

People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 8th June, 2021

MEETING OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

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

Also attended: Councillors Heading, Lyons and 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

Apologies for inability to attend were reported on behalf of Alderman Copeland and Councillors Baker and McCusker.

Condolences

The Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, extended his condolences to Councillor Baker on the recent death of his father.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 11th May were taken as read and signed as correct.

It was reported that the minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st June, subject to the following amendment:

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

At the request of Councillor de Faoite, the minute will now read.

'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, arc21 to present to a future meeting of the Committee on relevant important proposed legislation affecting the future of Waste Collections and that Belfast City Council supports the implementation of a full bottle deposit return scheme as opposed to an "on the go" scheme.'

Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were recorded.

Presentations

Public Health Agency

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. Frances Dowds, Belfast and South East Area Manager, Health and Social Care (HSC). She commenced by explaining that her remit was specifically over drugs, alcohol, and mental health issues. Ms. Dowds then introduced her colleagues Mr. J. Brogan, Assistant Director of Integrated Care and Ms. K. Turner, Medicines Management Lead for Integrated Care, along with associates from the Public Health Authority (PHA), Ms. L. Wylie, Senior Health and Social Well Being Improvement Officer and Mr. M. Owen, Health and Social Well Being Improvement Manager.

Ms. Dowds thanked the Members for the opportunity to present and apologised for the delay in attending, which she explained had been a direct result of the Covid-19 pandemic and ongoing work pressures. She advised that she and her colleagues would be presenting in regard to the ongoing work to try and reduce alcohol and drug related harm in Northern Ireland within the context of the New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs Strategy (2011-2016) and Draft Programme for Government Framework (2016 – 2021).

Mr. Rogan advised that the Department of Health (DoH) was currently leading on the development of a new Substance Use Strategy – ‘Preventing Harm and Empowering Recovery – A Strategic Framework to Tackle Substance Use’. This strategy had been co-produced with a wide range of stakeholders and the public consultation had closed on 5th February 2021. He advised that the co-production writing group had been reconvened and was currently discussing the responses received, once complete, the final strategy would then be forwarded to the Minister for Health for his consideration and then to the Executive for final approval.

He highlighted that most of the responsibility for illegal substances had not been devolved and was still the responsibility of the Home Office, therefore, it was important for the Members to understand that the PHA did not have the lead in this area and it was trying to deliver within the parameters of the existing legislation. He then provided an overview of the remits of both the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) and the Public Health Agency (PHA).

The Committee was advised that, in addition to the new Substance Use Strategy, the following would also be key policy considerations going forward in 2021:

- New Liquor Licensing Bill being progressed by Department for Communities (DfC);
- Consultation on Minimum Unit Pricing for Alcohol; and
- Consultation regarding the new Mental Health Strategy.

Ms. Dowds then provided the Committee with an overview of the PHA Health Improvement – Regional and Local Level Approach. She advised that statistics showed that 1 in 14 adults with a mental illness also suffered with a substance abuse disorder, therefore in terms of drugs and alcohol and mental health and suicide prevention it was essential that there was a coordinated multi-agency approach to ensure the sharing of

good practice. She also referred to the high drug related deaths in areas of deprivation and stated that they were committed to focusing on addressing these inequalities.

The representative referred to the current treatment and crisis response and she outlined the proposed next steps for Belfast, as follows:

- the strategic alignment of Belfast Drug and Alcohol Coordination Team (BDACT) and Belfast Protect Life Implementation Group (BPLIG);
- a 'whole system' approach to supporting vulnerable with 'complex lives';
- a Commitment to develop integrated, neighbourhood-based care supported by strong partnership with communities
- establishing a integrated and multi-agency teams - fuelled by diverse skills and experience
- progressing Joint Commissioning Agreement - underpinning partnership arrangements
- Belfast has many of the foundations/elements – these need to be brought together; and
- 'Integrated and resourced plan 'Doncaster Model' as a driver for integrating, for example, Health, Social Care and Housing.

The representative referred to the Strategic Leadership Group, of which Belfast City Council was a Member, along with the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT), the PHA, the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS), Translink and the Belfast Drug and Alcohol Addition Team (BDACT). She referred to the linkages that it had with the Community Planning Partnership and the Living Here Board and provided an overview of its strategic vision to adopt a Complex Lives Model – whole system approach, as follows:

- The formation of a Multi-Agency Delivery Group – aligned with the BDACT priorities/action plan;
- to Develop a SMART action plan and roadmap (short/medium/longer-term);
- utilise support from the Doncaster Complex Lives Alliance;
- identify the potential co-location of teams and/or support (for example, community support hubs); and
- to identifying vulnerable/at-risk people and mobilise the required support.

The representative then referred to the PHA funded Needle Exchange Service. She explained that community pharmacies and non-pharmacy providers throughout Northern Ireland strived to provide a high quality and safe service for all clients, this included the provision of sterile injecting equipment and harm reduction advice. The delivery of this service had been maintained throughout the pandemic. She referred to the figures in respect of visits to the service and advised that, year on year, these had increased which was a positive outcome for the service and stressed that the PHA were keen to increase and promote the benefits of this service to local communities. She reported that, unfortunately, two NSES providers within Belfast had withdrawn from the scheme within the last 20 months due to a mixture of antisocial behaviour issues and community protests. She highlighted that not all people were in favour of these services being offered within their local communities.

She also referred to the Take Home Naloxone (THN) programme which was another important lifesaving intervention also funded by the PHA. This programme aimed to supply THN packs to those at risk of opioid overdose as well as opioid overdose responses training.

Regarding the Drug and Alcohol Monitoring Information System (DAMIS), the representative advised that this programme was funded by the DoH, with support from lead partners and was coordinated by the PHA, it currently had over 400 network members. She explained that this was an e-mail based 'early warning system', aimed at identifying possible emerging trends in drug and alcohol misuse.

The Members welcomed the comprehensive update regarding the wide ranging programmes that were already in existence and that the focus was on joined up working and multi-agency initiatives.

During discussion, the representatives answered a range of questions in relation to the possible establishment of a Citizens' Assembly, Safe Injection Facilities (Drug Consumption Rooms) and the closure of the HSC in March 2022.

The importance of both the Community Planning Partnership and the Belfast Open Spaces Strategy were both discussed in terms of further progressing many of the issues/discussion further. It was also noted that many of the concerns raised were difficult to resolve as they were working within the parameters of the existing legislation.

The representatives advised that more information was available at www.drugsandalcoholni.info, this site provided information regarding the services and supports systems that were available throughout Northern Ireland.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their comprehensive presentation following which they left the meeting.

Waste as a Resource - Changing Landscape

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. T. Walker, Arc 21 Acting Chief Executive to the meeting to present an update on the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and Deposit Return Scheme (DRS).

Mr. Walker commenced by explaining that the Government aimed to establish the transfer of responsibility from brands to Councils to ensure the producers paid the full cost of dealing with the waste packaging that they each produced. He explained that the original producer responsibility scheme did not support the principles of producers paying for the full costs, nor that the benefits should be spread across all stakeholders in the supply chain. The aim of the new EPR scheme was to focus on addressing this shortfall to ensure that it was fairer to all stakeholders. He advised that it was anticipated that the proposed changes would create an annual bill of over £2.7 billion, this would have profound implications upon the Council's current waste activities and particularly on the financing of collection arrangements and revenue arising from the sale of recyclables.

He then advised the Members of the operational costs and potential infrastructure that the Council would require to enable delivery of the proposed scheme along with the following key dates:

- Autumn 2021 – Environmental Bill to receive Royal Assent;
- 2022 – EPR Regulations laid before Parliament; Obligated producers to compile and report packaging data; Scheme Administrator procured in 2022 and appointed in 2023;
- 2023 - Phase 1 – first payments to be made to Local Authorities from October 2023 based on modelled costs;
- 2024 - Phase 2 – Modulated fees, litter and business payments and full net costs to be paid to Local Authorities;
- 2025 - Packaging re-use targets from 2025; and
- 2026 - Plastic film from 2026.

In terms of the proposed Deposit Return Scheme (DRS), the representative advised that Northern Ireland, England and Wales had committed to introduce the scheme for drinks containers subject to further consultation, he advised that it was anticipated that this scheme would be implemented in late 2024, as part of the EPR Scheme to ensure that there was no gap in funding. He then provided a comprehensive overview of the proposed scheme including information in respect of deposits, return points and digital options. He stated that the recent consultation would help inform final policy decisions on key aspects of the scheme, such as governance, targets, and implementation timelines.

The representative concluded the presentation by advising that he felt that the proposals represented an opportunity in progressing the development of a Circular Economy and should be viewed as such. The aim of placing the cost burden on producers would hopefully cause them to question whether their packaging was necessary, could be reduced, or not used at all, any reduction in waste packaging would be positive and should, in time, help to reduce the overall financial burden placed on councils in dealing with packaging waste.

The Chairperson thanked the representative for his comprehensive presentation following which he left the proceedings.

DfC Affordable Warmth update

The Chairperson welcome Mr. D. Polley, Director – Housing Supply Policy, and Ms. D. Knowes, Head of Affordable Warmth and Energy Branch, both representing the Department for Communities, to the meeting to address Member's queries regarding the Affordable Warmth Scheme (AWS).

Mr. Polley commenced by advising that he was delighted to confirm that funding of 16 million had been allocated for the overall scheme, this would equate to 30 referrals per month per Council. He also confirmed that the affordability threshold was due to increase from 20k – 23k, it was anticipated that this increase would result in the scheme being available to more people. In addition, some of the benefits, including Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance, Personal Independence Payment and Carer's Allowance were being removed from the calculation of income, which should result in a fairer scheme for applicants.

The representative referred to the Covid-19 Pandemic. He advised that delivery of the scheme had been interrupted due to the necessary restrictions and it had taken a while to get the scheme restarted, which had resulted in an underspend in the scheme. To try address the impact on councils of the reduced funding, DfC had provided an

upfront 'in year' payment to councils and there had also been the option to apply for any additional costs incurred.

Mr. Polley advised that representatives from the DfC, in conjunction with an officer from the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council (who was representing the 11 Councils), were currently drafting a new Service Level Agreement (SLA) for the AWS which would be shared for consideration in due course.

He highlighted that Business Continuity Services (Department of Finance) was currently undertaking a review on the targeted approach and funding models for the AWS, the final report on this was likely to be available by the end of June 2021. Any proposed changes to the scheme would have to be signed off by the relevant government departments and it was therefore unlikely that this would be completed before the next financial year.

He also referred to discussion that had taken place with SOLACE regarding a 50:50 funding model, explaining that this would allow for 50% funding upfront to Council, with the remaining 50% payment per referral.

He concluded by confirming that since 2015 the scheme had allocated 82 million which had provided affordable warmth improvement measures to 20,000 homes. He stated that the AWS was vital to the Fuel Poverty Strategy and it was essential therefore that both worked hand in hand. He detailed that he was aware of several issues that the Department were currently working on addressing but added that he anticipated an improved scheme going forward.

Following a query from a Member, Mr. Polley confirmed that the Department for Communities did liaise with the Department of Finance and Department for the Economy in the regard to the Energy Strategy.

During discussion, the current rise in material costs was highlighted and the fact that this was affecting the margins to deliver on individual schemes. Ms. Knowles noted that the Department was aware of the issue but stated that in most instances the current grant covered the required measures. She went on to state that it was unlikely that the grant/allowance would be increased in line with the inflated costs as this would require a change in legislation.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for attending the meeting following which they left the proceedings.

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.

Request for The Hire of Boucher Road Playing Fields

The Committee considered a request seeking permission to use the Boucher Road Playing Fields from 6th September – 13th September 2021 for the purpose of hosting a local music festival - Planet Love 2021 in association with Cool FM.

The Committee noted that this would be a one-day event on the 11th September from 1.00 p.m. – 11.00 p.m. This would be a ticketed, licensed event for strictly 18+ patrons and identification would be required upon entry to the venue.

The Event Layout would allow for the safe egress of 15,000 patrons. It was expected that there would be maximum capacity of this number. Entertainment would be provided by both Live Acts and DJs performing on multiple stages located inside the site. There would also be Amusement/fairground rides, Fireworks/Pyrotechnics, Food Vendors, a marquee and the pavilion would be being used.

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

- (i) grant authority to Notorious Brands for the use of Boucher Road Playing Fields for a local music festival Planet Love in association with Cool FM from 6th September -13th September 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' and 'take down' periods, and booking amendments, subject to:
 - the promoter resolving any operational issues to the Council's satisfaction;
 - compliance with Coronavirus restrictions in place at the time of the event; and
 - the promoter meeting all the statutory requirements of the Planning and Building Control Service including the terms and conditions of the Park's Entertainment Licence.

The 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.

Rosario Youth Club - Funding Request

The Committee considered a request from Rosario Youth Club seeking ongoing additional financial support with staff costs incurred due to longer operating at Ulidia Playing Fields, in addition to the contribution paid under their Partnership Agreement.

The Director reminded the Members of a previous request from Rosario Youth Club seeking to progress to an alternative management model for the facility, by way of a potential lease arrangement. He advised that officers had been working with the club to further progress discussions around their plans and aspirations for a potential Community Asset Transfer, with the club looking at providing detailed information demonstrating clear community benefit from their plans, however, due to difficulties arising from the Covid19 pandemic progress had been delayed. The Committee noted that it was anticipated that this would be progressed under a new Community Asset Transfer framework for the Council, which officers were currently drafting. Given the delay in progressing any new arrangements, the group was keen to sustain the existing resource support and therefore were seeking interim support.

Following a query from a Member who suggested that Rosario YC was experiencing difficulties with the community funding application process, the Director of Neighbourhood Services advised that he was unaware of any such issues. He suggested that if the Member had additional information, to contact him directly and he would have it investigated.

Following a further query, the Director advised that the formation of the Community Asset Transfer Policy Framework was in its early stages. He explained that the aim of the framework was to streamline the numerous arrangements across the City, he highlighted that pilot schemes were being considered which would be subject to committee consideration and approval.

In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Members agreed that the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to agree to provide a maximum financial payment to Rosario Youth Club of up to £2,000 per month for staff costs, subject to vouching of fully evidenced expenditure from July 2021 to March 2022.

Requests for the use of Parks for Summer Events report

The Committee were advised that, following the recent relaxation on restrictions, several requests had been received from organisers seeking to host events in various Belfast park locations during coming months.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services advised that any events would be subject to strict criteria and a robust risk assessment. As with all the events, delivery would be fully dependent on compliance with NIE restrictions and government guidelines at the time. The situation remained fluid and, should the government guidance change, some events might need to be amended, postponed, or even cancelled.

The Members noted that these events would see a return to more animation of the Council's Parks and Open Spaces. Some of the events were long standing having previously taken place for many years, offering many of our Belfast citizens and family's great fun, entertainment, and experiences.

A Member raised some concern in relation to the proposed Finaghy Cultural Festival, given that this was a densely populated area. The Director of Neighbourhood Services undertook to discuss these concerns further directly with the Member but reaffirmed the process and the requirement for event management plan to be agreed in advance of any formal permission being granted. The Director advised that officers would be liaising with the event organisers to discuss and seek the assurances that the Council would require.

In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Members of the Committee agreed that the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to grant authority to each of the applicants for the following proposed events:

- **Feile**; 5th – 15th August at Falls Park;
- **Into the Woods**; 9th - 15th August at Botanic Gardens;
- **Finaghy Cultural Festival**; 27th – 29th August at Wedderburn Park;
- **Culture Night**; 17th September at Cathedral Gardens;
- **EastSide Arts Festival**; 5th – 15th August along the Connswater Community Greenway; and
- **Belfast 24 Hour International Road Race**; 16th & 17th October at Victoria Park.

it was further agreed that she grant authority to the Director to negotiate 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 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 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.

Operational Issues

Extended Producer Responsibility / Deposit Return Scheme - consultation update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues”

1.1 As agreed at the May 2021 People and Communities Committee, this update is to provide Committee with a copy of the relevant responses from the Council and arc21 to recent consultations on EPR and DRS relating to packaging waste. Both consultations opened on 24 March 2021 and closed on 04 June 2021.

2.0 Recommendations

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

- Retrospectively (as noted as last month’s Committee meeting, the consultations formally closed on 4th June) adopt the consultation responses to Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging and Introducing a Deposit Return Scheme in England, Wales & Northern Ireland.**

3.0 Main report

3.1 Members may recall a series of consultations in 2019, relating to packaging. This consultation process was the beginning of an approach to reform the arrangements for producer responsibility for packaging waste, which has been in place since 1997. The responses, to the original consultations, from both Belfast City Council and arc21, were presented to Committee in June 2019.

3.2 These consultations collectively represent possibly the biggest change in UK Waste Management practices in a generation. These will have profound implications upon BCC’ waste activities and particularly on the financing of collection arrangements and revenue arising from the sale of recyclables.

3.3 The premise of the EPR consultation is to ensure ‘*producers pay the full costs of dealing with the waste packaging they produce*’. The original producer responsibility scheme in its current guise has flaws and does not support the principles of producers paying for the full costs, nor that the benefits should be spread across all stakeholders in the supply chain. This new EPR scheme is focusing more clearly on addressing this shortfall to ensure that it is fairer for all stakeholders.

3.4 The EPR consultation has much to commend it in progressing the development of a Circular Economy and should be viewed as an opportunity, subject to the actual implementation of the detail to be contained within the legislation. The aim of placing the cost burden on producers

with the expectation that this will cause them to question whether their packaging is necessary, could be reduced, or not used at all, is a positive change and should reduce the overall financial burden placed on councils in dealing with packaging waste.

- 3.5 Following strong support from the 2019 consultations, Northern Ireland, England and Wales committed to introduce a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for drinks containers subject to further consultation. This second consultation is seeking views from across the industry, on how the scheme will function to ensure it achieves the desired outcomes. Responses to this consultation will help inform final policy decisions on key aspects of the scheme, such as governance, targets and implementation timelines.
- 3.6 At its meeting on 11 May 2021, Committee agreed to support an 'All-in Scheme' in relation to the size of drinks containers to be included within the Deposit Return Scheme and this has been reflected in the Belfast City Council response.
- 3.7 Both consultations opened on 24 March 2021 and closed on 04 June 2021. The responses to both consultations are contained in Appendices 1 and 2. In preparing the Council's response, officers have also taken on board the views of regional organisations such as NILGA, arc21 and LARAC, in order to recognise the regional and national importance of this consultation.

Background

- 3.8 To help the move towards a more Circular Economy, the UK Government for England (DEFRA), the Welsh Government and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland have all made commitments to develop policy which works towards achieving the aims of resource efficiency and resource productivity, through the development of producer responsibility proposals.
- 3.9 Government highlights that, in 2019, approximately 11.7 million tonnes of packaging was placed on the UK market and that every year across the UK, consumers go through an estimated 14 billion plastic drinks bottles, nine billion drinks cans and five billion glass bottles.
- 3.10 In March 2021, Government launched these Consultations to overhaul the waste and resources sector, in an attempt to boost recycling, tackle plastic pollution and reduce litter.
- 3.11 The proposals within the Consultations are underpinned by powers in the new Environment Bill, to make manufacturers more responsible for the packaging they produce and incentivise consumers to recycle more.

- 3.12 The new proposals include Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging where manufacturers will pay the full costs of managing and recycling their packaging waste, with higher fees being levied if packaging is harder to reuse or recycle. The scheme is being developed on a UK-wide basis.
- 3.13 Also included is a Deposit Return Scheme for drinks containers, where consumers will be incentivised to take their empty drinks containers to return points hosted by retailers. The scheme would cover England, Wales and Northern Ireland, with a separate scheme already under development in Scotland.

Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging (EPR)

- 3.14 The current producer responsibility system for packaging has been in place since 1997 and predates the introduction of devolved government in Scotland and Wales in 1999. It operates UK-wide under GB and parallel Northern Ireland regulations. In response to commitments made by the four governments to reform the existing regime and to incentivise producers to take more responsibility for the materials and products they place on the market, the UK Government, the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland published a joint consultation in February 2019 setting out proposals to reform the producer responsibility system for packaging.
- 3.15 Extended Producer Responsibility is an established policy approach adopted by many countries around the world, across a broad range of products and materials. It gives producers an incentive to make better, more sustainable decisions at the product design stage including decisions that make it easier for products to be re-used or recycled at their end of life. It also places the financial cost of managing products once they reach end of life on producers.
- 3.16 This second consultation sets out proposals for the introduction of EPR for Packaging. Views are sought from across the industry, as well as members of the public, on how the scheme will function to ensure it achieves the desired outcomes. Responses to this consultation will help inform final policy decisions on key aspects of the scheme, such as governance, recycling targets and implementation timelines to help ensure an effective system is put in place and inform the regulatory framework required to deliver this change.

A synopsis of the EPR scheme is outlined in the following sections.

Targets

- 3.17 Under the Packaging Waste Regulations 2007, obligated producers are required to meet annual recycling targets, with UK packaging waste recycling rates reported annually by Defra. Government will separately report overall packaging waste recycling rates for England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.
- 3.18 The consultation proposes minimum recycling targets for six packaging materials. These equate to an overall recycling rate for EPR packaging of 73% by 2030. It also proposes the introduction of a recycling target for fibre-based composite packaging such as food and drink cartons and single use paper cups.

Full Net Costs

- 3.19 Following strong support in the 2019 consultation, subsequent evidence development and stakeholder engagement, Government intends to progress with the broad scope of full net costs of managing packaging waste as set out in the response to the first consultation. This includes:
- The collecting, sorting, and recycling of packaging waste from households and businesses
 - The collecting and disposing of packaging in the residual waste stream from households only
 - Litter and refuse management costs, including bin and ground litter

Obligated Producers

- 3.20 Government proposes the introduction of a single point of obligation (i.e., a single producer is responsible for the cost of managing a piece of packaging). This will focus the obligations onto those who are best placed to reduce and/or increase the recyclability of the packaging they use. The consultation details the proposed obligations for reporting and payment of costs for the different types of obligated producer. In the current system, the obligation for a single item of packaging is shared across multiple businesses.
- 3.21 The consultation proposes lowering current 'de-minimis' levels so that more producers are obligated and also obligating online retailers for any imported packaging.

Disposable Cups

- 3.22 The consultation seeks views on whether a mandatory cup takeback and recycling requirement should be placed on businesses selling filled disposable paper cups to provide for the separate collection of used cups (either generated in-

store or consumed 'on-the-go'). Currently there are some voluntary schemes being operated by retailers in relation to disposable cups.

Modulated Fees

- 3.33 The consultation proposes that the fees producers will pay to cover the disposal costs of their packaging should be varied to reflect criteria such as recyclability. For instance, producers whose packaging contributes positively to scheme outcomes (e.g., easily recyclable) will pay lower fee rates, while fee rates for packaging which does not contribute positively to scheme outcomes will be increased (e.g., unrecyclable).

Labelling

- 3.34 The consultation proposes that mandatory recyclability labelling should be introduced on packaging as soon as is feasible and by end of 2026/27 at the latest. The expectation is that labelling is introduced on different packaging types in line with requirements for their separate collection by local authorities (so along the lines that the OPRL is designed). It is proposed that the broad requirements for labelling are set out in legislation, including a requirement to use a label approved by Government (or the Regulator).

Plastic Film and Flexible Packaging

- 3.35 It is proposed that plastic films and flexibles should be required to be collected for recycling as soon as is practical, and the costs of achieving this are paid by producers. It is assumed this will be possible by end of financial year 2026/27 but views are sought in the consultation.

Bio-degradable Packaging

- 3.36 This type of packaging will fall under EPR proposals. The consultation suggests that until such time as the state of evidence, collections and infrastructure for this packaging can be improved on this type of packaging, it is unlikely to be considered recyclable under packaging EPR and will therefore attract higher fee rates than packaging that contributes positively to scheme outcomes.

Payments for Household Waste to Local Authorities

- 3.37 The consultation sets broad principles underpinning the implementation of payment mechanisms. These include the scope of 'necessary costs' and that costs paid by producers should be for the delivery of 'efficient and effective' services.

- 3.38 It proposes that payments should be based on both the tonnages and quality of packaging waste collected and recycled, with these requirements being phased in and a Scheme Administrator encouraged to support local authorities to improve and meet performance benchmarks, to obtain their full payments.
- 3.39 Only local authorities which operate efficient and effective systems will have their full net costs recovered via a modelled approach based on the tonnage collected.

Payments for Business Waste

- 3.40 The consultation seeks views on three different approaches to facilitate payments from packaging producers to businesses generating packaging wastes. Two of these approaches foresee a clear role for compliance schemes, whilst one foresees full responsibility for payment, and therefore achievement of targets, placed on a Scheme Administrator.

Data and reporting required

- 3.41 To support the payment mechanisms proposed, Local Authorities will need to report data to the Scheme Administrator. This will include data on their collection and disposal services and facilities, the types of households and businesses they service, the tonnages collected through their systems and local communications activities.
- 3.42 It is proposed that producers pay according to the tonnage of packaging they place on the market in the previous calendar year as they currently do, and that Local Authorities are paid on a financial year basis, based on previous years tonnage data, quarterly in arrears.

Payments for Littered Waste

- 3.43 The consultation proposes that producers of commonly littered packaging items be made responsible for the costs that are directly attributable to their management, both as bin and ground litter. This includes costs incurred by Local Authorities, other duty bodies, litter authorities and statutory undertakers.

Scheme Administrator and Governance

- 3.44 The consultation seeks views on two broad approaches:

- A single administrator / management organisation: responsible for administering and managing delivery of the packaging waste management cost requirements and producer compliance with packaging waste recycling targets.
- Multiple compliance schemes with certain functions undertaken by a Scheme Administrator: A Scheme Administrator would take on functions that are better delivered UK-wide such as developing the approach to determining packaging waste management costs for household waste, setting the fee modulation mechanism, and administering payments to local authorities; with compliance schemes primarily responsible for managing compliance with obligations in respect of non-household packaging waste.

Monitoring and Enforcement

- 3.45 It proposes that the environmental regulators in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales will be the primary regulators and have the powers to monitor, audit, and use civil and criminal penalties to drive compliance and address non-compliance. There are no proposals for local authority involvement in aspects of regulation relating to the EPR system.

Implementation Timetable

- 3.46 The governments intend to have the first phase of EPR established in 2023 which would enable payments to local authorities to commence from October 2023. Full cost recovery is anticipated to be achievable in Phase 2 from April 2024.

Deposit Return Scheme

- 3.47 This consultation focuses on specific policy proposals for the introduction of a deposit return scheme, including the scope of materials, scheme governance, return points, and collection targets. The proposals set out in the consultation work together to create a scheme that incentivises consumers to change their behaviour, leading to higher recycling rates and lower levels of littering. The consultation refers solely to deposit return schemes for drinks containers.
- 3.48 Following the first consultation on a Deposit Return Scheme, in 2019, Government indicated the intention was to introduce a deposit return scheme for drinks containers in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland from 2023 and that the introduction of a deposit return scheme would be subject to receiving additional evidence and carrying out further analysis on the costs and benefits of such a scheme.

- 3.49 Government remains committed to delivering on its commitments to introduce a deposit return scheme, but it also recognises that the Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted the economy and society in unimaginable ways. On this basis, the second consultation builds on the first consultation, offering a chance to explore further what the continued appetite is for a deposit return scheme in a 'post-Covid' context.
- 3.50 Government have reassessed what a realistic timeline for implementation of a deposit return scheme looks like, ensuring that sufficient time is given for a successful roll-out of the scheme. They anticipate that the introduction of a deposit return scheme in England, Wales and Northern Ireland would be in late 2024 at the earliest. Updated information on the implementation timeline is provided in the consultation.
- 3.51 Views are being sought on how a deposit return scheme will operate, for example, scheme design, scheme governance, implementation timelines and enforcement. DEFRA is seeking views from across the industry, as well as members of the public, on how the scheme will function to ensure it achieves the desired outcomes.
- 3.52 The Consultation document covers ten major areas relating to a deposit return scheme. Of particular relevance to local authorities are the chapters covering the scope of the scheme, the scheme governance, return points and local authorities. Other areas covered include the collection targets, financial flows, labelling, monitoring and enforcement, the implementation timeline and the impact assessment.

Scope

- 3.53 The Consultation sets out the scheme participants who will take on obligations under the deposit return scheme – namely producers, retailers, and the Scheme Administrator (Deposit Management Organisation or DMO). These obligations include requiring producers to sign up to the DMO and carry out reporting obligations, paying a producer registration fee to the DMO to fund the deposit return scheme, and placing a redeemable deposit on in-scope drinks containers they place on the market. Retailers will be required to accept all deposit return scheme containers returned to their store and ensure the deposit price is added to the purchase price of an in-scope drink at the point of purchase.
- 3.54 It sets out what materials will be within the scope of a DRS. This will be based on materials and not the type of product and it is proposed that the scheme will include PET bottles, glass bottles and steel and aluminium cans. These will either

be drinks containers up to 3 litres for the 'all in' scheme or drinks containers under 750ml for the 'on the go' scheme.

Four options are proposed:

1. Do Nothing
2. All in (drinks containers up to 3 litres)
3. On the go (drinks containers under 750ml)
4. All in without glass

Welsh Government have stated a preference for an 'all in' system.

- 3.55 As noted, at its meeting on 11 May 2021, Committee agreed to support an 'All-in Scheme' in relation to the size of drinks containers to be included within the Deposit Return Scheme.

Within the Consultation response, although we support the inclusion of all proposed materials, we highlight the fact that the Republic of Ireland is developing a deposit return scheme excluding glass, and that this has the potential to cause confusion and even fraudulent cross-border activity. We also suggest that consideration could be given to additional materials, for example cartons.

Targets

- 3.56 There are proposals that legislation will set out targets for a proportion of drinks containers placed on the market to be collected for recycling. It is proposed that there should be an obligation placed on the DMO to achieve a 90% collection rate after three years from introduction. It will be the responsibility of the reprocessor to provide evidence how much has been recycled. The point at which material will be counted towards recycling targets will be when it reaches end of waste criteria.
- 3.57 To ensure that all material collected through a deposit return scheme will be recycled, the governments propose that there should be a legal obligation on the Deposit Management Organisation to ensure that the material that is collected via a deposit return scheme is passed on to a reprocessor and evidence is provided of this.
- 3.58 Within our response, we agree that in order to make the DRS system worthwhile it should achieve a high capture rate. However we highlight that consideration may need to be given to defer the scheme, until the outcomes of EPR and the plastics tax are realised before making additional investment for a DRS. We also stress that equality issues should be considered, to ensure that no one is disadvantaged or discriminated against, in order to achieve high capture and collection rates for all materials.

Scheme Governance

- 3.59 The consultation outlines the role of the Deposit Management Organisation (DMO) whose role is to manage the operation of the deposit return scheme. The DMO will own the material returned by the consumers and be responsible for meeting the high collection targets set out in legislation and will be appointed via a competitive tender process. The consultation elaborates on how the DMO will be held accountable for the success of the scheme. The DMO will have to ensure that financial provisions are made available to make payments to local authorities and/or the Extended Producer Responsibility scheme administrator to fund the collection of deposit return scheme containers that are collected through local authority waste streams.
- 3.60 Within our response, we stress the importance of including local authorities within the conversations and overall process. We also make reference to the digital trial which was recently conducted in Northern Ireland.

Financial Flows

- 3.61 The consultation sets out proposals for the DMO to be funded via three revenue streams: material revenue, producer registration fees, and unredeemed deposits.
- 3.62 It also discusses the approach to setting the deposit level (i.e., a maximum and minimum deposit level is set in secondary legislation with the DMO having flexibility to set the level within this threshold and may lead to variable deposit levels depending on the product), proposing that a fixed deposit level is not set in legislation but rather set out a minimum, and possibly maximum, deposit within the secondary legislation. This in theory will allow the DMO flexibility to set or change the deposit level in a way that influences behaviour change and increased recycling by consumers.
- 3.63 Within our response, we reference Equality issues and stress the importance in designing a system that is accessible to everyone. We also highlight the annual Northern Ireland cost of cleaning up litter and illegal dumping and we suggest that a detailed Northern Ireland specific cost-benefit analysis would be vitally important in examining potential savings associated with litter reduction.
- 3.64 With regards to the question on the minimum deposit level set in legislation, we propose 10p and highlight that the deposit should be sufficient to engage consumers but not be too much of a financial penalty for those unable to return the container. We would recommend that Government conduct further research on the issue of multipacks but suggest that a variable deposit scheme could be implemented in order to

minimise the multipack impact on consumers, especially those on lower incomes.

Return Points

- 3.65 The Consultation sets out further details of the retailer options in the deposit return scheme, proposing that all retailers who sell in-scope drinks containers will be obligated to accept returns of in-scope material by hosting a return point. This will likely be via reverse vending machine or manual return points, but the regulations will be broad in nature to ensure alternative methods of return are not ruled out. Requiring online retailers to be included in the scheme is discussed.
- 3.66 The Consultation also discusses the potential for innovation in technology to be deployed in a deposit return scheme system and provides further detail on how this might support the return points provisions using smart phone applications allowing the electronic redemption of a deposit. This could mean that residents could continue to use their kerbside collection systems and reclaim their deposit and so cut out the need to take containers back to the shops with them.
- 3.67 Within our response we highlight the importance of making the scheme as user friendly as possible, with minimal inconvenience involved for everyone participating. The concept of a digital scheme is interesting and could be further explored through larger scale trials.

Labelling

- 3.68 The Consultation proposes mandatory labelling be legislated for as part of a DRS. We support this proposal as a means of minimising the potential for fraud.

Local Authorities and Local Councils

- 3.69 The Consultation explores the impact a deposit return scheme will have on local authorities and the way in which containers in scope of the scheme will be treated when these containers still end up in local authority waste streams. It seeks views on three options for financially reimbursing local authorities for any DRS items they must deal with, in recycling, residual or litter.
- 3.70 In our response, we highlight the need for a solution that maximises the potential return of DRS material and offers a fair system of payment to cover all the DRS material that councils collect (recycling, litter, and residual). However, under current circumstances, there will probably be a reliance on MRFs to provide accurate data to councils.

Compliance, Monitoring and Enforcement

- 3.71 The Consultation provides an overview of how the deposit return scheme will be monitored and enforced. Whilst some functions will fall to the environmental regulators in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the governments consider there is a role for local authorities/Trading Standards to regulate the consumer-facing obligations that are placed on retailers. This is likened to functions undertaken in relation to the carrier bag tax.
- 3.72 Within our response, we highlight the additional obligations placed on local council staff and note that this could be quite significant, particularly in the short term as the scheme is set up.

Implementation timetable

- 3.73 The Consultation lists several activities required in advance of a DRS going live including:
- 2021 - Carrying out this second consultation, analysing the responses and publishing a Government response
 - 2021 - Finalising the Impact Assessment
 - 2021 - Securing the primary powers in the Environment Bill
 - 2022 - Securing the secondary legislation required
 - 2023 Appoint the DMO
 - 2023 – 2024 Rollout of infrastructure and other mobilisation activities
- 3.74 The governments currently anticipate that a DRS could launch in late 2024, subject to the outcome of this consultation and parliamentary passage of the Environment Bill.
- 3.75 Within our response, we note that timeline seems very ambitious, and will need to take into account the lead-in times required by scheme participants, particularly where production or contracting changes are required. We also note that a number of key policy pieces are not in place in Northern Ireland, such as decisions on the future of recycling, 'TEEP' policy and a MRF code of practice; these will need to be agreed and published as soon as possible. We suggest that the introduction of the DRS could be deferred until the EPR policies have been implemented and the outcome of the plastics tax is better known. This would allow these policies and regulations to work and see if they deliver the desired increases in recycling before determining whether a DRS is needed.

Approach to Impact Assessment

3.76 Four options are included in the impact assessments:

- Baseline - do nothing
- An 'All In' system
- An 'On the Go' system
- An 'All In' system that does not include glass

3.77 We note in our response that in the associated Impact Assessment, only limited data is available from the devolved administration. Also, if the digital solution is to be incorporated into the scheme design, this option should be fully evaluated as it is likely to substantially change the impacts/costs.

3.78 We do not necessarily agree with the analysis presented on littering as there is unlikely to be a cost saving related to operational aspects of litter collection. The impact assessment makes a direct correlation between the reduction in litter and cost savings in terms of manual sweeping and picking and emptying bins. We do not believe this is an accurate reflection as staff will be required to cover the same area to litter pick and bins will probably have to be emptied with the same frequency.

Financial and Resource Implications

3.79 Whilst there are no current financial or resource implications associated in responding to these consultations. As stated above in terms of full net cost recovery under EPR, there are likely to be considerable financial implications upon implementation of these schemes in due course and the impacts for district councils will need to be clearly defined and recoverable in terms of net impact on ratepayers .

Equality or Good Relations Implications

3.80 There are no equality or good relations implications in responding to the consultations.”

In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Members agreed that the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to retrospectively adopt the consultation responses to Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging and Introducing a Deposit Return Scheme in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

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
Hampton Park	Off Saintfield Road, BT7	Alan Patterson Design

Pest control update

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 provide Members with an update on the ongoing recovery of our pest control service and in particular the commencement of home visits and treatments.

2.0 Recommendations

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

- note the progress made to date on the ongoing recovery of the pest control service and the steps being taken to address the remaining challenges.**

3.0 Main report

3.1 Members will be aware of the significant impact the pandemic has had on front line services such as pest control. In the early stages of last year a number of pest control officers were furloughed as they were required to shield for various reasons. The service continued to deliver the sewer baiting programme throughout that time and residents were offered advice and information. The tenants of social housing were advised to contact their housing provider to obtain pest control services.

3.2 We re-introduced the pest control service in September 2020, albeit in a very limited way. Risk assessments and the various control measures meant that very few home treatments could be carried out and only for the most vulnerable and where significant public health issues were identified. Most visits were restricted to external only, with officers providing advice and information.

3.3 In recent months with transmission rates reducing and the easing of government restrictions the Pest Control team has been working with Corporate Health and Safety to carry out further risk assessments using the less than 2m template and to put in place additional safety measures to enable home treatments to resume at the beginning of June. The Trade Unions have been kept informed and the risk assessments have been agreed.

- 3.4 The proposed safe system of work will require more time for each visit and in between visits as officers have a list of questions to ask the householder before entering the property and they will be required to change their PPE between visits.
- 3.5 The safety measures will impact on the number of treatments that can be completed in a day and there is the potential for a long waiting list to build up very quickly. This is a concern to both staff and the Trade Unions because of the negative impact this can have on customer perception of the service and subsequently on staff morale. In order to manage the waiting list it is proposed, in the first instance, to only carryout treatments in private rented sector and owner occupied property and to continue to refer the tenants of social housing to the Housing Executive and Housing Associations. This approach will be supported by sewer baiting, external assessments and drain testing for defects as required regardless of tenure.
- 3.6 We have only recently started collecting information that enables us to breakdown service requests received by tenure and it is difficult therefore to determine the impact this approach will have on our capacity to meet demand. Also, we anticipate an initial surge in demand for treatments as we restart the service. We will keep the figures and waiting list under close review and will of course include treatments for social housing tenants as soon as there is capacity to do so. Members will be kept informed of any further changes.
- 3.7 Home treatments are the priority; however, we are conscious the time of year for wasp nests is fast approaching and we are exploring options to recover this service, which remains suspended since last year. Members will be kept informed as this work progresses.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.8 There are no additional financial implications associated with this report.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.9 There are no implications associated with this report.”

Several Members emphasised the need to get pest control services operational again as soon as it was safe to do so and thanked the officers for their quick response to incidents throughout the City during the pandemic.

During discussion the Members considered the role of the other statutory agencies and expressed concern that the Council appeared to be the public's first point of contact with any pest control issue, despite the fact that the NIHE and Housing Associations also offered a pest control service. They also highlighted the need for

preventative measures throughout the City and the need for a multiagency approach in this regard.

Following the suggestion of a Member, the Director of City Services agreed to liaise with the Customer Focus Programme Director to ascertain what role, if any, the Customer Hub could potentially play in logging potential requests for service and then referring the issue/area of concern to the appropriate statutory agency. She suggested that she would ask the Customer Focus Programme Director to update/e-mail the Members directly regarding whether this was possible.

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

- write to NIHE and Housing Associations requesting that they communicate their role to their tenants in regard to the pest control services that they offer;
- establish if there was an existing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the NIHE and Housing Associations. If so, update accordingly or alternatively draft a new document with an update report to be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee;
- write to Northern Ireland Water highlighting the issues and ask them to reaffirm their preventive role and multiagency approach going forward; and
- establish if the Members could log complaints via the Customer Hub which could then be referred via the hub to the other statutory agencies.

Committee/Strategic Issues

Update on Community Planning and work of Living Here Board

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 Committee on the work being taken forward through Community Planning with a specific focus on the Living Here Board and its recent meeting held on Monday 17 May 2021.

2.0 Recommendations

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

- (i) Key areas of work currently being progressed by the Living Here Board (LHB), as outlined below.**
- (ii) Alignment and synergies between the Board and the work of the Committee.**

- (iii) Planned process for refreshing the Belfast Agenda and the role of Elected Members in supporting this process.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Background

Members will be aware that the Community Planning Partnership (Partnership) was established in February 2018, under the auspices of the Local Government (NI) Act 2015, to improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing by encouraging and enabling joined up planning and collaborative delivery across partners, as well as promoting and enabling innovation and sharing good practice. In order to ensure that the vision and ambitions set out within the Belfast Agenda (community plan for the city) are translated into action and to mobilise city partners to support delivery, four 'delivery focused boards' have been formed to drive collaboration (i.e. City Development, Skills, Jobs and Education, Resilience and Sustainability and Living Here Board), as illustrated below:



3.2 Living Here Board

The LHB is co-Chaired by the Council's Director of Neighbourhood Services and the Health and Social Care Board's Assistant Director and Commissioning Lead for Belfast. The Board comprises Council officers and a range of its Community Planning Partners, including representation from the Statutory and VCSE sectors. The areas of collaborative focus being taken forward by the LHB, as set out below, clearly aligns with the remit of the Committee and seeks to support vulnerable people and communities as well as creating integrated approaches to improving service provision and support within the city. The LHB work programme currently focuses on the following:

- (i) Addressing Health Inequalities with a specific focus on
 - Drugs, Alcohol and Mental Health
 - Avoidable winter deaths
 - Promoting Positive Emotional Wellbeing
- (ii) Community Recovery and Area Planning (including Multi-Agency Support Hub)
- (iii) Integrated, inter-agency approaches to early intervention including early years support and family programmes.

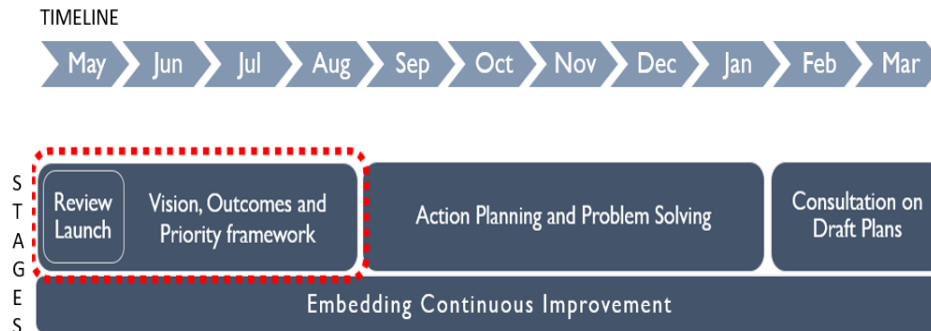
As the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic have begun to emerge, there is a need to understand how our city economy and communities are likely to be impacted, and what we need to focus on to rebuild in the coming months and years. Clearly, the pandemic is not over and there will need to be sustained efforts to protect the safety and health of our citizens, while at the same time balancing the need to stabilise and rebuild our economy and city. In this context, and as part of the review of the Belfast Agenda, there is a need to take stock and reassess the focus of Community Planning and the work of the Boards over the coming weeks and months. This is not to say that the ambitions and commitments set out within the Belfast Agenda should not remain at the core of our work. However, in order to address emerging challenges as a result of the pandemic, we may need to pivot our collective focus and seek to prioritise and accelerate key interventions and programmes.

Whilst the Committee will have previously discussed some of these areas, specifically, the intention is to move to a more standard approach to updating Members on the work programme of the respective Boards aligned to their scheduled meetings. A summary draft note and slide-deck from the recent LHB meeting (virtual) held on Monday 17 May 2021 is available for Members information. Key points for Members to note from the discussion include:

3.3

i Review of the Belfast Agenda and Role of the Boards

The Board received a presentation outlining the planned co-design process and timeline for refreshing the Belfast Agenda and the development of an associated 4-year action plan. The diagram below outlines this process.



It is important to note that Elected Members will be engaged at each stage of the review process through the All-Party Working Group on Community Planning. In addition, it is recommended that all Elected Members will have the opportunity to shape the priority framework and plans for the new 4-year period through Party Group briefings. Elected Members will also be supported by our Marketing and Communications team who will provide ongoing support via a communications toolkit, to enable effective engagement with constituents, so that their voices are heard.

While the specifics regarding engagement events will be finalised with partners, it is expected that there will be a series of thematic and/ or local-area virtual workshops. This will provide Elected Members with a leading role within their communities, to help shape the city's future plans.

3.4

ii Reaffirming the focus of the Living Here Board in the short-term (6-18 months)

Given the impact of Covid on the city, its communities and its people, the Board agreed to undertake a focused planning session to consider specific priorities which Board members could coalesce around and bring collaborative gain to, over the next 6-18 months to further support community recovery and feed into the Belfast Agenda Review process. The Board agreed to host the planning session in June 2021.

3.5 Addressing Health Inequalities

iii Complex Lives model

The Board received a presentation on the developing Complex Lives model for Belfast including the agreement of a 'route map' for the project built, on the themes of System Leadership, Frontline Delivery and System Enablers and the pragmatic approach being taken to implement action, which utilises existing services and partnership working. Board members noted the progress to date and timeline for the implementation of the model from 1 April 2022.

3.6

iv Promoting Positive Emotional Wellbeing Plan

Board members were briefed on planned activity within Council to integrate best practice approaches to promote positive emotional wellbeing across a range of services. This will act as a test for other organisations, with the sharing of lessons learned by Council.

3.7

v Belfast Warm and Well

The Board received a presentation following the completion of year 2 of the Belfast Warm and Well scheme, along with key considerations required in supporting its transition to mainstream delivery, including the opportunity to connect with and across other related work programmes including the Resilience and Sustainability Board's ambition to eradicate fuel poverty. Board members agreed to continue supporting the promotion of the scheme with frontline staff and to consider a response to the draft Energy Strategy for Northern Ireland.

3.8

Area Planning and Delivery

vi Multi-Agency Support Hub

A presentation was made to the Board on the establishment of a multi-agency support hub within south Belfast, which aims to enable collective working with statutory partners to support vulnerable individuals and reduce levels of risk and vulnerability. Members will recall approving Council's involvement within this pilot project in the Botanic DEA at the People and Communities meeting on 12 January 2021. Board members noted progress to date and highlighted the importance of linkages and synergies with the Complex Lives model project.

3.9

vii Belfast Area Outcomes Group – Combined Covid Response Approach

The Board received a presentation on behalf of the Belfast Area Outcomes Group (BAOG) which examined the approach taken to responding to the Covid-19 pandemic and the focus and nature of support provided across four critical anti-poverty priorities including support for families with children under two; digital poverty; flexible funding and healthy eating. CPP partners committed to joint planning with BAOG on the development of a specific action plan to support children and young people and their families to recover from the pandemic, with a view to adopt implementation of the plan.

3.10

viii Wider University and Lower Ormeau Intervention

Members will be aware that due to the significant and complex challenges in this area, in November 2019, the Council requested that Community Planning be used as a vehicle to bring key Statutory, Community and other partners together to develop an integrated and targeted approach and intervention(s) of scale for the wider university and Lower Ormeau area.

History has shown that there is no straightforward or single solution to the prevalent issues in the area. However, it is incumbent upon all partners to continue to demonstrate commitment, sustained effort and leadership to find solutions to improve the quality of life for those that live in the area. In support of this work, in November 2020, the Council worked closely with the Department for Communities, Department for Finance and local stakeholders to bring forward a strategic insights programme which included a series of tailored workshops with community groups, residents, student representatives, landlords and local councillors. While the process has highlighted entrenched positions and ongoing tension between the constituent stakeholder groups, there is a general consensus amongst the majority that a reconfigured and long-term vision is required with a supporting implementation plan, alongside proactively addressing the immediate challenges.

Work is underway to establish a recalibrated and re-energised Inter-Agency Delivery Group with an action and outcome-based focus and supported by a strategic Ministerial Group who will consider potential policy and legislative changes which may be required. Suggested outcomes for the area include, but are not limited to:

- Reduce anti-social behaviour,
- Improve community cohesion,
- Improve the physical and environmental appearance of the area,
- Develop new and innovative methods of engaging citizens, to identify local priorities and solutions.

Members will note the interconnectedness of the above priorities, which are being undertaken through the LHB and how these align to Council's efforts to lead the city recovery from Covid. Opportunities to further enhance synergies between work programmes within and across the various Board's under the Community Planning Partnership, will continue to emerge as the Board reaffirms its priorities and supports the review of the Belfast Agenda. Regular progress updates of the LHB will be brought to the Community Planning All-Party Working Group and the People and Communities Committee going forward, providing the

mechanism for informing and engaging members in relation to the Living Here work programme.

3.11 Financial and Resource Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Costs associated with the implementation and facilitation of the LHB are currently being met within existing council budgets.

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

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

The Members of the Committee noted:

- the key areas of work currently being progressed by the Living Here Board (LHB),
- the alignment and synergies between the Board and the work of the Committee; and
- the proposed procedure for refreshing the Belfast Agenda and the role of Elected Members in supporting the process.

Belfast Open Spaces Strategy - Delivery Plan

The Director of Neighbourhood Services provided the Members with a detailed update in respect of the Belfast Open Spaces Strategy (BOSS) and the proposed approach to implement the strategy through the development of Delivery Plans.

He reminded the Members that the new BOSS was an update of the previous Open Spaces Strategy – ‘Your City, Your Space’ which had been completed in 2005. The Council had appointed AECOM to help prepare a new BOSS for the council area. The BOSS, including the data collected during its preparation, had formed part of the evidence base for the Local Development Plan (LDP). A public consultation had been carried out on the draft BOSS from June -September 2019, with an update and proposed amendments having been presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in March 2020. As a result of the pandemic there had been a delay in finalising the publication of the BOSS.

The Members noted that the vision of the BOSS was that by 2035 *‘Belfast will have a well-connected, accessible network of high quality, sustainable open spaces recognised for the value and benefits they provide to everyone who lives, works in and visits our city.’*

The strategy outlined seven guiding strategic principles (SP), to ensure the council’s existing and new open spaces were fit for the future.

- SP1. Provide welcoming shared spaces
- SP2. Improve connectivity
- SP3. Improve health and wellbeing
- SP4. Support place-making and enhance the built environment
- SP5. Increase resilience to climate change
- SP6. Protect and enhance the natural environment
- SP7. Be celebrated and support learning

The Director advised that the strategy had identified a range of opportunities and headline actions aligned to the seven strategic principles above. These actions were currently underway or planned for the council's open space network across the city in the next five years. He detailed that over the coming months, officers from the CNS Department would work collaboratively with colleagues across the council to develop more focused thematic and geographically based (N, S, E, W and city wide) open space delivery plans. This work would include a review of the progress to date on the headline actions currently in the BOSS and the development of smart outcomes-based proposals for future actions.

Several Members welcomed and noted the importance of open spaces, stating that this had been particularly highlighted during the pandemic. During discussion the importance of improving connectivity through connecting spaces (greenways), sustainable transport and accessible travel and linking this work with the Belfast Access Strategy and aligning it with the work of the Physical Programmes section was highlighted.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services referred to localised delivery plans and advised that it was anticipated that much of the work to develop these plans would be progressed through the Area Working Groups.

The Members of the Committee noted the final version of the Belfast Open Spaces Strategy and the proposed approach and next steps in implementing the strategy through the development of smart outcomes-based delivery plans.

Belfast Healthy Cities

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 At the meeting of the People and Communities Committee on 9th March 2021, Members agreed to extend the current partnership agreement with Belfast Healthy Cities, until 30th September 2021 to allow for the submission of the application for Phase VII of the WHO European Healthy Cities Network and the completion of a value for money review of partnership arrangements with Belfast Healthy Cities, who facilitate the city's membership of the WHO European Healthy Cities Network.**
- 1.2 On 21st May BHC notified us that the City of Belfast has been designated in Phase VII thereby extended to April 2026. Council Officers will work with BHC to ensure that the certificate is formally signed off by the incoming Lord Mayor over the coming weeks.**

- 1.3 Belfast City Council are one of four core funders of Belfast Healthy Cities along with the Public Health Agency, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and Northern Ireland Housing Executive. Belfast's membership to the WHO European Healthy Cities Network is facilitated by Belfast Healthy Cities. The CEOs of each of the four funding bodies will receive a copy of the final designation letter.
- 1.4 The value for money review draft report has now been issued, on 6th May 2021, to the core funding partners of Belfast Healthy Cities for review and comment. Overall, the findings outlined in the initial draft report do indicate that the collective investment in Belfast Healthy Cities represents 'good value for money' based on the returns the city receives in both profile and practice.
- 1.5 Further engagement within, and across, each of the core funding partners is now required to collectively examine the content of the draft report. As such, and to ensure continuity of delivery during this period, it is recommended the current partnership agreement with Belfast Healthy Cities is extended until 31st March 2022.

2.0 Recommendations

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

- Note the content of the report
- Agree to extend the current partnership agreement with Belfast Healthy Cities to 31st March 2022
- Agree to a further report being brought to committee in the Autumn which will detail both the findings and recommendations from the final version of the value for money review as well as the four core funding partners plans for acting on/responding to the findings /recommendations.

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

- 3.1 At the meeting of the People and Communities Committee on 4th June 2019, Members agreed that a review be undertaken of the Department's ongoing partnership agreements with a focus on alignment with the Belfast Agenda and value for money. Included within this review was the partnership agreement with Belfast Healthy Cities.

- 3.2 Further to this, at the meeting of the People and Communities Committee on 9th March 2021, Members approved an extension of the current partnership agreement with Belfast Healthy Cities, until 30th September 2021 to allow for the completion of both the value for money review of partnership arrangements with Belfast Healthy Cities and to facilitate the application process for Phase VII of the WHO European Healthy Cities Network.
- 3.3 Belfast's membership to the WHO European Healthy Cities Network is facilitated by Belfast Healthy Cities, who are an independent partnership organisation, recognised as having charitable status by The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland. BHC is governed by a Board of Directors, elected annually and representing the public, university, voluntary and community sectors and funded by a range of partners including Council, Public Health Agency (PHA), Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE).
- 3.4 Independent consultancy support, working on behalf of the funders collectively, has led on the value for money review process. The timeframe for the review has been negatively impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly given the high levels of engagement required to undertake such work. As such, the timescale for the completion of the review was extended to allow for full involvement from key stakeholders.
- 3.5 A draft report has recently been submitted to the core funding partners. The draft report indicates the current level of collective funding to Belfast Healthy Cities represents good value for money based on the existing work programme and the return received to the city in both profile (regionally and internationally) and practice (partnership and action). Further engagement is now required within each of the core funding organisations, across the funding partnership, and with Belfast Healthy Cities.
- 3.6 A report will be brought back to committee in Autumn 2021, providing greater detail on the review findings and recommendations, as well as the core funding partners collective response in terms of how these should/could be addressed going forward for members consideration and approval.
- 3.7 In the interim, members are asked to approve an extension of the current partnership agreement with Belfast Healthy Cities, until 31st March 2022, to allow for further discussion and engagement to take place and to ensure continuity of service during this time.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.8 Extending the current partnership agreement with Belfast Healthy Cities as recommended, would have a financial

implication of £40,647. This has been included within the revenue estimates for 2021/22 and does not represent any growth.

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

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

Following a query in regard to funding, the Director of Neighbourhood Services advised that Belfast City Council was just one of the funders and he assured the Member that the long-term sustainability of the partnership would be considered in the Council’s value for money review.

In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Members agreed that the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to agree:

- to extend the current partnership agreement with Belfast Healthy Cities to 31st March 2022; and
- to a further report being submitted to committee in the Autumn which would detail both the findings and recommendations from the final version of the value for money review as well as the four core funding partners plans for acting on/responding to the findings/recommendations.

Naming of New Park at Colin

The Director provided the Members with an update regarding the outcome of the naming process for the new park at Colin, which had previously been reported to the People and Communities Committee at its meeting on 13th April 2021.

He reminded the Members that the Council were currently working in partnership with the Urban Villages Initiative to develop a large scale ‘destination’ park in the Colin area of the city. The new park, which represented an investment of over £4m in the area, would include a new play park, pump track, education zone and extensive new pathways. Work on the park was currently progressing well and it was anticipated that it would be completed by July. As previously advised, a preliminary engagement exercise had been carried out with key local stakeholders to develop several options for a name for the new park, with the initial agreed options having been:

- Páirc Nua Colin
- Leap of Faith Park
- Sherwood Park
- Colin New Park

In addition, as agreed at last month’s meeting Páirc Nua Chollann had also been added to the proposed list.

The Director advised that the Council had used its new online consultation platform, “Your Say” to consult on the five options above between 10th May and 31st May 2021. Hard copy questionnaires had also been circulated to key community stakeholders. The consultation had received a very strong uptake with over 900

responses received, the vast majority of which came from respondents within the BT17 postcode area and he drew the Members; attention to the results, as follows:

- Páirc Nua Chollann- 42.4% (317 responses)
- Leap of Faith Park- 23.8% (208)
- Páirc Nua Colin- 15.7% (137)
- Sherwood Park- 12.7% (111)
- Colin New Park- 5.4% (47)

In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Members agreed that the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note the findings of the public consultation exercise on the name of the new park at Colin and approve the name of the new park in Colin as Páirc Nua Chollann.

Motion - Recent Violence and Public Disorder

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 in relation to the Motion on Recent Violence and Public Disorder considered at the May meeting of committee and to outline how this would be facilitated, resourced and managed.

2.0 Recommendations

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

- i Note that the Motion will be considered at the next meeting of the Belfast Area Outcomes Group for CYP as the most appropriate forum of the relevant statutory agencies and third sector organisations to inform a consistent, young person led approach for future summer periods;**
- ii note the recent engagement with BHSCT and DfC to discuss any future discretionary funding to support youth engagement and intervention and commitment to continue the collaborative, flexible, co-design model successfully delivered by the BAOG and Locality groups for CYP Covid response programme support;**
- iii note ongoing arrangements to support continued, proactive, engagement with Trade Unions to ensure safety of our staff**

- iv note historic and ongoing engagement with Department of Engagement and Youth Service officials to support the ongoing process for the formation of a NI Youth Assembly; and to 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

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

- 3.1 The Council, at its meeting on 4th May, considered the following motion which had been moved by Councillor Smyth and seconded by Councillor Mulholland.

- 3.2 *'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.'

- 3.3 The Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to agree that a report on how this would be facilitated, resourced and managed be submitted to a future meeting.
- 3.4 Council is committed to the work of the Belfast Youth Forum and continues to facilitate this with dedicated officer support and an agreed programme of joint BYF and P&C committee meetings where YF members present progress reports on their campaigns, outline any emerging issues and present recommendations in order to agree related action. The next joint meeting of the BYF and P&C committee is 22nd June 2021. Recruitment for the next cohort of members for the BYF will begin in September 2021.
- 3.5 Officers meet with senior officials from the Youth Service in the city on a regular basis in order to discuss issues and agree collaborative action. We will continue to work with the EA Youth Service at both a city and neighbourhood level to support all elements of the Youth Service.
- 3.6 Within Priorities for Youth, the policy document which prescribes EA Youth Service work, participation is a key objective. To support the development of the Youth Voice, Youth Services are working in partnership with district councils to develop council wide, voluntary representation by young people and have confirmed that this approach has been heavily influenced by the recognised good practice in the Belfast Youth Forum model. We are currently working with Youth Services to agree how our Belfast Youth Forum can work collaboratively with this regional model. The Youth Voice groups will form part of the participative structures across Northern Ireland and will be recognised by Government Departments as a key component in this area. A network of the youth voice groups will be developed, with a conference held each year to discuss, share, support the issues and the work developed by the young people in each area. We hope to host the 2021 conference in Belfast in the autumn.
- 3.7 We have also been engaging with the Head of the Children and Young People's Strategy Team in the Department of Education on the broader Participation Network project which aims to support as many young people as possible to get their voice heard. This includes plans for the formation of a NI Youth Assembly. This work has been delayed due to Covid however we have indicated our interest in the Belfast Youth Forum supporting the Department in a genuine co-design process alongside Youth Voice groups in other councils and the broad range of local community led youth forums and groups. We have pointed to the Citizen Assembly model as a way to engage a broader range of

voices on specific discussion topics. We will also raise this with colleagues in the BCC Community Planning team to consider as an engagement methodology which would complement the views of the Belfast Youth Forum.

- 3.8** Members will be aware of council's historic and pro-active representation on the Belfast Area Outcomes Group which has been mandated by the regional Children and Young People Strategic Partnership to implement outcomes based planning for the Belfast Trust area. The membership of the Belfast Outcomes Group reflects that of the CYPSP with representation from statutory agencies and the voluntary and community sector. The Belfast Outcomes Group works to enable the improvement of support and services for children and young people in ways that ensure the participation and involvement of children, young people, families and communities in an integrated planning process.
- 3.9** The Chair of the BAOG was invited to join the Living Here Board in order to support the achievement of the CYP priority objectives agreed in the Belfast Agenda and to improve the strength of the CYP voice in ongoing delivery. In recognition of BAOG as the key city partnership for CYP, the Board agreed that BAOG should lead on *the design and delivery of a fully integrated, interagency approach to early intervention*. The BAOG have also led on our CYP Covid response programme for children and young people along with the Colin Locality group from the SEAOG to ensure full coverage across the council area. The programme combined available funding from council, BHSCT and DfC and was co-designed with voluntary and community group representatives to ensure it met evidenced need and was delivered locally.
- 3.10** In late May 2021, the co-chairs of the Living Here Board met with representatives from the BAOG to consider the positive learning from this collaboratively planned and delivered response and to agree a process to develop future delivery action plans. A senior representative from DfC was invited to the meeting in order to promote continuation of this collaborative, flexible and CYP informed approach to ensure alignment of any further available financial support.
- 3.11** On that basis, it is recommended that the BAOG is the most appropriate partnership structure to provide a considered multi stakeholder response to the Motion. The next meeting of the group is 15th June and the Motion will be considered as part of the agenda.

- 3.12 Given the timing of the recent Motion, it has not been possible to design any specific age appropriate, meaningful engagement sessions with children and young people in order to design a consistent youth led approach for the 2020 Summer period. As noted, officers are working with colleagues in EA Youth Service and other agencies to consider how best to collaboratively plan for the coming summer period and to consider how to ensure a more consistent, youth led approach for following years.
- 3.13 Colleagues in BCC Community Safety continue to participate in regular meetings with relevant key agencies including PSNI, EA Youth Service and Translink through the Citywide ASB Tasking group which covers West, South & East Belfast. Currently the meeting is primarily an exchange of information around ASB Hotspot locations with some areas experiencing more issues than others. Given the increase in issues, there is a separate meeting focusing on North Belfast with the same remit.
- 3.14 The Council regularly engages with the TU in both formal and informal ways at a corporate, departmental and service levels. Our TU engagement covers a range of issues, including risk assessments and staff safety and we work collectively in the consideration of staff related policy and procedures.
- 3.15 **Financial and Resource Implications**
- None.
- 3.16 **Equality or Good Relations Implications/
Rural Needs Assessment**
- None.”

In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, Members of the Committee agreed that the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to adopt the recommendations as detailed at section 2.1 of the report.

Chairperson