

# Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Monday, 28th March, 2022

## MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AND  
REMOTEY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

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

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

### **Apologies**

An apology for inability to attend was reported on behalf of Councillor McAllister.

### **Minutes**

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

### **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Murphy declared an interest in respect of agenda item 3a - Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service, on the basis that he was on the Board of the Ligoniel Improvement Association, which managed the service on behalf of the citywide advice consortium and left the meeting whilst the matter was being discussed.

### **Restricted Items**

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

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

**Motion - Pay Rise for Leisure Workers**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 21st January, it had considered a motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Ferguson, calling upon the Council to support a joint Trades Union pay claim, seeking a 11.75% increase for members on Belfast City Council terms and conditions and a 15.75% increase for those on Castlereagh Borough Council terms and conditions.

The Committee had agreed that a meeting be held initially between GLL representatives and Elected Members, with a report on the key issues discussed to be submitted to a future meeting.

The Chief Executive reported that GLL representatives had, on 24th February, met with Party Leaders, during which GLL's assessment of the request for a pay rise, including the number of staff affected and the estimated cost, had been set out. GLL had provided details around the timeline and process for engagement on the annual pay review and, in terms of next steps, had confirmed that meetings would be held with individual staff, staff groupings and Trades Unions. The Council would, over the next three months, receive an update on negotiations, details of which would then be presented to the Committee.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

**Bonfire and Cultural Expression**  
**Programme - Approach for 2022**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services submitted for the Committee's consideration a report seeking approval on three proposed elements to the overall approach to the Bonfires and Cultural Expression Programme for 2022.

After discussion, the Committee agreed as follows:

**i. Beacons**

That the fourteen groups which had used a beacon in 2019 and 2021 be invited to submit an expression of interest to avail of a beacon to replace a traditional bonfire in July, 2022, subject to availability and site suitability;

**ii. Funding for Community Events**

That potential participants on the Bonfire and Cultural Expression Programme Grants scheme for community festival events be directed to apply for funding for these events/activities over the

summer to the generic Micro Grant Funding 2022/23 and that this approach be adopted for subsequent years, going forward; and

**iii. Positive Cultural Expression Programme**

That up to £30,000, previously delivered through the Bonfire and Cultural Expression Programme for community events, be aligned with the new co-design framework which aimed to create a more rounded, sustainable and grass roots programme to support leadership and capacity building in arts, culture and heritage work in the broad Unionist community, as a joint approach from the Good Relations and the Tourism, Culture, Heritage and Arts Units via the 'City Imagining Strategy'.

**Update on Organisational Reviews and Change Programme**

The Committee noted the contents of a report providing a quarterly update on the indicative timescales and prioritised work programme associated with the Organisational Reviews and Change Portfolio.

**Employees on Temporary Contracts**

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy submitted for the Committee's consideration a report providing a quarterly update on the number of employees on temporary contracts. The report provided information also, on a Departmental basis, on the number of agency staff engaged by the Council.

He confirmed that, at 1st March, 270 staff were filling posts on a temporary basis, 162 of whom had a substantive post to return to when no longer required. The remaining 108 staff were employed on a fixed-term contract basis and did not have a substantive post to return to. In addition, 301 agency staff were employed by the Council at 31st December.

After discussion, the Committee:

- i. noted the contents of the report, including the appointment of a 'gatekeeper' post to manage the overall use of agency staff;
- ii. agreed that the report on staff on temporary contracts would in future include details of the progress which had been made since the previous report;
- iii. agreed that the report on agency staff would in future be presented in a similar format as that on staff on temporary contracts; and
- iv. noted that the protocol requiring permanent posts to be trawled internally, which prevented agency assignees from applying initially, would end on 31st March, 2022.

**Review of Leisure Governance  
and Active Belfast Limited Board**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 20th November, 2020, it had agreed to review the current tri-partite leisure model and the operation of the Active Belfast Limited Board, including its membership and governance arrangements. The Committee had subsequently approved the Terms of Reference and a consultancy firm had been appointed to undertake the review.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reported that the review had entailed an extensive desktop exercise and a programme of stakeholder consultations and had been followed by a draft report setting out the key findings, proposals and recommendations. In terms of recommendations, the following three options had been presented for consideration, with Option 3 being preferred, based on an assessment of the findings within the report:

- **Option 1** Do nothing
- **Option 2** Bring Contract Compliance and Performance Monitoring of GLL back into the Council and retain Active Belfast Limited in a different form to focus on its broader objectives
- **Option 3** Bring Contract Compliance and Performance Monitoring of GLL back into the Council and commence the winding up of Active Belfast Limited.

She pointed out that, should the Committee agree to adopt Option 3, officers would begin the process of transferring contract compliance and performance monitoring to the City and Neighbourhood Services Department and would liaise with the Active Belfast Limited Board to pursue a voluntary and solvent winding up of the company. Legal amendments would also be required to be made to the existing tri-partite arrangements and contractual documentation.

The Committee agreed to proceed with Option 3.

**Alleygates – Phase 5**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 19th March 2021, it had agreed a budget of £500K for Phase 5 of the Council's alleygating scheme, with the funding to be divided equally between North, South, East and West. The Committee subsequently agreed a framework to be used to identify potential locations.

The Committee was reminded further that, at its meeting on 18th February, it had been requested to approve a 'long list' for each of the four quadrants of the City, based upon the agreed framework, for referral to relevant Area Working Group for prioritisation.

The Committee had, in light of omissions which had been highlighted by Members, agreed to defer the matter to allow for a full list of location requests to be circulated and a comprehensive list of potential locations to be drafted.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reported that that work had now been completed and drew the Committee's attention to Appendices 1 to 4 of the report, which had been generated from Members' returns for each of the four areas of the City and been assessed using the agreed framework. The 'long lists' set out in Appendices 5 – 8 of the report provided details of the 456 streets, divided also into four areas, for which requests for alleygates had been received.

Accordingly, she recommended that the Committee:

- i approve the list of potential alleygate locations for North, South, East and West Belfast, as set out in Appendices 1 – 4;
- ii agree to refer the lists to the relevant Area Working Group for prioritisation, based on the available budget of £125,000 for each quadrant of the City; and
- iii note that the Department for Communities had offered an additional £100k for an environmental improvement scheme, ringfenced for the Holylands area, with the South Belfast Area Working Group to be updated on the progress of this proposal.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor McDonough-Brown,  
Seconded by Councillor McReynolds and

Resolved – That the Committee agrees instead that the long lists set out within Appendices 5 – 8 be approved and that they be referred to the relevant Area Working Group for prioritisation.

The Committee agreed also to note the offer of funding from the Department for Communities.

### **Update on Key Funding Streams**

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy submitted for the Committee's consideration a report providing information on the UK Government's Levelling Up Agenda and its plans in relation to the Shared Prosperity Fund, which had been established to replace European Union funding.

After discussion, the Committee agreed:

- i to note the update in relation to the Levelling Up and Shared Prosperity Funds;
- ii to note that officers would submit to a future meeting a list of suitable projects which were aligned to corporate priorities and the Belfast Agenda for consideration under Round 2 Levelling Up; once the themes had been announced;

- iii that officers would develop a preferred corporate approach to Levelling-Up and Shared Prosperity Funds and other key funding streams such as Peace Plus, Complementary Fund, Shared Island, that will be presented to members at a future Strategic Policy and Resources Committee meeting;
- iv that the Council would write to the local Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities team to raise concerns around the timeliness of information being provided on the Levelling Up fund;
- v to note the resource and governance arrangements required to corporately co-ordinate the bid development process for future Levelling Up and Shared Prosperity Fund projects, in addition to other funding avenues such as Peace Plus, the High Street Task Force and Shared Island funding; and
- vi that officers would develop a mechanism by which requests from local organisations for letters of support for funding applications are assessed to determine if they supported existing corporate priorities.

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

##### **City Hall Statues – Winifred Carney and Mary Ann McCracken**

- The Committee agreed that both projects be moved to Stage 3 – Committed on the Capital Programme and that the necessary procurement processes be initiated, as required, with contracts to be awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.

##### **IT Programme – In Cab Technology and Routing System**

- The Committee agreed that this project be moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted under the IT Programme to enable an Outline Business Case to be developed.

##### **DfI Green and Blue Infrastructure Fund and Active Travel Projects**

- The Committee granted approval for the Council to act as the delivery agent for a range of projects proposed under the DfI Green and Blue Infrastructure Fund and Active Travel funding and agreed that any necessary procurement processes for these projects be initiated, as required, with contracts to be awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.

##### **Peace IV – Forth Meadow Community Greenway**

- The Committee noted the potential negative impact of any delay on this project.

### **Update on Organisational Structures**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 19th May, 2017, it had approved a new operating model for the Council and had noted that further engagement and alignment had been required for some functions.

Following on from this, the management function and associated budgets for Belfast Castle, Belfast Zoo and Malone House would, from 1st April, 2022, transfer from the City and Neighbourhood Services Department to the Place and Economy Department.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

### **Request for the use of Woodvale Park**

The Committee acceded to a request from the Apprentice Boys of Derry Association to use Woodvale Park as an assembly point for its annual Easter Monday parade on 18th April and delegated authority to the Directors of City Services/Neighbourhood Services to:

- negotiate satisfactory terms and conditions of use via an appropriate legal agreement, to be prepared by the Council's Legal Services section, including managing final booking confirmation dates and flexibility around 'set up' and take down' periods, and booking amendments, subject to:
  - (a) the organiser resolving any operational issues to the Council's satisfaction;
  - (b) compliance with any Covid-19 restrictions in place at the time of the event; and
  - (c) the organiser meeting all statutory Planning and Building Control requirements, including the terms and conditions of the Park's Entertainments Licence.

### **Extension of Off-Street Parking Enforcement Services**

(Mr. D. Bone, City Services Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 20th August, 2021, it had been informed that the agency arrangement with the Department for Infrastructure for the provision of off-street parking enforcement services had been due to expire on 31st October, 2022.

The Committee had agreed, in line with the views which had been expressed at a meeting of SOLACE, that the eight participating councils should tender for enforcement services on the open market, through a joint tendering procurement exercise, rather than renew the service agreement with the Department for Infrastructure. That process would be led by Ards and North Down Borough Council.

The City Services Manager reported that delays in the process required to terminate the existing contract and to put in place appropriate arrangements for a new service provider had meant that a temporary extension was required to ensure that off-street enforcement services could continue. The Regional Off-Street Parking Group, at a recent meeting, had suggested that an extension until 31st October, 2023 would allow sufficient time to procure a new service provider and ensure a smooth transition from the Department for Infrastructure.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed to support the request for the Department for Infrastructure to extend the current arrangement for off-street enforcement services until 31st October, 2023.

**Draft Plan Strategy (dPS) – Required Amendments and Adoption**

(Mr. K. Sutherland, Planning Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered a report providing details of the Planning Appeals Commission's report on the independent examination of the Belfast Local Development Plan draft Plan Strategy, the subsequent formal Direction from the Department for Infrastructure requiring the Council to adopt the draft Plan Strategy development plan document and, finally, setting out the potential process for the Council to formally adopt what would be the first draft Plan Strategy to be brought forward under the new system.

After discussion, the Committee:

- i. noted the contents of the report, including the Planning Appeals Commission's assertion that the draft Plan Strategy could, with modifications, be considered as "Sound";
- ii. noted the Department for Infrastructure's Statutory Direction document, the Planning Appeals Commission's report on the Independent Examination of the draft Plan Strategy, the required amendments and outline work programme, as set out in the appendices 1, 2, 3 and 5; and
- iii. endorsed the proposed response to the requirement for a new strategic policy and modifications to draft Policy HOU1, as set out in paragraphs 3.7 to 3.11 of the report and in Appendix 4.

**Social Value Procurement Policy**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 18th June, 2021, it had approved the draft Social Value Procurement Policy.

The Chief Executive reported that a twelve-week public consultation exercise had commenced on 21st September, which had provided stakeholders with an opportunity to comment upon the key aspect of the draft policy. The Social Policy Working Group had reviewed the findings of the public consultation and had made a number of amendments to the policy. Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee approve the revised draft Social Value Procurement Policy for implementation on 1st June, 2022.



After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendation and noted that the policy would be reviewed by the Social Policy Working Group and the Committee on an annual basis.

**Recruitment of Post of Director of Finance and Resources**

(Ms. C. Sheridan, Head of Human Resources, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 22nd October, it had agreed that the role of Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources be altered as part of a structural review and had granted approval for the current postholder to retire no later than 31st October, 2022.

The Head of Human Resources reviewed the proposed timeline for the recruitment process, following which the Committee:

- i. approved the recruitment of the post of Director of Finance and Resources on a permanent basis; and
- ii. agreed that the selection panel should consist of:
  - a. the Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson of the Committee (or their nominees) and Councillor Bunting; and
  - b. the Chief Executive (or his nominee) and a Director.

**Matters referred back from Council/Motions**

**Motion - Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service**

The Chief Executive informed the Members that the Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 22nd February, had referred the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Ferguson and seconded by Councillor Matt Collins, to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration:

“This Council notes with concern that the Belfast Citywide Tribunal service once again faces a lack of funding, putting staff jobs and a vital service at risk.

Additionally, the Council is deeply disappointed that the Department for Communities has failed to provide core funding for this service, despite the impact this will have on workers and working-class communities in particular.

Given the vast amount of successful tribunal appeals, the Council recognises that there is an onus on the Executive to fund a tribunal service which is capable of addressing the flawed welfare system.

However, given that core funding is not forthcoming and the upcoming election leaves uncertainty about future funding, the Council agrees that measures should be taken to ensure the service can stay open for the next year.

Accordingly, the Council agrees to fund the Tribunal services an amount of £342,278, from its reserves if necessary, to maintain the service and stave off redundancies.”

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources reported that the People and Communities Committee, at its meeting on 8th March, had agreed:

- i to allocate £90,000 from existing 2022/23 budgets to the Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service; and
- ii that an allocation of £70,400, which the Department for Communities had indicated that it would, in line with 2021/21, be making available for welfare mitigation – tribunal representation during 2022/23, be ringfenced for use by the Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service, subject to the receipt of formal confirmation.

In terms of addressing the shortfall of £181,878, he pointed out that due diligence work on the Tribunal Service’s business plan was continuing and that the Department for Communities was due to hold in the near future a business planning event around the future funding of advice services.

The Committee agreed that a report be submitted to its next meeting on the outcome of the due diligence process and the Department for Communities’ business planning event.

### **Industrial Action**

At the request of a Member, the Committee agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting providing details of the total earnings lost by those staff who had participated in the previous weeks’ industrial action.

### **Governance**

#### **Revisions to the Scheme of Allowances 2022-23**

The Chief Executive reminded the Committee the Department for Communities was responsible for determining the maximum hourly rate of Dependant’s Carers’ Allowance for both standard care and specialised care. The rate for standard care was based on the hourly National Living Wage for a person aged 25 years and over and would increase on 1st April, 2022 from £8.91 to £9.50 per hour. The rate for specialised care was double that for standard care. The Department also set the maximum monthly amounts for standard care and specialised care, which was capped at the equivalent of 52 hours per month.

Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee approve the following amendments to the Scheme of Allowances, in line with the increase in the National Living Wage and with effect from 1st April, 2022:

*“(iv) Dependants’ Carers’ Allowance*

*Standard Care            £9.50 per hour - limited to £494.00 per month*  
*Specialist Care        £19.00 per hour - limited to £988.00 per month”*

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

**Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues**

**Recruitment and Selection of New Chief Executive**

The Committee noted the contents of a report providing details of the selection process which had resulted in the appointment of Mr. John Walsh, City Solicitor and Director of Legal Services, to the post of Chief Executive, with effect from 21st March, and congratulated him on his success.

**Belfast Residents’ Survey**

The Committee considered the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report**

**1.1 To update the Committee on the key findings from the Belfast Residents’ Survey and to outline how the data will be used and reported.**

**2.0 Recommendation**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to note the report.**

**3.0 Key Issues**

**Background**

**3.1 Every two years, the Council commissions consultants to carry out an independent survey of residents. The survey provides statistically reliable, perception data based on a representative sample of Belfast residents (aged 16 and over) and is used to inform strategic planning and performance management at the city (Belfast Agenda) and organisational level. Normally conducted face-to-face, this year’s survey was carried out by telephone due to Covid restrictions. Following a quotation exercise, we appointed**

Social Market Research (SMR) to carry out the survey on our behalf. They interviewed 1504 people between 15th November and 12th December, with quotas applied to ensure those completing the survey were representative of the population of Belfast (by age, gender, social class and geographical area).

#### Trend Data

- 3.2 On the whole, the results for 2021 are positive. In 2019, satisfaction with the Council and life in Belfast dipped, a trend replicated across the rest of the UK. This year, our results have improved on 2019 and are now generally on a par, and in some places better than the 2017 results. For most of the Council indicators, we have reversed the downward trend in satisfaction and approval ratings, whereas this has continued in English council areas (as per the LGA benchmark).
- 3.3 The Committee is asked to note that overall satisfaction with Belfast and local area remains lower than in 2017 (85% now compared to 91% in 2017), though still higher when compared to other local authorities. Some data has fallen, such as views on whether all people can lead healthy lives or live life to the full, whether they feel listened to and whether they feel safe in the city centre at night. This data will be used to inform improvement activities of council and the Belfast Agenda.

#### Key Results

- 3.4 Overall satisfaction with Belfast and local area:
- 85% of those surveyed were satisfied with Belfast as a place to live
  - 85% of those surveyed were satisfied with their local area as a place to live
- 3.5 When asked about Living in Belfast, more than three quarters of those surveyed agreed that:
- Belfast was a good place to visit - 90%
  - People are friendly, caring and compassionate - 88%
  - Belfast had good infrastructure (83%) and was easy to get about (85%)
  - The city centre was vibrant and attractive, with lots going on - 80%
  - Belfast is a welcoming safe, fair and inclusive city for all - 79%
  - Older people are treated with respect and dignity -76%
  - People can live life to the full - 75%

3.6 However, respondents were less likely to agree that Belfast:

- Is an environmentally friendly city - 73%
- Where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous city - 65%
- Everyone fulfils their potential - 52%
- Everyone experiences good health and wellbeing - 51%
- Just over half of those surveyed (56%) said they felt safe in the city centre after dark

3.7 Priorities for Belfast

When asked to select their most important priority for Belfast overall, *health and wellbeing* emerged as the highest priority followed by a stronger economy and employment and skills:

Health and wellbeing	26%
A stronger economy	13%
Employment and skills (jobs)	13%
Reducing poverty	12%
Improving local communities and neighbourhoods	11%

3.8 My Local Area

When asked about their Local Area, at least three quarters of those surveyed agreed their area:

- Was safe 96% (during the day) and 86% (after dark)
- They could access all the services they needed - 85%
- Was seen as welcoming to others - 82%
- Had a strong sense of community - 82% and was a place where people worked together to improve things - 80%
- Was clean and attractive - 80% and
- Had good quality parks and green space - 78%
- Had parks and green space that were safe - 76%
- They could access job and training opportunities - 76%

3.9 However, respondents were less likely to agree that their local area was a place where:

- People from different racial and ethnic backgrounds got on well together - 72%

- People from different religions and political backgrounds got on well together - 67%

3.10 When asked unprompted, to specify what one thing would most improve the quality of life in their local area, the most frequently mentioned individual issues were:

All good, don't know or can't think of anything	25%
Community safety	17%
Cleanliness	8%
Jobs / wages	5%
Children and Young people	4%
Housing	4%

3.11 Respondent came up with an extensive list of issues, which we have grouped under 5 broad headings. Appendix 1 provides more detail on the type and relative importance of each of the issues raised under these themes.

3.12 **Belfast City Council**

When asked about Belfast City Council, around three quarters (76%) were satisfied with the Council overall up from 65% in 2019. And at least three quarters agreed that we:

- Make Belfast a better place to live - 80%
- Keeps resident very well or fairly well informed - 78%
- Responds to the needs of local residents – 77%

3.13 And around two thirds or more agreed that we:

- Provide good customer service- 73% (up from 62% in 2019)
- Show good leadership for the City - 72% (up from 62% in 2019)

3.14 Although the primary aim of the survey is to provide statistical information (quantitative data), respondents who stated that they were dissatisfied with council were asked why they had said this. 93 comments were provided, many of whom cited Covid-19 and in some way:

- 24 comments about covid and its impact on access to council services, the impact on cleanliness and pest control or concerns about the lack of enforcement;

- 12 residents felt the council could listen more to local residents; some felt they did not have a voice or weren't respected and that council be more responsiveness to local residents' needs;
- 12 residents felt that the council was not doing enough in their local area, with some suggesting that their area has been neglected;
- 8 references to crime and anti-social behaviour;
- 8 comments relating to lack of communication or information;
- 7 felt the Council was not doing enough to support poorer and vulnerable residents;
- A smaller number cited cleanliness issues (5); felt more could be done to promote recycling and the green environment (4) or that we took too long to act (2); and
- 5 residents felt that we 'could just do more' and 3 said they can't see or don't know what we do. 3 comments did not relate directly to council e.g., housing and healthcare.

### 3.15 Benchmarking our Results

In previous years, we have benchmarked our results against other UK cities, but due to covid or budgetary constraints benchmark data is either no longer available or has been delayed. Bristol and Cardiff have recently completed resident surveys, which we will benchmark against once this data becomes available. Available comparisons against Glasgow City Council and local council averages as measured by the Local Government Association are provided below. When comparing Belfast with these benchmarks, our results are significantly higher:

	Glasgow	LGA Average	<i>Belfast</i>
		2021	2021
Overall satisfaction with local area		78%	↗ 85%
Overall satisfaction council	48%	56%	↗ 76%
Value for money	33%	43%	↗ 64%
Keeps informed	39%	57%	↗ 78%

Responsiveness (Listens and acts)		52%	↗ 77%
Trust	42%	57%	↗ 63%
Feels safe in local area - during the day		92%	↗ 96%
Feels safe in local area - after dark		71%	↗ 86%
Satisfaction with response to pandemic	50%		↗ 78%

**3.16 Resident Survey – Analysing the Results:**

On the whole, these results are positive and encouragingly for Belfast, and in particular the council:

- Significant increases in satisfaction with Belfast City Council. Many of the 2017 survey results were high, whereas the 2019 results were exceptionally low, a trend also replicated across the UK. However, our results for 2021 are generally on a par, and in some places better than the 2017 results.
- Perceptions of the Council in terms of reputation and trust has improved (up by 16% and 10%) with the majority of respondents (78%) indicating that we responded well or very well to the covid -19 pandemic;
- The percentage of people who felt that people in Belfast were friendly, caring and compassionate increased significantly, up from 80% to 88%. As did those who felt that Belfast was a good place to visit, up from 82% to 90%;
- Significant increase in percentage of people who felt Belfast was safe, fair and inclusive, and that local areas were welcoming to others. However, perceptions in relation to people from different religious and racial backgrounds ‘getting on’ with each other were still the lowest rated local area indicators, with only two thirds agreeing that people from different religious and political backgrounds got on well, down slightly from 2019.



3.17 However, although these results are positive and compare quite favourably to other council areas, it is noted that levels of dissatisfaction have increased compared to previous years. This is in contrast to 2019, where despite local government approval ratings falling, both in Belfast and across the UK, our levels of dissatisfaction did not increase significantly. Instead, more respondents voiced a neutral opinion than in previous years. Whilst these results show that we have been able to move people back into the satisfied band, the increase in dissatisfaction suggests that there is a small but increasing proportion of residents who have shown dissatisfaction.

3.18 Other findings to note include:

- The percentage of people who agreed that people in Belfast 'lead healthy lives' and can 'fulfil their potential' fell (down by 7% and 9% respectively). The proportion of those disagreeing also rose. Only around half of residents agreed with these statements whilst almost a third (32%) disagreed that everyone experiences good health and wellbeing (up from a fifth in 2019), and almost a quarter (24%) disagreed that everyone fulfils their potential (also up from around a fifth in 2019);
- This was reflected in people's opinion regarding the city's priorities with a quarter of respondents (26%) selecting 'health and wellbeing' as their number one priority, making it the highest-ranking priority for Belfast;
- Significant increase in the number of people feeling less safe at night, especially in the city centre (up to 25% from 9%). Perception of safety during the day remained high and fairly constant; and
- The number of people who have sought advice for debt or financial problems remained constant (approx. 1 in 10 respondents), and although the percentage of respondents who report using a food bank is relatively low, that percentage has doubled - up from 4% in 2019 to 8% in 2021.

3.19 *Impact of Covid-19*

Whilst it is unclear as to the full impact of covid-19, these results point to a correlation between perceptions, behaviours and covid. For example:

- Increase in perceptions of people being caring and compassion;
- Increase in those disagreeing that everyone experiences good health and wellbeing;
- Reduction in volunteering and participation in local groups and community activities (although 4% did indicate that they do more volunteering now);
- Whilst 23% said they would be more likely to use public transport during the next 6 months, 28% said they would be less likely;
- Increase in use of foodbanks;
- Perceptions of wellbeing generally remained constant, although there were slight falls in reported satisfaction with mental / emotional wellbeing; financial situation and living accommodation; and
- People have equally reported being 'more' and 'less' active as a result of covid; Further analysis might shed more light on physical activity levels by age and reported physical activity in due course, which might correlate with research undertaken by Age UK that indicated older people have become less active during covid. Currently, the results do seem to indicate a general increase in walking for leisure.

### 3.20 Next Steps

The results from the resident survey play a key part in helping to track progress against key outcomes within the 'Belfast Agenda'. These results will also be used to inform the ongoing review and action planning process of the Belfast Agenda, corporate plan and other council strategies, particularly where figures indicate room for improvement. Information relating to the city centre, safety and physical and active travel for example will be shared with relevant operational sections and strategic programmes.

- 3.21 Further detailed analysis of the survey data is currently underway. This includes an analysis by area (North, South East and West) and by other demographic characteristics including age and social class. An initial analysis by gender indicates that, with the exception of safety at night particularly in the city centre, there is no or limited statistical difference in perceptions based on gender. Area based results will be brought to the Area Working Groups in due course. Relevant results will also be shared with, for example, the Healthy Aging Strategic Partnership and Belfast Community Safety Partnership. Benchmark data will be

added as it becomes available. Relevant survey data (in the form of performance indicators) will be included within the Council Improvement Plan, year-end performance assessment report for the Local Government Auditor and our corporate plan.

3.22 Currently this survey is repeated every 2 years, but with the introduction of the Your Say Belfast platform, we may trial the survey through this platform later this year. The reliability of this method will be determined by response rates and, whilst it may not be as statistically representative nor provide accurate trend data for certain analysis (such as by age or area), it could provide interim citywide data to inform progress and annual performance data.

3.23 Resources Implications

There are no resource implications contained in this report.

3.24 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

There are no equality implications contained in this report. However, the information obtained will help inform our good relations work and audit of inequalities.”

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

Response to Consultation on Infrastructure 2050 –  
Draft Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland

The Director of City and Organisation Strategy informed the Committee that the Strategic Investment Board had, in January, published on behalf of the Northern Ireland Executive a consultation document entitled ‘Infrastructure 2050 – Draft Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland.’

The draft Strategy set out how the Northern Ireland Executive’s stated vision for infrastructure would be achieved and had identified the following five key strategic objectives, needs and priorities for its investment in infrastructure over the coming decades:

- to decarbonise the economy and society;
- to strengthen and protect essential services;
- to build a strong, connected and competitive region;

- to enhance communities and places; and
- to maximise the benefits from new technology and innovation.

He reviewed the key elements of the draft Council response to the consultation and recommended that it be forwarded to the Strategic Investment Board by the deadline date of 20th April.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

### **Review of Belfast Agenda – Update on Action Planning**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the progress of the Belfast Agenda Review, including the action planning phase and to seek approval of the minutes of the All-Party Working Group on Community Planning of 23rd February.**

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- i note the progress of the development of the refreshed Belfast Agenda Strategy document and supporting four-year Delivery Action Plans as set out in this report;**
- ii endorse the emerging strategic intents and measures of success (stretch goals), as set out in Appendix 1;**
- iii note the proposed next steps and timeline, as set out in Appendix 1;**
- iv note the plans for continued Member engagement, as detailed in section 3.5 below; and**
- v approve the minutes of the meeting of the All-Party Working Group on Community Planning of 23rd February.**

#### **3.0 Main Report**

**3.1 In November 2021, Members received an update on the emerging findings and recommendations following the initial**

phase of Belfast Agenda: Continuing the Conversation engagement to inform the refreshed Belfast Agenda (BA) for the period 2022-2026. As reported at the November meeting, there was broad agreement that the existing long-term vision and outcomes of the BA remain relevant, and the proposed priorities for focus were the things that stakeholders and communities believed community planning could help address over the next 4-year period. There had been feedback in relation to how some of the priorities had been framed and the need for them to be easily understood. As a result, some minor changes had been made to the framing of the priority areas such as, changing 'economic recovery' to 'Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Growth'.

### **3.2 Bringing Focus and Commitment to Delivery**

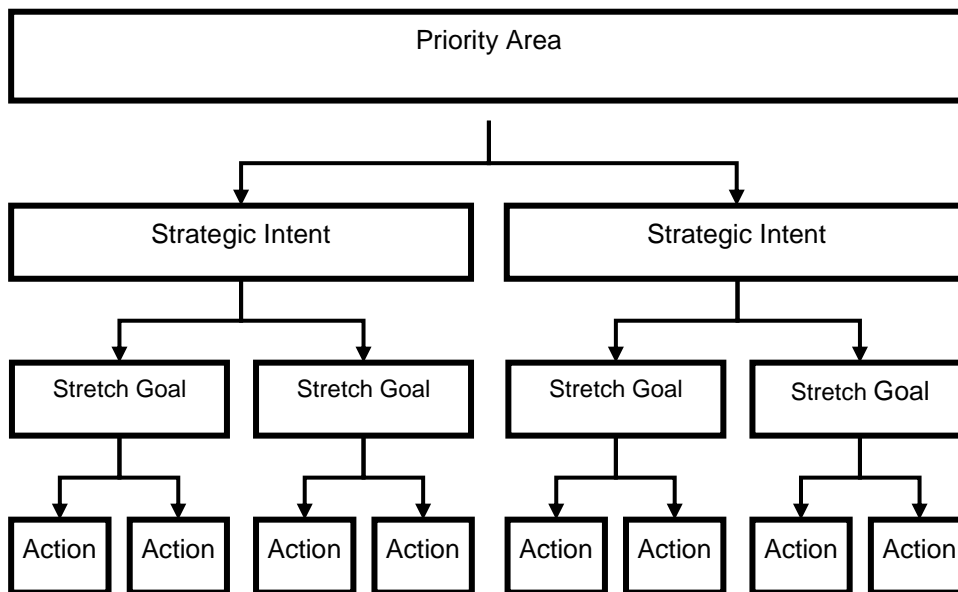
Building on the recommendations and consensus reached through Phase I, the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) and council has committed to co-design specific and measurable actions plan(s) which would underpin the priority areas of focus. Subsequently, a small group of core partners (cross-sectoral) has been brought together to help further develop the approach to co-designing each of the priority areas and cross-cutting themes. Each task and finish group were responsible for analysing the range of outputs from phase 1 of the 'Belfast Agenda: Continuing the Conversation' engagement process; assessing relevant strategies, plans and local intelligence (including information received through the call for evidence); feedback from the community and Belfast Agenda Board engagement workshops; online and paper-based survey results; and the current delivery plans of existing Belfast Agenda Boards.

Based on this initial analysis, partners prepared a strategic framework to help bring focus and shape the co-designed action plans consisting of:

1. What we are trying to achieve over the next 4 years (strategic intent);
2. How will we measure success (stretch goals); and
3. How will we realise such success (SMART Action Plan(s)).

Figure 1 below illustrates this framework and how a structured and informed approach is being implemented with partners to ensure there is a strong thread between each of the priority areas, ambitions, measures of success and importantly the focus for collaborative action.

*Figure 1: strategic framework adopted by partners to bring focus and shape co-designed action plans*



3.3 Output from this initial exercise will inform the next phase of the Continuing the Conversation engagement programme, where we will continue to work with partners and communities to co-design delivery plans. This represents an ongoing and complex process, which requires participation and involvement across sectors and communities at multiple levels, which has resulted in some priorities being more developed than others. The emerging frameworks for each of the priorities, which have been circulated, were discussed with the All-Party Working group on Community Planning when it met on 23rd February. Since that meeting, the strategic intents and stretch goals have been further developed, particularly the City Development elements following the Board meeting on Friday 11th March. This reflects the dynamic nature of the co-design process which remains a work in progress. Members are asked to consider and provide feedback on the emerging frameworks outlined by 1st April 2022 to [communityplanning@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:communityplanning@belfastcity.gov.uk). This feedback will then be reflected in future iterations and can be discussed further with members as the strategy is further refined.

3.4 As discussed with the All-Party Working Group, it is proposed that the timeline for developing the refreshed Belfast Agenda strategy document and underpinning delivery plans includes sufficient time for direct and genuine engagement with partners, communities/ communities of interest and specific sectors including the business and private sector over April and May 2022. In addition, more formal and intensive consultation activities are planned on the strategy document as well as further engagement to co-design the action plans during May and June 2022. Slide 33 in Appendix 1 outlines the proposed next steps and timeline for this process. It is felt that the timeline will allow for greater input and enable valuable buy-in to the emerging plans.

3.5 Political Engagement with Elected Members

In addition to the All-Party Working Group on Community Planning on 23rd February, and subsequently the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, it is also intended to bring a similar paper, presentation, and discussions to the Social Policy Working Group in early April. The intention would be to bring a further iteration of the draft strategy and emerging action plans to Committee in April for further consideration, input, and refinement.

The minutes of the meeting of the All-Party Working Group on Community Planning meeting of 23rd February are attached at Appendix 2 for approval. It is important to note that the feedback and recommendations from Members at this meeting will be factored into the continued refinement of the BA Refresh.

3.6 Financial and Resource Implications

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

3.7 Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

It is recommended that the consultation and engagement activities to review the Belfast Agenda will take account of the draft Audit of Inequalities and include specific sessions

with targeted harder to reach groups to ensure that equality implications are considered as part of the review process.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **Update on Belfast Poverty Commission**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

1.1 To update the Committee on the initial engagement sessions carried out by with the Poverty Truth Network to explore the potential to establish a Belfast Poverty Commission to support the Council’s work on Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty and to consider next steps.

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- i agree that officers continue to engage with partners and those engaged in poverty-related initiatives in Belfast to identify how a Poverty Commission could be adapted to work in Belfast and secure buy-in to that approach; and
- ii agree to the inclusion of a Belfast Poverty Commission as an identified workstream in the Belfast Agenda to aim to address poverty and tackle inequalities. This approach would require CPP agreement to collectively meet the resourcing requirements for a poverty commission.

#### **3.0 Main Report**

##### **3.1 Key Issues**

The Poverty Truth Network helps cities to determine whether a Poverty Truth Commission would be right for their local area. Poverty Truth Network accompany cities at every stage of their journey from asking ‘*whether a Poverty Truth Commission could happen here*’ through to the establishment of a commission. The Poverty Truth Network is a registered charity that supports Poverty Truth Commissions and encourages them to work together. Further information is available at: <https://povertytruthnetwork.org/commissions/what-is-a-poverty-truth-commission/>

3.2 Following the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee meeting in December 2021, four initial engagement sessions were organised for the Poverty Truth Network to engage with key stakeholders in January and March 2022. Stakeholders



included Members, community planning partners and the VCSE Panel as well as government departments (Department for Communities and the Executive Office). The purpose of these sessions was to:

- hear the experience from the Poverty Truth Network about what a Poverty Truth Commission is.
- consider if this is an approach that could be adapted for Belfast
- consider whether the timing is right for it and who would need to own/drive it

A separate session was also hosted by NICVA.

3.3 The Committee will recall that a phased approach is supported by the Poverty Truth Network:

- Establishment of a start-up group - to host, develop and facilitate the establishment of the Commission.
- Recruitment of commissioners – those with lived experience of poverty (15 people), and civic/business commissioners, including the VCSE sector (15 people). These 30 individuals should reflect the demographic make-up of Belfast.
- Commission implementation – full commission conversations and issue groups formed.
- Closing event for the Commission – to communicate the findings and commit to plans to embed changes.
- The City may decide to run another Commission in subsequent years, for example, Leeds is now running its third Commission.

3.4 The Belfast Poverty Commission, if established, would be responsible for setting their agenda and their own work. The approach is a 2–3-year commitment, focusing on creating a cultural shift at the level of the individuals and organisations participating as well as at a policy and societal/city level, in terms of changing language and attitudes. It's a deliberate process to build relationships, trust and capacity of those involved in order to understand the issues deeply before moving to solutions and therefore requires the personal commitment of all those who sit on the commission.

3.5 A key commitment in the Belfast Agenda and Council's Inclusive Growth Strategy is to strengthen civic voice and to enable us and our partners to tackle poverty and inequality in the city. A Belfast Poverty Commission would seek to:

- Strengthen and diversify civic voice.
  - Build capacity of participants and shared understanding of the issues faced by those living in poverty to inform policy, programmes, service delivery.
  - Create cultural change at an individual, organisation and city level.
- 3.6** Establishing a Belfast Poverty Commission would provide a mechanism for the Council and Community Planning Partnership to design and test a model of engagement to enable individuals who are seldom heard to share their experiences and views on policy/service design issues that are important to them in order to help inform and improve them.
- 3.7** The following provides a summary of the key points raised in the initial engagement sessions:
- A Poverty Commission must sit alongside existing structures aligning and enhancing existing work rather than displacing, replacing or adding layers of governance.
  - It must recognise and connect to the strong, established community networks across the city to ensure the Commission and its work is knitted in.
  - There is a range of work across the city on poverty-related issues which a Poverty Commission could enhance.
  - The Commission and its Commissioners must reflect Belfast – the Commission must look and feel like the people of the city
  - Organisational commitment is essential to support the commissioners, particularly local ‘community commissioners’, to develop and fulfil their role on the Commission.
  - Assurance that there is buy-in, resource and commitment to the process, including the co-design nature of the process.
  - Build on the experience and learning from Belfast based initiatives as well as the impact that Poverty Commissions have had elsewhere.
  - It was welcomed that the Commission is a timebound programme, over a 3-year period, as a means of keeping it focused and ‘fresh’.
- 3.8** The Committee will be aware that the Department for Communities is considering a regional approach to establishing a poverty commission, based on the recommendations in the Report from the Anti-Poverty Strategy Expert Panel. Initial conversations with DfC have indicated that should Belfast go ahead with a Poverty Commission, they would be keen that this informs the

regional strategy and approach. Any Belfast Poverty Commission must be positioned to align with these plans as well as the Belfast Community Planning structures, particularly the VCSE Panel.

3.9 Feedback from all the engagement sessions indicated that a significant focus on poverty in the city is now imperative at a strategic and practical level. There was support for the Poverty Commission approach; however further engagement with stakeholders is required to ensure that the approach is owned by partners and that the process is co-designed with partners / stakeholders. The inclusion of a workstream in the refresh of the Belfast Agenda to explore and establish a Belfast Poverty Commission would provide the means to continue the conversations to develop an approach that works for Belfast.

3.10 It is important to note that this process should not detract from the ongoing efforts to tackle poverty and provide practical support to those who are experiencing poverty across the city, for example fuel poverty. However, the Commission will provide a mechanism to support, inform and shape these efforts in the medium and longer term, while also increasing and improving our civic engagement and involvement.

3.11 Financial and Resource Implications

Officer time will be required to support the ongoing engagement and development of the approach. The Poverty Truth Network estimate that financial resource of approx. £110,000 is required for three part-time staff members (approx.) to recruit the commissioners and to facilitate and support the Poverty Commission. If included within the Belfast Agenda action plan, CPP agreement would be sought to collectively meet the resourcing requirements for the poverty commission.

An organisation will also be required to 'host' the commission, acting a base for the staff team and to provide equipment/materials. In-kind support from partners will also be required, for example, provision of meeting space.

3.12 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

The programme to develop a Belfast Poverty Commission will be subject to equality, good relations and rural needs considerations.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

## **PEACE PLUS Programme**

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 the Committee with an update on the development of the PEACE PLUS programme and on emerging work being undertaken as part of the first investment area that will open 1.1. Co-Designed Local Community Peace Action plan for Belfast.

**1.2** Approval is also being sought for officers to proceed with the development of a new PEACEPLUS Partnership for Belfast that will oversee the development of the local action plan via SP&R committee and will build on learning from PEACE IV and the governance arrangements through the Shared City Partnership (SCP).

### **2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1** The Committee is asked to:

- i** note the report; and
- ii** approve the proposed approach for the development a PEACEPLUS partnership for Belfast.

### **3.0 Main Report**

#### **3.1 Background**

The EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation is a unique Structural Funds programme aimed at reinforcing progress towards a peaceful and stable society in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland. Currently, through its Managing Authority, the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), the European Commission is developing a €1billion PEACE PLUS programme.

The overall objective of the PEACE PLUS Programme is to build Peace and Prosperity and ensure that this Programme will leave a lasting and tangible legacy across Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland. The Programme's strategy is to continue to take the opportunities and address the needs arising from the peace process in order to boost economic

growth and stimulate social and economic regeneration and secondly, to promote social inclusion, particularly for those at the margins of economic and social life.

SEUPB is currently seeking approval from the European Commission for the development of the PEACE PLUS Programme and have submitted a finance agreement to the European Commission as part of the process to receive final approval for the overall programme. The Programme in its totality comprises of six themes, which encompass 22 individual investment areas for possible submissions for investment.

An infographic illustrating the main themes of the PEACE PLUS Programme is shown in appendix 1. Further information on the PEACE PLUS Programme including consultation responses is available at:  
<https://www.seupb.eu/PEACEPLUS>

The potential for investment within Belfast is significant, due to the scale of the overall programme Senior officers are currently scoping the overall programme to assess where we should consider making submissions across the 22 investment areas. It is likely that some of the investment areas may open in 2022, with others to follow in 2023, not all of them will be suitable for Councils to make submissions, but an initial scope has identified a number of areas where we may lead on delivery.

A corporate approach is required to provide cross Council oversight for delivery of potential investment opportunities for the Council from across PEACEPLUS. A more detailed report will be brought back to members to consider the areas of work in addition to the Local Community PEACEPLUS Action Plan where Council may make a bid for investment.

### 3.2 Co-Designed Local Community Peace Action Plan Investment Area 1.1

The first investment area likely to open is The Local Community PEACE Action Plans contained within Theme 1: Building peaceful and thriving communities of the PEACE PLUS Programme under Investment Area 1.1. Co-designed Local Community Peace Action Plans (€110 million budget across 17 local authorities). Following discussions with SEUPB, early indications are that Belfast may be able to make a submission of at least £17million, with this being managed as previous Local PEACE action plans.

**The plans will centre on three core themes:**

- 1. Local community regeneration and transformation.**
- 2. Thriving and peaceful communities; and**
- 3. Building respect for all cultural identities.**

**and are likely to include activities such as;**

- youth development programmes;**
- health and wellbeing initiatives;**
- community regeneration projects;**
- redevelopment and reimagining of existing community facilities for shared usage;**
- initiatives to build positive relations;**
- education and skills development programmes;**
- social innovation / enterprise initiatives.**

**The Managing Authority, SEUPB has indicated that the open call for applications to this programme will be made in Quarter Two 2022 and that the application process may remain open for 3-6 months with the earliest date for open call expected to be April 2022 (though this may not be realistic as no guidance on the expected co-design process has yet been received from SEUPB). It is yet to be confirmed but it is expected that there will be a 6-month window for applications. Members should note that this will be an extremely tight timeframe with significant consultation and engagement required to inform any submission.**

### **3.3 PEACE PLUS Partnership - Co-designed Local Community Peace Action Plans (priority 1.1)**

**It is a requirement that each Local Community Action Plan should comprise of a PEACE PLUS local authority partnership which will oversee the co-design and implementation of a process in their local authority area which will be used to inform the development and delivery of an overarching PEACE Action Plan ensuring alignment with the local Community Plan for the area.**

**SEUPB previously advised that they will not be overly prescriptive in terms of partnership composition, development process or selection, but rather they encourage that representation should be balanced as far as possible. They advised partnerships should ideally include some of the following:**

<b>Pillar 1</b> <b>Elected Members</b>	<b>Pillar 2</b> <b>Statutory Partners</b>
<b>Pillar 3</b> <b>Social Partners - Geographical Community Representatives / Civic Society</b>	<b>Pillar 4</b> <b>Social Partners - PEACE PLUS Target Groups; S75 / under-represented groups</b>

### 3.5 Preferred option

Council officers have been engaging with SEUPB on a preferred model for the Belfast partnership with the preferred option as follows:

The current Shared City Partnership (SCP) retains oversight of the development and implementation of the future PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan and becomes the PEACEPLUS Partnership.

The key reasons that officers engaged with SEUPB on this model included:

- There was a significant refresh of the SCP recently, which included recruitment of new members from the Community and Voluntary Sector.
- The SCP is a formal working group of the Council that oversees the Good Relations Strategy and Action Plan and PEACE IV Plan via SP and R.
- SCP will continue post PEACEPLUS completion and will have sustainability with capacity to continue to work on Peace and Reconciliation post PEACE funding.
- SCP has representation from across Political parties.
- SCP has a good mixture of elected members, statutory agencies, interested groups and community partners across the four pillars outlined above.
- SCP membership currently has clear alignment with community planning partnership members.

Following discussions with SEUPB, it has advised that it is content that the preferred option above is an acceptable model for overseeing the future PEACEPLUS Local Community Action Plan. Officers are seeing approval from members to proceed on this basis.

### 3.5 External Support

SEUPB has also given approval to councils to use a maximum of €100,000 on resourcing the development of the local action plan. This expenditure is not additional to any final award that the Council receives, it will be included in the PEACE PLUS Action Plan application and when successful, will form part of the letter of award for reimbursement.

There will be significant work required to deliver on these ambitious timelines, which will require additional external support. While we may not maximise the full €100,000 available to assist with the development of the local action plan, we will initially use circa £48,500 (€56,260) to appoint suitably qualified contractors who will be expected to lead on the development, facilitation and submission of the Belfast PEACE PLUS local community PEACE action plan, this investment cannot be used for anything other than 1.1 Development of the Local Community PEACEPLUS Action Plan.

This will help develop the systems and processes including the design and facilitation of a consultation and engagement framework and associated local area informal governance to enable Council to submit their Local Community PEACE Action Plan. The successful applicants will be expected to undertake a co-designed approach with members, the local community and stakeholders to develop a prioritisation list for possible projects, develop and draft the action plan for consideration by Council and write the detailed plan and engage with SEUPB on any changes required post submission. As we develop our approach to 1.1, ongoing engagement will take place with members, with updates brought back via SP&R.

### 3.6 Financial and Resource Implications

External support of up to 100,000 euros for the development of 1.1 local action plans can be claimed from any future Letter of Offer from SEUPB but will be included in the final budget allocation.

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

The plan will be subject to equality screening.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.



### **City Co-operation on Achieving Net Zero**

The Director of Organisational Strategy informed the Committee that, in addition to the global negotiations at last year's COP26 conference in Glasgow, a number of city-to-city events had taken place, to emphasise the need for increased collaboration around topics such as climate finance, energy and achieving a just transition.

The Lord Mayor, Councillor Nicholl, had played a key role in many of these events and there had been follow up discussions with a number of cities, including Greater Manchester, Liverpool, and Dublin, to explore opportunities to work together on common causes.

He confirmed that a delegation including the Mayors of Greater Manchester, the Liverpool City Region and Dublin would meet in Belfast on 30th March to view the good work being undertaken in Belfast around the use of hydrogen. The itinerary would include a visit to a school, engagement with local businesses and a workshop, at which officers from each city would discuss their programme of work and opportunities for collaboration.

It was proposed that the following Statement of Intent be agreed and publicised on the day of the visit:

**“Belfast, Dublin, Liverpool City Region and Greater Manchester, with a collective population of over five million, will come together to form a co-operative partnership to develop practical approaches to accelerate the delivery of net-zero commitments in our cities and city regions.**

**Climate change is the greatest challenge facing our nations and our planet. That is why we have developed ambitious climate agendas to become more equitable, fairer, prosperous and greener cities. Each of us is committed to the protection of our economies and our people and we are firmly of the view that working together will give us the best chance of realising the benefits of transitioning to a low carbon economy.**

**To achieve these goals, we are committed to:**

- **sharing best practices, knowledge and experience;**
- **connecting organisations and facilitating research and development, business and investment collaborations; and**
- **co-ordinating joint participation at events (including the Net Zero Summit in June, 2022) and hosting, where necessary, incoming delegations.”**

The Committee approved the Statement of Intent.

### **Draft Corporate Delivery Plan 2022-23**

The Chief Executive submitted for the Committee's approval the draft Corporate Delivery Plan for 2022/23. The Plan reflected the in-year deliverables against the priorities which had been agreed as part of the four-year Corporate Plan, as well as some additional priorities which had arisen in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and had been structured around the following themes:

- Our Services
- Economic Recovery
- Community Recovery
- Environmental Recovery
- Strategic Planning Frameworks and
- Organisational Foundations

He confirmed that a series of priorities had been identified for each theme, with each of those having a number of committed deliverables for 2022/23, and pointed out that, in addition to being provided with in-year reports on a number of priorities, the Committee would receive a six-monthly progress report against all commitments and a year-end report.

After discussion, the Committee approved the draft Corporate Annual Delivery Plan for 2022/23.

### **Ukraine Refugee Scheme**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

**1.1 To update the Committee on the emerging plans to implement the local response to the ‘Homes for Ukraine’ scheme, which allows UK individuals, charities, community groups and businesses to record their interest in supporting Ukrainians fleeing the war.**

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to note:**

- **the work that is ongoing with The Executive Office, DfC, NIHE and across Local Government to plan for local responses to the Ukrainian Refugee Scheme, which was launched on 14th March; and**
- **that this work is progressing at pace, and it may be necessary for the Chief Executive to quickly assign**

Council resources to the emerging scheme using his delegated authority.

**3.0 Main Report**

**3.1** On 14th March, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Michael Gove launched the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme, which allows UK individuals, charities, community groups and businesses to record their interest in supporting Ukrainians fleeing the war.

**3.2** The Homes for Ukraine scheme will allow individuals, charities, community groups and businesses in the UK to bring Ukrainians to safety, including those with no family ties to the UK. Phase One of the scheme will allow sponsors in the UK to nominate a named Ukrainian or a named Ukrainian family to stay with them in their home or in a separate property. The scheme uses a webpage for sponsors to record their interest, with the scheme opening for applications on 18th March.

**3.3** The scheme will operate in Northern Ireland and The Executive Office (TEO) plans to strongly encourage expressions of interest in the provision of accommodation from both individuals and organisations. Whilst not all the details have yet been announced by Westminster, TEO is working at pace, making preparations so they can provide sanctuary to Ukrainian refugees.

**3.4** Mindful of the pressure on social housing stock, TEO officials are engaging with councils and the voluntary and community sector to find creative ways of bringing suitable accommodation into use and identifying all available capacity. TEO is also in close contact with the Home Office and the Department for Levelling Up, Communities and Housing and with colleagues in other jurisdictions.

**Indicative areas of Focus for Local Government**

**3.5** TEO has stated that partnership working will be central to making the best of this scheme and to maximise the positive impact for refugees more generally. TEO has met with SOLACE and NILGA to identify how a co-design approach might be taken.

**3.6** The indicative workstreams that will involve Local Government are likely to include:

- Possible design and delivery of Welcome Centres in their local areas, in partnership with public sector organisations and community and voluntary sector. This will include orientation centres, as well as centres with accommodation for short stays. NIHE is also looking at the option of a single regional Welcome Centre.
- Provision of local knowledge and information to inform the capacity exercise being led by NI Housing Executive as well as on an ongoing basis.
- Communications in liaison with a central comms team that will be established by TEO with Council colleagues.

#### Next Steps

- 3.7 Further co-design meetings will be arranged with agreed points of contacts for each council and there will be further meetings with TEO, DfC and others commencing as soon as possible. SOLACE is represented on the Strategic Planning Group (SPG) chaired by TEO and BCC is represented on the regional planning group for local government. A central comms working group has also been established and BCC is represented in this group. Regular updates on the refugee scheme will be provided to Elected Members as further details emerge.
- 3.8 The original ambition was to stand Welcome Centres in each council up by end of March 2022 and evolve thereafter. A recent readout from the SPG indicates that NIHE is now considering a single regional Welcome Centre. BCC has established an internal working group and will continue to work with partner organisations as the operating model and role of local government emerges. BCC has requested an ongoing readout of numbers and locations from the on-line sponsor and refugee registration system, which should identify the locations of sponsors where refugees will be based and provide an indication of scale.
- 3.9 Financial and Resource Implications
- BCC costs to support the refugee programme will be estimated as the programme develops. TEO has indicated that councils will need to make use of existing resources as far as possible

in the first instance. However, TEO recognises that additional resources may be required as action plans are costed.

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

The programme to support Ukrainian refugees will be subject to equality, good relations and rural needs considerations.”

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

**UK - Republic of Korea  
Innovation Twins Programme**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

**1.1 To seek Committee approval of a Statement of Intent to support ongoing collaboration with the city of Sejong (South Korea). A pre-recording of the signing of the Statement by the Chief Executive will feature as part of a virtual International Showcase Day with Sejong on 30th March, which will mark the culmination of this last phase of the project.**

**1.2 To provide an update on the virtual international Showcase Day on March 30th and planned agenda.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

**i approve the Statement of Intent - which has been developed with support from key institutions across the city - to progress opportunities for collaboration with the city of Sejong in South Korea; and**

**ii note the arrangements for a joint city to city virtual international showcase day on March 30th, which will feature a pre-recording of the signing of the Statement of Intent by the Chief Executive.**

**3.0 Main Report**

**3.1 At the Committee meeting in November 2021, Members were presented with details of the Council’s participation in the ‘UK-Republic of Korea Innovation Twins’ programme<sup>1</sup> which was**

**set up by the Connected Places Catapult and funded by BEIS and UKRI.**

- 3.2 The programme aims to build relationships between smart cities with high potential for accelerating long term R and I collaborations and generating opportunities for trade and FDI. Committee has also received regular updates on the programme and has been made aware of the development of a Statement of Intent to support ongoing collaboration and this is now being submitted for approval.**
- 3.3 While not legally binding, the Statement sets out areas of shared interest which will form the basis for ongoing cooperation between Sejong and Belfast. These include smart cities, medtech, cyber security, fintech, academic, educational and cultural cooperation, economic development and opportunities for bilateral trade and investment.**
- 3.4 The Statement of Intent has been developed in conjunction with our colleagues in the city of Sejong in South Korea and with support from Invest NI who are in the process of developing a presence there. It will facilitate opportunities for mutual benefit between both cities and make it possible to unlock further funding from BEIS post March, 2022.**
- 3.5 It has also been discussed with Colin Crooks, the newly appointed UK Ambassador to South Korea. Following a meeting led by the City Innovation team with representatives from Queens University, Ulster University, Health Innovation Research Alliance and QUBIS, Ambassador Crooks has taken the opportunity to table areas of interest detailed in the Statement with the Mayor of Sejong to promote future collaboration.**
- 3.6 With Committee approval, a pre-recording of the signing of the Statement of Intent by the Chief Executive will be shown on March 30th, at a virtual international Showcase Day (organised and funded by Connected Places Catapult) to mark the culmination of the UK innovation twins programme.**
- 3.7 Ian Greer, Vice-chancellor of Queens University and Chair of Innovation City Belfast will provide a keynote speech at the showcase event, setting out the city's innovation ambitions and sector strengths and addressing the benefits of bilateral engagement between Belfast and Sejong, potential outcomes and impact for both cities. Invest NI will outline their role to**

support international trade and showcase companies currently doing business and who wish to do business in South Korea.

- 3.8 Deborah Colville will present at the event on the theme of Smart Cities and Belfast Digital Innovation investments and John Greer will attend a panel session to outline how opportunities can be further developed between Belfast and Sejong beyond the current programme.
- 3.9 Local companies who have received funding (from a total budget of c £100k as part of the Innovation Twins programme) will also have the opportunity to show-case their innovative products or services at the event. Eight companies in total have been successful in their application for funding and will present on a range of products relating to areas such as encouraging recycling behaviour, fitness hubs, virtual tourism, community rewards programmes, last mile delivery, safer cycling, and personal safety.
- 3.10 There are also opportunities for companies not directly involved in the programme but who wish to explore business/collaboration in Sejong/South Korea to profile their work within a virtual exhibition space.
- 3.11 Work undertaken to develop an 'Innovative Procurement Playbook' will also feature as part of the event. The Playbook will capture the learning from the full programme and support local councils and public sector bodies across the UK to find better ways to procure more innovative solutions and services. It will also include learning from the delivery of a training programme delivered to local SMEs, and to council officers (who took part in the programme) to build their capacity to engage in challenge-led competitions.
- 3.12 The training for both officers and for SMEs will provide useful preparation and learning for the council to ensure that we are able to maximise the innovation opportunities offered by the Belfast Region City Deal challenge funds and in particular the Innovation for Societal Impact fund which is in development.
- 3.13 Financial and Resource Implications
- The programme requires officer time commitment from across the Departments.
- 3.14 Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment
- None.”

**STATEMENT OF INTENT**



**Belfast**  
City Council

**Statement of Intent between Sejong City and Belfast**

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This Statement of Intent is intended to set out areas of shared interest which will form the basis for cooperation between Sejong and Belfast to support their city twinning project as well as other relevant activities.

The cities of Sejong and Belfast wish to explore opportunities for long-term city to city relationships which, inter alia, contribute to shared economic prosperity, enhance bilateral trade and investment and accelerate research and innovation for both cities. Cooperation between both cities will also include the promotion of skills development and job creation in both regions, business growth, market access for participating entities, shared socioeconomic prosperity and lasting research and innovation to address city challenges.

Both cities, working together for the purposes of this Statement of Intent, will consider their cooperation in such particular areas of interest as follow but are not exclusive to:

- smart cities, cyber security, fintech, medtech, regtech, enabling and emerging technologies
- regulatory sandboxes
- research and innovation contributing to mobility, health and wellbeing, advanced manufacturing, net zero, sustainable and resilient cities.
- innovation eco-systems and innovative procurement.
- economic development and diversification.
- start-up and SME support.
- academic, educational and cultural cooperation.
- opportunities for bilateral trade and investment, as appropriate, supported by Invest Northern Ireland

In accordance with the principles of equality and mutual benefit, both cities will explore opportunities to carry out cooperation in various forms to support the areas listed above.

Both cities will conduct regular visits and exchanges to strengthen further their friendly and cooperative relationships and will exchange information on the areas listed above as applicable.



**This Statement of Intent is not a legally binding document and will not be deemed to constitute or create any legally binding or enforceable obligations, express or implied.**

**It will come into effect on the date of signing and will be reviewed on an annual basis.**

**Signed on behalf of Sejong City**

**Signed on behalf of Belfast City Council**

Name:

Name:

Title:

Title:

Date:

Date:

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **UEFA Conference League Final 2023**

(Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development, attended in connection with this item.)

The Director of Economic Development reminded the Committee that Belfast had, in August 2021, hosted the UEFA Super Cup final in the National Stadium. The Council had allocated £200,000 to the event, which had been used primarily for city animation, fan mobility and fan experience, a formal dinner in the City Hall and other City logistics.

He reviewed the overall impact of the event and confirmed that the Council had now received from the Irish Football Association a request to support its bid for the UEFA Conference League Final in 2023. This competition was now in its second year and infrastructure and expectations for the event would be similar to that of the UEFA Super Cup Final. The timelines for UEFA's evaluation phase was as follows:

- February/March, 2022 - Potential site visits by UEFA
- April 2022 - Evaluation completed
- May 2022 - Appointment of the Host Association by UEFA's Executive Committee

He reported that the Lord Mayor had, at the request of the Irish Football Association, issued on behalf of the Council a letter of support prior to the deadline for bids expiring in February. The letter did not commit the Council to any financial outlay. UEFA had since requested the Council to sign a 'Host City Authority Undertaking' letter to further confirm its support for the Irish Football Association's bid. That letter had set out a number of obligations which the host City would have to meet in order to host the event. It had been reviewed by the Legal Services section, which had advised that Committee approval would be required prior to the Council agreeing to the terms of the document.

The Director pointed out that, should the bid be successful, it was anticipated that the Council would again be requested to provide funding for the event, with the amount potentially being similar to that which had been allocated to the UEFA Super Cup final, given that the events were similar in profile. He drew the Committee's attention to a number of significant major events which were due to take place in 2023 and confirmed that no financial provision had been made in the medium term for the UEFA Conference League Final.

After discussion, the Committee agreed:

- i. to note the details of the imminent bid by the Irish Football Association to host the UEFA Conference League Final 2023;
- ii. that the Council would support the bid by the Irish Football Association;
- iii. to note that, should the bid be successful:
  - a. it would potentially lead to a future request for financial support, which had not been factored into medium-term financial planning; and
  - b. a report would be presented to the Committee outlining the resource implications for the Council and providing details of funding from other sources; and
- iv. authorised officers to engage with the Irish Football Association in the development process.

### **Physical Programme and Asset Management**

#### **Asset Management**

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

#### **Suffolk Playing Fields - Grant of Cable Easement and Right of Way to NIE Networks Ltd.**

- The Committee approved the surrender of two cable easements and the grant of a new cable easement and right of way to NIE Networks Ltd.

#### **2 Royal Avenue – Licence for Hoarding**

- The Committee approved a licence agreement with Bennett (Construction) Ltd. to formalise the arrangement for the hoarding around the Primark building, which encroaches onto Council land at 2 Royal Avenue.

### **Hit the North Arts Festival 2022**

- The Committee noted the inclusion of 'Site 10' in the City centre as part of the Hit the North Festival on 1st May, 2022.

### **Update on Area Working Groups**

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

- the North Belfast Area Working Group of 23rd February, subject to the inclusion of a declaration of interest which had been made at the meeting by Councillor Pankhurst to reflect that he was on the Board of the Cultural Community Hub, which had been allocated funding under the Belfast Investment Fund;
- the West Belfast Area Working Group of 24th February;
- the South Belfast Area Working Group of 28th February; and
- the East Belfast Area Working Group of 3rd March.

### **Finance, Procurement and Performance**

#### **Requests for Funding**

The Committee's attention was drawn to the following requests for funding, which fell under the Council's discretionary expenditure policy:

#### **Glór na Móna**

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources informed the Committee that a request had been received from Glór na Móna for funding of £86,000 to cover the 2022/23 financial year. The request had followed a decision by the Education Authority not to allocate a budget for that period and, if approved, would secure five youth worker posts and the continuation of Irish medium youth services in the Upper Springfield area.

In response to issues which had been raised by some Members around the request, he confirmed that, if the Committee was to agree to provide the £86,000, it would be paid in four equal tranches. Should the ongoing discussions between Glór na Móna and the Education Authority lead to funding being reinstated, the Council would seek to recoup funding which it had provided during any period of overlap.

On that basis, the Committee agreed to allocate £86,000 to Glór na Móna and granted approval for Elected Members to engage with Glór na Móna and the Education Authority, if required.

**Malone Tornadoes Rugby Football Club**

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources reported that Malone Tornadoes Rugby Football Club had requested that the Council provide £10,000 towards the estimated overall cost of between £30,000 and £35,000 required to secure the club's participation in the third International Mixed Ability World Cup Rugby Tournament being held in Cork between 5th and 10th June, 2022.

The Committee agreed to allocate £10,000 to the Club.

**Update on Contracts**

The Committee:

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

**Table 1: Competitive Tenders**

<b>Title of Tender</b>	<b>Proposed Contract Duration</b>	<b>Estimated Total Contract Value</b>	<b>SRO</b>	<b>Short description of goods / services</b>
Supply and delivery of steeled wheeled bins, castors and all supporting spare parts	Up to 2 years	£100,000	S Toland / R Crozier	Supply of commercial bins and spare parts for repair
Email filtering solution to help prevent spam, phishing attacks and other malicious email	Up to 3 years	£48,000	R Cregan	To reduce risk of infection or loss of data from malicious email
Provision of legionella monitoring & risk management programme at BCC properties	Up to 5 years	£250,000	S Grimes	Statutory compliance requirement
Design and build of a mobile responsive and	Up to 4 years & 3	£45,000	R Cregan	There is currently no

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Estimated Total Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services
accessible website for Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) and implement a web CMS	months			standalone website for the BRCD programme. The information is currently on a landing page on BCC's website.
T2119 - Supply of bottled and mains-fed water with dispensers across BCC offices and sites	Up to 3 years	£50,000	R Cregan	Supply of bottled and mains-fed water with dispensers across BCC offices and sites. This is a continuing requirement as kitchens throughout Council buildings need to be refurbished to provide safe drinking water and public access areas need to have a supply of water
Multi supplier framework agreement for the provision of marketing services for the Marketing and Corporate Comms Business Area of BCC	Up to 4 years	N/A	J Tully	BCC target a number of audiences with our Marketing and Communication activities: residents, businesses, potential investors, tourists (local and international) and students that come to study in Belfast
In-depth technical research and guidance to help Digital Services advance the initiatives/projects that support execution of the IT strategy	Up to 2 years	£39,600	R Cregan	Use proven reference architecture to develop technology architecture

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Estimated Total Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services
				<p>Receive organisation-specific guidance through calls with analysts Leverage industry best practices to avoid costly mistakes Enables Digital Services to stay current with changing markets and technologies</p>
<p>Multi supplier framework agreement for the provision of technical support, advice and research and economic analysis support service for the Labour Market Partnership, Employability &amp; Skills, Enterprise &amp; Business Growth departments as well as the wider Economic Development division and BRCD Suppliers on the framework will have not have a guarantee of any work</p>	<p>Up to 5 years</p>	<p>Up to £4,000,000</p>	<p>A Reid</p>	<p>The tender will provide technical assistance and economic data analysis as part of an intelligence-led approach, based on robust economic data and strong consultation and research with relevant stakeholders in the city. *Note - approval granted Oct 2021 for 4.5 year at £225k which for Labour Market Partnership only. Requesting increase to 5 years and up to a total value of £4m which includes potential use by other departments in BCC</p>
<p>T2210 - professional congress/conference organiser required for One Young World 2023 conference</p>	<p>Up to 20 months</p>	<p>£2,700,000</p>	<p>A Reid</p>	<p>The contractor will be entitled to a management fee of £250k but will be responsible for</p>

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Estimated Total Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services
				<p>managing the overall budget for the event £2.7m.</p> <p>*Note - approval granted Sept 2021 for £175k.</p> <p>Requesting increased to £2.7m. Of this £1m is funding coming from NI Executive to BCC and a further £350,000 from BCC directly with the remaining to be raised from the private sector.</p>
New camera and microphone system for the Committee Rooms	1 off purchase	£49,816	J Walsh	To prepare the Committee Rooms to hold hybrid meetings
Design, provision and management of a meanwhile use at 2 Royal Avenue	Up to 2 years	£1,200,000	A Reid	Agreement to deliver meanwhile use at 2 Royal Avenue until end of temporary planning permission

**Table 2: Single Tender Actions**

Title	Total Value	SRO	Supplier
Renewal of support and maintenance for SSA (Spectrum Spatial Analyst) software	£45,000	R Cregan	CDR Group
Renewal of support and maintenance for MapInfo mapping software	£57,000	R Cregan	CDR Group
Belfast City brand advertising at George Best Belfast City Airport	£30,000	J Tully	George Best Belfast City Airport

Extension of the design and build contract for ongoing corporate website development and development of additional BCC websites	£170,000	R Cregan	Simply Zesty UK Ltd
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**Table 3: Modification to Contract**

<b>Title of Contract</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Modification</b>	<b>SRO</b>	<b>Supplier</b>
T2084 (b) Provision of a 'Shared History, Heritage and Identity Content / Narratives for Interpretative Panels on Shared Space Greenway' PEACE IV Programme Services	Up to 16 months	Additional 3 months	S Toland / R Crozier	Mediation NI
T1710 - Provision of a cleaning service at Belfast Castle, Malone House, The Stables and Lock Keepers Cottage	Up 5 years	Additional 3 months and £20,000	S Toland / R Crozier	Precision Industrial Services
T1870 Tender for the Maintenance and Removal of Flower Displays	Up 3 years	Additional 3 months and £16,000	S Toland / R Crozier	Clive Richardson Ltd

**Table 4: Retrospective Single Tender Actions**

<b>Title of Contract</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>SRO</b>	<b>Supplier</b>
Delivery of a feasibility study and essential public engagement work for the Urban Forest project at 2 Royal Avenue (Part funded)	Up to 1 month	£100,000	A Reid	The Eden Trust
Company required to produce and action a detailed and robust Venue Management Plan to cover operational and event needs at 2 Royal Avenue (fully funded)	Up to 4 months	£100,000	A Reid	Smallworld Music
Increase connectivity between the city centre and neighbourhoods through thematically aligned programmes at 2 Royal Avenue (fully funded)	Up to 1 month	£54,000	A Reid	BDA Property Projects Ltd
Develop and deliver an extensive	Up to 6	£125,000	A Reid	Visit Belfast



Marcomms campaign to support the reopening of the city at 2 Royal Avenue (fully funded)	weeks			
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**CIPFA Prudential Code Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Indicators 2022-23**

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

**“1.0 Purpose of Report**

**1.1 The Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011 and the supporting Prudential and Treasury Codes produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), require the Council to consider the affordability and sustainability of capital expenditure decisions through the reporting of prudential and treasury management indicators.**

**1.2 The Prudential Code requires the Council to produce a Capital Strategy for 2022/23. This report provides information for the Committee on the Capital Strategy, incorporating the prudential indicators for Belfast City Council for the period 2022/23 to 2024/25, and the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2022/23.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

**i note the contents of this report and the prudential and treasury management indicators included within the appendices;**

**and agree:**

**ii the Authorised Borrowing Limit for the Council of £147m for 2022/23; and**

**iii the Treasury Management Strategy for 2022/23, which has been included as Appendix 2 to this report.**

**3.0 Main Report**

**3.1 The Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011 requires the Council to adopt the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities. In doing so, the Council is required to agree a minimum revenue provision policy annually and to set and monitor a series of Prudential Indicators, the key objectives of which are to ensure that,**

within a clear framework, the capital investment plans of the council are affordable, prudent and sustainable.

- 3.2 At the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the 9 December 2011, Members approved the Council's Treasury Management Policy which is based on the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice. The Treasury Management Policy requires that a Treasury Management Strategy be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on an annual basis and that it is supported by a mid-year and year end treasury management reports.
- 3.3 The Capital Strategy, incorporating the prudential indicators, is included as Appendix 1, while the Treasury Management Strategy and treasury management indicators have been included as Appendix 2.
- 3.4 The comparison of 'Gross Borrowing' to 'Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)' is the main indicator of prudence when considering the proposed capital investment plans of the Council. Estimated gross borrowing should not exceed the CFR for the current year plus two years. The Council's estimated gross borrowing position, illustrated in Table 6, Appendix 1, is comfortably within the CFR in the medium term. The Director of Finance and Resources therefore considers the estimated levels of gross borrowing as being prudent.
- 3.5 Table 10 (Appendix 1) shows the estimated financing costs for capital expenditure as a percentage of the estimated net revenue stream for the Council, based on the medium financial plan. These illustrate that in the medium term, capital financing costs will represent 8.7% of the Council's net running costs. On this basis the Director of Finance and Resources is satisfied that the level of capital expenditure is affordable.
- 3.6 The Finance Act requires the Council to set an affordable borrowing limit, relating to gross debt. The Prudential Code defines the affordable limit as the 'Authorised Borrowing Limit' and gross borrowing must not exceed this limit. Table 8 (Appendix 1) sets out the recommended 'Authorised Borrowing Limit' for the Council as being £147m for 2022/23.
- 3.7 **Financial and Resource Implications**
- As detailed in the report
- 3.8 **Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment**
- None."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

## Equality and Good Relations

### Minutes of Meeting of Shared City Partnership

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Shared City Partnership of 7th March, including the recommendations:

#### PEACE IV

##### Secretariat

- to delegate authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services, as the SRO for PEACE IV, and to the Good Relations Manager to agree the business case/mitigations required for submission to the SEUPB, with a further report to be submitted to the Partnership meeting in April 2022.

##### Children and Young People

###### CYP3 On the Right Track

- to agree, in principle, a contract uplift of up to 10% of the contract value, estimated at £20,000, subject to confirmation of costs, availability of funding and SEUPB approval.

##### Shared Spaces and Services

- to accept the recommendations, possible actions and links to existing supported project work contained within the MDL Dialogue and Engagement Project Report.

##### Building Positive Relations

###### BPR5 – Roma Project

- to extend project delivery until September 2022, as within the current contract specifications for the Roma project and the Council's Letter of Offer.

###### BPR6 - St. Comgall's

- to agree, in principle, the methodology for content gathering, the style and layout of the templates for the educational resources and exhibition materials; and
- to delegate authority to the Programme Board to agree the content of the final resource for a full suite of the educational resources and exhibition materials, which will also be subject to SEUPB approval.

## **GOOD RELATIONS**

### **Belfast Agenda Refresh and Action Planning**

- to note that a supporting action plan would be co-designed with the Shared City Partnership and partners and brought back for consideration in due course.

### **Update on Research on the Experiences of BAME and Traveller Communities**

- to agree that the Council uses the underspend of £6,000 identified in the District Council Good Relations programme to widen the participation of peer researchers from BAME communities in the research and to provide a programme of skills development to enhance their capacity.

### **Anti-Sectarianism and Good Relations**

- to receive at a future meeting of the Partnership a presentation from the Executive Office on its current mapping exercise regarding support for good relations at a future meeting

### **Presentation from the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust**

- to receive at a future meeting of the Partnership a presentation from the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust on the development of its Good Relations Strategy.

### **Equality and Diversity: Equality Screening and Rural Needs Outcome Report**

The Committee noted the contents of a report providing a summary of equality screenings and rural needs impact assessments for the period from October to December, 2021.

### **Annual Day of Reflection**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 18th February, it had agreed to adopt a motion in relation to the forthcoming 50th Anniversary of 'Bloody Friday'. The Committee had agreed also that Party Leaders would discuss the potential for holding a separate day of reflection to remember all of the victims of the Troubles in Belfast.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services informed the Committee that the Party Leaders had subsequently agreed that the Council should host an annual day of reflection, with the preferred date being 21st June. That would allow it to link into a wider day of reflection which was organised each year by the Healing Through Remembering organisation. It was proposed that a space be set aside within the City Hall for quiet reflection and that the overall format should include poetry, music and some form of physical animation.

She went on to recommend that the City Hall be illuminated in yellow on 21st June each year, as that was the colour used to mark the wider day of reflection.

After discussion, the Committee granted approval for the Council to hold a Day of Reflection on 21st June each year and for the City Hall to be illuminated in yellow on each occasion.

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

The Committee considered the following report:

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

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on the funding programme for Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.**

#### **2.0 Recommendation**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to note the report.**

#### **3.0 Main Report**

##### **3.1 Background**

**Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee weekend will take place from Thursday 2nd to Sunday 5th June, inclusive.**

**At the meeting on 18th February, the Committee agreed to allocate funding of £100,000 for events to take place in local communities across the city over the Platinum Jubilee weekend. The Committee also agreed to engage the services of the Community Foundation Northern Ireland (CFNI) to administer the fund, which will allocate a maximum of £2,000 for any group / event to take place.**

**Officers have been engaging with the Community Foundation over the past few weeks to finalise the details of the programme to make sure the funding process is straightforward and open to as many groups as possible. Members have also been providing feedback on a number of important points such as non-constituted groups being able to access the funding.**

**The programme is now live, with groups able to apply online and attend information sessions to find out more about how to apply, please see the following link for further details**

<https://communityfoundationni.org/grants/her-majesty-the-queens-platinum-jubilee-fund-for-belfast/>. The following provides an overview of how the programme will be delivered:

**3.2 Application Timeline:**

Stage	Timescale
Open Call	23 March 2022
Close of Applications	11 April 2022
Awards made	W/C 2 May 2022
Delivery	2-5 June 2022

**3.3 Community Engagement**

Venue	Time
Duncairn Community Centre Upper Mervue St, BT15 2J	Tuesday 29 March 1.00 pm
Olympia Leisure Centre Boucher Rd, BT12 6HR	Wednesday, 30 March 10.15 am
Inverary Community Centre Inverary Ave, BT4 1RN	Tuesday, 29 March 11.30 am
Spectrum Centre Café, Shankill Road Belfast	Wednesday, 30 March 6.00 pm
Online via Zoom <a href="https://us06web.zoom.us/j/6086313480">https://us06web.zoom.us/j/6086313480</a> Meeting ID: 608 631 3480	Friday 1 April 11:30 am

The fund has been advertised via Social media channels and has been published on the Council's and CFNI websites. Any groups who require further information on how to apply can call the CFNI grants team directly on 028 9024 5927.

**3.4 Multiple ‘Umbrella’ applications:**

Following discussions with CFNI we have agreed that ‘Umbrella’ organisations can support applications from community groups who do not have a constitution. However, this will be up to a limit of £6,000 in total applications, with the minimum award per group £500, maximum award per group £2,000. An application for each individual community group must be received.

The governance arrangements of the CFNI does not directly support the advancement of religion and/or organisations whose purposes include the advancement of religion. To assist such groups in accessing this funding, organisations with purposes to advance religion, can seek an eligible umbrella organisation who can submit an application for an eligible project on their behalf. Alternatively, they can work with an eligible partner organisation who can act as the lead applicant.

Information sessions as outlined above will provide support to groups to enable them to apply or signpost them as appropriate. Council officers will also be supporting community groups, providing information and supporting the application process.

**3.5 Payment and Verification**

As many of the groups who are accessing this funding, will have limited financial capacity, successful awards will be paid 100% in advance. All successful applicants will have to return project monitoring information, with a sample of applicants subject to full verification and will be asked to submit all relevant receipts of payments made with the funding.

**3.6 Financial and Resource Implications**

An additional Budget of £110,000, which includes the amount required to buy in the services of the Community Foundation, is being allocated from Departmental budgets.

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

All events will take equality and good relations implications into account.”

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

### Operational Issues

#### Update on Recovery of Pest Control Service

The Committee considered the following report:

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

As requested at the Council meeting on 10th January 2022, this report provides an update on the recovery of the Pest Control Service and on the proposed improvements for a full resumption of services to pre-Covid levels.

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- note the progress made to date on the recovery of the pest control service and support the proposed improvements for full resumption of pest control services across the district; and
- agree that an operational service review be progressed in 2022/23 with the aim of improving the customer experience, streamlining processes and improving effectiveness of service delivery, with a report to come back to the Committee.

**3.0 Main Report**

**3.1 Members will be aware of the impact that the pandemic had on our pest control service, with several pest control officers furloughed April-August 2020. During this time, the service continued to deliver the sewer baiting programme across the City and residents were offered advice and information by the Pest Control Manager. The tenants of social housing were advised to contact their housing provider to obtain pest control services.**

**3.2 The Pest Control service was re-introduced in September 2020, albeit in a limited capacity. Risk assessment were reviewed and various covid control measures to protect our staff implemented, this resulted in a significant reduction in home treatments compared to normal levels that could be carried out. Visits therefore had to be prioritised and restricted to only the most vulnerable and where significant public health issues were identified. The vast majority of visits carried out were external only, with officers providing advice and information by phone.**



- 3.3 In June 2021, internal treatments resumed for rats and mice only, with the support and guidance of Corporate Health and Safety and the Trade Unions in order to support a phased and manageable return. The safety measures introduced impacted on the number of internal treatments that could be completed in a day thus at that's time it was agreed to only carryout treatments in the private rented and owner-occupied sector initially. We continued to refer the tenants of social housing to the Housing Executive and Housing Associations where private contractors facilitated the service. When the service resumed, waiting times averaged 3-5 weeks during the period Jun-Oct 2021.
- 3.4 In September, the Council's Chief Executive received correspondence from Minister Hargey, Department for Communities raising concerns about its restricted Pest Control services for NI Housing Executive and Housing Associations. Following an update on Pest control services on September 7th to Council members, it was agreed that pest control services would resume to all tenures. It was also requested by members that officers would investigate the establishment of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with both the NIHE and Housing Associations with a view to the Council recouping the costs for these services.
- 3.5 A meeting was arranged with the NI Housing Executive to explore the option of an SLA and recouping of costs. The NIHE officers shared their concerns about ensuring equity across all constituents and tenures allowing access to BCC pest control services free of charge.
- 3.6 The officers expressed the need to ensure their tenants should be entitled to benefit from the Councils free public health pest control services. In light of discussions with the NIHE and taking account of issues of equality for all BCC residents, the issue of cost recovery for the pest control services would need to be considered across all sectors at a future point if at all.
- 3.7 From September 2021 to date, all stakeholders have availed of the restricted service and waiting times for visits have averaged 4-5 weeks however this peaked at 7-weeks at the beginning of January due to a number of officers self-isolating as a result of the new variant and as a result of demand for services. The current waiting time for an appointment is now 3 weeks. In January, a high-level service review was carried out which identified that the scheduling system was inefficient and offered spare capacity for additional appointments. The scheduling system was amended which resulted in an immediate 1-week reduction in the waiting time.

- 3.8 For the past number of months, the Pest Control service has not had a full complement of staff, however two open vacancies have now been filled with 1 x officer starting on 21st March and 1 x Operative starting on 1st April. Waiting times are, therefore, expected to further reduce once the personnel have been onboarded. It should be noted that the Pest Control team has remained the same size for several years and has not grown with the population of the district.**
- 3.9 The safety of our staff is paramount and we are continuing to operate with the original Covid restrictions in place. Officers have a list of questions to ask the householder before entering the property and they are required to change their PPE between visits. This system required additional time between each visit compared to the pre-covid levels and this reduces the overall capacity for appointments by around 25%. This Risk Assessment is currently being reviewed with staff and the trade unions with the ambitions of full resumption of pre-covid operations and reducing waiting times further.**
- 3.10 Whilst we have navigated the service through Covid and made operational changes the pest control service was last reviewed in 2005/06 and the operating environment has since changed. Our priorities going forward as part of commissioning an operational review are to provide an exceptional service to all constituents by:**
- Resumption of all treatments including fleas, flies, cockroaches.**
  - Review of scheduling system and time slots and the systems used to support this.**
  - Review of works planning and area / regional approach which will offer further efficiencies.**
  - Monitor waiting times and aim to reduce.**
  - The synergies with the customer hub**
- 3.11 Longer term, we would be keen to explore the use of mobile workflow management software which will improve the customer experience, offer reductions in our no admission rates, streamline processes and improve efficiencies. A report will be brought back to committee on the findings of the review.**
- 3.12 Finally, as part of the City Services transformation project, Ms.Helen Morrissey has been appointed as the City Protection Manager – Neighbourhood and will oversee the Pest Control function in the new financial year among other functions.**

**3.13 Financial and Resource Implications**

There are no additional financial implications associated with this report.

With the exception of wasps, the Council continues to provide the service on a free of charge basis. We will commission a review during 2022/23 and the costs for this will be met from the existing City and Neighbourhood Services' revenue budget.

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

There are no implications associated with this report."

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

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

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meetings of the Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum of 16th and 21st March.

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

The Committee noted the minutes of the meeting of the Active Belfast Limited Board of 7th March.

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

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Social Policy Working Group of 28th February.

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

The Committee agreed to adopt the recommendations made in respect of those applications received up to 11th March, as set out below:

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
<b>2022 EVENTS</b>						
QUB <a href="#">Secure Connected Intelligence Summit</a>	17 May 2022	<b>Conference Reception and Dinner</b> for guests attending the summit showcasing activities around Global Innovation Institute (GII) in	A &B	No (waived as linked BCC City Deal)	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality

		connection with the Belfast Region City Deal.  Numbers attending - 60				
SMARTS Agency	PR 27 May 2022	<b>BT Staff Recognition Reception</b> – morning reception as part of a day long showcase of Belfast and local venues to reward and recognize key BT staff.  Numbers attending - 150	A &B	Charge (commercial company)	No hospitality	Approve Charge £115 No hospitality
Insurance Institute of Northern Ireland	27 May 2022	<b>Insurance Institute of Northern Ireland Annual Awards Ceremony</b> - presentation of awards and certificates followed by buffet reception  Numbers attending - 150	D	No (Voluntary/ NFP)	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality 1 in 3 rule
Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce and Industry	24 June 2022	<b>Annual President's Lunch</b> – annual lunch for the NI Chamber of Commerce and Industry to mark economic benefits to the City.  Numbers attending – 400	B	Charge £300	No Hospitality	Approve Charge £300 No hospitality
Clonduff Football Club	25 June 2022	<b>End of Season Awards Ceremony and Buffet</b> Presentation of trophies to children recognising and rewarding their efforts and achievements. Special	D	No (Voluntary/ NFP)	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality 1 in 3 rule

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee  
Monday, 28th March, 2022**

**B  
4017**

		recognition awards to outstanding members.  Numbers attending – 350				
Belfast Pride	22 <sup>nd</sup> July 2022	<b>30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Belfast Pride Launch and Pride Awards</b> – LGBT Community awards ceremony. Drinks reception followed by Awards presentation.  Numbers attending – 350	A, C & D	No, (Charity)	Yes, Wine Reception as significant anniversary	Approve No charge Wine Reception or £500 given to their chosen caterer for wine on tables
Belfast One BID	13 & 14 <sup>th</sup> August 2022	<b>Belfast One-Way Edit Fashion Show</b> showcasing city centre retailers	B	Yes £300	No hospitality	Approve Charge £300 No hospitality
Ulster Obstetrics and Gynaecological Society	7 October 2022	<b>70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala Dinner</b> to celebrate the BSA promoting highest standard of legal practice.  Numbers attending – 150	C	No (Voluntary/ NFP)	Yes, Wine Reception as significant anniversary	Approve No charge Wine Reception or £500 given to their chosen caterer for wine on tables
<b>2023</b>						
Holocaust Memorial Day Trust	24 January 2023	<b>Northern Ireland regional ceremony to mark Holocaust Memorial Day 2023</b> - a time for all to remember the millions of people killed in the Holocaust and subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.. The event is the official Northern Ireland commemoration of the Holocaust.	C	No (charity)	No hospitality (funding provided)	Approve No Charge No hospitality

		Numbers attending – 400 – 500				
Association of Breast Surgery	14 May 2023	<b>Conference Welcome Reception</b> for guests attending their 2-day conference taking place in ICC Belfast.  Numbers attending - 200	A &B	No (waived as linked to Visit Belfast)	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality
AMOSSHE, The Student Services Organisation	6 July 2023	<b>AMOSSHE Gala Reception</b> guests attending their flagship conference taking place in ICC Belfast.  Numbers attending - 250	A &B	No (waived as linked to Visit Belfast)	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality
Stena Line part of Stena Sphere group	22 September 2023	<b>Annual Conference Reception and Dinner</b> for global directors' attending the 3-day conference taking place in ICC Belfast.  Numbers attending - 300	A &B	No (waived as linked to Visit Belfast)	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality

*\*For all events noted above numbers and room layout will be reviewed and revised in line with COVID19 social distancing guidelines at the time of each event.*

### **Requests for the use of the City Hall Grounds**

The Committee approved the following requests for the use of the City Hall Grounds and noted that each organiser would be required to submit an event management plan and risk assessment in advance of their event:

- 25th June - 100th Anniversary Celebration of St John's Cadets
- 16th and 17th July - Belfast One Cinema Screenings; and
- 6th August - The National Youth Junior Choir of Northern Ireland Performance.

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

The Committee noted the key issues which had been discussed at the meeting of the Audit and Risk Panel on 8th March and approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting.

### **Minutes of Meeting of City Hall/City Hall Grounds Installations Working Group**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the City Hall/City Hall Grounds Installations Working Group of 16th February.

### **Minutes of Language Strategy Working Group**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Language Strategy Working Group of 15th March.

### **Minutes of Meeting of Customer Focus Task and Finish Working Group**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Customer Focus Task and Finish Working Group of 10th March.

### **Issues Raised in Advance by Members**

#### **Illumination of Belfast Castle - The Samaritans**

The Committee was reminded that the Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 22nd February, had considered the following motion which had been proposed by Councillor Kyle and seconded by Councillor Lyons:

"This Council commends and recognises the extraordinary efforts of the Samaritans during the period of Covid-19 and beyond. The ability of the volunteers to react quickly and effectively during the pandemic and to continue to offer support to anyone who needs a listening ear, day or night, 365 days a year, is to be commended.

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**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee  
Monday, 28th March, 2022**

The Council also recognises the mental health challenges facing our society and agrees to illuminate the Belfast Castle in green (Samaritan colours) to mark the Longest Night on 21st December, to show people that the Samaritans are always there for them.”

The Committee had agreed that that element of the motion specifically requesting the illumination of the Belfast Castle on 21st December be referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.

It was pointed out that the proposer had originally requested that the City Hall be illuminated on 21st December. However, upon being advised that this was not possible due to the Christmas lighting, he had agreed to amend his motion to call for Belfast Castle to be illuminated on that date instead.

The Committee approved the request to illuminate Belfast Castle in green on the night of 21st December.

Chairperson