

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 20th October, 2023

MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM AND
REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Black (Chairperson);
Alderman McCoubrey; and
Councillors Beattie, Bunting, Cobain, de Faoite,
M. Donnelly, R.M. Donnelly, Ferguson, Garrett, Hanvey,
Long, Maghie, Maskey, I. McLaughlin, R. McLaughlin,
Nelson, Nic Bhranair and Whyte.

In attendance: Mr. J. Walsh, Chief Executive;
Ms. S. McNicholl, Deputy Chief Executive/Director of
Corporate Services;
Ms. N. Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and
Civic Services;
Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;
Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development;
Ms. C. Matthews, Director of Resources and Fleet;
Ms. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and
Development;
Mr. D. Sales, Director of Neighbourhood Services;
Ms. C. Sheridan, Director of Human Resources;
Ms. S. Toland, Director of City Services;
Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;
Mr. T. Wallace, Director of Finance;
Mr. K. Heaney, Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty;
Ms. S. Williams, Governance and Compliance Manager;
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Smyth.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 22nd September were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council, at its meeting on 4th October, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Toilet Facilities - Cregagh Wanderers Container

Councillor Maghie stated that she had been made aware of a potential issue around the release of the funding for this project, which the Committee, at its meeting on 22nd September, had approved in adopting the minutes of the meeting of the East Belfast Area Working Group of 7th September.

The Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services confirmed that she would raise the issue with the relevant Council officer over the course of the meeting and provide a response in due course.

(Councillor Ferguson declared an interest as soon as this matter had been raised, due to his involvement with Nettlefield and Glentoran Football Clubs, both of which were included in the LIF project from which the funding was being provided and left the meeting for the duration of the discussion.)

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Beattie declared an interest in relation to agenda item 3g – Hardship Fund – Emerging Considerations, in that the organisation for which he worked delivered a number of programmes and left the meeting whilst it was under consideration.

Councillor Whyte declared an interest in relation to agenda item 3c – QUB Civic Commitment to the South Belfast University Area, on the basis that he was a part-time Teaching Assistant at Queen's University's School of Economics and Management and left the meeting whilst it was being considered.

Request to Present

**Conradh na Gaeilge/Committee
on the Administration of Justice**

The Committee acceded to a request from representatives of Conradh na Gaeilge and the Committee on the Administration of Justice to attend a future meeting to discuss their concerns in relation to the Council's proposed language provision along the Springfield Dam section of the Forth Meadow Community Greenway and wider issues relating to the Equality Impact Assessment process and the Irish Language.

Restricted Items

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

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

Organisational Reviews - Democratic Services/Equality and Diversity Units

(The Senior Democratic Officer, Democratic Services Officer and Democratic Services Support Assistant left the meeting whilst this item was under consideration.)

The Committee was reminded that, following the creation in February, 2019 of the Legal and Civic Services Department, approval had been granted to undertake a review of the Democratic Services Unit, to ensure that it was fit for purpose in terms of delivering the Council's governance arrangements.

The Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services reported that the review had now been completed and drew the Committee's attention to a proposed staffing structure which would fulfil the aforementioned objective and provide those people currently employed within the Unit on a temporary basis with an opportunity to apply for permanent posts. She confirmed that extensive consultation had been undertaken with the Trades Unions, through the Departmental Trades Union Forum, and the staff affected and, accordingly, recommended that the Committee approve the new organisational structure for implementation.

The Committee adopted the recommendation and agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting providing information on the salary grade attributed to each post within the structure.

Update on Employees on Temporary Contracts and Agency Workers

The Director of Human Resources submitted for the Committee's consideration a report providing an update on the number of employees on temporary contracts and agency assignees engaged by the Council and outlining the steps being taken to reduce the Council's reliance on those two categories.

She reported that, as at 30th September, 205 staff had been filling posts on a temporary basis, 125 of whom had substantive Council posts to return to when no longer required. The other 80 were fixed term contract employees who did not have a substantive post to return to. Between 1st July and 30th September, 23 staff had joined the Council on a temporary contract, with 10 having a substantive post and 13 being on fixed term contracts.

She reported further that, as in the previous quarter, 259 agency assignees had been engaged by the Council at 30th September, 40 of whom were seasonal workers. She outlined the cost of employing agency assignees for the three-month period ending on 30th September and pointed out that this did not represent a financial burden, as it was met through vacant posts.

The Director then stated that the Corporate Contract Manager, who had been in post since February, had established regular compliance and challenge meetings across Departments, with a view to driving down long-term agency usage and that data was being reviewed to assess the potential for creating some permanent flexible roles.

She went on to remind the Committee that the Commercial Team within the Commercial and Procurement Service was working with Corporate HR to provide a comprehensive overview of the 'status quo' in relation to the managed service in place for the provision of temporary agency workers for a diverse range of job roles. In addition, further research into in-house employment agencies which may be used in other organisations was ongoing and a report on the findings from this initial exercise would be included in the Quarter 3 update and in the quarterly reports thereafter. She concluded by making reference to the People Strategy which had just been launched and by outlining the measures which were in place to support those staff applying for permanent posts.

After discussion, the Committee noted the information which had been provided and agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting on the establishment of an apprenticeship scheme and on the number and Department of vacant permanent posts across the Council.

QUB Civic Commitment to the South Belfast University Area

The Committee was reminded that Queen's University and the Ulster University were each playing an important role in bringing about positive behavioural change in the South Belfast University Area by engaging in the inter-agency steering group and supporting the development of a shared action plan to address priorities such as crime, antisocial behaviour, community cohesion and the wellbeing of residents.

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy reported that, as part of this work, Queen's University was committed to becoming a 'Civic University', as a way of improving employment opportunities, addressing skills need, driving economic growth, improving public health outcomes and strengthening communities. The university was of the view that its transition to a Civic University should occur on a phased basis, with an initial focus being placed on the South Belfast University area.

He went on to draw the Committee's attention to a draft Civic Commitment, which set out a number of commitments and actions from Queen's University to work with the Council, local communities and students to support those who regarded the university area of South Belfast as their home. A review of the draft document by Council officers had revealed no major areas of concern, other than the fact that any interventions or actions would be subject to resource availability and established processes. He added that the Ulster University was understood to be developing a similar charter and would be engaging with partners, including the Council, in the process.

In response to a Member, the Director confirmed that the Council would discuss with the Community Planning Partnership, the universities and other agencies the potential for extending the initiative to other areas of the City, as a means of addressing antisocial behaviour and other issues.

The Committee granted approval for the Council to be a signatory to Queen's University's Civic Commitment for the South Belfast University Area.

Review of Continuous Improvement and how Reviews are Conducted

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 4th October, had agreed that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee outlining how organisational reviews were conducted and setting out a Terms of Reference, along with options for both an internal and an external review into the process.

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy informed the Committee that the Continuous Improvement Unit played a fundamental role in supporting the design and delivery of change and improvement programmes, project management and business-as-usual organisational development activities. He reported that Audit, Governance and Risk Services had, in February, completed an assurance review of the Unit and had made a number of recommendations around programme design, programme governance, programme management and project management/benefits realisation.

In response to those recommendations, quotations had, in August, been invited for external assistance to conduct a review of the Continuous Improvement Unit, in support of the continued evolution of the approach to organisational reviews and development, improvement and change. He provided details of the key deliverables which had been identified within the terms of reference for the review and confirmed that a contractor had now been appointed. A report on the outcome of the review would be presented to the Committee in due course.

After discussion, during which the Director of City and Organisational Strategy provided an assurance that the contractor would be engaging with Members and those staff across the Council whose review had either been completed or was underway, the Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Belfast Regional Innovation Hub Bid

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 26th June, it had approved the development of a £3.8m bid to the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology's Regional Innovation Hub competition.

The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services reported that the Department was seeking to create a nationwide network of innovation hubs which would support industry, small and medium-sized enterprises and public agencies to fully exploit the commercial and innovation potential of 5G advanced wireless networks. Each successful local authority would receive capital funding to deliver a first programme between December, 2023 and March, 2025.

She stated that the Council's City Innovation Office had worked with the Belfast Region City Deal Partners to develop a bid, which had been submitted in September. She reviewed the main elements and structure of the Belfast Innovation Region's proposal and pointed out that the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology would be likely to make grant offers by mid-October, with the expectation that contracts would be signed and agreed by mid-November. It would then expect each local authority to be ready to agree a contract for funding and to commence programme delivery by the end of November.

In view of the very narrow timeframe, a programme board had already been established, being chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive, which would, in the event of Belfast's bid being successful, provide the Committee with updates on progress. Officers had, under the direction of the board, already commenced work with partners on the likely legal, procurement and contractual requirements. Should the Council be offered a contract in the coming weeks, the final terms of the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology's contract would also be presented to the Committee for approval.

After discussion, during which the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services confirmed that the Innovation Team would be working closely with the Economic Development Team to reach out to small and medium-sized enterprises, as part of the process, the Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Update on External Funding

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy submitted for the Committee's consideration a report providing an update on some emerging developments relating to major funding programmes, including PEACEPLUS, the Shared Island Initiative and Levelling Up and outlining proposals for continued engagement with Members in developing a pipeline of potential candidate projects for emerging funding opportunities.

After discussion, the Committee:

- i. noted that officers would be arranging a series of Party Group briefings to enable detailed discussions to take place in relation to possible funding opportunities and to inform the development of an agreed pipeline of corporate projects (funding priorities) which should be developed to an appropriate stage of maturity;
- ii. noted that the emerging pipeline of possible candidate funding projects would be presented to the Committee in November;
- iii. noted that the engagement with Members on a potential pipeline of project proposals would be a key element in developing a wider Funding Framework for the Council, cognisant of existing programmes, ensuring that projects were being proactively developed to bring forward for funding opportunities when announced, and that existing governance for these projects had already been established;

- iv. noted that a comprehensive report providing an update on the Council's application and involvement under the PEACEPLUS programme would be presented to the Committee in November;
- v. noted the plans to provide training and awareness sessions for Members and the intention to roll-out funding alerts to local partners using the Grantfinder system;
- vi. authorised officers to continue to share awareness raising events in relation to funding opportunities with all Members, to act as a conduit with local groups and ensure coverage across the City;
- vii. noted that Council officers were continuing to engage with the Shared Island Unit and others to address the issues alluded to within the report in relation to the Shared Island Initiative and identify emerging opportunities;
- viii. agreed that a letter be forwarded to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities expressing concern that Northern Ireland had not been included in the Long-term Plan for Towns Programme which had been announced on 1st October and pointing out that local councils had, in the absence of the Northern Ireland Executive, demonstrated their ability to deliver such programmes; and
- ix. agreed that there was a need for the Council to assist organisations in building the capacity required to avail of external funding opportunities.

Hardship Fund – Emerging Considerations

The Committee was reminded that it had, at a previous meeting, agreed to establish a Cost-of-Living Working Group to review previous hardship schemes and work to co-design an effective hardship scheme.

The Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty reported that the Working Group had met on two occasions and drew the Committee's attention to draft proposals in relation to the Hardship Fund for 2023/24, based upon its discussions and direct feedback from Members. The proposals covered three main areas, namely, Focus of Support (Cohorts), Design Principles and the Emerging Funding Model.

He pointed out that the funding being provided by the Department for Communities and the Council, through the hardship scheme and the underspend in the Covid Support Grant respectively, amounted to approximately £1,019,000, with the indicative budget allocation being as follows:

Theme	Partner(s)	Funding Allocation (indicative)
1. Support to Children and Families	Schools via Education Authority	£250,000
	Sponsored/Community Day-Care (Children 0-10 years age / vulnerable children)	£24,000
	Save the Children	£100,000
	Family Support Hubs (network of 10)	£100,000
2. Support for Individuals and Families in Immediate (Emergency) Need	SVDP	£75,000
	Red Cross (55+ Age Group)	£75,000
	Generalist Advice Providers	£120,000
	Trussell Trust	£30,000
	Fareshare	£80,000
3. Enhance Capacity of Existing Structures and Programmes	Winter Wellbeing Community Programmes	£15,000
	Warm and Well Programme	£50,000
	Social Supermarkets	£100,000
	TOTAL	£1,019,000

The Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty then pointed out that, whilst the Department for Communities' Letter of Offer provided for a management fee for the delivery of the hardship fund, it was anticipated that this would apply to a minimal number of partners. There could also be other non-avoidable costs, relating to delivery infrastructure, for some delivery partners which would be kept to a minimum. Any such costs would, he confirmed, be inclusive of the overall funding allocations outlined above.

He went on to state that discussions were ongoing with potential delivery partners in terms of the capacity to deliver the scale of support and funding in this financial year and there might, therefore, be a need to realign identified in-year underspends at very short notice. He added that the Cost-of-Living Working Group had highlighted the need for any emerging Hardship Scheme to be underpinned by an effective communications plan, setting out clear messages around the scope of the scheme, the support available and how it could be accessed and have clear referral pathways in place which were promoted across community partners. He concluded by recommending that the Committee:

- i. note the contents of the report, including the funding being made available to support the development and implementation of a Hardship Scheme for the 2023/24 financial year;
- ii. approve the proposed cohorts who should benefit from any such scheme, namely, children and young people (including those with special needs), families and/or individuals in emergency need, aging population and newcomer communities;
- iii. approve the proposed funding model as set out in the table above; and
- iv. delegate authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services and the Director of City and Organisational Strategy to realign in-year underspends within the overall funding framework.

The Committee adopted the recommendations, subject to the funding allocation for Generalist Advice Providers in the foregoing table being reduced by £100k to £20k and that for the Family Support Hubs and Social Supermarkets each being increased by £50k to £150k.

Update on Contracts

The Committee:

- approved the public advertisement of tenders, as per Standing Order 37a, as detailed in Table 1 below;
- approved the award of Single Tender Actions, in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions, as detailed in Table 2 below;
- approved the modification of the contract, as per Standing Order 37a, as detailed in Table 3 below; and
- noted the award of retrospective Single Tender Actions, in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions, as detailed in Table 4 below.

Table 1: Competitive Tenders

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Estimated Total Contract Value	SRO	Short Description of Goods / Services
App-based Carparking Management System	Up to 5 years	Up to £78,000	J. Tully	Council Staff App-based carparking management system.
Bulk LPG for Duncrue Estate	Up to 14 months	Up to £160,000	S. Grimes	LPG is used as a support fuel to the council's landfill gas extraction and flaring plant that services commercial and other premises situated within the Dargan Industrial Estate.
Percipio Skillsoft e-learning platform	Up to 3 years	Up to £44,973.36	T. Wallace	Percipio is an online learning platform that allows the user to watch, read or listen to content as well as practice learning in a secure lab environment. This resource is utilised by Digital Services staff to both maintain and stay up to date with current skills and IT knowledge as well gain and learn new IT and related skills that support the delivery of IT services to the Council.
Provision of Energy Audits for selected BCC buildings *Approved June 2023. Value reviewed and approved Aug 2023. Requesting duration additional 6 month up to 12 months.	Up to 12 months	Up to £85,000	J. Tully	Supplier required to complete energy audits of four high use Council buildings – City Hall, Cecil Ward, Adelaide and Duncrue. This SOC and spend has been approved through the Climate Plan Programme Board. Additional value is included to cover thermal heat modelling/digital twinning options and potential future works e.g., additional sites.

Supply, delivery, installation, replacement and off-loading of litter bins	Up to 5 years	Up to £750,000	D. Sales	Continued supply of litter bins and support services including new wider scope for different types of bins and flexibility to procure any other bin types that may be required in future.
Crematorium and Cemetery Supplies	Up to 5 years	Up to £250,000	S. Toland	After an unsuccessful quotation exercise for urns, the service is looking to included other items i.e. memorial safety equipment, grave side utilities, grass mats, shoring equipment plus spare parts and maintenance of existing shoring, to achieve value for money.
Provision and installation of a system for side of vehicle advertising on refuse collection vehicles (RCV), including printing of the banner	Up to 2 years	Up to £80,000	D. Sales	The Council is to launch the Bin credible waste campaign in October, 2023. The proposed graphics would reflect the campaign's look and message and add weight and longevity to the campaign. The proposed system will ensure that any advertising can be easily changed with no damage to the vehicle to reflect any changes to the campaign message or future campaigns.
Procurement Framework for delivery of Employment Academies *Approved CMT 27/09/2023 £6m contract value now reviewed	Up to 4 years	Up to £9,000,000	J. Greer	The current Employment Academy Framework is ending in February, 2024. A successive framework must be established to ensure continued delivery of Employment Academies. Scope/ value extended to include other local NI council's use.
Provision of Building Management, Operation and Café Provision at 2 Royal	Up to 10 months	£160,000	J. Greer	2 Royal Avenue has been operating since 2022 providing a non-commercial space in the

Avenue, Belfast				heart of the city providing citizens and visitors with a free and accessible place to relax, have a coffee and enjoy an arts and cultural offering. The building management contract will terminate on 31st December 2023.
Franchisee for the Bobbin Café in City Hall	Up to 5 years	Up to £2.5m (est. £500k revenue p.a. plus concession fee)		Provision of retail catering service at Bobbin Coffee Shop in City Hall including additional catering services required for Members/ Officers; meetings, trolley service. Tender will be a Reserved Contract for social enterprise sector. Contract value best estimate as incumbent Franchisee has not disclosed business financial information.
Toilet Hygiene Services	Up to 5 years	Up to £375,000	N. Largey	Supply, rental, installation and servicing of toilet hygiene equipment and floor mats for various Council properties. This service is required for all Council buildings where bathrooms are used by Council staff and members of the public to ensure cleanliness and the health and safety of all those using Council buildings and facilities.

Table 2: Single Tender Actions

Title	Duration	Total Value	SRO	Description	Supplier	STA Reason Code*
SAP Licences Support	Up to 1 year	Up to £50,500	P. Gribben	Licenses are obtained directly from SAP and are required one year as we transition to a	SAP UK Limited	3

				new finance system.		
Oracle technical support and software license for use of systems with 1000 users	Up to 3 years	Up to £125,000	S. McNicholl	This is a proprietary license for use with Oracle based database systems.	Oracle Premier Support Digital Renewal Centre	3
Festive Lighting Infrastructure	Up to 7 months	Up to £159,000	J. Greer	Acquisition of festive lighting infrastructure from BCCM, with additional management services for the erection of Belfast's festive lighting scheme.	BCCM	3
Masternaut – Fleet Tracking/Telematics	Up to 2 Years	Up to £120,000	S. McNicholl	GPS tracking system installed in council vehicles and the service can only be provided by Masternaut. Maintenance and support renewal for installed software. Continued use of system required until in-cab fleet system procured.	Masternaut Ltd	3
MTC Mechanical Services cover Nov-Dec	Up to 2 months	Up to £100,000	S. Grimes	As the current STA cover will end 31st October 2023, a new STA is required to ensure continuity of service until the re-tender evaluation process is completed.	WJM Building Services Ltd	11

<p>Deployment App with Route Optimization and Customer Updates</p>	<p>Up to 2 years</p>	<p>Up to £43,000</p>	<p>C. Matthews</p>	<p>Brisqq Ltd is the only supplier of this type of software that is able to comply with our requirement to have data stored in UK. Continued use of system required until in-cab fleet system procured.</p>	<p>Brisqq Ltd</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>Provision of an Environmental Health Officer (EHO) via temporary agency</p>	<p>Up to 6 months</p>	<p>Up to £45,000</p>	<p>S Toland</p>	<p>The role is required for 24hr shift rota cover for essential service delivery within the Port Health service. The incumbent temporary agency provider, Matrix SCM, have been unable to fulfil this role therefore STA is required. A new recruitment exercise is underway which could see the post filled by the end of December, 23.</p>	<p>MCS Group</p>	<p>11</p>

Table 3: Modification to Contract

Title of Contract	Duration	Modification	SRO	Description	Supplier
T1873 - Provision of Toilet Hygiene Services	Up to 5 years	Additional 4 months and £25,000	N. Largey	A contract modification is required to allow for a new tender process to be completed. Work is underway to review and update the current specification in line with Departmental requirements and advertise tender.	Concept Services (NI) Ltd
T1851 - Young tree maintenance, tree planting and minor horticultural works	Up to 5 years	Additional 4 months & £140,000	D. Sales	A contract modification is required to allow for a new tender process to be completed. Work is underway to review and update the current specification in line with Departmental requirements and advertise tender.	Clive Richardson Ltd.

T2303 - Provision of building management, operation and café provision at 2 Royal Avenue	Up to 17 months	Additional 2 months and £26,596	J. Greer	A contract modification is required to allow for a new tender process to be completed. Work is underway to review and update the current specification in line with Departmental requirements and advertise tender.	MayWe
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Table 4: Retrospective Single Tender Actions

Title of Contract	Duration	Value	SRO	Description	Supplier	STA Reason Code*
MTC Mechanical services cover Sept-Oct	Up to 2 months	Up to £100,000	S Grimes	To ensure continuity of service until the re-tender evaluation process is completed. This will ensure the incumbent contractor can continue to carry out essential services including callouts, repairs and planned maintenance until the new contract is in place.	WJM Building Services Ltd	11

*** STA/ Direct Award Reasons**

Reason Code	Reasons in Line with Public Contract Regulations, for the Direct Award
1	No response following advertised procurement exercise
2	Creation or acquisition of a unique work of art or artistic performance
3	Competition is absent for technical reasons (no reasonable substitute exists).
4	The protection of exclusive rights, including intellectual property rights.
5	Extreme urgency brought about by events unforeseeable by BCC, the time limits for a procurement cannot be complied with.
6	Products manufactured purely for the purpose of research, experimentation, study or development.
7	Additional deliveries which are intended either as a partial or extended replacement of supplies or installations where a change of supplier would result in supplies of different technical characteristics causing incompatibility or disproportionate technical difficulties in operation and maintenance.
8	Supplies quoted and purchased on a commodity market.
9	Supplies or services on particularly time-limited advantageous terms e.g. supplier winding up its business activities.
10	New works and services consisting of the repetition of similar works or services, provided that the possibility of a direct award is disclosed during the original tender process.
11	Other – Reason out with Public Contract Regulations (PCR 2015)

In addition, the Committee agreed that the quarterly finance report should, in future, include information on expenditure on Single Tender Actions and on the number and value of contracts under £30,000. The Committee also reiterated the point which had been made at previous meetings that the monthly report on contracts should provide as much information as possible on Single Tender Actions, in order to inform the decision-making process.

Single Tender Action - Supply, Delivery and Commissioning of Replacement Illuminate Lighting Fittings and Ancillary Equipment

The Committee considered further the above-mentioned minute of the meeting of 22nd September, which the Council, at its meeting on 4th October had referred back to the Committee to enable further information to be provided. An extract of the minute is set out below:

Extract from minutes of:-

STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

22nd September, 2023

Title	Duration	Total Value	SRO/ Delegated Officer	Description	Supplier
Supply, delivery and commissioning of replacement illuminate lighting fittings and ancillary equipment as part of the PPM maintenance programme	Up to 3 years	Up to £60,000	S. Grimes	The City Hall Illuminate system is wholly proprietary to Philips lighting. The system is installed throughout the City Hall utilising a specialist technology, that is a closed protocol, and will only operate with the family of Phillips products. Signify (Phillips) do not supply to clients direct, as they use approved wholesalers. Due to our partnership in the 2013 EU project, we have a wholesale account directly with them.	Signify Commercial Ireland Ltd.

The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services drew the Members' attention to the additional information provided within the contracts report, following which the Committee agreed to affirm its decision of 22nd September to approve the award of the Single Tender Action, in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions.

Matters referred back from Council/Motions

Single Tender Action - Supply, Delivery and Commissioning of Replacement Illuminate Lighting Fittings and Ancillary Equipment

The Committee noted that this item had been dealt with earlier in the meeting, as part of the Update on Contracts report.

Quarterly Update on Motions

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Committee on the progress of all motions for which Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is responsible.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is recommended to:

- i. note the updates to all motions for which it is responsible; and**
- ii. agree to the closure of motions 7, 24, 25, 55, 73, 78, 93, 98, 108, 139, 163, 168, 169, 196, 198, 210, 213, 215, 237, 239, 247, 292, 295, 301 as referenced in paragraph 3.4 below.**

3.0 Main Report

Background

3.1 At the Committee meeting on 25th October 2019, the following motion was agreed:

‘That this Council notes that other Councils produce a monthly status report in relation to motions; and agrees that Belfast City Council adopts a similar practice and produces a monthly update on motions which will be brought to each full Council meeting, detailing the following:

- 1. Date received;**
- 2. Motion title**
- 3. Submitted by which Councillor**
- 4. Council meeting date**
- 5. Committee motion is referred to**
- 6. Outcome of Committee where motion will be debated**
- 7. Month it will be reported back to Committee**
- 8. Other action to be taken.’**

3.2 Following a review exercise, a new database containing all motions and Issues Raised in Advance at Committee was created and quarterly reporting to Committee commenced in March 2021. The latest quarterly update showing all active

motions and Issues Raised in Advance which this Committee is responsible for has been circulated.

Closure of motions and Issues Raised in Advance

3.3 At the Committee meeting on 20th November 2020, it was agreed that motions could be closed for one of two reasons:

- those which contained an action(s) that has been completed; and
- those which have become Council policy.

3.4 The Committee is asked to agree that the following 24 motions are now closed:

Category 1 Recommended Closures:

- **Childcare Strategy (Ref no 7)** – This motion called for the Council to agree to investigate options to co-create a Childcare Strategy for the city. It was agreed that a childcare strategy that is for Belfast alone would not be operational and outside the remit of the Council. Council continues to engage with key central government departments and agencies through community planning and other structures to advocate the need to accelerate the finalisation and implementation of the regional strategy. Therefore, it is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Application to Ulster History Circle for a Blue Plaque (Ref 108)** – This motion called for an application to the Ulster History Circle for a blue plaque for Olaudah Equiano and to meet the costs for its implementation. A letter was issued to the Secretary of the Ulster History Circle who advised that this application has been discussed and declined on the basis that Mr. Equiano did not meet the criteria for a blue plaque. Therefore, it is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Establishment of an External Independent Review of Educational Provision (Ref 139)** – This motion called for the Council to write to the NI Executive to show support for the very early implementation of the agreement to establish an external, independent review of educational provision and the prospect of moving towards a single education system and invite representation onto the Community Planning Partnership to ensure Belfast is equipped to ensure that education is inclusive for all. SP&R Committee agreed a Council response on 18th November 2022 (endorsed by Full Council) to the Department of

Education's consultation on its Corporate Plan which has been submitted. Council officers continue to work with colleagues from Dept of Education and the Education Authority in bringing forward the refreshed Belfast Agenda and focus for the next four years and it is recommended that this motion is now closed.

- **Application Fees in the Private Rental Sector (Ref 163)** – This motion called for the Council to write to the Minister for Communities and the Minister of Finance, outlining concerns about and pledging council's support for the regulation of the private rented sector. Letters were sent in March 2021 and the responses reported back to Committee in April 2021. It is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Legislation to Tackle the Third Party Sale of Pups (Ref 168)** – This motion called for the Council to write to the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs with regard to measures to tackle the third party sale of pups. Letters were issued in April 2021 and a further motion on the Illegal Puppy Trade (Ref 221) was taken forward and completed in December 2021. It is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Mullaghglass Landfill Site – Legal action (Ref 169) –** This motion called on the Council to prepare legal action against the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and the site operator for their dereliction of duty in protecting the rights of citizens around the Mullaghglass landfill site. The outcome of the legal proceedings were notified to the People and Communities Committee at the September 2023 meeting. It is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Bonfire Procedures (Ref 198)** – This motion called for the Council to review bonfire procedures. A report was brought to Committee on 24 September 2021. A further report 'Review of Bonfire Procedure' was brought on 19 November 2021. The SP and R Committee agreed to endorse the proposed review process and noted that the Bonfire Panel would be reconvened to move that forward and address the issues which had been raised in relation to the decision to regulate illegal and toxic bonfires. It is recommended that this motion is now closed.

- **Community Sector Terms and Conditions (Ref 213)** – This motion called for the Council to write to the Minister for Communities to request that a review be undertaken and actions recommended, to support and strengthen the community sector, particularly in relation to terms and conditions and salaries. A letter was sent in November 2021. It is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Regulation of Air BnB's (Ref 215)** – This motion called on the Council to write to the NI Executive to undertake a review and propose recommendations with regard to concerns around the growing number of unregulated Air BnB's and similar types of short-term let arrangements. A letter was sent in November 2021. It is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service (Ref 237)** – This motion called on the Council to fund the Tribunal a sum of money, if necessary, to avert redundancies and maintain the level of service. The funding allocation was approved and it is therefore recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Mountainview Centre (Ref 239)** – This motion called on the Council to convene an urgent meeting with relevant partners to explore the possibility of keeping this service open. The Mountainview Centre has now closed with the staff and service users being absorbed elsewhere and therefore it is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Abortion Services (Ref 295)** – This motion called on the Council to write to the Northern Trust to encourage it to provide more information about early medical abortion on their website and write to Minister Swann to urge him to convene an emergency meeting of the Executive to officially commission abortion services. The Northern Trust have now commissioned abortion services and therefore it is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Dual Language Street Signage (Ref 301)** – This motion called for an update report to be brought to the next meeting of SP&R outlining the reasons for the delay in processing the backlog of applications. An update report was brought to Committee on 17 February 2023. It is recommended that this motion is now closed.

Category 2 Recommended Closures:

- **Webcasting of Committee Meetings (Refs 24 and 93)** – These motions called for the webcasting of committee meetings to become common practice after the pandemic. This has now been implemented so it is recommended that both motions be closed.
- **Abortion Imagery (Ref 25)** – This motion called on the Council to investigate whether the public display of graphic abortion imagery in the city centre can be regulated lawfully. The Council undertook initial engagement with the Department for Communities and obtained legal advice on the draft byelaws. On 26th June 2023 the SP and R Committee agreed that the draft bye laws be issued for formal public consultation commencing in September 2023. It is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Drug Risk Force (Ref 55)** – This motion called on the Council to write to the Ministers for Health, Justice and Communities to establish a drug task force, the primary role of which would be to co-ordinate and drive action to improve the health outcomes for people who use drugs, reducing the risk of harm and death. Letters were issued as requested on 20 Feb 2020 and this work is now being taken forward as part of the 'Complex Lives' initiative. It is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Race Equality Champion for Belfast City Council (Ref 73)** – This motion called on a report to be brought forward for Members to consider, outlining options to further promote the inclusion of BAME communities, their access to Council services and participation in civic life. The Director of City and Organisational Strategy is now the CMT nominated Executive Sponsor for Race and is overseeing the development of a Race Action Plan for 2023 – 2026. The Race Action Plan will be an additional strand to the Council's diversity action plans going forward. It is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Suicide Awareness Training (Ref 78)** – This motion called on the Council to resource further mental health and suicide awareness training for staff and appoint mental health champions in each department. A number of courses have been promoted to staff and

Members and are offered on a continual basis via the Council's health and well-being support page. In addition, the revised Health and Well-Being Strategy Action Plan includes the establishment of a network of health and wellbeing champions as a key action. It is recommended that this motion is now closed.

- **Procurement Policy – Living Wage (Ref 98)** – This motion called on the Council to promote a procurement policy that supports the principle of a Real Living Wage. The council's Social Value Procurement Policy is now implemented and includes support for the Real Living Wage and the Council has also been awarded accreditation from the Living Wage Foundation. It is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **A Changing Places Toilets Policy for Belfast City Council (Ref 196)** – This motion called on the Council to develop a Changing Places Toilet Facility Policy for Belfast City Council, with input from disabled people, older people and carers. An officer working group has now been established, who are working on a draft policy. This draft policy was presented to the Disability Working Group in October 2023 and therefore it is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Staff on Temporary Contracts (Ref no 210)** – This motion called on the Council to obtain legal opinion to establish whether anyone employed on a temporary contract for 12 continuous months can have that contract made permanent if the staff member wishes to do so. A report was presented to January's SP&R Committee on the legal opinion received and reports on the number of staff on temporary contracts and the use of agency assignees is presented to Committee on a quarterly basis. It is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **City of Sanctuary (Ref 247)** – This motion called on the Council to support the Council becoming a Council of Sanctuary and Belfast a City of Sanctuary and commit to the standards identified as part of this. The council has recently carried out research into the inequalities experienced by Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Traveller people residing in Belfast and work is on-going to ensure a co-ordinated approach to addressing the findings. In addition, initiatives are still on-going through the Good Relations Action Plan and Council has also been awarded £406 thousand pounds from the TEO's Dispersal Fund to assist with programmes to support asylum seekers until March 2024. Updates on this on-going work are brought to

Committee as required. Therefore, it is recommended that this motion is now closed.

- **Council to become an Autism Impact Champion (Ref 292)** – This motion called on the council to become an Autism Impact Champion, as defined by Autism NI. The Equality and Diversity Unit have included ‘becoming an Autism NI Impact Champion’ as an action measure in the new Disability Action Plan 2022-25. Therefore, it is recommended that this NOM is now closed.

3.5 Financial and Resource Implications

There are no additional financial implications required to implement these recommendations.

3.6 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

There are no equality, good relations or rural needs implications contained in this report.”

After discussion, the Committee noted the quarterly update on motions and granted approval to close those motions set out within paragraph 2.1 of the report, with the exception of the following two:

- **Childcare Strategy (Reference Number 7)**

The Committee agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting on how the Council could work with childcare providers and agencies to address the current crisis in the childcare sector.

- **Abortion Imagery (Reference Number 25)**

The Committee agreed that this motion should remain open, in the context of the consultation which was due to open shortly on the new draft bye laws for the good governance of Belfast City Centre.

In closing the motion on the provision of a Blue Plaque for Olaudah Equiano (Reference number 108), the Committee agreed that the matter be progressed via the motion calling for the erection of street signage in the City centre to mark the location of important historical events related to the 'Belfast Enlightenment' period, which had been passed by the City Growth and Regeneration Committee at its meeting on 10th November, 2021 and that consideration be given to making reference to Olaudah Equiano within the City Hall visitor exhibition.

The Committee agreed also that a review be undertaken of the City Hall visitor exhibition, which had opened in 2017, with a view to refreshing its content.

Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues

UK Future Cities Commission

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To update the Committee on the key recommendations emanating from the UK Future Cities Commission report and outline the Council’s current position in relation to the proposed recommendations.

2.1 Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is asked to note the UK Future Cities Commission report.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 The UK Urban Futures Commission is an ambitious enquiry established to unlock the potential of the UK’s cities. The Commission is led by the Royal Society of Arts in partnership with Core Cities UK and Lloyds Banking Group and aims to work with cities and citizens to develop a transformative national plan for their future.

3.2 The Commission has recently published a report ‘Unleashing the potential of the UK’s cities’ (see appendix 1) which was guided by three core questions:

- 1. What are cities and what role do they play in our social, economic and environmental systems? What are the biggest challenges and opportunities – both now and in the coming decades?;**
- 2. In light of those challenges, what do we want and need them to be?; and**
- 3. How do we reach our vision for cities? What steps can we take now to get there?**

3.3 The report produced a series of recommendations and actions for consideration of cities and national government, each of which are summarised in the tables below, alongside a brief summary of the Council’s current position against those specifically related to cities.

3.4 **Recommendations for Cities to Consider**

<u>Recommendation 1: Cities need a plan to replenish and grow their natural, social and economic assets.</u>	
<i>Actions</i>	<i>BCC Position</i>
<p>1a) <u>Form a City Coalition</u>, reflecting the plurality of leaders in a city, with actors from local government, business, anchor institutions, and the community.</p>	<p>The refreshed Belfast Agenda and the supporting city governance arrangements is the mechanism for achieving this coalition in Belfast.</p> <p>A review of the governance arrangements is currently taking place to ensure they remain fit for purpose.</p> <p>Likewise, the Belfast Region City Deal is a further established leadership space for the city driving game changing programmes of work for the city.</p>
<p>1b) <u>Develop a Local Prosperity Plan</u>. Cities should have a single long term strategic plan for delivering ‘prosperity’ – defined in social, economic and ecological terms - for their citizens and beyond, co-developed by the City Coalition</p>	<p>This description resonates with elements of the refreshed Belfast Agenda with themes focused on our People and Communities, Our Economy, Our Place, Our Planet and a Compassionate City.</p>
<p>1c) <u>Strengthen Data and Modelling Capabilities</u>, with a view to better measurement of</p>	<p>Lack of data is an ongoing issue for Belfast and NI (evidenced in the Future Cities report where a lot of the</p>

<p>economic, social and natural value, and modelling of the interconnected effects of interventions across the three systems.</p>	<p>comparative tables do not cover Belfast due to a lack of available data). The Council would welcome the opportunity to explore the data and modelling capabilities with other Core Cities members. There have been recent discussions with NISRA to explore opportunities to jointly improve data modelling for Belfast and work continues with Queens University on GIS mapping. A Council data maturity assessment has been undertaken with a view of assessing how we can better use data.</p>
<p>1d) <u>Increase citizen participation through residents' councils and juries</u>. Ensuring the voices of different interests are heard is important for the legitimacy and durability of decision-making.</p>	<p>The Belfast Agenda refresh commits to enhanced citizen engagement. Work is currently being undertaken to develop a co-design framework for the Belfast Agenda that will be brought to SP and R Committee at a future date.</p>

<u>Recommendation 2:</u> Cities need the powers and tools to execute the plan.	
<i>Actions</i>	<i>BCC Position</i>
2a) <u>Develop urban leadership schemes</u>, to build and retain the skills needed to transform our cities.	To be further explored as part of the People Strategy. Work is ongoing regarding managing in a political environment.
2b) <u>Co-fund the establishment of a Cities Investment Hub</u>, a central spine of specialist expertise available to all cities, delivering economies of scale to help develop Local Prosperity Plans and associated investment propositions.	Officers will consider further how this would work in a devolved environment.
2c) <u>Consider establishing an Urban Wealth Fund</u> to manage and increase local revenues from public sector assets.	Officers will consider further how this would work in a devolved environment. Ongoing work on Strategic Site Assessments will ensure that public assets are being utilised strategically.
2e) <u>Grant local authorities and mayoral combined authorities in England more streamlined, long-term and flexible funding</u>, putting an end to all current competitive	Whilst this specifically references England, it is recommended the Council strategically supports this recommendation as an alternative to the levelling up fund approach.

<p>economic development funding pots, and rolling those that are delivered at a local authority level into an integrated revenue and capital allocation for 'prosperity' in the Local Government Finance Settlement, on a multi-year basis.</p>	<p>The Council has commissioned an analysis of regeneration funds that are currently available to local authorities in GB.</p>
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<p>Recommendation 3: Cities need to secure investment to finance the Plan.</p>	
<p><i>Actions</i></p>	<p><i>BCC Position</i></p>
<p>3a) <u>Catalyse private investment through joint ventures and special purpose vehicles</u>, for projects linked to the Local Prosperity Plan.</p>	<p>The Council is currently exploring funding models for regeneration and climate related projects.</p>
<p>3b) <u>Set up publicly capitalised investment funds</u>, explicitly linked to social, economic and ecological objectives in the Local Prosperity Plan.</p>	<p>Work is ongoing regarding the development of a portfolio of projects which will be used to target funding and investment opportunities.</p>
<p>3c) <u>Join with senior representatives of financial institutions to commit to a Cities Investment Compact</u>, with a commitment of 5% of their assets directly contributing to filling the investment gap in the Core Cities by 2030.</p>	<p>It is recommended that the Council explores this recommendation further.</p>

<p>3d) <u>Host investment showcases</u> to advertise investable, regenerative programmes to both domestic and foreign investors.</p>	<p>Work is ongoing regarding the development of a portfolio of projects which will be used to target funding and investment opportunities.</p>
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3.5 Recommendations for National Government to Consider

The Commission also provides a number of recommendations for national government that are required to support the work detailed in the report.

- Reinstate national industrial strategy with our largest cities at its heart. Mirroring Local Prosperity Plans, this should take account of outcomes across economic, social, and natural systems. It must also articulate cities' contribution, both individually and collectively.
- Introduce a new statutory purpose for city councils to generate prosperity in their place, defined by social and ecological as well as economic health. This new statutory purpose would place generating local prosperity on an equal footing to core services, providing the City Coalition with a strong mandate for action.
- Accelerate progress on the devolution of powers to local government in England, moving to the default presumption of powers and assets being devolved unless the UK Government can provide a strong rationale not to do so.
- Revise the remits of UK's major investment agencies to allow them to better support cities.
- Support responsible local borrowing for regenerative projects, deploying the Office for Local Government to offer better oversight and regulation and promoting investment in social and environmental capital through discounted interest rates.

- **Enhance fiscal devolution** through a target for HM Treasury to bring the share of taxes controlled locally to the OECD average by the end of the next Parliament.
- **Rewire the UK's macroeconomic and fiscal framework**, shifting our fiscal rules from a focus on net debt to net wealth, broadening the definition of capital to include social and natural dimensions and correcting for limitations in the Green Book.

- 3.6 Following the launch of this report, the Council will consider the Commission's recommendations further and work with Core Cities and other associated partners to review how they can be applied. These recommendations will also be taken forward internally through discussions during the corporate planning process over the coming months.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.7 There are no financial or resource implications associated with this report at this stage.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.8 There are no Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment associated with this report at this stage."

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

Consultation on Northern Ireland's Emissions Reduction Targets and Carbon Budgets and the UK Climate Change Committee's Advice Report

The Committee approved the Council's response (copy available [here](#)) to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs' consultation on emission targets, carbon budgets and the Climate Change Committee's Advice Report.

Visit Belfast - Management Agreement/Renewal of The Partnership Agreement with Translink and Visit Belfast

The Committee considered the following report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Committee to provide a management agreement which gives Visit Belfast reassurance of the Council's commitment to continued support of the organisation as a strategic partner, subject to an annual funding agreement, and to approve the renewal of the Partnership Agreement with Translink and

Visit Belfast for the operation of a ticketing area at the Belfast Welcome Centre.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- i. approve the provision of an agreement that provides Visit Belfast with the reassurance that the City Council is committed to supporting the organisation up to 15th July 2033, albeit subject to an annual funding agreement from recurrent budget provision; and
- ii. approve the renewal of the Partnership Agreement with Translink and Visit Belfast for the operation of a ticketing area within Belfast Welcome Centre at 8-9 Donegall Square North, up to 31st March, 2026.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Visit Belfast serves as the official DMO for Belfast, successfully promoting Belfast as a vibrant tourist destination to out of state, international & business tourism markets and managing various aspects of the tourism and visitor experience.

3.2 On 21st April 2023, the Committee approved the continued occupation of premises at 8-9 Donegall Square North by Visit Belfast to operate the Welcome Centre in the delivery of leisure marketing, business tourism and visitor servicing activity for Belfast and to extend the term of the existing Management Agreement for a period of 1 year from 16th July 2023 and year to year thereafter until a date no later than 15th July 2028, which is in line with the lease expiry held by the Council.

3.3 The Management Agreement is subject to an annual review of Visit Belfast's annual business plan and project plan and approval of funding by the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.

3.4 Visit Belfast has advised Council officers of unfortunate unintended negative consequences to business and planning challenges that the 5 year stop date on the current management agreement poses.

3.5 In order to continue to work with Visit Belfast as our strategic delivery partner, which will assist in achieving the outcomes of the Belfast Agenda; the provision of a ten year agreement for the delivery of leisure marketing, business tourism and visitor servicing activity for Belfast and Belfast City Region

creates greater confidence, stability and a level of security for staff retention and recruitment; generation of income from the private sector, other sources and from commercial activity; and reassurance to our wider tourism partners and industry.

Rationale for Extension:

- 3.6 **Positive Track Record:** Visit Belfast has a proven track record of effectively promoting Belfast as a tourist destination and managing critical functions such as marketing, visitor information, and event coordination.
- 3.7 **Consistency and Stability:** A 10-year long stop date will provide stability and consistency in planning and executing long-term tourism strategies, helping to maintain and enhance Belfast's reputation as a world-class destination.
- 3.8 **Long-Term Investment:** Encourage sustained investment in the city's tourism infrastructure, including the development of new attractions, improved visitor services, and enhanced marketing efforts.
- 3.9 **Economic Impact:** Tourism plays a significant role in Belfast's economy, and a long-term commitment to Visit Belfast will help ensure continued economic benefits, including job creation and revenue generation.
- 3.10 **Based on the rationale and considerations outlined above, committee are asked to consider the recommendations to review and progress amending the existing management agreement for Visit Belfast from July 2028 to July 2033. The management agreement will remain subject to annual review against annual business and project plans**
- 3.11 **Translink Sharing Agreement**
 - (i) **Approval of renewal of the Sharing Agreement with Translink and Visit Belfast for the operation of a ticketing area within Belfast Welcome Centre at 8-9 Donegall Square North up to 31 March 2026.**
- 3.12 **There has been a partnership agreement in place since 2017 with Translink and Visit Belfast to operate a ticketing area within Belfast Welcome Centre. The agreement is due for renewal for a further three years, the extension of which will ensure that there is continued ticketing services being provided at this key location in Belfast and Translink has indicated it wishes to continue to provide that service.**

- 3.13 Subject to the Committee's approval, officers will work to make the relevant changes to the current management agreement and any resultant modifications to the lease agreement if required; and the Sharing Agreement with Translink will be renewed.

Financial and Resources Implications

- 3.14 No financial implications – Visit Belfast funding is subject to an annual funding agreement from recurrent budget.

Equality and Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.15 None associated with this report.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Dual Language Street
Signs - Gaeltacht Quarter**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 On 1st March 2023 the Council agreed, in principle, to progress with dual language street signage in the Gaeltacht Quarter en block as a cost saving measure, subject to equality screening and when finance becomes available, with a report to be submitted to Committee in due course.
- 1.2 This decision was called in and subject to a barrister's opinion which concluded that the call-in did not have merit. Party Group Leaders were advised of the barrister's opinion via email on 7th July 2023 and were advised that officers would implement the decision and a report will be brought to a subsequent meeting of the SP and R Committee in due course outlining the result of an equality screening, the financial implications and any other associated matters.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to consider the contents of the report and to:
- (a) Consider the option to proceed with the erection of Dual language Street signs in the Gaeltacht Quarter in line with the process outlined in this report.

If the Committee is minded to proceed with the process outlined in this report, then it is asked to:

- (b) Confirm the threshold for objections to this process which triggers the requirement for an application and engagement of the current full process for a specific street within the Gaeltacht Quarter;**
- (c) Confirm if applications which are deemed subject to the full process due to the threshold of objections being met are dealt with after the existing applications received are processed;**
- (d) Agree that this be added to the Capital Programme as a capital project; and**
- (e) Confirm if those streets which form the boundary of the Gaeltacht Quarter will also be included as part of the area.**

3.0 Background

- 3.1 In July 2022, the SP and R Committee agreed to adopt a new policy position in relation to Dual Language Street Signs taking into account the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. This provides for a single resident / elected Member / Developer being sufficient to trigger a street survey and the threshold for the percentage of residents required to respond positively being changed to 15%.**
- 3.2 During the Committee's consideration of the draft policy, it was considered that separate arrangements would ultimately be developed with respect to streets within both the City Core and the Gaeltacht Quarter and that the Council would have the discretion to depart from the wider dual language street sign policy in respect of these two areas.**
- 3.3 The Council agreed, in principle, on 1st March 2023 how applications for a second name plate in the City Core would be processed. It also agreed, in principle, to progress with dual language signage in the Gaeltacht Quarter en bloc as a cost saving measure, subject to equality screening and when finance becomes available.**

The Gaeltacht Quarter

- 3.4 In 2010, Deloitte were commissioned by An Cheathru Ghealtachta Teo (ACGT) and the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure (DCAL) to prepare several documents including a plan for the development of Belfast's Gaeltacht Quarter and to further progress recommendations made in the 2004 Dutton report. This report developed the vision, objectives and principles for the Gaeltacht Quarter which built on the 2002 West Belfast and Greater Shankill Task Force recommendations, the 2004 Dutton report and the consultation exercise undertaken by Deloitte for the 2010 report.
- 3.5 The vision for An Cheathru Ghealtachta is:
- The development and sustenance of a vibrant and compelling quarter of the city where the unique selling point and the economic potential of the Irish Language and culture are exploited, developed and maximized so as to realise profit and benefit for the people of the area, the city and the region.
- 3.6 A map of the Gaeltacht Quarter boundary has been circulated with this report. This boundary will be used to identify the streets that are to be included in this proposal. The boundary shown is based upon the definition of the greater Gaeltacht Quarter boundary as outlined in the 2010 Deloitte report.
- 3.7 There are circa 417 streets in the Gaeltacht Quarter as established from the map prepared and some 108 streets have already had dual language street signage installed. Of the remaining 309 streets, approx. 48 have live applications under the current policy. Members are also asked to consider those streets that form the boundary line of the Gaeltacht Quarter and determine if these streets are to be included as part of the area.

The Proposed Approach

- 3.8 The Council has a discretionary power to erect dual language street signs under Article 11 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1995 ('the 1995 Order'). Article 11(4) of the 1995 Order sets out the matters to which the Council should have regard in deciding whether to exercise that discretionary power. This includes a requirement 'to have regard to any views on the matter expressed by the occupiers of premises in that street'.

- 3.9 Whilst the views of the occupiers of the street must be taken into consideration, their views need not be determinative, and the Council may also take into account other considerations affecting its decision.

Consultation Letter

- 3.10 Under the current Policy, only those residents on the electoral register are surveyed. This involves officers attending the Electoral Office to identify those residents and then hand delivering surveys to their property. It is instead proposed that one letter per identified property, addressed to the 'occupier', will be posted out to all properties in the identified streets within the Gaeltacht Quarter. This will explain the en bloc approach and how residents can make their views known about their individual street and will give the opportunity generally to highlight any equality of opportunity and good relations issues as outlined in the equality and good relations section below. A newspaper advert will also be placed that will outline the approach and ways that objections can be registered to ensure coverage of the proposal.
- 3.11 If a resident is in favour of the proposal to erect the street signs en bloc, then there is no requirement for them to formally respond to the letter.
- 3.12 If a resident is not in favour of the proposal, they will be able to write / email / contact the Council to advise of this. Such an objection would be the trigger to require an application and engagement of the current full process for a specific street within the Gaeltacht Quarter. Members are asked to confirm the threshold for objections to this process which triggers the requirement. Members could determine a particular number of objections to the en bloc approach for a particular street would lead to the full process being followed. Alternatively, members could agree a percentage of objections required to trigger the full process.
- 3.13 Once the threshold is reached an application will be required under the current policy for their specific street and the application subject to the full process. The objector(s) would be required to confirm their name and address so these could be checked against the electoral office to confirm they are validated as occupiers of the street.
- 3.14 Where applications are required, these will be considered by the Building Control team, processed as normal and where appropriate residents will be issued with a street survey following the usual electoral register checks. Such applications will be dealt with in the normal way and will require support from 15% of residents in order to be

successful. In accordance with the current policy for processing applications in the order received these applications will go to the end of the queue unless members agree an alternative method of dealing with or ordering them.

- 3.15 If the Council does not receive any objection to the en bloc approach for a particular street in the Gaeltacht Quarter within 30 calendar days of issuing the letter, the Council will move to erect the second name plate(s) on that street and will arrange for them to be installed as part of a planned schedule within a capital project.

Committee

- 3.16 Once the timeframe for responses is reached, any correspondence received would be processed and a report brought to committee outlining:
- 3.17 (a) those streets with no objections or below the objection threshold agreed from residents and where signage would be erected, and
(b) those streets where objections have been received above the objection threshold agreed which requires the street to be subject to the full process
- 3.18 Committee agreement will be sought to undertake the resultant actions and agreed processes for streets identified in (a) and (b) above.

Potential Benefits and Costs of the Proposed Approach

- 3.19 There are benefits that will likely be achieved by applying a blanket approach to erecting Dual Language street signs in the Gaeltacht Quarter. This approach would be beneficial as the streets within the defined area of the Gaeltacht Quarter could proceed more efficiently by eliminating some of the stages of the established process. The scale of these benefits would be based upon the number of streets for which nameplates would be erected without having to progress through the full process i.e. without meeting the agreed threshold of objection.
- 3.20 For these streets, staff time and resources in Building Control would be less per street as there would be:
- No carrying out of surveys and less administrative burden
This activity includes the stationary costs and postage cost for surveys returned. Surveys are prepared in the office and hand delivered to ensure that all local situations are covered. Returns are then

collated for each street and prepared for the next appropriate committee. Communications posted to residents will be one per household instead of one per resident on the electoral register. This will remove the requirement for unique identifiers and the overall administrative burden for issuing the communication will be reduced. Also, there will be fewer staffing resources required to track and record every decision through the standard

- **No requirement for checks at the Electoral Office.**
This involves visiting the Electoral Office in person and reviewing the register for specific streets to verify the applicant and document the numbers of all residents on the electoral register for each dwelling.
- **No requirement to respond if in favour**
This will reduce the amount of responses being returned and significantly less analysis which is required in standard surveys is anticipated.
- **No initial assessment exercise.**
Currently the initial assessments are carried out in a workshop format including staff from the Building Control, Good Relations, and Equality Teams.
- **Fewer Committee reports:**
For each street where the normal process is not required, no further staff time is required to create committee reports and going through the standard approval process for these to be submitted.
- **The revised approach will come with up-front costs, not contained in the current budgets.** To use the blanket approach for GQ streets, rather than receiving applications through the normal process would involve erecting significantly more nameplates in a shorter space of time and would require additional up front financial resources.
- **With the current staffing resource within the Building Control Service, it would not be possible to facilitate both this project and the ongoing processing of live applications for dual language street signs at the same time.** The Service would have to process any surveys for Gaeltacht Quarter streets, where objections that meet the threshold to trigger the full process have been received, as part of the existing workloads.

- Therefore, if this approach is to be taken, it is proposed that the erection of the nameplates in the Gaeltacht Quarter (where the full dual language street sign process is not being followed) could be brought forward as part of the Capital Programme as a capital project.

3.21 The overall project would require:

- Final confirmation of the streets and properties to be written to, including commercial properties.
- Mail drop to all properties.
- Collation of feedback provided in responses from residents.
- Provision of Committee report to consider the actions discussed at paragraph 3.16 above.
- Identification of nameplates in the streets, engagement with homeowners where signs are on properties.
- provision of work requests to contractor; and
- Checks of nameplates once erected and payment of invoices.

Mail Drop

- 3.22** Addresses within the Gaeltacht Quarter have been identified using the Local Development Plan map and data on the area as outlined above. This uses and is based upon the accuracy of the Pointer addressing database. It is estimated that there are in the region of 9600 properties to be included. Each property will receive one letter addressed to the 'occupier'. Officers have obtained an estimate for outsourcing this element of the work shown below.

Signage Costs

- 3.23** The estimated cost of signage for the streets currently identified within the Gaeltacht Quarter is contained in the finance section below and in the region of **£135,000**. This is based on an analysis of applications received under the new policy, and the number and cost of signs erected. Costs will vary depending on the number of signs in a street, if those signs are on walls or posts, and the size of signs required for the specific street names. It should be noted that costs would still be incurred if applications for all streets within the GQ were received, processed and approved through the normal application process, but given the condensed nature of this proposal, this finance would be required over a shorter period of time as part of the defined project, spent in

one project, rather than over a number of years. To date, approximately 40 applications have been received for streets in the GQ.

3.24 Summary Costs

Signage	£135,000
Mail drop	£7,500
Public adverts	£7,152
TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS	£149,652

3.25 It should be noted that these costs are estimated, based upon the average of 48 signs in 17 streets approved under the new policy.

Translations

3.26 Queens University have confirmed that they now have additional staffing resources to assist with translations of the current applications being processed. However, further discussions would be needed to confirm their ability to facilitate translations on the scale of this approach.

Financial and Resource Implications

3.27 Capital costs for the project to be refined through the Capital Programme.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

3.28 A draft equality screening has been carried out on the decision to erect dual language street signs en bloc within the Gaeltacht Quarter. The decision has been screened out as having minor impacts, but with the additional consultation action as outlined below.

3.29 The screening finds that the measures proposed align closely with the Council's Language and Good Relations strategies. In general, this equality screening indicates that there are sufficient safeguards, within the new procedure, to ensure there are no adverse impacts in relation to equality of opportunity and good relations issues.

3.30 It is proposed as the next step in the development of the policy approach to dual language street signage in the Gaeltacht Quarter that there is targeted and focused consultation on the new procedure with those likely to be

affected by the new procedure, i.e., the residents of the Gaeltacht Quarter. Households within the Gaeltacht Quarter will be written to, explaining the 'en bloc' approach and how each household can make their views known both about their individual street and given the opportunity generally to highlight any equality of opportunity and good relations issues.

- 3.31 Additionally, a public notice newspaper advert will be placed outlining the approach and ways that objections can be registered to ensure coverage of the proposal.
- 3.32 It is not considered that the initial Equality, Good Relations and Rural Needs assessment normally carried out for each street would be required in most streets within the Gaeltacht Quarter given that the area has designated status. However, with regards to interface areas or specific streets, there will always be an opportunity for residents and/or Members to raise objections and to engage the wider policy. It is proposed that Members would receive a notification of all streets within the GQ in advance of the letter being issued to residents, as is currently done in batches for standard applications.”

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Beattie,
Seconded by Councillor Nic Bhranair,

That the Committee agrees:

- i. to proceed with the erection of Dual language Street signs in the Gaeltacht Quarter, in line with the process outlined within the report;
- ii. that the threshold for objections to this process which would trigger the requirement for an application and engagement of the current full process for a specific street within the Gaeltacht Quarter be set at 15% of residents;
- iii. that applications which are deemed subject to the full process due to the threshold of objections being met be dealt with alongside existing applications;
- iv. that the project be added to the Capital Programme as a capital project and prioritised; and

- v. that those streets which form the boundary of the Gaeltacht Quarter also be included as part of the area, with only that portion of the Donegall Road within the boundary of the Gaeltacht Quarter, as set out in the appendix to the report, to be included.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Long,
Seconded by Councillor Maghie,

That the Committee agrees that the threshold for objections to this process which would trigger the requirement for an application and engagement of the current full process for a specific street within the Gaeltacht Quarter be set at one resident.

On a vote, nine Members voted for the amendment and ten against and it was declared lost.

The original proposal from Councillor Beattie was thereupon put to the meeting and passed.

Dual-Language Street Signs

The Director of Planning and Building Control referred to the fact that a number of dual-language street signs which had erected recently by the Council had been incorrect. She confirmed that those had now been rectified, existing signs erected under the new policy had been inspected for accuracy and robust measures had been put in place to prevent a recurrence.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

Asset Management

The Gatehouse, Templemore Baths

The Committee approved the grant of a lease for office accommodation at The Gatehouse, Templemore Baths, Templemore Avenue, to Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) for a term of six years, at a rent of £10,000 per annum.

Belfast Stories Site, North Street/Union Street

The Committee approved the use of part of the vacant land on the Belfast Stories site by The Conservation Volunteers for meanwhile use, under a short-term agreement, with the terms to be determined by the Estates Management and Legal Services Units.

Parkgate Avenue Car Park

The Committee approved the renewal of the existing licence agreement with the Directors of Argento Contemporary Jewellery Ltd. for a right to pass/repass over the Parkgate Avenue car park, for a period of one year to 31st August, 2024, subject to the payment of a fee of £3,000 per annum.

Gasworks Estate

The Committee approved the Linen Quarter BID's request to initiate a tender process to design a public space intervention within the public amenity area at the Gasworks Estate, with details to be presented to a future meeting before any commitment was given to the project.

Update on Physical Programme

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The Council's Physical Programme currently includes over 400 capital projects via a range of internal and external funding streams, together with projects which the Council delivers on behalf of external agencies. The Council's Capital Programme forms part of the Physical Programme and is a rolling programme of investment which either improves existing Council facilities or provides new facilities. This report includes stage movement requests relating to the Capital Programme, an update on Peace IV capital projects and an update on letters of offer received.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is requested to consider the following items on the Capital Programme:

- **IT Programme – F5 Access Policy Manager Project / Web Application Firewall - Agree that this project is moved to *Stage 3 – Committed* and agree that the necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate 'framework' arrangements) be initiated with contract to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.**
- **HWRCs and Civic Amenity Sites - Containers – Agree that this project is moved to *Stage 3 – Committed* and agree that the necessary procurement processes**

(including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate ‘framework’ arrangements) be initiated with contract to be awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.

- **Update on PEACE IV Capital Projects** - Note the status of Black Mountain Shared Space Project and Shankill Shared Women’s Centre and the challenging issues and risks presented in paragraph 3.5.
- **Externally Funded Projects** - Agree that necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate ‘framework’ arrangements) be initiated for any Physical Programme projects including externally funded projects as required, with contracts to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.

3.0 **Main Report**

Capital Programme

- 3.1 Members will be aware that the Council runs a substantial Physical Programme which includes the rolling Capital Programme – a multimillion regeneration programme of investment across the city which improves existing Council assets or provides new council facilities. The Council also delivers externally focused funding streams such as Belfast Investment Fund (BIF), Local Investment Fund (LIF), Social Outcomes Fund (SOF) and Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF), as well as numerous capital programmes that we deliver for central government. Our funding partners include National Lottery Heritage Fund, SEUPB Peace IV, the Executive Office, DfC, DfI via the Blue Green Infrastructure Fund and Living with Water Programme, DAERA, Ulster Garden Villages, Levelling Up Fund (LUF) and others. When appropriate, the Physical Programmes Department is happy to arrange site visits to any projects that have been completed.
- 3.2 Members agreed that all capital projects must go through a three-stage process where decisions on which capital projects progress are taken by the Committee. This provides assurance as to the level of financial control and will allow Members to properly consider the opportunity costs of approving one capital project over another capital project. The Committee is asked to note the following activity on the Capital Programme:

Project	Overview	Stage movement
IT Programme – F5 Access Policy Manager Project / Web Application Firewall	Procurement and commissioning of the F5 security suite consisting of Web Application Firewall and VPN modules. This protects our web applications and allows remote access for suppliers and some staff.	Move to Stage 3 - Committed
HWRC and CAS Containers	The project involves the replacement of containers (compactors and skips) at HWRCs and Civic Amenity sites in order to maintain service continuity and health and safety standards.	Move to Stage 3 – Committed

Proposed Stage Movement – F5 Access Policy Manager Project/ Web Application Firewall

- 3.3 Under the Council’s IT Programme, this project has been identified as being business critical which will replace existing but end of life devices and services. The project includes two modules of the F5 security suite, the F5 Access Policy Manager (APM) and the Web Application Firewall (WAF). The first module provides a VPN service for suppliers to work on network servers and for Council staff to access the network in the event of an issue with the Global Protect service. The second Web Application Firewall (WAF) module provides protection to the Council’s websites and online forms from attackers attacking the application. This project aims to continue provide remote connections to suppliers and for some applications, protect the Council against internet based cyber attacks and continue to host the digital certificates for the encryption of website traffic.

The Committee is asked to recommend that the F5 Access Policy Manager/ Web Application Firewall project now progresses to Stage 3 – Committed and that it is held at Tier 0 – Scheme at Risk pending further development of the project and a satisfactory tender return. An update will be brought back to the Committee at this stage along with the final budget allocation and confirmation that this is within the affordability limits of the Council. Members are asked to agree that necessary procurement processes (including the

invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate 'framework' arrangements) be initiated with contract to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.

Proposed stage movement – HWRC and Civic Amenity Sites - Containers (Compactors and Skips)

- 3.4 Members will recall that, in August 2023, this project was moved to *Stage 2 – Uncommitted* on the Capital Programme, with the requirement that an Outline Business Case will be worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee. Members are advised that the OBC has been completed and satisfactorily reviewed. The provision of Household Waste Recycling Centres/Civic Amenity sites is a statutory obligation on the Council, contained within article 25 of the Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997. The network of Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) and Civic Amenity Sites (CAS) is an essential business unit within the Resources & Fleet Service. Residents can deposit a significant range of large bulky items for re-use and/or recycling at the sites. The sites accept around 30,000 tonnes of waste per annum and account for almost 25% of the total tonnage of household recycling captured during the year. The provision of fit for purpose equipment (compactors & skips) will assist in achieving the key objectives, namely; maintaining efficient and effective site operations which meet strategic and statutory targets for landfill diversion and recycling; reduced Health and Safety risk associated with the sites and any potential liability arising from this equipment; maintaining customer service – recycling centre availability and capacity; and avoidance of additional costs in respect of the need to hire the containers.

The Committee is asked to recommend that the HWRC and CAS Containers project now progresses to Stage 3 – Committed and that it is held at Tier 0 – Scheme at Risk pending further development of the project and a satisfactory tender return. An update will be brought back to Committee at this stage along with the final budget allocation and confirmation that this is within the affordability limits of the Council. The Committee is asked to agree that necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate 'framework' arrangements) be initiated with contract to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.

PEACE IV Capital Projects

- 3.4 Members will recall that the Committee has expressed strong support for both Peace IV Capital Projects - Black Mountain Shared Space Project and Shankill Women's Centre - noting that this would constitute a potentially significant investment of up to €12.5m in the area which will build on the funding already secured under the Peace IV Local Action Plan for the Forth Meadow Community Greenway project and that it would also mark a significant further step towards the realisation of the 'Peace Corridor' stretching from Black Mountain to the city centre. On this basis the Council agreed to sign both letters of offer and progress with each project.

Black Mountain Shared Space Project – Phase 1

- 3.6 Members will be aware that as lead partner for the above project, the Council is effectively required to act as guarantor for the project including meeting any potential deficit in Capital Financing, as well as any ongoing revenue deficit. A potential funding deficit of £1,473,994 was reported to SP&R Committee in October 2022. The project timeframe has been extended out to December 2023 by SEUPB however this extension was within existing parameters and does not mitigate against delays caused by Covid 19, nor recent inflation rises. The capital build has always been programmed to complete in March 2024 and this remains the projection, with programming to be delivered afterwards as part of a 'grace period' requested by SEUPB. The Council has proposed this 'grace period' runs up until 28th June 2024 for completion of the physical build and associated monitoring. Officers have continued to explore any and all options possible with SEUPB to safeguard the Peace IV funding beyond the deadline date, including an extension to the claim deadline, a letter of guarantee, escrow and an advance payment bond. All these proposals were rejected by SEUPB in September 2023 due to Programme Rules. Officers will remain in contact with SEUPB to put forward any other potential solutions over the coming months.

Shankill Shared Women's Centre

- 3.7 The Committee is asked to note that the project is proceeding on site and has encountered significant cost increases directly related to inflationary pressures. This has been formally raised with SEUPB with a view to the funder meeting the additional costs. A response is awaited and the Committee will be updated accordingly.

The Committee is asked to note the status of Black Mountain Shared Space Project and Shankill Shared Women's Centre and the challenging issues and risks presented, with a further update to be brought back to Committee in due course.

Externally Funded Projects

- 3.8 The Committee is asked to note that capital project letters of offer and amended letters of offer have now been received for a number of projects where the Council is acting as the delivery agent. Amended letters of offer are commonly received to reflect minor adjustments required following tender returns. Several of these projects are match funded by the Council, either under the various funding streams i.e. LIF/BIF/SOF or through close alignment with ongoing Council initiatives. **The Committee is asked to agree that necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate 'framework' arrangements) be initiated for any Physical Programme projects including externally funded projects as required, with contracts to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.**

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.9 *Financial* – PEACEIV to be met within existing budgets and Council resources

Resources – Officer time to deliver as required

Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment

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

The Committee adopted the recommendations contained within the report and noted, in response to concerns which had been raised by Members around the challenging issues and risks associated with the Black Mountain Shared Space and the Shankill Shared Women's Centre projects highlighted therein, that the Chief Executive would keep the Party Group Leaders apprised of his ongoing discussions with the Special EU Programmes Body and would seek to hold a special meeting of the Committee/Council, should the need arise.

(Alderman McCoubrey and Councillor M. Donnelly declared an interest as soon as reference had been made to the Black Mountain Shared Space project, on the basis that they were on the Board of that organisation and left the meeting for the duration of the discussion.)

Finance, Procurement and Performance

Update on Contracts

The Committee noted that this report had been moved to Restricted Items and dealt with earlier in the meeting.

Equality and Good Relations

Minutes of the Meeting of the Shared City Partnership

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Shared City Partnership of 9th October, including the recommendations:

Belfast Stories

- to note the presentation from the Strategic Lead on the Belfast Stories project.

Membership of Shared City Partnership

- to note the update on the membership of the Partnership and agree that a temporary replacement be nominated for The Executive Office's current representative.

Good Relations Programme

- to note the quarterly update on the Good Relations Programme.

PEACE IV

- to note the update on the PEACE IV Programme.

PEACEPLUS

- to approve the PEACEPLUS Plan for submission to the Special EU Programmes Body and delegate authority to Council officers to make minor amendments to the Plan, where necessary, to ensure compliance with the assessment and funding requirements.

Operational Issues

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

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum of 12th October.

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

The Committee adopted the recommendations in respect of those applications received up to 9th October, as set out below:

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
2023 EVENTS						
Queen University Student Law Society	15 December 2023	QUB Student Law Society 85th Anniversary Celebration- Drinks Reception, Dinner and entertainment. Numbers attending – 175	C & D	No Charge as charity as voluntary group	Yes, Wine Reception as significant anniversary	Approve No Charge Wine Reception <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer for wine on arrival</i>
2024 EVENTS						
OMNI (Organisation of Malayalees in Northern Ireland)	6 January 2024	PONNONAM 2023 - A Cultural dinner and entertainment programme to celebrate New Year. Numbers attending 400	D	No charge as community group	Yes, Soft drinks reception.	Approve No Charge Soft Drink Reception <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer.</i>
Confucius Institute at Ulster University	23 February 2024	Chinese Year celebration – Year of the Dragon – cultural event of speeches, prize giving and a range of musical / dance performances. Numbers attending – 200	B & C	Charge £300 as not charity or voluntary	No hospitality	Approve Charge £300 No hospitality
Lough View Integrated Primary School	19 April 2024	Celebrating 30 Years of Lough View IPS Drinks Reception, Dinner and entertainment. Numbers attending – 200	C & D	No charge as school	Yes, Wine Reception as significant anniversary	Approve No Charge Wine Reception <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer for wine on arrival</i>

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Electronic & Security Services Limited (ESS)	20 April 2024	ESS 50th Anniversary Celebrations- Drinks Reception, Dinner, and entertainment. Numbers attending – 120	C & D	Charge as £825 as commercial company	Yes, Wine Reception as significant anniversary	Approve Charge £825 Wine Reception <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer for wine on arrival</i>
Queens University	2 July 2024	International Conference on Population Geographies Dinner Reception for guests attending their 3-day conference taking place in QUB Numbers attending – 160	A & B	No (Waiver as linked to Visit Belfast)	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality
2025 EVENTS						
Girls' Brigade Northern Ireland	16 May 2025	Queen's Award Presentation Ceremony to girls who've been actively involved in their communities and initiative in completing tasks and developing their educational skills. The Queen's Award is the highest award a girl can attain in Girls' Brigade. Numbers attending – 160	C & D	No charge as charity	Yes, Tea and coffee Reception as significant anniversary	Approve No Charge Tea and Coffee Reception <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer for wine on arrival</i>
The Royal College of Anaesthetists (RCoA)	21 May 2025	RCoA Annual Dinner Dinner and entertainment for guests attending their 3 day congress taking place in ICC Numbers attending - 100	A & B	No (Waiver as linked to Visit Belfast)	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality

The Committee approved an additional request for the use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality for an event on 19th November to mark the annual World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the
Disability Working Group**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Disability Working Group of 10th October.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the City Hall/
City Hall Grounds Working Group**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the City Hall/City Hall Grounds Working Group of 11th October.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the
Cost of Living Working Group**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Cost of Living Working Group of 5th October.

Issues Raised in Advance by Members

Illumination of the City Hall

Councillor Bunting, on behalf of Alderman McCullough, proposed that the City Hall be illuminated in blue and white, in solidarity with the nation state of Israel and its people.

The proposal was seconded by Alderman McCoubrey.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Garrett,
Seconded by Councillor Beattie,

That we again endorse and repeat what we have already agreed by illuminating the building white as a strong symbol and call for peace in the Middle East.

Let us go beyond that again by publicly stating (publishing) that Belfast City Council condemns the killing of civilians which has taken place on all sides and calls for a full and immediate ceasefire, with international intervention and leadership brought to bear in securing a lasting peace.

At the request of Councillor Nelson, Councillor Garrett agreed to include within his amendment a call, firstly, for the establishment of a peace process, focusing upon democracy as a means for resolving conflict and underpinned by strong protections, in terms of human rights etc., and, secondly, for the release of all hostages.

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

The amendment, as revised, was thereupon put to the Committee as the substantive motion and passed.

Toilet Facilities - Cregagh Wanderers Container

Prior to the conclusion of proceedings, the Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services informed the Committee that, in relation to the matter which had been raised by Councillor Maghie under the adoption of the minutes, it had been confirmed that there was no issue around the release of funding for the project.

Chairperson