

# People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 11th May, 2021

## MEETING OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

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

Also attended: Councillor O'Hara.

In attendance: Mr. R. Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services;  
Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;  
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer; and  
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

No apologies were recorded.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 13th April 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 May subject to the following amendment:

### **Response from Department for Communities – Affordable Warmth Update**

At the request of Councillor Heading, the Council agreed to communicate to the Minister for Communities its disappointment in relation to the rules outlined in her response which prevented the underspend of the Affordable Warmth Scheme in 2020-2021 being ring-fenced for the use of the scheme and carried over into the next financial year and it was unfortunate that this underspend could not be reallocated to those in need.

### **Declarations of Interest**

Alderman Rodgers and Councillors Newton and Pankhurst declared an interest in respect of agenda item 2 (c), Request for use of Barnett's Demesne, in that they were Members of the Orange Order. They remained in the room while the matter was under consideration but took no part in the discussion.

Councillor McReynolds declared an interest in item 2 (e) Resources and Fleet Update (Waste Collections and Management) in that he was the Belfast City Council representative on Arc21.

**Restricted**

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

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.

**Promoter Request for the Hire of  
The Boucher Road Playing Fields**

The Committee considered a request seeking permission to use the Boucher Road Playing Fields from 25th October – 2nd November, 2021 for the purpose of hosting a local music festival - Shorefest.

Following a query in regard to the promoters potentially offering space on one of the days to a local community organisation, the Director of Neighbourhood Services clarified that the details were being drawn up but the organisers were looking to work in conjunction with local community organisations, as opposed to handing over the actual use of the space.

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

- (i) Grant authority for Shorefest for the use of Boucher Road Playing Fields for a local music festival from 25th October 2021 to the 2nd November 2021;
- (ii) Delegate authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to:
  - negotiate an appropriate fee which recognises the costs to Council, minimises negative impact on the immediate area and takes account of the potential wider benefit to the City economy, in conjunction with the Council's Commercial Manager;
  - negotiate satisfactory terms and conditions of use via an appropriate legal agreement prepared by the City Solicitor, including managing final booking confirmation dates and flexibility around 'set up' & '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;
    - 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;

- a review clause, which allows for consideration of any issues during the previous events, prior to any authorisation for future years.

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

**Proposal to install a Panoramic Wheel  
in Botanic Gardens**

The Committee considered a report in relation to request from G Force Amusements Ltd to install, promote and operate a 33 metre Panoramic Wheel in the lawn area adjacent to the Tropical Ravine in Botanic Gardens during the period 3rd July 2021 – 26th September 2021.

The promoter was aware that there might be other events in the Botanic Gardens over the summer, for example, music events and the Belfast Mela. The promoters would be required to liaise with the existing pre-booked events to ensure there were no operational impediments to events already booked into the venue.

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

- (i) Grant authority for G Force Amusements Ltd to install, promote and operate a 33 metre Panoramic Wheel in the lawn area adjacent to the Tropical Ravine in Botanic Gardens during the period Saturday, 3rd July 2021 – Sunday, 26th September 2021 with 3 days prior to opening and 2 days after for erecting and dismantling;
- (ii) Delegate authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to 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;
- (iii) Delegate authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to 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' & 'take down' periods, and booking amendments, subject to;
  - The promoter resolving any operational issues to the Council's satisfaction;
  - 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;
  - a review clause, which allows for consideration of any issues during the previous events, prior to any authorisation for future years;

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

#### **Request for use of premises - Barnett Demesne**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reported that the County Grand Orange Lodge of Belfast had written to the Council regarding the use of the Barnett's Demesne for its Belfast demonstrations on 12th July.

He advised that a separate report was being submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee seeking permission for use of the Cenotaph at City Hall for the Service of Remembrance and wreath laying

The Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to accede to the request from the County Grand Lodge for the use of Barnett's Demesne on the 12th July 2021, subject to an appropriate legal agreement being prepared by Legal Services.

#### **City Cemetery Heritage Project and Crematorium Recovery Planning**

The Committee considered a detailed report which provided an update in regard to the City Cemetery Heritage Project, the ongoing management of vandalism of graves in the City Cemetery and finally measures being considered to plan and allow for the reopening of the Chapel at the crematorium.

The Director of City Services provided an overview of the City Heritage Project, as follows:

- contractor procured in early 2020 to deliver the capital elements, work commenced on site in March 2020;
- a dedicated City Cemetery Engagement Officer appointed in February 2020;
- restoration of some of the site's listed assets commenced;
- the new Service yard completed in December 2020;
- construction on the site's new Visitor Centre in February 2021, due for completion in early October 2021; and
- the project included the delivery of a comprehensive interpretive and digital plan for the site, both of which were well underway.

The Director advised that with the easing of current restrictions it was anticipated that interest in the project would increase dramatically over the coming months. During this time the project's Engagement Officer would continue to maximise stakeholder engagement while the Project Team would continue to manage project delivery. She stated that it was envisaged that the project would be completed in November 2021 and she Director undertook to keep the Members updated as the project progressed.

The Director then provided an overview of the recent damage caused by vandalism to ten graves in the Jewish Cemetery, located within City Cemetery. She reported that the necessary repair work was already underway to restore the damaged headstones.

She also referred the various measures implemented and currently being considered which would hopefully help to mitigate the ongoing antisocial behaviour (ASB) issues, these included:

- increasing the height of the existing perimeter wall;
- the installation of steel shutters;
- the installation of automatic security lighting;
- the installation of intruder alarms on all the yard's buildings/containers;
- the installation of new CCTV cameras; and
- the potential use of Smart Technology – Sparrowatch.

Discussion ensued in respect of the installation of CCTV cameras and how any footage might be used to secure prosecutions in the events of ASB and vandalism. The Director of Neighbourhood Services provided an update in respect of the CCTV policy that was currently being prepared by Legal Services and the Director of City Services provided a comprehensive update in respect of the strict legislation that existed around CCTV footage and its limitations for use. She advised that a further update on the potential use of the Sparrowatch technology would be provided to the Members in due course.

Following a request from a Member seeking the reintroduction of quarterly reporting in respect of vandalism to parks and cemeteries, along with repair costs, the Director of Neighbourhood Services advised that officers were currently looking at this, he detailed the lack of resources currently to commit to quarterly reporting and advised that this would be looked at within the context of the Open Space and Street Scene Project.

A suggestion was made by a Member that the collection of data could possibly also be looked at as part of the customer hub.

In terms of the potential reopening of the Chapel at the crematorium the Director of City Services advised that, as part of the NI Executive COVID Recovery Framework, the Council were constantly reviewing the Covid regulations. She stated that with the easing of current restrictions, officers were currently planning for the recovery of the internal use of the building.

She detailed that NI Coronavirus legislation and statutory guidance required venue operators to limit numbers attending funerals by risk assessment. An initial consideration of all the risks in the crematorium Chapel would limit numbers able to attend to approximately 20 mourners. The Crematorium Manager had assessed the building in terms of all the Covid guidelines. A limit of 20 mourners would ensure that attendees could be safely accommodated within the Chapel, giving due regard to social distancing measures and therefore reducing the risk of transmission of Covid-19. Enhanced cleaning between services and the application of risk assessment process would also be implemented to support the reopening, in addition the pews would also be temporally replaced with individual seating and it was also proposed that a webcasting service would be installed. It was anticipated that this would commence by the end of June.

The Members of the Committee noted the significant progress in the delivery of the City Cemetery Heritage Project, the ongoing work to address the vandalism of graves in City Cemetery and the potential reopening of the Chapel at the crematorium for mourners.

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

The Committee considered a detailed report which provided an update in regard to matters within Waste Collections and Management. The Director of City Services provided a comprehensive update in respect of each of the following areas:

- The latest performance data on waste arisings and recycling, including the impact of Covid-19;
- Important consultation documents around Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging and Deposit Return Schemes;
- Update and initial performance data on the Wheelie Box Pilot Scheme and the future of waste collections;
- Interaction with the Customer Hub launch and the ongoing work with policy implementation and missed bins; and
- Developments within the sphere of inter council collaborative working.

The Members noted the update and recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to grant permission for Mr. Tim Walker, acting Chief Executive, to present to a future meeting of the Committee on relevant important proposed legislation affecting the future of Waste Collections.

**Community Provision Update –**  
**Capacity and Grant Funding**

The Committee considered a report which outlined a proposal to test a new approach to support communities and also in regard to funding for independently managed community centres for summer schemes.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services provided an update in regard to Community Capacity. He provided an overview of the current support in terms of financial assistance, provision of community buildings and direct staff provision. He stated that, in order to ensure that the Council continued to respond to emerging needs, consideration had been given to testing new methods of supporting communities with a weak or no community infrastructure and he provided a detailed overview of the proposals.

During discussion several Members highlighted the issues within their communities that existed in terms of weak local community infrastructure and lack of capacity.

The Director advised that further consideration was being given as to how communities of interest could be supported and stated that proposals would be submitted to a future meeting for Members consideration. He further detailed that these areas of concern would be considered as part of the pilot, this might identify that a different approach was required and if this was the case, such changes could possibly be looked at through a co-design process.

In terms of the 2020/21 Capacity Grant, the Director reminded the Members that the Chief Executive had written to the Department for Communities (DfC) outlining the impact of the Covid-19 restrictions and the bearing that these had had in regard to the delivery of services for community/voluntary organisations. The letter had requested that the Council's Letter of Offer, in its entirety, be extended to allow 2020/21 funding to carry forward to the 2021/22 financial year.

The Director advised that the Department for Communities had responded stating that the Council should put only 2020/21 COVID-19 specific funding on to the Council reserves for use in the 2021/22 financial year. It stated that the DfC grant, which funds the Council's community capacity, buildings revenue and advice grants, must be spent in keeping with the original terms and conditions from DfC i.e. only spend between 1st April 2020 and 31st March 2021 would be eligible to be claimed.

The Members were reminded that the Council provided a significant amount of match funding for this grant funding and the Members were asked to consider if they wished to extend the delivery period for all of the above 2020/21 capacity, revenue and advice grant funding to end September 2021, to be considered on case by case basis.

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

- agree to test the new approach to supporting areas of weak or no community infrastructure in partnership with communities on a North, South, East, West basis and with a budget of £15,000 for each area; and
- extend the delivery period for 2020/21 capacity, revenue and advice grant funding to end September 2021, on a case by case basis as needed.

### **Matters referred back from the Council/Motions**

#### **Motion - Recent violence and Public Disorder**

The Committee was reminded that, at the Council meeting on 4th May, the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Smyth and seconded by Councillor Mulholland, had, in accordance with Standing Order 13(f), been referred to the Committee for consideration:

"This Council condemns the recent serious violence and public disorder that took place not only in Belfast, but across Northern Ireland

It condemns paramilitarism, the use of violence for political ends and the exploitation of young people and working class communities.

We were deeply troubled to see images of children and young people involved in violence and deplore the risk of another generation seeing violence as a response to political frustrations. Whilst matters have thankfully settled over the past 2 weeks, we still believe that the underlying issues prevail and the threat of violence is near too far away from the surface in Northern Ireland.

As the main political body of this city, we have a moral and ethical duty to do everything we can to protect our citizens, particularly those young people at risk of being manipulated into street violence, as well as our duty of care to front line council staff carrying out daily essential services. We must also move away from simply offering condemnation and begin to look at solutions that will offer our young people hope and invest in their futures.

This Council will: commit to supporting all elements of the Youth Service, including our own Belfast Youth Forum; and will convene an urgent meeting of the relevant statutory agencies and third sector organisations to develop a consistent, young person led approach for the coming summer period; engage with relevant departments to ensure that discretionary funding is made available to support youth engagement and intervention; engage with Trade Unions to ensure safety of our staff and; will support the ongoing process for the formation of a NI Youth Assembly; and seek assurances that Youth Citizens' Assemblies will be considered as an engagement model to make recommendations for the city on addressing poverty, inequality, eradicating paramilitarism, integrating communities, expanding opportunity and tackling the climate crises."

Both Councillors Smyth and Mulholland addressed the Committee and outlined the context of the motion.

### **Amendment**

Moved by Councillor Pankhurst,  
Seconded by Councillor Bunting,

"This Council also commits to encouraging young working-class Unionists and Loyalists to engage and join any youth forum given current disconnect and imbalances through engaging with local youth providers, including uniformed organisations such as the Boys' and Girls' Brigades, to encourage membership.

Furthermore, this Council calls upon the British Government, the Irish Government, and the European Union to move quickly to resolve the Northern Ireland Protocol which is greatly exacerbating tension and antagonising many within the Unionist and Loyalist community."

On a recorded vote, six Members voted for the amendment and thirteen against and it was declared lost.

<b><u>For 6</u></b>	<b><u>Against 13</u></b>
Alderman Rodgers; and Councillors Bunting, Cobain, Newton, Pankhurst and Verner.	Councillors Baker, Black, Michael Collins, Corr, De Faoite, Flynn, Garrett, Michelle Kelly, Magee, McAteer, McReynolds, Mulholland and Smyth.



Accordingly, the Members of the Committee recommended that the Motion be adopted and, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to agree that a report on how this would be facilitated, resourced and managed be submitted to a future meeting.

**Response from the Minister for Infrastructure re:  
The provision of pedestrians crossing adjacent to  
the proposed entrance to Cherryvale Playing Fields**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 9th March, it had agreed that the Council write to the Minister for Infrastructure requesting the provision of pedestrian crossings, at either side of the playing fields.

The Democratic Services Officer drew the Members' attention to a response that had been received from Minister Mallon.

In her correspondence the Minister advised that she had asked her Department officials to explore the possibility of the provision of pedestrian crossings as part of the Blue Green Initiative. She suggested that Council officers working on this proposal liaise with her

Department officials to try and progress the proposal further.

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to authorise that Council officers liaise with the Department for Infrastructure officials to further explore the potential of the provision of provision of pedestrian crossings on Knockbreda Road and on Ravenhill Road, at either side of the playing fields as part of the Blue Green Initiative.

**Presentations**

**Presentation on the Air Quality Detailed  
Assessment work - AECOM in attendance**

**(Mr. Alastair. Curran and Ms. Eliza. Barszczewska-Lyner attended in connection  
with this item.)**

The Committee was reminded that at its previous meeting it had agreed to receive an update presentation in regard to Air Quality Assessment. The Committee noted that Mr. M. Nancarrow from Aecom was also in attendance.

Mr. A Curran commenced by providing a comprehensive overview of the recent Air Quality Detailed Assessment work, detailing how the Council had arrived at the appointment of AECOM consultants in early 2020, this included information in respect of:

- Notice of Motion having been raised at the People and Communities Committee meeting in October 2019, regarding the delivery of a detailed air quality review and assessment for the city, for nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) ambient air pollutants;

- A Competitive European tender exercise having been undertaken by the Council in September 2020 in order to appoint an appropriately experienced environmental consultancy to deliver the detailed assessment project; and
- The Department of Agriculture Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DAERA) having agreed to provide 50% match funding up to a maximum of £125,000 during the 2020-2021 local air quality management grant year to support delivery of the detailed assessment project

The assessment project was a two-year contract, with the final project report scheduled to be presented to the People and Communities Committee in December 2022. The Members noted that it would comprise of the following 4 principal components:

- 1) Additional ambient monitoring for nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>) and fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>);
- 2) Development of an emissions inventory for the Belfast City Council area;
- 3) Detailed atmospheric dispersion modelling to map concentrations of NO<sub>2</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> spatially and temporally for the Belfast City Council area; and
- 4) Analysis and reporting of the dispersion modelling data for the city to identify geographic areas of exceedance of national or European health-based air quality standards and of WHO guideline values.

The Committee noted that the Emissions Inventory would incorporate activity data in respect of local roads, rail networks, shipping, air traffic, industrial sources, and household emissions. Detailed atmospheric modelling would be used which would involve Cambridge Environment Research Consultants and atmospheric dispersion modelling software. The software would enable the data gathered to be overlain on maps or aerial images of the city to aid interpretation of the findings.

The Aecom representative then provided the Members with details in respect of proposed locations for the six additional sensors that were to be installed, along with the rationale for the proposed locations which were still to be confirmed. He advised that these would be Zephyr 'real time' small sensor air quality monitors that would measure PM<sub>10</sub>, PM<sub>2.5</sub> and NO<sub>2</sub>, they would be solar powered and mounted on lampposts or street furniture. The monitoring locations would be operated by Aecom throughout 2021 and would then revert to the Council.

Following a number of queries in relation to the foul smell/gases in the Colin area and whether this technology would be useful, the officer advised that this particular technology was specifically designed to deal with ambient air quality and would not therefore pick up on methane/carbon dioxide gases etc. that are a result of landfill and therefore a monitor at this location would not be appropriate. The Director of City Services advised that there might be alternative technology available and she undertook to liaise with the two Members directly to discuss.

Following several specific queries in regard to the proposed locations of the detailed assessment monitors the officer explained the rationale behind the proposals, he advised that these were a starting point and ultimately this process would be built upon going forward to try and obtain as much information as possible citywide.

The Members welcomed the project and the work undertaken to date.

The Chairperson thanked the officers and AECOM representative for their attendance at the meeting, following which they left the proceedings.

### **Committee/Strategic Issues**

#### **Waste Partnerships - Belfast Hills Partnership**

The Committee was advised that the Council and Belfast Hills Partnership (BHP) currently operated a Service Level Agreement (SLA) to accept waste from their clean-up operations into Belfast City Council (BCC) waste disposal facilities. The Director reported that the SLA was due to terminate at the end of October 2021 and the BHP had approached the Council seeking it to consider a new agreement.

The Director reported that the current arrangement had worked well. The BHP brought approximately 2-3 bags of litter, per week, which had been collected from the Belfast Hills, to Blackstaff Way Recycling Centre for disposal. As this waste was categorised as litter, the current legislation deemed this to be household waste and it did not therefore incur any disposal charge to the BHP. The total amount of waste deposited over the course of the year was not excessive and the BHP welcomed the partnership working that had been adopted by the Council.

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to approve the Service Level Agreement approach with Belfast Hills Partnership.

#### **BHSCT Snowdrop Group Request**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

- 1.1 This purpose of this report is to outline a request which has been brought to Council by the Snowdrop Group – a service user service improved focussed group of BHSCT. In the absence of a broader memorialisation policy and accompanying framework (proposed for development) – this request is therefore being presented to committee/council for discussion and approval.**

##### **2.0 Recommendations**

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

- Note the content of the report – and specifically the request noted in 3.7 from the BHSCT Snowdrop Group to request that Council supports them to establish a small Snowdrop Garden area within one of our parks.**

- Give permission for Officers to continue to work with the Trust and the Group to identify and agree a suitable location, and to then work towards organising a small scale event/planting ceremony towards the end of May/early June (taking account of NI Exec restrictions in place at the time).

**3.0 Main Report**

**3.1** Around 60,000 babies are born prematurely each year in the UK. In the UK, it is estimated that 1 in 4 pregnancies end in loss during pregnancy or birth.

**3.2** The Snowdrop Group was established in 2017 and is a service user group within BHSCT. The group provides a means of working in partnership with bereaved parents to inform and drive improvements in Maternity services within the Trust. The group has representatives from all parts of Belfast and from all religious backgrounds and none. [The terms of reference for the group are included in Appendix 1.]

**3.3** United by their shared experience of the devastating loss of their precious babies, the parents are passionate about working with staff, to ensure those who travel the same path in the future, receive the most compassionate care and support possible. The group strives to improve care for all those who experience baby loss at any stage of pregnancy or shortly after birth, informed by the experience and understanding of what really matters most at such an unimaginable time.

**3.4** Since its inception, the group has contributed to a number of important and tangible improvements. These have included:

- Advocating for and contributing to, the refurbishment of Room 9 and the quiet room within the RJMH-Royal Jubilee Maternity Hospital (Room 9 is the delivery room used in circumstances where the baby will, or has already, passed away).
- Completion of artwork in conjunction with Artscape to be displayed in 'Room 9', linking the journeys of parents who give birth to their babies there, to those who have walked the path before them.
- The development of a handmade sympathy card which is now distributed to all parents who experience the loss of their baby, providing contact details for the Bereavement Midwife in the RVH.
- Informing work carried out in the area immediately outside the alternative exit from the Maternity Unit.
- Facilitated a recruitment/involvement event to encourage other service users to come forward with their experiences and perspective on how services could be improved.

- Work to improve the environment and information available within the Early Pregnancy Unit.
- Facilitating the Aching Arms and Cradle charities to deliver within RJMH.

- 3.5 The group have also focused on raising awareness and breaking stigma associated with pregnancy and baby loss, and are very active during Baby Loss Awareness Week (held annually 9th -15th October). The last two years they have been involved in a social media campaign where individuals shared their stories by video in order to help break the silence around this issue.
- 3.6 The Snowdrop has now become a symbol for baby loss awareness within Belfast Trust and beyond and is also a symbol of hope for many families. The group are keen to develop a Snowdrop walk each year and would like to try and establish a Snowdrop Garden – somewhere families can go to reflect and remember their babies.
- 3.7 They have approached council officers to enquire if it would be possible to have a dedicated area in a park in Belfast, where snowdrops could be planted and a small sign placed (wording to be agreed with BCC). They have no preference in terms of location apart from a request that the site would be able to accommodate being a starting and end point for an annual ‘Snowdrop Walk’ – therefore some of our larger parks/open spaces might be more appropriate.
- 3.8 It would then be the group’s intention to promote this place/space amongst their network and to hold events there periodically throughout the year (these would be considered via the normal BCC Outdoor Leisure application and approval process).
- 3.9 They also intend to fundraise in-year in order to be able to purchase a memorial bench (through Council’s memorialisation process) for installation at the chosen site.

**Financial & Resource Implications**

- 3.10 Initial resources associated with sourcing and planting snowdrops, alongside ongoing maintenance of the flower beds, would be met by Council via the existing OSS budget for whichever park is identified as being most appropriate for hosting. Going forward, the BHSCT Snowdrop group will be responsible for covering the costs of any future planned events, supplying a small sign to be placed within the flower beds and of sourcing funding to purchase and install a memorial bench (through Council’s normal memorialisation process) to be sited close to the site.

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

**3.11 There are no Equality or Good Relations Implications and no Rural Needs Assessment required for the recommendations outlined above.”**

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

- note the content of the report – and specifically the request noted in 3.7 from the BHSCT Snowdrop Group to request that Council supports them to establish a small Snowdrop Garden area within one of the parks; and
- grant permission for officers to continue to work with the Trust and the Group to identify and agree a suitable location, and to work towards organising a small scale event/planting ceremony at the end of May/early June (taking account of NI Exec restrictions in place at the time).

**Litter Bin Sensors - Smart Cities Data Analytics Project**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on a proposal for a litter analytics research project that Open Spaces and Streetscene are supporting via the Council’s City Innovation Section.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note the ongoing work in respect of this work and that future updates will be brought to committee as the project progresses.**

**3.0 Main report**

- 3.1 Members will recall previous update to SP&R committee in 2017 on the Council’s Smart Framework and Innovation Programme. This seeks to harness the talent of the city’s digital SME sector, and our world-class university research, to support the Council, community planning partners and local communities to create more innovative solutions to complex public policy challenges as identified in the Belfast Agenda. This work is part of a wider ambition to foster innovative methodologies and compliments the Council’s parallel work on Social Innovation with local communities and our corporate commitment to service transformation.**

- 3.2 A number of 'demonstrator' projects have taken place since 2017 including Waste Management analytics where the Council was awarded 20 hours of world-class 'big data' analytics expertise to analyse household recycling behaviour with the aim of providing insights that can assist in driving up recycling levels. Most recently Members will be familiar with the 'Amazing Spaces Smart Places' Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) challenge.
- 3.3 There has continued to be strong support for the concept of a Smart framework, particularly from the local SME community as it provides opportunities to deploy proto-types and products in a real-world environment. Public sector partners recognise the potential to bring innovation to bear on existing challenges, and broad agreement that Belfast City Council has an important convening role to play in bringing a diverse range of partners together for a common social impact.
- 3.4 One such existing challenge facing local government relates to public realm litter bins in terms of suitable locations, sufficient numbers, appropriate type, public usage, how frequently they fill up, frequency of emptying, and routing practices.
- 3.5 Queen's University and local SME Litter Analytics approached Belfast City Council in 2020 to partner on a collaborative urban waste research project using data from bin sensors to predict how quickly litterbins fill up, and to see how variables such as public holidays or weather might affect this. Information generated could provide predictive modelling to support workforce planning and optimised routing.
- 3.6 The SME have been liaising with the Neighbourhood Services Manager with portfolio responsibility for Open Spaces and Streetscene and has identified the following locations for deploying the proto-type sensors;
- Parks - Falls Park and Botanic Park
  - Linear arterial route - Antrim Road
  - High street retail area - City centre
- 3.7 The pilot feasibility study is due to commence in Q1 of 2021/22, with sensors in situ for approximately 6 months. The duration of the project will be in the region of 6-12 months, with the approach and breadth dictated by the number of sensors obtained by the SME.
- 3.8 The project will focus on general waste public realm litter bins in the first instance; however, the SME are interested in

wider urban waste challenges including public behaviours. Therefore, depending on the success of the pilot, and funding that the SME can source, there may be scope to analyse public realm recycling behaviours. For example, to use data from a standard litter bin for a period, then install or label a dedicated recycling bin beside it for another period of time and see what the difference would be.

- 3.9 It is hoped that the project will permit the development of 'Use cases' and insights to allow the Open Spaces and Streetscene team to consider emptying public realm bins in a more efficient manner saving resource and ensuring optimal deployment of infrastructure.
- 3.10 It will also supporting a local SME to develop their solutions, this will help them bid into larger funding opportunities and develop a market ready solution.
- 3.11 As the project progresses, future updates will be brought to this committee.

**Financial & Resource Implications**

- 3.12 The costs with this project have been included within existing revenue budgets.

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

- 3.13 None."

Noted.

**Physical Programme and Asset Management**

**Playground Improvement Programme 2021/22**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the successful 2020/21 Playground Improvement Programme (PIP) and outline plans for new playground refurbishments under the 2021/22 programme.

- 1.2 Members are asked to note that refurbishments are to be funded under the Capital Programme and that an allocation of £580,000 has been agreed for this work, in this financial year.



**1.3 Members should also note that under last year's PIP;**

- Refurbishment works at Blackmountain, Ohio Street and Falls Park playgrounds were successfully completed.
- Covid 19 restrictions impacted on the planning process and land transfer associated with construction of a new play facility at Vere Foster. As a result construction works commenced late in the 2020-21 financial year and are currently ongoing. Costs associated with completion of the new facility at Vere Foster will be part of this year's programme and included within the capital budget of £580k. Completion costs are estimated to be in the region of £150k.
- A playground refurbishment at Grosvenor Recreation Centre, fully funded by DfC (£145k), was completed successfully.
- An extension of the existing Lisnasharragh (Clonduff) playground, funded under the Leisure Transformation Programme, was also successfully delivered last year.

**1.4 Members should also note that during last year's programme DfC funded 49% of improvement work at the following playgrounds, reducing council's net capital spend by a total of £272k;**

- Falls Park
- Ohio Street
- Vere Foster

**2.0 Recommendations**

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

Agree refurbishment works at the sites below under the Playground Improvement Programme (PIP) 2021-22. This year's programme has an annual, in year budget of £580,000 under the Capital Programme for financial year 2021/22;

- Completion of construction works at Vere Foster playground
- Cavehill Adventurous playground (senior area)
- Ormeau 2000 playground (Park Road)

**2.2 In the event council secure external funding or identify internal shortfalls in year, Members are asked to agree**

- Refurbishment works at Clarawood Park playground (junior zone) are also included as part of this year's annual programme.

**3.0 Main report**

**Playground Refurbishment Programme**

- 3.1** Since its inception in 2012, the Playground Refurbishment Programme continues to make a significant and positive impact to the overall quality and play value of the city's playgrounds; this has greatly improved accessibility, providing more inclusive equipment, safety surfacing, boundary fencing, site furniture and landscaping works.
- 3.2** With continued investment over the last nine years, Council is achieving the desired improvements at each of its sites. The Council's newest refurbished playground facilities below are now more inviting, inclusive and exciting places for children and parents to visit; moving their quality scores to the desired higher standard. (See appendix 1 – image of some recently refurbished playgrounds).
1. Blackmountain
  2. Ohio Street
  3. Falls Park
  4. Grosvenor Recreation Centre
  5. Lisnasharragh (Clonduff)
- 3.3** Members should note that Play Services Ireland Ltd undertook the independent playground inspections on behalf of the Council. The 'quality score' allocated for each playground is based on compliance with European safety standards BS EN 1176-7: 2020.
- 3.4** The independent playground inspection report highlights the age range for each piece of playground apparatus and identifies and prioritises repairs to existing playground equipment. The Council's Facilities Management and Playground Inspectors continue to undertake these repairs in the order they have been prioritised. (See Appendix 2 – copy of the 2021 Independent Playground Inspection report for Cavehill Adventurous playground (senior area) which has the city's largest, bespoke multi-play fort. This unit is heavily used throughout the summer months however, it has been identified as nearing the end of its life expectancy.
- 3.5** Each playground is individually categorised, giving a combined 'quality score' Cavehill Adventurous playground (senior area) playground for example was allocated an overall quality score of 3.8 which positions it just below the categorisation of Insufficient/Poor.

**Quality scores:**

Score 9 – 10 Excellent  
Score 8 – 9 Very Good  
Score 7 – 8 Good  
Score 6 – 7 Fairly Good  
Score 5 – 6 Sufficient  
Score 4 – 5 Fair  
Score 3 – 4 Insufficient  
Score 2 – 3 Poor  
Score 1 – 2 Very Poor  
Score 0 – 1 Extremely Poor

- 3.6 Following the independent inspection assessments of all 103 playgrounds across the city, it is proposed that sites listed under Item 2.1 are refurbished as part of this year's Playground Improvement Programme, which has an allocated budget of £580,000 under the Capital Programme. If additional funding or internal shortfalls are identified in year, it is proposed that an additional playground site at Clarawood Park (junior zone) is also improved under this year's programme.

- 3.7 The playgrounds recommended for refurbishment are the ones with the lowest quality scores (See appendix 3 – 2021 mean quality score ratings). Because of the proposed refurbishment works, these playgrounds will move from insufficient/poor/fair to the higher classification of 'Excellent' – quality score 9 – 10 when re-inspected.

3.8 **Financial & Resource Implications**

The proposed Playground Improvement Programme will be funded through the Capital Programme with an annual budget of £580,000 allocated for works. CNS Landscape, Planning and Development Officers will continue to re-design play facilities and project manage all works associated with the 2021/22 Playground Improvement Programme.

- 3.9 As in previous years, the OSS Managers will continue to assist with the distribution of information relating to playground improvements to elected members, local communities and user groups.

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

- 3.10 None."

Several Members referred to the need for the installation of more inclusive playground equipment as part of the Council's Playground Improvement Programme.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services advised that the Council was committed to providing inclusive playground equipment for children of all abilities but stated that this would take time to progress and work through the proposed programme of works.

A Member raised a query in respect of the Clarawood Playground and the Director undertook to investigate the matter and to update him directly.

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to agree the refurbishment of the playground sites detailed below, under the Playground Improvement Programme, which had an allocated budget of £580,000 under the Capital Programme for financial year 2021/22:

- Completion of construction works at Vere Foster playground
- Cavehill Adventurous playground (senior area)
- Ormeau 2000 playground (Park Road)

It further recommended that, in the event that the Council secured external funding or identified any internal shortfalls in year, refurbishment works at Clarawood Park playground (junior zone) be included as part of the 2021/22 programme of works.

#### **Hannahstown Village Playground and Public Square**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services advised the Committee that the subject lands at Hannahstown were owned by Lamh Dhearg GLC and had been leased to Hannahstown Community Association (HCA) for 10 years until 1st February, 2024.

The HCA had licenced the subject lands to Lisburn City Council for 10 years until 31st January, 2024, this Licence had transferred to Belfast City Council on 1st April, 2015 under Local Government Reform. The Director detailed that the Licence could not be extended beyond 31st January, 2024 without the Lease to HCA from the GAA club being extended or indeed a new Lease being put in place.

The Committee noted that the Council had received Rural Development Programme (RDP) funds on behalf of the HCA to improve the quality of the general environment and services available in Hannahstown, this had included upgrades to the playground and the creation of a new public square. The Letter of offer from the RDP required the Council to enter into a development agreement with either the land owner (Lamh Dhearg GLC) or the Lessor (HCA) for 7 years from 29th January, 2019. The grant aid terms and conditions stated that the applicant i.e. Belfast City Council, must maintain in good condition all property, equipment, machinery, furniture, fixtures, fittings and assets owned or used by the applicant in connection with the property. The Council were therefore obliged to maintain the playground and new public square. The Council were unaware of this at the time of handover and therefore it had not been allowed for within the budget setting process and this would have to be absorbed from within existing budgets.

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it extend the Council's current Licence Agreement with Hannahstown Community Association and

amend the mapping to include the playground and adjacent public square lands only. This would ensure compliance with all the relevant terms and conditions of the RDP grant aid.

### **Operational Issues**

#### **Proposal for naming new streets**

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to approve the application for naming a new street in the City as set out below:

Proposed Name	Location	Applicant
Mill Valley Lodge	Off Mill Valley Road, BT14	Alan Patterson Design

#### **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 Trinity Street, the Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated to approve the application.

#### **Request for the use of Sandown Road Carpark**

The Committee considered a request from Ballyhackamore Residents Association for the exclusive use of Sandown Road carpark to host a family fun day event and local traders market.

A Member sought clarity if such use could be extended to other Council carparks which would enable more community events to be held.

The Director of City Services advised that the current Belfast Off Street Parking Order limited what Council could permit to take place at a public carpark. She advised that the Council were currently engaging with the Department for Infrastructure in this regard and meanwhile Council officers endeavoured to accommodate any requests received with alternative options.

The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to approve the request for the Ballyhackamore fun day event on Saturday 21st August and authorise the closure of the public carpark from 07.00 – 20.00, subject to the completion of the appropriate event management plans and satisfactory terms being agreed by the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services and on the condition that the Event Organisers:

- resolve all operational issues to the Council's satisfaction;
- meets all statutory requirements including Public Liability Insurance cover, Health and Safety, and licensing responsibilities;
- consult with adjoining residents, businesses and local communities as necessary; and

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- adhere to Government Covid19 Regulations in place at the time of the event.

**Last Meeting**

Councillor Baker referred to the fact that this had been his last meeting in the role of Chairperson, as his replacement was due to be appointed in June, and thanked the Members and officers for their support over the previous year.

Chairperson