

# Public Document Pack

## BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

### **SUMMONS TO ATTEND THE MONTHLY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

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

Notice is hereby given that the Council will meet both in the Council Chamber, City Hall, Belfast (on a proportional representation basis) and remotely via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday, 1st September, 2021 at 6.00 p.m., for the transaction of the following business:

1. Summons
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Minutes of the Council (Pages 1 - 14)
5. Official Announcements
6. Change of Membership on Committees/Outside Bodies
7. Minutes
  - a) Minutes of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (Pages 15 - 154)
  - b) Appointment of Members to the Standards and Business Committee and Positions of Responsibility - Year 3
  - c) Minutes of People and Communities Committee (Pages 155 - 188)
  - d) Minutes of City Growth and Regeneration Committee (Pages 189 - 254)
  - e) Minutes of Licensing Committee (Pages 255 - 262)
  - f) Minutes of Planning Committee (Pages 263 - 332)
  - g) Minutes of Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Shareholders' Committee (Pages 333 - 340)
  - h) Minutes of the Brexit Committee (Pages 341 - 356)
8. Motions
  - a) Triple Lock Guarantee (Pages 357 - 358)
  - b) NHS Pay (Pages 359 - 360)
  - c) A Changing Places Toilets Policy for Belfast City Council (Pages 361 - 362)
  - d) The Right of Nature (Pages 363 - 364)
  - e) Bonfire Procedures (Pages 365 - 366)
  - f) A Four-Day Working Week (Pages 367 - 368)

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Suzanne Wylie". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S' and a distinct 'W'.

Chief Executive

## **Council**

### **SPECIAL MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL**

Held in the City Hall on Thursday, 1st July, 2021  
at the hour of 10.45 o'clock a.m., pursuant to Notice.

Members present: The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor  
(Councillor Nicholl) (Chairperson);  
The Deputy Lord Mayor, Alderman Haire;  
The High Sheriff of Belfast, Councillor Long;  
Alderman Rodgers; and  
Councillors Bunting, Donnelly, Gormley,  
Hanvey, Hutchinson, Lyons, Maskey, McCabe,  
McCullough, Smyth, Spratt and Whyte.

### **Summons**

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

### **Apologies**

The Chief Executive explained that only a quarter of the Members, based on party strengths, were requested to attend the Special Meeting. She advised that it was in accordance with social distancing measures which were operational due to the coronavirus pandemic. A technical apology was therefore reported for all other Members.

### **Battle of the Somme Anniversary**

Moved by the Lord Mayor (Councillor Nicholl),  
Seconded by the Deputy Lord Mayor (Alderman Haire) and

Resolved – That we, the Lord Mayor and Citizens of the City of Belfast, on the 105th Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme, desire again to record our feelings of gratitude to the brave men of the 36th (Ulster) Division, the 16th (Irish) Division and other forces who, by their glorious conduct in that battle, made an imperishable name for themselves and their people and whose heroism will never be forgotten.

The Council stood in silence for one minute as a mark of respect to all those who had lost their lives in the Battle of the Somme.

Lord Mayor  
Chairperson

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# Council

## SPECIAL MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL (Proportional Representation)

Held in the City Hall on Thursday, 1st July, 2021  
at the hour of 5.45 o'clock p.m., pursuant to Notice.

Members present: The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor  
(Councillor Nicholl) (Chairperson);  
Aldermen Kingston and Rodgers; and  
Councillors Bradley, Bunting, Matt Collins,  
Garrett, Groogan, Hanvey, Heading, Howard,  
Hussey, T. Kelly, Kyle, McLaughlin, Murphy,  
Walsh and Whyte.

### **Apologies**

No apologies were reported.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

### **To approve and adopt the acquisition and disposal of land as set out in the extract from minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 18th June, 2021**

Moved by Councillor Groogan,  
Seconded by Councillor Walsh

That, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, that the decisions of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 18th June, 2021, relating to the extract of the minutes and the decisions regarding the following matters, be approved and adopted, subject to the removal, of the wording 'in principle' under the heading "Asset Management"

- Asset Management;
- Belfast Destination Hub - Acquisition of Site; and
- City Centre Property - Targeted Acquisition

### **To approve and adopt the Crematorium Recovery Plan as set out in the extract from minutes of the Special Strategic Policy and Resources Committee Minutes of 23rd June, 2021**

Moved by Councillor Groogan,  
Seconded by Councillor Garrett

**Special Meeting of Council,  
Thursday, 1st July, 2021 at 5.45 pm**

That, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, that the decisions of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 23rd June, 2021, relating to the extract of the minutes and the decisions regarding the Crematorium Recovery Plan be approved and adopted.

**Call-in**

The Committee agreed, in accordance with Standing Order 47 (a) (2) (c), that the aforementioned decision would not be subject to call-in, on the basis that an unreasonable delay could be prejudicial to the Council's or the public's interest.

Lord Mayor  
Chairperson

# **Council**

## **MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL**

Held in the City Hall and also Remotely, via Microsoft Teams on  
Thursday, 1st July, 2021 at 6.00 p.m., pursuant to notice.

Members present: The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor;  
(Councillor Nicholl) (Chairperson);  
The Deputy Lord Mayor, (Alderman Haire);  
The High Sheriff (Councillor Long);  
Aldermen Dorrian, Kingston, Rodgers  
and Sandford; and Councillors Baker,  
Beattie, Black, Bradley, Brooks, Bunting, Canavan,  
Carson, Cobain, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Corr,  
de Faoite, Donnelly, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett,  
Gormley, Groogan, Hanvey, Heading, Howard,  
Hussey, Hutchinson, M. Kelly, T. Kelly, Kyle, Lyons,  
Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAteer, McCullough,  
McCabe, McDonough-Brown, McKeown, McLaughlin,  
McMullan, McReynolds, Mulholland, Murphy, O'Hara,  
Pankhurst, Smyth, Spratt, Verner, Walsh and Whyte.

### **Summons**

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported on behalf of Aldermen Copeland and McCoubrey and Councillors McAllister, McCusker and Newton.

### **Declarations of Interest**

The following Members declared an interest in item "Finance Update", under the Strategic Policy and Resource minutes of 18th June (Summer Community Diversionary Festival Programme), for the reasons detailed below.

- Councillor Baker, in that his brother was a voluntary Director of Feile an Phobail, as this was a non-pecuniary position Councillor Baker was permitted to participate in the discussion;
- Councillor Gormley, in that he was a Board member of LORAG which is part of a community partnership that had previously received funding from the Programme and he left the meeting whilst the matter was being considered;
- Councillors Flynn and Dorrian as Board Members of the East Side Partnership that had previously received funding from the Programme, as these were Council appointments there was no requirement to leave the meeting and they were permitted to participate in the discussion;

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- Councillor T. Kelly, in that her husband was an employee of a community group that had previously received funding from the Programme in 2019 and she left the meeting whilst the matter was being discussed; and
- Councillor McCabe, in that she was an employee of Feile an Phobail and she left the meeting whilst the matter was being considered.

Councillor McKeown declared an interest in relation to the item contained within the minutes of the People and Communities Committee, under the heading “Rosario Youth Club – Funding Request”, in that he was a Member of Rosario Football Club and he left the meeting whilst the matter was under consideration.

**Minutes of the Council**

Moved by the Lord Mayor (Councillor Nicholl),  
Seconded by Councillor Murphy and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Annual meeting of the Council of 1st June and the Special meeting of 1st June be taken as read and signed as correct.

**Official Announcements**

The Lord Mayor, together with a number of Members, extended their condolences to Councillor Baker on the death of his father, Joseph and also to the City Solicitor on the death of his father, Christopher.

Councillor Magee expressed condolences to the family of Mr. Gerald McGuigan, a former Belfast City Councillor.

Alderman Kingston advised that Mr. Isaac Herzog had recently been elected as President of Israel, following in the footsteps of his Belfast-born father. The Lord Mayor agreed to write to Mr. Herzog congratulating him on his appointment.

**Decisions of the Chief Executive taken under Delegated Authority**

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee**

Moved by Councillor Groogan  
Seconded by Councillor Heading,

That, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the decisions of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee and subject to the omission of the minutes under the headings Asset Management, Belfast Destination Hub – Acquisition of Site and City Centre Property – Targeted

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Acquisition which were agreed at the special meeting earlier, be approved and adopted.

At the request of Councillor Heading, the Council agreed that the Lord Mayor write to CAPITA inviting representatives to an all-Party delegation to discuss its handling of the Personal Independent Payment assessment process.

**Amendment**

**Finance Update**

Moved by Alderman Kingston,  
Seconded by Councillor Bunting,

“due to the exceptional circumstances of this year and the fact that it is now July, that the open call for the Summer Community Diversionary Festival Programme is suspended for this year only. The funding, which is already included in the annual budget, is allocated to the same groups which were awarded funding following the open call in 2019, with the same amount again being ear-marked for each. These groups will be required to submit application forms which will be subject to due diligence, the application process will be opened to these groups immediately, that there be no fixed closing date so that applications can be assessed as they come in and funding awarded. Mindful that of the fact that some, though not all, events are planned for August, authority be delegated to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to hold a special Committee meeting on 2nd August to approve grants for those applications approved by then. All planned events obviously must be compliant with Covid restrictions at the time, with the use of Council Parks for approved events in August granted, if required, and that Call-in on this matter be suspended.”

On a recorded vote, thirty-four Members voted for the amendment and seventeen against and it was declared carried.

<b><u>For 34</u></b>	<b><u>Against 17</u></b>
The Deputy Lord Mayor, (Alderman Haire); and Aldermen Dorrian, Kingston, Rodgers and Sandford; and Councillors Baker, Beattie, Black, Bradley, Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Corr, Donnelly, Ferguson, Garrett, Hussey, Hutchinson, Kyle, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAteer, McCullough, McLaughlin, Murphy, Pankhurst, Spratt, Verner and Walsh.	The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor (Councillor Nicholl); and The High Sheriff (Councillor Long); and Councillors de Faoite, Flynn, Groogan, Hanvey, Heading, Howard, M. Kelly, Lyons, McDonough-Brown, McKeown, McMullan, McReynolds, Mulholland, Smyth and Whyte.

**Meeting of Council,  
Thursday, 1st July, 2021**

**Adoption of Minutes**

Subject to the foregoing amendments, the decisions of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and the minutes of the meeting of the Members of the Committee of 18th June, were approved and adopted, subject to the omission of the minutes under the headings Asset Management, Belfast Destination Hub – Acquisition of Site and City Centre Property – Targeted Acquisition.

**Ad Hoc Committee**

Moved by Councillor Carson,  
Seconded by Councillor Walsh,

That, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the decisions of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the Ad Hoc Committee be approved and adopted and accordingly the Council ratifies the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in relation to the establishment of the Standards and Business Committee.

**Amendment**

Moved by Councillor Ferguson,  
Seconded by Councillor Lyons,

That the decisions of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the Ad Hoc Committee not be approved and adopted and accordingly the Council does not agree to ratify the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in relation to the establishment of the Standards and Business Committee.

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

<b><u>For 20</u></b>	<b><u>Against 32</u></b>
The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor (Councillor Nicholl); and The High Sheriff (Councillor Long); and Councillors Matt Collins, Michael Collins, de Faoite, Ferguson, Flynn, Groogan, Hanvey, Heading, Howard, M. Kelly, Lyons, McDonough-Brown, McKeown, McMullan, McReynolds, Mulholland, Smyth and Whyte.	The Deputy Lord Mayor, (Alderman Haire); and Aldermen Dorrian, Kingston and Sandford; and Councillors Baker, Beattie, Bradley, Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Corr, Donnelly, Garrett, Gormley, Hussey, Hutchinson, T. Kelly, Kyle, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McCabe, McAteer, McCullough, McLaughlin, Murphy, Pankhurst, Spratt, Verner and Walsh.

**Meeting of Council,  
Thursday, 1st July, 2021**

**Adoption of Minutes**

The decision of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the Ad Hoc Committee and the minutes of the meeting of the Members of the Committee of 14th June, were approved and adopted and accordingly the Council ratified the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in relation to the establishment of the Standards and Business Committee.

**People and Communities Committee**

Moved by Councillor Cobain,  
Seconded by Councillor Murphy, and

Resolved - That, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the decisions of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the People and Communities Committee and the minute of the meeting of the Members of the Committee, of 8th and 22nd June be approved and adopted.

At the request of Councillor Gormley, the Council agreed that a report be submitted to the August meeting of the People and Communities Committee, asking the Committee to consider allocating additional funding to cover the months of April, May and June 2021 in respect of Rosario Youth Club.

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee**

Moved by Councillor Murphy,  
Seconded by Councillor Beattie,

That, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the decisions of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, the minute of the meeting of the Members of the Committee of 9th June, and the minute of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 23rd June, be approved and adopted, subject to the omission of the minute under the heading "Just Eat Belfast Bikes Strategic Review", which was subject to a valid call-in requisition and is not before the Council for approval and adoption.

**Amendment**

Moved by Councillor Ferguson,  
Seconded by Councillor Lyons,

"That the current extended Sunday trading hours are not brought back to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee for further extension beyond 5th September, 2021. And that the Council acknowledges the full range of challenges facing retail in the city, write to The Executive Office requesting an urgent meeting of the High Streets Task Force."

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On a recorded vote, forty-three Members voted for the amendment and eight against with one no vote, and it was declared carried.

<b><u>For 43</u></b>	<b><u>Against 8</u></b>	<b><u>No Vote 1</u></b>
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Alderman Haire); and Aldermen Dorrian, Kingston, and Sandford; and Councillors Baker, Beattie, Bradley, Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Corr, de Faoite, Donnelly, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Groogan, Heading, Hussey, Hutchinson, T. Kelly, Kyle, Lyons, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McCabe, McAteer, McCullough, McKeown, McLaughlin, Murphy, Pankhurst, Smyth, Spratt, Verner, Walsh and Whyte.	The High Sheriff (Councillor Long); and Councillors Hanvey, Howard, M. Kelly, McDonough-Brown, McMullan, McReynolds and Mulholland.	The Lord Mayor (Councillor Nicholl)

**Adoption of Minutes**

The decisions of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the City Growth and Regeneration Committee and the minutes of the meeting of the Members of the Committee of 9th June and 23rd June, were approved and adopted.

**Licensing Committee**

Moved by Councillor Donnelly,  
Seconded by Councillor Smyth, and

Resolved – That, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the decisions of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the Licensing Committee and the minutes of the meeting of the Members of the Licensing Committee of 16th June, be approved and adopted.

**Planning Committee**

Moved by Councillor Carson,  
Seconded by Councillor Groogan, and

Resolved - That, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the decisions of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the Planning Committee and the minutes of the meeting of the Members



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of the Planning Committee of 15th and 24th June, be approved and adopted.

**Motions**

**Transfer of Regeneration Powers to Local Authorities**

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor McReynolds proposed:

“The economic impact caused by Covid-19 has had a devastating impact on many of our businesses and it is essential Council has the necessary powers and funding to support the rebuilding of our local economy.

The new councils formed in 2015 were designed to be larger and more powerful, and since then Belfast City Council has demonstrated its competence and capability. Successfully undertaking planning and local economic development functions and delivering vital services.

One of the key levers that Councils were promised, and is now needed, is the power of regeneration. Place shaping is increasingly becoming a critical part of the recovery process, especially in an environment where places will be different and there is a need of local solutions. Obtaining control of regeneration powers will also complement the Local Development Plans and our community planning framework.

In recognition of the consultation on Programme for Government, Investment Strategy and Budget, lobbying by NILGA and other stakeholders, we call on this council to write to The Executive Office and the Department for Communities for the transfer of full regeneration powers and associated resources to local authorities as a matter of priority.”

The proposer of the Motion advised that he wished to add the following sentence to the end of the motion:

“As soon as an equality statement is agreed by all councils, to ensure the principle of objective need is central to any use of future powers or resources.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Harvey.

After discussion, the motion, as amended, was put to the Council and passed.

**Paid Leave for Miscarriage**

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor Michelle Kelly proposed:

“The Council recognises the emotional trauma and loss suffered by parents as a result of stillbirths and miscarriages.

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The Council also notes a growing number of employers across the UK and Ireland are offering paid leave to employees who have experienced or been affected by early pregnancy loss and miscarriage.

As such Council will bring forward compassionate, fair, and progressive proposals for bereavement leave to provide leave for miscarriage and for stillbirth so employees who have been impacted do not have to use sick or annual holiday leave."

The motion was seconded by Councillor Mulholland.

In accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the motion was referred, without discussion, to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

**Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee**

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor Bunting proposed:

"This Council,

Acknowledges the unique achievement of Her Majesty The Queen as our longest serving monarch in history, hails her life of service to our nation, to the Commonwealth and to many aspects of international life, and agrees to organise a programme of events celebrating her Platinum Jubilee in 2022, including a funding programme for events organised by local communities across the city, as permitted by Covid restrictions at that time."

The motion was seconded by Councillor Spratt.

In accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the motion was referred, without discussion, to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

**Marking the Centenary of the Ulster Memorial Tower**

In accordance with notice on the agenda Alderman Kingston proposed:

"This Council notes that this November marks the centenary of the opening of the Ulster Memorial Tower, on 19th November 1921, near Thiepval in France, as a lasting tribute to the men of Ulster who served and who gave their lives during the First World War.

Its position, opposite Thiepval Wood, is a particular reminder of the Officers and Men of the 36th (Ulster) Division who fell during the Battle of the Somme, and is a specific tribute to the Division's heroic charge on the opening day of that great offensive.

This Council notes the various historic connections between the Ulster Memorial Tower and Belfast City Council and agrees to include recognition of this connection in our Centenary programme this year."

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The motion was seconded by Councillor Pankhurst.

In accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the motion was referred, without discussion, to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

**Chat Bench and Tackling Loneliness**

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor Howard proposed:

“This Council notes that the challenges of loneliness and how this has been compounded during the pandemic. Loneliness is now endemic across Northern Ireland. 88% of people in N.I. say loneliness has become a bigger problem since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. 1 in 3 people in N.I. are ‘more often lonely’ and chronic loneliness affects 1 in 20 people.

This Council further notes the recent British Red Cross N.I report – The longest Year: Life under local restrictions, has called on the Executive to take urgent action to tackle loneliness and states that N.I remains the only part of the UK without a governmental loneliness strategy. 70 organisations including NICVA have also called for an urgent strategy to be brought forward.

This Council can do something tangible to tackle isolation and loneliness by agreeing to consider the repurposing of 2 council owned benches as ‘Happy to Chat Benches’. One of these is situated in the grounds of City Hall and the other in the Titanic quarter. Many Councils across the UK including some in N.I. have introduced chat benches to help break down the barriers of social isolation and to get people talking.

This Council also calls on the Minister for Health to initiate the development of a Northern Ireland Loneliness Strategy in partnership with other relevant Executive colleagues.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor de Faoite.

In accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the motion was referred, without discussion, to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Lord Mayor  
Chairperson

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## Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 11th June, 2021

### SPECIAL MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

(HELD IN THE GREAT HALL, CITY HALL)

Members present: Councillor Groogan (Chairperson);  
The High Sheriff (Councillor Long);  
Aldermen Dorrian, Haire, Kingston and Sandford; and  
Councillors Beattie, Black, Bunting, Carson, Garrett,  
Heading, Lyons, McLaughlin, McReynolds, Murphy,  
Pankhurst and Walsh.

In attendance: Mrs. S. Wylie, Chief Executive;  
Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources;  
Mr. J. Walsh, City Solicitor;  
Mr. R. Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services;  
Ms. A. Allen, Neighbourhood Services Manager  
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and  
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer

#### **Apologies**

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors McAllister and McDonough-Brown.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

#### **Delegated Authority/Restricted Item**

The Committee was advised that, in accordance with Standing Order 37a - Duties of Committees: Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, it had full delegated authority to take decisions in relation to bonfire-related issues.

The Committee agreed, in accordance with the Council's Bonfire Governance Arrangements, that, given the sensitive nature of the business to be discussed, the Press and the public be excluded from the meeting.

#### **Bonfire-Related Issues**

The Committee was provided with an update on the current status of a number of bonfire sites across the City, following which it was presented with a report setting out a number of issues for consideration.

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**Clonduff Bonfire Site**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reported that a Council officer had received a request on behalf of Clonduff Residents' Association to level a small piece of land in the centre of a green area upon which a bonfire was built each year. The land, which was located between two 3G pitches, had been landscaped as part of the overall development of the Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre site. The person who had made the request had pointed out that the work would allow the bonfire to be constructed in a more stable way, thereby improving safety and further developing the goodwill between the Council and the local community.

Council officers had reminded the person that, despite the size of the bonfire having been reduced in recent years, bonfire builders had, in 2020, found it necessary to erect wooden boards along the side of the 3G pitches to prevent heat damage. It had been established that they intended to put the same mitigation measures in place this year.

After discussion, the Committee agreed, given the limited timeframe between now and July, that Council officers enter into discussions with the Residents' Association:

- i. to ensure that mitigation measures would be put in place and that those would protect Council property; and
- ii. to assess the potential benefit to be derived in future years from levelling the land and the cost which would be incurred.

**Provision of Bonfire Beacons**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reminded the Members that beacons were a key element of the Council's Bonfire and Cultural Expression Programme. In 2019, the Council had provided a beacon for sixteen sites, three of which were on its land, six on Department for Infrastructure land, five on Northern Ireland Housing Executive land and two on land under private ownership.

He reported that, due to the Covid-19 restrictions in place in 2020, the beacon programme had not been rolled out and reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 19th March, it had agreed that those groups which had, in 2019, been provided with a beacon be requested, through an expression of interest exercise, to indicate if they would require one for this year. He pointed out that all requests for beacons must be made by a properly constituted community group and that it would assume responsibility for the beacon and for complying with the associated terms and conditions.

He explained that Council officers had since contacted all sixteen groups and that the following seven groups had responded positively:

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Beacon Site</b>	<b>Site Landowner</b>
Charter N.I. Diamond Project	Haig St/Lord St junction	DfI
Highfield Residents Association	Field beside c. centre, Highgreen	NIHE
WBACS - Ainsworth Avenue Beacon	Hardcore area off Ainsworth Avenue - end of Ceylon Street	Private Ownership

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WBACS - Mountjoy St Beacon	Green area between Mountjoy Street/ Bellevue Street	Private ownership
Wheatfield Action Project	Ballysillan Park- facing Wheatfield Drive	BCC
Charter N.I. Clara St Beacon	Clara Street	DfI
TBC	Blackmountain Grove	NIHE

The Director confirmed that the groups listed above had been advised that the Council had yet to make a final decision on the provision of beacons, with factors such as the number available, public health restrictions and health and safety requirements to be taken into consideration and land agreements drawn up. In the meantime, an inspection of beacons had indicated that there would be a sufficient number to cover the seven groups and an assessment of each site would be undertaken by a fire engineer.

After discussion, the Committee approved the provision of bonfire beacons to the seven groups/sites listed above, subject to them signing up to terms and conditions which would include responsibility for compliance with the public health regulations in place at that time.

**Request for Bonfire Beacon – Grove Street East**

The Committee was informed that a request had been received from a group seeking to place a beacon on a site in Grove Street East, where a bonfire had previously been constructed. An inspection report which had been prepared by a fire engineer and subsequent legal opinion had both highlighted the potential for significant damage to be caused to adjacent properties, should the request be granted for that site. Council officers had since been advised by the local community that they were unaware of any other site which would be suitable.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed to defer consideration of the request to allow for further discussions to take place with the local community to be fully assured that no other site could facilitate a beacon.

**Severn Street/Tamar Street Site**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services informed the Committee that, as a result of positive engagement between bonfire builders and the EA Youth Service, there had in recent weeks been a reduction in the amount of bonfire material on the above-mentioned site.

He pointed out, however, that there remained a significant amount of material there and that, whilst it was hoped that this could be further reduced through the ongoing engagement process, it was too early to determine if a bonfire would still pose a threat to property/life.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

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**Bloomfield Walkway Site**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services informed the Members that Council officers had yet to establish who was responsible for constructing a bonfire at the Bloomfield Walkway.

He reported that the EA Youth Service, which was carrying out engagement on the site, had advised bonfire builders of the agreed position that it was not a suitable site on which to place a bonfire. Elected Members for that area had also carried out engagement to highlight the fact that there was political consensus around the unacceptability of the site, given the problems which had been encountered in previous years. Council officers had also requested representatives of the local community initiative to use their influence. However, despite all their best efforts, no progress had been made and the base of a bonfire was now being built in the middle of the car park, although there had been no significant increase in the amount of bonfire material on the site.

After discussion, the Committee:

- i agreed, in principle, to commence an intervention process for the removal of bonfire material from the Bloomfield Walkway site;
- ii agreed that Council officers engage immediately with the contractor and relevant agencies to plan the intervention process and that an update, based upon the outcome of that engagement and including an indicative timeframe, be submitted to its next meeting; and
- iii agreed that Council officers initiate the planning for any request from other public sector bodies for the use of the Council's contractor to remove bonfire material from their land; and

**Correspondence**

The Chief Executive sought and was granted approval by the Committee:

- i to write to the Secretary of State and to The Executive Office highlighting the fact that bonfires were a Northern Ireland-wide issue and that, whilst the Council had some responsibilities, it should not be regarded as being the sole focal point for all bonfire-related issues; and
- ii to write to the Department of Health, the sponsoring Department for the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, expressing concern in relation to the Fire Service's stated position that there would, this year, be a reduction in its engagement with bonfire builders and in the extent of the mitigation measures which it would be putting in place around bonfires.



**Special Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,  
Friday, 11th June, 2021**

**Call-In**

The Committee agreed, in accordance with Standing Order 48 (a) (2) (c), that the aforementioned decisions would not be subject to call-in, on the basis that an unreasonable delay could be prejudicial to the Council's or the public's interest.

Chairperson

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# Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Wednesday, 23rd June, 2021

## SPECIAL MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

(HELD IN THE GREAT HALL, CITY HALL)

Members present: Councillor Groogan (Chairperson);  
Aldermen Dorrian, Haire, Kingston and Sandford; and  
Councillors Beattie, Black, Bunting, Carson, Garrett,  
Heading, Lyons, McAllister, McLaughlin, McReynolds,  
Murphy, Pankhurst and Walsh.

In attendance: Mrs. S. Wylie, Chief Executive;  
Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources;  
Ms. N. Largey, Divisional Solicitor;  
Mr. R. Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services;  
Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;  
Ms. A. Allen, Neighbourhood Services Manager  
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and  
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

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

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

### **Delegated Authority/Restricted Item**

The Committee was advised that, in accordance with Standing Order 37a - Duties of Committees: Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, it had full delegated authority to take decisions in relation to bonfire-related issues.

The Committee agreed, given the sensitive nature of the business to be discussed, that the Press and the public be excluded from the meeting.

### **Bonfire-Related Issues**

The Committee was informed that Chief Superintendent Freeburn and Superintendent Pollock, representing the Police Service of Northern Ireland, and Ms J. Hawthorne and Mr. P. McCombe, representing the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, were in attendance in order to address any issues which might be raised and they were welcomed by the Chairperson.

**Special Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,  
Wednesday, 23rd June, 2021**

The Committee was provided with an update on the current status of a number of bonfire sites across the City, following which it was presented with a report setting out a number of issues for consideration.

**Bonfires on Non-Council Land**

**Hope Street**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services informed the Committee that this site was under the ownership of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and that a bonfire had been placed on it for a number of years.

Ms. Hawthorne explained that the regeneration of the site had been included in the Housing Executive's proposals for the redevelopment of the area in the longer-term. She pointed out that the bonfire was being built on a different part of the site from last year and that it appeared that it would now be seventy-eight metres from the Victoria Place apartments. She stressed that the Housing Executive was fully aware of its responsibilities in terms of protecting life/property and that mitigation measures would be implemented, if required.

Mr. McCombe stated that the Housing Executive had commenced a process of engagement as soon as bonfire material had appeared on the site. He reiterated the point that the re-location of the bonfire to a point which was further away from the Victoria Place apartments than previously and stressed that that was an improvement in terms of protecting property. He added that the site was now being monitored on a daily basis and that the engagement process would continue.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor McAllister,  
Seconded by Councillor McReynolds,

That the Committee agrees to grant to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive full approval to use the Council contractor to support the removal of bonfire material from this site, if required.

On a vote by show of hands, twelve Members voted for the proposal and six against and it was declared carried.

**Adam Street**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services informed the Committee that the Department for Communities and the Department for Infrastructure had each requested the Committee to grant approval, in principle, for the Council's contractor to support the removal of materials from this site, if required.

Communication from the Department for Communities had indicated that the Minister for Communities would then make a decision on whether a removal intervention would be necessary, based on the outcome of an ongoing community engagement process.

**Special Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,  
Wednesday, 23rd June, 2021**

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Beattie,  
Seconded by Councillor Murphy,

That the Committee grants full approval for the Department for Communities/Department for Infrastructure to use the Council contractor to support the removal of bonfire material, if required.

On a vote by show of hands, twelve Members voted for the proposal and six against and it was declared carried.

**Severn Street/Tamar Street**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services informed the Committee that this bonfire, which was being constructed on unregistered land, was close to a commercial premises and a row of houses and was now of such a size that a risk to life/property could not be ruled out.

He provided an update on the engagement which had taken place with the bonfire builders since the last Committee meeting and highlighted the fact that Section 32 of the Police (Northern Ireland Act) 2000 stated that it was the general duty of the Police Service to protect life and property, preserve order, prevent the commission of offences and take measures to bring an offender to justice where an offence had been committed. Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights also placed an obligation on the Police Service to avert a real and immediate risk to life from the criminal acts of others, of which they were aware or should have been aware.

Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee agree, on the basis that it had not been possible to determine the owner of the land and of the potential threat to life/property, to refer the matter to the Police Service of Northern Ireland under Section 32 of the Police (Northern Ireland Act) 2000.

Chief Superintendent Freeburn confirmed that the Police Service would be engaging with the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service and other agencies to ensure that it fulfilled its legal obligations at this and all other sites.

The Committee subsequently adopted the recommendation to refer the matter to the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

**Bonfires on Council Land**

**Benview/Silverstream**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services informed the Members that the bonfire on this site had been built in close proximity to a row of houses on either side of a green area.

He reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 11th June, it had been advised that discussions between Elected Members and the local community was ongoing, to determine if a reduction in the amount of bonfire material could be achieved.

**Special Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,  
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He confirmed that that engagement had not, to date, had the desired effect, and that the amount of material on the site and the bonfire itself was significantly greater than in previous years. Given this, and its close proximity to property, it was not possible to rule out the possibility of a risk to life/property.

Ms. Hawthorne confirmed that, should there be no reduction in the scale of the bonfire, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, as the primary landlord for the houses, would implement measures to protect properties.

After discussion, the Committee noted the information which had been provided.

(Ms. Hawthorne and Mr. McCombe left the meeting at this point.)

**Bloomfield Walkway**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 11th June, it had agreed, as in previous years, that Bloomfield Walkway was not a suitable site on which to place a bonfire. The Committee had agreed, given the risk to life/property, that officers commence the planning process for the removal of bonfire material.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services provided an update on the amount of bonfire material which was on the site currently and stated that discussions had taken place with the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the contractor to work through the practical and legal considerations associated with its removal. It was pointed out that, given the current situation and the previous issues associated with this site, it would be reasonable to assume that, if a bonfire was likely to take place, it would require various measures to be put in place to protect life/property.

He concluded by inviting the Committee to consider if it wished to make a final decision to proceed with a removal intervention at this site and, if so, to indicate whether it wished to pursue legal action by way of injunctions and/or to put in place physical measures to disrupt any further attempts to accumulate bonfire material on the site, which would also minimise public access to the car park until after 11th July.

After discussion, the Committee:

- i. granted full approval to proceed with a removal intervention at this site;
- ii. agreed to put in place physical measures to disrupt any further attempts to accumulate bonfire material on the site, which would also minimise public access to the car park until after 11th July.
- iii. agreed not to pursue legal options at this stage but to retain the option to pursue legal action to prevent the accumulation of bonfire material on the site, if the need arose.

**Special Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,  
Wednesday, 23rd June, 2021**

**Bonfire Beacons**

**Grove Street East**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 11th June, it had considered a request from a group seeking to place a beacon on a site in Grove Street East, where a bonfire had previously been constructed.

The Committee had been informed that an inspection report which had been prepared by a fire engineer and subsequent legal opinion had both highlighted the potential for significant damage to be caused to adjacent properties, should the request be granted for that site. Council officers had since been advised by the local community that they were unaware of any other site which would be suitable.

Accordingly, the Committee had agreed to defer consideration of the request to allow for further discussions to take place with the local community to be fully assured that no other site could facilitate a beacon.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reported that officers had again engaged with the community and that, whilst another site had been identified, the same fire engineer had stated that there were negligible differences between it and the original site, in terms of the minimum separation distances which could be achieved from residential property and the potential for damage to boundary fence/walls and to two electrical service boxes.

He added that, whilst the required level of separation could not be achieved at the original site, the potential for damage, based on the correct usage of the beacon, could be limited to the adjacent boundary wall and fence and stated that Members may wish to consider mitigation measures to reduce damage. They were advised, however, that this would be on the understanding that there would be increased risks for the Council associated with any damage.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Alderman Dorrian,  
Seconded by Councillor Pankhurst,

That the Committee agrees to provide a beacon in Grove Street East on the site which had been requested initially, subject to appropriate mitigation measures being put in place to prevent damage to property.

On a vote by show of hands, twelve Members voted for the proposal and four against and it was declared carried.

**Tennent Street/Upper Riga Street**

The Committee noted that a request for the Council to provide a beacon on this site had just been withdrawn.

**Special Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,  
Wednesday, 23rd June, 2021**

**Brown Square**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services informed the Committee that, following the meeting on 11th June, the Council had received a request from a local residents' group to provide a beacon in Brown Square. A beacon had been supplied in 2019 and in previous years.

He reported that an assessment of the site by a fire engineer had found that, whilst a beacon could be located the correct distance from residential property, there could be a risk of damage to the boundary fence of the local car park and to fencing around the play park. It had also raised concerns around the proximity of the beacon to the Westlink motorway and had suggested that an alternative site be found. However, a traditional bonfire would, in all likelihood, have a more significant impact upon the motorway.

The Director reported further that, whilst the required level of separation could not be achieved, the potential for damage, based on the correct usage of the beacon, could be limited to the adjacent boundary wall and fence and stated that Members may wish to consider mitigation measures to reduce damage. They were advised, however, that this would be on the understanding that there would be increased risks for the Council associated with any damage.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Pankhurst,  
Seconded by Alderman Dorrian,

That the Committee agrees to provide a beacon on the site used previously, with appropriate mitigation measures to be put in place to prevent damage to property.

On a vote by show of hands, twelve Members voted for the proposal and four against and it was declared carried.

**Call-in**

The Committee agreed, in accordance with Standing Order 48 (a) (2) (c), that the aforementioned decisions would not be subject to call-in, on the basis that an unreasonable delay could be prejudicial to the Council's or the public's interest.

(Chief Superintendent Freeburn and Superintendent Pollock left the meeting at this point.)

**Crematorium Recovery Plan**

The Director of City Services reminded the Committee that the Crematorium had been closed to the public since 2nd April, 2020 and that families had only been permitted to hold a short committal service outside the building.

She reported that a recent risk assessment had recommended that, with an extended time between cremations to allow for detailed cleaning and with some modifications to seating and flooring, a maximum of twenty-eight mourners be



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Wednesday, 23rd June, 2021**

accommodated within the Crematorium at any one time. She pointed out that the Council, as the owner of the Crematorium, had a responsibility to manage the risk of Covid-19 transmission and to ensure that the number of mourners did not exceed twenty-eight. Funeral directors had a duty to ensure that family representatives were fully aware of the requirement and officers had been working with them to agree new operating procedures.

Accordingly, she recommended that the Committee:

- i agree to re-open the Crematorium Chapel on 9th July, 2021 for short committal services, with up to a maximum of twenty-eight mourners being permitted; and
- ii consider whether to retain the screen and speakers outside the crematorium building to facilitate additional mourners over and above the twenty-eight who would have access to the building and to note that this arrangement would be kept under review in terms of managing the impacts on numbers and the smooth transition between services.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Alderman Sandford,  
Seconded by Councillor Pankhurst,

That the Committee agrees to re-open the Crematorium Chapel on 9th July, 2021 for short committal services, with up to a maximum of twenty-eight mourners being permitted but to dispense with the screen and speakers outside the building.

**Amendment**

Moved by Councillor McAllister,  
Seconded by Councillor McReynolds,

That the Committee agrees to re-open the Crematorium Chapel on 9th July, 2021 for short committal services, with up to a maximum of twenty-eight mourners being permitted and to retain the screen and speakers whilst examining other measures which could be put in place to accommodate mourners outside the building.

Upon being carried, the amendment was put to the meeting as the substantive motion and was again carried.

**Call-in**

The Committee agreed, in accordance with Standing Order 48 (a) (2) (c), that the aforementioned decisions would not be subject to call-in, on the basis that an unreasonable delay could be prejudicial to the Council's or the public's interest.

**Non-Delegated Matter**

**Summer Community Diversionary Festival Programme**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 18th June, it had, in considering a report on the year-end financial position for 2020/21, agreed to retain £500k which had been set aside for the Summer Community Diversionary Festival Programme, with a view to delivering the Programme later in the year. That decision had been taken on the basis of the uncertainty which existed around the Covid-19 restrictions and the fact that an open call had not been advertised for this year.

Alderman Kingston, who had sought and been granted authority to raise the issue at this meeting, requested, given the exceptional circumstances which existed this year, that the Committee reconsider its decision and agree that a Letter of Offer be forwarded to those groups which had been awarded funding through an open call process in 2019, subject to all due diligence checks being undertaken. He stated that he had been made aware during consultation that some groups were planning to provide activities in July/August and stressed that his request related to this year only and that there would be a return to the open call process next year.

The Director of Finance and Resources outlined the implications of the request, from a governance and financial regulation perspective, and pointed out that details would be required on the extent of the funding being requested.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services highlighted the challenges which would be faced in meeting the timeframe, given that applications for the Summer Community Diversionary Festival Programme usually took between three and four months to process and staff were currently processing applications relating to other funding streams.

In the absence of a valid proposal, the Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to defer consideration of the request until the monthly meeting of the Council on 1st July.

Chairperson

# Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Monday, 2nd August, 2021

## SPECIAL MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

(HELD IN THE GREAT HALL, CITY HALL)

Members present: Councillor Groogan (Chairperson);  
Aldermen Dorrian, Haire, Kingston and Sandford; and  
Councillors Beattie, Carson, Garrett,  
Lyons, McAllister, McLaughlin, McReynolds, Murphy,  
Pankhurst and Walsh.

In attendance: Mr. J. Walsh, City Solicitor;  
Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources;  
Mr. R. Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services;  
Mr. S. Lavery, Programme Manager  
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and  
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

### Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors Black, Bunting, Heading, Long and McDonough-Brown.

### Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

### Restricted Item

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

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

### **Summer Community Diversionary Festival Programme**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services advised the Committee that, following approval by Council in July 2021 to deliver a £500,000 Summer Community Diversionary Festival Programme, open to successful groups awarded under the 2019 call and up to

**Special Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,  
Monday, 2nd August, 2021**

the maximum amount awarded to each group in 2019, subject to application, that all of the 2019 applicants had been contacted, to advise them of the Council decision, with an appointed officer supporting groups through the initial stages of the application process and that applications had been received from the following groups:

- Twaddell & Woodvale Residents Association
- Feile (North, South/East & West)
- Greater Village Regeneration Trust (GVRT)

He informed the Members that officers had undertaken a preliminary assessment of each application against the agreed criteria and were seeking a recommendation from the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on funding to be awarded to each group.

The Director stated that, due to resource challenges and the significantly shortened timeframes of the application and assessment process, officers had only been able to carry out a preliminary assessment of applications and overview of the score awarded under the agreed assessment criteria. Subject to the Committee's approval, officers would issue each successful applicant with a letter of offer and terms of grant, similar to those issued in 2019. Officers would support each of the applicants with the conditions of grant, based on final documentation submission, and this may result in changes to the proposed programme of works and /or a reduction of funding to individual applicants in ensuring compliance with relevant Council policies and procedures.

**Proposal**

Moved by Alderman Dorrian,  
Seconded by Councillor Beattie,

That the Committee agrees to allocate the funding which had been requested by each group as follows:

- Twadell and Woodvale Residents Association - £84,386;
- Feile (North, South/East and West) - £250,000;
- Greater Village Regeneration Trust (GVRT) - £37,229.

In compliance with existing Council policies and use of Council parks and open spaces, the approvals would remain subject to negotiation of satisfactory terms and conditions of use, including any relevant fees, via an appropriate legal agreement prepared by the City Solicitor, including managing final booking confirmation dates and flexibility around 'set up' and take down' periods, and booking amendments, subject to the applicant resolving any operational issues to the Council's satisfaction, compliance with Coronavirus restrictions in place at the time of the event, and that the applicant complies with all relevant statutory licencing requirements.

**Special Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,  
Monday, 2nd August, 2021**

On a recorded vote, 11 Members voted for the proposal and four against and it was declared carried.

<b><u>For 11</u></b>	<b><u>Against 4</u></b>
Aldermen Dorrian, Haire, Kingston and Sandford; and Councillors Beattie, Carson, Garrett, McLaughlin, Murphy, Pankhurst and Walsh	Councillor Groogan (Chairperson); and Councillors Lyons, McAllister and McReynolds.

The Committee further agreed to note the contents of the letter from the NIAO and the Council's response.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer reminded the Committee that, at the Council meeting in July 2021, it had been agreed that authority would be delegated to the Committee to make any decisions in relation to the award of the funding and, in accordance with Standing Order 48 (a) (2) (c), that the aforementioned decisions would not be subject to call-in, on the basis that an unreasonable delay could be prejudicial to the Council's or the public's interest.

Chairperson

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# CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY FOR THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

*Date of Meeting:* 20th August, 2021

*Final CX Decision Register Published:* 26th August, 2021

*Recommendations sent to CX:* 24th August, 2021

*Final Date for Call-in (10am):* 2nd September, 2021

*CX's Comments Received:* 25th August, 2021

	Topic	Chief Executive's Decision	Subject to call-in
<b><u>Restricted Items</u></b>			
<b>2a</b>	Financial Reporting – Quarter 1 – 2021-22	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. note the report; and</li> <li>ii. agree to extend the five step Finance Strategy to the remaining quarters of 2021/22.</li> </ul>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>2b</b>	Medium Term Financial Plan and Efficiency Programme	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. note the challenges to be taken into consideration as part of the annual and medium-term rate setting process; and</li> <li>ii. agree that the same District Rate increase will be levied on domestic and non-domestic properties.</li> </ul>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>2c</b>	City Hall Recovery Plan - Update on Progress	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to note the report.	<b>Yes</b>

<b>2d</b>	Intelligent Client Function – Contract Management for New Regional Planning IT System	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to agree that the Council take on the Intelligent Client Function contract management for the new regional planning IT system, subject to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. that the Council approves the final Service Level Agreement, which, amongst other areas, should address the points raised by the Legal Services Section in paragraph 3.14 of the Committee report;</li> <li>ii. that the Council be part of the first wave of implementation of the new IT system;</li> <li>iii. that appropriate contingency be agreed with the other ten Planning Authorities, in the event that the Council does not recruit to the new Intelligent Client Function team in time;</li> <li>iv. that the posts in the new Intelligent Client Function be filled on a permanent basis and appointed through an external recruitment exercise;</li> <li>v. that engagement/consultation take place with Trade Unions, as required; and</li> <li>vi. that the proposed arrangement be approved by SOLACE and the Planning Portal Governance Board.</li> </ul>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>2e</b>	Update on Cyber Security	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. agree to the delivery of the key actions associated with the security programme, as set out within the report;</li> </ul>	<b>Yes</b>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. note that further consideration would be required around the key areas relating to incident response set out within the report; and</li> <li>iii. adopt the recommendations relating to Threat and Vulnerability Management and Cloud Security set out within the report.</li> </ul>	
<b>2f</b>	Community Diversionary Festivals Programme	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. agree to allocate up to a maximum of £82,470 to the Eastside Partnership to deliver its community diversionary festivals programme;</li> <li>ii. agree, in accordance with Standing Order 48 (a) (2) (c), that the aforementioned decision would not be subject to call-in, on the basis that an unreasonable delay could be prejudicial to the Council's or the public's interest;</li> <li>iii. note that, in compliance with existing Council policies and the use of the Council's parks and open spaces, the decision to allocate funding to the Eastside Partnership would remain subject to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the negotiation of satisfactory terms and conditions of use, including any relevant fees, via an appropriate legal agreement prepared by the City Solicitor, including managing final booking confirmation dates and flexibility around 'set up' and 'take down' periods, and booking amendments, subject to:</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><u>No</u></p> <p>-</p> <p><u>No</u></p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the applicant resolving any operational issues to the Council's satisfaction;</li> <li>compliance with the Covid-19 restrictions in place at the time of the event(s); and</li> <li>the applicant complying with all relevant statutory licencing requirements.</li> </ul> <p>iv. agree that the Party Group Leaders be provided with information on how the Eastside Partnership project contributed to a positive image of Belfast and met the definition of a diversionary festival, as set out in parts 6 and 7 of the assessment criteria; and</p> <p>v. agree that issues which had been raised in relation to the Wolfe Tones concert on the night of 15th August be referred to the Party Group Leaders for further consideration.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>
2g	Assets Management	<p><b><i>The Members of the Committee agreed, on the basis that decisions relating to the disposal/acquisition of assets could not be taken under delegated authority, to adopt the following recommendations, in principle, and noted that the decisions would be subject to ratification by the Council, provided that the enabling legislation permitting the holding of remote Committee meetings had been put in place at that time:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Dargan Road – Disposal of Development Site;</li> <li>ii. Blanchflower Playing Fields – Lease to Harland and Wolff Welders Football Club;</li> <li>iii. Parkgate Avenue Off Street Car Park – New Access Licence Agreement;</li> </ul>	<p>Yes</p>

		iv. Plot 13 Balmoral Estate – Lease extension and revised rent review period;  v. 75 Mount Eagles Avenue – Disposal of Land; and  vi. Laganvale Manor – Disposal of Land	
<b><u>Matters referred back from Council/Motions</u></b>			
<b>3a</b>	Motion - Paid Leave for Miscarriage	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to adopt the motion and agree that a report be submitted to a future meeting providing details on how it would be facilitated, resourced and managed.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>3b</b>	Motion - Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to adopt the motion and agree that it be referred to the Party Group Leaders for consideration, with a report on how it would be facilitated, resourced and managed to be submitted to a future meeting.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>3c</b>	Motion - Centenary of the Ulster Memorial Tower	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to adopt the motion and agree that it be referred to the Party Group Leaders for consideration, with a report on how it would be facilitated, resourced and managed to be submitted to a future meeting.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>3d</b>	Motion - Chat Bench and Tackling Loneliness	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to adopt the motion and agree that a report be submitted to a future meeting providing details on how it would be facilitated, resourced and managed.	<b>Yes</b>

<b>3e</b>	Motion - Charges for the Use of ATMs - Response from Payments System Regulator	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to note the response.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>3f</b>	Motion - Local Government Pension Scheme – Responsible Investment Strategy – Response from NILGOSC	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to note the response and agree that the Chief Executive of NILGOSC be invited to attend a future meeting in order to discuss NILGOSC's divestment policy and principles in greater detail.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>3g</b>	Motion - Transfer of Regeneration Powers to Local Authorities – Response from Department for Communities	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to note the response and agree that the Council should, in future, in responding to consultations relating to regeneration, emphasise the benefits for Belfast of councils being provided with regeneration powers.	<b>Yes</b>
<b><u>Governance</u></b>			
<b>4a</b>	Update on Standards and Business Committee	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. note the previous decision to establish the Standards and Business Committee and approve the Terms of Reference;</li> <li>ii. note that the City Solicitor/Director of Legal Services will undertake the role of Monitoring Officer;</li> <li>iii. note that the Committee will consist of 20 Members and representation will be based on the Quota Greatest Remainder system;</li> <li>iv. note the allocation of the positions of Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson for the remaining 2 years of the Council term;</li> </ul>	<b>Yes</b>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>v. approve the payment of a Special Responsibility Allowance to the Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson of the Standards Committee, and approve the proposed reallocation of the SRAs, as set out within the report.</li> <li>vi. approve the changes to Standing Orders; and</li> <li>vii. note that, following ratification by the Council, the Committee will be established with effect from 1st September, 2021.</li> </ul>	
<b>4b</b>	Review of Active Belfast Limited/Governance Arrangements – Terms of Reference	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. approve the draft terms of reference set out within the report; along with the comments submitted by the Active Belfast Limited Board,</li> <li>ii. approve the review timeline set out within the report; and</li> <li>iii. agree that officers proceed with the procurement of an independent consultant to conduct the review.</li> </ul>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>4c</b>	National Association of Councillors Annual Conference	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to approve the attendance of any of the eight Members appointed to the National Association of Councillors (Northern Ireland Region) at the conference.	<b>Yes</b>
<b><u>Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues</u></b>			
<b>5a</b>	Update on City Region Growth Deal	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to note the report.	<b>Yes</b>

<b>5b</b>	Supporting Belfast's Digital Innovation Ambition	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. note the works strands on digital innovation in the city;</li> <li>ii. approve the recruitment of four temporary roles (three years) to support the further development of this work (an Advanced Wireless Infrastructure – Innovation Broker, Smart District Innovation Broker and two Innovation Challenge Fund managers);</li> <li>iii. note the rationale for a Belfast digital innovation framework and agree that proposals will be brought to the September Committee meeting; and</li> <li>iv. note that Mr. Mark Gillan has been appointed (via SIB) as the Interim Belfast Digital Innovation Commissioner to replace Jayne Brady who will take up her new role as Head of the Civil Service on 1st September.</li> </ul>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>5c</b>	Belfast Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission 'Reset for Growth Report' - Council Response	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. note the Reset for Growth report and its recommendations;</li> <li>ii. endorse the 'Reset for Growth' report;</li> <li>iii. note the associated implementation plan; and</li> <li>iv. note the proposed expenditure of £25,000 from existing departmental provision for research to assist with the implementation of the Commission's recommendations.</li> </ul>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>5d</b>	Invitation to Inclusive Growth Network Annual Political Leaders Meeting - Building Back Places Towards a Green, Inclusive Recovery	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to approve the attendance at the event of the Chairperson or the Deputy Chairperson (or their nominee).	<b>Yes</b>
<b>5e</b>	Consultation on draft Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland – Council Response	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to approve the response to the Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland consultation for submission to the Department for Economy.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>5f</b>	Belfast City Council Safeguarding Assurance Framework and Review of Policy	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. approve the draft Safeguarding (All Ages) Policy, which complies with the most recent developments in safeguarding and note that the draft policy has been shared for comment across a range of frontline services, including AGRS, Legal Services and corporate HR; and</li> <li>ii. endorse the public consultation timeframe for the draft policy document from November 2021.</li> </ul>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>5g</b>	Off-Street Parking Enforcement Services	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. agree, in line with SOLACE, that councils should tender for enforcement services on the open market, rather than renew the service agreement with the Department for Infrastructure. This would involve a joint tendering procurement exercise with the other councils for car parking enforcement services and penalty charge processing;</li> <li>ii. agree that officers formally inform the Department for Infrastructure that the Council did not wish to enter into another agency agreement and that it would, alongside other councils, tender on the open market for off-street enforcement and associated services; and</li> <li>iii. note that a further report would be submitted to the Committee in relation to the procurement process, outlining potential efficiencies, value-for-money and any financial challenges in delivering the off-street car parking function beyond October 2022.</li> </ul>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>5h</b>	Funding Agreements to support Belfast Climate Action	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. approve the award of funding agreements to the following organisations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Linenquarter BID - £20,000 contribution towards the delivery of the Festival of the Circular Economy, which will align with COP26 in November 2021;</li> <li>b) Common Purpose - £10,000 contribution towards the delivery of the Common Purpose Legacy</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>Yes</b>



		<p>Programme, which will focus on young leaders roles in relation to climate and be scheduled for October 2021, in advance of COP26; and</p> <p>c) The Woodland Trust - £45,000 for the delivery of volunteer coordination, community outreach and support for PR and communication for the Belfast One Million Trees Programme over a 3-year period.</p> <p>ii. note the ongoing work by officers on the Carbon Disclosure Project and WWF One Planet City Challenge.</p>	
<b>5i</b>	Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman Consultation on Complaints Handling Standards for the Public Sector - Council Response	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to approve the response to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman's consultation on complaints handling standards.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>5j</b>	Extension of Temporary Pavement Café Licence Scheme	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to agree that:</p> <p>i. the temporary Pavement Café licensing scheme be extended to 30th September 2022 and that any new licences granted be issued with the same expiry date;</p> <p>ii. any application fees associated with the temporary Pavement Café licensing scheme should be waived until 30th September 2022;</p> <p>iii. there should be a gradual return to normal and proportionate enforcement procedures in line with established council policy guidance, and</p> <p>iv. a follow up report be sent to the Licensing Committee prior to September 2022 to seek Members' views on how to proceed in relation to Pavement Café licensing.</p>	<b>Yes</b>

<b><u>Physical Programme and Asset Management</u></b>			
<b>6a</b>	Leisure Transformation Programme - Assets Update	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to note the report and also that those independent recreation centres which are still under the ownership of the Council are also under consideration.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>6b</b>	Update on Physical Programme	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Proposed Movement - <b>‘IT Programme – Replacement Hardware for NIHE System’</b> (Stage 3 – Committed on the Capital Programme) - a satisfactory tender return has now been achieved and it is recommended that a maximum £360,000 is now allocated to this project. The Director of Finance and Resources has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council and</li> <li>ii. note the update on contracts awarded in Q1 2021/22.</li> </ul>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>6c</b>	Update on Area Working	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to approve and adopt the minutes of the meeting of the East Belfast Area Working Group of 21st June.	<b>Yes</b>
<b><u>Finance, Procurement and Performance</u></b>			
<b>7a</b>	Update on Contracts	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. approve the public advertisement of tenders as per Standing Order 37a;</li> <li>ii. approve the award of Single Tender Actions in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions;</li> </ul>	<b>Yes</b>

		<p>iii. approve the modification of the contract as per Standing Order 37a; and</p> <p>iv. note the award of retrospective Single Tender Actions in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions.</p>	
<b>7b</b>	Request for Funding - Belfast Youth Cup	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to allocate £5,000 to Playing for the Future CIC towards the cost of hosting the Belfast Youth Cup.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>7c</b>	Request for Funding - Tri-Cities Golf Event	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to agree that funding of up to a maximum of £2,000 be allocated from existing budgets to host the Tri-Cities Golf event.	<b>Yes</b>
<b><u>Equality and Good Relations</u></b>			
<b>8a</b>	Update on Language Strategy	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to note the report.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>8b</b>	Audit of Inequalities 2021 and Equality Action Plan 2021-24	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to approve the Audit of Inequalities 2021 and the Equality Action Plan 2021-24 for submission to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>8c</b>	Equality and Diversity - Quarterly Screening Report and Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report (2020-21)	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to note a summary of equality screenings and rural needs impact assessments for April to June 2021 and approve the submission to DAERA of the Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Return for 2020/21.	<b>Yes</b>

<b>8d</b>	Equality Impact Assessment for the Transport Hub and Associated Masterplan – Response to Translink	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to approve the response to Translink's equality impact assessment for the Belfast Transport Hub and Wider Masterplan.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>8e</b>	Minutes of the Meeting of the Shared City Partnership	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to approve and adopt the minutes of the Shared City Partnership of 9th August, including the recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. to invite the CYP2 Delivery Partner Active Communities Network to present to a future meeting;</li> <li>ii. to invite Mediation NI to present the Shared History Narratives for the Shared Space to the Partnership at its meeting in September;</li> <li>iii. to approve a reallocation of budget to enable the funding awarded to NBIN/TASCIT for the Challenging Conversations project under BCC 8 Our Safe Community to be increased from £5k to £6,565; and</li> <li>iv. to note that the Dean Clarke Foundation has, under delegated authority, been allocated £1,940 towards a diversionary programme of activity for the Tigers Bay/ Mountcollyer area under the Strategic Intervention Programme.</li> </ul>	<b>Yes</b>
<b><u>Operational Issues</u></b>			
<b>9a</b>	Minutes of the Meeting of the Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to approve and adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum of 12th August.	<b>Yes</b>

<b>9b</b>	Minutes of the Meeting of the Social Policy Working Group	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to approve and adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Social Policy Working Group of 30th June.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>9c</b>	Minutes of the Meeting of the Working Group on the Climate Crisis	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to approve and adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Working Group on the Climate Crisis of 23rd June.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>9d</b>	Minutes of the Meeting of the Active Belfast Limited Board	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to note the minutes of the meeting of the Active Belfast Limited Board of 9th August.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>9e</b>	Requests for Use of the City Hall and the Provision of Hospitality	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to adopt the recommendations made in respect of those applications received up to 9th August, as set out within the appendix to the report.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>9f</b>	Belfast Maritime Consortium Supervisory Board	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to approve her appointment to the Belfast Maritime Consortium Supervisory Board.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>9g</b>	Recruitment of Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to note that the Alliance Party would, in the first instance, seek to nominate a Member to sit on the selection panel.	<b>Yes</b>

Please note that the agenda/reports associated with the decisions listed above can be accessed on the app and on the web, via the following link:

<http://www.internalminutes/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=163&MId=10231&Ver=4>

# Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 20th August, 2021

## MEETING OF THE MEMBERS OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Walsh (Deputy Chairperson);  
The High Sheriff (Councillor Long);  
Aldermen Dorrian, Haire, Kingston and Sandford; and  
Councillors Beattie, Black, Bunting, Carson, Garrett,  
Lyons, McAllister, McDonough-Brown, McLaughlin,  
McReynolds, Murphy and Pankhurst.

In attendance: Mrs. S. Wylie, Chief Executive;  
Mr. J. Walsh, City Solicitor;  
Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources;  
Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;  
Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational  
Strategy;  
Mr. R. Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services;  
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and  
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

Apologies were reported on behalf of the Chairperson (Councillor Groogan) and Councillor Heading.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 18th June were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st July, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

### **Restricted Items**

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

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the Press and public from the meeting during discussion of the following items

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as, due to the nature of the items, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Section 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

**Financial Reporting**

The Director of Finance and Resources reminded the Members that the Committee, at its meeting on 19th March, had agreed that the five step Finance Strategy which had, in June, 2020, been approved to manage the impact of Covid-19 upon the Council's finances, be extended into the first quarter of 2021/22 and that it be reviewed on a quarterly basis thereafter.

He drew the Members' attention to the financial position and forecast for Quarter 1 of 2021/22, which had been based on that Strategy. The financial position for the Council had shown an underspend of £4.6m, which represented 12% of the quarterly net expenditure budget. The key contributory factors related to additional expenditure controls, which had helped to offset income, the under occupancy of office buildings and underspends in employee budgets. The Quarter 1 forecast had shown an underspend of £2.18m, which represented 1.5% of the net expenditure budget.

The Director went on to provide an update on the forecast reserves position and District Rate forecast at Quarter 1 and on the overall Investment Programme.

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:

- i. note the report; and
- ii. agree to extend the five step Finance Strategy to the remaining quarters of 2021/22.

**Medium-Term Financial Plan and Efficiency Programme**

The Members of the Committee considered a report which provided an update on the assessment of the key financial factors which would influence the development of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan for 2022/23 - 2024/25 and the rate setting process for 2022/23, together with an overview of the priorities and work in progress to establish the 2022/23 - 2024/25 Efficiency Programme.

After discussion, the Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:

- i. note the challenges to be taken into consideration as part of the annual and medium-term rate setting process; and
- ii. agree that the same District Rate increase will be levied on domestic and non-domestic properties.



**City Hall Recovery Plan - Update on Progress**

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note a report providing an update on the progress being made across each of the operational areas in implementing the City Hall Recovery Plan.

**Intelligent Client Function – Contract Management  
for New Regional Planning IT System**

The Chief Executive informed the Members that the Northern Ireland Planning Portal provided users with an online facility to view and comment upon planning applications. It was also used by councils to process planning applications and enforcement cases and to administer the regional property certificate system. The portal had originally been developed for use by the former Department of the Environment's Planning Service but had been adapted for use by the eleven councils when planning powers had been transferred to local government in 2015.

She reported that the current contract for the provision of the planning portal was coming to an end and reminded the Members that, on 24th April 2020, they had delegated authority to her to approve a joint award of a contract, for ten years initially, for a new regional planning IT system. The system would be shared by the Department for Infrastructure and ten of the eleven councils and the Planning Portal Governance Board had stressed the need for it to commence no later than June, 2022, given that the current contract would expire the following December.

She reported further that the Department for Infrastructure, which was leading the project, had recommended that the role of Intelligent Client Function contract management for the new IT system be undertaken by one of the ten participating councils, given that they would be the primary users. Of those, only the Council had expressed a potential interest in assuming the role which, she pointed out, would provide it with an opportunity to build a close and constructive relationship with the supplier of the new IT system and influence the future development path to best meet the Planning Service's needs.

She outlined the key activities associated with the role and confirmed that officers had been collating information across a range of issues to inform the decision. A detailed analysis of risk and opportunities had been produced in relation to functions and resources, including a Service Level Agreement, legal considerations, finance, governance, organisational considerations, recruitment, implementation of the IT system, security and information governance. Having examined the issues in the round, it was recommended that the Council take on the Intelligent Client Function contract management for the new regional planning IT system, subject to the following:

- i. that the Council approves the final Service Level Agreement, which, amongst other areas, should address the points raised by the Legal Services Section in paragraph 3.14 of the Committee report;

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- ii. that the Council be part of the first wave of implementation of the new IT system;
- iii. that appropriate contingency be agreed with the other ten Planning Authorities, in the event that the Council does not recruit to the new Intelligent Client Function team in time;
- iv. that the posts in the new Intelligent Client Function be filled on a permanent basis and appointed through an external recruitment exercise;
- v. that engagement/consultation take place with Trade Unions, as required; and
- vi. that the proposed arrangement be approved by SOLACE and the Planning Portal Governance Board.

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to adopt the recommendation.

**Update on Cyber Security**

(Mr. P. Gribben, Head of Digital Services, attended in connection with this item.)

The Head of Digital Services informed the Members that the threat of cyber-attacks was the most severe risk which the Council faced and that this had increased significantly due to the disruption caused by Covid-19 and the growing use of Cloud services, which had made critical applications more accessible to attackers. Over the past year, cyber-attacks had had a major impact on several local authorities across the United Kingdom and on a number of local agencies/organisations.

He reported that, in response to those challenges, Digital Services had engaged cyber security specialists to carry out an updated security assessment of the Council's cyber controls and a new Security Strategy had been developed. A security programme had been established, focusing on critical areas of cyber defence and he provided details of key actions which were being recommended around incident response, security culture, identity and access management, password protection, threat and vulnerability management, cyber resilience and cloud security. He added that Digital Services would be working with the Head of Finance and Resources to determine the best approach for funding initial response activities.

After discussion, the Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to adopt the following recommendations:

- i. to agree to the delivery of the key actions associated with the security programme, as set out within the report; and

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- ii. to note that further consideration would be required around the key areas relating to incident response, as set out within the report.

**Threat and Vulnerability Management**

- i. that Elected Members and officers who had been provided with Council devices must access the Council's electronic information and systems using these devices;
- ii. that Council information must not be sent to personal devices;
- iii. that laptop provision would be prioritised for officers using personal devices and those with Customer facing roles;
- iv. that BCC email would be blocked on personal devices that do not have Mobile Device Management software installed (Following MDM implementation); and
- v. that personal email accounts would be blocked on the Council's network.

**Cloud Security**

- i. to develop a list of approved cloud services/applications that have been centrally procured through Digital Services. These will then be whitelisted for use;
- ii. to block Council staff from using unapproved cloud-based systems to store business data; and
- iii. to require a business case for Cloud services.

**Community Diversionary Festivals Programme**

The Members of the Committee were reminded that, at the meeting on 18th June, they had agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to retain the annual allocation of £500k for the Summer Community Diversionary Festival Programme, with a view to delivering the Programme later in the year.

They were reminded further that the Council, at its meeting on 1st July, had agreed that:

“due to the exceptional circumstances of this year and the fact that it is now July, that the open call for the Summer Community Diversionary Festival Programme is suspended for this year only. The funding, which is already included in the annual budget, is allocated to the same groups which were awarded funding following the open call in 2019, with the same amount again being ear-marked for each. These groups will be required to submit application forms which will be subject to due diligence, the application process will be opened to these groups immediately, that there be no fixed

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closing date so that applications can be assessed as they come in and funding awarded. Mindful that of the fact that some, though not all, events are planned for August, authority be delegated to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to hold a special Committee meeting on 2nd August to approve grants for those applications approved by then. All planned events obviously must be compliant with Covid restrictions at the time, with the use of Council Parks for approved events in August granted, if required, and that call-in on this matter be suspended.”

The Director of Neighbourhood Services informed the Members that, whilst the diversionary and festival fund was a rolling programme for 2021/22, officers had stipulated deadline dates for the submission of applications, to ensure that there was sufficient time for preliminary assessment in advance of them being presented to the Members of the Committee. He confirmed that the only application which had been received by the latest deadline date of 6th August related to the Eastside Partnership, which had requested funding of £82,470.

He provided a brief synopsis of the project, together with details of the assessment score, and confirmed that, if approved, officers would provide the applicant with a funding agreement and terms of grant, similar to those which had been issued in 2019. As part of the initial assessment, officers had identified that further clarification was required around the management costs associated with managing the overall programme of work. He added that, whilst officers would support successful applicants with the condition of grant, there could, based on the final documentation submitted, be changes to the proposed programme of works and/or a reduction in funding for individual applicants in ensuring compliance with the relevant Council policies and procedures.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Alderman Kingston,  
Seconded by Councillor Beattie,

That the Members of the Committee agree to recommend that, in accordance with the Council’s decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to agree to allocate up to a maximum of £82,470 to the Eastside Partnership to deliver its community diversionary festivals programme.

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

The Members of the Committee agreed also to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority:

- i. to agree, in accordance with Standing Order 48 (a) (2) (c), that the aforementioned decision would not be subject to call-in, on the basis that an unreasonable delay could be prejudicial to the Council’s or the public’s interest;

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- ii. to note that, in compliance with existing Council policies and the use of the Council's parks and open spaces, the decision to allocate funding to the Eastside Partnership would remain subject to:
  - a. the negotiation of satisfactory terms and conditions of use, including any relevant fees, via an appropriate legal agreement prepared by the City Solicitor, including managing final booking confirmation dates and flexibility around 'set up' and take down' periods, and booking amendments, subject to:
    - the applicant resolving any operational issues to the Council's satisfaction;
    - compliance with the Covid-19 restrictions in place at the time of the event(s); and
    - the applicant complying with all relevant statutory licencing requirements.
- iii. to agree that the Party Group Leaders be provided with information on how the Eastside Partnership project contributed to a positive image of Belfast and met the definition of a diversionary festival, as set out in parts 6 and 7 of the assessment criteria; and
- iv. to agree that issues which had been raised in relation to the Wolfe Tones concert on the night of 15th August be referred to the Party Group Leaders for further consideration.

**Assets Management**

The Members of the Committee agreed, on the basis that decisions relating to the disposal/acquisition of assets could not be taken under delegated authority, to adopt the following recommendations, in principle, and noted that the decisions would be subject to ratification by the Council, provided that the enabling legislation permitting the holding of remote Committee meetings had been put in place at that time:

- i. Dargan Road – Disposal of Development Site;
- ii. Blanchflower Playing Fields – Lease to Harland and Wolff Welders Football Club;
- iii. Parkgate Avenue Off Street Car Park – New Access Licence Agreement;
- iv. Plot 13 Balmoral Estate – Lease extension and revised rent review period;
- v. 75 Mount Eagles Avenue – Disposal of Land; and
- vi. Laganvale Manor – Disposal of Land

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**Matters referred back from Council/Motions**

**Motion - Paid Leave for Miscarriage**

The Members of the Committee were reminded that, at the Council meeting on 1st July, the following motion had been proposed by Councillor M. Kelly and seconded by Councillor Mulholland:

“This Council recognises the emotional trauma and loss suffered by parents as a result of stillbirths and miscarriages.

The Council also notes that a growing number of employers across the UK and Ireland are offering paid leave to employees who have experienced or been affected by early pregnancy loss and miscarriage.

As such, the Council will bring forward compassionate, fair and progressive proposals for bereavement leave to provide leave for miscarriage and for stillbirth, so that employees who have been impacted do not have to use sick or annual holiday leave.”

In accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the motion had been referred without discussion to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to adopt the motion and agree that a report be submitted to a future meeting providing details on how it would be facilitated, resourced and managed.

**Motion - Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee**

The Members of the Committee were reminded that, at the Council meeting on 1st July, the following motion had been proposed by Councillor Bunting and seconded by Councillor Spratt:

“This Council acknowledges the unique achievement of Her Majesty The Queen as our longest serving monarch in history, hails her life of service to our nation, to the Commonwealth and to many aspects of international life, and agrees to organise in 2022 a programme of events to celebrate her Platinum Jubilee, including a funding programme for events organised by local communities across the City, as permitted by the Covid restrictions at that time.”

In accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the motion had been referred without discussion to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to adopt the motion and agree that it be referred to the Party Group Leaders for consideration, with

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a report on how it would be facilitated, resourced and managed to be submitted to a future meeting.

**Motion - Centenary of the Ulster Memorial Tower**

The Members of the Committee were reminded that, at the Council meeting on 1st July, the following motion had been proposed by Alderman Kingston and seconded by Councillor Pankhurst:

“This Council notes that this November marks the centenary of the opening of the Ulster Memorial Tower, on 19th November 1921, near Thiepval in France, as a lasting tribute to the men of Ulster who served and who gave their lives during the First World War.

Its position, opposite Thiepval Wood, is a particular reminder of the officers and men of the 36th (Ulster) Division who fell during the Battle of the Somme, and is a specific tribute to the Division’s heroic charge on the opening day of that great offensive.

This Council notes the various historic connections between the Ulster Memorial Tower and Belfast City Council and agrees to include recognition of this connection in our Centenary programme this year.”

In accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the motion had been referred without discussion to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to adopt the motion and agree that it be referred to the Party Group Leaders for consideration, with a report on how it would be facilitated, resourced and managed to be submitted to a future meeting.

**Motion - Chat Bench and Tackling Loneliness**

The Members of the Committee were reminded that, at the Council meeting on 1st July, the following motion had been proposed by Councillor Howard and seconded by Councillor de Faoite:

“This Council notes the challenges posed by loneliness and how this has been compounded during the pandemic. Loneliness is now endemic across Northern Ireland, with 88% of people saying that loneliness has become a bigger problem since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. 1 in 3 people in Northern Ireland are ‘more often lonely’ and chronic loneliness affects 1 in 20 people.

The Council further notes that the recent British Red Cross NI report entitle “The longest Year: Life under Local Restrictions”, has called upon the Executive to take urgent action to tackle loneliness and states that Northern Ireland remains the only part of the United Kingdom without a

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Governmental loneliness strategy. 70 organisations, including NICVA, have also called for an urgent strategy to be brought forward.

The Council can do something tangible to tackle isolation and loneliness by agreeing to consider the repurposing of two council owned benches as 'Happy to Chat Benches'. One of these is situated in the grounds of the City Hall and the other in the Titanic quarter. Many Councils across the United Kingdom, including some in Northern Ireland, have introduced chat benches to help break down the barriers of social isolation and to get people talking.

The Council also calls upon the Minister for Health to initiate the development of a Northern Ireland Loneliness Strategy in partnership with other relevant Executive colleagues."

In accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the motion was referred without discussion to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to adopt the motion and agree that a report be submitted to a future meeting providing details on how it would be facilitated, resourced and managed.

**Motion - Charges for the Use of ATMs –  
Response from Payments System Regulator**

The Members of the Committee were reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 4th May, had passed the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Heading and seconded by Councillor Lyons:

"This Council notes the increase in commercial (non-bank) ATMs in convenience stores and in our high streets. The Council further notes that the financial charge made against the consumer for withdrawing their own cash from their own bank account can range from 75 pence to £1.25 per withdrawal.

"This Council notes the increase in commercial (non-bank) ATMs in convenience stores and in our high streets. The Council further notes that the financial charge made against the consumer for withdrawing their own cash from their own bank account can range from 75 pence to £1.25 per withdrawal.

The Council understands the need for people to be able to access cash while acknowledging the pandemic impact on the use of cash in circulating in the local economy.

The Council also notes that those on fixed incomes face a financial charge to withdraw small amounts of cash, usually for necessities, and this is an unnecessary financial burden on older people and families.



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The Council, therefore, will write to the Financial Conduct Authority urging it to cap the number of ATMs that charge for withdrawing cash.

The Council will also ask the Financial Conduct Authority to check on behalf of consumers, how such ATMs are sited and the criteria applied and if there is any correlation between the siting of cash ATMs which charge in areas of social deprivation, on the grounds they may be used more often in a seven-day period by people on fixed incomes and are, therefore, more profitable."

The City Solicitor reported that, as called for in the motion, a letter had been sent to the Financial Conduct Authority, which had then been forwarded to the Payment Systems Regulator, as the organisation responsible for LINK, the United Kingdom's largest cash machine network.

The response from the Payment Systems Regulator had recognised the important role which cash played for many people and highlighted the need for everyone to have a wide choice when making payments, in ways which worked for them. The Regulator had recently reaffirmed this commitment in a joint statement with the Financial Conduct Authority.

In relation to ATMs, the Regulator was focusing on ensuring that LINK delivered on its 2018 commitment to maintain the existing geographic spread of free-to-use ATMs for cash access. To ensure this, it had issued Specific Direction 8 to LINK, which required LINK to do all that it could to fulfil its commitment to maintaining the broad geographic spread of free-to-use ATMs. The Regulator was currently reviewing the need to keep this Direction in place and planned to publish a decision on this shortly.

The response had gone on to point out that LINK's commitment included the replacement of those free-to-use ATMs which closed, provided that there was no alternative free ATM or Post Office within one kilometre. It had added that, should anyone feel that free access to cash was insufficient in Belfast, even in areas which already had an ATM, LINK could be contacted through its community request scheme. That would allow them to identify a location where a free-to-use ATM may be required. Approximately 50 cashpoints had already been installed as result of community requests.

The response had concluded by stressing that the Payment Systems Regulator did not have the regulatory authority or power to cap the number of ATMs which charged for withdrawing cash. The provision of pay-to-use ATMs was a commercial matter for individual ATM providers and this was not controlled by LINK or the Payment Systems Regulator.

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note the response.

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**Motion - Local Government Pension Scheme –  
Responsible Investment Strategy –  
Response from NILGOSC**

The Members of the Committee were reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 1st June, had passed the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Murphy and seconded by Councillor Walsh:

"This Council notes that recent weeks have seen the most serious escalation of violence in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory since 2014, with a tragic impact on innocent civilians and loss of life, including the deaths of over 60 children, and condemns the indiscriminate targeting of civilian populations and infrastructure and the disproportionate impact which this has had, particularly in the Gaza strip.

The Council recognises that the displacement of Palestinian communities in East Jerusalem and across the West Bank and the expansion of illegal Israeli settlements undermines the prospect of peace, not just in recent weeks but over decades, and represents a flagrant violation of international law.

Therefore, the Council will write to the Local Government Pension Scheme to seek, as part of its responsible investment strategy, that it will begin the process of divesting from any Israeli State owned company or private company involved in the occupation and the violation of Palestinian human rights. This will include any companies listed by the United Nations as operating in these illegal Israeli settlements within the occupied Palestinian territories.

The Council will also ask that NILGOSC carry out its own due diligence into any other companies which are not included on this list but are known to be involved in or with these illegal settlements.

Finally, the Council will ask that the divestment process is time bound to a period of 12 months from when NILGOSC makes those companies involved first aware of the complaint and intention to divest."

The City Solicitor confirmed that a response to the motion has been received from Mr. D. Murphy, the Chief Executive of NILGOSC.

Mr. Murphy had begun by stating that it was NILGOSC's policy not to divest (or invest) for political reasons and that all investment decisions were made on investment grounds. However, fund managers were required to take environmental, social and corporate governance matters into account.

He had pointed out that the NILGOSC pension fund was the largest in Northern Ireland and was valued at £9.79bn at 31st March 2021, with investments being made in a range of asset classes across the world. NILGOSC's overriding obligation was to act in the best interests of the Fund's beneficiaries. In this fiduciary role, NILGOSC believed that environmental, social and corporate governance issues could affect the financial performance of investments. Accordingly, these factors should be taken into account when

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managing the Fund's assets, subject to the overriding fiduciary duty to maximise the financial return on investments.

He had gone on to explain that NILGOSC had adopted the United Nations Principles of Responsible Investment as a means of publicly demonstrating this approach and that it expected the companies in which it invested to comply with best practice, in terms of corporate governance.

He had added that NILGOSC collaborated with other like-minded investors and groups to engage with companies, industries and countries in which it invested, with the aim of improving levels of corporate governance, where needed.

Mr. Murphy had then stated that NILGOSC delegated the selection of investments held to its fund managers and did not impose any investment restrictions in relation to social, ethical and environmental issues. NILGOSC had instructed its active fund managers to take account of environmental, social and corporate governance considerations, provided the primary financial obligation was not compromised.

He had concluded by stating that NILGOSC ensured that the fund managers whom it appointed were capable of appropriately considering environmental, social and corporate governance issues when making investment choices and that it monitored the managers' action in this area. It worked with the fund managers and the investment sector to ensure that sufficient data was available to aid effective decision-making.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor McLaughlin,  
Seconded by Councillor Murphy,

That the Committee agrees to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to invite Mr. Murphy to attend a future meeting in order to discuss NILGOSC's divestment policy and principles in greater detail.

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

**Motion - Transfer of Regeneration Powers to Local  
Authorities – Response from Department for Communities**

The Members of the Committee were reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 1st July, had passed the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor McReynolds and seconded by Councillor Hanvey:

"The economic impact caused by Covid-19 has had a devastating impact on many of our businesses and it is essential that the Council has the necessary powers and funding to support the rebuilding of our local economy.

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The new councils formed in 2015 were designed to be larger and more powerful, and since then Belfast City Council has demonstrated its competence and capability. Successfully undertaking planning and local economic development functions and delivering vital services.

One of the key levers that councils were promised, and is now needed, is the power of regeneration. Place shaping is increasingly becoming a critical part of the recovery process, especially in an environment where places will be different and there is a need of local solutions. Obtaining control of regeneration powers will also complement the Local Development Plans and our community planning framework.

In recognition of the consultation on Programme for Government, Investment Strategy and Budget, lobbying by NILGA and other stakeholders, we call on this Council to write to The Executive Office and the Department for Communities calling for the transfer of full regeneration powers and associated resources to local authorities as a matter of priority, as soon as an equality statement is agreed by all councils, to ensure the principle of objective need is central to any use of future powers or resources."

The City Solicitor informed the Members that the Council has received a response from Mr. C. Donnelly, Director of the Belfast Regeneration Directorate, on behalf of both the Department for Communities and the Executive Office.

Mr. Donnelly had begun by stating that he was aware of the continued calls for the legislation to extend regeneration powers to local government to be reintroduced and that the Minister for Communities had addressed those calls on a number of occasions.

He had then proceeded to set out the Department's current position on the matter by explaining that the Department for Communities had a range of powers which could be used to take forward physical, economic and social regeneration, including community development activities. The principal powers currently used by the Department to pursue physical regeneration projects were mostly contained within Part VII of the Planning (NI) Order 1991. These provided the legislative basis for progressing development schemes, acquisition, disposal and development of land for planning purposes and the extinguishment of public rights of way over land held for planning purposes. The Department exercised these statutory powers in the public interest in the assembly and vesting of lands for the purpose of comprehensive development schemes and projects. He highlighted the Victoria Square as being one example where the Department worked closely with a preferred developer and had used its vesting powers to acquire the necessary land to enable a Development Scheme to complete.

An alternative provision in the Planning Order 1991 allowed the Department for Communities to acquire land where it was expedient to do so for a purpose which it was necessary to achieve in the interests of the proper planning of an area in which the land is situated. This provided it with scope to vest land in circumstances where it had not prepared a Development Scheme, such as where the use proposed would be consistent with strategic policies and site-specific proposals in the current Area Plan.

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Mr. Donnelly had gone on to state that, as part of the Reform of Local Government, certain regeneration responsibilities and the associated resources had been due to transfer from the Department to local government. To give effect to that decision, a draft Regeneration Bill had been prepared, which provided for the powers available to the Department to be conferred on councils to allow them, where necessary, to address issues related to social need and to take forward regeneration within their areas. It provided also for the transfer of functions associated with Laganside to the Council.

The Department for Communities and its immediate predecessor (The Department for Social Development/DSD) had developed proposals to transfer regeneration powers to local councils on a number of occasions, as part of the wider Reform of Public Administration (RPA) and a number of attempts had been made to put the necessary legislation in place (2011, 2015 and 2016). On each occasion, this had not progressed, due to a lack of consensus on the issue. He stated that there had been significant practical difficulties associated with the reintroduction of similar legislation, including the requirement for primary legislation, and that it would not be possible to complete the passage of such legislation in the current Assembly's mandate.

He had pointed out that, since the decision in 2016 not to progress the Regeneration Bill, the Department had been working more closely with councils and this collaboration was working well at present. The relationship had been strengthened further in the response to Covid-19, where the Department had liaised with councils and other stakeholders to develop locally designed recovery plans funded through the Covid-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme.

Mr. Donnelly had concluded by stressing that the Minister was committed to strengthening this collaboration and focussing even more on partnering, co-design and delivery.

After discussion, the Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note the response and agree that the Council should, in future, in responding to consultations relating to regeneration, emphasise the benefits for Belfast of councils being provided with regeneration powers.

**Governance**

**Update on Standards and Business Committee**

The Members of the Committee considered the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues**

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of the current position and the decisions which are still required following the Council's decision to establish the Standards and Business Committee.**

**2.0     Recommendation**

**2.1     The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May 2021, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:**

- 1.   note the previous decision to establish the Standards and Business Committee and approve the Terms of Reference;**
- 2.   note that the City Solicitor/Director of Legal Services will undertake the role of Monitoring Officer;**
- 3.   note that the Committee will consist of 20 Members and representation will be based on the Quota Greatest Remainder system;**
- 4.   note the allocation of the positions of Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson for the remaining 2 years of the Council term;**
- 5.   approve the payment of a Special Responsibility Allowance to the Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson of the Standards Committee, and approve the proposed reallocation of the SRAs as outlined below;**
- 6.   approve the changes to Standing Orders; and**
- 7.   note that, following ratification by the Council, the Committee will be established with effect from 1st September, 2021.**

**3.0     Main Report**

**Key Issues**

- 3.1     The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the decisions which have been previously agreed and those which are still required to be taken regarding the establishment of the new Standards and Business Committee.**
- 3.2     Members will be aware that the Council, at its meeting on 1st July, ratified the decision to establish the Standards and Business and approved the Terms of Reference. It also approved the new process for Notices of Motion.**
- 3.3     To give effect to those decisions, it was noted that changes would be required to be made to Standing Orders and that a**

report would be submitted to a meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee indicating the changes required. It would also require agreement that an associated Special Responsibility Allowance be allocated to the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson positions of responsibility and funded from the reallocation of the existing Special Responsibility Allowance fund.

**Monitoring Officer**

- 3.4 The Committee, at its meeting on 20th September, 2020, in considering the proposals in relation to a Standards Committee, agreed to the designation of the City Solicitor into a new 'Monitoring Officer' role responsible for all issues in relation to standards. The City Solicitor will continue to undertake this role in the new Standards and Business Committee.

**Representation on the Committee**

- 3.5 The Committee will consist of 20 Members. The appointment of Councillors to Committees is made in accordance with Section 13 and Schedule 2 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 "The Act" using the default method, that is, the Quota Greatest Remainder method of proportionality, which allocates places to Parties based on the number of Councillors who stood in the name of the Party when elected using the formula outlined in Schedule 2.
- 3.6 The representation will be as follows:

**One-off Quota Greatest Remainder**

SF	DUP	ALL	SDLP	GREEN	PBP	UUP	PUP
6	5	3	2	1	1	1	1

**Additional Positions of Responsibility**

- 3.7 With the establishment of the Standards and Business Committee, there are an additional 4 Positions of Responsibility places to be selected for Years 3 and 4, that is:

Year 3	Year 4
Chairperson	Chairperson
Deputy Chairperson	Deputy Chairperson

- 3.8 These positions are allocated in accordance with Schedule 1 to the Act and using the d'Hondt order of choices. Therefore,

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these seats will fall to the Alliance, DUP, SF and SDLP Parties, in that order.

**Special Responsibility Allowance**

- 3.9 The Council pays a Special Responsibility Allowances to those Councillors it considers having significant additional responsibilities over and above the generally accepted duties of a Councillor. These special responsibilities are related to the discharge of the Council's functions and include all the Chairpersons and the Deputy Chairpersons of each of the Council's Standing Committees.
- 3.10 The Department for Communities has set the maximum amount which a Council may pay to Members in respect of Special Responsibility Allowances at £117,774, of which £61,425 is paid to the Chairpersons and Deputy Chairpersons. At its meeting on 19th March, 2021, the Committee agreed to increase the rates of all SRAs to meet this limit.
- 3.11 Therefore, to enable the payment of additional SRAs to the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Standards Committee, it will be necessary to reallocate the amount which each Position of Responsibility receives.
- 3.12 The current and proposed rates, to include the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Standards Committee, are set out below:

Position	Current Allowances	Proposed Allowances
Chairpersons	£6,300	£5,460
Deputy Chairpersons	£3,150	£2,730
Chair BW&UH Cttee	£3,150	£2,730
Dep Chair BW&UH Cttee	£1,575	£1,365
<b>Total</b>	<b>£61,425</b>	<b>£61,425</b>

- 3.13 The Committee is asked to approve the proposed allowances.



**Changes to Standing Orders**

- 3.14 As previously indicated, a number of changes to Standing Orders are required to give effect to the Committee. These are as follows:

**13. Notices of motion**

3.15 **Amendments required to SO 13**

- (a) All notices of motion shall be given in writing to the Chief Executive not later than ~~seven~~ **fourteen** days at least before the Council meeting. Such notices shall clearly state the nature of the motion intended to be submitted to the Council and shall bear the names of the proposer and seconder.
- (g) If a notice of motion fails to be considered at a meeting of the Council, such notice of motion will only be included on the Summons Paper for the following meeting if submitted in writing to the Chief Executive by the Member concerned not later than ~~seven~~ **fourteen** clear days, at least, before the date of that Council meeting.

3.16 **Additional paragraphs to SO 13**

- (m) The Standards and Business Committee will have delegated authority to adopt or reject Notices of Motion. The Lord Mayor will indicate at the Council meeting those Notices of Motion that have been considered by the Standards and Business Committee and whether such Notices of Motion were rejected or adopted. In either case, the proposer only may speak on the issue at Council.
- (n) The Standards and Business Committee will refer all Notices of Motion directly to a standing committee when the matter to which the Notice of Motion refers falls within the remit of that committee. At Council, the Lord Mayor will indicate that the Notice of Motion was received and referred. There will be no speakers on such Notices of Motion at Council.
- (o) The Standards and Business Committee will refer Notices of Motion for consideration by full Council when the Notice of Motion relates to a strategic or constitutional matter.

- (p) The Standards and Business Committee will not have the power to amend the wording of any Notice of Motion that is being referred to the full Council for debate.
- (q) Any amendments to Notice of Motions to be proposed at the Council are to be furnished at least one day in advance of going to the full Council and will be circulated to Party Group Leaders in advance of the Council meeting.
- (r) In referring any matter to the full Council, the Standards and Business Committee may determine to restrict contributions to the debate in relation to any Notice of Motion to one per political party. At the Council meeting, the Lord Mayor will clearly indicate if the restriction applies.

**17. Amendments to be submitted in writing and seconded**

**Amendment required to SO 17**

- 3.17 All notices of motion shall appear on the agenda for the Council meeting. ~~All amendments to amend a notice of motion and~~ **Any amendments to Notices of Motion to be proposed at Council are to be furnished at least one day in advance of going to the full Council and will be circulated to Party Group Leaders in advance of the Council meeting.**
- 3.18 All amendments to amend a motion that the proceedings of a Committee are approved and adopted shall, where practicable, be submitted to the Lord Mayor in writing by the proposer, and read to the meeting, and such amendment shall not be discussed by anyone other than the proposer until it has been seconded.

**36. Standing Committees**

**Amendment required to SO 36**

- 3.19 The following shall be the Standing Committees of the Council:

**(h) Standards and Business**

**37. Duties of Committees**

- 3.20 The Standing Committees shall be responsible to the Council for the matters described hereunder and shall control the various Departments which carry out the functions of the Council, that is to say:

**(h) Standards and Business Committee**

The main functions of the proposed Standards and Business Committee is to promote, sustain and safeguard the conduct of Councillors within the Council; to promote a collaborative working relationship between senior officers and Members; to ensure the probity of all the Council's proceedings; and to review and improve processes in relation to bringing business before the Council

(The Standing Order to include the remit of the Committee as previously agreed by the Council and appended to the report).

**Next Steps**

- 3.21 If the Committee agrees to the recommendations, then Democratic Services will, prior to the meeting of the Council on 1st September, seek from the Party Leaders the names of those Members being nominated to sit on the Committee and, from the relevant Parties, the names of those Members who will act as Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson in year 3 of the Council Term.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.22 As the proposed Special Responsibility Allowances will be paid from a recalculation of the existing SRA budget, there are no additional financial or resource implications related to the above recommendations.
- 3.23 The Committee will be serviced by existing resources within Democratic Services and Governance and Compliance.

**Equality or Good Relations Implications**

- 3.24 There are not any equality or good relations considerations associated with this report."

After discussion, it was

Moved by The High Sheriff (Councillor Long),  
Seconded by Councillor Lyons,

That the Committee agrees to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to reject recommendations 5 and 6 within the report.

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

The Members of the Committee subsequently agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to adopt the recommendations contained within the report.

**Review of Active Belfast Limited/Governance  
Arrangements – Terms of Reference**

The Members of the Committee considered the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

- 1.1 To present draft terms of reference for a review of Active Belfast Limited and the current tri-partite governance arrangements.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May 2021, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:**

- consider the draft terms of reference set out below; along with the comments submitted by the Active Belfast Limited (ABL) Board,
- approve the review timeline set out below; and
- agree that officers proceed with the procurement of an independent consultant to conduct the review.

**3.0 Main Report**

**Key Issues**

- 3.1 The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 20th November, 2020, agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting setting out the terms of reference for a review of the Council's governance arrangements, in relation to the delivery of its leisure service.**
- 3.2 The Committee noted the motion and agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting setting out the terms of reference for a review of the ABL board, including its membership and governance arrangements.**
- 3.3 Work to progress this action has been significantly delayed by the most recent COVID lockdown, however, officers have now**

had an opportunity to draft Terms of Reference for consideration.

- 3.4 The draft terms of reference set out below were presented to the ABL board on 9th August 2021 for comment. Members of the Board were content with the terms of reference, however, they had suggested that the review takes account of the boards own 2020 – 2025 strategy, as well as some of their other strategic development work (i.e. aquatics strategy). (The minutes of that meeting are being presented separately to the Committee for noting under agenda item 9d.)

**Draft Terms of Reference**

3.5 **Introduction / Purpose**

Belfast City Council intends to conduct a review of the tri-partite operating model currently in place to govern the delivery of its leisure service with particular reference to the role, membership and governance arrangements of the Active Belfast Ltd (ABL) board.

- 3.6 Specifically, the objective of the exercise is to:

- 1 Undertake a review of the overall performance of the ABL Board against the Council's original objectives.
- 2 Review the ABL governance arrangements including the board's role in monitoring contract compliance and the performance of the strategic operating partner (GLL).
- 3 Review the level of control delegated to the ABL Board.
- 4 Provide a commentary on the overall status of the partnership and governance, between the three parties to the contract.
- 5 Make recommendations in terms of how governance arrangements could be amended/improved going forward.

- 3.7 It is recommended that the work undertaken will include the following:

- Review the existing tri-partite contractual arrangements. Any review of contractual arrangements will need to take into consideration input and advice from legal services.
- High level assessment of the ABL governance arrangements including a review of performance.
- Review the membership of the ABL Board.

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- Engage with members of the ABL Board for their views – including Council officers, GLL, current Board members and, where possible, previous Board members (up to 3-year period of notification of termination of membership).
- Review the level of added value provided by ABL within the current tri-partite arrangements.
- Consider how contractual and governance arrangements could be improved based on review findings and engagement with Board members.
- Regular progress meetings with, and reports to, the agreed project manager or management team.

Presentation of a final report with recommendations to the Committee.

**Expected Outcomes**

**3.8** Based on the above activities, the following outcomes are expected:

- A report on the membership and governance arrangements of the ABL board.
- An options paper with recommendations for how governance arrangements for the Council's leisure service should operate in the future.

**3.9** **Proposed Timeline**

Agree Terms of Reference	CMT Active Belfast Ltd SP and R	June 2021 9th August 2021 20th August 2021
Appointment of independent contractor	CNS	October 2021
Commence review		October/November 2021
Draft report and findings	CMT SP and R Active Belfast Ltd	January/February 2022

**Communications and Public Relations**

**3.10** None.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.11 Funding associated with the review will be resourced from within existing revenue estimates.**

**Equality or Good Relations Implications**

- 3.12 None.”**

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to adopt the recommendations contained within the report.

**National Association of Councillors’ Annual Conference**

The Members of the Committee were informed that the National Association of Councillors’ annual conference would this year be held in Carlisle from 1st till 3rd October. The theme for the event would be “The Future for the Regions/Levelling Up” and delegates would examine how the Government’s commitment to levelling up across the whole of the United Kingdom to ensure that no community would be left behind, post Covid-19, would be managed and if it would be affected by the current financial situation.

The City Solicitor pointed out that, in previous years, the Committee had granted authority for any of the eight Members appointed by the Council to the National Association of Councillors (Northern Ireland Region) to attend the conference. The fee per delegate would be £350 and there would be additional travel and accommodation costs.

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to approve the attendance of any of the eight Members appointed to the National Association of Councillors (Northern Ireland Region) at the conference.

**Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues**

**Update on City Region Growth Deal**

The Members of the Committee considered the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues**

- 1.1 This report is to provide the Committee with an update on the progress of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD), including progress on the development of the Programme Business Case for the Digital Programme and next steps in the establishment of Belfast City Council as the Accountable Body for the deal.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1** The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note:

- the development of the deal document, based on the agreed approach to delivery of a phased deal;
- that Belfast City Council will act as the Accountable body for the deal ensuring that decisions are made in accordance with all legal, financial, and administrative requirements;
- the programme overview and the progress that has been made in the Digital Innovation Programme Business Case; and
- the update in respect of the BRCD Council Panel.

**3.0 Main Report**

**Programme Update**

**3.1** In May, the Committee received a detailed update on progress across the programme and an outline on the development of the deal document. The key components for a phased deal are now well advanced, with Business Cases submitted and being reviewed by NI and UK Governments across the programme. Discussions continue with UK and NI Governments to agree a timeline and process for negotiation and approval of the deal document, in parallel with the formal consideration of Outline Business Cases (OBCs).

**3.2** As outlined previously the overarching deal document is supported by both an Implementation Plan and Financial Plan. Following the last update to Members in May work has continued with the NI and UK government departments and the Deal document and both the Implementation and Financial Plans are now well advanced. The BRCD partners are aiming for autumn for these plans to be finalised, allowing the deal to be signed and funding to start to flow to the projects.

**3.3** As previously reported the Tourism and Regeneration and Innovation OBCs have been submitted to the relevant Government Departments for formal review. Four of the Innovation OBCs have been approved through Casework and by the Economy Minister and await Department of Finance approval. The remaining Innovation OBC is to be reviewed through Casework in October. Two of the Tourism and



Regeneration have Casework dates confirmed for September and Partners are working closely with Departments to schedule Casework dates for the remaining projects.

- 3.4 The Employability and Skills Proposition for the BRCD has been developed, following a detailed engagement process with partners and key industry stakeholders, with the aim of creating a collaborative model for identifying and providing the skills required for the jobs that are being created through the BRCD programme of investment. It incorporates three core component elements of an Employability and Skills Partnership, a core E and S programme and approach to deliver inclusive growth. Partners continue to work to develop and implement collaborative partnership projects in support of the BRCD objectives.

**Digital Innovation Programme Business Case (PBC)**

- 3.5 As previously outlined to Members, as part of the Deal, partners led by Belfast City Council have been developing a Programme Business Case (PBC) for the £125m BRCD digital innovation programme, which sets out the strategic areas of intervention under the Digital pillar. The Digital Advisory Board, chaired by the Digital Innovation Commissioner, has overseen the development of this business case which sets out an approach to create an agile, place-based funding environment to help address core societal and regional challenges through digital innovation.
- 3.6 This has been produced in line with HMT Green Book guidance and will enable a long-term and flexible investment programme, which continues to respond to economic and social challenges and opportunities. As with all BRCD projects, specific investments will require full Outline Business Cases in order to receive expenditure approval for significant expenditure.
- 3.7 Utilising BRCD funding, the Digital Innovation programme sets out to establish:
- A £55 million Innovation Challenge Fund designed to help address the regional Grand Challenges of Health and Wellbeing, Artificial Intelligence and Data and Sustainability and Resilience providing potential for competitive grant funding, equity/debt finance and an SBRI-style programme;
  - £40 million investment in Enabling Infrastructure to support the Belfast Smart District and regional

connectivity through investment in advanced wireless infrastructure and data infrastructure; and

- £30m investment in Regional Innovation Hubs (including £5m of capital contributions from partner Councils outside Belfast) to ensure diffusion of innovation and skills throughout the region, building further on sub-regional strengths including the creative sector and cleantech.

- 3.8 The PBC has been developed in a highly collaborative way with detailed engagement and input from the Department for Economy, Department of Finance, Invest NI, Innovate UK, and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport as well as with private sector organisations through an Industry Reference Group. Following detailed feedback and engagement from January 2021 until June 2021 the PBC has been updated to address stakeholder views – resulting in an assurance statement from UK Government that it is supportive of the proposals.
- 3.9 Following this, at its June meeting, the Digital Advisory Board recommended that the BRCD Executive Board support formal submission of the PBC to the Department for Economy and UK Government. With the Executive Board agreeing the recommendation the PBC has now been formally submitted with approval expected from NI Government in the coming weeks.
- 3.10 In parallel with development of the PBC, a Digital strategic narrative has also been advanced, as per the attached appendix, and will provide a strong communications tool for both the Digital Pillar and the overall Programme.

**Next Steps – Establishment of BRCD Accountable Body**

- 3.11 Members will be aware that Belfast City Council is the Lead Authority for the BRCD, which means it carries out a range of functions that support and enable regional partnership working, such as employing the Programme Management Office and providing administrative, professional and technical support as required to support the Deal.
- 3.12 When the final deal document is signed, Belfast City Council will also be the Accountable body for the deal ensuring that the partnership makes decisions in accordance with all legal, financial, and administrative requirements.
- 3.13 The main role of the accountable body is to:

- Ensure that BRCD funds remain identifiable from Belfast City Council's own finances and are released and used appropriately and in accordance with the funding terms and conditions;
  - Put in place all financial and budget management arrangements and processes to ensure the BRCD funding is managed and accounted for. This will be through Belfast City Council's financial systems and subject to the Council's Financial Regulations
  - Establish appropriate accounting and reporting arrangements in line with the requirements set out in the letter of offer, financial plan and financial agreement
  - Prepare set of annual accounts
  - Provide appropriate internal audit services;
- 3.14 All grant funding for BRCD from the relevant NI government department will flow to the council, with the exception of projects delivered directly by NI departments (DfI) and the Council will then distribute the funding to the BRCD partners.
- 3.15 The Council is now working with the Department of Finance to agree funding flow and governance arrangements including the development of letters of offer, processes for the drawdown of money and reporting and monitoring requirements.
- 3.16 Over the coming weeks, officers from the BRCD team, finance and legal services will also work to ensure appropriate internal processes and procedures are put in place to allow the organisation to carry out the functions of the Accountable body as set out above.

**BRCD Council Panel**

- 3.17 Members will be aware that the BRCD Council Panel provides a forum for members from all six partner councils to meet to jointly discuss issues, progress and benefits of the BRCD. Each council is represented on the Forum by four members and, as previously agreed by this Committee, the four BCC nominees are the party group leaders (or their nominees) from the four largest parties.
- 3.18 Members received an update on the last Council Panel meeting in May and are asked to note that the next Council Panel meeting will be hosted by Belfast City Council on Wednesday 29th September.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.19 All costs associated with the BRCD are within existing budgets.

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

- 3.20 The approach taken to develop the City Deal has been subject to independent equality screening and rural proofing and states that;

*‘BRCD is inherently inclusive, affording an opportunity for the region to grow in a way that will benefit the economy of Northern Ireland as a whole, thereby enhancing the lives and well-being of its citizens. If during further development of the programme it becomes apparent that there may be an adverse impact on certain groups or communities then the partnership commits to carrying out further Section 75 work and including screening and EQIAs as and when appropriate.’*

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note the report.

**Supporting Belfast’s Digital Innovation Ambition**

The Members of the Committee considered the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues**

- 1.1 To outline proposals for a Belfast Digital Innovation framework that seeks to unlock the power of digital innovation to support the city in its post-Covid recovery and longer-term plans. The framework will seek to maximise the combined impact of a series of planned initiatives and investments on the social, economic and environmental challenges facing the city over the next decade. Members are asked to approve the approach and agree to a number of temporary roles to support the work.

**2.0     Recommendations**

**2.1     The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:**

- 1.   note the works strands on digital innovation in the city;**
- 2.   approve the recruitment of four temporary roles (three years) to support the further development of this work (an Advanced Wireless Infrastructure – Innovation Broker, Smart District Innovation Broker and two Innovation Challenge Fund managers);**
- 3.   note the rationale for a Belfast digital innovation framework and agree that proposals will be brought to the September Committee meeting; and**
- 4.   note that Mr. Mark Gillan has been appointed (via SIB) as the Interim Belfast Digital Innovation Commissioner to replace Jayne Brady who will take up her new role as Head of the Civil Service on 1st September.**

**3.0     Main Report**

**3.1     Over the past four years, the Council has been working with key institutions to develop a shared understanding of the importance of digital innovation to the future of the city and, more recently, seeking to build a common city level approach to maximise the opportunity that digital innovation represents in the post-Covid world.**

**3.2     This work began in 2017 with the Council's Smart Belfast programme developed in partnership with one of the UK Government's Catapults and local partners. Smart Belfast, which is managed by the Council's City Innovation team, has delivered a range of successful projects with industry, SMEs and our universities. Its core approach has been to clearly define shared urban 'challenges' and then create opportunities for business, academia and the public sector to collaborate and co-invest in developing innovative digital solutions, while at the same time generating opportunities for our local SMEs to develop ideas for new products and services. Over its life span Smart Belfast has delivered a diverse range of projects and attracted significant investments for the city and has been showcased at both a national and international level.**

**3.3     Earlier this year, the establishment of a new strategic partnership, Innovation City Belfast (ICB), which brings together the senior teams at Queen's University, Ulster University, Belfast Harbour, Invest NI and Catalyst, (has**

significantly increased the City's ambition in utilising digital innovation to transform our economy and tackle major societal challenges). The partnership is supported by the Digital Innovation Commissioner and a number of other jointly funded staff, along with the Council's City Innovation team.

- 3.4 ICB is committed to nurturing an urban environment in which industry, academia and the public sector can collaborate on urban challenges such as climate change, technological disruption and the health of our communities. The Covid-19 crisis has not only amplified these challenges and opportunities but has greatly accelerated the time scales against which they need to be addressed.
- 3.5 The Partnership has agreed to prioritise three interconnected place-based projects that will have a significant impact on our city and its economy across three geographical areas:
1. The Innovation District - a 400 acre area along Queen's Island and reaching over to the Ulster University Campus. This location act as a 'digital innovation economy multiplier' - an inclusive, mixed-use urban environment for research, innovation, entrepreneurialism and investment. ICB has recently appointed an Innovation District Programme Director (Clare Guinness) to take forward the phase 1 development of this district.
  2. The Smart Port - With substantial investments in infrastructure and digital technologies, Belfast Harbour aims to become a Smart Port and Green Port, setting Belfast on the global stage with one of the world's best regional ports.
  3. The Smart District – Mapping closely to the boundaries of the city centre, the Smart District will be the location where new digital and data technologies can be tested, trialled, scaled and deployed in a real urban setting. The concept is to encourage partners to work together to remove unnecessary barriers and bureaucracies, to create the supporting conditions in which communities, researchers, SMEs, innovators and public sector bodies can co-develop world-first novel solutions to real-world challenges. The Smart District's emphasis will be on bringing world-class innovation to bear on the critical priorities for our city, particularly those articulated in the city's Bolder Vision for the city centre and in our Climate Plan.
- 3.6 Within these districts, challenge-owners will have access to world-class connectivity, physical assets, data platforms, challenge funding, collaborative partnerships, and operate in

a supportive sandbox environment in which new ideas can be explored. To further stimulate innovation, we will develop a challenge programme that will incentivise local businesses and academia to collaborate with us on societal challenges to help transform the local economy. As the Districts grow they will become the showcase for the city's innovation ambition and become attractors for co-investment and funding.

- 3.7 To take forward the key elements of the work described above four three-year contracts are required:

Smart District Innovation Broker – This role will provide a programme approach to the development of the various strands of work within the smart district. This includes aligned of the co-creation and co design of the Smart Healthy Neighbourhood, Smart Mobility and Smart Energy projects as well as developing co-investment opportunities and leading bids to government funding schemes. The broker will also work to maximise the impact of Belfast Region City Deal digital and innovation investments on the city.

Advanced Wireless Infrastructure - Project Broker. This role will focus deployment of advanced wireless networks across the Districts and lead the development of a £30 million business case for submission to the Belfast Region City Deal Infrastructure Enabling Fund. The post holder will work with the mobile industry, city asset owners, and end-users to take forward the business case, and to establish a delivery vehicle to ensure that Belfast has world-class connectivity early in this decade.

Challenge Funds Managers (x2) – These roles will lead the development of challenges programmes and the business cases for drawdown from the £50 million Belfast Region City Deal. They will develop models for managing funds; lead the business case development; take recommendations and business cases through Council and the City Deal governance processes; and if successful in obtaining funds, initiate programmes to support delivery of the programmes.

Connected Places Catapult's Homes for Health Ageing

- 3.8 An early example of the 'attractor' role that the smart district is playing, even in its early stages, is Belfast's recent success in bidding to the Connected Places Catapult's Homes for Health Ageing programme. This £2.5 million programme will support a small number of innovative 'testbeds' that seek understand how scientists, engineers, and public policy leads can work more effectively with communities to develop technologies in the real-world setting of homes and

neighbourhoods. In choosing our region, the Catapult was impressed with city's wider digital ambition and our long term plans for the smart district in particular.

- 3.9 A Northern Ireland consortium made up of Age NI, Belfast City Council, Connected Health Innovation Centre (CHIC), Market Development Association (MDA), Public Health Agency NI, Queen's University Belfast, The Health Innovation Research Alliance (HIRANI) and Ulster University is one of two UK partners selected for the programme, and has secured £50,000 for an initial scoping phase. Over the next two years, the NI consortium will explore and testbed innovative technologies to support people live longer in their homes and enjoy healthy, active lives as they age.

**Towards a new Belfast Digital Innovation ambition**

- 3.10 As Members will note, the development of the Smart Belfast framework, the digital ambition of the Innovation City Belfast and the investments opportunities available within the Belfast Region City Deal, all took place in a pre-Covid policy environment. In the subsequent 16 months, the wider strategic environment has changed dramatically. The Covid crisis has both accelerated and highlighted a wide range of economic and urban policy issues facing the city. These range from the impact on the city's already underperforming economy, its impact on the future nature of the high street, through to Covid's implications for our approach to higher density urban living and travel modes.
- 3.11 Alongside this, a number of major policy pieces have been produced that have brought greater clarity to the city's challenges – including the Resilience Strategy, the Belfast climate plan, and the draft Bolder Vision for the city centre. And, at a regional and national level, the new 10X vision for the economy and the UK Innovation strategy, both have implications for our approach to digital innovation.
- 3.12 The new Digital Innovation Framework for Belfast will bring together the cities ambition and priorities for digital innovation and re-frame the Council's and the city's approach in the light of these new partnership initiatives and policy priorities. In particular, the revised framework would seek to ensure that the city maximises the positive impact of the planned Digital investments under City Deal to ensure they reflect the new priorities for the city.
- 3.13 Members are asked to note that this framework will be co-designed with Members and stakeholders over the coming



four months – with initial proposals presented at the September Committee meeting.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.14 Funding for the three (three-year) roles has already been identified within existing budgets, as follows:

Smart District Innovation Broker – Smart Cities Budget  
Advanced Wireless Post – the Council's BRCD budget  
Challenge Fund Managers (x2) – the Council's BRCD budget

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

- 3.15 None.”

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to adopt the recommendations contained within the report.

**Belfast Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission  
'Reset for Growth Report' - Council Response**

The Members of the Committee considered the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues**

- 1.1 To update Members on the final recommendations stemming from within the Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission, 'Reset for Growth' report and consider the Council's response.

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:
- i. note the [Reset for Growth report](#) and its recommendations;
  - ii. endorse the 'Reset for Growth' report;
  - iii. note the associated implementation plan; and
  - iv. note the proposed expenditure of £25,000 from existing departmental provision for research to assist with the implementation of the Commission's recommendations.

**3.0 Main Report**

- 3.1** The Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission was set up to support the Council and city partners in the further development and implementation of the priorities as set out in the Belfast Agenda. A particular focus has been given to the priorities of (1) growing the economy and (2) city development. The Commission will seek to deliver the core objective of inclusive growth.
- 3.2** Regular reports on the work of the Commission have been brought to this Committee and to party group leaders, with Members regularly attending meetings of the Commission.
- 3.3** The Commission is made up of Independent, Authoritative, and knowledgeable voices from a range of relevant backgrounds. Brought together to develop constructive, deliverable and challenging proposals that are focused on delivering radical change to Belfast and Northern Ireland's long-standing challenges in areas including:
- Lack of productivity
  - Economic inactivity
  - High levels of deprivation, and
  - Poor health
- 3.4** The commission is unique in that its independent and is viewing these challenges in the round, recognising the interrelated nature of the causes and effects.
- 3.5** It was initially envisaged that the Commission would be convened for one year. However, as COVID-19 took hold the Commissioners thought it was appropriate that it considered how it could be used as a potential recovery mechanism.
- 3.6** Commissioners seen the significant impact of the pandemic in terms of:
- Increasing unemployment,
  - Increasing deprivation and social isolation, and
  - accelerating decline in some critical industries, such as retail, tourism and hospitality and noted that Belfast and Northern Ireland's prolonged structural weaknesses mean these impacts are likely to be concentrated and longer lasting.
- 3.7** Because of the impacts of Covid-19, and the presence of some strategic funding opportunities including Levelling UP, the Comprehensive Spending review and the Belfast Region City Deal. The Commissioners concluded that Belfast and Northern Ireland stood at an inflexion point. A point where if the long

running structural weaknesses were not addressed it is likely that the standard of living for the people of Belfast and Northern Ireland could be eroded further.

- 3.8 The Reset for Growth report was launched by the Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission on 28th June 2021.
- 3.9 The report focused on five areas that were informed by Belfast and Northern Ireland's structural weaknesses. These proposals are aimed at delivering the Commission's overarching aim of: *'An inclusive sustainable, open and resilient city economy that functions effectively and provides good employment opportunities for its residents and others'*
- 3.10 Under each of these strands were a series of ambitious proposals that recognised some of the underpinning challenges that have contributed to the structural weaknesses. These areas of focus, the proposals and the underpinning rationale are listed below.

Renewed Future City

- More than 8,000 households in housing stress
- Lack of residential development in Belfast with only 3,700 units completed in the last five years
- Lack of city centre population
- Target of 11,500 sustainable homes to be built in 10 years, creating new sustainable communities

Sustainable Future

- Belfast will use up its carbon budget by 2030
- Reliance on fossil fuels exposes our most vulnerable communities to high levels of population and energy price volatility resulting in 1 in 6 families in Belfast living in fuel poverty
- Implement a carbon reduction programme in the city to reduce carbon emission by 66 % by 2025
- To do this commence delivery of housing retrofit programme that will impact on our emissions and provide inclusive jobs
- To ensure that Belfast and Northern Ireland businesses and residents benefit from the economic opportunity of the transition to net zero, provide funding and a strategy for developing green businesses and jobs

### **Intelligent Future**

- Current levels of investment are £300m less annually than other UK regions
- Lack of digital catapult
- Despite this strong performance in attracting FDI
- For every £1 of public money invested in R & D and return on investment of £7
- Secure the commitment to a digital catapult and £300m of annual ringfenced R and D funding

### **Global Belfast**

- Strong FDI record
- Strong networks globally
- Diaspora
- Existing relationships Boston & China
- Maximise unique opportunities from Northern Ireland's unrestricted access to two markets and regulatory environments by growing the share of exports as percentage of GDP from the current level of 23% to 50% by 2025, similar to comparable economies.
- Develop and agree with partners a city to city trade and investment strategic action plan by 2022.

### **Inclusive Futures**

- Changes in labour market
- Displacement as a result of Covid – 19
- Lack of skills in critical areas
- Growth in green and digital sectors
- Create a comprehensive programme of inclusive pathways to new growth areas

3.11 The proposals above do not recognise all of the recommendations contained in the report, each of the core proposals articulated above are supported by a range of steps to accelerate the delivery of these ambitious goals. The Commission also identified several foundation pillars which are listed below.

- Investment in education and skills to drive attainment and address economic imbalances and deprivation, and power economic growth and innovation
- Place-based multi-annual financing model supported by a more agile and risk-based approach to decision making
- Pursuing an inclusive growth agenda to ensure that economic benefits and success accrue to all residents

3.12 These recommendations are closely aligned to several council policies and current initiatives, including:

- Bolder Vision
- SSA/Housing Regeneration
- City Centre Living
- BCRIS
- City Imagining Strategy
- The Belfast Resilience Strategy

3.13 Given this alignment officers would recommend the formal endorsement of the recommendations contained within the Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission report, 'Reset for Growth'.

#### Next Steps

3.14 Commission members were acutely aware that their proposals are far-reaching and involve system-wide change. They recognised that, while their proposals are borne of their collective experiences in other cities and places, they also recognise they cannot simply be transplanted into Belfast. For that reason, the Commission have suggested that implementation is co-ordinated through lead departments and agencies. These lead departments and agencies will convene small groups of senior officials and stakeholders to bring forward these proposals. In terms of governance regular updates on progress will be of course brought back to the Committee.

3.15 During the implementation phase there is a need to undertake research to develop work programmes related to implementation. This work as a value of £25,000 and would be drawn from the existing Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission budget. The work involved includes:

- Developing projects and policies to deliver the Innovation City Belfast ambitions specifically around ensuring jobs in growth sectors are inclusive and open to all residents of Belfast.
- Assessing the economic, environmental and social benefits associated with the delivery of the IIGC's recommendations.

#### Financial and Resource Implications

3.16 Note the £25,000 funding request for research into the implementation of the 'Reset for Growth' report drawn from existing departmental budgets. This funding will be combined

with partner contributions. This research will be used to educate departmental engagement and submissions.

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

**3.17 There are no equality or good relations requirements related to this activity.”**

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to adopt the recommendations contained within the report.

**Invitation to Inclusive Growth Network Annual  
Political Leaders’ Meeting - Building Back  
Places Towards a Green, Inclusive Recovery**

The Chief Executive informed the Members that the Inclusive Growth Network had been established in 2020, with a view to using shared intelligence, learning and experience to develop and test ideas for local interventions to tackle inequalities, alleviate poverty and improve productivity. The Network, which was hosted by the Centre for Progressive Policy, consisted of twelve councils and combined authorities from across the United Kingdom, including Belfast, leading the drive for inclusive local economies.

She reported that the Lord Mayor had received an invitation from the Network to attend this year’s Political Leaders’ Meeting, which would be based around the theme “Building Back Places: Towards a Green, Inclusive Recovery. However, given the relevance of the subject matter, it had been decided that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee should nominate a Member to attend. The event would be taking place via Zoom on either 14th or 15th September, depending upon the availability of those attending, and would, amongst other things, explore how the Network could facilitate the Council’s inclusive growth priorities in year two.

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to approve the attendance at the event of the Chairperson or the Deputy Chairperson (or their nominee).

**Consultation on draft Skills Strategy for  
Northern Ireland – Council Response**

The Members of the Committee considered the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to present the Committee with a draft response to the consultation on the Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland – Skills for a 10x Economy. Subject to Council endorsement, this will be submitted to the Department**

for the Economy as the Council's contribution to the consultation.

## **2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1** The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:

- approve the attached response to the Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland consultation for submission to the Department for Economy.
- given the deadline for submission of responses by 20th August (extended for the Council until 26th August), the Committee is asked to give delegated authority to officers to submit the agreed response before the deadline, with the proviso that it is subject to Council ratification on 1st September.

## **3.0 Main Report**

**3.1** The Department for Economy (DfE) recently launched a consultation paper on the Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland – Skills for a 10x Economy. The Department has asked for views on how the challenge of building a world-class skills system is to be met. This Strategy sets direction for the development of a flexible skills system for the next decade, in line with DfE's 10x economic vision. It aims to align the skills system to better jobs and better wages across the economy. There is an overarching focus on creating a skills framework which can drive economic prosperity and tackle social inequality.

**3.2** The Skills Strategy recommendations have been informed by preliminary work undertaken last year by the OECD. There has also been some stakeholder engagement through a Programme Board (including local government representation through Belfast City Council's Chief Executive), as well as further data input through UUEPC's NI Skills Barometer.

**3.3** The draft strategy includes three broad objectives. These are:

- Addressing skills imbalances, driving economic growth
- Creating a culture of lifelong learning
- Enhancing digital skills – developing a digital spine.

**3.4** It also contains three strategic "enablers" which will support the delivery of the strategy:

- Enhancing policy cohesion

- Building strong relationships
- Investment in the skills system.

**3.5 Some of the key areas of challenge identified through the supporting research include:**

- Graduate and post-graduate levels: the overall number of qualifications produced in Northern Ireland is broadly in accordance with anticipated demand, but there is a need to rebalance the type of qualifications delivered towards STEM, with corresponding reductions in subjects more typically aligned to work in the public sector;
- Participation in lifelong learning: The Strategy sets a framework and objectives for the NI skills system to 2030. As 80% of the 2030 workforce will have already completed compulsory education, the education system needs to adapt to lifelong learning to adapt to a rapidly changing economy. OECD research suggests adults in OECD countries spend, on average, 30% more time in adult education than individuals here. As the skills demands of the labour market continue to grow, there is a risk that too many people are left behind, deepening inequalities even further;
- There is significant under-supply of level 3-5 qualifications (above GCSE and equivalent and below degree level). DfE assert that qualifications at this level will be vital in adapting to new technologies, driving economic growth and providing better jobs for more people. The Skills Barometer shows that too many people in the workforce have qualifications at level two or below. Jobs at this level are diminishing and, exasperated by Covid 19, low skilled individuals are more exposed to economic shocks and face challenges from automation;
- Enhancing digital skills: At the highest level, advanced digital skills are essential to develop the digital sector and key strategic clusters Digital, ICT and Creative Industries, Cyber Security, Agri-Food, Fintech/Financial Services, Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering and Life and Health Sciences (e.g. Digital Medicine) – all of which are essential to drive the necessary productivity and competitiveness improvements that the city needs to address. However, the Strategy recognises that, as the economy and workplaces become increasingly digitised, digital skills will be required across the board – at all skills levels.



- 3.6 In order to address the challenges and deliver on the 10x growth ambitions, a series of costed interventions has been incorporated in the Strategy. Key proposed activities include:
- Lifelong learning project and action plan
  - A Flexible Skills Fund
  - Public sector and all age apprenticeships
  - Overhaul of Careers Guidance (for young people)
  - Publication of Work Quality Indicators
  - Skills Action Plans to support priority clusters
  - Review of Level 4/5 HE provision in FE
  - Further Skills and Innovation research.
- 3.7 Members will be aware of the Council's work with the Department for Communities (DfC) in developing Belfast Inclusive Labour Market Partnership (LMP). The purpose of the LMP is to make employability and skills interventions more effective and support an inclusive approach to growth in the city. It aims to bring together, in a single body, the necessary local knowledge and expertise to build on existing structures and identify priority interventions within employability and skills that will:
- Enhance the effectiveness of current interventions
  - Highlight specific areas of challenge that risk inhibiting the city's ability to develop in a way that is inclusive and ambitious and that supports our growth ambitions
  - Be informed by data and insights – and guided by local knowledge of “what works”
  - Enable testing at scale to be able to make a measurable impact on jobs and employment in the city.
- 3.8 Labour Market Partnerships form part of the local governance structure associated with a new approach to employability issues across government – called Employability NI. While DfC is the lead department, DfE is directly engaged in the work of the Labour Market Partnerships and the partnerships are directly referenced in the draft strategy as being critical vehicles for coordination and prioritisation of local employability interventions. Other relevant areas of work that are important considerations for the outworking of the skills strategy include the work of Innovation City Belfast (ICB) – and the need to ensure an appropriate supply of skilled labour to meet future growth prospects. ICB has also identified the importance of taking an inclusive approach to innovation, including in the approach to skills development. This will require the development of new routes into growth sectors, rather than relying on existing models that are largely based on university access.

**3.9** It is recommended that the Council's response, as set out in the attached appendix, be submitted to DfE, subject to Council ratification. The response is structured in line with the consultation document issued by DfE. Some of the key points of the response include:

- Agreement with the overarching strategic direction aligned to the Programme for Government and 10x ambitions. There is a commitment to fully resourcing the Labour Market Partnerships and an ambition for greater engagement and – potentially – devolution of responsibility, at an appropriate point;
- Recommendation that Labour Market Partnerships are utilised as the sub-regional skills structures within the strategy as outlined in the consultation document;
- Proposal that the Strategy should not only concentrate on providing access to better jobs, but also support people who may require additional assistance in getting a first foot on the employment ladder, and helping others to build the confidence and skills to obtain a better job. This will require – among other things – a fit-for-purpose independent careers advice and guidance service is needed for adults as well as young people to ensure inequality is tackled and the skills gaps are addressed. This has also emerged as a priority area of work within the Labour Market Partnership;
- Recognition of the important role played by the VCSE sector in engaging with those who are further back in the labour market, those with lower attainment levels, those experiencing in-work poverty etc
- Recommendation that intelligence from the proposed Labour Market Observatory, within Belfast's LMP proposals (and likely to emerge within most Labour Market Partnerships), should be used in tandem with the Skills Barometer to inform decision making and allocate appropriate resources
- Recognition of the challenges in attracting and retaining workers across a range of sectors such as transport and logistics (all driving occupations), hospitality, social care etc. Initiatives therefore need to be agile to meet immediate skills shortages at level three and below. The Council's Employment Academy model has been successful to date: with 4 in 5 participants finding a job at the end of the intervention.

Models such as this need to be flexed and scaled up to address sectoral demand

- Identification of curriculum gaps at all levels across a range of new and emerging job areas in the green economy. In our view, this sector has not received sufficient profile in the draft Strategy. Without sufficient provision at all levels, there is a risk that we will not fully embrace the opportunities that will be created by the green economy
- The Strategy document states that some sectors such as hospitality, social care etc. have a reputation of not providing 'better quality jobs', however there is a work to be done to support these sectors to tackle this. Business and employers are needed as partners in skill provision. To this end, we welcome the 'better job pledge' as quality of work is important, together with security, wages, contracted hours, progression potential and better protection against precarious employment. We recommend that the Inclusive Growth City Charter (Belfast Business Promise) being developed by the Council is utilised as the basis for developing this 'better jobs pledge'
- Given that the volume of replacement demand will significantly outnumber new job creation over the next ten years, it is important that skills interventions are open to employers across all skills areas – not just priority growth sectors. This will be particularly important in areas such as logistics, hospitality and social care.

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

- 3.10 No specific financial or resource implications associated with this strategy.

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

- 3.11 There are no equality implications in relation to our draft response."

#### **Belfast City Council's Response to the Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland Skills for a 10x Economy - DRAFT**

The Skills Strategy was considered by the Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 20 August with the enclosed corporate response agreed. This response remains subject to ratification by Full Council on 1st September 2021 and we will inform you at that stage if there are any changes made.

1. ***Are you content with the overarching strategic direction set out in the section The Programme for Government, our Economic Vision (a 10x Economy) and the Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland:***

***“the Skills Strategy must be directly aligned to the PfG aim of improving wellbeing for all by supporting efforts to tackle inequalities, providing low skilled, low paid, or unemployed individuals with the opportunities they need to work in ‘better jobs’, whilst concurrently focusing on provision of the skills and qualifications needed to drive economic growth and competitiveness in the sectors where Northern Ireland has real global potential.”***

The Council agrees with the overarching strategic direction aligned to the Programme for Government. In particular, the focus on lifelong learning is welcomed to ensure that no one is left behind in terms of skills provision in NI. However, to ensure this is met in practice, independent and fit-for-purpose careers advice and guidance is needed – both for young people and for adults - to ensure inequality is tackled and the skills gaps are redressed. Independent careers/skills advice and guidance is needed to shape aspirations and to create skills pathways that support outcomes for individuals (better jobs) but also increasing talent pool for our economy.

As documented in the Council’s response to the Executive on the PfG Outcomes Framework relating to Skills and Employability,<sup>1</sup> the Council calls for further devolution of employability and skills functions – such as those provided by Employability NI and the creation of the Labour Market Partnerships – to increase the effectiveness of interventions and improve outcomes for Belfast residents.

It is recommended that the Labour Market Partnership structures that have been established in each council area are designated as the subregional structures proposed within the Strategy. This will ensure that both Employability and Skills are aligned using a place-based approach.

The Council would wish to explore how we can work with partners to use and intelligence-driven and evidence-based approach to enhance the effectiveness of the planning work around future skills needs and training provision to meet these needs with the objective of supporting inclusive economic growth. To do this, the Council intends to establish a Labour Market Observatory for Belfast – bringing together data and intelligence both in terms of supply and demand, and we understand that other councils are exploring similar approaches. We recommend that these insights are shared across partners and utilised to inform the design of interventions that are agile, optimise outcomes (jobs, education, training) and ensure alignment between labour market demand and skills. To do this effectively, the Council recommends that better data sharing among central government departments and the council is required (in compliance with GDPR and Data Protection legislation).

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<https://minutes.belfastcity.gov.uk/documents/s90483/Programme%20for%20Government%20Outcomes%20Framework%20-%20Draft%20Consultation%20Response.pdf> and  
<https://minutes.belfastcity.gov.uk/documents/s90485/Appendix%20-%20Draft%20Council%20Response%20to%20PfG%20Outcomes%20Framework.pdf>

In Belfast, the work of Innovation City Belfast will be critical in shaping and directing the skills interventions required to meet the growing demand in the sector. Significant investments such as the City Deal will create opportunities that can enhance competitiveness and productivity levels. These will necessitate commensurate levels of investment in skills in order to ensure that there is a sufficient and appropriate supply of skilled workers.

As the planning authority, the city Council is now in receipt of significant intelligence regarding future employment opportunities at key developments. The Council would wish to explore how we can work with partners to use this information to plan better around skills needs and training provision to meet these needs with the objective of supporting inclusive economic growth.

The Strategy should not only concentrate on providing access to better jobs, but also support people who may require additional assistance in getting a first foot on the employment ladder and have the confidence, skills and career path created to obtain a better job. Quality of work is important, together with security, wages, contracted hours, progression potential and better protection for unstable work.

*2. Do you agree with the need to rationalise the skills landscape by limiting the number of strategies governing separate parts of the skills system, instead focusing on a single, overarching, Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland (see page 40-41)?*

The Council agrees with the need to rationalise the skills landscape. We propose that DfE works closely with the Labour Market Partnerships to do this, creating an overarching framework for Employability & Skills that works to actively reduce skills mismatches by ensuring that provision is directly matched to intelligence-driven demand. In our view, employability and skills should be closely aligned.

*3. Have you any other comments on the Strategic Context Chapter?*

In reference to the over-provision up to Level One qualifications, the Council agrees there is over provision at that level and below. However, Level One and below needs to be provided to allow foundational skills to be built. The role of local provision to engage those who are further back in the labour market also needs to be addressed and the role of the VCSE sector is crucial in doing the outreach amination and engagement within local communities needed to create a skills pipeline that meets employer needs. The challenge is to build transparent and coherent pathways from level one towards higher skills levels or towards other vocational pathways, rather than them necessarily being an end in themselves.

*4. Acknowledging the need for the development of 'SMART' targets, do you agree that the skills supply gap identified under the Skills Barometer's high growth scenario should be placed at the centre of the proposed Strategy (see page 43)?*

The Council broadly agrees that the skills supply gap identified under the NI Skills Barometer's high growth scenario should be placed at the centre of the proposed Strategy. Belfast's Skills Barometer is in line with the gaps identified at levels three to five. However, the NI Skills Barometer needs to be supplemented to capture real-time market intelligence on labour supply and demand: this volatility has been highlighted by the effects of COVID-19. A greater focus on 'highly skilled' workers should not overshadow acute labour shortages which are threatening the sustainability and survival of businesses across many sectors. The Council recommends that intelligence from the proposed Labour Market Observatory, within Belfast's LMP proposals, should be used in tandem with the Barometer to inform decision-making and allocate appropriate resources.

In addition:

- The Skills Barometer is an invaluable data source to guide the focus of the strategy however, it would be beneficial to see focus on not just higher skills levels such as the 4 cluster areas proposed but also on skills needed for a strong regional economy including health and social care; the skills gaps created by the demand for 'replacement jobs' in sectors such as logistics and transport; and emerging skills demand such as the green economy (transport and retrofitting).
- There are challenges in attracting and retaining workers being reported by employers and representative bodies across a range of sectors such as transport and logistics (all driving occupations), hospitality, social care etc. Some sectors are directly linking labour shortages to EU exit. Other issues such as a "fear of further lockdowns" also means that workers who are currently furloughed are anxious about returning to work in specific sectors while many others have left the sector for other types of work meaning many businesses are now facing staff shortages as the economy begins to open up again. Initiatives therefore need to be agile to meet immediate skills shortages at level three and below. The success rate of the Council's Employment Academy model in helping people access jobs or better jobs sits at 79% although further resources to address skills gaps in an agile way will be required to address sectoral demand.
- There is currently a lack of a skills development curriculum for new and emerging jobs in the green economy across all education and skills providers in NI. The green economy and related skills are largely overlooked in the strategy and, as a key growth area, it would be beneficial for a great emphasis on curriculum development and provision for new and emerging sectors if we want to future-proof the strategy. Without a proper curriculum (at all levels) it will be difficult to give local people the right skills to embrace the opportunities that will be created by the green economy
- The Strategy document states that some sectors such as hospitality, social care etc. have a reputation of not providing 'better quality jobs', however there is a work to be done to support these sectors to tackle this. Business and employers are key partners in employability and skills provision. To this end, the Council welcomes the 'better job pledge' as quality of work is important,

together with security, wages, contracted hours, progression potential and better protection against precarious employment. We recommend that the Inclusive Growth City Charter (Belfast Business Promise) being developed by the Council is utilised as the basis for developing this 'better jobs pledge' and are happy to share this information

- The Skills Strategy should provide support to ensure better jobs across all sectors – not just higher growth sectors – recognising the need to support 'replacement jobs' which experience significant skills mismatches such as logistics and driving occupations
- Although the Strategy document specifically recognises the under-provision of skills level between level two to five, the sectors identified tend to need at least level four qualifications as an entry level. There is a lack of support for the sectors that employ those with qualification level two to five, for example logistics, administration and care sectors. In addition, given the recruitment challenges in some of the high growth sectors, it is important that work is undertaken with employers to look at new and alternative entry pathways, as a means of securing the labour market supply for the future
- The NI Skills Barometer will also benefit from DfE's policy Objective 11, on page 96 regarding investment in the development of a consolidated portal, providing open access to information on current and forecast labour market skill needs and applicable study/work opportunities.

**5. Are you content that the proposals contained in pages 43 - 56 provide an ambitious and comprehensive approach to 'Addressing Skills Imbalance, Driving Economic Growth'?**

No	Proposal	Page	Belfast City Council Response
1	We will examine the potential to mainstream remote learning provision in key areas of essential skills, employability skills and digital skills for individuals and employers.	50	We welcome this approach
2	DfE will work directly with DfC to support collaborative approaches between local and central government to develop the education and training provision required to underpin both the Skills Strategy and the 'Employability NI' Strategy.	52	We strongly welcome this approach
3		53	The Council welcomes the commitment to develop and introduce new measures on careers guidance outcomes for young people. However,

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	The outcomes from the 'Transition of Young People into Careers (14 – 19) Project', jointly led by DE and DfE will be recognised within the new Skills Strategy.		the service should align and join up with an overall career service encompassing young people and adults and the proposal under Point 13 on 'Preparing for Success'. Under Belfast's LMP, the Council is proposing a "Gateway" service to provide residents with timely advice and guidance to help them find work or upskill.
4	DfE will review how it collects information on the destination and outcomes for FE College leavers, to improve evidence on long-term outcomes for FE qualifiers.	54	The Council welcomes this approach and would encourage DfE to share this information as part of their engagement with Local Labour Market Partnerships in order to improve outcomes for participants and inform the content of new interventions.
5	We will ensure that Northern Ireland's Further Education sector has the resource and capability to deliver its dual objectives of providing essential, entry level pathways to education and professional and technical skills, to support economic and social prosperity.	55	The Council welcomes this approach. However, we also acknowledge the key role played by the VCSE sector, particularly in engaging those who are further back in the labour market, those with lower attainment levels and those experiencing in-work poverty etc. We consider that there is an opportunity for the development of local models whereby the VCSE engages in the essential outreach and early engagement work and is supported by FE and other providers to ensure alignment with vocational and employment demand.
6	A review of level 4 and 5 'HE in FE' education will be conducted. Recommendations and actions arising from the review will be incorporated in the implementation of the Skills Strategy	55	We welcome this approach in order to ensure appropriate levels of supply for future economic growth, particularly in key growth areas.



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<b>7</b>	Relevant Government departments and arms-length bodies will contribute fully to the 'Independent Review of Education', announced by the Minister of Education in December 2020, to ensure our education system is sustainable, economically relevant and equipped to deliver the best outcomes for our children, young people and society as a whole.	<b>57</b>	The Council welcomes this approach.
<b>8</b>	We will increase collaborative investment between Government, research institutions and business in post-graduate education and research, which support the development of Northern Ireland's key strategic clusters set out in 'A 10x Economy'.	<b>58</b>	We support this approach. We consider that some of the models developed through the work of the Belfast Region City Deal can be useful blueprints for collaboration of this nature, and strongly endorse the work of Innovation City Belfast in taking some of these initiatives forward.
<b>9</b>	Recommendations emerging from the Women in STEM Working Group will be fully recognised in the Skills Strategy and subsequent skills action plans.	<b>60</b>	The Council welcomes this approach. We also suggest that there should be a commitment to supporting inclusion amongst all under-represented groups as part of all of the interventions that are proposed.

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<b>10</b>	<b>We will build on ‘Preparing for Success’, by developing and introducing new measures of careers guidance outcomes and by developing clear, common, transparent and accountable quality standards.</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>The Council welcomes this approach. Encouraging Lifelong Learning is an important objective. However, plans need to ensure that adults as well as younger people are aware of industry and employment/skills opportunities – and how they can change career if desired. Delivery plans should consider the needs of adults in a population that may already have had a negative experience of careers guidance. However, to ensure this is met in practice people need independent guidance to navigate through the myriad of employability and skills provision through a fit-for-purpose independent careers advice and guidance service for adults as well as young people – as recommended by the Belfast Labour Market Partnership - to ensure inequality is tackled and the skills gaps are redressed. Independent careers/skills advice and guidance is needed to shape aspirations and to create skills pathways that support outcomes for individuals (jobs/better jobs) but also reducing skills mismatches within the labour market.</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>We will invest in the development of a consolidated portal, providing open access to information on current and forecast labour market skill needs and applicable study/work opportunities.</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>The Council welcomes this approach. However, it requires sufficient resources in staffing and outreach is required to enable quality interaction with people (mentoring, careers guidance advice clinics, roadshows and employment opportunities showcasing what industries need).</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>We will enhance engagement between employers and the education sector to identify and publicise opportunities for individuals in education to engage with the world of work.</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>The Council welcomes the focus on providing employer engagement opportunities and work experience opportunities. This will provide opportunities to all, including under-represented groups and those requiring additional support. However, enhanced engagement is required as early as possible to maximise impact. Engagement with industry should happen at primary school and then be continually re-enforced throughout secondary school and beyond. Strong role models should be used as</b>

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			"influencers" particularly where there may be gender (or other) imbalances in employment in specific industries. This approach will require greater collaboration between the Department of Education and Department for the Economy.
13	We will develop bespoke skills action plans to support Northern Ireland's key strategic clusters.	62	The Council welcomes this objective. However, it would welcome extending this approach beyond the "core" priority sectors to cover those sectors that are likely to experience significant demand especially logistics, social care, hospitality etc.

***6. Are there any additional proposals you believe should be considered under the 'Addressing Skills Imbalances, Driving Economic Growth' objective?***

Broadly, the Council welcomes this approach. Additionally, it would welcome a focus on gender inequalities in skills provision, skills levels and access to 'better jobs'. Much of the skills provision is still unequal in gender balance, and this is particularly the case for high growth sectors.

***7. Are you content that the proposals contained in pages 57 - 75 provide an ambitious and comprehensive approach to 'Creating a Culture of Lifelong Learning'?***

The Council acknowledges that the VCSE sector are a vital stakeholder in engaging with those who are further back in the labour market, those with lower attainment levels, those experiencing in-work poverty etc. and recommend that the provision of community-based education and skills development is recognised as a key mechanism to reach these residents in the city to support people's empowerment, motivation and confidence – a vital starting point for the skills pipeline in the city and regionally. However, this can only work if the system is fully integrated and there is a need for much greater alignment to enable residents to benefit from clear pathways towards rewarding careers. We are exploring some interesting models in collaboration with the RSA e.g. digital badges and would be keen to engage with DfE on the outworking of these interventions.

No	Proposal	Page	Belfast City Council Response
14	We will assess the potential for more locally focused approaches, to support DE's policy interventions in relation to vulnerable children, particularly in areas of high social deprivation. This will include an assessment of	59	The Council welcomes the potential for more locally focused approaches to support DE's policy interventions in relation to vulnerable children, particularly in areas of high social deprivation. The Council is committed to addressing issues through Community

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	how data can be better used to monitor pupil outcomes from education and the efficacy of policy interventions throughout the education system.		Planning Partnership Structures, namely the Educational Inequalities within the Jobs, Skills and Education Board.
15	We will develop a new lifelong learning project and action plan, directly aligned to the achievement of the strategic goals set out in the new Skills Strategy.	60	For a number of years, Belfast has committed to being a “learning city” and is a member of UNESCO’s Learning City Network. We are currently revisiting the focus of this work and would welcome the opportunity to explore how we can contribute to and drive the regional approach.
16	We will develop proposals for the expansion of childcare support, to enable all individuals with parental responsibilities to participate in lifelong learning.	63	The Council welcomes this approach. However, plans should be extended to those who have other caring responsibilities (e.g. disabled or older relatives).
17	We will review funding exemptions to ensure more individuals can participate in ‘reskilling’ opportunities, aligned to under-supplied qualifications in engineering and technology, mathematics, computer science and physical and environmental sciences.	63	We support this approach and consider that it needs to incorporate re-skilling across a range of skills levels, in order to create inclusive pathways to new jobs
18	We will develop, and consult on, legislation to introduce training leave allowances for Northern Ireland employees.	64	
19	We will work with the FE Sector to examine the development of remote/blended, modular learning approaches, tailored to the needs of individuals and their employers.	65	The Council welcomes the Department’s proposed commitment to remove current age-related barriers to make apprenticeship opportunities at levels two and three more available. However, the Council recommends that a new delivery approach is needed to offer ‘portable’ or ‘flexi-job’ apprentices. Some industries (construction and creative industries) cannot offer a long-enough placement with a single employer for apprentices to meet the government’s minimum 12-month duration requirement. In the TV and film sector, for example, most roles are freelance and usually only run for two to three months. If we are to achieve the ambition of inclusive growth, a flexible intervention would greatly assist the Council [and the public sector], to deliver stronger social value outcomes within public procurement contracts, namely in

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			<p>construction. It will also lend itself to large construction infrastructure builds in city under City Deals. The Council recommends that a shared apprenticeship scheme is needed (for example, CITB's scheme in England and Wales, which supports apprenticeships while recognising that not all employers can provide full 104 weeks required for an apprentice to complete training).</p> <p>The strategy refers to public sector apprenticeships which should be welcomed; however, it must be balanced with support to the private sector to re-build and recover following Covid-19.</p>
20	Under the auspices of the new Skills Strategy, DfE will develop a renewed approach to management and leadership in Northern Ireland.	70	We strongly support this approach – and would propose that DfE works closely with councils to tailor interventions for local businesses – as a means of driving up competitiveness and productivity
21	We will introduce a business pledge to recognise and promote employers who actively engage with principles of the work quality indicators. Businesses with 50+ employees must subscribe and actively promote the principles of the 'Better Jobs Pledge' prior to engagement with publicly funded support programmes.	74	Creating an inclusive economy is at the heart of the council's agenda. One key commitment was the development and implementation of an Inclusive Growth City Charter for Belfast for employers across the city – setting a city wide standard in relation to procurement, employment and civic / neighbourhood engagement. Based on the engagement to date, the Council has drawn up a draft Charter – the Belfast Business Promise. The Charter focuses on good employment, procurement, and the role of businesses in their community through eight Charter Pledges. The Council therefore welcomes this proposal and offers that this city charter can inform the development of the 'better jobs pledge'.
22	The NICS will take steps to mark itself out as a leader in the adoption of High-Performance Working Practices and the development of management and leadership skills in Senior Civil Service grades.	75	The Council welcomes this approach.
23	We will develop a discrete, collaborative project, to define what employability skills means in	76	A focus is required, not only on traditional job search strategies but on enterprise, self-employment, social enterprises and job creation in the strategy. Supporting

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	the Northern Ireland labour market and propose a series of actions to improve the performance of our education system.		innovation and enterprise skills as a cross cutting skills set for the NI economy is particularly important as our comparatively low business start-up rates and high level of business deaths directly impact on productivity.
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**8. Are there any additional proposals you believe should be considered under the 'Creating a Culture of Lifelong Learning' objective?**

No additional comments.

**9. Under 'Enhancing Digital Skills, Creating Our Digital Spine' we include only one recommendation, that an expert panel is appointed to develop a specific Digital Skills Action Plan for Northern Ireland (see pages 76 - 81). Do you agree with this approach?**

No	Objective	Page	Belfast City Council Response
24	An expert panel of individuals from business and education will be appointed to develop a specific Digital Skills Action Plan for Northern Ireland.	82	The Council welcomes this approach and the work of Innovation City Belfast may be a useful model to consider. Digital skills are fundamental to the success of the economy as we move to economic recovery. The pandemic has accelerated the need for digital skills as those that were able to adapt and operate digitally were proved to be the more resilient. The Strategy recognises that digital skills are important for everyone in society, not just those with careers in the digital sector, and we fully support this.

**10. Have you any other comments on the Strategic Goals and Policy Objectives?**

No additional comments.

**Chapter 5: Policy Enablers**

**11. The first two 'policy enablers': 'Enhancing Policy Cohesion' and 'Building Stronger Relationships' focus on a refreshed approach to the governance of the skills system (pages 84 - 90). Do you agree that these structures are a useful and appropriate approach to improving the development and implementation of skills policy in Northern Ireland?**

No	Objective	Page	Belfast City Council Response
25	A new Northern Ireland Skills Council will be responsible for the implementation of the Skills Strategy. It will have ministerial	86	The Council welcomes this approach. Cross-government buy-in and engagement is critical – at regional and local government level.

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	leadership and include senior representatives from all government departments and local government.		
26	The Northern Ireland Skills Council should maintain an oversight role in the commissioning and development of all skills policies and related research.	86	The Council welcomes this approach in order to ensure greater coordination.
27	We will continue to work across central and local government to develop and implement sub-regional approaches to skills development, tailored to the needs of local businesses and communities.	87	The Council welcomes this approach and recommends that Labour Market Partnerships are used as the sub-regional structure.
28	The Northern Ireland Skills Council will be established to provide long-term, consistent, advice on the development and implementation of all aspects of skills policy. It will include representation from business leaders, senior representatives of education and employee representatives from trade unions.	88	The Council welcomes this approach. We recognise that there may be a need for additional working groups e.g. sectoral groups – but consider that the NISC should provide the vehicle for overall coordination. There may be an opportunity to consider how this aligns with the work of the Regional Employability and Skills Board
29	Under the auspices of the Northern Ireland Skills Council, we will review and rationalise the existing (skills) advisory infrastructure.	88	The Council welcomes this approach
30	Employer, employee and education institutions will be given a key role in determining the terms of reference for the Northern Ireland Skills Council.	88	The Council welcomes this approach
31	The Northern Ireland Skills Council should develop a sub-committee to consider how gender, and other diversity issues, can be better addressed across education, skills and employment policies and practices.	89	The Council welcomes this approach. Once agreed, these commitments should then be mainstreamed and should form part of the commitments for commissioned bodies that have responsibility for delivering key skills interventions.
32	The new Skills Strategy will be underpinned by 2, 5 and 10-year action plans.	90	We agree with the need for a longer-term strategic plan supported by shorter-term action plans.

**12. The third policy enabler focuses on 'Investment in the Skills System'. The programme of change proposed in this consultation document is likely to require substantial investment. Do you agree that this should be prioritised?**

No	Objective	Page	Belfast City Council Response
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<b>33</b>	<b>The Skills Strategy will be endorsed, as a whole-of-government Strategy, by the Northern Ireland Executive, recognising the key, strategic importance of education and skills development to our social and economic prosperity.</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>The Council welcomes cross-departmental collaboration as well as effective support pillars to engage with local communities to promote inclusive growth and reduce inequalities.</b>
<b>34</b>	<b>A ring-fenced skills fund will be developed to provide new opportunities in the labour market and support the skills development of the working age population as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic and prepare for the economic changes brought about by our exit from the EU.</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>The Council welcomes this approach. We also propose that the recent reductions in skills expenditure should be reversed as a matter of priority in order to support inclusive economic growth. We are content to ensure that the work of the Belfast Labour Market Partnership is aligned to relevant priority interventions.</b>

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to approve the foregoing response to the Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland consultation for submission to the Department for Economy.



**Belfast City Council Safeguarding Assurance  
Framework and Review of Policy**

The Members of the Committee considered the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to Members the draft Safeguarding (All ages) Policy and to inform them of the proposed timetable for public consultation.

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:
- i. approve the [draft Safeguarding \(All Ages\) Policy](#), which complies with the most recent developments in safeguarding. The Committee should note that the draft policy has been shared for comment across a range of frontline services including AGRS, Legal Services and corporate HR; and
  - ii. endorse the public consultation timeframe for the draft policy document from November 2021.

**3.0 Main Report**

**Key Issues**

- 3.1 The new policy includes a series of arrangements to support an enhanced and robust assurance framework for safeguarding compliance across the council. These include more stringent pre-employment checks and periodic checks during the course of employment (every three years), improved training, clearer reporting procedures and line management responsibility, coupled with a greater awareness and understanding throughout the organisation.

**Background**

**Context**

- 3.2 Child protection has been a priority for organisations for many years, and there is a well-established process in place throughout Belfast City Council to deal with child protection issues. The current policy was written in 2009 and whilst it remains broadly compliant, changes in the wider operational environment, developments in technology, the rapid growth of

social media and fluctuating socio-economic standards across the world has led to the need to revise the policy to ensure it continues to be fit for purpose. The main guidance for safeguarding is currently managed by Volunteer Now.

- 3.3 Adult safeguarding is a distinctly different area of practise and, in reality, it is still in its infancy in comparison with child safeguarding. In April 2009, the Department of Health (formerly the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety) commissioned the 'Our Duty to Care Team' from Volunteer Now to develop standards and guidance for good practice in adult safeguarding for voluntary, community and independent organisations based on their experience of developing 'Keeping Children Safe'. Since the guidance was first published, there have been considerable developments in the area of adult safeguarding in Northern Ireland.
- 3.4 The Council has a corporate responsibility for safeguarding all ages (children and adults) which is currently supported by 'Policy and Procedures for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults' which has been in operation since 2009.
- 3.5 The policy applies to elected members, BCC Chief Officers and all staff and volunteers who work within or in the name of the council. It is a demonstration of the Council's commitment to providing and maintaining services across all Departments that protect these service users from harm as well as protecting the organisation and our staff and volunteers from potential allegations.
- 3.6 The policy is broadly relevant; however, it is no longer fit for purpose and presents a significant risk to the organisation particularly when considered alongside rapid growth in social media, technology, and recent news reports concerning high profile Safeguarding issues.

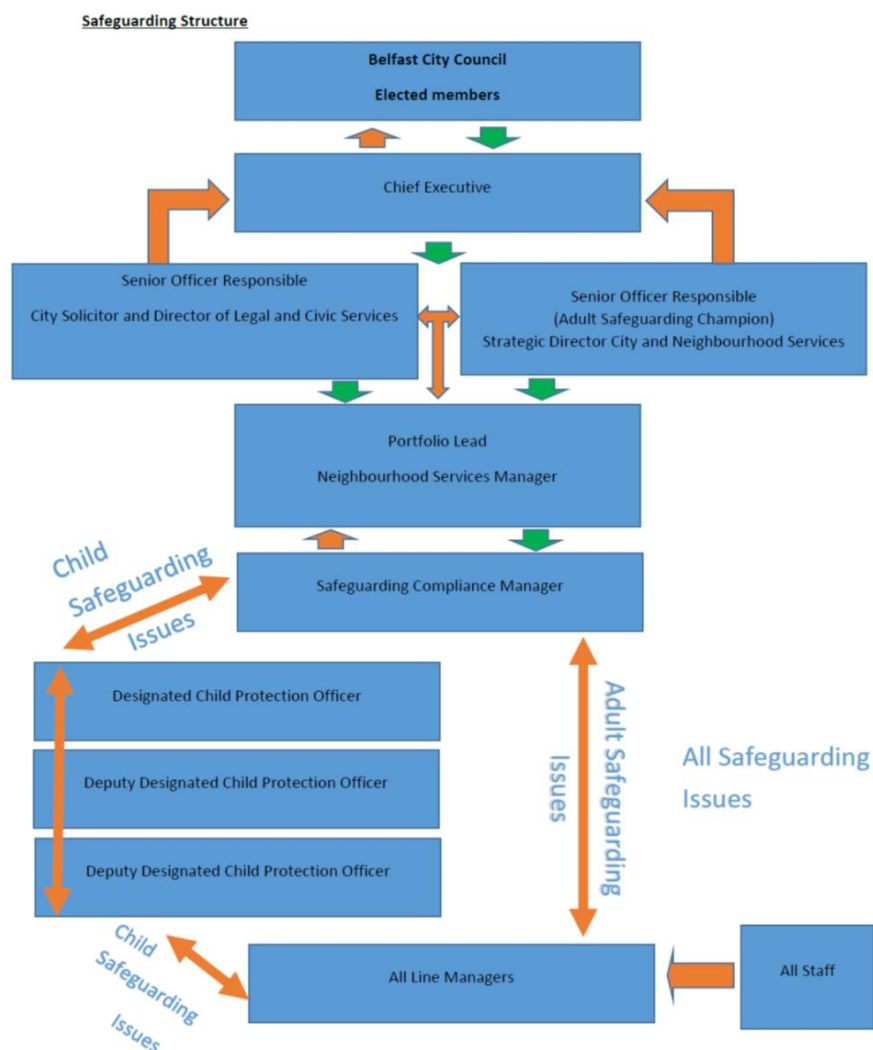
#### Current Position

- 3.7 Since August 2019, officers have worked to review the existing provision, identify the areas for improvement and enhance the risk assessment for the Corporate risk register.
- 3.8 The new policy has been developed and has been circulated to Members. The document is based on the principles of current good practice, shared learning and current legislation and will be reviewed every three years in line with new developments and best practise. The policy document is supported with robust operational procedures and guidance for all staff.

**3.9 This policy is the basis on which the assurance framework will be built and will include the following steps:**

- **Safeguarding is on the BCC corporate risk register with the Director of Neighbourhood Services as risk owner. This risk has recently been reviewed by AGRS and is subject to review on a quarterly basis. The risk is reviewed in line with corporate policy with the last review being June 2021.**
- **SROs: Director of Neighbourhood Services and the City Solicitor act as joint SRO's.**
- **Safeguarding Panel: Meets every two months starting April 2021 to provide strategic direction and leadership, discuss outstanding matters and is made up of senior Safeguarding champions from different departments across the Council.**
- **Safeguarding Operational Group: Will be established to disseminate information to the teams and help with the roll out of the new policy. This group meets in the alternate month to the Panel.**
- **Adult Safeguarding Champion: Although the Council does not currently have any regulated posts in relation to adult safeguarding, best practise would suggest that we should nominate an Adult Safeguarding Champion (ASC). Therefore, the Director of Neighbourhood Services was nominated and accepted by the panel as ASC. We can only name one ASC, however, there can be as many nominated persons as operationally required. The Panel suggestion is the Director of Neighbourhood Services will be the ASC and the responsibility is delegated to the Safeguarding Compliance Manager (SCM).**
- **There is now a clear structure, as demonstrated below:**

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**Training programme**

- 3.10** The Panel has also agreed a new training programme, for both adult and child safeguarding. There will be four levels of training:

	Who	When	Delivery method	Time Commitment	Refresher requirement
<b>Level 0</b>	All staff	At induction	Online/Paper based/in person	1 hour	Every 3 years or in response to major changes.
<b>Level 1</b>	Staff working in regulated positions, line managers of regulated staff, staff	During the first six months of employment	Face to face facilitation	6 hours	Every 3 years or in response to

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	with regular contact with the public and other identified staff				major changes
<b>Level 2</b>	Line managers	During the first six months of employment	Face to face facilitation	3 hours	Every 3 years or in response to major changes
<b>Level 3</b>	Designated/nominated Officers	As necessary	Face to face facilitation	3 hours	Every 3 years or in response to major changes

- **Safeguarding training will be offered to all Elected Members.**
- **HR/Access NI checks:** As part of the review process a piece of work has been completed to identify all 'regulated positions' within the council. This work is reaching completion and has to date identified 165 identified post holders undertaking regulated activity on behalf of the council. This provides a baseline for one part of the Safeguarding Compliance and assurance in the recruitment process.
- **A list of regulated posts will be maintained and reviewed periodically.**
- **All new job roles will be reviewed and assessed using the defined descriptions of regulated activity by the continuous improvement department.**

**Projected Consultation Timetable**

**3.11 Below is the expected timetable of events to allow the new policy to become operational, this is dependent on multiple factors and may be subject to amendment.**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activities associated with Safeguarding Policy are as follows:</b>
July 2021	Final draft policy to be presented to the Safeguarding Panel
	Present policy to CMT
August 2021	SP and R Committee report to be prepared and presented
	Equality Screening and RNIA to be undertaken
September 2021	New staff training rolled out.

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September – November 2021	External engagement and consultation with relevant public bodies to be undertaken
	Public consultation to be undertaken
Ongoing	Explore communications needs with Corporate Comms – internal and external
November 2021	Consultation analysis
December 2021	Final Committee Report to be prepared and presented.
Jan 2022	Roll out of new policy and Communication to staff.

**Financial and Human Resource Implications**

**3.12 The cost of the Safeguarding Compliance Manager - the salary is secured within CNS revenue estimates.**

**All other costs have been absorbed by existing budgets:**

- Training
- Access NI Checks

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

**3.13 There are no relevant equality considerations associated with the report at this time. The implementation plan will include arrangements for Equality Screening and Rural Needs Impact Assessment of the new Safeguarding Policy.”**

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to adopt the recommendations contained within the report.

**Off-Street Parking Enforcement Services**

(Ms. V. Brown, City Services Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The City Services Manager reminded the Members that responsibility for off-street public car parking had, on 1st April, 2015, transferred to councils as part of Local Government Reform. All eleven councils had, at that time, entered into an agency agreement with the then Department for Regional Development, which provided enforcement, cash collection and penalty charge processing services on their behalf. That agreement had been extended in November, 2016 and again in November, 2019.

She reported that the current arrangement with what was now the Department for Infrastructure would expire on 31st October, 2022, which would allow sufficient time to prepare the specification and tender documents, tender for the contract and embed the new arrangements. Eight of the nine councils which were still involved in the agency

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agreement had indicated that they wished to terminate the arrangement and tender collaboratively for the services. This approach would allow those participating to explore other methods of enforcement, evaluate potential savings and efficiencies and offer more assurances around value-for-money. The Council which had, in 2019, left the agreement had also confirmed its interest in pursuing the collaborative approach,

The City Services Manager went on to state that, at the SOLACE meeting in March, Ards and North Down Council had offered to lead the procurement exercise, with support from other councils, including Belfast. Following the assessment and award of the tender, each council would draw services from the tender and manage those independently. This joint tendering procurement approach had, she pointed out, been endorsed by the Council's Legal Services Unit.

She added that, whilst a decision had been taken to end the arrangement with the Department for Infrastructure, the current pandemic had impacted upon the replacement process. It was possible, therefore, that the current agreement may have to be extended on a temporary short-term basis and the Department had been requested to confirm that it would facilitate the extension, if required.

After discussion, the Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:

- i. agree, in line with SOLACE, that councils should tender for enforcement services on the open market, rather than renew the service agreement with the Department for Infrastructure. This would involve a joint tendering procurement exercise with the other councils for car parking enforcement services and penalty charge processing;
- ii. agree that officers formally inform the Department for Infrastructure that the Council did not wish to enter into another agency agreement and that it would, alongside other councils, tender on the open market for off-street enforcement and associated services; and
- iii. note that a further report would be submitted to the Committee in relation to the procurement process, outlining potential efficiencies, value-for-money and any financial challenges in delivering the off-street car parking function beyond October 2022.

**Funding Agreements to support the Belfast Climate Action**

The Members of the Committee considered the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report**

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Members approval for the following funding agreements, which are required to support delivery of Belfast’s programme of climate activity:**

- **Linenquarter BID - £20,000 contribution towards the delivery of the Festival of the Circular Economy, which will align with COP26;**
- **Common Purpose - £10,000 contribution towards the delivery of the Common Purpose Legacy Programme which will focus on young leaders roles in relation to climate and be scheduled in advance of COP26;**
- **Woodland Trust - £45,000 for the delivery of volunteer coordination, community outreach and support for PR and communication for the Belfast One Million Trees Programme.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to approve the awarding of funding agreements to the following organisations which are supporting the delivery of the Belfast Resilience Strategy and the programme of climate activity linked to COP26, which runs from 1st to 12th November.**

- **Linenquarter BID - £20,000 contribution towards the delivery of the Festival of the Circular Economy, which will align with COP26 in November 2021;**
- **Common Purpose - £10,000 contribution towards the delivery of the Common Purpose Legacy Programme, which will focus on young leaders roles in relation to climate and be scheduled for October 2021, in advance of COP26;**
- **The Woodland Trust - £45,000 for the delivery of volunteer coordination, community outreach and support for PR and communication for the Belfast One Million Trees Programme over a 3 year period.**

**Members are also asked to note the ongoing work by officers on the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) and WWF One Planet City Challenge.**



**3.0 Main Report**

**3.1** The Climate Team within Council is leading on the delivery of the Belfast Resilience Strategy Ambitions Document and a number of associated workstreams such as planning for COP26, engagement with and capacity building for young people, and the development of Council's own Climate Plan.

**3.2** Three projects are planned which require funding agreements to be put in place to allow delivery to take place. These are:

**3.3 Linenquarter BID Festival of Circular Economy**

The Linenquarter BID Festival of Circular Economy event will support business engagement around the concept of circular economy and will include high profile speakers including Belfast Lord Mayor and the Lord Mayor of Liverpool. The event is one of the key events in the City's programme of activity during the COP26 fortnight and will provide a platform to engage with business on a range of climate issues in the future. The Council is requested to fund £20,000 of a total £100,000 budget. The Council's contribution is included in the existing City and Organisational Strategy budget provision for the current financial year.

**3.4** The event organisers will ensure that the event is linked to the ambitions of the Resilience Strategy and will acknowledge the role of Belfast City Council and the Belfast Resilience and Sustainability Board in supporting the event. The organisers will also produce an Evaluation Report for the event, which will demonstrate how it supports the ambitions of the Resilience Strategy.

**3.5** Further information will be provided to Members as the event content and dates are confirmed.

**Common Purpose Legacy Programme**

**3.6** The Common Purpose Northern Ireland Legacy Programme is an engagement and capacity building programme focused on young people.

**3.7** Legacy programmes convene up to 100 young leaders (18-25 year-olds) – in and out of work, studying, campaigning and volunteering - to shape the future of their communities. The programme challenges them to think 20-30 years ahead to what their legacy will be and builds their confidence, know-how and social capital as well as identifying opportunities for them to get more involved in things ahead. Common Purpose

have held Legacy programmes in Newcastle, Leeds, Sheffield and Bradford in 2020. Common Purpose plan to run second programmes in each of those cities as well as in Northern Ireland, Lancashire, Glasgow and Edinburgh in 2021.

- 3.8 The Northern Ireland programme dates are 14th -15th October and 18th – 19th October 2021. The central challenge that the group will address is: How do we act together to transform our community into a cleaner and greener space for all?
- 3.9 Sponsorship of £10,000 from the Council for this regional programme will secure 10 places for Belfast. The Council will work with Common Purpose to ensure that participation from Belfast targets agreed cohorts under our Inclusive Growth ambitions, partner organisations/community sector and young staff within BCC. The Council will also input to the curriculum explore how we can contribute on the programme itself.
- 3.10 Further information for the Legacy Programme will also be provided to Members as the event content and Belfast participation is confirmed.

**The Woodland Trust – Belfast One Million Trees Programme**

- 3.11 Members will be aware that the Council leads and coordinates the Belfast One Million Trees Programme, working with a diverse range of partners across the city. A city steering group includes representatives from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. At the heart of the programme is a partnership with The Woodland Trust, who support a core delivery team which includes Belfast Hills Partnership, The Conservation Volunteers and the National Trust.

In April 2021, the Council secured £289,000 external funding through the Emergency Tree Fund for a number of critical workstreams to the success of the project, such as environmental impact assessments, tree nursery development, tree maintenance plans, tree planting, volunteer coordination, community engagement and education, communication, the development of the Belfast Tree Strategy, and the production of a Belfast I-Tree ECO Report.

- 3.12 This external funding is managed by the Council's Climate Team, with the support of colleagues in City and Neighbourhood Services. To facilitate delivery of the Volunteer Coordination, Community Engagement/Education and communication support role we propose to enter into a funding agreement with the Woodland Trust, who are the key delivery partner in the initiative. Funding will be £45,000 over

a 3-year period, which will be fully funded through the external funding received through the Emergency Tree Fund. A detailed plan will be developed based on funding targets and an agreed programme of activity which will be monitored and evaluated through the Climate Team.

**Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) and WWF One Planet City Challenge**

- 3.13 Members are asked to note that the Council has made a submission to the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) – ICLEI reporting platform, which is a global reporting framework to assess progress against climate ambitions at city level and is required as a prerequisite to a number of global climate campaigns. This submission will be assessed by CDP, with feedback and a score provided to the city by the end of 2021, which will inform the submission in 2022. A further report on CDP and other associate initiatives will be brought to committee at a future date.
- 3.14 The One Planet City Challenge (OPCC) is a friendly competition which supports cities in developing climate action plans and targets that align with the Paris Agreement's 1.5 °C maximum global warming goal. The OPCC recognises leading cities at the national and global level and inspires other cities to join the movement. In 2021, the OPCC celebrates 10 years of engagement during which time they have seen the participation of nearly 600 cities in over 50 countries.
- 3.15 To participate in the One Planet City Challenge cities must register by 31st August 2021 and Members are asked to note that work is underway to register Belfast for OPCC.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

**Linenquarter BID Festival of Circular Economy and Common Purpose Legacy Programme**

- 3.16 The £20,000 contribution to the development and delivery of the Linenquarter BID Festival of Circular Economy and £10,000 sponsorship for Common Purpose Legacy Programme will be funded from existing City and Organisational Strategy budget provision.

**The Woodland Trust – Belfast One Million Trees Programme**

- 3.17 The allocation of £45,000 over a 3-year period will be fully funded through the external funding received from the Emergency Tree Fund.

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

**3.18 The participant selection process for the Common Purpose Legacy Programme will be reviewed to ensure that it is fully representative.”**

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to adopt the recommendations contained within the report.

**Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman  
Consultation on Complaints Handling Standards  
for the Public Sector - Council Response**

The Director of Finance and Resources informed the Members that the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman had, in recent years, undertaken research with all public sector bodies, including the Council, under its remit. It had subsequently engaged with them to identify complaint management improvement opportunities, in partnership with each sector, with a view to introducing a public sector model complaints handling procedure.

He reported that the Ombudsman had been granted approval by the Northern Ireland Assembly, under Part 3 of the Public Services Ombudsman Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, to produce a set of principles and procedures to help standardise complaints handling by public bodies. The Ombudsman had, in June, launched its Complaints Handling Standards Public Consultation, which was open to public bodies, advocacy and support groups, politicians, members of the public and anyone with an interest in improving complaints handling and public services in Northern Ireland.

The Ombudsman had, alongside the consultation, launched its Research Report on ‘Complaints Handling in the Public Sector in Northern Ireland’, which had addressed the complaints handling procedures of public bodies in Northern Ireland, including the experience of complaining to a public sector body in Northern Ireland, barriers to improved complaints handling and improvements which might be made to complaints handling in the future.

The Director reported further that Party Group Leaders had been invited to complete the consultation questionnaire and he submitted for approval a draft Council response, which also reflected previous feedback from Chief Officers and senior management, as well as ongoing discussions with Departmental complaints officers, in preparation for both the consultation and subsequent co-design phases. He added that, once the consultation process had concluded, the Ombudsman would collate the responses, consider any changes and return to the Northern Ireland Assembly to seek final approval for its plans.

**Consultation on Creating Complaints Handling Standards  
for the Northern Ireland Public Sector**

**Council Response**

This questionnaire provides an opportunity for organisations and other interested parties to provide feedback on the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman's (NIPSO's) proposals for a set of principles and procedures aimed at standardising complaints handling by public bodies. If you haven't already done so, you may wish to read the consultation document before providing your feedback by [clicking here](#).

**The Statement of Principles**

The draft Statement of Principles (SOP) consists of six basic principles that NIPSO believe all public bodies should follow when handling a complaint. The full SOP is available by clicking [here](#).

The six key principles are:

1. Start off right
2. Fix it early
3. Focus on what matters
4. Be fair
5. Be honest
6. Learn and improve.

For each of the six principles above, NIPSO has set out what it expects public bodies to do when they receive a complaint. These include: acknowledging mistakes at the earliest opportunity, providing clear reasons for decisions, investigating complaints fairly, and using complaints as an opportunity for improvement.

Is there anything you would like to see added or changed in terms of the content of the principles? If yes, please indicate which principles and provide details.

Please enter your response below

The principles as stated are sufficiently comprehensive, easily understood and will, in the council's opinion, meet the needs of both the council and its customers.

### **Model Complaints Handling Procedure**

The draft Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP) is designed to: make sure complaints to public bodies are dealt with in a straight-forward and simple way; provide a general complaints handling procedure that all public bodies will broadly follow where complaints are resolved early, and where this is not possible, complaints are thoroughly investigated. The draft MCHP also makes it easier for public bodies to analyse and learn from the complaints they receive. The full draft MCHP is available [here](#).

Please consider each element of the draft MCHP outlined below and comment on any changes or additions.

**A Complaint Handling Procedure should contain an agreed definition of what is and what is not a complaint.**

Please enter your response below

A suitable and agreed definition is important to ensure that complaints are identified as such, as quickly as possible, and provide guidance to both complainants and council, to promote the early resolution of all complaints.

**A register of all complaints received should be kept by public bodies.**

Please enter your response below

Agree. This is the groundwork of ensuring that council successfully manages all complaints received, and learns from complaints through purposeful analytics. In particular providing information on feedback trends that can be used in conjunction with other approaches to customer insight to achieve a customer focused approach to service improvement.

**Complaints should be dealt with in no more than two stages; an initial 'frontline response' based on early resolution and a stage 2 'investigation' where early resolution is not possible and a complaint needs to be thoroughly investigated.**

Please enter your response below

Council considers this to be a modern and sensible approach that both simplifies the complaints process for customers and council. And importantly, will serve to help reduce the frustration sometimes felt by customers who perhaps feel they are engaging in a long drawn out procedure.

**Based on experiences in other places, a 'frontline response' should be responded to within a maximum of 5 working days, with the possibility of an extension in exceptional circumstances of up to 5 additional working days.**

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Please enter your response below

This is a practical solution to give every opportunity for a frontline response to be provided in as many cases as possible.

**All complaints escalated to stage 2 'investigation' should be acknowledged within 3 working days.**

Please enter your response below

Agree. This is achievable and is good practice.

**A full response to stage 2 complaints should be provided as soon as possible but no later than 20 working days from the time the complaint was received for investigation**

Please enter your response below

Based on council's experience twenty working days is sufficient to bring to conclusion the vast majority of complaint cases.

**In more complex cases, if it is not possible to meet the 20-day timeframe, a revised timescale should be provided, and an update at least once every 20 working days on the progress of the investigation.**

Please enter your response below

This is a very practical and efficient approach which will allow more time when needed for complex complaints, such as those involving planning service, to be addressed within an extended time frame. And will also keep the complainant aware of progress at pre-agreed milestones in the investigation process.

**Information about complaints received should be reported and publicised.**

Please enter your response below

Agree. Council already reports on all aspects of complaints management. And equally an easily understood quarterly and annual report, posted on the council's website, would meet this requirement.

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**Public bodies should demonstrate active learning from complaints.**

Please enter your response below

Agree. This is fundamental to the council's culture of customer focussed learning and gathering insight into customer journeys and experiences in a structured and transparent way, including from complaints.

**Suggested approach to implementation**

**NIPSO feels standardisation is necessary across all public bodies, however it also recognises that circumstances may sometimes differ between sectors. It is therefore expected that detailed discussions will be needed with public bodies within each sector, to decide precisely what their complaints handling procedures should look like.**

**Five distinct sectors have been identified: health and social care, councils, government departments, housing, and education.**

**NIPSO is proposing to introduce MCHPs for public bodies on a sector by sector basis. Do you consider this is the most effective approach? If not, what would you propose?**

Please enter your response below

The council views a sector by sector approach as a sensible and effective way to introduce and implement the MCHP. It will enable a programme of work which can address and learn from issues as it rolls out across different sectors.

**NIPSO has yet to decide the first sector(s) it will work with to introduce the MCHPs. Some of the factors being considered in this decision are: the number of complaints received by the sector, size/complexity of the sector, risk attached to public service provision. Do you have any views on this issue?**

Please enter your response below



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Given that the majority of local authority complaints are relatively straightforward and that referrals to the NIPSO are quite low, council would encourage the NIPSO to consider local authorities to be in the first tranche of sectors to adopt the revised approach. The Belfast City Council has been considering a change to a two stage procedure for quite some time and is well placed to implement 5/20 format following co-design.

**Are there any issues or concerns specific to any particular sector or area of work, that you feel NIPSO should take into account when refining MCHPs?**

Please enter your response below

**If you have any further comments on these proposals, or any other suggestions or**

Yes, it will be important that all services within local authorities are considered in the co-design phase, encompassing and taking account of both the more operationally focused 'frontline services' as well as the more complex service providers such as, planning, building control and environmental health.

**comments about NIPSO's Statement of Principles, MCHP and/or approach for implementing complaints standards and ensuring compliance with them, please provide details below.**

Please enter your response below

Belfast City Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation and looks forward to working with NIPSO and other councils in the co-design and implementation of the complaints handling standards for the Northern Ireland public sector.

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to agree that the foregoing comments be forwarded to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman as the Council's response to the consultation on complaints handling standards.

**Extension of Temporary Pavement Café Licence Scheme**

The Members of the Committee considered the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues**

- 1.1 To consider and agree the extension of a scheme for the temporary licensing of Pavement Cafes.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Taking into account the information presented Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May 2021, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to agree that:**

- 1. the temporary Pavement Café licensing scheme should be extended to 30th September 2022 and that any new licences that are granted be issued with the same expiry date;**
- 2. any application fees associated with the temporary Pavement Café licensing scheme should be waived until 30th September 2022;**
- 3. there should be a gradual return to normal and proportionate enforcement procedures in line with established council policy guidance, and**
- 4. a follow up report should be brought before the Licensing Committee prior to September 2022 to seek Members views on how to proceed in relation to Pavement Café licensing.**

**3.0 Main Report**

**Key Issues**

- 3.1 The Licensing of Pavement Cafes Act (NI) 2014 (“the Act”) came into operation on the 1 October 2016. However, the Council did not implement the legislation at that time as the Department for Infrastructure, Roads had not, and still has not, issued their technical guidance in support of the Act.**
- 3.2 That technical guidance was deemed crucial in that, among other matters, it was required to provide councils with the necessary information on an acceptable size and position of a pavement café such that there was clear demarcation between pedestrians and cafés to enhance health & safety regarding obstructions, tripping hazards and to provide a clear indicator for the visually impaired.**
- 3.3 In June last year, a temporary process for considering pavement café applications was introduced. This process, and associated temporary guidance for applicants, was**

developed, based on DfC and Licensing Forum guidance, in unique circumstances to assist the hospitality sector during the pandemic. When introduced it was made clear to applicants that it will be subject to review and that the council may modify or dispense with such aspects of the guidance as it thinks appropriate depending upon issues which may arise, or in response to changes in the Government's guidance in relation to Covid-19.

- 3.4 The aim of the scheme was to facilitate the controlled expansion of suitable premises such as cafes, restaurants and pubs, providing small businesses with an opportunity to boost their income at a time of economic crisis.
- 3.5 At that time authority was granted by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to waive the licence application fee given the prevailing circumstances.
- 3.6 The scheme was established with the intention of running for a year and all licences that have been issued have an expiry date of 31st August 2021.
- 3.7 Temporary Pavement Café Applications
- Since the scheme was launched 60 licences have been issued
  - More than 60 other applications have been received which we cannot progress due to applicants failing to provide sufficient information to consult with DfL Roads
  - A number of other pavement cafes are operating that have not applied for a licence.

#### Complaints

- 3.8 Complaints about pavement cafes and the licensing process are being monitored and any recurring themes will be used to inform how we implement the licensing process once the temporary scheme ends. Complaints about individual pavement café premises are investigated and followed up with licensees to address issues raised.
- 3.9 Many of the complaints received related to the re-opening of outdoor areas for the 2021 May Bank Holiday weekend and most were resolved quickly. Common complaints included:
- furniture obstructing pedestrian movement, particularly for those with disabilities,
  - furniture obstructing access to other premises,
  - problems for Cleansing Services,

- the Pavement Cafe area not being managed effectively.

#### Enforcement

- 3.10 Over the course of the pandemic, the Council has responded to requests from the Assembly and industry to assist recovery and we have therefore been endeavouring to provide support and minimise impact on small businesses.
- 3.11 For that reason, there has been a very 'light touch' approach to enforcement in relation to those who have not made application or failed to provide the necessary information to progress their application as well as those who may not be operating in accordance with the terms of their licence.

#### Universal access

- 3.12 Consultation when the legislation was enacted included regular engagement with groups representing people with disabilities and relevant issues were captured in our "Pavement Cafes: Guidance for Applicants during the Covid19 Pandemic" document which was equality screened in June 2020.
- 3.13 The Council consults with DfI Roads on all licensing applications received and the impact on pedestrians and particularly for disabled people is considered.
- 3.14 At a recent meeting with a representative of the Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC) on Pavement Cafés, their feedback was generally positive on extending the temporary licence scheme as people with disabilities are still cautious about going out and feel safer sitting outside in well ventilated spaces.
- 3.15 Whilst highlighting that there are some problem premises there was support for how we have implemented the scheme but it was suggested we should be taking more proactive action where premises don't apply.

#### Proposed extension to the temporary scheme

- 3.16 As the pandemic has continued for much longer than anticipated when the scheme was set up last June, and in recognition that the hospitality sector remains subject to operating restrictions, Members are asked to consider that the temporary Pavement Café licensing scheme be extended for a further period of time.

- 3.17 Recently the Business and Planning Act 2020 (Pavement Licences) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 came into effect which extended temporary pavement licence provisions in England to 30 September 2022.
- 3.18 It is suggested therefore that all existing temporary licences due to expire on 31st August 2021 be extended to 30th September 2022 and that any new licences that are granted be issued with the same expiry date.

**Fees**

- 3.19 Members are asked to consider that any application fees associated with the temporary Pavement Café licensing scheme be waived until 30th September 2022.

**Enforcement Stance**

- 3.20 As restrictions continue to ease, it is suggested that there is a gradual return to normal and proportionate enforcement procedures in line with established council policy guidance. This will include addressing applications which cannot progress because sufficient information has not been provided and commencing proactive action in relation to unlicensed pavement cafes.

**Transition to a Permanent Scheme**

- 3.21 If the temporary scheme is agreed, a follow up report will be brought before Licensing Committee prior to September 2022 to seek Members views on how to proceed in relation to Pavement Café licensing. The additional period will enable further process review to take place and any issues arising from enforcement measures to be considered.
- 3.22 This will also provide an opportunity to review and improve our guidance, particularly in terms of accessibility, but also in relation to pavement café furniture and the standards that we should set to ensure a vibrant and attractive city.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.23 The grant application fee for a 5-year pavement café licence is £225.00 with an annual licence fee of £55.00 for the subsequent 4 years. If the temporary scheme is to be extended and the fees are waived there will be a total lost income of at least £31000 on the basis of applications granted and pending at present.

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

- 3.24 If the temporary scheme is to be extended as proposed the equality screening exercise undertaken in June 2020 will be reviewed and updated as necessary.”

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to adopt the recommendations contained within the report.

**Physical Programme and Asset Management**

**Leisure Transformation Programme - Assets Update**

The Members of the Committee considered the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

- 1.1 This report updates Members on the development and implementation of the £105m leisure assets capital programme.

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note:
- i. that the ICT and Business Case consultant for the proposed new leisure facility at Girdwood have been appointed and options are currently being developed in advance of public consultation, as outlined in paragraph 3.1;
  - ii. that S & P Architects have now completed Phase A of the Future Options review for those centres not currently included in the Leisure Transformation Programme and agree that a special SP and R meeting and Party Group briefings are organised to update Members, as outlined at 3.2;
  - iii. that the three new leisure facilities at Lisnasharragh, Brook and Andersonstown have all now fully re-opened following lockdown and continue to see strong membership numbers as outlined at 3.3; and

- iv. that works are progressing at Avoniel and Templemore centres and both facilities remain on schedule as outlined at 3.4

### **Main Report**

#### **3.1. Girdwood Integrated Sports Facility (GISF)**

Following appointment of the ICT and business case consultant, a range of options for the new facility have been developed in line with the previous options developed by SIB/DfC back in 2017. These options all include a new community pool, changing for the existing 3G pitch alongside a new dry side leisure offering. The options are currently being tested through the business case with a view to arriving at a preferred option. It is currently envisaged that the preferred option will be developed by end September. This will then be presented to Members before being consulted on with the local community and key stakeholders. This consultation will help inform the final design of new facility.

It is currently envisaged that work on the new facility will commence in summer 2022.

#### **3.2 Future Options Review – (Ozone, Ballysillan, Whiterock, Shankill, Loughside and Belvoir)**

Members will be aware that Space and Place Architects (S&P) have been appointed to perform a review of current leisure provision across the city, with a specific focus on the impact to date of LTP and the future options for those centres not included in the current programme of redevelopment. This commission was split up into three distinct phases (A-C), with each phase to be brought into Committee for approval before proceeding with the next phase.

- Phase A – Baseline Review
- Phase B – Consultation –consultation with Members and a wide range of key stakeholders with a view to begin the process of developing options for the remaining six centres.
- Phase C – Concept Designs - Phase C would then involve the development of concept designs as required.

Phase A specifically focused on the performance and future strategic options for those centres not included in LTP Phases 1-3 and included carrying out a full analysis of the performance of the six existing centres, including metrics such as facilities mix, usage, catchment, condition, revenue costs and current subvention levels. The study also looked at

the current supply and demand across city taking into account LTP phase 1-3 developments (both completed and underway) and reported on likely demand for the replacement/re-purposing of the 6 remaining facilities under a potential further phase of works.

- 3.3 Leisure has been identified by Members as being a key priority for the next few years and it is, therefore, recommended that a future special SP and R Committee meeting (to which all Members will be invited) and Party Group Briefings be organised in order to present the findings from Phase A and to agree next steps which will inform Phase B. Members are asked to agree to S&P attending a future meeting and Party Group briefings.

#### Phase 2- Update on new centre performance

- 3.4 Lisnasharragh, Andersonstown and Brook centres are now fully re-opened and continue to enjoy strong membership numbers. Despite all leisure facilities experiencing a significant drop off in membership numbers over lockdown, the new centres have recovered extremely strongly with Lisnasharragh experiencing higher member numbers than pre-Covid. Lisnasharragh currently has 3,838 live pre-paid members (109% of pre-lockdown figures), Brook 1,700 (93% of pre-lockdown figures), and Andersonstown 1,708 (opened post lockdown). These figures are well in excess of the UK average which shows gym memberships currently averaging around 60%-70% pre-lockdown figures and is testament to the strength of the offering.

#### Phase 3- Project Updates (Avoniel and Templemore)

Avoniel – The majority of works are now complete including construction of the pavilion, the laying of the five-a-side and seven-a-side 3G pitches and the installation of the new car park. The eleven-a-side 3G pitch will be laid later this month, while the internal fit out of the building and the finishing touches to the outdoor spaces are now underway. It is currently envisaged that the new facility will be completed by late Autumn 2021 (photos at Appendix 1).

Templemore – the contractor has been on site since late last year and works are progressing on schedule. In terms of the existing building, significant works have been completed such as complete re-pointing of the existing chimney and installation of new lantern roofs over the main pool, derelict pool and slipper baths. A new roof has also been installed over the old courtyard to incorporate the new café area.



Significant progress has also been made on the new build element of the project. Foundations have been completed, the pool tank has been installed and the structural steelwork has also been completed. Blockwork has now commenced to the internal and external walls. It is currently envisaged that construction will complete on the facility by May 2022. Following construction completion, the interpretive fit out will take place (circa 8-10 weeks) in advance of a planned opening in late summer 2022.

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

- 3.5 Financial – Templemore and Avoniel - The design costs limits for each centre were agreed by Committee in April 2015 as part of the overall £105m leisure programme.**

**Leisure Phase 4 – no financing in place**

**Resource - Council to act as delivery partner for Girdwood Phase II ICT engagement. To be managed through current LTP governance arrangements.**

- 3.6 Equality or Good Relations Implications**

**There are no direct equality implications.”**

After discussion, during which the Director of Physical Programmes confirmed that those independent recreation centres which were still under the ownership of the Council were also under consideration, the Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note the report.

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

The Members of the Committee considered the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues**

- 1.1 The Council’s Physical Programme currently includes 170 capital projects with investment of £150m+ via a range of internal and external funding streams, together with projects which the Council delivers on behalf of external agencies. The Council’s Capital Programme forms part of the Physical Programme and is a rolling programme of investment which either improves existing Council facilities or provides new facilities. This report requests a movement under the Capital Programme (IT Programme) and provides an update on contracts awarded.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1** The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:

- **Proposed Movement - 'IT Programme – Replacement Hardware for NIHE System' (Stage 3 – Committed on the Capital Programme)** - Note that a satisfactory tender return has now been achieved and that it is recommended that a maximum £360,000 is now allocated to this project. The Director of Finance & Resources has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council.
- **Contracts awarded in Q1 2021/22 – note the update in relation to contracts awarded**

**3.0 Main Report**

**Capital Programme**

**3.1** Members agreed that all capital projects under the Council's Capital Programme 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.

**3.2** Members will recall that, in June 2021, the stage movement was agreed for *IT Programme: Replacement Hardware for NIHE System* project to *Stage 3 – Committed (Hold at Tier 0 – Scheme at risk pending tender return)*. This was to be brought back to Committee for sign-off and confirmation upon receipt of the tender returns. Members are now asked to note that the tender has now been returned within the affordability limits of the Council and that it is recommended that a maximum £360,000 is now allocated to this project.

Project	Overview	Stage
IT Programme: Replacement Hardware for NIHE System	The Council has a major contract to support systems on behalf of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. This project is to update IT hardware for that system.	Move to <i>Stage 3 – Committed (Tier 2 – Scheme Underway)</i>

**Contracts Awarded**

- 3.3 Members are asked to note the award of tenders for capital works, including services related to works set out below.**

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.4 Financial – IT Programme: Replacement Hardware for NIHE System - up to a maximum of £360,000. The Director of Finance and Resources has confirmed this is within the affordability limits of the Council.**

**Resources – Ongoing operating costs are within existing revenue budgets.**

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

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

**Schedule of Contracts Awarded (Works  
and Works Related) for Notation (Mar-July 2021)**

<b>Contract Awarded</b>	<b>Supplier</b>	<b>Date of Award</b>
PeaceIV – Single Party Construction Framework	McQuillans	15/03/2021
Holylands Environmental Improvements Scheme	Clive Richardson Ltd	10/03/2021
Waterfront Hall Replacement Escalators	ThyssenKrupp	19/05/2021
Boodles Dam Decommissioning Works	McQuillans	08/06/2021
SIF – Main Contractor for Mornington Community Centre	M&N Contracts	08/06/2021
Balmoral Bowling Club - Floodlight Installation and Ancillary Works	AG Wilson	07/06/2021
Refurbishment of CHP unit at Ballysillan LC under a self-financing energy supply contract EScO	Harvey Group PLC	22/06/2021
Upgrade of Castle Place Kiosk	Fabrite	01/07/2021

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<b>Contract Awarded</b>	<b>Supplier</b>	<b>Date of Award</b>
Design and Operation of an E-Cargo Bike Trial Scheme	StreetDock Systems Limited	19/07/2021
Supply & Installation of Football Goals for Avoniel Leisure Centre	Podium 4 Sport	23/07/2021
Supply & Installation of Café & Office Furniture at Avoniel Leisure Centre	Joseph Flanigan & Son	26/07/2021

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to adopt the recommendations contained within the report.

**Update on Area Working**

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to approve and adopt the minutes of the meeting of the East Belfast Area Working Group of 21st June.

**Finance, Procurement and Performance**

**Update on Contracts**

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:

- approve the public advertisement of tenders as per Standing Order 37a, as detailed in Table 1 below;
- approve the award of Single Tender Actions in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions, as detailed in Table 2 below;
- approve the modification of the contract as per Standing Order 37a, as detailed in Table 3 below; and
- note the award of retrospective Single Tender Actions in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions, as detailed in Table 4 below.

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**Table 1: Competitive Tenders**

<b>Title of Tender</b>	<b>Proposed Contract Duration</b>	<b>Estimated Total Contract Value</b>	<b>SRO</b>	<b>Short description of goods / services</b>
Replacement Building Control solutions IT system which provides functionality to manage service delivery	Up to 7 years	£636,000 1st year capital	A Reid	The existing legacy solutions are considered not fit for purpose in the current constantly changing digital age.
The provision of Insurance Brokerage Services	Up to 2 years	£2,700,000 (this includes the annual insurance premium payments plus any potential broker fee)	R Cregan	The provision of insurance brokerage services is needed to ensure that suitable insurance policies are purchased for the Council on the most cost-effective basis
Replacement of vehicles and mobile plant	Up to 1 year	£3,200,000	S Toland / R Black	Current vehicles have exceeded the Council's recommended replacement criteria (age & mechanical condition)
Delivery and supply of live and frozen animal feed	Up to 3 years	£72,000	S Toland / R Black	Animal feed for Belfast Zoo
Supply and delivery of frozen fish to Belfast Zoo	Up to 3 years	£84,000	S Toland / R Black	Animal feed for Belfast Zoo
Replacement of hardware that supports the NIHE environment	Up to 1 year	£263,719	R Cregan	Existing hardware becoming end of life (being reported retrospectively)
Deliver a programme of cross community activities - Forth Meadow Community Greenaway - Peace IV	Up to 11 months	£150,000	S Toland / R Black	To improved footfall along the Greenway's connecting foot / cycle paths, encouraging movement between communities and creating unique

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				experiences for local residents, and people from other communities.
PEACE IV Youth Engagement & Civic Education Project	Up to 11 months	£160,000	S Toland / R Black	A key deliverable of the PEACE IV Shared Space & Services theme, that will build positive relations between young people along the Forth Meadow Community Greenway and contribute to building positive relations.
Supply of hay, meadow hay, barley straw, lucerne and browse	Up to 3 years	£126,000	S Toland / R Black	Animal feed for Belfast Zoo
Provision of public address, staging and lighting equipment	Up to 4 years	£480,000	A Reid	PA, staging and lighting equipment for a planned events programme
Hire of ancillary equipment for Council events	Up to 4 years	£250,000	A Reid	To provide a range of equipment at Council Events
Inspection, cleaning and maintenance of automatic public conveniences	Up to 6 years	£600,000	S Toland / R Black	Maintenance and cleaning support contract of automatic public conveniences
Tender for qualified professional team to explore regeneration opportunities and produce a concept place-making plan for Council owned land at Corporation Street and Exchange Street	Up to 6 months	£50,000	A Reid	To prepare a place making concept for regeneration of Brownfield Council land at Corporation Street and Exchange Street that will facilitate residential opportunities as part of the Strategic Sites Assessment (Housing Led Regeneration) workstream

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**Table 2: Single Tender Actions**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Total Value</b>	<b>SRO</b>	<b>Supplier</b>
Improvement of the efficiency of the heating and cooling systems within the Waterfront Hall	£45,000	S Grimes	Hysopt
Bobbin Café City Hall - contract extension	£45,000 income	J Walsh	Now Group - Loaf Catering
Supply of a range of fruit and vegetables to the Canteen	£45,000	J Walsh	North Down Group
*Appointment of integrated design team to provide design development services to support Covid19 'Revitalisation programme' (funded)	Additional £45,000	A Reid	MMAS/OGU Architects

\* For Information - addendum to the STA approved in January 2021 for £60k with an additional £45k value added.

**Table 3: Modification to Contract**

<b>Title of Contract</b>	<b>Contract Duration</b>	<b>Modification</b>	<b>SRO</b>	<b>Supplier</b>
T1852 - Delivery and supply of live and frozen animal feed (lot 3 frozen meat)	Up to 3 years	Additional 4 months and £6,000	S Toland / R Black	WD Meats
T1883 - Supply and delivery of frozen fish to Belfast Zoo	Up to 3 years	Additional 4 months and £6,000	S Toland / R Black	Marine Nutrition
T1947 - Delivery of Peace IV Transform for Change	Up to 2.5 years	Additional 6 months	S Toland / R Black	The Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action

**Table 4: Retrospective Single Tender Actions**

<b>Title of Contract</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>SRO</b>	<b>Supplier</b>
T2149 - Event management and support services to deliver collaborative public private partnership (Renewed Ambition Programme RAP)	Up to 8 months	£70,400	A Reid	Lanyon Communications
Measured Term Contract for mechanical services including callouts and repairs	Up 2 months	£120,000	S Grimes	WJM Building Services Ltd
Consultancy Services – strategic support for C&NS	Up to 8 months	£125,000	J Tully	Deloitte

**Request for Funding - Belfast Youth Cup**

The Director of Finance and Resources informed the Members that the Council had received a request from Playing for the Future CIC for funding towards the costs of hosting the Belfast Youth Cup soccer tournament.

He explained that the organisation worked to bring people together to create opportunities for local children and celebrate diversity and that it operated Playing for the Future Academies in Belfast and Lurgan. It had established the Belfast Youth Cup in 2019 as a pilot initiative in order to provide young people with an opportunity to gain experience from playing in an international youth tournament and to showcase Belfast to a wider audience. Whilst, it had been the intention initially to limit the number of teams to eight, twenty-four teams from Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, England and Scotland had actually participated. The tournament, which had in 2020 been expanded to include teams from Denmark and South America, had been cancelled due to Covid-19 which, in terms of this year, had resulted in 30% of revenues through team registrations being lost, due to a knock on effect.

He reported that 120 teams from across Ireland had participated in this year's competition, which had taken place between 12th and 15th August, and that Seaview, Ulidia Playing Fields and the Ulster University Jordanstown had been used as venues. 500 bed nights had been created, 45% of which had related to the City centre. He drew the Members' attention to financial information which had been provided by Playing for the Future which had revealed that, as things stood, there would be a net loss of £29,244 associated with this year's competition. It had been emphasised that, should this not be addressed, it would have implications for next year's competition, as the number of participants would have to be significantly reduced.

The Director added that Playing for the Future had not requested a specific amount from the Council and he suggested that, should Members be minded to provide financial support by, for example, covering the £544 hire charge for Ulidia Playing Fields or making a contribution to help reduce the tournament deficit, it would be met through the Covid-19 reserve fund.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Pankhurst,  
Seconded by Councillor Beattie,

That the Committee agrees to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to allocate £5,000 to Playing for the Future towards the cost of hosting the Belfast Youth Cup.

On a vote, thirteen Members voted for the proposal and four against, with one "no vote" and it was declared carried.



### **Request for Funding - Tri-Cities Golf Event**

The City Solicitor informed the Members that representatives from the councils of Belfast, Dublin and Edinburgh had, since 2002, participated in an annual Tri-Cities Golf competition. The event, which had originated from the Cities of the Isles network, had been developed with the aim of establishing strong social capital networks across the three cities, as well as providing opportunities for networking, collaboration and engagement on a range of shared challenges.

He explained that this year's competition would take place in Belfast, with Belvoir Park Golf Club being used on 2nd September and Dunmurry Golf Club on the following day. Participants would meet their own travel and accommodation costs and would receive no subsequent allowances or expenses. He pointed out that, each year, the host city met the cost of green fees for the visiting teams and provided a meal after each day's competition and, accordingly, recommended that funding of up to a maximum of £2,000 be allocated from existing budgets to cover those costs.

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to adopt the recommendation.

### **Equality and Good Relations**

#### **Update on Language Strategy**

The Members of the Committee considered the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues**

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on the Language Strategy.**

**2.0 Recommendation**

**2.1 The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note the report.**

**3.0 Main Report**

**Background**

**3.1 The Council agreed a strategic approach to progress the Language Strategy in May 2021 including approving the establishment of:**

- a cross-party, bi-annual / quarterly Member Language Strategy Working Group;**

- 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
- an internal Language Strategy officer working group.

#### Key Issues

#### Progress update on Language Strategy

- 3.2 A report agreeing the next steps for the Language Strategy was brought to the Equality and Diversity Network – Strategic, which is chaired by the City Solicitor, in June where it was agreed that the Governance and Compliance Manager would carry out Departmental Management Team briefings so senior officers are aware of the implications of the Language Strategy. These are currently underway.
- 3.3 The internal Language Strategy officer working group has been established and comprises officers from Marketing and Communications; Customer Focus; Good Relations; Tourism, Culture, Heritage and Arts; Building Control; Corporate HR; City and Neighbourhood Services; Physical Programmes as well as the Language Officers. The key outcome from this officer working group is to develop draft action plans for each of the five language strands which we will bring to the first meeting of the Elected Member Working Group.
- 3.4 Nominations for the Elected Member Working Group will be sought in August, with the first and second meetings planned for September and October. It is planned to use these first two meetings to invite key stakeholders from the five language strands to brief the Working Group and for Elected Members to review and agree the draft action plans.
- 3.5 It is planned to establish and hold the new stakeholder fora for Irish and Ulster Scots in October / November.
- 3.6 In addition, English and Irish versions of the Council's logo have been provided to Glór na nGael to use for the Irish Language in Business Awards later this year and also Cairde Ard Eoin, a community group in Ardoyne, for local history storyboards as part of an environmental improvement scheme from the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme Business Cluster and Community Grant Scheme. This is in line with the decision made by the Joint Group of the Party Leaders' Forum and Historic Centenaries Working Group from [October 2013](#) which was agreed through SP and R to design a logo in Irish for use by individual Members and organisations. It is

suggested that a process is developed so that these requests are approved and logged by the Irish Language Officer.

- 3.7 The Irish Language Officer is also working with Foras na Gaeilge on the Council hosting an online event as part of the Foras na Gaeilge and Scotland's Bòrd na Gàidhlig's joint Comicille1500 celebrations.

**Progress update on the revised Dual Language Street Sign Policy**

- 3.8 Following the ratification of the revised Dual Language Street Sign Policy in May 2021, an officer working group has been established and procedures have been developed for implementation of the revised policy. An external equality specialist has been engaged to carry out the EQIA and this work is currently underway. The revised procedures and other steps necessary to establish the policy will be brought through the Elected Member Working Group in the coming months.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.9 There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

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

- 3.10 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."

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note the report.

**Audit of Inequalities and Equality Action Plan 2021-24**

The City Solicitor reminded the Members that the Committee, at its meeting on 19th February, had approved the Draft Audit of Inequalities and the Equality Action Plan for 2021-24 for public consultation. The documents had been prepared as part of the Council's compliance requirements under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, with the Equality Action Plan scheduled to run from 2021 until 2024, to align with the Corporate Plan.

He provided a brief overview of the consultation process and the list of consultees and confirmed that:

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- i. data gathered would be considered through the internal officer Equality and Diversity Network Strategic and Operational groups and would be fed into specific, relevant programmes;
- ii. no changes had been made to the draft Audit of Inequalities and this would now, subject to approval, be submitted to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and published as a final document; and
- iii. no changes had been made to the draft Equality Action Plan 2021-24 and this would now, subject to approval, be submitted to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and published as a final document.

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to approve the [Audit of Inequalities 2021](#) and the [Equality Action Plan 2021-24](#) for submission to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

**Equality and Diversity - Quarterly Screening Report  
Report and Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report**

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note a summary of equality screenings and rural needs impact assessments for the period from April to June 2021 and approve the submission to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs of the Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Return for 2020/21.

**Equality Impact Assessment for the Transport Hub  
and Associated Masterplan – Response to Translink**

The City Solicitor informed the Members that the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company, trading as Translink, had carried out an equality impact assessment of the Weavers' Cross Integrated Transport Hub, in accordance with the statutory duties contained within Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The assessment had included associated works and projects, up to and including the final build stage of the project.

He explained that the draft equality impact assessment report had been made available as part of the formal consultation stage of the process and that the Council had been invited, as a named consultee, to submit comments on both it and the preliminary recommendations around measures to mitigate any potential future adverse impact and/or alternative policies. He drew the Members' attention to the Council's proposed response, which had welcomed the development, as being in line with the objectives set out within the Belfast Agenda.

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to approve the submission of the following comments to Translink, as the Council's

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response to the equality impact assessment for the Belfast Transport Hub and Wider Masterplan:

**Belfast City Council response to Translink on the Equality Impact  
Assessment for the Transport Hub and Associated Masterplan**

**Background**

Translink has opened a period of public consultation on an Equality Impact Assessment for the Transport Hub and Associated Masterplan. An extension to the consultation period was agreed to allow for approval of our response at Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 20 August 2021, with the response then to be submitted subject to Council approval in September 2021.

**Introduction**

Belfast City Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Equality Impact Assessment for the Transport Hub and Associated Masterplan. It should be noted that the Council's City Growth and Regeneration Committee is scheduled to receive a presentation on the Transport Hub/Weavers Cross development in August 2021 which will also provide an opportunity for discussion on the development.

We have given due consideration to this EQIA given the synergies between the aims of the Transport Hub and Associated Masterplan, and its potential to contribute to the ongoing transformation of Belfast. Comments were sought from across the council for inclusion in the response and we welcome any opportunity for further dialogue on any of the areas noted.

**Contributing to the Belfast Agenda**

As noted in the EQIA, the Transport Hub, is a key transport-led regeneration project that will contribute to Belfast's community plan (the Belfast Agenda) ambitions and vision for the city in 2035 that *Belfast will be a city re-imagined and resurgent. A great place to live and work for everyone. Beautiful, well-connected and culturally vibrant, it will be a sustainable city shared and loved by all its citizens, free from the legacy of conflict.* As a key city infrastructure development it will contribute to our shared city outcome that by 2035:

- Belfast is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable city.

The Transport Hub is also identified as a transformational intervention for the city centre in the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS) which recognises the pivotal role of the city centre for the success of the city and for the region. This sets out the Council's ambition for the continuing growth and regeneration of the city core and its surrounding area up to 2030 and has been adopted by the Department for Communities as the policy framework for the city centre.

BCCRIS identifies the South Centre of the city centre as the primary focus for Belfast's office sector, at the centre of NI's knowledge economy and an essential driver of the region's economic growth. The Transport Hub and associated masterplan will be a major improvement in convenience and connectivity as well as

promoting sustainable and active travel, catering for over 14 million passengers per year; the impact of its reach will extend well beyond Belfast city centre. However, it is more than a multi-modal transport facility, the development will redefine a key gateway to the city centre as well as offering significant regeneration potential.

The Transport Hub will also have a key role in contributing to the Bolder Vision for Belfast, a shared vision with commitment to further collaboration from Belfast City Council, Department for Communities and Department for Infrastructure. As a key gateway to the city for employment, social-life and tourism the Transport Hub will contribute to the Bolder Vision's key principles of prioritising integrated walking, cycling and public transport as well as providing inclusive, shared spaces and improving access for all communities to the city centre.

### Serving our communities

Inclusion and accessibility need to be at the centre of the Transport Hub for its success, and travel to and from the hub. We welcome recognition of the ongoing need to take cognisance of the diverse needs of those who may choose to use the hub. Given demographic changes and as the Covid-19 recovery is felt in the tourism industry and the broader economy, it is likely that there will be increasing diversity in needs as the development progresses and is operational. We note the mitigating measures that have been prioritised along with the ongoing engagement with stakeholders such as IMTAC. We would also encourage engagement with stakeholders from all of the Section 75 protected characteristics groups.

The Council has received several representations from local business and residents' groups in relation to the development of the Transport Hub/Weavers Cross. We would therefore emphasise the importance of ongoing, meaningful community engagement as the Transport Hub and associated masterplan progresses to ensure that the economic and connectivity benefits of this development are felt by local communities and businesses.

As referenced in the EQIA, the establishment of a Community Committee and the commitment of the dedicated community engagement manager for the Belfast Transport Hub since 2017 are welcomed, given the significance of this development. These are vital resources in recognising the needs and maintaining dialogue with all communities of interest; particularly in catalysing the regeneration in the surrounding areas and maximising the benefits for the local communities.

The partnership working to date between the Community Engagement Manager, Belfast City Council and the contractor has resulted in a bespoke 'Belfast Transport Hub Construction Employment Academy' to offer employment opportunities for local people, who had been out of employment. 24.9% of the working age population in Belfast are employment deprived (compared to a regional figure of 20.6%) and 38.1% of the working age adults have no or low levels of qualification (compared to 35.6% regionally)<sup>2</sup> and The Transport Hub has highlighted the role that flagship developments in the city centre can play in delivering on inclusive growth and social value commitments through measures such as this. While not specifically identified as a Section 75 group, the cumulative impact of multiple sources of disadvantage – low incomes, benefit dependency, low skills levels and qualifications – are likely to combine together to impact on an individual's

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<sup>2</sup> NISRA (2018) NI Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017

opportunity and capacity to participate in employability programmes. The impact of Covid-19 has also served to accelerate the inequalities in society emphasising the need for an inclusive and sustainable recovery.

The first Employment Academy in 2020 saw 101 people signing up through 6 sign-up events, including two dedicated sign-up events in Sandy Row and Grosvenor Rd to promote access to employment for the adjoining communities. Of those who met the criteria, 16 participants were selected for the Belfast Transport Hub Construction Employment Academy, which resulted in 9 job outcomes relating to the Enabling Works.

Plans for the Construction Employment Academies for the Main Works are already in place with Social Value job opportunities due to come online from January 2022.

This commitment to inclusive growth and social value of the Transport Hub has been recognised through the achievement of two National Social Value Awards in 2021 for its delivery, in partnership with Belfast City Council and the contractor, working with the local community.

We welcome the continued engagement and commitment of the Transport Hub to inclusive growth and the development of the Inclusive Growth city charter.

#### Good relations

We welcome cognisance of the historical status of the site of the Boyne Bridge within the project and that it will continue to be afforded due and proportionate regard through ongoing engagement with the local community. The aim of such engagement is to ensure that good relations are maintained and enhanced, this is key to the diversity of our city as outlined in our Good Relations Strategy, agreed by all the political parties on Council in September 2019.

While much of the current focus is on the construction phase, it may be worth considering at this stage, the ultimate potential of the new Transport Hub and Wider Masterplan to be a new Shared Space for people from all backgrounds. The Good Relations Strategy details shared space principles and how they fit with the strategic vision for the city. When we use the term Shared Space we are describing space that is welcoming, accessible, good quality and safe.

- Welcoming
  - Shared Space should be welcoming, where people feel safe to visit and to take part in activity within that space, increasing an overall sense of shared experience and community
  - Activities within the public spaces will respect diversity and promote inclusion
- Accessible
  - There will be equality of opportunity afforded to all those using public spaces and accessing goods, facilities and services
  - In a Shared City, public expressions of identity will be respected and respectful

- Shared Spaces should reflect the values of diversity and inclusion
- Good quality
- Shared Space should be good quality, with attractive, high quality services and well-designed buildings and spaces
- Safe
- Shared Space should be safe for all

We welcome the stated purpose of the purpose of the Masterplan as being: 'to create an accessible, safe, comfortable and attractive environment for the Hub's customers, visitors and employees alike that is functional and practical to operate, cost-effective to maintain, commercially attractive, efficient and sustainable'. There is also potential for the project to contribute to an additional outcome of our Good Relations Strategy, focused on shared services. Through this aim we will:

- Focus on inclusion and social innovation
- Improve our use of data and evidence-based planning
- Evidence and articulate where division exacerbate social and economic issues
- Co-design and co-create new solutions to challenging issues
- Promote integrated planning
- Encourage projects that build the capacity of organisations and communities to be confident to access services throughout the city
- Encourage attitudinal and behavioural change.

#### Use of datasets in EQIA Appendix 3

We welcome Translink's research and the inclusion of supporting datasets within the EQIA. One such dataset presented is contained in Appendix 3 of the draft EQIA which outlines Data on Residents of Belfast. This is an *extract from the Belfast Local Government Plan Topic Paper 17: Population, 2017*. It should be noted that this topic paper is a supporting document in relation to the Belfast Local Development Plan *draft Plan Strategy 2035*.

The *draft Plan Strategy* is still in draft form and we are currently awaiting the Planning Appeals Commission's report following the Independent Examination earlier this year. It is therefore potentially subject to modification, adoption or withdrawal once the final report is. The policies in the *draft Plan Strategy* cannot be used until such time as the Plan is adopted. It is therefore possible that the Weavers Cross proposal will be considered under the current planning policy framework. We trust that as a public authority, Translink is however willing to commit to the proposals identified within Appendix 3 without necessarily being planning policy driven.

Therefore, we would ask for the following changes:



- a. Removal of the reference to “In land use planning terms” at para 4.3, as this relates to the *draft* Plan Strategy and is not current land use planning policy. We would suggest the revised paragraph should read as follows:

‘The principle of promoting equality of opportunity and good relations between people’ must be a key objective behind the plan and will be a central theme of the sustainability assessment. This means ensuring everyone benefits from quality housing, employment, and access to public services and recreation facilities. These themes will be addressed in more detail in later papers. However, this paper begins the process of identifying issues and needs facing different groups within the area over and above the general population, so that these can be considered at every stage of the plan making process. If an aim of the plan is also to help build a cohesive society then it must also be recognised that this can only be achieved by “sharing space” and “accessing opportunities”.’

- b. Removal of the reference to “that planning provides” at para 4.4, as this relates to the *draft* Plan Strategy and is not current land use planning policy. We would suggest the revised paragraph should read as follows:

‘The age structure of a population has obvious implications for planning. A growing young population will impact on the demand for and provision of childcare facilities, nursery, primary and secondary schools. A growing working age population would necessitate adequate housing especially for those entering the housing market and employment opportunities. For a growing elderly population, adequate services and housing to meet their specific needs must also be considered.’

The Council reiterates its broad welcome for the proposals set out in respect of the Transport Hub and asks that this response be considered going forward.

#### **Minutes of the Meeting of the Shared City Partnership**

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to approve and adopt the minutes of the Shared City Partnership of 9th August, including the recommendations:

- i. to invite the CYP2 Delivery Partner Active Communities Network to present to a future meeting;
- ii. to invite Mediation NI to present the Shared History Narratives for the Shared Space to the Partnership at its meeting in September;
- iii. to approve a reallocation of budget to enable the funding awarded to NBIN/TASCIT for the Challenging Conversations project under BCC 8 Our Safe Community to be increased from £5k to £6,565; and
- iv. to note that the Dean Clarke Foundation has, under delegated authority, been allocated £1,940 towards a diversionary programme of activity for the

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Tigers Bay/ Mountcollyer area under the Strategic Intervention Programme.

**Operational Issues**

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Party  
Group Leaders' Consultative Forum**

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to approve and adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum of 12th August.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the  
Social Policy Working Group**

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to approve and adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Social Policy Working Group of 30th June.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Working  
Group on the Climate Crisis**

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to approve and adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Working Group on the Climate Crisis of 23rd June.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Active Belfast Limited Board**

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note the minutes of the meeting of the Active Belfast Limited Board of 9th August.

**Requests for Use of the City Hall and the Provision of Hospitality**

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to adopt the recommendations made in respect of those applications received up to 9th August, as set out below:

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,  
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NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
<b>2021 EVENTS</b>						
Royal British Legion	26 September 2021	<b>Celebration to mark Centenary of the Royal British Legion -</b> Reception and service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph. We would then be leaving City Hall to march to Belfast Cathedral for a service'.  Numbers attending – 120  <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	No (charity)	Yes, Tea/ Coffee Reception as centenary	Approve No charge Yes, hospitality
University of Atypical	1 October 2021	<b>Launch of Bounce Festival –</b> annual arts festival that showcases outstanding new work by deaf and disabled writers, producers,	D	No (charity)	No Hospitality	Approve No charge No hospitality

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		actors, dancers, musicians, and directors.  Numbers attending – 12  <i>* Numbers and room layout will be reviewed and revised in line with COVID19 social distancing guidelines at the time of this event.</i>				
Belfast Trust	18 November 2021	<b>Launch of Men's Health Week</b> to showcase support available for men locally to get connected.  Numbers attending – 35  <i>* Numbers and room layout will be reviewed and revised in line with COVID19 social distancing guidelines at the time of this event.</i>	A & D	Yes - £115 (Govern ment Dept)	No Hospitality	Approve Yes charge No hospitality
<b>2022 EVENTS</b>						
Ulster Hockey	21 January 2022	<b>Celebration dinner for 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Ulster Hockey</b> Numbers attending – 300	C	No (charity)	Yes, Wine Reception as significant anniversary	Approve No charge Wine Reception

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		<i>* Numbers and room layout will be reviewed and revised in line with COVID19 social distancing guidelines at the time of this event.</i>				
British Transplant Society	3 March 2022	<b>Celebration dinner for 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of British Transplant Society</b> BTS will be holding their Congress in ICC for 400 delegates, City Hall will be the conference welcome and anniversary dinner  Numbers attending – 250 -  <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	No (charity)	Yes, Wine Reception as significant anniversary	Approve No charge Wine Reception
Catholic Chaplaincy, Queens University	10 June 2022	<b>Golden Jubilee Ball to celebrate 50 years of Catholic Chaplaincy at the Elmwood Avenue.</b>	C	No (charity)	Yes, Wine Reception as significant anniversary	Approve No charge Wine Reception

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		Numbers attending – 400  <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>2023 EVENTS</b>						
International Society for the Study of Individual Differences	20 July 2023	<b>Conference Welcome Reception and Dinner</b> to four-day conference taking place at Queen's University Belfast.  Numbers attending – 250	A & B	No  <i>£825 waived due to links with Visit Belfast</i>	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality

**Other Business**

**Belfast Maritime Consortium Supervisory Board**

The City Solicitor informed the Members that the Chief Executive had been invited to become a member of the Belfast Maritime Consortium Supervisory Board. He confirmed that he had reviewed the proposed terms of appointment and was satisfied that there was no conflict of interest for the Chief Executive.

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to approve her appointment to the Belfast Maritime Consortium Supervisory Board.

**Recruitment of Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty**

The Members of the Committee were reminded that, at the meeting on 18th June, they had agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to agree that the post of Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty be recruited on a permanent basis and that the Elected

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Friday, 20th August, 2021**

Members on the selection panel consist of the Chairperson of the Committee (or her nominee), together with Councillors McLaughlin and Pankhurst.

The Chief Executive reported that she had since been informed that Councillor Pankhurst would be unable to participate in the selection panel and that he had been unsuccessful in securing a replacement from his Political Party.

Accordingly, she sought a nominee from a Political Party other than those which were already represented on the recruitment panel and referred to the need to balance the panel in terms of gender and community background.

After discussion, the Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note that the Alliance Party would, in the first instance, seek to nominate a Member to sit on the selection panel.

Chairperson

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## CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY FOR THE SPECIAL PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

*Date of Meeting:* 3rd August, 2021

*Final CX Decision Register Published:* 6th August, 2021

*Recommendations sent to CX:* 4th August, 2021

*Final Date For Call-in (10am):* 13th August, 2021

*CX's Comments Received:* 6th August, 2021

	Topic	Chief Executive's Decision	Subject to call-in
<b>2</b>	Housing Investment Plan 2021 Annual Update	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to note the update provided.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>3</b>	Housing Executive's Revitalisation Programme	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to note the update provided.	<b>Yes</b>

Please note that the agenda/reports associated with the decisions listed above can be accessed on the app and on the web, via the following link: [3rd August 2021 Special People and Communities Committee - Housing Issues](#)

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# People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 3rd August, 2021

## SPECIAL MEETING OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Cobain (Chairperson);  
Councillors Baker, Black, Bunting,  
Michael Collins, Corr, de Faoite, Magee,  
McAteer, McCusker, Mulholland, Pankhurst,  
Smyth and Verner.

Also attended: Councillor Kyle.

In attendance: Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;  
Ms. V. Brown, City Services Manager;  
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer; and  
Ms. K. McCrum, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported on behalf of Councillors Flynn, M. Kelly, McReynolds and Newton.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No Declarations of Interest were recorded.

### **Housing Investment Plan 2021 Annual Update**

The Committee was informed that representatives of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) were in attendance to provide the second annual update on the Housing Investment Plan for Belfast 2019-2023, as well as an update on their Revitalisation Programme.

Accordingly, Ms. G. Long, Chief Executive, together with Ms. E. Newberry, Assistant Director Land and Strategic Regeneration, Mrs. J. Hawthorne, Regional Manager Belfast, Ms. F. McGrath, Head of Place Shaping Belfast, Mr. P. Reid, Land and Housing Analytics Manager, Mr. K. Boyle, Housing Analytics Manager, Mr. B. O'Kane, Senior Principal Officer, Mr. P. Kelly and Mr. P. McCombe, Area Managers, and, Mr. A. McKenna, Assistant Manager, were welcomed to the meeting.

The Chief Executive provided an overview of Housing Executive spend across Belfast during 2020/2021, detailing that, of the £177.6m spent, £116.7m related to 'Investment New Build', £18.08m had been spent on planned maintenance and improvements, £15.41m on response maintenance, and £20.62m on the Supporting People Programme. She also detailed projected spend for 2021/22, including £24.18m allocated to planned maintenance, £18.11m for response maintenance, £21.16 to Supporting People, and £13.46m for stock improvements. The significant challenges in accessing material supply chains and labour

**Special People and Communities Committee,  
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shortages were touched upon, and the Members were advised that the Housing Executive stock in Belfast was 25,407 homes.

The following priorities from within the NIHE 2021/2022 Business Plan were highlighted as of interest to the Members of the Committee:

- Working with the Department for Communities to revitalise the Housing Executive;
- Managing and maintaining over 85,000 homes;
- Providing £72.8m Supporting People funding for 19,000+ housing support places;
- Delivering the Homelessness Strategy actions to find housing solutions for those facing homelessness;
- Planning and managing a programme to increase the supply of new social homes with 1,900 starts and 1,400 completions;
- Investing £216m to improve tenants' homes;
- Delivering 11 Housing Investment Plans and contributing to Community Planning Partnerships to help create vibrant sustainable communities;
- Developing a new Climate Change Strategy to reduce carbon emissions, helping to sustain the environment for future generations;
- Launching a new apprenticeship learning scheme and introducing social clauses into contracts to provide local skills and employment;
- Processing Housing benefit applications to help tenants in both the public and private sector to meet their housing costs (in 2020/21 £532.7m was paid out).

In addition, an overview of the work undertaken as part of the Covid-19 recovery was provided, including the 'Everyone In' approach which supported rough sleepers, the acquisition of temporary accommodation, and bringing back into use void properties.

The Chief Executive explained that the Housing Investment Plan (HIP) provided an overview of the housing market in the Belfast City Council area and reflected Community Planning priorities locally. She confirmed that 55% of homes in Belfast were owner occupied, 19% private rented and 27% social rented, with a growth in the private rented sector seen in recent decades, in line with other cities.

The Members were presented with figures regarding waiting lists, which showed an increase in applications and those in housing stress, whilst the number of allocations had fallen in recent years, broadening the gap between supply and demand, which was deemed to require urgent intervention.

Ms. Long reported an increase in those presenting as homeless, with a high level of acceptance (63%), with an increase in younger people, single females and those with higher levels of complex needs. She added that the growth in use of temporary accommodation and the length of time that people were required to stay there was unsustainable.

The following points were highlighted as key housing issues within Belfast:

- Ensuring that housing drives sustainable and inclusive growth and meets the city's net zero ambitions;

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- Investing in existing housing stock to increase health and wellbeing and help reduce inequalities, including retrofitting and energy efficiency;
- An ageing population – 18% of population 65+ by 2029;
- Responding to gap between supply and demand;
- Welfare Reform – 13,856 NIHE tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit and 5,360 NIHE tenants in receipt of Housing Cost element of Universal Credit at March 2021;
- The long term impact of Covid-19 on demand for services.

The Members of the Committee were advised that, in Belfast, 303 new social homes had been completed during 2020/2021 and a further 1,464 homes were on-site, meeting the targets for both Northern Ireland and Belfast despite the challenges experienced. Ms. Long commented on the extensive developments programmed for the years ahead and underlined the need to ensure that planning applications were brought in a timely manner. She also provided an update on the Tower Blocks Strategy.

In conclusion, the Chief Executive emphasised the importance of the Community Planning partnership and working together towards meeting the outcomes within the Belfast Agenda. She added that progress against the HIP outcomes would be regularly monitored and reported on annually.

A number of the Members spoke positively about working relationships with proactive NIHE staff, but questioned how Community Planning linkages between the Council and Housing Executive could be improved at a more operational level, as well as how visibility within communities could be increased alongside a more person-centred approach. Questions were also posed regarding 40-day exclusions for those who turned down housing, and, what policies existed to prevent homelessness.

The Chief Executive suggested that it may be useful for her to more clearly set out and articulate how their day-to-day business was delivering on the outcomes of the Belfast Agenda, and agreed to look at how this could be done. The Assistant Director of Land and Strategic Regeneration added that the HIP had been aligned with the Belfast Agenda at a strategic level and that good working relationships existed between NIHE and the Council's Community Planning Officers.

The representatives suggested that, whilst they were one of the largest landlords in Europe, they continued to have a very local approach and were committed to better outcomes for their tenants. The Chief Executive commented that the current demand for temporary accommodation was unprecedented and so difficult decisions were having to be made. In terms of prevention, she advised of the investment through the Supporting People Programme which was a key area of focus. The Regional Manager for Belfast provided details regarding communication routes that had been improved recently and undertook to reflect on the comments made and look at areas for improvement.

Other issues raised during discussion included queries about mixed tenure housing, the percentage set aside for affordable housing within large developments and the reasons behind the increase in single people presenting as homeless. The need to work with other landowners to deliver local solutions, and keep tenants involved in decisions regarding the Tower Block Strategy were also raised.

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Representatives from the Housing Executive advised that the level of those presenting with complex needs, particularly amongst young people, was growing, involving a combination of mental and physical ill health and addiction. The work being undertaken to support young people into secure accommodation and reintroduce them to employment and training opportunities, alongside other partners, was outlined.

The Chief Executive emphasised their view that all developments should contain a 20% allocation of social and affordable housing and agreed that partnership working was necessary with other landowners to improve sites. The Assistant Director of Land and Strategic Regeneration provided examples of the opportunities that Community Planning had presented at a development level and undertook to explore similar partnership working at sites prior to that stage.

Discussion took place regarding growing housing needs, particularly among young families, and poor housing standards, as well as instances of the unsuitable allocation of tenancies. Examples of social problems, such as drug and alcohol misuse, and their destabilising effect, were also raised.

The Assistant Director of Land and Strategic Regeneration provided details about ongoing work to look at need verses land availability in the areas raised. The policies for dealing with anti-social behaviour were outlined, as were schemes to address the aging housing stock in South and East Belfast.

In response to a query as to the impact of material supply issues, Ms. Long reiterated her concerns regarding the rising costs of materials and the impact that it could have on building, but assured the Members that proactive contract management was in place.

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note the update provided.

**Housing Executive's Revitalisation Programme (Verbal Update)**

Ms. Long advised the Members of the Committee that the Housing Executive's Revitalisation Programme had been launched by the Minister for Communities in November, 2020, as part of a larger set of policy announcements, with the core goal of enabling NIHE to borrow to fund sustainable investment in existing stock and to enable it to build new housing.

She added that the Programme had a strong focus on co-design and engagement with tenants and the wider community and was vital to meet the levels of challenge outlined as part of the HIP Update. She explained that their immediate priority was to prepare an Outline Business Case determining what level of investment was required, alongside a Landlord Business Plan, Engagement and Communications Plan, and to develop governance procedures which would involve tenants. She confirmed that the nature of the borrowing was not for NIHE to determine but would be a decision for the Minister.

A Member of the Committee raised concerns regarding the future plans, in particular, an anticipated move towards privatisation. In response to a question as to whether tenants would be given a say about the future status of NIHE, specifically, giving up its status as a

**Special People and Communities Committee,  
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landlord, the Chief Executive confirmed that the Housing Executive did not have a preferred model and that the nature of borrowing would be a ministerial decision, as would the role of tenants. She did however reiterate that the NIHE was a tenant centred organisation and undertook to provide ongoing updates to the Council regarding the Programme.

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note the update provided.

Chairperson

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# CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DECISIONS, TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY FOR THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

**DATE OF MEETING:** 10th August, 2021      **FINAL CX DECISION REGISTER PUBLISHED:** 13th August, 2021  
**COMPILATION OF COMMITTEE**  
**RECOMMENDATIONS SENT TO CX:** 11th August, 2021      **FINAL DATE FOR CALL-IN (10am):** 20th August, 2021  
**CX's COMMENTS RECEIVED:** 12th August, 2021

	Topic	Chief Executive's Decision	Subject to call-in
<b><u>Restricted</u></b>			
<b>2 a</b>	Partner Agreement - Ulidia Playing Fields	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to agree the request for additional support for Rosario Youth Club and to provide a maximum financial payment of up to £2,000 per month for staff costs subject to vouching of fully evidenced expenditure from April 2021 to June 2021.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>2 b</b>	Community Provision Grant Funding 2021/22	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• award the funding allocation of £1,731,259.74 presented in the Letter of Offer from the DfC for the 2021/22 financial year and accept the offer on behalf of Council;</li> <li>• accept the additional in-year allocations from the DfC relating to the Community Support Programme;</li> <li>• grant officer authority to progress full annual allocations to all previously approved grant recipients subject to associated due diligence requirements; and</li> <li>• approve the transfer of the previous Play Resource Warehouse SLA to Bryson Energy on basis of same deliverables for 2021/22 only.</li> </ul>	<b>Yes</b>

2 c	Request for the use of Boucher Road Playing Fields	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Grant authority to G Force Entertainment to hold a fairground event, from Friday 1st October to Sunday 17th October 2021.</li> <li>2. Delegate authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• negotiate an appropriate fee which recognises the costs to Council, minimises negative impact on the immediate area and takes account of the potential wider benefit to the city economy, in conjunction with the Council's Commercial Manager;</li> <li>• negotiate satisfactory terms and conditions of use via an appropriate legal agreement prepared by the City Solicitor, including managing final booking confirmation dates and flexibility around 'set up' and take down' periods, and booking amendments, subject to:</li> <li>• the promoter resolving any operational issues to the Council's satisfaction;</li> <li>• compliance with Coronavirus restrictions in place at the time of the event; and</li> <li>• the promoter meeting all the statutory requirements of the Planning and Building Control Service, including the terms and conditions of the Park's Entertainment Licence</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>Members noted that the above recommendations were taken as pre-policy position, in advance of the Council agreeing a more structured framework and policy for 'Events', which was currently being taken forward in conjunction with the Council's Commercial team.</p>	Yes
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<b>2 d</b>	Finance Update	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• note the report and agree the 2020/21 balances,</li> <li>• agree to the year-end surplus of £5.4m being made available for re-allocation; and</li> <li>• agree to retain the annual allocation of £500k for the summer diversionary festival programme with the purpose of running it later in the year.</li> </ul>	<b>Yes</b>
<b><u>Matters referred back from the Council/Motions</u></b>			
<b>3 a</b>	Response from Department for Communities re: Funding Advice Services	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to note the response.	<b>Yes</b>
<b><u>Committee/Strategic Issues</u></b>			
<b>4 a</b>	Update on DAERA consultation on the Designation of Quiet Areas	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to agree write to the DAERA Minister to reaffirm the Council's proposal to have Lagan Meadows designated as a quiet area and to seek an update in regard to the status and timeframe for the proposal:	<b>Yes</b>
<b>4 b</b>	Wheelie Box Pilot Update	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• note and agree the proposals to reinstate the service; and</li> <li>• agree with the proposed configuration changes to the collection process and to commencing engagement with the Residents in the coming weeks, in advance Council ratification on 1st September.</li> </ul>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>4 c</b>	Request to Support Research Project at Queen's University Belfast into Sustainable Packaging	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to provide a letter of support for the project.	<b>Yes</b>

4 d	Affordable Warmth Scheme	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• agree to the request from DFC to sign the interim 2021-2022 SLA provided; and</li><li>• note the ongoing review which would be used in drafting the SLA for the next financial year.</li></ul>	Yes						
Finance, Procurement and Performance									
5 a	Revenue Grant for Community Buildings - request to transfer 2021/22 awards	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to authorise the transfer of the Belfast City Council revenue grant, currently paid to Newhill Youth and Community Association to Upper Springfield Development Trust (USDT), with the authorisation being subject to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the merger of both organisations; and</li><li>• the completion of all governance and financial obligations and continued service delivery from the facility for which the revenue grant had been awarded.</li></ul>	Yes						
Operational Issues									
6 a	Proposal for naming new street	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to approve the application for naming a new street in the City as set out below:</p> <table><tr><th>Proposed Name</th><th>Location</th><th>Applicant</th></tr><tr><td>Ben Madigan Hill</td><td>Off Ben Madigan Heights</td><td>Kilmoon Developments</td></tr></table>	Proposed Name	Location	Applicant	Ben Madigan Hill	Off Ben Madigan Heights	Kilmoon Developments	Yes
Proposed Name	Location	Applicant							
Ben Madigan Hill	Off Ben Madigan Heights	Kilmoon Developments							

<b>6 b</b>	The Queens Green Canopy - Tree Planting Initiative celebrating the forthcoming Queen's Platinum Jubilee	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to defer consideration of the report to enable information to be obtained and submitted to a future meeting in regard to the proposed locations where the trees would be planted and also to establish the varieties of the trees to be planted, ensuring that those selected were off a native species to guarantee inclusion within the Council's One Million Tree planting initiative.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>6 c</b>	Requested tree planting in Victoria Park to mark the Centenary of Northern Ireland	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to grant the request from the East End Great War Society to plant six Chestnut trees, along with the commemorative plaque, within an agreed location in Victoria Park, subject to officers ensuring that the proposed variety of trees used were native trees to ensure inclusion within the Council's One Million Tree planting initiative.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>6 d</b>	Ormeau Park BMX Track	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to grant approval for officers to work in partnership with Cycling Ulster officials to submit an application to the Whitemountain Programme main grants fund to redevelop the Ormeau Park BMX track.	<b>Yes</b>

Please note that the agenda/reports associated with the decisions listed above can be accessed on the app and on the web, via the following link:

<http://www.internalminutes/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=166&MId=10319&Ver=4>

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# **People and Communities Committee**

Tuesday, 10th August, 2021

## **MEETING OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE**

Members present: Councillor Cobain (Chairperson);  
Alderman Copeland; and  
Councillors Baker, Black, Bunting, Corr,  
de Faoite, Flynn, M. Kelly, Magee, McAteer,  
Mulholland, Newton, Smyth and Verner.

Also attended: Councillor O'Hara.

In attendance: Mr. R. Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services;  
Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;  
Mrs. C. Mathews, Director of Resources and Fleet;  
Mrs. K. McCrum, Democratic Services Officer; and  
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported on behalf of Councillors Michael Collins, Garrett, McCusker, McReynolds and Pankhurst.

### **Condolences**

The Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, extended condolences to Councillor Pankhurst on the recent death of his grandfather.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 8th and 22nd June were taken as read and signed as correct.

It was reported that the minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st July, subject to the following amendment to the 8th June minute:

### **Rosario Youth Club - Funding Request**

At the request of Councillor Gormley, the Council agreed that a report be submitted to the August meeting of the People and Communities Committee, asking the Committee to consider allocating additional funding to cover the months of April, May and June 2021 in respect of Rosario Youth Club.

### **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Smyth declared an interest in item 2 (a) Partner Agreement – Ulidia Playing Fields, in that he was a Member of its Steering Committee and he left the meeting whilst the matter was under consideration.

**People and Communities Committee,  
Tuesday, 10th August, 2021**

The following Members declared an interest in item 2 (b) in relation to the Community Provision Grant Funding 2021/22. All Members left the meeting whilst the matter was being discussed.

- Alderman Copeland, in that her daughter was a Director of the Greater Village Regeneration Trust;
- Councillor Black, on the basis that she managed the Grosvenor Community Centre;
- Councillor Verner, in that she was an employee of the Greater Shankill Partnership (Spectrum Centre); and
- Councillor Corr, in that he was an employee of Falls Community Council.

**Restricted**

**The information contained in the reports associated with the following 4 items is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.**

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the Members of the Press and public from the Committee meeting during discussion on the following 3 items as, due to their nature, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Section 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

**Partner Agreement - Ulidia Playing Fields**

Further to the decision at the 1st July meeting of Council, the Committee considered a report regarding allocating additional financial support to retrospectively cover staffing costs for the months of April, May and June 2021 in respect of Rosario Youth Club (in addition to the contribution which had been paid under their Partnership Agreement).

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 22nd June 2021, it had agreed to award Rosario Youth Club a payment, to a maximum of £2,000 per month (pending a long-term lease being achieved), with effect from 1st July 2021.

The Committee was advised that the Club had intended to write to the Council at an earlier date to request an extension to this funding but due to an error this had not been done. The Director of Neighbourhood Services confirmed that Rosario Youth Club had advised that they had provided the service and incurred the costs during this period and could provide full documentation and vouching of such.

Following a query from a Member regarding the possibility of establishing a Partner agreement for Glentoran Youth Academy for the new Blanchflower Asset, the Director of Neighbourhood Services advised that the existing Partner Agreements Policy had been established following an open Expression of Interest process in respect of the specific sites and that it had been for an initial period of five years, with the option to extend for an additional period of two years and that it was now currently in year six.



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He further advised that any new requests could be considered as part of a Community Asset Transfer process and confirmed that officers were preparing to submit further details on this for consideration in the Autumn.

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to agree the request for additional support for Rosario Youth Club and to provide a maximum financial payment of up to £2,000 per month for staff costs, subject to vouching of fully evidenced expenditure from April 2021 to June 2021.

**Community Provision Grant Funding 2021/22**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services advised that the Council had received a Letter of Offer) for 2021/22 from the Department for Communities, allocating £1,731,259.74 (which included additional Welfare Reform Mitigation Extensions), with some elements of the grant award being ring fenced, as detailed below:

Community Support General (Capacity, Revenue, Project)	£829,405.44
Advice Grant	£607,928.42
Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension Face to Face Award Advice	£223,525.88
Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension - Tribunal Representations	£70,400.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1,731,259.74</b>

The Director drew the Members' attention to a detailed summary of the exact budget breakdown of financial commitments for the overall Community Grants Programme for 2021/22, as follows:

<b>Funding</b>	<b>Budget Allocation</b>
Advice Grant (Generalist Advice)	£999,657.00
Advice Grant (Welfare Reform Face to Face)	£223,525.88
Capacity Building Grant	£1,021,336.12
Revenue for Community Buildings	£992,372.63
Independently Managed Community Centres	£362,746.00
Service Level Agreements	£37,709.00
Summer Scheme (now micro/medium grant and direct programming)	£169,726.10
Project Grants (now micro/medium grant and direct programming)	£30,965.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£3,838,037.73</b>

The Members noted that the ring-fenced allocation of £70,400 for Tribunal Representations was directly for services provided by Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service and

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that the Letter of Offer stipulated that the Council would agree to contribute to local advice provision from its own resources of at least £391,729.00.

The Director referred specifically to the funding to the Play Resource Warehouse. He advised the Members that the Council had provided funding of £31,209.00 to Play Resource Warehouse under a Service Level Agreement (SLA) for a number of years. The Council had recently received formal notification that the Play Resource Warehouse had formally merged with Bryson Energy and that Bryson Energy would continue with the arrangements agreed within the SLA.

The Committee was therefore asked to consider the transfer of the 2021/22 SLA for Play Resource Warehouse to Bryson Energy. If agreed, officers would work with Bryson Energy during 2021/22 to better understand the longer term development of the service which would be further considered by the Committee in Autumn 2021, along with the final recommendations from the previously agreed Review of Partnership Funding Arrangements.

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:

- award the funding allocation of £1,731,259.74 presented in the Letter of Offer from the DfC for the 2021/22 financial year and accept the offer on behalf of Council;
- accept the additional in-year allocations from the DfC relating to the Community Support Programme;
- grant officer authority to progress full annual allocations to all previously approved grant recipients, subject to associated due diligence requirements; and
- approve the transfer of the previous Play Resource Warehouse SLA to Bryson Energy on basis of same deliverables for 2021/22 only.

**Request for the use of Boucher Road Playing Fields**

The Committee considered a request seeking permission to use the Boucher Road Playing Fields from 1st October – 17th October 2021 for the purpose of hosting a funfair event.

The Committee noted that Fundamania would be open to the public from 6.00 p.m. – 10.00 p.m. Monday – Friday and 2.00 p.m. – 10.00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Access to the site would be required two days prior to the official opening for setup and two days immediately following the event to allow for dismantling of the equipment.

It was estimated that there would be in the region of 500 attendees each day.

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:

grant authority to G Force Entertainment to hold a fairground event from Friday, 1st October to Sunday, 17th October 2021; and

Delegate authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to:

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- negotiate an appropriate fee which recognises the costs to Council, minimises negative impact on the immediate area and takes account of the potential wider benefit to the city economy, in conjunction with the Council's Commercial Manager;
- negotiate satisfactory terms and conditions of use via an appropriate legal agreement prepared by the City Solicitor, including managing final booking confirmation dates and flexibility around 'set up' and take down' periods, and booking amendments, subject to:
- the promoter resolving any operational issues to the Council's satisfaction;
- compliance with Coronavirus restrictions in place at the time of the event; and
- the promoter meeting all the statutory requirements of the Planning and Building Control Service, including the terms and conditions of the Park's Entertainment Licence.

The Members noted that the above recommendations were taken as pre-policy position, in advance of the Council agreeing a more structured framework and policy for 'Events', which was currently being taken forward in conjunction with the Council's Commercial team.

**Finance Update**

The Committee was presented with a report on the year-end financial position for 2020/21 which provided details of the available balances and the areas of expenditure which had been identified for 2021/22 and confirmed that, when those had been taken into account, £5.4 million would be available for re-allocation.

The Committee was reminded that, in 2018, the Council had agreed to establish a Summer Community Diversionary Festival Programme, with £500k annually having been aside for its delivery. The Programme was targeted at activities taking place in July and August and the application process, which involved an open call, took between three and four months to complete. Given that the uncertainty around the Covid-19 restrictions, an open call had not been advertised for this year and the Members were advised that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 18th June 2021, had agreed that the Programme would be delivered later in the year, restrictions permitting.

Accordingly, Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:

- note the contents of the report and approve the 2021/22 balances;
- agree that the year-end surplus of £5.4m be made available for re-allocation; and
- note that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee had agreed that the annual allocation of £500k for the Summer Community

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Diversionary Festival Programme be retained, with a view to delivering the Programme later in the year.

**Matters referred back from the Council/Motions**

**Response from Department for Communities  
re: Funding Advice Services**

The Democratic Services Officer reminded the Committee that, at its meeting held on 13th April, it had agreed to write to the Minister for Communities to seek further clarity in relation to the future funding for Advice Services.

She advised that a response had been received from Minister Hargey. In her response she had advised that Belfast City Council had been allocated £901,854.30 from the Department's Community Support Programme for 2021/22 and that a formal letter of offer would be issued.

The officer advised that, as reported earlier in the meeting, the formal Letter of Offer from the Department had been received.

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive note the response.

**Committee/Strategic Issues**

**Update on DAERA consultation on  
the Designation of Quiet Areas**

The Committee considered the following report:

**"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

- 1.1 The Committee will be aware that on the 21st September 2016, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) commenced consultation into the designation of an area of the Lagan Meadows as a 'Quiet Area', under the provisions of Directive 2002/49/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25th June 2002, relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise, more commonly referred to as the Environmental Noise Directive or END, and of Regulation 40 of the Environmental Noise (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2006, relating to the preparation of noise maps identifying quiet areas in agglomerations. END defines an agglomeration as 'part of a territory, delimited by the Member State, having a population in excess of 100,000 persons and a population density such that the Member State considers it to be an urbanised area'.**
- 1.2 The People and Communities Committee considered this designation at its meeting of 11th October 2016 and subsequently provided a written consultation response to DAERA advising that the Committee welcomed and was supportive of designation of the**

Lagan Meadows as a Quiet Area. Moreover, the Committee advised DAERA that it noted the public health and wider environmental benefits of protecting appropriate Quiet Areas across Belfast and that council officers would continue to engage with the Department to help refine the screening criteria to be applied in subsequent rounds of Quiet Area identification and designation.

- 1.3 The DAERA consultation formally concluded on the 19th October 2016 but the Council has been unaware subsequently as to the outworkings of the consultation process and regarding DAERA's intentions and timetable for formally designating the Lagan Meadows as a Quiet Area.

- 1.4 This report serves therefore to provide an update to the People and Communities Committee on progress by DAERA concerning designation of the Lagan Meadows as a Quiet Area.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May 2021, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note the contents of this report.

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

- 3.1 The Committee is advised that the Environmental Noise Directive (END) has been transposed into Northern Ireland legislation through the Environmental Noise Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006, with three main objectives;

- (i) To determine the noise exposure of the population through noise mapping;
- (ii) To make information on environmental noise available to the public; and
- (iii) To develop Noise Action Plans based on the mapping results, to reduce noise levels where necessary, and to preserve environmental noise quality where it is good, including protecting Quiet Areas.

- 3.2 The Regulations required that by the 30th September 2007, DAERA was to have prepared noise maps identifying Quiet Areas in agglomerations. The Department was to have then considered whether the noise maps produced continued to be appropriate and if not, by the 30th September in any subsequent 'relevant' year, the Department was to have prepared, if it considered it necessary, updated noise maps identifying Quiet Areas in agglomerations. The 'relevant' years were 2012 and every fifth year thereafter, i.e. 2017, 2022, etc. Certified copies of the maps were to be made

available for inspection by DAERA on a website or in another manner considered to be appropriate.

- 3.3 In order to assist in identifying Quiet Areas within agglomerations, DAERA published, 'Draft Guidance on the Identification and Designation of Quiet Areas' in September 2015. Qualifying criteria included that the land to be designated should be publicly available parks or open space within the agglomeration, that the noise level at the location should be less than or equal to 55 dB  $L_{den}$ ; and that the land should have a minimum area of 5 hectares (circa 12.4 acres). The term  $L_{den}$  relates to an averaged noise level, based on modelled Day, Evening and Night noise levels, as denoted in the various technical mapping reports and accompanying DAERA online Noise Map Viewer:  
<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/services/noise-maps>
- 3.4 With regard to the protection of Quiet Areas, DAERA guidance advises that district councils are to manage the local noise environment within Quiet Areas to avoid increases in noise from the sources covered by END, i.e. road, railway, aircraft and industrial noise sources. In addition, they are to protect Quiet Areas by bringing forward bespoke policies in their Local Development Plans and managing the noise impact of development through determining planning applications. Accordingly, Policy ENV1 - Environmental Quality of Belfast City Council's Local Development Plan, Draft Plan Strategy document advises that, 'Planning permission will be granted for development that will maintain and, where possible, enhance environmental quality, and protect communities from materially harmful development'. The Policy further advises that the Council will require development to positively address protection of the city's designated Quiet Areas and quiet times of day for businesses (daytime) and residents (night-time).
- 3.5 In order to obtain an update on the designation of the Lagan Meadows as a Quiet Area, council environmental officers contacted their counterparts within DAERA. By way of response, the Department has advised that three Quiet Areas were designated within the Greater Belfast agglomeration on the 20th September 2016, on the basis of round 2 (for the 2012 year) noise mapping results. These were Connor Park / Stricklands Glen in Bangor West; Bashfordsland in Carrickfergus; and Carnmoney Hill Upper in Newtownabbey.
- 3.6 DAERA has additionally advised that the absence of a DAERA Minister from early 2017 prevented designation of the Lagan Meadows as a Quiet Area from progressing, and that in the intervening time period, round 2 noise mapping data (for the 2012 year), on which the Lagan Meadows Quiet Area consultation was based, has been superseded by round 3 noise mapping data (for the 2017 year) and will be informed further by round 4 noise maps.

Referring to the Department's various noise maps for the Lagan Meadows area, it is noted that 2017 year round 3 modelled consolidated  $L_{den}$  noise levels have broadly decreased across the Lagan Meadows when compared with the consolidated  $L_{den}$  noise levels reported for the 2012 year round 2 noise mapping.

- 3.7 Moreover, DAERA has advised that round 4 noise maps are to employ an updated noise mapping methodology as detailed within Commission Directive 2015/996 of the 19th May 2015, establishing common noise assessment methods according to Directive 2002/49/EC, relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise, i.e. Common Noise Assessment Methods in Europe for road, railway, aircraft and industrial noise (CNOSSOS-EU).
- 3.8 DAERA has therefore advised that further work relating to the designation of Quiet Areas in Northern Ireland will be based on the outcome of round 4 noise mapping which will incorporate the CNOSSOS-EU noise assessment methodology.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.9 None.

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

- 3.10 None."

A Member asked the Director to write to DAERA reaffirming the Committee's support for designation of the Lagan Meadows as a Quiet Area and to seek a written update as to the Department's next steps and timeframe concerning the designation.

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to agree that that the Director of City Services writes to DAERA to reaffirm the Councils proposal to have Lagan Meadows designated as a quiet area and to seek an update in regard to the status and timeframe for the proposal.

**Wheelie Box Pilot Update**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

- 1.1 To provide an update on plans to reinstate the Wheelie-box pilot in the Castle Area. The scheme was suspended in March 2020 due to the COVID outbreak. Councillors and residents have regularly enquired when the process would be reinstated.

- 1.2 To highlight recommendations to the configuration of the wheelie-box scheme and seek approval to start communicating to the residents prior to ratification at the September 1st Council meeting, with a view to restarting the full service from Monday, 6th September 2021.

2.0 **Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May 2021, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:

- Note the update to reinstate the service.
- Agree with the proposed configuration changes to the collection process as illustrated in Table 1 and to starting the engagement and communication with Residents in the coming weeks in advance of the ratification by Council on 1st September.

3.0 **Main report**

- 3.1 Members are reminded that it was noted at the 11th May People and Communities Committee that plans were being drawn up to reinstate the Caste pilot subject to review of the resource capacity within Resources and Fleet and appropriate controls being put in place to achieve a Covid safe recovery of the service.
- 3.2 The planning and review led to operational recommendations to achieve the successful recovery of the pilot. The changes are to the collection process to streamline it making it easier for residents to recycle and for crews to collect more efficiently.
- 3.3 Specifically, by separating cardboard from glass recycling, this improves the safety of the operation and positively impacts the collection efficiency at the kerbside because less sorting is required.
- 3.4 Additionally, the proposal to sort cardboard with paper makes the end process consistent with other re-cycling providers and more straightforward for residents. The combination of paper and cardboard in the same wheelie box improves the re-cycling rate by lowering the rejection rate at Bryson recycling and at the paper processor<sup>1</sup>.
- 3.5 Finally, discussions were held in relation to the collection of batteries and hand tools with the MRF contractor, Bryson Recycling. Bryson highlighted particular concerns around the recycling of batteries, as a significant fire risk at their facility. It

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<sup>1</sup> This is done by removing the risk of broken glass and the liquid contents of bottles contaminating the cardboard.



was noted that there had been two significant fires at Waste Facilities in Belfast in the last year and the major cause of such fires have been attributed to batteries. In relation to hand tools it was noted the near zero uptake of these items and as such the space in the wheelie boxes could be put to much better use.

Table 1 below sets out the proposed changes

	Pre COVID process	Proposed process
Top box	Bagged textiles and paper	Cardboard and paper
Middle box	Plastics and tins	No change
Bottom box	Cardboard and glass	Glass only
Food waste	Food Caddy	No change
Textiles	Bagged and placed in the Top box	Bagged and placed in any of the 3 stacker boxes
Batteries and hand tools	Batteries bagged and hand tools in top box	This Service will not be re-instated at this time

- 3.6 To reinstate the pre-COVID service, 3 x Romaquip Waste collection vehicles and crews are required. One of these vehicles is additional due to the impact of Covid increasing the levels of waste collection from home with glass collection increasing by 33%, recyclables by 23% and black bin waste by 12%. An additional 3 follow on vans are also required to comply with social distancing. The requirement of this additional vehicle and crew will be kept under review should government guidance changes in relation to operational working constraints,
- 3.7 With the uncertainty around the lifting of Covid19 restrictions the forecast is additional vehicles will be required until the end of this financial year, this will be kept under review in light of any updated public health advice.
- 3.8 Arc 21 and Bryson Recycling have been engaged in developing the reinstatement implementation plan. The reinstatement of the full service will reflect the collection and processing arrangements Bryson have introduced to the inner city collection service that have been running throughout the current pandemic.

- 3.9 The pilot is due to run until September 2022 with the evaluation to date continuing to feed into the current economic appraisal on recycling operations and thereafter the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan. It is important the full pilot resumes as soon as practical to inform the wider strategic direction.
- 3.10 The operational recovery assurance process has been completed, but the service will not fully resume until all the necessary risk assessments, associated training plans and governance are agreed and are in place. It is envisaged that all outstanding safety measures will be in place before the requested start date of 6th September 2021.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.11 There are costs associated with the reinstatement of the pilot as Covid restrictions continue to impact, particularly from social distancing and from the additional waste and recycling volumes arising from the impact of increased levels of working from home. These additional costs are forecast to be up to £160k and we expect to claim the costs from the Department for the Communities Covid fund.

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

- 3.12 There are no Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs assessment associated with this report."

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May 2021, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:

- note and agree the proposals to reinstate the service; and
- agree with the proposed configuration changes to the collection process and to commencing engagement with the residents in the coming weeks, in advance Council ratification on 1st September.

**Request to Support Research Project at Queen's  
University Belfast into Sustainable Packaging**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services advised the Committee that Queen's University Belfast, in Partnership with the University of Southampton, was in the final stages of applying for funding from the UK Government to carry out research into new bio-degradable/compostable packaging materials.

The aim of the project, which was to run for three years, was to develop foams that could be 3D printed into custom protective packaging for transporting products, for example, in e-commerce. The foam materials would be bio-mass derived and degradable into useful end-products to ensure it was used in a circular and sustainable way (that is, producing

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compost for growing food). The aim being to develop a replacement to current packaging materials like expanded polystyrene.

He explained that they had requested the involvement of an officer from the Recycling Outreach Team to help support this work, this would be for approximately two hours per month and would involve:

- providing input on requirements to bring new sustainable protective packaging solutions into use from the perspective of municipal waste management systems and the associated public policies and education;
- providing feedback on project activities and progress updates;
- participating in planned stakeholder engagement activities, including surveys and workshops;
- assisting QUB to engage with other relevant stakeholders, such as waste management providers and processing companies; and
- helping plan and promote public outreach and education activities.

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May 2021, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to grant the requested support from the Recycling Outreach Team, along with a letter of support for the project.

**Affordable Warmth Scheme**

The Director of City Services reminded the Members that, at a meeting of the Committee held on 9th February 2021, it had agreed to sign the 2020/21 Service Level Agreement, with a caveat regarding concerns raised around targeted ratio and funding. These concerns had subsequently been discussed with the Mr. D. Polley, Director Housing Supply Policy, when he had attended the May meeting of the Committee.

Following ongoing discussions, the Department for Communities (DfC) had now provided an interim Service Level Agreement (SLA) for 2021/21, available [here](#). The Director confirmed that engagement was ongoing and that the review into the main issues raised was still being completed (as outlined within the SLA).

The Committee was advised that, until completion of the review, the Affordable Warmth Scheme would continue to operate the payment per referral model. The referral rate was set at 360, which would cover the costs of the direct staff employed to work on the scheme.

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May 2021, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:

- agree to the request from DFC to sign the interim 2021-2022 SLA provided;
- and

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- note the ongoing review which would be used in drafting the SLA for the next financial year.

**Finance, Procurement and Performance**

**Revenue Grant for Community Buildings –  
request to transfer 2021/22 awards**

The Committee considered the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

- 1.1 To seek Committee authorisation for transfer of the BCC revenue grant award from Newhill Youth & Community Association to Upper Springfield Development Trust (USDT).
- 1.2 The total award amount is £13,000. Newhill Y&C Association have received the first payment of £6,500. The second payment will be due in October subject to submission of grant interim monitoring details and DFC agreed allocation.
- 1.3 Both organisations have engaged solicitors to undertake a merger with ‘due diligence’ now coming to a conclusion.
- 1.4 The proposal will ensure that all current and additional services/programmes will continue to be delivered from the facility for which the BCC revenue grant applies.
- 1.5 Legal governance and financial transfer of obligations and accountability will be met by USDT including contractual obligations relating to BCC revenue funding.
- 1.6 USDT does not receive a Capacity or Revenue grant thus the proposal to transfer the award does not conflict with Council’s policy on provision of the community development grants.

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May 2021, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to;
  - authorise transfer of the BCC revenue grant currently paid to Newhill Youth & Community Association to Upper Springfield Development Trust (USDT). Authorisation is subject to the merger of both organisations. Completion of all governance and financial obligations and continued service delivery from the facility for which the revenue grant has been awarded.

**3.0 Main report**

- 3.1** Newhill Youth & Community Association based at 261 Whiterock Road, Belfast BT12 7SX are in receipt of a revenue grant for community buildings in the amount of £13,000. The Letter of Offer was issued in June 2021 and the first instalment of the grant (£6,500) paid to Newhill Y&C Association.
- 3.2** The Board of Newhill Y&C Association approached the Upper Springfield Development Trust (USDT) in 2020 to request that both organisations consider merger options. This was influenced by two key factors. The first being the governance capacity of the Newhill Board. The second being the strategic compatibility of both organisations. USDT are considered to be the lead community development organisation within the Upper Springfield Community. Newhill Y&C Association have a 'state of the art' facility but limited human resources. USDT have an established youth and community project with financial and human resources but limited space to work from.
- 3.3** USDT have been operating as the 'parent' company for Newhill Youth & Community Association for the past 12 months. Legal advice has indicated that the most prudent and sustainable way forward is to formally dissolve Newhill Y&C Association and transfer all undertaking and contractual obligations to USDT. The Boards of both organisations have been formally completing the necessary 'due diligence' in relation to the formal merger.

**Key Issues**

- 3.4** The P&C Committee of 13th April 2021 authorised six month Letters of Offer for the period 2021/22 to be issued to all current recipients of Councils Community Buildings Revenue Grant. Payment at an approximate value of 50% of their 2021/22 grant allocation. The remaining allocation to be determined following confirmation from DFC.
- 3.5** The Council revenue grant was awarded to support the delivery of community development programmes and services from the building at 261 Whiterock Road, Belfast. Following the merger of USDT and Newhill Y&C Association, USDT will continue to deliver these services and programmes from the building.
- 3.6** The merging of the two organisations will address capacity issues and ensure the continued and additional delivery of services in the area.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.7 Council has extended all current funding contracts for the period 2021/22. The second payment of grant is subject to Department for Communities agreed allocation.**

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

- 3.8 There are no equality or good relations impacts associated with this report.”**

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May 2021, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to authorise the transfer of the Belfast City Council revenue grant, currently paid to Newhill Youth and Community Association to Upper Springfield Development Trust, with the authorisation being subject to:

- the merger of both organisations; and
- the completion of all governance and financial obligations and continued service delivery from the facility for which the revenue grant had been awarded.

**Operational Issues**

**Proposal for naming new street**

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to approve the application for naming a new street in the City as set out below:

<b>Proposed Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Applicant</b>
Ben Madigan Hill	Off Ben Madigan Heights	Kilmoon Developments

**The Queen’s Green Canopy - Tree Planting Initiative  
celebrating the forthcoming Queen’s Platinum Jubilee**

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May 2021, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to defer consideration of the report to enable information to be obtained and submitted to a future meeting in regard to the proposed locations as to where the trees would be planted and also to establish the varieties of the trees to be planted, ensuring that those selected met the criteria to ensure inclusion within the Council’s One Million Tree planting initiative.

**Requested tree planting in Victoria Park to  
mark the Centenary of Northern Ireland**

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The Director of Neighbourhood Services advised that a request had been received from the East End Great War Society seeking permission to plant six chestnut trees in Victoria Park to mark the Centenary of Northern Ireland, which would then be marked with a commemorative plaque. They had requested that the plaque be provided by the Council, which would state 'Centenary Wood', along with the names of the persons planting the trees.

The Committee was advised that the East End Great War Society was a World War I commemorative project based in East Belfast and that it had been involved in a range of educational and commemorative projects throughout the Decade of Centenaries.

The Director advised that, if the Committee supported the request, it would come under the remit of the tree management plan for Victoria Park, as part of its replacement planting programme and would be resourced from the related revenue budget. The additional trees would be included within the Council's One Million Tree Planting Programme running total.

As with the previous minute, a Member asked for officers to clarify that the requested Chestnut trees would be eligible for inclusion within the One Million Tree Planting initiative numbers and to substitute if necessary.

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May 2021, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to grant the request from the East End Great War Society to plant six Chestnut trees, along with the commemorative plaque, within an agreed location in Victoria Park, subject to officers ensuring that the proposed variety of trees used were eligible for inclusion within the Council's One Million Tree planting initiative.

**Ormeau Park BMX Track**

The Committee considered the following report:

**"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

- 1.1 This report is to seek approval to work in partnership with Cycling Ulster on a project to develop the existing BMX track in Ormeau Park.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May 2021, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:**

- Grant approval for officers to work in partnership with Cycling Ulster officials to submit an application to the Whitemountain Programme main grants fund to redevelop the Ormeau Park BMX track.**

**3.0 Main report**

**Background**

- 3.1 Council maintains a recreational BMX track in Ormeau Park which has low levels of use and is not used for club activity. Belfast BMX clubs are required to travel to the Lisburn track and beyond for training sessions, fitting in around the requirements of the local club. Despite this, members of the city's most successful club, Belfast City BMX club, regularly compete and succeed at the highest levels of the sport locally and nationally, with many of their members achieving international selection for European and World championships.
- 3.2 Cycling Ulster have previously approached officers seeking to work in partnership to identify sites for development of new facilities for the many branches within the sport of cycling, including track, mountain bike, cyclo-cross and BMX. Options for possible sites continue to be explored. Recently the chair of Cycling Ulster's BMX commission and the Cycling Ulster Development Officer met with Council officers to explore the option of redeveloping the existing Ormeau Park BMX track to a high enough standard for club training. At this meeting they agreed that they wish to work with Council officers to draw down funding from external sources and offered a direct contribution from Cycling Ulster. The Whitemountain Programme main grant offers up to £50,000 with application deadlines of 23rd July and 29th October. An application was submitted prior to the July deadline. To support this application the Council provided a letter offering an 'in principle' commitment for the Council to work in partnership with the group in respect of this project to enhance a Council asset. This commitment was subject to P&C consideration in August.
- 3.3 Cycling Ulster have sought estimated costs from established specialist contractors which indicate that an amount of £75,000 should be budgeted to complete the project. The project will involve some work to redesign the existing track to improve its rideability for a range of ability levels. The redesigned track will enable BMX clubs to programme and offer training and coaching sessions to its members, will permit them to offer bookable come and try it sessions for newcomers and will increase enjoyable use of the track for recreational and beginner riders.
- 3.4 Monitoring and Performance. Council officers will carry out random user counts at the site in advance of the project and data captured from bookings and user counts after development will quantify the extent of enhanced use following improved track design and programmed activity.

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

- 3.5 A total of £75,000 is estimated to deliver this project. Cycling Ulster anticipate that an amount of £50,000 will be available from Whitemountain Programme main grant and in the region £5,000



from Cycling Ulster budget. Cycling Ulster seeks to identify other potential funders and may seek some financial support via the Council, subject to availability of funding and normal consideration.

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

**3.6 None associated with this report.”**

In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Members agreed that the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to grant approval for officers to work in partnership with Cycling Ulster officials to submit an application to the Whitemountain Programme main grants fund to redevelop the Ormeau Park BMX track

Chairperson

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# CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY FOR THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

*Date of Meeting:* 11th August, 2021

*Final CX Decision Register Published:* 16th August, 2021

*Recommendation Sent to CX:* 12th August, 2021

*Final Date for Call-in (10am):* 23rd August, 2021

*CX's Comments Received:* 16th August, 2021

	Topic	Chief Executive's Decision	Subject to call-in
<b>Presentation</b>			
<b>2a</b>	Translink Belfast Transport Hub - Weavers Cross	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The information provided in Translink's presentation in relation to the Belfast Transport Hub and the wider Weavers Cross regeneration scheme and that, where relevant, Translink would provide further information on the issues raised;</li> <li>• In line with the Committee's approval in November 2019 the Council's Hope Street carpark facility is included in Translink's Weavers Cross master planning considerations and the site has been conditionally included in their marketing collateral seeking a master-developer partner with the financial means and relevant experience, skills and resources to realise the vision for Weavers Cross; and</li> <li>• That a further report will be brought to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in the near future on the detail of any subsequent land /development proposal and associated financial offer and, subject to Members endorsement, for inclusion of the Hope Street carpark facility in any formal development agreement with Translink's nominated developer partner.</li> </ul>	<b>YES</b>

<b><u>Restricted Items</u></b>			
<b>3a</b>	Financial Reporting - Quarter 4 2020/21	<p>The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note that the following recommendations outlined in the report had been agreed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in June: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>- Note the report and agree the 2020/21 balances;</i></li> <li><i>- Agree to the year-end surplus of £5.4m being made available for re-allocation; and</i></li> <li><i>- Retain the annual allocation of £500k for the summer diversionary festival programme with the purpose of running it later in the year.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>Note that, furthermore, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee had considered the Summer Community Diversionary Festival Programme at a Special Meeting on 2nd August, at which some of the £500k for the summer diversionary festival programme funding had been allocated.</li> </ul>	<b>YES</b>
<b>3b</b>	City Centre Property -Targeted Acquisition	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, that the decisions of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 18th June, 2021, relating to City Centre Property - Targeted Acquisition was approved and adopted by Council on 1st July, 2021;</li> <li>Note strategic alignment of this acquisition with priorities identified by Members at the recent City Growth &amp; Regeneration workshop – ‘Future of the City and Role of the City Centre’ in terms of place-making and</li> </ul>	<b>YES</b>

		<p>diversification of city centre uses;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note the immediate next steps and further work proposed in relation to scoping out optimal uses for these premises aligned to strategic proposals for reimagining the city centre; and</li> <li>• Note that further reports to be brought back to Committee with respect to emerging proposals for future uses of the property.</li> </ul>	
<b>3c</b>	Belfast Destination Hub - Site Acquisition	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council Legal Services is progressing the acquisition of Site 10 at Royal Ave / North Street for the Belfast Destination Hub, as considered by the Strategic Policy &amp; Resources Committee at its meeting of 18th June 2021 and ratified at the special meeting of the Council on 1st July 2021;</li> <li>• Land and Property Services has been instructed to progress acquisition negotiations with owners of 108 – 112 Royal Avenue and 114 – 116 Royal Avenue as ratified at the special meeting of the Council on 1st July 2021; and</li> <li>• All associated site assembly acquisitions will be subject to full title review, to be undertaken by Council Legal Services, with further updates to be brought back to Committee if required.</li> </ul>	<b>YES</b>
<b>3d</b>	Request for loan of Portrait of Michael Longley - 'Light from Two Windies' by Jeffrey Morgan	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve the loan of the Michael Longley Portrait for the duration of the Portrait of Northern Ireland Exhibition to support this important and unique exhibition.</li> </ul>	<b>YES</b>

<b><u>Regenerating Places and Improving Infrastructure</u></b>			
<b>4a</b>	Connectivity and Active Travel Update	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The update on the Connectivity Study: A Bolder Vision, including the pending elected representatives' workshop on the 23rd August and planned Public Consultation;</li> <li>• The updates on individual public realm projects including the 5Cs, and Belfast Streets Ahead phases 3 and 5;</li> <li>• The proposed amendments to the scope of the '5Cs' public realm scheme, including the removal of College Avenue, which will now be delivered through Belfast Streets Ahead Phase 5;</li> <li>• The update regarding DfC plans for carriageway resurfacing at Queens Square;</li> <li>• The update on the Junctions Working Group;</li> <li>• The update on the Belfast THRIVES initiative, a pilot partnership to inform how Belfast's public spaces can more effectively and inclusively contribute to the liveability of the city and the wellbeing of its inhabitants;</li> <li>• The update regarding the Council's bid to the UK Community Renewal Fund; and</li> <li>• Agree that, in relation to the indicative timeline outlined in the report regarding the Public Realm Projects, the Council writes to the relevant Ministers to expedite processes in relation to the Public Realm Projects to assist in transforming the city at a faster pace.</li> </ul>	<b>YES</b>
<b>4b</b>	DfC Housing Supply Strategy: Call for Evidence	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note that a draft response to the DfC Housing Supply Strategy Call for Evidence was submitted to DfC on the 16th July; and</li> <li>• Confirm the draft consultation response of the 16th July (Appendix 1) as the Council's final response.</li> </ul>	<b>YES</b>

<b>4c</b>	City Centre Open Spaces	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note the ongoing work to identify open space and additional greening opportunities across the city centre and connections to local communities;</li> <li>• Note the update regarding Cathedral Gardens design development;</li> <li>• Agree to receive a presentation on the emerging Cathedral Gardens Masterplan in the near future;</li> <li>• Agree to the proposal to consider opportunities to create a new temporary pop-up park in a suitable location during the permanent construction works for Cathedral Gardens;</li> <li>• Note the work underway through the INW Open Space Framework to maximise the combined benefits of emerging open space and regeneration projects in the wider Cathedral and UU area and its alignment also with the ongoing Bolder Vision Connectivity work; BRT Phase 2; Belfast Streets Ahead etc;</li> <li>• Note the update on other emerging projects, including City Quays Gardens and key connections between the City Quays and City Centre areas; and</li> <li>• Note the ongoing work on a 'Playful City'.</li> </ul>	<b>YES</b>
<b><u>Growing Business &amp; the Economy</u></b>			
<b>5a</b>	Employability NI - Belfast Labour Market Partnership Action Plan	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note the outline Action Plan which will be used as a basis for engagement with the Department for Communities (DfC) in the coming weeks, in order to support delivery of activity from September 2021. If</li> </ul>	<b>YES</b>

		<p>approved, the action plan will run from September 2021-March 2023;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note that a report be submitted to a future meeting providing further information on the current procurement framework and the Dynamic Procurement Gateway, together with the results, for consideration.</li> </ul>	
<b><u>Positioning Belfast to Compete</u></b>			
<b>6a</b>	A City Imagining Investment Programme: Cultural multi-annual grants	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note the contents of this report and agree to open cultural multi-annual grants in September 2021 for Arts and Heritage organisations and Events and Festivals for funding from 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2024 subject to final recommendations being agreed by Committee in February 2022.</li> </ul>	<b>YES</b>
<b><u>Finance, Procurement &amp; Performance</u></b>			
<b>7a</b>	The Zoo - Quarter 1 Performance Update Report	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note the Zoo performance update report for the period April – June 2021.</li> </ul>	<b>YES</b>
<b>7b</b>	DfC Covid-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme Update	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note the updates on the DfC Revitalisation Programme projects contained within this paper and the continued importance of the use of streets and spaces to assist businesses and communities as part of a wider programme of work focused on Reimagining the Public Realm;</li> </ul>	<b>YES</b>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To note the challenges and risk around delays in delivery, the request to DfC for an extension and the agreement, via a Letter of Variance process, to extend funding spend period to March 2022;</li> <li>• To note the outcome of the Castle Place Hub procurement, with project costs now exceeding the current budget allocated;</li> <li>• To note the DfI commitment to 100% funding Adelaide Street project and the proposed condition to reallocate Adelaide Street budget of £100,000 to Castle Place Hub scheme;</li> <li>• To note the £45,000 underspend of the Connectivity Scheme in Church Lane area following a procurement exercise and agree to reallocate this underspend to Castle Place Hub project;</li> <li>• To agree that any further underspends realised are utilised to meet any additional cost increases on previously agreed and committed projects;</li> <li>• To note the progress made with the E-cargo bike pilot and the appointment of a suitable operator to carry out the pilot project;</li> <li>• To note the progress of the Covid-19 Business Grant, the potential underspend and to approve the reallocation of underspend to the overall Revitalisation Programme budget; and</li> <li>• To note the current position regarding the Business Cluster and Community grant scheme and the ratified decision at full Council on 1st July to allocate Council monies towards the remaining applications (subject to the applications due diligence process).</li> </ul>	
<b><u>Strategic &amp; Operational Issues</u></b>			
<b>8a</b>	DfI Accessible Parking Bay Proposals	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note the two proposed schemes as outlined in the report.</li> </ul>	<b>YES</b>

<b>8b</b>	Notice of Motion Quarterly Report	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Note the updates to all Notices of Motion that this Committee is responsible for as referenced in Appendix 1;</li> <li>- Agree to the closure of a number of Notices of Motion, as referenced in Appendix 1 and noted in paragraph 3.6 below; and</li> <li>- Note that a timeframe for the Car Parking Strategy Review would be submitted to the Committee in due course (as noted under Notice of Motion Ref 153).</li> </ul>	<b>YES</b>
<b><u>Issues Raised in Advance by Members</u></b>			
<b>9a</b>	20s Plenty for Us Campaign (Cllr McMullan to raise)	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree to invite representatives of the 20s Plenty Campaign to present its work at a future meeting.</li> </ul>	<b>YES</b>

Please note that the agenda/reports associated with the decisions listed above can be accessed on the app and on the web, via the following link: [Agenda for City Growth and Regeneration Committee on Wednesday, 11th August, 2021, 5.15 pm - Belfast City Council \(www.internalminutes\)](#)

# City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 11th August, 2021

## REMOTE MEETING OF THE MEMBERS OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Murphy (Chairperson);  
Aldermen Dorrian and Kingston; and  
Councillors Beattie, Brooks, Donnelly, Gormley,  
Hanvey, Heading, Howard, Hussey, Maskey,  
McLaughlin, McMullan, O'Hara and Spratt.

In attendance: Mr. A. Reid, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;  
Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development;  
Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration  
and Development;  
Mr. S. Dolan, Senior Development Manager;  
Ms. E. Henry, Senior Manager - Culture and Tourism;  
Ms. J. Wilson, Business Manager; and  
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

### Apologies

Apologies for the inability to attend was reported on behalf of The High Sherriff, Councillor Long and Councillors Ferguson and Lyons.

### Minutes

The decisions of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the Committee and the minutes of the meeting of 9th and 23rd June were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st July subject to:

- the omission of the minute under the heading "Just Eat Belfast Bikes Strategic Review", which was subject to a valid call-in requisition and was not before the Council for approval and adoption; and
- the amendment agreed under the heading "Sunday Opening Hours" namely "That the current extended Sunday trading hours are not brought back to the Committee for further extension beyond 5th September, 2021. And that the Council acknowledges the full range of challenges facing retail in the city, write to The Executive Office requesting an urgent meeting of the High Streets Task Force.

**Declarations of Interest**

No Declarations of Interest were reported.

**Presentation**

**Translink Belfast Transport Hub - Weavers Cross**

The Chairperson introduced representatives from Translink and Weavers Cross to the meeting: Mr. S. Wilson, Mr. L. McCombe, Mr D. McAllister, Mr. B. Gallagher and Ms. H. Harrison, to provide an update on the Belfast Transport Hub at Weavers Cross.

Representatives provided an overview of building works, together with estimated timeline of completion stages and advised that the main works had been contracted over the next four years with anticipated completion for Summer 2024.

Mr. McAllister explained the social value activities and metrics, such as partnership working with the Council to deliver job opportunities.

Mr. Wilson described the social, economic and environmental benefits of the scheme which included:

- 8,000+ FTE Jobs in Grade A offices with FDI potential;
- 30%+ uplift in property values and rates;
- 20m+per annum public transport passenger footfall with all island connectivity;
- £25m urban renewal investment;
- 20 acre brownfield site regeneration;
- Zero emission public transport by 2040; and
- 20,000+ tonnes per year reduction in GHG emissions.

Ms Harrison provided an update on the current planning stages of the scheme and impending consultations.

Mr. McAllister advised how the development would promote environmental sustainability by a new high quality sustainable connected neighbourhood centred around the Belfast Transport Hub, delivering sustainable mobility with the City Centre. He stated that the ambition was to reduce dependency on private cars and fossil fuel consumption by encouraging modal shift.

Mr. McCombe described how part of the development, Saltwater Square, was intended to be an active space and clarified how it would link to other parts of the city.

During discussion, the representatives explained further the Carbon Footprint of Construction and sustainable construction targets and techniques, in particular in relation to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change announcements on global warming.

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Members of the Committee also raised queries on the streetscaping, cycling and walking paths, changes to existing road layouts and segregation of cycle paths.

One Member suggested that the Weavers Cross team prioritise active travel users and continue to liaise with the Department for Infrastructure to ensure safe and sustainable transport provision around the proposed development.

In relation to a query on Translink's Bikes on Trains Policy, representatives noted that they would get back to the Committee with an update in due course.

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

The Strategic Director drew Members attention to the report that accompanied the presentation and its recommendations.

After discussion, the Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note:

- The information provided in Translink's presentation in relation to the Belfast Transport Hub and the wider Weavers Cross regeneration scheme and that, where relevant, Translink would provide further information on the issues raised;
- In line with the Committee's approval in November 2019, the Council's Hope Street carpark facility is included in Translink's Weavers Cross master planning considerations and the site has been conditionally included in their marketing collateral seeking a master-developer partner with the financial means and relevant experience, skills and resources to realise the vision for Weavers Cross; and
- That a further report would be brought to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in the near future on the detail of any subsequent land /development proposal and associated financial offer and, subject to Members' endorsement, for inclusion of the Hope Street carpark facility in any formal development agreement with Translink's nominated developer partner.

**Restricted Items**

**The information contained in the report associated with the following 4 items were restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.**

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

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**Financial Reporting - Quarter 4 2020/21**

The Strategic Director provided an overview of the report which outlined the year end finance report for 2020/21 and highlighted the Quarterly finance update which had been included as appendix 1.

During discussion, one Member highlighted that the recommendations outlined in the report had been discussed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meetings in June and Special Meeting in August.

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:

- Note that the following recommendations outlined in the report had been agreed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in June:
  - note the report and agree the 2020/21 balances,
  - agree to the year-end surplus of £5.4m being made available for re-allocation.
  - Retain the annual allocation of £500k for the summer diversionary festival programme with the purpose of running it later in the year.
- Note that, furthermore, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee had considered the Summer Community Diversionary Festival Programme at a Special Meeting on 2nd August, at which some of the £500k for the summer diversionary festival programme funding had been allocated.

**City Centre Property -Targeted Acquisition**

The Director of City Regeneration and Development provided an update on the targeted acquisition of the City Centre and pointed out that further reports would be brought back to this Committee in respect of emerging proposals for future uses.

During discussion, Members welcomed the acquisition as a significant step in the Council's regeneration role in managing the future of the city centre. One Member raised the potential for the Council to look at other strategic acquisition opportunities within the city centre and across the city, in conjunction with statutory agencies, and for officers to consider other options for Targeted Acquisitions as part of an overall city regeneration and place-making approach.

After discussion, the Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:

- Note that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, that the decisions of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee,  
Wednesday, 11th August, 2021**

authority for the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 18th June, 2021, relating to City Centre Property - Targeted Acquisition was approved and adopted by Council on 1st July, 2021;

- Note strategic alignment of this acquisition with priorities identified by Members at the recent City Growth and Regeneration workshop – ‘Future of the City and Role of the City Centre’ in terms of place-making and diversification of city centre uses;
- Note the immediate next steps and further work proposed in relation to scoping out optimal uses for these premises aligned to strategic proposals for reimagining the city centre; and
- Note that further reports would be brought back to Committee with respect to emerging proposals for future uses of the property.

**Belfast Destination Hub - Site Acquisition**

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the acquisition of Site 10 for the Belfast Destination Hub.

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note the following:

- The Council’s Legal Services was progressing the acquisition of Site 10 at Royal Ave / North Street for the Belfast Destination Hub, as considered by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting of 18th June 2021 and ratified at the special meeting of the Council on 1st July 2021;
- Land and Property Services has been instructed to progress acquisition negotiations with owners of 108 – 112 Royal Avenue and 114 – 116 Royal Avenue as ratified at the special meeting of the Council on 1st July 2021; and
- All associated site assembly acquisitions would be subject to full title review, to be undertaken by Council Legal Services, with further updates to be brought back to Committee if required.

**Request for loan of Portrait of Michael Longley –  
‘Light from Two Windies’ by Jeffrey Morgan**

It was reported that the Northern Ireland Office was working with an expert panel to facilitate a major art exhibition and had requested the loan of Council’s portrait of Michael Longley, ‘Light from Two Windies’ by Jeffrey Morgan, which was currently exhibited at Belfast Waterfront Hall.

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to approve the loan of the Michael Longley Portrait for the duration of the Portrait of Northern Ireland Exhibition to support this important and unique exhibition.

**Regenerating Places and Improving Infrastructure**

**Connectivity and Active Travel Update**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

- 1.1** To update Members on work regarding connectivity and active travel, including the City Centre Connectivity Study, and a number of emerging public realm / infrastructure projects, the design and delivery of which will be informed by the principles established by ‘A Bolder Vision’.

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1** The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note:

- The update on the Connectivity Study: A Bolder Vision, including the pending elected representatives’ workshop on the 23rd August and planned Public Consultation;
- The updates on individual public realm projects including the 5Cs, and Belfast Streets Ahead phases 3 and 5;
- The proposed amendments to the scope of the ‘5Cs’ public realm scheme, including the removal of College Avenue, which will now be delivered through Belfast Streets Ahead Phase 5;
- The update regarding DfC plans for carriageway resurfacing at Queens Square;
- The update on the Junctions Working Group;
- The update on the Belfast THRIVES initiative, a pilot partnership to inform how Belfast’s public spaces can more effectively and inclusively contribute to the liveability of the city and the wellbeing of its inhabitants;
- The update regarding the BCC bid to the UK Community Renewal Fund.

**3.0 Main report**

**Background**

- 3.1** Connectivity is at the core of the Belfast Agenda. The Belfast Agenda seeks to develop a city that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable.



- 3.2 Sustainable connectivity and active travel requires a collaborative and holistic approach across a number of city stakeholders and partners to deliver strategic connections and improved access between, and into local communities and areas. At the April meeting of the CG&R Committee members requested a comprehensive report should be brought back to the Committee on Green and Blue Infrastructure / Active Travel related initiatives across the city along with Council proposals in relation to potential funding mechanisms. This is reflected in the prioritisation of the CG&R Committee Plan as agreed on the 9th June 2021 where one of the key pillars includes 'Working with stakeholders to bring forward improved, sustainable connectivity and active travel across the city'.**
- 3.3 The Community Planning Partnership Boards, as reported in May and June 2021, were established to translate the Belfast Agenda into action and to mobilise city partners to support the delivery and have clear synergies with the work of the CG&R Committee. The recently re-configured City Development Board has agreed the establishment of Active Travel and Connectivity as one of the four key pillars of work for the Board. The City Development Board, and as agreed by this Committee, recognises there is a need to focus on joint objectives and a targeted delivery approach across partners to accelerate opportunities to enhance accessibility, connectivity and active travel across the city. This is not only important to connect people to employment opportunities and investment hubs, but is important from a climate resilience perspective and will also create healthy, shared, vibrant and sustainable environments that promote health and emotional wellbeing**
- 3.4 The Belfast City Centre Regeneration & Investment Strategy identifies creating a green, walkable, cyclable centre and connecting to the city around as two of the eight key principles, recognising that active travel and connectivity are closely aligned to regeneration and development. In our ambition to attract 66,000 new residents to the city it is critical that connectivity considerations and alternative travel options can align with these growth ambitions. For example, the development of housing close to existing services may mean shorter, more localised journeys, allowing higher levels of cycling and walking or public transport, therefore reducing dependence upon the car and mitigating negative impacts such as traffic congestion and air pollution.**

- 3.5 Officers across the Council departments are working at pace to bring forward projects and initiatives that will help to achieve these goals, as well as assisting our statutory and city partners to enhance and further develop our collective ambitions.
- 3.6 While this report focuses on certain areas related to connectivity City Regeneration & Development Officers are working in conjunction with DfI, DfC, Physical Programmes, C&NS and Resilience to provide a strategic overview of our collective projects to focus the city's strategic priorities, opportunities, issues and funding options and an update will subsequently be provided to this Committee in the near future.

**A Bolder Vision for Belfast**

- 3.7 As reported previously, A Bolder Vision for Belfast was agreed by Council and endorsed by the DfC and DfI Ministers and is underpinned by four Visioning Principles:
- Creating a healthy, shared, vibrant and sustainable environment that promotes well-being for all, inclusive growth and innovation;
  - Fundamentally changing the centre of Belfast to prioritise integrated walking, cycling and public transport and end the dominance of the car;
  - Providing lively, safe, and green streets linking inclusive shared spaces to promote resilience and enhance our built heritage;
  - Removing severance and barriers to movement between the centre of Belfast and the surrounding communities to improve access for all.
- 3.8 The Bolder Vision represents the building blocks that to be considered within public realm, connectivity and open space investments within the city centre and key connectors to surrounding communities, influencing the development of public and private regeneration developments to ensure that the city centre is developed with people at the heart of design, that the city is attractive to investment, thrives economically, is fit to meet our climate agenda and is vibrant and welcoming to all.
- 3.9 To this end a number of public realm and junction improvement projects are currently progressing through design development within and at the edges of the city centre, and officers are working with DfC and DfI to ensure the agreed principles of '*A Bolder Vision*' are directly influencing these schemes so they release maximum benefit for the city centre

and surrounding communities. These principles have also informed the current place-shaping revitalisation work referred to in a separate report. Given the close alignment between the Bolder Vision and Connectivity and Active Travel update a detailed paper on the approach to the City Centre Open Spaces is included in a separate paper to this Committee meeting.

#### Detail

#### A Bolder Vision: City Centre Connectivity Study

- 3.10 As reported to this Committee on 9 June 2021, a multi-disciplinary team led by Jacobs has been appointed to progress with Phases 2 and 3 of the joint BCC/DfI/DfC Bolder Vision Connectivity Study for Belfast. Members were advised that this work would include co-design workshops, the development of scenarios and interventions and the completion of a draft Strategy for public consultation in the autumn of 2021. The Bolder Vision approach involves a fundamental rethink of how streets and places are used to make them attractive, inclusive, accessible, healthy, and vibrant places.
- 3.11 Phase 2 of the City Centre Connectivity Study will provide scenarios and projects to inform the future of the city centre by shaping large infrastructure projects and developing supporting or enabling schemes and initiatives. As part of a co-design approach, five workshops took place in June with a range of community, voluntary, statutory and private sector stakeholders.
- 3.12 A cross-sector Visioning Workshop was held on 25 June, which included Vienna's former Vice Mayor who successfully implemented a transformation agenda comprising numerous innovative projects, as a keynote speaker. The workshop also considered what had changed since the completion of '*A Bolder Vision*', and stimulated discussion on further 'What ifs', for the city centre.
- 3.13 Subsequently, four thematic workshops took place the following week covering Community, Heritage & Culture; Infrastructure, Energy and Environment; Economic Recovery, Development & Tourism, and Connectivity (Transport and Digital). This early engagement with a range of stakeholders provided a chance to explore opportunities and challenges and consider interventions to support positive transformation of the city centre.

- 3.14 As a continuation of the co-design process, a workshop with elected representatives including Councillors, MLAs and MPs is anticipated to take place on the 23rd August and will provide an opportunity to feed into the emerging scenarios, in advance of a 12 week public consultation that is due to commence on 27 September 2021 with a report to this Committee prior to launching the Consultation.
- 3.15 The public consultation document will include scenarios based on emerging infrastructure projects and development proposals and potential supporting or enabling projects to demonstrate concepts or test approaches that will enable the transformational changes required to create a connected and animated city core. Some of these could be delivered by partners such as the city stakeholders, for example the BIDs (subject to funding) whereas others may require a collaborative approach, particularly any significant proposals of a transformational nature and will be set out as short, medium and longer term projects and initiatives.
- 3.16 Following the public consultation, Phase 3 of the Connectivity Study will consist of the development of a Draft Strategy and Delivery Plan, Strategic Outline Business Case, and Monitoring Strategy. Critically, funding and commitment by central government agencies will be key to delivery going forward and through the City Development Board and other city fora we must ensure that these remain within the Programme for Government, Departmental and Council spending priorities. This includes the recent Reset for Growth Paper as published by the Belfast Innovation and Inclusive Growth recommendation inclusion of the Bolder Vision Strategy supported by a three year joint funding programme.

#### Public Realm Projects

- 3.17 A number of public realm projects are currently in development and officers have been working closely with DfI, DfC and other stakeholders to embed the principles of 'A Bolder Vision' during design development, so that these schemes can begin to effect positive change in a number of parts of the city.

#### The 5Cs

- 3.18 The CG&R and SP&R Committees approved the development of the 5Cs 'catalyst' Public Realm Project utilising existing developer contributions to support delivery of public realm improvements in Chichester Street, Callender Street, College Street, College Court and College Avenue. Delivered by DfC,

the 5C's project was originally estimated to have a value in the region of £1.9m-£2m, with £765k provided through secured Developer Contributions and the remainder to be funded by DfC.

- 3.19 An integrated design team (IDT) has been leading the design development process, with a Council Stakeholder and Engagement Group providing cross-Departmental input to the project, while workshops have been facilitated for elected members. The IDT has also engaged with key stakeholders (including DfI, city centre business representatives and residents) in relation to emerging design concepts, before running a public consultation on initial concept designs from 30 September to 22 December 2020.
- 3.20 In response to feedback received during the public consultation period the IDT made a number of amendments to the design- including incorporating cycle infrastructure on Chichester Street, and rationalising parking / loading bays across the scheme to maximise pedestrian space.
- 3.21 Further stakeholder workshops were then undertaken which captured strong views regarding the potential to stop-up both Upper Arthur St and Montgomery St to create additional pedestrian and business spill-out space, while also enabling provision of a segregated cycle lane along Chichester St. The project area has been extended to include these areas which can bring significant value to the project, in line with '*A Bolder Vision*'.
- 3.22 The recently revised project cost based on revised concept designs is now c£3.5m, £1.5m over the original budget. This significant rise in costs prompted a Value Engineering exercise which identified a number of amendments, while seeking to retain an emphasis on design quality. The most significant amendment is the proposed removal of College Avenue from the scope, with DfC confirming this section would then be delivered as part of Belfast Streets Ahead Phase 5.
- 3.23 Other amendments to the scheme include:
- Removal of Seymour Street from the project area- not originally included in the scope and minimal impact given very limited pedestrian usage.
  - Increasing soft landscaping on Upper Arthur Street and Montgomery Street (from Chichester Street to Arthur Lane).

- Removal of Street lighting from the project scope- DfI and DfC are working to agree separate delivery of upgraded street lighting (in line with Belfast Streets Ahead palette) throughout the 5Cs project area using alternative funding.
- 3.24 Officers have reviewed the proposed amendments to the scheme relative to the terms of the developer agreements that have been committed to the project and are content these are unaffected by the changes. As noted above, the removal of College Avenue is the most significant change to the scope, but BSA5 represents an opportunity to deliver this section out with the 5Cs scheme. Further detail on BSA5 is included below.
- 3.25 An initial assessment indicates these amendments would yield cost savings that bring the total budget down to £2.1m, with Council's financial contribution unchanged. The IDT are preparing a revised concept design on this basis, which will be shared with Members when available, and detailed drawings will also be shared in advance of a planning application being submitted.
- 3.26 Further stakeholder engagement is also planned in order to provide clarity regarding scope and design of the scheme.

### **Belfast Streets Ahead 3**

- 3.27 The Belfast Streets Ahead Board is overseen by the BSA Programme Board, a cross-department board consisting of DfI, DfC, DoF and Council Officers to ensure adequate governance and alignment across our collective objectives. BSA 3 focuses on the areas of Royal Avenue, York Street, Frederick Street and the area around St Anne's Cathedral. The current and anticipated development of the northern end of the city centre including the Ulster University development and other private sector development has made this a priority area for investment by the Department, to help to reverse economic, social and physical decline in this part of the city.
- 3.28 BSA 3 had been on hold since August 2017 due to funding for the construction works not being available. The Project has now recommenced.
- 3.29 As the scheme designs were developed in 2014-2015 the Design Team are now carrying out a review of the project plans to take account of changes to policies, developments in the area, changes emerging as a result of the Belfast City

Centre Connectivity Study (Bolder Vision), COVID 19 pandemic, etc.

- 3.30 DfC has advised that the following are indicative key milestones for the BSA 3 project:

Activity	Start Date	End Date
Design Revision (including stakeholder engagement, planning, consultation etc.)	August 2021	December 2021
Contractor Procurement & Pre-construction	January 2022	December 2022
Site works	January 2023	July 2025

**Belfast Streets Ahead 5**

- 3.31 BSA 5 comprises Great Victoria Street, Shaftesbury Square, Dublin Road, Bedford Street, Blackstaff Square, and surrounding streets as well as the Thomas Thompson Memorial Fountain. The project has been accelerated to complement the planned Belfast Transport Hub and surrounding Weaver's Cross development.
- 3.32 McAdam Design were appointed to lead the Integrated Design Team for BSA 5 in February 2021, with OPEN Landscape Architects acting as Lead Designer. OPEN Landscape Architects are also part of the Jacobs team leading the second stage of the Bolder Vision Connectivity Study, and both teams have met with Council officers to ensure alignment of objectives and ambition, and will continue to work closely with both DfI and the Council to ensure that the designs take account of the visioning principles from the shared Bolder Vision that is currently underway. The scheme designs will also take account of emerging proposals for the next phase of DfI's Belfast Rapid Transit programme which is likely to include part of the BSA 5 area.
- 3.33 Initial work will involve producing a range of design options, which will be refined to identify a preferred option, for which the Department will seek planning approval. As affordability will be a key consideration, costs will be provided for the range of options developed and this will help inform the decision about which option is selected as the preferred one.

- 3.34 The design team will be engaging with stakeholders to ensure that the scheme designs create a healthy, shared, vibrant and sustainable environment that supports the local communities, inclusive economic growth and innovation.
- 3.35 DfC have provided the following indicative key milestones for the BSA 5 project:

Activity	Start Date	End Date
Design Development (including public consultation)	August 2021	October 2022
Planning	November 2022	May 2023
Contractor Procurement	June 2023	December 2023
Site works	March 2024	September 2026

- 3.36 There are a number of timebound 'historic' developer contributions within the BSA 5 area, including in the vicinity of Blackstaff Square, and officers are continuing to explore delivery options with DfC to satisfy the terms of the agreements and deliver on regeneration potential in the area. The commitment of contributions will be reported through Strategic Policy & Resources Committee, with detail on proposals also to be brought to CGR

#### Queens Square

- 3.37 At the 6th November 2019 meeting of City Growth & Regeneration Committee, Members agreed *'that officers raise with the Department for Communities the Committee's concerns around its proposal to replace the granite carriageway in Queen's Square with a standard road construction, in the context of the transfer of assets, pedestrianisation and the wider connectivity study'*.
- 3.38 Officers have discussed the matter with DfC, and while minor revisions have been made, the most recent drawings submitted to Planning continue to propose the replacement of the existing granite carriageway with a standard road construction. Members may wish to note that Historic Environment Division had expressed concerns regarding the original proposal in terms of detrimental impact on listed buildings and the Conservation Area, but following



engagement with the applicant, and subject to conditions, have latterly noted the proposal to be acceptable. The application has yet to be determined, with a number of consultation responses currently outstanding.

**Junctions Working Group**

3.39 In October 2020 a Junctions Working Group was established with a view to developing proposals for a number of key junctions that fully reflect the shared commitment set out in 'A Bolder Vision'. This Group is chaired by DfC and comprises representatives from DfI, Belfast City Council, Ulster University, Clifton House (North Belfast Heritage Cluster) and more recently IMTAC, PSNI and Translink.

3.40 The work of the group has focused on:

3.41

- **Clifton Gateway**- the group has reviewed the previously developed designs with comments focused on reducing severance, reallocating space for pedestrians and cyclists, and introducing soft landscaping. Proposed amendments currently under review include the reduction of traffic lanes along Carrick Hill, the introduction of cycle lanes along North Queen St, Frederick St and Donegall St, and the removal of the left turn from Donegall St to Carrick Hill, although these decisions will be heavily influenced by the outcome of the BRT2 design development which opened to consultation on the 26th July 2021.
- **Shankill Gateway**- full planning approval was granted for the scheme in July 2020 although Members of the CG&R Committee subsequently expressed concern regarding the approved scheme in a letter to the DfC and DfI Minister. In response to this the Junctions Working Group is currently reviewing the designs and officers expect to bring the emerging designs into Committee in the near future.
- **Great Patrick Street / Frederick Street / York Street Junction**- informed by the views of the Group, DfI have developed a number of options for this key junction within the University Quarter. With the pending relocation of the University of Ulster and the influx of students there is a criticality to ensuring improvements are made in this area. A number of options have been shortlisted that propose amendments including removal of left turn slips, introduction of dedicated cycle lanes, reduction in the number of traffic lanes and the introduction of single-phase pedestrian crossings. An example of one of the options is provided in

Appendix 1 with DfI undertaking to carry out modelling so as to identify a preferred option which can then be costed and a delivery route agreed, informed by the junction's location within the BSA 3 project area. Members will be aware that the programming and delivery of this scheme is critical to support the integration of the student population, facilitate safe pedestrian and cycle movement, and to capitalise on a generational opportunity to promote and enable modal shift. This has been conveyed to the Minister in letters from this Committee and in direct conversations with the DfI Permanent Secretary. Updates will be provided to this Committee as designs and delivery mechanisms are developed.

- 3.42 Members will also be aware that Council agreed S76 contributions from developers of a number of student accommodation blocks adjacent to the junction, some of which could be directed towards the junction improvement scheme. At the October 2019 meeting of this committee, approval was granted to allocate '£100k of funding towards design and development of public realm and environmental improvement works', in a number of areas of the city including Greater Clarendon. Officers are working to develop a public realm scheme within Little York St / Little Patrick St which will further utilise these contributions to deliver local placemaking benefit. City Regeneration & Development officers are working with Physical Programmes to develop designs for this scheme and will report back to this Committee at a future date.

**Belfast THRIVES (Transformative Health & Regeneration Initiatives for Vibrancy, Equality and Sustainability)**

- 3.43 Belfast THRI(VES) is a pilot partnership between Ulster University [Urban Research Lab] and Belfast City Council, to inform how Belfast's public spaces can more effectively and inclusively contribute to the liveability of the city and the wellbeing of its inhabitants. The project is funded through Belfast City Council via the Department for Communities Covid-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme, and the Department for Infrastructure. This practical research project will support BCC and DfI to develop new urban-health focused collaborative working practices across civic and private sectors, and with the public. The project will draw lessons from current processes to transform Belfast's public spaces in line with '*A Bolder Vision*', and in response to immediate health and socio-economic threats, and will evaluate public-

private sector attitudes to the changing City Centre, including proposed building and infrastructure projects.

- 3.44 The project recognises that COVID recovery projects are emerging at pace with little to no time or resources put in place to evaluate their effectiveness against agreed criteria and datasets, or through user engagement to collect feedback and identify improvements for future schemes. In developing this partnership, the project will establish a base reference model that will reflect on how we have addressed the immediate needs of the pandemic, while also laying the groundwork from which to prepare for future environmental stressors. It is anticipated that this short-term project will lead to longer term benefits and potentially larger scale projects to monitor and evaluate interventions alongside socio-economic factors, capturing new primary data by implementing and testing new proposals.
- 3.45 As part of the project, a free online webinar took place on the 16th of June that featured four international speakers, and an online Symposium on 17th June with Belfast-focused panel discussions and next generation planning researchers. The events were very well received and provided a platform for a range of Belfast views to come forward and included input from AGENI, Belfast Healthy Cities, Belfast Charitable Society, Clifton House, Bryson CARE, Migrant Help, Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee, NI Women's European Platform, Belfast Chamber, Linen Quarter BIDs, Ulster University Youth Forum, Belfast City Centre Management, among others, see [Belfast THRI\(VES\) | ND Events](#)
- 3.46 As part of the project, UU will conduct four semi-structured focus group sessions with city centre business reps and BIDs, NI-UK professional bodies and expert organisations, Government and Council officers, NI based community and voluntary organisations. They will also be launching a survey to capture public views on how Belfast's public spaces can more effectively and inclusively contribute to the liveability of the city and the wellbeing of its inhabitants. There are a number of emerging opportunities for international dissemination of the findings and the final report will be available late 2021.
- UK Community Renewal Funding
- 3.47 In terms of the wider connectivity context, a bid for revenue funding under the UK Community Renewal Fund has been made to carry out a city-wide feasibility study that would examine gaps in the provision active travel infrastructure including greenway and urban active connectivity routes and

enabling infrastructure; explore opportunities to maximise social, economic and environmental outcomes from the range of connectivity and active travel ideas; assess proposals and options that would then form an overarching delivery plan that is feasible, deliverable and supported by partners. The plan would also inform key criteria for phasing delivery options for the emerging proposals to inform our capital requirements.

- 3.48 This work could provide an opportunity for Belfast to be a unique exemplar in terms of accessibility and connectivity, with the ability to access all areas of the city in an active and sustainable way. This links with aspirations which have already been put forward by Members including access to the hills, active travel and biodiversity gain, and links with other initiatives underway including Belfast Urban Greenway (BUG), BOSS (Belfast Open Spaces Strategy). An update on this bid was also reported to SPR 18 June as part of Physical Programmes Report.
- 3.49 The output of the study would also help prepare for and inform future capital funding bids and influence partnership delivery. At the time of writing this report, the outcome of the bid is expected to be communicated from late July onwards. In addition, as agreed in the recently approved CGR Committee Plan for 2021/22 and as a priority pillar of the City Development Board, a report will be brought to Committee on the overall Connectivity and Active Travel related projects/initiatives that Council is involved in. Furthermore, we will consider and identify key areas of collaboration with external partners to support effective delivery and maximise outcomes, particularly via the Community Planning Partnership City Development Board.

**Financial & Resource Implications**

- 3.50 None associated with this report.

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

- 3.51 None associated with the report- EQIA Screening has been undertaken by DfC for the 5Cs project which Council are part funding. Project specific assessments will be undertaken by the relevant lead delivery body at the appropriate stage of the development process."

During discussion, one Member questioned the time frame of the Public Realm projects, junction works at Ulster University, and the delay to the Street Licence at Union Street. Officer's provided further detail on the process of bringing forward major public

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realm and infrastructure projects and advised that the Union Street License had been submitted in July.

**Proposal**

Moved by Councillor O'Hara,  
Seconded by Councillor Hanvey and

Resolved - That In relation to the indicative timeline outlined in the report re Public Realm Projects, the Members of the Committee agree to write to the relevant Ministers to expedite processes in relation to the Public Realm Projects to assist in transforming the city at a faster pace.

Accordingly, the Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note:

- The update on the Connectivity Study: A Bolder Vision, including the pending elected representatives' workshop on the 23rd August and planned Public Consultation;
- The updates on individual public realm projects including the 5Cs, and Belfast Streets Ahead phases 3 and 5;
- The proposed amendments to the scope of the '5Cs' public realm scheme, including the removal of College Avenue, which would now be delivered through Belfast Streets Ahead Phase 5;
- The update regarding Department for Communities plans for carriageway resurfacing at Queens Square;
- The update on the Junctions Working Group;
- The update on the Belfast THRIVES initiative, a pilot partnership to inform how Belfast's public spaces could more effectively and inclusively contribute to the liveability of the city and the wellbeing of its inhabitants;
- The update regarding the Council's bid to the UK Community Renewal Fund; and
- Agree that, in relation to the indicative timeline outlined in the report regarding the Public Realm Projects, the Council writes to the relevant Ministers to expedite processes in relation to the Public Realm Projects to assist in transforming the city at a faster pace.

**Department for Communities (DfC) Housing Supply Strategy: Call for Evidence**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting in June, it was provided with an update on the emerging Department for Communities work to develop a Housing Supply Strategy as a key part of the housing programme to help meet the Programme for Government commitments to reduce housing stress and increase housing supply, together with details of the launch of a public Call for Evidence to inform this new Housing Supply Strategy.

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The Committee subsequently recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to:

- *Agree that officers develop initial responses to the questions posed in the recent Housing Supply Strategy: Call for Evidence document that has been launched by DfC; and*
- *Agree that the draft response will subsequently be brought via Party Group Leaders given the closing date of 16 July for responses, with the final response brought back retrospectively to CGR Committee in August.*

However, due to other Council commitments the meeting of the Party Leaders Forum did not meet prior to the closing date of 16th July for responses. As a result, officers circulated an electronic copy of the draft responses to the Call for Evidence to the Members of the Party Group Leaders Forum and the Members of the Committee on the 2nd July for review and comment, with a requested return date for all comments of the 8th July.

In keeping with the timetable set out by DfC, the draft response was submitted on the 16th July, as included within Appendix 1 of the report (copy available [here](#)) pending Council ratification in September.

Accordingly, the Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:

- Note that a draft response to the DfC Housing Supply Strategy Call for Evidence was submitted to DfC on the 16th July; and
- Confirm the draft consultation response of the 16th July (Appendix 1) as the Council's final response.

### **City Centre Open Spaces**

The Committee considered the undernoted report together with the associated appendices:

**"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

- 1.1 To update Members regarding ongoing work to develop and enable the creation and curation of a network of high quality open/green spaces across the city centre that are both accessible and attractive to a range of users.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council**

decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:

- Note the ongoing work to identify open space and additional greening opportunities across the city centre and connections to local communities;
- Note the update regarding Cathedral Gardens design development
- Agree to receive a presentation on the emerging Cathedral Gardens Masterplan in the near future;
- Agree to the proposal to consider opportunities to create a new temporary pop-up park in a suitable location during the permanent construction works for Cathedral Gardens;
- Note the work underway through the INW Open Space Framework to maximise the combined benefits of emerging open space and regeneration projects in the wider Cathedral and UU area and its alignment also with the ongoing Bolder Vision Connectivity work; BRT Phase 2; Belfast Streets Ahead etc;
- Note the update on other emerging projects, including City Quays Gardens and key connections between the City Quays and City Centre areas.
- Note the ongoing work on a 'Playful City'.

### **3.0 Main report**

#### **Background**

- 3.1 The City Centre Connectivity Study: 'A Bolder Vision', in line with the Belfast City Centre Regeneration Investment Strategy (BCCRIS), proposes the development of a more attractive, accessible, safe and vibrant city centre with a greener, walkable and connected core that is more people and family-focussed. BCCRIS identifies that the city centre lacks major publicly accessible open spaces, and that the majority of open spaces are disconnect and have a hard landscape and character, with the centre lacking in greener streets that can provide relief in the most densely developed part of the city. BCCRIS also identifies the opportunity to provide a sizable new open space and greening opportunities by linking St. Anne's Cathedral to Cathedral Gardens and Writers Square. It goes onto say that 'the entire Inner Ring should be

tamed, humanised and greened to reduce severance from adjacent communities.

- 3.2** It is well understood that there is a need to enhance existing, and develop new, high quality open spaces across the city centre, for the benefit of all users, including existing communities, and to support the growth of the resident population and diversification of uses in the city centre. This was reflected in the Future City Workshop held with Members of the CG&R Committee in May 2021 where Members agreed that the right infrastructure needed to be developed in order to achieve the aims of diversification of use and supporting city centre living within the Future City Centre Programme. It was noted that this includes the provision of community infrastructure and high quality, inclusive and sustainable open spaces for families and city users to enjoy and utilise the outdoor environment.
- 3.3** At the Future of the City Centre Workshop in May 2021 Members had asked that officers look at the provision of open and green space across the city centre and opportunities to improve on this in order to attract families, build communities and support businesses. At the CG&R meeting in June 2021 Members had also raised some concerns in relation to the timeline of expected developments that were key to the Bolder Vision connectivity work and the importance, in the interim, of bringing forward existing plans and interventions, such as the greening of the city centre in a timely manner. Through ongoing work under the Future City Centre Programme officers will be bringing key pieces of work to provide a holistic approach to address the matters raised by Members, both from this Workshop and other Committee Meetings, to this Committee in the near future. This includes the City Centre Living Vision, the Bolder Vision and the City Centre Open Spaces work.
- 3.4** While this paper relates specifically to 'City Centre Open Spaces', additional papers to this Committee meeting address 'Connectivity & Active Travel', and an update on the interventions under the Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme. It is important to note that the work referred to in these papers, including specific projects, form part of an integrated approach to addressing key city centre issues under the Future City Centre Programme in terms of maximising combined outcomes through targeted interventions. In this



context, the aim is to develop a network of temporary and permanent spaces across the city centre that complement one another in terms of form and function, and that are connected by streets and other linkages that are designed for people and economic benefit.

- 3.5 An update regarding the second phase of the Bolder Vision is included in a separate paper to this Committee, and sets out next steps in terms of developing proposals that will seek to reimagine the city centre and connections to local communities, where streets and open spaces are designed to meet the changing needs of a diverse range of users, as well as supporting existing businesses alongside the diversification of city centre uses to promote resilience and wellbeing within a more sustainable, climate-resilient city.

#### Providing Enhanced Open Spaces

- 3.6 Officers have commenced work to scope a review of open space and 'greening' opportunities within the city centre, with a view to producing a recce of open spaces and identifying potential opportunities for improvements to existing spaces or greening opportunities. The focus of the work is to enhance usability and sustainability, as well as opportunities to create new spaces of varying size and function, with an emphasis on greening and softening otherwise hard and underutilised streetscapes. To bring forward proposals will require collaboration across Council departments, and with other agencies and landowners in terms of statutory approvals, consents and deliverability, funding opportunities and consideration of new models of maintenance and stewardship. To note also that such opportunities may also involve the private sector/developers etc, particularly in relation to lands or properties that are vacant or underutilised and where meanwhile uses may be explored. This proposal is aimed at ultimately providing a connected network of spaces that when knitted together enhance the overall experience of connectivity and usability of the city centre. As this work progresses, further detail will be provided at a future meeting of the CG&R Committee.
- 3.7 It is also considered that opportunities to temporarily utilise vacant sites (public / private) to provide open space 'meanwhile uses' should be fully explored, including sites pending development, taking account of

the opportunity to release social value while protecting asset value and development potential. This would centre on the Council / wider public sector assets as well as private sector land ownerships linking in with and enhancing policies associated with the Clean, Green, Inclusive & Safe research, Resilience Strategy, the Cultural Strategy, the Belfast Open Space Strategy, the One Million Trees Initiative and the Cultural Strategy. Careful consideration will be required across Council departments in terms of delivery, funding and maintenance however this will not be viewed as a Council only initiative but will influence other public and private land holders to commit to and deliver the aims and objectives of the work.

- 3.8 To support the ambitions set out in the 10 year cultural strategy, A City Imagining and in the new tourism plan, a strategic and operational assessment of meanwhile sites in the city is to be carried out. Further detail will be presented to committee as part of the culture and events programme development and will be subject to approval. This will include consideration of internal use of the Bank of Ireland building subject to a condition survey and options for the potential use of external space based on a cost analysis and the wider development timeline.
- 3.9 There are also a number of specific open space / public space projects in development by Council and others, which represent opportunities to deliver on the ambitions set out above and conveyed by the BCCRIS and '*A Bolder Vision*', with updates provided below.

#### Cathedral Gardens

- 3.10 Members will be aware of the temporary use of the Council's Cathedral Gardens site as a playpark, which was completed in August 2020 as a meanwhile use. In terms of its permanent redevelopment, as part the Council's Physical Programme a Master Plan for the space has been commissioned with the intention to create a unique urban space reflective of the changing nature of the city centre. As part of this Master Plan, and to inform the emerging design concepts, a number of engagement sessions have recently taken place with key city stakeholders and it is expected this process will be completed in early Autumn. The project is at Stage 2 ('Uncommitted') in terms of the Council's Physical Programme, and in line with the Council's

governance process further updates on will this be provided to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee via the “Physical Programme Update”. Upon completion of the draft Masterplan, which is envisaged late August, it is recommended that the plans are presented to the CG&R Committee in the near future.

- 3.11 The consultants developing the Master Plan are also assisting Council with the development of a temporary Active Travel Hub within Cathedral Gardens, to promote modal shift among user groups including the growing student population. This Active Travel Hub will be delivered through the Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme with further details provided in the associated update report to this Committee meeting.
- 3.12 A consideration during delivery of the project will be how to offset the temporary loss of open space at Cathedral Gardens during the permanent construction works, with potential utilisation of vacant city centre lands for temporary open space currently under exploration by Officers. The existing play space has seen substantial usage, particularly during the pandemic when outdoor and family friendly space was at a premium and has been recognised internationally as a leading example of how to create child friendly spaces in city centres while addressing issues associated with underused or derelict spaces. Pending agreement and subject to funding it is proposed to recreate this space within a suitable site to ensure a continuity of provision while construction works are undertaken. As further details are developed a report will be brought into this Committee for approval prior to proceeding.

**Belfast City Centre Regeneration & Investment Strategy: Inner North West Special Action Area; Open Space Framework**

- 3.13 As above, BCCRIS highlighted the opportunity to link the spaces of St Anne’s, Cathedral Gardens, Writers Square and Streets Ahead 3. While Council are developing designs for Cathedral Gardens, a number of other schemes are emerging in the immediate vicinity of the Cathedral Gardens site. St Anne’s Cathedral (funded by DfC / HLF) have appointed Urban Scale Interventions to carry out an initial scoping exercise which will explore options for the future of the Cathedral, looking at both internal and external space

within the theme of 'Reframing Reconciliation' (included Appendix 1). This work includes concept design development (to RIBA Stage 1) for land surrounding the Cathedral including creation of green space through a process involving gradual transition from meanwhile installations and partial landscaping to a fully green and integrated space connecting beyond to Cathedral Gardens and Writer's Square.

- 3.14 In addition to this, DfC have commenced a review of the Belfast Streets Ahead 3 scheme designs under the Principles of the Bolder Vision for Belfast and the BRT Phase 2 route options opened for consultation on the 26th July 2021. The Tribeca Scheme was granted planning approval in 2020 and includes proposals for North Street and Writer's Square. It should be noted that while developer discussions are ongoing, Writers Square currently remains within the ownership of DfC. The University of Ulster Greater Belfast Campus, due to open this year, through the Campus Community Regeneration Forum have prioritised the provision of sustainable and active travel connections, and enhanced provision of open spaces both in the city centre, and in the connections to local communities.
- 3.15 Given the strategic significance of the location and the range of schemes at different stages of design and delivery, officers are engaging consultants to ensure a fully considered and collaborative approach to placemaking across the emerging schemes that will maximise the delivery of the combined open space and public realm. As identified in BCCRIS, this will aim to provide an integrated approach in terms of both form and function, while fully capitalising on the potential of the core area of Cathedral Gardens, Writers Sq., St Anne's Cathedral and surrounding infrastructure to maximise contribution of the combined investment to the immediate surrounds, adjacent areas and the wider city centre. This approach is supported by key stakeholders including St. Anne's, University of Ulster, DfC & DfI.
- 3.16 This work will be informed by existing policy and strategy including BCCRIS, relevant masterplans and the visioning principles of '*A Bolder Vision*', and will enable the identification of synergies or disconnects, critical areas of collaboration, as well as opportunities to align approaches from a placemaking (and connectivity) perspective, through existing projects or

via further commissions. Officers will consider the timing of design development and phasing of delivery across schemes, to ensure alignment of design ethos/approach, and to maximise efficiencies through delivery, future proofing etc, in order to work towards a collective vision to help inform current and future funding opportunities.

**City Quays Gardens**

- 3.17 **Belfast Harbour Commissioners (BHC) are continuing to develop design proposals for 'City Quays Gardens', which they have indicated will place significant emphasis on creating quality open and green space, incorporating active travel infrastructure and event space, enhancing connections with adjacent communities. The overall scheme is expected to exceed £20m and comprises 4 phases (Appendix 2), with BHC intending to submit a planning application for Phase 1 (Clarendon Gardens) in the coming weeks.**
- 3.18 **Subsequent phases extend beyond the BHC estate and potentially include lands in Council ownership. Officers will continue to engage with BHC to ensure Council land and operational interests are protected, while also seeking to collaborate with and capitalise upon the BHC scheme as a catalyst to deliver further regeneration benefit in line with BCCRIS and the Greater Clarendon & Sailortown masterplan (Appendix 3).**
- 3.19 **There are specific opportunities in this regard to deliver wider benefit through and alongside the Housing Led Regeneration programme of work, and to utilise committed and potential developer contributions in the area, to help reconnect and humanise streets and spaces in this part of the city.**
- 3.20 **BHC are developing the City Quays Gardens scheme in the context of a wider 'Placemaking Strategy', which is attached at Appendix 4.**
- 3.21 **The work of the INW Open Space Framework and the projects identified within the 'Connectivity and Active Travel' paper to this Committee Meeting, including the North/South Spine, the Little York/Little Patrick St scheme, and the Fredrick St Junction will provide enhanced connectivity between the emerging Open Spaces of Cathedral Gardens and City Quays Gardens. These projects will focus on linking open spaces**

through prioritised sustainable and active travel and enable a seamless link of quality places through and around the city centre (Appendix 5).

**‘Playful City’**

- 3.22 Over the past three years, officers have worked to elevate and embed play in the city centre, placing emphasis on the need to create family-friendly places through engagement and participation with user groups during design development. For example, due to the multi-functional nature of the space, the temporary scheme completed at Cathedral Gardens in September 2020 involved children and other user groups early in the design process to develop an understanding of how people of all ages might use the space before design detail was considered.
- 3.23 In terms of taking an ‘active learning’ approach, the Urban Childhoods Report that shaped the Resilience Ambitions document as previously reported to SP&R was informed by the Castle Place pop up park and resulted in a shared approach to progressing a child-friendly city centre. Recently, an internal officer’s workshop was held to explore issues, challenges and opportunities to progress a child-friendly city, in line with the aspirations of the Cultural Strategy and Resilience Strategy to establish Belfast as ‘A Playful City’ by 2023. Council teams involved to date include representatives from City & Neighbourhood Services, Physical Programmes, Local Development Plan, Tourism, Arts and Culture and City Innovation.
- 3.24 Drawing upon Belfast’s membership of the Resilient Cities Network (RCN), officers worked with Placemaking X and the Real Play Coalition (ARUP, Lego, IKEA, Bernard Van Leer Foundation, National Geographic, and UNICEF) and identified a number of areas for focus, including, the engagement of children and young people in the design and development of schemes and places, tangible projects and space for children and families in the city centre and the potential to leverage in policies and strategies to support a coherent approach.
- 3.25 This programme supports the wider Future City Centre programme and the diversification, re-imagination and liveability of the city centre. Play and leisure are key drivers for successful place-making and increase

footfall and dwell time. It is also recognised that play is not just for children and supports the physical and emotional well-being of people, regardless of age.

- 3.26 Through this work with the RCN, Belfast has been invited to join the '*Strengthen Resilience through Play*' initiative and be one of a selected cohort of eight cities who will become an Ambassador City for Play. The initiative aims to promote the value of play in cities and support impactful play-focused ideas that contribute to children's well-being and development and strengthening the resilience of cities. This programme is being led through the Resilience Unit and will run from June 2021 to January 2022 with CRD and other officers from across the Council feeding into it at key intervals, including a knowledge sharing webinar. The aim of the programme is to have cities develop and sign up to a pledge in January 2022 and it is likely that our involvement will give us access to additional resources which will become available through the Real Play Coalition in 2022.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 4.0 Concept design work (up to £40k) for temporary play areas will be covered from within the CRD approved budget.

INW Open Space Framework (up to £20k) will be covered from within the CRD approved budget.

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

- 5.0 None associated with the report- EQIA Screening will be undertaken by Council or lead partner organisations as required as projects are further developed."

During discussion, one Member questioned why the play element of Cathedral Gardens would not be brought forward into the Masterplan and pointed out that the temporary park at Cathedral Gardens had seen significant use since its establishment, providing a welcome space for families and residents. The Director of City Regeneration and Development stated that the Masterplan was still under development and would be brought to the Committee for consideration in the near future as part of the stakeholder engagement process.

In response to a Members question in relation to emerging and new public space opportunities, the Director of City Regeneration and Development explained further the approach to take a holistic overview of these spaces to provide enhanced open space in the city centre.

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The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:

- Note the ongoing work to identify open space and additional greening opportunities across the city centre and connections to local communities;
- Note the update regarding Cathedral Gardens design development;
- Agree to receive a presentation on the emerging Cathedral Gardens Masterplan in the near future;
- Agree to the proposal to consider opportunities to create a new temporary pop-up park in a suitable location during the permanent construction works for Cathedral Gardens;
- Note the work underway through the INW Open Space Framework to maximise the combined benefits of emerging open space and regeneration projects in the wider Cathedral and UU area and its alignment also with the ongoing Bolder Vision Connectivity work; BRT Phase 2; Belfast Streets Ahead etc;
- Note the update on other emerging projects, including City Quays Gardens and key connections between the City Quays and City Centre areas; and
- Note the ongoing work on a 'Playful City'.

**Growing Business and the Economy**

**Employability NI - Belfast Labour Market  
Partnership Action Plan**

The Committee considered the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the Strategic Assessment & Action Plan developed by the Belfast Labour Market Partnership (LMP).**

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:**

- **Note the outline Action Plan which will be used as a basis for engagement with the Department for Communities (DfC) in the coming weeks, in order to support delivery of activity from September 2021. If approved, the action plan will run from September 2021-March 2023.**



**3.0 Main report**

**3.1** Members have recently received a number of reports on Employability NI and the emerging work of the Belfast Labour Market Partnership. At the June meeting of this committee, it was noted that the LMP action plan was under development and would be submitted to DfC in the coming months. Since that time, officers have undertaken further consultation with the interim partnership and are currently working with DfC with a view to formally submitting the action plan for review and approval in early August.

**3.2 Strategic Assessment & Action Planning Process**

Between February and June this year, the interim Belfast LMP undertook a Strategic Assessment of employability, skills, provision and local labour market conditions in Belfast. This exercise was undertaken to inform the priority areas of investment within the action plan.

**3.3** The LMP action plan is based on:

- A statistical assessment of labour market data and insights relating to both supply (those seeking work) and demand (nature/scale/type of job opportunities), with very local level data generated by Queen's University, Belfast
- Consideration of key policy documents including the Draft Programme for Government Outcomes Framework, the Belfast Agenda, Belfast City Council's Inclusive Growth Strategy and the draft skills strategy, in order to ensure alignment
- Input from the interim Belfast Labour Market Partnership members to shape and tailor emerging interventions.

**3.4** The action plan is for an initial period of 18 months from September 2021 until March 2023 with a subsequent 3-year action plan to be submitted for the period from April 2023 onwards. The current draft structure of the plan is focused on four priority areas of intervention. As previously noted, these are:

- Quickly back to work: Ensuring a co-ordinated response to the substantial number of people in the city who have been or are risk of being made employed, especially as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on helping people to move quickly

back into employment and/or training (with a view to future employment);

- **Increasing Opportunities:** Empowering those furthest from the labour market to succeed through quality support, especially those who will be considered long-term unemployed as a consequence of COVID-19, as well as the economically inactive;
- **No-one Left Behind:** Targeting of those disadvantaged groups through the delivery of an integrated, comprehensive, inclusive, holistic and local employability approach; and
- **Catching Up:** Supporting access to careers pathways, re-skilling and upskilling for those unemployed as well as those on low incomes.

**3.5** The Labour Market Partnership also identified a number of cross-cutting issues which are considered to be essential in order to improve the performance of the proposed active labour market programmes. These are:

- **Need for a strong and effective Belfast Labour Market Partnership,** including operational arrangements to deliver Action Plan initiatives, in particular between Belfast City Council and Belfast's Jobs and Benefits Offices
- **Priorities and actions to be intelligence-led:** our work to date has identified significant limitations with the existing labour market data, particularly when focusing on local geographies.
- **Need to support employers to build back better** following the interruptions caused by COVID-19 lockdown. Providing flexible responses to employer requirements to recruit and train staff and supporting the aims of inclusive growth
- **Need to create an integrated framework of provision in Belfast.** There needs to be improved information about existing provision and help for individuals and employers to navigate the range of services on offer and make informed choices. In the longer term, there is a need to ensure that new interventions are more coherent and better aligned than in currently the case
- **Need to ensure co-ordination with other Departments,** particularly Department for Health (DoH) and Department for the Economy (DfE).

**3.6** The LMP action plan seeks to target provision on those priority groups identified in section 3.4, recognising that not all interventions need be new 'provision' or 'programmes'; sometimes it is equally important to profile and/or promote

existing interventions. The headline programme of work within the action plan at present is as follows:

**3.7**

- **Gateway to Choice:** A key issue that emerged in our engagement with the LMP partners was the need for independent advice and guidance outside of mainstream JBO support for those who are out of work and non-job ready such as long-term unemployed and the economically inactive. In our engagement with LMP members, they considered that these groups required enhanced support to navigate the existing provision and identify the right support, at the right time, to help move them towards positive job, skills and qualification outcomes. It is proposed that the Gateway to Choice will support 1,000 people, engaging on a voluntary basis, over the 18 month period. Subject to DfC endorsement, it is proposed that the delivery model will be co-designed in the coming months, working with key stakeholders such as the JBO Network, Careers Service, VCSE sector etc. with a view to procuring the service following intensive pre-market engagement in early 2022.

**3.8**

- **Employment Pathways:** members will be aware that the Employment Academies model has been successful in helping an average of 350 people a year into employment over the last 4-5 years. The academies focus on those furthest from the labour market. Their success is due, to a significant extent, to the partnerships with local organisations that undertake the early engagement and outreach activity to identify those individuals that may be interested in taking part and ready to do so. The volatility of the labour market at present means that there are certain groups – such as people on furlough or at risk of redundancy – that could benefit from an abridged version of the Employment Academy model in order to help them find a more sustainable job role. Likewise, there are sectors where the levels of demand are significant and where there are opportunities to target those further back in the labour market as well as those impacted by COVID-19. These include:
  - Logistics & transport
  - Health & social care
  - Anchor institutions/CPP partners
  - Technical & professional services, including digital sectors

- **Tourism and hospitality.**

The proposal in the action plan is – in addition to those supported by Council’s resources to deliver Employment Academies - to support a minimum of 300 individuals through these interventions, helping at least 225 of those to find a new or better job. One of the new areas of work for this calendar year is a significant investment in curriculum development to create skills interventions at all levels in the green sector – particularly focusing on retrofitting and opportunities arising from the growth of electric vehicles and the associated infrastructure. We have established a strong partnership with BMC and NIHE in particular to support the development and delivery of these interventions and propose to be delivering employment pathways and academies at scale within 18 months.

**3.9**

- **Enterprise Pathway:** following an economic downturn, many of those who lose their job or risk doing so take the opportunity to become self-employed. Last year, we piloted a targeted enterprise pathway intervention for LTU individuals seeking to set up their own business. Given the uptake and the appetite for additional support, the action plan includes a proposal to support 40 people on out-of-work benefits, who are ready for self-employment but require intensive wrap-around support to do this.

**3.10**

- **Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) Pilot:** ILMs are paid employment interventions in specifically created posts. They are focused on specific individuals that are far from the labour market and generally operate on the basis of dedicated support alongside the time-bound role. The objective is to help the individual towards a permanent role – either within that position or within another post, following the period of labour market engagement. ILMs have previously been used in Belfast as part of wider labour market support interventions. It is proposed that scoping work is undertaken to develop a pilot ILM for up to 30 people, focusing on those aged over 25 with significant barriers to employment.

**3.11**

- **Digital Badges project:** The number of people in Belfast with no or low skills is significantly above the NI and UK average. This is based on formally recognised

skills. Officers have recently been working with the RSA to explore how a Digital Badges scheme could be used to help recognise the non-accredited skills of these individuals, as well as working with employers to help them think about how some current practices are excluding those that may not have the formal qualifications but that have aptitudes and strengths that could make a valuable contribution to the workforce. The RSA has supported a number of pilots in other cities so we are reviewing the initial learning in order to shape the Belfast-based intervention, focusing on how the employability and skills providers within the city might create a collaborative approach and have access to digital badging that recognises the 'hidden' skills of their participants.

3.12 While the initial delivery will focus on the Gateway, the Employment Pathways, the ILM and the Digital Badges work, there will also be a significant programme of development work to explore the potential for large-scale interventions in 2022/23. Initial areas of focus include:

- Coordination of the employer-facing support services: this has loosely been referenced as an 'employer navigation service'. It acknowledges that Belfast is predominantly a micro and small business economy and that those businesses need support and guidance to navigate the wide range of employability and skills support interventions in place, focusing on the right solution for their business and helping them access the relevant support

3.13

- Bridges to progression: over the coming years, the training environment for level 1 and level 2 skills is changing. We know that, at present, up to 1000 young people in Belfast are entering these training interventions and that, in many cases, the outcomes (into employment, education or training) are very poor. This proposal will look at how the positive outcomes for these young people can be enhanced, through additional support and more structured exposure to the work of work – particularly in new growth sectors

3.14

- Targeted interventions for key groups/locations: the strategic assessment identified a number of key groups that were under-represented in the labour market or that faced significant barriers to finding work. These groups include (among others) those with

a disability, justice system leavers, older people, lone parents, those living with health issues (including mental health), ethnic minorities. Likewise, the research identified that there are specific parts of the city where levels of LTU and economic inactivity are more than twice the city average. Government programmes over many years have tried different approaches to support these groups. We propose to explore some new models that are either target group-based and/or location-based in order to support incremental improvements in employment outcomes among the target populations. The development work on these interventions will take place until April 2022, with delivery coming forward after that time.

- 3.15 In order to support delivery of these priority interventions and to raise awareness of the opportunities for both job seekers and for businesses, it is proposed that a campaign loosely around the theme of 'Belfast: Back to Work' will be developed as well as supports for those on furlough who have no other access to employability advice and guidance within the city. This will be timed to coincide with the planned end of the furlough period, when the real impact on the employment numbers is likely to become clearer.

**Financial and resource implications**

- 3.16 No specific additional financial contribution required from council at this point. The resourcing plan for delivery of the agreed interventions will be agreed with DfC and funding will be allocated to Council through a funding agreement.

**Equality implications/rural needs assessment**

- 3.17 One of the key advantages of this approach is that it will enable us to target resources on specific groups, including those with particular access issues and barriers that currently prevent them from accessing training and employment opportunities.
- 3.18 DfC proposes to establish Local Inclusive Labour Market Partnerships in all council areas in the course of the coming financial year."

During discussion, one Member suggested the need for smaller/individual providers to get the opportunity to provide training through more Council tenders being advertised. The Director of Economic Development advised that officer's were involved in the process of launching a Dynamic Procurement Gateway which would provide opportunities to all training providers in the future and a report would be brought back

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detailing the current procurement framework and the Dynamic Procurement Gateway, together with the analysis and results for consideration.

During further discussion, Members welcomed the focus on long term unemployed and the importance of engaging localised community based providers and participants.

After discussion, the Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note:

- The outline Action Plan which will be used as a basis for engagement with the Department for Communities (DfC) in the coming weeks, in order to support delivery of activity from September 2021. If approved, the action plan would run from September 2021-March 2023; and
- That a report be submitted to a future meeting providing further information on the current procurement framework and the Dynamic Procurement Gateway, together with the results, for consideration.

**Positioning Belfast to Compete**

**A City Imagining Investment Programme:  
Cultural multi-annual grants**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

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

- Update Members on the investment programme that supports the cultural strategy, *A City Imagining 2020-2030*.
- Seek approval for the opening of the cultural multi-annual two-year scheme in September 2021 for funding from 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2024.

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:**

- Note the contents of this report and agree to open cultural multi-annual grants in September 2021 for Arts and Heritage organisations and Events and Festivals

for funding from 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2024 subject to final recommendations being agreed by Committee in February 2022.

**3.0 Main report**

Members will be aware that at a meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee on 28 August 2019 a new ten-year cultural strategy for Belfast, *A City Imagining*, was agreed. As part of this strategy a new investment approach was approved including phased implementation of new funding programmes. Similar to the Belfast Agenda, the recommended investment model for culture proposed a new partnership approach to supporting the cultural sector, with the aim of sustaining and developing accessible cultural activity and infrastructure across Belfast. This investment is central to creating positive cultural, social and economic impacts for the city, delivering on our overall targets for the period, positioning Belfast as a regional driver, and creating the conditions for long-term transformation.

**3.2 As included in the strategy, the aims of the cultural investment model are to:**

- support the cultural life of the city by enabling citizens to be active, dynamic and creative agents of change
- invest in the cultural and creative sectors skills development and capacity for production and innovation
- position Belfast as an international testing ground for new approaches to cultural engagement, development and placemaking
- establish Belfast as a cultural destination.

**3.3 The first phased implementation of the cultural investment model commenced with the opening of a competitive funding programme for cultural multi-annual grants for the period April 2020 to March 2024. It was agreed that these multi-annual grants would cover two main areas:**

- Arts and heritage organisations, which have a year-round programme of cultural activity (*Anchor* four-year grants and *Enable* two-year grants)
- Festivals and events organisations, which have a festival or event with an audience of 65,000 or more (*Imagine* four-year grants), or an audience of 10,000 or more (*Activate* two-year grants) by end of grant period.



- 3.4 These two strands of funding, Arts and Heritage and Festivals and Events, each with two tiers of investment available (two-year and four-year) replaced previous core multi-annual funding for arts and heritage and previous one-off funding agreements to events and festivals awarded on an annual basis via the Committee process.
- 3.5 The Arts and Heritage strand of funding is similar to and replaced the established core multi annual funding first implemented in 2013. It was designed to sustain our existing cultural offer covering both programmes and infrastructure. The Festivals and Events strand of funding was a new element and was designed to develop large events and festivals that will help Belfast become a year-round events destination. Furthermore it created a transparent and open process in line with the arts and heritage funding process.

**Cultural multi-annual funding April 2020 Process**

**Applications received**

- 3.6 In 2019 the process was completed to award funding for the period commencing 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020. A summary of this process is included below.
- 3.7 Cultural multi-annual grants opened for applications on 7 October 2019 and closed on 22 November 2019. The grants were advertised via websites, existing networks and on social media. Nine information sessions were held across the city, with 204 attendees in total. In addition, 137 one to one advice sessions took place. In total, officers engaged directly with 406 potential applicants in advance of the deadline.
- 3.8 84 applications were received in total, and 54 grants were recommended to be awarded across the two strands as follows:

3.9 **Festivals & Events cultural multi-annual funding**

- Four-year *Imagine* grants: 11 applications were assessed, of which four were recommended and received a grant. Seven applications were unsuccessful, of which six were considered for a two-year grant.
- Two-year *Activate* grants: 26 applications were assessed, of which 12 were recommended and received a grant. Eleven applications were unsuccessful, two were ineligible, and one was withdrawn.

**3.10 Arts & Heritage cultural multi-annual funding**

- Four-year *Anchor* awards: 13 applications were assessed, of which nine were recommended and received a grant. Four applications were unsuccessful, of which three were assessed for a two-year grant.
- Two-year *Enable* awards: 43 applications were assessed, of which 29 were recommended and received a grant. Thirteen applications were unsuccessful, and one was deemed ineligible.

**3.11 Criteria for Decision making**

Assessments were made and scoring applied under three key areas of criteria:

- Quality of programme: this includes their vision, content, audience experience and marketing and audience development.
- Impact of activity: this includes how the programme contributes to the four strategic themes (A City Belonging, A City Challenging, A City Creating and A City Exploring) and how they will monitor and evaluate that impact. A minimum score of 30 was required in this section to be eligible for a grant.
- Readiness for investment: this includes planning, financial management, staff, governance and environmental impact.

**3.12** Assessments were made only on the basis of information supplied by the applicant within their submission. This included the application form and supporting documentation such as business plans and strategies.

**3.13 Principles of the Assessment Process**

Applications are received and eligibility checked by the Central Grants Unit before being passed to officers for scoring. A five-day rule is implemented consistently by the Central Grants Unit at the eligibility check stage for missing key eligibility information such as annual accounts, bank statements and governing documents. Thereafter, officers do not return to applicants to request any additional details in relation to their applications.

**3.14** Officers undertake a thorough assessment of all eligible applications. Applications and assessments are discussed and agreed at an internal moderation panel. Applications to

Festivals and Events grants were assessed and moderated jointly between the Tourism Culture Arts & Heritage team and the City Events team. This was in order to combine the skills and knowledge of both teams. Given the substantial investment for the *Imagine* festivals and events grant strand, an independent external advisor was appointed via competitive quotation to complement the team in assessing and moderating these applications.

- 3.15 An independent assessment panel co-ordinated by Central Grants Unit and chaired by a Senior Managers is then convened. The role of this assessment panel is ‘to ensure that the scoring of applications has been undertaken in an appropriate fashion and to provide verification or validation of sampled applications and the overall process’.

3.16 Rationale for funding allocations

The threshold for awarding grants was determined by the quality of applications and the budget available within each strand. This was a competitive process and the standard of applications was overall very high, with thresholds ranging from over 73% to over 79%.

- 3.17 Due to limits of budget available, volume of applications, and high scoring threshold, some parameters were set in place to help guide grant allocations. The following general rules were applied to help rationalise allocation of grants:

3.18 Festivals and Events organisations (*Activate* two-year grants):

- Those organisations recommended to receive an *Imagine* and an *Activate* grant, or two *Activate* grants for different festivals or events, received a maximum of £20,000 for their second festival or event.

3.19 Arts and Heritage organisations (*Enable* two-year grants)

- The following three steps were applied:
  1. Grant offer was 10% of turnover based on average of last two year’s supplied audited accounts, or £30,000, or specific amount requested, whichever is the lowest (as published in the guidance notes).
  2. Maximum of standstill funding, if applicant was an existing core multi-annual funding recipient, where the minimum score of 30 had been achieved under the ‘Impact’ criteria within the scoring matrix.

3. Where an uplift of funding was recommended following step one and the minimum impact score of 30 had been exceeded, then 90% of the amount calculated at step one was awarded. The exception is where this amounts to less than standstill funding for existing clients, at which point the amount recommended will revert to standstill, or maximum grant of £30,000, whichever is lower.

3.20 In calculating the level of award for organisations that met the scoring threshold and were not in receipt of a core multi-annual grant, the moderation panel took into consideration the level of turnover and discretionary factors such as nature of work and potential for alternative sources of income.

3.21 Key Issues

The total requested for Festivals and Events funding was £2,431,150.00, and for Arts & Heritage it was £2,014,963.50. This was a total request of £4,446,113.50 which was substantially more than the budget available.

3.22 51 organisations representing 54 grants received funding amounting to a total level investment of £ 2,363,264. Of these 54 grants 41 were for a 2-year period made up of:

- 29 Arts and Heritage organisations
- 12 Events and Festivals

These 2-year contracts are due to come to an end on 31st March 2021. In order to ensure new funding is in place it is recommended that a new 2-year scheme opens in September 2021 for grants for period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2024. This scheme would operate under the cultural strategy criteria as set out at 3.11.

3.23 Review of current scheme

Whilst the 2-year scheme falls into an overall 4-year programme with a commitment for a full review at the end of this period (March 2024) there is an opportunity to make a number of amendments at this stage. Therefore, officers have conducted a review of the current scheme including:

- 10 group engagement sessions
- 67 one to one meetings
- Analysis of end of year monitoring data
- Consideration of the application and assessment process for the 2020 scheme

**3.24 Key feedback includes;**

- Overall satisfaction at the funding process and systems
- Concern relating to certain eligibility thresholds, for example turnover and beneficiaries given the impact of COVID-19
- Greater parity between Arts and Heritage upper grant limit (£30,000) and Festival and Events (£50,000) upper grant limit
- Concerns that 4-year and 2-year tiers create a hierarchy within the cultural sector in the city

**3.25 In response to this feedback and based on an analysis of available information a number of amendments are proposed. These have also been informed by a review of the quality of applications received as part of the 2020 funding scheme including information relating to unsuccessful or ineligible application in order to better understand barriers to accessing multi-annual grants.**

**3.26 The proposed changes are as follows:**

**3.27**

- Lowering the turnover threshold from £100,000 to £60,000 to reflect how baselines have changed due to COVID-19. Consideration was given to requesting baselines relating to pre-COVID-19 period however this was felt to disadvantage new organisations or those that had continued to develop.
- The requirement to have a full-time equivalent staff member for the delivery of an event or festival is adapted so that this resource can be within a partner organisation where there is a clear legal relationship and where a commitment to delivering the Festival or Event can be demonstrated and measured.
- Inclusion of digital audiences as part of beneficiaries - both baselines and targets.
- Strengthening of criteria relating to sustainability (in particular environmental practices) and accessibility.
- Integration of criteria relating to proposals for Year of Culture to streamline process for applicants. This will be subject to a separate assessment and approvals process however is an efficient method for organisations to present information to Council.

**3.28 Proposed process**

It is therefore recommended that the amendments above are made to the scheme and that it opens in September 2021 and closes in November 2021. An extensive assessment process will be undertaken as outlined at 3.13. Final recommendations for funding will be presented to City Growth and Regeneration Committee in February 2022. Engagement with the sector will be sustained throughout the application process including:

- Group Advice Clinics facilitated by the Central Grants Unit and Culture and Tourism team offering information and guidance.
- In addition, officers will offer one to one meetings to any organisation considering applying to the scheme. Organisations who have applied to previous schemes will be offered detailed feedback on their applications.

### **3.29 Other Forms of Investment**

It is important to note that Cultural multi-annual grants (CMAG) are only one form of funding provided by the Council to support cultural development in the city. As part of *A City Imagining* other schemes include:

- Community Festivals Fund – while this did not operate in 20/21 due to COVID-19, a letter of offer has now been received from Department for Communities and this scheme will launch in October 2021.
- Pathfinder Awards – for organisations not in receipt of core funding from any public sector body.
- Creative Bursaries – to support individuals who have clear career development paths aligned to the priorities of the cultural strategy.
- Project Funding – during COVID-19 this has been replaced by transition funding for organisations who had lost core funding. This scheme will be re-introduced in due course.

### **3.30 Financial & Resource Implications**

There are currently no financial implications to this report. Final recommendations will be subject to Committee approval and confirmation of departmental budgets for 2022-23.

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

An Equality Impact Assessment and Rural Needs Assessment was carried out for the Cultural Strategy. An equality screening was completed on the Investment Model including

**multi-annual grants which has been screened out with mitigating actions. Mitigating actions include: monitoring key population indicators and programme performance measures, in particular participation and attendance by disabled people; consider additional support and for sector-wide audience development of under-engaged audiences, in particular disabled people and older people; people and groups where there is evidence of additional barriers, such as LGBTQ+ and carers, and people with multiple identities; promotion and implementation of the council's Inclusive Events Guide for outdoor events and cultural festivals."**

During discussion, in response to a Members' question regarding Belfast Pride applying for funding as part of a consortia, the Senior Manager - Culture and Tourism confirmed that applications for this funding needed to be received from one accountable body, but that organisations could work in partnership if proper agreements were in place.

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:

- Note the contents of the report and agree to open cultural multi-annual grants in September 2021 for Arts and Heritage organisations and Events and Festivals for funding from 1st April, 2022 and 31st March, 2024, subject to final recommendations being agreed by Committee in February 2022.

### **Finance, Procurement & Performance**

#### **The Zoo - Quarter 1 Performance Update Report**

The purpose of the report was to provide Members with an update in regard to the Zoo performance during Q1 (April-June) of the 2021-22 financial year, under the following areas:

- Visitor Services;
- Education Services;
- Animal Collection;
- Marketing and Events, and
- Financial performance.

In relation to Visitor Services, it was reported that the zoo had remained closed to the public at the start of Q1 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and reopened on 30th April as an outdoor attraction only, with a takeaway catering service provided in the zoo's small Treetop Café located the top of the zoo. The indoor animal houses (excluding the Rainforest House) had reopened to the public on 24th May.

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The Business Manager explained that the zoo had implemented a range of health and safety measures in line with Covid-19 requirements and several zoo initiatives remained unavailable during Q1 due to health and safety requirements.

She advised that, upon reopening at the end of April, the zoo had seen significant visitor demand with the majority of weekends throughout May and June being fully booked. During Q1 the zoo welcomed 84k visitors over the two-month period it was open. She advised that this was an increase of 54% compared to average number of visitors (May-June) since 2014, even with the daily capacity restrictions in place.

She informed the Committee that the requirement of advance booking had helped with increased visitor demand, as people were planning in advance and were committed to visiting the zoo on their selected date. She confirmed that the zoo intended to keep this, in at least some form, even when Covid-19 restrictions were reduced or removed in future.

In relation to Education Services, she stated that the zoo had a small education team with two staff members. Due to limited staff resources and the impact of Covid-19 restrictions, a normal education service was not available during Q1. School groups were accommodated on a reduced basis with self-guided visits only available.

The Business Manager highlighted that, regarding Animal Collection / Welfare, the zoo celebrated the birth of five Fijian banded baby iguanas which hatched in early January, marking the first new addition to the zoo of 2021. She also highlighted that a health and safety refurbishment of Belfast Zoo's sea lion pool in 2021 within the aquatic habitat was completed with fresh water being changed to saline water which enhanced the welfare of the animals.

Regarding Marketing and Events, the Committee was advised that the emphasis during Q1 was heavily focused on generating awareness that the zoo was 'Now Open', it also promoted its new Changing Places facility for visitors with disabilities and reopened its sea lion viewing window which was closed to the public for several years.

It was reported that the zoo welcomed several babies during Q1, including the birth of a giraffe calf, Ballysheen, in front of hundreds of visitors, a critically endangered bongo and six Madagascar tree boas.

The Committee was provided with an update on the Financial performance for the end of Q1: Income was £997k, which was £245k above budgeted income, generated primarily through admission, followed by retail, key commercial products and franchise concessions; and retail income was £205k which was £66k above budget.

The Business Manager highlighted that no catering commissions had been received yet for this financial year, as the commission threshold had not been met. However, the zoo's photography commission had seen increased demand.

During discussion, the Committee welcomed the increase in visitor numbers.



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The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note the Zoo performance update report for the period April – June 2021.

**Department for Communities (DfC) Covid-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme Update**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

- 1.1 To update Members on the progress of the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme and to seek approvals to proceed with the recommendations regarding reallocation of budget lines within the overall programme.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:**

- **Note the updates on the DfC Revitalisation Programme projects contained within this paper and the continued importance of the use of streets and spaces to assist businesses and communities as part of a wider programme of work focused on Reimagining the Public Realm.**
- **To note the challenges and risk around delays in delivery, the request to DfC for an extension and the agreement, via a Letter of Variance process, to extend funding spend period to March 2022.**
- **To note the outcome of the Castle Place Hub procurement, with project costs now exceeding the current budget allocated;**
- **To note the DfC commitment to 100% funding Adelaide Street project and the proposed condition to reallocate Adelaide Street budget of £100,000 to Castle Place Hub scheme.**
- **To note the £45,000 underspend of the Connectivity Scheme in Church Lane area following a procurement exercise and agree to reallocate this underspend to Castle Place Hub project.**
- **To agree that any further underspends realised are utilised to meet any additional cost increases on previously agreed and committed projects.**
- **To note the progress made with the E-cargo bike pilot and the appointment of a suitable operator to carry out the pilot project.**

- To note the progress of the Covid-19 Business Grant, the potential underspend and to approve the reallocation of underspend to the overall Revitalisation Programme budget.
- To note the current position regarding the Business Cluster and Community grant scheme and the ratified decision at full Council 1 July to allocate Council monies towards the remaining applications (subject to the applications due diligence process).

**3.0 Main report**

**Background**

- 3.1** The CG&R Committee have received regular updates and provided approvals relating to the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme - a £4.039m programme funded via DfC to bring forward and deliver a range of economic, cultural and physical interventions to support businesses to trade efficiently during the Covid-19 restrictions and to maximise and create more outdoor space for businesses. To date a total of £2.250m has been spent or directly allocated to delivery partners up to the end of June 2021. The following sections provide an outline of certain works still in progress and programme challenges, with Appendix 1 Table providing a summary overview of the overall programme.
- 3.2** To date, some eight interventions/projects have been completed including marketing, branding, public safety messaging and communication activity; animation activity; revenue funding support for additional street cleansing and neighbourhood safety; and the replacement of the Belfast Bikes fleet with 450 new smart bikes. The first of the physical interventions completed and recently launched by the Lord Mayor and Department for Infrastructure Minister was the Linen Quarter parklet (see Appendix 2 photos). This new 10m parklet, located on the corner of Linenhall Street and Clarence Street, provides improved and enhanced outdoor green, social space and bike racks. This parklet is the first of a number of new place-making and outdoor spaces across the Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) areas that we are working in partnership with the BIDs, DfI and other city stakeholders to deliver.
- 3.3** While much progress has been made and work continues to progress at pace across a number of strands, there are however challenges and risks to achieving the current programme deadline of September 2021. A key factor in the delay in progressing with a number of projects is

the dependency of Council on external factors such as the reliance on DfI Statutory approvals and /or DfI enabling works delivery timeframes. As much of the physical public realm, parklet, and streetscape type interventions are on adopted pavements and roads this requires DfI consent or have elements of enabling works that require DfI delivery of the civils works elements. Ongoing delays have also resulted in the realisation of increases in contractor/supplier costs, increased lead-in times for delivery items, and limitations in contractor availability. Officers have taken a partnership approach to delivering many of the physical measures, and therefore are reliant on partner capacity and resources to support this partnership working at a time when many partners are stretched.

- 3.4 Given the expected delays in delivery in a number of interventions, officers requested an extension to the DfC Contract for Funding programme completion timeframe from September 2021 to March 2022. DfC have issued notice of their agreement to extend the completion timeframe in line with this request and will issue the associated Letter of Variance in the coming weeks.
- 3.5 As above, we are increasingly aware of external supplier environment in terms of increase in contractor/supplier costs. We continue to proactively manage the cost estimate process as effectively as possible through project scope review and value engineer processes and also via consideration of other sources of funding (e.g. DfI, DfC), identified underspend opportunities within the Revitalisation Programme and agreed CRD Divisional budget. As outlined below there is an excess budget cost on one project (Castle Place Hub) but with underspend within another project (Church Lane) The proposed recommendations below will also be notified to DfC and included with the information to be submitted as part of the DfC Letter of Variance process.

**Project Specific updates**

**Castle Place Hub**

- 3.6 This project involves the creation of new public realm and streetscape enhancements, including a new cycle lane and a new kiosk that offers a unique city centre kiosk located in a prime retail pitch. Planning Permission has been granted although following further engagement with local businesses, an amendment to the Planning Consent will be sought in August 2021. DfC (with Council also on the assessment panel) have completed an external exercise to seek an operator for

the new kiosk with 16 applications received, with the preferred operator notified. Other statutory approvals, including Experimental Road Orders, signalling design and relocation of bus and blue badge parking are currently underway by DfI. A critical factor however in the overall delivery is DfI delivery of the civils enabling works and finalising the necessary statutory approvals. Discussions remain ongoing with DfI regarding programming these works into their works programme.

- 3.7 In terms of contractor appointment procurement has completed however the returned cost has exceeded the current project budget by approx. £150k. As outlined below there are proposals for reallocation of underspend from other interventions as well as the potential to lever in additional monies from other funders.

**Adelaide Street – parklet and public realm scheme**

- 3.8 This parklet / public realm scheme proposal has been developed in partnership with DfI and will see pavement extensions and public realm improvements along the length of Adelaide Street. Given the wider benefits of the scheme DfI have agreed to commit to 100% fund this scheme outside of the Revitalisation Programme, thereby releasing the previously allocated funding of £100,000, on the condition that the budget would be reallocated to Castle Place Hub given the Castle Place Hub budget issues (as above) and as this project contains a significant amount of DfI-related improvements to the pavements/public highway. The funding commitment from DfI for Adelaide Street scheme is currently going through Department of Finance approval process.
- 3.9 Subject to a satisfactory Contract for Funding offer from DfI for £100,000 for the Adelaide Street Scheme, it is being recommended that the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation £100,000 budget is subsequently moved from Adelaide Street scheme to Castle Place Hub budget line.

**Connectivity Scheme in Church Lane area**

- 3.10 Following consultation with local businesses to refine the project scope, the emerging proposal will see a new lighting installation and open space enhancements via planters. The procurement process for a relevant contractor has now been completed. The reduction in the initial project proposal scope and confirmed project costs will result in a £45,000 underspend and it is being recommended that this underspend is reallocated to the Castle Place Hub project.

- 3.11 It is also worth noting that the illegal car parking and enforcement of the pedestrianised zone along Church Lane was raised as a specific issue by a number of stakeholders. Officers have been liaising with DfI to develop measures to address this issue.

**E-cargo delivery pilot**

- 3.12 This e-cargo delivery pilot aims to improve air quality, reduce kerb parking and congestion by providing a sustainable delivery options for first mile/last mile/onforwarding and only mile deliveries. As updated in the CG&R Committee Revitalisation report in May, an Expressions of Interest exercise was undertaken which subsequently informed a competitive tender process. This tender process closed on 9 July 2021. Following the assessment process, and contract discussions, a local business, StreetDock Systems Limited has been awarded the contract for the pilot which will commence operations in the Autumn.
- 3.13 This project will involve use of e-cargo delivery bikes to make urban logistics more convenient, efficient and environmentally sustainable. Seed-funding is often offered in city centres to bring forward innovative pilot schemes for breaching the issues created by the last and first mile deliveries. Previous bids for funding for sustainable solutions have been unsuccessful in the city centre, with successful bidders showing that once market viability is established the trend continues to grow. It will operate as a first, last and only mile delivery project through a hub-based approach that is scalable as demand grows. The successful operator is responsible for developing a long term and sustainable business plan, client base and operation of the e-cargo fleet. Key performance indicators have been established and will be reported on at agreed intervals to monitor the success of the project and longer-term commercial viability.

**Cathedral Gardens Active Travel Hub**

- 3.14 This pilot project involves the creation of new active travel physical hub on Council's Cathedral Gardens site as a meanwhile use. It will provide two key elements that will be run and operated by the successful operator following a competitive procurement competition:
1. Active Travel Support and Advice: Information, guidance and programming provision to encourage and support walking and cycling

**2. Bicycle and Bicycle Parking Provision: Supporting bike accessibility and provision through a range of cost-effective products and services**

- 3.15** A Planning Application was submitted on the 9th July in conjunction with Physical Programmes and the design team for the proposed permanent Cathedral Gardens works. Discussions remain ongoing with a number of partners including the Public Health Agency, DoJ and the University of Ulster to finalise agreements on the required revenue funding for the temporary period. Any approvals in relation to asset implications (e.g. lease/licence) will be brought to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee.

**Covid-19 Business Grants [up to £2.5k grant]**

- 3.16** The Covid-19 Business Grant, with an initial budget of £800k, is now closed and fully committed through mini grants up to £2.5k per application. Following additional funding provided by DfC in January 2021 an additional £154k was allocated to this scheme. In total 494 awards were made totalling £858,165.
- 3.17** The closing date for businesses to claim their awards through the scheme was the 25th June. To date £790,821 of funding has been drawn down by 445 businesses who were granted awards through the process. 49 businesses have withdrawn from the scheme and officers are currently processing the remaining 13 claims. There is currently an underspend within this budget line, and it is therefore recommended to reallocate any underspend from the fund to the overall Revitalisation Programme budget to meet some of the cost escalation currently being realised in other projects. The total amount of underspend and area of reallocation will be confirmed to this Committee when outstanding claims are processed.

**Business Cluster & Community Grants [£10k - £25k capital grants]**

- 3.18** Members will be aware of this capital grants scheme for environmental improvement proposals on arterial routes, in urban villages and local communities – proposals were sought on interventions that would support business operation and recovery; enhance physical spaces; increase civic participation and sense of ownership; and encourage people to live, work, visit and invest in local area. The scheme was originally allocated £363k from the Revitalisation Programme, with a further £300k and £95k allocated to the scheme following additional funding provided by DfC in

January 2021 and from underspend in the Business Grant Scheme respectively and as agreed by this Committee. Members will also be aware that the Council received a total request for £1.34m from over 66 submitted applications. Grants were awarded on a first come basis, subject to appropriate due diligence checks, and 32 applications were approved with total committed funding of £690k.

**3.19** As of end of June £531,160 has been provided to businesses. This represents the provision of the Integrated Design Team and the first 80% upfront payment to 27 of the successful applicants, with the remaining 20% to be paid on completion of the works and satisfactory completion of the monitoring and evaluation returns. Officers continue to work through the remaining successful applicants to secure relevant statutory approvals, however delays in securing relevant statutory approvals are anticipated and will result in an impact on delivery timelines, and subsequent funding spend beyond the initial proposed September deadline of the Funding Contract as paragraph 3.6 above.

**3.20** Members will be aware of the oversubscription of applications to the funding allocated to this Business Cluster and Community Grants Scheme. Following Council ratification on the 1st July, the Council have committed to allocating £450,000 additional Council funding to meet the outstanding demand with an extended scheme delivery timeframe of March 2022. Officers have commenced engagement with business and organisations who previously applied, with the due diligence assessment process underway. Further updates on this next phase of application assessment will be brought back to Committee at a future date.

**3.21** Financial & Resource Implications

Subject to a satisfactory Contract for Funding from DfI for £100,000 to fund the Adelaide Street parklet and public realm scheme, it is recommended that £100,000 initially allocated from the Adelaide St project is to be reallocated to Castle Place Hub. It is recommended the £45,000 underspend identified as part of the Connectivity Scheme in Church Lane area, to be allocated to Castle Place Hub scheme, and that any further underspends realised will be utilised to meet any additional cost increases on previously agreed and committed projects. Any overall Programme underspend will be brought into this Committee for agreement on allocation.

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

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**Impact assessment complete on overall programme and kept under review.”**

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority:

- To note the updates on the DfC Revitalisation Programme projects contained within the report and the continued importance of the use of streets and spaces to assist businesses and communities as part of a wider programme of work focused on Reimagining the Public Realm;
- To note the challenges and risk around delays in delivery, the request to DfC for an extension and the agreement, via a Letter of Variance process, to extend funding spend period to March 2022;
- To note the outcome of the Castle Place Hub procurement, with project costs now exceeding the current budget allocated;
- To note the Department for Infrastructure commitment to 100% funding Adelaide Street project and the proposed condition to reallocate Adelaide Street budget of £100,000 to Castle Place Hub scheme;
- To note the £45,000 underspend of the Connectivity Scheme in Church Lane area following a procurement exercise and agree to reallocate this underspend to Castle Place Hub project;
- To agree that any further underspends realised are utilised to meet any additional cost increases on previously agreed and committed projects;
- To note the progress made with the E-cargo bike pilot and the appointment of a suitable operator to carry out the pilot project;
- To note the progress of the Covid-19 Business Grant, the potential underspend and to approve the reallocation of underspend to the overall Revitalisation Programme budget; and
- To note the current position regarding the Business Cluster and Community grant scheme and the ratified decision at full Council on 1st July to allocate Council monies towards the remaining applications (subject to the applications due diligence process).

**Strategic and Operational Issues**

**Department for Infrastructure (DfI) Accessible Parking Bay Proposals**

The Members of the Committee were informed that correspondence had been received from the Department for Infrastructure regarding the following two consultations relating to accessible/disabled park bay proposals within the city:

- **St Jude's Parade** - DfI propose to remove an accessible/disabled parking bay outside No. 26 St Jude's Parade and provide an accessible/disabled parking bay outside Nos. 24 and 28 St Jude's



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Parade. This proposal was in response to the bay outside No. 26 no longer being required and two subsequent applications from local residents for accessible parking bays outside Nos. 24 and 28.

- **80 Willowbank Gardens** - DfI propose to remove an accessible/disabled parking bay outside No. 80 Willowbank Gardens as it was no longer required.

It was reported that these proposals would contribute to the provision of accessible parking and/or on-street parking in the respective localities and in the case of St Jude's Parade should provide improved accessibility for motorists with limited mobility.

In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Members agreed that the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note the two proposed schemes as outlined.

**Notice of Motion Quarterly Report**

The Committee was provided with a quarterly update on the Notices of Motion. It was reported that the Committee was responsible for 11 active Motions and Issues Raised in Advance.

The Committee was reminded that, given the current pressures in responding to the pandemic, it had been difficult to afford the usual time towards progressing Motions. Nevertheless, there had been progress in a number of items and it was suggested that the following 4 Motions be now closed:

**Category 1 Recommended Closures** (Notices of Motion which contained an action that had been completed):

- **Sustainable Transport (Ref number 43)**. The Committee was reminded that a further report was considered by the Committee in May 2021 and a range of potential impacts and issues were discussed such as increased vehicles in shared bus/cycle lanes, segregated cycle provision, hackney and public hire vehicles, convenience for the public as well as the impact of vehicles on air pollution and the need for better transport options. The Committee, at its meeting in May, noted that the proposed Notice of Motion as set out would not be taken forward.

**Category 2 Recommended Closures** (Notices of Motion have become Council policy or absorbed into a strategic programme of work):

- **Air Passenger Duty (Ref number 58)**. It was reported that this motion would be considered in the context of the new draft 10 year Tourism Plan, which would be included on the Committee agenda for consideration in September 2021.

- **Economic impact of retail closures and job losses (Ref number 92)**. The Committee was reminded that the Future of the City Committee

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Workshop on 25th May, 2021 provided an update on the current economic impact of Covid-19 on the city, including job losses and the vacancy rates in the city centre. This information was directly informing the Future City Centre Programme. Whilst this programme was initially developed around the key findings and recommendations outlined in the Pragma Consulting retail analysis, given the significant challenges brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Future City Centre Programme had been recast to help address the issues impacting on the city centre and is aligned with the wider Belfast: Our Recovery framework priorities. The Committee was advised that it would continue to be monitored to reflect the changes in the city which would involve analysing the recent trends influencing the city centre and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, with a future report being submitted to the Committee, together with regular updates on the Future City Centre programme of work as it progressed.

**- Belfast Bikes – pilot Rolloe scheme (Ref number 102).** As noted in the committee report of June 2021, Officers had been working with the company on the viability of pilot scheme and regular updates would be brought back to the Committee. The Committee was advised that this would be integrated into the Belfast Bikes programme of work.

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:

- Note the updates to all Notices of Motion that this Committee is responsible for as referenced in Appendix 1;
- Agree to the closure of a number of Notices of Motion, as referenced in Appendix 1 and noted in paragraph 3.6 of the report; and
- Note that a timeframe for the Car Parking Strategy Review would be submitted to the Committee in due course (as referred to under Notice of Motion Ref 153).

**Issues Raised in Advance by Members**

**20s Plenty for Us Campaign (Cllr McMullan to raise)**

Councillor McMullan suggested that the Committee invite representatives from the 20s Plenty Campaign, which advocate for a speed limit of 20mph to be normal on residential streets and in town and village centres, to present their work at a future meeting.

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to agree to invite representatives of the 20s Plenty Campaign to present its work at a future meeting.

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Chairperson

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# CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY FOR THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

**Date of Meeting:** 18th August, 2021

**Final CX Decision Register Published:** 20th August, 2021

**Recommendations sent to CX** 20th August, 2021

**Final Date For Call-in (10am):** n/a

**CX's Comments Received:** 20th August, 2021

	Topic	Chief Executive's Decision	Subject to call-in
<b><u>Delegated Matters</u></b>			
<b>2a</b>	Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licenses Issued Under Delegated Authority	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to note the applications that have been issued under the Scheme of Delegation.	<b>No</b>
<b>2b</b>	Update on an application for the Grant of a 14-Day Occasional Outdoor Entertainments Licence for Holy Cross Boy's School Pitch	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority, subject to all technical requirements being met, to approve the application for the grant of the Entertainments Licence for the dates specified (20th and 21st August).	<b>No</b>
<b>2c</b>	Application for the Grant of a 14-Day Occasional Outdoor Entertainments Licence for Wedderburn Playing Fields	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority, subject to no representations being received, a satisfactory response from statutory consultees and all technical requirements being met, to approve the application for the grant of the 14-Day Occasional Outdoor Entertainments.	<b>No</b>
<b>2d</b>	Application for the Grant of a 7-Day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence for Haymarket, 84 Royal Avenue	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority, subject to a satisfactory response from statutory consultees and all technical requirements being met, to approve the application	<b>No</b>

		for the grant of the 7-Day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence with the hours requested.	
<b>2e</b>	Application for the Grant of a 7-Day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence for Vault Artist's Studios, 4-48 Tower Street	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority, subject to a satisfactory response from statutory consultees and all technical requirements being met to approve the application for the grant of the 7-Day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence.	<b>No</b>

Please note that the agenda/reports associated with the decisions listed above can be accessed on the app and on the web, via the following link: <https://minutes.belfastcity.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=168&MId=10276&Ver=4>

# Licensing Committee

Wednesday, 18th August, 2021

## MEETING OF THE MEMBERS OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Donnelly (Chairperson);  
Aldermen Rodgers, and Sandford; and  
Councillors Bunting, Michael Collins, Howard,  
Hutchinson, M. Kelly, T. Kelly, Magee, McAteer,  
McCabe, McCullough, McCusker, McKeown,  
Mulholland and Smyth.

In attendance: Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;  
Ms. N. Largey, Divisional Solicitor;  
Mr. S. Hewitt, Building Control Manager;  
Mr. K. Bloomfield, HMO Unit Manager;  
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer; and  
Ms. K. McCrum, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Alderman McCoubrey and Councillors Bradley and Magennis.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 16th June were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st July, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were recorded.

### **Delegated Matters**

### **THE MEMBERS OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE CONSIDERED THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN ORDER TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN PURSUANCE OF THE POWERS DELEGATED TO HER BY THE COUNCIL ON 4TH MAY, 2021**

#### **Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licenses Issued Under Delegated Authority**

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note the applications that have been issued under the Scheme of Delegation.

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**Update on an application for the Grant of a  
14-Day Occasional Outdoor Entertainments  
Licence for Holy Cross Boy's School Pitch**

The Members were reminded that in June the Committee had recommended that, subject to no representations being received and all technical requirements being met, the application for the grant of the 14-Day Occasional Outdoor Entertainments Licence, and for permission to provide entertainment after the hours of 11.00 p.m., be approved.

The Building Control Manager advised that, whilst a public notice of the application had been placed in the press, the date of the advertisement was such that the 28-day statutory period during which representations to the application could be made, would not expire until 23rd August which was after the dates that the events were scheduled to take place on. He added that, to date, no representations had been received in relation to the application.

He therefore asked the Members of the Committee to consider granting approval for the planned events only and issue a licence for the 20th and 21st August, as to issue the licence, from a regulatory and enforcement perspective, was preferable to an event proceeding unlicensed.

Having taken into account the information presented, the Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May 2021, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority, subject to all technical requirements being met, to approve the application for the grant of the Entertainments Licence for the dates specified.

**Application for the Grant of a 14-Day Occasional  
Outdoor Entertainments Licence for Wedderburn  
Playing Fields**

The Building Control Manager advised that, as for all licences associated with Council parks, the applicant was the Director of Neighbourhood Services.

He added that the additional part of the application from Finaghy Residents Association to provide outdoor entertainment on the playing fields for a community cultural festival beyond 11 p.m. on 27th and 28th August, had since been withdrawn. He confirmed that as a result, the application now related to the grant of the 14-Day Occasional Outdoor Entertainments Licence within standard days and hours.

It was also confirmed that, to date, no written representation had been received in relation to the application, however, the 28-day period had not yet expired, and a response from the PSNI was also still to be received.

The Building Control Manager advised that, when received, the service would provide any health and safety mitigations related to Covid-19 to the Council's Health and Safety Unit for their consideration. He added that staff would be on site in the build up to the event to ensure that all safety and management procedures were in place, and confirmed that the applicant had been requested to provide an acoustic report, which



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when received, would be provided to the Environmental Protection Unit (EPU) for evaluation.

Taking into account the information presented, the Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May 2021, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority, subject to no representations being received, a satisfactory response from statutory consultees and all technical requirements being met, to approve the application for the grant of the 14-Day Occasional Outdoor Entertainments Licence.

**Application for the Grant of a 7-Day Annual  
Outdoor Entertainments Licence for Haymarket,  
84 Royal Avenue**

The Members of the Committee were asked to consider an application to provide entertainment in the form of live music within an outdoor arcade running between the rear of properties located on Royal Avenue and Gresham Street from Monday to Sunday between 11.30 a.m. to 1.00 a.m. the following morning.

The Building Control Manager confirmed that the 28-day statutory period of the public notice had expired with no objections having been received, however, a response from the PSNI was still to be received.

With regards to health and safety, he advised that, when received, the service would provide any health and safety mitigations related to Covid-19 to the Council's Health and Safety Unit for their consideration, and that the applicant had been requested to provide an acoustic report, which when received, would be provided to the Environmental Protection Unit (EPU) for evaluation.

Taking into account the information presented, the Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May 2021, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority, subject to satisfactory responses from statutory consultees and all technical requirements being met, to approve the application for the grant of the 7-Day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence with the hours requested.

**Application for the Grant of a 7-Day Annual  
Outdoor Entertainments Licence for Vault Artist's  
Studios, 4-48 Tower Street**

The Members of the Committee were asked to consider an application to provide outdoor entertainment in the form of live music to the car parking enclosure to the main front entrance of Vault Artist's Studio in Tower Street.

The Building Control Manager advised that no written representation had been lodged as a result of the public notice of the application, however, a response from the PSNI was still to be received.

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Taking into account the information presented, the Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May 2021, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority, subject to a satisfactory response from statutory consultees and all technical requirements being met, to approve the application for the grant of the 7-Day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence.

**Graffiti Enforcement**

A Member requested an update on the work of the Council in tackling graffiti on Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO), including the number of properties contacted, the number of cases that were successfully resolved, and what, if any, enforcement had been taken forward.

The HMO Unit Manager confirmed that three exercises had been undertaken to date in the Holylands, Stranmillis and Upper Lisburn Road areas. He added that following the environmental audit of the Holylands area, including the Botanic and Rugby areas, 66 sites were identified as having significant graffiti, half of which were on HMO accommodation.

He explained that approximately 80-85% of landlords had complied with the requirement to remove the graffiti, and provided details of an ongoing case where graffiti had reappeared after numerous removals by the landlord. He added that letters had been issued to two properties which were subject to old NIHE licensing conditions informing them of the proposal to vary their licence conditions which would require them to remove the graffiti. He confirmed that one further landlord had been written to seeking reasons as to why they had not complied with the request, prior to any enforcement action being taken.

A number of the Members welcomed the proactive work being done to address the issue and commented that the Council's efforts should be promoted so as to demonstrate the work being undertaken to manage such properties and to tackle anti-social behaviour in these areas.

**Update in Relation to Legal Proceedings**

The Divisional Solicitor provided an update on recent legal proceedings in relation to a County Court Appeal regarding the Committee's decision to refuse an application for an HMO Licence at 17 Balfour Avenue.

She confirmed that the applicant had previously operated the premises as an unregistered and then unlicensed HMO for a period of some years. She explained that the Judge had overturned the Committee's decision, finding the appellant to be a fit and proper person, but criticised the fact that he did not have a licence for the premises and therefore issued the licence for a period of 1.5 years, rather than the maximum five year period.

She added that the Judge had found in favour of the Council's position that the three month deadline within which the Council must make a decision on an HMO application began when the application became valid, not when it was initially received.

**Licensing Committee,  
Wednesday, 18th August, 2021**

She advised that the Council was currently taking advice regarding a possible appeal of the decision, and that a full report would be brought to the next meeting of the Committee.

The Members noted the information which had been provided.

Chairperson

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# CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY FOR THE PLANNING COMMITTEE



**Belfast**  
City Council

**Date of Meeting:** 17th August, 2021

**CX Decision Register Published:** 19<sup>th</sup> August, 2021

**Recommendations sent to CX:** 18th August, 2021

**Final Date for Call-in (10am):** 26th August, 2021

**Deadline for CX's Comments:** 19th August, 2021

Item no.	Agenda Item	CX Decision	Subject to call in
2	<b>Committee Site Visit</b>	<p>The Members noted that a site visit had been undertaken to the following site, on 10<sup>th</sup> August:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LA04/2020/0847/F &amp; LA04/2020/1208/DCA - Partial demolition and redevelopment of existing buildings to provide 16 apartments, communal bin store and landscaped communal garden at 25-29 University Road</li> </ul>	<b>No</b>
3	<b>Quarter 1 Finance Update</b>	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>note the report and agree the 2020/21 balances;</li> <li>agree to the year-end surplus of £5.4m being made available for re-allocation; and</li> <li>retain the annual allocation of £500k for the summer diversionary festival programme with the purpose of running it later in the year.</li> </ul>	<b>Yes</b>
4	<b>Planning Appeals Notified</b>	<p>The Members noted the receipt of correspondence in respect of a number of planning appeals which had been submitted to the Planning Appeals Commission, together with the outcomes of a range of hearings which had been considered by the Commission.</p>	<b>No</b>

<b>5</b>	<b>Planning Decisions Issued</b>	The Members noted a list of decisions which had been taken under the delegated authority of the Strategic Director of Place and Economy, together with all other planning decisions which had been issued by the Planning Department between 8th June and 9th August, 2021.	<b>No</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Vesting Order and Abandonment</b>	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to note that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NIHE had submitted a notice of application for a Vesting Order of Lands at Block 34g Corrib Avenue, under Local Government Act (NI) 1972 The Housing (NI) Order; and</li> <li>• DFI Roads was proposing to abandon 1000.476 sq metres of Adam Street, at its junction with Duncairn Gardens to Upper Canning Street Under Article 68 (1) of the Roads (NI) Order 1993.</li> </ul>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Planning Applications</b> (Please note that these are not subject to Call-in)		
<b>b</b>	<b>(Reconsidered Item) LA04/2020/2280/F</b> - Mixed use development comprising 1 ground floor retail unit and 13 apartments, associated amenity space, landscaping and all other site works at 93-95 Falls Road	In accordance with the Council decision of 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2021, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to defer the application in order that the Committee would undertake a site visit to allow the Members to better familiarise themselves with the proposals and the site.	<b>No</b>
<b>a</b>	<b>(Reconsidered item) LA04/2020/0847/F &amp; LA04/2020/1208/DCA</b> - Partial demolition and redevelopment of existing buildings to provide 16 apartments, communal bin store and landscaped communal garden at 25-29 University Road	<i>This item was withdrawn from the agenda.</i>	<b>No</b>
<b>d</b>	<b>LA04/2019/0775/F</b> - 18 dwellings to include revision of site layout of previous approval Z/2007/1401/F at sites 2-8 (7 dwellings) and additional 11 No. dwellings, including landscaping, access via Hampton Park and other associated site works on lands	This item was withdrawn from the agenda and the Committee agreed to undertake a pre-emptive site visit.	<b>No</b>

	approximately 50m to the north of 35 Hampton Park and approximately 30m to the west of 60 Hampton Park, Galwally		
<b>k</b>	<b>LA04/2021/1595/F</b> - Lands in front of Calvert House - Re-placing existing kiosk with upgraded kiosk which includes covered area at 23 and 17 Castle Place	<i>This item was withdrawn from the agenda.</i>	<b>No</b>
<b>f</b>	<b>LA04/2020/1858/F</b> - 18 social housing units at Hillview Retail Park	In accordance with the Council decision of 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2021, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to grant approval to the application, subject to the outstanding assessments on <i>roads</i> , drainage, contamination, air quality and noise being submitted to, and considered acceptable by, the Committee at a future meeting.	No
<b>e</b>	<b>LA04/2020/0493/F</b> - Alteration and extension of existing building to provide 4 No one bed apartments at 23 Glandore Avenue and 2 Glanworth Gardens	In accordance with the Council decision of 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2021, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to defer the application in order that the Committee would undertake a site visit to allow the Members to better familiarise themselves with the proposals and the site.	<b>No</b>
<b>c</b>	<b>LA04/2021/0001/F</b> - Contractor's Temporary Site Compound (for proposed development at adjacent Ulster Independent Clinic planning ref: LA04/2019/0318/F) to include Contractor's buildings, storage, car parking, planted bank, Covid-19 Marshall Station / Testing Area and associated operational development with new, temporary site access on Site at junction of Malone Road and Cranmore Park to south of 14-20 Cranmore Park and east of 75 Cranmore Park	In accordance with the Council decision of 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2021, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to grant a temporary approval of 3 years with the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the conditions and the Section 76 Agreement.	<b>No</b>

<b>g</b>	<b>LA04/2020/0754/F</b> - 14 social housing units at 197-203 Crumlin Road	In accordance with the Council decision of 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2021, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to grant approval with the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions.	<b>No</b>
<b>h</b>	<b>LA04/2020/1360/F</b> - Demolition of existing church hall and construction of 9.no apartments at 491-495 Lisburn Road	In accordance with the Council decision of 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2021, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to defer the application in order that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the Committee would undertake a site visit to allow the Members to better familiarise themselves with the proposals and the site; and</li> <li>DFI Roads would be requested to attend the next meeting in order to answer Members queries.</li> </ul>	<b>No</b>
<b>i</b>	<b>LA04/2019/2778/F</b> - Residential development comprising 18 x two-bedroom apartments and 5 x one-bedroom apartments with associated amenity space, cycle & bin storage, landscaping and site works (23 units in total) on lands at 159-165 Holywood Road	In accordance with the Council decision of 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2021, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to grant approval with the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions.	<b>No</b>
<b>j</b>	<b>LA04/2021/1645/F</b> - Single and two storey rear extension, rear car parking and turning area at 44 Ravenhill Park	In accordance with the Council decision of 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2021, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to grant approval with the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions.	<b>No</b>
<b>l</b>	<b>LA04/2021/0773/F</b> - Retention and alteration of shipping container for use as a community facility with domestic kitchen Ulidia playing Fields, Ormeau Road	In accordance with the Council decision of 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2021, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to grant approval with the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions.	<b>No</b>
<b>m</b>	<b>LA04/2021/0791/F</b> - Renewal of planning permission LA04/2019/2412/F for temporary single storey timber structure at C.S. Lewis Square, Newtownards Road	In accordance with the Council decision of 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2021, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to grant approval with the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions.	<b>No</b>



Link for the agenda is here: <https://minutes.belfastcity.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=167&MId=10192&Ver=4>

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# Planning Committee

Tuesday, 17th August, 2021

## MEETING OF THE MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

- Members present: Councillor Maskey (in the Chair);  
Councillors Brooks, Carson, Matt Collins,  
Garrett, Hussey, Hutchinson, McCullough,  
McMullan, Murphy, O'Hara and Whyte.
- In attendance: Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;  
Mr. E. Baker, Planning Manager  
(Development Management);  
Ms. N. Largey, Divisional Solicitor;  
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer; and  
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors Groogan and Hanvey.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings of 15th and 24th June were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st July, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

### **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor McCullough declared an interest in Item 7f – Hillview, in that he had been involved in public and private meetings with residents in respect of the application, and he did not participate in the discussion or vote.

Councillors Brooks and McMullan advised the Committee that, in relation to Item 7m – C. S. Lewis Square, they were Council appointments to the EastSide Partnership but clarified that, as they did not have a pecuniary interest, they remained in the meeting for the duration.

Councillor O'Hara declared an interest in Item 7f – Hillview, in that, a number of years before he had been elected as a Councillor, he had supported PPR Project's campaign for housing at the site in question but that had been before the current planning application had been lodged. Upon seeking legal advice, the Divisional Solicitor clarified that, while it was up to the Member, she was content that, as long as he would consider

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the application with an open mind and without prejudice, he could participate in the discussion and vote on the item.

**Committee Site Visit**

The Committee noted that a site visit had taken place, on 10th August, to the following site:

- LA04/2020/0847/F & LA04/2020/1208/DCA - Partial demolition and redevelopment of existing buildings to provide 16 apartments, communal bin store and landscaped communal garden at 25-29 University Road.

**Quarter 1 Finance Update**

The Members recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive would exercise her delegated authority to:

- note the report and agree the 2020/21 balances;
- agree to the year-end surplus of £5.4m being made available for re-allocation; and
- retain the annual allocation of £500k for the summer diversionary festival programme with the purpose of running it later in the year.

**Planning Appeals Notified**

The Members noted the receipt of correspondence in respect of a number of planning appeals which had been submitted to the Planning Appeals Commission, together with the outcomes of a range of hearings which had been considered by the Commission.

**Planning Decisions Issued**

The Members noted a list of decisions which had been taken under the delegated authority of the Strategic Director of Place and Economy, together with all other planning decisions which had been issued by the Planning Department between 8th June and 9th August 2021.

**Vesting Order and Abandonment**

The Members recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive would exercise her delegated authority to note that:

- NIHE had submitted a notice of application for a Vesting Order of Lands at Block 34g Corrib Avenue, under Local Government Act (NI) 1972 The Housing (NI) Order; and
- DFI Roads was proposing to abandon 1000.476 sq metres of Adam Street, at its junction with Duncairn Gardens to Upper Canning Street Under Article 68 (1) of the Roads (NI) Order 1993.

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**Planning Applications**

**THE MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE CONSIDERED THE FOLLOWING  
ITEMS IN ORDER TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
IN PURSUANCE OF THE POWERS DELEGATED TO HER BY THE COUNCIL  
ON 4TH MAY, 2021**

**Withdrawn Items**

The Members noted that the following three applications had been withdrawn from the agenda:

- (Reconsidered Item) LA04/2020/0847/F & LA04/2020/1208/DCA - Partial demolition and redevelopment of existing buildings to provide 16 apartments, communal bin store and landscaped communal garden at 25-29 University Road;
- LA04/2019/0775/F - 18 dwellings to include revision of site layout of previous approval Z/2007/1401/F at sites 2-8 (7 dwellings) and additional 11 No. dwellings, including landscaping, access via Hampton Park and other associated site works on lands approximately 50m to the north of 35 Hampton Park and approximately 30m to the west of 60 Hampton Park, Galwally; and
- LA04/2021/1595/F - Lands in front of Calvert House – Re-placing existing kiosk with upgraded kiosk which includes covered area at 23 and 17 Castle Place

The Committee also agreed to undertake a pre-emptive site visit in respect of application LA04/2019/0775/F.

**(Reconsidered Item) LA04/2020/2280/F - Mixed  
use development comprising 1 ground floor retail  
unit and 13 apartments, associated amenity space,  
landscaping and all other site works at 93-95 Falls Road**

Before presentation of the application commenced, the Committee agreed to defer consideration of the application to enable a site visit to be undertaken to allow the Committee to acquaint itself with the location and the proposals at first hand.

The Committee noted, as the application had not been presented, that all Members' present at the next meeting, would be able to take part in the debate and vote on this item.

**LA04/2020/1858/F - 18 social housing units  
at Hillview Retail Park**

(Councillor McCullough, having declared an interest, left the meeting at this point in proceedings and did not participate in the vote)

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The Principal Planning officer outlined the key aspects of the application for the erection of 18 social houses comprising two different rows of housing. She explained that the site had an area of 0.41 hectare and was located within the development limits for Belfast in both the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 (BUAP) and the draft Belfast Metropolitan Plan 2015 (BMAP). The application site was unzoned whiteland within the development limits in BUAP and was located within a proposed district centre designation (BT017/2) in draft BMAP 2004.

The Members were advised of the main issues which had been considered during the assessment of the application, including:

- the principle of the proposal at the location;
- design, layout and impact on the character and appearance of the area;
- impact on residential amenity for existing and prospective residents
- impact on built heritage;
- access, parking, and transport;
- infrastructure capacity; and
- impact on human health.

The Principal Planning officer explained that District Centres were characterised by predominantly retail and commercial uses, acting as key service centres for surrounding communities. She reported that the proposal would result in a loss of space for that use and, therefore, the principle of the proposal was unacceptable on the basis that the site was within a zoned district centre and was also incompatible with adjacent land uses.

She outlined that the proposed residential use was incompatible with the adjacent land use which consisted of the retail units, service yards and the large areas of hardstanding for the car park. As such it was considered that housing at the location was unacceptable.

The Members were also advised that the layout and density proposed would result in overdevelopment of the site and that was contrary to the SPPS and Policy QD 1 of PPS 7 Quality Residential Development. The members were advised that it would result in unacceptable damage to the local character and would create an undesirable living environment for prospective residents by way of the poor layout, overlooking and inadequate amenity provision. She added that the scheme also failed to promote the safety and surveillance for prospective residents due to its location along an interface wall and within a retail park.

The Principal Planning officer outlined that 220 objections had been received in respect of the application, including objections from Mr. William Humphrey MLA, Alderman Kingston and Councillors Verner, Pankhurst and McCullough. The objections related to the use of the retail site for housing, impact on community issues, safety concerns, contrary to wider planning policy, inappropriate layout and impact on the character of the area, poor outlook onto a peace wall, inadequate amenity provision, design and layout create conflict with adjacent land uses, impact on residential amenity, overlooking, particularly at the north western corner of the site, the potential of increased crime and compromised personal safety given the sensitive location of the site and

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inequality amongst provision of housing for different parts of the local community. The Members noted that the issues raised had been addressed within the Case Officer's report.

She advised that a letter of support had been received from a resident of the greater North Belfast area who welcomed much needed housing in the area. She also drew the Members' attention to the Late Items pack, which included correspondence that had been received from John Finucane MP, Gerry Kelly MLA and Carál Ní Chuilín MLA in support of the application. The points raised included that the waiting list for social housing in North Belfast consisted of over 4,500 applicants, demand for housing in the north of the city outstripped supply and the availability of land was one of the key barriers to addressing the housing problem, the proposal represented a positive approach to the supply of housing as it was adjacent to existing housing and would offer a good mix with the existing commercial offerings.

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. Ni Chuilin MLA to the meeting. She advised the Members that:

- she was in support of the application for social housing in North Belfast, where over 4,000 people were on the waiting list;
- she welcomed the fact that planners were concerned about people living beside an interface, however, given the fact of high housing need in North Belfast and that it was a mixed-use development, she would welcome more housing units within it;
- while it was whiteland in both BMAP and BUAP, where there were opportunities to have mixed use sites, they should be taken;
- there should be an ambition to make the site more accessible by green transport measures;
- she felt it was disappointing that applications for housing on that side of the Crumlin Road were met with numerous objections;
- a person's perceived religion, political opinion, gender, nor sexuality should come into the decision process for whether an application was acceptable or not; and
- that North Belfast should be a place where everyone could live, work and shop in.

In response to a Member's question, Ms. Ni Chuilin advised that she had spoken with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) last week in relation to the application and that the NIHE had indicated that it was supportive of the housing scheme. She advised that she was unsure, therefore, as to why the status of the housing had not been confirmed as social housing in writing, either by planning officers or by the applicant.

In response to a further question, she explained that the application had been designed based on the understanding that the site would consist of a retail frontage with housing at the back and that contiguous access to the wider Ardoyne area and the Crumlin Road was required.

A Member asked officers to clarify whether the development was for social housing or not. The Principal Planning officer confirmed that the applicant was not a

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social housing provider and that no evidence had been submitted to illustrate that the units would be taken on by a social housing provider.

The Members were advised that the Historic Environment Division (HED) and NI Water had been consulted and had no objections to the proposal. DFI Roads had advised that the proposals were unacceptable and Environmental Health and Rivers Agency required further information.

The Principal Planning officer explained that DFI Roads had been consulted on the proposal and had advised that the application in its present form was unacceptable. DFI Roads had made a number of comments in relation to the proposal, including that the red line did not contain sufficient areas to deliver the required works, a fully adopted road and footways would need to be delivered to serve the development, adequate visibility splays would need to be provided which might not be achievable due to trees and a wall and that a Travel Plan and a Transport Assessment Form were required.

It was considered that the proposal was contrary to Planning Policy Statement 7: Quality Residential Environments: Policy QD1, in that the applicant had failed to demonstrate an acceptable road layout and parking arrangement in accordance with the guidance contained within 'Creating Places' and it was also contrary to the SPPS and policies AMP 1 and AMP2 of PPS3.

A Member pointed out that DFI Roads had advised that it required additional information in order to make a further assessment of the proposal. The Principal Planning advised the Members that further information was not requested from the applicant, given that the proposal was considered fundamentally unacceptable in principle by officers and to request such information would put the applicant to unnecessary expense. She explained that, in line with the Council's Planning Operating principles, it was deemed appropriate to determine the application based on the information received to date.

Additionally, the Principal Planning officer outlined that the applicant had failed to include a drainage assessment as part of the application and that Rivers Agency had requested further information. Again, as there were fundamental concerns with the proposal, it was considered not to request additional information from the applicant and to proceed with a determination based on the original submission.

Environmental Health had expressed concerns with the proposal relating to contamination, air quality and noise, and set out that the necessary assessments and reports had not been submitted with the application and would be required to make a full assessment of the impacts. Similarly, as there were fundamental concerns with the proposal and, in line with the Council's operating principles, it was considered not to request additional information from the applicant and to proceed with a determination based on the original submission. As such it was considered that the proposal would have an adverse impact on prospective residents and was therefore contrary to the SPPS and PPS 7 Policy QD 1 Criteria (h) in that the proposed development would cause demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance.

A Member stated that he had concerns with the approach taken by officers. He argued that surely the principle of the application was open to interpretation and, if the



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Belfast Urban Area Plan (BUAP), as the extant planning policy, considered the site to be unzoned whiteland, then technically housing was acceptable on the site.

In response, the Principal Planning officer clarified that it was a balance between the designation as whiteland and the fact that it was, as a matter of fact, used for retail and that there were a number of retail approvals on the site as well.

She explained that the applicant had been given an opportunity to submit all of the required information and would have been informed that the application was recommended for refusal but that the applicant had not submitted the information required.

In response to a further Member's question, the Principal Planning officer and the Divisional Solicitor clarified to the Members that zonings within the forthcoming Local Development Plan were not yet a material consideration as the report had not yet been received from the Planning Appeals Commission.

A Member stated that the BUAP was still the extant planning policy and that, therefore, there was nothing wrong with a mixed-use development on the site. He added that, due to the location of the site, at the far corner, once the gates were moved, it would not be 18 social housing units within a retail park. He advised that there were social houses behind the site, at Rosehead, and that the application was therefore not incompatible with the adjacent land uses nor in conflict with the shopping centre. He highlighted the development of 71 units at Brookfield Mill which was currently under construction. He added that the need for social housing should be considered in terms of whether it was compatible or not. He stated that none of the units had inadequate amenity space. For those reasons, he advised that he proposed that the application should be approved, subject to the required reports being submitted.

A further Member requested clarity as to why the site was deemed unsuitable for housing when there was housing on the other side of the interface. In response, the Principal Planning officer explained that each application was considered based on the material circumstances of the individual site. She explained that the quality of the environment at Rosehead was not the same as the site in question, given the road network issues, the shorter gardens, the outlook onto car parking and the amenity space which were not adequate for houses backing onto a 6 metre high peacemall.

A further Member stated that he felt that a site visit would be appropriate in order to visualise the application on site.

Moved by Councillor McMullan  
Seconded by Councillor Brooks,

That the Members agree to recommend that the Chief Executive uses her delegated authority to agree to defer consideration of the application in order that Members would undertake a site visit in order to view the site and consider the application in situ.

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On a vote, four members voted for the amendment and six against, with one no vote, and it was declared lost.

The Planning Manager clarified to the Members that:

- while the weight to be afford to BMAP versus the BUAP was a matter for the Committee Members to determine, officers recommended that significant weight should be given to draft BMAP, given the advanced stage that it had reached;
- notwithstanding the zoning issue, noise assessments had not been submitted and officers had concerns regarding the compatibility of housing within the retail park, such as noise emanating from plant facilities or deliveries at unsociable hours, and cautioned that there could be legal implications and/curtailment requirements for businesses if objections from residents at the site were to be received;
- some of the concerns that DFI Roads had raised concerned land outside of the red line site and could lead to potential risks in terms of highway safety;
- a contaminated land report was also outstanding and officers would have concerns relating to human health.

Moved by Councillor Murphy  
Seconded by Councillor Carson

That the Members agree to recommend that the Chief Executive uses her delegated authority to agree grant approval to the application, on the basis that the principle of housing is acceptable at that location, subject to the outstanding assessments on roads, drainage, contamination, air quality and noise being submitted to, and considered acceptable by, the Committee at a future meeting.

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

**LA04/2020/0493/F - Alteration and extension of existing building  
to provide 4 No one bed apartments at 23 Glandore Avenue  
and 2 Glanworth Gardens**

(Councillor McCullough returned to the meeting at this point)

The Senior Planning officer outlined that permission was sought for the alteration and extension of an existing property, which contained two apartments, to provide four 1 bedroom apartments. She explained that the proposal included internal reconfiguration of the rooms and the demolition and replacement of the rear return.

The Members were advised that the apartments would occupy three floors, with one apartment on the ground floor, two apartments on the first floor and one on the second floor proposed. The rear return would be replaced, allowing bin storage, cycle

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parking and private amenity space to be provided to the rear of the apartments and increasing the separation distance with its neighbour to the south.

The Members were advised that the main issues which had been considered during the assessment included the principle of development, the impact on the character and appearance of the area (including the draft Area of Townscape Character), residential amenity, access, parking and road safety and available infrastructure.

The application had been neighbour notified and was advertised in the local press. The Senior Planning officer explained that a total of 19 letters of objection had been received. The objections raised a number of concerns, including the impact on the Area of Townscape Character, design, impact on amenity, parking provision, accuracy of the parking survey and the structural impact on the adjoining property.

The Members were advised that Environmental Health had been consulted and it was content with the proposal, subject to an informative being attached to the decision. NI Water had been consulted and had offered no objection. DfI Roads had also been consulted and had offered no objection, subject to condition.

The Senior Planning officer detailed that the proposal had been assessed against and was considered to comply with the BUAP, Draft BMAP, PPS3, PPS7, PPS7 Addendum, the SPPS and Creating Places.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor McAllister to the meeting who wished to speak in objection to the proposal. She advised the Members that:

- part of the original building would be destroyed, which was a direct contradiction to the Council's commitment to preserve heritage within the Belfast Agenda and the forthcoming Local Development Plan;
- under PPS 6 section 7.8, it was recommended that, in Areas of Townscape Character (ATCs), that consultation should be undertaken with the Conservation officer. That consultation had not taken place, and the Conservation officer had confirmed that he had been consulted on similar changes to other applications for new apartments in that area;
- application LA04/2018/2844/F confirmed that "planning authorities must deliver increased housing density without town cramming", however, the Case officer advised that the increased units in the current application, with a smaller square footage, should be approved;
- many of the objections and recommendations within application LA04/2018/2844/F were relevant, such as opposition to Policy HOU 5 – a lack of adequate facilities and inferior dwellings – the even smaller square footage of the current application made that even more stark;
- the North Belfast Housing Strategy highlighted the need for more family households, which the current application did not fulfil;
- two dwellings would be replaced with 4 dwellings which will inevitably lead to parking issues;
- she believed that not all processes had been followed or dealt with appropriately by Planning officers; and

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- she would request that Members would reject the application or defer the application for a site visit in order to understand the issues.

A Member requested that Councillor McAllister would expand on her statement that the correct procedures had not been followed. In response, she outlined that the Case officer's report stated that altered proposals were re-advertised and given to the residents who had objected, however, a number of residents who had submitted written objections were not made aware of the amended plans. She stated that she had had to update residents that she was in contact with about the fact that the application would be considered by the Committee this month, as objectors did not automatically receive correspondence from the Planning Service advising them of such. Additionally, she added that she felt that there was not enough emphasis on the area of townscape character within the assessment of the proposal and she highlighted the fact that the Conservation officer had not been consulted on the proposal was unsatisfactory.

A further Member requested information in relation to the issues raised about the Area of Townscape Character (ATC). Councillor McAllister stated that the area comprised tree-lined avenues with red bricked terraced or semi-detached houses, with some houses dating back to the 1920s. She stated that, by altering or removing part of the roofline or the chimney, she believed that constituted a material consideration for rejecting the proposal.

The Senior Planning officer advised the Members that the site fell within a draft ATC and that PPS6 Addendum did not apply to draft ATCs which had been established through the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC). She added that Planning officers did consult with the Conservation team where full demolition was taking place within a draft ATC or on proposals within adopted ATCs. However, where there were proposals within a draft ATC and which did not involve the full demolition of a building, Planning officers assessed the proposals themselves. She explained that the policy test included examining the existing building with the proposals and considered whether they would change the overall character of the area.

The Chairperson thanked Councillor McAllister for her contribution.

He then welcomed Mr. N. Hughes and Mr. J. Gray, who were objecting to the application.

Together, they advised the Committee that:

- they had had just a few days notice that the application was being considered by the Committee this evening and they would have appreciated written notice;
- the application included partial demolition of the back return of the property of No. 23 Glandore Avenue which was a permanent move which would expose the party wall of the neighbouring property;
- the proposals would erode the look and character of the building, which was built in 1896, and was one of the oldest properties in the street;
- a large number of residents had objected to the overdevelopment of the site;

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- the proposed plans had too many one bedroom apartments units on a corner site which led into a narrow cul-de-sac, with only one way in and out;
- there was already a lack of parking in the area and no parking spaces were proposed as part of the plans;
- the proposal would create intensification and density of the site, parking issues and cramped accommodation which was not in keeping with the residential, family area;
- DFI Roads had acknowledged that there were flaws in the architect's parking survey, including breaches of the highway code and therefore it could not be relied upon;
- they believed the area to be within an ATC and they were surprised that the Conservation officer had not been consulted;
- Mr. Hughes had applied to build a house directly opposite the site and had had to provide two parking spaces and to ensure that the views of the Conservation officer were sought in relation to the proposal;
- the exiting layout comprised 2 substantial apartments, where families could live, whereas the apartments proposed in the plans in front of Members just exceeded the 35 square metre requirements which would mean that they would be populated by a transient population and it would skew the residential nature of Glandore;
- they were not against development but were against the proposed overdevelopment.

Mr. L. Bannon, applicant, was welcomed to the meeting. He advised the Members that:

- there was considerable need for apartments for couples who don't require parking spaces and who used public transport;
- planning permission had been granted previously for a much larger scheme at the site, but it had been redesigned after listening to the concerns from some of the nearby residents;
- the planners agreed with him that the design was respectful to the area and it had been designed with that in mind and it was a higher quality design than the extant permission;
- as much of the existing building was being retained as possible and that the party wall would be built up again in accordance with building control standards; and
- a parking survey had been completed and accepted by DFI Roads and that bicycle parking would be provided on site.

Moved by Councillor McCullough  
Seconded by Councillor Brooks and

Resolved - that the Members of the Committee recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May 2021, the Chief Executive exercises her delegated authority to defer the application in order that the Committee would undertake a site visit to allow the Members to better familiarise themselves with the proposals and the site.

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**LA04/2021/0001/F - Contractor's Temporary Site Compound  
(for proposed development at adjacent Ulster Independent  
Clinic planning ref: LA04/2019/0318/F) to include Contractor's  
buildings, storage, car parking, planted bank, Covid-19  
Marshall Station / Testing Area and associated operational  
development with new, temporary site access on Site at  
junction of Malone Road and Cranmore Park to south of  
14-20 Cranmore Park and east of 75 Cranmore Park**

The Senior Planning officer outlined the principal aspects of the application to the Members. She explained that permission was being sought for a site compound for a temporary period of three years.

The key issues which had been considered in the assessment of the application included the principle of development/loss of open space, impact on a Conservation Area, impact on trees, impact on neighbouring amenity, impact on natural heritage, traffic, parking and a Section 76 Planning Agreement.

She outlined that the site was designated as whiteland in the BUAP and within both versions of draft BMAP as existing open space and a local landscape policy area (LLPA). The Members were advised that the site formed part of sub area F of the Malone Conservation Area.

She drew the Members' attention to the Late Items pack, whereby there was an error in Condition 1 in the Development Management Officer Report, which should have read "*The permission hereby granted shall be for a limited period of 3 years only from the date of the decision notice.*"

The Members were advised that the proposed change of use would result in the temporary loss of open space and would temporarily adversely impact the character and appearance of the Malone Conservation Area and the draft LLPA. They were asked to note that the Council's Conservation Officer had objected to the proposal. However, officers considered that the temporary impacts on the conservation area and loss of open space had to be balanced against the substantial community and public benefits that would derive from an extended hospital which would be of a greater benefit to the wider community. As such it was considered that the presumption against the development could be relaxed in that instance, having regard to Section 104 of the Planning Act, Policy BH12 of PPS6, Policy OS1 of PPS8 and the SPPS.

The Senior Planning officer outlined that the applicant had agreed to enter into a Section 76 Agreement to ensure that the land was restored to its former condition on completion of the works.

She reported that nine objections had been received in respect of the proposal, citing concern with the following:

- increased traffic congestion at Cranmore Park and busy road junction and associated road safety concerns regarding nearby schools;

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- location of the Cranmore site entrance, should be relocated to the Malone Road;
- impact on the surrounding character with inappropriate development;
- impact on wildlife - Badgers within the site;
- removal of trees;
- noise and disturbance associated with the proposed use;
- concern regarding dates of the traffic survey, which had been undertaken during Covid restrictions.

The Senior Planning officer advised that the issues had been addressed within the Case officer's report.

The Members were advised that the Council's Trees and Landscaping Team, Environmental Health, DfI Roads Service and DAERA (Natural Environment Division) had all been consulted and had no objections, subject to conditions.

She outlined that supporting statements had been provided by the applicant to demonstrate why the proposal should be considered an exceptional case, including that the proposal would bring substantial community benefits through supporting the construction of increased hospital facilities to a key healthcare facility and the provision of services to the NHS which would also assist with current waiting lists.

The Members were advised that the proposal involved the removal of an existing tree from the site to accommodate an access point. The Senior Planning officer explained that it was proposed that the tree would be replaced after the site compound was removed and to ensure compliance, it would be subject to a Section 76 Planning Agreement. She advised that any temporary adverse impacts on the LLPA were offset by the substantial community discussed above.

Accordingly, the Chairperson put the officer's recommendation that the Members of the Committee recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May 2021, the Chief Executive would exercise her delegated authority to grant a temporary approval of 3 years, with the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the conditions and the Section 76 Agreement.

On a vote, ten Members voted in favour of the recommendation and one against and it was declared carried.

**LA04/2020/0754/F - 14 social housing units  
at 197-203 Crumlin Road**

The Senior Planning officer presented the application to the Members. She advised that the 14 social housing units were proposed to be built in three rows.

The Members were advised that the site had an area of 0.15 hectare and was located within the development limits for Belfast in both the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 (BUAP) and the draft Belfast Metropolitan Plan 2015 (BMAP). The site was unzoned in BUAP 2001. The northern half of the site was unzoned in draft BMAP 2004 while the

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southern part of the site was zoned as a shopping/commercial area, along an arterial route.

She detailed the main issues which had been considered during the assessment of the application, which included the principle of the proposal at the location, the design, layout and impact on the character and appearance of the area, impact on amenity, access, parking and transport, infrastructure capacity and impact on human health.

The Members were advised that the site had a history of planning approvals for housing and that the development plan did not preclude housing at that location.

The Senior Planning officer explained that the proposal followed the general pattern of development in the area. The design and layout would not create conflict and was in keeping with the local character and would not impact on environmental quality or residential amenity in accordance with PPS 7.

In terms of prospective residents, the Members were advised that each unit had an adequate outlook to the public street, and that all units were proposed to be built to a size not less than those set out Policy LC1. It was also considered that the design, layout and separation distances proposed were acceptable and would not significantly impact on existing residential amenity by way of overlooking, dominance, loss of light or overshadowing.

The Members were advised that objections had been received from the Lower Oldpark Community Association. They had raised a number of concerns, including: parking and traffic; the proposal was at odds with the Development Plan zoning for a Commercial/Shopping area; the proposal should contain an element of retail/commercial uses; and the proposal did not respect the built context/local character of the area. The Senior Planning officer explained that the issues had been addressed in the Case officer's report.

In respect of the impact on parking and traffic, DfI Roads was content with the parking spaces and access provided. She added that Rivers Agency, NI Water and Environmental Health had offered no objections.

The Members were advised that DfI Roads had offered no fundamental objections to the proposal other than the detailing of the Travel Plan offered by the applicant. DfI Roads had commented that the submitted Travel Plan should be conditioned for three years as opposed to one year. The agent had requested that the Planning officers would consider that one year was appropriate, given financial constraints. The Travel Plan would include one Translink Travel Card per dwelling, the provision of one membership for the Belfast Bike Scheme and a 50% subsidy for one membership to a car club.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. G. Hughes, Lower Oldpark Community Association (LOCA), to the meeting. He advised the Members that:



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- while LOCA's written submissions also raised issues regarding the requirement for commercial development on the site, given the time constraints, he would focus on the parking issues;
- the proposal only included 14 car parking spaces for 14 units whereas Creating Places (Section 20) guidelines required it to include 21.25 spaces;
- that was an inadequate level of parking provision to meet the needs of residents and visitors;
- the fact that the properties were part of a social housing development did not provide reasonable grounds for so significantly reducing the parking provision from that required by Creating Places;
- images of parking in the area had been submitted to the Planning Department showing the high demand for spaces even during the Covid pandemic;
- occupants of the seven properties fronting onto the Crumlin Road would not be able to park at the front of their homes because there was no in-curtilage or layby parking;
- between 7.00 and 9.30am, they would not be able to park on the main carriageway due to a bus lane;
- Creating Places (Section 20.02) stated that there was a need to provide parking spaces close to and within sight of the dwellings that they intended to serve;
- the proposal would result in competition for spaces and disputes with the residents of the new homes in Century Street and Albertville Drive;
- in failing to provide parking immediately adjacent to the proposed houses fronting onto the Crumlin Road, the plans failed to take account of the specific needs of people with disabilities or mobility problems;
- a significant proportion of the parking provision for the social housing development in the surrounding area was in-curtilage while the remainder was all lay-by parking at the front of properties;
- the parking provision in this development is unassigned grouped hardstanding, something that Creating Places (11.17) sees as potentially being suitable where high densities are required, which isn't the case with this proposed development; and
- there was already a high level of daytime parking in the area and further development in the area, such as the old Carnegie Library Building, would increase demand further.

The Chairperson thanked Mr. Hughes for his contribution.

He then welcomed Ms. D. Lyle, agent, and Mr. D. Erskine, NB Housing, applicant, to the meeting.

Ms. Lyle advised the Members that:

- the site was on a key arterial route, on a brownfield site, in a highly accessible location;

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- the site had been vacant for a number of years and was subject to an extant planning permission for four retail units and 34 apartments;
- the principle of residential use on the site had been established through an extensive history of planning approvals between 2006 and 2014;
- the retail function that could potentially exist on site had been diluted by successive permissions granted;
- the design, scale and massing had been directly informed by the best architectural characteristics of the built form surrounding the site;
- the heights of properties on the Crumlin Road were 2.5 to 3 storeys;
- the design of the current proposal was stronger than that of the approved permission from 2016;
- DFI Roads had approved the Car Parking survey, and had raised a query with the duration of the Travel Plan which had no bearing on the issues raised by LOCA;
- NB Housing was a small scale housing association, where the scheme would be part funded by government grants, and it could not commit to a three year Travel Plan as it would render it unviable and that a one year Travel Plan was being proposed; and
- NB Housing would manage the administration of the travel Plan through its own officers in order to keep costs down, which was deemed acceptable by Planning officers.

Mr. Erskine advised the Members that:

- NB Housing had been established in May 2014 following the merger of two community associations;
- it currently owned and managed 1100 social housing units, the majority of which were in north Belfast; and
- the scheme had NIHE support, as required, and had been specifically designed to meet the waiting list requirements for the area as assessed by NIHE for a number of different applicant types with different needs to help address the housing need within North Belfast.

In response to a Member's question regarding the Travel Plan, Mr Erskine advised the Members that current NB Housing staff would be able to manage the Plan for one year, in-house, as they did not have the finance available to cover the staffing costs for an additional member of staff to manage it over three years, as required, as the salary cost would have to be met on top of the £8,000 outlined in the report.

In relation to a query on the consultation exercise which had been carried out, Mr. Erskine advised that Housing Associations were required to consult the local community on any plans. He confirmed that 250 leaflets were distributed in the local area and that an open evening had been held for local residents on 7th January, 2020, which LOCA had attended.

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The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May 2021, the Chief Executive would exercise her delegated authority to grant approval for the application, with the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions.

**LA04/2020/1360/F - Demolition of existing  
church hall and construction of 9.no apartments  
and 1. retail unit at 491-495 Lisburn Road**

The Principal Planning officer provided the Members with the details of the application.

She outlined the key issues which had been considered during the assessment of the proposed development, including:

- the principle of re-development and use;
- scale, design, massing and layout;
- impact on the Surrounding Character, Area of Townscape Character;
- impact on neighbouring amenity;
- provision of internal and outdoor amenity;
- parking and traffic issues; and
- water and sewage

The Members were advised that eight letters of objection had been received in response to the initial and amended schemes. Seven were from two individuals and the other was from Councillor T. Kelly, who had supported the comments from one of the objectors. Councillor McKeown had also made representation and requested that the application was brought before the Committee for the reasons set out in the objection letters. The Principal Planning officer explained that it was considered that some of the initial issues of concern had been resolved following amendments to the scheme.

The objections referenced inadequate parking provision, overlooking/dominance of neighbouring properties, noise/smell from balconies resulting from talking/smoking, food waste, density, need/economic impact of an additional retail unit, and that the design was contrary to Area of Townscape Character.

The Case officer's response to the points raised were dealt with in report.

The Principal Planning officer explained that the proposal was within the Urban Area and the development limits of Belfast. The proposed uses of retail on the ground floor with residential above was compatible on the site and therefore the principle was acceptable providing the proposal was compliant with all relevant policies and material considerations.

She advised that the proposed design, scale, height, mass and appearance was, on balance, acceptable within the surrounding context. The proposed residential units were of a size and layout which were acceptable with all having access to amenity provision. She highlighted that a reduced standard of amenity was considered

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acceptable as the site sat in a highly accessible location close to local amenities including parks and a contribution would be made towards local park amenities.

The Members were advised that the proposal had been amended during the processing both to ensure that it would not result in an unacceptable impact in terms of dominance and overlooking on neighbouring terraces and to ensure that the design would sit more comfortably both on the Lisburn Road and the residential street.

She reported that DFI Roads, Environmental Health, the Urban Design Officer, NI Water and Rivers Agency had been consulted in respect of the application and had offered no objection to the proposal.

The Members were advised that, as the development proposed fell short in terms of private and shared amenity, the developer had agreed to contribute to local public amenity to offset the reduction.

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. C. Flanagan and Ms. L. Dawson, objectors, to the meeting. Together they advised the Committee Members that:

- they were concerned that the recent amendment to the plans included double doors which opened onto the balconies/terraces;
- there was no precedent for double doors opening onto the street in the area and that they would encourage the use of the balconies for socialising, including anti-social noise and smoking;
- the amended plans showed that the ground floor terrace would be even closer to the front door of 1 Rathcool Street;
- the balconies/terraces would result in overlooking of nos. 1 and 2 Rathcool Street from all levels;
- the bin collection point had been moved and was now outside the front door of 1 Rathcool Street which would be an eyesore;
- residents of Rathcool Street already had outstanding issues in relation to their own bin collection point, beside No. 2 Rathcool Street, including fly tipping, contamination, graffiti and anti-social behaviour;
- another collection point opposite the existing one would compound the issue; and
- there was a severe lack of parking provision in the area already and that a nearby apartment block had underground parking included.

A Member queried why there was no parking included in the development. The Principal Planning officer advised the Members that the Travel Plan had been accepted by DFI Roads. DFI Roads was satisfied that sufficient on-street parking was available in the surrounding area and had requested that green travel measures, in the form of travel cards, be supplied to each apartment and funded for 3 years to encourage the uptake in the use of public transport. The developer had agreed to the measures being implemented.

A further Member requested information on overlooking and the bin collection issues raised. The Principal Planning officer outlined that it was acceptable in urban

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situations where neighbours could see into each other's front gardens in a high density development. The balconies would not intrude into the private amenity space to the rear of properties, which was afforded greater protection.

In relation to the bins, she explained that they were originally to be placed in the entry which was unacceptable to officers. She outlined that they had since been moved in curtilage within the building and that a management plan would ensure that the bins were brought out and back into the storage area.

A number of Members expressed concerns with DFI Roads' assessment which confirmed that there was adequate on street parking available in the area.

Moved by Councillor Whyte

Seconded by Councillor McCullough and

Resolved – that the Members of the Committee agree to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May 2021, the Chief Executive would exercise her delegated authority to defer the application in order that:

- the Committee would undertake a site visit to allow the Members to better familiarise themselves with the proposals and the site at first hand; and
- DFI Roads be requested to attend the next meeting in order to answer Members queries in relation to the parking issues.

**LA04/2019/2778/F - Residential development  
comprising 18 x two-bedroom apartments and  
5 x one-bedroom apartments with associated  
amenity space, cycle & bin storage, landscaping  
and site works (23 units in total) on lands at 159-165  
Holywood Road**

The Senior Planning officer presented the Members with the principal aspects of the application.

The key issues which had been considered by officers in the assessment of the application were:

- the principle of development;
- impact on the character and appearance of the area;
- impact upon the setting of nearby listed building;
- residential amenity;
- provision of parking and access; and
- water infrastructure, drainage and flooding.

The Members were advised that the site was located adjacent to a mixture of commercial, public and residential land uses and was within the development limits identified under the existing Belfast Urban Area Plan (BUAP) and draft Belfast

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Metropolitan Area Plan. In dBMAP (both versions) it was located adjacent to an arterial route and within a Commercial Node/Area of Parking Restraint. The site currently comprised vacant land with previous buildings demolished.

The Senior Planning officer reported that there was a planning history on the site which informed consideration of the current proposal. Application LA4/2015/1160/F permitted 18 apartments on lands at 165-169 Holywood Road, granted in June 2018, and application LA04/2017/1558/F permitted 4 apartments on lands at 159-163 Holywood Road, granted in May 2017. The Members were reminded that both approvals were extant and provided a legitimate fallback position.

She explained that the current application combined both sites and proposed to build and manage it as a single development. She pointed out that the proposal was amended and reduced during the processing of the application and had largely been informed by the extant approvals on the site, presenting four stories with a fifth set back on the corner of the Holywood Road and Dundela Crescent, stepping down to four stories where it adjoined its neighbouring building on the Holywood Road.

The Members were advised that no parking was proposed but that the site was located adjacent to an arterial route which was well served by public transport and was within an area of parking restraint in a commercial node. The Senior Planning officer reported that integral cycle parking was provided. She explained that the applicant had submitted a Residential Framework Travel Plan and Service Management Plan.

The Senior Planning officer pointed out that DfI Roads had objected to the development, requesting that further sustainable travel measures be provided. She highlighted, however, that given the fallback position it was considered unreasonable to insist on additional measures, noting that DfI Roads sought no such measures for the previous two permissions, which could be implemented.

A Grade B2 listed building at Nos. 2 to 4 Belmont Road, occupied by the UUP Headquarter Offices, sat on the opposite side of the Belmont Road from the site. The Members were advised that HED had stated that the proposal, as presented, would have an adverse impact on the listed building and its setting, however, it deferred to the Council in relation to the material consideration afforded to previously approved applications. The Senior Planning explained that officers felt that significant weight should be given to the previous approvals and were satisfied, on balance, that the amended proposals would not have any greater adverse impact on the listed building than what was already approved and could be implemented.

The Members were advised that no third-party representations had been received and Environmental Health, NI Water and Rivers Agency had offered no objection to the proposal.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Flynn to the meeting, who was objecting to the proposal. He advised the Members that:

- the HED objection should be given more consideration. The report referred to two extant approvals, however, the 2015 approval

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predated the awarding of grade B2 listed status of 2-4 Belmont Road whereby HED was not consulted, and, similarly for the 2017 approval, HED was not consulted;

- HED have said that while they were not consulted in 2015 or 2017, the impact of the application had not satisfied an understanding of the heritage asset of the Listed Building and was contrary to Paragraph 6.12 of SPPS under listed buildings and Policy BH 11 Planning Policy Statement 6;
- the elevations of the proposal were not in keeping with the surrounding buildings, being multiple stories higher, and, considering the scale, proportion and massing of the listed building, the proposal impacted the setting of it under policy BH 11 and crucially it would draw the eye disproportionately from the nearby heritage asset at multiple angles, but particularly when coming down the Belmont and Holywood Roads;
- consideration should also be given to the historic Strand Cinema building directly across from the site and, while it was not listed currently, it did contribute to an area of special historical context along the stretch of the Holywood Road when taken along with the listed building;
- DfI had also objected to the proposal in relation to lack of suitable measures to encourage active travel. While the extant approvals had no DfI objection, it was 4 years later in a different context, after the Council had declared a Climate Emergency, and two IPCC reports outlining the severe impact of climate chaos; and
- the applicant must do more to encourage a move away from car usage.

The Chairperson then welcomed Mr. P. Stinson, agent, to the meeting. He outlined to the Committee that:

- the site of the former Stormont Inn had been vacant for some time and the proposal presented an opportunity for townscape improvements to a key nodal site;
- the applicant had worked collaboratively with planning officers and made significant reductions to the proposals to arrive at the current scheme which was before Members;
- there had been no third-party objections to the application;
- there was a variety of materials used in the area;
- the proposed building would have no greater impact on the listed building opposite than the extant permissions and the use of materials provided a modern contrast;
- the extant permission were an important consideration and the applicant was committed to providing green transport measures to residents for one year, and that the site was in a highly accessible location with excellent transport links and nearby to amenities in Belmont village.

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The officer's recommendation that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May 2021, the Chief Executive would exercise her delegated authority to approve the application was put to the Members.

On a vote, seven members voted in favour of the recommendation and four against and it was declared carried.

**LA04/2021/1645/F - Single and two storey rear extension, rear car parking and turning area at 44 Ravenhill Park**

The Members were advised that the application was being considered by the Committee as the applicant was a member of staff as outlined in the Scheme of Delegation.

The proposal comprised a single and two storey rear extension with a rear car parking and turning area.

The site was whiteland within the BUAP and was within the proposed Ravenhill Park Area of Townscape Character (ATC) as designated within both versions of dBMAP.

The extension was considered sympathetic to the existing dwelling and surrounding area including the proposed ATC and would not have an adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents. No representations had been received.

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May 2021, the Chief Executive would exercise her delegated authority to approve the application and for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions.

**LA04/2021/0773/F - Retention and alteration of shipping container for use as a community facility with domestic kitchen Ulidia playing Fields, Ormeau Road**

The Members were advised that full planning permission was sought for the retention of an existing in-situ storage container to be used as a community facility with domestic kitchen. They were advised that the Council was the landowner.

The Planning officer explained that Environmental Health had confirmed that it was satisfied that the proposal would not have a negative impact on amenity.

No representations had been received and the proposal was considered to comply with planning policy including PPS8 and the SPPS. The officer outlined that it would improve facilities for the local community and would complement the existing sports facility.

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May 2021, the Chief Executive would exercise her delegated



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authority to approve the application and for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions.

**LA04/2021/0791/F - Renewal of planning  
permission LA04/2019/2412/F for temporary  
single storey timber structure at C.S. Lewis Square,  
Newtownards Road**

The Members were advised that the Council was the landowner of the application and were advised that a renewal of planning approval LA04/2019/2412/F was being sought, for a temporary timber structure at CS Lewis Square prior to its expiry on 31st July, 2021.

The Members were advised that the proposal included an addition to the visitor attraction at the Hub and offered shelter to users of C.S Lewis Square. It would not detract from the public space or the surrounding area, including the Connswater Greenway. Rivers Agency had been consulted in relation to the proposal and had no objections to its renewal.

The application had been neighbour notified and was advertised in the local press, with no representations having been submitted.

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May 2021, the Chief Executive would exercise her delegated authority to approve the application and for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions.

Chairperson

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# CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY FOR THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

**Date of Meeting:** 19th August, 2021

**CX Decision Register Published:** 20th August, 2021

**Recommendations sent to CX:** 19th August, 2021  
**CX Comments Received:** 20th August, 2021

**Final Date for Call-in (10am):** 27th August, 2021

Item no.	Agenda Item	CX Decision	Subject to call in
2	<b>Pre-emptive Site Visits</b>	<p>The Committee agreed to undertake pre-emptive site visits in respect of the following applications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>LA04/2021/0493/F</b> – Demolition of existing buildings and erection of social-led, mixed tenure residential development comprising of 90 units in 2 no. apartment buildings (maximum height of 4 storeys) containing 75 apartments; and 11 townhouses and 4 apartments (along Sefton Drive); provision of hard and soft landscaping including communal gardens, provision of car parking spaces, tenant/staff hub, cycle parking, substation and associated works at Former Park Avenue Hotel, 158 Hollywood Road; and</li><li>• <b>LA04/2020/1959/F</b> – New parkland (Section 2 Forthmeadow Community Greenway) – foot and cycle pathways, lighting columns, new entrances and street furniture, site to be developed includes vacant land bounded by the Forthriver Industrial Park in the east, Springfield Road to the South and Paisley Park &amp; West Circular Road &amp; Crescent to the West. Area also includes links through the Forthriver Industrial Park to Woodvale Avenue, land at Springfield Dam (Springfield Road), Paisley Park (West Circular Road) and the Junction of West Circular Road &amp; Ballygomartin Road.</li></ul>	<b>No</b>

<b><u>Correspondence received</u></b>			
<b>3a</b>	<b>PPR Project - Participation and the Practice of Rights</b>	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May 2021, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• refer the invitation for a walkabout of the former Mackie's site to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, given that it would be inappropriate for Members of the Planning Committee to accept the invitation from PPR, who were objectors to a current planning application lodged within that site; and</li> <li>• accept the invitation for Members of the Planning Committee to attend future workshops coordinated by Mr. Hugh Ellis, Policy Director at the Town and Country Planning Association, to explore the key issues in developing social housing in Belfast, on themes such as sustainability, planning, financing and contested spaces, given that they were general and not site specific, and that officers would liaise with the PPR Project and update Members of the Committee with the workshop dates and topics.</li> </ul>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Planning Applications</b> (Please note that these are not subject to Call-in)		
<b>a</b>	<b>LA04/2021/0516/F</b> - Erection of a Purpose-Built Managed Student Accommodation development comprising 724 no. units, courtyards, ancillary accommodation and facilities, cycle and car parking and all other associated site and access works. (Amendment to planning approval LA04/2015/0609/F) at 140 Donegall Street	In accordance with the Council decision of 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2021, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to approve the application subject to conditions and to finalise the wording, and enter into the Section 76 Planning Agreement subject to no new substantive planning issues being raised and to resolve any issues arising from any outstanding consultation responses.	<b>No</b>
<b>b</b>	<b>LA04/2021/0303/F</b> - Redevelopment, refurbishment, and partial change of use of building at 35-39 Queen St & demolition of building and redevelopment of site at	In accordance with the Council decision of 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2021, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to grant approval to the application, subject to conditions, with power delegated to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the Section 76 Planning	<b>No</b>

	31-33 Queen St. Provision of ground floor offices/professional services units (use class B1/A2), cafe and retail unit and offices above (use class B1)	Agreement and the wording of conditions subject to no new substantive planning issues being raised by third parties.	
<b>c</b>	LA04/2021/0244/F - Demolition of existing building and erection of 8-storey building with retail/coffee shop at ground floor and 45No serviced apartments for both long- and short-term occupancy on the floors above at 52-54 Dublin Road	In accordance with the Council decision of 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2021, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to grant approval to the application, subject to conditions, with power delegated to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the Section 76 Planning Agreement and the wording of conditions subject to no new substantive planning issues being raised by third parties.	<b>No</b>
<b>d</b>	LA04/2021/0629/F - Residential development of 72no. apartments in 3no. blocks with associated car parking, landscaping and road widening works to Stockmans Way on lands north east of 43 Stockmans Way and south west of 49 Stockmans Way	In accordance with the Council decision of 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2021, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to grant approval to the application, subject to conditions, with power delegated to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the Section 76 Planning Agreement and the wording of conditions subject to no new substantive planning issues being raised by third parties.	<b>No</b>
<b>e</b>	LA04/2020/1158/F - Demolition of existing building and erection of 65No Apartments including 20% social housing at 1-5 Redcar Street	In accordance with the Council decision of 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2021, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to grant approval to the application, subject to conditions, with power delegated to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the Section 76 Planning Agreement and the wording of conditions subject to no new substantive planning issues being raised by third parties.	<b>No</b>
<b>f</b>	LA04/2021/1358/F - Section 54 application seeking amendments to condition Nos 2 (access), 7, 13, 20 (CEMP), 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 19 (ground conditions), 12 (noise/vibration), 17 (piling risk), 21 (drainage), 27 (landscaping) to enable a	In accordance with the Council decision of 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2021, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to grant approval to the application, subject to conditions, with power delegated to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions.	<b>No</b>

	phased approach to the construction of the permitted film studios complex approved under planning permission LA04/2020/0474/F on lands immediately north and south of existing film studios north of Dargan Road Belfast (within wider Belfast City Council lands known as North Foreshore/Giants Park).		
<b>g</b>	LA04/2021/0789/F - Application under Section 54 to vary conditions applied to approval LA04/202019/1100/F to facilitate development of this proposal. Relevant conditions which require to be amended are: -Condition 2 (Landscaping, Condition 5 (public realm), Condition 25 (retail plant and associated equipment), Condition 26 (verification report for noise), Condition 28 (odour technologies). Condition to be deleted Conditions 17 (verification report for contamination), this is a duplication of Condition 15 at 721-739 Lisburn Road	In accordance with the Council decision of 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2021, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to grant approval to the application, subject to conditions, with power delegated to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions.	<b>No</b>

Link for the agenda is here: <https://minutes.belfastcity.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=167&MIId=10193&Ver=4>

# Planning Committee

Thursday, 19th August, 2021

## MEETING OF THE MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

- Members present: Councillor O'Hara (In the Chair);  
Councillors Brooks, Carson,  
Garrett, Groogan, Hanvey, Hussey,  
Maskey, McCullough, Murphy and Whyte.
- In attendance: Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;  
Mr. E. Baker, Planning Manager  
(Development Management);  
Ms. N. Largey, Divisional Solicitor;  
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer; and  
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors Matt Collins, Hutchinson, McMullan and Whyte.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were recorded.

### **Pre-emptive Site Visits**

The Members agreed to undertake pre-emptive site visits in respect of the following applications:

- **LA04/2021/0493/F** – Demolition of existing buildings and erection of social-led, mixed tenure residential development comprising of 90 units in 2 no. apartment buildings (maximum height of 4 storeys) containing 75 apartments; and 11 townhouses and 4 apartments (along Sefton Drive); provision of hard and soft landscaping including communal gardens, provision of car parking spaces, tenant/staff hub, cycle parking, substation and associated works at Former Park Avenue Hotel, 158 Holywood Road; and
- **LA04/2020/1959/F** – New parkland (Section 2 Forthmeadow Community Greenway) – foot and cycle pathways, lighting columns, new entrances and street furniture, site to be developed includes vacant land bounded by the Forthriver Industrial Park in the east, Springfield Road to the South and Paisley Park & West Circular Road & Crescent to the West. Area also includes links through the Forthriver Industrial Park to Woodvale Avenue, land at Springfield Dam (Springfield Road), Paisley Park (West

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Circular Road) and the Junction of West Circular Road & Ballygomartin Road.

**Correspondence received**

**PPR Project - Participation and the Practice of Rights**

The Members of the Committee noted correspondence which had been received from Participation and the Practice of Rights (PPR project), inviting Members of the Planning Committee to undertake a walkabout of the former Mackie's site and also inviting them to attend future workshops coordinated by Mr. Hugh Ellis, Policy Director at the Town and Country Planning Association, in respect of developing social housing in Belfast.

The Members agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May 2021, the Chief Executive would exercise her delegated authority to:

- refer the invitation for a walkabout of the former Mackie's site to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, as it was not considered appropriate for Members of the Planning Committee to accept the invitation given that there was a current planning application lodged within that site; and
- accept the invitation for Members of the Planning Committee to attend future workshops to explore the key issues in developing social housing in Belfast, on themes such as sustainability, planning, financing and contested spaces, given that they were general and not site specific, and that officers would liaise with the PPR Project and would update Members of the Committee with the workshop dates and topics.

**Planning Applications**

**THE MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE CONSIDERED THE FOLLOWING  
ITEMS IN ORDER TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
IN PURSUANCE OF THE POWERS DELEGATED TO HER BY THE COUNCIL  
ON 4TH MAY, 2021**

**LA04/2021/0516/F - Erection of a Purpose-Built Managed  
Student Accommodation development comprising 724 no. units,  
courtyards, ancillary accommodation and facilities, cycle and car  
parking and all other associated site and access works.  
(Amendment to planning approval LA04/2015/0609/F)  
at 140 Donegall Street**

The Planning Manager (Development Management) presented the proposed scheme to the Members.



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He explained that the application followed the granting of planning permission at appeal for a scheme of 620 units, with 54 car parking spaces at lower ground floor level (LA04/2015/0609/F). The site was currently a surface level car park.

The Members were advised of the key issues which had been considered by officers during the assessment of the proposed development, including the principle of Student Accommodation at the location; impact on built heritage; scale, massing and design; waste water infrastructure capacity; open space provision; traffic and parking; impact on amenity; air quality; noise; drainage and flooding; developer contributions and pre-application community consultation.

He outlined to the Members that the principle of student accommodation at the site had been established with an extant permission for a 620 bed scheme (LA04/2015/0609/F) which had been allowed at planning appeal.

He explained that the design of the proposed building was considered to be an improvement over the previous permission. Subtle detailing would help break up what could have been an imposing block and had added significantly to the previously approved design. The members were advised that the Historic Environment Division (HED) had welcomed the proposed design changes.

The Members were advised that an additional 104 units were proposed, with basement parking now omitted. He outlined that 15 on-site parking spaces were proposed, compared to 54 spaces in the previously approved scheme. Subject to a robust Travel Plan, the proposed approach to parking was considered acceptable given the highly accessible nature of the site and that it was consistent with other previously approved city centre PBMSA schemes which also had little or no on-site parking.

He advised that DFI Roads, DAERA, Rivers Agency, NI Water, Belfast City Airport, Shared Environmental Services, Environmental Health, Urban Design officer and Building Control had all been consulted in respect of the application and that they were all content, subject to conditions.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. T. Stokes, agent, to the meeting. He advised the Committee Members that the application:

- site was well connected to the heart of the city centre, and exceptionally close to the new Ulster University campus;
- had come about through the detailed design development stage, and the aspiration from the new promoter, Lotus Group, to deliver a much higher quality proposal from that which was previously granted;
- would deliver additional student beds within a building which was the same in terms of overall height, scale, massing and building footprint as the current approval;
- incorporated newly proposed communal courtyard spaces and secure cycle spaces;
- design was a massive improvement in the quality and fenestration over the current approval;

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- comprised a number of green travel measures, including a £75,000 contribution to Travel cards and other sustainable transport modes, which did not form part of the previous approval;
- included an agreement to improve the width and capacity of the pedestrian junction at Donegall Street and Royal Avenue intersection, again over and above any requirement under the current permission;
- included a Section S76 Planning Agreement which would secure an employability and skills plan to secure local jobs and apprenticeships through the necessary interventions with the main appointed contractor;
- it represented a significant investment and firm proposal of £55m from the private sector. Subject to approval, construction works were programmed to commence on site before year end in order to complement the completion and opening of the Belfast Ulster University Campus; and
- would generate around 500 local jobs and apprenticeships.

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021, the Chief Executive would exercise her delegated authority to approve the application, subject to conditions with power delegated to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording, and enter into the Section 76 Planning Agreement, subject to no new substantive planning issues being raised and to resolve any issues arising from any outstanding consultation responses.

**LA04/2021/0303/F - Redevelopment, refurbishment, and partial change of use of building at 35-39 Queen St & demolition of building and redevelopment of site at 31-33 Queen St. Provision of ground floor offices/professional services units (use class B1/A2), cafe and retail unit and offices above (use class B1)**

(Councillors Murphy and Garrett left the meeting at this point in proceedings)

The Senior Planning officer outlined the principal aspects of the application to the Members. It sought the retention of a 5-storey warehouse at Nos. 35-39 Queen Street and the addition of a two-storey glazed rooftop extension. She explained that it further sought the demolition of Nos. 31-33 Queen Street, to be replaced with a 5-storey infill building which would also benefit, in part, from the rooftop extension at upper floors.

The Members were advised of the following issues which had been considered during the assessment:

- the principle of offices and ground floor uses at the location;
- the principle of demolition of 31-33 Queen Street;
- the consideration of economic benefits;
- the impact on built heritage and the principle of demolition in the conservation area;

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- the scale, height, massing and design of the extension and new build;
- the impact on traffic and parking;
- the impact on amenity;
- site drainage;
- waste management;
- the impact on human health;
- the impact on the amenity of adjacent land users; and
- the consideration of developer contributions.

The Senior Planning officer reported that the site was located within the City Centre, City Centre Conservation Area, Area of Parking Restraint, Primary Retail Core, Airport Height Restriction, Old City Character Area and that it was proximate to listed buildings.

She confirmed that DFI Roads, Environmental Health, NIEA, NIE, Rivers Agency, HED and NI Water had all been consulted in addition to the Urban Design Officer, the Economic Development Team and the Environmental Health team within the Council. Their responses were detailed in the Case officer's report.

No third party objections had been received.

The Members were advised that, having regard to the submitted information and reports, consultee responses and representations, officers considered that the conversion and extension of the current building and proposed replacement building were acceptable. It was reported that the Conservation Officer noted that the current building at 31-33 Queen Street did not reflect the architectural or historical interest of the wider conservation area and did not make a material contribution that merited retention. The Senior Planning officer outlined that demolition in the conservation area met the policy test for demolition as set out in PPS6. She explained that the Urban Design Officer, Conservation Officer and Historic Environment Division considered that the extension to 35-39 Queen Street was appropriate to the context of the host building and locale. Officers considered that the proposed scheme would contribute positively to the local environment by enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area and that the proposed scheme would make a positive contribution to the economy. The proposal met the policy tests outlined in the SPPS and Planning Policy Statement 6.

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021, the Chief Executive would exercise her delegated authority to grant approval to the application, subject to conditions, with power delegated to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the Section 76 Planning Agreement and the wording of conditions subject to no new substantive planning issues being raised by third parties.

**LA04/2021/0244/F - Demolition of existing building and erection of 8-storey building with retail/coffee shop at ground floor and 45No serviced apartments for both long- and short-term occupancy on the floors above at 52-54 Dublin Road**

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The Principal Planning officer outlined the details of the application, which was located within the development limits of Belfast city centre, to the Members.

He explained the key issues which had been considered during the assessment of the proposal, including the principle of use on the site, demolition, access, movement and parking, design and layout, open space and landscaping, flood risk, waste water treatment, impact on natural heritage and developer contributions.

The proposal had been assessed against and was considered to comply with the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS), Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 (BUAP), Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (BMAP), Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 2, PPS 3, PPS 8, PPS 13, PPS 15, PPS 16, Parking Standards, The Belfast Agenda (Community Plan), Developer Contribution Framework, and Creating Places.

The Members were advised that Environmental Health, NI Water, DFI Roads Service, DFI Rivers Agency, DAERA Water Management Unit, DAERA Regulation Unit and DAERA Natural Environment Division had raised no objections subject to conditions and that the proposal was considered acceptable.

The Members noted that the application had been neighbour notified and advertised in the local press. It was reported that additional information and amendments had been received during the processing of the application in response to requests for clarification from consultees and that re-notification of objectors and neighbours had been undertaken following receipt of such. The Principal Planning officer explained that two objections had been received from local residents, raising the following issues:

- lack of parking;
- noise during construction and parking obstructions;
- noise from prospective residents;
- loss of light;
- loss of privacy; and
- height and density disproportionate to the area

The issues had been addressed within the Case officer's report.

He outlined that, whilst the proposal did not fall under the category of Major Development, Pre-Application Community Consultation had been carried out, as it was initially proposed to comprise more than 50 apartments. The Members were advised that the feedback given had been generally positive.

The Principal Planning officer reported that 35 of the apartments would have a balcony and, together with the amenity space on the third floor and the rooftop terrace, the level of private open space was comparable with other developments in the area. He explained that, overall, an average of 6.87 sqm of amenity provision per unit was proposed which, whilst below the recommended minimum standard of 10 sqm, it was comparable to other developments within the city centre and, on balance, was considered acceptable.

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A Member stated that they had some concerns with the proposal, namely:

- the relationship of the proposal with Salisbury Lane, particularly in relation to the risk of overlooking;
- the height of the proposal in relation to its immediate neighbours, both the residential neighbours to the rear, and the restaurant beside it;
- whether there an area-based policy for the Dublin Road;
- the suitability of the site for residential use, given the lively nighttime economy and its close proximity to a bar.

In response, the Principal Planning officer presented further images of the site and its context within the Dublin Road. He advised the Committee that:

- the height differential between the proposal and the ridge height of the restaurant immediately beside it would be approximately 8.7metres and that step up was something that already existed along the Dublin Road which was not out of keeping with its context;
- there were a number of different building heights established along the Dublin Road and that was the context in which they had considered the application;
- the design of the rear return and the angled windows was as such to protect the amenity of residential properties to the rear of the site;
- the site was located within BMAP's designated Shaftesbury Square Character Area, where the building heights ranged from five to seven storeys fronting the Dublin Road, and that officers felt that the proposal was acceptable given that the eighth storey was set back, and that it was in keeping with the context of other taller buildings along the Dublin Road; and
- he did not believe that the proposal would result in the hemming in of, or substantially impact upon, the adjacent residential areas;
- in respect of the suitability of the site for residential use, he explained that there were a number of residential properties surrounding the site, it was a mixed-use area and that Environmental Health had no objections to the proposal, subject to conditions relating to noise proofing and fenestration.

A Member asked for further clarification in relation to Policy OS2 of PPS8, whereby an exception was allowed for apartments within the city centre. The Principal Planning officer outlined that most recent approval for the site opposite had been for a mixed-use 10 storey building comprising 85 apartments, which would provide an average of 5.59 square metres per unit while the current application would provide 8 square metres. He explained that the level of private open space was therefore comparable with other developments in the area and was also in close proximity to existing areas of open space within reasonable walking distance, including Botanic Gardens.

Accordingly, the Chairperson put the officer's recommendation that the Members of the Committee recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021, the Chief Executive would exercise her delegated authority to grant approval to the application, subject to conditions, with power delegated to the Director of Planning and

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Building Control to finalise the Section 76 Planning Agreement and the wording of conditions subject to no new substantive planning issues being raised by third parties.

On a vote, five Members voted in favour of the recommendation and two against and it was declared carried.

**LA04/2021/0629/F - Residential development of 72no. apartments  
in 3no. blocks with associated car parking, landscaping and  
road widening works to Stockmans Way on lands north east  
of 43 Stockmans Way and south west of 49 Stockmans Way**

The Planning Manager (Development Management) provided the principal aspects to the application to the Members.

He outlined the main issues which had been considered during the assessment of the application, including the principle of development, the planning history of the site, impact on the character of the area, impact on amenity, access, parking and sustainable transport and various environmental considerations.

The Members were advised that part of the site was zoned for housing, part whiteland and part zoned as existing employment within draft BMAP 2015. He explained that the part zoned as existing employment comprised the access road along Stockman's Way and was part of a larger adjacent existing employment zoning (Ref: BT005/12). He advised the Members that permission had previously been granted, in November 2018, for the "Demolition of existing buildings and erection of residential development comprising of 96 units and associated car parking and landscaping" (Ref: LA04/2015/0668/F) on the application site. He explained that the permission was live and implementable. The Members were also advised that a subsequent application was received for the 'Erection of mixed-use development consisting of a 25no. bed hotel and 88no. apartments with associated car parking and landscaping' on the site. The Members noted that it was resolved to approve that application in June 2020 and a decision to approve was pending.

One representation had been received regarding the proposal, raising issues regarding increased traffic impact and over capacity within the sewerage system. The issues had been addressed within the Case officer's report.

Consultees had no objections with the proposal subject to conditions.

The Planning Manager explained that a Section 76 Planning Agreement was proposed to secure the following developer obligations:

- Contribution of £72,000 towards the delivery of open space provision/play equipment or improvement of Public Open Space at Musgrave Park;
- Access link to Public Open Space at Musgrave Park;
- Management of Open Space Areas within the site;
- Residential Travel Plan;
- Travel Cards for each unit for 3 years; and

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- Car Club spaces and discounted membership of a car club for 3 years for each unit.

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021, the Chief Executive would exercise her delegated authority to grant approval to the application, subject to conditions, with power delegated to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the Section 76 Planning Agreement and the wording of conditions subject to no new substantive planning issues being raised by third parties.

**LA04/2020/1158/F - Demolition of existing  
building and erection of 65No Apartments  
including 20% social housing at 1-5 Redcar Street**

The Senior Planning officer outlined the details of the application for outline permission for 65 apartments on the current site of a factory. She presented the plan for the apartments, which would be split over 4 blocks. Between the two terraces of Block A there were private gardens for the larger ground floor units, and a central private alleyway which could be used for residents bringing bins to the main bin store. A large area of communal open space sat to the rear of Blocks B and C.

The main issues which had been considered during the assessment of the proposal included the principle of housing at the location, the design and layout, the impact on traffic and road safety, the impact on amenity of nearby residents and businesses, the impact on Built Heritage and Archaeological interests, waste management, human health, parking provision and access, drainage and flooding and the consideration of developer contributions.

The Senior Planning officer advised the Members that the site was located within the development limits of Belfast in the BUAP 2001 and Draft BMAP 2015 (dBMAP) and was unzoned, white land under dBMAP. She explained that, as the site was within the settlement development limit, and taking into account the site context and last use of the site as a factory, the principle of housing at the site was acceptable, subject to prevailing policy considerations.

The Members noted that consultees, including DfI Roads, NI Environment Agency, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Historic Environment Division and NI Water had no objection to the proposal, subject to conditions.

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive had indicated there was social housing need in the vicinity and that they welcomed the scheme which would include 20% social housing.

The Senior Planning officer outlined that officers considered that the proposed scheme would create a quality residential environment, contribute positively to the local environment by creating a more sympathetic use adjacent to the school and other residential streets and would meet the requirements of PPS 3, PPS 4, PPS 7, PPS 8, PPS 12 and PPS 15.

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She reported that 11 objections had been received, one of which was received in response to the most recently amended scheme. All objections had been considered within the case officer's report.

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021, the Chief Executive would exercise her delegated authority to grant approval to the application, subject to conditions, with power delegated to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the Section 76 Planning Agreement and the wording of conditions subject to no new substantive planning issues being raised by third parties.

**LA04/2021/1358/F - Section 54 application seeking amendments to condition Nos 2 (access), 7, 13, 20 (CEMP), 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 19 (ground conditions), 12 (noise/vibration), 17 (piling risk), 21 (drainage), 27 (landscaping) to enable a phased approach to the Construction of the permitted film studios complex Approved under planning permission LA04/2020/0474/F on lands immediately north and south of existing film studios north of Dargan Road Belfast (within wider Belfast City Council lands known as North Foreshore/Giants Park)**

The Members were advised that permission was sought, under Section 54 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, to vary several conditions to allow for a phased construction of Planning Application approval LA04/2020/0474/F.

The site was un-zoned "white land" within the Belfast Area Urban Plan (BUAP) 2001 and located within the development limits of the City in the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (dBMAP) with a number of relevant zonings.

The Members noted that NIEA, Environmental Health, DfI Roads and Rivers Agency had been consulted in relation to the amended wording of conditions. All consultees were content with the phased approach as detailed within the report.

The Members were advised that the proposed development was estimated to represent an investment of £45m, generate in excess of 200 construction jobs and approximately 1,000 creative industry jobs and it was considered that the variation of conditions to assist the investment was acceptable.

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021, the Chief Executive would exercise her delegated authority to grant approval to the application, subject to conditions, with power delegated to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions.

**LA04/2021/0789/F - Application under Section 54 to vary conditions applied to approval LA04/2020/191100/F to facilitate development of this proposal. Relevant conditions which require to be amended are: -Condition 2 (Landscaping, Condition 5 (public realm),**



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**Condition 25 (retail plant and associated equipment),  
Condition 26 (verification report for noise), Condition 28  
(odour technologies). Condition to be deleted Conditions 17  
(verification report for contamination), this is a duplication  
of Condition 15 at 721-739 Lisburn Road**

The Members noted that permission was sought for the variation of five planning conditions and the removal of one condition attached to planning permission LA04/2019/1100/F. The approved apartment building was a substantial development and the proposed changes to the wording of the conditions would enable occupation of the development before the entire building was completed.

Environmental Health had no objections to the revised approach to the development and the gradual approval and verification of ground floor plant and equipment. The Members noted that amended wording of the conditions had been requested and the revisions were considered acceptable. The planting/ public realm condition had also been reworded to ensure a more enforceable approach and that an acceptable streetscape was created as soon as possible after completion of the development.

No third party objections were received in respect of the application.

The Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021, the Chief Executive would exercise her delegated authority to grant approval to the application, subject to conditions, with power delegated to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions.

**Change to October Committee Date**

The Committee Members were advised that an Investment Conference was due to take place in the City Hall at the same time as the Planning Committee on Tuesday, 19th October, 2021.

At the request of the Director of Planning and Building Control, the Members agreed to change the date of their monthly meeting in October from Tuesday 19th October to Thursday 21st October.

Chairperson

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# Planning Committee

Tuesday, 24th August, 2021

## MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Carson (Chairperson);  
Councillors Garrett, Groogan, Hanvey,  
Hussey, McCullough, Murphy  
and O'Hara.

In attendance: Mr. A. Reid, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;  
Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control  
Mr. E. Baker, Planning Manager  
(Development Management);  
Ms. N. Largey, Divisional Solicitor;  
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer; and  
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

### Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported on behalf of Councillors Brooks, Matt Collins, Hutchinson, Maskey, McMullan and Whyte.

### Declarations of Interest

Councillor O'Hara declared an interest in Item 2a - LA04/2019/1540/F, in that he was on the Board of Belfast Harbour Commissioners as a political appointment and that it had objected to the application. He advised that, as it was a Council appointment and he did not have a pecuniary interest, he could fully participate in the discussion on the item.

### Planning Application

**THE COMMITTEE DEALT WITH THE FOLLOWING ITEM IN PURSUANCE OF THE POWERS DELEGATED TO IT BY THE COUNCIL UNDER STANDING ORDER 37(e)**

**(Reconsidered Item) LA04/2019/1540/F – Centralised Anaerobic Digestion (CAD) plant to include a bundled tank farm, (6no. digester tanks, 2no. buffer tanks, 1no. storage tank and associated pump rooms), biogas holder, biogas conditioning system, temperature control system, waste-water treatment plant (WWTP), motor circuit control room building, hot/cold water recovery system, feedstock reception and digestate treatment building, product storage building, odour control system and associated tanks, emergency gas flare, back-up boiler, administration/office building, car parking, 3no. weighbridges, fire water tank and pump house, pipelines to existing combined heat and power (CHP) plant engines, switchgear, earth bunding, 3no. accesses to existing Giant's Park Service road infrastructure and ancillary plant/site works**

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The Chairperson advised that, whilst both the agent/applicant and the objectors had already addressed the Committee in relation to this application, a request had been submitted to address the Committee again under exceptional circumstances.

Moved by Councillor Garrett and  
Seconded by Councillor Murphy,

That the Committee agrees to refuse the request for additional speaking rights on the basis that deputations had been heard on a number of occasions, and that it was unlikely that any further information would be provided that would have an impact the Committee's ability to make a decision on the application.

On a vote, 5 Members voted for the proposal and 3 against, and it was accordingly declared carried.

The Committee considered the following report:

**"1.0 Background**

**1.1 Addendum Report 3 should be read in conjunction with Addendum Report 2 (April 2021), Pre-Determination Report (February 2021), Addendum Report 1 (January 2021) and original Committee report (August 2020), together with associated Late Items. These reports are appended.**

**1.2 At the April 2021 Planning Committee, Members agreed to defer consideration of the application and asked that officers draw up planning reasons for refusal based on the following concerns:**

- **That the proposed development is incompatible with adjacent land uses and is contrary to Policy WM1 of Planning Policy Statement 11, in that it is incompatible with the character of the surrounding area and adjacent land uses, namely with the adjacent film studios and its expansion and also with the GPBL proposals; and**
- **That the film studio extension has been built in the zone which was zoned for Waste Management in the Masterplan, and that the waste management element therefore no longer existed.**

**1.3 The following report sets out planning refusal reasons based on the above, including consideration of those reasons and officer recommendation.**

**2.0 Refusal Reason 1 – incompatibility with film studios and GPBL proposals**

**2.1 The Planning Committee is concerned about the compatibility of the proposed CAD facility with two receptors: the film studios to the east; and the GPBL proposals for mixed use development to the north and west. The impact on each is dealt with in turn.**

**Compatibility with the film studios**

- 2.2 The film studios are located to the east of the site. Phase 1 was granted planning permission in 2016 (LA04/2015/1605/F) and has since been implemented. Phase 2 was granted permission in 2020 (LA04/2020/0474/F) and has yet to be constructed. An application to vary the conditions under permission LA04/2020/0474/F was validated in May 2021 and is scheduled for the Planning Committee on 19 August 2021 (LA04/2021/1358/F).
- 2.3 In October 2020, the applicant submitted Addendum 2 to its Environmental Statement. This dealt with the cumulative impact of the proposed CAD facility with the addition of Phase 2 of the film studios. The Environmental Statement (ES) dealt with a range of environmental considerations, both during construction and operation, including but not limited to air quality and odour; noise and vibration; and lighting. The Council's Environmental Health team assessed the ES and provided specialist advice to the Planning Service regarding the compatibility of the proposed CAD facility with adjacent land-uses, including both phases of the film studios.
- 2.4 In addition, for the purposes of this Addendum Report 3, Environmental Health (EH) has provided an additional note on the compatibility concerns raised by Members. This note has been uploaded to the Planning Portal and is appended to this report at Annex 1.

***Ambient Air Quality***

- 2.5 Ambient air quality is considered in Chapter 6 of the ES. The ambient air quality impact assessment took account of emissions from the proposed CAD facility and associated gas generating engines.
- 2.6 An air quality impact assessment was undertaken by the applicant for nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide ambient pollutants associated with operation of the proposed CAD facility. UK government technical guidance advises that air quality regulations require exceedances of objectives to be assessed in relation to *'the quality of the air at locations which are situated outside of buildings or other natural or man-made structures, above or below ground, and where members of the public are regularly present'*. Moreover, longer term objectives such as annual mean or 24 and 8 hour objectives typically apply only at the façades of residential properties or other places of residence such as schools, hospitals and care homes, etc. Shorter term objectives apply where members of the public might reasonably expect of spend 15 minutes or 1 hour. Such short-term objectives have, however, been established only for nitrogen

dioxide and sulphur dioxide. Importantly, the government guidance further advises that air quality objectives are not relevant to places of work or to other locations where members of the public do not have regular access.

- 2.7** Emission factors for the various pollutants under consideration were derived using atmospheric dispersion modelling software. Vehicle movements were screened out of the air quality impact assessment as they fall below thresholds detailed within the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and the Institute of Air Quality Management Land-Use Planning & Development Control: Planning for Air Quality guidance. A range of seven residential and commercial receptor locations were initially identified both on and off the North Foreshore site, including offices on Dargan Road, residential properties on the Shore Road and at Mount Vernon, the council's waste transfer station on the North Foreshore site and the closest building within the Phase 1 of the Belfast Harbour Studios.
- 2.8** Dispersion modelling was undertaken by way of a sensitivity test. The ES states that the modelled concentrations of nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide and sulphur dioxide were all predicted to be below their respective standards. Consequently, the ES concludes that proposed and existing sensitive locations will not experience a significant air quality impact as determined from the results of the air quality assessment, which predicted pollutant concentrations to be significantly lower than the appropriate guideline limits during the operational phase. As previously mentioned, the outworking of the ambient air quality assessment needs to be considered in terms of government guidance that air quality objectives are not relevant to places of work or to other locations where members of the public do not have regular access.
- 2.9** Addendum 2 of the ES deals with the cumulative impact of the proposed CAD facility taking into account the planning permission for Phase 2 of the film studios. The proposed target levels and method of assessment was extended with two additional receptor locations to account of Phase 2. The additional receptor locations were representative of 1) the closest external area to the application site; and 2) the closest building to the application site.
- 2.10** Addendum 2 of the ES states that the Phase 2 site is in a non-residential area, which is commercial in nature and has been defined within the planning application for the Phase 2 development as operating internally only with no open doors or windows. Notwithstanding this, and consistent with the conservative approach to the existing film studio complex in the original ES, the limits applicable to human health receptors were

applied in a manner similar to what would have been applicable to residential receptors to ensure a worst case scenario.

- 2.11 An air quality impact assessment was therefore undertaken by way of dispersion modelling for the two additional receptor locations within Phase 2 of the film studios. The ES concludes that predicted ground level concentrations in each year, as well as the 5-year average were significantly below the limit values or objectives for nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), carbon monoxide (CO) and sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>). EH reiterates UK Government guidance which advises that air quality objectives are not relevant to places of work or other locations where members of the public do not have regular access.
- 2.12 Addendum 2 of the ES again refers to the previous transport assessment, advising that existing traffic flows were reviewed as part of the Further Environmental Information to consider the traffic attributable to the Phase 2 permitted development. The updated Transport Assessment confirms that the percentage increase of the proposed CAD facility traffic on the Giant's Park access road and on Dargan Road remain beneath the threshold of significance, primarily due to the fact that baseline traffic has increased with the Phase 2 permitted development. EH also notes that the traffic numbers also fall below the thresholds for an air quality impact assessment established in the 2017 Institute of Air Quality Management, 'Land-Use Planning & Development Control: Planning For Air Quality' publication; an increase in light duty vehicle of 500 AADT and an increase in heavy duty vehicles of more than 100 AADT.
- 2.13 Should Members be minded to grant permission, a planning condition is recommended to deal with dust impacts during construction through the submission of a Construction Environmental Management Plan.
- 2.14 Given the above assessment, it is considered that the film studios and proposed CAD facility would be compatible in terms of ambient air quality impacts.

*Odour*

- 2.15 The applicant's odour impact assessment took account of emissions from the odour control system for the plant. Digestate from the anaerobic digestion process was not considered as an odour source as output from the municipal solid waste fines stream are proposed to be dried and disposed of as waste at landfill and output from the source separated organic waste stream will be dried, pelletised and exported to market as a fertiliser product. These processes are to be undertaken inside a building maintained under negative pressure. Odour impacts from

waste contained in HGVs was not specifically identified as an issue by the Environmental Statement. The Pollution Prevention Control Permit that the applicant would require from DAERA would require the submission of an Odour Management Plan to mitigate potential impacts.

- 2.16 The odour impact assessment was also carried out by way of dispersion modelling, having regard to the provisions of the Environment Agency, *'Additional guidance for H4 Odour Management. How to comply with your environmental permit'*. Within the H4 guidance, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) has advanced a series of odour benchmarks to be achieved at a site or installation boundary. The benchmark for the most offensive odours, including processes involving decaying animal or fish remains, processes involving septic effluent or sludge and biological landfill odours, is 1.5 odour units – assessed as the 98<sup>th</sup> percentile of hourly average concentrations of odour modelled over a year at the site or installation boundary.
- 2.17 The odour modelling was undertaken for the same original seven commercial and residential receptors, located on and off the North Foreshore site, as identified for the air quality impact assessment. The ES advises that the modelled odour concentrations at all sensitive receptors are below the 1.5 ouEm<sup>-3</sup> when considered as individual years or as a 5-year average. In actuality, the modelling suggests maximum odour levels of 0.25 ouEm<sup>-3</sup> or less at all receptors.
- 2.18 The Institute of Air Quality Management's *'Guidance on the assessment of odour for planning'* (July 2018) provides a series of suggested descriptors for assessing the magnitudes of odour effect. For the purposes of the IAQM guidance, high sensitivity receptors may include residential dwellings, hospitals, schools or places of education and tourist or cultural locations. Such locations are described as where users can reasonably expect enjoyment of a high level of amenity; and where people would reasonably be expected to be present continuously, or at least regularly for extended periods, as part of the normal pattern of use of the land. Medium sensitivity receptor locations include places of work, commercial or retail premises and playing or recreation fields – the film studios fall into this medium sensitivity receptor category.
- 2.19 Accordingly, the IAQM proposed odour effect descriptor for impacts predicted by modelling for the most offensive odours suggests that for an odour exposure level of less than 0.5 ouEm<sup>-3</sup>, the impact will be negligible for all receptor sensitivities; i.e. low, medium or high.



2.20 Additional odour modelling was carried out at the two additional receptor locations located within Phase 2 of the film studios. The resultant 98<sup>th</sup> percentiles of the hourly average concentrations of odour modelled over successive years were all found to be below the proposed 1.5ouEm<sup>-3</sup> benchmark. Predicted odour concentrations at receptor R1 ranged from 0.23-0.25 ouEm<sup>-3</sup> and ranged from 0.18-0.24 ouEm<sup>-3</sup> at receptor R2. These values are in broad keeping with the odour concentration range of the Environmental Statement. Moreover, in referring to the Institute of Air Quality Management, 'Guidance on the assessment of odour for planning' version 1.1 - July 2018, EHO notes that places of work can be considered as 'medium sensitivity' receptors. Accordingly, for a medium sensitivity receptor, exposed to a 'most offensive' odour, where the impact has been predicted by modelling, the impact of an odour exposure level of less than 0.5 ouEm<sup>-3</sup> would be described as 'negligible'.

2.21 Given the above assessment, it is considered that the film studios and proposed CAD facility would be compatible in terms of odour impacts.

*Noise and vibration*

2.22 Noise and vibration are dealt with in Chapter 7 of the ES. The applicant undertook a noise and vibration assessment in accordance with: 'BS4142:2014: Method for Rating and Assessing Industrial and Commercial Sound' and; 'BS5228:2009 The Code of Practice for Noise and Vibration Control on Construction and Open Sites.

2.23 IBS4142 requires that the measured rating level (L<sub>Ar</sub>) is compared to the background level (L<sub>A90</sub>), measured in the absence of the noise under assessment, to determine the likelihood of an adverse noise impact. The rating level of the development should not significantly exceed the existing background noise level, depending on the context.

2.24 A baseline noise survey was undertaken at the North Foreshore site in October 2019. The measurement position was placed in close proximity to Phase 1 of the film studios, an exposed location. Background noise levels were then derived from data collected during this survey. 54 dB L<sub>A90</sub> was chosen as the appropriate and representative background noise levels for the daytime period and 46 dB L<sub>A90</sub> was chosen as the appropriate and representative background noise levels for the night-time period.

2.25 Noise modelling was undertaken to predict the noise impact of the proposed CAD facility on nearby receptors. The ES advises that noise from the proposal is principally associated with the Biogas CHP engines, various pumps, blowers/fans and agitators, as well

as HGV movements to and from the site. HGV movements would be limited to daytime hours only, from 7am to 7pm, with all other plant operating 24 hours per day. Modelled daytime and night-time noise contours were provided in the ES.

- 2.26 Five noise sensitive receptors were identified both on and off the North Foreshore site, including Phase 1 of the Belfast Harbour Studios, and residential properties some 600-700m away at the Shore Road. The predicted noise levels at these receptors as a consequence of the proposal were presented for daytime and night-time. Daytime noise levels at the Belfast Harbour Studios were predicted to be around 44 dB LAeq,1hr and less than 30 dB LAeq,1hr at the residential premises at the Shore Road. Night-time noise levels at the at the Belfast Harbour Studios were also predicted to be around 44 dB LAeq,15 min and as previously, less than 30 dB LAeq,15 min at the residential premises.
- 2.27 An acoustic feature correction was applied to the predicted daytime noise level to take account of vehicle movements in accordance with the requirements of BS4142 and the data was then compared with daytime and night-time background noise levels.
- 2.28 In comparing the data, the ES concludes that the highest predicted daytime and night-time noise impacts from the proposed development at the Belfast Harbour Studio were below their respective 'typical' background noise levels; as per BS4142 "this is an indication of the specific sound source having a low impact".
- 2.29 The noise levels associated with the proposed CAD facility were similarly predicted to be below daytime and background noise levels at residential properties located on the Shore Road. It is noted that the residential properties located on the Shore Road are separated from the North Foreshore site by the M2 Motorway and Fortwilliam Roundabout.
- 2.30 In relation to the noise impact of the proposal on Phase 1 of the film studios, the ES advises that it is important to note that BS4142:2014 assesses external noise only and its suitability for assessing impacts on internal noise environments is limited. The predicted noise levels due to the proposed development are external levels; absolute internal levels can be estimated assuming a reduction of 10 – 15dB afforded by an open window, resulting in a daytime internal sound pressure level within the film studios between 28.7 and 33.7 dB(A). The ES advises that this is a minimum of 1.3 dB below the BS8233: 2014 Guidance on sound insulation and noise reduction for buildings, sleeping (daytime resting) bedroom noise level of 35 dB LAeq for residential dwellings. In addition, BS8233:2014 also provides typical noise levels for non-domestic buildings; an internal design range of 35-

**40 (dB LAeq,T) would normally be sought for an executive office environment where activities undertaken would include study or work requiring concentration.**

- 2.31 Addendum 2 of the ES extended the previous noise impact assessment to take account of the two additional receptor points located within Phase 2 of the film studios. EH notes that as part of the noise and vibration assessment for Phase 2, the ES states that the precise activities that will occur during the operational phase of Phase 2 are not known. The ES assumes that the majority of activities will be undertaken at the proposed studios internally. As the majority of the proposed operational activities will be undertaken within the relevant buildings, it will be possible to benefit from the significant noise attenuation of the building shell, which on the assumption of there being no openable doors or windows, will be at least 20-30dB(A). The ES advises that with a distance attenuation of at least 12dB(A) and building attenuation of at least 20-30dB(A), it would take exterior noise levels of greater than 80dB(A) just to result in noise levels at the nearest commercial units similar to background noise level of approximately 54 dBA during the daytime and 46 dBA during the night time. EH further notes that an acoustician will be employed at the detailed design stage of Phase 2 to ensure that the appropriate building shell specification, roof specification, window specifications and door specifications are used to ensure that there is no operational phase noise impact from such activities.**
- 2.32 Addendum 2 of the ES refers to this information in its assessment of noise for the two additional receptors located within Phase 2 of the Belfast Harbour Studios development. The noise assessment for the two additional receptors indicates that the predicted noise levels at the Phase 2 permitted development would be lower than 50dB(A) and consistent with residential standards designed for external residential amenity. The ES states that utilising the same assumptions as those submitted as part of the noise impact assessment accompanying the Phase 2 planning application, i.e. the existing background noise levels on the site are nearly 10dB higher than those relied upon in the CAD facility application; and the shell of the proposed buildings will provide at least 20-30dB of sound insulation to the sensitive areas of the site, this would mean that noise level would need to be in the region of 30-40dB higher than predicted levels to cause an impact within the Phase 2 development.**
- 2.33 There would be some noise impact on the film studios during the construction phase, particularly with regard to piling. Should Members be minded to grant planning permission, a planning condition is recommended to require a Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan so as to minimise the potential noise**

impacts in so far as practicable. It should be noted that the best practice guidance does not safeguard commercial uses during the construction process. However, it should be borne in mind that construction noise, including piling, would occur during the build for other development proposals for the site including logistical warehousing, which the land is zoned for in both Policy BHA 05 of dBMAP 2015 (v2014) and the adopted masterplan.

- 2.34 Given the above assessment, it is considered that the film studios and proposed CAD facility would be compatible in terms of noise impacts.

*Lighting*

- 2.35 An artificial lighting assessment is provided in Appendix 15.1 of the ES. The ES highlights that the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 came into operation on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012 and contains laws which cover many of the problems which can detract from the quality of people's day-to-day lives. The Act makes reference to artificial lighting as follows; Part 7 Statutory Nuisances 63 (1) (h) artificial light emitted from premises so as to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance. Although light is described within the Act as having the potential to cause statutory nuisance, no prescriptive limits or rules are set for assessment. However, Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light produced by the Institute of Lighting Professionals are commonly adopted in the UK as being appropriate lighting assessment criteria.
- 2.36 The ES characterises the existing lighting environment of the North Foreshore area as E2 – Low District Brightness and reflective of a rural conditions; a village or relatively dark outer suburban locations. The applicant therefore recognised the importance of minimising the potential effect of lighting upon the surrounding area by minimising sky glow, glare and light spillage. Data for various luminaires to be installed at and around the site have been provided. The assessment has also considered lighting impact during the construction phase. Modelling for the operational lighting design indicated that it will achieve the E2 criteria for luminaire intensities and light intrusion into windows. The ES therefore concludes that no significant cumulative artificial lighting impacts are predicted as a consequence of the proposed CAD facility. Given this assessment, it is considered that the film studios and proposed CAD facility would be compatible in terms of lighting impacts.

*Pollution Prevention Control Permit*

- 2.37 EH has advised on the environmental impacts of the proposed CAD facility both during construction and upon operation. Its

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operation would be subject to a Pollution Prevention Control Permit which will need to be obtained from DAERA NIEA.

- 2.38 **Planning Policy Statement: Planning and Waste Management (PPS 11)** sets out the Department for Infrastructure's planning policies for the development of waste management facilities. PPS 11 seeks to promote the highest environmental standards in development proposals for waste management facilities and includes guidance on the issues likely to be considered in the determination of planning applications.
- 2.39 Section 2 of PPS 11 describes the relationship between Planning and Pollution Control Regimes, highlighting that planning control focuses primarily on whether a development is an acceptable use of land rather than on the control of the processes or substances involved; and regulating the location of the development in order to avoid or minimise adverse effects on people, the use of land and the environment.
- 2.40 The Pollution Control regime is alternatively concerned with the control and regulation of proposed operations and processes of a waste activity and with the day to day operation. The objective is to ensure that the waste is disposed of or treated without endangering human health or causing harm to the environment.
- 2.41 Accordingly, the Department has advised that planning control should not duplicate other statutory controls or be used to achieve objectives relating to other legislation. The Council as Planning Authority must therefore make planning decisions on the basis that the pollution control regimes will be properly applied and enforced.
- 2.42 It is noted that in their consultation response of 15 October 2019, NIEA advises that the Pollution Prevention Control (PPC) Team within the Regulatory Unit have noted that the activities described in the planning application will require a Pollution Prevention and Control Permit issued under the Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013 to operate, and hence must demonstrate Best Available Techniques as per the Regulations.

**Compatibility with the Giant's Park Belfast Limited proposals**

- 2.43 In January 2021, Giant's Park Belfast Ltd (GPBL) submitted a Pre-Application Discussion (PAD) request and Proposal of Application Notice in respect of mixed-use proposals on the land to the north and west. The description of development is: *'Major mixed use leisure led development comprising indoor and outdoor leisure and recreational uses, hotels, food and beverage units, petrol filling station, and research and development hub.'* In June 2021,

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these proposals were amended to replace the proposed research and development hub and indoor leisure proposals with logistics and distribution (Use Class B4), and incubation hub (Use Class B2) to meet demand for smaller independent units. There would also be an indoor leisure element in the proposed adventure park.

- 2.44 These proposals are still at an early stage with an initial PAD meeting held in March 2021. Policy BHA 05 of dBMAP 2015 (v2014) zones the area for a variety of employment uses but these do not include many of the uses featured in the GPBL proposals, namely the zoning excludes leisure, food and beverage, hotel and petrol filling station uses. The only use which directly accords with the zoning are the proposed Use Class B2 and B4 uses. The zoning does include 'Open space and associated facilities' but not leisure.
- 2.45 The 'North Foreshore Giants Park Masterplan' (2010) was produced as a Key Site Requirement for the zoning (and pre-dates dBMAP 2015 (v2014)). In addition to employment uses, it includes 81ha (200 acre) of Public Open Space. According to the Masterplan, this would include a visitors/education centre; children's adventure play area; sports playing fields; cycle and pedestrian paths; festival and performance space; bird hides and landscaping; public artwork and pedestrian bridges.
- 2.46 EH has previously advised that they do not have in principle concerns regarding the compatibility of the proposed CAD facility with the adjacent uses zoned under Policy BHA 05 of dBMAP 2015 or the approved masterplan, in respect of land contamination, ambient air quality, odour, noise impacts or lighting. The noise assessment indicates that noise levels would be less than daytime background levels. EH advises that noise impacts would be manageable in relation to the layout and design of uses. Odour impacts would be negligible. There would be no unacceptable conflicts with regard to air quality.
- 2.47 Members' concerns about the compatibility of the proposed CAD facility with the GPBL proposals are understood to principally relate to the proposed leisure uses, food and beverage and hotel. The proposed Use Classes B2 and B4 are less sensitive receptors.
- 2.48 It is considered unreasonable for the Council to refuse planning permission on grounds of incompatibility of the CAD facility with the GPBL proposals for several reasons. Firstly, minimal weight should be afforded to these proposals given the early stage of the GPBL proposals in the planning process, which remain at the PAD stage. Secondly, that the leisure, food and beverage, hotel and petrol filling station uses are not committed nor do they form part of the zoning and Key Site Requirements under Policy BHA 05 which specifies the range of uses that may be permitted at the site.

Thirdly, Environmental Health has not raised in principle concerns about the compatibility of the proposed CAD facility with the GPBL proposals. Fourthly, even if the GPBL proposals had progressed to formal planning application stage, it is considered unreasonable to withhold planning permission or delay determination of the application for the proposed CAD facility until the GPBL application is determined given 1) the GPBL proposals do not accord with the zoning of the land; and 2) the length of time that the CAD facility application has already been in the system having been submitted to the Council in June 2019 (2 years ago).

- 2.49 Whilst the masterplan specifies a range of recreational uses associated with the Public Open Space (as described in par. 2.42 above), these are not committed and greater weight should be given to the Policy BHA 05 zoning itself as the master policy. Moreover, there is no evidence before the Council that the proposed CAD facility would be incompatible with the recreational uses included in the masterplan.

**Conclusion on Refusal Reason 1**

- 2.50 A refusal reason based on Members concerns could read:

*'The proposed development would result in unacceptable environmental conflict with the adjacent film studios to the east (including Phases 1 and 2 of the film studios); and with the leisure, hotel, food and beverage uses contained in Giant's Park Belfast Limited's leisure-led mixed use proposals for land to the north and west. The proposed development would not be compatible with the character of the surrounding area and these adjacent land-uses and would prejudice future operations of these economic uses, contrary to paragraph 6.90 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (2015); Policy WM 1 of PPS 11: Planning and Waste Management; and Policies PED 8 and PED 9(a) of PPS 4: Planning and Economic Development.'*

However, having regard to the assessment carried out in this and previous reports, it is considered that there are no technical reasons why the proposed CAD facility would be incompatible with either the film studios or GPBL proposals. Moreover, the GPBL proposals should be given minimal weight because of their early stage in the planning application process. In addition, many of the uses featured in the GPBL proposals do not form part of the zoning of the land in dBMAP.

- 3.0 **Refusal Reason 2 – zoning of the area for waste management no longer exists**

- 3.1 The site and wider lands at North Foreshore are zoned for employment uses in both the 2004 and 2014 versions of draft

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**BMAP. Greater weight is given to the most recent 2014 version of BMAP (dBMAP 2015 (v2014)) because of the advanced stage that it had reached in the Development Plan process.**

- 3.2 Policy BHA 05 of dBMAP 2015 (v2014) zones the area for a variety of uses including:**
- **Waste management**
  - **Port and port related land-uses**
  - **Class B1 Business, call centres and research and development**
  - **Class B2 Light industrial use**
  - **Class B3 General industrial use**
  - **Class B4 Storage and distribution use**
  - **Open space and associated facilities**
- 3.3 A Key Site Requirement is that development shall only be permitted in accordance with an overall comprehensive masterplan to be agreed with the Department. The ‘North Foreshore Giants Park Masterplan’ was approved by the Department in 2010. This sets out detailed proposals for the development of the site including technical commentary.**  
**In the masterplan, land to the south east of the zoning is earmarked for Arc21 waste management facilities. This is where film studios phase 1 have been built and planning permission has been granted for film studios phase 2. Members are concerned that in view of these permissions for alternative uses, waste management facilities are no longer required within the wider zoning and therefore planning permission for the proposed CAD facility should be refused.**
- 3.4 When the Planning Committee granted permission for the original film studios (LA04/2015/1605/F) it accepted the case officer report which advised that the proposal ‘conformed in principle’ with Policy BHA 05, in recognition of the broad zoning of the land for employment uses as well as the contribution that the film studios would make to the local economy, having regard to PPS 4 Planning and Economic Development. The Planning Committee did not grant permission on the basis that there was no longer a requirement for waste management facilities.**
- 3.5 The agreed masterplan is conceptual and it is unclear from the document how definitive the spatial configuration of uses across the zoning is. In any event, it is advised that greater weight should be afforded to the Policy BHA 05 zoning itself as the masterplan is a subordinate policy document in this regard. Moreover, masterplan is more than 10 years, does not reflect the planning permission granted for the film studios, and is arguably outdated. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the Council’s decision to grant permission for the film studios on land assigned for Arc21 waste**



management facilities in the masterplan establishes the principle of the Council taking a flexible approach to zoned uses under Policy BHA 05. The planning process often has to be reactive to changing circumstances on the ground.

**3.6 A refusal reason based on Members concerns could read:**

*‘Policy BHA 05 of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014) zones the area for a range of uses including waste management. The associated North Foreshore Giants Park Masterplan (2010) identifies land to the south east of the zoning for Arc21 waste management facilities. However, this land has since been redeveloped as film studios with further planning permission granted on these lands to extend the film studios operations. As a consequence, waste management uses are no longer required within the Policy BHA 05 zoning and for this reason planning permission is refused.’*

**3.7 However, there is no evidence that the granting of planning permission for the film studios means that waste management facilities are no longer required on the wider lands zoned under Policy BHA 05. The strategic need for the proposal has been demonstrated by the applicant in that the proposal accords with the waste hierarchy, having regard to Policy WM2 (a) of PPS 11.**

**4.0 Summary and recommendation**

**4.1 Having regard to the Development Plan, relevant planning policy and materials considerations, the recommendation remains that planning permission should be granted subject to conditions. Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions.**

**4.2 Draft Conditions**

A list of draft conditions is set out below.

**1: The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 5 years from the date of this permission.**

**Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.**

**2: Prior to commencement of development, a Detailed Remediation Strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The Remediation Strategy must be based on the capping, landfill gas extraction infrastructure and building protection measures proposals contained within the RPS Group Plc reports entitled ‘Remedial Strategy Report, Dargan Road Biogas Ltd, Bioenergy (AD) Plant, Giant’s Park, Belfast’ (dated**

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December 2019 and referenced IBR1061 version 5) and 'Dargan Road Biogas Ltd, Gas Extraction System, Bioenergy Anaerobic Digestion (AD) Plant' (dated December 2019 and referenced IBR1061 version 8) and the letter from RPS dated 24th February 2020 and referenced 'IBR1061, Dargan Road Biogas Limited, Centralised Anaerobic Digestion (CAD) Plant - Planning Application Ref: LA04/2019/1540/F'. The Detailed Remediation Strategy must demonstrate how the identified pollutant linkages are to be demonstrably broken and that they no longer pose a potential risk to human health. In particular, this Detailed Remediation Strategy must provide final detail on:

- The capping systems to be installed.
- The gas protection measures to be installed in all buildings requiring gas protection, which must be compliant with BS 8485:2015+A1:2019 and Belfast City Council's North Foreshore Developer's Guidance Note.
- The hydrocarbon vapour protection membrane to be installed in all buildings requiring protection.
- The gas abstraction system to be installed on the development site.
- How the proposed remedial works are to be verified.

All construction thereafter must be in accordance with the approved Remediation Strategy.

The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved Remediation Strategy.

**Reason: Protection of human health and environmental receptors.**

3: In order to demonstrate that the required remedial measures have been incorporated within the proposal, prior to operation of the development, a Verification Report shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Planning Authority. The Verification Report must be in accordance with Environment Agency guidance, British Standards, CIRIA and Land Contamination: Risk Management (LCRM) guidance. It must demonstrate that the mitigation measures outlined in the agreed Remediation Strategy have been implemented and have broken the relevant pollutant linkages, and that the site no longer poses a potential risk to human health.

**Reason: Protection of human health and environmental receptors.**

4: If during the development works, new contamination or risks are encountered which have not previously been identified, works must cease and the Council shall be notified immediately in writing. This new contamination shall be fully investigated in accordance with best practice and the Land Contamination: Risk

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**Management (LCRM) guidance available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/landcontamination-how-to-manage-the-risks>. In the event of unacceptable risks being identified, a remediation strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council, and subsequently implemented and verified to its satisfaction prior to occupation or use of the CAD facility.**

**Reason: Protection of human health and environmental receptors.**

**5: Notwithstanding the submitted details, no works (including site preparation clearance or construction works) shall commence on site unless a Final Dust Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. This Plan must conform to the measures set out in the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [authored by RPS Group, dated June 2019 and marked on the Planning Portal as received on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2019]. It must outline the methods to be employed to minimise any dust impacts associated with site preparation and construction works, demonstrating the use of 'best practicable means'. The plan must have due regard to the IAQM Guidance on the Assessment of dust from demolition and construction 2014. All site preparation and construction works thereafter must be carried out in accordance with the approved Dust Management Plan.**

**Reason: Protection of human health and amenity of nearby premises.**

**6: Notwithstanding the submitted details, no works (including site preparation clearance or construction works) shall commence on site unless a Final Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. This Plan must conform to the measures set out in Chapter 7 of the Environmental Statement submitted in June 2019 and marked on the Planning Portal as received on the 4<sup>th</sup> July 2019 and those set out in Chapter 4 of the Addendum II submitted in October 2020 and marked on the Planning Portal as received on the 13<sup>th</sup> October 2020. It must outline the methods to be employed to minimise any noise and vibration impacts associated with site preparation and construction works, demonstrating the use of 'best practicable means'. The plan must have regard to BS 5228:2009+A1:2014 Parts 1 and 2 Code of practice for Noise and vibration on construction and open sites, and demonstrate that site preparatory and constructions works will achieve the BS5228 'ABC method' Category A noise threshold value for daytime and Saturdays at relevant sensitive receptors. All site preparation and construction works thereafter must be carried out in accordance with the approved Noise and Vibration Management Plan.**

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**Reason: Protection of human health and amenity of nearby premises.**

**7: Notwithstanding the submitted details, no works (including site preparation clearance or construction works) shall commence on site until a final Construction Environmental Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. This Plan must conform to the measures set out in the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [authored by RPS Group, dated June 2019 and marked on the Planning Portal as received on 5th July 2019]. All site preparation and construction works thereafter must be carried out in accordance with the approved Construction Environmental Management Plan.**

**Reason: Protection of human health and the environment and amenity of nearby premises and to ensure that the appointed contractor is cognisant of all mitigation and avoidance measures required to protect all watercourses and the marine environment ensuring that there is no adverse effect on site integrity of Belfast Lough Open Water SPA, Belfast Lough SPA/Ramsar site and East Coast (Northern Ireland) Marine Proposed SPA.**

**8: No development should take place on-site until the method of sewage disposal has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details.**

**Reason: To ensure a practical solution to sewage disposal is possible at this site.**

**9: No development shall commence on site until details of foul and surface water drainage, including a programme for implementation of these works, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The details shall also include detailed calculations for surface water drainage of the site. The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details.**

**Reason: To ensure appropriate foul and surface water drainage of the site. Approval is required upfront because the design of the drainage is an integral part of the development and its acceptability.**

**10: The development hereby permitted shall not become operational until the vehicular accesses have been constructed in accordance with the approved Drawing No. 03A 'Proposed Site Layout Plan' bearing the Belfast City Council Planning Office date stamp 20 December 2019. The access shall be constructed and marked to the satisfaction of DfI Roads.**

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**Reason: To ensure there is a satisfactory means of access in the interests of road safety and the convenience of road users.**

**11: The development hereby permitted shall not become operational until hard surfaced areas have been constructed in accordance with the approved layout Drawing No. 03A 'Proposed Site Layout Plan' bearing the Belfast City Council Planning Office date stamp 20 December 2019 to provide adequate facilities for parking, servicing and circulating within the site. No part of these hard surfaced areas shall be used for any purpose at any time than for the parking and movement of vehicles.**

**Reason: To ensure that adequate provision has been made for parking and manoeuvring within the site.**

**12: A minimum of 8 No. secure cycle parking spaces shall be provided and permanently retained within the development for use by staff and visitors to the development.**

**Reason: to encourage the use of alternative modes of transport for development users.**

**13: The development hereby permitted shall not operate unless in accordance with the Travel Plan contained within Appendix 4.1 of the Environmental Statement Addendum published by the Belfast City Council Planning Office on 15 January 2020. The Travel Plan will be provided to the Site Operator as a separate, stand-alone, document. The Site Operator will provide their employees with access to the Translink iLink Initiative and the Bike2Work Initiative or equivalent measures agreed by DfI Roads.**

**Reason: To encourage the use of alternative modes of transport to the private car in accordance with the Transportation Principles.**

**14: The development hereby permitted shall not operate unless in accordance with the Service Management Plan contained within Appendix 4.2 of the Environmental Statement Addendum published by the Belfast City Council Planning Office on 15 January 2020. The Service Management Plan will be provided to the Site Operator as a separate, stand-alone, document.**

**Reason: In the interests of road safety and traffic progression.**

**15: Prior to the commencement of any works hereby approved, an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (in accordance with BS: 5837:2012) shall be submitted and agreed in writing by the Council. This will identify, evaluate and mitigate where appropriate the extent of direct and indirect impacts on existing trees that may arise as a result of any site layout proposal. The**

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development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details.

**Reason:** To ensure minimal impact from the development on existing trees to be retained.

**16:** All trees and planting within the site shall be retained unless shown on the approved drawings as being removed. Any existing or proposed trees or planting indicated on the approved plans which, within a period of five years from the date of planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged, diseased or dying, shall be replaced during the next planting season (October to March inclusive) with other trees or plants of a location, species and size to be first approved in writing by the Planning Authority.

**Reason:** In the interests of visual amenity.

**17:** No retained tree shall be cut down, uprooted or destroyed or have its roots damaged within the crown spread, nor shall arboricultural work or tree surgery take place or any retained tree be topped or lopped other than in accordance with the approved plans and particulars, without the written approval of the Council. Any approved arboricultural work or tree surgery shall be carried out in accordance with British Standard 3998, 2010. Recommendations for Tree Work.

**Reason:** To ensure the continuity of amenity afforded by existing trees.

**18.** If any retained tree is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, another tree or trees shall be planted at the same place and that tree shall be of such size and species and shall be planted at such time as may be specified by the Council.

**Reason:** To ensure the continuity of amenity afforded by existing trees.

**19.** Prior to any work commencing, protective barriers (fencing) and ground protection shall be erected / installed as specified in British Standard 5837: 2012 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations' (section 6.2) on all trees to be retained within the site, and must be in place before any materials or machinery are brought onto site for demolition, development or soil stripping. Protective fencing must remain in place until all work is completed and all associated materials and equipment are removed from site. Within the fenced area no activities associated with building operations shall take place, no storage of materials, and the ground levels within those areas shall not be altered.

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**Reason:** To ensure that adequate protection measures are put in place around trees prior to the commencement of development to ensure that the trees to be retained are not damaged or otherwise adversely affected by building operations and soil compaction.

**20:** All soft landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with the details on stamped approved drawing no 17A, bearing the Council's date stamp 20th December 2019. The works shall be carried out prior to the occupation of the development hereby approved or before the end of the first planting season after occupation, whatever is sooner, and shall be permanently retained thereafter. Any trees or plants indicated on the approved scheme which, within a period of five years from the date of planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged, diseased or dying shall be replaced during the next planting season with other trees or plants of a similar species and size, details of which shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council.

**Reason:** To ensure the provision, establishment and maintenance of a high standard of landscape.

**21:** The development hereby permitted shall be constructed and finished in accordance with the approved details including the annotated finished colours for buildings and tanks.

**Reason:** In the interests of visual amenity.

**22.** The feedstock hereby accepted at the facility shall be limited to MSW organic fines (EWC code 19 12 12 and the EWC (European Waste Catalogue) Codes as set out in the Environmental Statement, appendix 3.1 and no other feedstock. (Attached as information no 2 to this decision notice).

**Reason:** In the interests of environmental protection and public health and to ensure that there is no adverse effect on site integrity of any European designated site.

**23:** The development hereby approved not be permitted to accept waste from EWC code 02 01 06. No digestate from the facility shall be landspread within the site.

**Reason:** To ensure that there is no adverse effect on site integrity of any European designated site.

**24:** The Anaerobic Digester (AD) shall not exceed a maximum of 99,999 tonnes per annum, in accordance with written records which will be made available to the Council on written request.

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**Reason: In the interests of environmental protection and public health.**

**25: There shall be no external storage of waste at any time.**

**Reason: in the interests of environmental protection and in the interest of amenity.”**

The Planning Manager then provided a recap of the application process to date, reminding the Committee that the application had been received by the Council in June, 2019, and had been due to be considered by the Committee on 18th August 2020, but was deferred due to an objection received from a legal representative, representing Giant's Park Belfast Limited (GPBL). He added that the Committee had undertaken a site visit in respect of the application in September 2020 and, at its meeting on 19th January, 2021, had agreed to defer the application for further information on the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), and to hold a non-mandatory Pre Determination Hearing which took place on 23rd February, 2021. The application was then reported back to the Committee on 20th April, 2021, at which time the Committee resolved to defer consideration of the application and asked that officers draw up planning reasons for refusal based on the following concerns:

- That the proposed development was incompatible with adjacent land uses and was contrary to Policy WM1 of Planning Policy Statement 11, in that it was incompatible with the character of the surrounding area and adjacent land uses, namely with the adjacent film studios and its expansion and also with the GPBL proposals; and
- That a film studio extension had been built in the zone which was zoned for Waste Management in the Masterplan, and that the waste management element therefore no longer existed.

The Committee was then presented with a summary of the proposals and the policy context related to the application. The Planning Manager also provided a summary of the issues raised in the Committee report.

With regards to refusal on the grounds of incompatibility with the adjacent film studios, the Planning Manager drew attention to a number of relevant environmental considerations, including ambient air quality, odour, noise and vibration, and lighting. Following a detailed explanation of the relevant guidance and assessments which had been carried out in relation to each aspect, the Committee was advised that it was considered that the film studios and proposed CAD facility would be compatible in terms of these environmental considerations.

He added that, if planning permission was to be granted, and the proposal was to go ahead, the applicant would be required to obtain a Pollution Prevention Control Permit from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs' (DAERA) Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) to ensure that waste is disposed of, or treated, without endangering human health or causing harm to the environment. In addition, planning guidance is that planning control should not duplicate other statutory controls or be used to achieve objectives relating to other legislation.

The Committee was advised that DAERA were unable to attend the meeting, but had advised that, in relation to the permitting process, the waste authorisation for the potential



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development, if approved, would have conditions within it that would be designed to ensure there were no negative impacts (for example, odour, noise etc.) beyond the site boundary. The permit would have enforcement mechanisms in place to mitigate against such effects, should they occur.

The Planning Manager then addressed compatibility with the GPBL proposals, reminding the Committee that a Pre-Application Discussion (PAD) request and Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) in respect of mixed-use proposals on the land to the north and west had been received in January, 2021, and then amended in June, 2021.

He drew attention to the refusal reason put forward by the Planning Committee based on these concerns but confirmed that, in the view of officers, minimal weight should be given to the GPBL proposals given their early stage in the planning process and that several of the uses featured in the GPBL proposals did not accord with the zoning of the site under Policy BHA 05 of dBMAP 2015 (v2014). Furthermore, Environmental Health had advised that they had no in principle concerns about incompatibility between the proposed CAD facility and the GPBL proposals.

With regards to the second refusal reasons put forward by the Committee, namely that there was no longer a requirement for waste management uses at the site, the Planning Manager set out the key issues.

The Committee was reminded that the 'North Foreshore Giants Park Masterplan' was approved by the Department of Environment in 2010, setting out detailed proposals for the development of the site, including land earmarked for Arc21 waste management facilities. However, film studios had since been built on this land and planning permission had been granted for a second phase of the studios.

The Planning Manager advised that, when the Planning Committee granted permission for the original film studios, it had accepted that the proposal 'conformed in principle' with Policy BHA 05, in recognition of the broad zoning of the land for employment uses, as well as the contribution that the film studios would make to the local economy. The Planning Committee did not, however, grant permission on the basis that there was no longer a requirement for waste management facilities. He added that the Masterplan was arguably outdated and that the decision to grant permission for the film studios on land assigned for Arc21 waste management facilities, established the principle of the Council taking a flexible approach to zoned uses under Policy BHA 05.

In summary, the Committee were advised that there was no evidence that the granting of planning permission for the film studios meant that waste management facilities were no longer required on the wider lands zoned under Policy BHA 05, and that the strategic need for the proposal has been demonstrated by the applicant, in that the proposal accorded with the waste hierarchy, having regard to Policy WM2 (a) of PPS 11.

The Planning Manager therefore advised that, for the reasons set out within the report, officers continued to recommend the application for approval.

A Member commented that they would be unable to support refusal based on the reasons set out within the report, given that there did not appear to be an evidential basis to support them. However, they raised major concerns regarding the potential environmental

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impacts of the proposal and shared their view that the lawfulness of the policies cited, particularly relating to nitrogen emissions, would leave the decision to approve the application as vulnerable to challenge. The Member emphasised the Council's role in accessing such applications to be assured they would not cause demonstratable harm to a European designated site. These concerns were echoed by a number of the other Committee Members.

(Councillor McCullough left and re-joined the meeting during part of the presentation. As he had not been present for the whole discussion, he did not participate in the vote.)

**Proposal**

Moved by Councillor Murphy and  
Seconded by Councillor Hussey,

That the Committee agrees to refuse the application, based on the fact that:

- the proposed development would result in unacceptable environmental conflict with the adjacent film studios to the east (including Phases 1 and 2 of the film studios); and with the leisure, hotel, food and beverage uses contained in Giant's Park Belfast Limited's leisure-led mixed use proposals for land to the north and west. The proposed development would not be compatible with the character of the surrounding area and these adjacent land-uses and would prejudice future operations of these economic uses, contrary to paragraph 6.90 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (2015); Policy WM 1 of PPS 11: Planning and Waste Management; and Policies PED 8 and PED 9(a) of PPS 4: Planning and Economic Development; and
- Policy BHA 05 of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014) zones the area for a range of uses including waste management. The associated North Foreshore Giants Park Masterplan (2010) identifies land to the south east of the zoning for Arc21 waste management facilities. However, this land has since been redeveloped as film studios with further planning permission granted on these lands to extend the film studios operations. As a consequence, waste management uses are no longer required within the Policy BHA 05 zoning.

On a vote, 4 Members voted for the proposal, none against, with 3 no votes, and it was accordingly declared carried.

The Committee also agreed to provide delegated authority to officers to look at the additional concerns in relation to environmental issues raised by the Members during discussion, so as to incorporate this into any appeal that may be forthcoming.

Chairperson



# CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY FOR THE BELFAST WATERFRONT AND ULSTER HALL LTD SHAREHOLDERS' COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 2nd August, 2021

Final CX Decision Register Published: 4th August, 2021

Recommendations sent to CX: 3rd August, 2021

Final Date for Call-in (10am): 11th August, 2021

CX's Comments Received: 4th August, 2021

	Topic	Chief Executive's Decision	Subject to call-in
<b><u>Restricted Items</u></b>			
<b>2a</b>	<b>Annual Report and Financial Statements for year ended 31st March 2021</b>	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to note the BWUH Ltd Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2021.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>2b</b>	<b>Final Draft Business Plan 2021/2022</b>	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to approve the draft BWUH Ltd. Business Plan 2021/22.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>2c</b>	<b>Casual Workers - Verbal update</b>	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to note the update on casual workers.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>2d</b>	<b>Extension of Board Directors' Contracts</b>	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to approve the extension of three existing ICC BWUH Directors' contracts to 31st August 2022.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>2e</b>	<b>Capital and Maintenance Update</b>	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to note the monies agreed under non-recurrent for works at the Waterfront– £450,000 towards a toilet upgrade programme and £45,000 for a proof of concept project to optimise the heating and cooling systems.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>2f</b>	<b>Changes to the BWUH Box Office</b>	The Members noted the contents of the report and requested that they would continue to be updated on the changes throughout the consultation process.	<b>Yes</b>

Please note that the agenda/reports associated with the decisions listed above can be accessed on the app and on the web, via the following link: <http://www.internalminutes/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=360&MId=10205&Ver=4>

# **Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee**

Monday, 2nd August, 2021

## **MEETING OF THE MEMBERS OF THE BELFAST WATERFRONT AND ULSTER HALL LTD. SHAREHOLDERS' COMMITTEE HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

Members present: Councillor McCabe (Chairperson);  
Alderman Haire;  
Councillors Bradley, Flynn, M. Kelly,  
Magee, Mulholland, and Newton.

In attendance: Ms. J. Corkey, Chief Executive, ICC Belfast  
(Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd.);  
Mr. I. Bell, Director of Finance and Systems, ICC Belfast  
(Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd.);  
Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development;  
Ms. P. Morrow, Tourism Culture Heritage & Arts  
Development Officer;  
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer; and  
Ms. K. McCrum, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Alderman Copeland and Councillor McAteer.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 17th May were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st June.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were recorded.

### **Restricted Items**

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

**Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee**  
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**Annual Report and Financial Statements**  
**for the year ended 31st March 2021**

The Chief Executive of ICC Belfast/BWUH Ltd. reminded the Members that, at its meeting on 17th May 2021, they had been presented with the Quarter 4 Year to Date performance overview. The Members had since been provided with the full audited accounts.

She advised the Members that the Annual Report and Financial Statements had been presented to the BWUH Ltd Board at its meeting on 30th June 2021 and that both the Annual Report and Financial Statements were agreed as final by the Board and were electronically signed following that meeting.

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive would exercise her delegated authority to note the BWUH Ltd Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2021.

**Final Draft Business Plan 2021/2022**

The Director of Finance and Systems and the Chief Executive of ICC Belfast/BWUH Ltd. presented the Members with the draft BWUH Ltd. Business Plan and the direction of travel for the financial year 2021/2022. The Members noted that the draft Business Plan had been approved by the BWUH Ltd. Board in April 2021, subject to approval by the Shareholders' Committee.

The Members were advised that, due to the ongoing global pandemic, the plan served as a direction of travel due to the venues having been instructed to remain closed. As a reopening date had not been received by the NI Executive, assumptions had been made that the full opening date, in line with the end of furlough and current booked business, would be 1st October 2021.

The Members of the Committee recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive would exercise her delegated authority to approve the draft BWUH Ltd. Business Plan 2021/22.

**Casual Workers - Verbal update**

The Director of Finance and Systems provided the Committee Members with an update on the outcome of the consultation which had taken place with casual staff Members of the ICC Belfast/BWUH Ltd.

He outlined that a number of staff members had accepted permanent contracts, with the others having chosen to remain as casual employees.

A number of Members welcomed the outcome.

The Members noted the update.

**Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee**  
**Monday, 2nd August, 2021**

**Extension of Board Directors' Contracts**

The Director of Economic Development advised the Members that an extension was sought for three existing ICC BWUH Directors' contracts, to 31st August, 2022, in order to accommodate the acceleration and growth of the business when emerging from COVID19.

He explained that, given the ongoing impact of COVID-19, a recruitment exercise for Directors was still not possible.

The Board Directors concerned were Mr. A. Dixon, Mr. R. Holt and Mr. P. McClughan.

The Members of the Committee recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive would exercise her delegated authority to approve the extension of the three existing ICC BWUH Directors' contracts to 31st August, 2022.

**Capital and Maintenance Update**

The Director of Economic Development reminded the Members that a number of major capital projects had been identified at the Waterfront, including escalator replacement, replacement of the chiller units and works to the roof.

He explained that work was ongoing by Council officers to look at all of those works but that, currently, only the escalator replacement had agreed capital financing in place.

The Members noted that the replacement of the escalators had previously been agreed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, where a budget of £900,000 had been allocated in principle for the replacement of two sets of escalators (ground to first floor and first floor to second floor). In April the Committee was advised that tenders had been returned and that contract negotiations were on-going with the contractor nominated for appointment. In addition, the Committee was also advised that the scope of the project had been increased to incorporate the replacement of all six escalators. Following successful negotiations, the contract had now been awarded.

In relation to the replacement of the chiller units, the Council's and Waterfront's Facilities Teams were working closely with structural engineers to produce a practically deliverable solution. He reminded the Members that there was currently no capital financing associated with the project and that it would therefore be subject to the Council's capital governance processes, including the Oversight Group and the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

An options report was being prepared in relation to the roof works which were required and the Committee would be updated in due course. As with the replacement of the chiller units, there was currently no capital financing associated with the project and that it would therefore be subject to the Council's capital governance processes.

**Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee**  
**Monday, 2nd August, 2021**

A number of Members asked questions in relation to the works. A Member stated that they would like to receive a further update from the Director of Physical Programmes on the works required to the Waterfront at its next meeting.

In relation to ongoing maintenance, the Members were advised that monies had been agreed under non-recurrent capital funding for works at the Waterfront. This comprised £450,000 towards a toilet upgrade programme in the original Waterfront Hall and £45,000 for a proof of concept project to improve the efficiency and optimise the heating and cooling systems at the Waterfront Hall.

The Members noted the update and the monies which had been agreed under non-recurrent capital funding.

**Changes to BWUH Box Office**

The Chief Executive of ICC Belfast/BWUH Ltd. reminded the Committee Members that a review of the Entertainments business had been carried out in 2018, which had highlighted the growth in e-commerce buying behaviour and had identified an opportunity for growth in online sales.

She outlined the growth in online sales across all demographics and audiences.

The Members were advised that, in February 2020, the BWUH Board had reviewed the need to restructure the box office in line with business needs and the industry trend for online ticket sales. She outlined that it had been put on hold due to COVID-19 but that it was proposed that the business would review it in light of potential reopening and returning to business as usual.

She outlined a number of updates which had taken place in respect of the BWUH ticketing system. As restrictions lifted, she explained that the demand for tickets and level of customer enquiries had increased and with the upcoming return of live events, staff needed to be trained.

The Members were advised that an evaluation of the responsibilities of box office roles had been carried out, including gathering feedback from team members. She outlined that a benchmarking exercise against wider industry practices had identified that other entertainment venues, given the impact of COVID-19 and the significant increase in online purchasing, had closed their box office counters and, in some cases, their phone lines.

The Chief Executive of BWUH Ltd. outlined the proposed changes to the business. She also outlined the importance of a strong Customer Service team.

She outlined that there would be a formal process of meaningful consultation when proposals were still at a formative stage and that BWUH Ltd. would talk with Trade Union representatives and impacted individuals formally about any changes and would be seeking feedback on the proposals over the coming weeks.



**Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee**  
**Monday, 2nd August, 2021**

In response to a request from a Member, the Chief Executive of BWUH Ltd agreed to provide the Members of the Committee with updates in relation to the consultation process.

The Members noted the update which had been provided.

Chairperson

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## CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY FOR THE BREXIT COMMITTEE

**Date of Meeting:** 12th August, 2021

**Final CX Decision Register Published:** 17th August, 2021

**Recommendations Sent to CX:** 16th August, 2021

**Final Date For Call-in (10am):** 25th August, 2021

**CX's Comments Received:** 17th August, 2021

	Topic	Chief Executive's Decision	Subject to call-in
2	Update on NI Protocol	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to note the content of the report.	Yes
3	Legal Challenge to the NI Protocol	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to note the content of the report.	Yes
4	Shared Prosperity Fund Update	<p>In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• note the update on current issues set out below and in Appendix 1 regarding the potential impacts of the Shared Prosperity Fund on the Council and local government sector;</li><li>• agree that SOLACE NI are approached to commission Ekosgen to undertake a further position piece in relation to the Shared Prosperity Fund. This further work should expand on the earlier lobbying piece which Ekosgen produced, and set out the basis for local government to have a greater role in the future management and delivery of the Shared Prosperity Fund; and</li></ul>	Yes

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>agree that officers continue to engage with partners across the city, delivery organisations, central government colleagues and the new MCHLG offices to assess the likely impacts of the Shared Prosperity Fund, ensuring that the council and sectoral position is suitably articulated.</li> </ul>	
<b>5</b>	Port Health Update	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to note the content of the report.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>6</b>	Schedule of Meetings 2021	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to hold the September meeting of the Brexit Committee on its scheduled date of 9th September in remote format.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>7</b>	Future of Brexit Committee	In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to defer until the September meeting of the Brexit Committee, following discussion at the Party Group Leaders Forum, the Member-led proposal to widen the remit of the Brexit Committee to include responsibility for both the Shared Island Working Group and the International Relations Framework, which currently is under the remit of City Growth and Regeneration, with the purpose of implementing a new domestic and international relations strategy for the city.	<b>Yes</b>

Please note that the agenda/reports associated with the decisions listed above can be accessed on the app and on the web, via the following link: [Agenda for Brexit Committee on Thursday, 12th August, 2021, 5.15 pm](#)



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# Brexit Committee

Thursday, 12th August, 2021

## MEETING OF THE MEMBERS OF THE BREXIT COMMITTEE HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Baker (Chairperson); and  
Alderman Rodgers; and  
Councillors Brooks, Canavan, de Faoite,  
Flynn, Gormley, Hanvey, Kelly, Kyle, McKeown, Spratt and  
Walsh.

In attendance: Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;  
Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development;  
Mrs. N. Largey, Divisional Solicitor;  
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer;  
Mrs. K. McCrum, Democratic Services Officer; and  
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported on behalf of Aldermen Haire and Sandford, and Councillor Long.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 17th May were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st June.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

### **Update on NI Protocol**

The Divisional Solicitor presented the Committee with an update in respect of the following report:

#### **“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

**To update members following a briefing given by the Minister of State for N Ireland, Robin Walker, on the British Government position on the NI Protocol and future negotiations with the EU.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

The Members of the Committee are requested to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May 2021, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note the contents of the report and the Command Paper.

**3.0 Main Report**

**Background**

The British Government has taken the view that the NI Protocol is not working in its current form and has indicated that it wishes to work in partnership with the EU to make significant changes which it asserts will deliver more effectively on the core objectives of that agreement. The asserted basis for a revised arrangement is to enable goods to circulate more freely within the UK customs territory whilst ensuring compliance in respect of standards for those goods that are destined for the EU. The Government contend that this can be achieved without infrastructure or checks between N Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and thus measures would remain consistent with the Good Friday Agreement.

**Key Issues**

The Government contends that the NI Protocol is not functioning as it should to the extent that it would warrant triggering Article 16. The command paper sets out that the view that the Protocol has had profound impacts economically, socially, politically and commercially, noting that these are felt in the context of the current grace period with mitigations in place. To address these issues the paper sets out a position advocating for significant changes to be made to the Protocol that would achieve 'a new balance'.

The proposals principally focus on trade arrangements, thus there are no changes sought in the status of the Common Travel Area, the Single Electricity Market or Human Rights.

The key elements of the Command Paper are;

1. A new system of trader declarations regarding goods moving from the UK to Northern Ireland with registration required and transparency of supply chains. The UK would undertake to enforce such a scheme.
2. The system referred to at 1 would apply to sanitary and phytosanitary (agri-food) goods with the UK undertaking to enforce a



requirement for such goods to comply with EU standards if destined for the Republic of Ireland.

3. The current system dealing with live animals would be retained on the basis that they pose a greater risk.
4. A regime would be created for biosecurity in terms of the movement of certain plants but excepting seeds and plants destined for garden centres.
5. Greater flexibility in setting VAT and excise rates with safeguards that will prevent significant divergence on the island of Ireland.
6. A dual regulatory regime as regards product safety enabling goods compliant with either UK or EU standards to circulate in N Ireland. The UK would undertake to put in place legislation to provide for penalties on UK traders placing non-compliant goods on the EU market.
7. The Command paper takes the view that governance arrangements on the operation of the Protocol are inadequate. It proposes that these are reworked. In particular it takes the view that jurisdiction of the EU and the Court of Justice are unconstitutional and at odds with international law. It is proposed that an alternative treaty arrangement is put in place for dispute resolution.

**Financial & Resource Implications**

None.”

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

Not Applicable.”

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note the content of the report.

**Legal Challenge to the NI Protocol**

The Divisional Solicitor advised the Members of the Committee that update on the Judicial Review proceedings which had been lodged by a number of elected representatives on the basis that the NI protocol was contrary to the Act of Union and would affect the constitutional position of Northern Ireland.

She reported that the Court held that, whilst it was clearly a matter of public controversy but that the making of treaties and international foreign affairs were matters for government and not suitable for Judicial Review proceedings. The Court also found that it was within the margin of appreciation for the UK Government enter into the Agreement and put the various provisions in place, and therefore found no issue with how the UK Government had acted. She added that the Court had dismissed all the grounds of challenge and that an appeal had been lodged, the proceedings of which would be heard in the autumn.

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note the content of the report.

**Shared Prosperity Fund Update**

The Director of Economic Development presented the Committee with an update in respect of the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

**To provide Members with an update in relation to EU Replacement Funding, and the emerging issues which need to be considered as a council and the wider local government sector.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**The Members of the Committee are requested to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May 2021, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority, to:**

- **note the update on current issues set out below and in Appendix 1 regarding the potential impacts of the Shared Prosperity Fund on the Council and local government sector;**
- **agree that SOLACE NI are approached to commission Ekosgen to undertake a further position piece in relation to the Shared Prosperity Fund. This further work should expand on the earlier**

- lobbying piece which Ekosgen produced, and set out the basis for local government to have a greater role in the future management and delivery of the Shared Prosperity Fund; and
- agree that officers continue to engage with partners across the city, delivery organisations, central government colleagues and the new MCHLG offices to assess the likely impacts of the Shared Prosperity Fund, ensuring that the council and sectoral position is suitably articulated.

### 3.0 Main report

#### Background

Members will be aware of the UK government plans to replace European Union 'structural funds' with a new Shared Prosperity Fund, due to launch in April 2022. As a member of the EU, the UK received substantial transfers from the EU budget as structural funds. These formed a central part of the EU commitment to support sustainable development and reduce economic disparities between and within member states, and were used to fund employment and skills programmes, research and innovation, and direct support for business and infrastructure.

The two main structural funds that have operated in Northern Ireland are the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF). The two funds have slightly different profiles:

- The ERDF supported investment in innovation and research, information technology, small and medium-sized enterprises, and the promotion of a low-carbon economy. Spending under the ERDF in the UK was split roughly equally between capital (investment) and resource (programme) expenditure.
- The ESF supported employment-related projects and vocational skills training. Including support for programmes to support young people who are not in education, employment or training. ESF spending was categorised almost entirely as resource spending.

In 2014–20, the EU’s last seven-year budget cycle, the UK was allocated a total of €11 billion from these two funds. The three devolved nations received a larger amount of funding per person than England. From the ERDF and ESF combined in the 2014–20 cycle, England was allocated €7.1bn, or €130 per person; Scotland €940 million, or €180 per person; Northern Ireland €510m, or €280 per person; and Wales €2.4bn, or €780 per person.

During the last EU Funding programme Northern Ireland received in the region of 4.8% of the UK’s allocated funding. However, under the recent Community Renewal funding, which has been badged as a pre-cursor to the Shared Prosperity Fund, Northern Ireland received an allocation of around 3% linked to our population figure within the UK. If this approach was to continue with the Shared Prosperity Fund, this would represent a significant loss in terms of replacement funding. This is an area that we need to be well-positioned as a council and sector to work with colleagues in the regional government departments, to argue that there should be no reduction to the previous funding levels through the introduction of the Shared Prosperity Fund.

#### The European Social Fund (ESF)

The European Social Fund (ESF) will come to an end in 2023. ESF funding is managed by DfE and much of the funding is administered through an open call. The fund provides support for a range of employability support interventions, largely aimed at those who are hardest to help (e.g. economically inactive, long term unemployed) and those that require specific support e.g. disabled individuals.

Over the last four years, 32 ESF projects in Belfast have been resourced to a level of £85million.

The volume of support provided by these organisations – and the significant structural challenges in the Belfast labour market that has been exacerbated by COVID-19 mean that the withdrawal of ESF will have a significant indirect impact on Belfast City Council.

Given our commitment through the Recovery Plan, the work of the Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission and the recent agreement to establish Labour Market Partnerships to focus on supporting the development of an inclusive economy, any reduction in engagement and support for the most vulnerable groups will make it more challenging to deliver on that commitment. Having said that, officers are of

the view that the current open call approach to addressing these labour market challenges and supporting those groups is not the best way to make an impact and this is borne out by the stubbornly high levels of economic inactivity and unemployment amongst key demographics that have not been impacted by the significant levels of investment to date.

**European Social Fund – current status**

ESF projects are currently in year 4 of a 4-year funding agreement, with an end date of March 2022. Earlier this year, DfE confirmed that they were going to be able to extend the funding to existing projects for one more year and they began the planning work on the ESF successor fund. In May 2021, DfE subsequently confirmed that they would not be able to undertake the project extension support and that they would have to issue a new call for funding.

**Future delivery options for Shared Prosperity Fund**

If the UK Government maintains its approach of engaging directly through MCHLG with councils in terms of future delivery of the Shared Prosperity Fund, we will need to consider carefully as a sector whether the capacity exists to take on this role and what the best delivery mechanisms would be to fulfil our own strategic objectives in managing this funding to address local need within our areas.

Members will be aware that Labour Market Partnerships are to be established in each council area. The Partnership is tasked with developing a local plan to address the key employability challenges and resources are allocated to support delivery of targeted interventions. The initial plan for Belfast currently in draft form for discussion with DfC will attract funding of up to £1.4million annually against a range of targeted interventions (overall regional budget is £7million). Going forward, funding will be allocated on a three-year cycle, taking account of the need for longer-term planning on these issues.

The current plan includes a significant investment to support LTU/economically inactive and the intention is to commission this support with input from both the Jobs and Benefits Office (JBO) staff and our employability stakeholder network and this has the potential to create a template for how employability support might be provided for key target groups in the future. However, the scale of investment is significantly smaller than the current ESF budget allocation and will not be able to be used to support all the organisations in the way that the current open call process has been able to do.

While there appears to be limited information available on the shape and scale of the Shared Prosperity Fund, there is an opportunity to engage with MHCLG to explore how the Labour Market Partnerships may become a conduit for targeting resources at a local level to address long-standing employability challenges and support the “levelling up” agenda. The added value of the LMPs is that they have direct departmental support and buy-in from both DfE and DfC and they also have support across other parts of government – including DoJ and DoH.

Each of the Labour Market Partnerships must complete a strategic assessment of the local labour market as part of their action plan development work with DfC and this provides an independent assessment of need against which interventions can be developed or activities commissioned. It is also important to note that, traditionally, DfE has used ESF to fund some apprenticeship delivery.

However, the employability element of the EU funds is only one part of the overall budget commitment. Funds allocated through ERDF and Rural Development Funding will have a more wide-ranging impact on support for businesses as well as rural diversification activities. On ERDF, it is clear that the reductions in funding will also have a significant impact on Invest NI and their ability to support local companies. The scope of the eligible expenditure extends beyond councils and, while we need to present a business case for continued investment from the replacement funds, this is likely to be part of a wider package of delivery, some of which will fall outside of the vires of the council.

For these reasons officers are seeking to engage Eskogen via SOLACE to expand on the earlier lobbying piece which Ekosgen produced, and set out the basis for local government to have a greater role in the future management and delivery of the Shared Prosperity Fund to ensure that the council and sectoral position is suitably articulated

It is envisaged that this position will allow officers continue to engage with partners across the city, delivery organisations, central government colleagues and the new MCHLG offices.

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

None associated with this report.

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

**None associated with this report.**

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:

- note the update on current issues set out in the report and in Appendix 1 regarding the potential impacts of the Shared Prosperity Fund on the Council and local government sector;
- agree that SOLACE NI be approached to commission Ekosgen to undertake a further position piece in relation to the Shared Prosperity Fund. This further work should expand on the earlier lobbying piece which Ekosgen had produced, and set out the basis for local government to have a greater role in the future management and delivery of the Shared Prosperity Fund; and
- agree that officers continue to engage with partners across the city, delivery organisations, central government colleagues and the new MCHLG offices to assess the likely impacts of the Shared Prosperity Fund, ensuring that the council and sectoral position is suitably articulated.

**Update on Port Health**

The Director of City Services reported that the Council, through Solace, was being represented on a board of governance, together with DAERA, to hold discussions around the command paper and garner further understanding with regard to grace period deadlines. She advised the Members that the grace period would most likely be extended, however, negotiations were continuing.

She reported that the EU Audit had taken place at the end of June with EU auditors and DAERA officials and informed the Members that the audit report would not be issued to the UK Government until late August, however, initial feedback regarding the understanding of the complexities with paperwork and processes had been positive.

She advised the Members that Port Health recruitment was ongoing and that retention of staff had been an issue due to the nature of shift working and other positions becoming available within the field of expertise. The Director added that it was estimated that new facilities would be in place in 2023.

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note the content of the report.

**Brexit Committee,  
Thursday, 12th August, 2021**

**Schedule of Meetings 2021**

The Chairperson reported to the Members of the Committee that, in order to facilitate in-person Committee meetings from September, the Great Hall was to be used as the venue in the City Hall. However, some conflict had arisen with regard to events which had been booked to use the Great Hall and the Committee schedule.

He advised the Members that an alternative date had been identified for the September meeting of the Brexit Committee or that, alternatively, the meeting could take place on the scheduled date of 9th September, but in remote format.

Following discussion, the Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to hold the September meeting of the Brexit Committee on its scheduled date of 9th September in remote format.

**Future of the Brexit Committee**

The Divisional Solicitor advised the Committee that this was to be considered at the Party Group Leaders' Forum at its meeting in August, and subsequently, a full report would be presented to the Members of the Brexit Committee at its meeting in September. She asked that the Members of the Committee share their views on the future of the Committee with the City Solicitor in advance of the Party Group Leader meeting or raise them prior to that date with their Party Group Leaders.

**Proposal**

Moved by Councillor Gormley,  
Seconded by Councillor Walsh,

That the remit of the Brexit Committee be widened to include responsibility for both the Shared Island Working Group and the International Relations Framework, which currently is under the remit of City Growth and Regeneration, with the purpose of implementing a new domestic and international relations strategy for the city.

**Amendment**

Moved by Councillor Flynn,  
Seconded by Councillor de Faoite,

That the Committee agrees to defer until the September meeting of the Brexit Committee, following discussion at the Party Group Leaders Forum, the proposal to widen the remit of the Brexit Committee to include responsibility for both the Shared Island Working Group and the International Relations Framework, which currently is under the remit of City Growth and Regeneration, with the purpose of implementing a new domestic and international relations strategy for the city.



**Brexit Committee,  
Thursday, 12th August, 2021**

The Committee proceeded to vote on the proposal. However, following discussion, the Committee agreed to adjourn for short period to seek advice on the correct procedure.

Following, the recommencement of the meeting, the Senior Democratic Services Officer advised the Committee that the correct procedure was for the Committee to vote firstly on the amendment and, as there had been a procedural error, that the Committee should restart the vote taking the amendment first.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and, accordingly, proceeded to vote on the amendment.

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

The amendment was put as the substantive motion and passed.

Chairperson

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## **Triple Lock Guarantee**

Proposed by Alderman Copeland,

Seconded by Alderman Rodgers,

“As the Chair of the Reference Group on Older People, I am deeply concerned at the consequences for local pensioners, should the Government move to end the State Pension “Triple Lock Guarantee”, which was introduced in 2010 to inflation proof the UK state pension.

Accordingly, the Council agrees to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, requesting him to honour the “Triple Lock Guarantee”, thereby ensuring the real time, real value of the State Pension.

The Council is aware of other proposed reforms which may be used to camouflage a diluting of the” State Pension Triple Lock Guarantee”. This is not acceptable.”

**(To be debated by the Council)**

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## **NHS Pay**

Proposed by Councillor Matt Collins,

Seconded by Councillor Michael Collins,

This Council notes with concern the 3% pay offer set to be made to health workers. This offer falls way short of satisfying the health union's demands for a substantial pay uplift.

Our health workers deserve a real pay increase for their efforts throughout the pandemic. A 3% pay increase is only 1% above the UK inflation rate and is not nearly enough recognition for health staff and their efforts in these difficult times.

The Council notes that this offer comes at a time when health workers are under considerable strain, with Northern Ireland currently struggling with one of the highest Covid -19 death rates across the world.

The Council also notes with concern the recent reports of understaffing in our health service, with 1,800 nursing positions currently vacant in the North, while a further 1000 vacancies exist in the social work and domiciliary care sector.

In order to retain a vibrant and world class health service, we must reward staff for the vital work which they carry out. Pay disparity with other jurisdictions has left many seeking employment elsewhere and low pay has contributed to staff resigning from the profession altogether.

The pandemic has shown how vital our health service is. Yet many NHS staff still suffer poverty wages and continue to be paid less when compared with other regions in the UK.

The Council resolves to write to Health Minister Robin Swann and the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister, urging them to not implement the planned offer of 3%, for health workers and implores the Executive to explore ways to fund a more substantial pay uplift for health workers here.

The Council also resolves to convene a cross party meeting with Political Parties in Belfast City Council and Trade Unionists in the Health service, to discuss the urgent need for a more substantial pay uplift for NHS staff, and the practical steps which can be taken to achieve this.

**(To be debated by the Council)**

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## **A Changing Places toilets policy for Belfast City Council**

Proposed by Councillor McMullan

Seconded by Councillor Mulholland

Changing Places are specialised toilet facilities which make public places and spaces accessible and inclusive for everyone, including children, adults and older people with complex needs or mobility issues.

Where they are not provided, people are changed on a toilet floor, which is dangerous, unhygienic and undignified. Without them, people may be excluded entirely from certain public spaces.

The Council notes its commitment in the Belfast Agenda to deliver an accessible City for all and its unanimous support for a COVID-19 response and recovery inclusive of disabled people, older people and carers in July, 2020.

It further recognises the importance of Changing Places toilets in delivering our vision of an accessible and inclusive Belfast.

The Council notes that Building Regulations in Northern Ireland only require standard accessible toilets to be provided. Despite discussion to add Changing Places toilets to these regulations, there is currently no requirement for these facilities. As a result of this, Changing Places are not usually provided as a matter of course- even in new buildings.

This Council will, therefore, develop a Changing Places toilet facility policy for Belfast City Council, with input from disabled people, older people and carers, to include the following:

The Council will commit to include a Changing Places facility in every new building in which the public will have access to its services and where public toilet provision is available for others.

The Council will also make every effort to include Changing Places facilities when it extends or extensively refurbishes an existing Council-owned building. These schemes will be considered on a case-by-case basis at the early stages of feasibility/design to establish whether there is an opportunity to install a Changing Places.

It will review where such facilities could be installed on the Council Estate (e.g. playgrounds) and put a plan in place to ensure that all inclusive playgrounds are equipped with such a facility.

It will ensure that organisers of all large-scale public events (e.g. concerts, festivals, family days) with a license from the Council will have a fixed or portable Changing Places unit as part of the design of the event.

Where the Council is organising a large public event, it should be considered if it can take place at a venue that already has a Changing Places facility and include a mobile/portable facility, if a permanent Changing Places toilet is not available.

For smaller public events, these should be advertised early and adequately communicated with the option to request access to a Changing Places facility whereupon they can be moved or have a mobile/portable facility provided.

**(To be referred directly to the  
Strategic Policy and Resources Committee)**

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## **The Right of Nature**

Proposed by Councillor Smyth,

Seconded by Alderman Copeland,

“This Council notes the legal and social movement globally for the ‘Rights of Nature’, which aims to strengthen protections for people, place and planet.

It believes that ‘Rights of Nature’ can help inspire an innovative rethinking about how to create regenerative, not extractivist, economies while also making human and other living communities safer, stronger and more resilient.

The positive work already being done by Council staff and groups on the climate emergency and biodiversity crises are commendable, but we recognise the need for a rights-based approach to nature.

It is proposed, that over the next twelve months, the Council will collaborate with civic society to explore what rights of nature mean for the people and economies of the region and to investigate how Rights of Nature could be expressed in community plans, corporate plans, improvement objectives and other strategic frameworks. In particular, the Council will, in the next twelve months, hold community workshops and work with the local community and stakeholders to draw up a Declaration for the Rights of Nature for the City, to be brought back before the Council for adoption.

It is also requested that a report, authored in collaboration and with input from the local community be brought to the Council in relation to embedding ‘Rights of Nature’ as a keystone concept into the Council’s operational practices, planning processes and long-term decision making.

Mindful of our mutual environmental obligations under the Espoo Convention, we call on all councils in Northern Ireland to also explore ‘Rights of Nature’ for their Council areas.”

**(To be referred directly to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee)**

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## **Bonfire Procedures**

Proposed by Councillor Beattie,

Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin

“After multiple incidents, including the tragic incident in Ballysillan on 11th July, this Council agrees to remove all bonfire materials from Belfast City Council assets, unless permission has been granted through an application process.

A bonfire application must include:

- permission being requested by a constituted organisation;
- a Risk assessment provided by the applicant and agreed with the PSNI, Fire Service and landowner (BCC);
- Public Liability Insurance;
- an Event Management Plan;
- a commitment to ensuring that there will be no burning of any toxic materials (e.g. tyres);
- an Entertainments Licence;
- the demonstration of sufficient consultation with local residents; and
- a site cleansing plan.

In addition:

- The display or burning of offensive materials such as flags, emblems, effigies, and posters will not be permitted and a commitment must be provided. Any breaches will impact upon future applications; and
- Bonfire Beacons will be preferred, unless an applicant can demonstrate the necessity and safety of a non-structured bonfire.

Any failure to follow an open, transparent, robust and successful application procedure for a bonfire will result in the Council requesting the support of the PSNI to provide protection to our contractors for the removal of materials.

Applications must be received three months before a planned event.”

**(To be referred directly to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee)**

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## **A Four-Day Working Week**

Proposed by Councillor Garrett,

Seconded by Councillor Murphy,

“Over the course of the Covid-19 pandemic, businesses and workers have re-evaluated and re-assessed the issue of work life balance and productivity.

It has been almost 100 years since Trades Unions secured workers the right to a weekend and it is important that, as part of the economic recovery, we consider how we can modernise the working arrangements to the benefit of workers and employers.

There are numerous examples from across the world where a four-day working week has been successfully trialled, leading to increases in positivity and an improved work life balance.

The latest trial from Iceland has been hailed as an 'overwhelming success', with productivity remaining unchanged or actually going up and the health and wellbeing of workers improving significantly.

The Council agrees, therefore, to work alongside Trades Unions and other relevant bodies, to bring forward a plan within twelve months to implement a trial under review within our own Council workforce, based on best international examples and practices elsewhere.

The Council agrees also that progress and implementation reports be presented to the Council on a quarterly basis, to support and inform any policies being progressed within the Department for Economy or other relevant bodies elsewhere.”

**(To be referred directly to the  
Strategic Policy and Resources Committee)**

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