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BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

SUMMONS TO ATTEND THE MONTHLY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

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

Notice is hereby given that the monthly meeting of the Council will be held in the Council Chamber, City Hall, Belfast and Remotely via Microsoft Teams on Monday, 4th October, 2021 at 6.00 pm, for the transaction of the following business:

1. Summons
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Minutes of the Council (Pages 1 - 14)
5. Official Announcements
6. Request to Address the Council

To consider a request to address the Council from the Women's Support Network, in relation to the Motion to be proposed by Councillor Heading – "Universal Credit".

7. Minutes
 - a) Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (Pages 15 - 88)
 - b) Delegated Decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee 20th August: Minute Standards and Business Committee (Pages 89 - 106)
 - c) Appointment of Members to the Standards and Business Committee (Pages 107 - 108)
 - d) People and Communities Committee (Pages 109 - 140)
 - e) City Growth and Regeneration Committee (Pages 141 - 196)
 - f) Licensing Committee (Pages 197 - 208)
 - g) Planning Committee (Pages 209 - 228)
 - h) Brexit Committee (Pages 229 - 232)
8. Motions
 - a) Road Safety Review (Pages 233 - 234)
 - b) Electric Charging Ports (Pages 235 - 236)
 - c) Universal Credit (Pages 237 - 238)
 - d) Tsar for the Holylands Area (Pages 239 - 240)

- e) Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay (Pages 241 - 242)
- f) York Street Interchange Project (Pages 243 - 244)
- g) Belfast City Night life and Night-time Economy (Pages 245 - 246)
- h) Environmentally Sustainable Event Spaces (Pages 247 - 248)
- i) Staff on Temporary Contracts (Pages 249 - 250)
- j) Community Wealth Building (Pages 251 - 252)

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

Suzanne Wylie

Chief Executive

Council

MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the City Hall and also remotely, via Microsoft Teams, on
Wednesday, 1st September, 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 Copeland, Dorrian, Kingston, McCoubrey,
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, McAllister, McAteer,
McCabe, McCullough, McDonough-Brown,
McKeown, McLaughlin, McMullan, McReynolds,
Mulholland, Murphy, Newton, O'Hara, Pankhurst,
Smyth, Verner and Walsh.

Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported on behalf of Councillors McCusker, Spratt and Whyte.

Declarations of Interest

The Deputy Lord Mayor (Aldermen Haire) and Councillors Brooks, Flynn, M. Kelly, McMullan and McReynolds declared an interest in relation to the decision of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th August, under the heading "Community Diversionary Festivals Programme", on the basis that they were on the Board of the Eastside Partnership, which had been recommended for funding. However, as that item did not become the subject of discussion, they were not required to leave the meeting.

Councillor McCabe declared an interest in relation to the decision of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th August, under the heading "Community Diversionary Festivals Programme", to refer issues which had been raised around the Wolfe Tones concert on the night of 15th August to the Party Group Leaders for further consideration, on the basis that she was employed by Féile An Phobail. However, as that item did not become the subject of discussion, she was not required to leave the meeting.

Councillors McKeown declared an interest in relation to the decision of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the People and Communities Committee

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of 10th August, under the heading “Partner Agreement – Ulidia Playing Fields”, on the basis that his son was a member of Rosario Youth Club, which had been recommended for additional funding. Councillor Smyth also declared an interest, on the basis that he was on the Steering Committee of Rosario Youth Club. However, as that item did not become the subject of discussion, they were not required to leave the meeting.

The High Sheriff (Councillor Long), Alderman Copeland and Councillors Carson, Corr, Flynn, Garrett, Hanvey, Heading, Kyle, M. Kelly, McKeown, McMullan, McReynolds, Pankhurst and Smyth declared an interest in relation to the motion on NHS Pay, in that they either worked for or had a family member who worked for the National Health Service, and left the meeting whilst the motion was being discussed.

The following Members declared an interest in relation to the decision of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the People and Communities Committee of 10th August, under the heading “Community Provision Grant Funding 2021/22”:

- Alderman Kingston - on the Board and a Trustee of the Greater Shankill Partnership;
- Councillor Black - managed Grosvenor Community Centre;
- Councillor Canavan - on the Board of the Greater Shankill Partnership;
- Councillor Corr – employed by Falls Community Council;
- Councillor Donnelly – employed by the Upper Springfield Development Trust;
- Councillor Gormley - on the Board of the Lower Ormeau Residents’ Action Group;
- Councillor Hutchinson - on the Board of the Greater Shankill Partnership; and
- Councillor Verner - an employee of the Greater Shankill Partnership.

However, as that item did not become the subject of discussion, they were not required to leave the meeting.

Minutes of the Council

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

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Monthly meeting and the Special meetings of 1st July be taken as read and signed as correct.

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Request for Meeting

At the request of Councillor Heading, the Chief Executive confirmed that officers would again contact CAPITA, on behalf of the Lord Mayor, to invite representatives to meet with an all-Party delegation from the Council to discuss Capita's handling of the Personal Independent Payment assessment process and that the issue would be progressed through the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Official Announcements

Afghanistan

The Lord Mayor referred to the recent disturbing events in Afghanistan and welcomed the announcement by the First and Deputy First Ministers that the Northern Ireland Executive would do everything within its power to settle Afghan refugees in Northern Ireland. She added that the Council would also work with its partners to ensure that those who may settle in the City were assured of their safety and fully supported in rebuilding their lives.

Request for Meeting

The Lord Mayor drew the Council's attention to a letter which she had received from Miss Ragda Dawood, an eighteen-year-old who had, in 2020, moved with her family from Yemen to Belfast. Miss Dawood had, in stating her ambition to study medicine, highlighted the difficulties which she and similar newcomers had faced in trying to understand and access the education system in Northern Ireland.

The Lord Mayor confirmed that she had agreed to meet with Miss Dawood to discuss those difficulties in greater detail and that all Members would be invited to attend that meeting.

Expressions of Sympathy

The Lord Mayor, on behalf of the Council, extended her condolences to Councillor Heading on the recent death of his mother.

At the request of Alderman Rodgers, the Lord Mayor agreed to forward a letter of condolence to the family of Mr. George Haffey, a former Belfast City Councillor, who had died recently.

Change of Membership on Committee

The Chief Executive reported that the Democratic Unionist Party had confirmed that Alderman McCoubrey would be replacing Councillor Pankhurst on the People and Communities Committee.

The Council noted the change.

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Decisions of the Chief Executive taken under Delegated Authority

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Moved by Councillor Groogan,
Seconded by Councillor Walsh,

- i. 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 and the minutes of the meeting of the Members of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th August, subject to the omission of the minute under the heading "Update on Standards and Business Committee", which was subject to call-in and is not before the Council for approval and adoption, and those matters which are delegated to the Committee, be approved and adopted;
- ii. Resolved - That the minute of the meeting of the Members of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th August, under the heading "Assets Management", be ratified by the Council, now that the enabling legislation permitting the holding of remote Committee meetings has been put in place; and
- iii. Resolved - That the minutes of the special meetings of 11th and 23rd June and 2nd August be noted by the Council.

Amendment

Moved by Alderman Kingston,
Seconded by Alderman Copeland and

Resolved - That the decision of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th August, under the heading "Requests for Use of the City Hall and the Provision of Hospitality", be amended to reflect that the Council agrees to accede to a request for the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK to be granted the use of the City Hall and provided with a drinks reception on 21st September, to mark the hosting of the British Islands and Mediterranean Regions Parliamentary Associations Conference in Belfast, subject to all relevant criteria being met.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendment, 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 20th August, subject to the omission of the minute under the heading "Update on Standards and Business Committee", which was subject to call-in, and those matters which were delegated to the Committee, were approved and adopted.

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**Appointment of Members to the Standards and
Business Committee and Positions of Responsibility - Year 3**

The Council noted that, since the decision of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th August, under the heading "Update on Standards and Business Committee", had been subject to a valid call-in requisition, this item had been withdrawn from the agenda.

Minutes of People and Communities Committee

Moved by Councillor Cobain,
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 People and Communities Committee and the minutes of the meetings of the Members of the People and Communities Committee of 3rd and 10th August, be approved and adopted.

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Moved by Councillor Murphy,
Seconded by Councillor O'Hara and

Resolved - 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 and the minutes of the meeting of the Members of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 11th August, be approved and adopted.

Just Eat Belfast Bikes Strategic Review

Moved by Councillor Murphy,
Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin and

Resolved – That, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the decision of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the City Growth and Regeneration Committee and the minute of the meeting of the Members of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 9th June, 2021, under the heading "Just Eat Belfast Bikes Strategic Review", which was called in, be referred back to the Committee for review, given the opinion of the call-in, in terms of equality screening.

Licensing Committee

Moved by Councillor Donnelly,
Seconded by Councillor McCabe, and

Resolved – That, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the decisions of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for

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the Licensing Committee and the minutes of the meeting of the Members of the Licensing Committee of 18th August, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Planning Committee

Moved by Councillor Carson,
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 Planning Committee and the minutes of the meeting of the Members of the Planning Committee of 17th, 19th and 24th August, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

**Belfast Waterfront and Ulster
Hall Shareholders' Committee**

Moved by Councillor McCabe,
Seconded by Councillor Mulholland and

Resolved - That, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the decisions of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee and the minutes of the meeting of the Members of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee of 2nd August, be approved and adopted.

Brexit Committee

Moved by Councillor Baker,
Seconded by Councillor T. Kelly and

Resolved - That, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the decisions of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the Brexit Committee and the minutes of the meeting of the Members of the Brexit Committee of 12th August, be approved and adopted.

Motions

Triple Lock Guarantee

In accordance with notice on the agenda Alderman Copeland proposed:

“As the Chair of the Reference Group on Older People, I am deeply concerned at the consequences for local pensioners, should the

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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.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Hutchinson.

At the request of Councillor Heading, the proposer agreed to insert the following paragraph at the end of her motion:

“The Council also notes the Government’s decision to cut the Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit uplift and reiterates its call for the uplift to be retained.”

The motion, as amended, was thereupon put to the Council and passed as follows:

“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.

The Council also notes the Government’s decision to cut the Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit uplift and reiterates its call for the uplift to be retained.”

NHS Pay

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor Matt Collins proposed:

“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 unions’ demands for a substantial pay uplift.

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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 1,000 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 the Minister of Health, 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.

The motion was seconded by Michael Collins.

At the request of Councillor McLaughlin, the proposer agreed to replace the penultimate paragraph of his motion with the following:

“The Council resolves to write to the Health Minister, Robin Swann, calling upon him to refuse to bring forward the 3% pay offer, urging him, alongside the First and Deputy First Ministers, to lobby the British Government to award a substantial offer and asking him to bring forward proposals on safe staffing.”

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The motion, as amended, was thereupon put to the Council and passed as follows:

“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 unions’ 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 1,000 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 the Health Minister, Robin Swann, calling upon him to refuse to bring forward the 3% pay offer, urging him, alongside the First and Deputy First Ministers, to lobby the British Government to award a substantial offer and asking him to bring forward proposals on safe staffing.

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.”

A Changing Places Toilets Policy for Belfast City Council

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor McMullan proposed:

“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.

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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

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Changing Places facility whereupon they can be moved or have a mobile/portable facility provided.”

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.

The Rights of Nature

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor Smyth proposed:

“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.”

The motion was seconded by Alderman Copeland.

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

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Bonfire Procedures

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor Beattie proposed:

“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.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor McLaughlin.

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

A Four-Day Working Week

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor Garrett proposed:

“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.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Murphy.

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, 24th September, 2021

MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AND
REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

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, McAllister, McDonough-Brown,
McLaughlin, Murphy, Pankhurst and Walsh.

In attendance: Mrs. S. Wylie, Chief Executive;
Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources;
Mr. J. Walsh, City Solicitor;
Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;
Ms. C. Matthews, Director of City Services (Resources
and Fleet);
Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;
Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational
Strategy;
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 Councillor McReynolds.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 2nd and 20th August were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st September, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

Councillors Beattie and Lyons declared an interest in relation to agenda item 4(a) – Local Government Boundary Commissioner – Provisional Recommendations, insofar as it related to the boundary of the Harbour Ward, on the basis that they were on the Board of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners, and left the meeting for that part of the discussion.

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The High Sheriff, Councillor Long, declared an interest in relation to agenda item 4(e) – Modern Slavery Act 2015 – Proposed Corporate Action Plan and agenda item 8(a) – Response to Consultation on the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Bill, on the basis that they made reference to the Department of Justice, where his wife was the Justice Minister, and left the meeting whilst they were being presented.

The Chairperson (Councillor Groogan), together with Councillors Carson, Garrett and Murphy, declared an interest in relation to agenda item 2(g) – Assets Management, insofar as it related to Connswater Community Centre, on the basis that they were members of the Planning Committee and would be considering an application for the Centre, and left the meeting for that part of the discussion.

Restricted Items

The information contained in the reports associated with the following ten 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 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.

Residual Waste Contract Arrangements

The Director of City Services (Resources and Fleet) provided the Committee with details of the latest developments around the Council's residual waste disposal arrangements, in the context of the decision by Alpha Resource Management not to extend the existing arc21 contract for the provision of landfill disposal, post January 2022, under the existing terms and conditions. The Director sought the Committee's approval to implement an interim solution, pending the outcome of the arc21 interim residual waste treatment contract and in the longer term, the Residual Waste Treatment Project.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed:

- i. to recommend that arc21 enter into formal contractual negotiations with Biffa Waste Services Ltd. to deliver interim landfill arrangements for a period of six months, commencing on 1st February, 2022;
- ii. to transfer disposal arrangements to Biffa Waste Services Ltd., subject to negotiations reaching a satisfactory conclusion and the payment of the gate fee proposed within the report; and
- iii. that officers organise in the autumn a workshop for all Members on residual waste disposal and future options.

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The Committee agreed also that any new landfill contract awarded by arc21, in which the Council was a participant, would include a clause that waste would be pre-treated before it entered the ground.

Community Diversionary Festivals Programme

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 18th June, it had been agreed that the annual allocation of £500k for the Summer Community Diversionary Festival Programme be retained, with a view to delivering the Programme later in the year.

The Committee was 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 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 City 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 a preliminary assessment in advance of them being presented to the Committee. She confirmed that the only application which had been received by the latest deadline date of 10th September related to The Hubb, which had requested funding of £44,051.50. If approved, the Hubb's allocation would be capped at £44,000, which was the maximum amount which could be awarded for this project.

She provided details of the project and the assessment score and confirmed that, if approved, officers would provide the applicant with a funding agreement and terms of grant, similar to that which had been issued in 2019. There was, however, the potential, based on the final documentation submitted, for changes to be made to the proposed programme and/or a reduction in funding to ensure compliance with the relevant Council policies and procedures.

The Director added that, since all those groups which had received funding in 2019 had submitted an application for 2021, there would be no requirement for further submission dates.

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After discussion, it was

Moved by Alderman Kingston,
Seconded by Councillor Pankhurst,

That the Committee agrees to allocate up to a maximum of £44,000 to The Hubb to deliver its community diversionary festivals programme.

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

The Committee agreed also:

- i that, in accordance with Standing Order 48 (a) (2) (c), 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;
- ii 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 Hubb would remain subject to the negotiation of satisfactory terms and conditions of use, including any relevant fees, via an appropriate legal agreement to be 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.

Recruitment of Senior Posts

Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services

The Committee agreed that the selection panel for the re-advertised post of Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services would consist of the Chairperson of the Committee (or her nominee), Councillor Murphy (as the nominee of the Deputy Chairperson), Councillor Bunting, the Chief Executive and the Deputy Chief Executive.

Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 18th June, it had agreed that the selection panel for the post of Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty should

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comprise Councillor O'Hara (as the nominee of the Chairperson), Councillors McLaughlin and Pankhurst, the Chief Executive (or her nominee) and another Council Director.

The Committee was reminded further that, at its meeting on 20th August, it had 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. The Committee had noted that the Alliance Party would, in the first instance, seek to nominate a Member to sit on the selection panel.

The Chief Executive reported that the Alliance Party has also been unable to nominate a Member and confirmed that the Head of Human Resources had been appointed to the panel. Her appointment fulfilled the panel's requirements in terms of community background and gender balance.

The Committee noted the change in the membership of the panel.

Post of Chief Executive

The Committee noted that proposals would shortly be presented to the Party Group Leaders on the process for appointing a replacement for the current Chief Executive, who would be leaving her post early in 2022.

**City Regeneration - Institutional
Investment Expression of Interest**

The Chief Executive reminded the Members that reports had, in the past, been presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee around the strategic use of Council land assets to bring forward regeneration opportunities, including the potential for institutional investment to help drive regeneration at scale, as aligned to Belfast Agenda growth ambitions and the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy.

She reported that recent engagement with institutional investors and other cities had identified a number of partnership-based regeneration schemes between institutional investors and councils and referred, for example, to those in Bristol, Cardiff, Manchester and Newcastle. In addition, the recent Innovation and Growth Commission 'Reset for Growth' report had highlighted the need to create a re-imagined, liveable, mixed use city core, with a strong focus on quality residential schemes, and had emphasised the need for public bodies to engage actively with the market and with investment partners in order to deliver on this ambition.

In terms of progressing these discussions further, the Council had sought legal and professional commercial advice to establish a robust and compliant process to fully engage with the investment/development market, with a view to procuring a suitable partner to unlock the investment and regeneration potential which existed across a number of strategic assets in the city centre initially and to develop a partnership which could deliver on further regeneration across the city.

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The Chief Executive explained that the legal advice had included a thorough review of potential procurement routes and had proposed the following phased approach to engagement and evaluation:

Stage 1: Pre-soft market testing preparation

Stage 2: Soft market testing (to inform Stage 3)

Stage 3: Expressions of Interest stage

Stage 4: Evaluation

Stage 5: Appointment of preferred bidder and contract close

She pointed out that it was recognised that, to bring forward regeneration and development at scale, with a focus on housing regeneration, would require significant funding and stressed the importance of engaging with investment partners. Based on the legal and commercial advice, it was proposed that the Council proceed by way of a soft market testing exercise, followed by an expression of interest exercise, to determine investor/development partner interest. The soft market testing exercise would involve targeted engagement with identified potential institutional investors/strategic development partners in relation to the Council's identified sites. The feedback from this would inform the detail of the expression of interest exercise and help to understand the viability, scale and phasing potential, the nature of subsequent partnership/joint venture arrangements and investor requirements to bring forward development at scale. The proposed soft marketing testing and expression of interest process would not, she pointed out, bind the Council and the outcome of this exercise would be presented to the Committee before any decisions would be made.

The Chief Executive concluded by providing details of five sites which had been identified through the ongoing Strategic Site Assessment process and confirmed that those would be deemed suitable for inclusion in an initial development portfolio.

She then recommended that the Committee:

- i note the ongoing work in relation to the potential for adopting an institutional investor approach to the delivery of housing led placemaking regeneration;
- ii approve the proposed approach, commencing with an initial soft market testing exercise and a subsequent expression of interest exercise and note that it would receive a further detailed report upon the completion of the expression of interest exercise in order to inform next steps; and
- iii note the inclusion of Council property assets, as detailed within the report, as part of the initial soft market testing exercise.

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

City Hall Recovery Plan - Update on Progress

The Committee noted a report providing an update on the progress being made across each of the operational areas in implementing the City Hall Recovery Plan.

Consultation on Signage - Andersonstown, Lisnasharragh, Olympia and Templemore Leisure Centres – Options Paper

The City Solicitor submitted for the Committee's consideration a report presenting options for the language or languages to be used in naming and signage in those leisure facilities designated with a City-wide catchment.

He reminded the Committee that, in accordance with the decision taken at the special meeting of the Council on 11th October, 2019 around dual-language signage, a City-wide consultation had been undertaken, to inform the approach to be adopted in respect of Andersonstown, Lisnasharragh, Olympia and Templemore Leisure Centres, which were deemed to have a City-wide catchment. The Committee had subsequently, at its meeting on 24th January, 2020, granted approval to erect bilingual external naming and internal directional signage in Andersonstown Leisure Centre.

He reported that Mr. J. Kremer, an equality consultant, who had been commissioned by the Council, was in attendance to outline the findings of the consultation exercise.

Mr. Kremer reviewed the consultation methodology and provided details on the number of responses which had been received. In terms of the results, he confirmed that there had been overall support for bilingual naming, using English and Irish. However, where more local consultation had been undertaken, strong opposition and views had been expressed in relation to Lisnasharragh and Templemore Leisure Centres. In terms of Olympia Leisure Centre, the consultation had not provoked the same reaction at that time. However, he and Council officers had met subsequently with local community representatives who had expressed strong views against bilingual signage in English and Irish.

The City Solicitor pointed out that Mr. Kremer had met with officers from the Legal and Civic Services and the Physical Programmes sections to review the results of the consultation and the views which had been expressed by local communities and Party Group Leaders. In light of those, the following options had been drafted for the Committee's consideration:

1. to retain the current use of English only at the centres;
2. to use bilingual or some element of bilingual signage at the centres (English and Irish);
3. to use tri-lingual or some element of tri-lingual signage at the centres (English, Irish and Ulster-Scots);
4. to use multi-lingual or some element of multi-lingual signage at the Centres (English, Irish, Ulster-Scots and the language of the

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predominant new community in the City Council district, as informed by information on languages in new migrant communities in Belfast);

5. the use of pictorial signage is recommended;
6. to have a single sign at the point of entry (the main directional sign) in the formats suggested at options 2, 3 or 4, with the remaining signs in English and pictorial format, as a way of delivering balance;
7. it is recommended that the signage under consideration is wayfinding only.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Beattie,
Seconded by Councillor Murphy,

That the Committee agrees:

- i. to erect bilingual external naming and internal directional signage at Olympia Leisure Centre, with a report on the detail and appearance of that signage to be submitted to a future meeting;
- ii. that a report on linguistic accessibility at Lisnasharragh and Templemore Leisure Centres be submitted to a future meeting; and
- iii. that a multi-lingual welcome sign be erected in the entrance/reception area of all leisure centres.

Amendment

Moved by Alderman Kingston,
Seconded by Councillor Bunting,

That the Committee agrees to defer consideration of the linguistic signage to be erected at Olympia Leisure Centre to allow for further engagement to take place with the local community.

On a vote, six Members voted for the amendment and twelve against, with one “no vote” and it was declared lost.

The original proposal, which had been proposed by Councillor Beattie and seconded by Councillor Murphy, was then put to the meeting, when twelve Members voted for and six against, with one ‘no vote’, and it was declared carried.

The Committee agreed also to adopt the recommendation to proceed with pictorial signage.

Assets Management

The Director of Physical Programmes submitted for Committee's consideration a report seeking approval in relation to the following asset related disposal, acquisition and estate matters:

i. Land at Upper Whiterock Road

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of a recommendation to dispose of this site to Radius Housing Association to enable further discussions to take place around access to the Belfast Hills.

ii. Beechvale Farm

The Committee agreed to proceed with the disposal of approximately 108 acres of agricultural land and to retain the former farmhouse dwellings, outbuildings and surrounding land (circa 3 acres) and the remaining land (circa 22 acres) and access laneways.

(The Deputy Chairperson, Councillor Walsh, in the Chair.)

iii. Connswater Community Centre

The Committee agreed to grant to Sustrans a temporary licence to place a storage container on Council land at Severn Street, for an initial period of up to nine months, with the potential to extend the agreement for a further nine months thereafter.

(The Chairperson, Councillor Groogan, in the Chair.)

iv. Ormeau Park

The Committee agreed to grant a retrospective easement to the Department for Infrastructure which had, when placing a pedestrian crossing on the Ormeau Embankment, erroneously encroached onto Council land, close to the entrance to the Ormeau Park.

King George V Playing Fields

The Committee noted that this item had been withdrawn from the agenda.

**Belfast Destination Hub –
Update on Site Acquisition**

The Committee was provided with details of the revised programme for the delivery of the Belfast Destination Hub and, accordingly, adopted the recommendation within the report to:

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- i. approve the extension of the date for the payment of the remaining balance for Site 10 from 31st December, 2024 to 31st December, 2026; and
- ii. approve the corresponding proposal for the indexation of the final balance payment from 1st January, 2025.

Meanwhile Use in the City Centre

The minute for this item has been restricted due to commercial sensitivity. The restriction will be lifted in due course.

Matters referred back from Council/Motions

**Motion - A Changing Places Toilets
Policy for Belfast City Council**

The Committee was reminded that, at the Council meeting on 1st September, the following motion had been proposed by Councillor McMullan and 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.

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- 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.”

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

The Committee adopted the motion and agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting providing details on how it would be facilitated, resourced and managed.

Motion - Rights of Nature

The Committee was reminded that, at the Council meeting on 1st September, the following motion had been proposed by Councillor Smyth and 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.

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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."

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

Councillor Smyth spoke in favour of his motion, following which the Committee adopted the motion and agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting providing details on how it would be facilitated, resourced and managed.

Motion - Bonfire Procedures

The Committee was reminded that, at the Council meeting on 1st September, the following motion had been proposed by Councillor Beattie and 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;

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- 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.”

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

Amendment 1

Moved by Alderman Kingston,
Seconded by Councillor Bunting,

That Councillor Beattie’s motion be replaced with the following:

“This Council:

- recognises that July bonfires are a legitimate and long-standing tradition within the Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist community;
- supports all efforts to encourage self-regulation and responsible management of bonfires and beacons, free from hazardous or offensive material;
- will not support bonfires which pose a serious risk to property or life nor the burning of hazardous materials which pose a serious risk to health and/or the environment;

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- will work with local communities, elected representatives, collaborative networks and statutory partners to encourage safe and responsible bonfires, where these are locally wanted; and
- will continue to provide and to encourage the use of beacons in agreed managed circumstances where these are wanted by local communities as an alternative to a traditional bonfire.”

On a vote, six Members voted for the amendment and eleven against, with one “no vote”, and it was declared lost.

Amendment 2

Moved by the High Sheriff (Councillor Long),
Seconded by Councillor McDonough-Brown,

That Councillor Beattie's motion be replaced with the following:

“This Council will conduct an immediate review of the 2021 bonfire season, to be completed in time for the Committee meeting in November, to include Elected Representatives, statutory agencies and bonfire builders, in order to highlight issues which will need to be addressed.

The Council agrees to write to the Executive Office asking for the FICT report to be published, along with an action plan, as this will help inform the Council's view moving forward.”

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

Councillor Beattie's motion was then put to the meeting, when nine Members voted for and eight against, with one “no vote”, and it was declared carried.

The Committee noted that a report would be submitted to a future meeting providing details on how the motion would be facilitated, resourced and managed.

Motion - A Four-Day Working Week

The Committee was reminded that, at the Council meeting on 1st September, the following motion had been proposed by Councillor Garrett and 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.

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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.”

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

The Committee adopted the motion and agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting providing details on how it would be facilitated, resourced and managed.

**Quarterly Update on Motions/
Issues Raised in Advance**

The City Solicitor submitted for the Committee’s consideration the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the progress of all motions for which it is responsible.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is requested to:

- **note the updates on all motions for which it is responsible; and**
- **agree to the closure of 30 motions and Issues Raised in Advance, as outlined in paragraph 3.8 below.**

3.0 Main Report

Background

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- 3.1 Members will recall that the first update on motions was presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in March 2021.
- 3.2 This report provides an overview of the progress on those motions and Issues Raised in Advance which remained open following the March 2021 update and new motions which have been approved by the Committee since March 2021.

Motion Updates

- 3.3 There are currently 95 active motions and Issues Raised in Advance for which the Committee is responsible.

Closure of Motions and Issues Raised in Advance

- 3.4 At the SP and R Committee meeting on 20th November, it was agreed that motions could be closed for one of two reasons:

- Category 1
- Motions which contained an action that has been completed and recommend they are closed.

All motions within this category contained a specific task that has since been complete. It is worth noting that, when Committee agree to action a motion, there are sometimes additional actions agreed alongside the motion. As these are not technically part of the motion, they are taken forward through normal committee decision making processes. The motion can, therefore, be closed, but additional actions related to it will continue to be progressed and reported to the committee. These additional actions are not contained in this report but will be noted in the live database moving forward.

- Category 2

Motions which have become Council policy and recommend they are closed.

These motions did not contain a specific task that could be complete. Instead, they were more strategic in nature and required changes in Council policy and/ or strategy for long term outcomes. Those listed within this category have all been agreed by Committee and are now either Council policy or are currently being implemented through a Council strategy that is managed by a Standing Committee through the corporate planning process.

- 3.5 Following an update of those motions and Issues Raised in Advance on the live database, it is recommended that Members approve the following Motions/Issues for closure.

Category 1 Recommended Closures:

- No Grey Zone Campaign (Reference Number 10)

PCSP procured a 'Talking about Consent' project and advised that this project would include the PSNI's 'No Grey Zone' messaging. Work is ongoing by PCSP regarding talking about consent and the aspect regarding premises could be taken forward once our premises are being used fully post COVID-19. Lead Officer has advised once final meeting has been convened we will report back via PCSPs. The motion can be closed and work taken forward via PCSP partners.

- Support for People with a Gambling Addiction (Reference Number 53)

Letter sent. No responses received.

- Needle Exchange Facility (Reference Number 100).

PHA presented to the People and Communities Committee in June 2021 - this and related issues will be picked up in routine briefings on public health issues to Committee on a six-monthly basis. It is recommended that this motion is now closed.

- Addressing Hate and Intolerance across all our communities (Reference Number 101)

- Correspondence sent to TEO in November 20 regarding flexibility in funding and consideration of extension to the hate crime categories. Response reported to Shared City Partnership (SCP)/ SP&R Committee in March 21 – S75 is a matter reserved for Westminster and groups included in the hate crime categories can apply for GR funding if meeting T:BUC priorities. A number of projects are being considered through SCP and PCSP regarding Hate Crime, however, a number of projects have been funded through the Community Recovery Fund to reduce isolation among groups which are included in the hate crime legislation.

- Review of Housing Fitness Standards (Reference Number 103)

Response from Minister for Communities noted by S P and R 23/10/20

- Free car parking for health workers, patients and visitors (Reference Number 104)

Responses from Minister of Health and Minister for Infrastructure noted by SP and R 23/10/20

- Climate Change Act (Reference Number 105)

Response from DAERA Minister noted by the SP and R Committee 20/11/20. Climate legislation now in development and BCC will input when appropriate

- Moratorium on Licences for Fracking and Exploration of Fossil Fuels (Reference Number 111)

Responses from Minister for the Economy and Minister for Infrastructure noted by SP and R 20/11/20

- Funding for the Arts and Creative Industries (Reference Number 112)

Response from Minister for Communities noted by SP and R 20/11/20

- Job Retention Scheme (Reference Number 113)

Job Retention Scheme was extended beyond October 31st

- Implementation of Care Partner arrangements in Nursing and Care Homes (Reference Number 128)

Response from Minister of Health noted by SP and R 22/1/21

- Access to Maternity Wards for Birthing Partners (Reference Number 129)

Response from Minister of Health noted by SP and R 18/12/20

- Clean Air Strategy (Reference Number 132)

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Response from DAERA Minister noted by SP and R
18/12/20

- Invitation to President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Harris (Reference Number 134)

Letters issued

- Disability Strategy (Reference Number 142)

No specific actions for the Council to take forward

- Procurement - Employment Academy Framework (Reference Number 144)

Report noted by SP and R in January 2021. A 6-month review of impacts has been programmed in and will be reported to Committee to enable any adjustments to future plans

- Health and Social Care Workers: Thank You Payment (Reference Number 147)

Response from Minister of Health noted by S P and R
19/3/21

- Takeover of Private Healthcare (Reference Number 158)

Response noted by S P and R 19/3/21

Proposed Bank of Ireland Closures (Reference Number 166)

Letter sent 22/4/21 – Response noted by S P and R
21/5/21

- Support for Sign Languages Act and Addition of Sign Languages to School Curricula (Reference Number 170)

Letter sent 22/4/21 - Response noted by S P and R
21/5/21

- Equality for LGBTQI+ Community (Reference Number 173)

Letter sent 17/05/21 - Response noted by SP and R June 21

- Immediate need to tackle the waiting lists for Diagnosing Autism in Children (Reference Number 174)

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Amended letter sent 17/05/21 - Response noted by SP and R June 21

- **Charges for use of ATMs (Reference Number 175)**

Letter sent 17/05/21 - Response noted by SP and R August 21

- **Motion - Ban Conversion Therapy (Reference Number 177)**

Letter sent 17/05/21 - Response noted by SP and R June 21

- **Private Members Bill to provide Safe Access Zones (Reference Number 183)**

No specific actions required from Council in motion

- **The Employment Rights (NI) Order 1996 (Reference Number 184)**

No specific actions required from Council in motion

- **Request to the Irish Government and the UK (Reference Number 185)**

Letters sent 2/7/21

- **Ballymurphy Massacre (Reference Number 186)**

No specific actions required from Council in motion

- **End Child Poverty (Reference Number 188)**

No specific actions required from Council in motion

- **Transfer of Regeneration Powers to Local Authorities (Reference Number 191)**

Letters sent 22/7/2021 - Joint Response from DfC noted by S P and R 20/8/21

3.6 Additional information in relation to these motions and Issues Raised in Advance are attached.

3.7 Financial and Resource Implications

There are no additional financial implications required to implement these recommendations.

3.8 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

There are no equality, good relations or rural needs implications contained in this report.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues

**Local Government Boundary Commissioner –
Provisional Recommendations**

The Committee considered the following report and draft Council response to the Local Government Boundary Commissioner’s provisional recommendations on the review of local government boundaries in Northern Ireland:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the Local Government Boundary Commissioner’s Provisional Recommendations which are out for public consultation and to seek retrospective approval for the attached Council response which was provisionally approved by Party Leaders Consultative Forum on 16th September. The Commissioner had invited written feedback and suggestions by 21st September.**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- i. note the report;**
- ii. approve retrospectively the attached response to the Local Government Boundary Commissioner (which has been provisionally approved by Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum) on 16th September; and**
- iii. agree that officers make representations in line with this response on behalf of the Council at the public hearings scheduled for late September / early October**

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Background

On 27th July 2021 the Local Government Boundary Commissioner published the Provisional Recommendations for the Review of Local Government Boundaries in Northern Ireland. These Provisional Recommendations will now be the subject of public consultation. The closing date for written feedback and suggestions about these proposals is 21st September 2021.

The Commissioner's office has indicated that the process is about independently ensuring electoral equality and fairness across Northern Ireland, with the aim that all the wards within a district should, as far as possible, have a similar number of electors. The Statutory Rules governing the review are set out in the Local Government Act (Northern) Ireland Act 1972, as amended.

After the initial consultation period a series of 11 public hearings will be held in each council area facilitated by Assistant Commissioners. The public hearings, which will be subject to public health guidance at that time, will be held in late September and early October. To maximise public participation in the hearings, and to mitigate against any public health restrictions that may be in place, these events will be in a hybrid format allowing for both in person and online participation.

3.2 Previous Local Government Boundary Review – 2008

The previous Local Government Boundary review took place in 2008. At that time the Final Recommendations of the Local Government Boundary Commissioner (Dick Mackenzie) included the placement of the area containing Forestside shopping centre and the Castlereagh Council Civic HQ building within the new Belfast district boundary.

However, the NI Executive made amendments to the Final Recommendations which resulted in Forestside and the adjacent Castlereagh Council Civic HQs remaining within the new Lisburn and Castlereagh council area.

3.3 Local Government Boundary Review (2021 – 2022)

Provisional Recommendations – Belfast

On 27 July the Local Government Boundary Commissioner published the Provisional Recommendations for the Review of Local Government Boundaries in Northern Ireland.

District Boundary – Belfast

The LG Boundary Commissioner recommends that the district boundary line should remain unchanged.

Wards

The LG Boundary Commissioner recommends that Belfast district should remain comprised of 60 wards. The current electorate per ward (as at 4 January 2021) and proposed new electorate per ward have been circulated.

There has been some alteration to ward boundaries to satisfy the legislative requirement for each ward within the district to have substantially the same number of electors. There is a total of 230236 electors within the district which averages at 3837 electors per ward and the recommended changes are designed to balance the electorate across the district.

The ward boundary changes that have been proposed can be accessed by clicking:

[Belfast Wards](#)

3.4 Belfast City Council Response

(as provisionally approved by Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum on 16th September).

Wards

In line with previous decisions in relation to the Review of Local Government Boundaries in Northern Ireland, responses to the Commissioners recommendations in relation to ward boundaries will be left to individual parties. Parties are encouraged to examine the table at Appendix 1 and to review the map accessible at the link above.

District Boundary

Whilst the 2021 review recommends that the district boundary remains unchanged, Members will note that, in 2008, the Final Recommendations recommended that the area containing Forestside shopping centre and the Castlereagh Council Civic HQ building should reside within the new Belfast district boundary. However, the Council notes that the NI Executive did in fact amend the Final Recommendations of the Commissioner and included Forestside in the new LCCC district boundary.

Given the LG Boundary Commissioner's previous conclusions in respect of the Belfast district boundary, Members are asked to retrospectively approve the Belfast City Council response (attached at Appendix 2) asking the LG Boundary Commissioner to reassess the 2008 Final Recommendations with a view to placing the area containing Forestside within the Belfast district boundary as originally proposed in 2008.

The Council would argue that the principles upon which the 2008 recommendations were made and those features which the Commissioner determined to constitute 'readily identifiable boundaries' in respect of this area (namely the A55 Outer Ring Road and the upland topography in this area) have not changed.

The Council's response also highlights an issue with the district boundary as it pertains to the Harbour ward, and in particular the extension to the harbour which has resulted in part of the harbour infrastructure being outside of the district boundary. The Council would note that there is a further approved extension beyond the currently constructed area shown on the plans and request that the Commissioner, when considering any modification to the district boundary, may wish to take this into account also.

3.5 Financial and Resource Implications

No financial implications attached this report

3.6 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Implications

No good relations or equality implications attached to this report."

Local Government Boundaries Review in Northern Ireland

Provisional Recommendations

(September 2021)

BELFAST CITY COUNCIL SUBMISSION

Introduction

This submission in response to the Local Government Boundary Commissioner's Provisional Recommendations 2021-22 is made on behalf of Belfast City Council.

The Commissioner will wish to note that, as with previous decisions in relation to boundaries review in Northern Ireland, the Council have advised individual parties to submit their own responses to the recommendations, particularly in relation to proposed changes to ward boundaries.

The following Council response can be categorised into:

(i) General Points pertaining to broad issues concerning the Commission's approach to the identification of boundaries; and

(ii) Specific Points in relation to Belfast.

(i) General Points re Boundary Delimitation

A number of General Points on the approach to boundary delimitation can be distilled under the headings of (a) statutory parameters and (b) additional factors.

Statutory Parameters

Please note from the outset that the Council understands how the Commission has arrived at its recommendations, having regard to the statutory parameters it has to work within. In this respect, we understand that Belfast has to be equipped with a certain number of wards that falls within the range of 55 to 65. We appreciate that the Commission, in the desire to appear even-handed, would have a tendency to advocate the medium of this range, namely the 60-ward figure.

We also accept that a degree of interpretation has to be made in respect of what constitutes readily identifiable boundaries, in terms of the importance attached to physical features on the ground – whether they be man-made (roads, railway lines, etc.) or natural features (rivers, lakes or uplands).

To this end, we recognise that the existing urban footprint and Development Plans, such as the BUAP and Draft BMAP, can act as reference points for deciding what constitutes 'readily identifiable boundaries' for District Council areas. This is because Development Plans define settlement limits and apply land use zonings, particular those relating to green spaces between built areas, which need to be respected when defining boundaries.

Taking on board these points, the Council would refer the Commissioner back to the Final Recommendations from the previous Local Government Boundary Review in Northern Ireland in 2008 which made clear those features which the Commissioner adjudged to constitute 'readily identifiable boundaries' in the Belfast City Council area. As the Council argued at that time, such 'readily identifiable

boundaries' provided support for the principle of expansion of the Belfast Council Area.

Additional Factors

Having stated the above, we would, however, like to make the Commissioner aware of a number of additional factors that may help inform her of the need to facilitate the expansion of Belfast's council area. There are essentially two of these:

1. Firstly, we are well aware that the definition of Local Government Districts is very much premised on achieving greater efficiency in the delivery of services, in terms of securing better value for money and quality of service.

The definition of such boundaries must allow for the creation of a critical mass of population within the Belfast Council Area upon which to sustain and improve upon efficiency in the delivery of services. We say this for the very good reason that Belfast City Council has a disproportionate number of deprived wards in Northern Ireland.

Following the 2008 review a number of wards of similar socio-economic standing were included within the new Belfast City Council area (Twinbrook and Collin Glen, which are ranked the twentieth and the twenty first most deprived wards), making it even more imperative that the Belfast Local Government District be equipped with an optimum population size and geographical area capable of sustaining and improving services.

2. Secondly, we attach appreciable significance to the Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland and its aspirations (under SPG-BMA 1) to create a thriving Belfast Metropolitan Area based on a revitalised City of Belfast. In this regard, we view Belfast as the regional driver of growth in Northern Ireland and all efforts to promote this objective in the form of bolstering its population size should be welcomed. This is especially so when it is considered that, in recent times, Belfast has endured significant population loss to surrounding districts.

(ii) Specific Response in relation to Belfast

Against the background of the general points outlined above, we would like to make the following comments in respect of the existing Belfast City Council district boundary.

Boundary with Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council

The previous Local Government Boundary Review for Northern Ireland - Final Recommendations 2008 included a recommendation to place the Galwally area (including Forestside) within the new Belfast City Council district area. However, as the Commissioner will be aware, the NI Assembly ultimately approved the Final Recommendations with some amendments, one of which included the placement of the Galwally area within the new Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council area.

Belfast City Council would contend that this decision by the NI Assembly disregarded the logic governing the need to have regard to the 'readily identifiable boundaries' guidelines and was in contravention of the clear recommendations of the Boundary Commissioner.

This decision, as Belfast City Council argued at the time, amounted to an irrational departure from those features that have helped to shape the delimitation of the District Boundary in this part of Belfast, namely the readily identifiable boundaries of the Outer Ring Road and the upland topography in this area. Indeed, when viewed on a map, it graphically stands out as an aberration in boundary demarcation.

Forestside Catchment Area

There are different ways to approach the calculation of catchment area figure as it can be done on a spend or population (customer) basis, both of which could be further refined in many ways to take account of the different days, times of travel, population / household composition, socio/economic group.

The Council however believe that that the simple drive time catchment analysis could be utilised as it is based on published data and standard tools.

The appended diagram shows the extent of the catchments generated for 0-5, 5-10, 10-15 and 15-20 minutes. For the table these polygons were used to determine the number of residential properties (using the OSNI Pointer Domestic Address from 27/07/2021).

Drivetime Catchment	Percentage of Pointer Domestic Addresses by Council Area				
	Belfast	Lisburn and Castlereagh	Ards and North Down	Newry, Mourne and Down	Antrim and Newtownabbey
0 - 5 mins	69.6	30.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
0 - 10 mins	84.3	15.6	0.1	0.0	0.0
0 - 15 mins	74.4	19.5	4.8	1.1	0.2
0 - 20 mins	62.7	20.4	8.5	2.5	5.9

There have been no major applications at Forestside that could provide an assessed catchment for the Centre although the Centre was assessed as part of the Lisburn and Castlereagh Retail Capacity Study 2018. In para 6.5.4 (page 25) of that study the concluding statement is at best a simplification in terms of potential draw from outside *"In the Forestside catchment, it was estimated that 50% of the comparison turnover of the centre came from outside the area; principally from the Belfast suburbs, as the shopping centre is right on the border of the Council area"*. Both the average household size and available income would have to be significantly higher to sustain such a conclusion.

Belfast City Council also notes that the various objections from the former Lisburn and Castlereagh councils to the Final Recommendations in 2008 in respect of this area, (whilst not being deemed sufficient at that time to change the Final Recommendations), which carry less weight now given that i) the majority of LCCC council services have since been transferred to the Island Civic Centre in Lisburn, and ii) a range of new bus routes has been introduced since 2008 (including the Glider service and the proposed Phase 2 of Glider) which extend routes into the Lisburn and Castlereagh district.

The Council would also make a case based on which authority is best placed to manage and address the wider implications of the District Centre's operations, accessibility and servicing. The A55 Outer Ring Road is a significant physical barrier and much of the potential for improvements in accessibility with potential for better integration into the surrounding urban areas would naturally lie with Belfast City Council in relation to the geography of the site and the potential for integration with existing services.

Taking into account each of these points, and the Commissioners previous recommendations, the Council does not agree with the Provisional Recommendation at para 7.3.1 which recommends that the Belfast "district boundary line should remain unchanged".

Belfast City Council would, therefore, request that the Local Government Boundary Commissioner reassess the findings of the 2008 Local Government Boundary Review including the "Final Recommendations" report and the "Report of the Assistant Commissioner Sarah Havlin on Belfast City Council district" which clearly recommended that the Galwally area containing Forestside should reside within the Belfast district boundary based on the statutory parameters highlighted above.

District Boundary with regards to the Harbour Ward

The Council also wishes to highlight an issue with the district boundary as it pertains to the Harbour ward, and in particular the extension to the harbour which has resulted in part of the harbour infrastructure existing outside of the district boundary (see image below).

Existing Situation (area currently beyond the BCC boundary)



The exercise of powers and responsibilities are normally linked to the LGD geography. This creates an issue for the Council not only in terms of rates but also for enforcement with regards to any event which may happen beyond our line and therefore jurisdiction. The Council would note that there is a further approved extension (planning permission at appendix 1) beyond the currently constructed area shown on the plans – see red line below. The Commissioner when considering any modification to the district boundary may wish to take this into account also.

Example of potential new boundary to encompass the extension of the Harbour



Conclusion

In summary, Belfast City Council does not agree with para 7.3.1 of the Provisional Recommendations report which states that the district boundary line should remain unchanged. The Council would refer to the following two issues in relation to the district boundary.

Galwally Area (including Forestside)

The Council requests that the Local Government Boundary Commissioner reassess the findings of the 2008 Local Government Boundary Review including the “Final Recommendations” report and the “Report of the Assistant Commissioner Sarah Havlin on Belfast City Council district” which made clear recommendations that the Galwally area containing Forestside should reside within the Belfast district boundary.

The Council would argue that the principles upon which the 2008 recommendations were made and those features which the Commissioner determined to constitute ‘readily identifiable boundaries’ in respect of this area (namely the A55 Outer Ring Road and the upland topography in this area) have not changed.

Harbour Area

The Council also wishes to highlight the issue with the district boundary as it pertains to the Harbour ward, and in particular the extension to the harbour which has resulted in part of the harbour infrastructure being outside of the district boundary.

The Council would note that there is a further approved extension beyond the currently constructed area shown on the plans. The Commissioner when considering any modification to the district boundary may wish to take this into account also.”

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations contained within the report.

France-United Kingdom Local Government Forum

The Committee was informed that the city of Nancy would, on 25th and 26th October, be hosting the next meeting of the France – United Kingdom Local Government Forum. It was intended that this would be an in-person meeting, however, it could change to a hybrid or virtual one nearer to the time.

The Chief Executive pointed out that the theme for days one and two of the forum would be “Reinvigorating Franco-British Cooperation and Exchange” and “Green Transition: Global Challenges and Local Responses” respectively and that NILGA was

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inviting nominations from Northern Ireland councils to speak at the event. She added that some funding had been agreed between NILGA and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, with any additional travel and subsistence costs to be met from existing Departmental budgets.

Accordingly, she recommended, given the subject matter, that the Committee approve the attendance at the France-United Kingdom Local Government Forum of the Chairperson of the Brexit Committee, the Chairperson of the Working Group on the Climate Crisis and the City Solicitor, as the Senior Reporting Officer for Brexit.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

**COP 26 Climate Business
Conference Funding Agreement**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 This report is to inform the Committee of a proposal by the Management and Leadership Network (MLN) to host a prominent climate business conference ‘Sustain Exchange’ in Belfast, with up to 400 business leaders, ahead of the COP 26 conference. The report also requests retrospective approval for a funding agreement to be put in place between the Council and the event organiser, with the value of £10,000. The event will be planned to coincide with the arrival of BEIS -sponsored Planetmark’s Carbon Battle Bus. Both events will simultaneously promote the *Road to Zero* and *Together for the Planet* campaigns.

1.2 Furthermore, in relation to the COP26 programme, which runs from 1st to 12th November in Glasgow, permission is being sought for the Chair of the All Party Working Group on the Climate Crisis (Councillor Smyth), and the Chair of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (Councillor Groogan) to attend events should the opportunity for a delegation to attend arise.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to support this business focused climate conference by retrospectively approving that a funding agreement to the value of £10,000 be entered into with the event organiser, a report having previously been submitted to and approved by CMT and Party Group Leaders.

2.2 The Committee is also asked to approve the attendance of the Chair of the All Party Working Group on the Climate Crisis (Councillor Smyth) and the Chair of the Strategic Policy and

Resources Committee (Councillor Groogan) at events during COP26 in Glasgow, should the opportunity for a delegation to attend arise.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Background

The United Nations COP 26 Climate Summit in Glasgow in November will bring a sharp focus on the role of the business community on delivering on global net zero GHG emissions by 2050. It will also challenge business to radically reduce their environmental impact both directly and indirectly through their supply chains. It is a truly transformative time for businesses as they address climate risks and identify new opportunities in the green economy. The transition is not straightforward. Businesses need help in securing cleaner power, heat and transport solutions. They need help in navigating new markets to find more environmentally sustainable solutions in their supply chain, and they need to do it fast. There has never been a more important time to find specialist help to navigate the transition, and to educate inform and engage by sharing the existing knowledge and exemplar experience of those at the forefront of the transition.

Purpose and Format of Event

- 3.2** The event will be planned to deliver on the objectives above and will connect local business leaders with international thought leaders with those at the forefront of the transition locally.

The event will ideally take place as a hybrid event with the Carbon Bus campaign that will bring 100 local leaders (primarily business leaders but also those from the public, NDPB and third sectors) together in-person for a half day with some or all of the event streamed live to a mass (400+) virtual audience of additional local leaders, thus ensuring the message has reach and that partners get a level of profile, amongst the NI business / leadership community, to justify their investment.

Opening Address and Format

- 3.3** The opening keynote address will be delivered by an authoritative political or business leader who will focus on the business threat of the climate crisis, the legacy of COP 26 and the imperative of business to act fast, within the next decade to take advantage of the new global and local business opportunities. The keynote speaker will be followed by a

carefully selected line-up of local leaders who will be challenged to share their story (exemplar), insights (expert) or support offering (stakeholder).

As exemplars these businesses will share their story and associated lessons in an engaging, informative, and entertaining manner. The speakers will encourage and empower other sectoral representative bodies (insurance, banking, hospitality transport and logistics etc) to consider their own climate impact and take the first steps on their 'Race To Zero'.

Management and Leadership Network Experience

- 3.4 Management and Leadership Network (MLN) have previous experience in hosting several large events with 500 + attendees.

Virtual summits organised by Management and Leadership Network include:

Galvanise NI May 2020 - 1400 Business leaders
Re- launch July 2020- 900 business leaders
Unlearn 2021 December 2020- 700 business leaders
WELL – February 2021 – 1000 business leaders

Leadership Summit - February 2020 Prior to first lockdown MLN hosted 500 paying business leaders at Titanic Belfast. BCC was a partner on this event which featured world class speakers including Lord David Puttnam at Titanic Belfast. Podium and MLN's virtual events have been created and delivered in a 3–4-week lead time (and have consistently attracted business leader audiences of 500+).

As host, MLN will facilitate the event and invite all speakers to provide their slides in advance so that the idea-sharing session is delivered in a concise, visually impactful and professional manner. This format can be flipped to 100% virtual at short notice should restrictions command. Council will be invited to participate and profile their extensive climate work i.e Mini – Stern Report, and associated Housing and Transport Readiness Assessments, Climate Ambitions Report, Reset Agenda, internal climate mitigation and adaptation plans and /or the work of the Belfast Climate Commission, Resilience and Sustainability Board etc.

Legacy Platform and Annual Event

- 3.5 The conference is an opportunity to highlight and celebrate the activity that is already underway in NI. It is intended that this

will become an annual event which positions Belfast as a centre of excellence and activity when it comes to businesses and the Race to Zero. It is the intention of the organisers to establish an online platform to share the case studies profiled and others available. The climate challenge will inevitably move further up the political and business agenda as we move through the decade and the pace of change on this issue is fast, so there is a need for annual event for the NI business/leadership community to share knowledge, experience and progress and supporting platforms available all year round to share resources.

'Lifting the Rock' - Branding

- 3.6 The conference will be branded with the theme of 'Lifting the Rock'. It is designed to speak to and encourage participation from those businesses well on their way and those just starting their zero-carbon pathway. It acknowledges the challenges involved in committing to take meaningful action. This 'planet – saving' rock will be heavy for most organisations, and there may well be 'creepy crawlies' underneath, but better to honestly assess the realities and create a realistic and robust strategy rather than set the rock back down and opt for greenwashing. Podiem will complete a comprehensive evaluation report on the conference.

Date, Venue and Contingence

- 3.7 The total cost of the conference will be £60k. Podiem have already secured some corporate sponsorship for the event from Danske bank and are in advanced conversations with Belfast Harbour along with other corporate partners of MLN (energy companies etc).

Venue

- 3.8 The event will be hosted in a City centre location (to encourage use of public transport and cycle networks) and this will also allow for the Carbon Bus to be on show at the venue. Should Covid restrictions (due to 3rd wave or variant) rule out any form of in-person gathering then all elements of the event will switch to 100% virtual. This includes profiling and involving the Carbon Bus.

Partner Contribution and Profile Benefits

- 3.9 If the Council chooses to support the conference it would be profiled as an 'Event Partner' alongside several other lead event partners. The Council brand would be prominent on all event marketing collateral as well as 'at-event'. A Council

representative would be invited to participate in the event press launch and MLN would be delighted for the Council to deliver a presentation. Council would also promote the conference through its social media and other relevant communication channels.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.10 £10,000 to support this initiative has been allocated from within the existing City and Organisational Strategy budget.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.11 There are no direct equality or good relations/rural needs implications.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Belfast Submission to the Carbon Disclosure Project and Associated Campaigns

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to invite the Committee 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. A number of global climate campaigns require a submission to CDP – ICLEI as a prerequisite to joining – we will explain what each entails and request that Members approve Belfast’s participation in these campaigns. This will support marketing and publicity linked to COP26 (1st – 12th November 2021), provide access to networks of good practice, toolkits, and support for Belfast in determining and reaching our city targets.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note:

- i. that the Council has made the first annual submission through the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) – ICLEI reporting platform. 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; and

- ii. that officers will take forward the Council's participation in a number of global campaigns described in this report, with updates to be provided on an annual basis on the annual CDP – ICLEI submission and campaign progress.

3.0 Main Report

Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) – ICLEI submission

- 3.1 In July 2021, the Council made the first annual submission to the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) – ICLEI reporting platform. This was undertaken to support baselining of activity and emissions in Belfast, and to enable full participation by Belfast in global climate action campaigns such as the Race to Zero, which links to COP26, the Race to Resilience, the Global Covenant of Mayors, and the WWF One Planet City competition. All of these campaigns require members to have made a submission through a recognised reporting mechanism, of which CDP – ICLEI is perhaps the most well-known. The survey consisted of 59 questions across the following categories:

- Governance and Data Management
- Climate Hazards and Vulnerability
- Adaptation
- City-wide Emissions
- Emissions Reduction
- Opportunities
- Energy
- Transport
- Food
- Waste
- Water Security

- 3.2 As Belfast has made a submission to CDP – ICLEI, the city is now eligible to participate in a number of global campaigns which are set out below. The benefits of these campaigns are as enablers for local activity, by giving access to good practice, climate finance partnerships, city networks with a focus on climate and reaching net zero. In joining these campaigns Belfast will be part of global efforts to reach net zero, which will in turn enhance our reputation and allow us to share our progress both locally and globally. For the last 5 years Belfast has been a member of the Global Resilient Cities Network (previously 100 Resilient Cities) which presented opportunities to access additional funding, participate in peer learning initiatives, and to lever support from experts in a range of areas, most recently enabling Belfast to become part of the Real City Play Coalition.

- 3.3 Participation in these initiatives will be on the basis that they provide tangible benefits to Belfast and this will be kept under review on an annual basis. The Council will be active throughout COP26, supporting local activity by young people, business, the arts sector and will use the opportunity to lobby for additional powers and finance to allow progress on our local targets. The Belfast Net Zero Carbon Report and Belfast Resilience Strategy – Ambitions Document form the foundation of our programme of activity, and Members will be aware that the Council is developing its own Climate Plan at present. We have established city and council governance structures to ensure accountability and collaboration is at the heart of our programme of work – through the Belfast Resilience and Sustainability Board, Belfast Climate Commission, Belfast City Council Climate Plan Programme Board, All Party Working Group on the Climate Crisis and through city initiatives such as the Belfast One Million Trees Programme.

Cities Race to Zero

- 3.4 This global campaign is bringing together a large coalition of leaders from cities, regions, businesses, investors, and universities who are committing to be net zero by 2050 at the latest. To participate Belfast would have to sign up to the following pledges:

I. Publicly endorse the following Principles:

- We recognise the global climate emergency;
- We are committed to keeping global heating below the 1.5°Celsius goal of the Paris Agreement;
- We are committed to putting inclusive climate action at the centre of all urban decision-making, to create thriving and equitable communities for everyone;
- We invite our partners – political leaders, CEOs, trade unions, investors, and civil society – to join us in recognising the global climate emergency and help us deliver on science-based action to overcome it; and
- Pledge to reach (net)-zero in the 2040s or sooner, or by mid-century at the latest, in line with global efforts to limit warming to 1.5°Celsius.

- I. In advance of COP26, explain what steps will be taken toward achieving net zero, especially in the short- to medium-term. Set an interim target to achieve in the

next decade, which reflects a fair share of the 50% global reduction in CO2 by 2030 identified in the IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°Celsius.

- II. Immediately proceed to planning at least one inclusive and equitable climate action as listed on www.citiesracetozero.org that will help to place your city on a resilient pathway consistent with the 1.5°Celsius objective of the Paris Agreement and begin implementation no later than 2022. Actions are listed in Appendix 1, which has been circulated with this report, with an asterix beside those that Belfast has already made progress against.
- III. Report progress annually, beginning no later than 2022 to the usual or the recommended reporting platform. The cities 1.5°Celsius target and action commitment(s) should be shared through your regular channels of reporting. If the city has not reported before, the city will be contacted by partners for support.

<http://www.citiesracetozero.org/>

Race to Resilience

- 3.5 The Cities Race to Resilience (CRTR) is a strand of the Race to Resilience campaign, focusing on supporting cities to pledge their commitment to building resilience in the face of climate change.

Should Belfast sign up to the campaign, the Mayor and/or City Council would have to commit to the following four pledges:

- I. Integrate climate change adaptation and resilience in all aspects of urban planning and undertake a community-wide climate risk and vulnerability assessment that also includes all vulnerable communities;
- II. Plan to use available knowledge and scientific evidence, including data and spatial analysis, for decision-making and action, and outline interim targets and milestones as part of a long-term commitment for citywide action;
- III. Immediately proceed to taking action by committing to at least one of the resilience actions listed by COP26, which has been circulated with this report. An asterix has been placed beside those which Belfast has already made progress against.

IV. Report commitments by COP26 - and progress annually thereafter, to an existing or recommended reporting platform.

The list of actions referenced above under pledge 3 have been circulated with this report. At least one action would have to be undertaken to permit participation in the campaign.

<https://citiesrace resilience.org/>

Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy (GCoM)

- 3.6 The Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy is the largest global alliance for city climate leadership, built upon the commitment of over 10,000 cities and local governments.**

The Carbon Disclosure Report (CDP)-ICLEI Unified Reporting System is one of the officially recognised reporting platforms to GCoM.

Signatories commit to develop, implement and report - within the established deadlines, an action plan to reach their targets. More specifically, signatories commit to submit the following:

- A strategy with a long-term vision including mitigation targets and climate adaptation goals (within 2 years after their official adhesion to the Covenant of Mayors);
- A Baseline Emission Inventory (BEI), quantifying the energy consumed and therefore the emissions emitted on the signatory's territory (within 2 years);
- A Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (RVA), identifying and assessing the climate hazards and vulnerable sectors (within 2 years);
- Actions undertaken on mitigation, adaptation and energy poverty; and
- Monitoring reports on the implementation of actions (every 2 years) and on emissions (every 4 years).

<https://www.globalcovenantofmayors.org/why-join-us/>

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.7 There are no financial or resource implications at present.**

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

3.8 There are no direct equality or good relations/rural needs implications.”

The Committee noted the report.

**Modern Slavery Act 2015 – Proposed
Corporate Action Plan**

The Committee considered the following report and approved the accompanying Modern Slavery Act Transparency Statement for 2020/21 and the suggested actions to be taken forward by Council Departments:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out for Committee approval a corporate action plan to meet the obligations of the Modern Slavery Act, 2015, including the updating of the annual Transparency Statement.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- i. agree to the proposed actions based on the NILGA guidelines, which are to be taken forward by various Departments; and**
- ii. approve the updated annual Transparency Statement.**

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Background

3.1 The Modern Slavery Act 2015 aims to address slavery and trafficking by enhancing support and protection for victims, giving law enforcement the tools needed to target today’s slave drivers and ensuring perpetrators can be severely punished. It also includes a provision to encourage organisations to ensure their supply chains are slavery-free, known as the Transparency in Supply Chains arrangements (‘TISC’).

Key Issues

3.2 The Council has voluntarily published an annual Modern Slavery Transparency in Supply Chains statement on our website since 2015. This sets out what an organisation has done to ensure there is no modern slavery in their supply chains or any part of their business. This year, the annual

Transparency Statement has been significantly refreshed by Commercial and Procurement Services to reflect current guidance on its content and layout. An updated version for 20-21 is set out in Appendix 1 below and will be published well before the deadline of October 21. Please note that due to business pressures in Governance and Compliance Services the update of last year's statement was delayed.

- 3.3 In July 2018, the Home Secretary undertook an independent review of the MSA and made recommendations, one of which was to strengthen Section 54 by extending the requirement to publish Modern Slavery Statements to government and the public sector.
- 3.4 In July 2019, the UK Government launched a consultation on measures to strengthen the TISC arrangements, and recently published its proposals on how it plans to take this work forward. Many of the proposed changes will require legislative change which the UK Government hopes to take forward later in 2021. The proposed changes will see a strengthening of the TISC arrangements for commercial businesses, and will, for the first time, extend them so they apply to the public sector.
- 3.5 The Northern Ireland Department of Justice conducted a consultation exercise, which closed in May 2021, relating to the extension of the TISC arrangements to the public sector in Northern Ireland.
- 3.6 In accordance with Section 12 of the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2015, the Department of Justice publishes an annual Modern Slavery Strategy. The most recent Modern Slavery Strategy for 2019-2020 is the third strategy published by the Department of Justice and a consultation on the 2021/22 Modern Slavery Strategy recently took place. The purpose of the strategy is to raise awareness of modern slavery offences and so reduce the threat from, the vulnerability to, and the prevalence of, modern slavery in Northern Ireland.
- 3.7 In May 2020, NILGA published a guide for Councils with the Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership (NISMP), (a multi-agency, cross-party and cross-departmental body working to reflect the regionally specific needs of Northern Ireland in the development and implementation of UK immigration policy). The guide was also produced in partnership with the Department of Justice and the UK Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner. It sets out some actions which councils can take to tackle modern slavery specifically:

1. Provide Modern Slavery Awareness Training for all council personnel in public facing services (Lead: Corporate HR / Commercial and Procurement Services / Governance and Compliance Services);
 2. Designate a point of contact to report modern slavery concerns and raise awareness of modern slavery among communities (Lead: City and Neighbourhood Services);
 3. Establish clear procurement guidelines (Lead: Commercial and Procurement Services); and
 4. Collaborate with other councils and agencies (Lead: All Directors)
- 3.8 The suggested actions for councils are outlined in Appendix 2 below, which also includes a summary of the guidance from NILGA and a suggested lead within the Council for each action.

Reporting

- 3.9 Governance and Compliance Services will co-ordinate an annual report on progress to be brought to committee.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.10 This will involve staff from City and Neighbourhood Services, Legal Services, Governance and Compliance Services, Commercial and Procurement Services, Corporate HR and Marketing and Corporate Communications.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.11 Any equality, good relations or rural needs implications will be identified using the council's usual screening process."

Appendix 1

Modern Slavery Act Transparency Statement for the period

1st April, 2020 to 31st March, 2021

Introduction

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 (the "Act") places specific responsibilities on organisations to ensure slavery and human trafficking does not exist within their

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supply chains, and in any part of their own businesses. Organisations need to demonstrate accountability through transparency to protect workers, adults and children from abuse and exploitation.

The Council is committed to improving practices to prevent slavery and human trafficking. The Council expects suppliers, partners and third parties to adhere to the same values and principles to combat slavery and human trafficking.

This statement is made pursuant to section 54(1) of the Act and constitutes Belfast City Council's slavery and human trafficking statement for the financial year ending 31st March 2021.

Our structure and our supply chains

The Council is the local authority for the Belfast area with responsibility for a wide range of services including local planning, economic development, tourism, street cleaning and parks, leisure and waste management.

The [Belfast Agenda](#) is the community plan that the whole city is working towards. Our vision is that by 2035 Belfast will be a city

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

Our political governance structure is set out below:



The Council procured goods, works and services from circa 2,400 suppliers during the last financial year with a supply chain mostly based in the UK and Ireland.

The Council has a responsibility to prevent slavery and human trafficking within its supply chain and in any part of the organisation. As the customer, the Council makes clear to our suppliers, and those wishing to do business with us, what is expected of them.

The Council's tender process require all tenderers to provide confirmation that they are compliant with the Act. They are also required to confirm their subcontractors and suppliers comply with the Act.

Our policies in relation to slavery and human trafficking

The Council has the following policies or procedures in place, related to mitigating the risks of slavery and human trafficking:

Safeguarding

We recognise our responsibility to develop, implement and monitor policies and procedures to safeguard the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. Our child safeguarding procedures are well established; our current focus is on underpinning how we take care of adults and the reporting system.

Equality and Diversity

We are committed to Equality and Diversity and actively seek to eradicate discrimination and inequality when developing services and when goods and or services are provided on the Council's behalf. To this end we have developed an internal toolkit which integrates equality and diversity into everything we do from policy development to service planning and delivery.

We are an Equal Opportunities employer and welcome applications from all sections of the community. We are a Lead Partner and Member of Excellence of Employers for Disability NI with members of our recruitment team being accredited as "Disability Positive". We have a dedicated helpline for any applicants who require reasonable adjustments or whose first language is not English. We appoint strictly on the merit principle and our recruitment processes require the completion of relevant pre-employment checks which include eligibility to work in the UK and the uptake of suitable references, where required.

We operate a job evaluation scheme to ensure all employees are paid fairly and equitably.

Raising Concerns

We encourage workers to raise any concerns that they may have and there are established arrangements in place for handling these. Externally, members of the public and customers can use our [Corporate Complaints Compliments and Comments](#) procedure to report concerns.

Fraud and Bribery

We are committed to protecting the public money we look after and to making sure that the opportunity for fraud, bribery or any other financial impropriety is reduced to the lowest possible risk. We have policies and procedures to manage the risk of fraud, bribery and other financial impropriety, including arrangements for prevention and detection as well as arrangements for reporting and investigation.

Code of Conduct

We expect all employees and Councillors to demonstrate the highest standards of conduct and ethical behaviour. We require all Councillors and Senior Managers to submit declaration of interests to record and declare personal and pecuniary interests.

Due diligence in assessing modern slavery risk in operations or supply chains

The Council's Commercial and Procurement Services team have recently introduced Category Management. A Category Management structure within the team enables greater transparency in the identification of risks associated with modern slavery on a category basis.

Risk Assessment and Management

All new suppliers, for new or extended applicable contracts, are assessed as part of the Council's tendering process to ensure that they meet the requirements of the Act.

We commit to reviewing and updating our contract terms and conditions to ensure that they are compliant with the Act.

The Commercial and Procurement Services team completed CIPS Ethical Procurement training achieving the professional standard of CIPS Corporate Ethics kite mark for the service.

We commit to developing a new safeguarding policy that will go out for consultation in 2021.

Key performance indicators to measure effectiveness of steps being taken

We will communicate this policy to our staff to make them aware of the issue and the Council's obligations.

The Northern Ireland Department of Justice is expected, at some point, to announce guidance on the new duty to report incidences of modern slavery. This may require further training and guidance being issued to staff.

Training on modern slavery and trafficking

The Commercial and Procurement Services team commit to retaining the professional standard of CIPS Corporate Ethics during 2021. Further Council officers involved in procurement activity will also be selected for this training.

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This statement was approved by the Corporate Management Team of Belfast City Council on 31st August, 2021.

Signed on behalf of Belfast City Council by:

John Walsh
City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services
Date:

Appendix 2

SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR COUNCILS

Action	NILGA Guidance	Suggested Lead	Estimated deadline
1. Provide Modern Slavery Awareness Training for all council personnel in public facing services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Department of Justice and the Department of Finance's Construction and Procurement Delivery can advise on TISC (Transparency in Supply Chains) training for public sector and council procurement leads.The guidance provides a list of voluntary and community sector organisations which can advise on modern slavery and provide training. <p>NILGA's suggested next steps for Councils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Deliver training for public sector procurement leads in respect of transparency in supply chains.Accessing "Train the trainer" sessions for Councils shared by the	<p>Commercial and Procurement Services – N Bohill</p> <p>Corporate HR – C Sheridan / Governance and Compliance Services – S Williams</p>	March 2023

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Action	NILGA Guidance	Suggested Lead	Estimated deadline
	<p>Department of Justice to provide Councils with the tools to deliver their own inhouse training on Modern Slavery. <i>(The Train the Trainers session will be built into NILGA's Regional Training Programme and further information will follow on an ongoing basis as appropriate).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using Training Materials for Council Staff, available from the Department of Justice and PSNI. <i>(In April 2019, the Department of Justice and the PSNI wrote to all local Councils CEOs to offer training materials for staff on modern slavery concerns¹⁵.)</i> 	<p>External provider to deliver approved training.</p>	
<p>2. Designate a point of contact to report modern slavery concerns and raise awareness of modern slavery among communities.</p>	<p>Councils should designate a lead officer or team who can act as a point of contact and expertise on the issue. Council Community Planning, Good Relations or Policing and Community Partnerships (PCSP) teams are ideally placed to fulfil this role. A Lead Officer from either one of these teams could be nominated as the "go to" person for other officers or council workers who have concerns that modern slavery may be happening in certain businesses or in the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A council protocol for reporting suspicions of 	<p>City and Neighbourhood Services – R Black</p> <p>Nicola Lane to take the lead on this element of the action plan and act as the conduit in terms of Good Relations and PCSP.</p> <p>To be agreed, at the relevant time, how we will embed / promote through the</p>	<p>March 2023</p>

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Action	NILGA Guidance	Suggested Lead	Estimated deadline
	<p>modern slavery should be developed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Planning Partnerships should be harnessed to share information and to raise awareness of modern slavery with communities and the drive to eradicate it. • PCSPs are a key council resource in the drive to eradicate modern slavery in Northern Ireland. Intelligence which can be disclosed by the PCSP should be shared with the lead person / team in the council appointed as the “go to” for modern slavery concerns. 	Community Planning Structures, SCP and PCSP/DPCSP’s.	
3. Establish clear procurement guidelines	<p>The modern slavery transparency statement required to be published by the Council under Section 54 of the MSA must include the steps the Council has taken during the financial year to ensure that slavery and human trafficking is not taking place in any of its supply chains, and in any part of its own business or; that the organisation has taken no steps in the financial year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparency in supply chains is a process of continuous improvement. As stipulated in government guidance, the government expects organisations to <i>build</i> on their statements year on year 	Commercial and Procurement Services – N Bohill	Annually

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Action	NILGA Guidance	Suggested Lead	Estimated deadline
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance and resources include: Transparency in Supply Chains etc. A practical guide; Council Transparency Statements Portal; TISCReport Transparency Map; LGA's Tackling Modern Slavery Guide <p>NILGA's suggested next steps for Councils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taking account of any further government developments on proposals to extend the scope of Section 54 (TISC). 		
4. Collaborate with other councils and agencies	<p>Opportunities for collaboration include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All-Council Professional Officers Groups (e.g. the Environmental Health Professional Officers Group, the Local Government Safeguarding Network and the Planning Professional Officers Group); Cross-council project collaboration (e.g. arc21); and Council collaboration with the private sector: e.g. for 	All Directors to raise with relevant officers	Immediate

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Action	NILGA Guidance	Suggested Lead	Estimated deadline
	Economic Development teams to provide guidance to new and existing businesses in their districts on developing modern slavery transparency statements to enhance their competitiveness when bidding for new, or when renewing goods / services contracts.		

**Consultation on Draft NI Flood Risk Management
Plan 2021-27 - Council Response**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To submit for the Committee’s approval a draft Council response to the Draft NI Flood Risk Management Plan 2021 – 2027 for submission to the Department of Infrastructure.**

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to approve the draft consultation response and to note that any additional comments will be incorporated in the response.**

3.0 Main Report

- 3.1 The Draft Flood Risk Management Plan states that in recent years, flooding has presented considerable challenges to both people and communities directly affected and to those providing emergency responses. Flooding can have potentially devastating impacts, on human life and health,**

damage to property, pollution to rivers and the sea and severe effects on economic activity, infrastructure and the environment. Flooding is also becoming more frequent and climate projections indicate that changing rainfall patterns, rising sea levels and more severe extreme weather conditions will increase its occurrence in the future.

- 3.2 Members will be aware that the Council has led on the development of the Belfast Resilience Strategy (December 2020), and has established Belfast Emergency Preparedness Group. In addition, the Council is currently developing the Belfast City Council Climate Plan, which will address both adaptation and mitigation, and Council is closely aligned with the planning and delivery of the Living with Water Programme.
- 3.3 The implementation of the Floods Directive, through the first six-year cycle of Flood Risk Management Planning, set out a catchment-based approach to the management of flood risk. It provided a more systematic, holistic and sustainable way of assessing, mapping and planning to manage flood risk than had been done previously. This was initiated in Northern Ireland by a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment completed in 2011 (PFRA 2011) followed by preparation of Flood Hazard and Risk Maps in 2014. The information from these two stages culminated in the development of objectives and measures under the headings of Prevention, Protection and Preparedness, in the first cycle Flood Risk Management Plans, published in December 2015.
- 3.4 We are now well into the second cycle of Flood Risk Management Planning, the first stage of which was the Northern Ireland Flood Risk Assessment (NIFRA 2018). Flood Hazard and Risk Mapping was then reviewed and updated in December 2019. Accordingly, the [second cycle Draft Flood Risk Management Plan](#) has been issued for public consultation and the Council is now preparing to submit a response.
- 3.5 The second cycle Plan differs from the first cycle Plans in that there is now a single Plan covering the three River Basin Districts (RBD) for the six years from 2021 until 2027. Surface water flooding has been given greater emphasis because of the predominance of flooding from this source in recent years, and because the NIFRA 2018 indicated that potential damages from surface water flooding could be greater than from other main sources. In preparing this draft Plan the Department of Infrastructure worked in partnership with NI Water, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and the Department for the Economy (DfE), to develop a shared understanding of flood risk and to consider and agree roles and responsibilities in managing this risk.

3.6 Financial and Resource Implications

There are no financial or resource implications.

3.7 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

There are no direct equality or good relations/rural needs implications.”

After discussion, the Committee approved the response for submission to the Department for Infrastructure, a copy of which can be accessed [here](#) and agreed that it should also emphasise the need for more soft Sustainable Drainage Systems to be provided in urban spaces, including those where there were multiple land owners.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

Update on Area Working Groups

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of:

- the North Belfast Area Working Group of 25th August;
- the West Belfast Area Working Group of 26th August;
- the East Belfast Area Working Group of 2nd September; and
- the South Belfast Area Working Group of 6th September.

Colin Interpretive Heritage Trail

The Committee was informed that the Colin Neighbourhood Partnership was working with the local community to develop the Colin Heritage Walking Trail across the Colin area. The trail would include a series of six interpretative panels providing information on notable landmarks and historical figures from that area. The Partnership had submitted a request to place panel number 4 in Páirc Nua Chollann, the Council's new park in Colin. That panel would commemorate the life and achievements of Mr. Frank Pantridge, who together with Dr. John Geddes and Mr. Alfred Mawhinney, had invented the portable defibrillator.

It was pointed out that the other five interpretive panels would not require approval by the Council as they were not being placed on its land.

The Committee acceded to the request from the Colin Neighbourhood Partnership to place the aforementioned panel in Páirc Nua Chollann.

Update on Physical Programme

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. This report requests agreement on implementation of procurement processes in relation to the Capital Programme (Fleet Programme) and non-recurrent programme.

2.0 **Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- i agree that the necessary procurement processes are initiated for the agreed Fleet Programme for 2021/22 and 2022/23, with contracts to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver;
- ii agree that necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate 'framework' arrangements) be initiated for any non-recurrent projects for 2021/22 and non-recurrent projects under re-allocated reserves as required, with contracts to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver; and
- iii note that the Leisure Transformation Programme has been shortlisted for an international award for 'Social project of the year' by the Association of Project Management with the winner to be announced in November.

3.0 **Main Report**

Key Issues

3.1 **Capital Programme - Fleet Programme 2021/22 and 2022/23**

Members will know that the Council needs to run and maintain a substantial fleet in order to deliver its services. There is a rolling allocation of £2.2m towards the Fleet Programme for 2021/22 and £2.2m for 2022/23 under the Capital Programme at Stage 3. Members are asked to note that the Fleet Programme has been developed in conjunction with Council departments and reflects the service needs of the organisation. Members are asked to note that there are ongoing issues caused by the high age profile and condition of the fleet operating well beyond its recommended operational life cycle. Members are asked to note the agreed Fleet Programme for 2021/22 and 2022/23 and agree that the necessary procurement processes

are initiated, with contracts to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.

Non-recurrent projects 2021/22 and non-recurrent re-allocation funding

- 3.2 Members will be aware that the incremental nature of the capital programme allows the Council the opportunity to allocate an element of the 2021/22 capital financing budget to finance a number of one-off (non-recurrent) projects within year. It is recommended that this is focused on progressing projects which the Council is required to take forward either from a health and safety perspective and/or a legislative perspective. Members will also recall their decision in June 2021 to re-allocate the year-end surplus for 2020/21 to progress emerging projects and essential projects which did not have a recurring budget. These projects are now being developed. This included additional funding towards fleet. Members are asked to agree that necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate 'framework' arrangements) be initiated for any non-recurrent projects for 2021/22 and non-recurrent projects under re-allocated reserves as required, with contracts to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.

Leisure Transformation Programme – Finalist, APM Project Management Awards 2021

- 3.3 The Leisure Transformation Programme has been shortlisted in the international APM (Association of Project Management) Awards 2021 in the category: 'Social project of the year'. The category recognises teams whose project demonstrates the most effective use of project management and the greatest benefits and outcomes to end users and communities in projects seeking to address the concerns of 21st century society globally. The winner will be announced on 15 November 2021 at an awards ceremony in London.
- 3.4 Members are asked to note that the Physical Programmes Department is happy to arrange site visits for Members/ Party Groups to any capital project, with appropriate arrangements in place as required under latest Covid-19 guidance.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.5 *Financial* – Fleet Replacement Programme– as above
Resources – Officer time to deliver as required

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

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

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Finance, Procurement and Performance

Update on Contracts

The Committee:

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

Table 1: Competitive Tenders

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Estimated Total Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services
Creative Development 2024	Up to 3.5 years	£175,000	A Reid	Seeking external expertise and leadership in the hosting of a large scale cultural programme in Belfast (retender)
Implementation services to assist with the new NIHE hardware	Up to 2 months	£31,052	R Cregan	Includes the build, installation and migration of data and software.
Professional Congress/Conference Organiser required for One Young World 2023 conference in 2023	Up to 20 months	£175,000	A Reid	The total budget for the event is approx. £2.2m. Of this £1m is coming from NI Executive to BCC and a further £350,000 from BCC

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				<p>directly with the remaining to be raised from the private sector. For this type of event the host city procures the services of a PCO (Professional Congress/Conference Organiser). They will be responsible for overall co-ordination and project management.</p>
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Table 2: Single Tender Actions

Title	Total Value	SRO	Supplier
To provide and supply 'Dennis Eagle and Terberg' OEM approved warranty parts/components, support and maintenance.	£400,000	C Matthews	Manvik Plant and Hire Ltd
To provide and supply 'Holder' and 'Schmidt' OEM approved warranty parts/components, support and maintenance.	£400,000	C Matthews	RD Mechanical Services Ltd

Table 3: Modification to Contract Term

Title of Contract	Duration	Modification	SRO	Supplier
T1764 - supply and delivery of general uniforms to stores	Up to 4 years	Additional 3 months and £60,000	S Grimes	Antrim Supplies Lot 1 – Hi-Vis Uniform Prosafe Lot 2 - General uniform Tailored Image Lot 3 – Uniform accessories

Table 4: Retrospective Single Tender Actions

Title of Contract	Duration	Value	SRO	Supplier
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T1996 - Co-ordination, design development, fabrication, installation and maintenance of projection installations on Castle Street	Up to 2 years	£95,000	A Reid	C3 Productions Ltd
QCRD026 - Concept, detailed design development, outline costings and project management for extended payment enhancement at Adelaide Street, Belfast	Up to 3 months	£38,250	A Reid	MMAS/OGU Architects

Corporate Diaries and Christmas Cards

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 18th December, 2020, it had agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting providing information on the savings to be derived from ceasing the production of Members' corporate diaries and Christmas cards and the process for donating those savings to a chosen local charity each Christmas.

The City Solicitor reported that the combined annual cost of purchasing corporate diaries and Christmas cards was £8,212.80 and stated that, in advance of committing resources to developing a process for making donations to charities, it would be preferable to obtain direction from the Committee on how it wished to succeed.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Garrett,
Seconded by Councillor Beattie and

Resolved - That the Committee agrees to cease the purchase of corporate diaries and Christmas cards and to include the resulting savings within an overall allocation of £10,000 from current budgets to be distributed equally each year amongst the Lord Mayor's four chosen charities.

**Belfast City Council Statement
of Accounts 2020-21**

The Director of Finance and Resources submitted for the Committee's consideration the following report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to the Committee the Statement of Accounts of the Council, including the Annual Governance Statement, for the period ending 31st March 2021.

1.2 The Statement of Accounts are an important element of the council's overall corporate governance framework as they provide assurance to Members and ratepayers on the stewardship of the council's finances and its financial position.

1.3 The Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2021, as attached, have been prepared in line with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 based on International Financial Reporting Standards and the Department for Communities Accounts Direction, Circular LG 08/21 dated 11th March and 24th June 2021.

1.4 I can confirm that the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2021 has been prepared in the form directed by the Department for Communities and, in my opinion, the Statement of Accounts give a true and fair view of the income and expenditure and cash flows for the financial year and the financial position as at the end of the financial year.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to

- i. approve the Council's Statement of Accounts and incorporated Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2021; and
- ii. agree that this report should not be subject to call-in (as indicated above) because it would cause an unreasonable delay which would be prejudicial to the Council's and the public's interests given that the statement of accounts must be published by 30th September 2021.

3.0 Main Report

Key Issues

Audit Opinion

3.1 It is the Local government Auditors' opinion that:

- the financial statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with relevant legal and statutory requirements and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020-21, of the financial position of Belfast City Council as at 31 March 2021 and its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and
- the statement of accounts have been properly prepared in accordance with the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and the Department for Communities directions issued thereunder; and

- the part of the Remuneration Report to be audited has been properly prepared in accordance with the Department for Communities directions made under the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015; and
- the information given in the Narrative Report for the financial year ended 31 March 2021 is consistent with the financial statements.

Reserves

3.2 General Fund

The credit balance on the General Fund has increased to £54,924,106 (of which £40,929,092 relates to specified reserves). The movement on the reserves balance is summarised in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Summary of Reserves Position

Opening Balance	£28.7m
In year movement in reserves	<u>£ 26.2m</u>
Closing Balance	£54.9m
Specified Reserves at year end	<u>£40.9m</u>
Balance Available	<u>£14m</u>

3.3 **Capital Fund £19,296,139**

The Capital Fund is made up of:

- **Belfast Investment Fund (£1,908,136)** -created to support key partnership projects to regenerate Belfast and help lever substantial funds from other sources
- **Local Investment Fund (£1,056,624)** to fund smaller local regeneration projects
- **City Centre Investment Fund (£13,408,897)** to support the Belfast City Centre Regeneration Investment Plans
- **Social Outcomes Fund (£2,922,482)** to support City Centre projects which might not generate a direct financial return but would enhance the overall City Centre offer and support the attraction of investment.

3.4 Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund £8,000,000

This fund was created from the Belfast Investment Fund, to support neighbourhood regeneration and tourism projects in local neighbourhoods.

3.5 Leisure Mobilisation Fund £630,245

This fund is to support the Leisure Transformation Programme and will cover programme level costs including communications, engagement and procurement costs.

3.6 Capital Receipts Reserve £7,962,458 and Deferred Capital Receipts £342,300

These are capital receipts which have originated primarily from the sale of assets and which have not yet been used to finance capital expenditure.

3.7 Other Fund Balances and Reserves £1,091,532

This relates to the Election Reserve (£379,435) which has been set up to smooth the cost of running council elections, the BWUH Subvention Fund (£436,402) to support national and international organisations in bringing their conferences to Belfast and the BWUH Sinking Fund (£275,695) to support planned maintenance and future capital works at the new exhibition centre.

3.8 Debt

The overall level of trade debtors had increased this year from £4.1m at 31 March 2020 to £5.2m at 31 March 2021. Whilst, the COVID 19 pandemic had an impact on overall debt levels, the main reason is an increase in public authority debt at year end. An analysis of trade debtors, inclusive of VAT, for the last two years is shown below:

Table 2: Analysis of Trade Debtors

	31 March 2021	31 March 2020
Less than three months	£3,963,319	£3,239,834
Three to one year	£418,307	£614,739
More than one year	£772,373	£218,298
Total	£5,216,999	£4,072,871

3.9 Creditors

The Department for Communities has set councils a target of paying invoices within 30 days. During the year, the council paid 51,593 invoices totalling £154,605,481.

The average time taken to pay creditor invoices was 17 days for the year ended 31 March 2021. The Council paid 39,959 invoices within 10 days, 48,218 invoices within 30 days, and 3,375 invoices outside of 30 days. The council endeavours to process invoices as quickly as possible and has an improvement plan to support this process.

3.10 Annual Governance Statement (AGS)

The Statement of Accounts include Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for the year 2020/21, which has been prepared in line with the Accounts Directive provided by the Department for Communities, NIAO guidance and is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government'. Specifically, the AGS sets out:

- scope of responsibility of the Council in relation to governance
- the purpose of the governance framework
- the governance framework in place
- review of effectiveness of the governance framework
- significant governance issues to be disclosed.

3.11 The AGS is approved by the Chair of the Strategic Policy and Resources, the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and Resources. It is subject to review by the LGA (NIAO) as part of their annual audit.

3.12 Financial and Resource Implications

None

3.13 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

None.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Stall Fees for St George's Market –
Request for Further Rent-Free Period**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on:

- i. a request from traders at St George's Market for a four-week rent free period due to continuing COVID-19 restrictions; and
- ii. the financial implications of any decision to waive the stall fees for a further four-week period.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to consider the request from St. George's Market traders to waive stall fees at St George's Market for a further four weeks from 1st October 2021, with an associated loss of income of £31,000, based on current rent figures for the market.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Members will be aware that St George's Market was closed to the public due to COVID-19 on a number of occasions over the last eighteen months, most recently between December 2020 and April 2021.

3.2 Taking account of the difficulties faced by the traders during the previous periods of lockdown and subsequent limited re-opening, the Council agreed a rent-free period for St George's Market traders from July 2020 to December 2020. This resulted in a loss of income of £233k to the Council. Members also agreed a further 12-week rent-free period from the end of December 2020. As the market went into lockdown following this decision, this rent-free period commenced when the market re-opened on 19 April 2021. This meant that the traders at St George's Market did not pay daily rent for their pitches until 9 July 2021. This 12-week rent-free period has meant a further loss of income to the Council of £143k.

3.3 Following the July 2021 re-opening, the capacity in the market was limited in order to comply with the Northern Ireland Executive's social distancing requirements for retail premises. This meant that no more than 350 visitors at a time could access the market. Staff had to manage the capacity by putting in place queuing arrangements and actively managing the social distancing requirements within the market. As a result, visitor numbers were around 40% of pre-COVID-19 figures. Given the reduction in capacity, the traders at St George's Market expressed a concern about their ability to generate income. As a result, they made a request for the Council to consider a further rent-free period of four weeks. In the interim,

traders have been paying rent on their stalls in line with the existing fee rates.

- 3.4 Since the initial request was made by the traders, Government guidance on social distancing has changed. This means that the current capacity in the market building at any one time has increased from 350 to 550 visitors. Since this expanded capacity has been in operation, footfall numbers in the market have increased. However, like all retail outlets, some restrictions remain both in market capacity and also in our ability to offer the full 'market experience' in terms of live music performances and other animation. As further announcements are made by the Northern Ireland Executive, we will keep these arrangements under review, and will continue to take advice from the Council's Corporate Health and Safety Unit in terms of implementation and management.
- 3.5 Members will be aware that, prior to lockdown, work had been undertaken on a development and investment plan for St George's Market. One of the driving factors behind this plan was the need to ensure that the market retained its status as a unique asset in the city centre. In light of the challenges currently facing the city centre, attractions such as St George's Market will be more critical than ever in supporting city recovery. However, buildings of this nature require ongoing investment and have significant operational overheads, and it is critical that there is an underpinning investment programme to ensure that they continue to offer a quality experience. As the work on the implementation of the development plan moves forward, it is important that consideration is given to managing the costs associated with running the market, including the level of council investment available to support this work.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.6 A four weeks stall freeze would result in a cost to council of a further £31,000 based on current stall figures of 140 for each market day over the three-day weekend with the current restrictions continuing.
- 3.7 There is currently no provision in any departmental budget to cover these increased costs

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.8 No specific equality/good relations implications. No negative impact on rural areas."

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After discussion, the Committee agreed to accede to the request from traders to waive stall fees at St. George's Market for a further four weeks from 1st October.

Equality and Good Relations

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

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Shared City Partnership of 6th September, including the recommendations:

- i. to approve the delivery of a Leadership Development Programme to progress the recommendations contained within the COVID research report, at a cost of £10k and as budgeted for in the Good Relations Action Plan 2021/22;
- ii. to agree 'in principle' the Shared History, Heritage and Identity narratives for the Section 1 panels – Clarendon/Glencairn for inclusion in the project publication and to delegate authority to the Programme Board and Capital Project Board to agree on the locations, with a report to be submitted to the Partnership meeting in October;
- iii. to note the updates to the District Council Good Relations Plan Action Plan 2021/22;
- iv. to note that the North Belfast Friendship Club has been awarded £1,960 to facilitate meetings of the North Belfast Friendship Club through the Strategic Intervention Programme within the District Council Good Relations Plan Action Plan 2021/22;
- v. to agree the modifications to the Good Relations Action Plan 2021/22, as detailed under the update on the Council's District Good Relations Action Plan 2021/22; and
- vi. to assist with the cost for the storage of donations relating to the NI Refugee Resettlement Scheme, with an award of £300 for 2021/22 and an additional £300 for the 2022/23 financial year.

**Language Strategy - Update on Dual
Language Street Sign Policy**

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 Dual Language Street Sign Policy.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is requested to note the report

3.0 Main Report

Background

3.1 By way of brief background and as reported previously to the Committee, the Council on 7th January ratified a decision taken by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 23rd October, 2020 to adopt a new policy position in respect of the Dual Language Street Sign Policy.

(Whilst the initial decision of 23rd October had been called-in, counsel opinion subsequently found that the grounds for call-in had not been satisfied).

3.2 Following this decision, an officer working group was formed, comprising officers from Governance and Compliance Services, Equality and Diversity Unit, Building Control, Good Relations, Legal Services and Place and Economy Policy who developed a new proposed revised policy incorporating the changes agreed.

3.3 In April 2021, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approved this proposed revised policy which incorporated the following key changes:

- The trigger for a consultation of the occupiers of a street will be an application to the Council by a resident / residents of the street or an Elected Member representing that District Electoral Area, as opposed to an application from anyone, supported by a petition of 1/3 of occupiers. In order for further consideration as to the erection of a second language street sign to take place, the threshold for the percentage of residents responding positively is 15% instead of 2/3;**
- People not returning a reply are no longer deemed not to be in favour of the application;**
- Each application will be equality, good relations and rural needs screened;**
- Members may want to consider whether they will exercise their residual discretion at the point when an application is received and decide as to whether to progress that application to the stage of surveying the street in question or not.**

3.4 The following key principles agreed previously were also incorporated into the new policy:

- 1. That the policy will be used for the promotion of language rights and for the benefit of linguistic communities.**
- 2. That the principles of equality, promoting good relations and respect will underpin the application of the policy in addition to the rights promoted by the policy itself:**
 - Based on legal advice, each application will be subject to an equality, good relations and rural needs screening;**
 - The Council retains an overriding residual discretion to take the particular circumstances of each application into account in deciding whether or not a second language street name plate should be erected. In summary, there may be circumstances when notwithstanding the consultation response it may be appropriate to depart from the policy when there are clear reasons for doing so. Guidance will be provided to Members on the factors which should be considered when using this discretion; and**
 - As is the case at present, the Council will consider the best approach for any applications relating to long streets.**
- 3. That, as with any statutory consultation which the Council is required to undertake, the City Solicitor may intervene if any complaint is made and a basis for that complaint established.**
- 4. That any decision relating to the erection of a second nameplate in the City centre (business core) will, in addition to the current policy considerations, be subject to a wider public consultation to reflect the community of users.**
- 5. That the policy will cover the corporately designated Gaeltacht Quarter, until such time as a policy which may contain specific proposals in respect of a bilingual strategy have been adopted.**

Update

3.5 This revised policy has been screened in for an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) and during the summer months, a

quotation was developed and issued to procure specialist equality support for both the EQIA and the public consultation process. An equality consultant has now been appointed and an initial briefing meeting has taken place. The consultant is currently developing a detailed plan of action on the process required for carrying out the EQIA and aligning this with the public consultation process as well as helping to devise the process for equality-screening each individual application as per legal advice.

- 3.6 It is envisaged by the equality consultant that the public consultation will be issued in the next 4-6 weeks i.e. by the end of October. It has been recommended by the equality consultant that the consultation is issued for a 14/16-week period due to an overlap with the Christmas holiday period. The equality consultant is also providing advice on what further pre-consultation engagement is required in order to explain the proposed operation of this policy in practice. Advice will be also sought from Marketing & Communications for communications support due to the high level of interest when this decision was made at Committee.
- 3.7 Members will be aware that the Council is in the process of establishing an Elected Member Working Group as well as two external stakeholder engagement fora, for the Irish and Ulster Scots language communities. In preparation for this, an internal officer working group has also been convened. The officer working group is developing an approach to take forward the Language Strategy which can be discussed and agreed by Members. Depending on timings, it is hoped that the results of the public consultation on Dual Language Street Signs can be used to inform the development of these emerging structures.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.8 As agreed previously, given the potential for increased numbers of applications, the Council will deal with no more than 5 in any given month, Processing time could increase however, due to the potential changes to the procedure. If numbers are excessive they will be held in a queue and dealt with in the order in which they have been received. This will also be managed in the context of the existing staffing resource and the established annual budget for street signage. As requested by Members, a report will be submitted to a future meeting outlining the potential for increasing the number of applications which could be processed on a monthly basis, taking into account the new procedure emanating from the revised policy.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.9 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."**

After discussion, the Committee noted the report.

Operational Issues

Response to Consultation on the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Bill

The City Solicitor informed the Members that the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Bill had, on 5th July, been introduced into the Northern Ireland Assembly. The Bill would give effect to the Justice Minister's desire to improve the operation and effectiveness of the justice system and would have at its core the key themes of:

- i. enhancing public safety by implementing certain elements of the Report of the Gillen review of serious sexual offence cases and from a review of the law on child sexual exploitation and sexual offences against children; and
- ii. improving services for victims of trafficking and exploitation.

He reviewed the main provisions within the Bill and reported that the Committee Stage would commence in September, with the Committee for Justice seeking comments from interested parties by 24th September. Whilst officers had not identified any objections to the Bill nor any evidence which would inform its content, it was felt that the Council should submit a brief response welcoming the provisions within the Bill. Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee approve the following response for submission to the Committee for Justice:

"The Council has reviewed the content of the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Bill and is supportive of the provisions outlined in the Bill. It particularly welcomes the inclusion of live streamed images in the definition of exploitation for sexual purposes and the creation of a new offence of adults masquerading as children online and also welcomes the broadening of the definition of the abuse of power definitions, which are long overdue".

The Committee approved the response.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Customer Focus Working Group

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Customer Focus Working Group of 8th September.

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

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The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum of 16th September.

**Department of Finance Consultation on
Updated Building Control Advice on the
fitting of Changing Places Toilets –
Council Response**

The City Solicitor informed the Committee that the Department of Finance had, on 28th July, initiated a consultation on its intention to implement amendments to the technical guidance accompanying local Building Regulations, to provide that new/relevant large buildings commonly used by the public were fitted with changing places facilities.

He explained that changing places were facilities where people with profound and multiple disabilities could avail of toilet and personal hygiene amenities designed specifically for their needs.

He pointed out that the draft response to the consultation had confirmed that the Council would support the mandatory provision of changing places toilets under Building Regulations, as a positive way of increasing inclusion for service users and their carers.

He went on to state that, following the introduction of similar regulations in England and issues which had been raised around the financial challenges associated with voluntarily providing changing places toilets in existing premises, a £30 million fund had been launched in July, to be distributed through local authorities. He suggested that, in addition to responding to the consultation, the Committee might wish to write to the Minister of Finance requesting that a similar fund be established in Northern Ireland for retrospective installations in existing premises.

The Committee approved the following response for submission to the Department of Finance and agreed that a letter be forwarded to the Minister of Finance, as suggested:

COUNCIL RESPONSE

The questions below are extracted from the online questionnaire which must be completed with the approved response. Information will be made publicly available, unless we request otherwise, and state a rationale for the information being kept out of the public domain.

The consultation opened on 28th July and will close on 20th October, 2021

Q1 Do you support the proposal to introduce criteria for Changing Places Toilets (CPT) facilities provision (in addition to the current accessible sanitary provisions), in certain buildings through building regulations statutory guidance?

We support the provision of CPT facilities in new buildings and those created by a material change of use for the category of buildings indicated. It is the view of Belfast City Council that a statutory requirement for such a facility would be

the best way to ensure maximum provision. Whilst an amendment to technical guidance would be easier for the Department to implement this will allow scope for building owners and their designers to submit justifications for non-provision on the basis of proposed occupancy and detailed use at the design and construction phase. These justifications would have to be considered under the functional regulation which requires 'Reasonable provision'. This may appropriately justify non-provision at the design and construction stage but may not cater for the occupancy and specific use over the life span of the building. Changes to how a building is occupied or used over its lifespan may not re-engage this requirement unless the purpose group of the building changed. In this regard we consider mandatory provision for CPT facilities under Building Regulations to be the preferred option.

In addition, the current guidance contained in Technical Booklet R for accessible toilets is applicable only where toilets are provided for visitors, customers or staff. If no such facilities are provided, then no equivalent accessible facility is required. In terms of how the guidance is written it would appear that a CPT facility is being recommended for compliance irrespective of toilet provision for visitors, customers or staff, however clarity would be required. It would be helpful if the recommendations of paragraph 6.14A as a stand-alone requirement was clearly indicated as independent of paragraph 6.12. For example, the guidance in paragraphs 6.13 and 6.14 would not be applicable unless toilets are provided as per paragraph 6.12. It should be clear and unambiguous that CPT provision in paragraph 6.14A is independent of paragraph 6.12 unlike paragraphs 6.13 and 6.14 if this is the case.

Q2 Do you agree with the defined in scope/relevant types of large buildings commonly used by the public, where a CPT facility should be provided for a new building or where a building is formed by a material change of use?

The scope proposed would appear reasonable and we would have no additional information or evidence to bring in terms of a reduction or increase to scope. However as indicated in Q1 we do consider maximum benefit will be achieved by an amendment to the regulations to make these facilities mandatory in relevant buildings. Applicants will still have the opportunity to apply for a relaxation or a dispensation of a prescriptive regulation if they have a valid case to make for non-provision. However, provision is likely to more widespread in the relevant scope with a mandatory requirement.

Q3: Do you agree with the set criteria (the building function, its people capacity or gross floor area) for the defined in scope/relevant buildings?

Yes, we would agree with the set criteria and would have no additional information or evidence to bring in terms of changes to this criteria.

Q4: The Department acknowledges that there may be complexities associated with CPT provision in existing buildings undertaking extension or alteration works, but would welcome further views and supporting evidence. Do you agree with the Department on the need for further supporting evidence and can you provide such,

regarding CPT retro-fit installation to existing buildings undertaking extension or alteration works?

We have no evidence that would be of assistance in the establishment of triggers or thresholds for extending the provision of this facility to existing buildings. To have maximum impact this is an area which would need to be explored. Threshold combinations have been utilised in other Building Regulations for additional requirements such as floor area of the extension combined with percentage increase in useful floor area of the extended building. However we do not consider that determination of the threshold for application to extensions could be anything other than arbitrary. The application to alterations is likely to be even more problematic with perhaps type/size of the existing development and the estimated cost of alterations being carried out being potential triggers. Extending the recommendations to these categories of work would greatly enhance the provision of CPT facilities in the built environment as opposed to limiting provision to new buildings and those created by material change of use.

Q5: Do you agree with the analysis/principal assumptions, costs and impacts set out in the Part R consultation stage RIA?

Based on our experience of installing Changing Places into a number of premises, we would agree with the information/figures contained within the consultation

Q6: Have you any additional comments on the proposals you wish to provide?

It would be helpful to all industry stakeholders if the technical requirements for a CPT facility was provided in the statutory guidance as opposed to reference to associated documents. This could be reproduced as an additional appendix if necessary.

We welcome the steps being taken to increase inclusion for Changing Places Toilets facilities service users, and their carers. Promoting equality of opportunity is at the heart of the Belfast Agenda, the community plan for the city, and this action will contribute to that aim. In understanding the background to the campaign which has driven this change, there are several relevant points that demonstrate the opportunities we can learn from:

- The campaign for Changing Places Toilets facilities originated in England, gathering momentum with the establishment of a consortium in 2005. They successfully highlighted the need for such facilities, increasing public awareness and support from big business.
- This consortium has driven through the changes and utilised the findings of organisations such as the Research Institute for Disabled

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Consumers to highlight the spending power of disabled people, which has become known as the ‘purple pound’.

- Statutory guidance under Part M of the Building Regulations in England was amended in 2021 to require CPT facilities in new buildings, and since then the financial challenges to including such facilities voluntarily in existing buildings have been well documented. The Council notes that in July 2021 a £30 million fund was launched to encourage the retrospective installation of these facilities in existing premises which did not come under the scope of the new statutory guidance. This funding is to be distributed through Local Authorities.”

**Minutes of the Meeting of
the Audit and Risk Panel**

The Committee noted the key issues which had been discussed at the meeting of the Audit and Risk Panel of 14th September and approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting.

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

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Working Group on the Climate Crisis of 21st September.

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

The Committee agreed to adopt the recommendations made in respect of those applications received up to 10th September, as set out below:

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
2021 EVENTS						
Aisling Events	4th November 2021	Belfast International Homecoming Dinner and Award Presentation as part of COP26 themed events in Belfast Numbers attending – 300	A and B	Charge £825	No hospitality	Approve Charge No hospitality

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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>				
2022 EVENTS						
Society for Cardiothoracic Surgery in GB and Ireland	14 March 2022	SCTS Annual Meeting 2022 Gala dinner As part of their Congress in ICC, Belfast Numbers attending – 150 - <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 & B	No (charity)	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality
Microbiology Society	5 April 2022	Microbiology Society Drinks Reception as part of a celebration programme to celebrate 75 th anniversary of the journal and engagement events for microbiologists	A & B	No £825 waived due to links with Visit Belfast	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality

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		Numbers attending – 100				
QUB & Solar Orbiter Workshop	11 September 2022	Conference Welcome Reception for four-day conference taking place at Assembly Building Numbers attending – 250	A & B	No <i>£825 waived due to links with Visit Belfast</i>	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality

Issues Raised in Advance by Members

Adopt a Kiosk Scheme

Councillor Garrett drew the Members' attention to BT's Adopt a Kiosk scheme which provided local councils, registered charities and other organisations with an opportunity, for a fee of £1, to transform unused payphone kiosks. He pointed out that he was aware of several such kiosks in his area and suggested that they could, for example, be used as a defibrillator station or put to other uses by community groups.

The Committee agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting on the feasibility of joining the scheme and outlining the options open to the Council for the removal of the kiosks, should a decision be taken not to proceed.

Illumination of the City Hall

The Committee agreed, at the request of Alderman Kingston, that the City Hall be illuminated in an appropriate colour on the night of 18th October to mark Anti-Slavery Day.

At the request of Councillor Heading, the Committee agreed that the lights of the City Hall be dimmed for a short period of time on the night of October 6th to mark the removal of the £20 uplift in Universal Credit.

Chairperson

Extract of the Minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th August

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, 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
Total	£61,425	£61,425

- 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 a~~
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.

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.

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Standards and Business Committee and Positions of Responsibility 2021/22 (year 3)

1	Sinn Fein	Councillor Black	Deputy Chairperson
2	Sinn Fein	Councillor McCabe	
3	Sinn Fein	Councillor Corr	
4	Sinn Fein	Councillor Gormley	
5	Sinn Fein	Councillor McAteer	
6	Sinn Fein	Councillor Canavan	
7	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Bunting	
8	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor T. Kelly	
9	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor McCullough	Chairperson
10	Democratic Unionist Party	Alderman Kingston	
11	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Pankhurst	
12	Alliance Party	Councillor McAllister	
13	Alliance Party	Councillor McDonough-Brown	
14	Alliance Party	Councillor M. Kelly	
15	Progressive Unionist Party	Councillor Kyle	
16	Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor TBC	
17	Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor TBC	
18	Ulster Unionist Party	Alderman Copeland	
19	Green Party	Councillor Groogan	
20	People Before Profit Alliance	Councillor Ferguson	

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People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 7th September, 2021

MEETING OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Cobain (Chairperson);
Aldermen Copeland and McCoubrey; and
Councillors Baker, Black, Bunting, Corr,
de Faoite, Flynn, Garrett, M. Kelly, Magee, McAteer,
McCusker, McReynolds, Mulholland, Newton, Smyth and
Verner.

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

No apologies were recorded.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 3rd and 10th August were taken as read and signed as correct.

It was reported that the minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st September.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Smyth declared an interest in item 4 (a) Partner Agreements Update, in that he was a Member of Rosario's Youth Club funding steering group and he left the meeting whilst the matter was under consideration.

The following Members declared an interest in item 5 (a) in relation to the Community Provision Grant Funding Update. All Members left the meeting whilst the matter was being discussed.

- 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 4 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.

Financial Reporting - Quarter 1 2021/22

(Ms. J. Wilson, Business Manager, attended in connection with this item)

The Business Manager summarised the contents of the report which presented a Quarter 1 financial position for the People and Communities Committee, including a forecast of the year end outturn. She explained that the Quarter 1 position for the Committee showed an underspend of £1.428m (6.9%), with the forecast year-end position being an underspend of £18k (0%) which was well within the acceptable variance limit of 3%.

The Committee was advised that the reasons for the Quarter 1 underspend were due to vacant posts across a number of services, the receipt of additional income and the timing of grants and programmes.

The Committee:

- noted the report and the associated financial reporting pack; and
- requested that a report detailing the number of vacant posts within City and Neighbourhood Services, along with a proposed timeline for the recruitment of these positions be submitted to a future meeting.

City Centre Street Resourcing - Open Spaces and Streetscene

The Director of Neighbourhood Services provided the Members with a comprehensive update regarding the following matters, which included specific detail in relation to future resourcing of the functions:

- the approach to city centre cleanliness and the associated resourcing;
- the proposed realignment of resources into the Open Space and Street Scene (OSS) central team;
- an update in respect of the plans to commission a study to review the provision of street litter bins, floral displays in the city centre, along with the recommended improvements; and
- an update on the Clean, Green, Safe and Inclusive City Centre Study.

Several of the Members noted the update in regard to city centre cleanliness and the plans to commission a study to review the provision of street litter bins and floral displays in

**People and Communities Committee,
Tuesday, 7th September, 2021**

the city centre. Whilst broadly speaking the Members welcomed the review, several Members stated that its remit needed to be extended to cover the whole of the city and not just be city centre specific.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services suggested that Neighbourhood Cleansing Services and the overall proposed approach be further considered at a local level through the four Area Working Groups, with a citywide update report submitted to Committee in due course.

The Committee noted:

- the ongoing challenges around meeting customer expectation in relation street cleanliness within the city centre;
- the proposed approach to realigning and bolstering Council resources, subject to finance and Trade Union consultation;
- the plans to engage a consultant to review the provision of street litter bins, floral displays, and other street furniture across the city; and
- the update in respect of the Clean, Green, Safe and Inclusive City Centre study.

It was also agreed that, further consideration of Neighbourhood Cleansing Services would initially be presented through the Area Working Group, with a citywide update report to be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

**Update regarding legal proceedings concerning
Mullaghglass Landfill Site, Lisburn**

The Committee noted a report which provided an update regarding the legal proceedings that had been issued against the Council in respect of the ongoing odour nuisance associated with the Mullaghglass Landfill Site, Lisburn.

The Director of City Services undertook to keep the Committee updated as more information became available.

Noted.

Lagan Gateway Project - Bridge Naming

The Committee considered a report which considered the next steps regarding the naming process of the Lagan Gateway project.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to defer the report for consideration by the Party Group Leaders.

Committee/Strategic Issues

Notices of Motion Quarterly update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 To provide the quarterly update to People and Communities Committee on Notices of Motion.**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the updates to all Notices of Motion / Issues Raised in Advance that P&C Committee is responsible for as referenced; and
- Agree to the closure of 5 Notices of Motion / Issues Raised in Advance, as noted in paragraph 3.5 below.

3.0 Main report

Background

3.1 Members will recall that the first quarterly Notices of Motion update was presented to People and Communities Committee in April 2021.

3.2 This report provides an overview of the progress on those Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance which remained open following the April 2021 update, and on one new Motion which has since been added following agreement at the May 2021 Committee.

3.3 Notice of Motion Updates

There are currently 23 active Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance which the People and Communities Committee is responsible for. An update on those Notices of Motion which remain active on the live database.

3.4 Closure of Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance

At SP&R Committee on 20th November 2020, it was agreed that Notices of Motion could be closed for one of two reasons:

- **Category 1 - Notices of Motion which contained an action that has been completed.** All Notices of Motion within this category contained a specific task that has since been complete. It is worth noting that, when Committee agree to action a Notice of Motion, there are sometimes additional actions agreed alongside the Notice of Motion. As these are not technically part of the Notice of Motion, they are taken forward through normal committee decision making processes. The Notice of Motion can therefore be closed, but additional actions related to it will continue to be progressed and reported to the committee. These additional actions are not contained in this report, but will be noted in the live database moving forward.

- Category 2 - Notices of Motion have become Council policy or absorbed into a strategic programme of work. These Notices of Motion did not contain a specific task that could be complete. Instead, they were more strategic in nature and required changes in Council policy and/ or strategy for long term outcomes. Those listed within this category have all been agreed by Committee and are now either Council policy or are currently being implemented through a Council strategy that is managed by a Standing Committee through the corporate planning process.

3.5 Following an update of those Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance on the live database, it is recommended that Members approve the following Motions/Issues for closure.

Category 1 Recommended Closures:

- Desecration of Graves within Belfast City Cemetery – A report was presented to May 21 P&C Committee outlining the actions to reduce vandalism and ASB in the City Cemetery. Members noted the actions in the report. This NOM can be closed as the specific tasks have been completed.
- Community Impact of Needle Finds - This issue was addressed in a presentation delivered by the PHA to June 21 P&C Committee, and will now be picked up in routine briefings on public health issues to Committee on a six monthly basis. It is recommended that this Motion is now closed.
- Youth Service – Invitation to address Committee – Department of Education, Youth Service and PHA reps attended joint P&C / BYF meeting in Jan 2021. This motion can now be closed.
- Mapping exercise of 3G and 4G Pitches - This request has been addressed with Member who raised the issue and is recommended for closure.
- Sections 43A and 43B of the Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 - Officers have updated Cllr Heading, on the current position regarding the DoF 5 phase plan to uplift the Conservation of Fuel and Power section of the Building Regulations. This plan is outlined in the consultation on the new draft Energy Strategy, to which Building Control have provided a response. The plan outlines further consultation work to be carried out by the DoF regarding these changes to the Building Regulations and the Service will feed into a response. Building Control will monitor the progress on the

uplift of the Building Regulations and provide a response to the consultation when released. It is recommended that this motion is now closed.

3.6 Financial & Resource Implications

There are no additional financial implications required to implement these recommendations.

3.7 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

There are no equality, good relations or rural needs implications contained in this report.”

Following a query in regard to closing off, under category one, the mapping of 3g and 4g pitches, the Director of Neighbourhood Services advised that this issue would be further considered within the context of the Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy and therefore suggested that it instead be closed off on the live database under category 2 (Category 2 - Notice of Motion which has become Council policy or been absorbed into a strategic programme of work).

The Committee:

- noted the report and agreed to the closure of 5 Notices of Motion / Issues Raised in Advance, as referenced in in paragraph 3.5 of the report; and
- agreed that the mapping of 3g and 4g pitches be closed off on the live database under category 2.

**Department of Health - Integrated Care System (ICS)
NI Draft Framework - Draft Belfast City Council
Consultation Response**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 The Department of Health (DoH) has recently published for consultation, proposals for the development of a Future Planning Model, which will replace existing commissioning arrangements and processes in place within Northern Ireland (NI).**
- 1.2 This work will see the development of a new Integrated Care System (ICS) model in NI, whereby local providers and communities would be empowered to come together to plan, manage and deliver care for their local population based on a population health approach, with regional and specialised services planned, managed and delivered at a regional level. The deadline for the submission of consultation responses is Friday 17 September 2021.**

1.2 This report and appendices available on mod.gov set out the draft Council response for Members' consideration and approval.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- (i) Note that health colleagues are attending the August/ early September cycle of Members' Area Working Groups to provide an overview and discuss the emerging proposals.
- (ii) Consider and approve the draft consultation response, subject to any additional feedback from the Members' Area Working Groups captured and raised verbally at the Committee meeting.
- (iii) Agree that the response is submitted by 17 September 2021, highlighting that this remains subject to full Council approval in early October with any amendments being submitted at that stage.

3.0 Main report

Key Issues & Current Position

3.1 In 2005, A review of commissioning health services within NI found that the system was overly bureaucratic and lacking in clarity of accountability of decision making, detailing the need for changes in the way we plan, manage and deliver health services. The need for reform was subsequently reinforced by the Bengoa Report 'Systems not Structures'.

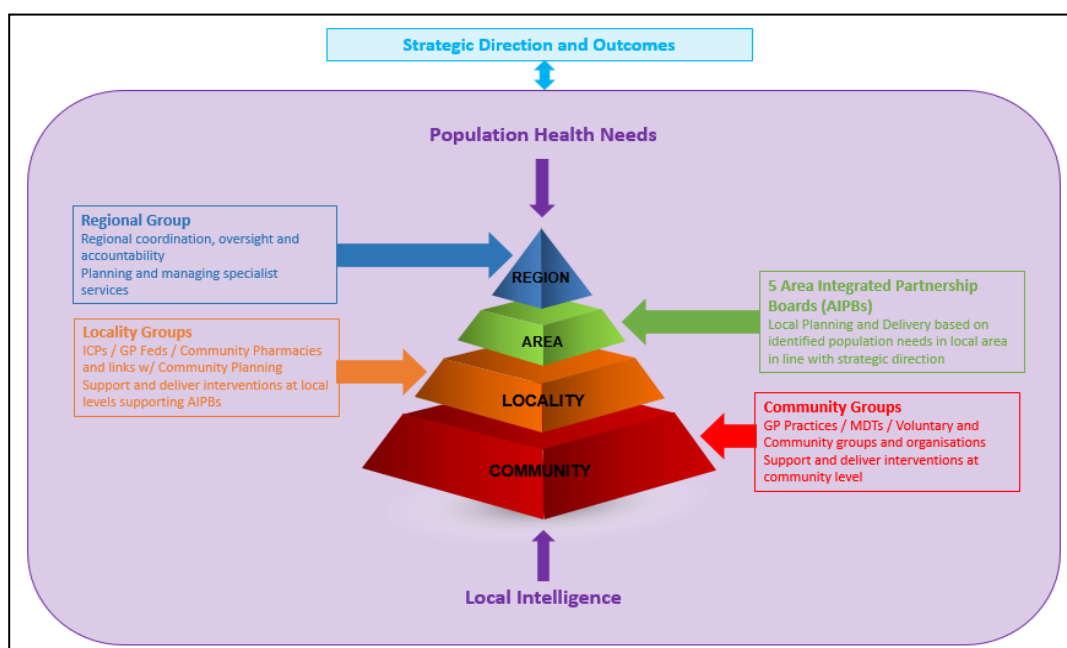
3.2 Following the commitments set out in the Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together plan to transform the health and social care system, the DoH has brought forward proposals for a new blueprint for the future of planning and managing health and social care services in NI.

3.3 The emerging proposals are based on an ICS approach which seeks to bring together partners within health and social care alongside other sectors including voluntary and community sector and local government, to plan, manage and deliver services based on the needs of the local population. A number of core principles underpin the ICS approach being proposed, including:

- Seek to increase autonomy and accountability at local decision making levels;
- See the delegation of decision-making and funding to local levels, except for regional and specialised services;
- Allow for planning, management and delivery of specialised services at a regional level; and
- Adopts an outcome-based approach.

- 3.4 The new model will ultimately enable local groups to take more control over planning and funding for services delivered within their areas to meet local needs. It will recognise the wider determinants impacting health and wellbeing and adopt a whole-system and integrated approach to planning and addressing these. The consultation document highlights the experience and evidence captured in responding to Covid-19 pandemic and what can be achieved if we come together to work as 'one-system'. Setting aside bureaucratic processes and breaking down barriers between sectors and organisations has allowed services to be delivered in a responsive and agile way to meet local need.
- 3.5 The consultation outlines the proposed vision, objectives values and principles which underpin the new ICS approach. Whilst further developmental work and detailed planning is required, the proposed ICS model will adopt a tiered approach as set out below.

Figure 1: ICS tiered approach.



Draft BCC Consultation Response

- 3.6 A detailed draft BCC response has been compiled for Members consideration. Feedback is provided on the specific questions set on different aspects of the proposed framework. In summary, the response supports the development and introduction of an Integrated Care System (ICS) model and focus on adopting an agile, whole-system and outcomes-based approach to the design,

delivery and management of health, social and community services.

3.7 Addressing health inequalities and improving health and well-being outcomes within Belfast are key priorities for the Belfast Community Planning Partnership (CPP) and Council. The commitment to an outcomes-based approach is at the heart of the Belfast Agenda, the community plan for Belfast, as well as the provision of direct Council services and support to citizens and communities. The Council works collaboratively with multi-agency partners to alleviate many of the health inequality challenges that exist within Belfast and we welcome and support the commitment to continue to plan and manage services informed by local input and intelligence, which underpins the proposed ICS model.

3.8 A summary of Council's main comments is outlined below:

- **Strongly recommend that in designing the new ICS model and supporting tiered structures, due consideration is given to how this can take account and build upon existing Community Planning and local structures. This would avoid potential duplication, maximise the contribution and commitment of cross-sectoral/ inter-agency partners and address the wider determinants of health. It is important to note that there has ongoing engagement between Council officers and health colleagues to support the alignment of planning processes and structures within the city.**
- **Seek further engagement and input into designing how the ICS model will operate at multiple levels, strategically and operationally, and how service users, local communities and local intelligence on health pressures (e.g. mental health and emotional well-being, substance misuse) help shape the overall strategic approach. It is important that regional measurements align with and are informed by local and community impact measures and 'bottom up' checks and balances are built into area level decision making.**
- **Whilst recognising the need to introduce a regional body to provide coordination, consistency, oversight and accountability as well as planning and managing specialist services, it is important that consideration is given to its relationship with local structures and addressing common localised health challenges, with appropriate flexibility built into any resourcing / funding model brought forward.**
- **In designing the proposed regional group, consideration must be given to its relationship with local structures and how the plans and performance framework links with local level planning. It is also important that a common approach is adopted to developing local delivery plans, associated performance accountability frameworks and measuring**

success/ impact of services and interventions – adopting an outcome-based approach.

- Support in principle the proposed creation of Area Integration Partnership Boards (AIPB), however, would recommend that further consideration and discussion takes place on the proposed composition of AIPB. The proposed nomination of 1 lead officer to represent Community Planning/ Council on the AIPB is not suffice. Highlight that the Council wishes to explore its own potential role and representation on AIPB and within the ICS model given its role in delivering services and support, and strong connections with local communities.
- Important that the AIPB and the proposed sub-structures at a 'locality' and 'community' level relate and align with CPPs, structures and key areas of work i.e. development of integrated area planning model, to avoid duplication.
- In developing the new ICS model, consideration must be given to ensuring boundaries are co-terminus with the 11 local council boundaries; highlighting the fact that currently two Health Trusts (i.e. Belfast HSCT and South Eastern HSCT) currently cover Belfast LGD. This approach would support and enable a more integrated, place-based participatory approach to planning and delivery of services.
- Highlight the synergies between the development timescale for the ICS model and the co-design of the refreshed Belfast Agenda (2022-2026) underway, with March 2022 being a key joint milestone. Opportunity presented to align and integrate the planning processes and support a collaborative and whole-system approach to addressing population health needs.
- We welcome the discussions to date with DoH colleagues and would relish the opportunity to continue engagement to maximise the opportunities and impact of the new ICS model and explore how we strengthen the linkages and alignment to Council and Community Planning, including; strategic direction; governance arrangements; timeframes; roles and expectations; co-design processes; representation and levels of representation.
- We welcome the opportunity to continue to engage with DoH colleagues and other partners to help bring forward the ICS model; further considering the governance arrangements to be brought forward and how they relate with existing local structures as well as understanding the anticipated timescales and sequencing of the proposed three-phased approach to introducing the new ICS model.

Members Engagement

- 3.9 It should be noted that colleagues from the Belfast Health and Social Care Board are attending the Members' Area Working

Groups this month to outline the proposals for a new ICS model and discuss Members views. The draft Council response has been prepared in parallel, any comments raised by Members at the AWGs will be raised at Committee and the response amended accordingly.

Financial & Resource Implications

3.10 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

3.11 There are no equality, good relations or rural needs implications in relation to the draft consultation response.”

The Committee:

- noted that representatives from the Belfast Health and Social Care Board would be attending the next round of Area Working Group meetings to outline the Board's proposals to develop a new Integrated Care System (ICS), which would enable further consideration and discussion by the Members; and
- approved the draft consultation response available [here](#), subject to the inclusion of any additional feedback from the aforementioned meetings and agreed that the draft document be submitted by the deadline of 17th September 2021, advising that it was subject to Council ratification on 4th October.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

Partner Agreements Update

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reminded the Committee that the Council had previously agreed to enter into Partner Agreements at seven sites and he then provided an update on the progress in relation to the Agreements for April – June 2021.

He advised that regular checks on the necessary Insurance, Health and Safety and Governance had been undertaken at all sites. All partners had been compliant on these matters apart from East Belfast Football Club, which was outstanding a financial report, and a non-compliance notice had been issued.

As previously agreed, funding of up to £20,000 per annum was available for each partner for the delivery of a programme (supporting the Sports Development Plan). The Director reported that letters of offer had been sent to all partners based on approved sports development plans for the current financial year.

The Committee was advised that, given the current Covid19 restrictions, the usual end of quarter monitoring meetings had not been held face to face with the partners but parks management and sports development officers had kept in contact via phone calls for updates on site management and bookings, health and safety, finance, and their sports development plans. Action plans had been reviewed and agreed with the partners during these discussions

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to ensure that the planned outcomes were achieved, and improvements identified where required.

He explained that, in line with the Council's objectives, the diversification of use and improved sports development impact were priorities at the partner agreement sites and he advised that, despite the Covid19 restrictions, the programme delivery had led to significant positive achievements across the seven sites. He drew the Members' attention to a table which indicated the outputs at the sites as reported by the partners for Quarter 1 (April – June 2021).

Following a query from a Member regarding the possibility of establishing a Partner agreement 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.

As previously reported at the August meeting, it was anticipated that any new requests could therefore be considered as part of a new Community Asset Transfer process, proposals for which were currently being drawn up by officers. He advised that it was anticipated that a report outlining the details of the proposal would be submitted to the November meeting of the Committee.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

**Variation to Partner Agreement –
Loughside Playing Fields**

As detailed in the previous report, Partner Agreements were currently in operation at seven playing field sites across the city, one of these being Loughside Playing Fields. These agreements had all recently been extended for a further year, beyond the initial five-year Partner Agreement period, based on satisfactory performance by the Partners.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reported that, in each of the Partner Agreements, apart from Loughside Playing Fields, the agreements had defined areas of responsibility which included keyholding and service operations of the changing rooms and toilets. The agreement with Loughside Playing Fields included keyholding responsibility which only permitted the Partner access to a small office space, all other keyholding/operations at the pitch changing rooms and toilets had been undertaken by Loughside Recreation Centre staff.

The Committee was advised that a suggested variation to the existing agreement proposed to include additional responsibilities for the Partner, these would include further keyholding and service operations by way of a variation agreement.

In order to facilitate the proposed change to the agreement, some minor works had been carried out to the interior of the building at Loughside Playing Fields. These included the installation of an external door that would enable the Council to extend the Partner's area of responsibility to the changing rooms, whilst removing access to the remainder of the building. Consultation had taken place with the Partner who had advised that they would be

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willing to increase their area of responsibility within the building, this would align their Partner Agreement with the others, subject to relevant terms and conditions (to be determined by the Council).

The Committee agreed to vary the terms of the Agreement at Loughside Playing Fields, specifically to extend the Partner's area of responsibility within the building to include access to four team changing rooms plus male and female toilets.

Ormeau Park BMX Track

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting held on 10th August, approval had been granted for the Council to work in partnership with Cycling Ulster to support its bid to the Whitemountain Programme to access external funding to upgrade the BMX track in Ormeau Park. The proposed upgraded track would facilitate increased usage for structured training and sports development activities and enhance the facility for general recreational use by the public.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services advised that Cycling Ulster had submitted an application to the Whitemountain Programme, which had reverted to Cycling Ulster, seeking confirmation, before 29th October, that planning permission was not required for the upgrade works and that a formal agreement be put in place which would clearly articulate the availability of access to the site for public recreational use.

In terms of the planning issue, Cycling Ulster had indicated that it would provide this either through their professional advisers or through a statement from Belfast City Council Planning Office.

The Director detailed that, in terms of the formal agreement regarding availability, Cycling Ulster had requested that the Council would establish a Preferential Use Agreement with them, stipulating the following.

- the opening hours of the site and the hours during which it would be available to the general public;
- the limited number of hours during which the site would be closed to the public for Cycling Ulster preferential use;
- the booking system which the Council would operate for Cycling Ulster use;
- that the booking would not be required for recreational use; and
- that the site would be open for recreational use at no charge at all other times.

The Members were reminded that similar agreements were in place which afforded preferential use to other partner organisations. Generally, such agreements provided either significant financial contribution to help develop the Council asset or contributed to delivering local sports development outcomes at the site.

Several Members referred to the facility and stated that they would welcome the introduction of similar facilities across the city. A number of other specific queries were also raised in regard to the current status of previous requests.

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services provided the Members with an assurance that officers would be looking at improvements across the whole of the city in terms

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of the Parks Estate through the Belfast Open Spaces Strategy (BOSS). He confirmed that projects currently on the list had not been forgotten about but stated that they needed to be managed collaboratively to ensure the best use of open spaces across all areas of the city. He also confirmed that, as with this request, where possible, external funding opportunities were identified and applied for, however, these were not always successful.

Following a query from a Member regarding the specific request by Cycling Ulster to close the track for a limited number of hours and the potential impact that this might have on existing recreational users of the track, the Director of Neighbourhood Services suggested that the Committee grant approval 'in principle' to allow for a preferential agreement to be drawn up to enable the proposal to proceed, on the basis that a report be submitted to a future meeting which would provide more clarity in regard to the specific request for priority use of the track.

The Committee:

- granted approval 'in principle' for a preferential use agreement to be developed with Cycling Ulster in relation to the BMX track at Ormeau Park, subject to further details being submitted to a future meeting specifically in regard to the proposed priority use of the track at limited times by Cycling Ulster;
- noted that the proposal was subject to Cycling Ulster accessing external partnership funding to upgrade the existing track; and
- agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting which would consider the provision of similar facilities across the city.

Alleyway Transformation - scheme pilots

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 Members will recall that the Committee, at its meeting in December 2020, considered a report from officers on Alley-gating, Alleyway Transformation and Un-adopted alleyways.

1.2 This report provides the committee with an update on progress to date, in particular, the ongoing discussions with officials from the Department for Infrastructure (DFI) on accessing funding available to support Alleyway Transformation projects.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is asked to note the update on alleyway transformation and un-adopted alleyways and to agree the delivery of a number of pilot alleyway transformation schemes throughout the city.

3.0 Key Issues

- 3.1 Members are reminded that the December 2020 report provide an update on work officers have been carrying out in respect of un-adopted alleyways, alley transformation and sourcing financial support for alleyway transformation schemes.**
- 3.2 The report identified the top 20 problematic un-adopted alleyways in the city and beginning with the top 4 (one from each area of the city) a cross departmental group was set up to identify ownership and engage the relevant statutory authorities to deal with the problems found. The work of this group was paused as a result of the pandemic but will recommence once resources are in place to proceed.**
- 3.3 In December 2020, the DfI Minister wrote to all Councils in Northern Ireland offering monies via the Blue/Green Infrastructure fund to deliver alleyway transformation initiatives across Northern Ireland. Due to the Pandemic Officers were not in a position to engage at that time but have been in discussions with officials from the Department since early summer with regard to how much funding was available to the Council, how the Council could access this money and to understand the scope of the fund. Discussions also explored the possibility utilising this funding to support bringing un-adopted alleyways up to an adoptable standard.**
- 3.4 DfI confirmed that £1-2 million is available to all 11 Councils in Northern Ireland but as yet no set criterion has been developed as to how it can be accessed and what it can be utilised for.**
- 3.5 Initial engineering survey work has identified that the cost for upgrading unadopted alleyways, to meet an adoption standard would consume most of the proposed DfI budget, which is to be allocated across all the councils in Northern Ireland. As a result, it was felt that given the limited pot of money available it would be better to focus on transformation schemes that could be delivered at a lesser cost.**
- 3.6 This would enable the monies to be spent on the transformation of alleyways, through cleaning and greening interventions. This would not prohibit un-adopted alleyways from taking part in the scheme, but this would be dependant on their condition.**
- 3.7 DfI have agreed that in order to test the processes required to deliver an alleyway transformation scheme, a number of pilot projects be initiated, to develop a framework which will be used for a larger programme, and be a path-finding exercise, for other councils as a recognised method to access the DfI monies.**

- 3.8 Pilots projects will involve the community receiving a `Starter Pack` of materials and information to support the regeneration of alleyways and deliver a transformation project.

The pack would / should include: -

- a. Plants, planters, soil / compost, seats etc.
 - b. Planting / growing / basic wooden planter and willow plant support (trellis) workshops to develop community capacity for the longevity of the project.
 - c. Signposting communities to other departments and agencies for issues not within the remit or responsibility of BCC.
 - d. Signposting communities to funding opportunities they could avail of to further develop and maintain the area after BCC / DFI funding has been utilised.
 - e. Legal information / liabilities and ownership of alleyways.
- 3.9 It is anticipated that the cost for delivering a starter pack could be up to £7500. DFI will fund the purchasing of all equipment, plants, baskets, street furniture however as there is no revenue budget within this programme, the capacity building element of the pilot will have to be provided by Council from within existing budgets.
- 3.10 To enable the pilot to be progressed at pace, Officers are suggesting that through our Outreach teams we identify up to 5 potential alleyway sites across each of the 4 quadrants of the city, based on officer knowledge, community infrastructure and delivery of improved outcomes. The long list of five will be circulated to Members on a North, South, East & West basis for consideration and prioritisation of the long list. Following receipt of the prioritisation exercise, Officers will move forward to deliver the pilot alleyway transformation projects in 2 locations per quadrant.

Longer term alleyway transformation schemes

- 3.11 At the May SP&R committee members considered a paper on alleygating and the process for Members to input into the identification of gate locations, through pro-forma, which is due to be issued imminently. As part of this pro-forma members will be asked to identify potential gating locations as well as locations suitable for alley transformation, for further consideration at SP&R committee and Area Working Groups over the autumn.
- 3.12 On receipt of this information officers will be in a better position to understand the demand for transformation schemes across the city, collate the learnings from the pilot projects and bid into £1-2

million fund for monies to support a future alleyway transformation programmes in the City.

Financial & Resource Implications

- 3.13 Capital expenditure associated with the alleyway transformation programme will be accessed via the DFI alleyway transformation scheme with outreach and capacity building support supported via existing Council resources.**

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.14 None associated with this report.”**

A Member welcomed the report but made reference to the number of unadopted alleyways that remained throughout the city and she sought an assurance that the cross departmental team currently working on this would continue this valuable work and that the Committee would be kept apprised of the progress.

Several Members concurred and stated that, whilst they welcomed the funding, they were disappointed that it was likely to only cover the transformation of a small number of existing alleyways, through cleaning and greening interventions, which in no way helped to address the huge desire from communities across the city to bring un-adopted and unsafe alleyways to an adoptable standard.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services confirmed that this workstream was iterative and that unadopted alleyways would be considered as part of the longer-term scheme.

A further Member referred to the fact that in certain areas, particularly in the south and east of the city, landlords were disposing of rubbish in the alleyways during house clearances which was subsequently getting lifted free of charge by the Council, he stated that this was an unacceptable regular occurrence which needed to be addressed.

A Member referred to the pilot and the proposal for officers to identify 5 potential alleyway sites per area for Members prioritisation to identify the top 2 for each of the 4 quadrants of the city. The Member suggested that the potential sites should be referred to the relevant Area Working Group (AWGs) for its consideration, with the aim of each AWG eventually selecting the final areas to proceed. He stated that he would like to see more flexibility in terms of how the final funding awarded to each of the 4 areas was actually utilised. Therefore, should the AWG feel that it had the capacity to deliver all 5 schemes in their area (albeit, potentially much smaller schemes), that authority should be delegated to the AWG to agree the final number for selection.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Baker,
Seconded by Councillor Magee,

That the Committee agrees to the delivery of a number of pilot alleyway transformation schemes throughout the city and further agrees that the final

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area selection, number of pilots and the detail of intervention be delegated to the Area Working Groups who would be asked to adopt a flexible approach as to how the funding was allocated.

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

Finance, Procurement and Performance

Community Provision Funding Update

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 seek members views on the funding approach in respect of the Councils Revenue, Capacity and Advice grants for 2022/2023.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Members of the Committee are asked to.

- **Agree to extend the existing Community Development Grants’ funding agreements for Capacity Building, Revenue for Community Buildings and Advice to the 31 March 2023 (at the current funding allocation, subject to confirmation of the 22/23 funding allocation from DfC), including extending the previously agreed bridging funding for St. Simon’s Hall.**
- **Note the reprofile of the agreed annual BCC contribution of £90,000 to Active Belfast. Funding will be used to extend funding agreements with current Active Belfast grant holders in order to complete their original programmes in 2021-22 and provide a budget for developmental projects and the re-profile of £23,133 from the BCC budget to Jog Belfast.**

3.0 Main report

3.1 Community Provision Capacity, Buildings Revenue and Advice Grants 22/23

3.2 Background

Council’s capacity, buildings revenue and advice grants aim to promote and invest in a resilient and effective independent community sector across the city by offering a number of different funding streams that any eligible group operating in Belfast can apply for:

Capacity Building

Aimed at Lead community development organisations that advocate the interests of their local groups, area and residents; and support local groups to ensure good practice in governance, committee procedures, appropriate policies and financial management.

Revenue for Community Buildings

Aimed at community organisations which address the needs of their community by delivering a broad-based programme from their building. The building may be used by the local neighbourhood, or the community may be from across the whole city for a thematic/special interest group.

Advice Funding

Council provides funding for generalist advice services to five area-based Consortia, consisting of 20 Advice Organisations throughout the city. The level of funding is based on an allocation formula (weighted for population size and level of deprivation) agreed by Council in 2015. There is a stipulation by the DfC that all groups must be registered with the regional body, Advice NI, and adhere to a range of policies and quality standards.

Funding for the grants programme comes from two main sources, Council and DfC via the Community Support Programme (CSP). At August Committee members agreed to accept the CSP Letter of Offer (LoO) from DfC, which also included 2 additional allocations for Welfare Mitigations Extensions.

3.3 Key Considerations

In normal circumstances, applications under the capacity and revenue grant schemes are normally facilitated through an open call in October of each year, for activity in the upcoming financial year. Application calls are required to take place in October to allow application development, assessment and award of grants.

Members are aware that as a result of COVID, contracts associated with our revenue and capacity grants had been extended from 2020/2021 at the same allocation level into 2021/2022. This extension allowed communities to sustain current services and continue to focus on delivery and recovery during the pandemic.

Members will also be aware that our Community / Voluntary sector partners continue to support communities to recover from the pandemic and many have had to adjust how they approach their service delivery to comply with our 'new normal'.

In recognition of the current focus of the Community / Voluntary sector, Officers are seeking member approval to extend the current contracts until March 2023 rather than proceed with an open call in October 2021.

This extension would be on the basis that officers undertake a review of the Capacity and Buildings Revenue Grants, aligning with DfC revised outcomes and our Community Provision priorities in readiness for an open call in October 2022 for delivery from April 2023 – March 2026.

In addition, Officers will conduct research to understand the changing needs and priorities of communities and organisations as we move to phased recovery and consider how we fully utilise resources to support the development of neighbourhoods and organisations.

Given the importance of ensuring there is support for communities where there may be low or no community capacity, it is proposed the following programmes of activity would be delivered to ensure those communities were in a position to apply for the recommended open call for 22/23 grants:

- Enhanced Capacity building support – members will recall that officers have committed to the development of a Capacity Pilot Programme that will provide an additional resource for organisations who are not successful in accessing sufficient funding because of capacity limitations. Officers are developing a Capacity Programme which will provide support for organisations in 22/23. Further detail will be brought back to committee and Area Working Groups in November/December.**
- Community Provision grants – these grants which have been successfully delivered as micro and medium grants will be made available for project activity in 22/23. Feedback on this approach, which combines a range of community provision funding, has been very positive, particularly because of the reduced levels of bureaucracy enabling new organisations to participate**

The recommendation to extend current contracts and undertake a review of the current process is based on the following considerations:

- Community and voluntary partners report that Covid has had a significant impact on service delivery, governance, staff and volunteer availability. An open call in October 21 would not provide sufficient time for organisations to**

accurately capture and reflect emerging needs and will add pressure to an already stretched sector.

- DfC has conducted a review of the Community Support Programme which provides the majority of the finance for council capacity and revenue funding. A key recommendation from the review is that the department adopts an Outcomes Based Approach for its future funding programmes; this review is currently with the minister for consideration. Postponing the open call will provide council with an opportunity to revisit our Community Development Grants and ensure alignment with revised future DfC outcomes.
- Delivering an open call now does not give sufficient time to give communities with low or no capacity to be effectively supported by Council to enable their participation and inclusion in future Council grant programmes.
- Carrying out an open call for this funding now will put pressure on existing council community services and create an order of competing priorities in already under-resourced service teams. Each stage of the process requires significant staff time, from support to develop applications through to assessment and verification of funding to date. Officers recommend that given the pressures in the CVS they need to prioritise support and a reassessment of the current approach to ensure that it meets the current and emerging needs of the sector.

3.4 St. Simon's Hall

At February's Committee meeting members agreed the provision of a one off 'Bridging Support' to Southcity Resource and Development Centre for revenue costs associated with St Simons Hall. Should members agree to extend the current grant contracts to March 2023. St. Simon's will not have the opportunity of applying for a Revenue Grant. Thus based on the previous decision rationale, it is recommended the St. Simon's contract is extended in keeping with any extension to the capacity and buildings revenue grant programme at a cost of £18,000.

3.5 Active Belfast

Active Belfast (AB) is a multi-agency partnership supporting physical activity and healthy eating in Belfast, the partnership is currently undertaking a review of its operation and a report with further information will be provided at a later date. Two of the main initiatives supported by Active Belfast include the Active Belfast grant scheme (supports participation in physical activity) and Jog

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Belfast (couch to 5k programme), these initiatives are administered by staff in the Belfast Health Development Unit (BHDU).

In 2019 Active Belfast agreed to a two year funding programme from 2019/21 to increase capacity and foster sustainability at community level. In April 2021, in order to respond to the impacts of the Covid 19 pandemic, partners agreed that Active Belfast would contribute a proportion of its grant funds towards the Belfast City Council Micro and Medium Grants Scheme for 21/22. This approach is intended to enhance access to funding for physical activity and nutrition focussed work in Belfast. BHDU staff will provide advice on the physical activity & healthy eating elements of successful BCC Micro/Medium grant projects.

Given the impact of Covid 19 on delivery of 2019/21 projects, officers have adopted the following approach for 21/22 which members are asked to note that;

- current Active Belfast grant holders will be offered continuation funding in order to complete their original programmes/initiatives in 2021-22. This will be subject to meeting key performance indicators.
- a developmental budget will be used for Active Belfast Partnership supported projects and initiatives, again this will be subject to meeting key indicators.

In addition, members are advised that the additional in year re-profile to Jog Belfast of £23,133 is provided from the existing BCC 90k contribution to Active Belfast.

Members should note that this request will be met within existing budgets as outlined below:

BCC	£39,970	Contribution to BCC Covid Recovery Grants Micro/Medium Grant
PHA	£39,970	Contribution to BCC Covid Recovery Grants Micro/Medium Grant
PHA	£73,163	Active Belfast Partnership budget to support AB grants from 20/21 and developmental activities
BCC	£26,897	Active Belfast Partnership budget to support AB grants from 20/21 and developmental activities

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PHA	£32,867	Jog Belfast
BCC	£23,133	Jog Belfast

3.6 Financial & Resource Implications

The financial and resource implications detailed within this report and their implementation will ensure a more effective use of staff and financial resources in a context with continuing pressures on community and voluntary partners.

3.7 Equality or Good Relations Implications and Rural Needs Assessment

This will be considered throughout and any appropriate issues highlighted to Members. Any amendments to existing scheme or new scheme will be considered in the context of any equality/Good Relations and rural needs considerations.”

Following a query from a Member, the Director of Neighbourhood Services confirmed that the Members were being asked to agree ‘in principle’ to roll forward the contracts into 2022/23. He explained that the final allocation of funding into 2022/23 would only be made once the DfC had formally confirmed the Council’s allocation which was the same arrangement as the current year.

A number of Members stated that the community groups needed the security of this funding and stated that they felt that it was essential that the officer’s recommendation within the report, to extend the existing Community Development Grant funding agreements for Capacity Building, Revenue for Community Buildings and Advice to the 31st March 2023 (at the current funding allocation, subject to confirmation of the 2022/23 funding allocation from DfC) be adopted, which also included extending the previously agreed bridging funding for St Simon’s Hall.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Bunting,
Seconded by Alderman McCoubrey,

That the Committee agrees not to the extend the existing Community Development Grants’ funding agreements for Capacity Building, Revenue for Community Buildings and Advice to the 31 March 2023 and that it reverts to an open call for funding.

On a vote, seven Members voted for the proposal and seven against.

Casting Vote

There being an equality of votes, the Chairperson, Councillor Cobain, exercised his second and casting vote for the proposal and it was declared carried.

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On this basis, the Committee further:

- agreed not to extend the previously agreed bridging funding for St. Simon's Hall; and
- noted the reprofile of the agreed annual BCC contribution of £90,000 to Active Belfast and that funding would be used to extend funding agreements with current Active Belfast grant holders in order to complete their original programmes in 2021-22 and to provide a budget for developmental projects and the re-profile of £23,133 from the BCC budget to Jog Belfast.

Boxing Strategy Quarterly Update

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reminded the Committee that the Council had previously agreed to provide £200,000 in funding to the Irish Athletic Boxing Association Ulster Branch (IABA) in the current financial year for delivery of an agreed action plan which supported the Belfast Boxing Strategy and he then provided an update on the progress in relation to the agreement up to the end of June 2021.

He explained that, in line with the Council's objectives, the Belfast Boxing Strategy Steering Group had met quarterly. The Steering Group was chaired by the Director of Neighbourhood Services and attended by Council officers, IABA officers and officials and Co. Antrim officials.

The Committee was reminded that the Council had previously agreed a total of 37 Indicators with the IABA to monitor delivery of the programmes. The Director reported that the IABA had been compliant with all the reporting requirements. He advised that the IABA had provided narrative against each of the KPIs to describe progress against each indicator and planned to ensure that all targets were achieved at year end. Whilst the performance reports indicated some significant underperformance against targets, he highlighted that it was important to note that participation in boxing had been heavily restricted under the Covid19 restrictions, given that boxing was a full contact indoor sport. Where possible, the IABA had mitigated against this by modifying delivery of many elements to online methods.

The Committee was advised that the 2021 – 2022 action plan had been developed with this in mind and therefore many of the indoor contact-based elements had been programmed into Q3 and Q4 of this financial year.

The Committee noted the progress update report regarding the IABA.

Operational Issues

Pest Control Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 A report outlining the ongoing recovery of the pest control service was presented to Committee in June of this year. The report highlighted some of the difficulties faced by the pest control team in resuming home treatments and other aspects of the service. We**

agreed to keep the recovery of the service and the measures we had put in place under close review and the purpose of this report is to update Members on the current position.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the current position and waiting times for pest control services and the actions being taken to manage its ongoing recovery.**

3.0 Main report

- 3.1 In the June committee report Members were reminded of the significant impact the pandemic has had on the staff and delivery therefore delivery of service due to furlough, contact tracing and shielding etc. However, despite significantly reduced resources, the Pest Control service continued to deliver the sewer baiting programme throughout that time and residents were offered advice and information. The tenants of social housing were advised to contact their housing provider to obtain pest control services.**
- 3.2 In September of last year, the service was able to resume some home treatments, however, risk assessments and health and safety controls meant that these could only be provided for the most vulnerable or if significant public health issues were identified. Most visits were restricted to external only, with officers providing advice and information.**
- 3.3 The pest control team continued to work with Corporate Health and Safety and when transmission rates reduced, and restrictions eased, further risk assessments, with additional safety measures, enabled home treatments to resume in June.**
- 3.4 In planning to resume the home treatments concerns were expressed by staff and Trade Unions that because of high demand for the service and the reduced number of visits that could be made in a day because of the additional safety requirements, there was potential for a long waiting list to build up very quickly. They were concerned about the negative impact that this could have on public perception of the service and, in turn, on staff morale.**
- 3.5 It was proposed to effectively manage the waiting list in the first instance by only undertaking home treatments in private rented sector and owner-occupied property and continuing to refer the tenants of social housing to the Housing Executive and Housing Associations.**
- 3.6 Given that our pest control service for treatment of public health pests are free of charge C&NS does not have an SLA or MoU with**

the NI Housing Executive or Housing Associations. As such, at the request of Members, the Operational Director wrote to the Chief Executive of the NI Housing Executive and all Housing Associations advising them of our ongoing approach during the pandemic. A letter of response was received from the Housing Executive noting the approach.

- 3.7 The Operational Director also wrote to Northern Ireland Water regarding areas of the city that have been experiencing significant issues with rats, requesting the sewer systems in those areas be surveyed and any defects repaired. NIW responded positively and has commissioned survey work as requested. We will continue to liaise with NIW regarding the outcome of this work and any further action required.

3.8 Current Position

Since we resumed the home treatments in June, the waiting time for an internal treatment has fluctuated between 3-5 weeks and currently sits at 2 weeks. Unfortunately, increased transmission rates in Covid-19 and an increase in the number of people self-isolating during July and August has impacted on the home treatment service, with appointments having to be cancelled, sometimes at the time of the actual visit as the information on people self-isolating, asked by the visiting officer as a control measure, is only disclosed by the householder at that point. This coupled with employees testing positive for Covid-19 and others being required to self-isolate because of contact with someone who has tested positive, and summer leave, has made it difficult to manage the waiting time for appointments. We have done this by balancing resources between sewer treatments and home treatments, however the current waiting time for sewer treatments is 3 weeks. All resources are directed at managing these two aspects of our pest control service and we were unable therefore to recover our seasonal service of treating wasp nests.

- 3.9 In support of the ongoing recovery of the service we are in the process of recruiting a Pest Control Supervisor to provide additional support to the Pest Control Manager and the team. There is also an ongoing review of City Services and the resilience of the pest control service is being considered as part of that review. In the meantime, we are continuing with our current arrangements and controls for recovery of pest control and continue to monitor the waiting times and balance the service in line with guidance from Corporate Health and Safety and Human Resources.
- 3.10 It has also been established as requested by the committee, and communicated to committee members via email on 1st July 2021, that Elected Members can log requests for service with the

Customer Hub for other statutory agencies such as NI Water and NIHE. However, it should be understood that there is no method to track or update these requests when they are external to BCC.

3.11 Financial & Resource Implications

There are no additional financial implications associated with this report.

3.12 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

There are no implications associated with this report.”

The Committee considered the report, during which several Members expressed the desire to resume pest control services to all citizens of the city, which would include tenants of social housing who had previously been asked during the pandemic to contact their local housing provider.

During discussion, the Members considered the role of the other statutory agencies and expressed concern that the Council appeared to be the public's first point of contact with any pest control issue, despite the fact that the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) and Housing Associations also offered a pest control service. Whilst the Members were in agreement that they wished to see a full resumption of pest control services to all ratepayers, there was a general consensus that there also needed to be an emphasis placed on the NIHE and local Housing Associations to pick up the costs of the Council providing this service on their behalf. The Director of City Services was therefore asked to investigate the establishment of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Housing Executive and Housing Associations, with a view to the Council recouping the costs of providing the service.

After discussion, the Committee:

- noted the current position and waiting times for pest control services and agreed to the resumption of pest control services to all ratepayers; and
- asked officers to investigate the establishment of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the NIHE and Housing Associations, with a view to the Council recouping the costs of providing a pest control service and to submit an update report to Committee in due course.

**The Queen's Green Canopy - Tree Planting Initiative
celebrating the forthcoming Queen's Platinum Jubilee**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 At the People and Communities Committee meeting on the 10th August 2021, Members were asked to consider a request received from Colonel Dan Rex MVO, CEO to the Queen's Green Canopy, inviting Belfast City Council to celebrate Her Majesty's**

Platinum Jubilee and at the same time, promoting the importance of trees to the environment by planting trees in one of our Parks

- 1.2 Committee Members at that meeting recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of the 4th May 2021, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to defer consideration of the report to enable information to be obtained by officers and submitted to a future meeting in regard to the proposed locations as to where the trees would be planted and to establish the varieties of the trees to be planted, ensuring that those selected were of a native species and to guarantee inclusion within the Council's One Million Tree planting initiative.**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Agree to one (QGC) tree planting event proposed for Belmont Park, where 500 small native trees will be planted between November 2021 and March 2022, in the lead up to the official Platinum Jubilee celebrations planned for 3rd – 6th June 2022.**
- All 500 young, native trees planted as part of this (QGC) event will be automatically added to the Council's on-going One Million Tree planting running total.**
- Agree the Council's Outreach officer for the east of the city, work with local community groups to plan and take part in the proposed (QGC) event.**
- Agree to the installation of one small (QGC) plaque at the Belmont Park planting site.**

3.0 Main report

- 3.1 On 8th March 2021 correspondence was sent out to all the Chief Executives in Northern Ireland from Colonel Dan Rex MVO, CEO to the Queen's Green Canopy inviting Councils to take part in the Queen's Green Canopy initiative.**
- 3.2 Colonel Dan Rex invited representatives from Councils and other interested parties to an on-line presentation which took place on 22nd March 2021 and this was attended by representatives from Belfast City Council; Mid Ulster Council; Ards and North Down Council; Lisburn and Castlereagh Council and Antrim and Newtownabbey Council, Viscount Brookborough KG, The Earl of Caledon Lord -Lieutenant, Mathew Stewart, Abercorn Estate, Robert Scott Lord – Lieutenant Co Tyrone, Nicola Brady General Secretary.**

- 3.3 The presentation set out what the (QGC) project entailed:**
- 1. Thanking Her Majesty, the Queen for her exceptional service**
 - 2. To celebrate Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee**
 - 3. Promote the importance of trees to the environment**
 - 4. Involving communities; charities; schools; youth groups and councils in tree planting; creating a lasting legacy in honour of the Queen's leadership**
- 3.4 The (QGC) is particularly focused on supporting urban tree planting, in the most disadvantaged communities across Northern Ireland**
- 3.5 The (QGC) currently has a number of key partnerships in place and more are getting involved as the initiative gathers momentum:**
- Trees for Cities**
 - Forest Canopy Foundation**
 - Woodland Trust**
 - Royal Horticultural Society**
 - Royal Forestry Society**
- 3.6 Assessing where trees are planted each year continues to be on a rolling programme and is undertaken by local Park Managers with the assistance of the Council's Woodland/Arboricultural officers and in conjunction with site specific tree management plans. In this 2021/22 tree planting season, we will also be focussing our attention on woodland restoration, removing invasive species and replacing with more suitable native trees.**
- 3.7 Tree diseases are becoming more prevalent due to climate change; even our native ash trees are currently under serious threat due to the Ash Die-back disease, so it is important to plant a wide range of species, predominantly native, but it is equally important to include some non-native, larger ornamental trees, especially in keeping with previous tree planting in our Parks over the past one hundred years.. It should be noted that no tree, whether native or non- native is immune from pest and diseases, so the more varied tree planting undertaken, the better.**
- 3.8 Members are reminded that Council continues to forge ahead with the One Million Tree planting initiative which is running over a 15-year period and this year our park Managers have identified seven planting sites for the 2021/22 tree planting season, which includes the proposed Belmont park (QGC) planting site. All of the 3,700 proposed young trees (whips) will consist of native varieties such as: birch; bird cherry; hazel; scots pine; hawthorn; mountain ash and holly.**

- 3.9 The department also plans to plant approximately 200 larger extra heavy standard trees, which are approximately 10' tall and these will consist of what is known in the tree nursery industry as 'ornamental/specimen trees' which are non-native, such as: maple; hornbeam; beech; sweet gum; cherry; lime; elm and dawn redwood. These larger trees will comprise of new and replacement planting.**

3.12 Financial & Resource Implications

None – Tree planting projects scheduled for 2021/2022 will come out of existing tree planting budgets and also out of a Woodland Trust 'Tree Emergency' fund. These monies are sufficient to cover the Council's planned one million trees contribution for 21/22 and the additional planting proposed under the QGC project.

3.13 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

None."

In response to a number of queries from a Member, the Director of Neighbourhood Services advised that he would arrange for the Council's Woodland Officer to liaise with the Member directly to discuss these in more detail.

The Committee:

- agreed to one (QGC) tree planting event proposed for Belmont Park, where 500 small native trees would be planted between November 2021 and March 2022, in the lead up to the official Platinum Jubilee celebrations planned for 3rd – 6th June 2022;
- noted that all 500 young, native trees planted as part of this (QGC) event would be automatically added to the Council's on-going One Million Tree planting running total;
- agreed that the Council's Outreach officer for the East of the city would liaise with local community groups to plan and take part in the proposed (QGC) event; and
- agreed to the installation of one small (QGC) plaque at the Belmont Park planting site.

**Request for the use of Ballysillan Car park for
Drive-thru Gospel Event**

The Committee was advised that a request had been received from Gospel Van Ministries seeking to deliver a weeklong programme of drive thru gospel services at Ballysillan Playing Fields Carpark during October. The event would be set up on the tarmac carpark area which services both the park/playing fields and the leisure centre and confirmed that there should be adequate car parking for park and centre users.

The Committee granted permission for Gospel Van Ministries to deliver a weeklong programme of drive thru gospel services at Ballysillan Playing Fields Carpark, from Monday

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4th - Friday 8th October 2021 from 7.30 p.m. – 8.30 p.m. subject to the completion of the appropriate event management plans and satisfactory terms being agreed by the Director of Neighbourhood Services and on the condition that the Event Organisers:

- resolve all operational issues to the Council's satisfaction;
- meet all statutory requirements including Public Liability Insurance cover, Health and Safety, and licensing responsibilities;
- consult with adjoining public bodies and local communities as necessary; and
- ensure that the proposed event adheres to the relevant Government Covid19 Regulations in place at the time of the event.

Chairperson

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City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 8th September, 2021

HYBRID MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Murphy (Chairperson);
Aldermen Dorrian and Kingston; and
Councillors Beattie, Brooks, Donnelly, Ferguson,
Hanvey, Heading, Howard, Hussey, Long, Lyons, Maskey,
McLaughlin, McMullan, O'Hara, Spratt and Whyte.

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; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology for inability to attend was reported for Councillor Gormley.

Minutes

The decisions of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority, for the Committee and the minutes of the meeting of 11th August were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st September.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Donnelly declared an interest in respect of item 6b – ESF Update and Proposed Match Funding Approach, on the basis that he was employed by the Upper Springfield Development Trust, and left the meeting whilst the item was being considered.

Councillors Brooks, Hussey, Maskey, McMullan, Murphy and O'Hara declared an interest in respect of item 5d – Correspondence referred from the Planning Committee – Participation and Practice of Rights (PPR) Project, on the basis that they were all Members of the Planning Committee which had referred the invitation to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee due to PPR being objectors to a current planning application within the former Mackies Factory site, and therefore would not participate in a site visit. As the report was presented for noting only, the Members were not, therefore, required to leave the meeting.

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Correspondence - Sunday Opening Hours

The Strategic Director of Place and Economy reminded the Committee that, following its meeting on 9th June, the Chief Executive had exercised her delegated authority to approve the request from city business organisations to extend the current approach to Sunday opening for large retailers until 5th September, 2021.

He referred to the decision of Council, at its meeting on 1st July, where it had been agreed that the minute of the meeting of 9th June, under the heading “Sunday Opening Hours” was amended to provide “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 Hight Streets Task Force”.

He informed the Members that Democratic Services had, subsequently, written to the Junior Ministers who convene the Task Force and that a response had been received from the Department for Communities on their behalf, indicating that it was content to add the issue to the agenda for the Task Force’s next plenary meeting, once a date for it had been confirmed.

The Strategic Director also drew the Member’s attention to correspondence which had been received from the Belfast Chamber in relation to this matter, which requested that the Council reconsiders its previous decision not to extend its permissions for early Sunday trading hours by larger retailers.

The Committee noted the correspondence.

Matters Referred Back from Council

Just Eat Belfast Bikes Strategic Review

The Director of Economic Development reminded the Members that, at its meeting on 1st September, the Council agreed that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the decision of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the City Growth and Regeneration Committee and the minute of the meeting of the Members of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 9th June, 2021, under the heading “Just Eat Belfast Bikes Strategic Review”, which had been called-in, be referred back to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee for further consideration.

He directed the Members to the legal opinion of Counsel, which had been sought by the City Solicitor in accordance with Standing Order 47(c)(5), and reported that an equality impact assessment was underway and an update on that assessment would be presented to the Committee at its meeting in October.

The Committee noted the report.

Presentations

**Belfast Rapid Transit 2 - Consultation
on Route Options**

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. C. Robinson, Belfast Rapid Transit, Phase 2 (BRT2) Programme Manager, and Mr. M. Fox, BRT2 Senior Project Engineer, from the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) to the meeting.

Mr. Fox thanked the Committee for inviting representation from DfI to the meeting to discuss the Public Consultation for the BRT2 Programme.

He reported that the upcoming milestone in delivering the programme was to develop an outline business case in order to demonstrate if it would deliver value for money. He stated that identifying a preferred route for the system was the next step and a public and stakeholder consultation was required as part of that process. He outlined the process undertaken to arrive at a short list of routes for consideration, and he explained the rationale as to why particular options passed the long list assessment and others did not.

He highlighted that consideration had been given to how the services would route through the city centre and that the assessment had concluded that the options for a potential Antrim Road route and a Shore Road route could be taken forward to service north Belfast. He added that a number of options had also been considered to service south Belfast and that the connection to Ormeau Road and the connection to Ravenhill Road were the two options that had passed the long list assessment.

He pointed out to the Members that the proposal to extend the Glider network included an extension of the G2 service to link with Belfast City Hospital and Queen's University, and that only one option had passed the long list assessment, a clockwise route from Dublin Road, to facilitate access to Queen's University via University Road, connecting to Belfast City Hospital on Lisburn Road, by way of Elmwood Avenue.

He referred to the more detailed criteria which had been used to conduct a short list assessment, such as catchment analysis to identify measures of social deprivation in the area, key attractors and levels of car ownership in the area.

He reported that the short list assessment had further discounted a number of options, including Crumlin Road and Ravenhill Road and that, on completion of the shortlisting process, three options had been identified for public consultation and engagement, to link north and south Belfast:

1. O'Neill Road via Antrim Road to Cairnshill;
2. Longwood Road via Shore Road to Cairnshill; and
3. O'Neill Road via Shore Road to Cairnshill.

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He stated that the public consultation period was from 26th July to 4th October, and that a virtual approach had been undertaken, to engage as widely as possible, by developing a bespoke digital platform containing all of the public consultation material, with a facility to leave feedback. A freephone voicemail number had also been created as an alternative, where comments could be made, questions asked, and hard copy information material could be requested.

He further added that the public consultation was being promoted on social media platforms and in the local press and that a number of engagement events and webinars would be held during the consultation period.

Following a number of questions from the Members, Mr. Robinson stated that the consultation was focussed on the corridors and that, once a route had been identified, the project would move to the detailed design phase, following which a more comprehensive consultation would be carried out with the people who live and work along the route. He also addressed concerns with regard to Glengormley. He stated that, logistically and geographically, it posed a huge challenge and that it was not considered a viable option for a Glider.

He further added that, with regard to concerns around the city centre, a meeting had been scheduled between DfI, Council officers and Bolder Vision consultants to try to achieve a balance between accessibility and the look and feel of the city centre and that it would remain as part of the overall consultation process.

Following further discussion, the Committee thanked Mr. Robinson and Mr. Fox for their presentation and they retired from the meeting.

The Director of City and Regeneration Development drew the Members attention to the associated report and the proposed mechanism for providing the Council's response to the public consultation. She pointed out that, given the timeframes of the BRT2 Public Consultation, it was proposed the Council consultation response would be brought to the Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum prior to submission on 4th October and that the consultation response would be submitted, subject to Committee approval on 13th October and Council ratification on 1st November.

The Committee agreed to:

- Note the information provided within the presentation and associated report on the emerging preferred routes for Belfast Rapid Transport Phase 2;
- Note the timelines of the ongoing BRT2 Public Consultation; and
- Note the Council's proposed mechanism for providing the Council's response to the Public Consultation.

Renewed Ambition Programme Task Force

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. J. O'Neill, Chair of Renewed Ambition and Chief Executive of Belfast Harbour, Mr. J. McDonald, Managing Director of GRAHAM

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Investment Projects, Mr. D. Mitchell, Property Director at Causeway Asset Management, and Ms. A. Feeney, Partner, KPMG, to the meeting.

Mr. J. O'Neill thanked the Committee for inviting the Renewed Ambition Task Force to the meeting. He outlined the range of organisations who were involved in the Programme who had a shared interest in the development and promotion of the city to generate investment.

He reported that the programme agenda had been structured upon the following five pillars:

- Programme and Content;
- Advocacy and Engagement;
- Media and Communications;
- Research; and
- Repository.

He pointed out to Members that 14 key events had taken place, both physical and virtual, which focussed on housing regeneration, waterfront regeneration, city centre living and net zero city, with both internal and external stakeholders.

He referred to two pieces of research which had been commissioned, one with regard to taking stock of what had been achieved by investments in the city over the past five years and the other with opportunities for further investment.

Ms. Feeny reported that the power of the collaboration had facilitated a joined up and balanced perspective to strategic investment related matters which impact the city, for example, the proposal to set up an independent infrastructure commission for Northern Ireland, to help drive a long term infrastructure strategy, and the Northern Ireland Water Consultation. She added that it had facilitated investment into research to develop collateral used to support engagement with government departments and help build investor confidence on a global stage, through the public sector having a more meaningful and better understanding of the challenges the private sector faced.

Mr. O'Neill referred to high growth sector led regeneration, including Belfast Harbour Film Studios, Titanic Quarter Film Studios and Innovation City Belfast, establishing Belfast as a globally significant destination for innovation and investment.

Mr. Mitchell highlighted that Merchant Square and Chichester House represented recent success in attracting investment into Belfast through office led regeneration and how the developments were important in attracting organisations to the city that, in turn, created graduate and apprenticeship opportunities and benefited associated service industries.

Mr. O'Neill outlined how housing led regeneration contributed to the Belfast Agenda's ambition to attract 66,000 new residents to the city by 2035 and he highlighted the wide range of positive impacts and how it would contribute to keeping Belfast globally competitive.

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Following a number of comments by the Members, Mr. O'Neill assured the Committee that the public sector had equal weighting within the programme, and at no point had any private sector representatives made propositions for absolute profit. He added that the Renewed Ambition Programme employed a holistic approach to ensure social value.

Following discussion, the Director of City Regeneration and Development drew the Members' attention to the following report which had been published alongside the presentation, which outlined the Public-Private Partnership Programme to date:

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues"

The purpose of this report is to:

- Update Members on the Public- Private Partnership Programme to date
- Seek approval to extend the Council's involvement in the Partnership Programme and contribution as part of a wider public-private approach

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to;

- Note the presentation to this Committee from representatives from the Renewed Ambition Partnership Taskforce
- Note the update on the programme of work which is being delivered via a public private sector partnership, aimed at delivering regeneration, infrastructure and a modern built environment for Belfast and the proposals as set out below in relation to the 2022 Programme.
- Approve the Council contribution on basis as set out below as part of the wider public private partnership investment towards the delivery of the Programme

3.0 Main report

As Members will recall, at the meeting of the City Growth & Regeneration Committee on 9th June 2021, an update was provided on a public-private partnership programme of work underpinning regeneration, development and infrastructure activities in the city. As highlighted in that 'Renewed Ambition' report, the partnership is delivering a programme of work aimed at ensuring Belfast is positioned to continue to attract investment and deliver on inclusive growth. The partnership is supported by public, private and key anchor institution partners including BCC and other BRCD partner

Councils, Invest NI, Belfast Harbour, Translink, Housing Association representation, the local development community and representatives from key city infrastructure, regeneration and development projects.

The programme of work is delivering activity across a number of strands aligned to securing investment and regeneration for the Belfast region. A key objective is to build awareness of the Belfast investment proposition aimed at attracting investment and creating employment opportunities and facilitate investor engagement to support the delivery of regeneration projects across the City, with a focus on creating the economic and social infrastructure/assets we need for inclusive sustainable growth.

Members had agreed that representatives from the Renewed Ambition Taskforce attend a future Committee meeting to update on activity and priority issues and these representatives will be attendance at this Committee.

3.3 Context

Post-pandemic the City continues to face a range of economic, social and environmental challenges. At a city level 'Belfast: Our Recovery' identifies areas of focus to drive city recovery in the short term, laying the foundations for sustained recovery, while supporting our longer term ambitions as outlined in the Belfast Agenda, including supporting 46,000 additional jobs and our city being home to an additional 66,000 people. The City Recovery Framework also supports the delivery of our Corporate Plan and other city plans and strategies - albeit through the lens of these new challenges. Priority areas include building business resilience, digital innovation; investing in jobs-led growth within key sectors and working in collaboration with city partners to drive city regeneration and development, while maximising the impact of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) and partnerships including the Belfast Dublin Economic Corridor, Innovation City Belfast and Belfast Climate Commission.

The priorities within the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS) together with the Future City Programme and city-wide regeneration and investment priorities remain critical to supporting city recovery and delivering physical and inclusive development in the city. From a Community Planning Partnership perspective, the City Development Board has identified housing-led regeneration; improving connectivity and active travel; supporting city-wide

development and regeneration and delivering the Future City Centre programme as key priorities. Various Renewed Ambition partners are also represented on the City Development Board, underpinning the importance of a collaborative approach to city development.

Through our Inclusive Growth Framework, we are committed to working with others including the private sector, anchor institutions, community and voluntary sector and our wider public sector partners to create an inclusive city. The physical and built environment is part of an overall enabling framework to deliver on this.

Enhanced connectivity, in terms of connecting people physically as well as socially and economically to opportunities, will be key to supporting city recovery. This will require having fit for purpose physical and digital infrastructure in place. Major infrastructure projects, such as the Belfast Transport Hub and BRT Phase 2, are at differing stages of the development process and will improve connectivity at a city and regional level. The Bolder Vision Connectivity Study also seeks to address connectivity and the interdependencies with infrastructure and development /regeneration proposals. Critically, collaborative working across a number of city stakeholders and partners on such projects is needed to improve connectivity across the city and with communities.

Members will also be aware of the 'Reset for Growth' report that the Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission has recently produced. Delivering a house building programme at scale, creating a sustainable, connected and animated city centre, focusing on making Belfast a globally significant innovation hub in key sectors and building strong global co-operation frameworks were identified as focussed action areas to address to generate inclusive economic growth in Belfast. Specifically, the Commission highlighted the need for collaborative working with partners, building strategic networks and relationships and developing viable investment propositions to bring to market as being critical to positioning the city globally and attracting investment.

Working collaboratively with stakeholders to ensure we create the right environment and have the right physical, digital and social infrastructure in place, underpinned by our ability to attract investment, is critical to the creation of jobs and delivering sustained, inclusive growth across the city.

In terms of the journey that the partnership has taken, Members may recall that in 2016 a public private sector partnership was established to promote Belfast in the context of development and regeneration that provides for sustainable, inclusive growth. This also involved attendance at real estate and investment events, which in the past included MIPIM. More recently this partnership approach has evolved to having a wider focus, anchored in the desire to ensuring inclusive economic growth as a key objective of regeneration, development and investment in the region. This approach is one lever within a wider 'Position the City to Compete' proposition which seeks to build on the city's reputation as a unique destination for investment, tourism, development and supporting inclusive economic growth.

Outlined below are some of the programme objectives and activities although representatives of the Taskforce will be in attendance at Committee with further detail.

Position Belfast's attractiveness to support delivery of regeneration projects across the city and create employment opportunities to provide for sustainable, inclusive growth:

To date the programme has delivered an extensive programme of events, webinars and podcasts aimed at the regeneration, real estate and investment community. This provided an opportunity to highlight Belfast's key strengths and investment proposition on a variety of topics including Housing Led Regeneration, Reimagining our City Centre, Net Zero City, Waterfront Renewal, Sustainable Development & Construction, Tourism and Cultural Regeneration and Investment. In addition, major regeneration projects and housing opportunities were showcased to potential investors and end users to assist city partners to bring forward and maximise their regeneration potential. Upcoming events include a Belfast focused event on 'City Centre Living' at Real Estate Live which will showcase our ambitions to accelerate city centre living and bring forward significant city centre residential opportunities across all housing tenures.

A suite of marketing tools has been developed to facilitate the sharing of positive messaging around Belfast's investment proposition. This has included the development of a regular newsletter, marketing collateral and the delivery of a communications strategy, with Belfast featured in international, national and regional publications.

Engage with key stakeholders to highlight the role real estate investment plays in strengthening the Belfast region's

resilience and competitiveness, and delivering inclusive economic growth:

Delivering Belfast's ambitions relies on strong collaborative working, for e.g with the Department for International Trade (DIT), Invest NI and their extensive networks. Invest NI are one of the RAP partners and have provided access to their global teams to highlight investment opportunities in the Belfast City region. By way of example, through continued engagement with DIT, Belfast was invited to present (virtually) at the November 2020 'Downing Street – Investing in Cities' event. An Engagement and Advocacy programme is also continuing using local, national and international contacts of the RAP partners to showcase and pitch the city region for investment.

Continue to foster a strong public-private partnership approach, and align with city recovery plans, Belfast Region City Deal, the Reset for Growth ambitions, and emerging city focus on being an innovative/digital, green and resilient city:

The programme is supported by a range of public, private and key anchor institution partners which ensures a collaborative approach to delivering our shared ambitions in terms of key regeneration priorities and recovery plans. It also provides an important forum for Council to engage with key stakeholders on city priorities for e.g Smart Belfast, BRCD, Belfast-Dublin Economic Corridor and Bolder Vision.

Future approach

The Renewed Ambition Taskforce are keen to ensure that we continue to take a collaborative public /private approach to positioning Belfast globally for investment and regeneration and wish to extend the programme into the 2022 calendar year.

From the Council's perspective it is felt this partnership approach offers a strong foundation to build on the work to date and presents an ongoing opportunity for alignment with other strategic aims of the Council. For the Council, the key aims and objectives of being part of the partnership and contributing to the programme include:

- Securing longer term institutional investors to support agreed regeneration plans of the Council and other partners.
- Securing investment to deliver housing development at scale as set out in the growth ambitions of the Belfast Agenda and the 'Reset for Growth' report

- Secure investment in the built environment on a city-wide basis to facilitate opportunities for jobs and business, communities and providing physical and social infrastructure to deliver on inclusive economic growth
- Investment in waterfront regeneration and key infrastructure, connectivity and innovation related projects
- Investment to help address dereliction and support the re-use and preservation of heritage assets
- Investment in tourism and cultural products to underpin regeneration priorities
- Investment in clean tech, environmental and sustainability initiatives

Critically, these objectives form part of an overall Belfast proposition for economic growth and investment. Having the right physical, digital and social infrastructure in place is essential for the creation of jobs and delivery of sustained, inclusive growth.

The 2022 programme is currently under development and is to include focused stakeholder, investor and media engagement; showcase events; advocacy and research aligned to the real estate investment market and with a very clear focus on securing investment to deliver on city priorities. This public private partnership programme will continue to align to and complement other BCC led activities within the context of 'Positioning the City to Compete' and delivering a 'Global Future' - a key action area from the Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission. This includes work being undertaken by Economic Development, Tourism and Culture, International Relations, the SMART team and partnerships including Innovation City Belfast, Belfast Dublin Economic Corridor and BRCD. In addition, the need to continue to work in collaboration with international partners, including Department for International Trade (DIT) and Invest NI to promote investment opportunities in Belfast will be a critical component.

All five BRCD partner Councils have invested in RAP and it has been an important forum to showcase the real estate investment potential for the wider Belfast City Region and forthcoming BRCD projects. BRCD, which seeks to deliver a 10-year programme to increase GVA by £470m and creating up to 20,000 new and better jobs across the Belfast City Region, is expected to commence its delivery phase across 6 Council areas from Autumn 2021. Within Belfast, it will support the delivery of Belfast Destination Hub, active travel

through a new cycle & pedestrian bridge, a Smart District as well as innovative University-led centres of excellence in life & health sciences, data analytics and virtual production. Whilst c.£150m is expected by way of direct capital contributions from the private sector to these projects, there are opportunities and a requirement for a further £1bn of private sector investment in order to deliver the benefits through jobs and productivity set out within the business cases.

The Council has a lead role to play in delivering on this shared agenda. Supporting the collaborative partnership approach taken by the Renewed Ambition Programme to showcasing Belfast, locally and globally, to the real estate investment, development and occupier market is critical, as we seek to attract the right investment into the city to drive the delivery of key regeneration projects, including residential, commercial and forthcoming BRCD projects, to provide for sustainable inclusive growth in the city.

In terms of future events, due to the on-going uncertainty from the health pandemic, a hybrid approach to showcase events is currently being explored by the partnership. This may potentially include physical attendance at investment showcase events and participation in webinar forums, though partners including UKREiif, MIPIM, Real Estate Live and Estates Gazette. However, it is still unclear at this stage how some of these events might be held and the extent of participation by all potential attendees.

UKREiif, the UK's Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum, is currently proposed to take place in Leeds in May 2022 and seeks to connect investors, developers, the public sector, funders and occupiers to drive inward investment to unlock inclusive economic growth through an exhibition and forum focusing on the following themes - the UK's Net Zero Target, Social Value and Inclusive Growth, the Future of Real Estate and Building Better Communities. Discussions are ongoing via the Renewed Ambition Taskforce with the event organisers to maximise Belfast brand awareness and explore the potential of a Belfast presence at the UKREiif Forum.

MIPIM, the world's leading real estate market event, is planned to return in March 2022 following the cancellation of the March 2020 event due to Covid-19. In previous years Council had participated as part of a 'Team Belfast' delegation to MIPIM of over 100 delegates from private and public-sector organisations and included a dedicated Belfast stand. The Renewed Ambition partners are, however, currently in

discussions with event organisers, other UK and European Cities and DIT to understand plans for March 2022 and explore potential alternative formats to the dedicated stand approach.

Discussions are also ongoing with key stakeholders including INI and DIT to leverage their national and international networks to facilitate focused investor engagement events aligned to specific city priorities and aimed at delivering regeneration, infrastructure and a modern built environment for Belfast.

3.12 Finance & Resource Implications

Given the make-up of the partnership across a number of organisations, the funding to deliver the programme comes from a number of parties, with external funding forming the majority of the overall budget.

Within the CGR Committee Plan (2021 – 2022) as agreed in June 2021, the Renewed Ambition Programme was included as a key programme of work to support inclusive economic recovery. A Council investment of £80,000 is proposed to contribute to this overall public and private sector partnership budget to extend the programme into the 2022 calendar year. This is a similar contribution made by Council in previous years, but will also be subject to a significant matched funding package from the other partners, as was the case in previous years where the majority of the funding came from external partners. Eighty per cent of funding for the current programme came from the wider private and public partners and it is envisaged that external funding will again form the majority of the overall budget for the 2022 programme. The Council's contribution will be met from within the City Regeneration and Development existing departmental budget for '21/22.

3.13 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

None associated with this report.”

The Committee agreed to:

- Note the update on the programme of work which was being delivered via a public private sector partnership, aimed at delivering regeneration, infrastructure and a modern built environment for Belfast and the proposals as set out in relation to the 2022 Programme; and

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- Approve the Council contribution of £80,000 as part of the wider public private partnership investment towards the delivery of the Programme.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives from the Renewed Ambition Task Force for their presentation, and they retired from the meeting.

Restricted Items

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

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the press and public from the meeting during discussion of the item as, due to the nature of the item, 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 - Quarter 1 2021/22

The Strategic Director of Place and Economy reminded the Members that, at its meeting on 19th March, 2021, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee adopted the recommendation to extend the five step finance strategy, which had been adopted in 2020/21 into 2021/22, subject to quarterly review.

He provided the Committee with an overview of the quarter one financial position and year-end forecast.

The Committee agreed to note the content of the report.

Regenerating Places & Improving Infrastructure

A Bolder Vision Update

Members of the Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1

- To update Members on the pre-engagement activity that will shape the A Bolder Vision public consultation document, including the workshop held with Belfast elected representatives on 23 August
- To update on the planned 12-week public consultation starting on 27 September until 20 December 2021 and timeframe for completion of the Vision

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to note;

- The update on the Connectivity Study: A Bolder Vision, including the feedback from the elected representatives' workshop on the 23rd August, and planned Public Consultation in the autumn.

3.0 Main report

3.1 A Bolder Vision for Belfast involves a fundamental rethink of how streets and places are used to make them attractive, inclusive, accessible, healthy, and vibrant places. As reported previously Phase 1 of the City Centre Connectivity Study, A Bolder Vision (ABV), was agreed by Council and endorsed by the DfC and DfI Ministers and is underpinned by four Visioning Principles that will drive and shape the city centre:

- 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.

3.2 As reported to this Committee on 11 August 2021, 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. To support the development of these scenarios, five workshops took place in June with a range of community, voluntary, statutory and private sector stakeholders as part of a co-design process. This included a cross-sector Visioning Workshop on 25 June that included Vienna's former Vice Mayor who successfully implemented a transformation agenda comprised of numerous innovative, inclusive projects, as a keynote speaker. The following week four thematic workshops took place covering Community, Heritage & Culture; Infrastructure, Energy and Environment; Economic Recovery, Development & Tourism, and Connectivity (Transport and Digital).

- 3.3** Follow up meetings have taken place with IMTAC, the Transport Hub and within Council Departments. A part of the governance structure, an Oversight Group comprised on the BCC Chief Executive and the DfI and DfC Permanent Secretaries met in early September. This is a critical partnership that helps align the Vision across local and central government, including across critical policy, strategy, funding opportunities and capital investment. 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.
- 3.4** As a continuation of the co-design process, a workshop with Belfast elected representatives including Councillors, MLAs and MPs took place on the 23rd August and provided an opportunity to feed into the emerging scenarios. Representatives were asked to consider how to spatially locate potential Bolder Vision interventions to support the positive transformation and identify potential outcomes for communities of Belfast, both in and outside of the city centre while still ensuring that the accessibility and servicing of the city centre. Representatives were presented with a number of areas of opportunity such as the potential of a city civic spine, inner ring road, a network of streets linking destinations in the context of large infrastructure projects for the city centre, such as BRT2, Belfast Streets Ahead and public realm catalyst projects being delivered through Section 76. This included discussion around the prioritisation of specific streets and access nodes for specific uses, such as public transportation network, walking and cycling and vehicular requirements as opposed to continuing to balance all of the needs within all of the streets.
- 3.5** Through facilitated break out rooms, elected representatives were able to give detailed feedback on the proposals and offer suggestions and concerns. The workshop captured a range of insights and suggestions, both strategic and granular.
- 3.6** The key issues raised during the engagement sessions included:
- Importance of improving connectivity to surrounding communities, particularly in the north of the city, Sailortown and Titanic Quarter and to ensure the realisation of benefits to communities through improved connectivity;
 - Remove the feeling of severance of communities from city centre and create a sense of arrival using heritage buildings and spaces;

- Consideration of the needs of different users, including elderly, families, those with disabilities, students, visitors, and professionals;
- How to future-proof the land and keep the essence of Belfast;
- Widened pavements should be kept clear to ensure accessibility is enhanced and street clutter kept to minimal, especially shops placing signs etc;
- Questions around the impact of York Street Interchange, impact on movement and the potential to something better with the funding;
- Need to balance uses and need for those living, working and visiting the city centre;
- Concerns about the timeframes for delivery and need to see short, medium and longer term changes;
- Inner ring road is critical to travel and there is concern of displacement and congestion caused by road closures;
- Concern that cars will be displaced into neighbourhoods and need to establish residents' parking schemes;
- BRT could be complemented through micro-mobility or shuttles and in Multistorey Car Parks to support active travel choices;
- Recognition that the city centre needs to change to accommodate more city centre living, families, green spaces, diverse uses and a better night-time economy to drive footfall and keep people in the city;
- The changes must be radical to make the transformation needed for the future;
- The proposed two-way public transport system for BRT & Metro on Donegall St & Royal is a retro-grade approach in terms of the city centre public realm environment – how can we plan this better?
- Learn lessons from COVID and support businesses spilling out onto streets or bring in more public realm;
- Consider the different levers that could help make the changes, such as congestion charge, Clean Air Zones, residents' parking or increased opportunities for modal change

Public Consultation, autumn 2021

- 3.7 The contribution from the elected representatives will be incorporated into the scenarios and build on the feedback received during the previous co-design sessions. Additionally, follow up meetings will be held throughout the consultation process.

- 3.8 The public consultation document will include scenarios for the future of the city centre, based on emerging infrastructure projects and the future city centre user and supported by short, medium and long term projects. Aligned to the scenarios, a high-level, qualitative Multi-Criteria Analysis will prioritise each option against a set of criteria is being developed that will outline the benefits of the interventions that will inform the Business Case, including social, economic and environmental benefits. This approach will allow for an informed debate balancing the views and requirements of all of our city stakeholders and users to provide a holistic agreement for the landscape of the future city centre that will test approaches and/or enable larger schemes to come forward and shape the transformational changes required to create a connected and animated city core for an inclusive and modern Belfast. This is particularly critical at the minute to ensure that we get our planned capital works right to support our future ambitions.
- 3.9 The 12-week public consultation will commence on 27 September 2021 and run until 20 December and will be hosted on Council's Engagement HQ site. Engagement events will mainly take place online through a virtual consultation room that will be available 24/7 and will be communicated via Council, DfC and DfI communications channels as well as through Council's own extensive networks that reach across sectors and into communities. During this period, Officers will remain flexible and if opportunities emerge for in person engagement sessions, then these will be incorporated into the consultation plan.
- 3.10 To ensure the process is inclusive, there has been engagement with IMTAC on the public consultation process and Officers will continue to work with them and through their People, Streets and Places group who will help advise on engagement methods.
- 3.11 After the consultation is completed, the responses will be collated in a Public Consultation Report and Summary Recommendations that will be brought back to Committee. The final Monitoring Strategy and ABV Strategy Delivery Plan is due to complete by May 2022.
- 3.12 Finance & Resource Implications
- None associated with this report.
- 3.13 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

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None associated with this report, however, an EQIA Screening will be carried out on the emerging work.”

The Committee noted the update on the Connectivity Study: A Bolder Vision, including the feedback from the elected representatives’ workshop which had been held on 23rd August and the planned Public Consultation in the autumn.

DfI Autumn Report

The Director of City Regeneration and Development advised the Committee that the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) had requested permission to present its Autumn Infrastructure Report to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee at its meeting on 23rd October.

She pointed out to the Committee that, at its meeting in June, DfI had presented its Spring Update, and reminded the Members of the discussion and actions agreed on the following issues which had been raised with DfI at the aforementioned meeting:

- York Street Interchange Independent Assurance Review;
- Safe Cycle Network;
- Implementation of the Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) policy and integration;
- 20mph zones in the city centre;
- Pedestrianisation of the city centre; and
- Car Park Strategy.

The Director reported that officers were drafting the specification and Terms of Reference of the Car Parking Strategy and that it would be proposed that work would commence following the completion of the Bolder Vision for Belfast Public Consultation, due to the close relationship between the two pieces of work, and the importance of the Bolder Vision for Belfast in setting the strategic context or the future provision of infrastructure within the city centre, the findings of which would be used to inform the next stages of the Car Parking Strategy.

She outlined the timelines for the Bolder Vision for Belfast public consultation and the Car Parking Strategy review and informed the Members that, the Bolder Vision for Belfast document would be finalised between January and April, 2022.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed to:

- to receive the DfI Autumn Report Update to the Special Meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee on 23rd October 2021;
- note the issues previously discussed at the presentation of the Spring Report;

- note the update on the Car Parking Strategy Action Plan and proposed timelines for the review of the Car Parking Strategy; and
- request an update from DfI, in relation to the Belfast Metropolitan Transport System in advance of the October Special CG&R Committee meeting.

DfC Revitalisation Programme Update

The Members of the Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 To update Committee on the ongoing DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme including the provision of covered cycle stands under the DfI Sustainable and Active funded element of the programme.**

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to;**

- Note the Extension of Time is now approved for the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme and the status summary provided;
- Agree to the proposed covered cycle stand locations as identified within this report.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Background

The CG&R Committee have received regular updates and provided approvals relating to the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme and it was agreed at the Committee Meeting of the 12th May that an extension of time would be sought from DfC to March 2022. This extension of time is required due to delays in the required statutory approvals process, compounded by an escalation in cost and demand on key materials and contractor provision.

- 3.2 The Committee also received an update on the status of the physical projects aligned with the ‘Re-Imaging the public Realm’, agreed to the funding allocation under the DfI Sustainable & Active Travel Fund for the E-cargo bike pilot, the Active/Sustainable Travel Hubs and expansion of the Belfast Bike network. Members were also updated on the**

progress of the covered cycle stands with further details to be provided to a future meeting of this Committee

3.3 Main Report

In relation to the request for the extension of time DfC have now approved and provided the Letter of Variance to provide an extension of time to the programme until March 2022. While this extension of time allows until March 2022 officers, along with our key delivery partners, are committed to have the majority of projects delivered by December 2021. The majority of the Statutory Approvals are now in place and procurement has completed on the majority of the projects minimising the risk of overrun on a number of projects including the Linen Quarter parklets and Brunswick St Hub; the Union St and Warehouse Lane projects; the e-cargo bike pilot; the Belfast bike expansion; and the Business Cluster and Community Grant scheme.

- 3.4** The Cathedral Gardens Active Travel Hub and the Castle Place kiosk are currently in planning and works will commence pending the outcome of the decision, and DfI are scheduled to commence works on the Castle Place footpath extension and cycle lane provision in September 2021 pending final approval of the business plan.

Covered Cycle Stands

- 3.5** At the May CG&R Committee meeting it was agreed that £100k would be allocated from the Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme for the provision of covered cycle stands, and members were updated that Sustrans was appointed to develop a strategic approach of identifying well-planned cycle parking across the city.
- 3.6** The report established a set of criteria for assessing cycle parking across the city, including existing provision of cycle infrastructure in the area, access to the DfI Cycle Network, suitable land availability, safe access and egress, revenue implications/operating models and types of units. Given the time constraints of the Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme further criteria was added in terms of deliverability, focusing on the use of Council assets to ensure delivery within the funding period.
- 3.7** Sustrans also recommended several types of cycle parking for consideration appropriate to the shortlisted locations and this information formed the specification for the procurement process for the stands. Following a competitive procurement

competition, a contractor has been appointed to deliver the following types of covered cycle stand (Suburban type as illustrated in Appendix 1) and will proceed with manufacturing and installation pending Committee approval of the proposed locations, and finalisation of discussions with the 3rd party operators, (i.e. GLL) associated with some of the locations, as outlined in item 3.8 of this report;

1. Urban type for city centre locations – Mono Cycle: a modern modular aluminium shelter; proposed combination of green and solar roof; integrated light unit (LED light powered by solar panel) and perch seating
2. Suburban type for neighbourhoods and parks - Mono Cycle: a modern modular aluminium shelter with green roof

3.8 Based on the above criteria and type of cycle stand the following locations are recommended for approval for installation within this DfC Revitalisation Programme;

Location	Reasons for priority
Gasworks	Council owned, business agglomeration and community proximity, off road and on cycle route, visible, accessible and convenient
St George's	Adjoining Council owned but requiring DfI consent, leisure destination, near cycle route, visible, accessible and convenient
Grosvenor Community Centre	Council owned, leisure destination, on pop-up cycle lane, safe and accessible
Shankill Leisure Centre	Council owned, leisure destination, lack of cycle infrastructure, safe and accessible
Belmont Park	Council owned, leisure destination, off road, visible, safe and accessible
Inverary Community Centre	Council owned, leisure destination, off road, safe and accessible, close to planned greenway
Belfast Zoo	Council owned, leisure destination, off road, safe and accessible

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Waterworks	Council owned, leisure destination, off road, safe and accessible
Belvoir Activity Centre	Council owned, leisure destination, off road and on planned greenway, visible, accessible and convenient
Mary Peters Track	Council owned, leisure destination, off road, safe and accessible

- 3.9** While the locations above are assessed in terms of the available funding and, critically, deliverability within the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme timeframes as well as the key criteria aligned to cycle infrastructure provision, officers are mindful that there will be demand in other locations. Officers are therefore in discussions with DfI for potential additional funding under the Green & Blue Infrastructure Fund to deliver additional covered cycle stands. As highlighted below however in the resource implications, there is a revenue implication to the Council in terms of maintenance etc, or third party consents required, and this will need to be factored into any future additional provision in a similar manner to the current provision. Provision of £5k has been included to cover any management and maintenance associated with the stands. This revenue provision will be subject to an annual review and, if necessary, further consideration.
- 3.10** An evaluation of secured cycle stands within the city centre was also undertaken, and given the requirement to have in place a system /personnel resource maintaining the operation of these locations, including membership provision, allocation and monitoring of access fobs, and emergency call-out facilities it was not possible to have the secured cycle provision included within this funding package. To address this officers are also in discussions with DfI for potential funding under the Green & Blue Infrastructure Fund to provide secured cycle locations that would be incorporated within existing publicly available, serviced locations that have the capacity to operate the systems required. These locations could potentially involve a partnership arrangement with for example, Translink and/or Multi-story car park providers. This work is ongoing and a further report will be brought back to this Committee at a future date.
- 3.11** **Additional cycle parking opportunities**

Officers have explored other opportunities to enhance cycling provision in that city and as part of the Leisure Transformation Programme there are plans to retrofit covers over the existing

cycle parking at four leisure centres: Brook, Lisnasharragh, Andersonstown and Avoneil. This will be taken forward separate from the Revitalisation funding and will be delivered within this financial year.

3.12 Finance & Resource Implications

The capital costs associated within this report will be covered from within the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme via direct delivery by Council. An additional allowance of £5k has been allocated from the DfC Revitalisation Programme for the maintenance of the covered cycle stands. Revenue implications will be subject to annual review and may require consideration in relation to growth or value for money evaluations.

3.13 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

Equality of opportunity and good relations, and disability duties screening is complete on the overall programme with mitigating actions agreed and implemented. The screening of the programme is currently undergoing a review and the appropriate actions will be picked up by officers.”

In response to several questions from Members regarding the effectiveness of the proposed covered cycle stands, the Director of City Regeneration and Development informed the Committee that secured cycle stands would be much more expensive to put in place as there would be a resource requirement in that, secured cycle stands required 24-hour access and would therefore require a call-out service. She added that it would not be possible to install secured cycle stands within the budget and timeframe. She further added that Council officers had taken advice and recommendations from Sustrans to identify a fit for purpose model, however, she stated that she would bring a report back to a future meeting of the Committee regarding the potential costs associated with the installation of secured cycle stands.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Hussey,
Seconded by Councillor Dorrian,

That the Committee agrees to the recommendations as set out in the report to:

- Note the Extension of Time for the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme and the status summary provided; and
- Agree to the proposed covered cycle stand locations as identified within the report.

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On a vote, twelve Members voted for the proposal, with four no-votes and it was declared carried.

Correspondence referred from Planning Committee – Participation and the Practice of Rights (PPR) Project

The Strategic Director of Place and Economy informed the Committee that correspondence had been received by the Planning Committee from the PPR Project with information relating to the Take back the City coalition, which was seeking the development of a prototype community on the site of the former Mackie's Factory in west Belfast.

He reported that PPR had invited the Members of the Planning Committee to attend a walkabout at the Mackie's site, in order to assess the site's potential for addressing housing needs and that, given the Planning Committee's potential role in determining any future planning applications in respect of the site, officers were of the view that it would be inappropriate for Members of the Planning Committee to accept the invitation.

He advised the Committee that, at its meeting on 19th August, the Planning Committee agreed to refer the invitation to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee for consideration.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Lyons,
Seconded by Councillor Long,

That the Members of the Committee note the correspondence and agree to accept the invite from PPR to a site visit at the former Mackie's factory site.

Councillors Brooks, Hussey, Maskey, McMullan, Murphy and O'Hara had declared an interest in relation to the item, in that they were all Members of the Planning Committee, and, for that reason, would not partake in a site visit, therefore, they refrained from participating in the decision making.

The remaining Members of the Committee agreed to adopt Councillor Lyons' proposal.

Draft Ten Year Tourism Plan

The Members of the Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 At a meeting of City Growth and Regeneration Committee in August 2020, it was agreed that a ten-year tourism plan for Belfast would be developed. The purpose of this report is to provide a draft of the proposed plan, *Make Yourself at Home* and seek approval to commence public consultation in October 2021.**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the contents of this report and agree to commence a 12-week consultation period from October 2021.
- Agree to hold a workshop with Members to discuss in detail the priorities set out in the plan.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Members will be aware that at a meeting of City Growth and Regeneration Committee in August 2020 it was agreed that a new ten-year tourism plan was to be developed. The purpose of this plan is to:

- Deliver on the tourism priorities set out in the *Belfast Agenda* recognising the importance of tourism to *Growing the economy* and *City Development*.
- Align to the ten-year cultural strategy, *A City Imagining*, in order to ensure that tourism development supports cultural development and is based upon an authentic and sustainable Belfast offer.
- Support economic and social recovery in the context of COVID-19 including stabilisation, recovery and growth with the opportunity to build back better.
- Provide strategic context to the Belfast Region City Deal that sets out wider city priorities to ensure Belfast's appeal internationally and ability to attract out of state visitors.

3.2 Tourism Growth Pre Covid-19

In August 2019 Belfast City Council agreed a new ten-year cultural strategy, *A City Imagining 2020-2030*, to drive transformation in the city. For the first time, the scope of this strategy brought together under one compelling vision a number of areas including tourism, culture, heritage, arts, events and festivals. *A City Imagining* (cultural strategy) and *Make Yourself at Home* (tourism plan) should be seen as part of an overall strategic approach with strong alignment and interdependencies.

3.3 *A City Imagining* acknowledges that whilst Belfast has enjoyed relative growth in tourism over recent years that in turn has supported regional development, it is necessary to continue to support sustainable tourism development and job

creation. Belfast's first community plan, the *Belfast Agenda*, also articulates the importance of delivering a culturally vibrant city both for residents and visitors as well as acting as an attractive driver for inward investment. In order to continue to build on the value of out-of-state tourism and welcome more overnight stays in our visitor accommodation it is essential that we collaborate with our tourism sector to evolve, broaden, deepen and expand the tourism offer currently available in Belfast.

- 3.4 Despite significant growth and the success of flagship projects such as Titanic Belfast there is still a gap in scale and maturity of the local industry when compared with other regions. Notably, Northern Ireland lags behind UK regions and Republic of Ireland with respect to tourism as a driver for job growth. However, the positive trajectory in place before Covid-19 had identified tourism growth as both feasible and a necessary part of inclusive economic growth. The challenge of any tourism development plan will be to create a sustainable model that continues to support the growth that is essential for city success and the creation of jobs.
- 3.5 Belfast's tourism and hospitality sectors directly supports 19,300 jobs, one third of the sector in Northern Ireland. Key tourism sectors such as Accommodation & Food Services, Arts, Entertainment & Recreation and Transportation have been impacted by COVID-19 however if Belfast's recovery from the pandemic is managed then the growth potential remains high. The hospitality sector is an employment-intensive one, supporting a disproportionate number of jobs compared with the average sectoral GVA: jobs ratio. Between 2013 and 2019 employment in Accommodation and Food Services in Belfast increased by 18.2 percent, compared with 8.5 percent growth in the city's total employment.
- 3.6 It was in this context that Tourism NI set the ambitious target of doubling the value of the tourism industry to £2 billion by 2030. A key element of this opportunity further reinforced by ambitions of the Belfast Region City Deal was getting a bigger share of the international visitors coming to the island of Ireland to travel to Belfast and the Belfast region.
- 3.7 Impact of Covid-19

While the full impact of Covid-19 is as yet unknown what is clear is that recovery will require new and innovative approaches in an increasingly competitive market. As the regional driver, Belfast will be hugely significant to this growth ambition, both in terms of visitor spend and the creation of

new jobs. It is therefore imperative that our city break destination is developed in a strategic way which maximises the economic benefits that can be derived from tourism for local industries, businesses and communities, as well as increasing visitor numbers and spend and improving overall satisfaction levels.

3.8 In advance of the development of the tourism plan, Ernest and Young were commissioned to assess the potential impact of COVID-19 on the city. The report recognises Belfast's role in regional tourism:

- Belfast is an important attractor for international, high value tourists to the region.
- Belfast's share of out of state tourism spend has been significantly higher than the NI-wide share (83% v 72%).
- Spending by tourists in Belfast has outpaced the NI average, growing by 20% year on year compared to 4.5% regionally.
- Belfast has grown at a faster rate than the rest of NI mainly because of its attractiveness in two high value markets – city breaks and business tourism.

3.9 The report also sets out a number of scenarios depending on the length of the pandemic and recovery trajectory. Below is set out a series of recommendations specific to Belfast and need for stabilisation, recovery and longer-term growth. These recommendations have formed the basis for the strategic priorities and actions set out in the draft tourism plan.

3.10 Develop tourism supply in Belfast to foster a sustainable economic model creating jobs and improving local quality of life

1. Bring forward renovations or upgrading of tourism facilities to support the economy and improve the quality of the tourism offer in Belfast.
2. Pursue planned City Deal investments following a dynamic model based on regularly updated visitor numbers and visitor behaviours.
3. Focus on the development of resilient tourism attractions (e.g. mix of outdoor and indoor spaces, online content, attractive to locals) and mitigate the impacts for the most impacted sectors (e.g. business tourism).
4. Launch a wide consultation with key stakeholders and locals regarding the role tourism should play in a city like Belfast (e.g. urban regeneration, housing,

sustainability, jobs, social inclusion, international attractiveness).

5. Identify ways for Belfast or specific attractions within the City to be distinguished internationally (e.g. awards, UNESCO, travel guides).

3.11 Developing a ten-year plan

The draft ten-year tourism plan has taken into consideration these initial recommendations alongside the existing commitments outlined in the Cultural Strategy that identified the four areas where Council could make the most difference:

- Increasing the coherency of the Belfast experience
- Supporting quality authentic product
- Developing skills
- Strengthening the city's position through marketing and communications

3.12 The approach

The past two decades have given rise to a number of trends within tourism development. This has included the popularity of approaches such as cultural tourism, green tourism or local tourism. What each of these approaches and associated models have in common is an increasing awareness that sustainable forms of tourism must respect the local context and support the economic, social, environmental and cultural values of a place.

- 3.13 In the context of Belfast, even before COVID-19, this is a complex proposition. The city requires further growth with a clear international agenda and need to continue to attract and grow out of state visitors. The new 10 year tourism plan seeks to set out how this growth can be achieved in a responsible and inclusive way recognising that the city's greatest asset is its people.

- 3.14 The plan sets out a shared vision for tourism in the city and will be supported by 4 strategic themes and three of catalyst projects. The draft strategic themes are:

- Grow Belfast
- Experience Belfast
- Position Belfast
- Sustainable Belfast

- 3.15 Each theme is supported by an evidence-based body of work and research.

3.16 *Strategic theme 1: Grow Belfast* (supported by EY Recovery report)

This theme focuses on the role of tourism in city recovery including the need for stabilisation of the tourism sector and the requirement for further growth in Belfast. This includes:

- Strategic context and evidence-based proposition that Belfast acts as a catalyst for the region.
- Measurement of the attractiveness of the city as a destination and how this plays a key role in maximising the economic impact of each visitor by increasing average length of stay and daily spending levels.
- Priority areas for investment e.g. catalyst projects.
- Introducing social, cultural and environmental measures to better understand and advocate for the true value of responsible tourism growth.

3.17 *Strategic Theme 2: Position Belfast* (supported by a Positioning Review completed by Blue Sail Consulting).

A critical dimension to any tourism development plan is understanding the market and how the brand operates in this space. In order to develop an effective strategy there also needs to be consideration of the brand architecture for the city and the region. The result should be clarity of roles and responsibilities for agencies working in this field including Council's own role and city partners such as Visit Belfast and Tourism NI. The ten year plan sets out a dynamic model for city positioning that strengthens Belfast's role as the gateway to the region in a way that responds to key markets including:

- Business Tourism and sub-sectors within this group.
- Leisure tourism target markets including - geographic considerations and the visitor journey.

3.18 This theme takes forward a new approach that pushes beyond traditional marketing methods towards enabling the people creating the Belfast experience to tell their story. Therefore, the approach is narrative driven and the new plan sets out areas of support on:

- How do we tell Belfast stories? How do we enable people to tell their Belfast story?
- How do we create an emotional connection with visitors?
- How do we make local stories resonate internationally?

- 3.19 The theme brings forward actions that support an effective way of working and will be particularly dependent on successful establishment of governance and leadership support mechanisms that will be strengthened to support the overall delivery of the plan.

3.20 ***Strategic theme 3: Experience Belfast*** (supported by Visitor Experience Framework developed with CHL Consulting)

The plan provides a summary of key actions to strengthen the coherency of Belfast's overall visitor experience. The plan contains strategic priorities that:

- include experiences that can be brought to life through the development of an optimal mix of 'anchor' and ancillary products that get people into an area and keep them there
- focuses on encouraging international visitors to immerse themselves actively in the locale, interacting with people, engaging the senses and learning the history and stories of the places.
- prioritises delivering immersive moments that inspire tourists not only to share their experience with others but also make them want to return to the city.

3.2.1 This theme is critical to the overall success of the overall plan due to:

- the role of Belfast City Council in developing the Belfast experience through the development of Council assets
- Support for local initiatives and development plans through geographic or thematic based community development

Therefore, a full Belfast Experience Framework has been developed to support implementation. This detailed Framework will be presented to Committee in January 2021 alongside a revised plan followed public consultation. It is proposed that engagement with Members of this Framework takes place through a dedicated workshop.

3.22 In developing this Framework, a number of pieces of foundational work have been completed including:

- A mapping exercise which maps our existing tourism assets against the city's 'Belfast brand' and Tourism NI 'Embrace the Giant Spirit' brand.

- Assessment of the quality, market fit and sustainability of existing products.
- Development of a proposed combination of thematic and geographical clustering.
- Undertaken a gap analysis of potential experience-based products. The gap analysis reviewed what was missing from the tourism offer taking into consideration issues such as seasonality, immersive experiences, events and festival animation, and opportunities to meet local people for instance.
- Consideration of investment and evaluation criteria for longer term priorities and programmes of support incorporating social, environmental and economic factors.

3.23 Strategic theme 4: Sustain Belfast (supported by benchmarking of Belfast as part of Global Destination Sustainability Index)

This theme is shaped by recommendations emerging from the benchmarking completed as part of Global Destination Sustainability Index. Members will be aware that Belfast signed up to this benchmarking following Committee approval in August 2020. The Global Destination Sustainability Index is the world's leading benchmarking and performance Index for cities, their events and their visitor economy. Its purpose is to engage, enable and inspire cities to become more sustainable places to visit, meet and thrive in. In addition to benchmarking a city's environmental strategy and social sustainability performance, the GDS-Index assess criteria that are industry specific: industry supplier support (restaurants, hotels, conference centres) and convention bureau strategy and initiatives. Alongside benchmarking it helps destination management organisations, convention bureaus, key industry associations suppliers and clients to develop effective strategies and practices in support of sustainability goals.

3.24 Since 2019, over 60 cities have started the process of benchmarking and assessment. The goal is to have 300 cities collaborating by 2023. The Index is based on 69 Indicators broken down into four categories:

- City Environmental Performance
- City Social Performance
- Supplier Performance
- Destination Management Performance

3.25 Belfast has now completed benchmarking and a series of recommendations are included in the 10-year plan. A number

of these relate to Visit Belfast's role as the Destination Management Organisation (DMO) and Visit Belfast have already made significant progress in implementing these as part of their current funding agreement with a commitment to build on this on a multi-annual basis. However, Council also has a direct role and recommendations within the plan include the establishment of a taskforce and a sustainability lab for tourism in Belfast. Further action is also set out in relation to the following areas:

Council assets

- Developing plans for Council's assets and supporting the ICC (as the city's Congress Venue) to achieve accreditation.
- Embed tourism in city emergency planning.

Supporting the supply chain

- Developing a tiered certification strategy for suppliers set targets for certification.
- Funding support to help / incentivise suppliers achieve 3rd part accreditation Sustainability training for suppliers.
- Training and capacity building to help suppliers create and implement their own sustainability policies.

Catalyst Projects

3.26 All four of these strategic themes are underpinned by the need to support inclusive economic growth and to differentiate the Belfast offer in an increasingly competitive global marketplace. A fifth strand to the plan considers key strategic opportunities that could bolster investment in the sector in order to support recovery and future growth. These are catalyst or accelerator projects and are outlined below.

3.27 **Catalyst Project 1: Our Place – support for local tourism**

Adopting a place-based approach to the development of our neighbourhoods through local tourism investment that supports product development, jobs creation and destination management including the design and delivery of a Belfast Experience Development Fund to support product development. There are also opportunities to support capital development through alignment with existing programmes such as the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund.

3.28 **Catalyst 2: Make Yourself at Home**

This is a renewed commitment to long-term initiatives contained in the cultural strategy including signature Belfast events, International Year of Culture and UNESCO City of Music. The global summit of One Young World has been secured for 2023. A plan will be developed to bid for other major events that support the ambitions set out in the plan. Members will be aware that Belfast had planned to host a year of culture in 2023 in line with the original European Capital of Culture bid. However, the ongoing impact of COVID-19 at a city level in terms of the capacity of our local sector to deliver something of this scale in 18 months and the trajectory for the full return of international markets increasing makes this challenging. Therefore, it is now proposed that a multi-annual approach is taken forward focussing initially on the period 2022-24. Building on the cultural strategy, we have positioned events as one of the catalyst programmes for tourism to help contribute to the city's long term growth (visitor numbers, dwell time, spend and brand positioning) and in particular act as a key motivator for GB and Ireland visitors as part of the next phase of recovery. Over this initial period this would include at least 2 flagship events each with a critical mass of homegrown activity in 2024. Consumer sentiment research is already indicating that Events will be a key differentiator for cities in terms of re-establishing market position post-COVID. It is proposed an update report on events is presented to Committee in November 2021 following the result of the UNESCO City of Music bid.

3.29 Catalyst Project 3: Our Stories

Delivering the Belfast Destination Hub as part of the tourism pillar of the Belfast Regional City Deal must be part of an overall integrated approach to tourism development and inclusive economic growth for the city. The Hub will connect to local tourism product development and infrastructure through a hub and spoke model. Importantly the Hub will be an exemplar for responsible and sustainable tourism demonstrating the principles set out in the ten-year plan. Through the focus on Belfast Stories, the Hub will also be transformative for the positioning of the city. The development programme for the Hub as part of BRCD is fully aligned to this 10-year tourism plan with cross-cutting priorities and synergies.

3.30 Next steps

Subject to approval, the draft plan *Make Yourself at Home* included at Appendix 1 will be subject to a 12-week public

consultation with a revised plan presented to CGR Committee in January 2022. It is proposed that a workshop for Members will take place during the public consultation phase.

- 3.31 Significant engagement has already taken place with public sector stakeholders such as Visit Belfast, Tourism NI and Tourism Ireland as well as with the tourism industry. To build on this, a detailed consultation plan will be delivered optimising a number of consultation methods including online platforms, workshops (by sector and by theme) and surveys.

3.32 **Financial & Resource Implications**

There are currently no immediate financial implications to this report. The final plan will be supported by implementation programmes and a detailed finance and resource plan will be presented to Committee as part of the next phase of work.

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

The cultural strategy, *A City Imagining* has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) and a Rural Needs Assessment (RNA). A specific screening is being carried out on this plan that will be included as part of the consultation exercise and presented to Committee in January 2022. The Belfast Destination Hub will be subject to a separate Equality Impact Assessment. It is also anticipated that should any investment programmes emerge from this plan these will be subject to further equality screening.”

The Committee agreed to:

- note the contents of this report and to commence a 12-week consultation period from October 2021; and
- hold a workshop with Members to discuss in detail the priorities set out in the plan.

**ESF Update and Proposed Match
Funding Approach**

The Director of Economic Development advised the Committee that, in May, 2021, the Department for the Economy advised that the proposed extension of existing funding agreements for a further year would not be possible, based on advice from the European Commission and instead, it had issued an open call for applications in June 2021, with a closing date of July 2021.

He reported that Applications were currently being assessed and it was likely that decisions on successful projects would be made by mid-September and that, similar to

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previous years, successful projects would receive up to 65% of the requested budget and the project promoters would be expected to find the remaining 35%. He explained that the remaining funding usually came from other government departments, council, public bodies or private organisations.

He informed the Members that as part of the application process, the Council had received match-funding requests from ten organisations and that officers had met with representatives from all projects to explain the Council's position and the following proposed approach:

- Maintain the match funding at £240,000 (subject to resource availability as part of the estimates process); and
- Establish a transparent process for assessing which projects should receive match funding from the Council, and the amount of match funding that they should receive.

He added that it was proposed that a number of criteria would be established and formally communicated to those seeking match funding as part of the transparent process and that only those projects that were successful in securing DfE funding would be included as part of the process.

He informed the Members that a report would be presented to a future meeting of the Committee outlining the proposed projects to be supported and would include the financial allocation recommended for each project

After further discussion it was:

Moved by Councillor Beattie,
Seconded by Councillor Heading and

Resolved - That Committee agree to the recommendations as set out in the report to:

- note the Department for the Economy's decision to open the last year of ESF funding (2022/23) to an open call;
- approve the recommended approach for Council match funding, within the indicative funding envelope of £240,000 (subject to approval of 2022/23 estimates), consistent with the amounts and approach operated in the previous years; and
- note that a report would be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee to advise on proposed funding allocations.

Furthermore, that the Committee agrees to invite representatives from the Department for the Economy to a future meeting of the Committee to discuss future funding.

Destination CQ BID Ballot

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is advise of the upcoming ballot for the Destination CQ BID (Business Improvement District) and to recommend that the council uses its available votes to support a ‘yes’ vote to enable the BID to extend its mandate for a further five years.**

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to;**

- Agree to use the council ballots to support a Yes vote for a new five year mandate for Destination CQ BID.**

3.0 Main report

- 3.1 Members will be aware that Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) were established for the first time in Northern Ireland in 2015. There are three BIDs in Belfast:**

- Destination CQ covers the Cathedral Quarter, encompassing the area from High Street to Great George’s Street, bounded by Donegall Quay and Millfield**
- Belfast One covers the retail core from City Hall to Royal Avenue, bounded by Victoria Street and Millfield**
- Linen Quarter BID covers the area from City Hall to Dublin Road, bounded by Joy Street and Durham Street.**

- 3.2 Businesses located within the BID area agree a five-year business plan and pay a mandatory annual contribution (levy) to the delivery of the business plan, based on the NAV of their property. BID services must demonstrate that they are additional to core services that are delivered by other statutory partners (such as the Council, Department for Communities, Department for Infrastructure etc.). Belfast One was the first BID to be established in Belfast in April 2016 and**

was subject to a successful re-ballot at the end of March this year. Destination CQ's initial five-year mandate is now coming to an end and the re-ballot to determine whether or not the organisation will remain in existence for the next five years is currently open, with a closing date of 22 September 2021.

3.3 All property owners are eligible for one vote per levy-paying property in the BID area. Belfast City Council has sixteen properties in the Destination CQ area (largely car parks) and will therefore be entitled to a vote for each of the properties.

3.4 Members will be aware that all three BIDs have been playing an active role in the animation and management of the city centre since their establishment a number of years ago. Destination CQ's business plan for the next five year period includes a recap of its activities over the previous five years. These include:

- More than 1200 individuals from Cathedral Quarter businesses attended training events and took part in learning and development activities
- Helped businesses to reduce their rate overheads by 30% through collective purchasing arrangements
- Supported council in delivery of public realm improvements funded through DfC's Revitalisation Fund to a value of £170,000
- Worked with the other BIDs to successfully achieve Purple Flag – recognition of work to support a safe and vibrant night-time economy, as well as delivering events such as Belfast Restaurant Week and participating in collaborative promotion activities such as the Belfast Gift Card
- Supported delivery of a dedicated police team for the Cathedral Quarter – Street Beat
- Provided additional and dedicated cleansing services through their appointed contractor, working alongside council teams to improve the cleanliness of the area.

3.5 The BID expects to spend up to £2 million over the next five years. Its business plan identifies how this spend will break down across three priority work areas. These are:

1. **Business Support:** includes activities such as collective purchasing to reduce costs, training and networking activities and support for local businesses/cultural organisations
2. **Safer, Cleaner, Greener:** includes putting in place additional street cleansing activities, progressing pedestrianisation efforts in collaboration with statutory

partners, addressing anti-social behaviour issues and working on social issues such as homelessness

3. Promoting and Animating: include activities to encourage visitors to stay in the area outside of work hours as well championing culture and arts activities.

- 3.6 All levy payers will now have received their ballots, which must be returned in advance of 22 September 2021. In order to secure a new mandate, the BID requires that at least 25% of those eligible to vote do so. Of those that vote, at least 50% need to cast a 'yes' vote if the BID is to continue its work for a further five years. It is proposed that officers return the council ballots to confirm support for the BID with a 'yes' vote. The BIDs are important engagement and delivery partners for the council and it will be increasingly important for us to have strong interfaces with city centre businesses as we focus on re-shaping the city centre in the post-COVID era and driving forward on key interventions such as city centre living and progressing the work on the Bolder Vision in conjunction with the other government departments. In addition, the complementary services that the BID delivers such as the Street Beat and the additional street cleansing regime are important in creating a welcome and safe city centre for all.

3.7 Financial & Resource Implications

The current levy payable by the council to Destination CQ is in the region of £7,500 on an annual basis. This has been accounted for in existing estimates.

3.8 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

No specific equality implications. BIDs have been established in a number of locations across Northern Ireland."

The Committee agreed to use the Council ballots to support a 'yes' vote for a new five-year mandate for Destination CQ BID.

Growing Business & the Economy

City of Music - Support for Autumn Programme 2021

The Committee considered the following report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- update Members on developments on the UNESCO City of Music designation process, strategic music development and music-based events due to happen as part of the city's recovery programme in October and November 2021.
- Request that Members consider supporting events due to take place in Belfast.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to;

- Gradam Ceoil including broadcast event, local engagement programme and legacy bursary support.
- NI Music Prize – incorporating UNESCO City of Music announcement

3.0 Main Report

3.1 In March 2018, as a result of the coalescence of many conversations which were happening in the city at the same time, Council backed a proposal for the city and its partners to make an application for the endorsement of UNESCO City of Music status which became a key ambition of the city's cultural strategy *A City Imagining 2020-30*, setting out a commitment to applying for UNESCO Creative Cities Network membership via recognition as a UNESCO City of Music in 2021. Since 2018, Council have spent three years working on music development for the city including extensive engagement with the sector and city stakeholders to co-design the UNESCO application as well as a complementary music strategy and implementation plan to support the ambitions set out for UNESCO designation. In June 2021 Belfast was officially shortlisted in the global competition for UNESCO City of Music status in 2021, the results of which will be announced mid-November 2021. This will coincide with a number of key music events for the city which we seek to support as part of our ongoing commitment to music in the city.

3.2 Support for these high-profile music events will contribute not only to the city's cultural recovery but to a number of the aims set out in the Belfast Agenda and *A City Imagining* cultural strategy by contributing to:

- An inclusive city where everyone actively participates in cultural life
- A diverse city with vibrant public and cultural spaces
- A city where creativity pushes boundaries

- A city confident of our place in the world

Gradam Ceoil

3.3 *Broadcast Event*

Gradam Ceoil is an annual awards ceremony which celebrates the best of traditional Irish music and song. It comprises a gala event as well as citywide community outreach and engagement events which help to maximise reach and impact.

- 3.4 The live coverage on TG4 provides a meaningful opportunity to showcase Belfast as a city of music, arts and culture with the event often picked up by other broadcast platforms such as PBS America and online channels. As host city, Belfast continues to work closely with the event organisers to develop deep cultural and visitor engagement opportunities. This year concludes Gradam's four-year residency in the city and plans are underway for a bursary programme for local musicians to build on its legacy by strengthening and continuing Gradam Ceoil's connection with Belfast. In 2019 the event reached 110,000 television viewers with a total of over 500,000 views including online channels.

3.5 The 2021 edition will include:

- Gradam's fourth and final year of residency in Belfast.
- Previous years the Award Ceremony and Concert was held in The Waterfront Hall but this has had to be scaled back due to ongoing Covid restrictions.
- The Award Ceremony and Concert will be recorded at The Whitla Hall the week commencing 25 October and broadcast on TG4 on Sunday 31 October and promotion through online channels.
- Six music categories will be awarded.
- Launch event will take place in Belfast on Wednesday 8 September.

3.6 *Local Programme*

In previous years the Gradam local engagement programme in Belfast centred on small scale music events and tutoring sessions at community venues. These were held in the two days leading up to the main event. With this year being Gradam's final year in Belfast, there is a focus on its legacy and how it will continue to positively impact on Belfast as a music city. The proposal for these events will include a series of special performances in venues across the city:

- Focus on all female performers who are also Gradam award recipients
- Focus on promoting regional artists
- Youth Concert tour – pop up concerts with past Gradam pupils performing in venues in Belfast such as Duncairn, Ulster Scots Centre and QUB. Potential guest performances.

3.7 *Gradam Ceoil – Bursary Programme*

Creating a legacy from Gradam Ceoil Belfast is a priority. Since 2017, in preparation for the arrival of Gradam Ceoil in Belfast in 2018, Red Shoe (Gradam Producer) has been building networks and partnerships with a diverse mix of cultural organisations in neighbourhoods across Belfast and has established a hub at The Duncairn.

3.8 Building on the success and impact of the programme of fringe events that animate the city around the main Gradam Ceoil event, Red Shoe, in partnership with The Duncairn and TG4, now propose to establish a music and audio-visual bursary scheme for an initial five-year period to achieve the following objectives and to contribute to Belfast's proposition to UNESCO for designation as a Music City:

- Create a practical, living legacy from Gradam Ceoil Belfast
- Develop and support the traditional music sector across the city region, and promote Belfast as a destination rich in traditional and other music
- Enrich Belfast's offering as a creative place and as a city that fosters ideas, ambition, in ways that help our artists to build capacity and develop their work
- Recognise potential and support creative ideas, particularly among young people engaged in traditional music
- Create opportunities for young people to work and learn alongside leading figures in traditional music and in the audio-visual production sector
- Provide new kinds of creative opportunities to foster creativity in response to the needs that young people identify for themselves, for their work, and for their communities

3.9 The proposition is to create three Gradam Ceoil Belfast bursaries annually, each valued at £3,000, for the five-year period 2021-25.

- 3.10 The call for applications will seek proposals that are grounded in traditional music, ideally with a Belfast angle, and that can be realised as audio-visual projects such as short film, video, or other digital content. The recipients will be able to work with their ideal team of artistic and technical experts, under the guidance and mentorship of Red Shoe, thereby learning and refining additional and new transferrable skills in many aspects of audio-visual production.
- 3.11 The rationale for this approach is that with the increased availability and ease of access to technology today, the strategic issue is about quality, skills, training, and being able to make the best use of all the tools of audio-visual production to support creative projects based in and around traditional music.
- 3.12 The involvement of the delivery partners is as follows:
- Red Shoe Productions: concept and project development; design and delivery in Belfast of the creative and technical supports for recipients; post-production support to bring projects to broadcast quality; joint management (with The Duncairn) of the project.
- The Duncairn: concept and project development; identification and communication with target groups across the city; location and venue support; administrative support and joint management (with Red Shoe) of the project
- TG4: concept and project development; broadcast platform and online dissemination of selected projects as integral element of Gradam Ceoil; recognition and promotion of the significance of the relationship with Belfast, and Belfast's uniquely diverse musical traditions (this project is unique to Belfast).
- 3.13 The application process for these bursaries will be designed and managed jointly by Red Shoe and The Duncairn, using an open call for expressions of interest and a scored assessment process in line with prevailing good practice. Council will be invited to sit on the assessment panel for these bursaries. The assessment of applications will be carried out by a panel comprising Red Shoe, The Duncairn, TG4, a BCC nominee and an external assessor.

NI Music Prize & UNESCO City of Music Announcement

- 3.14 The Northern Ireland Music Prize honours and celebrates the very best of new, established and emerging Northern Irish

music and is a key music event for the city of Belfast, more so than ever with the ambitions for City of Music Designation announcement coinciding with this year's ceremony . It is an annual awards night organised by the Oh Yeah Music Centre and takes place in the Ulster Hall during Sound of Belfast Festival every year. Sound of Belfast is a festival that showcases the Belfast music scene and sector with gigs, panels, talks, workshops, discussions, exhibitions, showcases and special events at various venues across Belfast.

3.15 The prize is a high-profile celebration of music from Northern Ireland. Four awards are available:

- Best Album (with cash prize of £3,000),
- Best Live Act (normally £1000, an alternative in 2021 due to impact on live music in 2020)
- Best Newcomer (Oh Yeah Contender Award (in association with BBC cash prize of £1000)
- Best Single (with cash prize of £1000 and shortlist going to public vote).

3.16 The NI Music Prize was established to support the growth and build the profile of NI Music and reflect similar work and recognition of regional music in other parts of the UK and Ireland. It is a significant event and key milestone for Belfast as the regional driver for the music industry in Northern Ireland.

Plans for 2021

3.17 Due to the pandemic NI Music Prize 2021 will be with an invited audience of music industry, media, nominated and shortlisted acts, stakeholders and supporters as well as a limited number of tickets going to fans or key workers. A cabaret style event on the ground floor, reducing numbers and keeping with the possibility of a more restricted event, but also elevating it to a more formal awards event for the first time. The event will take on a blended approach in terms of reaching audiences:

- A live audience in the hall
- A live stream to a wider and global audience via high quality production via YouTube.
- Media interviews, podcast recordings, live streams and prerecords backstage.
- There will be 5 award presentations
- Guest Presenters and speakers
- Video messages
- Performances from 3 special guest acts

- Performances from 3 or 4 shortlisted acts
- UNESCO announcement – and/or opportunity for BCC to use the platform to communicate successful UNESCO City of Music Designation, and if unsuccessful the plans to continue to support music in the city through the cultural strategy and recovery programmes.

Significance of NI Music Prize in 2021

3.18 This is an important event for music in Belfast given the impact of the Covid pandemic:

- The NI Music Prize can play a key part in the recovery of Belfast as a music city
- It will be an opportunity for the music community of Belfast to come together for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic
- It will be an important platform to recognise the resilience of the industry and how it will be part of the city's overall recovery
- It will be an investment in our world class and strong emerging diverse talent, which is becoming more varied and exciting as the city emerges from almost two years under restrictions
- It will acknowledge the challenges and recognise the role of our creative sector throughout lockdown
- Belfast will be notified of the outcome of the UNESCO City of Music bid at this time therefore this would be a potential platform for an announcement
- It will showcase our local talent through extensive online reach with a live streamed event
- It will demonstrate that Council is committed to supporting and investing in music long term

3.19 Regardless of the outcome of the bid for UNESCO designation, there is still cause for this to be a significant event with a strong message going forward – that music will be at the centre of the recovery and future of Belfast as a culturally vibrant city and that Council is committed to music in the city through delivery of *A City Imagining* and the development of a new music strategy for the city.

3.20 To complement and strengthen the initiatives and ambitions laid out in the UNESCO City of Music application officers have been working with Sound Diplomacy and the City of Music Steering Group to develop a robust Music Strategy and Recovery Plan for Belfast which includes priority actions for the music sector post-pandemic and a three-year

implementation plan which will be taken back to Committee for approval in November 2021.

Financial & Resource Implications

- 3.21 The financial support requested from Belfast City Council is as follows:

Gradam Ceoil Broadcast event and local engagement programme - £50,000

Gradam Ceoil legacy bursaries for local musicians - £15,000

NI Music Prize - £15,000

These costs are to be met from existing departmental budgets allocated to music development.

Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.22 Officers will work with event organisers to ensure that a wide range of groups and artists across the city are engaged with. There are no Rural Needs implications.”

Following discussion, it was:

Moved by Councillor O'Hara,
Seconded by Councillor Maskey and

Resolve - That the Committee agrees to the recommendations as set out in the report to:

- Approve the funding of £50,000 from existing departmental budgets for the Gradam Ceoil broadcast event and local engagement programme;
- Approve £15,000 from existing departmental budgets for the provision of the Gradam Ceoil legacy bursaries;
- Approve £15,000 to support the delivery of the NI Music Prize, incorporating the UNESCO City of Music announcement and music development programme.

Furthermore, that the Committee agrees to delegate authority to the Director of Economic Development to identify feasible additional funding up to £15,000 from existing budgets and liaise with the Oh Yeah Music Centre, to contribute to the NI Music Prize funding gap.

Support for NI Hospice Public Art Project

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The Director of Economic Development reported that the Northern Ireland Hospice was collaborating with Wild in Art and Andersen Press to bring David McKee's popular children's character Elmer the Patchwork Elephant to life during 2022, through a physical and online trail to celebrate the 21st anniversary of their children's in-patient unit - Horizon House and that Elmer's Big Art Parades had taken place previously in Suffolk, Maidstone and London since 2019.

He pointed out that, as part of the project, a herd of around 60 elephant sculptures would be colourfully decorated by local artists working with young people and community groups and would be positioned around key landmarks across Belfast and Northern Ireland from June 2022 before being auctioned off for charity in October 2022.

He advised the Committee that, through delivering this largescale public art event in Belfast, NI Hospice note that the event would likely:

- generate an estimated £20million economic impact including £1million media value through national and regional media coverage (note that similar projects such as Manchester's 'Bee in the City' (2018) and Birmingham's 'The Big Hoot' (2015) generated over £30million economic impact);
- attract one million visitors across ten weeks and one million interactions via the trail app;
- engage more than 10,000 local schoolchildren in over 30 schools;
- offer employment to artists and showcase local and regional artists; and
- promote health and wellbeing (the majority of visitors to 'Bee in the City' said the trail helped them to spend more time with their family)

He pointed out how the project would contribute to the aims set out in the Belfast Agenda through the A City Imagining cultural strategy and the City Recovery Plan and that officers would provide additional support to the NI Hospice to connect with local groups and with artists to help promote the event.

The Committee agreed to note the content of the report and that Belfast City Council act as an official sponsor of the initiative at a cost of £35,000.

International Engagement Activities

The Director of Economic Development reported that, as Belfast City Council was a member of the Eurocities network, an invite had been received to the Eurocities Annual Conference which was scheduled to be held in Leipzig on 3rd and 4th November, 2021.

He informed the Members that the theme of conference was "The Power of Cities – Transforming Society" and that the focus would be on how the "Green New Deal" was being implemented at a local level and that it would explore additional mechanisms to

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push forward the role of cities as key conduits to move forward at pace in an volatile economic climate.

The pointed out that the conference would provide the opportunity for elected representatives and senior city officials to input into the organisation's workplan, discuss pertinent city issues and network, collaborate and debate with European officials and representatives from other cities.

He advised the Committee that officers were recommending that it approve the attendance of the Chairperson or the Deputy Chairperson or nominee, plus one officer at the conference, at a maximum cost of £2,500.

The Director reminded the Committee that over a five-year period, from 2015, the Council had supported the work of the Odyssey Trust in developing and delivering he Friendship Four Festival.

He reported that, based on the success of the Friendship Four Model, the Odyssey Trust was developing plans to host the Women's Ice Hockey Teams that will represent both the USA and Russia a the 2022 Olympic Games.

He advised the Committee that, as part of the engagement fixtures, officers were proposing that a civic reception for both teams would take place in City Hall on 10th November, with the costs associated with hosting the event, not to exceed £3,000.

He reminded the Committee that the Confucius Institute in Northern Ireland had been established in partnership with Ulster University in Belfast, in 2011 and that its role was comparable to that of the British Council, in that it serves to promote Chinese culture, education and language across the world.

He stated that he Institute had also been working closely with those NI councils that are engaged in activity within China, and had greatly assisted Belfast City Council in its work with Sister City Shenyang since 2016. He added that Confucius Directors had engaged with the Council to explore the potential to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding in order to formalise the support services and agree an outline activity plan. They considered that this approach would help them manage resources more effectively.

He reported that, based on the outline programme of activity, it was being proposed that a budget allocation of £5,000 be set aside for this work. The outputs would be managed and reviewed by officers in order to ensure value for money and to inform future support.

In response to a question from a Member, the Director of Economic Development agreed that he would explore the opportunity to attend the Eurocities Annual Conference remotely, and the costs associated with virtual attendance.

After further discussion, it was:

Moved by Councillor Lyons,

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Seconded by Councillor Maskey,

That the Committee agrees to:

- Approve the attendance of Committee Chairperson or the Deputy Chairperson or nominee and one officer at the Eurocities AGM, taking place from 3-5 November in Leipzig, at a maximum cost of £2500, subject to prevailing COVID restrictions, and to delegate authority to the Director of Economic Development to determine the networking and financial viability of attendance at the conference, against virtual attendance, if the option was available;
- Facilitate a City Hall reception on the occasion of the visit to Belfast by the US and Russian Women's Olympic Ice Hockey Teams, as part of their visit to Belfast from 7-12 November 2021, at a maximum cost of £3,000, depending on numbers attending; and
- Refuse to provide financial support to the Confucius Institute on the basis that it is associated with the Chinese State/Government which has a select approach on how it conducts its business, therefore Belfast City Council should not deepen its relationship by developing a memorandum of understanding.

On a recorded vote, eight Members voted for the proposal and three against, with four no-votes, and it was declared carried.

<u>For 8</u>	<u>Against 3</u>	<u>No Vote 4</u>
Councillor Murphy (Chairperson); and Councillors Beattie, Donnelly, Ferguson, Heading, Lyons, Maskey and O'Hara.	Alderman Dorrian; and Councillors Hussey and Spratt.	The High Sheriff (Councillor Long); and Councillors Hanvey, Howard and McMullan.

Chairperson

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City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 22nd September, 2021

SPECIAL REMOTE MEETING OF THE MEMBERS OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Murphy (Chairperson);
Alderman Kingston; and
Councillors Donnelly, Ferguson, Gormley,
Hanvey, Hussey, Lyons, Maskey,
McLaughlin, McMullan, O'Hara, Spratt and Whyte.

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;
Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;
Mr. F. Smith, Project Sponsor; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported for Alderman Dorrian and Councillors Howard and Whyte.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Presentations

Transport Hub Alternative Group

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. W. Dickson and Mr. K. Martin from the Transport Hub Alternative Group to the meeting.

Mr. Dickson thanked the Committee for accepting a presentation from the Transport Hub Alternative Group and explained that the organisation aimed to raise its concerns regarding plans by Translink for a transport hub, and that he felt that there had not been adequate political involvement or representation at relevant meetings.

Mr. Dickson and Mr. Martin outlined several reasons which had caused concern with regard to Translink's plans, which included:

- that Translink's proposals involved demolition of the Boyne Bridge and replacing it with a busy four lane road;
- that there would be Increased traffic, noise and pollution, especially for Sandy Row residents;

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- that the proposals involved the demolition of the 1936 Bridge, the structure of which, was unique and was a critical part of Belfast's industrial Heritage;
- that the existing station was to be replaced with commercial developments provided by the private sector;
- that two entrances to the station create a Catholic/Nationalist access and a Protestant Loyalist Route;
- Potential shadow casting, as a result of the positioning of a thirteen-story office building;
- that Weavers Cross was a weak name and suggested naming it 'Belfast Central',
- that, a report by THAG indicated that Translink had not followed the Gunning Principles in their Consultation Process;
- Concerns regarding the disappearance of the traditional entrance from Great Victoria Street; and
- That the proposals could see the disappearance of traditional names such as The Great Northern, Great Victoria and Boyne Bridge.

Mr. Dickson stated that progress and history could and must co-exist and that a review of the planning of the Transport Hub development should take place to allow concerns to be raised and addressed. He asked that Members consider supporting the Transport Hub Alternative Group in its pursuit of a review and to convene a working group to investigate all the aspects of the plans.

In response to some of the concerns raised, the Strategic Director of Place and Economy reported that there were two planning applications to be considered, one of which had already been adjudicated on by the Department for Infrastructure which concerned the Transport Hub, Saltwater Square and the treatment of the Boyne and Saltwater bridges. He stated that, on that basis, Translink was bringing the project forward to construction stage.

He added that Belfast City Council was expecting to receive the second planning application, for the Weaver's Cross Regeneration Development, which would be considered by the Members of the Planning Committee.

The Chairperson thanked Mr. Dickson and Mr. Martin for their presentation, and they retired from the meeting.

The Members of the Committee agreed to note the content of the presentation.

Cathedral Gardens - Update on Masterplan and Next Steps

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the development of the emerging master plan for the redevelopment of Cathedral Gardens.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is requested to;

- Note that they will receive a presentation on the emerging design concepts for the Cathedral Gardens Master Plan from Council appointed consultants – Hassell - at this meeting (22nd September 2021)
- note that the next stage will be to go out for public consultation on the concept design with a further update to be brought back.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Members will recall that at Committee last month they received a detailed update paper in respect of ‘City Centre Open Spaces’. In this it was highlighted that 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. 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 has also identified the opportunity to provide a sizable new open space and greening opportunities by linking St. Anne’s Cathedral to Cathedral Gardens and Writers Square. At the Future City Workshop, held with Members of the CG&R Committee in May 2021, Members also noted that the provision of high quality, inclusive and sustainable open spaces for families and city users to enjoy and utilise the outdoor environment was a key priority.

3.2 The Council’s key asset in the city centre in terms of open space is Cathedral Gardens. The SP&R Committee has previously agreed the redevelopment of Cathedral Gardens. Members will be aware that originally this was to be taken forward as part of Streets Ahead Phase 3. However, when this was placed on hold it was agreed the redevelopment of the Gardens should be decoupled from this.

- 3.3 The redevelopment of Cathedral Gardens provides a significant opportunity to inject critical and much needed quality public urban space into the city centre. The area adjacent to and surrounding Cathedral Gardens is home to a rich history of fabrication and cultural identity. It is a precinct in the process of evolution through a mixture of commercial, education and housing related developments that are transforming this part of Belfast into a new and vibrant mixed-use neighbourhood for the city.
- 3.4 Members have been advised that the Council have commissioned Hassell Consultants to develop a concept masterplan for the redevelopment of the Cathedral Gardens space. The Master Plan has been commissioned with the intention to create a unique urban space. As part of this process a number of engagement sessions have taken place with key stakeholders to inform the emerging design concepts that will be presented to Members at this Committee for consideration. The emerging design concepts include the reinvigorating the civic space, the integration of landscape and urban forestry and building in exemplary grey to green infrastructure along with looking at how the site can be programmed to become a year round asset for use by all audiences.

The redevelopment of Cathedral Gardens is currently a Stage 2 – Uncommitted on the Capital Programme. The project will be required to go through the 3 stage approval process as agreed for all capital projects. This includes consultation on proposed designs. The next proposed step is to go out for wider consultation on the concept masterplan including public consultation via the 'Your Say' consultation platform, continued engagement with key stakeholders (e.g. UU, DFC, DFI, St. Anne's Cathedral), and targeted consultation with a range of stakeholders (e.g. the Events sector). Following this the final proposed design will be brought back to Members

- 3.5 As previously outlined a key consideration during delivery of the project will be how to offset the 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. Pending agreement and subject to funding it is proposed to recreate a play space within a suitable site. The final scope of these works will take into consideration the final design for the redevelopment of Cathedral Gardens to ensure complementarity. This work is continuing and an update

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report will be brought into this Committee for approval prior to proceeding.

4.0 Financial & Resource Implications

Finance - The redevelopment of Cathedral Gardens is an agreed project on the Council's Capital Programme.

Resources - Officer time in terms of the next steps of consultation

3.8 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

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

The Committee agreed to:

- Note that they would receive a presentation on the emerging design concepts for the Cathedral Gardens Master Plan from Council appointed consultants – Hassell; and
- note that the next stage will be to go out for public consultation on the concept design with a further update to be brought back.

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

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. A. Bruce, Ms. N. Albertin and Mr. S. Travers, from Hassell Studio to the meeting and they presented the Committee with an overview of design concepts for the Cathedral Gardens Masterplan.

Upon completion of the presentation, the Chairperson thanked Mr. A. Bruce, Ms. N. Albertin and Mr. S. Travers for their presentation, and they retired from the meeting.

The Committee noted the content of the presentation.

Chairperson

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Licensing Committee

Wednesday, 15th September, 2021

MEETING OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AND
REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Donnelly (Chairperson);
Aldermen Rodgers and Sandford; and
Councillors Bradley, Bunting, Michael Collins, Howard,
Hutchinson, M. Kelly, T. Kelly, Magee, Magennis, McAteer,
McCabe, 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. V. Donnelly, City Protection Manager; and
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology for inability to attend was reported on behalf of Councillor McCullough.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 18th August were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st September, 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.

Delegated Matters

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

HMO Licences Issued Under Delegated Authority

The Committee noted a list of licences for Houses in Multiple Occupation which had been issued under the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 15th September, 2021**

**Application for the Grant of a
HMO Licence – 77 Palestine Street**

The HMO Unit Manager submitted for the Committee's consideration the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 To consider an application for a Licence permitting the use of premises as a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO).**

Premises	Application No.	Applicant	Managing Agents
77 Palestine Street Belfast BT7 1QL	8438	Mr Padhraig Magill	M and M Property Services

- 1.2 Members are reminded that HMO licences are issued for a 5-year period, with standard conditions. Where it is considered necessary to do so, the Committee can also impose special conditions.**

Background

- 1.3 The property had the benefit of an HMO licence in the name of the previous owner.**
- 1.4 The previous licence, pursuant to Section 28(2) of the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 ('the 2016 Act'), ceased to have effect on 10th September 2019, when the property was purchased by Mr. Padhraig Magill. Had Mr. Magill applied for a new HMO licence before the date of transfer, the existing licence, pursuant to Section 28(3) of the 2016 Act, would have been held until his new licence application was determined.**
- 1.5 On 10th May, 2021, an HMO licence application was received from the owner of the accommodation. As this was a new application, the HMO Unit consulted with the Council's Planning Service, which, on 20th May, confirmed that a Certificate of Lawful Use or Development was granted, with the planning reference LA04/2019/1471/LDE**
- 1.6 Following an email exchange on 3rd June between officers from the HMO Unit and the applicant, Mr Magill confirmed that he has been lived in the property since September 2019 (Appendix 3). In accordance with paragraph 9 of Schedule 1 of the 2016 Act, any building which is occupied by the owner or**

any members of the owner's household is not a house in multiple occupation. As such, the building has not been an HMO since September 2019, when Mr Magill and his brother took up occupation.

1.7 Pursuant to Section 87(1) General notices of the 2016 Act, the Council specified a number of documents which are required under paragraph 1(1) or (1)(2)(h) of Schedule 2, before an application is considered valid, the last of those documents 'Proof of suitable funding arrangements' was received on 28th June, 2021. As such the application was deemed valid on 28th June, 2021.

1.8 In accordance with paragraph 12 of Schedule 2 of the 2016 Act, the Council must decide whether to grant or refuse an application for an HMO licence before the end of a period of 3 months, that 3 month period expires on 28th September, 2021.

2.0 **Recommendations**

2.1 Taking into account the information presented, the Committee is asked to hear from the applicant and make a decision to either:

- (i) Grant the application, with or without any special conditions; or
- (ii) Refuse the application.

2.2 If the application is refused, the applicant has a right of appeal to the County Court. Such an appeal must be lodged within 28 days of formal notification of the decision. The licence will remain in place pending the appeal.

3.0 **Main report**

Key Issues

3.1 Pursuant to the 2016 Act, the Council may only grant a licence if it is satisfied that:

- a) the occupation of the living accommodation as an HMO would not constitute a breach of planning control;
- b) the owner, and any managing agent of it, are fit and proper persons;
- c) the proposed management arrangements are satisfactory);

- d) the granting of the licence will not result in overprovision of HMOs in the locality;**
- e) the living accommodation is fit for human habitation and:**
 - (i) is suitable for occupation as an HMO by the number of persons to be specified in the licence, or**
 - (ii) can be made so suitable by including conditions in the licence.**

- 3.2 As this is a new application, the HMO Unit consulted with the Council's Planning Service which on 20th May 2021, confirmed that a Certificate of Lawful Use or Development was granted with the planning reference LA04/2019/1471/LDE**
- 3.3 For the purpose of determining whether or not the granting of a licence would result in an overprovision of HMOs in the locality of the accommodation, and in order to ensure consistency as both a planning and licensing authority, the locality was defined as being HMO Policy Area 'HMO 2/22 Botanic, Holylands and Rugby' as defined in the document 'Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) Subject Plan for Belfast City Council Area 2015.**
- 3.4 The Legal Services Section has advised that there is a clear requirement in Section 8 of the 2016 Act upon the Council to be satisfied that the granting of a licence will not result in overprovision.**
- 3.5 On the date of assessment, 22nd July 2021, there were a total of 1,084 licensed HMOs in HMO policy area 'HMO 2/22 Botanic, Holylands and Rugby', which equates to 47% of the total dwelling units, which in turn exceeds the 30% development limit as set out at Policy HMO 1. The 1,082 licensed HMOs have a capacity of 4,974 persons.**
- 3.6 The total number of dwelling units in a Policy Area is measured by Ordnance Survey's Pointer database.**
- 3.7 The Council must also consider the need for housing accommodation in the locality and the extent to which HMO accommodation is required to meet that need.**
- 3.8 The Council recognises that there is a need for intensive forms of housing and to meet this demand, Houses in Multiple Occupation are an important component of this housing provision. HMOs, alongside other accommodation options within the private rented sector, play an important role in**

meeting the housing needs of people who are single, who have temporary employment, students, low income households and, more recently, migrant workers.

- 3.9** In September 2017, the Housing Executive published the document 'Housing Market Analysis Update – Belfast City Council Area' which states that 'HMOs form an important element of the PRS, particularly for younger people on low incomes and for single people, under the age of 35, affected by the limitation of housing benefit to the shared room rate. Anecdotal evidence also indicates that this has been a popular sector with migrant workers.'
- 3.10** On 10th August 2021, there were 10 licensed HMOs advertised for let on the website Property News in BT7, with a capacity of 47 bed spaces, of the 10 licensed properties 8 (38 bedspaces) were located in policy area 'HMO 2/22 Botanic, Holylands and Rugby'. Additionally, it was identified on the same website that there were 12 licensed HMO properties advertised for let in BT9 with a capacity of 54 bed spaces.
- 3.11** Members will be aware from BBC press reports that 'Queen's offers students £1,500 not to take up university accommodation'. The university said that due to 'unprecedented' demand accommodation in its halls was oversubscribed. Officers followed up on the press reports by contacting other Purpose-Built Managed Student Accommodation PBMSA. Student Roost confirmed that it has no accommodation across its 3 sites in Great Patrick Street, John Bell House and Swanston Houses and is now operating a waiting list. Botanic Studios confirmed that it is also completely full and has a waiting list. LIV Student Belfast indicates on its website that it is sold out.
- 3.12** A subsequent search on Property News was undertaken on 10th September 2021 and no licensed HMOs were advertised for let in BT7 or BT9. Anecdotal evidence from conversations with HMO managing agents suggest that that there is currently a lack of HMO accommodation available in the locality. It is too early to tell whether this is a temporary problem or evidence of an emerging long-term supply issue.
- 3.13** The fact the use of the property as an HMO is permitted for planning purposes is a relevant consideration in determining whether the grant of this licence will result in overprovision. There is an argument that it may not do so as the premises are already being used as an HMO.

- 3.14 However, it should be borne in mind that planning permission was granted on the basis that the use had been established for 5 or more years and was, therefore, immune to enforcement. No assessment of overprovision was made at that time. Given the level of licensed HMO properties in this locality, as set out above, it would be highly unlikely that a planning application for a new HMO in the area would be successful, as the thresholds in the 2015 Plan have been significantly exceeded.
- 3.15 When considering the fitness of an applicant, the Council must have regard to any offences concerning fraud/dishonesty, violence, drugs, human trafficking, firearms, sexual offences, unlawful discrimination in, or in connection with, the carrying on of any business; or any provision of the law relating to housing or of landlord and tenant law. It also permits the Council to take into account any other matter which the council considers to be relevant.
- 3.16 The NIHMO Unit has consulted with the following units within the Council's City and Neighbourhood Services Department –
- (a) the Environmental Protection Unit ('EPU') has confirmed that, in relation to night-time noise, there have been two noise warning notices issued on 18th September 2019 and 17th March 2020 in respect of the HMO since the change of ownership on the 10th September 2019;
 - (b) the Environmental Protection Unit ('EPU') has confirmed that, in relation to day-time noise, there has been no relevant enforcement action required in respect of the HMO in the last 5 years;
 - (c) the Public Health and Housing Unit ('PHHU') has confirmed that, in relation to rubbish accumulation/filthy premises, there has been no relevant enforcement action required in respect of the HMO in the last 5 years;
 - (d) the Cleansing Enforcement section (CE) has confirmed that, in relation to litter and waste, there has been no relevant enforcement action required in respect of the HMO in the last 5 years.

Fitness

- 3.17 The applicant and managing agent have confirmed that they have not been convicted of any relevant offences as set out at paragraph 3.15 of this report.
- 3.18 The applicant or managing agent have not been convicted of any HMO related offences by the Council. The EPU, PHHU and CE, solely in respect of their statutory functions, have confirmed that there are no relevant, previous convictions in respect of the applicant, managing agent or occupants. Due to data protection issues which have arisen, PSNI have not been accepting or responding to notification of these applications. Officers are continuing to engage with PSNI to find a resolution to this issue.
- 3.19 Officers are not aware of any other issue relevant to the applicant's fitness.

Attendance

- 3.20 The applicant and/or their representatives will be available to discuss any matters relating to the licence application, should they arise during your meeting.

Suitability of the Premises

- 3.21 An inspection of the premises was carried out by Officers from the Service on 16th June 2021, at which time it was established that the property met the physical standards for an HMO.

Notice of Proposed Decision

- 3.22 On 28th July 2021, pursuant to Paragraph 9 of Schedule 2 of the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, officers issued a notice of proposed decision to the applicant setting out the terms of the proposed licence.
- 3.23 The notice of proposed decision stated that the Council proposes to refuse the licence. A statement of reasons for the proposal was included in the notice of proposed decision.

The statement of reasons outlined the following as the Council's basis for refusal:

- 3.24 Pursuant to section 12 of the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 '2016 Act', the Council is satisfied that the granting of the HMO licence will result in overprovision of HMO accommodation in the locality of the

accommodation for the purpose of section 8(2)(d) of the 2016 Act.

- 3.25 For the purpose of section 12(2) of the Act the Council has determined the locality as being HMO Policy Area 'HMO 2/22 Botanic, Holylands and Rugby' as defined in the document 'Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) Subject Plan for Belfast City Council Area 2015 (the '2015 Plan')
- 3.26 In making this decision the Council has had regard to:
- (a) the number and capacity of licensed HMOs in the locality
 - (b) the need for housing accommodation in the locality and the extent to which HMO accommodation is required to meet that need
- 3.27 To inform the Council in its consideration of the above provisions, the Council has taken account of the 2015 Plan and in particular, Policy HMO 1 and Policy HMO 2.
- 3.28 On the date of assessment, 22 July 2021, there were a total of 1,084 licensed HMOs in HMO policy area 'HMO 2/22 Botanic, Holylands and Rugby', which equates to 47% of the total dwelling units, which in turn exceeds the 30% development limit as set out at Policy HMO 1. The 1,082 licensed HMOs have a capacity of 4,974 persons. The total number of dwelling units in a Policy Area is measured by Ordnance Survey's Pointer database.
- 3.29 Consequently, officers are satisfied that the granting of the HMO licence will result in overprovision of HMO accommodation in the locality of the accommodation for the purpose of section 8(2)(d) of the 2016 Act.

Analysis of Demand

- 3.30 From the date of initial assessment on 22nd July 2021, the demand for HMO accommodation in the locality has surged. Paragraphs 3.7 – 3.13 of this report highlight the most up to date information available to officers on the demand for HMO accommodation in the locality and the wider city.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.31 None. The cost of assessing the application and officer inspections are provided for within existing budgets.

Equality and Good Relations Implications

3.32 There are no equality or good relations issues associated with this report.”

The Committee was informed that Mr. P. Magill, the applicant, and Mr. MacDermott, his legal representative, were in attendance and they were welcomed by the Chairperson.

Mr. MacDermott informed the Committee that number 77 Palestine Street had been a House in Multiple Occupation since before 2004 and that it had been included in a list of HMOs which had been published in that year by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and in 2015 in the HMO Subject Plan for the Belfast City Council area. The property also had the benefit of an HMO Registration Certificate, which had been issued on the introduction of the new HMO legislation in 2019 and was valid until June, 2022, and of a Certificate of Lawful Use or Development, which confirmed that there had been no planning-related issues.

He explained that Mr. Magill had purchased the property in September, 2019 and that it had been the first HMO to have been acquired by him. He had been advised by his then legal representative to seek clarification from the Council around the registration process. Upon doing so, he had been informed by a Council officer that he required a Landlord Registration Certificate, which he obtained. However, the officer had made no mention of the need to apply for an HMO Licence, which Mr. MacDermott stated was in keeping with the general uncertainty which had existed around the interpretation of the process at that time. Mr. Magill had subsequently submitted an application.

Mr. MacDermott went on to point out that the HMO Unit had, within its Notice of Proposed Decision, indicated that his client's application was being refused solely on the basis that to grant it would result in an overprovision of HMO accommodation in that locality. He referred to the fact that Section 12 of the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 stated that the Council, in determining an application, had a mandatory duty to have regard to (i). the number and capacity of HMOs in a locality and (ii.) the need for housing accommodation in that locality and the extent to which HMO accommodation was required to meet that need.

In addressing point (i), he pointed out that the Committee report had stated that, on 22nd July, 2021, HMOs had made up 47% of the total dwelling units in policy area “HMO 2/22 Botanic, Holylands and Rugby”, which was higher than the 30% development limit. He explained that, in his view, the former figure was excessive, as the HMO Unit would not be aware of properties which had been transferred or sold, until such time as the HMO Licence was due for renewal.

In terms of point (ii), Mr. MacDermott confirmed that the Council was required to consider housing need at the time of the application, rather than past or future need, and he highlighted the fact that the Committee report had recognised that HMOs played an important role in meeting the housing requirements of a wide range of groups/people. The report had referred also to students being paid by one university not to take up their accommodation and to research which had been undertaken by the HMO Unit, which had

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found that other purpose built managed student accommodation had been oversubscribed and that there was a lack of HMO accommodation in the area where his client's property was located.

Mr. MacDermott went on to confirm that he was aware that the Council policy document stated that the 2015 HMO Subject Plan on overprovision must be taken into consideration when assessing the number of HMOs in a particular locality. He stressed that this policy was not binding upon the Council and that it would, therefore, be incorrect for more weight to be attached to it than to the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016. He concluded by stressing that, should the Committee refuse to grant the licence, it would be acting unlawfully, on the basis, firstly, that the property had previously operated as an HMO and, should the Licence be granted, there would be no increase in number in that locality and, secondly, that it would be ignoring the clearly recognised need for this type of accommodation in that area.

In response to Mr. MacDermott's submission, the Divisional Solicitor confirmed that there was no record of his client having contacted the Council at the time suggested to seek clarification around the registration process. She then pointed out that it was a matter for the Committee to take all material considerations into account when assessing the application in the context of overprovision, including the 2015 HMO Subject Plan for the Belfast City Council area and the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016. She added that, once this Licence was granted, overprovision and planning issues could not be taken into consideration in respect of renewals and the Committee was, therefore, entitled to have regard to the impact of this decision in the longer-term.

In response to a Member's query regarding consideration of the wellbeing of the local community and full-time residents, the Divisional Solicitor pointed out that, whilst there was no specific provision within the legislation which required the Committee to have regard to the balance between HMOs and long-term residents, it would be remiss of it not to consider such material considerations alongside the number and capacity of HMOs and the need for housing in a particular area.

After discussion it was

Moved by Councillor McAteer,
Seconded by Councillor T. Kelly,

That the Committee agrees to reject the application for the grant of an HMO Licence in respect of number 77 Palestine Street, on the grounds that the granting of the Licence would result in the overprovision of HMO accommodation in the locality in which the property was situated.

On a vote, twelve Members voted for the proposal and none against, with five "no votes" and it was declared carried.

Licences Issued Under Delegated Authority

The Committee noted a list of licences which had been issued and orders which had been made under the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

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**Application for the Grant of a Stationary
Street Trading Licence - Berry Street**

The Building Control Manager informed the Committee that the Council had received an application from Mrs. Anita Cooley for a Stationary Street Trading Licence to trade at an available designated site in Berry Street, 32 feet from its junction with Royal Avenue. The designation of the site allowed for the commodity to be determined, but excluded the sale of hot food, and the application complied with the designating resolution.

Mrs. Cooley had applied to sell hot and cold non-alcoholic beverages, cold food and ice cream from Monday to Sunday, between 7.30 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. and was planning to trade from a custom converted horsebox trailer, measuring 3.15 metres by 2 metres, with an 0.4 metre overhanging hatch door. The Building Control Manager pointed out that, whilst the overall size of the trailer exceeded that stipulated within the Council's Stall Design Policy, the Committee had discretion to diverge from the Policy. It had done so previously for three sites within the City centre, including this one, where the previous trader had used a trailer unit of similar proportions as that being proposed. Mrs. Cooley had not previously held a Street Trading Licence with the Council.

In terms of consultation, the Police Service of Northern Ireland had offered no objection, nor had the Department for Infrastructure Roads Service, other than to highlight the fact that patrons queuing at the stall would cause an obstruction on the footway for pedestrians. A neighbourhood consultation exercise which had been undertaken by Belfast City Centre Management had failed to receive any formal responses from businesses in the areas. It had, however, expressed concern, on the basis of previous consultations and responses, that a stall selling food from that site would be in direct competition with established businesses in that area trading in similar commodities. It had also pointed out that Berry Street had, in recent years, undergone extensive public realm improvements which had greatly enhanced the appearance of that area and had requested that the aesthetics of any new stall or trailer be taken into consideration when assessing the application.

The Committee agreed, on the basis of the information which had been presented, to grant to Mrs. Anita Cooley a Stationary Street Trading Licence to trade at the designated site in Berry Street, 32 feet from its junction with Royal Avenue, with the size of the trailer, the commodities to be sold and the hours of trading, to be as outlined above.

Chairperson

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Planning Committee

Tuesday, 14th September, 2021

HYBRID MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Members present: Councillor Carson (Chairperson);
Councillors Brooks, Matt Collins,
Garrett, Groogan, Hanvey, Hussey,
Hutchinson, Maskey, 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);
Mr. K. Sutherland, Planning Manager (Policy);
Ms. N. Largey, Divisional Solicitor;
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer; and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies for inability to attend were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 17th, 19th and 24th August were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st September, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Groogan declared an interest in relation to item 6f – LA04/2019/1886/F – 13 Residential Apartments (One block of 11 No. Apartments, one block of 2 No. Apartments) with associated amenity space and site works at 42-50 Ormeau Road, in that the applicant was known to her and that she would not participate in the vote on the item.

Councillor McMullan declared an interest in relation to item 6g – LA04/2021/0173/F - Alterations and extension to create new consulting and therapy rooms with plant relocated to roof at 193 Belmont Road, as he had previously discussed the matter with residents in the area and had expressed opinions on the application and that he would not participate in the vote on the item.

Committee Site Visits

The Committee noted that site visits had taken place, on 2nd and 9th September, in respect of the following applications:

- **LA04/2020/1360/F** - Demolition of existing church hall and construction of 9.no apartments at 491-495 Lisburn Road;

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- **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
- **LA04/2021/0493/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;
- **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 Circular Road) and the Junction of West Circular Road & Ballygomartin Road;
- **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; and
- **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.

Planning Appeals Notified

The Committee 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 Committee 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 10th August and 6th September 2021.

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Abandonments

The Committee was advised that correspondence had been received from the Department for Infrastructure (DfI), giving notice that it intended to abandon an area of 19.537 square metres of footway on the western side of the Westlink to the rear of Nos. 10 and 11 Quadrant Place, Belfast.

The Committee noted the abandonment.

Planning Application

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

Withdrawn Items

The Members noted that the following applications had been withdrawn from the agenda:

- (Reconsidered Item) LA04/2020/0857/F – Demolition of existing hostel building and redevelopment to provide four-storey building comprising 15 No. residential units, office space and ancillary development at Ormeau Centre, 5-11 Verner Street; and
- (Reconsidered Item) LA04/2021/1595/F - Re-placing existing kiosk with upgraded kiosk on Lands in front of Calvert House including covered area at 23 and 17 Castle Place.

**(Reconsidered Item) 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**

The Divisional Solicitor advised the Committee that the item had been withdrawn by officers on the basis of legal advice, as information from a statutory consultee had not been uploaded to the Portal until earlier that day.

The Committee noted that, as the application had not been presented, all Members present at the next meeting would be able to take part in the debate and vote on this item.

**(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**

The Committee noted the Late Items pack, whereby the agent had requested that the application be withdrawn from the agenda to allow further engagement between the applicant and the local community on parking and the other issues raised.

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Before presentation of the application commenced, the Committee agreed to defer consideration of the application to enable the discussions to continue.

The Committee noted that, as the application had not been presented, all Members present at the next meeting would be able to take part in the debate and vote on this item.

**LA04/2019/1886/F - 13 Residential Apartments
(One block of 11 No. Apartments, one block of
2 No. Apartments) with associated amenity space
and site works at 42-50 Ormeau Road**

The Chairperson advised the Members that Councillor Gormley wished to address the Committee on the item and he was welcomed to the meeting.

Councillor Gormley explained that he had only been informed that the application was due to be considered by the Committee earlier that day and that he had not had sufficient time to engage with the residents who had objected to the application. He requested that the Committee would defer the application for one month in order to allow him to speak with residents.

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the application for one month.

The Committee noted that, as the application had not been presented, all Members present at the next meeting would be able to take part in the debate and vote on this item.

**(Reconsidered Item) LA04/2020/1360/F –
Demolition of existing church hall and
construction of 9.no apartments at
491-495 Lisburn Road**

The Members were reminded that the application was considered by the Committee at its meeting on 17th August where it had agreed to defer consideration for a site visit to be undertaken to allow the Committee to acquaint itself with the location and to consider points of objection which had been raised. The site visit had taken place on Thursday, 2nd September.

The Chairperson reminded Councillors Groogan and Hanvey that, as had not been present for the discussion of the application on 17th August, they could not participate in the vote on the item.

The Principal Planning officer provided a brief overview of the application to the Members. On the site visit, Members had assessed overlooking from the proposed balconies and discussed parking provision within the street location and associated with the neighbouring development.

She confirmed to the Members that no new amendments or information had been received for further consideration and that the officers' recommendation remained unchanged.

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She clarified the planning history for the neighbouring site, at 497-505 Lisburn Road, under reference Z/2007/0197/F, was granted permission over ten years ago for four retail units, 10 apartments and basement car parking.

In response to a Member's question regarding why it was deemed acceptable for the development to proceed without the inclusion of any car parking spaces, Mr. C. Sloan, Department for Infrastructure, advised the Committee that the application had been assessed against and was considered to comply with PPS3. He explained that the developer had promoted alternative modes of transport, by way of providing travel cards to residents, and also advised that the site was in a highly accessible location. The Members were advised that the applicant had provided a parking survey which illustrated spare capacity on nearby roads, adjacent to the site.

A further Member expressed concern that there appeared to be a trend with developers submitting plans for developments on arterial routes, with little to no parking included, and using it as an opportunity to put more units on a site. He also queried whether an applicant was likely to submit a parking survey which stated that there was no spare capacity for parking in the surrounding area of a site, and suggested that surely DFI Roads should conduct their own surveys independent from the applicant.

A further Member stated that they were also sympathetic to the objectors who had raised concerns regarding parking but that the Committee Members' hands were largely tied as the policy standards, in their current format, were being met by the application.

(Councillors Brooks and Hutchinson joined the meeting at this point in proceedings and therefore did not participate in the vote)

The Principal Planning officer outlined to the Committee that the onus was on the applicant to submit a range of surveys. She explained that they would employ experts in order to carry out those surveys and officers had to accept the surveys at face value. She explained that quite often the parking surveys would be accompanied by photographic evidence and that the visits had taken place across a number of different days and times.

She confirmed to the Committee that there had been occasions where surveys had been submitted with applications which did not show sufficient on-street parking and those were refused and upheld at appeal.

The Chairperson put the officer's recommendation to approve the application to the Committee, with delegated authority granted to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions.

On a vote, six Members voted for the proposal, two against and two no votes, and it was declared carried.

(The Committee adjourned for a five minute recess at this point in proceedings)

**LA04/2021/0173/F - Alterations and extension
to create new consulting and therapy rooms with
plant relocated to roof at 193 Belmont Road**

(Councillor McMullan, having declared an interest in the item, left the meeting for the duration of the discussion and did not participate in the vote)

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The Senior Planning officer provided the Committee with the key aspects of the application.

She outlined that the key issues which had been considered during the assessment of the application included the principle of development, the effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area including the draft Area of Townscape Character (ATC), the effect on amenity and traffic and road safety.

The Committee was advised that eight objections had been received from neighbouring properties, raising issues predominantly with parking and road safety concerns as well as the impact on a residential area and concerns regarding light and noise pollution. She explained that the concerns had been addressed within the Case officer's report.

The Members were advised that the principle of development for the proposed extension and alterations to the veterinary hospital was considered acceptable as it was directly related to the already established use. The proposal would not adversely impact the character and appearance of the surrounding area nor give rise to any unacceptable impacts regarding residential amenity.

She advised the Committee that the Council had consulted DFI Roads, requesting it to consider the objections regarding parking and road safety. She highlighted that DFI Roads had offered no objections to the development proposal.

The Members were advised that, given the response from DFI Roads, which was the statutory consultee on road safety and parking, the minor nature of the proposal and that the applicant had advised that they did not forecast an expected increase in average no. of vehicles/persons at the premises, it would be difficult to conclude that the proposal would have a significant impact or exacerbate the existing issues that would constitute a refusal.

The Committee was advised that the proposal was considered to accord with Policies AMP2 and AMP7 of PPS3 and the SPPS.

The Members were advised that Environmental Health had also been re-consulted on the issues raised by objectors and it had confirmed it had no objections to the proposal.

The Committee's attention was drawn to the Late Items pack, whereby correspondence had been received from the agent. The agent had advised that the existing on-site parking provision fell short of what was required by Parking Standards. He explained that the site could facilitate 14 parking spaces but the parking standards would mean a requirement of 34 spaces for the current building. He advised that there was no increase planned in either staff or patient numbers but rather the proposal was required for facility improvement rather than service expansion. Currently, the practice was using some rooms for multiple purposes which was not ideal nor efficient. He added that consultations were by appointment only, with the exception of emergencies.

The Committee welcomed Mrs. A. Huggett, an objector and neighbour, to the meeting. She explained that:

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- what was once a small 1960's veterinary hospital, it had increased in size significantly over the years
- it was situated in the midst of a residential area, and was open 24/7 and fronted onto the Belmont Road;
- the Belmont Road, according to DFI, carried 9,000 vehicles daily and the speed limit was 30mph, and that particular stretch of the Belmont Road was extremely dangerous;
- the application, if approved, would significantly increase the dangers to motorists, pedestrians and residents;
- parked cars and unmarked side roads which opened onto the main road all added to the dangers;
- for safety reasons they tarmacked their front garden so they could park their car within their property;
- the introduction of the Glider to the Upper Newtownards Road had led to greatly increased traffic on the Belmont Road, including many heavy goods vehicles;
- A Belfast Telegraph report in January 2021 claimed that the Belmont Road was listed as one of the worst roads for speeding in 2019, with 693 Detections. In 2020, Covid and the resulting lighter traffic had encouraged some to drive even faster;
- there was insufficient parking space on site at the Vets for customers, delivery vehicles, an imaging lorry and veterinary staff which unfortunately resulted in main road kerb-side parking and, as a consequence, obstruction of sight lines for those resident on that section of the Belmont Road;
- due to poor sightlines, they had been forced to park outside their house on the Belmont Road itself, but that was also fraught with danger - entering and leaving a car, especially if they were carrying goods or had their grandchildren with them, was extremely dangerous;
- a chevron box and double yellow lines on vet's side of the Belmont Road provided excellent safety and uninterrupted views for visitors to the vets when exiting. whereas residents on the other side of the road had to contend with a bus stop, very limited safety signage and hazards from mainly Veterinary staff parking for 8 hours plus daily, blocking residents' sight lines;
- DFI was extremely well informed of the dangers they faced and she did not understand why its response to was "No Objection". She had requested more details under the Freedom of Information Act but was yet to receive anything.
- the Police had provided her with a much-needed warning sign regarding Parking outside her property; and
- if successful, the application would lead to an additional 42 square metres of floor space which was likely to require more staff and more cars, worsening an already bad situation.

The Chairperson thanked Ms. Huggett for her contribution.

He then welcomed Mr. G. Dunlop, applicant, to the meeting.

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Mr. Dunlop advised the Committee that he would be happy to meet with Mrs. Huggett and that he would ask that his employees did not park in areas which obstructed her sightlines.

Accordingly, the Chairperson put the officer's recommendation to approve the application, subject to the imposing of the conditions set out within the case officer's report and to delegate power to the Director of Planning and Building Control for the final wording of the conditions, and it was agreed.

LA04/2020/1959/F - parkland (Section 2 Forth Meadow Community Greenway) - foot and cycle pathways, lighting columns, new entrances and street furniture on 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 and the Junction of West circular Road & Ballygomartin Road

(Councillor McMullan re-joined the meeting at this point)

The Planning Manager presented the details of the major application to the Committee, made by Belfast City Council, for a new parkland for Section 2 of the proposed Forth Meadow Community Greenway. It included foot and cycle pathways, landscaping, lighting columns, new entrances and street furniture.

He outlined the key issues which had been considered by officers during the assessment of the planning application, including:

- the principle of development;
- impact on the character and appearance of the area;
- impact on natural heritage;
- access, movement and parking, including road safety;
- impact on built heritage; and
- flood risk.

The Members were advised that the site was a large area of open space, characterised by planting and a variety of trees and includes the Forth River Ravine to the east of the site. The area comprised a mix of uses. The Innovation Factory was situated immediately adjacent to the site and, further to the north, west and south of the site the area was mostly residential with a large supermarket to the north east.

The Planning Manager explained that the site was located within an area zoned as industry and commerce in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 (BUAP). He advised that part of the application site was zoned in the 2004 version of draft BMAP 2015 (dBMAP v2004) as an area of Existing Employment/Industry under designation BT010 – Employment/industry Land at Springfield Road (Former Mackies Site). The Members were also advised that the site was also located partly within zoning WB 04/12 Housing – Lands to the south of Ballygomartin Road and to the east of West Circular Road. In addition, the site was subject to the following environmental designations: Site of Local Nature Conservation Importance (SLNCI) – BT

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102/26- Springfield Pond/ Highfield Dam; Local Landscape Policy Area (LLPA) BT 160 Woodvale / Springfield Road; and a Community Greenway BT162/02.

He explained that part of the application site was zoned in the 2014 version of draft BMAP 2015 (dBMAP v2014) as an area of Existing Employment under designation BT 004 – Land at Springfield Road (Former Mackies site). The application site also fell within an uncommitted housing site WB 04/04 – Land between West Circular Road and Ballygomartin Road, either side of the Forth river. In addition, the site was subject to two environmental designations: SLINCI - BT 084/26 – Springfield pond/Highfield Glen' and a Community Greenway BT147/02.

The Committee was advised that Environmental Health, Northern Ireland Water, BCC Tree Officer, BCC Landscape, Planning and Development team, DFI Roads Service, DFI Rivers Agency, Historic Environment Division (Historic Monuments); Historic Environment Division (Historic Buildings); DAERA Water Management Unit, DAERA Regulation Unit; Shared Environmental Services and DAERA Natural Environment Division had been consulted in respect of the application and had raised no issues of concern subject to conditions.

The Planning Manager explained that the proposal had been assessed against the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS), Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 (BUAP), dBMAP v2004, dBMAP v2014, Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 2, PPS 3, PPS 4; PPS 6, PPS 8, and PPS 15. He reported that, having regard to the assessment of the Development Plan and relevant material considerations, the proposal was considered acceptable.

He advised that two letters of support and three objections had been received in respect of the application and the issues they raised were set out in the main report.

The Committee's attention was drawn to the Late Items Pack, whereby a letter had been received from Nicholas Quinn Solicitors, acting on behalf of Participation and the Practice of Rights (PPR) who had objected to the application. The letter raised issues in respect of loss of employment land, policy interpretation, a reference to an error in the Committee report, that dBMAP 2015 greenway zoning aligned with the Forth River Valley and not the site, concerns about prematurity in relation to the delivery of the new Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP) and requested that the Committee would defer consideration so that fuller representations could be made in respect of the Committee report. The Planning Manager advised the Members of the Planning officers' response to the issues raised.

The Late Items Pack also included the details of correspondence which had been received from the applicant, the Council's Physical Programmes team. The correspondence included the objectives of the Shared Spaces project, that £5million of funding had been secured in respect of the project and set out concerns regarding potential slippage of the time programme. The Members were asked to note the correspondence.

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. C. Trew, Director of Participation and the Practice of Rights (PPR) and Ms. M. McMahon, Organiser at PPR. Mr. Trew advised the Committee that:

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- there were elements of the Case officer's report that did not adequately address objections which they had raised, particularly in respect of PPS4 which focused on protecting the employment zoning;
- PPR did not believe that the proposal complied with PPS4;
- they had a long-standing interest in the former Mackie's site and believed that it should be used for much required social housing in West Belfast; and
- there were currently 1,805 children on the housing waiting list in that area.

Ms. McMahon advised the Committee that:

- she was speaking on behalf of the numerous families who were in housing stress and who were not able to attend the meeting at short notice;
- that West Belfast had the highest need for social housing and that the former Mackie's site was a substantial size and could address that need;
- PPR had been working in coalition with planners, architects, academics and artists renowned in their fields, who recognised the potential of the Mackie's site and who wanted to build sustainable, equitable and eco-friendly housing; and
- requested that the Committee would defer consideration of the application in order to work with PPR to create a better plan for the site, with the inclusion of much needed housing.

A Member stated that, while she was extremely sympathetic with PPR and their desire to create more homes in West Belfast, she did not believe that the topography of the site in question could be built upon. She asked the PPR representatives why they felt that the application for the greenway works were prejudicial to housing being built elsewhere on the wider Mackie's site. She added that she also felt that leisure use, through a greenway, was surely better as an adjacent land use than industrial use.

In response, Ms. Trew advised the Members that they wanted to see the Mackie's site providing thousands of new homes. She reported that the proposed greenway had originally been proposed to go along the river and that the current application would, in fact, create a barrier between communities rather than connectivity. She added that they felt that the application risked sterilising the land for any other use and that they wanted to see a holistic approach.

A further Member stated that he was also sympathetic to PPR and recognised the need for more social housing in that area of the City. In response to a question regarding the barriers faced by those on the waiting list and who could not participate in the meeting, Ms. McMahon explained that many lived in hostels without wifi and therefore could not participate in the remote meeting. She added that PPR had only had a day and a half to prepare their presentation to the Committee given the late publication of the Case officer's report on the application.

In response to a further Member's question as to the reason why PPR would like the Committee to defer consideration of the application, Ms. Trew advised the Members that she would like their planning policy advisor, Mr. David Worthington, to be able to address the

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Committee in respect of a number of points within the Case officer's report, and for the Committee to hear from a number of those who were on the housing waiting list.

A further Member stated that it was important that the Committee was mindful of the timebound peace funding for the greenway project and also that there was no other live application in respect of the site.

A Member asked for clarification from officers as to whether the current application for a greenway development would prejudice any future applications for housing on the adjacent land and whether the current site was suitable for being built upon. In response, the Planning Manager advised the Committee that it had to consider the application in question, which was for a proposed greenway on the site, and whether it was acceptable in planning terms. He explained that officers felt that the proposal for a greenway would be complementary to future applications for the adjacent land, as either employment use or housing, pointing out that employment uses and housing need green spaces. The proposal would provide a valuable visual landscape buffer, breakout amenity space for future employees and residents, and improve connectivity to the adjacent uses. He did not believe that the proposal would compromise the development potential of the adjacent land to deliver employment and housing. The Planning Manager confirmed that the future zoning of the adjacent land would be addressed through the Local Policies Plan stage of the Local Development Plan process.

A Member stated that, under dBMAP 2015, the site in question had been marked for housing and that the advice from officers suggesting that the greenway would be complementary to housing was a contradiction. He also queried the equality screening of the application.

The Divisional Solicitor advised the Committee that it must assess the application that was in front of it. She also added that, in respect of an upcoming Workshop held by the Town and Country Planning Association, Members of the Planning Committee would be strongly advised not to attend if there was the potential for any discussion on specific sites as it would prejudice the Committee in terms of future decision making. She explained that the application had been screened by the Equality Unit and that it had been screened out.

Moved by Councillor Collins,
Seconded by Councillor Groogan,

That the Committee agrees to defer consideration to allow PPR more time to consider the Case officer's report, given its late publication, and in order that their planning consultant could attend the next meeting, particularly in order to address the land use policy considerations.

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

Accordingly, the Chairperson put the officer's recommendation to approve the application to the Committee, with delegated authority granted to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions, and it was agreed.

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**LA04/2020/2307/F - Upgrade to existing park
entrances and lighting in Falls Park and bounded
by Falls Road Belfast City Cemetery & property at
Divis Drive**

The Committee was advised of a Council application for an environmental improvement scheme at two locations on the Falls Road and the entrance from the City Cemetery to the Falls Park. The works included upgrades to park entrances and path lighting, foot and cycle pathways, lighting columns, upgraded entrances and street furniture.

The site was designated as lands reserved for landscape, amenity or recreational use in the BUAP and as existing open space within both versions of dBMAP and an urban landscape wedge.

The Members noted that the proposals would complement and improve the area and comply with the relevant policy and area designations.

DFI Roads and NIEA had been consulted and had offered no objection to the proposal. Environmental Health had requested contamination information which could be adequately addressed through condition. No third party representations had been received.

The Committee granted approval to the application, subject to the imposing of the conditions set out within the case officer's report and delegated power to the Director of Planning and Building Control for the final wording of the conditions.

**LA04/2021/0169/F - Upgrade to existing park
entrances and lighting on site bounded by
Whiterock Road Whiterock Leisure Centre and
by property boundaries at Ardmonagh Gardens
Whiterock Grove & Bleach Green Terrace**

The Committee was apprised of the details of the Council application.

The Members were advised that the proposal was an environmental improvement scheme at two locations on the Whiterock Road and Ardmonagh Gardens. The works included foot and cycle pathways, lighting columns, enhanced entrance layouts and street furniture.

The Members were advised that the site was designated as lands reserved for landscape, amenity or recreational use in the BUAP and as existing open space within both versions of dBMAP and an urban landscape wedge. It was reported that the proposals would complement and improve the area and comply with the relevant policy and area designations.

The Committee was advised that NIEA had offered no objection to the proposal. Environmental Health had requested additional contamination information, which could be adequately addressed through condition. Whilst there was an outstanding consultation response from DFI Roads, officers advised that an amended plan had been submitted to address that and no objection was expected from DFI Roads.

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One objection had been received in relation to the proposed removal of the gates. The Committee's attention was drawn to the Late Items pack. The Members were advised that the removal of the gates did not require planning permission and that the proposal included the replacement of the gates with 1.8m high paladin gates. The applicant had advised that the gates would be opened and closed in line with the Council's parks policy.

The Committee granted approval to the application, subject to the imposing of the conditions set out within the case officer's report and delegated power to the Director of Planning and Building Control for the final wording of the conditions, subject to no objection from DFI Roads.

**LA04/2021/1777/F - New glazed entryway
and windows, seating area covered by canopy.
Integral planting and existing trees retained -
Townsend Enterprise Park Limited,
28 Townsend Street**

The Committee was advised of the key details of the application and noted that the scheme was funded by Belfast City Council.

The building was a two storey brown brick building fronting an enterprise centre comprised of single storey warehouse buildings. The proposed glazed entryway was of a minor scale and the design complimented the existing building.

The site was white land within BUAP and was in a major area of existing employment/industry (BT011/38) as designated within dBMAP.

The Committee was advised that no third party objections had been received.

The Committee granted approval to the application, subject to the imposing of the conditions set out within the case officer's report and delegated power to the Director of Planning and Building Control for the final wording of the conditions.

Miscellaneous Items

**Response to 'Conservation Principles –
Guidance for the sustainable management of
the historic environment in Northern Ireland'**

The Committee considered the undernoted report and appendix:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 Correspondence has been received from the Historic Environment Division (HED) of the Department for Communities (DFC), inviting the council to review and provide feedback on a guidance document, entitled ‘*Conservation Principles – Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic Environment in Northern Ireland July 2021*’.**

- 1.2 The document has been made available for public consultation for an 8-week consultation period, commencing on 13 August and closing on 08 October 2021.
- 2.0 **Recommendations**
- 2.1 Committee is requested to:
- note the contents of Appendix 2, which sets out the guidance document provided by HED with the Supporting Consultation statement from the Minister; and
 - consider and if appropriate approve the response to the *Conservation Principles* document as set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.0 **Main report**
- 3.1 The consultation document is provided in Appendix 2 and is the first part of a two-part publication on DfC's Conservation Principles for the sustainable management of the Historic Environment. Part 2 will set out how to apply these principles, which will be provided to councils for comment in due course.
- 3.2 This document, Part 1, sets out the six key guiding Conservation Principles, providing a best practice conservation-led framework to inform all aspects of decision-making which affect our historic environment, and to reconcile its protection with the economic and social needs and aspirations of our communities.
- 3.3 Whilst the purpose of the guidance is to inform the exercise of HED in its primary functions the intention is that it would also to be referred to by owners, developers, policy makers and decision makers in central government when considering changes which impact on a designated or non-designated heritage assets.
- 3.4 The specific applicability in relation to the the work of HED would be in respect of:
- decision-making prior to undertaking work on sites in their ownership and care,
 - decision-making and in their advice to others,
 - informing their consultation advice to local councils on planning applications,
 - providing advice with regard to the marine historic environment for development, proposals either seaward, or exempt from, terrestrial planning,
 - contributing to Local Development Plans,

- publishing guidance relating to the historic environment; and assessing applications, and
- where they provide financial support.

3.5 The six key guiding principles are:

1. The historic environment is of value to us all
2. Everyone should be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment
3. Understanding the significance of heritage assets is vital
4. Heritage assets shall be managed to sustain their significance
5. Decisions about change shall be reasonable, transparent and consistent
6. Documenting and learning from decisions is essential

3.6 This publication whist reflective of guidance in other jurisdictions is tailored to the process through which the historic environment is managed in Northern Ireland. It seeks to provide a best practice conservation-led framework, the document will assist and guide those considering proposals or the development of policy affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets.

3.7 Whilst the Council could broadly support the approach to the guidance set out in the document there are a number of areas that would need to be clarified in order to ensure that the Part 2 document referred to in 3.1 above is both appropriate and proportionate.

3.8 The response set out in Appendix 1 of this report details the specific comments in response to the questions set out in the consultation documentations and Members are requested to consider and if appropriate support the submission of the document as the response to the consultation.

3.9 Financial & Resource Implications

None

3.10 Equality or Good Relations Implications

None”

Appendix 1

Proposed Response to Historic Environment Division

1. Do you agree with the overall approach to the Conservation Principles as outlined within its introduction?

Whilst the Council broadly welcomes the six Conservation Principles and the conservation- led framework for the heritage focussed work of the Department for Communities (DfC) and the Historic Environment Division (HED) there are some potential issues in relation to their status, proportionality and broader applicability. It is recognised that the consultation document, as set out in page 5, will ultimately be read alongside a Part 2 and this note of caution would also need to be considered in any guide in respect of “how to apply these principles”.

The document whilst focussed on the work of HED in the Introduction “encourages” other agencies and stakeholders to refer to the guidance although there is little distinction between the more narrowly prescribed “designated” and the potentially wide-ranging variety of “non-designated” assets in the subsequent narrative. This may be clarified in the second part of the guidance but the proportionality and full applicability of the assessment and management approaches, suggested in the second half of the document, need to recognise the difference in what may be both appropriate and practicable. There is clear recognition that for protected heritage assets the criteria for their designation is derived from the legislation (page 17) but the approach in respect of the guidance applicability for the range of other potential assets is left open or ill-defined.

The introduction whilst referring to the consistency with various conventions and legislation does not clarify the relationship or ultimate status that the proposed documents would have in the context of the range of existing relevant heritage guidance published by HED and DAERA when being considered by other bodies in the exercise of their statutory or other responsibilities. The responsibility for the formal introduction and designation several “Designated Heritage Assets” set out within the definitions in the document rests with the Council.

2. Do you agree or disagree with each of the proposed six key principles and their associated aims?

As indicated above the Council broadly welcomes the six Conservation Principles and the conservation- led framework for the heritage focussed work HED with the expressed caveats in relation to their overall status, proportionality and broader applicability. Where appropriate the specific comments in respect of the individual Principles are detailed below.

This “**Principle 1** - *The historic environment is of value to us all*” is welcomed with the clear recognition of the potentially dynamic nature of the various

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environments and heritage assets. This evolving and non-finite characteristic is, however, lost in the narrative of subsequent Principles.

In “**Principle 2** - *Everyone should be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment*” the interrelated custodial / education role of users and occupiers of heritage assets such as landscapes does not appear to be recognised with an over emphasis on “experts” referred to in Principle 4.

The explanation of “**Principle 3** - *Understanding the significance of heritage assets is vital*” will need to be carefully articulated in the follow up document or refined as the opening paragraph is all-encompassing. The principle narrative omits the consideration of the landscape interest.

In “**Principle 4** - *Heritage assets shall be managed to sustain their significance*” there is some inconsistency between the first two paragraphs- the focus should be on “managing change” to protect the asset significance . The final bullet of para 4.3 is not required and forms part of Principle 5.

The subsequent detail in respect of “**Principle 5** - *Decisions about change shall be reasonable, transparent and consistent*” to address the issues of proportionality and applicability alongside the issue of the relationships between the different assets including their role as context.

There are potentially significant practical implications that could arise from “**Principle 6** - *Documenting and learning from decisions is essential*” in terms of the suggested requirements in final paragraphs. The existing approach recording and retention responsibilities for designated assets is recognised but it is not clear if this is to be expanded to include other assets -assessed by their “significance”.

3. Do you agree or disagree with the approach to Understanding Significance, and the three key interests of archaeological, architectural and historic?

Local Landscape Policy Areas are recognised as designated heritage assets and there may be other areas which could be considered on the basis of the interest arising from their natural and managed landforms. Although landscape is mentioned within the “Archaeological interest” the approach to assessment of potential assets is not distinct as the current focus is on the tree key “interests” irrespective of whether the landscape related heritage assets may contain other forms of Heritage assets.

As mentioned above there is clear recognition that for protected heritage assets the criteria for their designation is derived from the legislation but there is no detail on the expected approach to the utilisation of the guidance by other organisations or applicability for the range of other potential heritage assets that guidance suggests could come forward.

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4. Do you agree or disagree with the approach to Assessment of Significance?

No specific comments in addition to the general comments outline in respect of the first question.

5. Do you agree or disagree with the approach to Managing Change to a Heritage Asset?

No specific comments in addition to the general comments outline in respect of the first question.

6. Is there any other comment you would like to make on the document content?

For navigation and reference it would be useful for the document to have a consistent approach to paragraph numbering and for the references to the legislation (including those in the “Supporting Text” document) to be set out within an appendix -detailing the aspect or obligations to which they are considered to align. Whilst the document is focussed on the work of HED there is currently a potential element of uncertainty arising from the inclusion of Designated Heritage Assets for which councils have responsibility.

7. In responding to this consultation, please highlight any possible unintended consequences of the proposals and any practical difficulties you foresee in implementing them.

In Principle 6 whilst the intent of the final paragraph is welcomed there could be an unintended adverse impact arising from inaction or inability to satisfy the requirements in a situation where there are viability challenges and potentially little benefit to be derived other than reuse or retention of the general fabric. In such circumstances the requirements and responsibility (extract, record, archive) may result in abandonment or delays that have adverse implications for the assets.

The Committee:

- noted the contents of the guidance document provided by HED with the Supporting Consultation statement from the Minister; and
- considered and approved the response to the *Conservation Principles* document as set out in Appendix 1.

Updated Schedule of Planning Committee Workshops

The Committee was provided with an updated Schedule of Planning Committee Workshops for September 2021 to September 2022.

The Members were advised that the Workshop on the Local Development Plan (LDP), which was scheduled to take place on 16th September 2021, would be rescheduled and that it would be discussed as part of restricted Item 8a, “Response to 'Draft Development Plan

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Practice Note (DPPN) 11- Receipt of Independent Examination Report and Adoption of a Development Plan”.

The Committee agreed the schedule and noted the above change in respect of 16th September, 2021.

(Councillor Whyte left the meeting at this point in proceedings)

Restricted Items

The information contained in the reports associated with the following three 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 these 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.

Response to 'Draft Development Plan Practice Note (DPPN) 11- Receipt of Independent Examination Report and Adoption of a Development Plan'

The Planning Manager (Policy) outlined the Department for Infrastructure’s (DfI) recent draft guidance (DPPN11) on the adoption of Local Development Plan (LDP) documents to the Committee. He advised the Members that DfI had requested comments on the draft DPPN by end of September 2021.

The draft guidance relates to the final stages of the local development plan preparation process whereby the DfI consider the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) report and issue a formal Direction to Council with a requirement to either adopt, modify or withdraw the LDP document. It also covers future LDP monitoring requirements.

He highlighted that the guidance suggested that the Planning Appeal Commission’s report would not be issued to any council in advance of a Direction being issued, thus not affording the Council advanced consideration of the outcomes or issues arising from the Independent Examination.

A number of Members expressed concern that the PAC report would not be made available to Elected Members or officers before a Direction was issued.

The Committee:

- noted the draft DPPN11 guidance document;
- considered the proposed response to the draft DPPN11, as set out in Appendix 2, and approved its submission with the addition of the further detail in respect of any potential DfI Directions for withdrawal and the

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- expanded case for the early release of the Independent Examination Report; and
- agreed to hold a Special Meeting in respect of the issue, at a time and date to be agreed by the Chairperson, if deemed necessary by officers based on their discussions with DFI.

Financial Reporting - Quarter 1 2021 / 2022

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

**Update regarding legal proceedings concerning
Planning Application LA04/2020/0426/F
at 228-232 Stewartstown Road**

The Divisional Solicitor provided the Committee with an update in relation to legal proceedings in respect of planning application LA04/2020/0426/F, for the reconstruction of petrol station and ancillary retail unit at 228-232 Stewartstown Road. She reminded the Committee that it had resolved to grant planning permission in respect of the application at its meeting on 20th April, 2021.

She explained that an application for judicial review had been lodged on 19th July, 2021, on behalf of objectors. She outlined that no correspondence had been received regarding any potential challenge prior to the judicial review application being lodged.

The Committee was advised of the grounds of challenge in the judicial review application.

She explained that officers had conceded that the decision should be quashed, on the grounds outlined to Members. However, the Committee was advised that the developer had not consented to the planning permission being quashed, as they had completed 50% of the works on site. As a result, the Court had scheduled a Remedies Hearing on 8th October, 2021.

The Committee was advised that, if the Court agreed to quash the Committee decision, the planning application would be reheard by the Committee at a subsequent meeting.

The Divisional Solicitor advised that the Committee would be provided with a further update on the application at a future meeting.

Chairperson

Brexit Committee

Thursday, 9th September, 2021

MEETING OF THE BREXIT COMMITTEE HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Baker (Chairperson); and
Alderman Rodgers and Sandford; and
Councillors Brooks, Canavan, de Faoite, Ferguson,
Flynn, Hanvey, T. Kelly, Kyle, Long, Magennis,
McKeown, McLaughlin, Spratt and Walsh.

In attendance: Mr. J. Walsh, City Solicitor;
Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;
Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development;
Ms. N. Largey, Divisional Solicitor;
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer; and
Ms. K. McCrum, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were reported from Alderman Haire and Councillors Gormley and McDonough-Brown.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 12th August were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st September.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

Presentations

NI Retail Consortium: Mr. A. Connolly

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. A. Connolly, Director of the Northern Ireland Retail Consortium (NIRC), to the meeting.

Mr. Connolly provided an update on key issues within the business sector related to the Northern Ireland Protocol and informed the Committee that he had met with Maros Sefcovic, European Commission Vice-President, during his visit to the Northern Ireland.

He reported that the UK Government and European Commission were increasingly working together to find solutions to the problems that were being experienced, with the EU keen to focus on sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) rules,

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customs and representation. He added that there were additional areas which the UK Government wished to review, including veterinary medicines and tariff rate quotas (TRQs) on building supplies.

He pointed out that dual market access was a real opportunity for Northern Ireland as an economy, offering the chance to act as a hub for adding value to imports via manufacturing or food production etc., which would lead to better, more well paid jobs, which in turn would bring about positive outcomes in the retail and service sectors as household incomes increased.

Mr. Connolly confirmed that, during the meetings with the European Commission, topics of discussion had included local issues related to SPS, logistics, manufacturing, farming and governance, the need for an implementation period to be provided irrespective of what solutions were proposed and the importance of working with local businesses and utilising their expertise. He added that it was important to note the positives that had emerged, including an increase in manufacturing and agri-food contracts.

He stated that he was increasingly optimistic as a result of recent conversations, however, there were still areas to work through, which to be effective, would require a bespoke solution for Northern Ireland that offered stability, certainty, simplicity and affordability. He suggested that the solution would be a UK-EU veterinary agreement which would remove a great deal of the paperwork and costs, while keeping business competitive.

In conclusion, he underlined the need for political will to deliver the solutions and advised that political instability was the biggest pull away from investment in a region.

A Member pointed to the increased imports and exports between the North and South of Ireland and questioned how such positive outcomes could be better promoted. Mr. Connolly advised that there had been a number of positive investments as a result of the NI protocol, with further on the horizon, labour shortages in the manufacturing sector, a lack of HGV drivers and TRQs relating to various alloys needed to be resolved to enable further growth.

During discussion, the Committee raised a number of further queries regarding paperwork requirements, pet passports, food shortages and the supply of medication.

Mr. Connolly confirmed that there had been concerns in the business community about additional paperwork that would commence following the end of the current grace periods, however, that had now been extended indefinitely. He added that work was ongoing to simplify the processes by digitising some elements and he undertook to update the Committee once the proposed solutions had been finalised. He also confirmed that the extension of the grace periods applied to pet passports, and so no change was expected on this issue, and undertook to find out how many passports were issued before the extension.

With regards to food supplies, he suggested that certain retailers were more exposed to shortages than others, dependent on where their food was processed,

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however, both Governments were accepting that work needed to be done to resolve issues surrounding sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) products.

The Committee was advised that the EU Commission had published a non-paper on the supply of medicine in early July, 2021, and that discussions were ongoing. Mr. Connolly suggested that progress was being made in this area and the importance of the issue was well understood by both the UK Government and EU Commission.

With regards to supply lines, a Member asked whether it was possible to separate the impact of Brexit from the impact of Covid-19 so as to understand whether the situation would elevate as the pandemic eased. Mr. Connolly explained that there were 4 elements to consider; Brexit, the Protocol, Covid-19 and global supply chains and that, currently, it was difficult to disaggregate between them. He added that one of the biggest issues with the Protocol had been a lack of education about trading with Northern Ireland, in comparison to the UK.

In closing, Mr. Connolly reported that engagement from both Governments had been increasing in recent months, however, friction continued with regards to ideology and economics. He also encouraged Members of the Committee to contact him should they have any further queries.

Following discussion, the Committee thanked Mr. Connolly for his presentation and he retired from the meeting.

Future of Brexit Committee

The City Solicitor sought the views of the Members on an expanded remit for the Brexit Committee given the general consensus that the Committee continue, rather than have its standard agenda items subsumed within the remit of other Committees.

He reminded the Members that a proposal made in August, 2021, to include responsibility for both the Shared Island Working Group and the International Relations Framework (IRF), had been deferred and he recommended that the IRF remain with the City Growth and Regeneration Committee given it's wider economic functions.

The Committee suggested the following points:

- Including responsibility for the Shared Island Working Group/Unit, as well as an East/West remit and connections with Europe;
- Focusing on the climate crisis by creating a formal link to the Climate Emergency Working Group;
- Including Resilience as an area of focus;
- A wider review of all standing Committees and reprioritisation/restructuring as necessary;

The City Solicitor thanked the Committee for their comments and undertook to review the suggestions for inclusion in a future report.

The following discussion, Committee noted that:

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- a further report would be brought to Party Group Leaders and subsequently to the Brexit and Strategic Policy and Resources Committees containing options to expand the remit of the Brexit Committee;
- a wider review of all Council Committees would be undertaken in preparation for the next Council mandate to be discussed at next joint meeting of Corporate Management Team and Party Group Leaders.

Port Health Update

The Director of City Services provided an update on a written statement from the UK Government announcing that it intended to continue operating the NI Protocol on the current basis, and a statement from the European Commission issued in response.

She explained that Lord Frost's statement confirmed that current grace periods and easements would be extended to allow negotiations with the EU to continue, with no end date for this extension announced.

The Committee was advised that Council officers continued to work with officials from the Food Standard Agency (FSA) to understand the resource and operational requirements for delivery of Port Health work in financial year 2022/2023 and beyond. The Director of City Services confirmed that there were no direct financial implications related to this as costs associated with the implementation and facilitation of Port Health work in relation to the NI protocol were currently being met by UK Government funding via the Food Standards Agency, and that discussions regarding the continuation of this arrangement were ongoing.

In response to a query as to when a visit to Belfast Port would be possible, she confirmed that she would continue to look at how this could be facilitated within current Covid-19 health and safety regulations.

The Members of the Committee noted the update provided.

Chairperson

Road Safety Review

Communities around the City Centre, in all quarters of Belfast, face issues attached to commuter parking, high density traffic volumes and services proximity. The resulting infrastructural impacts include damaged road surfaces, outdated safety measures, inadequate parking controls and poor air quality. Such areas generally house dense residential communities including schools who are at the front line of daily road safety concerns.

The inner-city surrounding communities of Belfast are also dissected by the Westlink further straining the already at breaking point road capacity.

This Council has a duty of care to citizens and in the vein of the Belfast Agenda a commitment to ensure people can live in safety and with improved health outcomes. As such, this motion asks that a letter be sent to the Minister for Infrastructure to commission a road safety review of inner-city surrounding communities in all quarters of the City. This should include review of road surfaces, safety measures, parking restrictions and accident volume.

Proposed by: Christina Black

Seconded by: Matt Garrett

(To be debated by the Council)

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Electric Charging Ports

This Council notes new legislation being brought forward in other parts of the United Kingdom requiring electric charging points to be included in new home and office developments, and believes that this should be introduced in Northern Ireland at the earliest opportunity, in a partnership between the public and private sectors. The council will agree;

- I. To write to the Minister for Infrastructure outlining the council position and requesting the departmental position, including any discussions about this matter to date;
- II. To write to the Minister for Economy outlining the council position and requesting the departmental position, including in relation to how it may fit with the ongoing energy strategy consultation; and
- III. To Members receiving a report from the Council's Legal and Civic Services and Planning Departments indicating how this could be best considered in the criteria for planning applications.

Proposer: Alderman Dorrian

Seconder: Councillor Brooks

(To be debated by the Council)

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Universal Credit

This Council recognises that the £20 Universal Credit uplift has provided a lifeline to many families and recognises the devastating impact that its proposed removal would have at this critical juncture of the recovery period when workers face the end of the furlough scheme and massive increases in energy bills.

The Council also recognises that the removal of the £20 per week payment will be devastating for those living here, will push more people into poverty, increase reliance on foodbanks, and increase homelessness, as well as having dire consequences for our local economy.

The Council calls on the Communities Minister, in the absence of any action from the Westminster government, to liaise with her colleague, Finance Minister Conor Murphy, to uphold this uplift for the remainder of the financial year and commit to expediting a long term strategy to tackle the shameful levels of poverty and social deprivation across Belfast.

Proposer: Councillor Heading

Seconder: Councillor McCusker

(To be debated by the Council)

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Tsar for the Holylands Area

'Following yet another turbulent Freshers Week in the Holylands, this Council regrets that little progress has been made to date on efforts to address anti-social behaviour and to bring forward a regeneration scheme for the area.

This Council will redouble its efforts to implement the recommendations of the Louise Browne and the Paddy Gray reports and calls on the NI Executive and the Universities to work together with us to establish a Tsar for the Holylands area in order to drive this work forward. This role will be properly resourced and empowered to work cross-departmentally and in conjunction with residents and other stakeholders in the area to achieve fundamental changes to the area.

Proposer: Councillor Groogan

Seconder: Councillor McKeown

(To be debated by the Council)

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Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay

This Council:

- I. Welcomes legislation at committee stage in Stormont for Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay;
- II. Notes the Coalition for Bereaved Workers concern that this bill is a 'missed opportunity' and 'does not go far enough';
- III. Will write to the Stormont Economy Committee to urge that they further the legislation on bereavement policy so that everyone who is bereaved of a close relative or partner is entitled to 2 weeks statutory bereavement leave and pay in line with the Coalition for Bereaved Workers campaign objectives; and
- IV. Will also undertake a review of its own bereavement policy, in conjunction with the unions, that seeks to establish 2 weeks statutory bereavement leave and pay for all Council workers in line with the Coalition for Bereaved Workers "Call to action" document.

Proposer: Councillor Matt Collins

Seconder: Councillor Ferguson

(To be debated by the Council)

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York Street Interchange Project

This Council notes that it is currently corporately committed to supporting the York Street Interchange project. This decision was made before this Council declared a climate emergency; before the NI Assembly declared a climate emergency and before the most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Report published in August 2021, which was a 'Code Red' warning for humanity.

Belfast City Council is a key stakeholder in the York Street Interchange Project and sits on the Strategic Advisory Group for the York Street Interchange. We call on the Minister for Infrastructure to immediately share her the Independent Assurance Review of the York Street Interchange with Belfast City Council. This will allow us to make an informed decision on whether we as a Council continue with our corporate support for this project.

Proposer: Councillor O'Hara

Seconder: Councillor McAllister

(To be debated by the Council)

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Belfast City Night life and Night-time Economy

Belfast City Council:

- I. Recognises the profound impact of the pandemic on the city's nightlife, music, arts and entertainment sectors and the night-time economy and acknowledges the actions of Council Officers to support a managed return of Belfast's nightlife in difficult circumstances;
- II. Further recognises that, for many residents and visitors, Belfast at night may not feel safe or welcoming at present due to changes in behaviour and the use of space over the last 18 months;
- III. Believes significant night-time challenges existed prior to COVID-19, including issues around licensing, policing, public safety, diversity, organisational and venue capacity, public transit and sustainability;
- IV. Further believes that the establishment of a vibrant, diverse and sustainable nightlife between 6pm and 6am will help us meet the objectives set out in the Belfast Agenda, including encouraging city centre living and creating a vibrant, well-connected environment for people to enjoy;
- V. Seeks to create a nightlife for the City which is inclusive of young people, women, LGBT+ people and ethnic minorities;
- VI. Believes that this work to establish Belfast's nightlife takes on a new urgency following the pandemic;
- VII. Notes that several cities have chosen to establish a nightlife co-ordinator including Dublin, London, Amsterdam, Washington D.C., New York, Paris, Zurich, Toulouse and Mannheim;
- VIII. Shall convene a one day roundtable discussion about the future of Belfast's nightlife and the immediate challenges posed in the city between 6pm and 6am, with Elected Members, relevant Executive Ministers and political representatives, trade unions, public and private transport providers, artists, event organisers, venue owners, industry and consumer representatives, student unions, Belfast City Youth Council and non-profit organisations, including but not limited to Reclaim The Night, the Rainbow Project, Women's Aid and the SOS Bus; and
- IX. Agrees to establish a co-ordinator for Belfast's nightlife or "Night Mayor" who will co-ordinate the work of the Council and relevant partners in developing and promoting the city's nightlife and night-time economy following the roundtable discussion.

Proposer: Councillor de Faoite

Seconder: Councillor Smyth

(To be referred to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee)

Environmentally Sustainable Event Spaces

This Council has a long-standing track record of working with event promoters to host significant events and concerts within the Council's estate across the city.

The Council should be commended for the role it plays in facilitating and promoting a vibrant calendar of events within our estate.

As we look into the future, our position as a Council in declaring a climate emergency and the stark indications presented within Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Report, we must find ways and offer solutions to mitigate against the catastrophic effects of climate change.

Making our event venues more environmentally sustainable, with access to clean energy (Electricity) and running water will help mitigate the necessity for Fossil Fuel energy combustion and plastic pollution derived from plastic products.

Therefore, this Council will commit to a timetable and plan for delivering the physical means for environmentally sustainable event spaces with Clean Energy (Electric) power sources and Running Water points to mitigate against plastic pollution.

Proposer: Councillor Garrett

Seconder: Councillor Bradley

(To be referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee)

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Staff on Temporary Contracts

This Council is concerned to learn about the number of staff on temporary contracts that have worked for the organisation for many years.

These affected staff do not have job security, they can't plan their lives and they are constantly worried this temporary contract will be their last. We can and must do better for our staff. An organisation should be measured about how it treats its staff and if the COVID-19 pandemic has shown us anything it's the value of all our incredible hard working and diligent staff members who constantly go above and beyond for the citizens of this city.

As a result, this Council will obtain a legal opinion with a view to ascertaining if it is possible to establish that anyone on a temporary contract employed for 12 continuous months, regardless of job title, can have that contract made permanent if the staff member wishes to do so and, subject to that advice, the Council will put in place procedures enabling this to happen.

Proposer: Councillor McLaughlin

Seconder: Councillor Murphy

(To be referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee)

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Community Wealth Building

This Council:

- I. Recognises the economic disruption caused to communities across the district caused by the COVID-19 public health emergency, periods of economic recession, and Tory austerity;
- II. Further recognises long-standing economic problems in the District, including inequality, low-paid employment, poor rates of socially ineffective investment, deprivation, and unsustainable levels of carbon emissions and ecological damage;
- III. Commends Minister Hargey's intention to establish a departmental advisory group to embed and deliver Community Wealth Building which centres on: a more just and fair labour market; an inclusive economy with a focus on growing and rebuilding the local economy; and ensuring land and property in our communities generates wealth for the people who live there.

Therefore, this council commits to developing a fully funded community wealth building framework with the purpose of democratising the economy by empowering community organisations, non-profits, social enterprise and cooperatives to be established or expanded with the ambition to create employment and grow local economies.

Proposer: Councillor Murphy

Seconder: Councillor Black

(To be referred to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee)

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