

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



**Belfast  
City Council**

20th September, 2022

## **MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the Council Chamber and remotely via Microsoft Teams on Friday, 23rd September, 2022 at 9.30 a.m., for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

### **AGENDA:**

#### **1. Routine Matters**

- (a) Apologies
- (b) Minutes
- (c) Declarations of Interest

#### **2. Restricted Items**

- (a) Medium Term Financial Plan and Efficiency Programme (Pages 1 - 8)

#### **3. Matters referred back from Council/Motions**

#### **4. Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues**

- (a) Update on City Region Growth Deal (Pages 9 - 18)
- (b) Age Friendly Belfast Draft Plan 2022-2026 - Public Consultation (Pages 19 - 60)

**5. Physical Programme and Asset Management**

- (a) Asset Management (Pages 61 - 64)

**6. Finance, Procurement and Performance**

- (a) Belfast City Council Statement of Accounts 2021-22 (Pages 65 - 70)
- (b) Update on Contracts (Pages 71 - 78)

**7. Equality and Good Relations**

**8. Operational Issues**

- (a) Minutes of Meeting of Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum  
(Pages 79 - 82)
- (b) Requests for Use of the City Hall and the Provision of Hospitality  
(Pages 83 - 86)
- (c) Minutes of Meeting of Language Strategy Working Group  
(Pages 87 - 88)

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6  
of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Update on City Region Growth Deal</b>
<b>Date:</b>	23rd September, 2022
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Walsh, Chief Executive
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources Damien Martin, Programme Director

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	This report is to provide the Committee with an update on the progress of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) including a detailed update on progress to secure in excess of £7m of funding through the Complementary Fund to establish a Northern Ireland wide Digital Transformation Flexible Fund (DTFF) which will help to address the financial barriers facing small businesses and social enterprises wishing to digitally transform.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is requested to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. note that it is intended that the DTFF will operate on NI wide basis and be led by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council through its existing arrangements operating the Full Fibre NI Consortium;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. note the revenue costs associated with operation of the Fund, across a three year delivery period as outlined in the attached. Please note that there is no additional financial ask for Belfast City Council as revenue costs identified have already been accounted for within existing Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) budgets;</li> <li>iii. approve the council's participation in the DTFF requiring Belfast City Council to join the FFNI consortium along with the other 10 partnering councils currently members of this partnership and for revenue costs associated with the delivery of the project to commence from November 2022 to enable pre-development work to commence;</li> <li>iv. note the update in relation to Belfast Stories and approve the extension for the Programme Director in line with the project timetable which will be financed from existing BRCD resources;</li> <li>v. note the update in relation to the Belfast Digital Innovation Commissioner;</li> <li>vi. approve the contribution to Innovation City Belfast, which will be financed from existing BRCD resources; and</li> <li>vii. note that the next meeting of the BRCD Council Panel will be hosted by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council on 28<sup>th</sup> September.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<p><b>Digital Transformation Flexible Fund (DTFF)</b></p> <p>As the Committee will be aware, supporting digital innovation is a key priority in the development of the spectrum of projects emerging through city and growth deals across Northern Ireland. The Digital Transformation Flexible Fund (DTFF) concept was initially developed in response to the low levels of innovation and digital transformation taking place across the region - particularly among the small business community. The DTFF aims to address the financial barrier that small businesses face when seeking to digitally transform by establishing a capital grant fund that will support investment in the types of capital equipment considered critical to their strategic digital transformation ambitions (e.g. hardware, software, bespoke system development).</p>
<b>3.2</b>	<p>To date, £6m of funding for this project has been ring-fenced through the NI City and Growth Deal Complementary Fund. The Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has committed a further £1.1m. Due to its ineligibility for the Complementary Fund, engagement is ongoing with the Derry City &amp; Strabane Growth Deal to secure an additional £450k to create a total capital grant fund of £7.5m.</p>

3.3	<p>Over the past six months, councils have participated in a robust process to develop the outline business case required to release this government funding. The business case has been informed by detailed and continuous engagement with a range of stakeholders including more than 40 businesses and organisations such as Digital Catapult Catalyst, Innovate UK, Intertrade Ireland and Invest NI. A review of best practice models - such as the Leeds City Region Digital Enterprise and the Scottish Digital Boost initiatives – has been used to supplement this work.</p>
3.4	<p>The preferred option for the delivery and management of the DTFF project is as summarised below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Business Eligibility:</b> micro and small businesses and social enterprises (up to 50 employees) across all sectors, with the exception of primary agriculture and fisheries<sup>1</sup>. Eligible businesses must be able to demonstrate at least one year's trading history;</li> <li>• <b>Grant funding levels:</b> will range from £5,000 - £20,000 with a grant subvention rate of 70% of total project costs;</li> <li>• <b>Eligible expenditure:</b> will be limited to the purchase of capital equipment and/or resources for software or bespoke system development. It will be aligned to advanced digital technologies<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• <b>Application Process:</b> Up to nine funding calls will be opened across the three year delivery period of this Fund. Pre application workshops will be held in local council areas in advance of calls to help stimulate demand. Businesses will be required to submit a digital transformation plan<sup>3</sup> to demonstrate the strategic fit and economic return of their proposed investment projects through a competitive application process. There is an imperative to progress the business case process at pace to ensure alignment with the Councils' Digital Surge programme<sup>4</sup> which is likely to lead to business plans that will require financial investment to which the DTFF is directly aligned to support. This current programme is due to end in March 2023 and it will be important to ensure that the DTFF is operational prior to the conclusion of this programme.</li> <li>• <b>Management of the Fund:</b> the project will be managed on a cross council basis through existing governance structures created through the existing Full Fibre NI Consortium, led by Newry, Mourne &amp; Down District Council. Whilst the centralised management structure will deliver economies of scale for managing the overall fund, its operation will be managed through cross council governance structures. Local Council Economic Development Teams will play a key supporting role to animate and promote the Fund, assess funding applications etc.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Due to state aid challenges and wider interventions provided to these sub-sectors

<sup>2</sup> Including; smart technologies (Internet of Things), process automation, big data and analytics, immersive technologies, artificial intelligence and blockchain technologies;

<sup>3</sup> Please note support to develop Digital Transformation Plans is currently available through Councils' Digital Surge Programme (led by Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council) equivalent plans are also provided through FE College intervention such as Innovate US.

<sup>4</sup> Digital Surge is a capability-building programme designed to support small businesses wishing to develop digital transformation plans,

3.5	<p>The Full Fibre Consortium is an existing partnership initially established to support digital infrastructure delivery across Northern Ireland with ability to deliver additional digitally focused interventions which require cross council partnership working. At present Belfast City Council are the only local authority not engaged through this consortium, this was principally due to the fact that the council had proceeded with their own digital infrastructure arrangements at the time when the consortium was formed. Recognising the opportunity now presented through DTFF it is recommended that Belfast City Council join this consortium to facilitate the delivery of this project, it should be noted that Legal Services have already reviewed partnership documents have confirmed that the DTFF project can be brought within the remit of this existing partnership and that mechanisms are in place for the Council to be added as a member.</p>
3.6	<p>In the delivery of this contract, the centralised project team based within Newry, Mourne &amp; Down District Council will undertake overall management of the project. The council's Economic Development Unit will support this activity and seek to maximise impact for local businesses by undertaking localised promotion, supporting the delivery of pre-application workshop sessions, participating on grant funding assessment panels and assisting businesses in receipt of funding to progress their onward innovation journey.</p> <p><u>Outcomes</u></p>
3.7	<p>Based upon an average grant rate, it is estimated that approximately 600 businesses will be supported over the three-year delivery timeframe of the project, delivering significant investment in local businesses across Northern Ireland, with an expected return of investment of £1: £2.24, with expected benefits expected to be principally focused upon increased employment levels and/or turnover levels for participating businesses.</p>
3.8	<p>As with wider city and growth deal funding, both the Complementary Fund and DAERA funding are limited to capital expenditure creating the need for additional revenue funding to manage delivery of the Fund. The estimated total revenue cost for the 11 council partners for the preferred delivery option is approximately £870k over the three year period. Members should be aware that in identifying the preferred delivery mechanism a range of options were explored including council led and procured delivery providers. The proposed council-led delivery model was identified to be the most cost effective, quickest to implement and benefited from a model of delivery where economies of scale could be achieved whilst retaining the ability to maintain localised engagement. The proportional cost allocation for each council have been informed by business population levels across Council areas. This is detailed within the attached <b>Appendix</b>. The revenue cost contribution for Belfast City Council across the three-year period will be £165,312. The council's contribution for this project has already been</p>

	accounted for within existing Belfast Region City Deal budgets so there is no additional financial ask.
3.9	Given the time pressures outlined above, councils are asked to commit revenue funding at risk, whilst the final stages of the business case approval process continue simultaneously in Autumn of this year. This will ensure sufficient resources are in place to support the business case process, as well as preparing for the delivery of the project including updating governance structures, development of detailed project plans and preparing funding processes to enable the project to mobilise quickly. Revenue funding will be required to support the project team required to deliver the project enabling vital pre-development work to be undertaken and ensuring the project can be mobilised in the January to March 2023 period, subject to a successful approval process.
3.10	<p>The approval process for the business case requires Invest NI approval initially prior to progressing through departmental approval mechanisms. In the development of the business case ongoing engagement has taken place with government departments and Invest NI to inform the development of the business case. Equally the staged approval process will mean that in advance of the November timeframe when revenue costs are expected to be incurred by Councils 'at risk' there is expected to be reasonable progress made through the business case approval journey.</p> <p><b>Belfast Stories</b></p>
3.11	Members will be aware that Belfast Stories, the Council's flagship BRCD project, is due to open in 2028. Several important milestones in relation to the project have been achieved including the acquisition of the site in October 2021 and the press launch of Belfast Stories in December 2021 following the signing of the Deal. Public consultation across the city is underway and includes a Members' workshop in October 2022, date to be confirmed.
3.12	The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed in November 2021 to progress a number of key pieces of work, in order to ensure we meet the 2028 anticipated opening date including the appointment of the integrated design team, the exhibition design team and the stories collection. Documentation is being finalised to procure these teams who should be confirmed Q1 2023. City Growth and Regeneration Committee received programme updates in February and December 2021 and in May 2022.
3.13	To deliver a project of this magnitude for the city and the region it was necessary to recruit a Project Director to lead the development and delivery of the project. Members agreed this

	<p>appointment in 2019 on a three year full-time fixed term contract, with the possibility of extension and / or permanency.</p>
3.14	<p>Now that the timescales for delivery of the project have been further established, the Committee is asked to approve the extension of the Project Director for 5 years in line with the proposed opening in 2028. This will be financed from existing BRCD resources.</p> <p><b>Belfast Digital Innovation Commissioner</b></p>
3.15	<p>The Committee is asked to note that the Belfast Digital Innovation Commissioner has resigned from post, as of September 2022. Partners will be consulted in the coming months in terms of the role and way forward in order to align with the Innovation and Digital Pillar requirements for the next phase of the Deal and Members will be updated as this progresses.</p> <p><b>Innovation City Belfast</b></p>
3.16	<p>Members previously agreed to contribute £50,000 to the overall programme budget for the development of the Belfast Innovation District proposition as part of the work of Innovation City Belfast in order to fund the necessary resources, staffing, and technical support required as part of a total ICB co-investment of £325,000.</p>
3.17	<p>Now that the partnership is established and is moving into the next phase, the Committee is asked to approve the contribution of £50,000 for the next phase. This will be financed from existing BRCD resources.</p> <p><b>BRCD Council Panel</b></p>
3.18	<p>The next meeting of the BRCD Council Panel will be hosted as a hybrid meeting by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council on 28th September 2022. In addition to considering a detailed programme update, the Panel will receive a presentation on the i4C innovation hub that will be located at the St Patrick's Barracks Regeneration site in Ballymena and on the work that is being undertaken to ensure that social value criteria are being integrated into future BRCD procurements and that social value benefits are then realised.</p>
3.19	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>All costs associated with the BRCD are within existing budgets.</p>
3.20	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>Equality and Rural Needs Assessment screening has been undertaken for the DTFF project. The project has been designed to support inclusion by targeting smaller businesses who face</p>

	barriers to engagement in digital transformation, the fund will also actively target businesses in rural areas in line with DAERA funding requirements.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Document Attached</b>
	DTFF Revenue Cost Summary

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**Appendix**

		FY 2022 -2023	FY 2023-2024	FY 2024-2025	FY 2025-2026	Totals
Antrim & Newtownabbey	6%	6,576	18,499	20,299	6,830	<b>52,204</b>
Ards & North Down	7%	7,672	21,582	23,682	7,969	<b>60,904</b>
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	11%	12,056	33,914	37,214	12,522	<b>95,707</b>
Belfast	19%	20,825	58,579	64,279	21,629	<b>165,312</b>
Causeway Coast & Glens	7%	7,672	21,582	23,682	7,969	<b>60,904</b>
Derry City & Strabane	7%	7,672	21,582	23,682	7,969	<b>60,904</b>
Fermanagh & Omagh	8%	8,768	24,665	27,065	9,107	<b>69,605</b>
Fishburn & Castlereagh	8%	8,768	24,665	27,065	9,107	<b>69,605</b>
Mid & East Antrim	6%	6,576	18,499	20,299	6,830	<b>52,204</b>
Mid Ulster	10%	10,960	30,831	33,831	11,384	<b>87,006</b>
Newry, Mourne & Down	11%	12,056	33,914	37,214	12,522	<b>95,707</b>
<b>Totals</b>		<b>109,603</b>	<b>308,311</b>	<b>338,311</b>	<b>113,838</b>	<b>870,064</b>

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Age Friendly Belfast Draft Plan 2022/2026 - Public Consultation</b>
<b>Date:</b>	23rd September, 2022
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Siobhan Toland, Director City Services David Sales, Neighbourhood Services Manager
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Kelly Gilliland, Neighbourhood Manager Margaret Higgins, Lead Officer, Community Provision

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To update the Committee on the Age Friendly Belfast Draft Plan 2022-2026 and agree the Age Friendly Belfast Draft Plan to go to public consultation.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to approve the Age Friendly Belfast Draft Plan 2022-2026 for public consultation in Autumn 2022.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
	<u>Key Issues</u>
	<u>Background</u>
3.1	In 2012, the Council's All-Party Reference Group on Older People provided the initial leadership to explore Belfast becoming an Age Friendly City, and in May 2012, the Lord

	Mayor signed a declaration committing Belfast to this process. HASP coordinated delivery of two Age Friendly Belfast Plans in 2014-2017 and 2018-2021.
3.2	The Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership (HASP) coordinates the work of many organisations and agencies working with and for older people. HASP manages the development and implementation of the city's Age Friendly Plans on behalf of Belfast City Council and the wider Community Planning Partnership.
3.3	The draft plan is attached in Appendix 1, this will be issued for consultation in the Autumn as part of October Positive Ageing Month, with a launch in December 2022/January 2023 and submission to WHO. An accessible version of the final plan will also be made available.
	<u>Age Friendly Draft Plan 2022-2026</u>
3.4	The plan will retain the vision <i>A city where older people live life to the full.</i>
3.5	<p>Consultation has identified the following 4 strategic themes and associated actions;</p> <p><b>1. Infrastructure/Getting out and about</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a joined-up approach to engagement and co-design with older people on local and city centre developments, led by Greater Belfast Seniors Forum, the Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC) and the Department for Infrastructure</li> <li>• Develop age friendly design principles, which can be used to inform new infrastructure developments, led by Age Friendly Network NI and Belfast City Council</li> <li>• Review and improve access to seating and toilets, led by Belfast City Council, Department for Communities and Department for Infrastructure</li> <li>• Raise awareness and provide training for bus drivers on the needs of older people using their services, led by Age Partnership Belfast</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Social Connections</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support recovery of groups/programmes with older people led by Age Partnership Belfast, Belfast City Council and voluntary and community sector partners</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate an Age Friendly Belfast annual programme of events/activities, led by BCC Age Friendly Co-ordinator, supported by a range of city partners</li> <li>• Develop local connection hubs and a city centre hub where older people can meet each other and access information, led by Greater Belfast Seniors Forum</li> <li>• Develop dementia carers cafes in all 4 dementia friendly neighbourhoods, led by Dementia Friendly Neighbourhood groups and supported by Belfast Health and Social Care Trust</li> <li>• Develop a recruitment drive to encourage older people to re-engage in volunteering, and to recruit new volunteers. Promote initiatives to manage and support older people's participation in volunteering, led by Volunteer Now</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Health and Wellbeing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with Greater Belfast Seniors forum to link with GP representatives and multi-disciplinary teams to ensure that the voice of older people is heard in discussions on access to services led by Age Partnership Belfast</li> <li>• Support 600-800 older people (most in need) to improve their mobility levels and to feel more connected and less lonely, led by Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, supported by BHDU. (This is the older people's priority for the refreshed Belfast Agenda)</li> <li>• Promote key messages and connect older people's programmes that seek to increase their strength and mobility, including fall prevention, led by Age NI and Public Health Agency</li> <li>• Involve Older people in the development of the 'Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing' approach, led by Belfast Health and Social Care Trust</li> </ul> <p><b>4. Financial Security/Cost of Living</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with older people to provide information and support on financial security in a way that is easy to understand and navigate.</li> <li>• Review and support the wider policy level work on food and fuel poverty</li> </ul>
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3.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer access to employment support and employment for those aged 50+, led by Belfast City Council Employability and Skills Team/Belfast Labour Market Partnership</li> <li>• Promote and support the Age at Work approach to recruit, retain and retrain workers aged 50+, led by Business in the Community.</li> </ul> <p>The plan is written in the context of recovery from Covid-19 and it includes some lessons learned from the Covid-19 response, which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Covid-19 response demonstrated at scale and pace, a whole-system approach to supporting vulnerable populations. The response tested new approaches to joint working across sectors at both the strategic / policy setting level and the operational / neighbourhood level. Whilst the scale and urgent timing of response is different, lessons from this joint working are needed to help the most vulnerable citizens in Belfast on an ongoing basis and particularly in the context of the cost-of-living crisis.</li> <li>• Neighbourliness thrived during Covid-19 with many local services identifying and supporting older residents to a much greater extent than prior to the pandemic. Older people value the services and amenities in their local areas, they mostly feel safe there and they are often able to access all the goods and services they require. This desire to use local provision should inform how service providers engage and provide services for older people.</li> <li>• During Covid-19 new approaches to befriending and connecting people developed and learning from these approaches have been shared through Age Friendly Belfast partners.</li> <li>• Living with Covid-19 restrictions showed the resilience and adaptability of older people's groups. This included increased use of technology and moving to using outdoor spaces for meetings and events. The various methods of engaging should be considered when developing future services and programmes.</li> <li>• Loneliness has always been a key concern for, and about, older people in the city, and this was exacerbated by Covid-19. This has placed a focus on mental health and wellbeing which should continue to be a priority.</li> </ul>
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	<p><u>Links to the Belfast Agenda</u></p>
3.7	The new plan will operate over 4 years to align with Belfast Agenda, which includes 'Older People' as one of its cross-cutting themes.
3.8	<p>The draft Belfast Agenda Review has potential to support the Age Friendly Belfast plan through some of the following priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connectivity, Sustainability and Active Travel - improve cycle and walking lanes and improve use of sustainable transport</li> <li>• Housing led Regeneration - increase affordable housing supply</li> <li>• Health Inequalities - promote, improve, and support mental health and emotional wellbeing, and increase levels of physical activity and reduce obesity</li> <li>• Future City Centre - facilitate a clean, green, safe, vibrant, and inclusive city centre</li> <li>• Inclusive Growth - better understand issues/drivers of those in poverty and develop action plans to address issues</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p>
3.9	<p>There is a small budget from Belfast City Council and Belfast Health and Social Care Trust to deliver actions in the Age Friendly Plan. Funding has also been secured through Public Health Agency (PHA) to appoint an Age Friendly Co-ordinator until March 2025 in line with the other council areas and this officer will co-ordinate delivery of the plan.</p> <p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p>
3.10	None – EQIAs and RAIAs have been completed
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Document Attached</b>
	Age Friendly Belfast Draft Plan 2022-2026

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# Age Friendly Belfast Plan

2022 - 2026

A city where older people live life to the full

<https://yoursay.belfastcity.gov.uk>





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## Forewords

### *Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Tina Black*

I am delighted as Lord Mayor of Belfast to introduce our third Age Friendly Belfast Plan. We committed to our civic leadership in being the first city in Northern Ireland to sign up to the World Health Organization's Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities.

Our statutory, community and voluntary partners have been essential in this ongoing commitment. In particular, we benefit from the leadership of the Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership who coordinate our Age Friendly Belfast Plan on behalf of Belfast Community Planning Partnership.

Ensuring an Age Friendly Belfast is a key workstream in Belfast's community plan, the Belfast Agenda. We want to ensure that the needs of older people are taken into account during service development and to help maximise the benefits of older people's experience.

Older people are at the heart of what we do. We could not fulfil our vision of Belfast being a city where older people live life to the full without the input, support and challenge provided by Greater Belfast Seniors Forum, the six local older people's forums and the many groups they represent.

We know that the pandemic has provided a number of key challenges, particularly for older people, however city-wide and community-based collaboration thrived during Covid-19. Older people were at the heart of this collaboration, both as volunteers and recipients of support. We will build on this partnership approach in tackling the challenges that older people have said are important to them.

### ***Chair, Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership, Ciara McClements***

Like many cities around the world Belfast's population is ageing and we need to adapt our services and structures to support the health and wellbeing of our



older people. We currently have a slightly smaller older population than the NI average, one fifth of our population is aged 60+; two in every 10 people.

There are variations across our city- East Belfast and North Belfast have a higher percentage of older people, but the percentage of older people in West Belfast is increasing. Between 2013-2015 and 2017-2019, there has been an increase in life expectancy at age 65 years for both men and women in Belfast, although the increase was only slight in women. In the same period life expectancy at age 65 years for both men and women in Belfast's most deprived areas were lower than for Belfast local government district (LGD).

The Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership (HASP) has been working collaboratively for the past 10 years to ensure Belfast is an Age Friendly City. In the development of our third age friendly plan we have been working with older people and our partners to evaluate our previous action plan. Through a series of engagement sessions with older people, we now know that most older people feel it is easy to 'get out and about' in Belfast with 74% of them now using public transport, however it is evident there are still some barriers .

Loneliness continues to be an issue for older people with friendships and participation in group activities being greatly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Older people have also told us that they are taking part in less physical activity and sitting down more than usual. Therefore, over the next four years, partners will be focusing on four thematic areas.

#### **1. Infrastructure**

We want infrastructure developments in Belfast to be designed in consultation with older people using agreed age friendly principles, ensuring that amenities are more accessible.

#### **2. Social inclusion, promoting connections**

We want older people to be more connected and involved through programmes, places and services.

#### **3. Health and wellbeing**

We want older people to be active partners in the design and delivery of health and social care services. We also want to support older people to live more active and socially connected lives.

#### **4. Financial stability**

We want improved access to financial support for older people to equip them to deal with the increased cost of living. We also want older people to have access to employment, support when in employment and information on planning for their retirement.

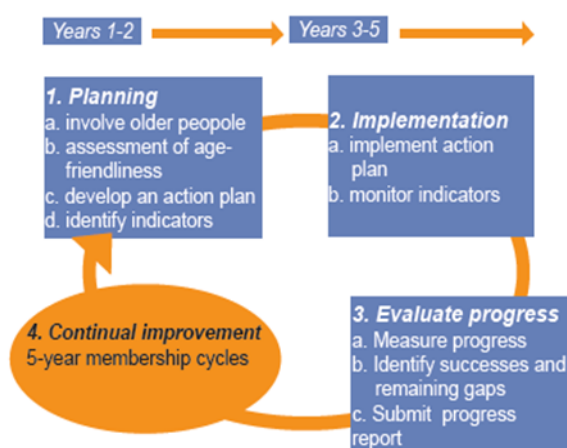
I look forward to building on the previous achievements of HASP, working collaboratively with older people and all partners to deliver on the key actions within this plan to ensure that Belfast remains an Age Friendly City ensuring that older citizens feel heard, included and supported.

# Context

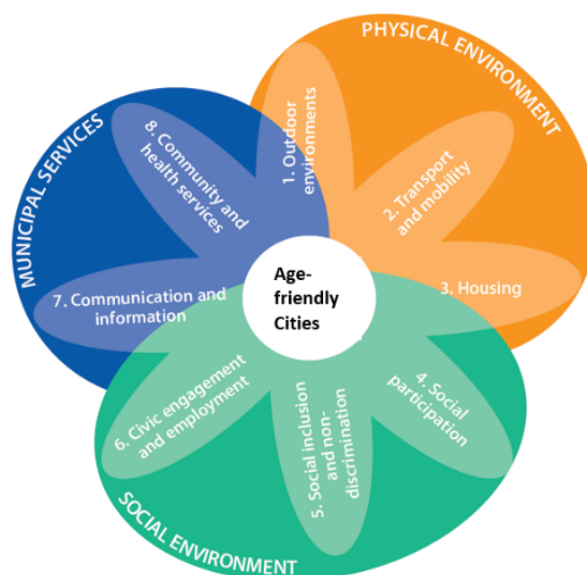
## Age-friendly Cities and communities

The WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities was established in 2010 to connect cities, communities and organizations worldwide, with the common vision of making their community a great place to grow old in. The Global Network currently includes over 1333 cities in 47 countries, covering 298 million people worldwide.

**Cycle of WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities®**



The eight domains of age friendly cover all the aspects of community life that need to be considered to support citizens to age well. They can be summarised as actions to improve the physical environment, social environment, and delivery of key services. The pace of improvements and key themes in action plans are determined by what is needed in each city.



### An Age-friendly City must:

1. Establish mechanisms to involve older people throughout the age friendly process,
2. Develop a baseline assessment of the age friendliness of the city under eight domains,
3. Develop a 3-year city-wide action plan, and
4. Identify measurements to monitor progress against this plan.

## Age Friendly Belfast

In 2012, Belfast City Council provided the initial leadership to explore Belfast becoming an Age Friendly City, and in May 2012, the Lord Mayor signed a declaration committing Belfast to this process by joining the World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities.

The Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership (HASP) coordinates the work of many organisations and agencies working with, and for, older people in Belfast. HASP manages the development and implementation of the city's Age Friendly Plan on behalf of Belfast

City Council and the wider Community Planning Partnership.

In 2014, Belfast produced the first Age Friendly Belfast Plan and developed a second action plan for 2018-2021. In early 2022 we commenced the process of review and development of our third plan.

## Age Friendly Connections

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Belfast benefits from regional, UK-wide, and European connections to support our age friendly work.

The Age Friendly Network NI was launched in 2019 with the aim of promoting the age friendly ethos and supporting practitioners in the 11 local councils across Northern Ireland to advance age friendly planning and practices. All 11 councils are committed to this process and we are supported by Age NI, the Department for Communities and the Public Health Agency.

Belfast is also part of the UK Network of Age-friendly Communities, which is a growing movement with over 50 member places across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Learning through case studies, peer meetings and conferences enhances our efforts to become more age friendly.

Belfast also participates in the Healthy Ageing Task Group, which is part of the WHO European Healthy Cities network. This task group provides leadership, coordination and sharing of good practice on healthy ageing.

## Strategic Connections

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The Belfast Agenda, the city's first community plan, was created by Belfast City Council in partnership with its community planning partner organisations and published in

November 2017. The Belfast Agenda will continue to enhance and support ongoing implementation of the Age Friendly Belfast Plan.

A formal review and update of the Belfast Agenda has taken place and older people have been identified as a cross-cutting theme. This means that the needs of older people are considered when identifying action plans across a range of priorities for the city.

A strategic intent for older people has also been identified for the refreshed Belfast Agenda over the next 4 years 2022-2026:

**To support our older people to live healthy and socially connected lives, with a focus on those most in need.**

Department for Communities' Active Ageing Strategy 2016–2022 is also a key strategic context for this plan.

**“Our vision is one of Northern Ireland being an age friendly region in which people, as they grow older, are valued and supported to live actively to their fullest potential; with their rights respected and their dignity protected.”**

This strategy aims to increase understanding of the issues affecting older people and promote and emphasise their rights, value and contribution.

The Department for Communities has begun the process of co-designing a new Active Ageing Strategy.

The Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government (PfG) provides the overall strategic context the Active Ageing Strategy. The Executive is committed to producing a long-term strategic programme for government and consulted on a draft Outcomes Framework in 2021. Appendix 1 outlines the connections between the proposed outcomes for the Age Friendly Belfast plan, the Belfast Agenda and the draft PfG Outcomes.

## Age Friendly Belfast Baseline Report

<https://www.makinglifebettertogether.com/age-friendly/>

The following word cloud summarizes what older people say is being done already to make a real difference in their lives.

**City** - structural and social developments in Belfast over recent years have generated feelings of pride in the city for older people, with some older people keen to get back into Belfast City Centre to meet up with others and enjoy new experiences.





## ***Listening to and co-designing with older people***

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Throughout the consultation period, it was apparent that the older people who engaged with this process want their needs to be respected and their opinions taken into account as the city develops. This is partly about the need to consult and engage in the first instance, but it is also about ensuring that views are listened to and acted upon.

We know that there is a balance to be struck between overwhelming people with information and also ensuring that they have the right information at the right time. The older people's forums and Greater Belfast Seniors Forum are excellent at meeting this need. However, there are groups which are not connected with the forums, and people who are not members of groups, so the challenge is to make sure that relevant information reaches them.

### ***Accessibility and inclusion***

We need to address additional barriers faced by older people who are:

- Are digitally excluded – don't have digital skills and / or internet connectivity
- Caring or providing support to spouses/family members,
- Coming from black and minority ethnic/asylum seeker backgrounds
- Experiencing language barriers,
- Living with dementia,
- Living on a low/fixed income
- Living with a long-term illness,
- Living with mobility issues,
- Living with a physical disability,
- Living with a sensory impairment, and
- Members of the LGBT+ community.



# Key Strategic Themes

A set of key strategic themes for Age-friendly Belfast 2022-2026 were identified through review and consultation. The following four themes are very similar to the 2018-2021 plan and this reflects the ongoing nature of these themes and also the impact of Covid-19 on older people.

- Infrastructure- helping people to get out and about,

- Social inclusion- promoting social connections,
- Health and wellbeing- promoting opportunities to be healthy, active and included and;
- Financial security- supporting people to manage the increasing costs of living.

## *Infrastructure, supporting people to get out and about*

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### *What we did*

Our partners have worked together to support and influence older people's use of public transport. It is the main mode of transport for many older people and the 60+ SmartPass and Senior (65+) SmartPass is viewed by older people as an invaluable support in enabling them to get out and about around the city and beyond.

A representative from Greater Belfast Seniors Forum is a member of the Translink Accessibility Working Group. Through this group older people (and disabled people) have provided input into the design of the Translink website, review of the Access Guide and future bus design.

Work has taken place to assess and influence the walkability of local areas as well as the city centre. With people spending more time in their local neighbourhoods during Covid-19, the walkability of local areas has been even more important. Seats have been added to sections of the Comber Greenway and the walkability tool now includes dementia friendly assessment.

Other achievements for older people included:

- The needs of older residents being proactively considered in key developments, including Connswater Greenway, Springfield Dam, Phase I of Belfast Rapid Transport (Glider),
- 20 Belfast City Council Parks have gained Green Flag status, including Roselawn cemetery. There has been increased use of parks by older people through age friendly walks, hosting of events and using community outreach to target older people's groups and networks,
- Work undertaken by the Department for Infrastructure and Belfast City Council to produce guidance and regulate the licensing of pavement cafes to ensure they are sensitive to the needs of street users, including those with mobility issues,
- A new road safety campaign 'Think Before You Park', aimed at highlighting the dangers associated with inconsiderate pavement parking, alongside a public consultation on pavement parking to help determine the need for more effective legislation
- Launch of the first Older Peoples Housing Strategy 2021/22-2025/26 by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, which includes an important theme of 'Planning for the Future'.

## Good Practice Case Study:

### Older People Involvement in Glider Design



Launched on 3 September 2018, the Glider is a modern, safe, efficient, and accessible public transport service which promotes increased use of public transport.

A collaborative approach to the development of this service, which directly involved older people from Belfast, meant they had the opportunity to influence the project at every stage. Older people participated in vehicle and stop design, shaped ticketing and passenger information, and influenced bespoke training for Glider Staff. Their feedback helped ensure changes to kerb heights, shelter and seating provision, audio-visual passenger information, ticketing facilities, and that colour contrasting was considered.

In particular, the training for Glider staff, which included interaction between older people and people with a disability, gave transport staff a unique opportunity to better understand their transport needs.

Engaging with and listening to people at the development and design stages of any project achieves buy in and helps ensure a project where the focus is on the customer.

Translink estimate that this approach contributed to the 25 per cent increase in public transport usage by older people and people with disabilities in 2018 compared to 2017.

## Good Practice Case Study:

### Walkability Assessments



By focusing on the needs of older people with various levels of mobility, it provides a built environment suitable for people using mobility aids, wheelchairs and with prams. The Walkability Assessment for Healthy Ageing (WAHA) tool was designed by Belfast Healthy Cities for use by older people and organisations to evaluate the age friendliness of the built environment on local streets and in parks. Walk assessments were conducted in neighbourhoods across Belfast to explore older people's perceptions of walkability across the city. The tool is designed to identify key elements in the built environment that affect older people's ability to be mobile and active, based on the WHO Checklist of Essential Features of Age-Friendly Cities.

The aim of the project was to engage with older people in Belfast to support them to assess the built environment in their local area using the WAHA tool. A pilot was undertaken focusing on short, guided walks on routes familiar to walk participants, while gathering their views. The results of the pilot highlighted consistent provision of maintained pavements and dropped kerbs, sufficient public seating, good street lighting and pedestrian crossings in appropriate locations as key positive aspects that support older people to remain active in their local neighbourhood. Key barriers identified focused on maintenance of pavements, seating, and dog fouling. The project also highlighted the importance of the personal safety of older people.

The evidence collected through this pilot, and from any future assessments, is used to inform policy consultations and public realm projects to ensure the needs of older people are considered. It will also help to ensure that the city centre and neighbourhoods consider the needs of an ageing population in their designs going forward.



## Learning from elsewhere

### Take a Seat campaign, Manchester (UK)

A low-cost initiative aiming to raise awareness about how older people may struggle to get out and about because there is not enough seating available in shops and other public spaces. By applying a We are Age Friendly sticker in their window, participating shops can let older people know they will be made welcome and offered a chair if they need to rest. The project, which was inspired by a similar initiative conducted in New York, was initially set in motion by Southway Housing Trust, a charitable housing association in south Manchester and is now being rolled out across the Greater Manchester region.

### The Age Friendly Design Group (Manchester)

The Age Friendly Design Group is made up of retired architects, planners, design students and urban designers. They meet every eight weeks. Their objectives are to:

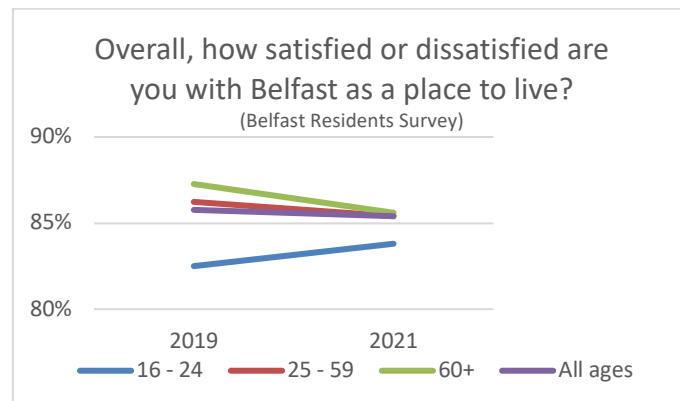
- Develop definitions of age friendly design,
- Develop a set of age friendly design guidelines for our city that will evolve over time,
- Test and hone these guidelines through a number of demonstrator projects,
- Learn and understand how age friendly design can work in practical application,
- Generate interest and ownership from a range of partners in age friendly design work,
- Present and promote reasons for age friendly design principles and criteria, and
- Influence how the city is currently designed so it is more age friendly in the future.

To date, the Manchester Age Friendly Design group has led the age friendly development of local parks, worked with older people and housing trusts to develop and implement age friendly home design projects, and participated in research to inform a practical Age Friendly Design Reference.

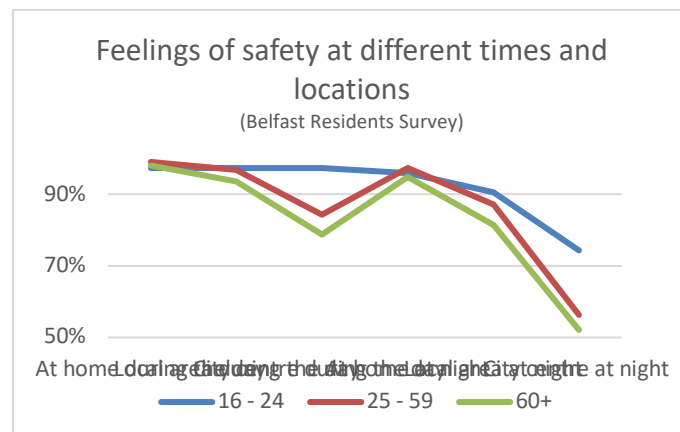
### Where we are now

In 2021, 85.4 per cent of residents aged 60 and over were satisfied with Belfast as a place

to live<sup>i</sup>. This was a slight reduction on 87.3 per cent in 2019. Nine out of 10 Belfast-based respondents (90.4 per cent) reported they were very satisfied or fairly satisfied with their “area” as a place to live<sup>ii</sup>. This is slightly less than across the whole of NI, where 95.3 per cent of respondents were very or fairly satisfied.



Older people are less likely to feel safe than other age groups. This is particularly noticeable when asked about feeling safe in the city centre both during the day and in the evening<sup>iii</sup>.



### What is needed

#### Who is most vulnerable/excluded?

Getting out and about in Belfast remains problematic for older people with mobility issues in particular.

### Access to amenities

Difficulty accessing amenities, and in particular toilets and seating in parks, public spaces and in the city centre, can be a barrier

to older generations choosing to spend time out and about. The removal of some seating due to COVID-19 and related safety measures has exacerbated what was already a challenge for older people. Similarly, we have heard that older people find there is less access to public toilets. As we emerge from restrictions, and more people are going out and about in their neighbourhoods and the city, these issues need to be re-examined.

The development and provision of new physical assets, parks and green spaces and recreation areas, need to take into account the needs of whole population. If we want to encourage older people to use more facilities, their needs must be considered in the design and development of these assets. Age friendly/dementia friendly design principles can be promoted, and these could be approached through an intergenerational lens which allows opportunities for older and younger people to meet and use the same spaces.

### **Public transport**

Prior to the pandemic, Age Friendly Belfast partners were working with Translink and local taxi firms to raise awareness with drivers on some of the challenges that older passengers might face. Older people have told us that whilst they are broadly happy with transport services, they still have concerns about the accessibility of buses, about using mobility aids on public transport and on having enough time to be safely seated before the bus moves off.

### **What partners have committed to do**

1. Develop a joined-up approach to engagement and co-design with older people on local and city centre developments.
2. Develop age friendly design principles, which can be used to inform new infrastructure developments.
3. Work to review and improve access to seating and toilets:

- reviewing provision of seating and toilets in parks and open spaces in Belfast and identify gaps (including provision of radar keys).
  - carry out an audit of current public toilet usage and identify any barriers to use.
  - exploring 'take a seat' pilots in several areas.
  - providing age friendly input into the development of parklets.
4. Revisit work to raise awareness and provide training for bus drivers on the needs of older people using their services.

### **Key programmes that are contributing to the Age Friendly Belfast Plan:**

- Work with Belfast City Council, the Department for Communities, and the Department for Infrastructure to co-design structural developments for the city, for example Belfast Street Ahead Phases 3 and 5, the Five Cs Public Realm Project and Belfast; A Bolder Vision
- Structural developments through the Belfast Region City Deal, for example Belfast Stories
- Belfast City Council's Disability Action Plan, including actions to engage with city stakeholders to put in place mechanisms to encourage businesses to support accessibility for disabled people and reviewing the temporary pavement café licensing scheme
- Belfast City Council Park Improvement Plans 2023-2025 (in support of the Belfast Open Space Strategy)
- Development of a Road Safety Strategy
- Sustrans work on sharing of paths and the One Path Initiative
- Developments through the Making Belfast an Active City – Belfast Cycling Network 2021
- Work with Translink on initiatives to encourage older people back on to public transport
- Consultation and involvement by older people in Belfast Rapid Transport Phase 2 and Belfast Central Transport hub

## ***Social inclusion, promoting social connections***

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### **What we did**

Belfast has developed a wide range of services which can support older people who may be on their own or isolated. Good morning calls and befriending services have provided a supportive voice or person, and community connectors provide support to engage more widely. During Covid-19 new approaches to befriending and connecting people developed and learning from these approaches has been shared through Age Friendly Belfast partners.

Belfast City Council, Engage with Age, Volunteer Now, older group leaders and a range of community and voluntary sector groups provide engaging and fun activities for older people to take part in. The yearly October Positive Ageing Month programme and regular age friendly events draw in new people who can then go on to be regular participants in cultural, leisure, community and lifelong learning programmes.

### **“it’s nice to go to bed knowing you have somewhere to go”**

The establishment of four Dementia friendly neighbourhood groups covering north, south, east and west Belfast has been a significant achievement. Covid-19 presented many challenges for this work, but concerted efforts by these neighbourhood groups and the Alzheimer’s Society led to online dementia friendly training from March 2020, creating over 120 dementia friends across Belfast and the development on virtual interactive training through Dementia Friendly East Belfast. Regular dementia friendly church services have also been established.

Other achievements for older people have included:

- The resilience and adaptability of older people’s groups and networks. Some connected online by using Zoom for meetings and others have set up informal check-in with member
- Belfast City Council’s Reuse IT and Get IT initiatives supporting older people to get online
- Work by Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Housing Associations to support work on digital inclusion and dementia friendly living for their tenants
- Development of Take 5 for emotional wellbeing senior champions and roll out of Take 5 sessions in local older people ‘s forums
- Completion of research to establish the need and recommended methods of training for staff and volunteers on loneliness and isolation
- The recruitment of new volunteers during Covid-19 and work through local communities to link with isolated older people



## Good Practice Case Study:

### Hug in a Box

As part of a campaign to connect with those struggling with isolation, loneliness, and lack of support, Dementia Friendly East Belfast delivered bespoke boxes containing dementia related activities, puzzles, crafts, and gifts to people living with dementia in East Belfast. Over 100 boxes were hand delivered to either the person living with dementia or their carers doorstep.

Working closely with the Dementia Navigator service in Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, they were able to reach out to people whose face-to-face supports had been reduced due to closure or suspension of services during the pandemic. The Hug in a Box scheme meant these people felt supported while remaining in their own homes.

This simple, yet highly effective project which began in East Belfast was replicated across the city. The content of boxes evolved based on feedback from recipients to ensure their needs and interests were met. Face-to-face delivery was a vital element of this initiative, as it was such an important source of support for carers and those living with dementia.

**A lady who is living with dementia commented on how she had not played dominoes for years and was so looking forward to sitting down with her husband and daughter to play a game that evening.**



## Good Practice Case Study:

### Cliftonville Men's Shed

Cliftonville Men's Shed is supported by North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum. The Shed, which was set up in 2018 with land leased from the Housing Executive at the Peace Wall in Manor St, is for older men aged 50, though most members are over 60. Between 10 and 20 men regularly attend the shed, some of whom have long term disabilities or debilitating illnesses, and some who are experiencing isolation or other challenges to their health and wellbeing.

For many of its members, the shed acts as an anchor, a place where they 'can do' and where they can share their skills, learn from others and avail of opportunities to participate in new activities.

The activities at the shed are guided by the interests of the men involved. Two members have trained as beekeepers and now tend to the 3 hives at the Shed. Some men carry out joinery work and have made 'Buddy Benches' for local primary schools. There is also a polytunnel and raised beds where members grow vegetables and herbs.

Most work with older people has been with women for a variety of reasons, and historically it has been difficult to engage men in programmes. The shed has proven an ideal way to provide connections and information about other services to men who would not normally have links with community and voluntary sector groups and to encourage them to participate. Involving men in their local communities through the men's shed is a step forward for an age friendly Belfast and a model which can be built upon to increase their participation.

## Good Practice Case Study:

### Engage with Age - the PAL Project

Every year Engage with Age receives in excess of 200 referrals for people who are experiencing loneliness or isolation. The PAL Project (People Addressing Loneliness) sets up sustainable activity groups for older people experiencing loneliness to ensure that when the funding ends the activity continues.

A range of groups were formed including Games Groups, Walking Groups, Social Groups, Book Groups, Dance Groups and more. Many of these groups survived the impact of Covid-19 and the pandemic lockdowns. Through these groups, older people who have experienced loneliness meet every week. A survey of over 170 participants showed that 86% said the groups improved their wellbeing, 73% said their circle of friends had increased because of the activity, and 61% said they were routinely in contact with more people every week. Participants said that:

*“Loneliness is a very dark place... and it was like [the project] opened the blinds and the light came in.”*

*“you go to somewhere that you’ve never been before, and it’s a strange place, and you meet all of these people and you don’t know them... the door opened, and it was like another world, a brilliant world to live in...”*

The project is led by older people, with support and guidance from Engage with Age. Group leaders make sure older people have ownership of their groups and decide the activities they want. They also discuss how loneliness feels and are encouraged to give new members a very warm welcome, so that everyone feels valued.

We have learned that:

- there is a lot of trial and error and ‘positive failure’ in forming groups

- if the welcome for new participants isn’t right then the person may not come back, so setting that culture is a priority
- longevity of support at the start is important to grow a sense of routine and permanence within the group

## Good Practice Case Study:

### Supporting People, Northern Ireland Housing Executive Digital Inclusion Project

Supporting People had previously provided funding for Amazon Dots which can play music, play quizzes, tell jokes, give weather reports to name only a few functions. The provider was able to evaluate the project after the devices had been in place for 6 months and noted:

- an increase in the amount of time residents spend together
- an increase in satisfaction levels from residents who can access Amazon Dots independently
- an increase the amount of time the support staff have available to provide other areas of housing support.

They decided to purchase Amazon Echo Show devices, which allow an additional video call facility. This enabled residents to make video calls to family and friends without the need for assistance from staff or other residents. Due to Covid-19 many residents were still cautious about going out and visiting in some schemes can still be restricted. Video calling enables residents to keep in touch with friends and family in a more tangible way than phone calls alone.

The Echo devices will be situated in the communal areas where the residents gather together to eat and socialise. Residents will be able to use the Echo devices to enhance social activities such as quizzes and creates an atmosphere that encourages everyone to take part. Use of the Echo devices will be evaluated after 6 months of use.



## Learning from elsewhere

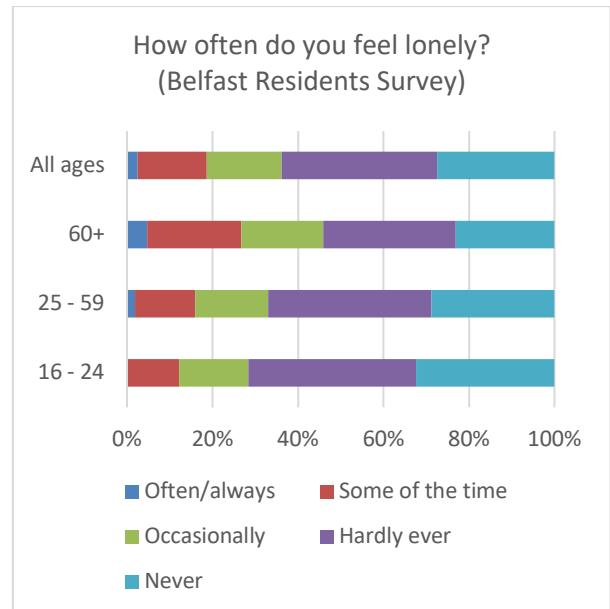
### Rock Through the Ages (Folkstone) – a musical get-together for all ages

Rock Through the Ages is a social participation initiative based on the PhD research of Dr Julia Jones, the CEO of Found in Music. Its primary aim is to harness the popular music taste of several generations and to facilitate events that encourage intergenerational social participation. These events were first run in Folkstone in 2011 – 2014 as part a piece of PhD research. The results clearly showed how pop and rock music themes could connect several age groups because the genre is now over 60 years old. Several generations have grown up with rock and pop music and can share an enjoyment of it.

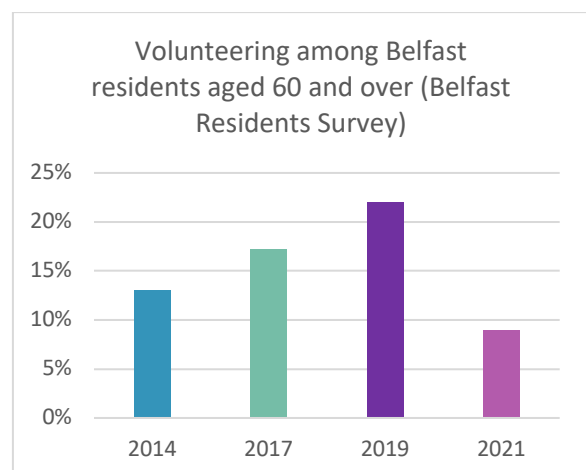
### Case Study: La Maison des seniors [Seniors House] (Dijon, France)

Launched in 2013, La Maison des Seniors (Seniors House) is a space dedicated to welcoming, informing, and helping anyone in need of support with an ageing-related issue. It aims to be a key resource for all the community, including older people, their families, and professionals. Residents of Dijon can stop by in person or phone to ask questions, meet with a professional, learn more about the city's services or take part in various cultural and leisure activities. The building also provides a physical place for people involved in the age friendly movement to meet and exchange information.

## Where we are now



People aged 60 and over were more likely to feel lonely often always and sometimes (26.8 per cent) and occasionally (19.1 per cent) than the general Belfast population (18.7 per cent and 17.6 per cent respectively)<sup>iv</sup>.



- Volunteering was rising steadily among people aged 60 and over until 2021 when it fell to 8.9 per cent. Those aged 60 and over experienced the sharpest drop in volunteering between 2019 and 2021 with

5.2 per cent reporting they had to stop or limit their activity<sup>v</sup> during Covid-19. Whilst this is understandable in terms of people reducing their risk of infection, efforts to support older people to return to, or take up, volunteering are important

- Alcohol-related admissions to hospital is greater for men compared to women in both West and North Belfast. This could be a factor in reducing loneliness in men and developing healthy coping mechanisms.

### **What is needed**

#### **Who is most vulnerable/excluded?**

People can be more vulnerable to loneliness or isolation when they live alone or have mobility problems/are housebound. People who experience additional barriers such as addiction, mental health challenges, language barriers or disability will all find it more challenging to form social connections.

*“poverty increases isolation – people think they can’t afford to go out”*

### **Loneliness**

Loneliness has always been a key concern for, and about, older people in the city, and this concern has been exacerbated by Covid-19. There is a need to rebuild confidence so that older people feel that it is safe for them to re-establish connections with people outside of their own homes. This might mean ensuring there is support for smaller local organisations for people to re-engage initially in smaller and more controlled groups before they have the confidence to be part of larger groups or events.

There is a strong lobby for hubs for seniors where they can access information, refreshments, stay warm and a safe comfortable place to rest. Advocates for such a space believe it will have broader appeal than organised groups as it will offer a

commitment-free opportunity to meet others or ask for advice/support.

### **Communication and information**

We have heard that people still rely on word of mouth to find out about the opportunities available to them. While the amount of information and support available has increased and is shared through different channels, we still need to reach out to engage new people to make people aware of what is happening for them in their area and the city.

*“good programmes for those that know about them and can get out”*

#### **What partners have committed to do**

1. Work together to support the recovery of groups and programmes with older people.
2. Coordinate an Age Friendly Belfast annual programme of activities.
3. Develop local connection hubs and a city centre hub where older people can drop in and access information.
4. Develop dementia carers cafes in all four dementia friendly neighbourhoods.
5. A recruitment drive to encourage older people to re-engage in volunteering, and to recruit new volunteers. Promotion of initiatives to manage and support older people’s participation in volunteering.
6. Celebrate older volunteers through a yearly older volunteer awards programme.

### ***Programmes that are contributing to the Age Friendly Belfast Plan:***

- A range of age organisations, community and voluntary sectors groups to connect older people, for example Good Morning schemes, CLARE CIC, Healthy Living Centres, Red Cross Community Connector Service and Volunteer Now Men's Volunteering Challenges
- Belfast City Council's community facilities, programming activity and grant funding
- A range of digital inclusion programmes through Belfast City Council, Department for Communities, Libraries, Northern Ireland Housing Executive and local providers
- Development of Take 5 benches, chatty seats, and chatty cafes
- Work through dementia friendly neighbourhood groups
- Partnership work to join up and invest in social connections programmes through an Older Active and Connected programme, funded through Public Health Agency
- Safe Seniors, Safer at Home and 'confidence in policing' programmes through Belfast's Police and Community safety Partnership
- Linking Generations NI Intergenerational network and programmes in Belfast
- Belfast's 10-year Cultural Strategy – A City Imagining



## Health and wellbeing

### What we did

Working with Age Friendly Belfast partners we have shared and promoted health and wellbeing messages and opportunities to older residents across the city to take part in regular programmes. The Age Friendly Belfast yearly calendar and Belfast City Council City Matters magazine have been very effective ways to share messages and direct people towards programmes. Covid-19 made this challenging, but walking groups continued across the city, taking advantage of the green spaces, parks, and greenways across the city.

Older people had previously stated that they didn't understand social support available to them in the community. Belfast Health and Social Care Trust in partnership with Age Friendly Belfast, produced an easy read Health & Wellbeing Information Booklet for seniors. This booklet has been very well received and used by older people in Belfast.

Other achievements for older people have included:

- Work by Greater Belfast Seniors Forum to raise awareness of suicide among older people and to promote the Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing,
- Physical activity and strength and programmes supported or provided through the Public Health Agency, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, Belfast City Council, Better Gyms and Leisure Centres and local community providers,
- Development of the Keeping Well at Home and Good Vibrations resources through Age NI, the Age Friendly Network NI and the Northern Ireland Frailty Network
- Work by Belfast City Council and Volunteer Now to celebrate and promote the benefits of volunteering in older people.

### Good Practice Case Study:

#### The Health & Wellbeing Information & Support for Seniors in the Community booklet

Launched in January 2022, the *Health & Wellbeing Information & Support for Seniors in the Community* was created in response to the Age Friendly Belfast Plan 2018-2021. The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust had made a commitment to produce an easy read *Patient, Client and Carers' Guide on Community Care*. The booklet would provide information about services provided by the Trust for seniors living in Belfast.

For this information booklet to be meaningful, it was important that seniors who lived in Belfast were involved in its development. Seniors from the Greater Belfast Seniors Forum (G6), Cross Cultural Senior Citizen Forum and Good Morning Colin members were all involved through discussion groups, telephone interviews and questionnaires. Trust services and the community and voluntary sector also partnered in the booklet's development. All the contributors were then involved in coproducing the content, style and layout of the booklet, whilst also helping plan distribution and accessibility.

This partnership approach ensured the right information was included. The amount of information to be included increased as the process continued and the format for the information changed from a foldable A3 brochure to a 48-page booklet. The result is an information booklet about the health and social care services provided by the Belfast Trust alongside information about key services in the wider community to support older people with their health and wellbeing. Over seven thousand copies distributed across Belfast, through community and voluntary organisations, GP practices, Health and Wellbeing Centres and Trust services.







## Good Practice Case Study:

### BraveHEARTS

At the H.E.A.R.T. Project Healthy Living Centre, the aim is to promote health and wellbeing, mentally and physically and to encourage people to take responsibility for their own health. For the BraveHEARTS (50+ Men's group) and the SweetHEARTS (50+ Women's Group), age is no barrier to getting up and active. From walking water polo and Danderball, to circuits cycling and walking groups, the activities on offer are informed by what people want to do, not what others decide might be good for them.

Like all similar groups, during the pandemic, they needed to think out of the box and look at outdoor activities and different ways of doing things. Having a variety of activities on offer has helped with physical and mental health. Perhaps more importantly however just to have people out meeting others was a massive benefit for those who found themselves isolated. A sense of community was restored.



## Good Practice Case Study:

### Safer Together Project'

'Safer Together Project' was developed by the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service East, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Older Persons Social Work Service and Ulster University. It came about as a result of a meeting between the Fire Service and an older people's social worker to discuss home fire safety checks, which identified a need to increase awareness of the referral mechanisms and support available to older people from the Fire Service.

In the initial stages, the project focused on providing informal training to social workers on what fire risk is, how to identify risk and how to refer older people for a home fire safety check.

When a PhD student, who was also a member of the Fire Service came on board, the project evolved further. The focus groups highlighted that as well as developing resources to increase fire risk awareness, there was a need for items such as fire-retardant bedding and smoking aprons, as well as nightlights and panic alarms which would help protect older people in the event of a fire. These items can now be provided to those older people who are identified by social workers as being most at risk.

In the first year of the project, referrals for home fire safety checks increased by 45% which has enabled the case to be made for further funding.

## Learning from elsewhere

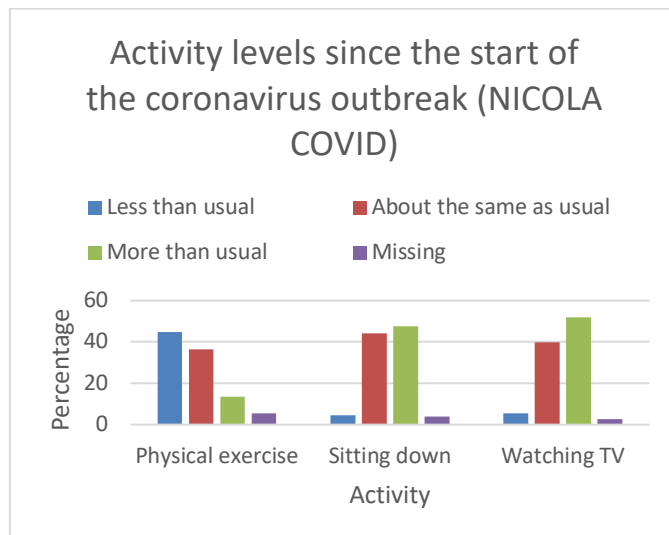
### The Elder Academy scheme (Hong Kong)

An education and social inclusion initiative was launched in early 2007 by The Labour and Welfare Bureau and the Elderly Commission in Hong Kong. The activities provide access to learning opportunities in schools and university campuses and are aimed primarily at older people who have had little or no education. The scheme optimizes the use of existing educational facilities and has been successful in promoting both lifelong and initial learning for older people, encouraging participation, and helping to maintain physical and mental wellbeing. School and university students are engaged in the scheme, thereby also promoting civic education and intergenerational understanding. Currently, some 125 elder academies in various districts and seven tertiary institutions offer a wide variety of courses.

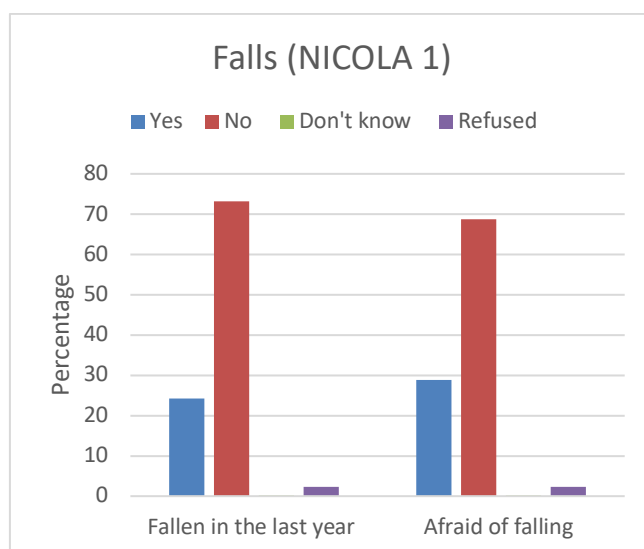
Another intergenerational scheme is run by the NGO Aberdeen Kai Fong Welfare Association. This focuses on community education, intergenerational learning, and volunteer development, and promoting cultural heritage. Older people interact with students of all ages in activities including creating stories and plays with primary school children; mentoring secondary school children and helping with homework; and secondary school children organising trips with older people to explore Hong Kong sites.

## Where we are now

During Covid, older people in Belfast<sup>vi</sup> reported taking part in less than usual physical exercise and sitting down or watching TV more than usual.



Among NICOLA research respondents, 24.3 per cent had fallen in the last year and 28.9 per cent were afraid of falling.



Compared to other parts of Northern Ireland, Belfast has higher rates of avoidable deaths and early deaths from circulatory disease and cancer. West Belfast has the highest rates followed by North Belfast.







### ***What is needed***

#### ***Who is most vulnerable/excluded?***

People who are already isolated may find it more challenging to be more active – sometimes it takes having a companion to encourage people out. Mobility and mental health issues can also be barriers.

#### ***Access to primary care***

Being able to see their doctor or get the treatment they need it is a source of real concern for older people in the city. The Greater Belfast Seniors Forum continues to lobby on these issues, which have been exacerbated by the pandemic. There are many older people for whom technology-based health care- online prescription requests, appointments by phone/video call – are no substitute for seeing a health care professional face to face.

#### ***The importance of strength and balance and moving more often***

Despite a range of physical activity programmes, physical activity levels in many older people in Belfast are well below what is recommended for good health and wellbeing, and people face challenges in keeping strong and active. Covid-19 has also had a significant impact on the strength and activity levels of older people and so there is a need to work with those who are most in need to help them improve their strength and balance and get more active.

#### ***What partners have committed to do***

1. Work with Greater Belfast Seniors forum to link with GP representatives and multi-disciplinary teams on a regular basis to ensure that the voice of older people is heard in discussions on access to services, and influences new developments.
2. Support 600-800 older people (most in need) to improve their mobility levels and to feel more connected and less lonely.

3. Promote key messages and connect up programmes for older people to increase their strength and mobility, including falls prevention.
4. Older people's involvement in the expansion of the 'Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing' approach.

#### ***Key programmes that are contributing to the Age Friendly Belfast Plan:***

- Greater Belfast Seniors Forum participation in the Healthy Ageing Reference Group with Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
- Links to Integrated Care Partnerships and Multi-Disciplinary Teams to support 2-way conversations between older people and health professionals
- Continued distribution and updating of the Health and Wellbeing Information Booklet for seniors
- Work through Belfast Health and Social Care Trust's Carer Support Service
- Older people's participation in parks and open spaces and programmes in Belfast City Council community centres and bowling pavilions
- Physical activity, strength and balance and falls prevention programmes supported or provided through Public Health Agency, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, Belfast City Council, Better Gyms and Leisure Centres, Healthy Living Centres and local community providers
- Partnership work to tackle health inequalities through Belfast Community Planning Partnership and Belfast Health Development Unit
- Home safety work carried out through a range of partners including, the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, Belfast City Council, the Safer Homes Scheme and the Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP)
- The Connected Community Care Service, a citywide social prescribing service, connecting people to local health and wellbeing support services.



## Financial security, assisting with the increasing cost of living

### What we did

We have sponsored a yearly award in the Belfast Business Awards.

Won in 2021 by Sync Living, and in 2020 by Bank of Ireland, the Age Friendly Business Award recognised those businesses that provide exceptional customer care for older customers and which value an age diverse workforce.

Through communication in the council's City Matters Magazine and social media, we have promoted awareness of the Make the Call campaign, scam awareness initiatives, and advice services. All these initiatives, in different ways, contribute to the financial security of our older residents. Greater Belfast Seniors Forum and local forums have campaigned to raise awareness of advice services and to reduce the stigma of asking for help through food banks.

Other achievements for older people have included:

- Work with the Ulster Bank, Hourglass and the Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland (COPNI) to raise awareness of financial abuse
- Development of the Warm and Well Project through the Living Here Board in Belfast's Community Planning Partnership, coordinated by National Energy Action
- Be Prepared information sessions across the city, which focused on financial security, benefits uptake and scam awareness
- Business in the Community and Age NI work with employers and employees through the Age at Work campaign aimed at helping older workers to remain in work or return to work. This approach enables older workers to have enough income, stay connected and have a fuller working life. It urges employers to commit to an MOT at

50, to help people with future plans and pension savings

- Work with Belfast's Police and Community Safety Partnership on Safe Seniors packs and avoiding scams.

### Good Practice Case Study:

#### Age NI Helpline

The Age NI Helpline provides advice to older people on a range of issues including benefit entitlements. Mrs P was contacted by Mrs P (aged 83) in relation to her benefit entitlements. Until recently, Mrs P had been the main carer for her severely disabled adult daughter. When Mrs P developed her own illnesses and they impacted on her personal care and support needs, Mrs P's daughter moved into a residential home and Mrs P now lives alone.

Mrs P was in receipt of a State Pension and Guarantee Pension Credit. She received a Carers Premium included in her Pension Credit award for looking after her daughter, so the fact that she was not caring for her daughter anymore meant that she would lose the Carers Premium, a loss of £37.70 per week.

No longer being able to care for her daughter was a life-changing event for Mrs P, the upset of which was further exacerbated by the fact that her income was going to be impacted and she was worried about finances.

Like many long-term carers, Mrs P had rarely focused on her own health and wellbeing. Advice workers were able to check Mrs P's eligibility for additional benefits and support her to successfully apply for them. The support provided by the helpline staff reduced some of the additional stresses caused by the change of circumstances and increased her income.



## Good Practice Case Study:

### Belfast Warm and Well



The Belfast Warm and Well (WAW) Project was developed by the Living Here Board in Belfast Community Planning Partnership. It is coordinated by National Energy Action (NEA) and aims to help local people who are struggling to keep their homes warm. The project works with local community and voluntary groups, to provide helpful independent and confidential advice and practical support to people aged 65 years or older; people living with disability or long term physical or mental health condition; pregnant women; households with young children (from new-born to school age); and people on a low income.

WAW has received calls from over 300 householders and provided practical assistance to 250 households. This assistance included organising boiler-checks, emergency out of hours referrals to restore heating to vulnerable households, providing oil filled radiators and Winter Warmth Packs, emergency fuel top-ups, and energy efficiency advice. In addition, project staff can make onward referrals for draughtproofing/insulation measures, benefit checks and food parcels.

With the unprecedented increase in energy costs combined with rising inflation impacting many vulnerable households, demand for assistance has risen significantly. Without the practical interventions provided by the WAW Project, many vulnerable householders who did not qualify for assistance under existing schemes would have been left having to continue to live in circumstances which could ultimately impact on their health.

As households continue to make tough financial choices, those households who have been struggling to keep the lights and heat on, will continue to struggle. This figure is most likely to continue climbing and therefore continuing measures to support these householders will continue to be critical.

It has been difficult to identify case studies from elsewhere on this theme, but the recent partnership response to Covid-19 has highlighted important learning

### Learning from Belfast Covid-19 community response

Covid-19 had a profound impact on the residents of Belfast of all ages, and on delivery of a range of services. A regional and citywide community response mechanism was established including:

- Community and voluntary groups leading local response efforts
- The development of a citywide helpline, remote contact centre and a central food distribution hub for Belfast residents
- A contact centre to process and coordinate responses to local needs
- Area based teams to manage welfare referrals and provide a link between partners
- The creation of a grant funding scheme to support emergency response and recovery activities.

The following results were achieved:

- 9,770 calls handled by the Belfast City Council contact centre
- 5,115 calls handled by local community run helplines,
- 107,407 food parcels and hot food were delivered over 16 weeks,
- 930 welfare referrals were managed by the area teams, and
- 9,320 deliveries or prescription pick-ups were made on behalf of residents.

During 2020-2021 Belfast City Council Provided almost £4.5 million additional funding to help organisations to deliver support for those individuals impacted by Covid-19 restrictions and supported 679 projects by providing £698,532.00 to deliver small scale projects across the city with grants ranging from £1,000 - £5,000.

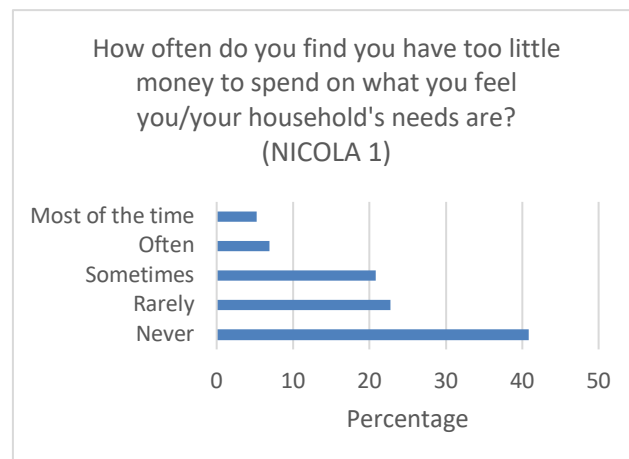
During 2021-2022 Belfast City Council provided £1 million additional funding to help organisations to deliver support for those individuals impacted by Covid-19 restrictions and cost of living issues and supported 414 organisations with £1,089,781.00 to deliver small scale projects across the city with grants ranging from £1,000 - £5,000.

### Learning for work on financial security with older people

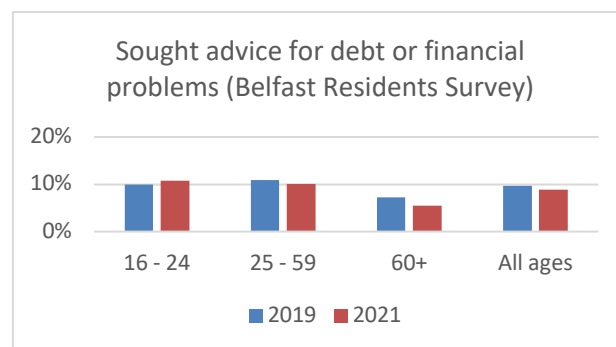
The Covid-19 response demonstrated at scale and pace, a whole-system approach to supporting vulnerable populations. The response tested new approaches to joint working across sectors at both the strategic / policy setting level and the operational / neighbourhood level. Whilst the scale and urgent timing of response is different, lessons from this joint working is needed to help the most vulnerable citizens in Belfast with the rising cost of living.

#### Where we are now

Over a third of older people<sup>vii</sup> stated that they do not have enough money for household needs sometimes, often, or most of the time. One in ten reported that this kept them from keeping their house in a reasonable state of decoration or from replacing or repairing broken electrical items, and 8.5 per cent reported that this impacted on their choice of food.



According to the Belfast Residents Survey, those aged 60 and over are least likely to have sought advice for debt or financial problems, falling from 7.2 per cent in 2019 to 5.5 per cent in 2021.



#### What is needed

Although there has been some increase in the uptake of some benefits, we still need to encourage older people to find out what they are entitled to and to access those supports. Older people tell us that the system is complex and at times overwhelming, that the forms are not age friendly and that where online application is the only option, they are deterred from applying. There is a continued need for support and advice for older people to navigate the benefit system.

#### Who is most vulnerable/excluded?

It is challenging to identify the people who are really in need of support as they may be among the more hidden/less heard members of our communities. People with a medical condition or disability who may need to keep

the heat on longer or power medical equipment are particularly vulnerable to rising fuel costs. Those who are on a fixed income are also vulnerable.

### ***Fuel and food poverty***

Rising fuel and food costs and rising inflation are issues which particularly impact on older people. While there are support systems available, these may not be adequate, or indeed people may not know the support is there. Increasing awareness of grants to assist with energy efficiency and signposting residents to the help available from foodbanks will be important during the current cost of living crisis. Of almost equal importance is de-stigmatising asking for advice or assistance.

### ***The need for further research***

There are fewer case studies and practical examples of projects in other Age Friendly cities on this theme. In order to better inform how HASP progresses on this theme, further research will be needed into measures taken to address food and fuel poverty amongst older people in other parts of Europe and the world.

### ***What partners have committed to do***

1. Work with older people to provide information and support on financial security in a way that is easy to understand and navigate.
  - information events in four localities
  - promotion of information through local older people's forums
2. Work to normalise and reduce stigma of older people accessing financial entitlements and addressing debt
3. Promote debt advice services to older people

4. Review and support the wider policy level work on food and fuel poverty. For example:
  - increase uptake of reducing food waste cookery sessions and promotion of fuel stamps
  - promote links to foodbanks and social supermarkets.
5. Offer access to employment support and employment for those aged 50+.
6. Promote and support of the Age at Work approach to recruit, retain and retrain workers aged 50+.

### ***Programmes that are contributing to the Age Friendly Belfast Plan:***

- Make the Call, Age NI helpline and various advice centre work to support older people to access entitlements
- Advice NI Rights for Seniors initiatives and the Debt Advice Service
- Repair cafes
- Belfast City Council Fuel stamps initiative
- The Warm and Well project and NEA Energy efficiency information sessions
- Belfast Safer Homes project
- Work with Police and Community Safety Partnership and the police service for Northern Ireland on Scam Awareness and Older Adults Cyber Safety work
- Work by age organisations to retain older people's access to local post offices and banks
- Promotion of advice services and scam awareness through the Greater Belfast Seniors Forum and local older people's forums
- Belfast City Council Employability and Skills/ Belfast Labour Market Partnership training/skills programmes which allow residents of all ages in the city to gain skills to secure employment across a broad range of sectors and employers
- The Economic Strategy for Belfast 2022-2030







## Summary of actions

Infrastructure, helping people to get out and about  Outcomes:	Key partners	Timescale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infrastructure developments in Belfast are designed in consultation with older people using agreed age friendly design principles</li> <li>Amenities and services in Belfast are more accessible for older people</li> </ul>		
Develop a joined-up approach to engagement and co-design with older people on local and city centre developments	Greater Belfast Seniors Forum, Older people's forums, the Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC) and the Department for Infrastructure	Years 3 and 4
Develop age friendly design principles, which can be used to inform new infrastructure developments	Age Friendly Network NI, Belfast City Council, Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC) and older people's forums	Years 3 and 4
Work to review and improve access to seating and toilets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review provision of seating and toilets in parks and open spaces in Belfast and identify gaps (including provision of radar keys)</li> <li>Carry out an audit of current public toilet usage and identify any barriers to use</li> <li>Explore 'take a seat' pilots in several areas</li> <li>Provide age friendly input into the development of parklets</li> </ul>	Belfast City Council Age Friendly Officer, Department for Communities and Department for Infrastructure and local neighbourhoods	Years 1 and 2
Revisit the work to raise awareness of the needs of older people when using transport	Age Partnership Belfast and Translink	Years 1 and 2

<b>Social inclusion, promoting social connections</b> <b>Outcome:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>older people are more connected and involved through programmes, places and services</li> </ul>	<b>Key partners</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Work together to support recovery of groups/programmes with older people	Age Partnership Belfast, Belfast City Council and voluntary and community sector partners	Years 1 and 2
Co-ordinate an Age Friendly Belfast annual programme of activities	Belfast City Council Age Friendly officer and a range of city partners	Ongoing Years 1, 2, 3 and 4
Develop local connection hubs and a city centre hub where older people can drop in and access information	Older people's forums, community partners and Belfast City Council	Ongoing Years 1, 2, 3 and 4
Develop dementia carers cafes in all four dementia friendly neighbourhoods	Dementia friendly neighbourhood groups, supported by Belfast Health and Social Care Trust	Ongoing Years 1, 2, 3 and 4
A recruitment drive to encourage older people to re-engage in volunteering, and to recruit new volunteers. Promotion of initiatives to manage and support older people's participation in volunteering.	Volunteer Now and HASP partners	Ongoing Years 1 and 2
Celebrate older volunteers through a yearly older volunteer awards programme	Volunteer Now and Belfast City Council	Ongoing Years 1, 2, 3 and 4
<b>Health and wellbeing</b> <b>Outcomes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Older people are active partners in the design and delivery of health and social services to ensure access</li> <li>Older people, who are most in need, are supported to live more active and socially connected lives</li> </ul>	<b>Key partners</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Work with Greater Belfast Seniors forum to link with GP representatives and multi-disciplinary teams on a regular basis to ensure that the voice of older people is heard in discussions on access to services, and influences new developments	Age Partnership Belfast, Belfast Health & Social Care Trust and primary care teams	Ongoing Years 1, 2, 3 and 4

Support 600-800 older people (most in need) to improve their mobility levels and to feel more connected and less lonely	Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, supported by Belfast Health Development Unit	Ongoing Years 1, 2, 3 and 4
Promote key messages and connect up programmes for older people to increase their strength and mobility, including prevention of falls	Age NI and Public Health Agency	Years 1 and 2
Involve older people's involvement in the expansion of the 'Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing' approach	Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and Greater Belfast Seniors Forum	Ongoing Years 1, 2, 3 and 4
<b>Financial security, supporting people to manage the increasing costs of living</b> <b>Outcomes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved access to financial support for older people to equip them to deal with the increased cost of living</li> <li>Older people have access to employment, support in employment and information on planning for retirement</li> </ul>	<b>Key partners</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Work with older people to provide information and support on financial security in a way that is easy to understand and navigate. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information events in four localities</li> <li>Promotion of information through local older people's forums</li> </ul>	Advice NI, Department for Communities Make the Call team and older people's forums	Years 1 and 2
Work to normalise and reduce the stigma of older people accessing financial entitlements and addressing debt	Age Friendly NI Network supported Belfast City Council Age Friendly Officer and Advice NI	Years 1 and 2
Promote debt advice services to older people	Advice NI, Belfast City Council Age Friendly Officer	Ongoing Years 1, 2, 3 and 4
Review and support the wider policy level work on food and fuel poverty e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>increase uptake of reducing food waste cookery sessions and promotion of fuel stamps</li> <li>promote links to foodbanks and social supermarkets</li> </ul>	Belfast City Council Trussell Trust, FairShare NI and other community food providers	Ongoing Years 1, 2, 3 and 4



Offer access to employment support and employment for those aged 50+	Belfast City Council Employability and Skills Team/Belfast Labour Market Partnership	Ongoing Years 1, 2, 3 and 4
Promote and support the Age at Work approach to recruit, retain and retrain workers aged 50+	Business in the Community and Age NI	Years 1 and 2



## Leadership- making it happen

Leadership and governance for Age-friendly Belfast will be provided by the Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership (HASP). They will co-ordinate the Age-friendly Belfast Plan against specific timescales with agreed resources.

HASP partners will oversee the delivery and performance management of the Age-Friendly action plan and report on progress to Belfast Community Planning Partnership.

A detailed action plan will be developed, and we will know that we are making a difference by using an outcomes based accountability approach (OBA).

This means that we will measure progress against the draft outcome framework outlined in the included Appendix 1.

HASP currently involves the following organisations:

- Age NI
- The Alzheimer's Society
- Belfast City Council
- Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
- Belfast Healthy Cities
- Dementia NI
- The Department for Communities
- The Department for Infrastructure
- Engage with Age
- Greater Belfast Seniors Forum
- North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive
- The Public Health Agency
- Volunteer Now

## Appendix 1 - Draft Outcomes Framework

Key Strategic Theme	Proposed Thematic Outcomes	Belfast Agenda Outcomes	Programme for Government Draft Outcomes Framework
1. <b>Infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infrastructure developments in Belfast are designed in consultation with older people using agreed age friendly design principles</li> <li>Amenities and services in Belfast are more accessible for older people</li> </ul>	Belfast is a vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable city for older people	<p>People want to live, work and visit here</p> <p>We have an equal and inclusive society where everyone is valued and treated with respect</p> <p>We all enjoy long, healthy active lives</p>
2. <b>Social Inclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Older people are more connected and involved through programmes, places and services</li> </ul>	<p>Belfast is a welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive city for older people</p> <p>Everyone in Belfast fulfils their potential</p>	
3. <b>Health and wellbeing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Older people are active partners in the design and delivery of health and social services to ensure access</li> <li>Older people, who are most in need, are supported to live more active and socially connected lives</li> </ul>	Older people in Belfast experience good health and well being	<p>We have a caring society that supports people throughout their lives</p>
4. <b>Financial Security</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved access to financial support for older people to equip them to deal with the increased cost of living</li> <li>Older people have access to employment, support in employment and information on planning for retirement</li> </ul>	Older people in Belfast benefit from a thriving and prosperous economy	<p>Everyone feels safe – we all respect the law and each other</p> <p>Everyone can reach their potential</p>

<sup>i</sup>Belfast Residents Survey

<sup>ii</sup> NICOLA Study

<sup>iii</sup> Belfast Residents Survey

<sup>iv</sup> Belfast Residents Survey

<sup>v</sup> Belfast Residents Survey

<sup>vi</sup> NICOLA Study

<sup>vi</sup> NICOLA Study





# Age Friendly Belfast

For more information on Age-friendly Belfast contact:

Elma Greer  
 Healthy Ageing Co-ordinator  
 Email: [Elma.Greer@bhdu.org](mailto:Elma.Greer@bhdu.org)  
 Telephone: 028 9050 2073 extension 3386  
 Mobile: 0796 7646 146

Gillian McEvoy  
 Senior Health and Environmental Officer  
 Email: [mcevoyg@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:mcevoyg@belfastcity.gov.uk)  
 Telephone: 028 9032 0202 extension 3765  
 Mobile: 0771 3684 705





<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Asset Management</b> <b>i) Balmoral Estate – Deed of Variation</b>
<b>Date:</b>	23rd September, 2022
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Sinead Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Pamela Davison, Estates Manager

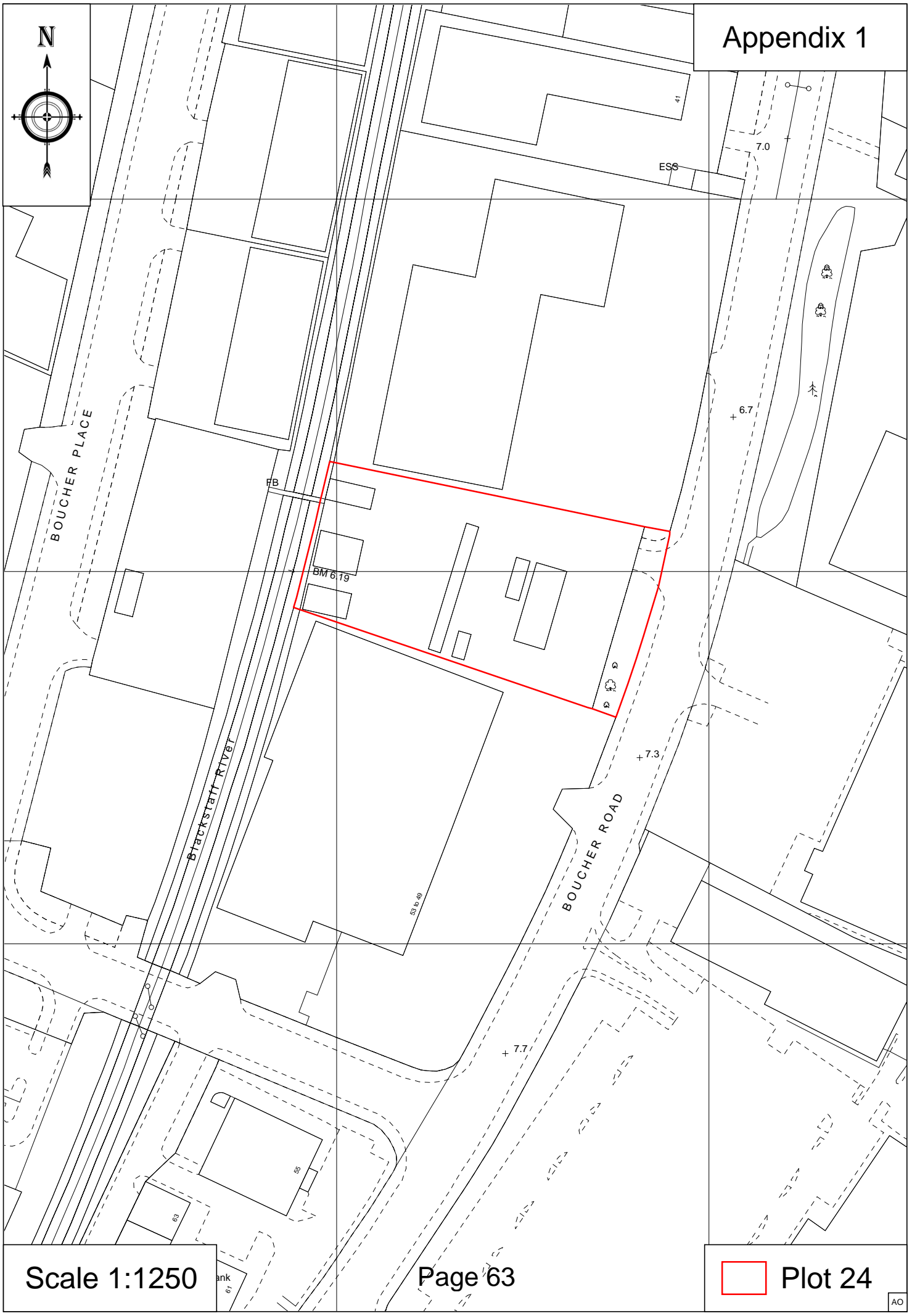
<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Committee on asset related disposal, acquisition, and estates matters.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <p><b>i. Balmoral Estate – Deed of Variation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- approve the extension of the current term of the ground Lease at Plot 24 Balmoral Estate to a term of 125 years, from 2022, and approve the variation of the user clause to include commercial use as a permitted use.</li> </ul>

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b>i) Balmoral Estate – Deed of Variation</b></p> <p><b><u>Key Issues</u></b></p> <p>Plot 24 Balmoral Estate is currently held on a 99-year ground Lease from 1<sup>st</sup> June 1980. The plot is Leased to Gilbert-Ash Limited who wish to assign their Lease. On the same day as the assignment takes place, the new tenant has requested an extension to the term of the existing Lease and a variation to the user clause to include commercial use as a permitted use. Estates have agreed a premium of £8,000 to extend the Lease. A Deed of Variation to the Lease will be entered into to formalise the extended term and the additional use, if approved by Members. A map showing Plot 24 Balmoral Estate is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.</p> <p><b><u>Financial and Resources Implications</u></b></p> <p>3.2 The Council will receive a single premium payment of £8,000. The Legal Services Unit will act on the instructions of the Estates Management Unit.</p> <p><b><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>3.3 None associated with this report.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Document Attached</b>
	Map showing Plot 24 Balmoral Estate





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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Belfast City Council Statement of Accounts 2021/22</b>
<b>Date:</b>	23rd September, 2022
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Trevor Wallace, Head of Finance Helen Lyons, Corporate Finance Manager

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to present to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, the Statement of Accounts of the Council, including the Annual Governance Statement, for the period ending 31 March 2022.
1.2	The Statement of Accounts are an important element of the council's overall corporate governance framework as they provide assurance to Members and ratepayers on the stewardship of the council's finances and its financial position.
1.3	The Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022, which can be accessed from the Council website <a href="#">here</a> , have been prepared in line with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021/22 based on International Financial

	Reporting Standards and the Department for Communities Accounts Direction, Circular LG 02/22 dated 7th January, 2022 and 23rd March, 2022.
1.4	I can confirm that the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022 has been prepared in the form directed by the Department for Communities and in my opinion the Statement of Accounts give a true and fair view of the income and expenditure and cash flows for the financial year and the financial position as at the end of the financial year.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. approve the Council's Statement of Accounts and incorporated Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2022; and</li> <li>ii. agree that this report should not be subject to call-in (as indicated above) because it would cause an unreasonable delay which would be prejudicial to the Council's and the public's interests given that the statement of accounts must be published by 30th September, 2022.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
	<u>Key Issues</u>
	<b>Normal Approval Process</b>
3.1	<p>The Committee will be aware that the normal approval process allows for the Statement of Accounts to be presented to the Audit and Risk Panel to allow them to review the annual statement of accounts. Specifically, to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the council prior to this report going to the SP and R Committee.</p> <p>However, the Audit and Risk Panel was postponed on 13th September, in line with agreed protocol for the passing of HM Queen Elizabeth II. The meeting has now been reconvened for Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> September, at which the Statement of Accounts will be discussed, any issues raised by the panel will be verbally reported to this Committee.</p>
	<b>Audit Opinion</b>
3.2	<p>It is the Local government Auditors' opinion that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the financial statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with relevant legal and statutory requirements and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting</li> </ul>

	<p>in the United Kingdom 2021-22, of the financial position of Belfast City Council as at 31 March 2022 and its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the statement of accounts have been properly prepared in accordance with the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and the Department for Communities directions issued thereunder; and</li> <li>the part of the Remuneration Report to be audited has been properly prepared in accordance with the Department for Communities directions made under the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015; and</li> <li>the information given in the Narrative Report for the financial year ended 31 March 2022 is consistent with the financial statements.</li> </ul>																		
	<b>Reserves</b>																		
3.3	<p><b>General Fund</b></p> <p>The credit balance on the General Fund has increased to £62,218,726 (of which £48,145,477 relates to specified reserves). The movement on the reserves balance is summarised in Table 1 below:</p> <p><b>Table 1: Summary of Reserves Position</b></p> <table> <tr> <td>Opening Balance</td><td>£54.9m</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>In year movement in reserves</td><td><u>£ 7.3m</u></td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td><b>Closing Balance</b></td><td><b>£62.2m</b></td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Specified Reserves at year end</td><td><u>£48.1m</u></td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td><b>Balance Available</b></td><td><b><u>£14.1m</u></b></td></tr> </table>	Opening Balance	£54.9m			In year movement in reserves	<u>£ 7.3m</u>			<b>Closing Balance</b>	<b>£62.2m</b>			Specified Reserves at year end	<u>£48.1m</u>			<b>Balance Available</b>	<b><u>£14.1m</u></b>
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<b>Balance Available</b>	<b><u>£14.1m</u></b>																		
3.4	<p><b>Capital Fund            £12,220,031</b></p> <p>The Capital Fund is made up of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Belfast Investment Fund (£1,368,532) -created to support key partnership projects to regenerate Belfast and help lever substantial funds from other sources</li> <li>Local Investment Fund (£800,741) to fund smaller local regeneration projects</li> <li>City Centre Investment Fund (£7,688,069) to support the Belfast City Centre Regeneration Investment Plans</li> <li>Social Outcomes Fund (£2,362,689) to support City Centre projects which might not generate a direct financial return but would enhance the overall City Centre offer and support the attraction of investment.</li> </ul>																		

3.5	<b>Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund    £10,000,000</b>  This fund is to support neighbourhood regeneration and tourism projects in local neighbourhoods.															
3.6	<b>Leisure Mobilisation Fund    £621,287</b>  This fund is to support the Leisure Transformation Programme and will cover programme level costs including communications, engagement and procurement costs.															
3.7	<b>Capital Receipts Reserve £1,068,583</b>  These are capital receipts which have originated primarily from the sale of assets and which have not yet been used to finance capital expenditure.															
3.8	<b>Other Fund Balances and Reserves    £1,731,811</b>  This relates to the Election Reserve (£735,037) which has been set up to smooth the cost of running council elections, the BWUH Subvention Fund (£703,151) to support national and international organisations in bringing their conferences to Belfast and the BWUH Sinking Fund (£293,623) to support planned maintenance and future capital works at the new exhibition centre.															
3.9	<b>Debt</b>  The overall level of trade debtors had increased this year from £5.2m at 31 March 2021 to £7.1m at 31 March 2022. Whilst, the COVID 19 pandemic had an impact on overall debt levels, the main reason is an increase in public authority debt at year end. An analysis of trade debtors, inclusive of VAT, for the last two years is shown below:  <b>Table 2 : Analysis of Trade Debtors</b> <table><tr><td></td><td><b>31 March 2022</b></td><td><b>31 March 2021</b></td></tr><tr><td>Less than three months</td><td>£5,450,710</td><td>£3,963,319</td></tr><tr><td>Three to one year</td><td>£1,070,718</td><td>£481,307</td></tr><tr><td>More than one year</td><td>£553,310</td><td>£772,373</td></tr><tr><td><b>Total</b></td><td><b>£7,074,738</b></td><td><b>£5,216,999</b></td></tr></table>		<b>31 March 2022</b>	<b>31 March 2021</b>	Less than three months	£5,450,710	£3,963,319	Three to one year	£1,070,718	£481,307	More than one year	£553,310	£772,373	<b>Total</b>	<b>£7,074,738</b>	<b>£5,216,999</b>
	<b>31 March 2022</b>	<b>31 March 2021</b>														
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Three to one year	£1,070,718	£481,307														
More than one year	£553,310	£772,373														
<b>Total</b>	<b>£7,074,738</b>	<b>£5,216,999</b>														
3.10	<b>Creditors</b>  The Department for Communities has set councils a target of paying invoices within 30 days. During the year the council paid 71,202 invoices totalling £187,290,662.															
	The average time taken to pay creditor invoices was 17 days for the year ended 31 March 2022. The Council paid 57,882 invoices within 10 days, 66,649 invoices within 30 days, and 4,553 invoices outside of 30 days. The council endeavours to process invoices as quickly as possible and has an improvement plan to support this process.															



3.11	<p><b>Annual Governance Statement (AGS)</b></p> <p>The Statement of Accounts include Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for the year 2021/22, which has been prepared in line with the Accounts Directive provided by the Department for Communities, NIAO guidance and is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework ‘Delivering Good Governance in Local Government’. Specifically, the AGS sets out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• scope of responsibility of the Council in relation to governance</li> <li>• the purpose of the governance framework</li> <li>• the governance framework in place</li> <li>• review of effectiveness of the governance framework</li> <li>• update on the significant governance issues from prior year</li> <li>• significant governance issues to be disclosed for current year</li> </ul>
3.12	<p>The AGS is approved by the Chair of the Strategic Policy and Resources, the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and Resources. It is subject to review by the LGA (NIAO) as part of their annual audit.</p>
3.13	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>None</p>
3.14	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>None</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Document Attached</b>
	<p>Detailed Statement of Accounts titled “Belfast City Council Statement of Accounts 2022” (can be accessed in paragraph 1.3 above)</p>

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Update on Contracts</b>
<b>Date:</b>	23rd September, 2022
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Noleen Bohill, Head of Commercial and Procurement Services

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek Committee approval for tenders and Single Tender Actions (STA) over £30,000; and</li> <li>• to ask the Committee to note contract modifications to contract term and retrospective Single Tender Actions (STAs)</li> </ul>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>approve the public advertisement of tenders as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (<b>Table 1</b>);</li> <li>approve the award of STAs in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in Appendix 1 (<b>Table 2</b>);</li> <li>approve the modification of the contract as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (<b>Table 3</b>); and</li> </ol>

	iv. note the award of retrospective STAs in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in Appendix 1 ( <b>Table 4</b> )
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
	<u>Competitive Tenders</u>
3.1	Section 2.5 of the Scheme of Delegation states that Chief Officers have delegated authority to authorise a contract for the procurement of goods, services or works over the statutory limit of £30,000 following a tender exercise, where the council has approved the invitation to tender.
3.2	Standing Order 60(a) states any contract that exceeds the statutory amount (currently £30,000) shall be made under the Corporate Seal. Under Standing Order 51(b) the Corporate Seal can only be affixed when there is a resolution of the Council.
3.3	Standing Order 54 states that every contract shall comply with the relevant requirements of national and European legislation.
	<u>Single Tender Actions (STAs)</u>
3.4	<p>The following STAs are being submitted for approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a contract for £40,000, for up to 4 years, awarded to FIAT Donnelly Group for procurement of Fiat Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) approved parts and components, warranty support and specialist repairs ensuring they are safe and road worthy as part of Council fleet. Therefore, ensuring that parts and components are replaced and fitted in keeping with the manufacturer warranty, operational safety terms and conditions. The supplier has the sole distributor rights for these OEM parts and services for Northern Ireland and therefore the only suitable supplier.</li> <li>• A contract for £60,000, for up to 4 years, awarded to Mercedes Benz Truck &amp; Van, for procurement of Mercedes Benz Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) approved parts and components, warranty support and specialist repairs ensuring they are safe and road worthy as part of Council fleet. Therefore, ensuring that parts and components are replaced and fitted in keeping with the manufacturer warranty, operational safety terms and conditions. The supplier has the sole distributor rights for these OEM parts and services for Northern Ireland and is, therefore, the only suitable supplier.</li> <li>• a contract for £180,000 (fully funded), for up to 6 months, awarded to Energy Systems Catapult, for procurement of a Local Area Energy Plan 'LAEP' for Belfast and Queens Island. The LAEP approach is bespoke to Energy Systems Catapult. Energy Systems Catapult is the only supplier in the market who has the experience, knowledge, and</li> </ul>

capability to provide this service. The STA was approved in August for £110,000 but an additional £70,000 funding has become available. The contract is not yet awarded.

3.5 The following retrospective STAs were awarded:

- an increase in contract value of previously approved STA from £60,000 to £100,000. STA (T2286) for the provision of largescale outdoor event for 2 months was awarded to Belfast International Arts Festival in April 2022. The STA was agreed in line with Service Level Agreement with Tourism NI which named Belfast International Arts Festival as the supplier of exclusive artistic product. This STA was originally approved for a total value of £60,000; however, this only included first staged payment. The total contract value/spend has been confirmed as £100,000.

Modification to Contract term

3.6 The following contract terms were modified:

- a 3-month extension and an increase in contract value by £10,000 for contract T1795 - Provision of portorage services, awarded to Delivery Services and Storage Ltd. A modification is required to extend the current contract whilst the new tender process is carried out.
- a 2-month extension and an increase in contract value by £75,000 for T1846 - Collection and treatment of mixed waste materials (timber and hard plastics), awarded to MacNabb Bros and R Heatrick Ltd. The extension is required to bring the contract period into line with the expiry dates of other waste disposal/recycling contracts for plasterboard and paints and varnishes which expire on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022. The new tender will include all waste streams using 4 lots to maximise economies of scale.
- a 2-month extension for contract T1990 (b) - Cinematography for PEACE IV programme services, awarded to Morrow Communications. A modification is required to extend the current contract to facilitate the completion of the project.
- a 2-month extension for contract T1858 - PEACE IV – Supporting Connected Communities project, awarded to NI Alternatives. A modification is required to extend the current contract to facilitate the completion of the project.



	<b>Financial and Resource Implications</b>
3.7	The financial resources for these contracts are within approved corporate or departmental budgets
	<b>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</b>
3.8	None
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	<p>Appendix 1</p> <p>Table 1 - Competitive Tenders</p> <p>Table 2 - Single Tender Actions</p> <p>Table 3 - Modification to Contract</p> <p>Table 4 - Retrospective Single Tender Actions</p>

**Table 1: Competitive Tenders**

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Estimated Total Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services
Installation of solar reflective film to glazing system to all bar / restaurant areas within the Waterfront Hall 3 levels including glazed roof	Up to 10 weeks	£100,000	S Grimes	Required to reject the solar heat and glare during summer months.
Technical Professionals providing in-depth technical research and guidance to help Digital Services advance the initiatives/projects that support execution of the IT strategy  *Previously approval Aug 22 for £53k but revised total now £92k	Up to 2 years	£92,000	R Cregan	*Use proven Reference Architecture to develop technology Architecture  *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
Procurement and implementation of Qlik Sense SaaS application, along with support and maintenance for Qlik Sense, QlikView, Nprinting and GeoAnalytics	Up to 3 years	£185,000	R Cregan	The current support and maintenance contract for the Council's on premise Qlik applications is up for renewal on 30/11/2022
Collection and treatment/recycling of mixed materials from recycling centres to include timber, hard plastic, plasterboard and paints and varnishes  *Previously approved May 2022 for £2m but revised total now £2.6m to include additional waste streams (i.e. plasterboard and paints and varnishes)	Up to 4 years	£2,600,000	C Matthews	To ensure the Council's waste is disposed/ recycled in line with current environmental legislation, best practice and circular economy principles.
Contract for the placement of planning notices in the local press	Up to 5 years	£120,000	K Bentley	Fulfilment of statutory obligation to advertise planning notices under Article 8 of the Planning (General

## Appendix 1

				Development Procedure) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015.
Hire of grounds maintenance equipment with operator	Up to 3 years	£100,000	C Matthews	Hire of a range of specialist grounds maintenance equipment with operators primarily to support pitches and bowling greens maintenance.
Procurement of consultancy team to develop an Outline Business Case for the Innovation for Societal Impact Challenge Fund under the Belfast Region City Deal's Digital Pillar  *Tender previously approved in June 2022 for £100k and up to 6 months	Up to 12 months	£125,000	J Tully	An Innovation for Societal Impact fund is a key element of the overall suite of BRCD (City Deal) Innovation Challenge Funds as outlined in the digital pillar Programme Business Case.  <i>An option now included to extend the contract for a further 6 months and further £25,000, if required</i>
Develop an Outline Business Case (OBC) for a £20m risk capital, Venture Fund, funded by the Belfast City Region Deal  *Tender previously approved in June 2022 for £50k and up to 3 months	Up to 9 months	£60,000	J Tully	An equity debt fund is a key element of the innovation Challenge Fund as outlined in the digital pillar Programme Business Case.  <i>An option now included to extend the contract for a further 6 months and further £10,000, if required</i>
Design contest to support the delivery of Belfast Imagining 2024	Up to 22 months	£2.5m	J Greer	Use the competitive Design Contest process to seek out and develop proposals from the market to support the delivery of civic and culturally led programmes, events and projects for Belfast Imagining 2024. The £2.5m will include the payment of prize monies to applicants to develop their proposals and the award of subsequent service contracts to deliver the successful projects.
Supply of tractors, support services and spare parts  (Initial purchase of new tractors over next 2 years plus ongoing support services and parts over life of tractors - estimated 10 years)	Up to 12 years	£160,000	C Matthews	Replacement of tractors that are past end of life/ operational use and are now uneconomical to continue to maintain. New contract will include replacement tractors via open competition and ongoing support services and spare parts.

**Table 2: Single Tender Actions**

Title	Duration	Total Value	SRO	Description	Supplier
Fiat Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) approved parts and components, warranty support and specialist repairs	Up to 4 years	£40,000	C Matthews	<p>To ensure that FIAT vehicles being used by the Council have only approved OEM parts and components replaced in all safety related vehicle areas on a like for like basis in keeping with the vehicle manufacturer terms and conditions.</p> <p>The supplier has the sole distributor rights for these OEM parts and services for Northern Ireland and therefore the only suitable supplier.</p>	FIAT Donnelly Group
Mercedes Benz Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) approved parts and components, warranty support and specialist repairs	Up to 4 years	£60,000	C Matthews	<p>To ensure that Mercedes Benz vehicles being used by the Council have only approved OEM parts and components replaced in all safety related vehicle areas on a like for like basis in keeping with the vehicle manufacturer terms and conditions.</p> <p>The supplier has the sole distributor rights for these OEM parts and services for Northern Ireland and therefore the only suitable supplier.</p>	Mercedes Benz Truck & Van
<p>Procurement of a Local Area Energy Plan for Belfast and Queens Island</p> <p>*Fully funded</p> <p>*STA previously approved in August 2022 for £110k but revised total value is now £180k due an additional £70,000 funding has become available. The contract is not yet awarded.</p>	Up to 6 months	£180,000	J Tully	<p>The Local Area Energy Plan approach is bespoke to Energy Systems Catapult. Energy Systems Catapult is the only supplier in the market who has the experience, knowledge and capability to provide this service.</p>	Energy Systems Catapult

**Table 3: Modification to Contract**

<b>Title of Contract</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Modification</b>	<b>SRO</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Supplier</b>
T1795 - Provision of portage services	Up to 5 years	Additional 3 months and £10,000	N Largey	Modification required to extend the current portage contract whilst the new tender process is carried out	Delivery Services and Storage Ltd
T1846 - Collection and treatment of mixed waste materials (Timber and hard plastics)	Up to 4 years	Additional 2 months and £75,000	C Matthews	The extension is required to bring T1846 timber and hard plastics into line with the expiry dates for the plasterboard and paints and varnishes contracts (30/11/2022).	MacNabb Bros and R Heatrick Ltd
T1990 (b) - Cinematography for PEACE IV programme services	Up to 4 years	Additional 2 months	S Toland	Modification required to facilitate the completion of the project.	Morrow Communications
T1858 - PEACE IV – Supporting Connected Communities	Up to 4 years	Additional 2 months	S Toland	Modification required to facilitate the completion of the project.	NI Alternatives

**Table 4: Retrospective Single Tender Actions**

<b>Title of Contract</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>SRO</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Supplier</b>
T2286 - Provision of largescale outdoor event  *STA previously approved in April 2022 for £60k but revised total value is now £100k  (Fully funded)	Up to 2 months	£100,000	J Greer	An initial STA was agreed in line with Service Level Agreement with Tourism NI which named Belfast International Arts Festival as the supplier of exclusive artistic product.	Belfast International Arts Festival



## **Minutes of Meeting of Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

### **Attendance**

#### **Members:**

Councillor Ronan McLaughlin  
Councillor Billy Hutchinson  
Councillor Michael Long  
Alderman George Dorrian  
Councillor Brian Smyth  
Councillor Donal Lyons  
Alderman Sonia Copeland  
Councillor Fiona Ferguson

**Apologies:** Councillor Emmet McDonough-Brown

#### **Officers:**

John Walsh, Chief Executive  
Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources  
Nora Largey, City Solicitor (for Item 6)  
Peadar Doyle, Logistics Manager (for Item 8 Contracts Update)

### **1. Structures**

The Chief Executive presented a proposed structure for the Corporate Management Tier following approval of the interim arrangements put in place to ensure continuity for the Deputy Chief Executive role. Members noted a report detailing the proposals discussed along with a revised proposal for the role of Director of Finance and Resources will be presented to September's SP&R Committee for consideration.

### **2. Finance Update**

The Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Finance & Resources advised that work has commenced on the estimates for 2023/24 and an initial report outlining the 2023/24 rate setting process will be presented to September SP&R committee. Further to discussions at the last meeting of the Forum he stressed to Members the many challenges involved for the 2023/24 rate setting process due to the rising utility costs and the rise in inflation and the impact on Council Financing. Members discussed in detail the challenges involved, including potential options to review energy efficiency within Council Owned assets in order to mitigate

against some of the rising utility costs. It was noted that the process for 2023/24 would be unprecedented and very different from previous years.

Members also discussed NI Reval2023, the revaluation process being undertaken by Land & Property Services (LPS) to adjust the rateable value of business properties to reflect changes in the property market and the potential impacts for 2023/24.

A Member requested a Party Group Briefing for new party members who weren't familiar with the rate setting process and it was agreed a suitable time would be arranged. The Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Finance & Resources advised that Party Group Briefings for the 2023/24 rate setting process would also be arranged for all parties following October SP&R Committee when more detail on the LPS revaluation exercise would be available.

### **3. Update on Cost-of-Living Proposals – Agency and Casual Staff**

The Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Finance & Resources provided an update on the ongoing discussions in relation to the cost of living payments for Agency and Casual Staff. He advised that August SP&R Committee had agreed in principle to also provide cost of living payments to Agency and Casual staff alongside the payment to all Council staff below Chief Officer grade. Discussion followed on how this might be managed and it was agreed that the projected costs for the options discussed would be circulated to Party Group Leaders in advance of September SP&R for consideration and review.

### **5. Joint Leadership Session PGL's/CMT**

The Chief Executive advised that the externally facilitated leadership training session with Party Group Leaders and the Council's Corporate Management Team would take place on Friday 14th October, 2022. Diary invites have been issued and Members noted the venue. He advised that the facilitator had requested to meet with Party Group Leaders individually in advance of the session and it was agreed that Members would confirm with his office if they were content for their contact details to be shared.

### **6. Dual Language Street Signage**

The City Solicitor advised that an update report would be brought to September SP&R Committee on the Dual Language Street Signs Policy. It was noted that the report will ask members to agree final wording before the policy is published online. In relation to a number

of queries raised by Members the City Solicitor advised that the policy has been agreed and is being implemented, the revisions discussed were administrative in nature only. The City Solicitor to provide an update for Members to confirm that the previously agreed quota of 5 applications in any given month was continuing to be processed following approval at July Council.

## **7. Planning Update**

The Chief Executive updated the Forum on the live planning applications and informed the Forum of applications that were being presented to the Planning Committee in September. He also provided an update on the Replacement Planning Portal (new Planning IT system) and some of the issues with the transition.

## **8. AOB**

### **Update on Contracts**

The Chief executive provided an update on the amendment to two proposed Single Tender Actions (STA's) to be administered as Competitive Tenders at September Council meeting. Members discussed the amendment made at the Council meeting and the Logistics Manager outlined the rationale for why they had been recommended for approval as a STA. Following discussion, it was noted that a report will be brought to September SP&R Committee for further consideration.

### **Hugh Hanna Statue**

Alderman Dorrian raised an issue in relation the relocation of the Hugh Hanna Statue. Members noted the update and further information will be brought back to Party Group Leaders in due course.

### **Illumination Request**

Alderman Dorrian requested to light up City Hall on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022 during Anti Slavery week in order to highlight Modern Slavery. It was noted that this request would be agreed under the Chief Executive's delegated authority, subject to availability.

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**Belfast**  
City Council

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Requests for Use of the City Hall and the Provision of Hospitality</b>
<b>Date:</b>	23rd September 2022
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Aisling Milliken, Functions and Exhibition Manager

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	This report, together with the attached appendix, contains the recommended approach in respect of each of the requests by external organisations for access to the City Hall function rooms received up to 9th September, which appear to the Function Management Unit to comply with the criteria previously established by the Committee and are recommended for approval.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to approve the recommendations made in respect of applications received up to 9th September, as set out in the attached appendix.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
	<u>Background Information</u>
3.1	The Committee will be aware that, at its meeting on 6th January 2017, it agreed to modify the criteria governing access to the City Hall function rooms for external organisations.



3.2	<p>The Committee also agreed to the implementation of room-hire charges for some categories of function, and also revised the approach to the provision of civic hospitality for functions on foot of the agreed efficiency programme. Some further modifications to this approach were agreed at the Committee's meetings of 24th March and 23rd June 2017 and 23rd June and 25th October 2019.</p> <p><u>Key Issues</u></p>
3.3	<p>The existing revised criteria and scale of charges have been applied to the various requests received and the recommendations herein are offered to the Committee on this basis for approval.</p>
3.4	<p>The schedule attached covers six applications for functions, scheduled for 2022 and 2023.</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p>
3.5	<p>The implementation of charging for external functions has commenced, in line with the Committee's decisions in the matter.</p> <p><u>Equality and Good Relations / Rural Needs Implications</u></p>
3.6	<p>There are no direct good relations, equality or rural needs implications arising from this report.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Document Attached</b>
	Schedule of function requests received up to 9th September, 2022

## SEPTEMBER 2022 CITY HALL FUNCTION APPLICATIONS

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
<b>2022 EVENTS</b>						
Volunteer Service, Belfast Health & Social Care Trust	24 October 2022	<b>BHSCT Volunteers Recognition Event</b> – for their time, energy and expertise support existing services in a wide variety of roles improving the patient and carer experience for our service users.  Numbers attending – 80	C	Charge should be £115 in line with criteria but waiver due to Freedom of City for NHS	No Hospitality	Approve No charge No hospitality
RNIB (NI)	24 November 2022	<b>Launch of Research findings</b> “Barriers to Employment for people with sight loss NI”  Numbers attending – 150	A	No charge - Complimentary as Charity	No Hospitality	Approve No charge No hospitality
Groundwork NI	30 November 2022	<b>Young Women – Leaders of Tomorrow programme</b> - celebration for students from Belfast Model School and Holy Trinity College on completion of their programme  Numbers attending – 60	C	No charge - Complimentary as Charity	No Hospitality	Approve No charge No hospitality
<b>2023 EVENTS</b>						
QUB Architecture Society	27 March 2023	<b>Architecture Gala Ball</b> – Celebrating a year of new architects who are crucial for in the future for enhancing the city’s image through the built architecture around us.	B	Yes	No hospitality	Approve Charge £825 No hospitality

## SEPTEMBER 2022 CITY HALL FUNCTION APPLICATIONS

		Numbers attending - 300				
Bray Leino Events	18 April 2023	<p>CyberFirst Dinner - with speeches and after dinner entertainment for guests attending a 3 day conference.</p> <p>Numbers attending - 150</p>	A & B	No (waived as linked to Visit Belfast)	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality
Belfast Pride	21 July 2023	<p><b>Belfast Pride Launch and Pride Awards</b> – LGBT Community awards ceremony. Drinks reception followed by Awards presentation.</p> <p>Numbers attending – 350</p>	D	No charge - Complimentary as Charity	No Hospitality	Approve No charge No hospitality

## Language Strategy Working Group

Friday, 26th August, 2022

### LANGUAGE STRATEGY WORKING GROUP MINUTES HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillors McMullan, Spratt and Whyte.  
Councillor McLaughlin (on behalf  
of Councillor Walsh).

In attendance: Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor;  
Mrs. S. Williams, Governance and Compliance Manager;  
Mr. M. Johnston, Language Officer;  
Mr. C. McGuigan, Irish Language Officer;  
Ms. L McKee, Democratic Services Officer  
Mrs. G. Boyd, Democratic Services Officer; and  
Ms. R. Budd (Interpreter)

#### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were recorded from Councillors Kyle, O'Hara and Walsh .

#### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 12 August were taken as read and signed as correct.

The city solicitor thanked the members of the working group for their attendance and reminded them that it had been agreed at the working group meeting on 12 August that the working group would reconvene at the end of August to allow the Members time to consult with their respective parties to consider the reports circulated.

#### **Revised thematic draft Action Plan**

The Language Officer advised the Members that they still had an opportunity to feed into the language strategy and that they were keen to gather as much feedback as possible.

### **TOR for Sign Languages Stakeholders' Forum**

The City Solicitor suggested that, if members were agreeable, this item and the next item could be discussed at the next meeting of the working group at the end of September. She advised that the Democratic Services Officer would identify the next available date for the working group.

Noted.

### **Draft Irish Language Policy**

Members agreed that this item would be discussed at the next meeting of the working group. Councillor McLaughlin advised the other Members of the working group that his party had some feedback on the policy and agreed to forward the comments on the strategy to the City Solicitor and the Democratic Services officer for circulation to the working group.

### **Next steps and Date of next meeting**

The City Solicitor advised the Members that their party groups would be consulted during September in relation to the dual language street signage and that a further meeting of the group would be scheduled for the end of September at some stage after the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. She added that it was envisaged that the dual language action plan/draft policy would be brought to the October meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Noted.

Chairperson