

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



**Belfast  
City Council**

29th October, 2021

**MEETING OF COUNCIL**

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The Council will meet in the Council Chamber and via Microsoft Teams, on Monday, 1st November, 2021 at 6.00 pm, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

SUZANNE WYLIE

Chief Executive

**AGENDA:**

1. **Summons**
2. **Apologies**
3. **Declarations of Interest**
4. **Minutes of the Council** (Pages 1 - 20)
5. **Official Announcements**
6. **Minutes**
  - (a) Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (Pages 21 - 62)
  - (b) Standards and Business Committee (Pages 63 - 66)
  - (c) People and Communities Committee (Pages 67 - 86)
  - (d) City Growth and Regeneration Committee (Pages 87 - 116)
  - (e) Licensing Committee (Pages 117 - 144)

(f) Planning Committee (Pages 145 - 176)

7. **Motions**

(a) Community Sector Terms and Conditions (Pages 177 - 178)

(b) Rent Controls (Pages 179 - 180)

(c) COP26 - Global Day of Action - 6th November, 2021 (Pages 181 - 182)

(d) Regulation of Airbnbs (Pages 183 - 184)

## Council

### MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the City Hall and also remotely, via Microsoft Teams, on Monday, 4th October, 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, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Groogan, Hanvey, Heading, Howard, Hussey, Hutchinson, M. Kelly, T. Kelly, Kyle, Lyons, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAllister, McAteer, McCabe, McCullough, McCusker, McDonough-Brown, McKeown, McLaughlin, McMullan, McReynolds, Mulholland, Murphy, Newton, O'Hara, Pankhurst, Smyth, Spratt, Verner, Walsh and Whyte.

#### Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

#### Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported on behalf of Councillor Ferguson.

#### Declarations of Interest

Councillor Mulholland declared an interest in relation to the decision of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee in relation to the Northern Ireland Music Prize. She was employed by the organisation which coordinated that prize.

Councillor Smyth declared an interest in relation to the item "Partner User Agreements" under the People and Communities Committee minutes, in that he was on the Committee of Rosario Youth Club. Councillor McKeown declared an interest in that his son was involved with Rosario Youth Club.

The following Members declared an interest in relation to the decision of the People and Communities Committee of 7th September, under the heading "Community Provision Grant Funding 2021/22":

- Alderman Kingston – worked part time for Forward South Partnership;
- Alderman Copeland – an organisation which her daughter worked for was in receipt of funding;

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- Councillor Beattie - worked for an organisation which was in receipt of funding;
- Councillor Black - managed Grosvenor Community Centre;
- Councillor Corr – worked for an organisation which was in receipt of funding;
- Councillor Donnelly – employed by the Upper Springfield Development Trust;
- Councillor Gormley - on the Board of the Lower Ormeau Residents' Action Group;
- Councillor T. Kelly – worked for an organisation which was in receipt of funding;
- Councillor McCullough – worked for an organisation which was in receipt of funding; and
- Councillor Verner - an employee of the Greater Shankill Partnership.

**Minutes of the Council**

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

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

**Official Announcements**

**Congratulations**

The Lord Mayor, on behalf of the Council, congratulated the Chief Executive on her recent appointment as the Chief Executive of the Jersey Civil Service. It was noted that the Chief Executive would be leaving the Council at the end of January 2022 to take up the post.

**Letter from an Unaccompanied Child Refugee**

The Lord Mayor read out a letter from a Children's Law Centre client who had arrived in Belfast eighteen months ago. He had expressed his love for the City and how he felt it was clean, well designed and safe, and that the people were friendly.

She explained that she had recently met with him and what a pleasure it had been to do so. She advised the Council that he was incredibly optimistic and that it was a real testament to what we all had to be grateful for in Belfast. She added that there

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was a lot that Members could do in order to support newcomers to the city, especially through supporting the Children's Law Centre and in terms of seeking to reform immigration laws.

**Expressions of Sympathy**

Councillors McCabe and Lyons paid tribute to Mr. Anto Finnegan, the former Antrim Captain, who had passed away at the age of 48 following a battle with Motor Neurone Disease. Councillor McCabe asked that the Lord Mayor, on behalf of the Council, would write to extend her condolences to his wife, Alison, and his children, Conall and Ava.

Councillor Garrett paid tribute to his friend, Mr. Sean McGuinness, the former Antrim and Down hurling manager who had unfortunately passed away. At Councillor Garrett's request, the Lord Mayor agreed to send her condolence to his wife, Eileen, and their children Eileen, Colm, Orla, Sean Og, Clar Rois, Niall, Aisling and Emer.

**Congratulations**

Councillor McCabe requested that the Lord Mayor would pass on her congratulations to the Antrim Ladies Football Team, who had reached the All Ireland Final in Croke Park last month, and also to the Antrim Camogie Team, who had won the All Ireland Intermediate Title in Croke Park and had also won the Tesco All Ireland Cup. At her request, the Lord Mayor agreed to invite the teams to attend City Hall.

**Spórtlann na hÉireann**

Councillor Beattie advised the Council that the sporting facility on the Falls Road, on the site of the former Beechmount Leisure Centre, was at imminent risk of closure. He stated that an Irish Medium school had bought the site and had invested £7million into the facility. He advised the Council that, at that time, the Council had entered into a contract with Spórtlann to provide community use, which they had been doing since it opened. He added that the Council had, in 2009, agreed to provide a financial contribution to assist the facility but that the funding had not materialised. He requested that the Chief Executive would look into the situation urgently.

**Thanks**

Alderman Kingston thanked the Belfast City Marathon organisers and all of the volunteers for their hard work leading up to and on the day itself. He requested that the Lord Mayor would, on behalf of the Council, write to the Marathon Organising Committee to pass on her appreciation.

**Violence Against Women and Girls**

Councillor Mulholland referenced the recent sentencing of the murderer of Sarah Everard in England. She explained that the issue of violence against women and girls had been brought to the fore and that it had great ramifications at all levels of society. She stated that it was crucial for the Council to assess what progress had been made in

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order to make them feel safer within our city and that there were tangible actions which everyone could take. She particularly encouraged the male Members to undertake the upcoming "Bystander Training", facilitated by Women's Aid, on Wednesday, 6th October.

**Request to Address the Council**

**Universal Credit - Women's Support Network**

The Chief Executive advised the Members that a request to address the Council had been received in relation to the motion on Universal Credit.

The Council acceded to the request and Ms. Siobhan Harding, Women's Support Network, was welcomed to the meeting.

Ms. Harding advised the Council of the devastating impact that the forthcoming cut, of £20 per week, to Universal Credit would have for thousands of people across Northern Ireland. She explained that while £20 per week might not sound like much to some, it was a significant amount of money to those on the lowest incomes.

She outlined that it was used for necessities such as putting food on the table, heating the house, buying food or winter coats or putting petrol in the car in order to get to work. She highlighted that gas prices were set to rise by 33% in the greater Belfast area.

She emphasised the impact that it would have on lone parents and that 84,000 children would be impacted by the cut. She outlined that 10% of children in N.I. were defined as living in a food insecure household.

She explained that the cut would amount to a loss of over £700,000 per week, or just under £37million per year, to the Belfast economy. She added that Resolution Foundation research had shown that the cut would hit 36% of non-pensioner households in N.I., the highest of all the UK regions.

She advised that N.I. had larger family sizes, with twice as many large poor families as Scotland and the South East of England. The Council was advised that analysis carried out by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission had shown that the overall cash impact of welfare reform had been more negative for women than men, especially for lone parents. N.I. also had differing childcare support with families here spending a greater proportion of their incomes on childcare than in the rest of the U.K.

She welcomed the latest interventions by the First Ministers of the devolved administrations, and by the Minister for Communities who had all written to the UK Government urging them to reverse the cut. She advised that she wanted to see the NI Executive put welfare mitigations on the agenda urgently to close the loopholes and extend the mitigations as they were vitally important payments in tackling hardship and poverty.

The Lord Mayor thanked Ms. Harding for her presentation.

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The Council noted the information which had been provided and that it would have an opportunity to discuss the issue later in the meeting.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee**

Moved by Councillor Groogan,  
Seconded by Alderman Kingston

That the Minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 24th September, 2021, subject to the omission of the minute under the heading 'Consultation on Signage - Andersonstown, Lisnasharragh, Olympia and Templemore Leisure Centres – Options Paper', which was subject to a valid call-in requisition and is not before the Council for approval and adoption, and those matters which are delegated to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

**Residual Waste Contract Arrangements**

**Amendment**

In response to a query from Councillor Michael Collins, the Chief Executive confirmed that the minutes could be amended to clarify that the Council would be using the Cottonmount Landfill site in Mallusk for the interim arrangement and not the Mullaghglass site.

**Further Amendment**

Moved by Councillor Baker,  
Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin and

Resolved - that a letter be sent to Arc21, and to the Chief Executive of each Council which has a contract with Arc21, to state that there should be no extension the contract at Mullaghglass Landfill Site beyond January 2022.

**Request for Matter to be Taken Back to Committee**

**Assets Management – (ii) Beechvale Farm**

Moved by Alderman Rodgers  
Seconded by Alderman Copeland and

Resolved - That the minute under the heading "Assets Management – (ii) Beechvale Farm" be taken back to the Committee for further consideration.

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**Amendment**

**Bonfire Procedures**

Moved by Councillor McAllister,  
Seconded by Councillor Long,

“That 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 recorded vote, thirty-three Members voted for the amendment and twenty-six against, and it was declared carried.

<b><u>For 33</u></b>	<b><u>Against 26</u></b>
The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor (Councillor Nicholl); and The Deputy Lord Mayor, (Alderman Haire); and The High Sheriff (Councillor Long); and Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Kingston, McCoubrey, Rodgers and Sandford; and Councillors Brooks, Bunting, Cobain, Flynn, Groogan, Harvey, Howard, Hussey, Hutchinson, M. Kelly, T Kelly, Kyle, McAllister, McCullough, McDonough-Brown, McMullan, McReynolds, Mulholland, Newton, O’Hara, Pankhurst, Smyth, Spratt and Verner.	Councillors Baker, Beattie, Black, Bradley, Canavan, Carson, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Corr, de Faoite, Donnelly, Garrett, Gormley, Heading, Lyons, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAteer, McCabe, McCusker, McKeown, McLaughlin, Murphy, Walsh and Whyte.

Subject the foregoing amendments, the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 24th September were thereupon approved and adopted.

**Delegated Decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources  
Committee 20th August: Minute Standards and Business Committee**

The Lord Mayor advised the Council that the decision of 20th August in relation to the Standards and Business Committee was subject to Call-in. The legal opinion had



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been circulated and had concluded that the Call-in did not have merit. Therefore, the decision was before the Council for ratification.

Moved by Councillor Walsh,  
Seconded by Alderman Kingston,

That the delegated decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th August, 2021, in relation to the "Update on Standards and Business Committee", be approved and adopted.

**Amendment**

Moved by Councillor McAllister,  
Seconded by Councillor Matt Collins,

That the Council rejects the decision of 20th August, 2021, in relation to the "Update on Standards and Business Committee".

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

<b><u>For 21</u></b>	<b><u>Against 37</u></b>
The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor (Councillor Nicholl); and The High Sheriff (Councillor Long); and Councillors Matt Collins, Michael Collins, de Faoite, Flynn, Groogan, Hanvey, Heading, Howard, M. Kelly, Lyons, McAllister, McCusker, McDonough-Brown, McKeown, McMullan, McReynolds, Mulholland, O'Hara and Smyth.	The Deputy Lord Mayor, (Alderman Haire); and Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Kingston, McCoubrey, Rodgers and Sandford; and Councillors Baker, Beattie, Black, Bradley, Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Corr, Donnelly, Garrett, Gormley, Hussey, Hutchinson, T. Kelly, Kyle, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAteer, McCabe, McCullough, McLaughlin, Murphy, Newton, Pankhurst, Spratt, Verner and Walsh.

The proposal standing in the name of Councillor Walsh was thereupon put to the Council and agreed.

**Appointment of Members to the Standards and Business Committee**

The Council agreed the following Membership of the Standards and Business Committee for Year 3 of the Council Term, 2021/2022 and noted the appointment of the Members to the positions of Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson.

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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 Lyons
17	Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor de Faoite
18	Ulster Unionist Party	Alderman Copeland
19	Green Party	Councillor Groogan
20	People Before Profit Alliance	Councillor Ferguson

**People and Communities Committee**

Moved by Councillor Cobain,  
Seconded by Councillor Bunting

That the minutes of the meeting of the People and Communities Committee of 7th September be approved and adopted.

**Alleyway Transformation Scheme Pilots**

**Amendment**

Moved by Councillor M. Kelly,  
Seconded by Councillor Newton and

Resolved - That the City Solicitor would consider any potential legal action that the Council could take against other bodies for their failure to take action in respect of unadopted alleyways.

The Lord Mayor added that she would be hosting a session with “9ft in Common” about the transformation of alleyways across the city and she encouraged the Members to attend.

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**Amendment to the Minutes**

The Chief Executive advised the Council that the Committee decision in respect of the item would have to be amended, as the Area Working Groups did not have decision making powers, and that the Council could not delegate that power to them. She requested that the Council consider amending the decision to the following:

“The Committee agrees to the delivery of a number of pilot alleyway transformation schemes throughout the city and further agrees that consideration would be given by the Area Working Groups to the area selection; the number of pilots; the detail of intervention and the flexibility of approach in terms of how funding would be allocated, which would then be subject to final decision by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.”

The Council agreed to adopt the amended wording for the decision.

**Ormeau Park BMX Track**

At the request of Councillor McKeown, the Chief Executive confirmed that the report which was to be submitted to a future meeting would include other non-mainstream sports such as skateboarding, table tennis and basketball.

**Community Provision Funding Update**

(Those Members who had declared an interest in this item left  
the meeting for the duration)

**Amendment**

Moved by Councillor Garrett  
Seconded by Councillor Maskey

To agree to extend the existing Community Development Grants' Funding Agreements for Capacity Building, Revenue for Community Buildings and Advice to 31st March, 2023, as per the September Committee report.

At the request of Councillor Bunting, Councillor Garrett agreed to accept the following addition to his proposal:

and that a further report, on capacity building and potential further funding for other groups, be submitted to the Committee in November.

On a vote on the amendment standing in the name of Councillor Garrett, as amended by Councillor Bunting, twenty-two Members voted for the amendment and twenty against, and it was declared carried.

The amendment was thereupon put to the Council as the substantive motion.

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**Further Amendment**

Moved by Councillor Flynn  
Seconded by Councillor Mulholland

That the issue be brought back to the Committee for further reconsideration.

On a recorded vote on the amendment standing in the name of Councillor Flynn, twenty Members voted for the amendment and twenty-two voted against, and it was declared lost.

<b><u>For 20</u></b>	<b><u>Against 22</u></b>
The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor (Councillor Nicholl); and The High Sheriff (Councillor Long); and Councillors Matt Collins, Michael Collins, de Faoite, Flynn, Groogan, Hanvey, Heading, Howard, M. Kelly, Lyons, McAllister, McCusker, McDonough-Brown, McKeown, McReynolds, Mulholland, O'Hara and Whyte.	The Deputy Lord Mayor, (Alderman Haire); and Aldermen Dorrian, McCoubrey, Rodgers and Sandford; and Councillors Baker, Bradley, Brooks, Bunting, Carson, Cobain, Garrett, Hussey, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAteer, McLaughlin, Newton, Pankhurst, Spratt and Walsh.

(Those Members who had declared an interest in this item returned to the meeting at this point in proceedings)

Subject the foregoing amendments, the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 7th September were thereupon approved and adopted.

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee**

Moved by Councillor Murphy,  
Seconded by Councillor Dorrian and

That the minutes of the meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 8th September be approved and adopted.

**Correspondence - Sunday Opening Hours**

Councillor Hanvey referenced the letter which had been received from Belfast Chamber. He stated that the city centre was struggling as a result of the pandemic and requested that a focus be placed on street cleansing within the city centre in order to assist the businesses and to encourage more footfall into the city centre.

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**Amendment**

**International Engagement Activities**

Moved by Alderman Kingston,  
Seconded by Councillor Kyle,

To enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Confucius Institute and to provide financial support of £5,000 in respect of it.

On a recorded vote, seventeen Members voted for the amendment, twenty-nine against and 10 no votes, and it was declared lost.

<b><u>For 17</u></b>	<b><u>Against 29</u></b>	<b><u>No Vote 10</u></b>
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Alderman Haire); and Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Kingston, McCoubrey, Rodgers and Sandford; and Councillors Brooks, Bunting, Hussey, Hutchinson, T. Kelly, Kyle, Newton, Pankhurst, Spratt and Verner.	Councillors Baker, Beattie, Black, Bradley, Canavan, Carson, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Corr, de Faoite, Donnelly, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Groogan, Heading, Lyons, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAteer, McCabe, McCusker, McKeown, McLaughlin, Murphy, O'Hara, Walsh and Whyte.	The Lord Mayor (Councillor Nicholl); The High Sheriff (Councillor Long); and Councillors Hanvey, Howard, M. Kelly, McAllister, McDonough-Brown, McMullan, McReynolds and Mulholland.

**Presentation - Transport Hub Alternatives Group**

Councillor T. Kelly welcomed that Translink had recently engaged with the local community of Sandy Row by showing them a number of artefacts which had been uncovered on the site, and they had also been reassured that the Saltwater Bridge would remain in situ.

**Adoption of Minutes**

The minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 8th September were thereupon approved and adopted.

**Licensing Committee**

Moved by Councillor Donnelly,  
Seconded by Alderman Rodgers and

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee of 15th September, omitting matters in respect of which the

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Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

**Planning Committee**

Moved by Councillor Carson,  
Seconded by Councillor Hanvey and

Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee of 14th September, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

**Brexit Committee**

Moved by Councillor Baker,  
Seconded by Councillor de Faoite and

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Brexit Committee of 9th September be approved and adopted.

**Motions**

**Road Safety Review**

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor Black proposed:

“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.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Garrett.

At the request of Councillor Hanvey, Councillor Black agreed to amend the last line to include “active and sustainable transport” as part the review.

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**Amendment**

Moved by Councillor de Faoite,  
Seconded by Councillor Heading,

That the Motion standing in the name of Councillor Black be replaced with the following:

“Communities around the City Centre, in all quarters of Belfast, face issues attached to commuter parking, high density traffic volumes, services proximity and the legacy of division in the city. The resulting infrastructural impacts include poor access to dedicated public transit links, physical barriers to active travel, damaged road surfaces, outdated safety measures, inadequate parking controls and poor air quality. Such areas generally house dense residential communities, with poor access to private vehicles and high exposure to toxic emissions, 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 a review of active travel measures, dedicated public transit links, road surfaces, safety measures, parking restrictions and accident volume. A further letter should be sent to the Minister for Finance and the Executive Office, recognising the significant financial restraints placed on the Department for Infrastructure under existing budgetary allocations and supporting the establishment of an Infrastructure Commission alongside further budgetary allocation to fund the chance for change in communities like our inner-city.”

Councillor Black did not accept the amendment.

On a vote, thirty-five Members voted for the amendment standing in the name of Councillor de Faoite, nineteen against and one no vote, and it was declared carried.

The amended motion was thereupon put to the Council as the substantive motion and passed.

**Electric Charging Ports**

In accordance with notice on the agenda Alderman Dorrian proposed:

“This Council notes new legislation being brought forward in other parts of the United Kingdom requiring electric charging points to be included in new

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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."

The motion was seconded by Councillor Brooks.

At the request of Councillor McMullan, Alderman Dorrian agreed to the following amendment, to be inserted between Sections I and II:

"To write to the Minister for Finance, given that amendments to building regulations were part of his remit, and that it was essential that those amendments were made to ensure that every new home was installed with electric charging ports"

Councillor Michael Collins proposed the removal of the following in the first sentence "in a partnership between the public and private sectors", to instead be replaced with "to be led by an expansion of public sector investment".

Alderman Dorrian did not accept the amendment.

On a vote, twenty-six Members voted for the amendment standing in the name of Councillor Collins and thirty against, and it was declared lost.

The following motion, standing in the name of Alderman Dorrian, as amended by Councillor McMullan, was put to the meeting and passed:

"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;



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- II. To write to the Minister for Finance, given that amendments to building regulations were part of his remit, and that it was essential that those amendments were made to ensure that every new home was installed with electric charging ports;
- III. 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
- IV. 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."

**Universal Credit**

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor Heading proposed:

"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, Deirdre Hargey, 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."

The motion was seconded by Councillor McCusker.

Councillor Heading requested to amend his motion to also include the addition of following wording:

"To write to the Prime Minister, asking him to strongly reconsider the removal of the £20 uplift in Universal Credit, and that the letter would be made available for all Members to sign through the Lord Mayor's office; and

To request that Members would attend the front gates of the City Hall at 8pm on Wednesday, 6th October, where the lights would be dimmed to mark the removal of the uplift in Universal Credit."

The motion, as amended, was put to the meeting and passed.

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**Tsar for the Holylands Area**

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor Groogan proposed:

“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.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor McKeown.

The motion was put to the meeting and passed.

**Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay**

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

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.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Michael Collins.

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

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**York Street Interchange Project**

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor O'Hara proposed:

“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 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.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor McAllister.

The motion was put to the meeting and passed.

**Belfast City Night life and Night-time Economy**

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor de Faoite proposed:

“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;

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- 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."

The motion was seconded by Councillor Smyth.

In accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the motion was referred, without discussion, to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.

**Environmentally Sustainable Event Spaces**

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor Garrett proposed:

"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

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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.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Bradley.

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

**Staff on Temporary Contracts**

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor McLaughlin proposed:

“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”

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.

**Community Wealth Building**

In accordance with notice on the agenda Councillor Murphy proposed:

“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;

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- 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.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Black.

In accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the motion was referred, without discussion, to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.

Lord Mayor  
Chairperson

## Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 22nd October, 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, McReynolds, Murphy, Pankhurst and Walsh.

In attendance: Mrs. S. Wylie, Chief Executive;  
Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources;  
Mr. J. Walsh, City Solicitor;  
Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;  
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**

No apologies were reported.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 24th September were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 4th October, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

### **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Walsh declared an interest in relation to agenda item 2(i) - Heritage Trail - Expression of Interest Submissions, in so far as it related to the application to erect a James Connolly Heritage Trail Sign, on the basis that he was involved in that initiative, and left the meeting whilst the matter was under consideration.

**Restricted Items**

**The information contained in the reports associated with the following thirteen 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.

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

The Director of Finance and Resources submitted for the Committee's consideration a report providing an update on the assessment of the key financial factors which would influence the development of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan for 2022/23 - 2024/25 and the rate setting process for 2022/23 and on the priorities and work in progress to establish the 2022/22 – 2024/25 Efficiency Programme.

The report outlined the six key elements involved in the annual setting of the District Rate and provided information on business as usual pressures, committed and emerging priorities, efficiencies, the rate base and the ongoing revaluation of non-domestic properties.

After discussion, the Committee noted the contents of the report.

**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 and agreed that it should continue to receive the report on a monthly basis.

**Belfast Region City Growth Deal**

The Chief Executive submitted for the Committee's approval the Belfast Region City Deal Document and Governance Framework. The Deal Document, which would be approved and signed by all partners, committed the partners to the delivery of the £850m Belfast Region City Deal investment programme and would allow funding to flow to projects once their individual Outline Businesses Cases had been approved. She pointed out that the approval and signing of the deal document represented a key milestone in the Belfast Region City Deal process.

The Committee approved the Belfast Region City Deal Document and Governance Framework and commended those officers who had been involved in the process to date.



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**Update on Strategic Property Acquisitions**

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

**Update on New Regional Planning IT System**

(Mr. E. Baker, Planning Manager (Development Management), attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee noted a report providing an update on the progress being made on the design, configuration and implementation of the new regional Planning IT System, to be shared by the Council, nine other councils and the Department for Infrastructure. The report provided an update also on the contract management of the new system, which would be managed by the Council on behalf of the eleven participants.

**Review of Corporate HR**

The Committee:

- i approved the implementation of the proposed staffing structure resulting from the review of Corporate HR (Phase 1), including the increase in establishment posts, as set out within the report; and
- ii agreed that a report be submitted to its meeting in November providing information on other structural reviews which were currently being undertaken across the Council, including an indicative timeframe for their completion.

**Correspondence - Casement Park**

The City Solicitor informed the Committee that the Council had received pre-action correspondence in relation to the Department for Infrastructure's decision to grant planning permission for the redevelopment of Casement Park. The Executive Office had also been named as a proposed respondent, as part of the challenge related to the Executive Committee (Functions) Act (Northern Ireland) 2020, which had permitted the Minister to determine the planning application without Executive approval.

He reported that the correspondence had been sent to the Council as a potential notice party, as the development was within its district and he requested that the Committee determine whether the Council should:

- a. become a notice party to the proceedings;
- b. provide a substantive response to the issues raised within the correspondence; or
- c. respond by advising that the application had been considered acceptable by the Council's Planning Committee in its role as statutory consultee and that it was for DfI and The Executive Office to

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provide a substantive response on the issues raised and in addition to reiterate the Council's strategic support for the development.

The Committee granted approval to the City Solicitor to proceed with option c.

**Update on Draft Amenity  
Bye Laws for the City Centre**

The City Solicitor submitted for the Committee's consideration a report outlining the background to the drafting of amended bye laws for the amenity and good governance of the City centre. He explained that, under the provisions of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 1972, bye laws must be approved by the Department for Communities before they could be adopted. Council officers were of the view that it would be prudent to carry out some informal consultation with that Department and with other relevant agencies, following which a report would be presented to the Committee.

After discussion, the Committee:

- i. approved the draft bye laws and authorised officers to begin the consultation process with the Department for Infrastructure and other relevant statutory agencies, in advance of a wider public consultation;
- ii. agreed that the City Solicitor examine the issue of excessive noise from Belfast Party bikes; and
- iii. agreed that a similar review be undertaken of the bye laws governing the use of the Council's parks.

**Heritage Trail - Expression of Interest Submissions**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 19th March, it had considered a request to install an interpretative interactive sign on a bollard facing the North West lawn in the grounds of the City Hall, as part of a James Connolly heritage trail in Belfast.

The Committee had agreed to defer the request to allow for an appropriate policy to be formulated and for an expression of interest exercise to be undertaken to review other cultural heritage type projects which might wish to work up an interactive signage proposal.

The City Solicitor reported that the expression of interest exercise had concluded on 8th October and that ten submissions had been received by that date. He explained that four of those had met the criteria and scoring threshold, and recommended that they be progressed to the next stage on a without prejudice basis, to obtain more detail on the proposals for the purpose of further consideration by the Party Group Leaders and the Committee. He recommended also that the Committee consider if it wished to approve the installation of the James Connolly Heritage Trail sign at this stage, given that it was a fully worked up proposal.

After discussion, it was

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

That the Committee agrees to proceed immediately with the installation of a James Connolly Heritage Trail sign on a bollard facing the North West lawn in the grounds of the City Hall.

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

The Committee agreed also:

- i. that the design of interactive signage, including symbols, be addressed by the Party Group Leaders, in consultation with the City Solicitor;
- ii. that the four submissions which had met the criteria and scoring threshold be progressed to the next stage in the process and that other groups which had been identified by Members but had not submitted an expression of interest be included for consideration; and
- iii. that officers work with a number of other proposals for which a previous interest had been expressed outside of the current process.

### **Pedestrian Animation**

The Committee agreed, at the request of Councillor Garrett, that a report be submitted to a future meeting providing an update on his motion on Pedestrian Animation, which had called for the creation of permanent animation at appropriate points along the Pride Parade route ahead of the 2020 Pride festival, which had been passed by the Council at its meeting on 2nd December, 2019.

### **Amendments to Standing Orders**

The City Solicitor informed the Committee that Council officers had been made aware of a recent judicial review of a planning decision which had been taken by another council. Whilst the Judgement had yet to be formally published, it was felt that it should be brought to the attention of the Committee, as the judge had made a number of findings which would require the Council to consider its Standing Orders in relation to the call-in process and the operation of the protocols governing the Licensing and Planning Committees, insofar as they related to Member participation in decision-making when they may have been absent during any part of the process of determining an application.

He explained that officers were engaging with their counterparts in the Department for Communities to explore how the issues identified by the Judgement could be resolved and that a more detailed report on the impact of the Judgement on the Licensing and Committees would be presented to the Committee in due course.

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Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee:

- i agree to suspend the relevant provisions of the Operating Protocols of the Planning and Licensing Committee which prohibited Members from taking part in decision making insofar as they related to non-attendance;
- ii agree to amend Standing Orders to the effect that decisions of quasi-judicial committees (Planning and Licensing) would be subject to call-in by the deletion of Standing Order 48 (2) (a); and
- iii agree to amend Standing Order 48 (2) (c) limiting the ability to suspend call-in to those cases in which an inability to immediately implement a decision would result in a breach of statutory or contractual duty or would otherwise prevent the Council from responding to a situation of emergency, as defined in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Assets Management**

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

**Beechvale Farm**

The Committee:

- i. agreed to affirm its decision of 24th September 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; and
- ii. agreed that consideration be given to re-establishing tree nurseries on the Council estate, including on the 22 acres being retained at Beechvale Farm.

**Cregagh Youth and Community Centre**

The Committee approved the grant of a new licence to the Irish Rugby Football Union (Ulster Branch) for the occasional use of the car park adjacent to Cregagh Youth and Community Centre.

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**Request for the use of Falls Park for  
Féile An Phobail Winter Festival**

(Mr. R. Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services, attended in connection with this item.)

The Director of Neighbourhood Services informed the Committee that a request had been received from Féile An Phobail for the use of Falls Park to hold its “Winter Festival” event.

He reported that the festival, which was a new addition to Féile An Phobail’s annual events programme, would take place provisionally between 26th November and 4th January and detailed the various attractions/facilities which would be provided. The event would be taking place outside normal opening hours and would require the closure of a substantial area of the park, particularly when equipment was being erected and dismantled.

He confirmed that the organisers would, in line with the Council’s events process, be required to submit supporting documentation, including a Covid-19 Risk Assessment, to demonstrate that the event management plan was compliant with all Government Covid-19 regulations and public health guidance requirements at the time of the event. In addition, a legal agreement would be prepared by the Legal Services Section and would include appropriate fees and bonds for reinstatement costs.

Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee grant to Féile an Phobail the use of Falls Park to hold its “Winter Festival” event on the aforementioned dates, subject to the completion of the appropriate Event Management Plans and satisfactory terms being agreed by him and on the condition that the event organisers:

- resolve all operational issues to the satisfaction of the Council;
- meet all statutory requirements, including those relating to Public Liability Insurance cover, health and safety and licensing;
- consult with adjoining public bodies and local communities, as necessary; and
- adhere to Government Covid-19 Regulations in place at the time of the event.

After discussion, during which the Director of Neighbourhood Services confirmed that the event organiser would be advised of their responsibilities under the Council’s Goods Relations Policy, the Committee adopted the recommendation.

**Recruitment of Post of Chief Executive  
and Interim Arrangements**

(With the exception of the Chief Executive, the Senior Democratic Services Officer and the Democratic Services Officer, all officers left the meeting whilst this item was under consideration.)

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The Committee considered a report which set out recommendations for the recruitment of the post of Chief Executive on a permanent basis, including an indicative timeframe for completion, together with the interim arrangements to be put in place to ensure continuity in the intervening period and a number of proposed changes to the role of Deputy Chief Executive.

The Committee:

- i. approved the recruitment of the post of Chief Executive on a permanent basis and agreed that it include the responsibility of Accounting Officer;
- ii. agreed that the shortlisting panel for the post consist of the Chairperson of the Committee and two Members from a Political Party not represented by the Chairperson (or their nominees), the Chairperson of the Local Government Staff Commission and the Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services of the Local Government Staff Commission, in accordance with the Local Government Staff Commission's Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection; and
  - a. nominated Councillors Beattie and Bunting to sit on the shortlisting panel;
- iii. agreed that the final interview panel for the post consist of the Chairperson of the Committee and four Members from Political Parties not represented by the Chairperson (or the nominees) and noted that it would be advised by the Chairperson of the Local Government Staff Commission, the Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services of the Local Government Staff Commission and one Professional Advisor, in accordance with the Local Government Staff Commission's Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection; and
  - a. agreed that one Member from each of the four largest Parties on the Council be nominated to sit on the final interview panel, with Councillors Beattie (SF) and Bunting (DUP) being nominated and the Alliance and SDLP Parties to nominate a Member in due course;
- iv. approved the interim arrangements to be put in place pending the appointment of a successful candidate, as set out within the report; and
- v. agreed that the role of Deputy Chief Executive be amended as part of a structural review and granted approval for the current postholder to retire on partial efficiency grounds at the end of the interim period.

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**Matters referred back from Council/Motions**

**Motion - Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay**

The Committee was reminded that, at the Council meeting on 4th October, the following motion had been proposed by Councillor Matt Collins and seconded by Councillor Michael Collins:

This Council:

- welcomes legislation at committee stage in Stormont for Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay;
- notes the Coalition for Bereaved Workers concern that this bill is a 'missed opportunity' and 'does not go far enough';
- 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
- will also undertake a review of its own bereavement policy, in conjunction with the unions, that seeks to establish two weeks statutory bereavement leave and pay for all Council workers, in line with the Coalition for Bereaved Workers "Call to action" document.

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

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

**Motion - Environmentally Sustainable Event Spaces**

The Committee was reminded that, at the Council meeting on 4th October, the following motion had been proposed by Councillor Garrett and seconded by Councillor Bradley:

"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

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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.”

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 on how it would be facilitated, resourced and managed.

**Motion - Staff on Temporary Contracts**

The Committee was reminded that, at the Council meeting on 4th October, the following motion had been proposed by Councillor McLaughlin and seconded by Councillor Murphy:

“This Council is concerned to learn about the number of staff on temporary contracts who have worked for the organisation for many years.

The staff affected do not have job security, cannot plan their lives and are constantly worried that this temporary contract will be their last. We can and must do better for our staff. An organisation should be measured on 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 who constantly go above and beyond for the citizens of this City.

As a result, the 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 so wishes and, subject to that advice, the Council will put in place procedures enabling this to happen”

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

After discussion, the Committee:

- i. adopted the motion and agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting on how it would be facilitated, resourced and managed; and



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- ii. agreed that a report be submitted to its meeting in November providing a breakdown, on a Departmental and Unit basis, of the number of staff currently employed on temporary contracts and the length of time on which they had been on them.

**Motion - Pregnancy Loss Pledge**

The City Solicitor informed the Members that a request had been received from Councillor M. Kelly for the Council to consider signing up to the Miscarriage Association's Pregnancy Loss Pledge.

He explained that the Pregnancy Loss campaign urged employers to commit to supporting staff through the distress of miscarriage by:

- encouraging a supportive work environment where people felt able to discuss and disclose pregnancy and/or loss without fear of being disadvantaged or discriminated against;
- understanding and implementing the rules around pregnancy-related leave, thereby ensuring that staff felt able to take the time off which they needed;
- showing empathy and understanding towards people and their partners experiencing pregnancy loss;
- implementing a pregnancy loss policy or guidance, or ensuring that it was included in sickness, bereavement or other workplace policies, being mindful also of the needs of partners;
- encouraging line managers to access in-house or external guidance, such as that available on the Miscarriage Association's website, on how to support someone experiencing pregnancy loss; and
- supporting people back to work by being responsive to their needs and showing flexibility, wherever possible.

He reported that the current approach adopted by the Council in relation to staff absence resulting from miscarriage was set out within the Attendance Booklet which accompanied the Attendance Policy. Line managers had been directed to seek further guidance, where necessary, from their Business Support Section and/or the Employee Relations and Occupational Health Units. The Employee Counselling service was also available to all staff.

He added that, whilst the Attendance Policy, advice and support materials were already aimed at ensuring that pregnancy loss absence was managed sensitively and that employees were fully supported, the Council would ensure that the Pregnancy Loss Pledge criteria would be fully considered and integrated into the ongoing review of the Attendance Policy and supporting materials.

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The Committee granted approval for the Council to sign up to the Miscarriage Association's Pregnancy Loss Pledge.

**Motion - Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order  
1996 – Response from Minister for the Economy**

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 1st June, had passed the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Lyons and seconded by Councillor Heading:

"This Council notes with alarm the growing number of employers, especially in the retail, hospitality and aviation sectors, who are making employees redundant before reemploying them on less-favourable terms and conditions; believes that these employers should instead be focused on supporting their employees through this pandemic; agrees with Unite the union and others that this fire-and-rehire practice makes a mockery of workers' rights.

The Council, therefore, calls on the Department for Economy to close this legal loophole as a matter of urgency, for example by amending The Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 to specify that such redundancies should automatically be regarded as unfair dismissals."

The City Solicitor drew the Committee's attention to a response which had been received from Mr. G. Lyons, Minister for the Economy.

The Minister had begun by stating that he would continue the work of his predecessors in protecting those immediately affected by the pandemic and had outlined the extent of that work. He pointed out that they had taken a number of steps to protect workers' rights in terms of ensuring that statutory family-related payments and various statutory entitlements connected with redundancy or the termination of employment had been based on normal pay rather than furlough pay.

The Department had also introduced legislation to allow workers who were unable to take holiday leave as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak to carry over their annual leave into the next two leave years. Legislation had also been introduced which had extended vital Health and Safety protections to all workers, something which had previously applied only to employees.

Significant progress had also been made towards the introduction of Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay in Northern Ireland, which would be an important new employment right for those parents in work who had suffered the loss of a child.

The Minister had gone to state that, as the focus moved to recovering from the damage inflicted on the economy by the pandemic, his priority would be to ensure that workers had jobs to which they can return. His Department's economic recovery action plan would help protect jobs, which, in his opinion, was the most fundamental of all employment rights.

He had then stressed that, in his view, the practice of giving notice and offering a new contract known as 'fire and rehire' should not be used as a negotiation tactic. Using

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fire and rehire as a tactic to put undue pressure on workers to accept new and often worse terms and conditions or face losing their jobs was unacceptable.

The Minister warned employers that dismissal and rehire should only be used where there was an existential risk to the business and added that, even in those circumstances, they must follow a statutory minimum dismissal procedure, and may have to follow a collective redundancy consultation process if a group of employees was involved.

He had pointed out that he was conscious that any potential measures to address the worst excesses of fire and rehire, including legislation, must be carefully considered to ensure there were no unintended consequences, particularly where those measures could lead to more redundancies. His officials would continue to liaise with their counterparts in the Department for Business, Enterprise and Industrial Strategy on this matter.

The Minister had then highlighted the need to remember that any employees who believed that they had been unfairly dismissed from the original contract may be able to complain to an Industrial Tribunal, providing that they had at least one year's continuous service with their employer. Employees may also be able to claim redundancy if they had at least two years' service.

He had concluded by making reference to the Labour Relations Agency's Workplace Information Service and the Law Centre as being valuable sources of assistance/support.

The Committee noted the response.

**Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues**

**Update on Customer Focus Programme**

(Mrs. R. Crozier, Customer Focus Programme Director, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the following report:

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

**1.1 Members are reminded that, in February and May 2021, the Committee was provided with updates on the Customer Focus Programme, which included updates on the new Customer Hub function which has been operational from 29 March 2021.**

**1.2 This report provides an update:**

- **on the implementation of the Customer Hub function;**
- **on progress in the development of added features in the Elected Members' mobile app and plans for release of this version to all Members; and**

- on the Customer Focus programme, including the Council's website development and enabling infrastructure.

## 2.0 Recommendations

### 2.1 The Committee is asked to:

1. note the update on the implementation of the Customer Hub function including completion of the reception area of the ground floor in CWB and continuing works to accommodate the Customer Hub team;
2. note the update on the next release of a mobile application for Elected Members and plans to roll this out to all members in October/November 2021;
3. note that Party Group briefings are planned to take place in October 2021 to continue engaging with elected members to gather feedback on their Customer Hub experience and to continue to promote use of the new mobile app and the additional functionality in the next release;
4. note the work that is continuing to improve missed bin collections;
5. note progress on the development of the Council's websites; and
6. note the progress on the provision of enabling infrastructure.

## 3.0 Main Report

### 3.1 Background

The first phase of the new Customer Hub function went live on 29th March 2021 as planned. The Customer Hub deals with customer contact for all departments and services, across a number of channels (online, telephone, email). In the first phase of implementation the hub has managed all customer contact for cleansing/waste and calls formerly through the main switchboard and corporate complaints numbers. All other direct dial telephone numbers remain unchanged.

As part of the blueprint for Elected Members, the Customer Hub provides specific services for Elected Members in the form of a direct phone line and email account and both these channels went live on 29 March 2021.

Work has continued with the Customer Focus Task and Finish group of Elected Members to develop a third contact channel, a mobile application which enables members to raise issues, keep track of their cases and review their history of cases. The first version of the app was rolled out to members in July 2021. Work has continued with the Task and Finish group to develop additional functionality within the app.

Work has now started on planning of phase 2 of the programme implementation which will include onboarding of the Building Control Service. A report to a future committee will provide details of the plan.

### **3.2 Update on the implementation of the Customer Hub Function**

The first few months of operation during the summer period provided significantly high volumes of calls averaging approximately 800 calls per day with higher volumes experienced after bank holidays. Email traffic has accounted for one third of overall contacts. An analysis of the Customer Hub throughput from April to September 2021 has been circulated.

#### **3.2.1 Customer Hub Resources and Capacity**

Because call volumes have been higher than anticipated we have been closely monitoring call queues, prioritising them and assessing the impact on staffing requirements. To address demand and to stabilise the operation of Customer Hub, we used temporary staff as an interim measure and increased and extended these arrangements whilst backfilling or recruiting temporary posts for a period of 6 months. We also brought forward the recruitment of an additional 2 permanent posts within the agreed establishment.

Integral to this formative stage has been the inclusion of staff and Trade Unions in understanding the impact on staffing requirements during the transition and the early stages of operating the new Customer Hub.

Recruitment has been completed and new staff have received their initial training and development, and this will continue across all team members as we continue to build capacity.

As this is a new function and to provide assurance after the first six months of operation, an independent health check is being commissioned to review the operational set up of the Customer Hub and to assess future capacity needs.

### **3.2.2 Hand offs to Departments/Services**

The handoffs from Customer Hub to services in other departments has been designed and implemented initially on a 'wide and thin' basis i.e. a basic level of information and signposting for customers is provided at the first point of contact for all services across all channels. Handoff processes have worked well in general however the focus has now shifted to improving issue resolution and responsiveness, ensuring service standards are consistent across departments and in particular as we step towards a return to office working. To facilitate this we are working with Digital Services and departments to define management information requirements to support continuous improvement in service delivery.

### **3.2.2 A new physical Customer Hub**

Since October 2020, plans for the refurbishment of the Ground Floor of Cecil Ward Building as the physical Customer Hub have been delivered by our Building and Maintenance colleagues with support from colleagues in Civic and Legal Services. Whilst it is to be determined when 'face to face' services will fully resume, the plans have included a refurbishment of the reception area as a first phase providing a more welcoming customer interface and acting as the physical focal point for customer service. This work has also provided the opportunity to upgrade digital infrastructure and to deep clean stonework. Work is now in progress to refurbish the office space adjacent to the reception area to accommodate the Customer Hub team. Photographs of the new reception area have been circulated.

### **3.3 Dedicated Services for Elected Members**

As stated, the Customer Hub went live with specific services designed for elected members – a dedicated telephone line and email account. A profile of Elected Members' engagement to date has been circulated to the Committee.

#### **3.3.1 Upgrade to the mobile App designed and developed for Elected Members**

After the launch of the mobile app for elected members in July 2021, we continued to work with the Customer Focus Task and Finish group of Elected Members to develop the product.

A second release of the app with new features has been developed which members of the Task and Finish group have tested and at a recent workshop fed back on their experience and recommendations for improvement. We are grateful to

elected members for their continuing support and time and input to the development process. The app has been developed and supported by Digital Services who are currently planning for the upgrade of the app to be made available to all Members at the end of October 2021. A training video has been developed by Digital Services Trainers to support the rollout. Members will receive an email from Democratic Services which will have links to the video – this will be accessed through the Members Portal where the other App training videos are already available.

### **3.3.2 Further Engagement with Elected Members**

Party group briefings have been arranged for the end of October to continue engaging with elected members to facilitate a demo and promotion of the upgrade to the elected members' app and to get their feedback on their Customer Hub experience to inform service improvements.

### **3.4 Update on Missed Bin Collections**

As part of the Customer Focus programme, aligned to the overall Resources and Fleet transition and improvement programme, we have been focussing on how we can improve issues with missed bins including information flows between elected members, customers, staff and managers.

A mobile app to report missed bins has been developed for Resources and Fleet staff to use during collections and a pilot to test the technology has been completed across 10 out of 50 squads. The outcomes of the pilot have been assessed and issues which were identified during the pilot, such as a high volume of damaged, contaminated or multiple bins, have been reviewed and action plans to address these issues, including a review of back office processes and systems have been reported and agreed through the People and Communities Committee.

Plans are now being developed to extend use of the mobile app to capture further information on missed collections and to focus on improving information flows between the operation, Customer Hub and customers.

### **3.5 Update on development of our Websites**

#### **3.5.1 New Council Website**

The new council website [www.belfastcity.gov.uk](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk) has now been in place for a year, aiming to provide a consistent online experience for every user and to adhere to the relatively new

legislation for public sector websites. The website was delivered on time and within budget.

The development focused specifically on accessibility and mobile responsiveness. It involved a complete content review and the size of the site was reduced by around 80%, making information more concise and relevant. We identified over 2000 pdfs and converted those still needed to HTML documents.

We carried out user testing throughout and after the project on a range of users, including those with disabilities and of different ages.

### 3.5.2 Other site developments

In addition to the main site, other sites to move under the [www.belfastcity.gov.uk](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk) domain are:

Belfast Stories – 16 September 2021

Belfast Zoo – 21 September 2021

Invest in Belfast - 27 October 2021

### 3.5.3 Web Governance Panel

A Web governance panel has been established comprising of officers from Digital Services and Marketing and Corporate Communications. Any requests for mobile apps, domain names, websites and online development work are directed through this panel in order to ensure we are managing contracts efficiently; to ensure information is correct and that Belfast is promoted in a cohesive manner.

To continue to provide assurance and to protect the investment in our online channels, any requests regarding new platforms will be channelled through the Web Governance panel.

### 3.5.4 Accessibility

The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 (the Accessibility Regulations) require us to:

1. meet the [international WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility standard](#)
2. publish an accessibility statement that explains how accessible our website or mobile app is.



Beyond this, we are continually looking for new ways to ensure no-one is left behind or hindered from getting the information they need from our website.

Our default publishing method is in HTML, the language of the website. We state in our accessibility statement that we will not publish any more PDFs to the site, and if needed due to a legislative requirement, we will amend our statement to alert users to the issue and offer alternatives.

#### Online Design Authority

- 3.5.5 An online design authority has been established to champion the removal of barriers to accessibility and usability. It thinks from the customer perspective, rather than the service.

To support this the Online Team has developed a suite of guides to support internal staff. These include web style guidelines, publishing principles and guidelines on legislative compliance across our digital offering, including General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018 (PSBAR).

#### Cabinet Office Monitoring

In July 2021, we were advised by the Central Digital and Data Office, which is part of the Cabinet Office, that they would be conducting a compliance audit on our main website [www.belfastcity.gov.uk](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk) which would involve monitoring of the site and provision of information to assist them.

We have received their feedback within the last week and are in the process of working through their recommendations to plan improvements.

#### The Silktide Index

- 3.5.7 The Silktide Index presents a comprehensive analysis of public sector websites throughout the UK. Tests cover the latest standards for website accessibility, which include mobile accessibility. The Index is maintained by Silktide in partnership with Society of IT Managers (SOCITM).

As of September 2021, the index measures Belfast City Council website as Excellent (91%), which is top in Northern Ireland councils.

**Enabling Infrastructure**

- 3.6 The success of the Customer Focus programme is wholly dependent on the delivery of enabling infrastructure and specific to Customer Hub, the technical infrastructure provided via telephony and systems delivered by Digital Services.

Digital Services are continuing the development and support of the following services:

- **Contact Centre**  
Improving customer experience by ensuring that customer contact from any channel is directed to the right agent with the right skills. It also provides real-time information to improve agent effectiveness and management information for departments to support service improvement;
- **Customised CRM integration**  
Phone and CRM system integration provides visibility of calls made and received, quick access to customer information and the ability to receive and make calls directly within the CRM;
- **Softphones**  
Bring all the functionality of a desk phone onto a laptop or mobile phone. This enables the staff working in the Customer Hub to operate remotely or in the office. Implementation of softphones is being prioritised in line with the design of hand offs to departments where use of softphones is most effective.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.7 The Committee agreed, in November 2017, that a budget of £500k be set aside for the customer focus project.

Resource requirements for operation of the Customer Hub are provided for within existing Budgets.

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

- 3.8 No implications.”

The Committee noted the report.

### **Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration**

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy informed the Committee that the Council had received from Glasgow City Council an invitation to sign the Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration, which would be presented on 6th November at the COP26 conference.

He explained that Glasgow City Council had, with a number of partner organisations, been part of a process aimed at moving local governments and integrated food policies to centre stage. That process had led to the establishment of the Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration and organisations and local authorities had been invited to become involved. The Declaration would confirm their commitment to developing sustainable food policies and called upon national governments to put food and farming at the heart of the global response to the climate emergency. The following three key commitments had been included:

- to develop and implement integrated food policies and strategies as key tools in the fight against climate change;
- to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from urban and regional food systems, in accordance with the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals, and build sustainable food systems which would be able to rebuild ecosystems and deliver safe, healthy, accessible, affordable, and sustainable diets for all; and
- to call upon national governments to establish supportive and enabling policy frameworks and multi-level and multi-actor governance mechanisms, to allow for co-ordinated decision-making on food systems.

The Committee granted approval for the Council to sign the Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration.

### **Update on COP26**

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy submitted for the Committee's consideration the following report:

#### **“1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with a high-level overview of the COP26 arrangements and Belfast's involvement. The Council is sending a delegation to the event and, as such, is seeking retrospective approval for Lord Mayor to attend COP26 in the lead role. She will be accompanied by two Elected Members and one council officer.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is requested to:**

- i note the current arrangements for COP26 and activity planned both in Belfast and Glasgow; and**
- ii provide retrospective approve for the Lord Mayor's attendance at COP26 on 10th and 11th November, as the lead of the Council's delegation.**

**3.0 Main Report**

**3.1 COP26 is the 2021 United Nations annual climate change conference which runs from the 1st to the 12th November 2021. COP stands for Conference of the Parties. Parties are the signatories of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) - a treaty agreed in 1994 which has 197 Parties (196 countries and the EU). The 2021 conference, hosted by the UK, together with partners Italy, in Glasgow, will be the 26th meeting of the Parties, which is why it's called COP26. United Nations climate change conferences are among the largest international meetings in the world. The negotiations between governments are complex and involve officials from every country in the world as well as representatives from civil society and the global news media.**

**3.2 Activity at a COP takes place in two different zones - the Blue Zone and the Green Zone. The Blue Zone is for people registered with the UN body tasked with coordinating the global response to the threat of climate change – the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In the Blue Zone you might be part of a national delegation, work for the United Nations and related organisations & agencies or be a member of the media or not-for-profit observer organisation. In the Blue Zone, delegates from countries meet for both formal negotiations and informal consultations. They may also take part in meetings with other delegations to clarify their position and interests with the aim of reaching agreement or overcoming a negotiating deadlock. The UNFCCC will also host a range of events, including technical briefings, to support the negotiations process.**

**3.3 The Green Zone is for the general public. There will be a wide range of events, including workshops, art exhibitions and installations, as well as presentations, demonstrations of technology and musical performances for everyone to attend.**

**The Council's approach to COP26 involvement is multi-faceted, with activity planned in Belfast over the period of**

COP26 and in Glasgow on 10th and 11th November. Our aims are as follows:

**3.5 AMBITION: Using the event as a catalyst for local action by Belfast anchor institutions, businesses and communities by:**

- **Joining Global Campaigns to pledge climate action and set targets, to plan how targets will be achieved, to show that we are proceeding with climate action and to publish our progress. Belfast has signed up to four global climate campaigns: Race to Zero, Race to Resilience, Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy and One Planet City Challenge.**
- **Explaining COP26 to local businesses, communities and individuals (Video and website)**
- **Showing how BCC is playing its part in the run up to COP26 and the wider climate agenda (list of events and actions to date on website)**
- **Encouraging local businesses, communities and individuals to be part of the conversation and get involved (tweet us your #OneWeeThing)**
- **Creating a community and city that is well informed about climate change**
- **Offering residents a positive vision of the transition to an inclusive, net-zero, resilient economy**
- **Encouraging personal responsibility and motivate residents, businesses and communities to join the climate journey (#OneWeeThing)**

**3.6 AWARENESS: Showcase examples of good practice and innovative work in Belfast, including:**

- **Electric and hydrogen buses, Artemis ferry, Hydrogen generation by NIW, Research and innovation in Bio-Energy, Marine, renewable Energy, floating solar, intelligent energy systems, Green apprenticeships, Greenway, One Million Trees, Species rich grasslands and wildflower meadows, Danske Bank's new Carbon Neutral Mortgage, Sustainable Tourism, Linen Quarter sustainable district, Recycling Centres**

**3.7 OPPORTUNITY: to build partnerships to tackle climate change and promote inclusive green growth**

- **Continued partnerships with Glasgow City Council and other core cities on climate action planning and delivery and build new partnerships to exploit opportunities to support and finance inclusive green growth.**

### **3.8 Belfast Focused Activity**

It was previously agreed that we would focus primarily on Belfast in our COP26 planned activity and, to that end, we have undertaken a number of actions:

- Supporting the Carbon Bus Tour, which is now complete.
- Funding for Podiem Business Sustainability Conference with 334 attendees, which is now complete.
- Development of a COP26 focused video which showcases local projects and people, aligned to the themes of the COP26 programme, for use on social media and as a 'climate asset' which can be used beyond COP26.
- Funding of the Common Purpose Northern Ireland Legacy Programme which this year has a climate theme
- Belfast partnership in the Core Cities Climate Investment Platform, which will launch an investment analysis report on the 21st October, with an in person event to follow on 11th November, during COP26.
- Funding of the RE(ACT) festival which is led by Linenquarter BID RE[act] Festival | Festival for a Sustainable Belfast (reactfestival.co.uk)
- Belfast Climate Commission Youth Working Group Youth Summit on the 5th November in Belfast City Hall, which will feedback the results of a recent Youth Climate Survey hosted on BCC Yoursay Platform.
- BCC coordinated 'Perspectives on adaptation' seminar – online session on the 8th November which forms part of the regional green zone activity, part funded by BCC and BEIS, through NILGA.
- Temporary Art installation – the Climate Unit and Culture Unit have funded a mobile art installation which will be developed by Threes Theatre Company, across the period of COP26.

**3.9 Opportunities for Elected Members to engage with and support COP26 activities are being developed and will be presented to the Party leaders.**

### **Glasgow Focused Activity**

- A Belfast City Council delegation will attend COP26 on 10th and 11th November, with plans to attend several Green Zone events including those that Council has been involved in arranging – Climate NI 'All together Now' session on local government networking and adaptation.

- The delegation will attend the Glasgow City Council/UK100 Leaders and Mayors event on the evening of the 10th November.
- The delegation will attend the Core Cities 'Enabling Net Zero Investment' event on the 11th November.
- The Glasgow Food and Climate Pledge will be launched during COP26 – Belfast City Council has been invited to participate.
- There are ongoing discussions with Glasgow City Council, and networks which Belfast is part of including Resilient Cities Network, ICLEI, Core Cities, PCAN to explore opportunities for city to city discussions.
- To that end meetings are planned with Nottingham representatives and Manchester representatives, and with the leader of Glasgow City Council.
- Belfast has also been invited to participate in a Blue Zone event run by the Resilient Cities Network on the morning of the 10th November, which is focused on the link between nature and play, which has come about through our involvement in the Real Play Coalition.
- Linked to our city submission to the Carbon Disclosure Project which was made in July 2021 Belfast has now joined the Race to Zero and Race to Resilience Campaigns, which are connected to COP26.

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

- 3.10 There are no new financial requirements.

#### **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.

#### **Universal Basic Income – Proposed Contribution to Feasibility Research**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform the Committee of a proposed feasibility study into the development of a Universal Basic Income (UBI) pilot in Northern Ireland as well as a financial ask to contribute to the feasibility work.

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1** The Committee is asked to consider the request for a contribution of £15,000 towards a feasibility study into developing a UBI pilot in Northern Ireland.

**3.0 Main Report**

- 3.1** Members will be aware that, in September 2019, the Council passed a motion to support the implementation of a Universal Basic Income (UBI) trial in Northern Ireland. Similar motions were passed in a number of other councils across the region. Over the last six months, a steering group has been formed to explore how this can be realised. This steering group is being co-ordinated by the UBI Lab Network, a global UBI advocacy movement with a local Northern Ireland group. Membership of the steering group includes councillors and officers from five of the eleven councils in Northern Ireland, as well as Advice NI, the Participation and Practice of Rights (PPR) Project and Community Foundation NI. The Council's representatives are Cllr. McReynolds and Cllr. Heading.

- 3.2** The group has met on three occasions to date. One of the main areas of work which they have explored is the potential to undertake a feasibility study to consider how a UBI trial would be planned, delivered and measured. This study would also identify the likely outcomes of such a trial and would create a foundation on which a NI-wide UBI might be delivered and resourced by the Northern Ireland Executive.

Whilst the Department for Communities is not likely to be a funding partner in this preliminary work, support for a UBI is contained within DfC's *Recommendations for an Anti-poverty Strategy* paper (published December 2020), stating that 'informed public debate on the merits and challenges involved should be encouraged'. Subject to the outcome of the work,

DfC could potentially become the lead agency in development and delivery of a UBI trial and any trial would require their endorsement.

The UBI model has been explored to varying degrees in a number of other locations. In June 2020, Scotland published an extensive report exploring the feasibility of a UBI there, which included detailed economic modelling and a range of options for trialling the concept. The main conclusion was that Scotland would require permission from DWP to run a trial, which DWP have indicated they will not give. The Welsh government has recently (following the local elections) stated their commitment to trialling UBI and initial costings on this



have recently been published. The coalition government in ROI committed to a trial of UBI in their Programme for Government, and planning of this trial is underway.

An outline scope of services for the feasibility study has been drafted by the Working Group secretariat. Key areas of work include:

- **Agent Based Modelling** - This type of modelling can provide a dynamic illustration of the potential impact of UBI on a diverse range of outcomes including mental health and wellbeing, crime, paramilitary activity and social trust. It has the potential to deliver a rich evidence base to support assumptions about the impact of any future trial. It would also be useful in expanding discussion around UBI outside of traditional metrics such as financial cost and labour market participation;
- **Economic Modelling** – this modelling would provide the cost of a range of levels of UBI at devolved level, as well as an analysis of fiscal powers required to fund this, such as devolution of income tax or a national wealth fund. This element of the research also provides a tax and benefit simulation model which would show how much better or worse people would be under UBI and the potential impact of UBI on poverty rates and inequality; and
- **UBI Calculator** – this is a public-facing UBI calculator which would be hosted online and allow people to enter their financial/household circumstances and see how much better or worse off they would be under the devolved UBI explored in the feasibility study.

The total cost of this study has been calculated at £95,800. The UBI Lab Network has secured around £40,000 to date and is now seeking support for the remainder of the cost from steering group members and charitable trusts. The finance proposal for the NI feasibility study consists of:

- A £15,000 contribution from each of the local authorities identified as a potential trial locations within the study. These areas would be promoted as lead authors alongside the UBI Lab Network. At present, locations being considered are based in three councils areas: Belfast City Council; Derry City and Strabane District Council and Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council (Note: Derry City and Strabane District Council has recently agreed to the funding request)

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- A £5,000 contribution from local authorities supportive of UBI but not identified as a potential trial location within the study
- A £5,000-£10,000 contribution from other steering group members CFNI and Advice NI (£5,000 secured from CFNI)
- Funding bids for any shortfall to trusts and foundations such as Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust, Big Lottery Awards for All, Nuffield Foundation, Andrew Wainwright Reform Trust.

The current funding position is as follows:

- €20,000 secured from Freiburg University in Germany via their *Basic Income and Peacebuilding* group
- £5,000 secured from the Community Foundation NI
- £2,500 secured from Queen's University for a project researcher to support the work of the project team
- £15,000 secured from Derry City and Strabane District Council
- A funding bid for £5,000 has been submitted to Advice NI
- A bid for £15,000 has also been submitted to Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
- In the event of a shortfall, funding bids will be prepared for Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust, Andrew Wainwright Reform Trust, Nuffield Foundation and Awards for All.

The indicative timeframe for this work is completion by September, 2022. However, it is likely that the early modelling work will be able to identify indicative costings for a potential UBI trial by Spring 2022.

This proposal was presented to the Social Policy Working Group on 28th September 2021. It was agreed that the request to contribute to the research should be brought to the S P and R Committee for further consideration.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.10 The overall cost of the feasibility study is likely to be in the region of £96,000. A financial request has been made of £15,000 from Belfast City Council.

**Equality or Good Relations Implications**

- 3.11 The modelling work will take account of the introduction of a UBI on all disadvantaged and s75 groups. One specific angle for this study will be to consider how this approach can support good relations in a post-conflict society.”

After discussion, it was

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

That the Committee agrees to adopt the recommendation to allocate £15,000 towards a feasibility study to develop a Universal Basic Income trial in Northern Ireland.

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

**Physical Programme and Asset Management**

**Update on Physical Programme**

The Director of Physical Programmes submitted for the Committee’s consideration the following report:

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

- 1.1 The Council’s Physical Programme currently includes 140 live capital projects, with investment of £100m+ via a range of internal and external funding streams, together with projects which the Council delivers on behalf of external agencies. The Capital Programme forms part of the Physical Programme and is a rolling programme of investment which either improves existing Council facilities or provides new facilities. This report provides an overview of recently completed capital projects and contracts awarded in the last quarter.

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- Physical Programme update - note the update on those projects that have been completed recently and those currently in construction; and

- Contracts awarded in Q2 2021/22 –note the update in relation to contracts awarded.

### 3.0 Main Report

#### 3.1 Physical Programmes Update: Q2 July to September 2021

Members will be aware that the Council runs a substantial Physical Programme. This includes the rolling Capital Programme - a multimillion regeneration programme of investment across the city which improves existing Council assets or provides new council facilities. The Council also delivers externally focused funding streams such as BIF, LIF and SOF, as well as numerous capital programmes that we deliver for central government. Our funding partners include NHLF, SEUPB Peace IV, the Executive Office via Social Investment Fund and Urban Villages, DfC, DfI, DAERA, Ulster Garden Villages and others.

#### 3.2 Recently completed projects:

- Capital Programme / non-recurrent: IT Programme – Backup Platform Infrastructure, Vere Foster playground, Falls Park playground, Hurling Wall at Cliftonville (Pitches Strategy), Cregagh Green pathways, Willowfield Changing Facilities, Customer Hub location – Phase 1
- BIF Programme: Knockbreda Parish Church Hall, Hanwood project, Colin Glen Trust - new tourism and recreation facilities totalling £4m at the forest park including Ireland's first Alpine Toboggan and the longest zipline in Ireland at nearly 700m; Lagan Gateway - £5m for a new navigation lock, iconic foot and cycle bridge and new path connections. Bridge completed. Work underway to develop Phase 2; new facilities for H&W Welders FC including new 3G pitch and pavilion
- SOF Programme: Belfast Orange Hall Museum
- LIF Programme: St. John GAC, Woodvale Cricket Club, West Belfast Orange Hall, St. Matthew's Parish Church Hall

#### 3.3 Projects Underway:

- LTP Avoniel - £8m new facility at Avoniel focused on outdoor leisure provision – due for completion Autumn 2021

- **City Cemetery Heritage Project** - £2.3m scheme to protect, enhance and promote the cemetery's rich heritage.
- **St Comgall's** – £7m restoration of former school to create a multi-use community hub
- **LTP Templemore Baths** – £17m restoration of Templemore Baths with a focus on heritage and spa provision
- **Forth Meadow Community Greenway** – an ambitious and transformational £5m scheme which will see the development of a new 12km urban greenway in West Belfast.
- **Páirc Nua Chollann (New Park in Colin)** – open space
- **Boodles Dam** – works to the Dam and environmental improvements
- **Belfast Zoo** - health & safety works and improvements at the zoo
- **Sports, leisure and tourism projects** - Blanchflower Playing Fields, TAGIT Boxing Club, Berlin Swifts FC changing pavilion, Roddy McCorley Heritage Centre
- **Community projects** –VOPIC (Voice of Young People in Care) – refurbishment and upgrade, Sailortown/St Joseph's upgrades, Star Neighbourhood Centre refurbishments, Holylands environmental improvements, Mornington Community Centre upgrades, Lisnasharragh Community Schools project, Walkway Community Association, Prokick community gym
- **Corporate projects** – range of IT projects to ensure business continuity and ongoing Fleet replacement programme

3.4 This overview does not include a number of additional projects either in early stages of development, Planning or procurement, neither does it include all of the activity on maintenance projects or all the legacy projects which still require resource. Photos of the projects recently completed have been circulated. When appropriate, as per Covid 19 public health guidance, the Physical Programmes Department is happy to arrange site visits to any projects that have been completed.

### 3.5 **Contracts Awarded – Quarter 2**

Members are asked to note the award of tenders for capital works including services related to works.

**3.6 Financial and Resource Implications**

Finance and resource implications have been identified within the stage approval process for individual projects.

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

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

The Committee noted the report.

**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**

<b>Title of Tender</b>	<b>Proposed Contract Duration</b>	<b>Estimated Total Contract Value</b>	<b>SRO</b>	<b>Short description of goods / services</b>
The appointment of delivery agent(s) to provide technical support, advice and research and economic analysis support service as part of Belfast Labour Market partnership	Up to 4 years 6 months	£225,000	A Reid	The purpose of the partnership is to make employability and skills interventions more effective and support an inclusive approach to growth in the city.
The appointment of delivery agent for Gateway to Choices service as part	Up to 4 years 6 months	£800,000	A Reid	The purpose of the partnership is to make employability

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of Belfast Labour Market partnership.				and skills interventions more effective and support an inclusive approach to growth in the city.
Appointment of delivery agent to ensure the delivery of Pathway to Enterprise Programme	Up to 3 years	£200,000	A Reid	The programme will support those who are economically inactive/those who are out of work to start a business or build skills to enter employment.
Replacement of the sports floor at Belvoir Activity Centre & Cregagh Youth & Community Centre	Up to 4 weeks	£40,000	S Grimes	Included in planned maintenance programme 2021. Back logged work.
Replacement Palo Alto Firewalls	Up to 3 year	£203,000	R Cregan	The procurement and commissioning of 2 new Palo Alto Firewalls, with the redesign of the council's IT Network Topology including moving from a dual to a single skin firewall
Multi supplier framework for external support services to deliver the Renewed Ambition Programme 'RAP'	Up to 4 years	Up to £1,000,000	A Reid	External support is required to assist with delivering RAP moving forward, including assisting with securing sponsorship, stakeholder management and engagement, programme development and delivery. The overall cost of delivering RAP will be covered by a programme budget raised from private and public sector

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				partners, which includes a BCC contribution of £80,000 for the 2022 programme. It is anticipated that external funding will form the majority of this overall budget.
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**Table 2: Single Tender Actions**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Total Value</b>	<b>SRO</b>	<b>Supplier</b>
Cloud based Content Management System (CMS) to manage content which will be displayed via screens and workstations at the new City Cemetery visitor centre	£42,000	S Grimes	Legato
The implementation of a centralised Uninterruptable Power Supply (UPS) to protect IT equipment from power outages and spikes in the Cecil Ward Building	£39,139	R Cregan	Black Box Network Services
To provide a detailed carbon reduction plan (mini stern) for the Belfast Region	£45,000	J Tully	Professor Andy Gouldson Leeds University

**Table 3: Modification to Contract**

<b>Title of Contract</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Modification</b>	<b>SRO</b>	<b>Supplier</b>
T1862 - Peace IV Young Advocates	Up to 3 years 5 months	Additional 4 months	S Toland / R Black	Cooperation Ireland
T1858a Peace IV Connecting Communities	Up to 3 years 2 months	Additional 3 months	S Toland / R Black	NI Alternatives Limited

**Table 4: Retrospective Single Tender Actions**

<b>Title of Contract</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>SRO</b>	<b>Supplier</b>
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T2070 - Bus internal & external advertising	Up to 18 months	£140,000	J Tully	Global Outdoor
T2071 - Advertising at bus stops	Up to 18 months	£140,000	J Tully	Clear Channel
The provision of de-icing and snow-clearance services (including outdoor cleaning activities)	Up to 6 months	£120,000	S Toland / R Black	Patterson Outdoor Cleaning Solutions
Re-roofing Smithfield Market rear car park elevation	Up to 4 weeks	£37,400	S Grimes	Robinsons Roofing Ltd

**Equality and Good Relations**

**Language Strategy: Elected Member Working Group – Draft Terms of Reference**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 23rd April, it had agreed to establish an All-Party Working Group to take forward the Council’s Language Strategy.

The City Solicitor reported that officers had met on a number of times since then, in preparation for the inaugural meeting of the Working Group in November and that nominations had been sought from each of the Political Parties. The Working Group would be asked at that meeting to agree its Terms of Reference and would be provided with an overview of the Language Strategy. A facilitated workshop would be held in December to enable the Working Group to agree the overall approach for taking forward the Strategy.

He pointed out that the officers involved in this work were also co-ordinating the public consultation on the Dual Language Street Sign Policy and the accompanying Equality Impact Assessment during this period, which could affect timelines due to resourcing issues. The Elected Member Language Strategy Working Group would, he added, be kept updated on the progress of this consultation and any emerging issues effecting the planned timelines.

He went on to state that the Department for Communities had recently established an Irish Language Strategy Expert Advisory Panel and an Ulster-Scots Language, Heritage and Culture Strategy Expert Advisory Panel to advise the Department on the direction and development of two new strategies. This work would be cognisant of developments in this area and the Council’s Irish Language Officer had already been invited to engage with the Irish Language Strategy Expert Advisory Panel.

He concluded by recommending that the Committee approve the following Terms of Reference for the Working Group on the Language Strategy and endorse the proposed approach:

**Draft Terms of Reference for the Elected Member Language Strategy Working Group**

**Introduction and Purpose**

A Language Strategy Member Working Group has been established to provide Members with a forum within which to discuss the implementation of the Belfast City Council Language Strategy 2018-2023 and agree action plans in relation to the languages in the Strategy.

Whilst the Working Group will not be a decision-making body, it will be required to report into the Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on progress against the strategy and associated action plans.

The Strategy has 5 strands: Irish; Ulster Scots; Sign Languages; New Communities' Languages and Languages and Communications for People with Disabilities. The Strategy commits to examining the use of languages in the following areas:

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

#### Terms of Reference

The Language Strategy Member Working Group Terms of Reference will be:

- to provide elected members with a forum to discuss the impact of the languages in the Strategy across the above areas of work;
- to support the development of action plans in relation to the Language Strategy;
- to seek updates and monitor the delivery of work emanating from the action plans;
- to oversee the investigation of emerging policy development in relation to the Language Strategy; and
- to report on progress to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on a regular basis through reports and minutes of meetings

#### Membership

- All political party groupings should be represented
- Each political party grouping should have one representative

#### Ways of Working

- The Working Group will decide on arrangements for chairing the meetings.
- The Working Group will meet quarterly or as required

#### Governance

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**The Working Group will not have decision-making powers. The minutes of its meetings will be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.**

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

**Request to fly the Transgender Flag to  
mark Transgender Day of Remembrance**

The Committee granted approval for the Transgender flag to be flown on the City Hall on 20th November and on that date each year thereafter to mark Transgender Day of Remembrance.

**Minutes of Meeting of Shared City Partnership**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Shared City Partnership of 11th October, including the recommendations:

- to note and agree the following updates from the ongoing delivery of the Good Relations Action Plan:
  - i. to note all updates in relation to the PEACE IV Programme;
  - ii. to note that £15,000 had been allocated to Falls Community Council (as a lead organisation in partnership with a number of other organisations in the area) through the Strategic Intervention Programme within Programme BCC10 of the District Council Good Relations Programme Action Plan;
  - iii. to note that up to £5,000 would be allocated to Finaghy Women's Group and Belvoir Area Residents Group from the same Programme in the District Council Good Relations Programme Action Plan for community interventions;
  - iv. to note that Suffolk Community Forum, as a lead partner for a number of Men's Sheds, had been awarded £12,000 for the delivery of a programme between now and March 2022, to increase cross community contact through community gardens and men's sheds, as part of BCC7 programme in the Action Plan;
  - v. to agree to grant funding of £1,500.00 under BCC7 – Shared Community for a Christmas event with Holy Family Youth Club and Mountcollyer Youth Club;
  - vi. to agree to receive a presentation from the Commission for Victims and Survivors on its current work; and
  - vii. to agree that a briefing session be organised in conjunction with the British Red Cross on current issues relating to Refugee and Asylum Seekers.

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**LGBTQ+ Hub for Belfast –  
Feasibility and Scoping Study**

The Committee acceded to a request from HERe NI, The Rainbow Project, Cara-Friend and Transgender NI, for the Council to support a feasibility and scoping study for the establishment of an LGBTQ+ hub in the City, with the cost, as yet unknown, to be met potentially through the feasibility fund.

**Operational Issues**

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

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum of 14th October.

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

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Social Policy Working Group of 28th 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 8th October, as set out below:

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
<b>2021 EVENTS</b>						
Pharmacy Forum	25th November 2021	<p><b>Rewarding Excellence Awards</b> celebrating excellence in pharmacy profession and fellowships awarded for outstanding contributions.</p> <p>Numbers attending – 100</p> <p><i>* Numbers and room layout will be reviewed</i></p>	B & C	No (charity)	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality

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		<i>and revised in line with COVID19 social distancing guidelines at the time of this event.</i>				
<b>2022 EVENTS</b>						
Libra Events on behalf of Royal Television Society	25th May 2022	<p><b>The Royal Television Society Northern Ireland Programme Awards 2022</b> Annual awards event to showcase the best programmes and the best people making a positive contribution to Northern Ireland's creative industries.</p> <p>Numbers attending – 300 to 400</p> <p><i>* Numbers and room layout will be reviewed and revised in line with COVID19 social distancing guidelines at the time of this event.</i></p>	B & C	No (charity)	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality

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Community Trade Union	31st May 2022	<b>Community Trade Union Biennial Delegate Conference Gala Dinner</b> as part of a conference taking place at the ICC.  Numbers attending – 300	A & B	No  <i>£825 waived due to links with Visit Belfast</i>	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality
Commonwealth Games Ireland	27th June 2022	<b>TeamNI Celebration Dinner</b> to recognise and celebrate NI athletes before they represent NI in Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games  Numbers attending – 400  <i>* Numbers and room layout will be reviewed and revised in line with COVID19 social distancing guidelines at the time of this event.</i>	B & C	No due to nature of event	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality
British Institute of Cleaning Science	26th August 2022	<b>Cleaning Operative of the Year Awards –</b> awards ceremony celebrating	B & C	Charge £115	No Hospitality	Approve Charge £115 No hospitality

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		excellent industry standards in the province.  Numbers attending – 100				
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**Minutes of 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 6th October.

**Issues Raised in Advance by Members**

**Fertility Treatment Leave**

At the request of Councillor Murphy, the Committee considered the following proposal:

"This Council:

- i. recognises that 1 in 6 couples across these islands experience infertility and that receiving treatment such as IVF can bring with it stress and pressure;
- ii. acknowledges that the World Health Organisation recognises infertility as a disability; and
- iii. further acknowledges that Council staff at present are having to take unpaid leave or annual leave to receive treatment, which is unacceptable.

In view of this, the Council will seek to implement a new leave provision for staff, which caters for those who need leave for fertility treatment and offers the same protections as sick leave.

The Council will include in any such provision a safety net period of two weeks paid leave following any unsuccessful treatment."

The Committee agreed to adopt the motion and agreed also, at the request of Councillor Murphy, that the report to be submitted to a future meeting on how it would be facilitated, resourced and managed be extended to include menopause leave.

**Illumination of City Hall for the Northern Ireland Centenary**

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The Committee noted, upon the advice of the City Solicitor, that this item had been withdrawn from the agenda.

Chairperson



## Standards and Business Committee

Tuesday, 26th October, 2021

### MEETING OF THE STANDARDS AND BUSINESS COMMITTEE

#### HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AND REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor McCullough (Chairperson);  
Alderman Kingston; and  
Councillors Black, Bunting, Canavan, Corr, de Faoite,  
Ferguson, Gormley, Groogan, M. Kelly, T. Kelly,  
McAllister, McAteer, McCabe and Pankhurst.

In attendance: Mr. J. Walsh, City Solicitor; and  
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

#### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported for Alderman Copeland and Councillors Kyle and Lyons.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were recorded.

#### **Delegated Matters**

#### **Notices of Motion Received for Council on 1st November**

The Committee considered report in relation to Notices of Motion which had been received for consideration by the Council at its meeting on 1st November.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed that the following motions be forwarded to the Council for debate on 1st November:

- Community Sector Terms and Conditions
- Rent Controls
- COP26 – Global Day of Action – 6 November 2021
- Regulation of AirBnBS

A motion on Tourism Street Signage was referred directly to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee for consideration.

The Committee also agreed that the motions which had been agreed for debate be forwarded to all Members of Council prior to the publication of the Council papers.

**Non-Delegated Matters**

**NI Local Government Code of Conduct Acceptance  
and Registration of Gifts and Hospitality**

The Committee was reminded that the Northern Ireland Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors at paragraph 4.20 - Acceptance and registration of gifts and hospitality - states:

*You must:*

- a) *in accordance with any standing orders of your council and within 28 days of receipt of any gift, hospitality, material benefit or service, which is above a value specified in a resolution of your council, provide written notification to your chief executive of the existence and nature of that gift, hospitality, material benefit or service;*
- b) *not accept from anyone gifts, hospitality, material benefits or services for yourself or any other person, which might place you, or reasonably appear to place you, under an improper obligation; and*
- c) *discourage gifts and offers of hospitality to any family members which might place you, or reasonably appear to place you, under an improper obligation.*

The current value above which the gifts and hospitality etc. are reported to the Chief Executive was £50 and it was proposed that this limit be maintained for the remainder of the Council term.

As with declarations of interest, it was the responsibility of the Councillor to report the receipt of such gifts. However, if a Member had any queries or concerns, advice could be sought from Legal Services/Democratic Services on whether or not it would be appropriate to report any gifts received.

The Committee agreed that any gift, hospitality, material benefit or service received above the value of £50 be reported to the Chief Executive and recorded in the appropriate Register.

**Standards and Business Committee –  
Programme of Work**

The City Solicitor advised the Members that, following the constitution of the Standards and Business Committee and the appointment of Members to it, a draft outline Programme of Work had been developed for the Committee.

The outline programme of work sets out the issues that the Standards and Business Committee was expected to consider during 2021/2022. It was aligned to the Committee's Terms of Reference and was intended to help Members and officers plan their work. The programme would be regularly reviewed and updated to incorporate any new or emerging

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issues and was subject to change across the year accounting for any resource implications and / or matters arising from Members.

In addition to the standing agenda items of apologies, agreeing and adopting the minutes of the previous meeting and declaring any interests, the programme set out those agenda items that would occur on a monthly, quarterly, six-monthly or annual basis or on an ongoing basis, as required.

The Committee was currently being serviced by existing resources within Governance and Compliance Services, including Democratic Services. A budget for the operation of this Committee was being requested through the Revenue Estimates process.

The Committee approved the draft Programme of Work, subject to the Review of alignment of Notices of Motion with the corporate plan and consideration of strategic policies by relevant committees being considered on a quarterly rather than a six-monthly basis.

**Agenda for Workshop**

The Committee noted the agenda for the workshop which would follow directly after the meeting.

Chairperson

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## People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 12th October, 2021

### HYBRID MEETING OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

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

Also attended: Councillor O'Hara.

In attendance: Mr. R. Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services;  
Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;  
Mrs. C. Mathews, Director of Resources and Fleet;  
Mrs. K. McCrum, Democratic Services Officer; and  
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

#### Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported on behalf of Alderman Copeland and Councillor Smyth.

#### Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 7th September were taken as read and signed as correct.

It was reported that the minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 4th October, subject to the following amendments:

#### Alleyway Transformation - scheme pilots

- the Council agreed to adopt the amended wording for the decision in respect of unadopted alleyways: The Committee agrees to the delivery of a number of pilot alleyway transformation schemes throughout the city and further agrees that consideration would be given by the Area Working Groups to the area selection; the number of pilots; the detail of intervention and the flexibility of approach in terms of how funding would be allocated, which would then be subject to final decision by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee; and
- the City Solicitor is to consider any potential legal action that the Council could take against other bodies for their failure to take action in respect of unadopted alleyways.

### **Community Provision Funding Update**

- note that the Council agreed to extend the existing Community Development Grants' Funding Agreements for Capacity Building, Revenue for Community Buildings and Advice to 31st March, 2023, as per the September Committee report and that a further report, on capacity building and potential further funding for other groups, be submitted to the Committee in November.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No Declarations of Interest were recorded.

### **Restricted**

**The information contained in the reports associated with the following 3 items is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.**

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the Members of the Press and public from the Committee meeting during discussion on the following 3 items as, due to their nature, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Section 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

### **Resources and Fleet Update (Waste Collections and Management)**

The Director of Resources and Fleet provided the Committee with a comprehensive update in respect of the following matters:

- the latest performance data on waste arisings and recycling, including the impact of Covid-19;
- the resumption of Wheelie Box Pilot Scheme and the initial findings;
- recycling centres and pedestrian access;
- interaction with the Customer Hub and the ongoing work with policy implementation and missed bin collections;
- developments within the sphere of inter council collaborative working; and
- developments with Interim Residual Waste contracts.

The Director of Resources and Fleet advised the Members that, following the decision taken at the September meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, a further report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for it to rectify the minute in regard to the pre-treatment of waste and the implications in respect of what this means, it's cost and the ability of arc21 to adopt this measure. She also referred to the cost implications associated with the additional treatment of waste, advising that the introduction of such would have huge cost implications which would have to be considered as part of the future rate setting process.

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The Director highlighted that, at the September Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, it had also been agreed that a Residual Waste Workshop would be organised to consider the future options. She advised that the provisional date for the Workshop was Thursday, 18th November and stressed the importance of all parties being represented.

At the request of a Member, the Committee agreed that the Council should progress immediately to undertake a detailed independent analysis of the costs and benefits of proceeding to expand the brown bin organics and glass recycling services across the city.

During discussion, the Director addressed a number of queries, during which she agreed that the next update report would include updates in respect of free compost, food recycling bags, the recycling of commercial waste and an update on the findings from the DAERA Deposit Return Scheme Consultation.

The Committee noted the update provide and:

- agreed that officers would progress a detailed independent analysis of the costs and benefits of expanding the brown bin organics and glass recycling services across the city, with a report to be submitted in due course for Members consideration;
- noted that a report would be being submitted to a future meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for it to rectify the minute in regard to the pre-treatment of waste and the implications in respect of what this means, it's cost and the ability of arc21 to adopt this measure;
- noted that any additional treatment of waste would have cost implications which would need to be considered as part of the future rate setting process; and
- noted that the next waste report would include updates in respect of free compost, food recycling bags, the recycling of commercial waste and an update on the findings from the DAERA Deposit Return Scheme Consultation.

**Request for the use of Boucher Road Playing Fields**

The Committee considered a request from the Great Russian Circus Ltd. seeking permission to use the Boucher Road Playing Fields from 13th – 29th November 2021 for the purpose of hosting a series of Circus Extreme Performances which would be open to the public daily from 12.00 p.m. – 9.45 p.m. from 17th – 28th November.

It was estimated that there would be in the region of 1000+ per performance.

The Committee granted authority to the Great Russian Circus Ltd. to use of the Boucher Road Playing Fields from 13th – 29th November 2021 for a series of Circus Extreme performances and delegated authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to:

- i. negotiate an appropriate fee which recognises the costs to Council, minimises negative impact on the immediate area and takes account of the potential wider benefit to the city economy, in conjunction with the Council's Commercial Manager;
- ii. negotiate satisfactory terms and conditions of use via an appropriate legal agreement prepared by the City Solicitor, including managing final booking confirmation dates and flexibility around 'set up' and take down' periods, and booking amendments, subject to:

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- the promoter resolving any operational issues to the Council's satisfaction;
- compliance with Coronavirus restrictions in place at the time of the event; and
- the promoter meeting all the statutory requirements of the Planning and Building Control Service, including the terms and conditions of the Park's Entertainment Licence.

The Members noted that the above recommendations were taken as a pre-policy position, in advance of the Council agreeing a more structured framework and policy for 'Events', which was currently being taken forward in conjunction with the Council's Commercial team.

**Request for use of Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park**

The Committee considered a report in relation to a request from MayWE Events Company seeking to host "Santa Safari Christmas Event" at Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park from Thursday 16th – 19th December 2021, from 3.00 p.m. – 9.00 p.m.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services advised that the proposed event was of a commercial nature, and whilst it would be held outside of the normal park opening hours it would require the closure of a substantial part of the park.

A Member highlighted that the proposed entrance ticket price for the event was £15.00 per person and requested that the promoter be asked to consider adding a reduced-price children's ticket. In addition, she welcomed the inclusion of the one hour 'relaxed sensory session' and requested that the event organiser be asked to consider extending this to a two-hour session.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services undertook to highlight these requests to the promoter.

Following a query in regard to major promoters and the streamlining of the current pricing policy, the Director of Neighbourhood Services suggested that, in the first instance, this would be better considered within the context of the Events Policy review and the Corporate Pricing Policy review and he undertook to submit an update report to Committee in due course.

The Committee granted authority to MayWE Events Company to host a 'Santa Safari Christmas Event' at Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park from 16th – 19th December 2021, from 3.00 p.m. – 9.00 p.m. daily and agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to:

- i. negotiate an appropriate fee which recognises the costs to Council, minimises negative impact on the immediate area and takes account of the potential wider benefit to the city economy, in conjunction with the Council's Commercial Manager;
- ii. negotiate satisfactory terms and conditions of use via an appropriate legal agreement prepared by the City Solicitor, including managing final booking confirmation dates and flexibility around 'set up' and 'take down' periods, and booking amendments, subject to:
  - the promoter resolving any operational issues to the Council's satisfaction;
  - compliance with Coronavirus restrictions in place at the time of the event; and



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- the promoter meeting all the statutory requirements of the Planning and Building Control Service, including the terms and conditions of the Park's Entertainment Licence.

The Members noted that the above recommendations were taken as a pre-policy position, in advance of the Council agreeing a more structured framework and policy for 'Events', which was currently being taken forward in conjunction with the Council's Commercial team.

**Committee/Strategic Issues**

**Local Air Quality Management Matters – Update**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

**1.1 The Committee will be aware that a number of ambient air quality projects are presently being progressed by officers from the City and Neighbourhood Services Department, including development of new 5-year Air Quality Action Plan for the city and completion of a detailed assessment for nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>).**

**1.2 This report serves to provide a further update to the Committee on progress with these two projects.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is requested to:**

- Note the contents of this update report.

**3.0 Main report**

**Key Issues.**

**Air Quality Action Plan.**

**3.1 Members will be aware that the Committee has already received a number of update reports during 2021, concerning progress with development of a new 5-year Air Quality Action Plan for Belfast 2021-2026, including at the:**

- 9th February 2021 Committee meeting, wherein the Committee considered the various actions proposed by the council and our Air Quality Action Plan Steering Group and Competent Authority partners for inclusion within the new Action Plan, to address the remaining nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) hotspots within our four Air Quality Management

Areas and to improve ambient air quality generally for the city. The Committee will be aware that our Air Quality Management Areas have been declared for a combination of exceedances of annual mean and hourly objectives for nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), associated principally with road transport emissions.

- 13th April 2021 Committee meeting, wherein Members considered proposals for public consultation and engagement on the new Air Quality Action Plan.

3.2 The Committee is advised that as part of the now completed consultation and engagement process, the council undertook a 12-week public consultation exercise into a draft version of the new Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026 from the 12th May to 3rd August 2021 inclusive. The consultation process comprised a detailed online questionnaire, delivered via the council's 'Your say Belfast' consultation hub, and the provision of four online information events to equality groups that had been identified by the council. As a consequence of the continuing Covid 19 pandemic, no face-to-face consultation events were held. The online questionnaire was augmented by a non-technical summary of the Action Plan and an Equality Screening and a Rural Needs Assessment. The consultation exercise was publicised via the council's various social media channels, through email and via the Summer 2021 edition of the Belfast City Council 'City Matters' residents' magazine, which is provided to every Belfast household. Consultation emails were also sent to those interest groups specifically identified for engagement by the council's People and Communities Committee, including, adjoining councils; the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust; the British Heart and Lung Foundation; Belfast Healthy Cities; Belfast Chamber of Commerce; Friends of the Earth; Belfast Taxis and Trade Unions, etc. The consultation process was designed to achieve the statutory consultation requirements detailed within, 'Schedule 2 Air Quality: Supplemental Provisions. Consultation Requirements' of the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002.

3.3 The Committee will be aware that the Air Quality Action Plan proposes various measures to further address ambient concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), grouped under the broad themes of public transport, active travel, sustainable energy and fuels, and monitoring and reporting of ambient air quality. Consultees were therefore invited to give their views on the importance of taking forward the various Air Quality Action Plan measures proposed under these themes. We then invited consultees to provide comments on the proposed measures, to provide recommendations for additional measures or actions to be included within the final Action Plan, to provide views on the current state of ambient air quality within Belfast, to comment on any lifestyle changes that consultees would themselves be

prepared to make in order to further improve ambient air quality, to indicate their support for the actions contained within the Action Plan and to provide any additional comments. We received 65 responses from individuals and specific interest groups at the conclusion of the consultation process.

- 3.4 For the purpose of communicating the outcome of the consultation process to our Air Quality Action Plan Steering Group and Competent Authority partners, we have circulated a summary of the consultation responses and recommendations received and we will also be providing a detailed statistical analysis of the consultation process as a separate report. In addition, we have invited Steering Group members and Competent Authorities to consider the outcome of the consultation process and to indicate whether they wish to amend or augment the Action Plan measures that they have proposed, in light of the consultation process. Their responses and any amendments will be captured in an Appendix to the Air Quality Action Plan. It is the council's intention that subject to fulfilling all general data protection requirements, a formal consultation report will be published as an addendum to the final Air Quality Action Plan.
- 3.5 The Committee is advised concerning some of the headline statistics from the consultation process, e.g. around 75% of the respondents live, work or study in Belfast; around 85% of respondents strongly agree and a further 10% agree with the aims of the Action Plan; after reading the draft Air Quality Action Plan, around 65% of respondents indicated that they are more concerned about ambient air quality within Belfast and; around 38% of respondents strongly agree and a further 51% agree that the actions proposed within the Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026 will improve ambient air quality within Belfast City.
- 3.6 Members will be aware that the Air Quality Action Plan is subject to technical appraisal by DAERA's independent assessors. The council's air quality officers would therefore propose, that subject to final comments, concerning the consultation process, being received from the Air Quality Action Plan Steering Group members and Competent Authorities, and any necessary revisions to the Action Plan being completed, the completed Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026 for Belfast will be presented to the 9th November 2021 hybrid meeting of the People and Communities Committee, with a view to the Committee accepting the Action Plan and recommending that it be forwarded to the independent assessors for appraisal, and for subsequent implementation by the Air Quality Action Plan Steering Group.

**Detailed assessment for nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>).**

- 3.7 At the 11th May 2021 remote meeting of the Committee, Members received an update concerning progress with the ‘Detailed assessment for nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>)’, together with a presentation from AECOM consultants and council officers regarding the proposed installation of additional Zephyr ambient monitoring equipment. AECOM have since completed installation of these additional Zephyr monitors and are now collating particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>) and nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) monitoring data. At this time, the monitoring data remains provisional in nature and subject to various quality assurance and quality control procedures before it can be considered ratified and reportable. Intercomparison work is also to be undertaken by AECOM to compare the Zephyr monitoring data with data from the council’s automatic reference method analysers, installed at our roadside and urban background monitoring sites, in order to derive appropriate scaling factors. The ratified monitoring data will then be used to augment existing ambient air quality monitoring undertaken by the council across the city and in calibrating the atmospheric dispersion modelling, to be undertaken by AECOM as a component of the detailed assessment project. Members will be aware that current targets for fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) are expressed as annual mean values and so air quality monitoring data must be collected over an appropriate time period to allow comparison with these annual targets. In addition, our new Action Plan is tasked with delivering the annual mean objective for nitrogen dioxide.
- 3.8 AECOM are currently in the process of sourcing activity and emissions data to be used in the development of an emissions inventory for Belfast and as an input to the atmospheric dispersion modelling software. As the principal focus of our Air Quality Management Areas and our new Air Quality Action Plan is on achieving the nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) objectives, associated principally with road transport emissions, AECOM have therefore been in recent contact with DfI Roads concerning obtaining detailed traffic census and traffic modelling data for the Belfast area.
- 3.9 In addition, AECOM will shortly be undertaking a series of automatic number plate recognition surveys (ANPR) for a number of arterial transport routes and residential locations across the city. These ANPR surveys will identify the registration numbers of motor vehicles passing the various survey locations, which can then be compared with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA) registration database to obtain the vehicle type, fuel type and year of first registration, etc. This vehicle specific data can

then be used to derive a more accurate local road fleet composition and more representative road transport emissions data for the Belfast area, to augment and refine existing information published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Devolved Administrations via the Emissions Factor Toolkit (currently version - v10.1, August 2020). The more accurate road transport fleet composition and emissions data will be used to refine inputs to the atmospheric dispersion modelling software and to help inform any subsequent source apportionment studies, undertaken for identified areas of objective exceedance.

**3.10** The Committee is reminded that the detailed assessment for nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) is scheduled to conclude and report in early 2023. Further periodic reports will however be provided to Committee during the intervening time to advise of progress with major project components.

**3.11** Financial and Resource Implications

The Committee is further reminded that funding to support delivery of the detailed assessment project has been secured from the DAERA Local Air Quality Management grant scheme for the 2021-2022 grant period.

**3.12** Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessments

An Equality Screening and a Rural Needs Assessment have been completed for the draft Air Quality Action Plan for Belfast 2021-2026. These documents currently remain available to review on the council's Your Say consultation platform, via the following web link:

<https://yoursay.belfastcity.gov.uk/air-quality>"

The Members considered the report and discussed at length the ongoing air quality issues in the Colin area and it was agreed that a briefing meeting would be convened for Members of the Committee to specifically consider the ongoing issues and monitoring of such in the Colin area. It was further agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee which would provide a detailed breakdown of air quality monitoring across the city, including specific detail regarding the west/outer west.

Following further discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Flynn,  
Seconded by Councillor de Faoite,

Resolved – The Committee agrees that the Council, as part of the Air Quality Action Plan, would include greater enforcement of smokeless zones and agree to develop an

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awareness campaign to educate residents on the impact of polluting home fuels. In addition, it was agreed that future Council reports relating to air pollution would benchmark the Council against the new WHO standards.

**Update on DAERA consultation on the Designation of Quiet Areas**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting held on 10th August 2021, it had agreed to write to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) to reaffirm the Council's support for the designation of the Lagan Meadows as a Quiet Area and to seek and update as to the Department's next steps and a timeframe for the proposed designation.

The Director of City Services drew the Members' attention to the response received from the Department, which provided an overview of the work to date in terms of previous mapping exercises, and explained that it was proposed that these would now be updated by a round 4 noise mapping exercise, using 2021 data.

The correspondence explained that round 4 noise mapping would use new mapping methodology as set out in Directive 2015/996 (CNOSSOS-UE Common Noise Assessment Methods in Europe). This methodology had been designed to increase accuracy of the noise maps and to enable increased comparison between European Countries' noise climates. It was the Department's intention that any further work relating to Quiet Areas in Northern Ireland would be based on the results of subsequent rounds of noise mapping using the new methodology.

Following a request from a Member, the Committee noted the response received and agreed to write back to DAERA to:

- request the results of the Round 3 mapping exercise that had been undertaken for Lagan Meadows;
- seek clarity regarding the designation threshold and whether the results would bring the Lagan Meadows close to the designation threshold; and
- ascertain what the expected designation threshold would be for the Round 4 noise mapping exercise.

**Framework Document for Civil Contingencies Northern Ireland**

The Director of City Services drew the Members' attention to the new Framework for Civil Contingencies Northern Ireland 'Building Resilience Together' document that had been produced by the Executive Office (TEO) available [here](#). She advised that this document was the first product within a wider strategic programme of work setting the direction for civil contingencies strategic planning in Northern Ireland.

Several regional emergency planning related protocols and reference documents were in place, however, some of these were outdated and therefore did not fully align to local level preparedness, response, and recovery structures.

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The new framework document had been designed to work as a foundation for all governance structures and procedures across the civil contingencies' structures. The framework did not alter the existing local multi agency structures both in planning and response but the new approach focused on providing a coordinated strategic risk managed environment for civil contingencies in NI with TEO bringing together all the partners and providing leadership and strategic direction for the management of an agreed portfolio of NI risks.

Presentations on the draft framework had been delivered by TEO to the Civil Contingencies Group NI on 26th March and 30th June 2021, and a detailed update had been provided to SOLACE in June 2021. A workshop had been facilitated on the 13th May 2021 for NI Emergency Preparedness Group (NIEPG) members to ensure a clear understanding of the prepare, respond and recover phases in addition to any changes that might impact local government and other partners working at a local or sub regional level.

She advised that the Civil Contingencies Policy Branch in The Executive Office (TEO) were responsible for the management and dissemination of this Framework.

In addition, NILGA would be hosting an interactive workshop for Elected Members on civil contingencies/emergency planning on 26th October 2021 from 10.30 a.m. -1.00 p.m. The session would be physically held in Craigavon Civic Centre and simultaneously available on zoom. The Regional Civil Contingencies Team and some emergency planning partners would be presenting. She advised that Elected Members, officers, and other interested stakeholders were welcome to register to attend.

The Committee was advised that further work was required to ensure local emergency planning documents and arrangements were fully aligned to the framework. This work would be progressed by the Northern Ireland, Belfast, Northern and Southern Emergency Preparedness Groups. Training and familiarisation on the Framework would be arranged by TEO in the forthcoming months and local Councils would be kept fully apprised of these arrangements.

The Committee noted the Framework for Civil Contingencies Northern Ireland 'Building Resilience Together' document.

### **Update on Commonwealth War Graves**

The Committee considered the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report**

**1.1 To seek Members' views on a request for a new Commonwealth War Grave Headstone in Dundonald Cemetery and a request to plant a tree under the Queens Green Canopy Scheme in Shankill Graveyard.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- Consider and agree to the requests from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to erect a new**

headstone in Dundonald Cemetery and plant a tree in Shankill Graveyard under the Queens Green Canopy Scheme.

### 3.0 **Main Report**

#### **Main Issue**

3.1 The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) was established in 1917 to construct cemeteries and memorials and maintain records for the war dead of the First World War. The commission owns 2,500 cemeteries; and has built 23,000 memorials across 150 countries and territories. One of the principles of the CWGC is to make no distinction between rank, race or creed. The CWGC works under a royal charter as a not-for-profit organisation. Currently the CWGC is paid £23 per year for every UK related grave and other governments have similar arrangements.

### 3.2 **CWGC**

The Commission has constructed 791 headstones for graves of war dead in all of the Council's cemeteries (apart from Friar's Bush) and 172 in Milltown Cemetery. They have constructed and maintain a 'Cross of Sacrifice' in Dundonald and City Cemeteries. The large screen wall monument in City Cemetery also belongs to the CWGC. The CWGC undertakes extensive research on all the dead it is responsible for commemorating. The CWGC's comprehensive and linked websites are a significant resource for those doing genealogical research and this contributes to some of the visitors to our cemeteries.

### 3.3 ***Construction***

The CWGC use Kilkenny Limestone to construct their headstone. Their unique foundations and ground anchoring system complies with BS 8415 and all memorial safety requirements. The sculptor they use is registered with the Council. The foundation system comes with the stone and the sculptor undertakes all the work. If a CWGC headstone is damaged or fails a safety test they carry out the repairs quickly. There is no cost to Belfast City Council in the construction and maintenance of CWGC headstones.

### 3.4 ***Application***

Recent research has identified one additional war casualty who died from wounds after the First World War. They are currently buried in Dundonald Cemetery with only a wooded cross as a marker. The Plot was bought in 1915 and the grave owners registered with the Council are no longer alive. The CWGC have



conducted an established communication process to connect and consult with any remaining family members and a descendant of the deceased has consented. The CWGC has applied to the Council to erect a headstone at the grave. Members may be aware that on 25th February 2019 the Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Development Working Group decided that the administrative charge of £18 would not be applied to CWGC as it is not-for-profit organisation and this decision was approved at P&C on 5th March 2019 and ratified at Council on 1st April 2019.

**3.5 *The Queens Green Canopy Scheme***

The Commission have asked permission to plant a tree in Shankill Graveyard adjacent to one of their headstones under the Queens Green Canopy Scheme. The Commission are planning to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee by planting a tree in every County in the UK, adjacent to one of their marked graves. Shankill Graveyard is their choice for County Antrim.

This is in line with the agreed policy of tree planting which states:

*'Permission for future tree planting requests may be granted by the People and Communities Committee on a request by request basis. Any tree planting proposals/request received by the Council should fit in and be aligned with the Council's 'Tree Management Plan' for that individual Park/Open Space as advised by Council Officers within City and Neighbourhood Services'*

- 3.6** If Committee support the tree planting proposal, it will come under the tree management plan for Shankill Graveyard, as part of a replacement planting programme and can be resourced from the related revenue budget. The additional tree will be included as part of the one million tree planting running total.
- 3.7** The Commission will work with the Councils Woodland and Recreation Officer to source a local species. The planting season is from November to March. The Commission have confirmed that they will plant the tree with minimal publicity, and it is not planned to have any additional markers onsite. Subsequent maintenance will be completed by the OSS team in North Belfast.
- 3.8** Based on the noted policy statement above, Committee is asked to accede to the request.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.9** The administrative fees will be borne within everyday budgets.

**Equality and Good Relations implications /  
Rural Needs Assessment**

**3.10 There are no equality or good relations implications associated with this report.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Physical Programme and Asset Management**

**Ormeau Park BMX Track**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reminded the Members that, at its meeting held on 7th September, 2021, it had agreed ‘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 regarding the proposed priority use of the track at limited times by Cycling Ulster.

The Committee was advised that officers had since negotiated with Cycling Ulster representatives to agree a proposed timetable of priority use at limited times for Cycling Ulster clubs. The track would be available for recreational use at all other times. He reported that the timetable would be seasonal to reflect the seasonal nature of the sport, the anticipated demand from Cycling Ulster clubs and to align with the park seasonal opening times, which were based on available daylight. He drew the Members’ attention to the proposed times that had been identified in the table below:

	Midweek usage	Start - end times	Weekend usage	Start - end times
January - March	nil	n/a	Sunday	10:00am – 12:00noon
April - June	Tue & Thu	6:30pm – 8:30pm	Sunday	10:00am – 12:00noon
July - September	Tue & Thu	6:30pm – 8:30pm	Saturday & Sunday	10:00am – 12:00noon
October – December	Nil	n/a	Sunday	10:00am – 12:00noon

Table 1. Timetable of priority use for Cycling Ulster

The Committee granted approval for a preferential use agreement to be developed with Cycling Ulster in relation to the BMX track at Ormeau Park, affording priority use of the track at limited times as detailed in the report, subject to Cycling Ulster accessing external partnership funding to upgrade the existing track.

**Finance, Procurement and Performance**

**Red Cross Funding Extension**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services referred to the additional funding that had been provided by both the Council and central government over the past 18 months to provide support to community/voluntary partners, individuals, families and communities who had been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

He reminded the Members that one of the organisations that the Council had funded was the Red Cross, with £50,000 having been awarded to assist with the following measures:

- Community Support Essentials – responding to vulnerable in need to buy supplies;
- Community Support Pick up essentials – food, prescription pick-ups;
- Financial Hardship Fund – purchase of gas, electric and white goods; and
- Transport to essential medical appointments.

This project had been established as a fall back where existing services could not meet the demand from vulnerable individuals and families who required urgent support during the pandemic or if no other services existed. Due to the excellent work of local community organisations and statutory partners this service had not been required to the level that had initially been anticipated.

He reported that the project had a funding agreement in place which allowed for delivery until the end of September 2021, £9,297 had been spent to date, leaving a balance of £40,703. The emergency support had provided a helpful safety net to ensure that adequate support was available to the most vulnerable people in the city when they had been unable to access help elsewhere. Within the context of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and rapidly approaching winter pressures it was recommended that this funding agreement be extended until the end of March 2022 to allow further uptake.

The Committee noted that, whilst officers could not be sure of the exact level of demand for this service, officers from the Red Cross and the Council would continue to engage with community and health partners to maximise awareness of the support available through the funding agreement.

The Committee noted that the following factors might lead to increased demand over the coming months:

- winter pressures;
- the recent spike in utility costs increasing financial pressures on vulnerable people;
- furlough scheme ending; and
- any further circuit breakers, lockdowns or other forms of restrictions that might occur.

The Committee agreed to an extension to the COVID-19 Emergency Provision Red Cross Funding contract to the end of March 2022.

**Operational Issues**

**Proposal for Dual Language Street Signs**

As at least two thirds of the total numbers of persons surveyed in the streets were in favour of the proposal to erect a second street nameplate in Irish at Clifton Street, Stephen Street, Forest Street and Fort Street, the Committee approved the applications.

**General Maintenance Program at  
Roselawn Cemetery**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the current challenges around maintaining Roselawn Cemetery and to make recommendations going forwards**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- Note the update

**3.0 Main report**

**3.1 The site at Roselawn Cemetery is the largest and busiest cemetery in Northern Ireland with a 268 acre site containing woodland, 4 lakes as well as grave and memorial tree sections. Aside from fields which are let out yearly to farmers – there are no areas of grass in Roselawn which can be cut with large machinery. Roselawn has approximately 39,000 family graves, 5,500 new unused graves and 14,000 memorial trees, and these all need to be cut around with small ride-on and pedestrian machines. Roselawn has 2 Cemetery Supervisors and 12 Cemetery Operatives who are responsible for all burials and estates management duties. Due to the pandemic there are 4 additional temporary staff employed at this site. In general, the upkeep of Roselawn is to a high standard and the site maintains its Green Flag status every year. This is evidenced by the thousands of visitors to the site every year who do not make complaints.**

***Summer Duties***

**3.2 From mid- February to the end of October the grass in all the grave sections and the lawned memorial tree areas is cut every two weeks. The Council does not lift any cut grass and it is left to mulch into the ground. All flower beds are dug over, rotavated and**

replaced with summer plants. As it is not possible to mechanically cut around the headstones/memorials on the 39,000 used graves and therefore, these are required to be manually sprayed with weedkiller and this is usually done 3 times every summer with pedestrian knapsack sprayers. In compliance with the Wildlife (NI) Order 1985 we cannot cut any hedges before the end of August. After this staff cut the small landscape hedges within the cemetery. The large roadside boundary hedges are cut by a contractor in October and which for the above reasons cannot be done earlier. Every Saturday morning a large street sweeper cleans all the vehicular roads throughout Roselawn, however this is too large for the small pedestrian grave paths.

*The number of burials*

- 3.3 It is usual during summer months for the number of burials to decrease across all our cemeteries. This means that the cemeteries workforce can be directed to grounds maintenance duties. During the summer of 2020 we conducted 27% more burials than the average for the past three years. During the summer of 2021 we conducted 32% more burials than the average of summers 2017/18/19. As Roselawn is the only Belfast City Council cemetery with new graves, most of the burials are conducted there. The labour requirement for most burials is three-fold, firstly for the gravedigging and the committal, then for topping up and pressing the soil on the grave after a couple of weeks, and then for final dressing and grass seed planting. These labour demands take place over 8 weeks and are dependent on weather conditions. The increase in burial numbers this summer has meant that the Roselawn cemetery staff were much less available to carry out grounds maintenance duties.

*Staff protection measures*

- 3.4 The burial procedure involves reducing the 2m social distancing guidance and putting in place mitigating controls around protection from Covid. As an infection control measure, the Council ceased the practice of family and Funeral Directors from being involved directly in the coffin lowering procedure and this is done solely by Council staff. Hence for the above reasons more of the cemetery staff are needed at each burial to carry this safe system of work out, and ultimately cemetery staff have been committed to burials for much of their working day.

*Weather conditions*

- 3.5 This summer the weather has been hot, humid and interspaced by wet days. These conditions are ideal for extreme vegetation growth. The grass in Roselawn grew excessively between fortnightly cuts and so the cut grass (risings) were very visible

throughout the cemetery. The cut grass then gets dragged onto grave paths and was an unsightly problem this summer. These weather conditions were also ideal for the propagation of Rosebay Willowherb which is now apparent in many sites across the city. In Roselawn there was an infestation of this weed between many of the 39, 000 headstones by July. Due to the high burial operational workload the second application of chemical weed control in July was not early enough and this resulted in the weed going brown but not dying back throughout the site. The weed spraying work requires a special license (PA6) which not all cemetery staff have as this is a specialised skill. At the start of August, the tall brown weeds had become an unsightly problem through most of the grave sections. The fortnightly grass cutting regime was maintained as a priority across the entire site. However, because the grass was growing excessively between cuts, this appeared to be an additional problem. Another result of the hot damp conditions was that undergrowth proliferated throughout some of the memorial tree barked copse sections. Between June and August Roselawn received 20 complaints regarding grounds maintenance and the general condition of the site. There was also negative publicity on social media. With the high number of burials taking place, it was operationally difficult to commit the required staff numbers to rectify the above problems in a timely manner but members should be assured that staff have been doing all they can to try and address this.

#### *Steps taken*

- 3.6 To remove the Rosebay Willowherb it was necessary to trim or hand weed 43,500 graves. This was very labour intensive. In September some staff were moved from other cemeteries to trim or hand weed on a daily basis. In addition, it was agreed to seek additional support to tackle the issues and a contractor was employed for 3 days to assist with strimming weeds. By the 17th of September all 43,500 graves and the required sections of barked memorial tree copses had been strimmed and/or hand weeded and most of the work was done by our staff.
- 3.7 It is clearly important to conduct all estates management work at the required seasonal time, however in cemeteries burial work takes priority and if the burial workload is high it may be necessary to find staff from other sites. It is also proposed that we explore the cost of procuring a mechanical brush to fit on a small tractor which would allow us to sweep the narrow grave paths.
- 3.8 Financial and Resource Implications

All costs are within operational budgets

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

**There are no equality or good relations issues.”**

The Committee welcomed the update and encouraged officers to explore all options to ensure that the cemetery was kept well maintained throughout the year.

Noted.

**Regional Home Safety Facility**

The Committee noted a letter sent to the Chief Executive by the Head of Health and Build Environment at the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council in relation to the closure of both the “Hazard House” facility in Ballymoney and the regional safety facility (Risk Danger Awareness Resource) in Belfast.

Noted.

**Update on the Reference Group  
on Older People**

The Committee was advised that a meeting of the Reference Group on Older People had been held on 13th September and the Director of City Services provided a brief overview of the items that had been considered:

- Update from the Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland;
- Development of Age-friendly Belfast Plan 2022-2025;
- Age-friendly Belfast Activities and Events; and
- Climate engagement by older people;

A Member welcomed the inclusion of Cara-Friend’s LGBT+ telefriending service in the Belfast City Council guide that had been produced to mark positive ageing month, available [here](#) and he requested that the Committee write to the Minister for Communities to seek the inclusion of action on positive ageing for LGBT+ people as part of the Executive’s expected LGBTQI+ Strategy.

The Committee:

- approved and adopted the minutes and the recommendations from the Reference Group on Older People meeting held on 13th September, 2021
- noted the request at 3.5 in the report for the Council to support the Commissioner for Older People in Northern Ireland’s campaign and agreed that Belfast City Council would support the campaign via its corporate communication channels; and
- agreed to write to the Minister for Communities to seek the inclusion of positive ageing for LGBT+ people as part of the Executive’s expected LGBTQI+ Strategy.

**Issues Raised in Advance by Members**

**City Centre Safety for Women - Councillor Black**

At the request of Councillor Black, the Committee agreed that an update report be submitted to a future meeting, to include relevant information and feedback, from the PSCPs, Partners and other Stakeholders, on the issue of City Centre Safety for Women.

**Request for Trade Unions to present to Committee –  
Councillor Cobain**

Following a query, the Committee noted that the Active Belfast Board Ltd. had Trade Union representation on its Board.

Chairperson



## City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 13th October, 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.

Also present: Councillors de Faoite and McAteer.

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**

No apologies were reported.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings of the Committee of 8th and 22nd September were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 4th October.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

#### **Correspondence - Sustainable and Active Travel**

The Chairperson drew the Committee's attention to correspondence which had been received from the Private Secretary to the Minister for Infrastructure, in response to the Committee's request to the Minister to reiterate the need for working in support of investment into the required protected cycle lane network and to support the future roll out of the Belfast Bikes Scheme, extending its reach and accessibility throughout the city.

The Members of the Committee noted the correspondence.

**Restricted Items**

**The information contained in the report associated with the following three items 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 following three 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.

**BRT Phase 2 - Draft Consultation Response**

The Director of City Regeneration and Development reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 8th September, the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) attended the meeting and presented the three shortlisted options which 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.

She pointed out that the public consultation period had been set from 26th July to 4th October, however, for the Council to share an agreed response to the Public Consultation an extension had been granted to the submission of the response until ratified by Council on the 1st November 2021.

After discussion, it was:

Moved by Alderman Kingston,  
Seconded by Councillor Hussey,

That the Members of the Committee agree that the Council response to the BRT Phase 2 Public Consultation would support the Shore Road route option (Shore Road to O'Neill Road), incorporating that the Council was not supportive of the introduction of a two-way system and associated adjacent halts in Donegall Place.

**Amendment**

Moved by Councillor Maskey,  
Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin,

That the Council response to the BRT Phase 2 Public Consultation would support the Antrim Road route option with the proviso that, it incorporated, that the Council was not supportive of the introduction of a two-way system and associated adjacent halts in Donegall Place.

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee,  
Wednesday, 13th October, 2021**

On a vote, 14 Members voted for the amendment, and five against and it was declared carried.

The amendment was thereupon put to the meeting as the substantive motion and passed.

The Members of the Committee:

- Noted that DfI had agreed to grant an extension to the consultation response until after the Council meeting of the 1st November to enable full Council to consider any response the Council may wish to make;
- Agreed that the Council response would support the delivery of the BRT Phase 2, and recognise the significant importance of the investment in terms of addressing climate change, delivering modal shift and connecting people with opportunities and amenities, and alignment with key policy and strategy documents;
- Agreed that, regardless of the selected North route, that the unsuccessful route would still be viewed as a primary public transport corridor with bus priority infrastructure, low or zero carbon vehicles, ticketless systems, feeder services and P&R facilities, and recommended that high quality connections to Glengormley are delivered;
- Agreed that the Council response would support the South preferred route and recommend that the Ravenhill Road was treated as a priority active travel corridor connecting a dense population in South Belfast with the Ormeau Park Gasworks Bridge and dedicated cycle infrastructure into the city centre;
- Agreed that the Bankmore link, as a dedicated sustainable and active travel corridor, would be supported by Council, and requested that DfI work with Council to optimise the route and regeneration potential of this corridor;
- Agreed that the Council response would identify the failure to connect directly to the Transport Hub, as a missed opportunity in terms of providing a coherent and comprehensive transport connection, and that by strategically realigning the local road network there were significant opportunities to address the current status of Great Victoria St;
- Agreed that the Council was not supportive of the introduction of a two-way system and associated adjacent halts in Donegall Place and that alternative options should be explored;
- Agreed that the Council response would request that, under the Bolder Vision, that DfI would work closely with key stakeholders, including Translink, City Council, the Chamber, UU and anchor institutions to

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develop a short, sharp review for delivering effective public transportation, vehicular access and spaces for people requirements of the future city centre; and

- Agreed that the response would make recommendations that, due consideration would be given to overcoming localised issues through detailed engagement, including access and provision for local businesses, problem parking in adjacent areas, accessibility both during and after construction, and mitigating the impacts of construction.

**Proposal**

Moved by Councillor O'Hara,  
Seconded by Councillor Ferguson,

That the Council response to the BRT Phase 2 Public Consultation would include the following recommendations:

- That the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) immediately introduce 12-hour bus priority lanes along all of the considered routes;
- That DfI consider the expansion of rail halts along the Shore Road;
- That the south bound route extends further south, beyond Cairnshill Park and Ride to Carryduff; and
- that DfI expediate residential parking schemes.

On a vote, 14 Members voted for the proposal and five against and it was declared carried.

**A City Imagining Cultural  
Strategy – Update on Events**

The Senior Manager for Culture and Tourism provided the Members with an update on the ongoing development of city events as part of the 10-year cultural strategy, A City Imagining and on the progress against the new approach to St Patrick's Day from 2022.

Following discussion, the Committee noted the content of the report and agreed to approve four creative development awards for St Patrick's Day 2020.

**Future City Centre Programme: Vacant Premises**

The Director of City Regeneration and Development provided the Committee with an update on a programme of work to address the rising number of vacant premises in the city centre, in multiple locations, including long established and resilient streets.

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The Committee agreed to:

- Note the emerging programme of work to address the increasing number of vacant premises across the city centre, including ongoing data gathering and analysis;
- Note the refresh of the 'Retail and Leisure Proposition' for the City Centre to provide an updated overview of the city centre's performance in terms of retail and leisure-based occupiers and trends, together with evidence-based recommendations;
- Note the planned appointment of a commercial agent to assist with a pilot 'matchmaking' service to align potential business/occupier interest with suitable properties and to assist with the recommendations from the 'Retail & Leisure Proposition';
- Note ongoing work regarding targeted strategic acquisitions including the update on 2 Royal Avenue; and
- Approve the development and delivery of a pilot Vacancy Grant Programme to be rolled out over two years.

The Committee further agreed to extend the programme to include arterial routes.

**Supporting Vibrant Business Destinations**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is provide the Committee with an outline of the proposed approach to supporting local business associations to develop and deliver interventions that will drive footfall and create vibrancy in those areas.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Members of the Committee are asked to:**

- **Note and agree the approach to accessing funding to support the delivery of area-based support for local business associations to increase vibrancy and drive footfall in anticipation of a go-live date in early November 2021.**

**3.0 Main report**

- 3.1 Members will be aware of the ongoing challenges faced by local businesses as a result of COVID-19. The specific impact on the city centre has already been the subject of significant discussion and while there is some research to suggest that businesses outside of the city centre may not have been**

affected to the same extent, it is clear that retail and hospitality businesses in particular across the board have suffered as a result of the successive lockdowns.

- 3.2 The council has supported local business associations over many years, but the drive from these groups does tend to vary at different times. Over recent months, we have seen a significant increase in interest from a number of existing business associations across the city, as well as the establishment of new business associations. While the needs vary from area to area, they generally involve environmental improvements (additional planting, improvements to open space), creation of seating areas/new focal points, animation, cultural programming, events and local promotion activities.
- 3.3 Within the existing departmental budget, there is some limited financial provision to support business associations, but it is clear that many of the activities identified above could not be accommodated within this spend.
- 3.4 Given the feedback from the businesses, we have been engaging with relevant teams across the council to consider how we can establish a streamlined process of support for the organisations. We have also had some preliminary engagement with the Department for Communities (DfC) and the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) to explore whether they may be able to provide financial resources to extend the budget provision. The engagement of the departments is also critical, given the need to engage with them in order to progress many of the interventions in the public realm.
- 3.5 DfC has identified a potential opportunity to secure resources through their Revitalisation programme (subject to application and internal businesses case). This support is in keeping with the work recently undertaken by the Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG), which DfC have sponsored, in developing a 'Living High Street Toolkit'. This toolkit is premised on building capacity within the high street business and community sectors of towns and neighbourhood centres (such as the arterial routes) and viewed through the lens of a combined economic, physical regeneration and environmental perspective. It is, however, very much based on building the capacity within the business communities to identify and take ownership of driving forward change in their areas. DfC considers that this initiative could act as a pilot to inform future approaches and funding investments.
- 3.6 Following discussions with DfC/DfI and other sections across the council, the Enterprise and Business Growth Unit and the

City Regeneration and Development Division have developed an outline approach to move these proposals forward. Subject to approval at this committee and DfC's internal processes, officers intend to launch this initiative in November 2021.

**3.7 The overarching purpose of the initiative is to strengthen the competitiveness of our local business destinations, focusing on actions which aim to:**

- Support the development of shared and safely accessible commercial areas
- Support the diversification of business destinations outside of the city centre
- Undertake initiatives that will bring together key stakeholders to benefit business destinations outside of the city centre
- Undertake initiatives that improve the quality of urban design, distinctiveness and townscape quality.

**3.8 The objectives include:**

- Increasing engagement and partnership working between statutory partners and local business associations
- Supporting the development of area-based actions plans which address specific local concerns and deliver specific, measurable benefits over the short/medium and long term
- Increasing footfall and sales as a direct result of marketing and promotional activity; generating new customers or sustaining customer loyalty through increasing sales revenue, increasing the number of new customers or developing repeat business
- Enhancing the profile of the area with a view to stimulating economic activity
- Supporting the growth and development of businesses engaged in associated activity.
- Supporting the sustainability of businesses and local business associations.

**3.9 The proposed initiative will put in place a 2-year pilot programme of support for business associations that are based outside of the city centre boundary/ BID areas. This programme will involve a two-stage process:**

- Stage 1 of the support will engage new and existing traders and business associations. It will help those groups that are not formally constituted to do so (being

constituted will be a pre-requisite for accessing the funding). It will also provide support to groups to develop an area-based action plan. This action plan will form the basis for moving to a stage 2 application. It will demonstrate how the group will meet the programme objectives around driving footfall and creating vibrancy in the area and will identify the priority areas for action, based on research and consultation with local businesses

- Stage 2 will enable the group to draw down resources to support delivery. Key areas of expenditure will include marketing, activities aimed at driving footfall to an area, developing business skills, enhancing the look and feel through small-scale environmental improvements, animating the area through events and activities and providing opportunities for groups to engage with representatives in statutory organisations and other partners across the city (overview of support included in Appendix 1). Associations will be provided with technical assistance throughout the process – both in terms of business support and engagement and in terms of the specialist technical skills associated with small-scale infrastructure investments.

3.10 It is envisaged that the pilot will support up to 10 business associations to access funding. Depending on the level of demand for support, a proposal may be submitted to extend the scheme (subject to appropriate approvals and access to resources). The total budget available to each association through stage 2 is a maximum of £40,000. The total budget request to DfC to support this scheme is £475,000, in addition to a £30,000 contribution from Belfast City Council to support the delivery of consultancy support for stage 1 which sits within the existing council budgets.

### 3.11 Financial and Resource Implications

The indicative budget allocations are conditional on securing resources from DfC, as set out above. The activities outlined within this report are expected to be resourced through an application and business case to the DfC Revitalisation fund, with the exception of £30,000 which will be from the 2021/22 Enterprise and Business Growth budget.

While the Enterprise and Business Growth team will coordinate this programme of work and remain the accountable team, the nature of the activities to be delivered will require input across the department.



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

**The proposed project referenced in this report is informed by statistical research, stakeholder engagement and complementary policies and strategies. The proposed project will go through a process of equality screening which will ensure consideration is given to equality and good relation impacts.”**

The Committee agreed:

- the approach to accessing funding to support the delivery of area-based support for local business associations to increase vibrancy and drive footfall in anticipation of a go-live date in early November 2021; and
- that officers undertake to present a report to a future meeting of the Committee outlining how Economic Development Officers could be assigned to understand and address specific areas of north, south, east, and west Belfast.

**Matters Referred Back from Council**

**Belfast City Nightlife and Night-time Economy**

The Director of Economic Development reminded the Committee that the Council, at its meeting on 4th October, had considered the following motion which had been proposed by Councillor de Faoite and seconded by Councillor Smyth:

“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;

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- 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."

He pointed out that, in accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the Motion was referred without discussion to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.

Councillor de Faoite addressed the Committee and referred to the Belfast Agenda. He stated that it did not mention the nightlife economy and that it should include a focus on Belfast City nightlife and the nighttime economy. He added that the Council, as city leaders, should take the time to bring interested partners and stakeholders together to establish clear parameters and appoint a champion to lead on that work.

**Proposal**

Moved by Councillor Hussey,  
Seconded by Alderman Kingston,

That Committee agrees that, in advance of a report on how the Motion would be facilitated, resourced and managed, officers would establish the feasibility and interest in convening a roundtable discussion and the creation of a Night Mayor.

On a vote, five Members voted for the proposal and 13 against and it was declared lost.

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Accordingly, the Committee agreed that a report on how the Motion would be facilitated, resourced and managed would be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee.

**Community Wealth Building**

The Director of Economic Development reminded the Committee that the Council, at its meeting on 4th October, considered the following motion which had been proposed by Councillor Murphy and seconded by Councillor Black:

“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.”

He pointed out that, in accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the Motion was referred without discussion to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.

The Committee agreed that a report on how the Motion would be facilitated, resourced and managed would be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee.

**Growing Business and the Economy**

**Economic Outlook and Overview  
of Business Support Services**

The Director of Economic Development reminded the Members that, at the City Growth and Regeneration Committee meeting on 12th May 2021, approval had been granted for a range of activities aimed at enhancing the level of business start-ups, growing existing businesses and supporting new investment in the city.

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He reported that, in partnership with Belfast Chamber of Commerce, the Council had undertaken a large-scale survey of Belfast businesses, which had been the first of a series of bi-annual surveys that would be undertaken, covering a minimum of 400 businesses each time. He stated that the survey would act as a barometer of business sentiment to build intelligence on how businesses were performing, identify their immediate challenges and gauge the outlook and prospects of local companies. He added that the findings would be used to inform and shape interventions by the Council and its partners to support business, employment and economic activity in the city.

He outlined the key achievements in start-up, social enterprise and cooperatives, and business growth.

The Director advised the Committee of the undernoted priorities for the following six months;

- Working with the other councils, Invest NI and DfE to bring forward plans to revamp the approach to business start-up post-2023;
- Continuing to deliver the Enterprise Pathway pilot, focusing on those furthest from the labour market;
- Launch the Digital Transformation initiative in partnership with the 10 other councils across the region;
- Build on support for Social Enterprises and Co-operatives by working with the procurement team to enable better access public procurement opportunities;
- Working towards recognition of being a “Social Economy Place” – the first in Northern Ireland;
- Delivering a new approach to support vibrant business destinations across the city by working with local business associations outside of the city centre;
- Delivering on the strategy and action plan for the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor; and
- Working with digital and innovation teams to increase the volume of SME engagement and support growth strategies for key sectors.

The Members of the Committee agreed to:

- Note the findings of the recent Belfast Business Survey which was to be undertaken every six months, in conjunction with the Belfast Chamber, and which will inform future areas of work;
- Note the outcomes of the activities undertaken over the past six months, particularly in the areas of business start-up, growth and investment;
- Note the planned activities in the coming months; and
- To write to The Executive Office to request that consideration be given to setting up a co-operative development agency for Northern Ireland.

**Jobs and Skills Outcomes**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report**

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on a number of existing and planned interventions to improve skills and help people find a new or better job, focusing on key target groups and those furthest from the labour market.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**The Members of the Committee are asked to,**

- Note the range of existing and planned interventions to improve skills and help people find a new or better job, focusing on key target groups and those furthest from the labour market**
- Note the job outcomes delivered by some of the key interventions**
- Note the planned activity for the coming months**
- Agree to join the RSA Cities of Learning network, making a financial contribution of £30,000 towards the programme of activity from November 2021.**

**3.0 Main report**

**3.1 Members will be aware that the pandemic has had a significant on the economy of the city.**

**At its peak, more than 20,000 people in Belfast were on furlough and the claimant count numbers in the city more than doubled following the initial lockdown in March 2020.**

**3.2 As we emerge from the series of lockdowns and the remaining restrictions are gradually moved, the labour market is slowly improving. However there is significant volatility with demand hugely outstripping supply in a number of sectors (tech and digital; logistics and health and social care) while other sectors are much more vulnerable (hospitality; retail). This is borne out in the recent Belfast Business Survey which is covered in more detail in a separate report to the committee.**

**3.3 A number of research reports have identified the fact that the pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on those who were already most vulnerable prior to COVID-19. In labour market terms, this has meant that those who were already having difficulty in finding work slipped further back as those who had more recent experience or transferable skills moved into an already competitive jobs market.**

- 3.4** Despite the volatility, council officers have been working closely with our stakeholder partners and with employers in key sectors to support the delivery of a range of interventions to help those furthest from the labour market to find sustainable employment in those sectors where demand has remained strong or is beginning to recover. This work has meant that, since April 2021, we have been able to bring 381 people on to our Employment Academy programmes across a range of sectors. This level of demand – both from employers as well as those looking for a job or a better job – represents a significant increase on figures from previous years. By way of example, in 2018/19, we supported around 500 people through Employment Academies over a full year – in a very buoyant economic climate. A number of recent changes including an expansion of the Employability and Skills team and the introduction of a new, more flexible commissioning framework, means that we have been much better placed to respond to opportunities, meeting employer demand and bringing forward solutions that benefit local businesses and residents.
- 3.5** The procurement framework covers four broad areas (lots). These are:
- **Lot 1: Care Sectors: Health Care; Social Care; Education; and Childcare/Playwork – delivery partner is People 1st**
  - **Lot 2: Customer Service Sectors: Leisure; Hospitality; Tourism; and Retail: delivery partner is Workforce Training Services**
  - **Lot 3: Practical Sectors: Transport & Logistics; Construction; Green Economy; and Manufacturing: delivery partner is Workforce Training Services**
  - **Lot 4: Office Based Sectors: Administration; Financial; and Digital: delivery partners are BMC in conjunction with LEMIS+ partners (Ashton Community Trust; GEMS NI; East Belfast Mission; Upper Springfield Development Trust and Impact Training).**
- 3.6** The lots will remain in place for up to four years. They provide the council with significant flexibility in developing and delivering targeted interventions within the relevant sectors. This flexibility has already been invaluable in enabling us to scale up at pace to support the increased number of participants as detailed above and will be an important resource to have access to as we seek to build our reach in new areas such as tech, digital and green skills.

- 3.7** As a complement to the four lots set out above, we have created an additional mechanism called a DPS (Dynamic Purchasing System). This provides the Council with access to additional alternative market capacity and capability in the areas covered by existing Employment Academies (e.g. if the existing provider cannot meet our needs). It also provides an opportunity to bring on new organisations in order to test out innovative approaches, to respond to specific employer/participant needs not covered within the framework or to provide specialist interventions (e.g. activities to ensure that specific target groups can access the job opportunities on offer, such as English language support or assistance for those with additional learning needs). The DPS will remain open for five years and organisations can register at any time.
- 3.8** Of those who started an Employment Academy since April 2021, 174 people have completed and 122 have secured employment so far. This represents an into-work rate of 70%. Of the 224 people still going through a programme, 90 are already in work and are receiving support, qualifications or licences needed to access a better job. These include Level 3-5 qualifications (e.g. in childcare sector, allowing staff to move to supervisory roles) and specific vehicle licences to help existing drivers progress to better-paid driving roles, including those within public sector organisations.
- 3.9** In terms of volume, the most popular Employment Academies are within logistics, leisure and social care sectors, although childcare and playwork strongly feature, particularly for those wanting a better job. A Nursing Assistant Employment Academy has also recently completed, with 17 people applying for Nursing Assistant posts within Belfast HSC Trust. Construction is another sector that has been in high demand, with both generic and female-targeted Employment Academies delivered over the last few months. The into-employment rate for these programmes has been in excess of 80%.
- 3.10** Over the coming months, a full programme of Employment Academies is being scheduled, with a significant volume of activity planned for the post-Christmas period. In order to raise awareness of the opportunities, a Meet the Employer event will take place in St George's Market on 9 November. This will give potential participants a chance to find out more about the upcoming academies and to register interest to participate as well being able to apply directly for vacancies. Employers across a range of sectors with workforce demand will be in attendance, and they will be able to provide an insight into emerging roles within their business as well as

current vacancies for people who can apply directly for on the day. Additional information on the event will be circulated to all members in advance in order to ensure that it can be promoted as widely as possible to all interested parties.

- 3.11 While the Academies represent short, employer-focused, into-employment interventions, the team has also been engaged in a wider range of jobs and skills-related activities – always with the aim of supporting inclusive growth. Although the increase in unemployment as a result of COVID-19 has not been as significant as might have previously been expected, the claimant count is still more than double the pre-pandemic levels, at around 5.7%. In recognition of the increased volume of claimants that may find it relatively easy to get back to work but that may need some light-touch support, such as interview preparation or advice on job search, officers are working on the introduction of a targeted intervention. This will be delivered by our existing partners through the new commissioning framework. It will focus on linking those who are more recently unemployed to existing opportunities in sectors such as hospitality, construction, logistics and social care through to attracting back, for example taxi-drivers who may require some additional support to return to this sector. This will mean much shorter (and therefore less resource intensive) interventions as well as providing exposure to employers who are currently recruiting, such as the event on 9 November.
- 3.12 In addition to the delivery, there is also significant development work underway to scope out new interventions that can contribute to the inclusive growth commitments. One key area of work at present is focusing on creating new pathways into the tech and digital sectors. While this sector has remained largely resilient throughout the pandemic, our research shows that there are limited pathways into the sector for those that do not have a degree. This challenge was identified through the work of the Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission and the relevant government departments have committed to work with the council and with employers in the city to explore potential solutions. New pathways are also being scoped for emerging sectors, including the green sector. Work is at an advanced stage in developing a retrofitting qualification at level 3 and level 5. This will offer opportunities for new entrants to access opportunities in a future growth area. It will also present significant reskilling opportunities for companies in the



construction sector, helping them to future-proof their business and look towards new opportunities for future growth.

- 3.13 While a significant proportion of the work that we have been engaged in to date has focused on those already in the labour market or trying to find a job or move to a better job, we have a number of interventions in place for young people, both in the formal education setting and outside of the school environment. Our GCSE support programme was significantly disrupted over the last two years given the challenges faced by schools during the pandemic and the limited face-to-face time with students over that period. Delivery for the current academic year is planned to be both school-based and community-based with places for at least 365 young people, focusing on those not currently predicted to achieve at least Grade C in English and Maths GCSE, with the objective of helping them achieve a pass. In recognition of the extraordinary challenges of the last two academic years and the impact that this has had on educational attainment – particularly of those who are already vulnerable – additional activities are currently being planned, for example, mid-term intensive learning programmes during the Halloween break.
- 3.14 We are also supporting 186 young people who either already have or are at risk of dropping out of the education system, employment or training through our Youth Support Programme. To date, 109 young people have progressed into positive outcomes with 40 into employment and 69 into further education/training. While this programme has not completed, this currently represents a positive outcome rate of 58%. This programme is also an important feeder as we develop additional skills development initiatives, particularly in the digital sector.
- 3.15 RSA Digital Skills project

To add value to our work, Belfast has recently been engaging with a number of external networks and partnerships. One of those networks is the RSA. The RSA operates globally with the aim of seeking ideas and solutions to resolve some of the most significant societal challenges. Through their Cities of Learning work, they provide technical support and expertise to network members to help them bring forward innovative approaches to learning within each of their locations, and also support learning across all of the network members. As part of this work, they have been successful in attracting funding from the Garfield Weston Foundation and have been engaging

with cities that they identify as having the potential and commitment to bring forward new learning solutions in a way that can meet their criteria for a City of Learning – and they approached Belfast as part of this work. Emerging from our initial engagement with the RSA, we are proposing to bring forward a project to develop bespoke Digital Badges for our employability interventions. These badges will be used to recognise and validate the work undertaken through our programmes as an alternative to the standard practice of asking for qualifications/experience. The RSA Cities of Learning will also work alongside officers to challenge how some current practices are excluding those that may not have the formal qualifications but that have aptitudes and strengths that could make a valuable contribution to the workforce.

- 3.16 Officers will also offer employability and skills providers across the city with access to digital badging for their own organisations. These badges will recognise the ‘hidden’ skills of their participants by creating a digital portfolio of their achievements and skills to use alongside CVs. This will further develop collaboration with providers in the city whilst addressing the disproportionate levels of those recorded as having ‘no or low’ skills. We will also engage with employers to ensure that there is buy-in to and recognition of the model and that they can see the merits of this approach to talent acquisition and development.
- 3.17 The funding from Garfield Weston Foundation will cover 50% of the costs associated with this project and partners are asked to bring forward the remaining 50%. It is proposed that the council agrees to allocate £30,000 towards this project for a 12-month period from November 2021, with the remaining £30,000 being provided by the Garfield Weston Foundation (coming via the RSA).

3.18 Financial and resource implications

The RSA Digital Badges project will require an allocation of £30,000. This funding has been set aside in the Employability and Skills budget for this year that was previously agreed through the estimates process. Funding for all other activities set out in this update has also previously been approved through the estimates process.

3.19 Equality implications/rural needs assessment

One of the key advantages of this approach is that it will enable us to target resources on specific groups, including those with particular access issues and barriers that currently

**prevent them from accessing training and employment opportunities. Our participation data is regularly reviewed to ensure that we are making a positive impact on key target groups.”**

The Committee agreed to:

- Note the range of existing and planned interventions to improve skills and help people find a new or better job, focusing on key target groups and those furthest from the labour market;
- Note the job outcomes delivered by some of the key interventions;
- Note the planned activity for the coming months; and
- Join the RSA Cities of Learning network, making a financial contribution of £30,000 towards the programme of activity from November 2021.

### **Positioning Belfast to Compete**

#### **Estates Gazette Awards – 'City of the Year' Award**

The Director of City Regeneration and Development reported that Belfast had been shortlisted in the 'City of the Year' Award category in the 2021 Estates Gazette Future of Real Estate Awards which celebrated cities, advisers, investors and developers from the UK and beyond that were driving innovation, long-term thinking and future proofing in the built environment.

She pointed out that the Belfast submission had highlighted how its young, vibrant and highly educated workforce, resilient infrastructure, strong civic leadership and city partnerships were priming Belfast for a positive economic future.

She advised the Members that the awards ceremony would take place in London on 28th October, 2021 and that, it was recommended that the Committee approve the attendance of the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson or their nominees, plus one officer.

The Committee agreed:

- To note that Belfast had been shortlisted for a 'City of the Year' Award at the 2021 Estates Gazette Future of Real Estate Awards;
- To approve the attendance of Committee Chair/Deputy Chair or nominees and one officer at the Estates Gazette Future of Real Estate Awards Ceremony, taking place 28 October in London, at a maximum cost of £1,750, subject to prevailing COVID restrictions; and
- To dispense with call-in, to facilitate attendance at the event which had been scheduled to take place in advance of a meeting of full Council; and
- That officers would bring a report back to a future meeting of the Committee outlining the actual costs associated with attendance at the Estates Gazette Future of Real Estate Awards Ceremony.

**Strategic and Operational**

**Community Planning Update**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

**1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members with an update on community planning with a specific focus on the work being taken forward by the newly re-configured ‘Jobs, Skills and Education’ and ‘City Development’ Delivery Boards.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- (i) note the on-going work of the Belfast Agenda Jobs, Skills and Education delivery Board and the City Development delivery Board;**
- (ii) note the alignment and synergies between the Boards and the work of the Committee;**
- (iii) note the proposed transition of the City Stakeholder Group established to support planning and implementation of the DFC Revitalisation Programme to City Centre Delivery Group (as set out in para. 3.10-11 below)**
- (iv) note the ongoing opportunities for Elected Members to input and shape the work being taken forward through Community Planning Partnership, including the refresh of the Belfast Agenda and associated delivery plans, over the coming months/years.**

**3.0 Main report**

**3.1 Background**

**Members will recall that in order to ensure that the vision and ambitions set out within the Belfast Agenda (community plan for the city) translated into action and to secure the commitment from city partners in supporting delivery, four cross-sectoral delivery Boards have been formed (City Development | Jobs, Skills and Education | Living Here | Resilience and Sustainability) under the auspices of the**

**Community Planning Partnership (CPP). These delivery focused Boards have been established to encourage and enable greater collaboration across partners to understand**

and and seek to address the challenges and priorities for the city and its communities.

**3.2** As reported to Committee in June 2021, CPP partners agreed to reconfigure two of the Boards to align priorities and maximise the synergies and impact of their work. As highlighted, the focus of the two Boards – City Development and Jobs, Skills and Education – clearly aligns with the work of this Committee. Members will also recall the intention going forward to update the Committee on the work of the boards alongside specific engagement and input from elected Members and Parties through the All-Party Community Planning Working Group and Community Planning Partnership. Members should note that the newly reconfigured Boards met for the first time in April and May 2021 respectively as well as specific action planning workshop sessions to reaffirm priority areas of focus. This report provides an update on these sessions and key activity underway through the Boards.

**3.3** **Jobs, Skills and Education Update**

Members will be aware of the ongoing review and refresh of the Belfast Agenda. Since the launch of the review in September 2021, we have been continuing the conversation with our city partners, including our Delivery Boards, to examine and define the key challenges, opportunities and priorities for the city for the period 2022-2026. To help inform the new Belfast Agenda a co-production has been adopted with city partners and stakeholders and is being rolled out in three phases: i) a review of existing priorities, ii) planning what needs to happen next and iii) consulting on our plans. On 10 September a workshop was held with the Jobs, Skills and Education Board as part of the first phase of this engagement. The workshop focused on:

- i) Taking stock of the current economic and labour market position in Belfast in the context of the Belfast Agenda commitments
- ii) Securing collective agreement on a small number of priority interventions that the Board can drive forward over the next 18 months
- iii) Shape and input into the refresh of the Belfast Agenda.

**3.4** The out-workings of this workshop will feed into subsequent engagement phases, allowing us to co-design action plans

and a relevant, refreshed Belfast Agenda which can deliver a positive impact for everyone in the city.

3.5 A detailed report providing an overview of the Board workshop session is attached at Appendix 1. A number of key overarching areas emerging from workshop discussions are summarised below:

- General consensus that the priorities identified in the emerging Belfast Agenda delivery framework (2022-26) reflect the key challenges and opportunities for the city.
- Highlighted the significant impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on widening existing inequalities – with NEETS and inactivity rates rising and therefore a greater need for a collaborative approach to addressing these challenges.
- Recognition of the importance of the emerging Labour Market Partnership and ensuring better connections across partners and with those furthest removed from the labour market. Highlight the flagship opportunity this presents for the city.
- Recognition of the significant opportunities presented by the Department for Education's 'Fair Start Action Plan' to address educational underachievement within the city and across the region. In this context, the Board (and CPP partners) will develop a Belfast specific proposition which seeks to align with, build upon and accelerate elements of this regional plan with a focus on enabling and encouraging place-based delivery with supporting budgets.
- A strong focus required to support and enable more new business start-ups, including social enterprises, in the city, given their importance to our economy
- Advocated the need to create focus and momentum on a small number of key challenges that require collaboration across partners to resolve – rather than spreading energy and resources across a wider range of activities.

3.6 Workshop participants agreed that the Jobs, Skills & Education Board should focus on three priority areas and highlighted specific programmes of work to be developed further as part of the action planning process. The three priority areas are:

**Economic Recovery**

- Bringing together partners to look at how we can achieve a significant increase in the number of business start-ups, with a focus on driving city competitiveness and productivity – while also considering how this work can support inclusive growth.
- Bringing forward new interventions to support the continued growth of the tech and digital sector – with a focus on creating inclusive pathways to develop new routes into this growth area.

#### Employability & Skills

- Recognition that the Labour Market Partnership will be a critical element for bringing forward key employability and skills interventions and agreement to ensure that regular updates are provided
- Exploring ways of intelligence gathering and sharing in order to inform and shape new interventions – need for short term and longer-term insights.

#### Educational Attainment

- Consideration of how a Belfast-focused response to the Fair Start Action Plan can be taken forward
- Exploring opportunities to enhance the support available at Key Transition Stages – with a special focus on early years.

- 3.7 As the engagement work on the refresh of the Belfast Agenda continues, the Jobs, Skills & Education Board and its supporting task groups will now undertake further action planning work to consider how the key interventions can be moved forward. One of the critical issues will be to consider how we can secure partner buy-in and resource allocation in order to ensure that there is shared ownership of commitments and outcomes.

#### City Development Update

- 3.8 Members will note that a similar workshop session is being planned to take place for the City Development Board in late October / early November 2021. The focus of this workshop will be to consider and unpack what specific interventions, programmes and actions are to be taken forward in support of the four priority areas identified by the Board and Community Planning Partnership i.e.

- i Housing-Led Regeneration

- ii City Regeneration and Investment
- iii Access, Connectivity and Active Travel
- iv Future City Centre

**3.9** In addition to the planned workshop in October, it is important to note that there has been significant work already underway and/or emerging across the City Development Board's four themes. Some specific areas which we would highlight for Members information include:-

- Agreement and establishment of a Housing-Led Regeneration delivery sub-group chaired by NIHE is underway.
- Consensus on need to bring forward transportation plan for Belfast.
- Continued delivery of £4.2m Revitalisation Programme to support recovery from pandemic.
- Ministerial and NI Executive departments commitment to the Bolder Vision and ongoing work to proceed to public consultation and next stages and implementation, alongside the importance of other city-wide connectivity priorities.
- Engagement with developers in support of the work of the Board and to ensure we maximise the benefits and potential access to opportunities from future investment schemes (inclusive growth). This will complement the cross-sectoral representation and input into community planning including the community and voluntary sector.
- Participation in the Renewed Ambition Programme engagement workshop around the Social, Economic and Environmental Impact of Real Estate

**3.10** Maintaining momentum and focus

Members will be aware that in support of the development and implementation of the Covid Recovery Revitalisation Programme that an external and cross-sectoral 'City Stakeholder Group' had been established and provided important insights and, experience to help shape the programme. Whilst we are emerging from the emergency response to the pandemic with restrictions being eased, there are no doubt significant strategic and operational challenges which need to be addressed including, among other things, a clean, green, inclusive and safe city centre. It is therefore proposed that we build upon the strength and success of the City Stakeholder Group, and recalibrate and transition it into a City Centre Delivery Group reporting into the City Development Board and the Community Planning partnership.



**3.11 This Group would bring a cross-sectoral perspective and input into understanding and seeking to address the key challenges facing the city and seeking to align resources as appropriate. Subject to CPP approval in November 2021, the group would also act as a forum to advocate for Belfast and help engage/influence NI Executive, Departments and other structures (e.g. High Street Task Force) to unlock barriers. This proposal would complement and support the Council's (and CG&R Committee's) significant leadership and implementation role around city development, including supporting city centre revitalisation. It is important to note that the City Development Board and community planning provides the forum to consider and progress non-city centre considerations and priorities as referred earlier in the report.**

**3.12 Role of Elected Members**

**Elected Members will be engaged at each stage of the review process underway to refresh the Belfast Agenda and shape the 4-year action plans which are to be developed over coming months. This will include, for example, Members' co-design workshops, Party Group briefings, Committee engagement and through the All-Party Community Planning Working Group.**

**3.13 Financial and Resource Implications**

**Any financial implications arising from this report will be covered from existing budgets. The review process will involve the participation of all community planning partners, who will need to commit their resources to the review process and the agreed action plans.**

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

**There are no equality, good relations or rural need implications in this report."**

The Committee agreed to:

- note the on-going work of the Belfast Agenda Jobs, Skills and Education delivery Board and the City Development delivery Board;
- note the alignment and synergies between the Boards and the work of the Committee;

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- note the proposed transition of the City Stakeholder Group established to support planning and implementation of the DfC Revitalisation Programme to City Centre Delivery; and
- note the ongoing opportunities for Elected Members to input and shape the work that was being taken forward through Community Planning Partnership, including the refresh of the Belfast Agenda and associated delivery plans, over the coming months and years.

Chairperson

# City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 22nd September, 2021

## SPECIAL REMOTE MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Alderman Kingston; and  
Councillors Brooks, Donnelly, Gormley,  
Hanvey, Hussey, Maskey,  
O'Hara and Spratt.

In attendance: Mr. A. Reid, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;  
Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration;  
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Chairperson**

In the absence of the Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson, the Committee agreed that Councillor Gormley would act as Chairperson for the duration of the meeting.

### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported for Councillor Murphy (Chairperson), Alderman Dorrian and Councillors Howard, Lyons and McMullan

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

### **Presentations**

#### **Department for Infrastructure - Autumn Report**

The Strategic Director of Place and Economy welcomed Ms. L. Loughran, Mr. A. Darragh, Mr. D. Williams, Mr. M. McKendry and Mr. K. Monaghan from the Department for Infrastructure to the meeting.

Mr. Monaghan explained to the Committee that the Eastern Division covered the two Council areas of Belfast and Lisburn and Castlereagh and that it was one of four Divisions, each of which managed, improved and maintained the transport network and he added that it was the primary contact point for those who walk, wheel, cycle or drive.

He stated that the DfI Autumn Report referred to works which had already been completed in the Belfast city Council area in 2021/22 and set out the programme of schemes being undertaken for the remainder of the financial year.

He reported that, over the past year, DfI had continued to deliver its programmes whilst dealing with the impacts of Covid-19 and that, the capital allocations had been issued which were similar to the previous year, with funds being made

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available for blue/green infrastructure and would include walking, cycling, structural maintenance, safer routes to schools and traffic information and control. He added that resource difficulties had been an issue regarding the delivery of minor improvement programmes which posed a continued risk that some schemes may not be delivered within the financial year.

Mr. Monaghan advised the Committee that the overall budget for 2021/22 structural maintenance capital budget in Northern Ireland was £80M and, of that, £17M had been set aside for a roads recovery fund which was being used to address areas of immediate need across the road network.

Ms. Loughran referred to 'Planning for the Future of Transport: Time for Change' which had been published in June 2021, in which the Minister set out her ambition that active travel would become a pillar of change within towns and cities and contribute to reducing emissions, improving health, wellbeing and connectivity and was based on the following principles:

- To reduce the carbon impact of transport, by reducing the number of journeys and use more sustainable modes of transports;
- To increase the allocation of road space for walking, cycling and urban transport on streets; and
- Behavioural change from understanding why and how people travel.

She reported that a number of steps had been taken over recent years in Belfast, such as, pop-up cycle lanes, facilitating parklets and street closures.

She informed the Members that the Belfast Cycling Network delivery plan was being progressed and that it would be published before the end of the year. She added that work had commenced on a new suite of transport plans to secure genuine integration between the planning of land use and the planning of transport infrastructure.

Mr. Monaghan reported that a proposal had been developed for a Park and Ride site at the Tillysburn Junction, on vacant ground situated between Holywood Road and Sydenham Bypass, and that the scheme was progressing to the initial stages of planning application with a Pre-Application Discussion (PAD) submission the Planning Committee at its meeting on 5th August, 2021.

He referred to the York Street Interchange Scheme and reported that it remained a high priority for the Department and that commencement of construction would depend upon the satisfactory completion of an economic assessment, completion of the statutory process and subject to funding being made available in future budget settlements.

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Mr. Monahan outlined to the Committee, the Department's schedule of works in the following areas:

- Minor works;
- Maintenance of structures;
- Collision remedial schemes;
- Traffic schemes;
- Belfast taxi rank review;
- Pedestrian measures;
- Safer routes to schools;
- Traffic signs;
- Carriageway markings;
- Legislation;
- Disabled parking bays;
- Street lighting;
- Cycle measures;
- Traffic calming; and
- Transportation measures.

In response to a question from a Member with regard to weed spraying, leaf shedding and pruning, Mr. Monaghan indicated that there had been contractual issues which had caused a delay in scheduling, however, he invited the Member to pass a list of areas of concern to his colleagues directly, who would endeavour to address the issues.

Following further discussion, the Chairperson thanked the representatives from the Department for Infrastructure for their presentation.

The Committee noted the presentation.

**Department for Infrastructure - Belfast Metropolitan Transport Strategy**

Ms. Loughran reported to the Committee that the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Strategy was now being developed into the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan and that tenders were being considered for partner consultants to assist with the delivery of all of the Transport Plans, lot one would be evaluating Belfast and lot two would cover the other Council areas in Northern Ireland.

She stated that the consultants would play a key role in working with each of the relevant councils and that the Joint Project Board which produced the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Study would be reconvened in December, 2021.

She pointed out that the Minister's 'Planning for the Future of Transport: Time for Change' document would guide the planning and design of the plan.

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Following discussion, the Committee thanked Ms. Loughran for the update and the representatives from the Department for Infrastructure retired from the meeting.

The Committee noted the update.

**20's Plenty for Us Campaign**

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. R. King MBE, founder of 20's Plenty for Us Campaign, to the meeting.

Mr. King reported that the 20's Plenty Campaign assisted local authorities and governments to balance movement, safety and the economy to create better streets for people.

He outlined common objectives, including increasing activity levels, promoting healthy active travel options, meeting climate change obligations, reducing inequalities and lowering emissions and congestion.

He pointed out that, there were multiple mobility challenges, and referred to 36% of primary age parents that were afraid to let children walk or cycle, due to fast speeding traffic and that one in five adults, aged between 40 and 60 years old, were physically inactive.

He stated that the 30mph speed limit was not fit for purpose and did not significantly reduce overall journey time in urban areas and did not support active travel. He added that all inner London boroughs, Cardiff and Edinburgh had already set a 20mph limit and that Wales would set a national 20mph urban/village limit from 2023.

He outlined the benefits that a 20mph limit would bring, including a rise in active travel, reduction in casualties and overall safer streets. He highlighted to the Committee the key considerations to maximise the success of implementing 20mph limit and that '20's Plenty for Us' could help provide a blueprint for meeting community demand for 20mph in more places.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed to note the presentation and agreed to write to the Minister for Infrastructure, asking her to undertake a feasibility study to introduce 20mph speed default limits on streets throughout Belfast where people live, work, shop, play or learn, with 30mph as the exception on those roads where full consideration of the needs of vulnerable users of a higher limit is given.

The Chairperson thanked Mr. King MBE for his presentation and he retired from the meeting.

Chairperson

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## Licensing Committee

Wednesday, 20th October, 2021

### MEETING OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

#### HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AND REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Donnelly (Chairperson);  
Aldermen McCoubrey, Rodgers and Sandford; and  
Councillors Bradley, Bunting, Michael Collins, Howard,  
Hutchinson, M. Kelly, T. Kelly, Magee, Magennis, McAteer,  
McCabe, McCullough, McCusker, McKeown, Mulholland  
and Smyth.

In attendance: Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;  
Ms. N. Largey, Divisional Solicitor;  
Mr. S. Hewitt, Building Control Manager;  
Mr. K. Bloomfield, HMO Unit Manager;  
Ms. V. Donnelly, City Protection Manager; and  
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

#### **Apologies**

No apologies were reported.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 15th September were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 4th October, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor McCullough declared an interest in relation to item 2c – Application for the Grant of a Seven-Day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence – Northwood Linear Park, on the basis that he had held discussions with the organiser of the event, and left the meeting whilst the application was being considered.

Councillors McCabe and Mulholland declared an interest in relation to item 3a - Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2021, in that they each worked for an organisation which, on occasions, applied for a liquor licence and left the meeting for the duration of the discussion.

**Restricted Item**

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

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the Press and public from the meeting during discussion of the following item as, due to the nature of the 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.

**Non-Delegated Matter**

**Amendment to Standing Orders and Operating Protocols**

The Divisional Solicitor informed the Committee that Council officers had been made aware of a recent judicial review of a planning decision which had been taken by another council. Whilst the Judgement had yet to be formally published, it was felt that it should be brought to the attention of Members, as the judge had made a number of findings which would impact upon decisions taken by the Committee for this and future meetings.

She confirmed that a report would, on 22nd October, be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee seeking approval, firstly, to suspend those parts of the Operating Protocols for the Licensing and Planning Committee which prohibited Members from taking part whilst a decision was being made, insofar as it related to non-attendance, and, secondly, to delete/replace those Standing Orders relating to the call-in of decisions taken by the Licensing and Planning Committees.

She pointed out that officers were engaging with their counterparts in the Department for Communities to explore how the issues identified by the Judgement could be resolved and that a further report would be presented to the Committee in due course.

Accordingly, she recommended that the Committee:

- i. note the information which had been provided;
- ii. note that the call-in process would apply to decisions taken by the Committee from this meeting onwards; and
- iii. agree that it was a matter for Members to decide whether to take part whilst a decision was being made, if they had not attended a previous meeting where the application had been discussed, notwithstanding the provisions of the Operating Protocol.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.



**Delegated Matters**

**THE COMMITTEE DEALT WITH THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN PURSUANCE  
OF THE POWERS DELEGATED TO IT UNDER STANDING ORDER 37(d)**

**Applications Approved under Delegated Authority**

The Committee noted a list of Road Closure Orders which had, since its last meeting, been made under the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

**Application for the Grant of a Seven-Day Annual Outdoor  
Entertainments Licence - Banana Block, 310 Newtownards Road**

The Building Control 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 the grant of a Seven-Day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence, based on the Council's standard conditions to provide outdoor musical entertainment.

<u>Area and Location</u>	<u>Ref. No.</u>	<u>Applicant</u>
Banana Block 310 Newtownards Road Belfast, BT4 1HE	WK/2020/01331	Mr Ralf Alwani Belfast Rooftops Ltd.

- 1.2 A location map has been circulated to Members.
- 1.3 Members are reminded that all applications for the grant of Outdoor Entertainments Licences must be brought before the Committee for consideration.

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Taking into account the information presented and any representations made in respect of the application the Committee is required to make a decision to either:

- (a) approve the application for the grant of the Seven-Day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence, or
- (b) approve the application for the grant with special conditions, or
- (c) refuse the application for the grant of the Seven-Day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence.

2.2 If an application is refused, or special conditions are attached to the licence to which the applicant does not consent, then the applicant may appeal the Council's decision within 21 days of notification of that decision to the County Court. In the case that the applicant subsequently decides to appeal, outdoor entertainment may not be provided until any such appeal is determined.

3.0 Main Report

Key Issues

3.1 The applicant has applied to provide entertainment within the outdoor area adjacent to the main building known as the Banana Block. The area will serve the Banana Block building, which is also subject to an application for Indoor Entertainment. If the Committee is minded to grant the Outdoor Entertainments Licence, it will not be issued until such time as the Indoor Entertainments Licence is granted. The applicant has indicated that the outdoor area will only be used for entertainment when entertainment is provided within the indoor space.

3.2 The standard days and hours for an Outdoor Entertainments Licence are:

- Monday to Sunday: 11.30 a.m. to 11.00 p.m.

3.3 In addition, the following Special Conditions are usually attached to Outdoor Licences:

1. Maximum numbers will be agreed at the discretion of the Building Control Service and will vary depending upon individual event set up proposals.
2. Prior to any event taking place the promoters are required to demonstrate evidence of early consultation and have in place a robust system of dealing with any complaints, which has been agreed in advance with the Council.
3. Any requests to provide entertainment later than 11.00 p.m. must be considered by the Licensing Committee and therefore must be made at least 3 months in advance of the proposed event.
4. Should an application to provide entertainment beyond 11.00 p.m. be granted and the Council then receive a

significant number of complaints regarding noise or the complaint is of such significant impact, authority is granted to the Director of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the City Solicitor, to reduce the finishing time for any subsequent nights of the event, in which case the promoter will be required to make contingency arrangements.

#### Representations

- 3.4 Public notice of the application has been placed and no written representation have been lodged as a result of the advertisement.

#### PSNI

- 3.5 The Police Service of Northern Ireland has been consulted in relation to the application. At the time of writing this report, the Council has not received a response. An update will be provided at the meeting.

#### NIFRS

- 3.6 The Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service was also consulted and has no objection to the application. It will be invited to attend any planning meetings and will be provided with any associated event documentation for comment.

#### Health, Safety and Welfare

- 3.7 The applicant is developing a management plan outlining how the area will be managed to ensure the health and safety of their patrons and staff. Policies on customer social distancing, staff social distancing, PPE, handwashing and waiter service will be included in the plan.
- 3.8 When received, the Service will provide a copy of the applicant's proposals to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 to the Health and Safety section of City and Neighbourhood Services for their consideration.

#### Noise

- 3.9 The applicant has been advised that an acoustic report will be required prior to outdoor entertainment being hosted at the venue. The report will be provided to the Environmental Protection Unit for evaluation.

**Applicant**

- 3.10 The applicant, and/or their representatives, will be available at your meeting to answer any queries you may have in relation to the application.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.11 None.

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

- 3.12 There are no issues associated with this report.”

The Committee agreed to grant a Seven-Day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence for Banana Block, 310 Newtownards Road, subject to the Police Service of Northern Ireland confirming that it had no objection to the licence being granted.

**Application for the Grant of a Seven-Day Annual Outdoor  
Entertainments Licence - Northwood Linear Park**

The Building Control 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 the grant of a Seven-day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence in respect of Northwood Linear Park, based on the Council’s standard conditions to provide outdoor musical entertainment.

<b><u>Area and Location</u></b>	<b><u>Ref. No.</u></b>	<b><u>Applicant</u></b>
Northwood Linear Park Shore Road Belfast BT15 3LZ	WK/2020/	Mr. Ryan Black City and Neighbourhood Services Department Belfast City Council

- 1.2 The dates of a forthcoming community event proposed to take place in the park are such that this is the only Committee meeting at which this matter can be considered.
- 1.3 A location map has been circulated to Members.

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 Taking into account the information presented and any representations made in respect of the application the Committee is required to make a decision to either:**

- a) approve the application for the grant of the Seven-day annual Outdoor Entertainments, or**
- b) approve the application for the grant with special conditions, or**
- c) refuse the application for the grant of the Seven-Day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence.**

**2.2 If an application is refused, or special conditions are attached to the licence to which the applicant does not consent, then the applicant may appeal the Council's decision within 21 days of notification of that decision to the County Court. In the case that the applicant subsequently decides to appeal, outdoor entertainment may not be provided until any such appeal is determined.**

**3.0 Main Report**

**Key Issues**

**3.1 As for all licences associated with the Council's parks, the applicant is Mr. Ryan Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services.**

**3.2 The standard days and hours for an Outdoor Entertainments Licence are:**

- Monday to Sunday: 11.30 a.m. to 11.00 p.m.**

**3.3 In addition, the following Special Conditions are attached to Outdoor Entertainments Licences:**

- Maximum numbers will be agreed at the discretion of the Building Control Service and will vary depending upon individual concert set up proposals.**
- Prior to any event taking place the promoters are required to demonstrate evidence of early consultation and have in place a robust system of dealing with any complaints, which has been agreed in advance with the Council.**

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- Any requests to provide entertainment later than 11.00 p.m. must be considered by the Licensing Committee and therefore must be made at least three months in advance of the proposed event.
- Should an application to provide entertainment beyond 11.00 p.m. be granted and the Council then receive a significant number of complaints regarding noise or the complaint is of such significant impact, authority is granted to the Director of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the City Solicitor, to reduce the finishing time for any subsequent nights of the event, in which case the promoter will be required to make contingency arrangements.

**3.4** Members are reminded that all applications for the grant of Outdoor Entertainments Licences are subject to consideration by the Committee.

**Dockside Festival**

**3.5** At the Council meeting in July 2021, it was agreed to allocate £500k to a diversionary and festival programme, on the understanding that, as part of this programme, there would be events on Council land that would have to be organised within a tight timeframe.

**3.6** It was further agreed that all planned events must be compliant with Covid-19 restrictions at the time, with the use of Council Parks for approved events granted, if required, in compliance with existing Council policies and use of Council parks and open spaces. Approvals were subject to:

- Negotiation of satisfactory terms and conditions of use, including any relevant fees, via an appropriate legal agreement prepared by the City Solicitor, including managing final booking confirmation dates and flexibility around 'set up' and take down' periods, and booking amendments, subject to:
  - The applicant resolving any operational issues to the Council's satisfaction;
  - Compliance with Coronavirus restrictions in place at the time of the event; and
  - The applicant complying with all relevant statutory licencing requirements.

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- 3.7** Subsequently, at the SP and R meeting on 24th September, The Hubb Community Resource Centre was awarded £44,000 to run a festival programme from 25th – 31st October.
- 3.8** Its showcase event is the Dockside Festival, which will utilise the Northwood Linear Park to host a family friendly, community event over the Halloween weekend on Friday 29th and Saturday 30th October.
- 3.9** Entertainment in the form of live bands and DJ's will be provided on both evenings of the Festival finishing by 11.00 pm.

**Representations**

- 3.10** Whilst public notice of the application has been placed in the press the date of the advertisement is such that the 28-day statutory period during which representations to the application may be made will not expire until after the outdoor events are scheduled to take place.
- 3.11** In the circumstances, where notification of a planned event is provided and there being no suitable alternative outdoor licenced venue to re-locate to, Members are asked to agree to grant approval for the events only and issue a licence for 29th and 30th of October.
- 3.12** To issue the licence, from a regulatory and enforcement perspective, is preferable to an event proceeding unlicensed.
- 3.13** At the time of writing this report, no representations have been received to the application.

**PSNI**

- 3.14** The Police Service of Northern Ireland has been consulted in relation to the application. At the time of writing this report the Council has not received a response. An update will be provided for Members at the meeting.

**NIFRS**

- 3.15** The Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service has been consulted in relation to the application. When additional fire safety information is available to permit an assessment being made the NIFRS will provide a consultation response.

**Health, Safety and Welfare**

- 3.16 Officers from the Service will engage with the applicant and event organisers in the lead up to the event to ensure all documentation and technical information is in place.
- 3.17 When received, the Service will provide a copy of the applicant's proposals to mitigate the spread of Covid-19 to the Health and Safety section of City and Neighbourhood Services for their consideration.
- 3.18 Additionally, officers will inspect the site during the build of the event space and following its completion to ensure they are satisfied all safety and management procedures are in place.

**Noise**

- 3.19 The applicant has been requested to provide the Service with an acoustic report for the event. When received, it will be provided to the Environmental Protection Unit for evaluation.
- 3.20 When a report has been developed for the event it will be considered by Officers to ensure the technical requirements are in accordance with all relevant legislation and guidance. The noise mitigation strategy must demonstrate that noise from the event will not cause unreasonable disturbance to commercial and residential premises.
- 3.21 The organisers will also be required to produce a suitable neighbourhood notification letter and officers will agree the extent of its distribution prior to the event taking place.

**Applicant**

- 3.22 The applicant, and/or their representatives, for both the licence and the event will be available at the meeting to answer any queries you may have in relation to the application.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.23 None.

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

- 3.24 There are no issues associated with this report."



**Licensing Committee,  
Wednesday, 20th October, 2021**

The Committee agreed to grant a Seven-Day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence for Northwood Linear Park, with entertainment being permitted only on Friday, 29th and Saturday 30th October.

**Application for the Grant of a Seven-Day Annual Indoor Entertainments Licence - Common Market, 16 - 20 Dunbar Street**

The Building Control Manager submitted for the Committee's consideration the following report:

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

**1.1 To consider whether to accept a late objection to an application for the grant of a Seven-Day Annual Entertainments Licence for Common Market.**

<b>1.2 Premises and Location</b>	<b>Ref. No</b>	<b>Applicant</b>
<b>Common Market 16-20 Dunbar Street Belfast, BT1 2LH</b>	<b>WK/2020/1444</b>	<b>Ms Alana Fox Carlisle Inns Limited 2-14 Dunbar Street Belfast, BT1 2LH</b>

**1.3 The application was received on 9th July 2021. Subsequently, an objection was received outside the 28-day statutory period on 17th September, 2021.**

**1.4 Should the Committee be minded to accept the late objection, it is then required to consider the application for the grant of a Seven-Day Annual Indoor Entertainments Licence.**

**1.5 A location map has been circulated to the Committee.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 As the objection against the application was received outside the 28-day statutory period the Committee is required to determine if it wishes to exercise its discretion to consider it.**

**2.2 If the Committee decides not to take the objection into account, then the grant application will be dealt with under the Scheme of Delegation.**

**2.3 Should it exercise its discretion, it is required to receive the person who made the representation, the applicant, and/or their representatives and, after having received their submissions, make a recommendation regarding the application. Both the applicant and the objector will be present should you decide to consider the objection.**

- 2.4** Thereafter, taking into account the information presented and any representations received the Committee is required to consider the application and to either:
- 1.** approve the application for the grant of Seven-Day Annual Indoor Entertainments Licence, or
  - 2.** approve the application for the grant of Seven-Day Annual Indoor Entertainments Licence with Special Conditions, or
  - 3.** refuse the application for the grant of Seven-Day Annual Indoor Entertainments Licence.
- 2.5** If the application is refused, or Special Conditions are attached to the licence to which the applicant does not consent, then the applicant may appeal the Council's decision within 21 days of notification of that decision to the County Court.
- 2.6** If the application is refused and an appeal is lodged, entertainment may not be provided during the appeal period.

**3.0** Main Report

Key Issues

- 3.1** The applicant, Ms Alana Fox of Carlisle Inns Ltd., has applied for the grant of a Seven-Day Annual Indoor Entertainments Licence, based on the Council's standard conditions to provide indoor music, singing, dancing or any other entertainment of a like kind.
- 3.2** Common Market is located in the former Arnott's Fruit Market building and Ms Fox is also the licensee for the building adjacent to Common Market, 39 Gordon Street and Lux, 2-16 Dunbar Street.
- 3.3** Mr Lawrence Bannon, who is a consultant and advisor to Carlisle Inns Ltd., has been liaising directly with the Service in relation to the application.
- 3.4** The Committee is reminded that, at the meeting on 18th January 2017, it considered a report regarding representations received outside the 28-day statutory period and agreed to adopt the following criteria when considering late objections:

- Has a reasonable explanation been provided, in writing, by the objector as to why their representation was not made within the 28-day period;
- Does the representation provide substantially different additional information to that already contained within representations that have been received within the 28-day period;
- How far outside the 28-day period were the representations received;
- The proximity of the objectors to the premises;
- The number of other representations received outside the 28-day period; and
- Whether there are any other material considerations which would warrant consideration of the objection.

#### Representations

- 3.5 The objector was involved in a previous application for the provisional grant of an entertainments licence for this premises and, therefore, has knowledge of the building. That application was considered and approved by the Committee in December, 2018.
- 3.6 The objector has confirmed that his main concern is the safety and welfare of the patrons of the premises and businesses in the immediate vicinity and in the objection has highlighted the following issues:
- That the premises are effectively being operated as a 'pop up pub';
  - Lack of Planning permission for the current use;
  - Protection of patrons from the asbestos roof;
  - Inadequate provision of emergency exits; and
  - The PSNI is not aware of the application.
- 3.7 Further to the objection, both parties agreed to meet to discuss the objector's concerns and attempt to resolve them. Following this meeting, which took place on 6th October, the objector advised that he wished to uphold his objection.
- 3.8 The objector noted in the original representation that he was unaware of the application for an entertainments licence and that if he had been aware of it, he would have immediately objected.

- 3.9 A copy of the objection email has been circulated.**
- 3.10 Should you exercise your discretion, you are required to receive the person who made the representation, the applicant, and/or their representatives and, after having received their submissions, make a recommendation regarding the application. If you do not wish to exercise discretion, then the grant application will be dealt with under the Scheme of Delegation.**

**Details of the Premises**

- 3.11 The areas where entertainment is proposed to be provided are as follows:**
- Main Area (Ground Floor), with a maximum capacity of 290 persons**
  - Mezzanine Floor, with a maximum capacity of 60 persons**
- 3.12 The applicant has applied to provide entertainment on the following days and hours:**
- Monday to Saturday: 12.00 p.m. to 1.00 a.m. the following morning, and**
  - Sunday: 12.00 p.m. to 12.00 a.m.**
- 3.13 The applicant initially applied to provide entertainment beyond the latest hour to which licences are normally granted for special events. However, Mr Lawrence Bannon advised the Service by email that they no longer require the extended hours at this time.**
- 3.14 The applicant proposes to provide entertainment in the form of DJ's and live bands. During these occasions, they will operate a public bar facility via an occasional liquor licence.**
- 3.15 This venue can potentially accommodate over 1,000 persons, however, the occupancy is restricted to 350 persons at this time due to emergency exit provision. A fire engineer has provided a strategy to ensure that adequate measures are in place to allow the 350 patrons to escape safely.**
- 3.16 If in future the applicant wishes to increase the capacity, then additional emergency exits will be required. Mr Bannon has advised that he is negotiating with Belfast City Council to acquire permission to escape via the Council Depot on Dunbar Street.**

- 3.17 Mr Bannon has advised that a Planning Application has been submitted in respect of the premises.
- 3.18 A Layout plan of the venue has been circulated to Members.

**PSNI**

- 3.19 The PSNI has been consulted and has confirmed that it has no objection to the application. However, it does highlight that the proposed area is not covered by a 5(1)(a) Liquor Licence, as stated on the application form.
- 3.20 PSNI advises that, if the licence is granted, it expects that all current Covid-19 Regulations and Guidance and any current hospitality restrictions be strictly adhered to, implemented and enforced by the licence holder.
- 3.21 A copy of its correspondence has been circulated.

**NIFRS**

- 3.22 The Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service has been consulted in relation to the application and has confirmed that it has no objection to the application.

**Health, Safety and Welfare Inspections**

- 3.23 This building was previously used by Arnott's for fruit and vegetable storage. The applicant submitted a Building Regulations application for the change of use to an assembly building and a completion certificate for the works has been issued by the Service.
- 3.24 The existing roof of this building is covered with profiled cement-based sheets which contain asbestos. An asbestos report was submitted with the application, although the report did not mention the effect that loud music may have on the asbestos sheets. The applicant provided a further specialist report which detailed air sampling before and after playing loud music.
- 3.25 This report was provided to the Health and Safety Unit within the City and Neighbourhood Services Department, which has confirmed that the report by the asbestos analyst indicates that noise-induced asbestos fibre release is unlikely and, subject to the duty holder's ongoing responsibility to manage the asbestos containing materials within the premises, it would have no concerns.

**Noise Issues**

- 3.26 Given the nature of the entertainment in the venue, an acoustic report outlining the measures to be taken to ensure minimal disturbance to persons in the neighbourhood, either due to noise breakout or from patron activity, has been requested from the applicant. The acoustic report has been submitted to the Environmental Protection Unit and consultations are ongoing with the Licensee in relation to the report.
- 3.27 If the Committee is of a mind to grant the application for the Entertainments Licence delegated authority is sought, before confirming the licence, to attach any terms and conditions to the Licence regarding the management of noise. Such conditions will only be attached with the full agreement of the licensee.

**Objector's Representation**

- 3.28 The objector's Representation Forms have been circulated and they have been provided to the applicant, as required by the protocol.
- 3.29 In general, the representations relate to concerns as follows:
- The premises do not have Planning Permission for the current use.
  - Contravention of the current planning consent brings into question the character and suitability of the applicant.
  - An opinion from an expert as to whether or not the asbestos could be released by sound energy or the transmission of vibration through rhythmic movement would not meet reasonable due diligence without physical on-site tests of a robust nature.
  - From knowledge of the premises and previous requirements of Building Control there are concerns regarding acoustics, fire compliance, toilet provision, emergency access and egress and noise nuisance in the neighbouring area.
- 3.30 The objector has been invited to attend the meeting to discuss any matters relating to their objections, should they arise.

**Applicant's Representation**

- 3.31 The applicant has provided their Representation Form, as required by the Protocol, and a copy of their response has been circulated.
- 3.32 The applicant's Representation Form has also been provided to the objectors, as required by the protocol.
- 3.33 A summary of the applicant's representation is as follows:
- The objection received is a commercial objection which is unfounded, without merit and does not stand up to scrutiny.
  - The meritless objections should be given no consideration.
  - Asbestos report submitted to the satisfaction of Belfast City Council Health and Safety.
  - Acoustic report submitted to Belfast City Council Environmental Protection Unit.
  - Building works completed to the satisfaction of Belfast City Council Building Control.
- 3.34 Following the PSNI response, the solicitor acting on behalf of Carlisle Inns Ltd confirmed that the application form was incorrect and the premises is not covered by a 5(1)(a) liquor licence.
- 3.35 He stated that there have been various applications for occasional licences at the premises which use the Article 5(1)(a) licence held by Carlisle Inns Ltd for the adjoining premises at Gordon Street. This is where the confusion has arisen.
- 3.36 The applicant and/or their representatives will be available at the meeting to answer any queries you may have in relation to the application.

**Counter Representations**

- 3.37 No counter representations have been received at the time of writing this report. A copy of the report has been provided to the applicant and objector and a verbal update will be provided in respect of any further representations which are received.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.38 Officers carry out during performance inspections on premises providing entertainment this is catered for within existing budgets.**

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

- 3.39 There are no issues associated with this report.”**

The Building Control Manager provided an overview of the report and explained that the Committee was required, in the first instance, to decide if it wished to exercise its discretion and hear from the objector, whose objection had been lodged outside the 28-day statutory period.

The Committee agreed to exercise its discretion and, accordingly, Mr. J. Morgan, the objector, and Mr. L. Bannon, an advisor to the applicant, were welcomed to the meeting.

Mr. Morgan informed the Committee that he had acted as an advisor to a company which, in 2018, had occupied the premises at 16 - 20 Dunbar Street. That company had secured planning permission to operate a temporary event space therein but had been forced to abandon the proposal and give up the property as it had deemed it to be commercially unviable due primarily to asbestos-related issues.

He explained that he owned a venue in Tomb Street, a short distance from this property, and that it held an Article 5 (1) (a) Liquor Licence, met all statutory requirements and did not serve food. He failed, therefore, to see how he could be viewed by the applicant as being a competitor. He pointed out that his venue complied fully with the licensing retailers' code on responsible drinking and did not sell alcohol at 99p per drink, as the applicant's company did.

He then rejected the applicant's assertion that other licensees in the area had welcomed the application by stating that they had made a significant investment in their business to meet current regulations and were not in favour of this venue being used as a pop-up bar.

Mr. Morgan drew the Committee's attention to his concerns around the existence of asbestos in the property and referred to the fact that the previous application had included a full asbestos report. The applicant at that time had been informed by the Council that, in order to ensure the safety of patrons, it would be necessary to fully encapsulate the roof. However, according to paragraph 3.25 of the Committee report, this was no longer required, as noise-induced asbestos release was deemed to be unlikely. He argued that this provided only limited assurance and stressed that robust testing should be undertaken to meet due diligence requirements.

He then highlighted the fact that the applicant had, since June, 2021, traded in breach of the current planning approval and that it was his understanding that



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enforcement action was being undertaken by the Planning Service in this regard. In addition, the latest application for an occasional Liquor Licence had been refused, on the basis that the judge had determined that the proposed charitable event would be secondary to a commercial venture. He added that an adjoining premises operated by the applicant had, in July 2021, been forced to close for one week for breaching Covid-19 restrictions by organising school formals with no social distancing.

Mr. Bannon informed the Members that Mr. Morgan had lodged his objection solely with the intention of frustrating the application process. He confirmed that the safety of customers was of paramount importance for the applicant and that all issues relating to the property had been addressed, in consultation with Council officers. Several tests had been carried out on the asbestos element of the roof, including one whilst music had been playing, and no concerns had been raised.

He pointed out that the applicant had been granted a number of occasional liquor licences, despite Mr. Morgan having objected unsuccessfully each time. On the latest occasion, the judge had found it difficult to grant a liquor licence, as the premises had not held an Entertainments Licence. However, the judge had confirmed that, should the Licence be granted by the Committee at this meeting, the applicant could return to Court on 21st October to obtain a Liquor Licence to cover events taking place over the incoming weekend.

Mr. Bannon went on to state that, in his view, there had been no breach of the current planning permission. Nevertheless, a new retrospective planning application had been submitted in August to allay any concerns around the future use of the premises.

He made the point that Common Market, which operated from Thursday to Sunday and provided employment for between sixty and eighty people, was extremely popular amongst traders and customers and had been praised by other licensees. He added that the venue was provided free-of-charge to any charity wishing to fundraise and concluded by stressing that the grant of the Entertainments Licence would further enhance the offering for all customers.

In response to a query from a Member, the Building Control Manager explained that the presence of asbestos had been the subject of considerable discussions between Council officers and the applicant. He explained that the initial application in 2018 had related to the use of the building as a music/concert venue, whilst the asbestos report and follow-up report which had been submitted for this application applied to a lower level of entertainment/noise. He added that the Council's Health and Safety Section had confirmed that it was content that the asbestos issue had been resolved on the basis of those reports.

The Divisional Solicitor explained that an enforcement file had been opened by the Planning Service in respect of the current use of the premises, which confirmed that there was an issue around planning permission and had given rise to a new application being submitted. In terms of the issues which had been raised around liquor licensing, she pointed out that that was the responsibility of the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Courts and highlighted the fact that the Police Service had not objected to the grant of the Entertainments Licence.

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The Chairperson then offered the objector and the applicant the opportunity to address any factual inaccuracies which had been raised by the other party.

Mr. Morgan highlighted the point which he had made earlier in the meeting around the planning enforcement action being undertaken in relation to the current use of the property and invited the Committee to defer the application until such time as the new planning application had been determined.

Mr. Bannon reiterated the points which he had made earlier in the meeting in relation to planning issues and urged the Committee to grant the Entertainments Licence.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to grant a Seven-Day Annual Indoor Entertainments Licence for Common Market, 16 – 20 Dunbar Street and delegated authority to Council officers, in advance of the licence being issued, to attach any conditions relating to noise control and the prevention of noise breakout from the venue.

**Houses in Multiple Occupation Licences  
Issued Under Delegated Authority**

The Committee noted a list of licences for Houses in Multiple Occupation which had, since its last meeting, been issued under the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

**Application for a New Licence to Operate a House  
of Multiple Occupation - 8 Jerusalem Street**

The Divisional Solicitor drew the Committee's attention to additional representation relating to the above-mentioned application which had been submitted earlier in the day by the applicant's legal representative and been circulated to Members. She recommended that the Committee agree to defer the application until its meeting in November to enable officers to review and formally respond to the representation and to allow for it to be included within the Committee report, if deemed to be material to the application.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

**Application for the Renewal of a Licence to Operate  
a House of Multiple Occupation - 12 Curzon 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 the renewal of a Licence permitting the use of premises as a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO).**

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<u>Premises</u>	<u>Application No.</u>	<u>Applicant(s)</u>	<u>Managing Agents</u>
12 Curzon Street Belfast BT7 1QU	8392	Dirnan Properties Ltd	None

- 1.2 Members are reminded that 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 Following the public notice of the application, objections were received in relation to alleged noise nuisance and anti-social behaviour taking place at the property.
- 1.4 As valid objections have been received, the application must be considered by the Committee which must, after hearing from the objectors and the applicant, decide whether to grant the renewal application.

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—
- f) is suitable for occupation as an HMO by the number of persons to be specified in the licence, or
- g) can be made so suitable by including conditions in the licence.

3.2 However, where the application is for renewal, the Council cannot take into account whether the use is a breach of planning control or would result in overprovision.

#### Objections

3.3 Following publication of notice of the application, a number objections were received. A copy of the objections have been circulated. The issues raised are as follows:

- a) Over provision of HMOs in this area, leading to densification of the neighbourhood and reducing living quality;
- b) Existing household waste arrangements are not sufficient for the existing population;
- c) Insufficient sound proofing of properties;
- d) Alleged nuisance complaints and anti-social behaviour attributed to the subject property.

3.4 Points a), b) and c) are not specific to the premises and, as this is a renewal application, the legislation prohibits the Council from taking into account issues around overprovision.

3.5 When considering the fitness of an applicant the Council must have regard to convictions in relation to specified offences and any other matter which it considers to be relevant.

3.6 The NIHMO Unit has consulted with the following units within the Council's City and Neighbourhood Services Department –

Environmental Protection Unit ('EPU') - has confirmed that in relation to night-time noise there have been three noise warning notices issued on the 16 November 2017, 13 November 2017 and 3 December 2017 in respect of the HMO in the last 5 years;

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;

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; and

Enforcement Unit('EU') – 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,

- 3.7 The NIHMO Unit received a complaint relating to an allegation of the tenants playing music and coming and going from the property on 5th April 2021. The complaint was accompanied by a video lasting 8 secs, showing an individual knocking on the door. In addition, there was a still photograph of a police car and a police officer on the Street at 1.36 am. The NIHMO unit took no action in relation to this complaint.
- 3.8 The NIHMO Unit received a further complaint relating to an incident on 8th August 2021 from 12.50 am onwards. The complaint consisted of a written statement and 3 videos, the complainant stated, *'The lads in number 12 were having a party and playing football on the street and in and out of their house all night.'*
- 3.9 The videos are short (23 seconds, 48 seconds and 79 seconds) and showed people coming and going from the property and in one video a person is seen kicking a football with someone out of camera shot. Officers will have these videos available for members to view at Committee.
- 3.10 On foot of this complaint, the NIHMO Unit wrote to the owner of the property.
- 3.11 The owner confirmed to the NIHMO Unit that, in response to the August incident, he had a meeting with the tenants regarding their behaviour, during which he reinforced their responsibilities as tenants and furnished them with a copy of the anti-social behaviour policy. He further advised the tenants that this couldn't happen again and if it does the next step will be to contact their guarantors. The owner is of the belief that the tenants took the advice on board and he states

that they apologised for their behaviour. The owner also asked his tenants to apologise to any of their neighbours that they may have annoyed.

- 3.12 Based on the information provided by the owner, the NIHMO Unit was satisfied that the owner's conduct in dealing with the incident was reasonable and proportionate.

#### Fitness

- 3.13 The applicants and managing agent have confirmed that they have not been convicted of any relevant offences, as set out at paragraph 3.6 of this report.
- 3.14 The applicant or managing agent have not been convicted of any HMO related offences by the Council. The EPU, PHHU and EU, 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.
- 3.15 Officers are not aware of any other issue relevant to the Applicant's fitness.

#### Attendance

- 3.16 The applicant and/or their representatives will be available to discuss any matters relating to the licence application should they arise during the Committee meeting.

#### Suitability of the Premises

- 3.17 An inspection of the premises was carried out by officers from the NIHMO Unit on 13th August 2021, at which time it was established that the property met the physical standards for an HMO.

#### Notice of Proposed Decision

- 3.18 On 20th August 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.
- 3.19 The notice of proposed decision stated that the council proposed to grant the licence. Officers are of the view that any

**reported/alleged instances of anti-social behaviour and concern about the lack of accountability from those who own HMO properties, can be adequately addressed by the provision of an anti-social behaviour plan and out of hours contact number by the owner, as is already required under the standard terms and conditions of a licence.**

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.20 None. The cost of assessing the application and officer inspections are provided for within existing budgets.**

**Equality and Good Relations Implications**

- 3.21 There are no equality or good relations issues associated with this report.”**

The HMO Unit Manager provided an overview of the report and played for the benefit of the Committee three short videos which had accompanied the complaint which the HMO Unit had received on 8th August.

He reported that Mr. S. Byrne and Mr. B. Gardiner-Crehan, two of the objectors to the applicant, and Mr. D. O'Donnell, the applicant, were in attendance and they were welcomed to the meeting.

Mr. Byrne explained that he was a homeowner in Curzon Street and that, on at least one night per week, he and his wife were forced to stay with neighbours due to excessive noise and anti-social behaviour associated with the property at number 12. He pointed out that Section 10 (6) of the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 defined anti-social behaviour as “acting or threatening to act in a manner causing or likely to cause a nuisance or annoyance to a person residing in, visiting or otherwise engaging in a lawful activity in residential premises or in the locality” and stressed that this was particularly relevant to this application. He made the point that whatever management arrangements were in place currently for number 12 Curzon Street were clearly inadequate and added that HMO properties in the area generally were having a detrimental impact upon the quality of life and human rights of other residents, in terms of, for example, feeling safe and being able to sleep without interruption.

Mr. Gardiner-Crehan drew the Members' attention to the three short videos which they had viewed earlier in the meeting and confirmed that he had recorded them outside number 12 Curzon Street from 12.50 a.m. onwards on the morning of 8th August, 2021. The video showing football being played in the street had been recorded at 12.58 a.m. He stated that this was a regular occurrence for that property and that his family, which included two young children, were often forced to move to another room in order to sleep. That was likely to be the case also for other families with young children living in the street. Such instances confirmed that the landlord was failing to address noise nuisance and anti-social behaviour. He went on to state that he had established a neighbourhood watch scheme in the street in an attempt to improve the appeal of the area, however, its

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effectiveness would be likely to be limited by the fact that ten of the seventeen properties in Curzon Street were now Houses in Multiple Occupation.

Mr. O'Donnell began by pointing out that, as the owner of the property, he had received only one complaint of anti-social behaviour, that being on 8th August. He stressed that he treated anti-social behaviour very seriously and fully investigated any incidents which were brought to his attention. That had been the case for this complaint, although, in his view, the videos which had submitted by Mr. Gardiner-Crehan offered no evidence, as they did not display the time of recording or the extent of noise nuisance. He confirmed that, following the complaint, he had met with his tenants to make them aware of their responsibilities towards other people living in the street and had provided them with a copy of the anti-social behaviour policy. Those tenants had left the property on 31st August, as their tenancy had not been renewed.

In response to a query from a Member, Mr. O'Donnell confirmed that there were now new tenants in his property and that he had not been made aware of any incidences of anti-social behaviour since they had moved in.

The Chairperson then offered the objectors and the applicant the opportunity to address any factual inaccuracies which had been raised by the other party.

Mr. Gardiner-Crehan pointed out that the videos from the night of 8th August had, in fact, contained noise, although this had not been apparent when they had been played to the Committee. He added that he had not made a complaint to the Police Service of Northern Ireland on that night as, from experience, the perpetrators had usually re-entered the property prior to officers arriving, nor had he contacted the Council's Night-Time Noise Team, as it dealt primarily with internal noise.

Mr. Byrne drew the Committee's attention to the fact that he had, on 30th September, informed the landlord that noise was emanating from his property.

Mr. O'Donnell stated that, in terms of the complaint relating to 8th August, he had not been provided with any measurement of noise levels.

The HMO Unit Manager added that the most recent information from the Council's Environmental Protection Unit had been provided two weeks previously and that it had made no reference to a further noise complaint. The HMO Unit had also received no complaints of noise or anti-social behaviour relating to this property.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to defer consideration of the application until its meeting in November to enable officers to obtain up-to-date information on any complaints of noise and/or anti-social behaviour associated with the property and agreed also that the objectors and the applicant be permitted to submit any relevant information.



**Non-Delegated Matter**

**Licensing and Registration of Clubs  
(Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2021**

The Committee agreed to defer until a special meeting a report providing an update on recent changes to the liquor licencing laws in Northern Ireland, by virtue of the Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Act (NI) 2021, which had received Royal Assent on 26th August, and inviting the Committee to establish a position in relation to any objections which the Council might wish to lodge.

The Committee agreed also that, in the interim, applications which had been notified to the Council would, pursuant to paragraph 3.7.9 of the Council's Scheme of Delegation, be dealt with under delegated authority, thereby permitting the Strategic Director of Place and Economy, in consultation with the City Solicitor, to lodge objections to notices of applications received under liquor licensing legislation.

Chairperson

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## Planning Committee

Monday, 11th October, 2021

### SPECIAL HYBRID MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Carson (Chairperson);  
Councillors Brooks, Matt Collins,  
Garrett, Hussey, Hutchinson, Maskey,  
McCullough, Murphy and O'Hara.

In attendance: Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;  
Mr. K. Sutherland, Planning Manager (Policy);  
Mr. D. O'Kane, Principal Planning officer;  
Ms. N. Largey, Divisional Solicitor;  
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer; and  
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

### Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors Groogan, Hanvey, McMullan and Whyte.

### Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

### 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.

### **Local Development Plan (LDP) Update**

The Director of Planning and Building Control advised the Committee that, on 29th September, the Planning Appeals Commissions (PAC) had informed the Council that it had completed the Report into the findings of the Independent Examination for the Belfast LDP draft Plan Strategy. In the notification the PAC had confirmed that the report had been forwarded to the Department for Infrastructure and that the release of that report was solely a matter for the Department.

The Planning Manager reminded the Committee that the Independent Examination (IE) had been held in two sessions, with the initial stages being convened for the two weeks between the 16th and 27th November 2020, with the concluding sessions from the

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18th January to 8th March 2021. He explained that the sessions were convened around 25 Topic Areas and that the PAC had further divided the topics into a series of over 500 questions which addressed the issues raised through both the representations and the considerations of the Commission. He provided that Committee with the issues which had been identified and an assessment in relation to their potential implications.

The Committee was advised that there was a need to set out the process and actions necessary for the Council to complete the potential adoption of the draft Plan Strategy. The Planning Manager reported that, whilst the DfI would send a Direction to the Council in respect of the plan adoption, it would not cover the Committee consideration and the work required to complete the associated reports. He added that the work and arrangements needed to bring forward the required SPG and the issue of the potential direction and the scope to reduce the potential for further delay in the LDP process were the subject of the subsequent items on the agenda.

The Members were advised that the Council would be required to modify both the timetable for the Local Development Plan and the Statement of Community Involvement to reflect the changes in guidance and the impacts of the delayed IE process on the overall development of the LDP. The Planning Manager explained that the proposal would be to follow the processes used in the development of the draft Plan Strategy, with the detailed issues being considered by the Planning Committee in advance of the final adoption documents being submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee prior to final adoption by the Council.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and the appendices, which provided an update in respect of the current position for the draft Plan Strategy stage of the ongoing Local Development Plan process.

**Supplementary Planning Guidance Update**

The Principal Planning officer provided the Committee with an update on the preparation of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) in advance of public consultation.

He outlined that SPG represented non-statutory planning guidance which supported and illustrated by example policies included in the current planning policy framework including regional policy. The Members were advised that SPG must be read in conjunction with the LDP and the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) but, unlike the LDP, they were not subject to the same scrutiny in terms of the statutory process. They were primarily designed to help members of the public, developers and planners to understand the intent of the policy and how it might be interpreted.

He advised that they were a useful mechanism for providing clarity and could be amended or updated through normal Council policy processes and were more adept to reflect changes in circumstances, for example, new design techniques or new policy products that emerged from central government. The Committee was advised that the SPGs had been prepared over the last two years in conjunction with Government Departments and Agencies, as well as a number of representatives from professional bodies. The approach had helped to raise awareness amongst those bodies, to alleviate and address their concerns and to ensure that the Council was abreast of the latest issues.

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The Committee:

- noted the update on the latest version of the Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) documents and the summary of their content, their current status and links to the latest version of the documents (available on modern.gov);
- agreed the content of the SPGs, subject to any minor amendments considered necessary upon receipt of the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) report from the Independent Examination; and
- agreed that public consultation upon the SPGs could be commenced upon receipt of the PAC report. If significant changes were required to any SPG on foot of the PAC report those SPG would be brought back to the Committee for its approval before going out for consultation.

**DfI Response to Comments on DPPN11**

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with the Department for Infrastructure's (DfI) response in respect of Development Planning Practice Note 11.

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. He outlined a number of potential actions or initiatives which could be taken in order to support the progression of the plan in a timely and efficient manner.

After discussion the Committee agreed to the next steps, as outlined within the report, which sought to progress the continued work towards the development and adoption of an up to date Local Development Plan for Belfast.

Chairperson

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# Planning Committee

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## 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);  
Ms. N. Largey, Divisional Solicitor;  
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer; and  
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

No apologies for inability to attend were reported.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 14th September were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 4th October, 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 item 6d - Proposed development of 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 leave the meeting and not participate in the discussion or vote.

Councillor O'Hara declared an interest in item 6i – LA04/2021/1119/F - Change of use from industrial storage units to waste metal recycling facility for export with offices, in curtilage parking and turning and associated works at 58 Duncrue Street, in that he was a political appointee to the Belfast Harbour Commissioners Board, but he confirmed that it was not a pecuniary nor a conflict of interest, and that he would not need to leave the meeting.

Councillor Carson, Chairperson, declared an interest in item 6m - LA04/2021/1520/F Change of use from 2 x first floor offices to an after-school care facility at Belfast Media Group, Teach Basil, 2 Hannahstown Hill, in that he had spoken with the developer and had been involved in a number of meetings in respect of the application and he would therefore withdraw from the meeting and not participate in the discussion or vote.

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**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.

The Planning Manager (Development Management) referenced the recent decision by the PAC in respect of Havelock House, which had supported the decision of the Committee in dismissing the appeal.

**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 7th September and 12th October 2021.

**Abandonment**

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 land at Cairnmartin Crescent in order to facilitate redevelopment in the area.

The Committee noted the abandonment.

**Proposed Listed Building**

The Committee was advised that correspondence had been received from the Historic Environment Division (HED) regarding the proposed listing of the Bank of Ireland building at 364 Lisburn Road. The Principal Planning officer outlined that Article 80 (3) of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 required the HED to consult with the Council before placing any building on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest.

The Committee

- noted the contents of Appendix 1; and
- supported the proposed listing of the Bank of Ireland building, 364 Lisburn Road.

**Planning Applications**

**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 two applications had been withdrawn from the agenda:



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- LA04/2021/0911/F - Demolition of existing building and construction of 9 no. apartments and associated site works at 236 Upper Newtownards Road; and
- (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.

**(Reconsidered Item) LA04/2020/1211/F - Mixed use regeneration scheme involving demolition of vacant buildings Hughes Christensen site; erection of 8No. Class B2 (light industrial) and Class B4 (storage/distribution) unit; extension to and subdivision of existing supermarket building to form 4. Class B4 units (existing retail use to be discontinued); erection of replacement supermarket; provision of new accesses, road improvements; car parking, landscaping and associated site works. (Lynas Food Outlet building to be retained) at No 46 Montgomery Road (former Hughes Christensen site) and between nos 44 and 46 Montgomery Road and no 41 Montgomery Road (Lidl)**

The Planning Manager reminded the Committee that the application had been considered by the Committee at its meeting on 15th June, 2021. At that meeting, the Committee had resolved to grant planning permission, subject to conditions and completion of a Section 76 planning agreement. He explained that the purpose of the Section 76 Planning Agreement was to:

- require the existing Lidl store to cease trading upon opening of the replacement Lidl store on the new site (in order to prevent two retail stores operating which would be contrary to retail planning policy);
- require the conversion of the existing Lidl store to Use Class B4 (storage and distribution); and
- completion of the other proposed business units to off-set the loss of overall employment land.

The Committee was advised that it was originally envisaged that the conversion works to the existing Lidl store would be required prior to occupation of the replacement Lidl store on the new site. However, that was impractical because it would not allow retail to continuously operate from Montgomery Road. It was therefore proposed that the conversion works to the existing Lidl store should be completed within three years of the first occupation of the replacement Lidl Store. The Committee was advised that course of action was considered reasonable from a planning and commercial perspective.

The Late items report at the June meeting had advised the Committee that completion of the other new build business units should also be secured by the Section 76 planning agreement to off-set the overall loss of employment land across the site. However, the Planning manager advised that, throughout the negotiations, the applicant had stated that the delivery of the other business units would be market driven and that the requirement to

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complete those units was commercially unrealistic and would put the scheme at jeopardy. Officers had therefore revisited whether the requirement was fundamentally necessary to make the proposed development acceptable.

He outlined that, whilst the Council gave significant weight to dBMAP 2015 given its very advanced stage in the process, the land was technically un-zoned for employment and was “white land” in the BUAP 2001. Consequently, the site was unzoned employment land for the purposes of Policy PED 7 of PPS 4 and therefore the second part of Policy PED 7 applied. He reminded the Committee that only one criterion in the second part of PED 7 needed to be satisfied and that proposal was considered to satisfy criteria b. He advised that that aspect of the proposal was therefore policy compliant and it was considered that there was no policy requirement for the other business units to be completed.

He advised the Committee that it was recommended that planning permission continued to be granted but that the terms of the Section 76 planning agreement be revised as follows:

- the requirement for conversion of the existing Lidl store to Use Class B4 (storage and distribution) in accordance with the approved plans within 3 years of first occupation of the replacement Lidl Store on the new site; and
- the removal of the requirement for completion of the other business units.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. D. Monaghan, agent, to the meeting. He provided the Committee with the benefits of the scheme and asked that the Committee would approve the changes as outlined by the Planning Manager.

The Committee granted approval to the application, subject to conditions and delegated power to the Director of Planning and Building Control for the final wording of the conditions and the Section 76 planning agreement.

**(Reconsidered Item) LA04/2020/0847/F & LA04/2020/1208/DCA –  
Partial demolition and redevelopment of existing buildings  
to provide 16 apartments, communal bin store and landscaped  
communal garden at 25-29 University Road**

The Principal Planning officer reminded the Committee that it had initially considered the application at its meeting on 15th June, 2021. At that meeting, the Committee had agreed to defer consideration in order to undertake a site visit. The site visit had taken place on 10th August. She explained that the application was subsequently relisted for the meeting on 17th August, 2021, but that the application was withdrawn from the agenda as amended drawings had been submitted late and the proposal description was amended.

She advised the Committee that the application was previously recommended for approval, subject to a Section 76 planning agreement to secure the inclusion of an area of rear amenity. However, following the submission of amendments, including a change of the description to social housing and the removal of the rear communal amenity area, it was now recommended for refusal.

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The Committee was advised that the proposal description had been amended to 'Partial demolition and redevelopment of existing buildings to provide 16 apartments (social housing units), comprising 10 one bedroom and 6 two bedroom units and communal bin store'. Amended drawings were also received which included the following changes:

- removal of the rear communal amenity area;
- relocation of the bin store / cycle parking area; and
- amendment of the internal floor plans.

The Principal Planning officer explained that two further objections had been received in relation to the development. Both of whom had previously objected to the proposal. The additional issues raised included fire safety issues, no mature landscaping was proposed, residential use was not suitable for the location, proposed density was unacceptable, it did not represent family accommodation and was not suitable for special needs use and potential structural issues.

In relation to the amenity space, she advised that the agent had stated that the overgrown area to the rear would be cleared and grassed, to improve the outlook, but not included as formal amenity space. Consequently, the total area of proposed amenity space was approximately 137 square metres, equating to 8.5 square metres per apartment. While the applicant stated that the area would be improved, it was not within the ownership or control of the applicant and no longer formed part of the application.

She explained that, while 10 of the proposed apartments would benefit from some degree of private open space, the remaining six apartments had no private amenity and were thus completely reliant on the small communal courtyard at the rear of the site. The Members were advised that Paragraph 5.20 of 'Creating Places' put an emphasis on private communal open space in the form of landscaped areas, courtyards and roof gardens and that only 39 square metres of the proposed amenity space was communal.

She advised that a large proportion of the proposed amenity space related to two private areas at the front of the building for Apartments 1 and 2, of approximately 62.5 square metres. It was not considered that the area represented a quality amenity space, due to the noise associated with traffic along University Road.

The Committee was advised that, as the original scheme had included the rear communal garden, which would have been somewhat protected from traffic and street noise, the original case officer report had concluded that, given the various amenity options within the development, the proposal was considered acceptable in terms of noise. However, following the amendments, it was now considered that the scheme was more reliant on the small amenity space provided at the front and on balconies and that it fell short in terms of both space and quality of space. Consequently, it was now considered that the proposed amenity space would result in an unacceptable adverse effect on proposed properties in terms of noise.

The Principal Planning officer added that, whilst a communal courtyard was proposed at the rear of the development, it was minimal at approximately 39 square metres and likely to be overshadowed for a significant period of the day.

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She explained that the agent had advised the close proximity of Crescent Gardens, King William Park and Mountcharles Gardens as public areas of open space which were easily accessed from the proposed development. Although it was acknowledged that the proposed development was located in relatively close proximity to those public areas, it was not considered that it was an acceptable substitute for the deficit of communal space within the proposed development.

She reminded the Committee of the 'Eia Street' appeal decision (PAC ref. 2018/A0070), whereby the Council had refused permission for 15 apartments as adequate provision had not been made for appropriate open space as an integral part of the development. She explained that approximately 80 square metres of open space was proposed within the application site, with the developer relying on close proximity to public parks to make up the shortfall. The PAC had agreed with the Council's reason for refusal and dismissed the appeal, with the other refusal reason not sustained. It was, however, acknowledged that all planning applications were considered on their own merits and that the Eia Street example differed from the current development, in that it was not located along an arterial route.

The agent had provided a number of precedent cases whereby the Council had departed from Policy QD1 and the advice contained within 'Creating Places' to allow residential developments with a reduced standard of amenity space. She drew the Committee's attention to the officer's comments in response to each case which was included within the Case officer's report.

In respect of the change to the description of the application, the NIHE had been consulted on the proposal, as it referred specifically to social housing. The NIHE had confirmed that the proposal was situated within an area of strong housing need in Belfast and that it was aware that the developer was in contact with a Housing Association regarding the proposed apartments, however, it had also advised that the units proposed did not appear to meet DfC Design Standards for social housing.

The Principal Planning officer advised that amended floorplans had been submitted to address the issues which had been raised by officers regarding internal floorspace and it was considered that those concerns had been addressed by the applicant.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. K. Carlin, agent, to the meeting. He advised the Committee that:

- the existing building had been severely fire damaged in January 2020 which had impacted upon the buildings on either side of it and that it was a blight on the area;
- the communal area at the rear had been removed from the scheme as the Housing Association which the developer had spoken with had stated that it would not be feasible for them to manage such an area;
- the average amenity site for the apartments was 8.5 square metres which was just under the Creating Places guideline of 10 square metres;
- the Case officer had not advised them that there were concerns regarding the quality of the communal area to the rear of the

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development and that they had not therefore had a chance to discuss it, and that they had requested a meeting with the Principal Planning officer to discuss the issues but that she had declined;

- the building was in a Conservation Area and therefore the front façade had to be retained, which constrained the development opportunities. He outlined that balconies were not possible to the front and that 8.5square metres was therefore the maximum achievable amenity space;
- he struggled to understand why the amenity space was deemed unacceptable when a similar permission was granted 70 metres away on University Road, which had no amenity space in such an urban area;
- the proposed development was 140 metres from the city centre boundary and if it was within Shaftesbury Square it would be deemed acceptable;
- it was on an arterial route;
- it should be treated as a refurbished building as, before the fire, it would have been a refurbishment and that the developer was being penalised;
- he refuted that the Eia Street scheme was comparable to the application in question;
- he questioned the logic of the case officer's concerns in relation to unit sizes versus communal amenity space;
- the British Standards relating to noise stated that a compromise was needed between elevated noise levels and the convenience of living in urban areas, and that the refusal reason given by the case officer would rule out nearly any development along arterial routes, which was contrary to policy and the emerging Local Development Plan; and
- the site was in a highly accessible location and all units were above the space standards required, with some 30% larger.

Mr. Carlin advised the Members that Mr. J. Laverty, noise consultant, was also in attendance to answer any questions in respect of the application. In response to a Member's question, Mr. Laverty confirmed that the only noise issue would be from outside the front two ground floor apartments, not inside. He explained that the Environmental Health officer had omitted an important part of the British Standards, where development should not be prohibited on the basis of elevated external noise in respect of urban areas. He added that 55 decibels was not absolute, rather that it was a guideline.

The Chairperson confirmed to the Committee that the two refusal reasons listed in the report related to amenity space.

The Chairperson put the officer's recommendation, to refuse the application for the following reasons, to the Committee:

- 1) The proposal is contrary to the SPPS and Policy QD1 of Planning Policy Statement 7 in that the scheme results in overdevelopment of the site as it fails to provide a quality residential environment for prospective residents due to inadequate and inappropriate public and private amenity space; and

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- 2) The proposal is contrary to the SPPS and Policy QD1 of Planning Policy Statement 7 in that the proposed amenity space will result in an unacceptable adverse impact on proposed residents by way of noise and nuisance.

On a vote, eleven members voted for the recommendation, one against and one no vote, and it was accordingly declared carried.

**(Reconsidered 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**

(Councillor Groogan, having declared an interest in the item, did not participate in the discussion or vote in respect of this item and left the meeting for the duration.)

The Senior Planning officer provided the Committee with an overview of the application which had been deferred without presentation at its meeting on 14th September, due to a request from an Elected Member.

She explained that 74 objections had been received in relation to the proposed development. The Members were advised that the site was not zoned within either BUAP or dBMAP, however, part of the site was located within the proposed Ormeau Area of Townscape Character (ATC) in dBMAP. The site also fronted onto an arterial route in dBMAP. The Committee was provided with the key issues which had been considered during the assessment of the development, which included the impact on the character of the area, impact on residential amenity, impact on parking and impact on sewage and drainage infrastructure.

The Members' attention was drawn to the Late Items pack, whereby Councillor Gormley had referenced a number of plans and drawings which were also included within the Case officer's presentation.

The Senior Planning officer advised that, throughout the processing of the application, numerous amendments had been made to address issues around the design, impact on character, residential amenity and landscaping. She explained that it was considered that the proposal respected the surrounding context and was appropriate to the character and topography of the site in terms of layout, scale, proportions, massing and appearance.

She outlined that many of the objections related to the lack of parking within the proposal and pressures on existing street parking. The location of the site was considered to be highly accessible as it was on an arterial route and provided convenient access to public transport links, local neighbourhood facilities and the city centre. The Committee was advised that a Draft consultation response from DFI Roads had been received, stating that it had no objection to the proposal subject to conditions. The Parking survey submitted in support of the proposal, together with a parking survey undertaken by DFI on 11th February, 2020, demonstrated sufficient availability of on-street parking within the vicinity of the site to accommodate the requirements of the development during its peak periods of parking demand.

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The Senior Planning officer reported that adequate provision had been made for open space within the proposed development, in accordance with Creating Places. Furthermore, it was considered that the proposed landscaping assisted with integration and softened the visual impact of the proposal.

The Committee was advised that the proposed development might result in some overshadowing, however, on balance, given the surrounding context and the amended design, it was not considered that it would create an unacceptable adverse impact on surrounding properties. It was also acknowledged that views towards existing dwellings were achievable from the bedroom and study window of Type A apartments on the first and second floor of Block A. However, the apartment windows were orientated towards the rear amenity area rather than the neighbouring properties, which were at an approximate 45 degree angle. The Senior Planning officer outlined that it was not considered that the proposal would result in an unacceptable adverse impact in terms of overlooking. She reported that there were no concerns in relation to loss of light, outlook, noise or general nuisance for any existing or proposed properties.

The Members were advised that NI Water had stated that the scheme could be registered on a pilot scheme, aiming to provide a site specific solution for sewage and drainage infrastructure. The pilot scheme related to both foul and storm connections and therefore it was considered that conditions should be applied in the event of approval. A Drainage Assessment had been submitted and Rivers Agency had requested further information. She confirmed that approval was recommended, subject to receipt of a satisfactory updated Drainage Assessment.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Gormley to the meeting. He advised the Committee that:

- the residential density was twice that of surrounding developments;
- there were no balconies or other private open space within the apartments;
- the two and three bedroom apartments would likely be used by families with young children, who required useable communal outdoor space;
- covid had highlighted the importance of access to adequate outdoor space;
- every pathway and shrub was counted as outdoor amenity space and the useable outdoor space was therefore significantly less than the quoted 238square metres, and was closer to 45square metres;
- he urged the Committee to consider the useable amenity space within the application and stated that the case officer had used the term “usable” in the previous application on the agenda; and
- suggested that the Committee should defer consideration of the application in order to undertake a site visit.

The Chairperson then welcomed Mr. G. Rice, Lower Ormeau Resident’s Association Group, and Ms. S. McKeown, local resident, to the meeting. They advised the Committee that they objected to the application for the following reasons:

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- the gable wall in Block B would obstruct natural light getting into the rear of Ms. McKeown's house in Shaftesbury Avenue;
- the light blockage caused by Block B would have a major impact on Ms. McKeown enjoying the amenity of her own home and her health;
- residents supported the development of the site and had supported a previous application for 14 apartments with ground floor shops, which had been granted approval;
- the site had caused major problems for residents throughout the years;
- the current proposal constituted over development;
- the amenity space was insufficient for a sustainable family type development;
- Block B would have between 35 and 45 adults living in it, with only 45 square metres of communal space;
- no consultation or engagement had taken place between the developer and the local residents; and
- they requested that the Committee undertake a site visit in order to view the context of the application.

In response to a Member's question regarding how long it would take DFI Roads to formally sign off the Private Streets Determination, the Senior Planning officer advised that there had been a recent change in management in DFI Roads which had caused a small delay but that it should only take a few weeks.

A further Member requested information on the housing density on main arterial routes and how the application fitted within that. The Senior Planning officer explained to the Committee that, while the surrounding streets were at a lower density, it was not uncommon to have a development on an arterial route at the density of 180 dwellings per hectare.

Moved by Councillor Garrett  
Seconded by Councillor Maskey and

Resolved - That the Committee agrees to defer consideration of the application to enable a site visit to be undertaken to allow the Committee to acquaint itself with the location and the proposals at first hand, particularly to consider the useable amenity space on site.

**(Reconsidered Item) 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**

(Councillors Hanvey and Groogan were reminded that, as they had not been present during the previous discussion of the application, on 17th August 2021, and that they would be advised not to vote on the item.)

The Chairperson advised the Committee that a request to speak had been received from Mr. C. Hughes, a neighbour, who had provided the Committee with details of the exceptional circumstances as to why he had been unable to attend the meeting on 17th August. The Committee acceded to his request, based on his exceptional circumstances,



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and agreed that he could address the Committee. The Committee also agreed that time would be granted to the applicant in order to respond.

The Senior Planning officer provided the Committee with an overview of the application, which had been presented at the meeting on 17th August, whereby the Committee had agreed to defer consideration of the application in order to undertake a site visit. The site visit had taken place on 9th September.

She reported that, at the Committee meeting on 17th August, objectors had raised concerns over the extent of demolition and stated that there appeared to be more demolition involved than was detailed in the report. Officers had requested the extent of demolition to be clarified by the agent with a detailed demolition plan. It was noted by officers at the site visit that the existing boundary, which the drawings had indicated was to be retained, had fallen into a poor state of repair and therefore the agent was also asked that the boundary be replaced or restored rather than retained as indicated.

The Committee was advised that a demolition plan and updated drawing had been published to the planning portal on 4th October, with neighbours and objectors notified on 5th October that additional information had been received. She explained that the updated drawing, alongside the demolition plan, confirmed that only the rear return and internal walls were to be demolished and that the roof of the original property would remain in situ as detailed in the original recommendation report. The new rear return proposed was as per previous drawings.

The Committee's attention was drawn to the Late items pack whereby twelve more objections had been received. The Senior planning officer outlined the officers' response to each of the issues which had been raised.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. C. Hughes to the meeting. He advised the Members that:

- he lived in the property attached to the application, built in 1896;
- the proposed demolition of the shared return would expose a large section of his party wall which held key Victorian features and structural integrity to his rear working chimney;
- the nature of the design of the Victorian ridge tiles which the semi-detached houses shared could not simply be cut in half;
- the site was a corner site and was fully visible from all angles within the draft ATC and removing those features was inappropriate;
- the applicant had stated that the apartments would be for couples but they did not meet the minimum space standards;
- the North Belfast Housing Strategy outlined a need for family homes within the area;
- policies PPS 6 for ATC planning policy (2.0) Policy ATC 1 Demolition Control 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.11, 7.7 and 7.8 had all been breached;
- similarly PPS7 - Quality residential environment and safeguarding the character of established Residential Areas – 2.14 had been breached;

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- that, given two apartments were being converted into four apartments, in light of “Creating Places – Achieving quality residential environments”, additional parking should be provided;
- the planners had stated that the demolition and addition of new dwellings for the application was exempt from the Area of Townscape Character guidelines because it was currently only a ‘draft’, but he had provided details of seven planning applications in recent years within the ATC boundary which had all been asked to apply to that guidance, and queried why the current application was being treated differently;
- it would set a bad precedent for the area if it was allowed to go ahead;
- he requested that the Conservation officer’s views were made public;
- there was room within the red line to make parking available if the developer did not overdevelop it;
- requested that the DFI Roads did not base their decision on a flawed parking survey; and
- he welcomed consultation with the applicant and architect to develop a good scheme.

The Chairperson then welcomed Mr. L. Bannon, applicant, to the meeting. He advised the Members that:

- he had reduced the application from five apartments to four;
- he felt the design was in keeping with, and sympathetic to, the area;
- the application would remove the unsightly side return to better match the character of the area;
- there would be no change to the elevations on Glandore and the street scene would be unaffected;
- a number of neighbouring properties had made alterations to their rear returns, including the adjoining no. 25 Glandore, which had an unsympathetic flat roof and a dormer added;
- at the last meeting he had mistakenly said that the apartments would be for couples but that they would in fact be two x two person apartments and two one person apartments; and
- that the location was suitable for four apartments, given its highly accessible location in terms of public transport and with the new Glider route.

In response to a Member’s question, Mr. Bannon confirmed that he would be content to re-engage with the neighbours in respect of the application if the Members felt that it was necessary.

In response to a further Member’s query as to whether there could be parking provision within the site, Mr. Bannon explained that DFI Roads had advised that car parking was not necessary but that he would be willing to ask his planning consultant and architect to re-engage with those who had concerns.

The Divisional Solicitor advised the Committee that, while it might be possible to amend a few elements of the application through amended drawings, it should be mindful that it was

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unlikely that all the issues which had been raised by objectors could be addressed through further consultation in reaching resolution and that it would likely require a new application.

Moved by Councillor Maskey  
Seconded by Councillor O'Hara and

Resolved – that the Committee agrees to defer consideration of the application to enable further engagement to take place between the applicant and the objectors.

**LA04/2019/2279/F - Demolition of existing buildings  
on site and erection of 29 no. apartments across 4 buildings  
(4 no. apartments in Block No. 1, 8 no. apartments in Block 2,  
8 no. apartments in Block 3 and 9 no. apartments in Block 4)  
with associated landscaping and car parking at Blocks 4, 5  
and 6 Clonaver Drive**

The Committee was presented with the details of the application.

The Senior Planning officer advised that the site was undesignated whiteland within the BUAP and dBMAP. He outlined the key issues which had been considered during the assessment, which included the principle of residential use at the location; scale, massing and design/ impact on character of the area; access and parking; amenity space provision and landscaping; impact on residential amenity; impact on existing trees and proposed landscaping; natural environment; contaminated land; flooding, drainage and sewage infrastructure.

He advised the Committee that the principle of residential development at the location was acceptable given the previous use and surrounding context and that it was considered that the proposed development was generally respectful of the context and character of the locality. Furthermore, it was considered that the pattern of development was generally in keeping with the overall character and environmental quality of the established residential area. He explained that, while the proposed development represented a higher density than that typically found in the surrounding area, it was adjacent to and would replace an existing higher density development.

The Members were advised that adequate provision had been made for private and public open space within the development, in accordance with Creating Places. The proposal included the removal of 14 trees and a group of scrub vegetation and, following consultation with the Tree and Landscaping officer, it was considered that the proposed landscaping helped to soften the visual impact of the proposed development and assisted in its integration with the surrounding area.

The Senior Planning officer reported that the development included 31 in curtilage parking spaces and DFI Roads had no objection subject to conditions.

He outlined that, following consultation with the relevant bodies, there were no concerns raised in relation to flooding, drainage, sewage, contamination or ecology, subject to appropriate conditions.

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The Chairperson welcomed Ms. R. Nicholl, agent, to the meeting. She advised the Members that:

- the site was not located within an Area of Townscape Character;
- it comprised underutilised brownfield land which had lain vacant for many years. It was currently occupied by three 1960s apartment blocks which had become an eyesore and, over recent years, had attracted anti-social behaviour;
- the scheme had been significantly reduced and re-designed since the initial proposal of 40 apartments submitted to Council in September 2019;
- 10 letters of objection and 6 letters of support had been received from different households and, since the reduced and amended final proposal was submitted in August, there had only been 1 objection and 1 letter of support from a previous objector to the scheme;
- in respect of drainage, DfI Rivers had no objection;
- in respect of trees and landscaping, it was proposed that all soft landscaping would be managed and maintained by a Management Company following construction of the scheme. The Council's Tree and Landscape Team had no objection;
- in respect of parking, 31 in curtilage car parking spaces would be provided, which equated to 1 per apartment plus two additional visitor spaces within the site. There were a further 55 on-street parking spaces along Clonaver Drive and DFI Roads had no objections; and
- the scheme represented a significant investment of approximately £7.5million from the private sector and would help to create 50 local construction jobs.

A Member stated that he had some concerns regarding the balconies, in respect of overlooking, and also requested some additional information in respect of the bicycle parking facilities.

Mr. T. Stokes, agent, advised the Committee that the scheme had been sympathetically designed to respect the character of the area. He explained that the balconies included screening and that the site sat below road level, with the blocks around 20 metres from any existing properties.

In respect of bicycle parking, Mr. A. Beckett, Project Architect, confirmed that Sheffield bicycle stands would be provided within the parking areas, with additional coverage. A Member asked whether CCTV or other security measures could be installed to provide a more secure environment for residents to store bicycles. Mr. Beckett advised that they were not at the security specification stage yet but that they could consider that in discussion with the management company at a later stage.

A further Member commended the applicant and developer on the aesthetically pleasing design, which would be a welcome improvement for the area.

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The Committee granted approval to the application, subject to conditions and delegated power to the Director of Planning and Building Control for the final wording of the conditions.

**LA04/2021/0165/F - Demolition of existing buildings, erection of replacement discount supermarket, car parking, vegetated retaining wall, landscaping, amended access, alterations to Shore Road, and associated site works at 176-178 Shore Road (HSS Hire) and 194-196 Shore Road (Lidl)**

The Senior Planning officer presented the key aspects of the application to the Committee.

He outlined the key issues which had been considered during the assessment of the proposal, which included:

- the principle of a major foodstore at the location;
- the economic impact of the proposal;
- design and layout considerations;
- impact on amenity / character of the area;
- impact on transport and other infrastructure;
- impact on natural environment;
- impact on flooding and drainage; and
- developer contributions

He advised the Committee that the Local Development Plan team had reviewed the supporting information and had no objections to the proposal on the basis that the existing store would be replaced. They were satisfied that the proposal met the sequential test, would not prejudice protected centres, or result in an unacceptable cumulative impact. He added that conditions were necessary to allow the Council to retain control of the nature of retailing at the location.

The Members were advised that the design and layout of the development was acceptable and adequately respected the existing context in terms of building locations and set-backs. The Senior Planning officer explained that the landscaped areas would positively contribute to local townscape and assist in mitigating the visual impact of hard-surfacing of the site.

He reported that the retaining wall would be screened by vegetation which would mitigate the visual impacts of the structure. He clarified that a condition was necessary to verify that the structural engineering solution had been completed to an appropriate standard by a suitably qualified structural engineer in order to protect public safety and amenity.

The Committee's attention was drawn to the Late items pack, where Environmental Health and NI Water had since responded with no objections subject to conditions and/or informatives. The Senior Planning officer advised that the responses could be viewed on the Planning Portal. He explained that Conditions 2 and 3 within the Case officer's report were therefore superseded by the conditions listed on the Environmental Health response, apart

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from the operating and delivery hours which would remain as stated in the report at 9.58 to further mitigate potential noise impacts.

The Committee was advised that it was considered that the proposal would not result in any detriment to amenity of existing properties adjacent to the site. He reported that the building would be located a sufficient distance from neighbouring buildings to prevent dominance and overshadowing. The Members were advised that noise impacts would also be mitigated through the siting of the building which would screen traffic noise from the parking area to neighbouring properties to the north, and separation distances to properties opposite the site.

The Committee was advised that DFI Roads had been consulted and it was satisfied with the parking and access arrangements.

He explained that the Council's Economic Development Unit had identified the need for a Developer Contribution towards Employability and Skills in relation to the construction phase of the development, which would be secured through a Section 76 planning agreement.

He advised the Committee that no other consultees had any objections to the application in relation to technical, amenity, or other issues and that no third party objections had been received.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. D. Monaghan, agent, to the meeting. He advised the Committee that:

- the scheme represented an investment of over £4million;
- it would support 35 jobs, 13 of which would be new jobs at the site;
- it would significantly enhanced the appearance of the site; and
- it would create a much improved shopping experience for customers.

A Member requested information pertaining to the number of car parking spaces on site and how the application would encourage access by more active and sustainable modes of transport.

In response, Mr. Monaghan advised that 134 car parking spaces would be provided, which was lower than Lidl's usual store car parks. He advised that that was because the site was on an arterial route, with a bus stop adjacent to it and a pedestrian crossing across the Shore Road right at the access to the site. The Members were also advised that there would be 10 bicycle spaces at the front door of the store. In response to a follow up question, Mr. Monaghan confirmed to the Committee that it represented an increase of 60 car parking spaces on site.

A number of Members expressed concern with the current traffic levels in the area and with the consultation response from DFI Roads. Mr Monaghan confirmed that a traffic assessment had been carried out which showed that the proposed access would operate within capacity and would not have an adverse impact on any junctions in the area. He explained that both DFI Roads and Translink had confirmed that they were content with the proposal.

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The Chairperson put the officer's recommendation to approve the application, subject to conditions and a Section 76 Planning Agreement, with delegated authority given to the Director to secure the employability and skills Developer Contribution and to finalise the wording of conditions and to enter into a Section 76 Planning Agreement to the Committee.

On a vote, twelve Members voted for the recommendation, and two no votes, and it was declared carried.

(Councillor Whyte left the meeting at this point in proceedings)

(The Committee adjourned for a ten minute recess at this point in proceedings)

**LA04/2021/1119/F - Change of use from industrial storage units to waste metal recycling facility for export with offices, in curtilage parking and turning and associated works at 58 Duncrue Street**

The Planning Manager presented the key aspects of the application to the Committee.

He advised that the site was unzoned land within the development limit of Belfast in the BUAP and Belfast Harbour Local Area Plan 1990-2005 and was zoned as an existing employment area within the Belfast Harbour Area (BHA 06) in Draft BMAP 2015.

The key issues which had been considered during the assessment of the application included the acceptability of the proposed use at the location; access, parking and traffic management; and environmental considerations such as drainage, contamination and noise.

He outlined that a final consultation was awaited from the NIEA Water Management Unit. However, the applicant had clarified that the proposed site drainage would discharge to NI Water Infrastructure, which was currently the case, and NI Water had no objection to the drainage arrangements given that the existing premises already connected to NI Water infrastructure. All other consultees had no objection to the proposed development subject to conditions. The Members were advised that no third party objections had been received.

The Committee granted approval to the application subject to conditions with delegated authority given to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions and subject to no substantive issues being raised by the NIEA Water Management Unit.

**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**

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The Senior Planning officer presented the details of the application to the Committee which he advised followed a lengthy Pre-Application Discussion (PAD) process with officers.

The key issues which had been considered during the assessment of the proposal included:

- the principle of the proposed use at this location;
- layout, scale, form, massing and design;
- impact on built heritage;
- impact on amenity;
- impact on transport and associated infrastructure;
- flooding and drainage impacts;
- impact on natural heritage assets;
- contamination and remediation of the site; and
- developer contributions.

The surrounding area was predominantly residential, comprising typical two storey terraced dwellings to the west, north, and opposite the site on the Holywood Road. He outlined that retail and office units were located along the frontages of the Holywood Road and the Belmont Road. The Strand cinema building was located opposite the site and there was also a B2 listed building opposite the site, currently in use as the Ulster Unionist headquarters.

The Members were advised that the site was located next to existing housing and that the principle of residential use was acceptable at the location subject to detailed considerations as set out in regional policies.

In relation to the demolition of the existing buildings, the site was not located in a Conservation Area or an Area of Townscape Character, and the buildings were not listed or of any historic interest or architectural merit. Demolition was therefore not subject to planning control.

The Committee was advised that the affordable housing scheme would help address an identified affordable housing need in the area and that the NI Housing Executive had advised that it supported mixed tenure development as it was an important way to create cohesive, sustainable, and balanced communities and that there was social housing need in the Housing Need Area (HNA).

The Senior Planning officer explained that the layout complied with supplementary guidance in terms of separation distances between proposed and neighbouring existing buildings. It also provided adequate amenity space equating to approximately 28 square metres per unit, which was above the minimum standard.

He advised the Committee that the dwellings on Sefton Drive would have rear garden amenity areas ranging from 50 square metres to 80 square metres. The dwelling unit sizes for prospective occupiers complied with PPS7 and the proposal would not adversely impact on the amenity of existing residents. He added that the design, scale and massing of the proposed buildings were considered acceptable within the local context and would not adversely impact character.



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The Committee was advised that Historic Environment Division had recommended that further design revisions be incorporated to safeguard the impacts of key views to historic assets, namely distance views to the H&W cranes (Scheduled Monuments) and the listed building opposite the site at the corner of Belmont Road. The revisions included suggested additional setbacks and correction/clarification of drawing details. The Senior Planning officer explained that officers had explored the concerns, however, the set back space requested would render the related residential units unviable in terms of space standards for social housing. It was considered that the visual impact of the aspects of the proposal would not be significant and would not result in adverse impacts on listed assets, taking account of separation distances and the existing built form and design of neighbouring sites.

The Members were advised that there were a number of trees on the site, some of which were subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). The Senior Planning officer advised that approximately 22 trees (13 TPO) would be removed, with approximately 70 replacement trees provided, with further shrub and amenity planting also included. He confirmed that the majority of existing visually significant trees along the Hollywood Road site frontage and a significant tree within the site would be retained.

He advised the Committee that the replacement planting and need for social housing were considered to outweigh the trees to be removed and objections from the Tree Officer.

He reported that DFI Roads had been consulted and was satisfied that sufficient vehicle and bicycle parking was proposed, the access arrangements were adequate, and that the proposal would not result in a significant impact on traffic or road safety. The proposal included 56 parking spaces and dedicated internal cycle parking within an ancillary building. The Committee was advised that 11 spaces would be provided on Sefton Drive to serve the 11 proposed terrace houses and 45 spaces would be provided for the apartments.

While the parking equated to 0.6 parking spaces per unit, which was less than standard, DFI Roads had paid regard to the fact that the proposal was an affordable housing scheme and that the applicant's evidence that car ownership for the type of housing proposed was less than the usual standard. Regard had also been given to the applicant's proposed green travel measures to encourage a model shift.

The Committee was advised that 75 objections had been received from the public, the details of which were summarised at paragraph 9.39 of the Case officer's report. He explained that 4 objections were received since the last re-advertisement and re-notification process.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. P. Stinson, agent, and Mr. J. Anderson, Choice Housing, to the meeting. Mr. Stinson advised the Committee that:

- the application would deliver much needed social housing for the area. In March 2020 there were 934 applicants in the Housing Need Area, 522 of which were in housing stress;
- Choice Housing wanted to deliver a signature development at the site, including on site management through a concierge service and a tenant hub building to help foster a sense of community for residents;

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- it was one of the first proposals to engage in digital consultation following the onset of the pandemic. Four separate webinars had been held in May 2020, with over 100 people in attendance and the recording viewed over 200 times. The project website was also visited on over 5000 occasions during the consultation period and they had issued a project update leaflet prior to submission of the planning application;
- the application submission followed an extensive process of engagement with planning officers through a 12 month pre application process;
- the process resulted in a significant reduction in building heights and a reduction of 20 units;
- much thought has gone into the detailing of the individual buildings and the elevations, providing design features which bring visual interest to the elevations for the site which was located at an important nodal point at the junction of Holywood Road, Belmont Road and Pims Avenue;
- the design had secured a central area of open space that was at the heart of the development and accessible to residents;
- the loss of trees was compensated by the provision of a significant amount of new trees and vegetation that reflected the layout and design of the buildings. It would transform the site from the current hotel use with its extensive areas of hard standing;
- the site was on an extremely accessible location on an arterial route with excellent amenities within walking distance and public transport links;
- secure bicycle parking would be incorporated within the site;
- the development was also supported by green travel measures, including travel cards; and
- the development would provide a number of improvements for the surrounding road network with enhanced footway provision around the site, a reduction in the number of existing vehicular access points and an improvement to the access into and out of Sefton Drive.

Mr. Anderson stated that:

- the scheme would be a new signature project for Choice Housing Association;
- the high level of housing need drove their involvement in the much needed project; and
- the scheme was a long term investment for Choice HA, not only financially but also in terms of creating a high quality place for their tenants for the long term.

A Member stated that some residents were concerned about disruption as the development progressed.

Mr. Stinson advised that Choice Housing required the appointed contractor to be registered with the Considerate Constructors scheme, which was a not for profit organisation designed to raise standards in the construction industry. It required caring about the appearance of the site, respecting and engaging with the community, protecting the environment and caring about safety as well as valuing their own workforce. He also

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confirmed that the service management plan included arrangements as to how construction traffic would come and go from the site in order to minimise disruption.

A further Member requested information on the rationale for the loss of mature trees, particularly those which were protected by TPOs. Mr. Stinson advised that they had had to balance the correct placement of the buildings along the road together with retaining as many trees as possible. He explained that the amount of hardstanding on the former hotel site had created issues in that regard. He confirmed that an ongoing maintenance plan would ensure that the new trees grew and become part of the value of the site and that the existing trees were appropriately maintained into the future.

A further Member requested information on various aspects of the design, particularly the curved design of Block 2 being overly dominant, the impact of the scheme on the Listed Building and apartments being out of character for the Sefton Drive area.

Mr. Stinson advised the Committee that the design of the curved building had been drawn from the surrounding buildings at such a key nodal point. He explained that the Pims Avenue side of the Strand was devoid of any elevational treatment and they felt that it was a positive addition to the area in townscape terms. He added that HED had acknowledged that there was an increase in one floor from the Listed Building but that with residential floor plates it was much reduced from what the previous proposals were and that it also recognised the separation distance between the Listed Building and the proposal and the fact that it was a bustling junction and that helped mitigate the impression of the new building with those around it. HED considered it highly unlikely that it would have an adverse impact.

In relation to the curved elements at the end of the Sefton Drive townhouses, Mr. Stinson explained that while it was slightly different to what existed currently, it was a modern response to harmonise the character of the area and helped to bookend the end of the terrace.

Mr. B. McKervey, Historic Environment Division (HED), was welcomed to the meeting. He advised the Committee that the position of HED was broadly supportive of the scheme and that the most recent iteration framed the Harland and Wolff cranes very effectively. He added that he felt that the curved design was entirely appropriate for the location and, although the proposal in front of the Committee was taller than the Listed Building at 2-4 Belmont Road, it did not mean that it was inappropriate.

In response to a Member's query regarding travel cards, Mr. Stinson advised the Committee that they were still in discussions the planning officers in relation to the duration of the travel cards as it would depend on viability. He advised the Members that there were significant cost implications for connecting the scheme to NI water infrastructure, the amendments and improvements which were required at the junction at Sefton Drive, as well as the well documented increase in construction costs.

A Member stated that the Tree Officer had objected to the removal of certain trees with TPOs and asked for clarity in relation to how officers determined when the removal of such trees was acceptable. The Director of Planning of Building Control confirmed that TPOs were there to protect trees but not at the cost of any other circumstances. She outlined that officers had to consider all material considerations, and that where the removal of some TPOs

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was proposed, and a suitable replacement programme included within a scheme, a balance had to be struck.

After discussion, the Committee granted approval to the application subject to conditions, with delegated authority given to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement, subject to the satisfactory resolution of outstanding issues, including:

- the receipt and assessment of information from the applicant to inform the potential requirement for Employability and Skills Developer Contributions; and
- finalising the conditions and Section 76 Planning Agreement, including the viability of the scheme in relation to the provision of travel cards.

**LA04/2020/1943/F - Residential conversion of the existing listed warehouses to form 57 (1 to 3 bed units) including 60% social and affordable to include a minimum of 20% social housing at 3-19 (Former Warehouse) Rydalmere Street**

The Senior Planning officer outlined the details of the application to the Committee.

She explained the main issues which had been considered in the assessment of the case, including:

- the principle of housing at the location;
- the impact on Built Heritage and Archaeological interests;
- the design and layout of the proposal;
- transportation;
- the impact on amenity of nearby residents and businesses;
- waste management;
- drainage and flood risk;
- the consideration of Developer Contributions

The Members were advised that the site was located within the development limit of Belfast in the BUAP 2001 and Draft BMAP 2015 (dBMAP, both versions) and it was un-zoned, white land in both versions of dBMAP.

The Senior Planning officer advised that the site was located within a draft Area of Townscape Character (BT041 Donegall Road (Village)). As the site was within the development limit, and taking into account the site context and that the proposal would bring the Listed Buildings back into viable use, the principle of housing at the site was considered acceptable subject to consideration of other regional planning policies.

The Committee was advised that DfC HED, DAERA NIEA, Northern Ireland Housing Executive and NI Water had no objections to the proposal subject to conditions. DfI Roads had concerns regarding road safety and traffic progression as a result of insufficient parking. However, it had also provided conditions and informatives should the Council view that the development was acceptable.

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She explained that the concerns raised by DfI Roads about insufficient parking, traffic progression and road safety should be balanced against the characteristics of the site, its sustainable location and the significant benefits of the scheme, notably that it would bring the important listed buildings back into viable use, deliver much needed affordable housing and that it would have regeneration benefits for the area.

She outlined that 29 representations had been received, the majority of which were received prior to the change in proposed tenure of the development to affordable housing. However, she drew the Members' attention to some recent objections and letters of support within the report.

The Committee granted approval to the application, subject to conditions and a Section 76 Planning Agreement, with delegated authority given to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise these. The Committee noted that before a decision was made, in view of the objection from DFI Roads and the position of NI Water, the Department for Infrastructure would need to be notified of the application and would decide whether to call it in and determine it itself.

**LA04/2021/1520/F - Change of use from 2 x first floor offices  
to an after-school care facility at Belfast Media Group,  
Teach Basil 2 Hannahstown Hill**

(Councillor Carson (Chairperson), having declared an interest in the item, left the meeting and did not participate in the discussion or vote)

(Councillor Hanvey, Deputy Chairperson, in the Chair)

The Principal Planning officer outlined the details of the application to the Committee.

She explained that the issues which had been considered during the assessment of the application included the principle of development and the impact of the proposal with regard to the treatment of wastewater

The Members were advised that the proposal was contrary to development plan zoning of Draft BMAP as a 'major area of existing employment / industry' and the BUAP 2001 as 'Area of Industry and Commerce. Whilst the proposed use was contrary to policy, she advised the Members that it was considered that the scale of the proposed change of use, relative to the scale of the zoning, would not adversely impact the employment zoning in the longer term, having regard to the development plan, Policy PED7 of PPS4 and the SPPS, providing it was granted for a temporary 3 year period. She explained that that would allow the operators an opportunity to find alternative accommodation.

The Committee was advised that Northern Ireland Water had recommended refusal of the proposal on the basis that the public sewer system could not presently serve the development proposal without significant risk of environmental harm and public dis-amenity, including pollution, flooding and detrimental impact on existing properties. The Senior Planning officer outlined, however, that NI Water had not provided any detailed evidence to support its objection.

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She reported that officers were of the view that the scale of the change of use would have no greater impact on the sewer network than the existing lawful use of the building as newspaper offices and thus would not result in a significant impact. The offices and printing presses had a lawful use on the site that could accommodate 120 staff. She advised that the current proposal would accommodate 20 existing staff, 30 children and 6 creche staff, totaling 56 persons. The scheme therefore constituted a net reduction of 64 people on site. She explained that it was difficult, therefore, to conclude on the basis of the evidence that the use proposed of itself would result in a greater or significant impact to the sewer network.

(Councillor O'Hara left the meeting at this point in proceedings)

A number of Members stated that they had concerns regarding the response from NI Water and that they would suggest a deferral to receive information from that organisation.

In response to a Member's query regarding the objection from NI Water, the Principal Planning officer explained that they had requested evidence from NI Water but that they had not received any. She explained that, in the absence of any evidence from NI Water, the presumption was in favour of development.

The Planning Manager added that, in the officers' view, there were no planning grounds on which to refuse the application and he strongly advised the Members not to defer and instead suggested a separate briefing on the wider issue of the reason behind NI Waters objection.

The Director of Planning and Building Control suggested that a briefing could be organised in respect of NI Water's objections to smaller applications and the cumulative impact of them. She drew the Members' attention to paragraph 9.4 of the Case officer's report which referenced conversations which had taken place on the capacity which NI Water had made allowances for.

Further Members stated that they did not feel that deferral of the application was appropriate based on the officers' advice. A Member suggested inviting NI Water and Living with Water to present the wider infrastructure issues to the Committee at a future date. He added that desktop exercises for statutory consultation responses were not good enough.

**Proposal**

Moved by Councillor Collins  
Seconded by Councillor Groogan

That the Committee agrees to defer consideration of the application in order to request information from NI Water in respect of what occupancy rate they feel is acceptable on the site.

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

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**Proposal**

Moved by Councillor Garrett  
Seconded by Councillor Brooks,

That the Committee grants approval to the application, subject to conditions, for a temporary period of 3 years, with delegated authority given to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions; and

agrees that NI Water and Living with Water be invited to present the wider infrastructure issues to the Committee at a future date, at a Workshop.

On a vote, ten Members voted for the proposal, with none against and one no vote, and it was declared carried.

**LA04/2020/2506/F - Application to vary condition 9  
LA04/2018/1415/F relating to odour abatement measures  
at Former Ballynafeigh Police Station, 332 Ormeau Road**

(Councillor McMullan left the meeting at this point in proceedings)

The Committee was advised that the application was before the Committee as it related to the varying of a condition of a Major development.

The Planning Manager outlined that the amended wording of condition 9 sought to amend the trigger point for when the odour abatement details were submitted for approval. This was necessary as Blocks A and B had already been constructed. The ground floor commercial units were still to be occupied.

Following the submission of amended and updated information, BCC Environmental Health had considered the technical information and had no objections to the proposed variation.

The Committee granted approval to the application, subject to conditions and delegated power to the Director of Planning and Building Control for the final wording of the conditions.

**LA04/2021/1586/A - Temporary mesh banner signage  
(19.1m x 9.84m) on former Belfast Telegraph Printworks,  
124-132 Royal Avenue**

The Committee was provided with the detail of the application for a temporary mesh banner sign (19.1M X 9.84m) for a period of 24 months.

A Member raised concerns that this was the second time that the application had been in front of the Committee for a time extension. She asked the officers to clarify why they felt it was appropriate to extend the permission once again.

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The Principal Planning officer outlined that, whilst the sign was contrary to Planning Policy (PPS17 Outdoor Advertisements), it was considered that granting consent for an extended period of 18 months would be acceptable in the particular circumstances. The commercial property market had slowed and there had been little activity in the city centre due to the Covid Pandemic. The locality was going through a period of transition with the construction of the university campus and the aim of the application was to secure a tenant and funding package to enable the commencement of development of the site.

Moved by Councillor Groogan  
Seconded by Councillor Collins and

Resolved – That the Committee refuses the application as the proposed signage is contrary to the policy requirements of SPPS 6.12, BH11 of PPS6 and Planning Policy (PPS17 Outdoor Advertisements).

**LA04/2019/2938/F - Lighting , including street lighting, lit & branded location 'Beacon' as well as associated electrical control pillars on Lands within the Glencairn park adjacent to Forthriver Road & Glencairn Road**

The Committee noted the details of the application for an environmental improvement scheme within Glencairn park. The site was designated as lands reserved for landscape, amenity or recreation use in the BUAP and as existing open space within both versions of dBMAP. The proposals would complement and improve the area and comply with the relevant policy and area designations.

It noted that, following the submission of a bat survey, NIEA had offered no objection to the proposal subject to conditions. Environmental Health was content with the proposal. DFI Roads had been consulted and, following amendments, was content with the proposal. No letters of representation had been received for the application.

The Committee granted approval to the application, subject to conditions and delegated power to the Director of Planning and Building Control for the final wording of the conditions.

(Councillor Brooks left the meeting at this point in proceedings)

**Restricted Items**

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

**Update on Replacement Planning Portal project**

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with an update on progress in the design, configuration and implementation of the new regional Planning IT System which would be shared by Belfast City Council, 9 other councils and the Department for Infrastructure.



**Meeting of Planning Committee,  
Thursday, 21st October, 2021**

He outlined that a similar report would be considered by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee the following day.

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

**Amendment to Standing Orders and Operating Protocol**

The Divisional Solicitor informed the Committee that Council officers had been made aware of a recent judicial review of a planning decision which had been taken by another council. Whilst the Judgement had yet to be formally published, it was felt that it should be brought to the attention of Members, as the judge had made a number of findings which would impact upon decisions taken by the Committee for this and future meetings.

She confirmed that a report would, on 22nd October, be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee seeking approval, firstly, to suspend those parts of the Operating Protocols for the Licensing and Planning Committee which prohibited Members from taking part whilst a decision was being made, insofar as it related to non-attendance, and, secondly, to delete/replace those Standing Orders relating to the call-in of decisions taken by the Licensing and Planning Committees.

She pointed out that officers were engaging with their counterparts in the Department for Communities to explore how the issues identified by the Judgement could be resolved and that a further report would be presented to the Committee in due course.

Accordingly, she recommended that the Committee:

- i. note the information which had been provided;
- ii. note that the call-in process would apply to decisions taken by the Committee from this meeting onwards; and
- iii. agree that it was a matter for Members to decide whether to take part whilst a decision was being made, if they had not attended a previous meeting where the application had been discussed, notwithstanding the provisions of the Operating Protocol.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Chairperson

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## **Community Sector Terms and Conditions**

“This Council commends and recognises the extraordinary efforts of the community sector during the emergency response period of COVID19. Their ability to react quickly and effectively during the first days of the pandemic and to assist and help the most vulnerable and those most in need in our society.

This council also recognises the challenges facing the community sector, particularly in relation to terms and conditions and salary levels, and agrees to write to the Minister for Communities and request a review been undertaken and actions identified to support and strengthen this valuable and essential Sector.”

Proposer: Councillor Bunting

Seconder: Alderman Dorrian

(To be debated by the Council)

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## **Rent Controls**

“This Council supports a system of rent controls in the City.

This council notes with grave concern the escalating prices of rents in all parts of Belfast, notes the failure of the executive to regulate the rental market and notes the significant additional number of students moving to the city with the relocation of the University of Ulster campus to North Belfast. This council is concerned about the increasing number of Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) spreading across the city, the escalation of living costs, while wages stagnate and National Insurance contributions increase.

This council calls on the Executive to; immediately bring forward a Rent Control scheme for the City.”

Proposer: Councillor O’Hara

Secunder: Councillor Groogan

(To be debated by the Council)

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## **COP26 – Global Day of Action on 6 November**

“Council notes that:

1. The UN climate negotiations, known as COP26, will take place in Glasgow from 31 Oct to 12 Nov 2021.
2. Human-caused climate breakdown is leading to and exacerbating extreme weather events across the globe. The most recent IPCC Report warned that many of these changes are unprecedented, and some are already ‘irreversible’.
3. The IPCC has also warned of dire consequences of exceeding the 1.5°C global average temperature rise and called for halving of global carbon emissions by 2030, yet emissions have continued to rise; and current emission reductions pledges as part of the Paris Agreement will set us on a course for a disastrous 3.5 degrees of warming.
4. The climate crisis is a social justice issue, with those who have done least to cause the crisis facing the worst impact.
5. Wealthy, industrialised countries have a responsibility to take on their fair share of emissions reductions and need to increase targets for emission reductions by significantly investing in green energy, public transport, and retro-fitting of buildings, and by leaving fossil fuels in the ground.
6. We also face a global crisis of unemployment and that the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic represents an ideal opportunity to invest in climate jobs, a just transition, and a fairer society.
7. Significant pressure is needed from across society, including local government, to ensure real action is taken to stop a climate catastrophe.
8. The COP26 Coalition - with local hubs across these islands, including in Belfast - has issued a call for a Global Day of Action on 6 November, and a march has been called in Belfast accordingly, to demand action.

Council therefore resolves:

To support the march in Belfast on 6 November; to circulate to Council staff information about the march; to issue a press statement indicating its support for the march, as well as publicising the march details on all social media channels; and finally, to light up City Hall green on the evening of the 5 November, in anticipation of the march the following day.”

Proposer: Councillor Ferguson

Seconder: Councillor Matt Collins

(To be debated by the Council)

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## Regulation of AirBnBs

“Council notes with concern the unregulated proliferation of AirBnBs and similar types of short-term lets in Belfast and the impact this is having on communities. In particular, council recognises the impact on residents through antisocial behaviour occurring at many such properties, the impact on the make-up and character of communities as properties previously used as residential homes are switched to short-term lets of this type, and the impact on both the affordability of properties and the availability of long-term tenancies in many areas.

Council therefore agrees to write to the Northern Ireland Executive requesting an urgent cross-departmental review of this issue, and the creation of a robust and effective regulatory and licensing system for properties intended for use as short-term lets of this type, including capacity to create areas of special concern where the number of properties authorised for such use can be capped to avoid an imbalance in housing diversity, affordability and availability.”

Proposer: Councillor McKeown

Seconder: Councillor McCusker

(To be debated by the Council)

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