recovery Support Medium grant had 132 groups approved for funding across Belfast with £558,735 allocated.

**In South Belfast 27 applications were approved with a total of £109,416.42 allocated. The deadline on project activities for both grants has been extended until September 2021.**

- 3.12 Further detail on the projects supported through the recovery support micro and medium grants in South Belfast has been circulated to Members.**

**Equality, Good Relations and Rural Needs Implications**

- 3.13 This approach proposed seeks to meet the needs of communities through a responsive programme of grants. Future funding approaches from 2021 onwards will be Equality and Rural Needs screened.”**

After discussion, the Working Group noted the contents of the report.

**Introduction to South Belfast Area Multi-Disciplinary Team**

The Working Group was reminded that one of the key priorities of the Belfast Agenda was to deliver better outcomes for neighbourhoods, through developing the emerging area approach and building capacity within communities.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager (South Belfast) explained that the need for the Council and other partners to work together with local communities on an area basis to plan interventions, services and investments had never been greater. This area approach recognised the importance of neighbourhood regeneration and developing a place-shaping approach tailored to meet local priorities and needs.

Over the past two years, the City and Neighbourhood Services Department had developed its approach to integrating service delivery at an area level across neighbourhood services. Specifically, within community provision, the following principles had already received political and corporate endorsement as the agreed direction for service delivery:

- to support local area problem solving;
- to create opportunities for new ways of working;
- to support cultural change in support of area working;
- to create synergies to pool the extensive knowledge and experience acquired by staff; and
- to align to the vision of community provision.

He explained that four Neighbourhood Services Managers had been appointed and that this had been followed by the recruitment of four Neighbourhood Integration Managers to support this area focus. In addition, the work to create the Open Space and Street Scene teams (former parks and cleansing operatives) had created an opportunity to develop links with these staff and those in other area-based services within the City and Neighbourhood Services Department, for the benefit of local communities.

He went on to highlight the fact that the current Covid-19 crisis had created significant economic and social challenges for communities. However, it had also created

opportunities for future working, with the relationships which had developed between Council officers and community, voluntary and social enterprise partners being at the forefront, with multiple examples of effective partnership working to address urgent community needs in localities and across the city.

As part of the Council's Covid-19 response (community hub), the Neighbourhood Integration Managers had established area support teams, which had responded quickly and flexibly to the emergency needs created by the pandemic. Given that the Council was now in recovery phase, and taking account of the Covid-19 collective learning, a decision has been taken to establish a revised Area Team approach across the City, which will seek to work with residents, Elected Members and stakeholders to revitalise neighbourhoods across the City by:

- supporting and working with communities and partners to collectively identify and tackle priority local issues;
- taking innovative approaches;
- being flexible and responsive;
- creating conditions to build capacity;
- empowering communities to build capacity and resilience and creating positive and lasting differences to their quality of life;
- addressing operational challenges in the ever-changing environment of Covid-19, through the lens of council procedures, but taking into account local nuances;
- leading on the integration and mobilisation of staff in local neighbourhoods, maximising opportunities where possible, to improve outcomes for our residents;
- designing how resources can be used in a more flexible way, including staff and funding;
- participating in and facilitating community engagement and communications activities associated with their catchment area;
- working with Elected Members to act as community advocates to identify and address local needs and support effective 'place-shaping';
- promoting local area knowledge and understanding;
- strengthening relationships with external agencies, residents, community representatives, partnerships and the wider communities to deliver improved Council services; and
- identifying area priorities as part of the neighbourhood regeneration approach.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager concluded by drawing the Members' attention to a list which set out the names and roles of those officers making up the South Belfast Area Team and added that they were willing to meet with Members individually to expand upon their role and discuss any issues.

Mr. S. Conlon, Open Spaces and Street Scene Manager (Holylands) and Ms. D. Smith, Neighbourhood Integration Manager, then provided a brief overview of their respective roles within the South Belfast Area Team.

In response to an issue which had been raised by a Member, the Neighbourhood Services Manager confirmed that the Area Team would be working closely with the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the two universities and other relevant agencies to address

any antisocial or other issues in South Belfast following the lifting of certain lockdown restrictions. He undertook, in response to a request from other Members, firstly, to provide in due course examples of how the objectives listed above under the revised Area Team approach were being achieved and, secondly, to provide photographs of each Team member and details of their area of responsibility.

The Working Group noted the information which had been provided.

### **Community Capacity Building and Community Infrastructure Needs in Balmoral District Electoral Area**

Following on from the previous item, the Chairperson (Councillor McAteer) drew the Members' attention to a paper which had been circulated on her behalf in advance of the meeting.

The paper had reiterated the points which had been made by the Neighbourhood Services Manager around the need for the Council and other partners to work together with local communities on an area basis and she referred specifically to the lack of community infrastructure in the Balmoral District Electoral Area, compared to some other areas of the City. She highlighted issues in that District Electoral Area around, for example, the flooding of homes, gardens and streets, heavy vehicles using side streets, speeding, environmental blights and the impact of Covid-19 on people and businesses and pointed out that a lack of community infrastructure had also limited the opportunity to access Covid Recovery funding.

Accordingly, she requested that the Working Group agree that the South Belfast Area Team draft a report and undertake a mapping exercise on the current provision of community capacity and infrastructure in the Balmoral District Electoral Area, its core functions and gaps in provision. The Team should engage with Elected Members and stakeholders from that District Electoral Area and submit draft findings and recommendations for community capacity to the Area Working Group in the first instance for consideration.

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services pointed out that work had already commenced on a mapping exercise around community and physical infrastructure provision in South Belfast overall and that Members would be afforded the opportunity to contribute to that process, both at an individual level and through the Area Working Group.

After a lengthy discussion, the Working Group agreed that the Chairperson's proposal be incorporated into the current mapping exercise.

### **Wider University and Lower Ormeau – ILAB Update**

The Working Group considered the following report:

#### **"1.0 Purpose of Report**

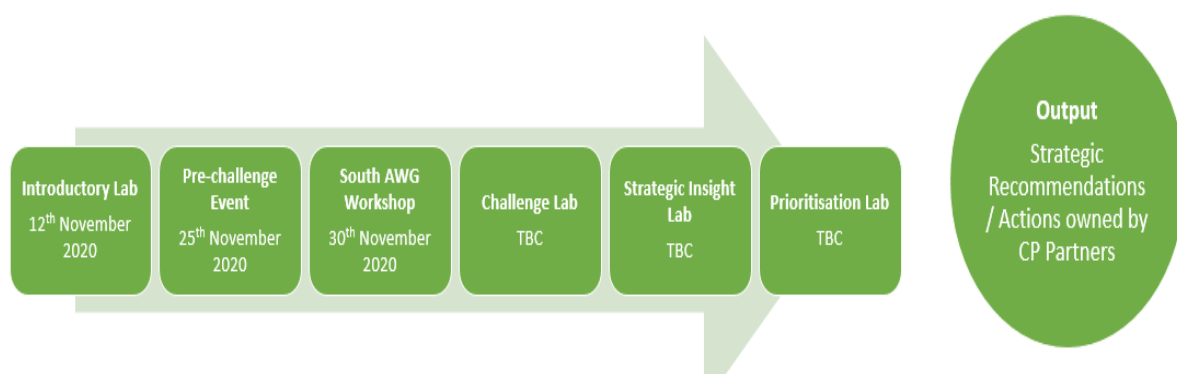
**The purpose of this report is to:**

- i. provide the Working Group with a progress update on the Wider University and Lower Ormeau ILAB, which commenced in November 2020; and
- ii. highlight significant issues that have been raised by the Department of Finance Innovation Team who are leading the ILAB process.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 Within the Belfast Agenda, there is a commitment to design an integrated, inter-agency approach to neighbourhood regeneration, which seeks to maximise the potential benefit of existing and/or planned programmes, assets and investments for local neighbourhoods and communities.
- 2.2 In order to inform the approach to this work, the Council undertook some initial mapping to scope potential areas of focus. This resulted in the identification of five 'transformational places' across the city including the South Belfast corridor as well as the Inner East corridor, Lower North corridor, Springfield and Colin areas.
- 2.3 Within this context, in November 2019, the Council and Living Here Board agreed to give special focus to the Wider University and Lower Ormeau, as part of the South Belfast Transformational Place, and agreed to adopt an integrated and sustainable approach to the regeneration of this area through the creation of a long-term vision and development plan. The People and Communities Committee had also recommended that a specific focus is given to this area given the complex challenges at play.
- 2.4 To commence this process, officers secured the commitment from the Department for Communities to provide £15,000 funding which supported the delivery of a Strategic Insights Programme facilitated by the Department of Finance Innovation Team.
- 2.5 The Insights Programme incorporates a series of virtual user engagement and definition events that lead to a two-day Strategic Insights Lab and seeks to gain consensus on a strategic direction to resolve the challenge(s) identified during the course of the programme. It should be noted that for the programme to be successful it requires a willingness from participants to find common ground and behave constructively.
- 2.6 The Insights programme commenced with an introductory lab on the 12th November 2020 and incorporates the following activities that, if successfully delivered, will produce strategic recommendations and actions, which will be owned by community planning partners.





**2.7 The following community stakeholders were invited to participate in the Introductory and Pre-Challenge events:**

Organisation	Attendance
Forward South Partnership & NICRAS	Yes
LORAG	Yes
South Belfast Roundtable	Yes
HALO	No
LANI	Yes
UU Student Representative	Yes
QUB Student Representative	Yes
Holyland Trust	Yes
University Quarter Business Association	Yes
City Church	Yes
Belfast Holyland Regeneration Association	Yes
College Park Avenue Residents Association	Yes
Stranmillis Environmental Action Group	Yes

**2.8 In addition to these events, a workshop was held with the South AWG on 30th November ensuring that that Members' feedback was incorporated within the insights process.**

### **3.0 Key Issues**

**3.1 Following the two initial community events, the facilitators from the Innovation Team advised that the personal animosity, aggressiveness and suspicion demonstrated between some participants and the levels of mistrust towards differing viewpoints during the two sessions would not be conducive to a consensus-based process and that these behaviours would need to change to move the process and the wider issues forward.**

**3.2 We had intended to run the Challenge Lab in December 2020, however, following consultation with the Innovation Team and DfC it was agreed to pause the process and hold an**

interim step to try to address the difficulties that have emerged and develop a contract with the participants to ensure behaviours and communication between participants became wholly respectful and positive.

**3.3** This was communicated to the participants in December 2020 and one-to-one sessions were held in January 2021 with representatives from the four primary sectors in the participant group:

- Landlords
- Community Groups
- Residents
- Student Groups

**3.4** Unfortunately, significant issues remain between the stakeholder groups and it was agreed with colleagues from DfC and DoF to pause the process while the respective parties consider options to help address the issues raised, including the possibility of providing dedicated resources.

**3.5** Within the context of the issues outlined within this report a meeting has been requested with Tracy Meharg (Permanent Secretary, Department for Communities) to explore potential options which would support the successful delivery of the ILAB and address wider societal issues in the area.

**3.6** Last week officers from City and Neighbourhood Services attended a multi-agency meeting chaired by the Communities Minister Deirdre Hargey MLA. The Minister will shortly be meeting with the Chief Executive to discuss medium to long-term plans for the Wider University and Lower Botanic area. The Minister acknowledged the significant work of the Council to date and wanting to build on that. She also announced that she was forming a Strategic Partnership group to look at a medium to long-term plan for the area and this would meet in April.

#### **4.0 Recommendations**

**4.1** Members are asked to:

- note the content of this report;
- note that a further update will be provided to Members following the meeting to explore potential options with the Department for Communities; and
- note that following further meetings of the ministerial Strategic Partnership group future updates will be provided to members."

During discussion, several Members highlighted the potential difficulties which residents of the Botanic District Electoral Area would be likely to experience once the Covid-19 night time economy restrictions were lifted and reference was made to the need for the Council to be given additional enforcement powers. The point was made also that the invitation to attend the multi-agency meeting, referred to in paragraph 3.6 of the report, had not been extended to Elected Members from the Botanic District Electoral Area and that this needed to be addressed moving forward.

In response, the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services pointed out that the meeting had been arranged at short notice and undertook to ensure that the views of those Members would be communicated to the Minister for Communities at the forthcoming meeting to discuss the medium to long-term plans for the Wider University and Lower Botanic area and in future meetings.

After further discussion, the Working Group noted the contents of the report and agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that a letter be forwarded to the Minister for Justice requesting that the Council be given additional enforcement powers around the seizure of alcohol and noise control.

### **Update on Lagan Gateway Project**

The Director of Physical Programmes submitted for the Working Group's consideration the following report:

#### **"1.0 Introduction**

**The Lagan Gateway project proposes a number of structural improvements and development works at Stranmillis including the development of a navigation lock, an iconic foot and cycle bridge, the refurbishment of the existing weir and high quality landscaping with associated path connections. The project will create a connection both on the water and on land by building a navigation lock and a pedestrian/cycle bridge.**

**The key objectives identified for the Lagan Gateway are to:**

- improve the navigation of the Lagan and create a gateway to Lagan Valley Regional Park and beyond**
- improve the access, safety and quality of green and open space around the Lagan**
- increase the pedestrian and cycle facilities and links into Belvoir Forest Park**
- improve health and well-being through providing a better living environment and enhanced exercise and recreation opportunities, accessible by all**
- realise the potential of the Lagan and its surroundings as an asset for current and future generations**

The project will result in improved connectivity and linkages in the area and improved biodiversity and natural habitats. The area is partly a heritage site and the project will aim to educate and inform visitors of its significant economic and environmental history. The proposed Greenway connection will ease the pressure on the existing towpath on the Stranmillis side; the new Greenway connection will take a high number of users from the towpath and bring them onto the other side of the Lagan and into Belvoir Forest Park, which is underused.

The total investment in the project is £4.8m, with £2.15m coming from the Council's Belfast Investment Fund. Other partners are Ulster Garden Villages, Department for Communities, Department for Infrastructure Rivers, the Department for Infrastructure and the Lagan Navigation Trust.

Phase 1 of the project is nearing its completion; the first section of the bridge has been lifted into place in February and the installation of the last bridge sections are planned for April 2021. The navigation lock will be completed in summer this year.

## **2. Recommendations**

The Working Group is requested to:

- i. agree to explore the option of entering a Service Level Agreement or similar with the Lagan Navigation Trust to operate and manage the navigation lock and associated areas after completion of the project;
- ii. note the outlined naming process for the bridge element of the Lagan Gateway project and agree that a naming competition is recommended into the next People and Communities Committee meeting; and
- iii. note the proposal for developing an art piece on the bridge piers as part of the UK Youth for Nature high-profile national campaign (involving more than 10 UK cities) and agree that this approach is recommended at the next People and Communities Committee meeting.

## **3. Operation/maintenance of the Navigation Lock**

Once the navigation lock is completed, it will become a Council asset and need to be operated and maintained. It is part of a wider programme that the Lagan Navigation Trust is pursuing – to open the whole navigation from Belfast to

Lough Neagh and create a working waterway, which serves collaborations and local businesses playing a role in the economic and social regeneration of this heritage asset along 27 miles of the Navigation. It is the first lock re-opened in the Belfast area and will set a precedence for the further development of navigation locks. The Lagan Navigation Trust, as the custodians of the Lagan navigation have expressed an interest in operating and maintaining the lock and surrounding area as they aim at opening all 27 locks along 27 miles in three local government areas (Belfast City Council, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and Armagh City, Banbridge, Craigavon Borough Council).

The Trust's remit is geographically specific - the Lagan Navigation and its stated purpose is to reopen the Navigation. They have civil engineers and waterways users on their Board with expertise in education, major charitable investment and Local Government expertise at both Director and elected member levels. To support their work, the Trust established a new charity, The Waterways Community, specifically to work with waterways in terms of animation, health and wellbeing, educational and cultural services related to those waterways. This is the driver for delivery of a working waterway on the Lagan. Council officers are currently working with the Chief Officer and Board of the Lagan Navigation Trust on an appropriate agreement (Service Level Agreement or similar) to ensure that the navigation lock of the Lagan Gateway project is being operated and maintained expertly. Specifically the management will be looking at the following:

- how to address security concerns
- how to prevent inundations during surges
- potential role of a lockkeeper in operating and maintaining the lock and carrying out works such as opening and closing the gates, providing assistance with launching /tying up boats at the site, ensuring that there is free-flow of water and removal of debris such as branches, cleaning of the gates and management of stop logs

Currently the Council contributes to the core funding of the LNT – one potential mechanism being considered is 'divert' this into project funding i.e. the operation of the navigation lock on behalf of the Council.

Members are asked to agree to explore the option of entering a Service Level Agreement or similar with the Lagan Navigation Trust to operate and manage the navigation lock and associated areas after completion of the project.

Members are asked if they wish to invite the Lagan Navigation Trust to a future meeting of the Area Working Group.

**4. Naming of the Bridge**

As stated above, the new pedestrian and cycle bridge will be fully installed later in spring. The first section of the bridge has been lifted into place with huge interest of media and general public in February. The Council has already received a number of queries regarding the potential naming of the bridge and we would like to give the public an opportunity to suggest a name for this new asset in the area. This report sets out a phased consultative approach and process for naming the new structure in line with the Council's naming policy.

At its meeting in August 2008, the Parks and Leisure Committee agreed a policy framework for managing requests to (re) name parks and leisure facilities. The proposed consultation process will be carried out in line with this policy, with the intention that the name proposed for the bridge will be assessed against the agreed criteria set out within it. This is in line with how new structures at Connswater Community Greenway were taken forward (new bridges and play parks).

The naming process follows a three stage process is outlined below:

- 2 week consultation period during which the public will have the opportunity to submit ideas for the name of the bridge
- Following this, a panel of judges will meet to consider the submissions and shortlist a number of potential names against the criteria in the naming policy. It is proposed that the Panel is made up of Council officers again with Project Board members which will include funding partners
- Public will then have an opportunity to vote on the shortlisted options. The final bridge name will be determined by the majority vote and will brought back to Committee to be considered for agreement within context of BCC's naming policy.

As with previous naming processes, communication and advertising will be used to engage and inform the public about the naming process and to ensure that people are aware of the opportunity to submit naming ideas etc. The South AWG will also be updated on proposals. If agreed officers will look at the timeframe for the naming process.

Members are asked to note the proposal to undertake a naming process for the Bridge and the key steps as outlined above and agree that a naming competition is recommended at the next People and Communities Committee meeting.

5. Art piece on bridge piers as part of UK Youth for Nature

The piers of the bridge at Stranmillis have been covered in graffiti a number of times. Though anti-graffiti paint has been applied to the piers, it is a laborious (and costly) task to remove the graffiti by the contractor. A number of longer-term solutions have been explored and a number of options have been assessed. A number of options have been ruled out including planting and the installation of panels as the bridge will require regular inspection. It is therefore recommended that artwork/murals are progressed and a number of ideas where proposed including nature murals reflecting the natural surroundings or maritime theme reflecting the river or a combination.

At the same time, UK Youth for Nature, the UK's leading youth-led network calling on the politicians and governments of the UK to take urgent action and tackle the loss of nature, has approached the Council with a proposal on an artwork project for the city. To draw a link between COP15 and COP26, they are aiming to create a connected pathway of wildlife murals from London to Glasgow (2+ per city) that highlight biodiversity decline and the impacts of climate change on nature. Priority locations (at this time) are: London, Exeter, Bristol/Bath, Cardiff, Birmingham, Norwich, Nottingham, Liverpool, Belfast, Manchester, Edinburgh, and Glasgow. The UK Youth for Nature team will work with local partners to identify appropriate locations and contact and secure local artists. The topic of the design will be on biodiversity - any key habitats or species that are iconic that are disappearing from the area, to evoke people's imaginations with the

It has approached the Council about the potential of using the bridge piers for the Belfast part of the campaign. The work will be carried out by a local Belfast artist/collective of young artists. Members are asked to agree that the Council works with UK Youth for Nature Team on taking forward this proposal. In agreeing this Members are asked to note that the Council will have the opportunity to agree the artists involved and so quality assure this aspect of the work. Officers from the PP Department have recently taken forward the delivery of the Entries projects in the city centre which have included a number of high quality murals and a similar approach to choosing the artist(s) will be undertaken for this project.

In addition if the proposal is agreed then Members are asked to note that the Council will need to make a financial contribution towards the costs of the project to cover the

costs of paint/materials and artists costs. These costs would be taken from the existing project budget.

Benefits for the project and city as a whole:

- Reputation as supporting a green youth movement
- Environmental credentials
- Community involvement
- Quality art piece
- Positive media attention
- Potential to cooperate with other biodiversity groups/organisations
- Be part of a wider UK network
- International recognition (UN climate conference in Glasgow in 2021)

Members are asked to note the proposal of developing an art piece on the bridge piers as part of the UK Youth for Nature high-profile national campaign (involving more than 10 UK cities) and agreed that this approach is recommended at the next People and Communities Committee meeting.

#### **6. Other**

Members are asked to note that other issues have been raised in relation to ASB in the area. Members are asked to note that the Council's community safety team are aware of this and additional patrols are being carried out on the area. In addition we have installed mobile CCTV to monitor the bridge which will alert the contractor if there are any issues.

We are also looking at longer term mitigation measures including the installation of permanent CCTV and are working with DFI on this. We have also had a request in terms of looking at the installation of night time gates on the Bridge. Members are asked to note that gates on the bridge were not part of the original design/scope and would not be in keeping with the ethos of the Bridge which was to open up access to the area. Given this at this stage we are not looking at the installation of these as there is no evidence that these are required as the Bridge has not yet opened. This will be kept under review."

After discussion, the Working Group adopted the recommendations, noted that it would be provided with examples of UK for Nature's work at other locations and commended the Director of Physical Programmes, the Project Sponsor and the other officers who had contributed to the success of the project.

#### **Update on Physical Programme**

The Working Group considered the following report:



## **“1. Introduction**

The Council’s Physical Programme covers projects under a range of funding streams including the Capital Programme, the Leisure Transformation Programme, the Local Investment Fund (LIF), the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF), and Social Outcome Fund (SOF); in addition, the programme covers projects that the Council is delivering on behalf of other agencies. This report outlines the status of projects under the Physical Programme.

## **2. Recommendations**

The Working Group is asked to note the physical programme update for South Belfast and:

- i. note the update on the Holylands Area Improvement Initiative LIF project;
- ii. note the update on the Sandy Row area proposed BIF projects;
- iii. note the update on the Lagan Gateway BIF project (separate detailed report); and
- iv. agree that the Council acts as the delivery agent for the Belfast South Community Resources – Sandy Row Tourism signage SOF project.

## **3. Local Investment Fund (LIF)**

Members are reminded LIF is a £9m fixed programme of capital investment in non-council neighbourhood assets, over two tranches: LIF1 (2012-2015) - £5m total funding pot, allocated across each AWG areas; and LIF2 (2015 -2019) - £4m allocation. Each LIF project proposal is taken through a Due Diligence process prior to any funding award.

Members will recall that the AWG requested an update on the Holylands Area Improvement Initiative. The project brief remains limited to the planting of trees in the area. The latest position on the project is below.

LIF Ref	Project	LIF Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
SLIF2-07	Holylands Area Improvement Initiative	£80,000	On Ground	A contractor has been appointed to undertake these works but was unable to source trees to plant within the growing season	Continue engagement with the group and partners

				due to BREXIT. The trees will be planted in late October 2021. Community group (QUBA) is aware of the project status and proposed way forward.	
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Members are asked to note the update of Holylands Area Improvement Initiative LIF project.

#### 4. Belfast Investment Fund (BIF)

Members are reminded BIF is a £28m investment fund for regeneration partnership projects, with a minimum £250k investment from Council BIF – South Belfast was allocated £5.5m; with additional £500k ringfenced for new areas (outer South) that had joined the area under Local Government Reform. In South Belfast, 6 projects received an In-Principle funding commitment, thereby fully allocating its BIF allocation.

##### *Sandy Row area projects*

Members will recall that, at its special meeting in October 2020, the AWG recommended the following project proposals, namely: Coffee Culture project in partnership with Urban Villages, Sandy Row Open Space project and BSCR IT Exam Centre project. These proposals will be funded under the ring-fenced Sandy Row area BIF funding of £1.35m. This recommendation was approved by SP&R in November 2020 and these projects have been added to the BIF programme as *Stage 1- Emerging* projects, which will go through the three-stage approval process and due diligence.

Members are asked to note that the vacant units identified for the expansion of the IT Exam Centre have since been let. A vacant corner site has now been identified that can accommodate both the IT Exam Centre BIF proposal as well as the Arts & Digital Hub project being developed by BSCR with the Urban Villages Initiative (project originally 'Wee Ruby's Live, Work Studios'). The project promoter, BSCR, now proposes to take forward these projects jointly on this site in one development. Further updates will be brought to Members as this proposal is further developed.

Members are asked to note the update on the Sandy Row area projects and further asked to consider the separate detailed report update on Lagan Gateway BIF project.

#### 5. Social Outcome Fund

SOF is £4m ringfenced capital investment programme with a focus on local community tourism projects. 3 projects in South Belfast received an In-Principle funding commitment. Similar to LIF and BIF, all projects are subject to Due Diligence process prior to any funding award.

In September 2020, the AWG agreed to the change in promoter for Sandy Row Tourism signage SOF project from Sandy Row Community Forum to Belfast South Community Resources. This project is now progressing through Due Diligence and the procurement process.

Project	SOF Award	Status and update	Recommendation
<b>SOF04</b>  Sandy Row Community Forum	£80,000	Development of a Tourism Trail to complement the Transport Hub. Due Diligence complete. The project concept has been developed and costed. Belfast South Community Resources have signed off the project concept. Council will act as delivery agent for the project and will assist in the maintenance of signage as part of the council-wide upkeep of tourism signage.	Recommend that the Council acts as the delivery agent for this project

**Members are also asked to note the project update and agree that the Council acts as the delivery agent for the Belfast South Community Resources - Sandy Row Tourism signage SOF project.”**

After discussion, during which the Director of Physical Programmes undertook, at the request of a Member, to ensure that all community groups in the Holylands area were briefed on the current status of the Holylands Area Improvement Initiative, the Committee adopted the recommendations set out within the report.

#### **Date of Next Meeting**

The Working Group noted that details of its next meeting would be circulated in due course.

Chairperson

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Update on Contracts</b>
<b>Date:</b>	23rd April, 2021
<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 over £30,000.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to approve the public advertisement of tenders, as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 ( <b>Table 1</b> ).
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
	<u>Competitive Tenders</u>
3.1	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.
3.2	Standing Order 60(a) states that 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.

3.3	Standing Order 54 states that every contract shall comply with the relevant requirements of national and European legislation.
	<b>Financial and Resource Implications</b>
3.4	The financial resources for these contracts are within approved corporate or departmental budgets
	<b>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</b>
3.5	None
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Document Attached</b>
	Appendix 1 - Table 1 - Competitive Tenders

**Table 1: Competitive Tenders**

<b>Title of Tender</b>	<b>Proposed Contract Duration</b>	<b>Estimated Total Contract Value</b>	<b>SRO</b>	<b>Short description of goods / services</b>
Management and coordination/referrals of service provision for the Traveller Communities. (fully funded)	Up to 1 year and 5 months	£66,000	S Toland / R Black	To develop and enhance infrastructure that enables a coordinated approach in accessing services and service delivery for the Travelling Community in Belfast.
Design and programme management support for each of the key stages of the Belfast Agenda refresh as agreed by the Belfast Community Planning Partnership	Up to 2 years	£75,000	J Tully	Sections 69 and 70 of the Local Government Act 2014 set out the statutory requirements for the review of community plans which must be completed before the fourth anniversary of the date on which the Plan was published.
2023 Creative Development	Up to 2.5 years	£175,000	A Reid	Seeking external expertise and leadership in the hosting of a large-scale cultural programme in Belfast in 2023.
Telephony software assurance and support	Up to 1 year	£42,474	R Cregan	The corporate telephony solution requires that all devices and users have licensing support in the form of software assurance. This not only provides ongoing support, but also functionality.
T2085 (b) Provision of a Shared Spaces and Services Volunteer Training PEACE IV Programme Services	Up to 24 months	£124,000	S Toland / R Black	Delivery of volunteer training as part of the Peace IV programme of work - Seeking re approved as duration has increased
Hire of Mini Buses/Coaches for Council Events,	Up to 4 years	£400,000	A Reid	Corporate wide contract - hire of transportation for the purposes of Council events as part of Officers work remit
Tender for the provision of Taxi Services	Up to 3 years	£150,000	R Cregan	Corporate wide contract - hire of transportation for Staff, Members and Council Visitors for the purposes of Council business

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Revised Dual Language Street Signs Policy</b>
<b>Date:</b>	23rd April, 2021
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Walsh, City Solicitor / Director of Legal & Civic Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Sarah Williams, Governance and Compliance Manager Ian Harper, Building Control 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/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval for the revised Dual Language Street Signs Policy to reflect the approach agreed by Members which was ratified by the Council in January 2021 for the purposes of issuing for public consultation.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to approve the draft policy, as attached in Appendix 1.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<b>Background</b> <b>Legislative basis</b> Article 11 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, provides for street naming, street numbering and the provision of street signs. It also

	gives Councils the discretionary power to erect dual language street signs or secondary nameplates in a language other than English. Article 11(4) requires the Council in deciding whether to exercise its discretion in relation to the erection of a second nameplate, <b>to have regard to any views on the matter expressed by the occupiers of premises in a street.</b>
3.2	<p><b>Background to the Dual Language Street Signs Policy</b></p> <p>The Council first agreed a Dual Language Street Sign Policy in 1995 but deferred implementation of it to enable resource implications to be agreed. In <a href="#">1998</a>, the Council agreed to implement the policy which provides that only applications supported by a petition of one third of residents of the street will trigger a formal consultation of residents on the street. If two-thirds of the residents of the street respond positively to the consultation, the threshold is deemed to be met for the erection of a second language street sign.</p>
3.3	In <a href="#">2007</a> , the Council agreed a one-year pilot whereby any application submitted through local Elected Representatives be progressed directly to survey stage. In <a href="#">2008</a> Council agreed to revert to the original policy.
3.4	The policy was incorporated into a new wider Policy on Naming of Streets and Numbering of Buildings which had been drafted to provide clear guidance on the naming of street and numbering of buildings in <a href="#">2009</a> . In <a href="#">2012</a> , the Council reaffirmed the existing policy after considering a number of proposed amendments.
3.5	The policy was subject to a judicial review in 2014 which was successfully defended by the Council (the results of which were reported to committee in <a href="#">2015</a> ). In summary, Mr Justice Horner found that the Council's decision making process was lawful; as a general proposition, international treaties or agreements which have not been incorporated into national laws are not enforceable; and that the Council had a residual discretion within the policy to allow due consideration being given to the particular circumstances of each application.
3.6	<p><b>Key Issues</b></p> <p><b>New agreed approach</b></p> <p>On 7th January 2021, the Council ratified a decision taken by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 23rd October to adopt a new policy position, following a Notice of Motion which was raised in February 2020. Different approaches were proposed. Legal advice was given setting out the need to include certain parameters otherwise some of the proposed approaches would be vulnerable to judicial review such as the need for setting a</p>

	<p>minimum response threshold and the need to have regard to the consultation response in full, including non-responses even if they are no longer deemed as not being in favour of an application.. The decision made in October was called in and counsel opinion was sought which found that the decision did not satisfy the following grounds for call-in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the <b>procedural</b> grounds on the basis that there was no failure to take into account relevant considerations including resources;</li> <li>• the <b>disproportionate adverse impact</b> grounds on the basis that the policy when drafted will be subject to equality screening and consultation; and that the operation of residual discretion will allow for appropriate consideration of any potentially sensitive decisions.</li> </ul>
3.7	<p><b>Language Strategy Context</b></p> <p>This policy applies to all languages although the majority of applications to date have been for signs in Irish. The revised policy aims to reflect historical international frameworks aimed at protecting and promoting regional and minority languages<sup>1</sup> which, while not legally binding until enshrined into domestic law, the UK is a signatory state. These recognise the value of bilingual or trilingual signage as affirmation that the presence of linguistic diversity is appreciated<sup>2</sup> and as a demonstration of the diverse character of the region<sup>3</sup>.</p>
3.8	<p>The proposed lower thresholds proposed in the policy is based on the level of population thresholds recommended by the guidebook of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on minority issues<sup>4</sup> (emphasis added):</p> <p>“Street and locality names and topographical indicators intended for the public are important as markers of social identity, culture and history. A good, practical approach adopted in most countries is for the authorities to provide transparent legislation or procedures to allow bilingual or even trilingual signs, usually following the proportionality principle where there is a sufficient concentration or demand for such signs in minority languages. While national legislation varies, the low threshold where <b>it is considered practicable and reasonable to provide such signs tends to vary between 5 per cent and 20 per cent of the local population</b>, with the lowest threshold usually associated with the use of a minority language that also has some kind of official status or for traditional, historical reasons. The criteria for the display of signs in minority languages must be given a clear and unambiguous legislative basis for it to be effectively implemented. Bilingual or multilingual signs used by public authorities demonstrate inclusiveness, and that various population groups share a locality in harmony and mutual respect.”</p>

<sup>1</sup> UN's International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), 1966; UN's International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), 1966; Council of Europe's European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML), 1992; Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM), 1994

<sup>2</sup> [Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Third Opinion on the Netherlands](#), 2019, para 116

<sup>3</sup> [Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Fourth Opinion on Croatia](#), 2015, para 66

<sup>4</sup> [Language Rights of Linguistic Minorities: A Practical Guide for Implementation](#), 2017

3.9	<p>In addition, the Committee of Experts who annually audit signatory states on their implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages have made references to the need for lower thresholds in their reports:</p> <p>“The Committee of Experts urges the Czech authorities to adopt a flexible approach ensuring the implementation of the relevant provisions of the Charter to all regional or minority languages and to encourage local authorities to apply the Charter where there is a demand, <b>irrespective of any thresholds</b>.”<sup>5</sup></p> <p>“The Committee of Experts notes that limiting the possibility for users of regional or minority languages to submit oral or written applications in these languages to municipalities where 20% of the population belong to a minority amounts to a territorial reservation which is incompatible with the Charter. <b>Besides, the 20% threshold appears in any case too high, as the number of people justifying protection measures under the Charter is commonly well below this percentage</b>.”<sup>6</sup></p>
3.10	<p><b>The Key Changes</b></p> <p>The updated policy is set out in <b>Appendix 1</b>. The key changes are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the trigger for a consultation of the occupiers of a street will be an application to the Council by a resident / residents of the street or an Elected Member representing that District Electoral Area, as opposed to an application from anyone, supported by a petition of 1/3 of occupiers. In order for further consideration as to the erection of a second language street sign to take place, the threshold for the percentage of residents responding positively is 15% instead of 2/3.</li> <li>• People not returning a reply are no longer deemed not to be in favour of the application</li> <li>• Each application will be equality, good relations and rural needs screened</li> <li>• Members may want to consider whether they will exercise their residual discretion at the point when an application is received and decide as to whether to progress that application to the stage of surveying the street in question or not.</li> </ul>
3.11	<p><b>Checks and Balances</b></p> <p>In the previously agreed report, some key principles were suggested which have been incorporated into the policy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the policy will be used for the promotion of language rights and for the benefit of linguistic communities.</li> <li>2. That the principles of equality, promoting good relations and respect will underpin the application of the policy in addition to the rights promoted by the policy itself:</li> </ol>

<sup>5</sup> [Application of the Charter in Czech Republic ECRML \(2015\) 6](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Application of the Charter in Poland ECRML \(2011\) 5](#)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on legal advice, each application will be subject to an equality, good relations and rural needs screening.</li> <li>• The Council retains an overriding residual discretion to take the particular circumstances of each application into account in deciding whether or not a second language street name plate should be erected. In summary, there may be circumstances when notwithstanding the consultation response it may be appropriate to depart from the policy when there are clear reasons for doing so. Guidance will be provided to Members on the factors which should be considered when using this discretion.</li> <li>• And, as is the case at present, the Council will consider the best approach for any applications relating to long streets.</li> </ul> <p>3. That, as with any statutory consultation which the council is required to undertake, the City Solicitor may intervene if any complaint is made and a basis for that complaint established.</p> <p>4. That any decision relating to the erection of a second nameplate in the city centre (business core) will, in addition to the current policy considerations, be subject to a wider public consultation to reflect the community of users.</p> <p>5. That the policy will cover the corporately designated Gaeltacht Quarter until such time as a policy which may contain specific proposals in respect of a bilingual strategy have been adopted.</p>
3.12	<p><b>Equality, good relations and rural needs screening of each application</b></p> <p>The Council is bound by its duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and under its own Equality Scheme to have due regard to the need to the promote equality of opportunity and to have regard to promoting good relations.</p> <p>The Council's Good Relations Strategy, adopted in 2019, is committed to creating shared spaces. It states (p. 17): "This Strategy aims to promote sharing over separation and the economic, social and environmental benefits of such. We need to continue to create spaces for communities to interact and make connections with each other, moving from parallel living to meaningful relationships and casual interactions". Based on legal advice, each application will be subject to an equality, good relations and rural needs screening.</p>

	Information gathered during the screening process will be considered by the Committee as part of its residual discretion. The exercise of the Committee's residual discretion will ensure that second language street signs will not be erected in a manner which could undermine Good Relations at a neighbourhood level.
3.13	<p><b>Public Consultation</b></p> <p>A public consultation document is being prepared and will be published on the Engagement HQ platform. The consultation will run for a period of [12/14] weeks and will include a variety of quantitative and qualitative methods of assessing public opinion in order to ensure widespread and meaningful engagement including two remote public meetings. Informal pre-consultation engagement has taken place with the indigenous language community groups namely Foras na Gaeilge, Conradh na Gaeilge and the Ulster Scots Agency. This consultation document will be sent to the other relevant language community groups in Belfast for their feedback. Advice will be sought from Marketing &amp; Communications for communications support due to the high level of interest when this decision was made at Committee.</p>
3.14	<p><b>Next Steps</b></p> <p>The following timetable is proposed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• April: commission EQIA</li> <li>• May – Sept: carry out 12/14 week public consultation</li> <li>• Sept/Oct: update documents based on consideration of consultation responses and prepare consultation report</li> <li>• Oct: submit final policy to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.</li> </ul>
3.15	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As agreed previously, given the potential for increased numbers of applications the council will deal with no more than 5 in any given month. If numbers are excessive they will be held in a queue and dealt with in the order in which they have been received. This will also be managed in the context of the existing staffing resource and the established annual budget for street signage. A report will be submitted to a future meeting outlining the potential for increasing the number of applications which could be processed on a monthly basis, taking into account the new procedure emanating from the revised policy.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Screening each application will have resource implications for Building Control, the Place &amp; Economy Policy team, the Good Relations Unit and also the Equality &amp; Diversity Unit.</li> <li>• The budget for commissioning an EQIA will be covered within existing budgets in Place &amp; Economy. The proposed budget for an EQIA is £6,000 - £8,000. This takes into account a number of supporting workshops and engagement events and the option of including additional equality expertise in the EQIA contract.</li> </ul>
3.16	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>It is anticipated that the updated policy will be screened in for an EQIA which will be commissioned externally and issued for feedback as part of the public consultation. It is also anticipated that each application for a dual language street name will be screened for equality / good relations / rural needs implications.</p>
4.0	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	<p>Appendix 1: Draft updated Dual Language Street Sign Policy</p> <p>Appendix 2: Process diagram showing current process</p> <p>Appendix 3: Process diagram showing draft new process</p>

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# **Dual Language Street Signs Policy**

## **1.0 Legislation**

The statutory basis for this function is contained within Article 11 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 which commenced on 15 March 1995. It provides for street naming, street numbering and the provision of street signs. It also gives Councils the discretionary power to erect dual language street signs or secondary nameplates in a language other than English.

## **2.0 Introduction**

The legislation requires the Council, in deciding whether and how to exercise its discretion to erect a street name in a language other than English, to have regard to any views on the matter expressed by the occupiers of premises in that street.

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, to which the U.K. is a signatory, was taken into account when developing this policy, as was guidance published by the UN Special Rapporteur on the practical implementation of language rights of linguistic minorities. The Council's Language Strategy adopted by the Council in May 2018 sets out the Council's commitment to establish a transparent set of principles for promoting, protecting and enhancing the linguistic diversity of the city.

The European Charter establishes an obligation on state signatories not to create barriers in respect of the use of a minority language. The UN Special Rapporteur guidance notes that the threshold where it is reasonable and practical to provide such signs varies between 5 percent and 20 percent of the local population. While this policy applies to all languages, the Council recognises that Irish and Ulster Scots are recognised as minority languages in the European Charter.

For the purposes of this policy "Occupiers" shall be taken to be any person whose name appears in the current Electoral Register plus the owners or tenants in actual possession of commercial premises, but not employees in such premises.

These policy proposals were developed in close consultation with the City Solicitor and are designed to promote consistent and reasonable responses. However, the policy should not be applied in such a way as to prevent due consideration being given to the particular circumstances of each application. See in particular Section 3(xi) below.

Having regard to the significant resource consequences of administering the implications of the policy, the policy will be reactive in nature. The policy will be managed and implemented based on the resources available and the established annual budget for street signage. The Council reserves the right to pause the processing of applications in the event that resources are not sufficient.

### **3.0 Procedure**

The procedures for seeking and assessing the views of Occupiers and the criteria to be applied in deciding whether to erect a street sign in a language other than English are as follows:

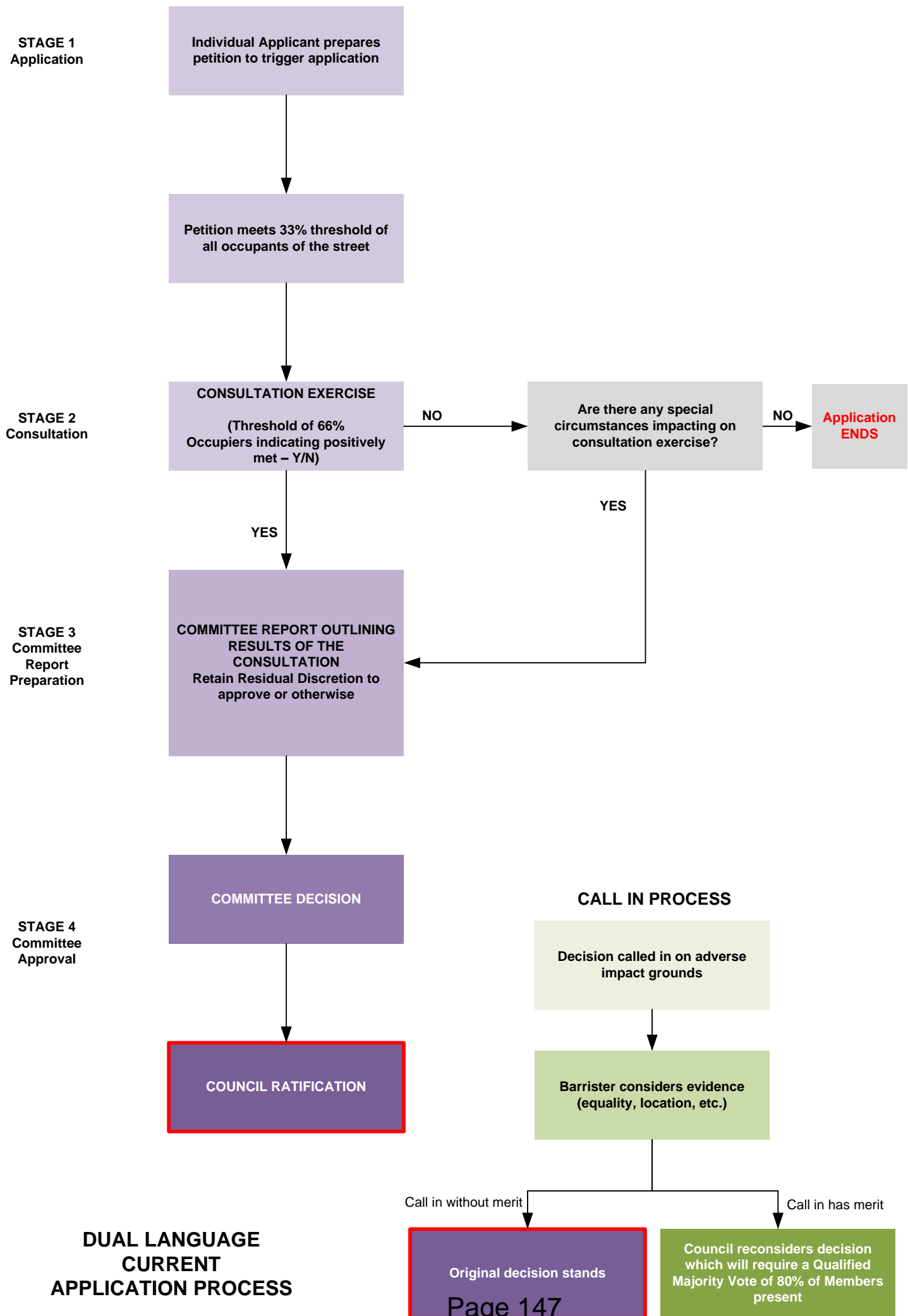
- (i) Applications for the erection of a street sign in a language other than English must be made by an Applicant submitting an application form either by post or electronically to Belfast City Council.
- (ii) An application for the erection of a street sign in a language other than English may be made by an 'Applicant' which for purposes of this policy means: (a) an Occupier or Occupiers of the street for which the application is made, (b) an Elected Member of Belfast City Council who represents the District Electoral Area in which the street is located or (c) a developer of a new street. Any application submitted by a developer with regard to a new street will be considered by the Council in accordance with Section 3(xi) of this policy. With regard to streets without any Occupiers, applications for the erection of a street sign in a language other than English may only be made by an Elected Member who represents the District Electoral Area in which the street is located. The Council will have regard to Section 3(xi) of this policy when considering any such application.
- (iii) When an application is received, the Council will canvass by post all Occupiers of that street and seek their views on the request to erect a street sign in a second specified language. Options for a response will be 'Yes', 'No' and 'No Preference'. The Council will note for its records those Occupiers who do not reply. Reply will be by way of a pre-paid envelope and should be returned within one month of receipt.
- (iv) Each survey that is sent out by the Council to the Occupiers of a street for which an application is made will have a unique identifier number. Survey responses received by the Council for that application will be cross-referenced against that unique identifier and will be recorded. The Council may choose to audit certain responses to surveys. These measures are to provide assurance that each Occupier's view is taken into account.
- (v) Applications will be dealt with in the order that they are received.
- (vi) Each application will be subject to a screening on equality, good relations and rural needs. This screening will commence when the application is received and will incorporate the results of the survey completed by the Occupiers.
- (vii) Where fifteen percent or more of the Occupiers of that street have indicated that they are in favour of the erection of a second language street sign, then such a sign may be erected, subject to the residual discretion of the Council as specified in subsection (xi) below.
- (viii) If the minimum threshold of fifteen percent is not met, the Applicant will be given two weeks to advise the Council of any special circumstances in relation to the application. If such special circumstances relate to the processing of a survey, the Strategic Director of Place and Economy, in conjunction with the City Solicitor will determine whether such exceptional circumstances exist to refer the matter to Committee. Where exceptional circumstances relate to matters other than the processing of a survey, the matter will be referred to Committee. If there are no special circumstances, the application will end.

- (ix) A report on all applications (other than those ended in the circumstances specified in subsection (viii) above) will be brought to Committee for a decision.
- (x) Consideration will be given to “long streets” where opinion on whether to have a second language street sign may differ between readily identifiable, substantial lengths of the street. In these circumstances, the decision as to the erection of dual language nameplates in certain portions of the street will be made by Committee, exercising its residual discretion and taking into account advice from officers.
- (xi) The Council will retain a residual discretion to decide to erect or not to erect a street sign in a language other than English in certain circumstances. This will be done on a case by case basis. It may be appropriate to depart from the procedures in this policy when there are clear reasons for doing so. This may include taking into account:
  - (a) the views of the Occupiers of the street;
  - (b) the results of the equality screening for the application, which will include the results of any adverse impact on good relations and rural needs;
  - (c) consideration of the local context of the application;
  - (d) any other Council policies or strategies related to the application and
  - (e) all material considerations relating to the application.
- (xii) When a decision has been taken to erect a street sign in a second language, appropriate arrangements for the translation from English to that second language will be made. The translation will be carried out by an independent, competent body such as the appropriate Language Department at Queen's University or other appropriate, independent and competent institution.
- (xiii) With regard to the design and placing of the street signs the second language sign shall be located immediately below the English sign and the size of lettering shall be smaller than the English version to avoid any risk of confusion to the emergency services.

#### **4.0 Adoption by Council**

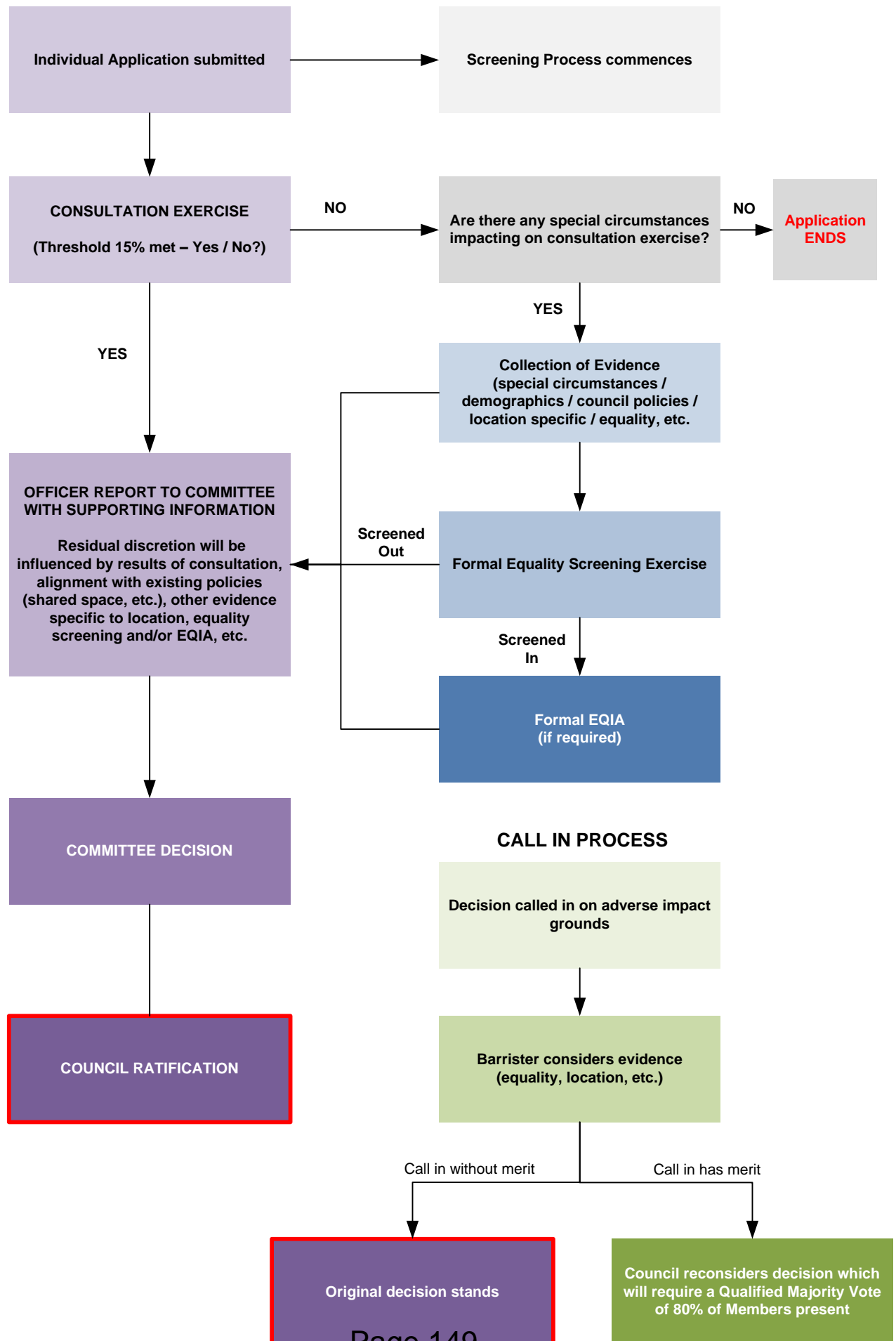
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## DUAL LANGUAGE APPLICATION PROCESS



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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Language Strategy - Proposed Strategic Approach</b>
<b>Date:</b>	23rd April, 2021
<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/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to request approval for a proposed strategic approach for the implementation of the Language Strategy.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to approve the establishment of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. a cross-party, bi-annual / quarterly Member Language Strategy Working Group;</li> <li>ii. a new external Irish Language Forum and a new external Ulster-Scots Forum to add to the existing Council stakeholder fora for the other language communities; and</li> <li>iii. an internal Language Strategy officer working group.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b>Background</b></p> <p>The Council launched its Language Strategy in April 2018 (set out in <b>Appendix 1</b>) which has two key purposes:</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Indigenous languages:</b> to <b>protect and promote</b> awareness of our indigenous languages: Irish and Ulster-Scots; and</li> <li>2. <b>Other languages:</b> to promote <b>access to, inclusion of and awareness of</b> other languages: sign languages, the languages of new communities who live in Belfast, and languages and communication for disabled people.</li> </ol>
3.2	<p>The Language Strategy was introduced to reflect:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To <b>protect and promote</b> awareness of our two indigenous languages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• historical international frameworks aimed at protecting and promoting regional and minority languages<sup>1</sup> which, while not legally binding until enshrined into domestic law, the UK is a signatory state;</li> <li>• commitments under the Belfast / Good Friday Agreement 1998 and the St Andrews Agreement 2006;</li> <li>• regional strategies and frameworks such as DCAL's Irish Language and Ulster-Scots Strategies in 2015;</li> <li>• developments in approach to language issues in Belfast City Council and other councils in NI</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. To promote <b>access to, inclusion of and awareness of</b> other languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• changing demographics in the city population and the need to promote access to Council services in languages other than English</li> <li>• national laws promoting diversity and inclusion.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
3.3	<p><b>Background to the Development of the Language Strategy</b></p> <p>The Council first considered the issue of language and the implications of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in <a href="#">2002</a>. In <a href="#">2006</a>, the Council agreed a Language Policy to address legislative obligations based on the needs and priorities of linguistic groups and to act as a guide for Council officers. This policy was subsequently extended in <a href="#">2007</a> to cover signage in all Council facilities that “the signs inside Council properties be either pictorial, tactile or in English or a combination of these, but that a multi-lingual Welcome sign be provided where there is appropriate demand”.</p>

<sup>1</sup> UN's International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), 1966; UN's International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), 1966; Council of Europe's European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML), 1992; Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM), 1994

3.4	<p>The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission was critical of this decision in its <a href="#">2010 Briefing Paper on Minority Language Rights</a>, noting that because it stipulates that the name of the facility can be in English only that it “in effect, prohibits the use of Irish in signage on all of the Council facilities”. Their view was that the policy generally conflicts with the spirit of and is also incompatible with several articles of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) in particular Article 10 which applies to Administrative authorities and public services.</p>
3.5	<p>The Council agreed to review the Language Policy in <a href="#">2012</a>. In November 2013, a revised Language Policy which incorporated legal advice from a QC to ensure the Council’s compliance with all relevant legal obligations was brought through the <a href="#">Party Group Leaders’ Forum and Historical Centenaries Working Group</a> however no agreement was reached. The group recommended at their meeting in <a href="#">October 2012</a> that the current guidelines should be extended to incorporate Irish versions of the official logo and branding since this would regularise the current position. The Irish version would then be available for use by individual Members and organisations.</p>
3.6	<p>At that time, the demands of Local Government Reform prioritised work streams in that area and consequently the 2006 Language Policy remained in place. In late 2016 a decision was made to revisit the 2006 Language Policy and following refreshed engagement with key stakeholders a draft <a href="#">Policy on Linguistic Diversity</a> was issued for consultation in 2017. This included three draft policies aimed at Irish, Ulster-Scots and other languages which are set out in the Language Strategy document. Following the outcome of the public consultation, in <a href="#">September 2017</a> Members a set of recommendations including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The draft Linguistic Diversity Policy should be re-branded as a Language Strategy, outlining a strategic approach to the development of accessible and inclusive communications;</li> <li>• Separate strands of work should be established under the strategy, for example – Irish Language, Ulster-Scots Language, Sign Language, New Communities’ Communications and Language, and Communications and Language Strand for those with a Disability;</li> <li>• Each strand should be assessed fully to inform appropriate resourcing, for example with dedicated human and material resources that are tailored to the particular needs and priorities of that language community;</li> <li>• To take forward these recommendations, an action plan should be put in place with immediate effect, setting out a staged approach to full implementation, with resources made available for each strand in order to provide continued momentum to the emerging strategy.</li> </ul>

	<p>The three draft policies were redefined into specific community needs (see section 3.5 of the Language Strategy) and it was stated “that the development of different policies under the strategy will accommodate the different aspirations and priorities of each language community, balanced through needs and constraints”. Draft aims for each language work strands were set out. The draft language policies are included in an appendix to the Language Strategy for reference.</p>
3.7	<p>The Council has also made some individual decisions in relation to signage such as a welcome sign in Falls Park in <a href="#">1999</a>; that banners and hoarding in the Gaeltacht Quarter as part of the <a href="#">City Dressing Plan 2012/13</a> and the <a href="#">Investment Programme in 2012</a> would be in both Irish and English; and in <a href="#">2012</a>, it was agreed that the Nollaig Shona (Happy Christmas) sign donated by An Cultúrlann would continue to be erected at the East entrance to the City Hall. More recently, as Members will be aware, the Council has carried out public consultations in relation to leisure centre signage. Members have also agreed an approach to revise the Dual Language Street Signs Policy which is subject to a separate report to this Committee.</p>
3.8	<p>The launch of the current Language Strategy was followed by the recruitment of two language officers in September 2018 with the approval of an Action Plan in December 2018 to cover the period up to March 2020. Highlights from this programme of work are set out in <b>Appendix 2</b> across all five of the language strands. This has included hosting events for Seachtain na Gaeilge/Irish Language Week for schools and schoolchildren; launching a <i>Pocket Guide to Ulster-Scots Place Names in Belfast</i>; signing the British Deaf Association British Sign Language &amp; Irish Sign Language Charter and becoming the first public sector organisation in Northern Ireland to offer SignVideo which allows Sign Language users to contact the council using a live video Sign Language interpreter; developing a ‘<i>Valuing Languages</i>’ film with Queen’s University Belfast showcasing 15 languages used in Belfast today; and developing a dedicated webpage to support people with disabilities to access the Council’s services. It should be noted that resourcing issues in the Equality and Diversity Unit, which are now being resolved, has delayed progress in this area.</p>
3.9	<p><b>Key Issues</b></p> <p>In order to take forward the further development of the Language Strategy, it is now proposed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To establish a political governance structure to enable Members to contribute to and inform the further development and implementation of the Language Strategy</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To establish two additional external stakeholder fora to enable discussion with and feedback from the language sectors in the city to add to the existing consultation fora for the other language sectors</li> <li>• To establish an internal officer working group to ensure a joined up corporate approach on areas related to language such as physical signage, documents translation, website/communications, promotion of heritage and culture</li> <li>• To develop an updated action plan for each strand of the Language Strategy including the development of language-related policies and protocols to be considered within the Council's existing budgetary constraints.</li> </ul> <p>It should be noted by Members, that the Council may be facing unprecedented budgetary challenges in the coming years and these actions plans will have to be developed in light of these circumstances.</p>
3.10	<p><b>Governance</b></p> <p>It is proposed that a cross-party Members' Language Strategy Working Group is established to look at language issues and how these are addressed. This group would meet quarterly in the first instance and as required and would comprise one representative from each party. Representatives from different language sectors would be invited to address the group in order to promote understanding of the issues in this area. Direct engagement with the Council's external language stakeholder fora would also be arranged. The Working Group would also receive updates and consider proposals from the Language Officers on their areas of work and would make recommendations on proposed actions plans and policy development. These recommendations would then be referred to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for agreement, as required.</p>
3.11	<p><b>External Stakeholder Engagement</b></p> <p>It is also proposed to establish groups to ensure that the Council can meaningful engage with relevant stakeholders on each strand of the Language Strategy. The Council already has groups relating to Sign Language (Sign Language Users' Forum), New Communities (Migrant Forum) and Disability Communications (Disability Advisory Panel). It is suggested that two new external fora are established for Irish and Ulster Scots. This would ensure there is a mechanism for communities in each language strand to identify and prioritise issues and influence the development of the Council's approach. It would also be an opportunity for the Council to communicate progress on current actions to these groups. It is envisaged that the two new groups would meet three times a year.</p>

3.12	<p><b>Internal Corporate Co-ordination</b></p> <p>To ensure a corporate joined-up approach the existing Equality and Diversity Network – Operational (or if needed a sub-group established) will be used to share information and co-ordinate work in relation to the Language Strategy. It is suggested this should comprise council officers from across the council including Marketing and Corporate Communications; the Good Relations Unit; Physical Programmes; Heritage, Culture and Arts and the Customer Focus Programme as it relates to matters such as physical signage, translation of documents, use of website/communications, and the promotion of heritage and culture (in particular place names).</p>
3.13	<p><b>Public consultation on leisure centre signage and other language-related queries</b></p> <p>It is suggested that the results of the public consultation on leisure centre signage is considered through this Working Group giving due consideration to the views expressed in the responses to the consultation. This decision was deferred to a later date by Strategic Policy and Resources at the outset of the pandemic.</p> <p>In addition, some physical projects are approaching completion with queries already arising related to requests for English / Irish signage, for example in the new Collin Park, which is funded by Urban Villages and will transfer to the Council following completion; and work on the City Cemetery Refurbishment project which is due to be completed in the autumn. The Council has recently received identical email requests for Irish / English signage in 11 parks reflecting the need to promote a wider understanding of the Council's current agreed policy position in relation to signage in other languages.</p>
3.14	<p><b>Action Plans 2021-23</b></p> <p>Draft action plans for each of the five strands of the Language Strategy will be developed in consultation with members of the external stakeholder groups. It is proposed that these action plans would be considered and agreed by the new Language Strategy Working Group. Any outstanding actions from the previous action plan have been included in the draft new action plans and progress would be reported through the Language Strategy Working Group.</p>
3.15	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>This work will be covered by existing budgets.</p>
3.16	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>The promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations are key principles within which the Language Strategy is delivered. The Language Strategy was subject to the Council's usual screening process.</p>

<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	<p>Appendix 1 - Language Strategy 2018-2023</p> <p>Appendix 2: Highlights from Programme of Work 2018-present</p>

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**Belfast**  
City Council

**Appendix 1**

## **Language Strategy 2018-2023**

### **Access to Information**

As part of our commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations, we want to ensure that everyone is able to access the documents we produce. We would therefore be happy to provide any of the information in this document in alternative formats on request. If you have any queries about this document, and its availability in alternative formats (including Braille, disk and audio cassette, or in other languages for those whose first language is not English) then please contact:

### **Equality and Diversity Unit**

**Belfast City Council, 9 Adelaide Street, Belfast, City Hall BT2 8DJ**

**Call: 028 90320202    Text phone: 028 9027 0405**

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

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In keeping with the Council's long term vision for the city, as set out in the Belfast Agenda, the Language Strategy 2018-2023 aspires to create a place where linguistic diversity is celebrated and respected, and where those who live, work and visit Belfast can expect to access what Belfast has to offer, using forms of language with which they are familiar and comfortable.

The aims of the strategy are to:

- address language and communication challenges and opportunities within the Belfast Agenda outcomes;
- establish a transparent set of principles for promoting, protecting and enhancing the linguistic diversity of the city;
- increase the profile of different languages along with awareness and understanding of associated cultures, heritage and traditions;
- engage with language communities to address language barriers and promote equality of opportunity through the development and integration of different languages into mainstream civic life;
- enhance good relations within the city through the promotion of linguistic diversity and to celebrate the significance of language in the history and culture of the city;
- address staff training and capacity building needs in relation to the role linguistic diversity has in the workplace and in the delivery of services.
- work in partnership to promote linguistic diversity across the city, to move toward our shared vision of inclusive growth, where no one is left behind.

The strategy builds on earlier initiatives including the draft Linguistic Diversity Policy and Language Framework, together with extensive consultation.

Bringing this Language Strategy to life over the next five years will require actions that are realistic and achievable. Five work strands will be delivered, representing different language forms other than the principal language of the Council, English. These work strands will address the needs and aspirations of the following language communities:

- **Irish Language;**
- **Ulster-Scots Language;**
- **Sign Languages;**
- **New Communities' Languages;**
- **Languages and communications for disabled people**

The Language Strategy is a corporate strategy, co-ordinated by the Equality and Diversity Unit. Work streams will be developed through stakeholder engagement and taken forward by two officers - one officer will be assigned responsibility for the promotion, protection and enhancement of Irish, while the second officer will have responsibility for increasing access and inclusion of the other languages.

## **1. VISION and STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

### **1.1 Vision**

Language<sup>1</sup>, in its diverse forms, lies at the core of our business. This is primarily because genuine engagement with individuals and communities rests on the capacity to use language to communicate effectively with all those who live in, work in and visit Belfast.

Planning for the diversity of language usage is not a simple task. Economic, political and social circumstances can each impact on policy areas, meaning that the data collected can become quickly outdated. However, we are confident the strategic approach over the next five years, from April 2018 until March 2023 can bring positive change through working with all stakeholders.

The Language Strategy is a key document which will contribute to achieving the aims of the Belfast Agenda<sup>2</sup>, which sets out a long term vision for the city as a place:

- where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy;
- that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all;
- that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable
- where everyone experiences good health and wellbeing; and
- where everyone fulfils their potential.

In line with this agenda, the vision for our Language Strategy is to create a city where linguistic diversity is celebrated and respected, and where those who live, work and visit the city can expect to access what Belfast has to offer, using forms of language within which they are familiar and comfortable.

Belfast City Council recognises and celebrates the linguistic diversity which characterises our city and duly acknowledges the importance of respect, understanding and tolerance of the different language forms used by residents, workers and visitors alike.

In turn we acknowledge that the creation of a climate of mutual respect of different language forms is necessary to enable cultural diversity to be a source not of division but of enrichment for the future of our city and our society.

We are committed to respecting the rights, traditions and cultures of users of different language forms, whether by choice or necessity, and to celebrate, promote and support the continued use of such languages, thereby increasing awareness and understanding of the heritage and culture of communities associated with linguistic diversity.

### **1.2 Strategic Aims**

A series of strategic aims have been developed for our Language Strategy, which will underpin future objectives and actions, while building on the legacy of previous work.

The strategic aims outlined below have been developed from a substantial evidence base, including conversations with language communities and other key stakeholders, legislation and the broader background, which is laid out in more detail in Section 2.

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<sup>1</sup> Defined as 'The method of human communication, either spoken or written, consisting of the use of words in a structured and conventional way.'

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/council/Communityplanning/BelfastAgenda.aspx>

- address language and communication challenges and opportunities within the Belfast Agenda outcomes;
- establish a transparent set of principles for promoting, protecting and enhancing the linguistic diversity of the city;
- increase the profile of different languages along with awareness and understanding of associated cultures, heritage and traditions;
- engage with language communities to address language barriers and promote equality of opportunity through the development and integration of different languages into mainstream civic life;
- enhance good relations within the city through the promotion of linguistic diversity and to celebrate the significance of language in the history and culture of the city;
- address staff training and capacity building needs in relation to the role linguistic diversity has in the workplace and in the delivery of services.
- work in partnership to promote linguistic diversity across the city, to move toward our shared vision of inclusive growth, where no-one is left behind;

## 2. BACKGROUND

### 2.1 A Short History

We first adopted a Language Policy in 2006 (see Appendix 1), a policy that reflected on thinking at that time and including guidance from the Department of the Environment (Local Government Division) on the implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages ('the European Charter').

At that time we adopted a wide ranging policy that addressed the use of languages other than English in our business. In particular, reference was made to Irish, Ulster-Scots, other 'minority' languages and sign languages.

Further to legal opinion, and taking into account significant developments in the way that the needs of users of other languages had been accommodated over the years, in 2013 we decided to look again at the policy and to bring it up to date. Consultation was then undertaken with representatives of the Irish language, Ulster-Scots and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) sectors, and a revised draft policy was then brought forward for implementation – without being formally adopted.

Since then, and in particular during 2017, there followed extensive consultation on a Draft Policy on Linguistic Diversity together with a Proposed Language Framework<sup>3</sup>. The formal consultation on the policy and framework ran from 23 May 2017 to 18 July 2017 and ended with the production of a Consultation Feedback Report<sup>4</sup>. While the consultation endorsed the general strategic approach adopted there was also an evident need to take into account each of the linguistic communities of Belfast, and their diverse needs and priorities.

Taken collectively the recommendations arising from the Draft Policy on Linguistic Diversity (2017) and from the Consultation Feedback Report (2017) form the basis of the Language Strategy 2018-23.

Key recommendations which have been actioned include:

- Rebranding the draft Linguistic Diversity Policy as a Language Strategy, which will outline a strategic approach to the development of accessible and inclusive communications;
- Labels such as 'minority' have not been used wherever possible – instead we refer to 'other' languages, meaning other than English
- Separate strands of work have been established under the strategy: Irish Language, Ulster-Scots Language, Sign Language, New Communities' Communications and Language, and Communications and Language Strand for those with a Disability;
- Two officers are being recruited - one officer will be assigned responsibility for the promotion, protection and enhancement of Irish, while the second officer will have responsibility for increasing access and inclusion for the other languages

Other recommendations will be taken forward, central to which is engaging with stakeholders to fine tune the aims and implementation sections of each strand so as to reflect needs and priorities, and in the process bringing the strategy to life through the staged implementation of short-term and long-term action plans for each strand.

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<sup>3</sup> All documents are available at:

<https://minutes3.belfastcity.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=163&MID=8260#AI40369>

or by contacting the Equality and Diversity Unit

<sup>4</sup> See above.

## **2.2 Legal Context**

### **2.2.1 Counsel's opinion**

In January 2013 we sought the opinion of Mr Richard Gordon QC, who is widely recognised as a leading counsel on constitutional, administrative, public and civil liberties law. Mr Gordon was asked to advise:

- whether the Council is in any legal conflict with the provisions of the European Charter and whether the current policies in relation to the use of Irish meet with the spirit and requirements of the Charter;
- whether the current language policies are open to legitimate criticism.

Mr Gordon advised that there would be potential for judicial review in relation to allegations of the Council's non-compliance with the European Charter and recommended that the Council should – as a minimum – have in place a clear strategy which can be shown to be implemented for facilitation of the Irish language so as to meet all the requirements of Article 10 of the European Charter. He suggested that the Council should reformulate the Language Policy in a comprehensive and easily accessible form and should attempt to itemise in the clearest terms what is being done to implement the policy.

### **2.2.2 High Court ruling**

In December 2014, the High Court ruled on an application for judicial review by Eileen Reid of a decision taken by Belfast City Council to refuse to erect an additional street name plate in Irish at Ballymurphy Drive, Belfast. The application was made on five grounds, one of which was that our street naming policy was inconsistent with its commitment to act in accordance with the European Charter. The ruling stated that, as a general proposition, international treaties or agreements which have not been incorporated into national law are not enforceable and went on to say:

‘a public authority ... cannot be obliged to treat itself as bound to act in compliance with international obligation. Even where it does so it is clear from the authorities that the courts will adopt a very light touch review which will not extend to ruling on the meaning or effect of the International Treaty.’

### **2.2.3 Judicial Review Application Conradh Na Gaeilge March 2017**

The High Court found that the Executive Committee of the NI Assembly had failed to comply with obligations flowing from the NI Act 1998 requiring it to adopt a strategy in respect of the Irish language and that consideration was not sufficient to discharge the duty arising under the Act.

### **2.2.4 International and domestic legal obligations and standards**

The sensitivities that can so often attach to the interplay between language, politics and identity, and many jurisdictions have wrestled with these issues over a considerable period of time.

Numerous international and domestic statutes and standards are potentially relevant to this strategy, including:

- The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992);
- The Belfast / Good Friday Agreement (1998);
- The Northern Ireland (St Andrew's Agreement) Act (2006);

- The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1994);
- The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (2000);
- The European Convention on Human Rights (1950);
- The Disability Discrimination Act (1995);
- The Race Relations (NI) Order (1997);
- The Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order (2000);
- Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998).

### **2.2.5 European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages**

The Charter is the European convention for the protection and promotion of languages used by traditional minorities. It was adopted not only to maintain and develop the Europe's cultural traditions and heritage but also to respect an inalienable and commonly recognised right to use a regional or minority language in private and public life.

In Northern Ireland, Part II of the Charter applies to both Irish and Ulster-Scots while Part III applies to Irish only.

Part II places a general duty on the state to facilitate and/or encourage the use of regional or minority languages, in speech and writing, in public and private life, but does not place any obligations directly on district councils.

However, Part III of the European Charter extends to public services under public control. In this context, the European Charter states (in Article 10) that services need to be able to be provided in the specified language (in this case, Irish) and users of the language need to be able to submit requests for services in that language.

Article 10 makes it clear that public authorities should have a capacity for translation and interpretation, allow or encourage the use of traditional forms of place-names and family names, draft documents in the specified language, facilitate oral and written applications in the language, facilitate the use of the language in debates, and allow people to submit requests in the language.

### **2.2.6 Belfast/Good Friday Agreement**

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

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

The Agreement was concluded before the European Charter and it is clear that the commitments in strand three were focusing on the transitional period prior to the ratification of the European Charter by the UK.

### **2.2.7 Northern Ireland (St Andrews Agreement) Act**

This Act places a duty on the Northern Ireland Executive to adopt a strategy for the enhancement and protection of the Irish language.

### **2.2.8 Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities**

Unlike the European Charter (which focuses on languages) the Council of Europe's Framework Convention focuses on linguistic minority groups. It does not place any directly enforceable obligation on local councils but includes a number of provisions in relation to minority languages. In particular Article 11 requires the state to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to use his or her surname (patronym) and first names in the minority language. The article also requires the state to facilitate the display of traditional local names, street names and other topographical indications in the minority language, where there is a sufficient demand and in areas traditionally inhabited by substantial numbers of persons belonging to a national minority.

### **2.2.9 EU Charter of Fundamental Rights**

The EU Charter provides simply that, 'the (European) Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity.' The EU Charter has been incorporated into domestic law.

### **2.2.10 European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)**

The ECHR and the general case law of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg place a general obligation on the state to respect linguistic pluralism and minority rights. The ECHR has also been incorporated into domestic law.

### **2.2.11 Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)**

The DDA outlaws discrimination against those with a disability (i.e. a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities). The legislation extends to employment, education, management of property and access to goods, facilities and services. Those, such as councils, that provide goods, facilities and services to the public cannot discriminate against a disabled person, and this can extend to use of language.

Under the DDA, discrimination in the provision of goods, facilities and services occurs when a disabled person is treated less favourably than someone else and the treatment is for a reason relating to the person's disability, where this treatment cannot be justified.

### **2.2.12 Race Relations (NI) Order (RRO)**

The RRO outlaws discrimination on racial grounds (including colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins). The law covers racial discrimination in employment, education, disposal or management of premises, or the provision of goods, facilities or services. The RRO outlaws discrimination on grounds of race in the provision of goods, facilities or services which are available to the public. This includes refusal of a service, or the provision of a lower standard of service.

### **2.2.13 Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order (FETO)**

FETO outlaws discrimination on grounds of religious belief and/or political opinion, and, in common with the DDA and RRO, also includes a goods, facilities and services provision, and includes indirect as well as direct discrimination. Indirect discrimination occurs where a provision, criterion or practice is applied equally but which puts persons of a particular religious



belief etc. at a particular disadvantage and which cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

#### **2.2.14 Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act (Section 75)**

Section 75 requires us, in carrying out our functions, powers and duties, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- 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
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

In addition, without prejudice to its obligations above, the Act requires that we have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

### **2.3 Regional Context**

The interplay between language, politics and identity, in Northern Ireland has impacted significantly on the advancement or implementation of any regional language strategies since the formation of the Department for Communities (DfC) in May 2016. Prior to that date, a number of regional language strategies had been brought forward under the former Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL).

#### **2.3.1 Irish Language Strategy**

In January 2015, DCAL published a Strategy to Enhance and Protect the Development of the Irish Language, over the period 2015-2035 (*Straitéis le Forbairt na Gaeilge a Fheabhsú agus a Chosaint*). The key aims of the strategy were to:

- support quality and sustainable acquisition and learning of the Irish language;
- enhance and protect the status and visibility of the Irish language;
- deliver quality and sustainable Irish language networks and communities; and
- promote the Irish language in a way that will contribute towards building a strong and shared community.

In relation to the delivery of public services, the strategy envisaged that public authorities would facilitate the use of Irish both orally and in writing, and produce and adhere to a Code of Courtesy that meets the needs of those who wish to conduct their business through Irish. The strategy notes that language awareness and language training programmes need to be provided so that a higher proportion of public service staff can effectively deliver services in Irish to customers who seek them.

The strategy set out expectations that local councils would:

- adopt Irish language policies and plans and appoint Irish language officers;
- initiate or expand facilities for the use of Irish in their council and committee meetings;
- increase the visibility of the Irish language by publicising the availability of their Irish language services;
- provide an Irish or bilingual version of publications, official documents and forms in line with the approach of the Strategy and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages;

- facilitate the proper preservation and signposting of Irish place-names and the naming of new housing developments; and
- encourage tourism and cultural initiatives through Irish.

In accordance with the Strategy, and working towards legislative protection of the Irish language, a consultation document was produced in February 2015.

### **2.3.2 Ulster-Scots Strategy**

Also in January 2015, DCAL published a Strategy to Enhance and Develop the Ulster-Scots Language, Heritage and Culture over the period 2015-2035 (Roadin furtae Bríng Forrits an Graith tha Ulstèr-Scotch Leid, Heirskip an Cultùr), with four key aims, to:

- promote and safeguard the status of, and respect for, the Ulster-Scots language, heritage and culture;
- build up the sustainability, capacity and infrastructure of the Ulster-Scots community; and
- foster an inclusive, wider understanding of the Ulster-Scots language, heritage and culture in a way that will contribute towards building a strong and shared community.

In relation to public services, the strategy indicated that government departments, councils and public bodies generally need to:

- facilitate and encourage the use of Ulster-Scots in public life;
- increase awareness and visibility of the Ulster-Scots services they provide;
- encourage the promotion of Ulster-Scots cultural and heritage tourism initiatives;
- ensure that respect for Ulster-Scots within the context of cultural diversity is an element of their commitment to good relations;
- facilitate the proper preservation and signposting of Ulster-Scots place names.

The strategy also says that awareness training for relevant staff needs to be a good practice requirement.

### **2.3.3 Sign Language Framework**

In 2005 DCAL set up a Sign Language Partnership Group to produce best practice guidance on providing public services to deaf people who use British Sign Language (BSL) or Irish Sign Language (ISL). Speaking in the Assembly on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015, the Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure said that the Partnership Group had contributed much to improving the lives of sign language users and their families but that she was convinced of the need to do much more. She indicated that the deaf community had made it clear that they want legislation to safeguard their rights as a cultural and linguistic minority. The Minister said that she would take initial steps to address this issue before responsibility transfers to the Department of Communities in 2016. A draft Sign Language Framework was opened for public consultation in 2016, including the following objectives:

- To increase positive attitudes, respect, understanding and tolerance for ISL/BSL by introducing a legislative framework by the end of the next Assembly mandate;
- To develop sustainable and quality Departmental ISL/BSL Plans in consultation with the deaf community;
- To provide a sustainable supply of sign language teachers, sign language interpreters and translators;
- To support the establishment of Deaf Cultural and Linguistic Centres in Belfast and Derry – ‘Deaf Hubs’;

- To ensure that all public information, Guidance and services are available in ISL/BSL at no additional expense to the deaf individual - in particular public health information to redress deaf people's poorer health and wellbeing compared to the general population;
- To promote the beneficial effects of ISL/BSL as a family-centred early intervention for deaf children, including in a bilingual environment with spoken language; including provision of free Family Sign Language ISL/BSL classes to deaf children, their parents/guardians, siblings and grandparents;
- To provide for the continuing education requirements of deaf children and young people from pre-school through to third level education through the medium of ISL/BSL;
- To provide a sustainable model of expertise, knowledge, research, innovation and teaching of ISL/BSL in the north of Ireland by partnering, developing and funding our local universities to access EU funding streams in partnership with sign language teaching universities in the south of Ireland, Scotland and England, where appropriate;
- To provide personal and social development programmes to redress the educational under-achievement of deaf people.

The intention was to bring forward an Irish Sign Language and British Sign Language Act for Northern Ireland in 2017.

## **2.4 Other Councils**

Other councils in Northern Ireland have adopted formal language policies, including:

- Fermanagh & Omagh DC has adopted an overarching Linguistic Diversity Policy;
- Derry City & Strabane DC has introduced separate policies on Irish and Ulster-Scots;
- Newry, Mourne & Down DC has adopted a Bilingual Language Policy to facilitate and encourage the promotion and use of both the Irish language and English language in the Council area;
- Mid Ulster DC adopted an Irish Language Policy in December 2015 and has conducted an EQIA on a proposed Ulster-Scots policy.

## **2.5 Socio-economic context**

The 2011 Census includes information on the main languages spoken by residents of Belfast and knowledge of Irish and Ulster-Scots, and the School Census 2014/15 provides information on the number of schools in the Belfast City Council area providing teaching through the medium of Irish. The figures (which relate to the Council's extended boundary) show that:

- 13.45% of the Belfast population (aged 3+) have some ability in Irish, compared with 10.65% of the population of Northern Ireland as a whole;
- over 16,000 people in Belfast speak, read, write and understand Irish;
- just under 3,000 pupils receive education through the medium of Irish in the Council area;
- 5.23% of the Belfast population (aged 3+) have some ability in Ulster-Scots, compared with 8.08% of the population of Northern Ireland as a whole;
- just over 2000 people in Belfast speak, read, write and understand Ulster-Scots;
- 5.47% of people in Belfast are deaf or have partial hearing loss – 18,261
- 4.94% of Belfast households contain at least one person who does not have English as a main language and in 2.71% of Belfast households, no-one has English as a main language;

- the most commonly spoken languages in Belfast (excluding English and Irish) are Polish, Chinese, Tagalog/Filipino and Slovak.<sup>5</sup>

One of the most interesting recommendations from the 2017 consultation was a need to emphasise the important role that bi-lingualism has - for employability, for trade and the economy, and for our cultural life.

Central to Belfast's ambitions, as outlined in the Belfast Agenda, will be the need to truly understand the opportunities a bi-lingual and multi-lingual population offers. A growing body of literature, based on a variety of economic, geopolitical, cultural and educational indicators, has identified the fundamental role that linguistic diversity can play, these include: export trade, diplomatic and security priorities and visitor destinations.

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<sup>5</sup> NISRA have indicated that all Chinese languages are grouped together for the purposes of the 2011 Census

### **3. MAKING IT HAPPEN**

#### **3.1 Increasing access and promoting inclusion**

Bringing this Language Strategy to life over the next five years will require actions that are realistic and achievable. In response to feedback from consultees, the strategy will include five strands, representing different language forms other than the principal language of the Council, English:

- **Irish Language;**
- **Ulster-Scots Language;**
- **Sign Languages;**
- **New Communities' Languages;**
- **Languages and communications for disabled people**

Work streams in each of these areas will be developed and taken forward by two officers - one officer will be assigned responsibility for the promotion, protection and enhancement of Irish, while the second officer will have responsibility for increasing access and inclusion of the other languages.

#### **3.2 Principal Language**

The principal language of the Council is English and our approach to the use of other languages in Council business will continue to be based on a proportionate response to the needs and requests of users of those languages. The Council will take all reasonable steps to address these needs and to meet requests within available resources and mindful of statutory rights and obligations.

The Council considers that the protection and encouragement of languages other than written or spoken English should not be to the detriment of the English language but should complement its use wherever possible, at the same time recognising the positive personal benefits attaching to bilingualism and multilingualism.

#### **3.3 Other Languages**

The term 'other languages' encompasses all other languages and communications spoken, written or used by people who live, work, or visit Belfast, whether this is their main language or their language of choice.

The Council recognises the number of people in Belfast whose first language is not English or who choose to express themselves in different languages. For example, use of Irish is prevalent in the west of the city where there is an established Gaeltacht area.

The Council is also mindful of the status of other language communities in the city including the Ulster-Scots language, along with its heritage and culture.

In addition a significant proportion of the population of Belfast now comprises new communities within which English may not be the first language.

The Council is mindful that the right to use a regional or minority language in private and public life is an inalienable right conforming to the principles embodied within international and domestic law.

We are committed to implementing the requirements of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in the provision of public services to users of the Irish language, and in helping to develop and strengthen the Ulster-Scots language, heritage and culture.

We are also committed to respecting the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of each person within Belfast belonging to a national minority in line with the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, and to increasing awareness and

tolerance of members of new communities at a time when the diversity of the city's residents and visitors is increasing.

We are also conscious that others may use different language forms to communicate with the council, either through need or choice, perhaps because of issues relating to disability. This could include the use of sign languages (either British or Irish Sign Language), or the availability of English in alternative formats (e.g. Braille). The Council recognises the needs of those who use British Sign Language (BSL) and Irish Sign Language (ISL) as their principal means of communication.

The Council also recognises the particular needs of those with literacy barriers and those for whom the written word may not always be fully accessible.

The personal and social benefits attaching to bilingualism and multilingualism are also duly acknowledged within the strategy.

### **3.4 Corporate approach to promoting linguistic diversity**

The development of this five year Language Strategy 2018-23 illustrates the Council's commitment to development and delivery of a strategic approach to promoting linguistic diversity.

Underpinning this corporate approach are the following:

- Two officers will be appointed - one officer will be assigned responsibility for the promotion, protection and enhancement of Irish, while the second officer will have responsibility for increasing access and inclusion of the other languages.
- Increasing awareness of linguistic diversity in screening for equality and good relations impacts
- Development of an internal network to mainstream linguistic diversity
- Better promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Actively increasing the participation by disabled people in public life
- The Council will continue to encourage and provide practical support for a range of language traditions, cultural activities and communities, for example, by providing use of the City Hall and other venues, or by providing grant-aid for significant events and projects where they meet the funding criteria.
- The Council will proactively seek opportunities to work with different language communities to promote linguistic traditions through different mechanisms including events, exhibitions and publications.
- The Council will respect the right of the public, Elected Members and staff to use their name in the language of their choice and to express their linguistic identity in accordance with the traditions of that language.
- The Council will give consideration to linguistic diversity when planning events and will promote the inclusion of and participation from members of different linguistic communities in these events.
- The Council will encourage tourism and cultural initiatives that reflect the linguistic diversity of the city.

The corporate approach will be further refined through the development and delivery of different strands of works attached to the different communities.

### **3.5 The Five Work Strands of the Language Strategy**

The Strategy includes five distinct language work strands:

- Irish Language;
- Ulster-Scots Language;
- Sign Languages;
- New Communities' Languages;
- Languages and communications for disabled people

Further detail on the original three policy areas proposed in the draft Linguistic Diversity Policy presented for public consultation from 23 May 2017 until 18 July 2017 i.e. Irish Language, Ulster-Scots Language and Other Languages, including sign language are included in Appendix 2. Following public consultation these specific areas were redefined into specific community needs, as outlined above.

The Council will have due regard to regional strategies (on Irish, Ulster-Scots and Sign Language) in developing these work strands and will also take account of best practice guidance including that published by Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster-Scots Agency.

The development of different policies under the strategy will accommodate the different aspirations and priorities of each language community, balanced through needs and constraints. Robust and meaningful stakeholder engagement is key to the work strands.

Each work stream will include consideration of the Council's approach to key Council services, including the following:

- Documents
- Communications
- Translation and interpretation
- Signage and Branding
- Council meetings
- Development of Website/social media
- Media
- Support for the community
- Support for schools
- Council staff

A set of draft aims will be further explored to better understand the needs and aspirations within each language community; these are listed below by specific community:

#### **3.5.1 Meeting the needs of the Irish language community**

The aims may include:

- to increase the visibility and use of the Irish language in Belfast as appropriate through Council services, facilities and events;
- to publicise the fact that the Council will facilitate the use of the Irish language in the provision of its services as appropriate;
- to encourage tourism and cultural initiatives through Irish;
- to normalise the visibility and use of Irish generally.

### **3.5.2 Meeting the needs of the Ulster-Scots language community**

The aims may include:

- to increase the visibility and use of the Ulster-Scots language and cultural context in Belfast as appropriate;
- to publicise the fact that the Council will facilitate the use of the Ulster Scots language and cultural expressions as appropriate;
- to encourage the promotion of Ulster-Scots cultural and heritage, educational and tourism initiatives.

### **3.5.3 Meeting the needs of the Sign language community**

The work streams will be developed in line with best practice advice from appropriate sources and will take into account the particular needs of the signing community (both Irish and British Sign Language).

The aims may include:

- to ensure that those who sign are not disadvantaged in accessing key Council services;
- to ensure good practice is observed in producing information for people who sign;
- to support community cohesion by removing barriers to positive relationships that may arise from differences in communication styles.

### **3.5.4 Meeting the needs of new communities' languages**

The work streams will be developed in line with best practice advice from appropriate sources and will take into account the increasing ethnic diversity of the city, as well as the specific communication needs within these new communities. The aims may include:

- to ensure that residents and customers who have difficulty communicating in English can access key Council services;
- to ensure good practice is observed in producing information for people whose first language may not be English;
- to support community cohesion and good relations by seeking to remove the barriers to the development of positive relationships that arise from an inability to communicate in a common language;
- to publicise the fact that the Council will facilitate the use of other languages as appropriate to encourage the promotion of cultural and heritage tourism initiatives through new communities' other languages and traditions.

### **3.5.5 Meeting the language and communications needs for disabled people**

The work stream will be developed in line with best practice advice from appropriate sources and will take into account the specific needs of those with a disability. The aims may include:

- to ensure that those with a disability can access key Council services;
- to ensure good practice is observed in producing information for people with sensory disabilities and make appropriate provision for those with learning disabilities;
- to remove the barriers to the development of positive relationships that may arise from communication barriers;



## BELFAST CITY COUNCIL LANGUAGE POLICY

September 2006

### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

All employees should understand the Council's obligations in relation to language and respond positively to all our customers or clients, who are entitled to be treated with courtesy and respect.

This is in line with the Council's stated commitments to:

- equality in the delivery of our services, as set out in our Equality Scheme
- compliance with the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages
- customer focus, one of the key elements within our improvement agenda
- improving communication and access to Council services and
- our corporate objective of promoting good relations, which includes celebrating cultural diversity.

The principal language of the Council is English and its approach to the use of other languages in Council business is based on need and demand, balanced with consideration of the resources available to deliver services.

### SIGN LANGUAGE

In line with official government policy, the Council recognises that sign language is a language in its own right. The Reception staff in the City Hall and Cecil Ward Building have been trained in sign language and other staff should make appropriate arrangements to provide sign language for customers if requested.

### SOURCES OF GUIDANCE

There are two primary sources of guidance on language.

The first of these is our **Equality Scheme**, approved by the Equality Commission in April 2001, which commits the Council to making information available on request in minority languages to meet the needs of those "who are not fluent in English". This is increasingly important as our city becomes more diverse.

The second relevant document is a circular from the Local Government Division, issued as guidance to all District Councils in NI in 2002, which relates to the **European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages**.

The European Charter is an international agreement designed to protect and promote regional and minority languages; it places emphasis on the cultural dimension of the language in all aspects of the life of its speakers and in Northern Ireland relates to Irish and Ulster-Scots.

To ensure compliance with Part III of the European Charter, the Council agreed to adopt certain recommendations in relation to the use of Irish at its meeting in January 2003. This includes accepting requests/applications in Irish (oral and written) and providing translation or interpretation when required.

The Council is also committed to the active promotion of Ulster-Scots as an expression of cultural heritage and identity, as Ulster-Scots is recognised under Part II of the European Charter at this time.

The Council's procedures are set out below.

## **TRANSLATIONS – WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE**

The Council uses the translation service within the Linguistic Operations Branch of the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL), which co-ordinates translation services for all government departments for all other languages. All Council Departments have a designated person within Business Support to take responsibility for translations and the current system is operating well.

When someone chooses to write to the Council in Irish, the Council will reply in Irish.

## **INTERPRETATION**

The Council will also provide interpreters for small meetings or in individual interview situations if required, provided advance notice is given. Please contact the Good Relations Unit for details.

## **TELEPHONE CALLS**

A Language Line telephone interpreting service has been established to assist with telephone enquiries from those who are not fluent in English. Currently this service is available only within the Office of the Registrar of Births, Deaths, Marriages and Civil Partnerships; please contact the Good Relations Unit for details if required.

An Irish Voicemail service is available as an extension from the main switchboard; guidance has been issued to staff on its use.

## **NAMES and ADDRESSES**

The Council will respect the wishes of anyone who wants to use the Irish form of their name or address and use those in correspondence or official business.

## **STREET NAMING**

The Council provides dual language street names, if two-thirds of the residents of the street request this.

## **PERSONAL STATIONERY for ELECTED MEMBERS of COUNCIL**

The Council has provided dual language personal headed notepaper, business cards and compliment slips in English/Irish and English/Ulster-Scots for elected Members of Council, as requested, for the past ten years.

## **SUPPORT for HERITAGE and TRADITIONS**

The Council will continue to support a range of Irish and Ulster-Scots traditions, cultural activities and language in practical ways, for example, by providing use of the City Hall, or by providing grant-aid for significant events and projects as appropriate.

The Ulster-Scots bodies agree that this type of support for their work is more beneficial and cost-effective than simply translating written documents into Ulster-Scots.

## **IRISH MEDIUM SCHOOLS**

The Council is aware that the Irish medium schools represent a fast growing sector and all correspondence to Irish medium schools will be in Irish. We will provide information in Irish on request for pupils who visit Council properties for educational/study purposes e.g. the Zoo, the City Hall etc. Information on major Council initiatives or policies may also be provided in Irish where schools are considered key target audiences.

## **SIGNAGE in COUNCIL PROPERTIES**

Fixed signage at and in Council properties is either pictorial, tactile or in English. A 'Welcome' sign may be provided, at a reception area or other appropriate place, in a number of languages, including Irish, Ulster-Scots and other languages e.g. Filipino/Polish to reflect Belfast's growing diversity and multi-cultural composition.

## **RECRUITMENT**

The Council is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications from all sections of the community. We currently offer a Careline telephone number (9027 0396) giving assistance to job applicants whose first language is not English.

## **WELCOME PACK**

A Welcome Pack for newcomers and visitors to Belfast is being prepared. This will provide information on the Council's services in a user-friendly way and will be translated into other languages as requested.

## **COUNCIL WEBSITE**

The Council website is designed to be as accessible as possible, with current on-line information in plain English (we aim to have the Plain English Internet Crystal Mark by April 2007). The Council will keep this under review and may provide information in other languages as requested.

## **ADVERTISEMENTS**

Council advertisements will be in English.

## **LANGUAGE TRAINING**

Departments may choose to organise basic conversational level language classes for appropriate staff, where management decides it will be useful to improve service delivery and increase local customer response.

## **OTHER FORMATS**

Major Council policies, strategies and publications (e.g. City Matters) may be made available in other formats on request, e.g. Braille, audio or large print.

## **CONSULTATION**

This policy was circulated to the relevant Irish and Ulster-Scots language bodies in Belfast i.e. the official North-South Language Body, made up of Foras na Gaeilge, which promotes the Irish language and the Ulster-Scots Agency (tha Boord o Ulster-Scotch), which promotes the Ulster-Scots language and culture; also Pobal and the Ulster-Scots Heritage Council.

We have also consulted with the Council's Equality Consultative Forum and appropriate representatives of minority ethnic groups in the Belfast area.

**Any comments received have been incorporated into this policy.**

## **MONITORING and REVIEW**

The policy will be monitored and reviewed in due course, in line with Council procedure.

## **GUIDANCE and ENQUIRIES**

Comprehensive guidance on language issues and translation arrangements was circulated to all Departmental Business Support Managers in May 2005. This will be re-circulated along with this policy when adopted and training will be provided for appropriate Council staff.

If you have any queries regarding this policy or our arrangements with DCAL, please contact the Good Relations Unit, extension 6025.

**Adopted by Policy & Resources Committee 22 September 2006**

### Extracts from draft Linguistic Diversity Policy

(This appendix is extracted from the draft Linguistic Diversity Policy presented for public consultation from 23 May 2017 until 18 July 2017 ie Irish Language, Ulster-Scots Language and Other Languages, including sign language. Following public consultation these specific areas were redefined into five areas of specific language community needs.)

#### Irish Language Policy

1. The Irish Language Policy will be developed in line with the proposals in the Executive's Strategy and will take account of best practice guidelines published by Foras na Gaeilge.
2. The aims of the Irish Language Policy may include:
  - to increase the visibility and use of the Irish language in Belfast as appropriate through Council services, facilities and events;
  - to publicise the fact that the Council will facilitate the use of the Irish language in the provision of its services as appropriate
  - to encourage tourism and cultural initiatives through Irish.
3. The development of the policy will enable consideration of the Council's approach to the following services:

**Documents** –documents are provided in either bilingual (English and Irish) format on request or as a matter of course when likely to be used primarily by the Irish speaking community.

**Communication** – correspondence and telephone calls received in Irish are responded to in Irish.

**Translation and interpretation** – requests from the Irish speaking public to use Irish in face-to-face discussions are welcome if notice is given so that simultaneous interpretation services can be made available.

**Signage and Branding** – the use of Irish whenever the Council's title and emblem appear on stationery, publications, signs, buildings and other contexts in which it will be seen primarily by users of Irish.

**Council meetings** – recognise the practice of speaking Irish in the Council Chamber. Individual Members may speak in Irish and subsequently provide an English translation (within the allocated time), acknowledging the principal language of the Council is English. We will facilitate the use of Irish at Council and Committee meetings by public delegations, including the provision of interpreting services.

**Development of Website/social media** – in the first instance, the development of an Irish language microsite and material on Facebook as appropriate.

**Irish language media** – the provision of an Irish language or bilingual version of press statements to the Irish language media as appropriate.

**Irish in the community** – support for the use of the Irish language within communities in Belfast within appropriate resources, including the provision of information. The Council will support Irish cultural, educational heritage and tourism activities by facilitating events within Council buildings and venues where practicable and in line with Council policy.

Belfast City Council will promote opportunities for the promotion of Irish by encouraging grant-aid applications for Irish initiatives to current and future schemes as appropriate.

**Support for Irish medium schools** – the provision of Irish versions of information generally provided to schools in relation to all Council services and events.

**Council staff** – pending the outcome of the review by Foras na Gaeilge, appointment of an Irish Language Officer to promote Irish within the Council and in the Council area, with responsibility for the development of an action plan to ensure the promotion of Irish language can be effectively provided by Council, including awareness raising and language training.

### **Ulster-Scots Language Policy**

1. The Ulster-Scots Language Policy will be developed in line with the proposals in the Executive's Strategy and will take account of advice from the Ulster-Scots Agency.
2. The aims of the Ulster-Scots Language Policy may include:
  - to increase the visibility and use of the Ulster-Scots language in Belfast as appropriate.
  - to publicise the fact that the Council will facilitate the use of the Ulster Scots language as appropriate
  - to encourage the promotion of Ulster-Scots cultural and heritage, educational and tourism initiatives;
3. The development of the policy will enable consideration of the Council's approach to the following services:

**Documents** – the provision of documents which are either bilingual (English and Ulster-Scots) or as a matter of course when likely to be used by the Ulster Scots speaking community.

**Communication** – Council will accept written correspondence in Ulster-Scots and where possible, will reply in Ulster-Scots.

**Translation and interpretation** – requests from the Ulster-Scots speaking public to use Ulster-Scots in face-to-face discussions are welcome if notice is given so that simultaneous interpretation services can be made available.

**Signage and Branding** – the use of Ulster-Scots whenever the Council's title and emblem appear on stationery, publications, signs, buildings and other contexts in which it will be seen primarily by users of Ulster-Scots.

**Council meetings** – recognise the practice of speaking Ulster-Scots in the Council Chamber. Individual Members may speak in Ulster-Scots and subsequently provide an English translation (within their allocated time), acknowledging the principal language of the Council is English. We will facilitate the use of Ulster-Scots at Council and Committee meetings by public delegations, including the provision of interpreting services.

**Development of Website/social media** – the development of an Ulster-Scots language microsite and material on Facebook as appropriate.

**Ulster-Scots language media** – the provision of an Ulster Scots language or bilingual version of press statements to the Ulster Scots language media as appropriate.

**Ulster Scots in the community** - The Council will support Ulster-Scots cultural, educational heritage and tourism activities by facilitating events within Council buildings and venues where practicable and in line with Council policy.

Belfast City Council will promote opportunities for the promotion of Ulster-Scots by encouraging grant-aid applications for Ulster-Scots initiatives to current and future schemes as appropriate.

**Council staff** – development of an action plan to ensure that Ulster-Scots language services can be effectively provided by the Council including awareness raising and language training.

### **Other Languages Policy (including sign language)**

1. The Other Languages Policy will be developed in line with best practice advice from appropriate sources and will take into account the increasing ethnic diversity of the city, as well as the communication needs of some disabled people. However, it will also emphasise the importance of using plain English at all times in the delivery of goods, services and facilities.
2. The aims of the Other Languages Policy may include:
  - to ensure that residents and customers who have difficulty communicating in English are not disadvantaged in accessing key Council services;
  - to ensure good practice is observed in producing information for people with sensory disabilities and make appropriate provision for those with learning disabilities;
  - to support community cohesion and good relations by seeking to remove the barriers to the development of positive relationships that arise from inability to communicate in a common language;
  - to publicise the fact that the Council will facilitate the use of minority languages as appropriate to encourage the promotion of cultural and heritage tourism initiatives through minority languages and traditions.
3. The development of the policy will enable consideration of the Council's approach to the following services:

**Documents** – continue to publicise the commitment in the Council's Equality Scheme to provide information in alternative formats on request, where reasonably practicable, by ensuring that appropriate information to this effect is included in all documents. All service providers to consider the need for translation of documents in relation to the specific nature of their service.

**Translation and interpretation** – requests from speakers of minority languages to use minority languages in face-to-face discussions are welcome if notice is given so that simultaneous interpretation services can be made available.

**Council meetings** – facilitation of the use of minority languages by public delegations at Council and Committee meetings, including the provision of interpreting services.

**Website** – ensuring that the Council's website is written in plain English, that the Google Translate tool is readily available and that the website contains information on the Council's minority language services, events and initiatives.

**Welcome guides** – provision of up-to-date information on Council services for newcomers/visitors in a range of languages.

**Events** – promotion of inclusion and participation from members of different linguistic communities in all Council events and the provision of interpretation where appropriate.

**Council staff** – development of an action plan to ensure that minority language services can be effectively provided by the Council where appropriate, including the development of linguistic diversity guidelines, awareness and language training and the provision of language identification cards and hearing loop induction at customer service reception desks.

**Minority Languages Forum** – establish a forum of organisations representing people from ethnic minority backgrounds and people with disabilities.



**Highlights from the Language Strategy Action Plans 2018-present**

**1. Irish Language:**

- **March 2019: Seachtain na Gaeilge / Irish Language Week** event for 160 children from six schools in the City Hall
- **August 2019:** Supported **Féile an Phobail's** Irish intensive language event for families in Falls Park
- **March 2020: Seachtain na Gaeilge/Irish Language Week** event for 220 children from 8 schools in Belfast City Hall. Council assisted with transport for schools who could not afford this
- **February 2021:** Article on Interlink by staff member on speaking Irish for **Mother Language Day**
- **March 2021:** showcased four short videos on the Council's YouTube channel from people who work in the Irish language sector talking about their careers, in Irish, and the opportunities for young people who might be considering a career using the Irish language for **Seachtain na Gaeilge / Irish Language Week**
- **March 2021:** Hosted short testimonials from staff members on Interlink speaking about the importance of learning Irish for **Seachtain na Gaeilge / Irish Language Week**
- Council's representative on external language fora such as the **West Belfast Irish Language Network / Lónra Gaeilge Iarthar Bhéal Feirste; Belfast Irish Language Forum** and **Glór na nGael's Irish Language Business Awards** Steering Group

**2. Ulster-Scots Language:**

- **November 2019:** Funded a ***Pocket Guide to Ulster-Scots Place Names in Belfast*** published by the Ulster-Scots Agency. The Pocket Guide was launched during **Ulster-Scots Leid Week**
- **January 2020:** Organised a range of events including a schools event and a community afternoon tea event during **Burns' Week** in the City Hall in partnership with the Ulster-Scots Agency and the Ulster-Scots Community Network
- **January 2021:** article on Interlink promoting **Burns' Week**

**3. Sign Languages:**

- **March 2019:** Signed up to a **British Deaf Association British Sign Language & Irish Sign Language Charter**
- **May 2019:** Launch of the **Sign Video Pilot** scheme. The service can be accessed on the Council's website, Belfast Zoo and the Olympia Leisure Centre
- **2019:** Translated **Sign Language videos** introduced at Tropical Ravine and the Visitors' Exhibition at City Hall. The videos are accessed on the Council's YouTube account and are shown in three different languages; British Sign Language, Irish Sign Language and International Sign Language
- **March 2021:** article on Interlink for **Sign Language Week**
- Hold quarterly meeting of **Sign Language Users' Forum**

#### 4. New Communities' Languages:

- **November 2019:** Support and launch of '**Valuing Languages**' film showcasing 15 languages used in Belfast
- **February 2020:** Organised event for **International Mother Tongue Day** with Arabic, Irish and African language speakers
- **February 2021:** Issued press release for **International Mother Tongue Day**; published an article on Interlink by staff member who speaks Tamil and Malay for **International Mother Tongue Day**

#### 5. Languages and communications for disabled people:

- **December 2019:** Organised event for **International Day of Persons with Disabilities** in the City Hall in partnership with Employers' for Disability NI
- **April 2019:** Introduced new **portable hearing loop systems** at several Council venues including City Hall, Belfast Castle, Malone House and Roselawn Cemetery.
- **December 2020:** article on Interlink for **International Day for People with Disabilities**
- **2020:** development of **new dedicated web** page on Council website to **support people with disabilities**
- Hold quarterly meeting of **Disability Advisory Panel**

#### 6. Staff training

- Compiled internal **audit** of related policies to inform policy development and staff capacity building
- **June 2019:** Held event for Council staff and representatives from other public bodies to discuss potential areas for collaboration in relation to the **Language Strategy**
- **October 2019:** Delivered pilot '**Introduction to British Sign Language**' course to Council front-line staff
- **December 2019:** Delivered two-hour pilot **General Awareness** staff training on linguistic diversity



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Minutes of the Meeting of the Shared City Partnership</b>
<b>Date:</b>	23rd April 2021
<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/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to report to the Committee the key issues discussed at the Shared City Partnership meeting held on 12th April.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is requested to approve the minutes and the recommendations from the Shared City Partnership Meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• agreement of the proposed recruitment process for a Community and Voluntary Representative for East Belfast and that the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Good Relations Manager would conduct the shortlisting exercise and subsequent interviews;</li> <li>• the nominee would be endorsed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, prior to appointment; and</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Noting the following indicative timetable and that interviews might have to be conducted virtually, subject to public health regulations at the time:  Opening of Recruitment – 5th May Deadline for Applications – 26th May Shortlisting – 27th May Interviews – Thursday 3rd June 2021 – to enable the nomination to be brought to the June meeting of the Shared City Partnership.</li> <li>That the May meeting of the Partnership will be a facilitated discussion on how to address sectarianism in the City and that other agenda items would be kept to a minimum, with an external facilitator being invited to facilitate.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b><u>Key Issues</u></b></p> <p>The Shared City Partnership is a Working Group of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee which consists of Elected members and representatives from various sectors across the city. The minutes from the Partnership are brought before the Committee for approval on a monthly basis.</p>
3.2	<p>The key issues on the agenda at the March meeting were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Membership of Partnership - Recruitment for Community and Voluntary Representative for East Belfast</li> <li>PEACE IV <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Update on PEACE IV Secretariat</li> <li>➤ Update on PEACE IV CYP Theme</li> <li>➤ Update on PEACE IV SSS Theme</li> <li>➤ Update on PEACE IV BPR Theme</li> </ul> </li> <li>Restricted Item - Update on Bonfire Approach 2021</li> </ul> <p>More details regarding the above issues and recommendations are included in the attached minutes.</p>
3.3	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>All financial implications are covered through existing budgets</p>
3.4	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>The recommendations of the Partnership promote the work of the Council in promoting good relations and will enhance equality and good relations impacts.</p>

4.0	<b>Document Attached</b> Minutes of the Shared City Partnership meeting of 12 <sup>th</sup> April 2021.
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## **SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP**

**MONDAY 12th APRIL, 2021**

### **MEETING OF SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

Members present: Councillor Kyle (Chairperson);  
Alderman Rodgers; and  
Councillors Lyons, Magennis and O'Hara.

External Members: Ms. B. Arthurs, Community and Voluntary Sector;  
Mr. R. Cushnie, Good Relations, TEO;  
Miss. G. Duggan, Belfast City Centre Management;  
Mr. P. Mackel, Belfast and District Trades Union Council;  
Mr. I. McLaughlin, Community and Voluntary Sector;  
Father. E. O'Neill, Faith Sector;  
Superintendent G. Pollock, PSNI; and  
Ms. A. M. White, British Red Cross.

In attendance: Ms. N. Lane, Good Relations Manager;  
Ms. D. McKinney, Programme Manager;  
Mrs. K. McCrum, Democratic Services Officer; and  
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

#### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported on behalf of Councillor M. Kelly, Mr. J. Donnelly and Ms. J. Irwin.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 8th March, 2021 were taken as read and signed as correct.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

Mrs. B. Arthurs declared an interest in item 3 (d), namely, Peace IV Updates – update on BPR Theme in that she is an employee of the Forward South Partnership, which acts as the delivery agent for two of the Peace IV projects, and she left the meeting whilst the agenda item was being considered.

#### **Membership of Partnership - Recruitment for Community and Voluntary Representative for East Belfast**

The Chairperson advised the Members that Mr. J. Currie, the representative for the Community and Voluntary Sector in the East of the City, had resigned his position from the Shared City Partnership as he had taken up new employment and he asked that the Partnership's thanks be conveyed to him for the valuable contribution that he had made.

The Members were reminded that as part of the review of the Shared City Partnership in 2018, Volunteer Now had assisted with the recruitment exercise of the four representatives

appointed from the community and voluntary sector (one from the North, South, East and West areas of the City). The call for applications had been publicly advertised and widely circulated through the Council and other known networks. The Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and the Good Relations Manager had all been involved in the shortlisting and interview process with the support of Volunteer Now. Subsequently, the names of the appointed nominees had been endorsed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

The Members then considered the proposed recruitment process to fill the current vacant position and agreed that it would be advertised by the Council through various community networks within the East of the City, including but not limited to the EBCDA bulletin, Race Relations Network, Inner East Forum and the Short Strand Community Association. It was further agreed that the Council would also ask relevant statutory agencies to advertise the nomination process.

The Good Relations Manager advised that officers within the East Area Team would assist in publicising the recruitment exercise widely and confirmed that initial discussions had taken place with the Neighbourhood integration Manager for East.

The Partnership recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that:

- it agrees the proposed recruitment process and that the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Good Relations Manager would conduct the shortlisting exercise and subsequent interviews;
- the nominee would be endorsed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, prior to appointment; and
- it notes the following indicative timetable and that interviews might have to be conducted virtually, subject to public health regulations at the time:

Opening of Recruitment – 5th May

Deadline for Applications – 26th May

Shortlisting – 27th May

Interviews – Thursday 3rd June 2021 – to enable the nomination to be brought to the June meeting of the Shared City Partnership.

## **Peace IV Updates**

### **Update on Secretariat**

The PEACE IV Programme Manager provided the Members with an update in respect of the Secretariat activity associated with the implementation of the Peace IV Local Action Plan.

The Partnership was advised that the final approvals for modifications to activity had now been approved by the SEUPB and that no further significant modifications had, at present, been requested by any of the delivery partners. Discussions with SEUPB on the revised Letter of Offer for the SSS theme were continuing and formal extensions requests for the CYP and BPR themes would be progressed with the SEUPB in due course, which would enable extensions to activity as previously requested by the delivery partners.

The officer reiterated that the delivery of project activity continued to be hampered as compliance with the Health Protection restrictions was a priority, activity, where possible, had moved to an online platform. The PEACE IV Managers Forum had met with a representative from the SEUPB on 16th March to highlight concerns regarding delivery in the current context. At this meeting, the SEUPB advised that there had been no discussions with the EU



Commission regarding mitigations for the PEACE IV Programme and reported that the performance across the Local Authority Local Action Plans was generally good. The high targets associated with the BCC Action Plan was acknowledged. The SEUPB also confirmed that flexibilities in relation to delivery timescales and tolerances in contact hours could be considered to enable delivery and it was confirmed that no additional funding or reduction in participant targets could be considered.

The Partnership was advised that SOLACE representatives were due to meet with the SEUPB to discuss risks to Local Authorities in early April. In relation to specific Belfast City Council risks, the Chief Executive, City Solicitor and Director of Neighbourhood Services had met the SEUPB Chief Executive on Tuesday, 30th March. This had been a positive meeting, with the SEUPB having advised that it had no issues with the Council's extension request, however, a business case to outline the expected level of programme achievement was to be submitted, and the Programme Manager advised that officers were currently preparing this.

The Partnership then considered the plan for the recovery of PEACE IV projects and activity which was currently being progressed.

The Programme Manager advised that the PEACE IV project activity had been aligned with the NI Executive's Moving Forward Pathway to aid the planning of recovery of PEACE IV project to try and identify the pathway and earliest possible step that activity could take place and also to take into account mitigations. She highlighted that, as no timeframe has been provided, it was difficult to determine how activity could be restarted and the recovery of activity was likely to be gradual with continuing impacts from the direction that social distancing would remain a requirement for the longer term. The Partnership also noted that several delivery partners (currently 4 partners) had indicated they would not be willing to extend contractual arrangements, which would inevitably result in a shortfall in targets.

In terms of the current workplan, the officer reported that the first virtual cultural café celebrating the Indian community with a focus on the Holi Festival had taken place on Monday, 29th March. A virtual conference discussing the role of Sport in Peace Building was scheduled to take place via a Zoom Webinar on Wednesday, 14th April from 7.00 pm – 9.00 pm. Denise Watson (U105 presenter) would facilitate discussions with guest speakers including Rory Best (former Ulster and Ireland Rugby Captain) and Richard Maguire from East Belfast GAA on the importance of the role of sport in peace building. In addition, community partners from the PEACE IV On the Right Track project would share experiences of building positive relations at a grassroots level.

Following a query from a Member, the Programme Manager advised that the aforementioned conference discussing the role of Sport in Peace had been organised by ND Events with input from officers. It was confirmed that a wide range of participants and speakers from various grassroots sporting backgrounds, including participants from the PEACE IV On the Right Track project would be contributing to the event.

The Partnership were informed that all claimed expenditure up to and including October 2020, totaling £3,652,907 had been fully reimbursed to Council. The Period 25 (November 2020 - January 2021) claim, totaling £561,478, was currently being verified by the SEUPB.

The Partnership recommended that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee note the contents of the report.

## **Update on Children and Young People's (CYP) Theme**

The Working Group considered the undernoted 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 Children and Young People's (CYP) 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**

#### **Project Updates**

#### **3.1 CYP 1 – Tech Connects**

##### **GIGA Training (Afterschool's & Digital Arts Academies (Tech Camps) (6-16 Yr. Olds)**

Participant numbers of 113 registered for face-to-face sessions to be delivered during the Easter holidays has reduced to 20 due to a virtual delivery approach being adopted to ensure compliance with ongoing restrictions. Additional 1-1 guidance for the virtual sessions is required due to the age range (6-11 year olds) and course content. Tech camps comprising of DJ Skills & Productions for 20 participants within the 12-16 year old target group will also be delivered virtually on 6-9th April 2021.

It is anticipated that face-to-face delivery will resume when restrictions allow with equipment available for the young people to access.

##### **Belfast Metropolitan College (Digital Insights Programme) (17-24 yr. olds)**

Delivering of the Tech Connects Insights element for 17-24 year olds is continuing with virtual sessions taking place and the next intake is currently progressing.

Members are requested to note that a flexible approach to delivery, comprising of taster sessions, half/full days as necessary, has been agreed by the Programme Board. There is no impact to contact time hours/ budget in implementing this change of delivery approach.

Clarity from SEUPB regarding the eligibility of young people studying in Belfast is progressing, in order to increase participation of this hard to reach group.

### **3.2 CYP 2 - Playing our Part in the City**

Our delivery partner, Active Communities Network, has evidenced 280 participants having completed the programme, with an additional 129 young people currently recruited & participating within the year 3 group. In addition, 62 parents have completed the programme, with 18 parents currently recruited to participate in the group for year 3. Achievement towards targets is currently 409 young people from a target of 500 and 80 parents from a target of 85. Members should note that in line with delegated authority approvals an extension to complete Year 3 targets by end of July 2021 was agreed by the Programme board. This extended timeframe for Year 3 should enable Active Communities Network to recapture some of the time lost due to lockdown restrictions and deliver face to face via outdoor play sessions. The delivery partner has advised they will also be utilising the weekends in order to achieve the required contact hours required for both parents & young people.

### **3.3 CYP3 – On the Right Track – Sports and Personal Change elements**

Due to ongoing restrictions activity has been limited. Options to recommence activity following the recent government announcement permitting outdoor training for club members for up to 15 people from 12 April is under consideration. The viability of outdoor delivery ensuring adherence with the regulations is to be discussed further with the current participants and clubs. The use of local sports clubs to deliver the sports sessions and attend the OCN training will help ensure that the learning and upskilling that takes place throughout the project, will remain in the local community after Peace IV.

A recruitment exercise is progressing following the recent resignation of the Project Officer.

#### **Personal Change**

To date Extern has completed delivery to 27 young people each completing a minimum of 265 hours engagement. Delivery of activity with the final cohort of 19 young people is progressing. Initial activity is focusing on one to one mentoring to increase the confidence of the young people, this will progress to group work sessions and the OCN units on family relationships.

This final cohort will ensure that the project target of 42 young people is achieved by 31 December 2021.

### **3.4 CYP 4 – Cooperation Ireland (Young Advocates)**

Discussions to re-mobilise project activity is progressing with Cooperation Ireland and a request to extend the pause in delivery to June 2021 has been agreed by SEUPB, with a condition that

activities should recommence at the earliest possibility, subject to government restrictions.

Feedback from young people interested in the project has highlighted a reluctance to engage via online platforms with youth groups confirming that the 3rd lockdown is proving challenging.

The delivery partner is positive that the outstanding participant target of 32 young people will be recruited by June 2021 with condensed delivery via face to face sessions with all necessary precautions in place. Concern regarding engagement from youth groups representing PUL communities has been highlighted, due to the current political climate and tensions regarding the NI protocol. Some groups have indicated they will not be engaging in good relations activity which may impact the cross community outcomes for the project and this will be closely monitored.

### **3.5 CYP 5 – NIHE Local Area Network Partner Delivery**

NIHE has encountered delays with delivery & recruitment as many of the clubs remained closed due to COVID, the team will assess the delivery options as restrictions relax. A revised implementation plan extending activity to September 2022 has been submitted and is under consideration. The revised timeframe for delivery is dependent on budget availability and restrictions allowing face to face delivery.

The re-tender for the social justice element of the programme is currently live in order to secure a delivery agent. A quotation exercise for the remainder of provision of Good Relations engagement boxes to be delivered to participants is progressing. This will encourage and increase contact hours under this programme for current participants.

### **3.6 Financial and Resource Implications**

To date all PEACE IV costs for the CYP Theme, up to Period 24 totalling £1,044,790 have been fully eligible and reimbursed by SEUPB.

SEUPB is currently verifying the Period 25 claim totalling £104,574.

### **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 Equality Consultative Forum was further consulted on 18 November 2020.”

During discussion the Members discussed the ongoing difficulties in getting young people to engage remotely given the amount of online activity with remote learning. It was also acknowledged that the current political tensions were not helping with engagement.

The Partnership recommended that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee note the contents of the report.

## **Update on Shared Spaces and Services (SSS) Theme**

The Programme Manager provided an update on the progress made to date in respect of the SSS theme, within the Peace IV Local Action Plan. She advised that, as with the other projects, the ongoing government restrictions continued to impact the implementation of both the Shared Space and Services (SSS) capital and programming elements.

She referred to a number of capital projects which were being undertaken as part of the initiative, including:

- **Springfield Dam** - All sections of the community continued to enjoy the shared space at Springfield Dam. Snagging and operational issues were being progressed as and when they arose. Belfast City Council SNOs and the PSNI jointly patrolled the site along with Youth Outreach support through the Social Value Clause. Due to COVID restrictions Youth Outreach, through the Clonard Monastery Youth Centre, had been suspended during January and February, however, it had resumed in March and would continue until the end of April 2021.

Outreach support by Forthspring Inter Community completed at the end of February 2021. Following recent reports of an increase in antisocial behaviour and related incidents at the Invest NI site, Innovation Factory and Springfield Road interface, the Programme Board agreed that the contractor should explore continuing support for the outreach work. As a result of this, the contractor had agreed to extend the youth outreach provision by Forthspring until the end of April 2021.

Following discussion in regard to the ongoing incidents of antisocial behaviour, the Programme Manager undertook to liaise with the SEUPB to establish if additional resources and new initiatives could be facilitated for the area to try and help alleviate some of the problems.

The Members noted the overall success of the project and condemned the violence and antisocial behaviour that was taking place.

**PEACE IV Network Scheme – Capital Works** - The construction contract for the wider network had now been awarded to McQuillans. The scheduling of works and sectional commencement dates (some planning dependent) were currently being finalised. The Members and the wider public would be notified of the work schedule within the next few weeks. Engagement aligning with the capital works as each of the sections were developed was being prioritized, with the community receiving regular updates.

The official project launch would be planned once restrictions permitted. Letters of Offer had been received from both the DfI and DfC, providing financial contributions towards the capital works of £750,000 and £500,000 respectively. Agreement on the apportionment of costs across the funders was currently being finalised.

In regard to programming, the Partnership was informed that all aspects of programming were progressing where possible.

In regard to the other Programmes:

- **Shared History, Heritage and Identity Content / Narratives for Shared Space**

To date, the delivery partner had participated in approximately 40 individual conversations to try and capture both the history and heritage of the Greenway locations with preliminary draft narratives currently being prepared. There had been difficulty engaging larger groups through virtual means, the delivery partners were hopeful that face-to-face sessions would be possible with the easing of restrictions. Discussion with McAdam Design had taken place in regard to aligning the narratives content with the capital works and these discussions would be ongoing.

- **Shared Space Volunteer Training** - The tender call for the delivery of the remaining volunteer training groups, the Shared Space Ambassadors, Heritage and Nature Guides had closed on 19th March but unfortunately no responses had been received.. Supplier feedback had been sought and a pre-market engagement session to discuss the tender opportunity had taken place on 29th March and the Members were advised that a further tender call would be made shortly. Sustrans had recruited 16 participants for the cycle and walking lead projects and virtual training sessions,, these would focus on course induction, monitoring and evaluation and mediation skills, and were planned for mid-April. It was anticipated that, subject to the relaxation of restrictions, face to face training would commence late April (walk leads) and May (cycle leads). The project had been promoted through a press release in local newspapers and an article in City Matters.
- **Dialogue & Engagement Project** – The officer report that a procurement exercise was underway for a facilitator to progress the dialogue and engagement works, specifically targeting young people, residents, BME groups and people with disabilities. It was anticipated that the contractor would be appointed by mid-April 2021, with engagement activity commencing late April. Tender documentation for the facilitation and development of a governance / management model for the Forth Meadow Community Greenway was currently with the SEUPB for approval to issue. The public tender call, valued at £60K, would open once approval had been granted
- **Springfield Dam activities** - Projects and activities, at the Springfield Dam, were on hold due to the current Health Protection restrictions.
- **Modular Building** - In line with other council facilities, the building remained closed due to the Health Protection restrictions. Compliance checks had commenced on 1st April and options for interim management arrangements for the facility were under consideration.

The Partnership were advised that, to date, all Peace IV costs for the SSS Theme, up to Period 24 totalling £1,392,444 had been fully eligible and reimbursed by the SEUPB, as the funding body, subject to eligibility expenditure. The SEUPB was currently verifying the Period 25 claim totalling £196,726.36.

The Partnership recommended that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee note the contents of the report.

## **Update on Building Positive Relations (BPR) 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 Building Positive Relations (BPR) 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 and related appendices.

### **3.0 Main report**

#### **Key Issues**

Project activity continues to be delivered where possible. However, the ongoing government restrictions continue to pose challenges across all BPR projects. Appendix I and II provides detail on RAG status and project progress as at March 2021.

### **3.1 BPR1 – Cross Community Area Networks**

The project team continues to maintain contact and retain interest across the majority of the identified CCAN areas.

The appointed contractor is planning for delivery of the Good Relations Programme to commence in late April. Prior to the commencement of the Good Relations Programme, online workshops focusing on Shared History and Mental Health & Wellbeing are scheduled to commence mid- April.

The ITT for the Place Visioning programme remains under NIHE internal review and as such the advertising of the public tender opportunity is now mid-late April 2021.

### **3.2 BPR2 – Creative Communities Project**

The Artist/Heritage residency programme continues to be interrupted due to extended COVID restrictions.

The Shankill/Clonard Cluster continues to successfully deliver on line while Divis/Lower Shankill, St Malachy's/Albert Foundry FC and Carlisle Circus Clusters continue to meet on line until they can reconvene group work sessions.

The Woodvale/Ardoyne youth cluster continues to be paused until after the Easter break as participants have limited access to online technology.

The Project team anticipates that 2/8 clusters (East Belfast Women's Network and LGBTQ+) will commence April 2021, with the School Thematic Cluster on hold until post primary school pupils return to school and following a settling in period.

### **3.3 BPR3 – Transform for Change Project**

**Transformative Leadership Programme:** Participants involved with the spring cohorts (Jan – Mar 2021) are completing the Leadership Training element w/c 29 March with an anticipated 90% participant completion rate. The cluster groups are progressing to develop and implement the next phase, which is the local community projects. With the assistance of the PEACE IV team, projects that are currently under development include Community Gardens, Art installation, Intergenerational events and Multi-Cultural festivals. Delivery of the projects will be in line with and / or subject to the Health Protection Regulations.

Participants from three clusters areas from North Belfast, Upper Springfield Road and Colin will commence the programme w/c 12 April. Programme delivery with participants from the South Belfast Cluster (Belvoir, Taughmonagh, Annadale and Ballynafeigh) is scheduled to commence 16 May 2021.

Due to current restrictions, the organisation of local community engagement events and cross border/UK study visits are currently on hold. However, a virtual city-wide 'networking' event is currently being planned for mid- June.

### **3.4 BPR4 – Belfast and the World (BATW)**

Engagement with two live cohorts from Ligoniel and Ballynafeigh is ongoing. In recognition of the challenges engaging the groups, the PEACE IV Programme Board agreed an extension for completion of the cohorts until June 2021.

In addition, the delivery of the Year 3 programme is continuing with participants engaging via online activities.

An open call for participants to engage with the programme via online delivery is to open in late April, with a further call in Autumn '21. This will enable the delivery partner to meet the contracted targets for the project.

Due to ongoing COVID related restrictions, two Civic led events will be held online. The first will be held in the evening of the 6 April with an Eamon Phoenix entitled 'Partitioning of Ireland and the creation of Northern Ireland'. The second anticipated to be held early Autumn, again marking 1921 through a Play focusing on Partition.



The delivery of the EU Study trips is currently on hold due to COVID restrictions. Consideration of alternative trips across NI and ROI is currently being explored.

### **3.5 BPR5 – Supporting Connected Communities - LINCS Projects**

Engagement with all Neighbourhood Participatory Forums continues albeit limited due to ongoing restrictions and limited access to online delivery.

The modification to project delivery has now been approved by SEUPB and includes:

1. Reduction of contact hours from 105 to minimum of 68 hours for the 96 participants currently engaged in the LINCS project;
2. Reduction from 8 Intercultural Family Programmes per annum (200 attendees) to 2 Intercultural Family Programmes per annum;
3. Reduction from 4 Shared learning Seminar's per year (133 attendees) to 1 Shared Learning Seminar per annum;
4. Amendment of the Strategic Advisory Forum element to a Belfast wide Inclusion Forum. Exploratory discussions underway.

The Delivery Partner continues to engage participants and is finalising the delivery of online workshops which will explore Language, Identity and Culture and Racism & Discrimination.

#### **3.5.1 BPR5 – Traveller Project - Supporting Connected Communities**

Mobilisation of the project is continuing with links established with organisation currently providing support to the Traveller community. Procurement for the delivery of the Traveller Support Hub is currently being progressed with an anticipated contractor appointed in June 2021.

It is anticipated that an Intercultural event will be held over the summer period with Culture and Heritage workshops commencing in early Autumn.

#### **3.5.2 BPR5 – Roma Project - Supporting Connected Communities**

This city wide Roma Support Programme is now mobilised. The Roma Support Hub is currently being established and the delivery partner has provided an assurance of a seamless transition from the Roma Helpline, which has now ceased.

Recruitment for the Advice worker and Capacity Officer is progressing with interviews scheduled to commence w/b 29 March 2021.

### **3.6 BPR6 – St. Comgalls**

The Delivery Partner, Copius Consulting is finalising SLAs with their community partners.

All community organisations who had previously given support for the project have been contacted and the recruitment of participants is now underway.

It is anticipated that online workshops delivery will commence in April 2021.

### **3.7 Financial & Resource Implications**

All BPR project delivery partners are regularly reviewing delivery methods and contractual deliverables which will determine the level and impact of COVID 19 crisis.

To date all PEACE IV costs for the BPR Theme, up to Period 24 totalling £1,215,673 have been fully eligible and reimbursed by SEUPB.

SEUPB is currently verifying the Period 25 claim totalling £260,178.

### **3.8 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 Equality Consultative Forum was further consulted on 18 November 2020.”

The Partnership recommended that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee note the contents of the report.

### **Restricted Item - Update on Bonfire Approach 2021**

The Partnership considered a report which provided an update on the Council's governance approach to deal with issues at bonfires along with an overview of key work regarding the 2021 approach.

The Good Relations Manager advised that, at the March meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, it had agreed the following:

- that those groups which had, in 2019, availed of the opportunity to replace a traditional bonfire with a beacon be requested to confirm if they wished to do so again this year and noted that the provision of beacons would be subject to any Covid-19 restrictions in place in July; and
- to align funding which had been delivered previously through the Bonfire and Cultural Expression Programme with the specific micro grant and cultural leadership programme being delivered through the City Imagining Strategy, as outlined within the report.

The Members considered in detail the approach being adopted along with the current governance arrangement which the Council currently had in place. The Members noted the current multi agency approach and stated that they felt there was a need to ensure that the correct message was being communicated to those on the ground. They discussed the issues with social media and the problems associated with incorrect messages being circulated and the speed at which they were shared through various platforms, noting that this often created immediate problems on the ground.

Following discussion, the Partnership noted the update provided and asked the Good Relations Manager to relay to the Corporate Management Team that, whilst taking cognizance of the current multiagency approach and the current governance arrangements, the Partnership Members felt strongly that young people in the bonfire building communities needed to be communicated with from an early stage in order to ensure that they were kept correctly informed and engaged in the process and to try and progress a more coordinated and targeted approach.

### **Recent Civil unrest in the City**

The Chairperson referred to the recent violence and civil unrest in the City and stated that he felt that it was important that the Shared City Partnership had an opportunity to discuss the matter.

Detailed discussion ensued, during which the Members discussed their concerns in regard to sectarianism, how to tackle it and their fears for the future of the many young people that had been involved in the violence and the problems that this could have for their future prospects.

As with the bonfires, the Members discussed the problems that social media had created through the spreading of often incorrect information and rumours and its ability to spread information so quickly which made community workers 'work on the ground' even more challenging.

The Members discussed civic and transformative leadership and considered how as a civic society the Council and indeed the people of Northern Ireland could better respond to sectarianism.

The Members acknowledged that further discussion was required within the context of community planning and also highlighted that this matter needed to be considered within the context of the recovery programme from the Covid 19 Pandemic, which had highlighted many areas with weak community infrastructures.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the May meeting of the Partnership would be a facilitated discussion on how to address sectarianism in the City and that other agenda items would be kept to a minimum, with an external facilitator being invited to facilitate.

Chairperson

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## Minutes of the Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum

15th April, 2021

### Attendance

#### Members:

Councillor Christina Black (Chair)  
Councillor Billy Hutchinson  
Councillor Nuala McAlister  
Councillor Donal Lyons  
Councillor Mal O'Hara  
Alderman Brian Kingston  
Alderman Sonia Copeland  
Councillor Fiona Ferguson  
Councillor Ciaran Beattie

#### Officers:

Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive  
Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources  
John Walsh, City Solicitor  
Alistair Reid, Director of Place and Economy (for Item 3)  
Wendy Langham, Programme Director Belfast Destination Hub (for Item 3)  
Eimear Henry, Senior Manager, Culture & Tourism (for Items 7 & 9)  
Joanne Delaney, Portfolio and Programme Coordinator (secretariat)

### 1. Medium Term Financial Plan

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources highlighted that now that the district rate is set for 2021/22, there is a need to review the overall financial strategy of the Council. If the Council is going to deliver on priorities additional to business as usual activities, such as inclusive growth, climate and waste there is a need to ensure that the use of current resources is maximised and new sources of income are found. He outlined the current status of the proposed Commercial Plan following Party Briefings that took place in January, and Members discussed some outline proposals in relation to Malone House. The Medium Term Financial plan report and a report on Malone House will be considered by April SP&R Committee.

### 2. Covid-19 Planning

The Chief Executive provided an update on organisational recovery aligned to the Northern Ireland Executive Pathway and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on council services. In relation to the current easing of restrictions, primarily affecting outdoor provision some

queries were raised on use of MUGA's, the City Service's Manager to provide an update for Members on the issues raised. The Chief Executive advised that discussions are ongoing with the Department of Health to establish a Covid 19 Asymptomatic Workplace Testing Programme on a pilot basis. In answer to a query raised by a Member she advised that the programme would be voluntary. Members will be updated as the programme progresses.

Members discussed the imminent announcement from the NI Executive Office and how the lifting of further restrictions will impact on operational services. A Summary of the announcements will be circulated to Members and a more detailed report on the impact on operational services will be brought to April SP&R Committee.

### **3. Destination Hub**

Members received an update on the preferred site option for the Destination Hub a key project under the tourism and regeneration pillar of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD). Detailed discussion took place on the proposed acquisition strategy and the Destination Hub programme aims and benefits. The Director of Place and Economy outlined the process to date, and Members noted the external advice including legal advice received. Members also discussed in detail the key milestones involved in order to move to the next stage of the BRCD process. A report will be submitted to April SP&R for site acquisition approval, which will include further detail as discussed for consideration of Members.

### **4. Belfast Agenda Review**

The Chief Executive provided a briefing on the review of the Belfast Agenda. Statutorily, the review of community plans must be completed before the 4<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the date on which the Plan was published. In light of this the Community Planning Partnership agreed to establish a dedicated sub-group from the Statutory Partners and VCSE Sectoral Advisory Panel to support the co-design and delivery of the refreshed Belfast Agenda by March 2022. This will then set the framework from which future area planning will flow. Members noted the proposed consultation and engagement process and key milestones for the review and that a report would be presented to April SP&R Committee.

### **5. Dual Language Street Signs Policy**

The City Solicitor outlined the key changes to the revised Dual Language Street Signs Policy. The draft policy will be considered by April SP&R Committee and reflects the approach agreed by Members which was ratified by Council in January 2021. Members will be asked to approve the draft policy for the purposes of issuing for public consultation.

## **6. Language Strategy**

The City Solicitor provided an update on a proposed strategic approach for the implementation of the Language Strategy. Members discussed the proposed approach and highlighted some issues in relation to representation on the groups and the format of the external groups proposed. The City Solicitor to further consider these issues raised in advance of the report going to SP&R. Members also asked that there is consideration given to how Members can integrate with these groups when established to allow for meaningful conversation.

## **7. Heritage Trail Sign Policy – City Hall**

The City Solicitor referred to recent discussions held at March SP&R committee in relation to the request received from Redhead Exhibition requesting assistance from the Council in relation a James Connolly Belfast Heritage Trail. He advised that this request has raised questions on whether there is interest from other groups to include City Hall as a location in heritage trails. The Cultural and Tourism Manager provided an update on potential interest for City Hall to be utilised as a key location in cultural and heritage trails and the opportunity for this to integrate into an overall experience plan for the city. In relation to a query raised by a Member it was noted that local communities would be engaged in any trails being considered where relevant. Members noted that two reports would be submitted to April SP&R, namely the request for assistance in relation to the James Connolly Belfast Heritage Trail and a report to consider options for future requests and how they could be integrated into plans for City Hall to be part of an overall Belfast Experience Plan.

## **8. Standards & Business Committee**

Members discussed a proposal to redesignate the previously agreed Standards Committee to a Standards and Business Committee. The City Solicitor advised that this is in response to various political discussions, including a meeting hosted by the Lord Mayor. He outlined the revised terms of reference which would include responsibility for specific roles in relation to managing some Council business, in particular reviewing Standing Orders and a delegated power to receive Notices of Motion. There were differing political views and some queries raised in terms of how the proposed Notices of Motion process would work in practice and further consideration is to be given to this. The City Solicitor highlighted that if agreed by SP&R to include the business element a review of the operation of the Committee and its associated processes would be undertaken after the first six months. Members also asked that when the report is brought to SP&R Committee it outlines the proposed party representation.

**9. Freedom of the City – Frontline Workers**

The Chief Executive outlined for Members the decision previously made by SP&R Committee in May 2020 to award the Freedom of the City to healthcare workers and all those working tirelessly on the frontline to care for vulnerable citizens during the COVID pandemic. The Cultural and Tourism Manager provided an update on the proposed arrangements for this to include both a reflective event of commemoration as well as a citywide recognition event with community participation. Members will consider the proposals at April SP&R Committee.

**10. Peace IV**

The Chief Executive provided an update on Peace IV funding issues and updated Members on ongoing discussions with SEUPB. She advised that Members will be updated when clarification is received on funding issues.

Members also noted that SEUPB are currently seeking views on the draft content of the European Union funded Peace Plus Programme (2021-2027) and a draft response will be brought to April SP&R Committee for consideration. A link to the consultation will be circulated to Party Leaders.

**11. Planning Update**

The Chief Executive updated the Forum on the live planning applications and informed the Forum of applications that were being presented to the Planning Committee in April. Members noted the correspondence sent to DfI in respect of a potential call-in of another authority's "minded-to" decision. This may require further consideration at a later stage and the City Solicitor will update Members if required accordingly.

**12. AOB**

**Remote Meetings**

The City Solicitor briefed Members on the legislation that currently allows for remote meetings to be held and advised that it is due to cease in May this year in that new legislation will not be made on time. Members discussed alternative options available going forward and the City Solicitor is to seek clarification on legal implications should Members wish to continue with remote meetings.

**Bye Laws**

Members discussed draft Bye Laws previously circulated to Party Leaders for Good Governance of Belfast City Centre. Members agreed to a joint meeting to discuss further, City Solicitor to extend out the invitation for a meeting on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> April and arrange alternative meeting for those that can't attend on that date.



## **Social Value Working Group**

Tuesday 30th March, 2021

### MEETING OF THE SOCIAL VALUE WORKING GROUP

HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor O'Hara (Chairperson);  
Aldermen Copeland and Dorrian; and  
Councillors Heading, Kyle and McLaughlin.

In attendance: Mr. J. Walsh, City Solicitor;  
Ms. N. Bohill, Head of Commercial and Procurement  
Services;  
Mr. C. Campbell, Divisional Solicitor;  
Ms. C. Robinson, Strategy Policy and Partnership  
Manager;  
Ms. C. Hutchinson, Policy and Performance Analyst;  
Mr. L. Murray, Strategic Category Manager;  
Mr. M. Denny, Commercial Manager  
Ms. L. Goodwin, Economic Development Officer  
Ms. Sinead O'Regan, Economic Development Manager  
Mr. J. Uprichard, Community Planning Officer;  
Ms. K. McCrum, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

An apology for inability to attend was reported on behalf of the High Sherriff (Councillor Long).

The Chairperson requested that the People Before Profit Party be contacted again regarding their representation on the Working Group.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 23rd February were taken as read and signed as correct. The Working Group also noted the Action Tracker which had been circulated via email.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

## **City Charter Members Workshop**

The Strategy Policy and Partnership Manager provided an update on progress to date with regards to the development of the Inclusive Growth City Charter for Belfast. She informed the Working Group that the purpose of the current session was to share high level feedback from engagement sessions, get Members' views on potential content, and to discuss and agree next steps.

The Members were advised that a detailed engagement exercise had been undertaken over the past 4 months with over 150 individuals from across the employer base, with further engagement planned with community planning partners, small businesses and the hospitality sector. The main takeaways from the engagement were detailed.

The Strategy Policy and Partnership Manager explained that the Charter would involve three focus areas: Inclusive Employment, Progressive Commissioning and Procurement and Supporting Your Community.

The vision for the Charter was outlined as follows:

*'To create a business community that is committed to a more inclusive and sustainable Belfast. A community that believe that all people matter and respect the place within which they operate'.*

The Working Group were then presented with the community and business benefits as well as the 8 proposed pledges which businesses would be expected to provide evidence of:

1. Provide fair wages and contracts
2. Offer opportunities into work
3. Support the local economy
4. Recruit inclusively
5. Improve engagement and wellbeing
6. Pay promptly
7. Support our community
8. Care for our environment

The Policy and Performance Analyst provided further details on the pledges, including a 2-tiered approach which recognised that larger businesses and statutory organisations were in a position to go further than small businesses. She noted that the wording within each pledge could change depending on how forceful Council wished to be on a particular issue.

She also advised that feedback had underlined the importance of getting businesses signed up to the Charter and not being exclusionary. Therefore, while it was imperative that standards of practice were developed, the first year should aim to build awareness of the importance of the issues and help businesses move towards better practices.

The Economic Development Manager also provided further details on offering opportunities into work, and the support that could be made available by the Council in order to help businesses meet the requirements within the Charter.

The Members broadly agreed with the proposed pledges as outlined, but asked for the following points to be considered:

- Elevating the language regarding climate change given that the Council and Assembly have declared a Climate Emergency, in particular supporting the transition towards a carbon neutral economy.
- Adding further detail around more investment/more jobs in the local economy.
- Reconsider the stance around zero hours contracts in light of the Private Members Bills seeking to ban zero hours contracts. Be ambitious with the Charter and don't encourage their use.
- Provide an analysis of how many employers would fit into the higher tier with over 250 employees. Consider how collective bargaining could be included.
- Suggest a co-design approach to flexible working recognising that working from home is not suitable for all employees.
- Add ageism in employment alongside such issues as the gender pay gap.
- Tighten up the language around apprenticeships reflecting the low wages paid and how this may be off-putting to those within the benefits system or those wanting to reskill.
- Consider how high levels of economic inactivity can be tackled.
- Consider how relationships with large incoming investors can be developed and how the Charter can be included within the 'Belfast Offer'.

The Strategy Policy and Partnership Manager noted that the workshop on Community Wealth Building work would look further at the vision and language.

In terms of zero hours contracts, she advised that the 2 options: not employing people on zero hours contracts; and minimising the use of zero hours contracts, had been included as there was currently no legislation banning their use. She suggested that further consultation on the options may be the best way forward on the issue.

A technical issue was highlighted with the distribution of papers ahead of the meeting, with a number of Members noting the level of detail on the slides was difficult to follow when seeing the information for the first time. Papers were then circulated via email and it was agreed that further engagement via Party Group Briefings would be provided to those Parties requesting them.

The Working Group also agreed to feed back any further comments to the Strategy Policy and Partnership Manager and it was resolved that a final draft would then be brought back to Members on 27<sup>th</sup> April for sign off, prior to the CLES Workshop to which all Members were to be invited.

The Strategy Policy and Partnership Manager explained the rationale for recommending a tiered approach to becoming a member of the Charter, notably as it offered the opportunity to engage with a wide range of businesses and allowed for progression on a journey to higher standards.

Details of the suggested 3 tiers, that is, Supporters, Members and Ambassadors, was provided. The Working Group were advised that all businesses would start as a Supporters, formally making a commitment to the pledge areas before working towards becoming a Charter Member at which point evidence would be required to demonstrate

that they met the pledge requirements. Once approved, businesses would be reviewed bi-annually to ensure that those standards had been maintained and that they were making progression.

The Strategy Policy and Partnership Manager suggested that Ambassadors were likely to be launched after 12-18 months, as the aim was to encourage all businesses to improve from their current baseline.

The Working Group was further advised that best practice and consultation feedback had recommended a core pledge approach in order to encourage businesses to do more without being exclusionary. Therefore, Members were being asked to consider the proposal that, to become a Charter Member, businesses must meet as a minimum of 3 of the 8 pledges, initially suggested as: Provide fair wages and contract; Offer opportunities into work; and Support the local economy.

The Working Group endorsed the tiered approach and the 3 mandatory pledges as suggested, alongside the 'Care for our environment' pledge. It was also suggested that a bi-annual review of the Supporter Members was built in to ensure that those businesses were working to improve their practices.

In closing, the Strategy Policy and Partnership Manager outlined the next steps including taking on the feedback provided, engagement with the external working group, developing plans around implementation and resource requirements, and moving towards Committee approval in May, 2021, followed by public consultation in June/July 2021 and an indicative launch in Autumn.

### **Social Value Framework**

The City Solicitor introduced the 3 components of the Social Value Framework that required consensus from Members before it progressed to consultation, and so Members were asked to review the details ahead of submission to Committee next month.

The Strategic Category Manager provided an overview of the areas within the Social Value Framework which had been agreed at previous meetings, and those that were for review during the session; Real Living Wage provisions, the use of zero hours contracts, and a minimum threshold for social value scoring.

### **Real Living Wage (RLW)**

With regards to the Real Living Wage (RLW), the following criteria was suggested: *'We will pay all employees engaged in delivering the services under the contract the Real Living Wage (as updated and published by the Real Living Wage Foundation) throughout the Contract Period'.*

The Strategy Category Manager noted that this would address the issue whilst allowing flexibility to contractors to offer the RLW where they could, and be rewarded for doing so, without being too restrictive. He added that some thought was needed around the points awarded for this within the toolkit, particularly across varying contract values.

It was noted that a recent Council Motion sought to commit the Council to becoming an accredited RLW Foundation Employer by April 2022. As a result, a Member suggested

that more could be achieved under this heading to encourage businesses to become accredited, such as asking that they pay the RLW across their entire organisation.

The Head of Commercial and Procurement Services suggested that the proposed solution rewarded good behaviour and cautioned that due to procurement law, it was only possible to set such stipulations on a specific contract, and that any change to this would require a change in UK procurement legislation.

Noted.

### **Zero Hours Contracts**

The Strategic Category Manager advised that a similar approach in terms of reward and flexibility was being suggested to address the issue of Zero Hours Contracts taking into consideration the associated risk of challenge from the market. He noted that the definition of what constituted the 'inappropriate' use of zero hours contracts was needed. The initiative under this heading was therefore suggested as:

*'We will not [inappropriately] use zero hours contracts for any employees in delivering services under the contract during the Contract Period.'*

He again welcomed thoughts on what points should be assigned to the initiative and cautioned that its inclusion would allow those who do not use such contracts to be rewarded for an existing practice without the need to demonstrate other social value behaviours.

A Member suggested that Council needed to remain ambitious through the Framework and recommended that the word 'inappropriately' was removed from the criteria. Another Member suggested that while he was not in favour of their use, consultation with those offering seasonal work in sectors such as agriculture and the arts may demonstrate a certain reliance on such contracts.

The City Solicitor agreed that it was important to differentiate between employers who require zero hours contracts and those who abuse the contracts in order to avoid other employment obligations. The Divisional Solicitor confirmed that the word 'inappropriate' was included in recognition of this.

The Head of Commercial and Procurement Services suggested that the true requirement for such contracts could be addressed during pre-engagement processes at which point questions could be asked about their necessity, what the justification would be, at which point appropriateness could be determined. She added that further feedback on the issue would be forthcoming from the public consultation.

A number of Members again noted their reluctance to include the option of Council issuing contracts to those utilising zero hours contracts and suggested that further discussions were needed on the issue. The Head of Commercial and Procurement Services provided examples of catering and cleaning services where they may be necessary and stated that in order to ensure continuing supply, she would be reluctant to rule out such contracts entirely. She therefore suggested that Council listen to the market and if zero hours contracts were required, this information could be reported back to the Working Group after which a decision would be made.

The Strategic Category Manager noted that while this criteria would be prevent suppliers from using zero hour's contracts, it did reward them for not using them and was

a step that did not currently exist in Council's award criteria. The City Solicitor added that he understood the aspirations, and while this was the suggestion within the current legal framework, if changes to legislation were made it was possible that in the future a more stringent approach could be taken.

A number of Members again reiterated their desire to remove the word 'inappropriately' from the criteria thus awarding additional points to those organisations not using zero hours contracts.

The City Solicitor confirmed that it would not mean that those using zero hours contracts could not apply to Council procurement exercises but the redraft would mean that those that could not comply with this condition would not be awarded any marks within this section of the assessment process.

Noted.

### **Minimum Threshold for Social Value Award**

The Strategic Category Manager advised the Working Group that staff had revisited the issue of a minimum threshold and felt that while it was permissible in procurement law, it was not recommended as excluding a supplier for not offering social value could be seen disproportionate and perhaps not represent best value for money to the Council, leading to the potential for challenge. It was therefore suggested that, given the current economic climate, an incremental approach to social value was best, building knowledge and capacity within the market place before thresholds were imposed.

A Member challenged this approach and suggested that his party would be unable to sign up to a policy where social value criteria could be bypassed. He noted the importance of Council displaying minimum standards for the organisations that it did business with. Another Member agreed but asked for time to discuss with colleagues. The City Solicitor suggested that the aspirations of Councillors and staff were the same, but staff were recommending a slower pace.

The Head of Commercial and Procurement Services reviewed the previous discussion regarding the application of 5% or 10% weighting for social value which had been broadly agreed to previously.

The City Solicitor concluded by stating that the views expressed would be taken into account when formulating the final version of the Framework which would be issued to the Working Group ahead of submission to Committee in order to take any final views.

In response to a query regarding sub-contracting, the Head of Commercial and Procurement Services advised that contractors would be required to demonstrate how they were meeting the social value requirements and so some form of waterfall clauses would be necessary.

The Working Group noted the information which had been provided.

### **Strategic Investment Board Presentation**

Given the lengthy discussions which had taken place thus far, Members agreed to defer the presentation from the Strategic Investment Board to a future meeting.

### **Forward Work Plan**

The Working Group were advised that the next meeting would be the CLES Community Wealth Building Workshop on 27th April at 2 pm and, as agreed by SP&R, would include all Members. The Strategy Policy and Partnership Manager added that a short side meeting for Working Group Members may also be required to sign off some of the items discussed at today's meeting.

She added that the Working Group would then reconvene as normal in May to consider issues around sustainability in procurement, communities of need, and the Living Wage Accreditation.

She then concluded by reminding Members that the offer of Party Group Briefings regarding the Charter would be issued via email and welcomed any further feedback.

The Chair thanked Members for attending and welcomed the exciting but challenging work that had been undertaken by staff to date.

Chairperson

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Requests for Use of the City Hall and the Provision of Hospitality</b>
<b>Date:</b>	23rd April, 2021
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Walsh, City Solicitor / Director of Legal and Civic Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Aisling Milliken, Functions and Exhibition 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</b>
1.1	This report, together with the attached appendix, contains the recommended approach in respect of each of the requests by external organisations for access to the City Hall function rooms received up to 9th April 2021, which appear to the Function Management Unit to comply with the criteria previously established by the Committee and are recommended for approval.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to approve the recommendations made in respect of applications received up to 9th April 2021, as set out in the attached appendix.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b><u>Background Information</u></b></p> <p>Members will be aware that the Committee, at its meeting of 6th January 2017, agreed to modify the criteria governing access to the City Hall function rooms for external organisations.</p>

3.2	<p>The Committee also agreed to the implementation of room-hire charges for some categories of function, and also revised the approach to the provision of civic hospitality for functions on foot of the agreed efficiency programme. Some further modifications to this approach were agreed at the Committee meetings of 24<sup>th</sup> March 2017, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2017, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2019 and 25<sup>th</sup> October 2019.</p> <p><b><u>Key Issues</u></b></p>
3.3	<p>The existing revised criteria and scale of charges have been applied to the various requests received and the recommendations herein are offered to the Committee on this basis for approval.</p>
3.4	<p>The attached schedule covers two applications for functions, scheduled for 2021 and 2022 however approval is provisional and function date to be approved in due course pending NI Executive and Council approval to reinstate functions in City Hall.</p> <p><b><u>Covid-19 Implications</u></b></p>
3.5	<p>In managing and delivering future functions, liaison with and guidance for organisers will be provided by officers to ensure compliance with any relevant social distancing guidelines at the time of their function. Committee approval for their function to take place in City Hall is recommended on the basis of their compliance to this caveat and what is permissible and feasible in City Hall function rooms.</p> <p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p>
3.6	<p>The implementation of charging for external functions has commenced, in line with the Committee's decisions in the matter.</p> <p><b><u>Equality and Good Relations / Rural Needs Implications</u></b></p>
3.7	<p>There are no direct good relations, equality or rural needs implications arising from this report.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	<p>Schedule of Function requests received up to 9th April 2021.</p>

## February 2021 City Hall Function Applications

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
<b>2021 EVENTS</b>						
Belfast Law Society	September 2021  <i>Dependent on City Hall recovery and COVID guidelines</i>	<b>Centenary Year Celebration Dinner</b> to celebrate achievements and successes and to thank those who have contributed (very largely on a voluntary basis) to the Society's work.  Numbers attending – 200  <i>* Numbers and room layout will be reviewed and revised in line with COVID19 social distancing guidelines at the time of this event.</i>	C & D	Yes - £825	No hospitality	Approve Charge £825 No hospitality
Ulster University Business School	April 2022  <i>Dependent on City Hall recovery and COVID guidelines</i>	<b>Gastronomy Summit 2022</b> Dinner as part of a 3-day conference in Ulster University Belfast Campus.  Numbers attending – 130  <i>* Numbers and room layout will be reviewed and revised in line with COVID19 social distancing guidelines at the time of this event.</i>	B	No – charity	No hospitality	Approve No charge No hospitality

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