

# Public Document Pack

## BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

### **SUMMONS TO ATTEND THE MONTHLY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

**TO: THE LORD MAYOR, ALDERMEN AND THE COUNCILLORS OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL**

Notice is hereby given that the monthly meeting of the Council will be held in the Council Chamber, City Hall, Belfast and remotely via Teams on Monday, 3rd July, 2023 at 6.00 pm., for the transaction of the following business:

1. Summons
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Minutes of the Council (Pages 1 - 8)
5. Official Announcements
  - a) Request to address the Council
6. Change of Membership on Committees/Outside Bodies
7. Minutes of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (Pages 9 - 100)
8. Minutes of People and Communities Committee (Pages 101 - 144)
9. Minutes of City Growth and Regeneration Committee (Pages 145 - 216)
10. Minutes of Licensing Committee (Pages 217 - 234)
11. Minutes of Planning Committee (Pages 235 - 242)
12. Minutes of Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd Shareholders Committee (Pages 243 - 246)
13. Minutes of Climate and City Resilience Committee (Pages 247 - 258)
14. Minutes of Standards and Business Committee (Pages 259 - 262)

The Members of Belfast City Council are hereby summoned to attend.

Chief Executive

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## **Council**

### **ANNUAL MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL**

Held in the Council Chamber, City Hall and remotely, via Microsoft Teams, on Monday, 5th June, 2023 at 6.00 p.m., pursuant to notice.

Members present: The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor (Councillor Black) (Chairperson); and

Councillors Anglin, Beattie, Bell, Bower, Bradley, R. Brooks, T. Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Collins, Copeland, de Faoite, Doherty, M. Donnelly, P. Donnelly, R. M. Donnelly, Doran, D. Douglas, S. Douglas, Duffy, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Groogan, Hanvey, Kelly, Lawlor, Long, Lyons, Magee, Maghie, Maskey, F. McAteer, G. McAteer, McCabe, McCann, McCormick, McCoubrey, McCullough, McCusker, McDonough-Brown, McDowell, McKeown, I. McLaughlin, R. McLaughlin, McMullan, Murphy, Murray, Nelson, Nic Bhranair, Ó Néill, Rodgers, Smyth, Verner, Walsh and Whyte.

### **Summons**

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

### **Apologies**

No apologies were reported.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

### **Minutes of the Council**

Moved by the Lord Mayor (Councillor Black)  
Seconded by Councillor R. McLaughlin and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the special meeting and the monthly meeting of the Council of 2nd May be taken as read and signed as correct.

### **Official Announcements**

The Lord Mayor, together with a number of Members, extended her condolences to Councillor de Faoite on the death of his grandmother.

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The Lord Mayor referred to the recent death of Mr. David Stevenson, a member of the Business Support Unit in the Building Control Service and extended her sympathy to his family.

The Lord Mayor, together with several Members, referred to the success of the recent event to confer the Freedom of the City upon Dáithí Mac Gabhann and wished him and his family well for the future.

Councillor Doran extended his best wishes to Reverend Colin Morrison, Minister of Eglantine Presbyterian Church, who was due to retire on 25th June after forty years of ministry.

Councillor Bunting paid tribute to those former Members of the Democratic Unionist Party who had either retired at the end of the previous Council term or not been re-elected and welcomed Councillors R. Brooks, D. Douglas, Ferguson, Lawlor, I. McLaughlin and McCormick to their first meeting.

Councillors Ferguson, Long and Smyth extended their best wishes to former Alderman Sandford who had retired at the end of the previous Council term.

Councillor Smyth paid tribute to former Councillor O'Hara who had failed to be re-elected and highlighted the significant contribution which he had made to the Council and the City over the past four years.

The Lord Mayor congratulated Miss Zara Thompson and her fellow pupils of St. Anne's Primary School on the success of their fundraising activities to provide aid to Cambodia.

**Request to Address the Council**

The Chief Executive reported that a request had been received for a representative of Unite the Union to address the Council in relation to the industrial action being undertaken currently by workers in the Survitec survival technology company based in Dunmurry.

The Council approved the request and, accordingly, Mr. N. Moore, Regional Officer, Unite the Union, together with Mr. D. Magee and Ms. A. Faulkner, two employees of the company, were welcomed to the meeting.

Mr. Magee informed the Council that Survitec was a world leader in the production of life saving equipment and highlighted the importance of the Dunmurry plant to the local manufacturing sector and economy. He highlighted the significant role which staff at the plant had played in ensuring the overall survival of the company during the Covid-19 pandemic and stressed that the lack of appreciation from management had left them feeling disrespected and disillusioned, with morale being at an all-time low. Approximately one hundred staff employed in the plant in Dunmurry were currently engaged in industrial action, with the aim of securing a pay rise in line with the rate of inflation, which, he stressed, was long-awaited and fully deserved.

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Ms. Faulkner explained that, since 2018, staff employed in the Survitec plant in Dunmurry had seen their basic pay increase by a mere seventy-eight pence and highlighted the challenges which many were facing during the current cost-of-living crisis. She pointed out that the management of the company had failed to engage with the Trades Unions and urged the Council to support the employees' demand for a pay rise equal to the rate of inflation, which was not deemed to be excessive in the context of the overall profits being made by the company.

Mr. Moore compared the average rate of pay of the Directors of Survitec with that of the workers and pointed out that increasing operational and material costs were continually being met at the expense of workers' pay. He confirmed that the rate of inflation, as measured by the Retail Price Index, currently stood at 11.5% and pointed out that, should the company accede to the workers' pay demand and also award all its workers across the United Kingdom and Ireland a similar pay increase, it would equate to only 3.3% of sales revenue. He concluded by stressing that the current industrial action was being widely supported by the various Trades Unions and urged the Council to also lend its support.

The Lord Mayor thanked the deputation for its contribution, following which the Council noted the information which had been provided.

**Request to Film Proceedings**

The Chief Executive reported that requests had been received from the BBC and UTV to film the installation of the Lord Mayor and the Deputy Lord Mayor.

The Council approved the requests.

**Appointment of Positions of Responsibility for 2023 – 2027**

The Chief Executive drew the Council's attention to a report providing information on the following Positions of Responsibility which had been selected by the Nominating Officer of each Political Party for the four-year Council term:

<b>Internal Positions of Responsibility</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>
Lord Mayor	SF	ALL	DUP	SF
Deputy Lord Mayor	GREEN	DUP	SDLP	ALL
Chair - SP and R Committee	SF	SF	SF	DUP
Deputy Chair – SP and R Committee	DUP	SDLP	ALL	SF
Chair - City Growth and Regeneration	SF	ALL	DUP	SF
Deputy Chair - City Growth and Regeneration	TUV	DUP	SF	ALL
Chair - People and Communities	ALL	DUP	DUP	ALL
Deputy Chair - People and Communities	SF	SF	DUP	SF
Chair – Licensing Committee	SDLP	UUP	DUP	ALL
Deputy Chair – Licensing Committee	SF	GREEN	SF	SF

**Meeting of Council,  
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Chair – Planning Committee	SF	SF	SF	SF
Deputy Chair – Planning Committee	SDLP	ALL	DUP	SF

Chair - Climate and City Resilience	SF	SF	SF	SDLP
Deputy Chair - Climate and City Resilience	PBPA	SF	DUP	SF

Chair - Standards and Business Committee	ALL	DUP	GREEN	DUP
Deputy Chair - Standards and Business	UUP	SF	DUP	SDLP

Chair – Waterfront and Ulster Hall	ALL	DUP	ALL	ALL
Deputy Chair - Waterfront and Ulster Hall	SF	ALL	DUP	SF

<b>Outside Positions of Responsibility</b>	<b>Held for the 4-Year Term</b>			
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arc21	GREEN	DUP	ALL
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Partnership Panel	SF
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NI Housing Council	IND
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Reserve Forces and Cadets Association	DUP
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The Council approved the Positions of Responsibility for the four-year Council term, as set out above.

**Year 1 Positions of Responsibility - 2023/2027**

The Chief Executive drew the Council's attention to a report providing information on the persons who had been selected by the Nominating Officer of each Political Party to hold Positions of Responsibility in Year 1 of the current Council term:

<b>Internal Positions of Responsibility</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Councillor</b>
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Lord Mayor	SF	Councillor Murphy
Deputy Lord Mayor	GREEN	Councillor Groogan

Chair – SP and R Committee	SF	Councillor Black
Deputy Chair – S P and R Committee	DUP	Alderman McCoubrey

Chair - City Growth and Regeneration Committee	SF	Councillor Nic Bhranair
Deputy Chair City Growth and Regeneration Committee	TUV	Councillor McDowell

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Chair - People and Communities Committee	ALLIANCE	Councillor Murray
Deputy Chair - People and Communities Committee	SF	Councillor Micheal Donnelly

Chair – Licensing Committee	SDLP	Councillor McKeown
Deputy Chair – Licensing Committee	SF	Councillor McCabe

Chair – Planning Committee	SF	Councillor Garrett
Deputy Chair - Planning	SDLP	Councillor Whyte

Chair Climate and City Resilience	SF	Councillor Róis-Máire Donnelly
Deputy Chair Climate and City Resilience	PBPA	Councillor Collins

Chair Standards and Business	ALLIANCE	Councillor McDonough-Brown
Deputy Chair Standards and Business	UUP	Alderman Copeland

Chair Waterfront and Ulster Hall	ALLIANCE	Councillor Bower
Deputy Chair Waterfront and Ulster Hall	SF	Councillor Gormley

<b>Outside Positions of Responsibility</b>	<b>Held for the 4-Year Term</b>		
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arc21	GREEN PARTY (Member to be confirmed)	DUP – Councillor Kelly	ALLIANCE (Member to be confirmed)
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Partnership Panel	Councillor Duffy
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NI Housing Council	INDEPENDENT Councillor McCusker
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Reserve Forces and Cadets Association	DUP Councillor Lawlor
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**Meeting of Council,  
Monday 5th June, 2023**

The Council agreed to appoint the Members to the positions of responsibility for Year 1 of the 2023/2027 Council term, as set out above.

**Expression of Thanks**

Prior to the installation of the Lord Mayor and the Deputy Lord Mayor, the outgoing Lord Mayor provided a brief overview of her year in office and stressed that it had been a privilege to serve as the First Citizen of Belfast. She went on to thank her Political Party, her family, former Councillor and Deputy Lord Mayor, Michelle Kelly, the High Sheriff, other Members and staff from across the Council for the valuable support which they had provided. She also paid tribute to her chosen charities and pointed out that meeting with various organisations/groups and with people generally had been a highlight. She concluded by wishing the incoming Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor every success over the forthcoming year.

Representatives of a number of Political Parties then paid tribute to the Lord Mayor and to former Councillor and Deputy Lord Mayor, Michelle Kelly, for the manner in which they had fulfilled their duties during their year in office.

**Installation of Lord Mayor**

The Chief Executive reminded the Council that it had, earlier in the meeting, approved the Positions of Responsibility for 2023/24 and that Councillor Murphy had been nominated to serve as Lord Mayor.

Accordingly, Councillor Murphy was installed in Office for the period to end on the date of the annual meeting of the Council in 2024 and he subscribed to the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

The Lord Mayor congratulated his predecessor, Councillor Black, on the success of her term in office and thanked his Political Party for nominating him to serve as Lord Mayor, as well as his family and the people of the Oldpark District Electoral Area. He stressed that he was fully committed to demonstrating positive leadership across all communities and that he would work to address the challenges being faced currently by workers and families across the City and to ensure that all opportunities to transform the City and increase investment, employment and prosperity were availed of.

(The Lord Mayor, Councillor Murphy, in the Chair.)

**Installation of Deputy Lord Mayor**

The Chief Executive reminded the Council that it had, earlier in the meeting, approved the Positions of Responsibility for 2023/24 and that Councillor Groogan had been nominated to serve as Deputy Lord Mayor.

Accordingly, Councillor Groogan was installed in Office for the period to end on the date of the annual meeting of the Council in 2024 and she subscribed to the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.



## Meeting of Council, Monday 5th June, 2023

Councillor Groogan began by stating that she was honoured to become the first Member of the Green Party to hold the position of either Lord Mayor or Deputy Lord Mayor in Northern Ireland.

She paid tribute to the previous Lord Mayor, Councillor Black, and to former Councillor and Deputy Lord Mayor, Michelle Kelly and stated that she was looking forward to working with the new Lord Mayor, Councillor Murphy, over the coming year.

She went on to thank the current and former Members of the Green Party on the Council and the people of the Botanic District Electoral Area for their support. She then highlighted the need for the Council, as a civic leader, to continue to demonstrate that Belfast was a welcoming place for asylum seekers, refugees and marginalised groups and, in the absence of the Northern Ireland Executive, to be at the forefront in addressing issues such as the cost-of-living crisis, budget cuts, the climate crisis and the destruction of the built heritage.

### **Appointment of Members to Standing Committees for 2023/24**

The Council approved the following table providing details of the number of places available on each Standing Committee per Political Party and noted that the names of those Members who had been nominated for Year 1 would be circulated in due course:

Political Party	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee	City Growth and Regeneration Committee	People and Communities Committee	Licensing Committee	Planning Committee	Climate and City Resilience Committee	Standards and Business Committee	Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Shareholders' Committee
SF	8	8	7	7	8	7	7	7
DUP	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	4
ALL	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	3
SDLP	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	1
Green	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
UUP	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
PBPA	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
TUV	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
IND	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
TOTAL	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20

### **Appointment of Aldermen**

The Chief Executive advised that the Local Government (Transitional, Incidental, Consequential and Supplemental Provisions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

**Meeting of Council,  
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permitted the Council, in an election year, to designate up to a maximum of fifteen Councillors to serve as Aldermen for the duration of the Council term.

Accordingly, the Council agreed that Councillors Copeland, Lawlor, McCoubrey, McCullough and Rodgers be appointed to the office of Alderman for the current Council term.

Lord Mayor  
Chairperson

## Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 16th June, 2023

### SPECIAL 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, Cobain, de Faoite, M. Donnelly,  
R.M. Donnelly, Ferguson, Garrett, Hanvey, Long,  
Maghie, Maskey, I. McLaughlin, R. McLaughlin,  
Nelson, Nic Bhranair, Smyth and Whyte.
- In attendance: Mr. J. Walsh, Chief Executive;  
Mr. D. Sales, Director of Neighbourhood Services  
Ms. L. Caldwell, Director of External Affairs, Marketing and  
Communications;  
Ms. N. Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and  
Civic Services;  
Mr. T. Wallace, Director of Finance;  
Ms. N. Lane, Neighbourhood Services Manager;  
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and  
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Bunting.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

### **THE COMMITTEE DEALT WITH THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN PURSUANCE OF THE POWERS DELEGATED TO IT BY THE COUNCIL AT ITS MEETING ON 1st MAY, 2018**

### **Restricted Items**

#### **Summer Community Festivals Programme**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 21st April, it had considered a report providing details of the initial assessment of applications which had been received under the Summer Community Diversionary Festivals Programme for 2023, with the £500k being made available by the Council to be divided equally between projects being delivered in July and August.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,  
Friday, 16th June, 2023**

The Committee had agreed to allocate £202,255 and £250,000 to those groups which had met the assessment criteria for projects to be delivered in July and August respectively. In terms of the underspend of £47,745 for the July programme, the Committee had granted approval for Council officers to meet with the five unsuccessful groups, namely, the Greater Village Regeneration Trust, the McDonald Centre, The Hubb Community Resource Centre, Phoenix Education and Woodvale Cricket Club, to determine if they had the capacity to deliver a reduced project from that which they had proposed initially. The Committee had granted approval also for a review to be undertaken of the Summer Community Diversionary Festivals Programme moving forward.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reported that all five organisations had since advised that they were willing to deliver a reduced programme and had the required capacity to do so. The Greater Village Regeneration Trust had also confirmed that it had the ability also to deliver its original programme in full should funding be made available.

With that in mind, he recommended that the Committee consider which of the following options, if any, it wished to adopt:

- i. to allocate £9,549 to each of the aforementioned five groups to deliver a reduced July programme in this instance; or
- ii. to award the £47,745 in full to the Greater Village Regeneration Trust, which was next in the scoring list and had passed one stage of the assessment process, bearing in mind that the aim of the Programme was to support larger programmes at a minimum of £25k; or
- iii. to not award the £47,745 to any group/s under the Programme for 2023.

The Director went on to recommend to the Committee that, should it decide to proceed with options i. or ii. above, approval be granted to any of those organisations wishing to use the Council's Parks for their event or activity and that authority be delegated to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to negotiate satisfactory terms and conditions of use, via an appropriate legal agreement prepared by the City Solicitor, including managing final booking confirmation dates and flexibility around 'set up' and 'take down' periods and booking amendments, subject to:

- the completion of an appropriate management plan; and
- the promoter resolving any operational issues to the satisfaction of the Council and meeting all the statutory requirements of the Planning and Building Control Service, including the terms and conditions of the Park's Entertainment Licence; and

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Long,  
Seconded by Councillor Hanvey,

That the Committee agrees, in light of the recent announcement by The Executive Office of a significant reduction in the amount of funding to

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,  
Friday, 16th June, 2023**

be allocated to the Council this year under the District Council Good Relations Programme, that the underspend of £47,745 be used to develop a capacity building programme to be delivered in the autumn to groups which might wish to deliver activities next July, with any funding remaining to be returned to Departmental budgets.

**Amendment**

Moved by Alderman McCoubrey,  
Seconded by Councillor Ferguson,

That the Committee agrees to allocate the entire underspend of £47,745 to the Greater Village Regeneration Trust, on the basis that it had been the only one of the five unsuccessful applicants to have passed one stage of the assessment process.

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

The Committee subsequently agreed to adopt the proposal which had been made by Councillor Long and seconded by Councillor Hanvey.

**Update on the Beacon Programme**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reminded the Committee that the beacon programme, which was open only to constituted community/voluntary groups and had been in existence for over fifteen years, supported the provision of beacons as an alternative to traditional bonfires over the 12th of July period.

He reminded the Committee further that, at its meeting on 21st April, it had granted approval for Council officers to contact the eight groups which had availed of a beacon in 2022, as well as four others which had expressed an interest subsequently, to determine if they wished to be placed on the list for this year.

He reported that two of those groups had since confirmed that they did not require a beacon and drew the Committee's attention to the list of ten organisations and locations which were being recommended for approval in 2023. The Committee was asked to note that, as had been the case in 2022, mitigations would need to be put in place at the Brown Square and White City sites and that the report on the Grove Street East site would, as previously, advise that there was potential for significant damage due to the distance factor.

The Director went on to state that a request had also been received through Action for Community Transformation for a beacon to replace a traditional bonfire at Shankill Terrace and California Close. Should the Committee accede to that request, the provision of a beacon would be subject to the usual terms and conditions and a fire engineer's report would be required. Initial indications had indicated that the land on which the beacon would be placed was unregistered.

In terms of funding, the current budget allocation for beacons was £72,000, which included a £15,000 contribution from The Executive Office through the District Council

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Good Relations Programme. The provision of eleven beacons would, the Director pointed out, cost a minimum of £81,103.75, excluding VAT, and would require the realignment of existing budgets.

After discussion, the Committee granted approval for the eleven groups set out in the table below to participate in the beacon programme for 2023 and agreed that any residual funding from the £47,745 which had, earlier in the meeting, been allocated to the development of a capacity building programme for groups which might wish to deliver activities next July, be vired to the bonfire programme.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Group</b>
Haig Street/Lord Street Junction	Diamond Project (Charter NI)
Clara Street Clara Street – Junction with Ravensdale Street	Charter NI
Grove Street East Grove Street East/Channing Street	East Belfast Alternatives
Highspring Avenue Green Area off Blackmountain Grove	EPIC
White City	Loughview Community Action Group
Ainsworth Avenue Hardcore Area at Ainsworth Avenue end of Ceylon Street	West Belfast Athletic and Cultural Society
Wheatfield Action Project Ballysillan Park, facing Wheatfield Drive	Wheatfield Action Project
Brown Square Middle of Road at bottom of Melbourne Street	Brown Square Development Association
Cregagh On the mound in the green space across from Trassey Close in Cregagh Estate	Cregagh Community Association
Dunmurry 2 Auburn Place, Dunmurry, Belfast	Dunmurry Community Association
Shankill Terrace and California Close	Action for Community Transformation

Chairperson

# Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Monday, 26th June, 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 Smyth.

Also attended: Councillor Murray.

In attendance: Mr. J. Walsh, Chief Executive;  
Ms. N. Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and  
Civic Services;  
Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;  
Ms. C. Matthews, Director of Resources and Fleet;  
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;  
Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;  
Ms. L. Caldwell, Director of External Affairs, Marketing and  
Communications; and  
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Whyte.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 21st April were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council, at its meeting on 5th May, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

**Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Nic Bhranair declared an interest in relation to agenda item 6c – Update on Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund, on the basis that her employer had submitted an application for funding.

Councillor Ian McLaughlin declared an interest in relation to agenda item 6c – Update on Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund, in that he worked for an organisation which had applied for funding.

Councillor Beattie declared an interest in relation to agenda item 2c – Hardship Grant/Cost of Living Support 2022/23, on the basis that the organisation in which he was employed operated a social supermarket and might apply for funding.

As those items did not become the subject of discussion, the Members were not required to leave the meeting.

**Restricted Items**

**The information contained in the reports associated with the following twelve 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 twelve 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.

**2022-23 Year End Finance Report**

The Director of Finance submitted for the Committee's consideration a report on the year-end financial position for 2022/23, together with the Quarter 4 finance report and year-end treasury position.

He reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 24th March, it had agreed to rescind its decision of 17th February in relation to the reallocation of Departmental underspends and had agreed further to use any in-year underspend to commit to covering the shortfall of up to £279,315 to fund the Citywide Tribunal Service in 2023/24.

The Director reported that, when available funds had been offset against the Departmental overspend, an overall revenue year-end surplus of £1.6 million was available. Information was then provided on the Council's reserve position, LPS Finalisation, Covid-19 losses for 2022/23, capital projects and the establishment of a hardship fund, in response to funding which had been received from the Department for Communities, details of which would be provided later in the meeting.



**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,  
Monday, 26th June, 2023**

The Director went on to remind the Committee that, at its meeting on 21st April, it had agreed to defer consideration of the allocation of micro and medium grants funding to enable it to be reviewed in the context of available funding at the year end. He pointed out that the Committee might now wish to allocate funds as part of the year-end reallocation process and, to aid considerations, drew its attention to the following table which highlighted the required budget to support applications up to different scoring thresholds and the number of projects which would be supported (in brackets):

<b>Grant type</b>	<b>Applications scoring above 50</b>	<b>Applications scoring above 60</b>	<b>Applications scoring above 65</b>	<b>Applications scoring above 70</b>	<b>Applications scoring above 80</b>
Medium	£555,394 (128)	£426,824 (97)	£360,207.83 (83)	£271,252 (61)	£127,539 (28)
Micro	£83,690 (64)	£79,354 (60)	£71,101.80 (54)	£59,132 (45)	£40,058 (30)
Total	£639,084	£506,178	£431,309.63	£330,384	£167,597
Active Belfast Contribution (for medium grants only)	£79,940	£79,940	£79,940	£79,940	£79,940
BCC Contribution	£559,144	£426,623	£351,369	£250,444	£87,651

After discussion, the Committee:

- i. noted the contents of the report and approved the 2022/23 balances;
- ii. agreed that the year-end surplus, after any adjustments, be set aside in a specified reserve to deal with any potential Central Government funding reductions;
- iii. noted the year-end treasury management report for 2022/23;
- iv. approved the creation of a specified reserve for hardship funding received from the Department for Communities; and
- v. agreed to allocate £431,309.63 to micro-medium grants, on the basis of a score above 65, as set out in the table above.

### **Summer Community Festivals Programme**

(Councillor Bunting declared an interest in this matter as discussions developed, on the basis that she was a member of the Belvoir Area Residents' Group which had been included in the application for the Summer Diversionary Funding under the Greater Village Regeneration Trust and left the meeting whilst it was being discussed.)

A Member referred to a proposal which had been made at the special meeting of the Committee on 16th June to allocate the entire underspend of £47,745 from the Summer Community Festivals Programme for projects being delivered in July to the Greater Village Regeneration Trust, on the basis that it had been the only one of the five unsuccessful applicants to have passed one threshold in the assessment process.

That proposal had been lost and the Committee had agreed that the underspend be used instead to develop a capacity building programme to be delivered in the autumn to groups which might wish to deliver activities next July, with any funding remaining to be returned to Departmental budgets.

The Member highlighted a number of issues which required clarification and, accordingly, the Committee granted approval for officers to undertake a further assessment of the application which had been submitted by the Greater Village Regeneration Trust and for a special meeting to be held only if it was found that the second threshold had also been met.

### **Central Government Funding**

The Director of Finance reminded the Committee that Government funding was a key source of income for the Council and represented over 17% of its budgeted income in 2023-24.

He explained that Members would, through the rate setting process, be aware of the increasing financial risks around external funding over the past number of years resulting from Brexit, the cost-of-living crisis and Central Government funding cuts. The budget for Northern Ireland, which had been set on 27th April, had been reduced from £14.269bn in 2022/23 to £14.212bn in 2023/24. All Executive Departments were facing significant financial pressures, as they were now allocating budgets at a time of increasing demands on services and running costs.

With that in mind, he drew the Committee's attention to the key risks which had been communicated from Executive Departments to Council officers and stressed that, in the absence of confirmed external funding support, the rate impact of the delivery of the various programmes would need to be considered as part of the 2024/25 rate setting process.

The Director went on to point out that the Council was, from a financial management perspective, obliged to include the risks from Government funding in its monitoring and planning processes and concluded by recommending that the Committee:

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- i. note the risk to grant funded projects for 2023/24, based on current information;
- ii. agree to receive regular updates on the impact of Executive budget cuts to Council grant funding; and
- iii. note the impact of the uncertainty of Executive support to Councils for the 2024/25 rate setting process.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Hardship Grant/Cost-of-Living Support 2022/23**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reminded the Committee that households were continuing to face pressures relating to inflation and the rising cost-of-living, which was having an adverse impact upon the most vulnerable in society, widening inequalities and increasing the prevalence of social isolation.

He reported that the Department for Communities had allocated £4m within the 2023/24 financial year to a hardship scheme to enable councils to provide support to the most vulnerable within their district. The Department had also advised that any underspends in the Covid-19 support grants which it had provided in 2020/21 and 2021/22 could also be ring-fenced for cost-of-living support. The Council would, therefore, have in total £1,018,790 to allocate.

The Director then provided details of what the Department for Communities deemed to be eligible and ineligible within the remit of the hardship scheme and pointed out that it had stated that funding could not be utilised for projects already being funded by the Department, unless being used to enhance or expand provision on food related schemes and that it was expected that no more than 10% in total of the funding be spent on administration of the scheme by a council or third parties.

He went on to remind the Committee that it had agreed previously that a Cost-of-Living Working Group, supported by Council officers, be established to review previous hardship schemes and work to co-design an effective hardship scheme and stated that there was now a need to seek nominees to it. Emerging proposals would, he pointed out, be submitted to this Committee in due course for consideration and approval.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

**Belfast Smart District Programme**

The Committee considered a report providing an update on current projects and initiatives associated with the Smart Belfast programme which were designed to support collaborative innovation in the City.

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The Committee:

- i. noted the progress on the £900,000 Augment the City challenge competition;
- ii. noted the work towards the delivery of a creative brief for the 'Belfast Immersive Experience' which would be shared with the City Hall/City Hall Grounds Installations Working Group for consideration;
- iii. approved the draft Memorandum of Understanding between Belfast and Sejong, South Korea, accompanying the report, which would on 7th August be signed by both cities during the visit by the Mayor of Sejong;
- iv. approved a contribution of £2,800 in 2024/25 to cover staffing costs for the six-month extension of the Hub-In programme due to Covid-19 delays;
- v. approved a contribution of up to a maximum of £30,000 towards the development of a potential £5 million Belfast Regional Wireless Innovation Hub bid; and
- vi. noted the request from Ulster University to work with the City Innovation Office on the design and delivery of its proposed Digital Healthcare Technology Accelerator, subject to Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council funding approval.

**Draft Amenity Bye Laws**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 18th February, 2022, it had granted approval for new draft bye laws for the good governance of Belfast City Centre to be submitted to the Department for Communities and other relevant agencies for initial consultation.

The Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services outlined the background to the formulation of the bye laws and reviewed the main elements contained therein and pointed out that the Department for Communities had, within its initial response, highlighted a number of issues for further consideration. It had observed that there may be the potential for the bye laws to interfere with rights under the Human Rights Act 1998 and the subsequent possibility for challenge and had confirmed that it would consult more fully with the Departmental Solicitors Office on these issues during the formal consultation process. The Department had also provided comments on the power to confiscate property and on an exemption for an official picket made by a Trade Union.

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She went to state that the Council had requested Counsel opinion on the aforementioned matters and pointed out that that opinion had included a recommendation that the words “and for the Prevention and Suppression of Nuisances in Belfast City Centre” be added to the title of the bye laws.

She confirmed that the draft amenity bye laws had been updated to take into account the comments from the Department for Communities and counsel’s opinion and recommended that the Committee grant approval for them to be issued for formal public consultation.

During discussion several Members welcomed the progress which had been made in addressing longstanding issues in the City Centre, following which the Committee adopted the recommendation and agreed that an update be sought from the Department of Justice in relation to the ongoing independent review of hate crime legislation in Northern Ireland.

**Proposal to Vest a Property**

(Having received advice from the Chief Executive, Councillors Ferguson, Garrett, Hanvey, Maskey and Nic Bhranair, who were members of the Planning Committee, left the meeting before the following item had been introduced, on the basis that there could potentially be planning considerations moving forward.)

The Chief Executive submitted for the Committee’s consideration a report:

- i. providing an update on the Council’s powers of compulsory acquisition;
- ii. providing context of the significance of the twelve-acre Tribeca Belfast (Tribeca) site in terms of the regeneration of the City centre; and
- iii. seeking approval to commence the procedure by initially approaching the owner to acquire the property by agreement in advance of making a Vesting Order via the Department of Communities for premises in the City centre on behalf of Castlebrooke Investments (Castlebrooke) in order to progress the land assembly necessary to implement consented elements of its Tribeca Belfast mixed use regeneration scheme.

During discussion, it was pointed out that the Standards and Business Committee would, at its meeting on 27th June, be recommended to refer to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee a motion inviting Castlebrooke Investments and/or any of its subsidiaries or related companies which had an interest in or was responsible for the development of the Cathedral Quarter to attend a future Committee meeting to present their plans and provide an update on their work being undertaken to date to develop the area.

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Accordingly, the Committee agreed to defer consideration of the report until such time as the meeting with Castlebrooke Investments had taken place.

**Levelling Up – Feedback on 2 Royal Avenue  
Levelling Up Fund Application and Future Learning**

The Committee:

- i. noted the feedback received from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in respect of the unsuccessful application for Round 2 Levelling Up Funding for 2 Royal Avenue and that this feedback would be considered for any relevant learning points for future applications for external funding;
- ii. noted that there has been concern from a range of interested parties regarding the decision-making process and funding allocations associated with the Levelling Up Agenda, as set out in the recent Levelling Up Funding report published by the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee in Westminster;
- iii. noted the proposed next steps in the development of a corporate process which would ensure that the Committee could make decisions on applications for funding opportunities based on priorities and projects agreed by Members; and
- iv. noted that a portfolio of projects was being drawn up by Council officers in readiness for the announcement of future funding streams from whatever source.

**Refresh of Belfast Agenda (City Community Plan) 2023-2027**

The Committee:

- i. endorsed the draft refreshed Belfast Agenda strategy document and underpinning action plans, in advance of commencing a period of public consultation on 1st August, 2023;
- ii. noted that a co-design and intensive engagement process had been adopted to inform the refresh of the Belfast Agenda and that a summary report of this engagement activity would be published online in the coming weeks;
- iii. noted that the refreshed Belfast Agenda (and accompanying draft action plans) had been developed in liaison with Community Planning Partnership partners which were seeking organisational commitment alongside consideration by the Council and Committee;

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- iv. noted that a full Equality Impact Assessment and Rural Needs Assessment had been undertaken and would be consulted on from 1st August, 2023; and
- v. noted that officers were working towards a launch date of the refreshed Belfast Agenda for week commencing 6th November, 2023, with a specific date to be confirmed shortly and all Members to be informed.

**Belfast 2024**

(Ms. E. Clark, 2024 Programme Manager and Ms. L. A. O'Donnell, Senior Manager, Culture and Tourism, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee was provided with a detailed presentation on the developments for Belfast 2024, the Council's ambitious year of creative celebration for Belfast, which included:

- an update on Belfast 2024 Creative Programme Development, including partners and details of an open call;
- updated B24 Budget allocations;
- partnership developments and partnership investment;
- an update on the streamlined Governance Model;
- engagement and citizen led development so far; and
- next steps.

The Committee was then provided with details of a number of decisions relating to Belfast 2024 which had been taken by the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, at its meeting on 14th June, and its attention was drawn to an additional request for funding of £63,000 to support One Young World Delegates under the programme development strand, which would be taken from the 2024 budget under the creative engagement and programme development line.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to defer consideration of this item to enable Party Group briefings to be held.

**Review of Strategic Policy and Partnerships  
Unit, Portfolio Unit and Creation of a new  
Strategic Performance Unit**

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy submitted for the Committee's consideration a report seeking approval to implement within his Department a revised staffing structure for the Strategy, Policy and Partnerships Unit and Portfolio Unit, as well as a staffing structure for a new Strategic Performance Unit.

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Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee approve:

- i. the re-alignment of the existing Portfolio Unit structure and team to report to the Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty;
- ii. the creation of a new Strategic Performance Unit under the management of the Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty, including the creation of one Strategic Performance Manager post, two Strategic Performance and Policy Officers and one temporary Policy and Performance Analyst; and
- iii. the renaming of the Service to 'Strategy, Programmes and Partnerships'.

During discussion, a Member pointed out that approval to undertake this review had only been granted on 25th January, 2023 and highlighted the fact that the report which the Committee received on a quarterly basis on the progress of reviews being undertaken across the Council included a number which had been ongoing for more than four years.

On that basis, it was

Proposed by Councillor R. McLaughlin,  
Seconded by Councillor Beattie,

That the Committee agrees to defer consideration of the report until such time as those reviews which had been ongoing for more than four years had been completed.

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

Accordingly, the Committee agreed to adopt the recommendations contained within the report.

**Update on the MAC (Metropolitan Arts Centre)**

The Committee was reminded that the MAC, which had opened in 2012 in the Cathedral Quarter and attracted 320,000 visitors annually, provided local and international art, theatre, dance and music, along with hospitality facilities.

The MAC currently received annual funding of £150,000 from the Council's Core Multi-Annual Grant programme, which was paid in two equal instalments of £75,000. This was the final year of a four-year funding commitment to the organisation at this level. The most significant investor in The MAC was the Arts Council for Northern Ireland, which allocated just under £1million annually.

It was reported that, due to issues surrounding the MAC's 2023/24 Annual Funding Programme application to the Arts Council for Northern Ireland and the timeframe taken



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to complete a potential funding review, The MAC had an immediate cash flow issue which needed to be addressed. Council officers were, therefore, proposing that a payment of £37,500, equivalent to three months' funding be made, which would be met from existing budgets under the Core Multi-Annual Grant programme allocation but be treated as transition funds. There was the potential for an additional ask, should the current circumstances dictate. The Board of the Arts Council for Northern Ireland had agreed to offer three months of transition funding until the end of September 2023, based at the level of last year's Annual Funding Programme grant, on the clear understanding that this was transition and not annual funding.

After discussion, during which the need to ensure that the City's cultural infrastructure was maintained and developed was highlighted, the Committee agreed to allocate the equivalent of six months' funding, that is £75,000, to The MAC. The Committee agreed also that the Chief Executive would write to its Board seeking clarification on how this funding would be utilised and suggesting that the Council be involved in discussions around funding requirements moving forward.

**Award of arc21 Interim Residual Waste Contract**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 23rd March, it had noted that arc21 had procured an interim contract for the treatment and disposal of the Council's residual waste. Following a procurement exercise, the interim contract had been signed on 12th May and the unsuccessful bidder, which would continue to provide this service under a contract directly with the Council until 30th June, had been notified on 16th May.

The Director of Resources and Fleet reported that the unsuccessful bidder had since issued two legal challenges against arc21 and confirmed that a Court ruling earlier that day in relation to the first, seeking an injunction to prevent the implementation of the contract, had not been granted by the Judge. The Council would now proceed to work, through arc21, with the successful contractor to take action to implement the new contract, which would commence on 1st July, 2023.

She went on to point out that legal proceedings were ongoing and that the legal challenge seeking a declaration of 'ineffectiveness' and/or penalties was not due to be heard until the week commencing on 23rd October, 2023. Given the situation, it was important to ensure that sufficient interim contingency measures were put in place to ensure compliance with the Council's statutory responsibilities in relation to residual waste.

Accordingly, she recommended that the Committee delegate authority to her, in consultation with the Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services and the Director of Finance to make the appropriate contingency arrangements.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

**Matters referred back from Council/Motions**

**Motion - Wilmont House**

The Committee was informed that the Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 28th March, had referred the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Murray and seconded by Councillor McDonough-Brown, to this Committee for consideration:

“This Council, having due regard to the value of our heritage assets across the City, agrees to commission an independent evaluation of the options to restore Wilmont House back into use. Such an evaluation should include potential business uses and associated costings for renovation and explore the viability of community or wider civic use.”

Councillor Murray provided a brief history of Wilmont House and emphasised the need to restore the building to use and protect the built heritage of the City generally.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to adopt the motion and agreed also that the process of identifying those Council heritage assets requiring action to be taken to prevent them from falling into disrepair and to address those which already had would be undertaken in the first instance through the Area Working Groups.

**Governance**

**Appointment of Members to Outside Bodies**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

**1.1 To make the appointments of Members to a range of Outside Bodies for the Council Term from 2023 to 2027.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is recommended to:**

- 1. note that the Council has agreed that all of the appointments to Outside Bodies will be grouped into one overall pool for the purposes of allocating positions;**
- 2. agree to nominate the representatives to NILGA as a separate one-off exercise, as set out in the report;**
- 3. note that the Council has agreed to use the Sainte Lague methodology to provide an order of party political choices of these positions;**

- 4. appoint the positions on Outside Bodies as set out in the attached appendix; and**
- 5. agree that, should any other requests be received for Council representation on Outside Bodies during the Council Term, the party or parties who would have had the next available choice(s) under the Sainte Lague table will be asked to nominate a representative(s).**

**3.0 Main Report**

**3.1 Key Issues**

- 3.1.1 The Committee will be aware that there are a number of Outside Bodies which request that a Member or several Members sit on the Board of their Body. As we embark on the new Council term, we need to make these appointments.**
- 3.1.2 Members should note that several appointments to Outside Bodies were determined by the former Department of the Environment to fall within the process established in the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 for Positions of Responsibility. These were arc 21, the Partnership Panel, the Northern Ireland Housing Council, the Reserve Forces and Cadets Association and the Policing and Community Safety Partnership and its 4 District Partnerships. These appointments were determined using the D'hondt system of proportionality alongside the appointments for the Lord Mayor, the Deputy Lord Mayor and the Chairpersons and Deputy Chairpersons of the 8 Standing Committees of the Council.**
- 3.1.3 In considering the requests for appointments to Outside Bodies which are not considered to be Positions of Responsibility, the Council is free to choose any methodology it so wishes. However, in keeping with the process of proportionality, which is enshrined in the 2014 Act and which has been employed in the Council for a number of years, the Committee has approved of the use of the Sainte Lague system.**
- 3.1.4 The process is for all of the appointments to Outside Bodies to be grouped together in one pool and the Party Leaders at a meeting on 15th June have selected the positions set out in the Appendix.**
- 3.1.5 In order for a process to be established which deals with any additional requests from Outside Bodies for Council representation during the Council Term, it is recommended that the party or parties who would have had the next available**

choice(s) under the Sainte Ligue table will be asked to nominate a representative(s).

**3.1.6 NILGA**

NILGA's Constitution requires that the Council's 10 nominations reflect the overall balance of the political parties on the Council. This would not be able to be achieved if the 10 positions were to be included in a larger pool of positions. Therefore, for that reason, the Council has previously agreed that the 10 nominations are allocated using a separate Sainte Ligue exercise. This was agreed again at the meeting of the Party Group Leaders on 15th June.

**3.1.7** The outcome of a Sainte Ligue exercise provided for 4 Sinn Féin, 2 DUP, 2 Alliance, 1 SDLP and 1 Green nominations.

**3.2 Financial and Resource Implications**

None Associated with this report.

**3.3 Equality, Good Relations and Rural Assessment Implications**

None associated with this report."

**Appointments to Outside Bodies**

**George Best Belfast City Airport Forum**

Sinn Féin	Councillor Pádraig Donnelly
Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Davy Douglas

**Visit Belfast**

Sinn Féin	Councillor Clíodhna Nic Bhranair
Sinn Féin	Councillor Séanna Walsh
Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Sammy Douglas
Alliance Party	Councillor Eric Hanvey

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**Issue Specific Bodies**

**Belfast Hills Partnership**

Sinn Féin	Councillor Micheal Donnelly
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**Board of the Ulster Orchestra Society Limited**

Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor Carl Whyte
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**Cathedral Quarter Trust**

Democratic Unionist Party	Alderman Dean McCullough
Independent Member	Councillor Paul McCusker

**Fairtrade Steering Group**

Sinn Féin	Councillor Nichola Bradley
Alliance Party	Councillor Ross McMullan

**Grand Opera House Trust**

Traditional Unionist Voice	Councillor Ron McDowell
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**Groundwork Northern Ireland**

Green Party	Councillor Brian Smyth
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**Lagan Navigation Trust**

Sinn Féin	Councillor John Gormley
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**Lagan Rural Partnership Local Action Group**

Alliance Party	Councillor David Bell
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**Lagan Valley Regional Park Advisory Committee**

Sinn Féin	Councillor Geraldine McAteer
Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Sarah Bunting
Alliance Party	Councillor Micky Murray

**Linenhall Library Board**

Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Nicola Verner
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**Local Strategic Partnership on Travellers Issues**

Sinn Féin	Councillor Róis-Máire Donnelly
Alliance Party	Councillor Christine Bower

**Lyric Theatre Education Advisory Panel**

Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor Séamas de Fáoite
Green Party	Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Áine Groogan

**Northern Ireland Amenity Council**

Sinn Féin	Councillor Matt Garrett
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**Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme**

Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Sarah Bunting
Alliance Party	Councillor Micky Murray

**Somme Advisory Council**

Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Tracy Kelly
Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Bradley Ferguson
Ulster Unionist Party	Alderman Sonia Copeland

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**NI Migration Partnership - Sustainable Community and Demographics Working Group**

Sinn Féin	Councillor Tina Black
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**NILGA Policy and Learning Network**

Sinn Féin	Councillor Claire Canavan
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**Sustainable NI**

Sinn Féin	Councillor Brónach Anglin
Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor Gary McKeown

**Members' Related Bodies**

**National Association of Councillors**

Sinn Féin	Councillor Arder Carson
Sinn Féin	Councillor JJ Magee
Sinn Féin	Councillor Tomás Ó Néill
Democratic Unionist Party	Alderman Dean McCullough
Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Ian McLaughlin
Alliance Party	Councillor Sam Nelson
Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor Donal Lyons
People Before Profit Alliance	Councillor Michael Collins

**Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA)**

Sinn Féin	Councillor Matt Garrett
Sinn Féin	(tbc)
Sinn Féin	(tbc)

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Sinn Féin	(tbc)
Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Sarah Bunting
Democratic Unionist Party	Alderman Dean McCullough
Alliance Party	Councillor David Bell
Alliance Party	Councillor Jenna Maghie
Green Party	(tbc)
Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor Carl Whyte

The Committee adopted the recommendations and noted that, as Belfast City Centre Management had changed its governance structure and was no longer in receipt of Council funding, there was no requirement to appoint Members to that organisation.

**Appointment of Members to the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships and District Policing and Community Safety Partnerships**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

**1.1 To note the appointment of Members to the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSP) and District Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (DPCSPs)**

**2.0 Recommendation**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to note the report and the nominations listed below.**

**3.0 Main Report**

**3.1 Key Issues**

**3.1.1 The Committee will be aware that the appointment of Members to the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSP) and District Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (DPCSPs) are considered as positions of responsibility.**



- 3.1.2 These positions had been agreed previously during selection of choices for other positions of responsibility using the d'Hondt system which was ratified at the Annual meeting of the Council.

**PCSP**

- 3.1.3 The PCSP is appointed based on proportionality to reflect the political balance of the Council following the local government election in May.

The representation on the PCSP as result of that exercise was as follows:

4 Sinn Féin 2 DUP 2 Alliance 1 SDLP

The legislation requires that, as far practicable, the position of Chair is to be held in turn by the four largest Parties represented on the Council immediately after the last local election.

- 3.1.4 At the meeting of the Party Group Leaders on 15th June the order of choices was as follows:

Year	1	2	3	4
Party	SDLP	SF	DUP	ALL

- 3.1.5 **DPCSPs**

All DPCSPs are taken together for the allocation of places and should also reflect the political balance of the Council after the election. There are six places on each giving a total of 24.

This results in the following allocation: SF 10, DUP 6, All 4, SDLP 2, Green 1 and UUP 1.

- 3.1.6 The legislation again requires the positions of Chair to be held, as far as practicable, by each of the four largest Parties on the Council. At the same meeting the following positions were selected:

**Chair**

DPCSP	North	South	East	West
Year 1	SF	DUP	ALL	SF
Year 2	SF	SF	DUP	SF
Year 3	DUP	SDLP	SF	SF
Year 4	ALL	ALL	SDLP	DUP

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**3.1.7 Following an exercise for the selection of places of the DPCSPs, the overall makeup of the DPCSPs for the 4-year term is as set out below:**

North	South	East	West
SF 2	SF 3	SF 2	SF 3
DUP 2	DUP 1	DUP 2	DUP 1
ALL 1	ALL 1	ALL 1	ALL 1
GREEN 1	SDLP 1	SDLP 1	UUP 1

**3.2 Financial and Resource Implications**

None Associated with this report.

**3.3 Equality, Good Relations and Rural Assessment Implications**

None associated with this report.”

Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership Membership	
<b>SDLP (Chairperson Year 1)</b>	Councillor Donal Lyons
<b>SF</b>	Councillor Claire Canavan (West)
<b>SF</b>	Councillor Conor Maskey (North)
<b>SF</b>	Councillor Caoimhín McCann
<b>SF</b>	Councillor JJ Magee
<b>DUP</b>	Councillor Tracy Kelly (South)
<b>DUP</b>	Councillor Ian McLaughlin
<b>ALL</b>	Councillor Fiona McAteer (East)
<b>ALL</b>	Councillor Emmet McDonough-Brown

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<b>North Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnerships</b>	
<b>SF (Chairperson Year 1)</b>	Councillor Conor Maskey
<b>SF</b>	Councillor JJ Magee
<b>DUP</b>	Councillor Fred Cobain
<b>DUP</b>	Alderman Dean McCullough
<b>ALL</b>	Councillor Sam Nelson
<b>GREEN</b>	Councillor Anthony Flynn

<b>South Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnerships</b>	
<b>DUP (Chairperson Year 1)</b>	Councillor Tracy Kelly
<b>SF</b>	Councillor John Gormley
<b>SF</b>	Councillor Pádraig Donnelly
<b>SF</b>	Councillor Geraldine McAteer
<b>SDLP</b>	Councillor Donal Lyons
<b>ALL</b>	Councillor Micky Murray

<b>East Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnerships</b>	
<b>ALL (Chairperson Year 1)</b>	Councillor Fiona McAteer
<b>SF</b>	Councillor Pádraig Donnelly

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<b>SF</b>	Councillor John Gormley
<b>DUP</b>	Councillor Davy Douglas
<b>DUP</b>	Councillor Andrew McCormick
<b>SDLP</b>	Councillor Séamas de Fáoite

<b>West Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnerships</b>	
<b>SF (Chairperson Year 1)</b>	Councillor Claire Canavan
<b>SF</b>	Councillor Caoimhin McCann
<b>SF</b>	Councillor Micheal Donnelly
<b>DUP</b>	Councillor Nicola Verner
<b>ALL</b>	Councillor David Bell
<b>UUP</b>	Alderman Jim Rodgers

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

**Appointment of Members to Partnership Boards**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

**To consider the appointment of Members to the four Partnership Boards.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is recommended to:**

- 1. approve the use of the Quota Greatest Remainder method to identify those parties entitled to nominate representatives to the Forward South Belfast and**

Eastside Partnership Boards, based upon the number of Members returned at the Local Elections for the District Electoral Areas coterminous with the Partnerships' areas;

2. approve the Party allocations for the Forward South and Eastside Partnerships as set out below; and
3. approve the compromise arrangement for the appointment of Members to the West Belfast and Greater Shankill Partnership Boards and to the Party allocations under this arrangement as set out below.

### **3.0 Main Report**

#### **Key Issues**

The Council has, since 2011, made nominations of Members to serve on the 4 Partnership Boards (Forward South, Eastside and West Belfast and Greater Shankill). These nominations were made from the Members returned for the related District Electoral Areas (DEAs) at the Local Elections, depending upon the political party strengths in those DEAs.

The representation on each of the Partnerships is as follows:

Forward South Partnership – 5 Members  
Eastside Partnership – 3 Members  
West Belfast Partnership – 8 Members  
Greater Shankill Partnership - 6 Members

The Committee is recommended to again adopt the Quota Greatest Remainder system of proportionality to determine the party representation to the Partnership Boards in South and East Belfast as set out below.

#### **Forward South Partnership Board (5 Members)**

The appointees are drawn proportionately from the Parties represented in the Balmoral and Botanic DEAs.

The strengths of the Parties in these DEAs is set out below, together with the number of places which the Parties would be entitled to on the Board based upon the strict application of proportionality.

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<b>Party</b>	<b>Number of Members</b>	<b>Representation</b>
ALL	3	(1.50) 2
DUP	2	(1.00) 1
SF	2	(1.00) 1
SDLP	2	(1.00) 1
Green	1	(0.50) 0
	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>

Four of the five seats are allocated automatically. The Quota Greatest Remainder system dictates that where two or more parties have the same figure the available place(s) should be allocated to the parties which attracted the most first preference votes in the most recent elections. Accordingly, the extra place is allocated to the Alliance Party.

The overall allocation is 2 Alliance, 1 DUP, 1 SF and 1 SDLP.

**Eastside Partnership Board (3 Members)**

In previous years, there were 8 Elected Members on the Eastside Partnership Board.

However, in March 2023, correspondence was received from the Chief Executive Officer stating that, following a governance review of the Board, there will only be 3 spaces for Belfast City Council Elected Members and preference is that there would be one Councillor from each of the DEAs - Lisnasharragh, Ormiston and Titanic.

The representation is based on the use of the Quota Greatest Remainder would be as follows:

**Lisnasharragh**

<b>Party</b>	<b>Number of Members</b>	<b>Representation</b>
ALL	2	(0.33) 1 *
DUP	2	(0.33) 0
Green	1	(0.16) 0
SDLP	1	(0.16) 0
	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>

\*Greater number of 1st Preference votes

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**Ormiston**

<b>Party</b>	<b>Number of Members</b>	<b>Representation</b>
ALL	3	(0.5) 1
DUP	2	(0.33) 0
Green	1	(0.17) 0
UUP	1	(0.17) 0
	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>

**Titanic**

<b>Party</b>	<b>Number of Members</b>	<b>Representation</b>
DUP	2	(0.33) 1 *
ALL	2	(0.33) 0
SF	1	(0.17) 0
UUP	1	(0.17) 0
	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>

**The seats are allocated as follows: 2 Alliance and 1 DUP**

**West Belfast Partnership Board (8 Members) and Greater Shankill Partnership Board (6 Members)**

The redrawing of the DEAs for the new Council had a particularly significant effect in the West and Greater Shankill areas of the city and, similarly, with the consideration of the appointment of Members to the West Belfast and Greater Shankill Partnership Boards.

The area covered by the Greater Shankill Partnership Board encompasses most of the Court DEA, excluding the Lower Falls area, as well as parts of the Oldpark area. The West Belfast Partnership by contrast includes Black Mountain and Collin DEAs as well as the Lower Falls and part of the Court DEA. It is therefore very difficult to identify DEAs which are coterminous with the area covered by the two Boards.

Given this disparity, it is considered that the best way to proceed is to take the 8 places on the West Belfast Partnership Board and the 6 on the Greater Shankill Partnership Board together and allocate places based upon the Party strengths across the Black Mountain, Collin, Court and Oldpark DEAs. Accordingly, the representation to the West Belfast and Greater Shankill Partnership Boards would be:

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<b>Party</b>	<b>Number of Members</b>	<b>Representation</b>
SF	17	(9.5) 9
DUP	4	(2.24) 2
PBPA	1	(0.56)) 1
SDLP	1	(0,56) 1
IND	1	(0.56) 1
TUV	1	(0.56) 0
	<b>25</b>	<b>14</b>

Eleven of the fourteen seats are allocated automatically. The PBPA, SDLP, Independent and TUV all have an equal greatest remainder figure of .56.

The Quota Greatest Remainder system dictates that where two or more parties have the same figure the available place(s) should be allocated to the parties which attracted the most first preference votes in the most recent elections. In this instance (taking into account the first preference votes across the four DEAs) the remaining seats are allocated to PBPA, SDLP and the Independent.

Accordingly, the overall allocation across the two Boards is: 9 SF, 2 DUP, 1 PBPA, 1 SDLP and 1 Independent.

As in previous years, it is recommended that the Party Leaders concerned meet to reach a compromise position for the allocation of seats on both Partnerships.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

None associated with this report.

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

None associated with this report.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Appointment of Members to Building  
Successful Communities Forums**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

- 1.1 To consider the appointment of Members to the five Building Successful Communities Forums operating in the City.**



## **2.0 Recommendations**

### **2.1 The Committee is recommended to:**

- 1. agree to the use of the Quota Greatest Remainder system of proportionality to allocate the available places on the five Forums amongst the political parties represented in the relevant DEAs; and**
- 2. agree to the allocation of the seats on the five Forums as follows:**
  - Lower Oldpark and Hillview – 2 SF**
  - Tiger's Bay and Mountcollyer – 1 DUP and 1 SF**
  - Lenadoon and Glencolin – 2 SF**
  - Lower Shankill and Brown Square and Falls – 2 DUP, 1 SF and 1 TUV**

## **3.0 Main Report**

### **3.1 Key Issues**

- 3.1.1 In October, 2013 the Department for Social development launched five pilot schemes in Belfast under the Building Successful Communities Programme. These were:**
  - Lower Oldpark and Hillview**
  - Tiger's Bay and Mountcollyer**
  - Lower Shankill and Brown Square**
  - Lenadoon and Glencolin**
  - Lower Falls**
- 3.1.2 These Forums, up until 2015, had membership from elected representatives, local communities and statutory and voluntary agencies. The Forums were tasked with identifying the particular housing and regeneration needs of their area and developing and implementing plans to reverse the decline in those areas and create more sustainable communities.**
- 3.1.3 Elected member representation on the Forums had been identified by way of nomination from MLAs. However, the Department in 2015 sought the formal nomination of up to two Council representatives on each of the five Forums.**
- 3.1.4 In 2015 and 2019, the Council agreed, in order to ensure that the nominated Members were from the District Electoral Areas (DEAs) in which the Forums operated and that the nominations were proportional to the political party strengths in those DEAs, that a Quota Greatest remainder exercise should be**

undertaken. It is recommended that the same approach is taken for the nomination of Members in 2023.

3.1.5 The five Forums and the relevant DEAs have been identified as:

- Lower Oldpark and Hillview – Oldpark DEA
- Tiger's Bay and Mountcollyer – Castle DEA
- Lenadoon and Glencolin – Collin and Black Mountain DEAs
- Lower Shankill and Brown Square – Court DEA
- Lower Falls – Court DEA

3.1.6 Accordingly, it is suggested that the two Forums for Lower Shankill and Brown Square and Lower Falls should be grouped together for the purpose of the proportionality exercise as the membership for both is being drawn from the Court DEA, as was the case in 2015 and 2019.

3.1.7 The outcome of the Quota Greatest Remainder exercise for each of the Forums is set out below:

3.1.8 Lower Oldpark and Hillview – Oldpark DEA

Party	Number of Members	Representation
SF	4	(1.33) 2
DUP	1	(0.33) 0
IND	1	(0.33) 0
	6	2

The Quota Greatest Remainder system dictates that where two or more parties have the same remainder figure the available place should be allocated to that party which attracted the most first preference votes in the most recent local elections. In this instance, SF, DUP and SDLP each have a remainder figure of 0.33. Therefore, the second seat is allocated to SF.

The two seats are allocated to SF.

3.1.9 Tiger's Bay and Mountcollyer – Castle DEA

Party	Number of Members	Representation
DUP	2	(0.66) 1
SF	2	(0.66) 1
ALL	1	(0.33) 0
SDLP	1	(0.33) 0
	6	2

The two available seats are therefore allocated to DUP and SF.

**3.1.10 Lenadoon and Glencolin – Collin and Black Mountain DEAs**

Party	Number of Members	Representation
SF	11	(1.69) 2
PBPA	1	(0.15) 0
SDLP	1	(0.15) 0
	13	2

The two available seats are therefore allocated to SF.

**3.1.11 Lower Shankill and Brown Square and Lower Falls – Court DEA**

Party	Number of Members	Representation
DUP	3	(2.00) 2
SF	2	(1.33) 1
TUV	1	(0.67) 1
	6	4

The four available seats across the two Forum areas are allocated to DUP (2), SF (1) and TUV (1). As in previous years, it will be a matter for agreement between the three parties concerned as to which of the two Forums they wish to nominate to. In the absence of such agreement, the order of choice should be in relation to the overall Party representation in the Court DEA.

**3.2 Financial and Resource Implications**

**3.2.1** None associated with this report.

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

**3.3.1** None associated with this report.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Working Groups 2023**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

**1.1** To provide the Committee with an update on the roles and remits of the various Working Groups and consider which Groups it wishes to reconstitute.

**2.0     Recommendations**

**2.1     The Committee is asked to:**

- note the Terms of Reference of the Working Groups;  
     and
- agree which Groups it wishes to reconstitute.

**3.0     Main Report**

**Key Issues**

**Committee Structure**

- 3.1     The Committee is reminded that, at its meeting on 21st April, it had considered a report on the new Council term commencing in May, 2023 and agreed to continue with the existing governance arrangements, that is, a traditional committee system, with 8 standing Committees.**

**Working Groups**

- 3.2     Since 2007, the Council has agreed also to appoint Working Groups to focus on issues of particular concern. In addition, the Council had agreed previously the following principles associated with appointment of Working Groups:**

- Working Groups should be established only if they are considered to be essential for the achievement of effective and efficient decision-making;
- such Working Groups should be appointed for a fixed-term and for a specific purpose;
- the Groups would not have decision-making powers but rather would produce a report with recommendations (usually in the form of minutes of the meeting) for consideration by the parent Committee;
- after the Working Group has concluded the business for which it was established, it would cease to exist; and
- Working Groups should be formed on the basis of All - Party representation with nominees sought from the Party Group Leaders.

- 3.3     At the meeting on 21st April, the Committee agreed to the reconstitute the following Working Groups:**

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<b>Audit and Risk Panel</b>
<b>Shared City Partnership</b>

**3.4** It agreed also that, in line with Council policy, to appoint 1 Member from each of the Parties on the Council, with a Party being defined as having 2 or more Members.

**3.5** The Committee now needs to consider which of the following Working Groups it wishes to reconstitute:

<b>All-Party Working Group on the City Centre</b>
<b>Castle, Cavehill, Zoo and North Foreshore Steering Group</b>
<b>Community Planning Working Group</b>
<b>Disability Working Group</b>
<b>Installations – City Hall/City Hall Grounds Working Group</b>
<b>Language Strategy Working Group</b>
<b>Social Policy Working Group</b>
<b>Reference Group on Older People</b>
<b>Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Development Working Group</b>
<b>East Area Working Group</b>
<b>North Area Working Group</b>
<b>South Area Working Group</b>
<b>West Area Working Group</b>

**3.6** **Financial and Resource Implications**

**None.**

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

**None.”**

The Committee agreed to reconstitute all of the Working Groups listed in paragraph 3.5 of the report and noted that it would in due course receive a report on the outcome of a review of governance arrangements, including the role, remit and number of Working Groups.

**Revision to the Scheme of Allowances**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

**1.1 To consider amendments to the Council’s Scheme of Allowances, adjusting the rates of Special Responsibility Allowances to reflect the increase in membership of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders’ Committee and the change in Party strengths at the recent Local Government Elections.**

**2.0 Recommendation**

**2.1 The Committee is recommended to:**

- 1. approve the increase in the allowance of the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders’ Committee to the same as the Council’s seven other Standing Committees;**
- 2. approve the adjustments to the allowances of the Council’s seven other Standing Committees; and**
- 3. approve the adjustments to the allowances for the Party Group Leaders, Deputy Party Group Leaders and the Party Group Secretaries.**

**3.0 Main Report**

**3.1 Key Issues**

**The Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019, Part 2, par 3 states that the Council must agree a new Scheme of Allowances for each year in which allowances are paid.**

- 3.1.1** Paragraphs 4(2) and 5(2) further state that the amount of basic allowance and special responsibility allowances shall be determined by the Council.
- 3.1.2** The Department for Communities issued a circular, LG 10/2022, dated 28th March, 2022, which set out revised maximum limits for basic and special responsibility allowances with effect from 1st April, 2021.
- 3.1.3** The Department for Communities issued a further circular, LG 03/2023 dated 25th January, 2023, which set out revised maximum limits for basic and special responsibility allowances with effect from 1st April, 2022 which the Council chose not to apply.
- 3.1.4** The allowance paid to the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee was previously set at half that paid to the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the other Standing Committees as it had a membership of 14 Councillors compared to the 20 Councillor membership of most of the other committees.
- 3.1.5** The membership of this committee, along with the Planning Committee, was increased this Council term to 20 members to bring them in line with all of the Council's other Standing Committees.
- 3.1.6** For a number of years, the Council has agreed a split in the special responsibility allowance budget so as to pay a Special Responsibility Allowance to the Chairpersons and the Deputy Chairpersons of the Standing Committees and to the Party Officers (Party Leaders of parties of 12 or more members, Deputy Party Leader of parties of five or more members, and Party Secretary of parties of 12 or more members).
- 3.1.7** **Special Responsibility Allowance**

The Committee is requested to consider whether it wishes to apply the increases to the allowances paid to the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of each of the Council's Standing Committees as detailed in the table below.

The Committee is further requested to consider if it wishes to apply the suggested increase to the allowances for Party Officers following the changes to party strengths at the recent Local Government Election.

**3.1.8** **Financial and Resource Implications**

There is no increase to the overall Special Responsibility budget as any increases are the result of adjustments made

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according to different party strengths following the recent Local Government Election.

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

There are not any Good Relations, Equality or Rural Needs issues associate with this report.”

**Division of Special Responsibility Allowances**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Committee</b>	<b>Current</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
Chairperson	Strategic Policy and Resources	£5,460.00	£5,500.00
Chairperson	City Growth and Regeneration	£5,460.00	£5,500.00
Chairperson	People and Communities	£5,460.00	£5,500.00
Chairperson	Licensing	£5,460.00	£5,500.00
Chairperson	Planning	£5,460.00	£5,500.00
Chairperson	Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall	£2,730.00	£5,500.00
Chairperson	Climate and City Resilience	£5,460.00	£5,500.00
Chairperson	Standards	£5,460.00	£5,500.00
Deputy Chairperson	Strategic Policy and Resources	£2,730.00	£2,750.00
Deputy Chairperson	City Growth and Regeneration	£2,730.00	£2,750.00
Deputy Chairperson	People and Communities	£2,730.00	£2,750.00
Deputy Chairperson	Licensing	£2,730.00	£2,750.00
Deputy Chairperson	Planning	£2,730.00	£2,750.00
Deputy Chairperson	Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall	£1,365.00	£2,750.00
Deputy Chairperson	Climate and City Resilience	£2,730.00	£2,750.00
Deputy Chairperson	Standards	£2,730.00	£2,750.00
subtotal		<b>£61,425</b>	<b>£66,000</b>



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<b>Party Officer</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Current</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
Party Group Leader	Sinn Fein (22 Members)	£6,383.70	£7,687.08
Party Group Leader	DUP (14 Members)	£5,897.25	£6,209.96
Party Group Leader	Alliance (11 Members)	£5,086.50	£5,656.04
Party Group Leader	SDLP (5 Members)	£4,437.90	£4,548.20
Party Group Leader	GREEN (3 Members)	£4,113.60	£4,178.92
Party Group Leader	UUP (2 Members)	£3,789.30	£3,994.28
Party Group Leader	PBPA (4 Members)	£3,951.45	-
Party Group Leader	PUP (2 Members)	£3,789.30	-
Dep Party Group Leader	Sinn Fein	£3,150	£3,250
Dep Party Group Leader	DUP	£3,150	£3,250
Dep Party Group Leader	Alliance	£3,150	£3,250
Dep Party Group Leader	SDLP	£3,150	£3,250
Party Group Secretary	Sinn Fein	£3,150	£3,250
Party Group Secretary	DUP	£3,150	£3,250
<b>subtotal</b>		<b>£56,349.00</b>	<b>£51,774.48</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>£117,774</b>	<b>£117,774</b>

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Nelson,  
Seconded by Councillor Harvey,

That the Committee agrees that no allowance be paid to Party Group Secretaries.

On a vote, four Members voted for the proposal and thirteen against and it was declared lost.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed to adopt the recommendations contained within the report.

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**Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues**

**Recruitment of Chief Officers**

Having been informed that the current Director of External Affairs, Marketing and Communication would be leaving the Council in August, 2023, the Committee:

- i. adopted the recommendation to recruit the post on a replacement basis and to change the title to Director of Communications, Marketing and External Affairs;
- ii. noted that, due to timing issues, the Chief Executive had, following consultation with the Party Group Leaders, taken the decision under delegated authority to proceed to advertise the post on 29th and 30th June; and
- iii. agreed that the selection panel comprise the Chairperson, the Deputy Chairperson, Councillor Smyth, the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services (or her nominee) and a Council Director;

In addition, the Committee:

- i. approved the proposed timeline for the recruitment of the posts of Strategic Director of City Operations, Strategic Director of Place and Economy and City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services; and
- ii. adopted the recommendation to change the title of Director of Physical Programmes/Physical Programmes Department to Director of Property and Projects/Department of Property and Projects.

**Department for Communities' Equality Impact  
Assessment Consultation on its 2023-24 Budget**

The Committee approved the Council's response to the Department for Communities' consultation, which can be accessed [here](#).

**Update on Belfast Region City Deal**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

**This report provides the Committee with an update on the progress of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) and seeks approval of the first Annual Report.**

**2.0     Recommendations**

**2.1     The Committee is asked to:**

- i.    approve the BRCD Annual Report for 2022/23;**
- ii.   note the update on project development and delivery across the pillars of investment;**
- iii.   note the update in relation the Implementation and Financial Plan;**
- iv.   note the updates on key pieces of work in relation to Net Zero and Green Growth; and**
- v.    note the update in respect of programme communication and the BRCD Council Panel.**

**3.0     Main Report**

**Annual Report 2022/23**

**3.1     As previously reported to the Committee, the agreed reporting arrangements for all City and Growth Deals requires the production of an Annual Report and the requirement to meet with the Northern Ireland Delivery Board in order to discuss deal progress as part of an ‘Annual Conversation’.**

**3.2     This is the first annual report produced for BRCD and outlines the significant progress made moving the deal from development to delivery stage in a period during which the partners have faced the considerable challenges of inflation, economic and political uncertainty and constraints on the public finances, alongside the complexities of City Deal financing and governance. The report provides an update on the progress of all the BRCD projects across its pillars of investment and key highlights include:**

- A total of 11 Outline Business Cases (OBC) have now been approved, with 3 more at advanced stages of the approval process**
- The first contract was signed by Ulster University for the Studio Ulster project in July 2022 and has been followed in recent months with contracts signed with Council partners for Carrickfergus Regeneration, Bangor Waterfront Regeneration and Newry City Centre Regeneration. In the latter part of 2022/23 contracts were signed with Queen’s University for the Advanced**

Manufacturing Innovation Centre (AMIC) (also supported by Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council and Ulster University), The Global Innovation Institute (GII) and Institute of Research Excellence for Advanced Clinical Healthcare (iREACH) projects

- The seven contracts for funding that have been signed will enable the delivery of projects with an approximate value of £430m.
- The Lagan Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge and Newry Southern Relief Road - which will be financed directly through BRCD funds available to the Department of Infrastructure - also have the approvals necessary to move into the delivery phase.
- The first funding drawdown requests for the BRCD have now been submitted to the Department for Economy (DfE) and Department for Communities (DfC) and the first claim to a BRCD partner has been completed, marking significant milestones for deal delivery.
- Another key milestone for deal partners was commencement of construction on the first project, the 57,000ft<sup>2</sup> Studio Ulster site at Giant's Park in October 2022.
- 2022/23 also saw work commence on the skills assessment process to understand and respond to the labour and skills implications and opportunities of the city deal investment projects. The first assessment, focusing on the construction opportunities arising through the investment, has already informed a series of recommendations both for BRCD partners, and other stakeholders.
- A Task and Finish Group looking across Northern Ireland at skills for advanced manufacturing has completed its work, with a draft report due in the summer of 2023.
- In January 2023 the BRCD partners launched the new BRCD website to assist in increasing awareness and understanding of the deal, its ambitions and the benefits it will deliver.

- 3.3 The Annual Report, which was approved by the BRCD Executive Board on 14th June 2023 has been circulated for Members' consideration. The individual BRCD partners will

also be seeking approval for the Annual Report through their own governance structures. The report will only be published after all approvals have been obtained.

- 3.4 The report will be shared with the Department of Finance (DoF) in advance of the Annual Conversation which is scheduled to take place in early July.

3.5 **Implementation Plan and Financial Plan**

The overarching deal document is supported by both an Implementation Plan and Financial Plan which were agreed with the UK and NI Government departments. The Implementation Plan provides detailed information on the projects including key milestones, financial information and funding flows, risks and outcomes. It also forms the basis of the monitoring and reporting information required for each project. The Financial Plan sets out the overall financial framework including stewardship, protocols and controls and the role of the accountable body. The plan also details the financial forecasts and predicted funding flows and timelines and forms the basis of the financial reporting and profiling arrangements.

- 3.6 The Programme Management Office has been engaging closely with partners to produce an annual review of both plans alongside the production of the Annual Report. Both plans have been considered by the Finance Directors Group and following consideration by the Executive Board, will be submitted to DOF by the end of June, as required by the Contract for Funding. Also, in line with Contract for Funding Requirements Quarterly Performance Reports and Quarterly Financial Reports will continue to be submitted to the respective Accountable Departments for projects which have signed Contracts for Funding.

**Progress across BRCD Pillars since Previous Report**

**Innovation**

- 3.7 **AMIC** has received planning approval for the Factory of the Future site at Global Point in Newtownabbey and has now concluded its procurement and awarded a contract for the Pre-Construction period under the Early Contractor involvement approach. Work has commenced in relation to its Full Business Case.
- 3.8 As previously reported to the Committee, construction work on Studio Ulster commenced on site in October 2022. Following

the conclusion of the Pre-Qualification phase and publication of the Invitation to Participate in Dialogue, competitive dialogue is now well underway with the intention to appoint an operator for Studio Ulster in summer 2023 and the conclusion of the Full Business Case.

**Digital**

- 3.9 Since the last update to the Committee, the i4c Cleantech Centre, led by Mid and East Antrim has received positive news with the re-endorsement of its updated OBC by the DfE Casework Committee. The project will now proceed to consideration by DoF Supply.
- 3.10 There has also been positive progress on the Augment the City project, led by the Council's City Innovation team, which has now received approval from the Department for the Economy. Work will now commence in relation to a funding agreement and transition will move towards implementation of the project.

**Tourism and Regeneration**

- 3.11 Following a number of delays, there has been positive progress in relation to approval of OBCs with Destination Royal Hillsborough receiving DoF approval and following completion of a Financial Review the Gobbins Phase 2 was re-endorsed by the Economy Casework Committee and awaits DoF Supply approval.
- 3.12 The Contracts for Funding for Mourne Mountain Gateway, Destination Royal Hillsborough and Gobbins Phase 2 have been drafted and engagement with Government Departments is ongoing to finalise.
- 3.13 Work is also being undertaken in parallel with the drafting of the Contracts for Funding for the Tourism Projects to complete subsidy control assessments arising from the requirements of Subsidy Control Act 2022
- 3.14 Progress in relation to procurement continues with the development of procurement documentation for Integrated Consultancy Teams (ICTs) and Integrated Supply Teams (ISTs) and a number of key project procurements are now live.
- 3.15 Belfast Stories, the Council's flagship project continues to progress against the agreed programme. The procurement of professional services continues with the pre-qualification stage completed and Invitation to Tender documents published. Members should also note that a detailed update

was considered by the City Growth and Regeneration Committee at its June meeting.

Infrastructure

- 3.16 As previously reported, feasibility studies are being completed and the OBC is being updated by Department for Infrastructure for Belfast Rapid Transit Phase 2. The procurement of the design and build contract for Lagan Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge will commence in the summer with appointment expected early in 2024.

Employability and Skills (E&S)

3.17 Skills Assessments

Our skills assessment process - developed through the BRCD E&S pillar to understand the labour and skills implications of the city deal investment projects – is continuing to progress. As reported in March the first ‘skills assessment’ looked at the construction opportunities arising through the city deal investment. The outworkings of this work then informed a series of recommendations for BRCD partners and other stakeholders. This approach worked well and the intention had been to extend it to other sectoral areas relevant to the BRCD

- 3.18 However, following engagement with our partners in Government – and our colleagues in other deal areas - we have since adopted a cross-deal approach to skills assessment to ensure a streamlined approach that reflects the full programme of activity planned through all 4 city and growth deals. As a result a new Cross Deal Skills Group held a meeting in May to consider the projects emerging across all 4 Deals to inform a full schedule of sectoral based skills assessments.

- 3.19 Two further skills assessments, aligned to Advanced Manufacturing and Creative Industries sectors, are already now well developed utilising this approach. An Advanced Manufacturing Assessment – completed with AMIC - will be shared with partners over the coming weeks with a view to approval in the Autumn. The Creative Industries (Virtual Production) assessment will begin to refine its emerging recommendations this month, with the intention of a final report to the Task and Finish Group in August.

- 3.20 We are currently planning recruitment of a new E&S programme manager to replace the previous post holder. This will allow us to continue to progress our ongoing

programme of skills assessments to include Digital Skills, Life and Health Sciences and Tourism.

- 3.21 To ensure that local businesses understood the opportunities arising from the construction pipeline of the BRCD investment programme – particularly over the next year – we held two events in March at which we also communicated both the inclusive growth and social value ambitions of the Deal, and the employability and skills support available through our council, college, and university partners to help the sector respond to labour and skills challenges. The events were both well attended and very well received.

**Digital Transformation Flexible Fund (DTFF)**

- 3.22 In May 2020 a collaborative cross city and growth deal bid was made to the City and Growth Deal Complementary Fund for the creation of a Digital Transformation Fund. The aim was to address the financial barriers micro businesses and SMEs face when looking to benefit from the economic opportunities of digital transformation, by establishing a capital grant fund to support investment in capital equipment (hardware and software) critical to business strategic digital transformation plans.
- 3.23 The OBC for the £7.5m DTFF project (with £6m from the Complementary Fund, £1.1m from DAERA and £451K from Derry and Strabane City Deal) involving all 11 Councils, led by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, was approved through Invest NI Casework on 10th May 23 and just last week was considered by the DfE Casework Committee, with positive feedback received and the expectation that it will move forward to Dof Approval.
- 3.24 Derry City and Strabane District Council (DCSDC) does not have access to the City and Growth Deal funding until its Deal is signed. However, government partners are content for businesses in DCSDC to be access DTFF funding from the Complementary fund/DAERA funding initially whilst the Derry and Strabane City Deal is progressing towards approval. On deal signing, £451k from the Derry and Strabane City Deal will then be allocated from the digital pillar of the deal to the DTFF.
- 3.25 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, on behalf of the partners has been making preparations for the launch of the fund whilst the business case has been going through the approvals process and so, subject to final approval, the first call is expected to be launched in Sept 23.



**Net-Zero and Green Growth**

- 3.26 Work has been undertaken with partners and with government departments in order to understand how the BRCD can respond to the challenge of net-zero.
- 3.27 A Green Growth Workshop was hosted in March 2023 by the Department of Finance and the Department for the Economy involving a representative from each of the City and Growth Deals. This was an initial workshop to seek to support deals in considering how to respond to the net-zero challenge and as well as hearing about plans for the first NI Climate Plan from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and each of the deals about how they are seeking to respond to net-zero challenges. Colleagues from North Wales Deal gave a presentation on their work to guide Growth Deal projects in North Wales to improve biodiversity and reduce operational and embodied carbon impacts from the outset of a project. A cross-deal working group will now be established to take forward this workstream, The BRCD Programme Director and Climate Commissioner have been invited to the initial meeting of the working group and an update on terms of reference, membership and workplan will be provided following this meeting.
- 3.28 Members were previously advised that partners had commissioned an assessment of the decarbonisation priorities for the Belfast region. Professor Andy Gouldson, Leeds University was appointed to develop a robust evidence base for Partners. This work titled 'An Analysis of Net Zero Options for the Belfast Region' has now been completed and the results of which were presented to the Executive Board in May and a copy shared with partners.
- 3.29 The report does not focus specifically on the BRCD programme but provides evidence on the scale of the challenge for the region and the potential options for delivery. It is intended that the analysis will:
- Assist the individual BRCD Partners in development of local net zero planning;
  - Help BRCD collectively consider future economic opportunities arising from net zero requirements and support the development of proposals for funding to allow such opportunities to be taken and integrated into the BRCD programme;
  - Support planned engagement with NI departments in relation to net zero integration across NI City and

Growth Deals, that will be led by the Working Group being established by the Department for the Economy as outlined above. This will support projects to integrate net-zero considerations into project development and delivery.

- 3.30 As outlined above given that the analysis is intended to assist BRCD partners in the development of their local net zero planning the final report will be considered by the Climate and City Resilience Committee at its meeting in August.. The Executive summary has been circulated for Members' information.

**Programme Communication**

- 3.31 The progress across the deal in recent months has been reflected in significant positive coverage in broadcast and social media. Major announcements and developments are included in the section of the BRCD website on [News & Events](#).
- 3.32 In the last week, the benefit and impact of the most advanced projects in the deal were widely reported following the announcement by AMIC of £1million of Innovate UK funding to support NI businesses and the announcement that a consortium led by Ulster University has been selected by the UK Government to host one of four new labs specialising in the future of virtual production at the BRCD funded Studio Ulster project.

**BRCD Council Panel**

- 3.33 The Council panel meeting due to be held in April and hosted by Ards and North Down Borough Council was postponed due to the Local Government Elections. Ards and North Down Borough Council will now host the September meeting due to take place on 27th September. The minutes from the panel meeting of 25th January have been circulated for Members' consideration.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.34 All costs associated with the BRCD are within existing budgets.

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

- 3.35 The approach taken to develop the City Deal has been subject to independent equality screening and rural proofing and states that;

*‘BRCD is inherently inclusive, affording an opportunity for the region to grow in a way that will benefit the economy of Northern Ireland as a whole, thereby enhancing the lives and well-being of its citizens. If during further development of the programme it becomes apparent that there may be an adverse impact on certain groups or communities then the partnership commits to carrying out further Section 75 work and including screening and EQIAs as and when appropriate.’*

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Consultation on The Executive Office’s Budget Allocation for 2023-2024 - Equality Impact Assessment**

The Committee approved the Council’s response to The Executive Office’s consultation, which can be accessed [here](#).

**Physical Programme and Asset Management**

**Asset Management**

**Cregagh Youth and Community Centre**

The Committee approved the grant of a licence to the Irish Rugby Football Union (Ulster Branch) for the use of the overflow parking area adjacent to Cregagh Youth and Community Centre up to twenty times per season, with the Council to receive £300 on each occasion.

**North Link Playing Fields**

The Committee approved the rectification of the Council’s boundary with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive at North Link Playing Fields, with the lands to be exchanged at nil value.

**Sally Gardens Community Centre**

The Committee approved the completion of a Deed of Dedication to Urban Villages in respect of works carried out as part of the Sally Gardens Urban Villages project.

**Whiterock Close**

The Committee approved the grant of a licence to Glór na Móna for the erection of a Portacabin on a Council site adjoining its premises on Whiterock Close, with the Council to receive a rental income of £600 per annum.

**Gasworks Northern Fringe Masterplan - Site A**

The Committee agreed to grant a Construction Licence to Radius Housing Association/Kelly Brothers, for a period of two years, to provide access over Council owned land at Site A Gasworks Northern Fringe to facilitate the construction of social housing on Radius' adjacent site, with the fee to be assessed by the Council's Estates Management Unit.

**Gasworks Northern Fringe Masterplan - Site D**

The Committee agreed to grant a Builder's Compound Licence to Kelly Brothers, for a period of up to 2 years, to place a compound on Council owned land at Site D Gasworks Northern Fringe to facilitate the construction of social housing on Radius' adjacent site, with the fee to be assessed by the Council's Estates Management Unit.

**Update on Physical Programme**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

**1.1 The Council's Physical Programme currently includes over 200 capital projects with investment of £150m+ 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:**

- a review of recently completed and underway physical projects,**
- requests for approvals relating to the Capital Programme,**
- a request to act as delivery agent for an Urban Villages project and;**
- approval to procure as appropriate for the Physical Programme.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- i. Physical Programme Half Year Update – to note the overall update on projects that have been completed recently and projects currently under construction as at 3.1-3.4 below and that the Physical Programmes Department is happy to arrange a site visit to any projects that have been completed or are underway;
- ii. Capital Programme movements: to agree the following movement under the Capital Programme:
  - IT Programme – SIEM QRadar Log Manager system project (move to *Stage 3 – Committed*)
  - Waterfront Hall Chiller Units, Waterfront Hall Smoke Curtains, City Hall Christmas Tree, Cremated Remains Burial Plots projects – add as *Stage 1 – Emerging* projects under the Capital Programme to allow business cases to be developed;
- iii. Role of the Council as delivery agent – to agree in principle that the Council acts as the delivery agent for a project receiving external funding from other sources (Donegall Pass Good Relations Hub under the Urban Villages Initiative on the former PSNI Station site) subject to the Council receiving a management fee for the delivery, full funding packages being in place and further discussions with Legal Services; and
- iv. Procurement – to agree that any necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate ‘framework’ arrangements) be initiated for any Physical Programmes projects including externally funded projects for 2023/24 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

#### 3.1 Physical Programme

Members will be aware that the Council runs a substantial Physical Programme. This 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 (TEO), DfC, DfI via the Blue Green Infrastructure Fund and Living with Water Programme, DAERA, Ulster Garden Villages, Levelling Up Fund (LUF) and others. Physical Programmes is happy to arrange site visits to any projects that have been completed.

### **3.2 PHYSICAL PROGRAMME HALF YEAR UPDATE**

Members are aware of the scale of the Council's Physical Programme via a range of internal and external funding streams. Below is a brief summary of projects completed over the last six months, as well as a sample of projects currently underway.

#### **Recently Completed Projects:**

- **LTP Templemore Baths** – This project comprises a £17m restoration of Templemore Baths with a focus on heritage and spa provision. Now open to the public, this is the sixth of seven new leisure facilities to be completed as part of the £105 million Leisure Transformation Programme. The facility includes an interactive visitor centre focusing on the building's heritage and many original features have been sympathetically restored. The facility includes a 25m six-lane swimming pool, a gym, spa and changing facilities, including a Changing Places facility, as well as a new café featuring the original Victorian fountain.
- **City Cemetery Visitor Centre** – part of a £2.8m scheme funded by the Council, Heritage Fund and DfC. The new centre is now open and includes an interpretive exhibition, digital touchscreens, interactive features for children, genealogy workstations and educational space. Further works and signage are ongoing.
- **Walkway Community Centre (Social Investment Fund)** - £1.8m project at Bloomfield funded by the Executive Office and DfC and delivered by Belfast City Council on behalf of Walkway Community Association. The new building includes a creche, soft play, a sports hall and meeting space. Walkway is the final SIF project to be delivered by the Council. The SIF Programme represented a total investment of £8m across 10 physical projects in Belfast: PIPs Suicide Prevention,

Joanmount Methodist Church, Glenburn Methodist Church, Mount Merrion Church, South City Resource Centre St Simon's, Greenway Women's Centre, North Belfast WISP, Mornington Community Project, St Comgall's and Walkway.

- Playground Improvement Programme - Sally Gardens and Westlands – major refurbishments of Westlands playground at Waterworks Park and Sally Gardens play park in Poleglass.
- Willowbank 3G pitch – improvements to 3G pitch and fencing alterations at Willowbank Youth Club.
- Covered cycle stands (DfI and DfC Revitalisation Fund) – stands at Belfast Zoo, Gasworks and Waterworks.
- Braniel Church (Council – Belfast Investment Fund) – extension and refurbishment to the existing church premises for community use.
- Belfast South Community Resources – Sandy Row Tourism Signage (Council - Social Outcomes Fund) – development of a tourism trail.
- Colin Valley FC (Urban Villages Initiative) – delivered by the Council on behalf of the Executive Office, this new clubhouse provides greater access to health and fitness, supporting mental health and wellbeing, supporting good community relations.

Physical Projects Underway:

3.3 Approximately 80 physical projects are currently on site or in contract including:

- Marrowbone Millennium Park – This is a £3.9m partnership project with DfC, Urban Villages, and NIHE. Contractor has been appointed and work is progressing on site, it is due for completion later this year. The park will become a vibrant, welcoming, better connected and open facility, which will be used for sport and active recreation; and social engagement.
- Ballysillan Playing Fields - This is a £7.5m partnership project with Urban Villages, DfI Living with Water and DfC. Due to go to Planning at the end of the month. It is anticipated that the contractor will be on site by next spring subject to planning approval.

- **City Hall Statues** – Winifred Carney and Mary Ann McCracken – Sculptures for the grounds of Belfast City Hall of Mary Ann McCracken and Winifred Carney. Artist has been appointed and it is anticipated that the statues will be installed early next year.
- **Frederick Douglass Statue** – Design and install of a figurative sculpture of the abolitionist and campaigner in Rosemary Street. Due to be unveiled in Summer 2023.
- **Lagan Gateway Greenway Phase 2** – Second phase of the Lagan Gateway project focusing on new connections on the Annadale side up to Belvoir Forest.
- **Peace IV Forth Meadow Community Greenway** – new 12km urban greenway in West/North Belfast. Section 1 – Glencairn – Works complete. Section 2 – Forth River/ Springfield Road – Works due to complete within the next month. Section 3 – Falls Park/Whiterock – Works complete. Section 4 – Bog Meadows – Works complete. Section 5 – Westlink to City Centre – Works to commence in June. Signage package to be installed to include to all sections feature panels, narrative panels and beacon lights – subject to language proposals and agreement via Committee and Council. Artwork is progressing well with installation and a public unveiling planned for June 2023.
- **Peace IV - Shankill Shared Women's Centre** – On Ground and due to complete end 2023.
- **Peace IV - Black Mountain Shared Space Centre** – On Ground. Phase 1. Works progressing well. Phase 2 design team appointed. Planning application submitted. Procurement of works contractor underway.
- **Paisley Park** – On Ground. Works progressing and due to complete in autumn 2023. Project includes an upgrade to 3G pitch, new floodlights and additional changing facilities
- **Brown's Bridge** - The bridge in Lagan Meadows was closed due to structural defects and associated health and safety risks to the public. Repair works starting w/c 26th June
- **ABC Trust Health and Leisure Hub** – This £5.9m partnership project via LIF, DfC, DfI, Flax Trust and Urban Villages involves the transformation of a derelict



building formerly St Gemma's College into a modern, purpose built health and leisure community facility. Contractor appointed and work is progressing on site.

- **The Lockhouse** - This £1.5m partnership project will reimagine a historic and culturally important residential building along the Lagan towpath into a community focal point for good relations activity and cross-community partnership working including minority ethnic communities. Funded by LIF, DfC, DfI and Urban Villages. Works underway on site.
- **Corporate projects** – Range of IT projects to ensure business continuity and ongoing Fleet replacement programme
- **LIF and BIF** - A total of 6 projects on site under the BIF Programme, 12 completed to date; and a total of 7 projects are on the ground under the LIF Programme, 123 projects completed to date.

#### **CAPITAL PROGRAMME - PROPOSED MOVEMENTS**

- 3.4 The Committee 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 – SIEM QRadar Log Manager	Replacement of the Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) Log collector to help protect the IT infrastructure against cyber-attack.	Move to <i>Stage 3 – Committed (Tier 2 – Scheme Underway)</i>
Waterfront Hall - Chiller Units	Replacement of the chiller units at the Waterfront Hall to ensure adequate cooling for events and operational requirements.	Add as a <i>Stage 1 – Emerging project</i>

Waterfront Hall - Smoke Curtains	Redesign and replacement of the smoke curtain system at Waterfront Hall due to operational requirements	<i>Add as a Stage 1 – Emerging project</i>
City Hall Christmas Tree Provision	Consideration of options for replacement of the current Christmas Tree provision in front of the City Hall with an alternate solution	<i>Add as a Stage 1 – Emerging project</i>
Cremated Remains Burial Plots	Development of cremated remains plots at Roselawn.	<i>Add as a Stage 1 – Emerging project</i>

### 3.5 IT Programme – SIEM QRadar Log Manager System

Under the Council's IT Programme of work, this project has been identified as being business critical and required to ensure continuity of service provision. The project involves the procurement and commissioning of a Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) Log Manager System. A Log Manager system collates data logs from many different ICT infrastructure appliances and can cross reference them to provide a total Security profile for the council and will help protect the IT infrastructure against Cyber-attack.

The Committee is asked to note that a satisfactory tender return has been achieved and it is recommended that a maximum of £45,000 is now allocated to this project. The Director of Finance has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council due to the corporate criticality requirements and to ensure business continuity is maintained.

### 3.6 Waterfront Hall – Chiller Units

The existing chiller units at the Belfast Waterfront have been in place since the opening of the Waterfront and are reaching the end of their economic life. The proposal is to replace the existing chiller units with high efficiency equivalents to improve performance and resilience to ensure a more efficient cooling system. The Committee is asked to agree that 'Waterfront Hall – Chiller Units' be added to the Capital Programme as a Stage 1 – Emerging project to allow the project and costs to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course.

**3.7 Waterfront Hall – Smoke Curtains**

Smoke curtains deploy under gravity to prevent smoke reaching other parts of a building including emergency exit routes in the case of a fire. The existing smoke curtains at the Waterfront have been in place since the opening of the Waterfront and this will examine the potential for new technological solutions which were not available at the time of the original installation. The Committee is asked to agree that 'Waterfront Hall – Smoke Curtains' be added to the Capital Programme as a Stage 1 – Emerging project to allow the project and costs to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course.

**3.8 City Hall Christmas Tree Provision**

The City Hall Christmas tree is a major central point within the City Centre and can set the tone for the Christmas celebrations both for visitors and the local economy. Issues with tree quality and supply are expected to increase in future years and Members may wish to consider exploring a suitable alternative. Options will be explored to replace the tree with an alternative sustainable option, to gather options and costs and to look at funding streams either purchasing or leasing, and the additional costs for installation and storage moving forward. Members can note that this proposal is at an early stage of options development and does not impact on the plans recently approved by Council for Christmas 2023. The Committee is asked to agree that 'City Hall Christmas Tree Provision' be added to the Capital Programme as a Stage 1 – Emerging project to allow the project and costs to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course.

**3.9 Cremated Remains Burial Plots**

In February 2020 Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Working Group considered a report which initiated this proposal to develop a section for 622 cremated remains plots in Roselawn cemetery. This land is unsuitable for earth burials but is suitable for cremated remains burials subject to planning permission. The number of cremated remains burials has more than doubled since 2015. To provide for this increased demand and make efficient use of existing burial land at Roselawn it is proposed to develop a cremated remains only section. A Pre-Application Discussion took place in March and Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council who have advised that the principle would be acceptable subject to a planning application. The proposal is at an early stage of development.

The Committee is asked to agree that 'Cremated Remains Burial Plots' be added to the Capital Programme as a *Stage 1 – Emerging* project to allow the project and costs to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course.

**3.10 REQUEST FOR COUNCIL TO ACT AS DELIVERY AGENT**

Members are asked to note that the Council has recently been requested to act as the delivery agent in principle for an additional transformational project under the Urban Villages Initiative – the Donegall Pass Good Relations Hub on the former PSNI site. Committee is asked to note that these projects are being 100% externally funded with the Executive Office as core funder. There is no Council financial commitment to the project. The Committee is asked to agree, in principle, to the Council acting as delivery agent for this project subject to the Council receiving a management fee for the delivery, full funding package being in place and further discussions with Legal Services.

**3.11 APPROVAL TO PROCURE**

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 for 2023/24 as required, with contracts to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.

**Financial and Resources Implications**

- 3.12 Finance** – Capital Programme projects are equality screened.  
**Resources** – Officer time to deliver as required.

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

None.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations and granted approval to proceed with the erection of dual-language signage in the Marrowbone Millennium Park, subject to an equality screening.

### **Update on Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

- 1.1 This report provides the Committee with an update on the next steps in respect of the £10m Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund.

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked:

- Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund - to note the background to this £10m fund and the update provided including the updated programme timeline for delivery.

#### **3.0 Main Report**

##### **NEIGHBOURHOOD REGENERATION FUND**

- 3.1 The Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF) is a £10m capital fund to help groups deliver capital projects that will make a real, long-term difference in their communities. Members will recall that the fund was originally £8m and has been bolstered by an additional £2m via the reallocation of year end surpluses. The fund attracted significant interest and a high volume of applications was received. The NRF Programme is currently at *Stage 2 – Development* Stage. The proposals presented in the applications showcase a wide variety of exciting new ideas for the city as well as enhancements to existing facilities. The NRF is an outcomes focused programme aligned to three key themes emerging from the City Recovery Framework: social economy, environmental sustainability and neighbourhood tourism. The fund is adopting an Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) approach derived directly from these three themes and all proposals are being specifically developed in terms of their alignment to these outcomes.

#### **3.2 Allocation Model**

Members will recall that the £10m fund allocation model per area is based on 50% proportion of population per quadrant of the city and 50% proportion of the population that is in top 20% area of multiple deprivation giving the final amounts available per area as outlined below -

	Allocation
North	£2,434,979
South	£1,924,744
East	£2,287,501
West	£3,352,776

\* Proportional allocation to Shankill from overall West (Shankill - £705,759)

3.3 Members agreed a 3 Stage process for the NRF projects in November 2021 as outlined below

- **Stage 1-Application Stage (Emerging project)** - an open call application process via the completion of an application form. Once received it was agreed that officers from across the Council would then carry out an assessment of projects using an assessment matrix designed to test projects against 4 abilities (affordability, feasibility, deliverability and sustainability). Members agreed that projects had to score over 55 in order to be considered to proceed to the next stage (Stage 2 – Development).
- **Stage 2 – Development (Uncommitted project)** - Project development stage - at this stage a business case/economic appraisal (commensurate with the scale of the project) will be undertaken along with detailed designs and project costings. If an EA or similar has already been undertaken then the findings of this EA will be tested. Additional support (if required) will also be looked at (capacity building etc.). Due-diligence checks will be carried out in line with arrangements under LIF, BIF and SOF programmes. Proposed that this stage will be timebound to 6 months to allow decisions on projects to be taken at the same time
- **Stage 3 – Delivery (Committed project)** - Delivery stage – This is likely to be subject to a number of preconditions for particular projects including the return of a satisfactory tender. Due diligence checks will be carried out again in line with arrangements under LIF, BIF and SOF programmes. At this stage an indicative budget will be assigned to a project in line with the Council's three stage approval process. Projects will not receive a final investment decision until tenders are returned.

### **3.4 Outcome of Stage 1 – Application Stage**

Members will be aware that there was substantial interest in the NRF und with requests for over 100 application packs and 61 applications received in total. In November 2022, the AWGs recommended 21 projects to the SP and R Committee to move to *Stage 2 - Development*. To inform their recommendation, the AWGs received the same information on each application which had reached the minimum threshold (above 55). In considering this Members were asked to note the delivery resource implications and also the overall budget envelope available for each area. It was also emphasised to Members that they were not making any investment decisions in a particular project at this stage. This will only be 'in principle' when projects are moved to *Stage 3 – Delivery*. It was also highlighted for Members that it was recognised that not every project which had reached threshold could be recommended to be progressed to *Stage 2 - Development*. Given this, applicants were advised of the outcome and in addition to being able to request feedback on their application, officers provided advice to applicants to help identify alternative potential sources of support. AWGs were also advised that projects which had reached threshold but that are not progressed are held at Stage 1 in case any of the projects which are moved forward do not progress beyond Stage 2. If this happens then projects will be presented again for Members' consideration.

### **3.5 Stage 2 – Development Stage – Underway**

The 21 projects agreed as *Stage 2 – Development* projects have all been allocated a Client Manager who are working closely with the Groups. The exact requirements for Stage 2 are dependent on the individual status and needs of each project, for example it could be the development of a business case or economic appraisal, testing of a business case, capacity building and/or the development of detailed designs. Members agreed that the development phase will be timebound to six months with updates on all projects to be brought back to the AWGs at the same time. At the end of this stage, recommendations to Committee will include a detailed update on each project, seeking approval for funding. Projects that receive approval will be issued with a Letter of Offer in principle and will move to *Stage 3 - Delivery*. However, a final investment decision will not be taken until a tender has been returned.

**3.6 Updated Programme Delivery Timeline**

Due to the high number of projects progressing to Stage 2 and subsequent pressure on resources and the wider market, the Stage 2 timeline has extended from the original target completion date of this month. Business cases are progressing well however some are still underway so the development phase is extended to allow for all proposals to be brought to Members at the same time as per the agreed process. The updated timeline is as follows:

- August – completion of Stage 2 – Development stage
- September – Member site visits to Stage 2 projects
- October to November – Special AWG meetings and report to SP and R Committee.
- Dec/Jan onwards – Notification of Stage 2 decision. Stage 3 – Delivery initiated.

The Committee is asked to note the background to this £10m fund and the update provided including the updated programme timeline for delivery.

**Financial and Resources Implications**

- 3.7 Finance** – NRF Programme has been equality screened.  
**Resources** – Officer time to deliver as required.

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

- 3.8 None.”**

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

**Update on Funding – Peace Plus  
and Community Ownership Fund**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

- 1.1** To provide the Committee with an update on the PEACEPLUS Programme, specifically the opening of the calls under Theme 1.1 and Theme 1.4, as well as a request for a letter of support for Development Trust Northern Ireland under the Community Ownership Fund.



**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked:**

- i. **PEACEPLUS 1.1. Co-designed Local Community Peace Action Plan** – to note that this SEUPB funding stream is now open, closing on 14th December 2023 and further note the approach for development of the capital proposals and that a detailed update will be brought to Committee in August;
- ii. **PEACEPLUS 1.4 Reimaging Communities** – to note that this SEUPB funding stream is now open, closing on 7th September 2023 and that officers are continuing to develop the proposals as previously agreed by the Committee (LGBTQIA+ Hub and Reconnected Belfast);
- iii. **PEACEPLUS** – Request for letters of support and/or request for Council to act as a delivery agent – to note that is likely that the Council will be requested to act as delivery agent and/or provide letters of support for projects being submitted under Theme 1.4 Reimaging Communities. The Committee is asked to note that officers are currently clarifying the implications of this with SEUPB and that an update on requests for support will be brought to Committee in August for consideration; and
- iv. **Community Ownership Fund** – to agree to provide a letter of support to Development Trust Northern Ireland for its proposal under the Community Ownership Fund.

**3.0 Main Report**

**PEACEPLUS PROGRAMME**

- 3.1** The EU PEACEPLUS Programme aims to build prosperity and peace within Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland. The PEACEPLUS Programme has been divided into six themes – each of which aims to address longstanding social, environmental and economic challenges which have and continue to impact our community. Within each theme there are several investment areas – these will have a more specific focus and target organisations such as local authorities or community groups. The PEACEPLUS Programme offers a significant funding opportunity with approx. £1billion of funding available across the 6 themes. The Committee is asked to note that a number of calls have recently opened under the Programme.

**3.2 Theme 1.1 Local Action Plan – Community Regeneration and Transformation (Capital)**

The call for Local Action Plan applications has been opened by SEUPB. The closing date is confirmed as 14 December 2023. Shared City Partnership agreed on 12 June 2023 to an indicative % allocation model on the basis that there is significant work still required to agree specific budget allocations for both Capital and Revenue spend under each project concept area and that this model is subject to change. The allocation for capital was agreed as 40% which is anticipated to be approximately £4.8m for Belfast. It should be noted however that work is still ongoing on refining the % allocations that will be available as further implementation costs may be taken from each of the allocations e.g., depending on the staffing model; each theme may require a dedicated Project Officer for the lifetime of the plan and there will also be animation costs for revenue and capital projects.

The development of the £15.1million Local PEACE Action Plan includes three thematic areas:

- i. Community Regeneration and Transformation (Capital Projects)
- ii. Thriving and Peaceful Communities
- iii. Building Respect for All Cultural Identities

The outworking of the current activity with stakeholders on themes ii and iii will feed into the capital theme (theme i) and is being delivered through the facilitation of Thematic Working Group sessions led via City and Neighbourhoods. The following 11 concept areas are under consideration and the capital proposals will flow from here:

Theme 2 Thriving & Peaceful Communities					
Capacity Building	Health and Wellbeing	Employability	Youth	Sport	Arts
Theme 3 Building Respect for All Cultural Identities					
Ethnic Minority	Ex-Politically motivated prisoners	Cultural & Heritage	LGBTQIA+	Church and Faith	

For Theme 1 (Community Regeneration and Transformation - Capital), an initial assessment of potential projects is underway using consultation from PEACEPLUS and other pipeline capital proposals, these will be tested for alignment to peace outcomes as well as deliverability within the constraints of the funding model. It is likely that under this theme a number of smaller projects will be taken forward at around £500,000 per capital project. Officers are currently undertaking an assessment of potential projects using the parameters and principles that were agreed by the SCP and those required by SEUPB. The capital projects identified will be developed via project specific co-design processes once identified. The Committee is asked to note that an update on proposed projects will be brought to Committee in August. There will also be further engagement with stakeholders as part of the co-design process.

**Key Milestones – Capital Theme**

<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Key Milestone</b>
June	SEUPB Open Call
June - July	Continuation of development of capital concepts
August	Committee consideration of capital concepts
August/September	Engagement with Stakeholders
<b>December</b>	<b>Action Plan submission to SEUPB</b>
June – July 2024	Letter of Offer received
Autumn 2024	Delivery of local action plan commences

The Committee is asked to note that PEACEPLUS 1.1. Co - designed Local Community Peace Action Plan SEUPB funding stream is now open, closing on 14th December, 2023 and further note the approach for development of the capital proposals.

**3.3 Theme 1.4 Reimagining Communities**

The Committee will recall that, in October 2022, it noted a report on the PEACEPLUS Investment Area 1.4 and agreed to further develop the LGBTQ+ Hub and the Reconnected Belfast (including redevelopment aspects of the Waterworks and Alexandra Park) proposals to ensure their readiness for

application stage. The call for applications has been opened by SEUPB. The closing date for applications under investment area 1.4 is confirmed as 7 September 2023. The Committee is asked to note that officers are continuing to develop the proposals which it had previously agreed. A further update on these will be brought back to the Committee in August.

**3.4 PEACEPLUS Request for the Council to act as delivery agent/provide letters of support**

The Committee is also asked to note that it is likely that the Council will be asked to endorse/provide letters of support for other Peace Plus Theme 1.4 applications and that the Council is also likely to receive requests to act as delivery agent for some projects. The potential implications of this are being checked with SEUPB. The Committee is asked to note that work is underway on a mechanism through which requests for letters of support/ requests for the Council to act as a delivery agent will be assessed with requests to be endorsed by Committee. Given the deadline for applications under this round, this will be brought into the Committee in August.

**3.5 COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP FUND**

The Committee was previously advised that the Community Ownership Fund (COF) was announced by DLUHC on 27 May 2022. The £150 million COF is for communities across the United Kingdom. It has been set up to help communities take ownership of assets at risk of closure with funding supporting the purchase and/or renovation costs of community assets. The Community Ownership Fund is not open to local authorities and is only open voluntary and community organisations. The closing date for the latest round of the Community Ownership Fund is 14th July. The Council has been approached by the Development Trust Northern Ireland (DTNI) who are submitting a proposal to acquire and develop the former synagogue in Annesley Street into a multi-purpose space to include exhibition and cultural space, office space and community engagement space. DTNI is seeking a letter of support from the Council to submit with their proposal. The Committee is asked to agree to submit a letter of support on the basis that there is no financial or other commitment required from the Council.

**3.6 Financial and Resources Implications**

Finance –The PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan and projects under Theme 1.4 will be equality screened.

**Resources** – Officer time to deliver as required.

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

**None.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations and delegated authority to officers to approve any additional requests for the Council to provide a letter of support to accompany applications to the Community Ownership Fund, given that the application process would close in mid-July.

**Finance, Procurement and Performance**

**Audit and Risk Panel Annual Report, including Annual Governance Statement**

The Committee:

- i. noted the summary of the work of the Audit and Risk Panel during 2022/23;
- ii. approved the draft Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23 and, in particular, the disclosure of the significant governance issues contained in the statement; and
- iii. approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Risk Panel of 13th June.

**Review of Local Authority Property Certificate Fees 2023**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

**1.1 To inform the Committee of a proposed increase in fees for the Local Authority Property Certificates.**

**2.0 Recommendation**

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

**3.0 Main Report**

**Background**

**3.1 The Committee will be aware that The Council Property Certificate system arises from an agreement in the early 1990’s**

between the Law Society (representing solicitors) and local Councils, as a means of ascertaining information, which is useful in legal searches relating to the conveyancing process for land and property. The Council Property Certificate is a series of questions asked about a specific address which, in the Belfast Council area, are coordinated and answered by Building Control with support from Environmental Health.

**Key Issues**

- 3.2 Members may recall that in 2020, councils agreed to increase the Council's Property Certificate fee from £60 to £70 fixed until a further review in 2023.
- 3.3 This review has now been undertaken by officers at a regional level and, given the increasing cost pressures on councils, officers have obtained SOLACE approval for the following proposal.
- 3.4 To mitigate against future inflationary costs to councils, officers have obtained SOLACE approval to the concept of applying a 3-year inflationary fee review cycle meaning a further review would not be required until 2026, unless there were significant changes to the Council Property certificate process. In which case, Councils would reserve the right to review the fees.
- 3.5 Therefore, if we build in an assumption for future rises to Consumer Price Index's (CPI's), along with other increasing cost pressures on councils, officers feel it would be reasonable to propose an increase the Councils Property Certificate fee from £70 to £90, fixed for three years.
- 3.6 This proposed increase would assist councils in maintaining adequate resources to ensure that the service is delivered in a prompt, efficient and professional manner. The slight differential between the Regional Property Certificate and Councils Property Certificate would also address the previous concerns raised by the Law Society that the two fees being the same had sometimes led to confusion in applications from solicitors and agents.
- 3.7 Allowing for establishment of new councils after the forthcoming election, this would increase the fees as outlined below from 1st July 2023:

**3.8 Standard Charges**

	<u>Current Fee</u>	<u>Inflationary cycle added</u>
a) Standard 10-year search	£70	£90
b) Search back to 1973	£95	£122
c) Specified 10-year search	£70	£90
d) Follow-up 10-year search	£30	£38

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.9 There would be significant increase to the income raised but the exact figure will depend on the number of applications received.

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

- 3.10 Officers are not aware of any equality or good relations implications in relation to this report.”

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

**Building Regulation Fees for  
Applications including Insulation**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the update the Committee on the implementation for the waiving of Building Regulation inspection fees for those applications involving loft insulation which are not part of funded schemes or maintenance contracts, which commenced on 1 December 2023 until 31 May 2023 subject to review.

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to decide if:

- i. the exercise should continue beyond 31st May 2023 for an additional six months; or
- ii. the exercise should cease, on the basis that of the outcomes outlined in the report.

**3.0 Main Report**

**Key Issues and Current Position**

- 3.1 The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 8th November agreed to waive Building Regulation inspection fees for those applications involving installation of insulation which were not part of funded schemes or maintenance contracts.
- 3.2 The waiving of fees was implemented from the date of Council ratification on 1st December, 2022 until 31st May, 2023 subject to review.
- 3.3 From 1st December 2023 until 31st May 2023, Building Control staff ran a series of reports, carried out an analysis and identified 95 applicants who they considered may have been eligible for a refund under this initiative. This was similar to the initial scoping analysis carried out and is based upon assessing the application details provided and judging those which fall outside any scheme and maintenance contracts that we are aware of.
- 3.4 A covering letter and a declaration form was issued to each potential eligible applicant.
- 3.5 Out of the 95 letters and declaration forms issued, 11 declaration forms were returned.
- 3.6 Through further investigation:
  - 7 applicants were not due a refund as fees had been paid through a scheme.
  - 4 applicants were eligible for a refund however the insulation was part of multiple works. Once the notional fee of £400 for insulation was deducted from the estimate cost of works the payment made was still due, therefore a refund was not applicable, and applicants were informed in writing.
- 3.7 Using this method of analysis and process to identify and contact any applicants who may have paid the fees outside of a scheme has therefore not resulted in a refund being issued to any applicant.



**Energy Efficiency and Cost of Living Advice**

- 3.8 Building Control has liaised with Corporate Communications and will be putting an article in the summer edition of City Matters (end of June) on the cost of living and energy advice for your home. This article is signing posting to links on Belfast City Council website, NIHE and Energy Saving Trust. A second article is being considered for inclusion in the winter edition, the details of the article are still to be agreed.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.9 The method used in attempting to identify those applicants who may have paid their own fees, issuing the documentation and dealing with follow up correspondence is labour intensive and undertaken outside existing duties.

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

- 3.10 There are no equality, good relations, or rural needs issues.”

The Committee agreed to waive Building Regulation inspection fees for those applications involving loft insulation which were not part of funded schemes or maintenance contracts for a further six months from 31st May, 2023.

**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, 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.

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**Table 1: Competitive Tenders**

<b>Title of Tender</b>	<b>Proposed Contract Duration</b>	<b>Estimated Total Contract Value</b>	<b>SRO</b>	<b>Short description of goods / services</b>
Provision of temporary agency workers	Up to 2 years	Up to £8m	C Sheridan	The provision of a wide range of temporary agency workers to support business operations across the Council.
Contract for Placement of Planning Notices in the local press  *Previously approved Sept 2022 for £120,000 but has now been reviewed	Up to 5 years	Up to £125,000	K Bentley	Fulfilment of statutory obligation to advertise planning notices under Article 8 of the Planning (General Development Procedure) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015
Laptops, docking stations and other peripherals	Up to 1 year	Up to £500,000	P Gribben	New devices to facilitate hybrid working and replacement devices as per regular business as usual replacement cycle
T2345 Design Contest to support the delivery of Belfast Imagining 2024  *Previously approved Oct 2022 for £1.85m but revised total now £2.7m	Up to 22 months	Up to £2.7m	J Greer	A Design Contest process to seek out project proposals for the year of culture through a competitive and 3 staged process that will lead to a series of civic and culturally led programmes, events and projects for 2024 totalling £2.7million which has been allocated from the cultural reserve for 2024.

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Provision of animal healthcare services	Up to 5 years	Up to £400,000	J Greer	Belfast Zoo requires a veterinary service to provide an essential service for the health and welfare of the zoo's valuable collections of animals
Supply of trees	Up to 3 years	Up to £80,000	D Sales	Tender is required to ensure the Council has a sufficient supply of large ornamental trees for the next 3 years
AutoDesk software licenses and support, to include bi-annual technology updates	Up to 3 years	Up to £96,000	P Gribben	AutoDesk software is licensed on an annual subscription basis meaning the current AutoDesk software in use by BCC will no longer be available after 30.11.2023 without a new contract. The software is currently in use by Facilities Management, Building Control, Parks Landscape and the Project Management Unit
T2438 NIESS Enquiry Call Handling Service  *Previously approved £125,000 but have been reviewed	Up to 4 years	Up to £500,000	J Greer	Enquiry call handling service required to receive and process client enquires related to the NI Enterprise Support Service.
Provision of St Patrick's Day Festival Events	Up to 3 years	Up to £900,000	J Greer	Creative sector to deliver St Patrick's Day events on behalf of the Council, as part

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				of wider programme of activity
Delivery of Belfast Stories up to end of RIBA Stage 2	Up to 16 months	Up to £200,00	W Langham	Belfast Stories is due to enter next phase of development up to the end of RIBA Stage 2. This will include the completion of public consultation, consumer market testing and commencement of story collection programme. Engagement and communications support is required across all of these strands
Drain clearance services	Up to 4 years	Up to £200,000	S Grimes	Drain clearance services including the provision of an emergency 24-hour call-out service, camera surveys, regular inspection and emptying of waste from septic tanks, grease traps and road gullies.
Reroof and replace 16 roof lights at 7th floor Cecil Ward Building	Up to 4 weeks	Up to £80,000	S Grimes	Urgent replacement and repair services required
Collection and treatment/recycling of paints and varnishes	Up to 4 years	Up to £865,000	C Matthews	To support waste management operations using a specialist and suitable licenced service provider.
Complete energy audits of four high use Council buildings –	6 months initially	Up to £50,000	J Tully	Energy audits of four high use Council buildings to inform

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City Hall, Cecil Ward, Adelaide and Duncrue				next steps on energy reduction plan
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**Table 2: Single Tender Actions**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Total Value</b>	<b>SRO</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Supplier</b>
Mercedes Benz Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) approved parts and components, warranty support and specialist repairs	Up to 4 years	Up to £60,000	C Matthews	<p>To ensure that the OEM approved engineering parts and components are replaced and fitted to Mercedes Benz vehicles in keeping with the manufacturer warranty, operational safety terms and conditions.</p> <p>A recent tender (T2323) was issued to the market via open competition. The tender competition closed on 05 May 2023 with no bids received for this requirement. A direct award/ STA is a fully compliant procurement route in these circumstances as per Reg 32 (a) of the Public Contracts Regulations.</p> <p>Mercedes Benz Truck and Van Commercial dealership based in</p>	Mercedes Benz Truck & Van

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				Mallusk is the only authorised OEM dealership in NI with exclusive rights.	
Visit Belfast out of state marketing for the Belfast Maritime Festival 2023	Up to 4 months	Up to £40,000	J Greer	There is currently a formalised agreement with Visit Belfast to act as our marketing partner. This is a short-term additional requirement specifically for out of state events marketing to attract visitors to stay and to spend during the festival time.	Visit Belfast
T1896 – Collection and treatment of paints and varnishes	Up to 6 months	Up to £108,000	C Matthews	This service was included as a Lot within the recent tender (T2310) for treatment of mixed waste from recycling centres. This lot was not awarded as no suitable tenders were received during the tender competition. Continuity of service required with the incumbent service provider whilst a review of the service is conducted and the re-tender process completed.	Irish Waste Services

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MTC small engineering and metalwork cover	Up to 6 months	Up to £75,000	S Grimes	The extension to this contract to the end of December 2023 with the incumbent contractor WJM Building Services Ltd is required to allow the unit to update the tender documentation and complete a new procurement exercise.	WJM Building Services Ltd
MTC mechanical services cover	Up to 2 months	Up to £100,000	S Grimes	STA required to ensure continuity of service until re-tender process. 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

**Table 3: Modification to Contract**

<b>Title of Contract</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Modification</b>	<b>SRO</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Supplier</b>
T1980a Enterprise Pathway Programme  *Request is retrospective	Up to 18 months	Additional 7 months	J Greer	Contract had previously been extended to 28th February 2023, however requesting an additional extension to 30th September 2023.	North City Business Centre

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				Re-engage is required with all previous participants to gain an update on business support requirements for those who are trading as well as providing additional support for individuals who may have not been able to progress at that time.	
T1914 - Supply and delivery of a range of fruit and vegetables to the Catering Unit	Up to 54 months	Up to additional 3 months and up to an additional £10,000	N Largey	<p>An extension for 3 months to support a local supplier and recoup the loss of income due to the continued closure of catering services and the canteen.</p> <p>A previous extension was approved in 2021 for an 18-month extension due to Covid the catering service and canteen continued to be suspended during that time.</p>	North Down Group



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**Table 4: Retrospective Single Tender Actions**

<b>Title of Contract</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>SRO</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Supplier</b>
Consultant to undertake stakeholder engagement to develop overarching vision for Waterworks and Alexandra Park	Up to 3 months	Up to £43,200	S Grimes	Engagement to be undertaken to inform BCC's Reconnected Belfast Bid to PeacePlus	Urban Scale Interventions
Supply of an advertising package in the NI4Kids magazine	Up to 3 years	Up to £32,000	J Greer	NI4Kids is the only monthly magazine in NI which targets parents of children under 12, allowing BCC to inform them each month about different products and tailored information about the zoo	NI4Kids
T1896 – Collection and treatment of paints and varnishes	Up to 4 months	Up to £72,000	C Matthews	This service was included as a Lot within the recent tender (T2310) for treatment of mixed waste from recycling centres. This lot was not awarded as no suitable tenders were received during the tender competition.	Irish Waste Services

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				Continuity of service required with the incumbent service provider whilst a review of the service is conducted and the re-tender process completed.	
MTC small engineering and metalwork cover*	Up to 3 months	Up to £37,500	S Grimes	Essential services required to be covered until the new tender is in place.	WJM Building Services Ltd
MTC Mechanical services cover*	Up to 10 months	Up to £500,000	S Grimes	Essential services required to be covered until the new tender is in place.	WJM Building Services Ltd

\* **Please note** - These 2 x STAs are exceptions from Standing Orders relating to contracts as allowed under 56 exceptions, where

(a) by direction of the Council acting on a recommendation of a Chief Officer that the exception is justified in special circumstances

**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 12th June, including the recommendations:

**PEACEPLUS**

- to agree to the indicative % allocation model, on the basis that there was significant work still required to agree specific budget allocations for both Capital and Revenue spend under each project concept area and that this model was subject to change; and

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- to note the updated process Stage 2 development of the Local Action Plan.

**PEACE IV**

**CYP Theme**

- to note the modifications considered and agreed through the Programme Board, via delegated authority, during the pre-election period (April and May 2023), as follows:

**CYP 1**

**Belfast Metropolitan College (Tech Connects)**

- to extend contact hours threshold to 20 hours and agree completion of the project based on 50% achievement;

**Tech Connects IT Equipment reallocation to agree:**

- to keep the EOIs application open, on a rolling basis, until all equipment was allocated; and
- to extend the applications to all groups which participated in the PEACE IV programme.

**SSS Theme**

- to extend the Network Scheme – Capital Works to 11th August 2023, to enable for delivery/closure, payments and finalisation of contracts; and
- to extend the period for delivery of FMCG signage to 31st December' 2023.

**BPR Theme**

- to note the report and level of achievement for the BPR Theme.

**GOOD RELATIONS**

**Good Relations Action Plan 2023/24, Reduced Budget Reprofile and response to The Executive Office and Spending Plans for 2023-2024**

- to agree the approach for reprofiling the reduced Good Relations budget, note the concerns raised and the contents of the EQIA report.

### **Update on TEO Asylum Full Dispersal Fund**

- to agree the approach for reprofiling costs in relation to the Asylum Dispersal Fund.

### **Membership of Shared City Partnership**

- to approve the approach to membership, Council officers to submit a report to the Partnership meeting in August on how to nominate members from the business sector and to note that it was agreed that, in relation to the vacancy in representation from the community/voluntary sector in North, it be advertised as previously, with networks and groups being contacted for expressions of interest.

### **Diversity Action Plans**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

- 1.1 To ask the Committee to agree the budget and appropriate resources for the implementation of the Gender Action Plan (GAP) and LGBT+ Action Plan Year 3 activities.**

#### **2.0 Recommendation**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to approve the proposed diversity action plans and associated year 3 costs.**

#### **3.0 Main Report**

- 3.1 The Council's Equality and Diversity Action Plan outlines how it will promote equality and diversity in our ambitions to create a city in which people love to live, learn, invest, work and visit. It also contributes to our compliance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Actions are categorised under the following corporate plan priorities:**

- Growing an inclusive economy
- Living here
- Cross cutting
- Organisational priorities

- 3.2 As part of the Equality and Diversity Action Plan the Council has committed to developing and delivering a Gender Action Plan, LGBT+ Action Plan and a Race Equality Action Plan.**

**Gender Action Plan (GAP)**

- 3.3 Gender inequalities are deeply embedded in our social, economic and cultural systems. There is overwhelming evidence that women disproportionately experience disadvantage and discrimination, a reflection of historical unaddressed inequality, but also that inequalities have been exacerbated by austerity, welfare reform and by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Statistics affirm the persistence of gendered inequalities, which continue to inhibit women's life opportunities in Northern Ireland. Men will benefit from gender equality as they too face gender-specific issues such as lower life expectancy, bad health, lower education levels and are impacted negatively by rigid gender norms.
- 3.4 The GAP (21-24) was agreed by the Council in July 21 following consultation with Women's Steering Group (WSG) the Women's Network and a wider group of staff that attended a Gender Inequalities workshop in January 2021.
- 3.5 Year 2 achievements / projects delivered include:
- Held annual International Women's Day event in City Hall
  - Funding provided for external International Women's Day event in city centre
  - Participation in the NI Gender Diversity Charter assessment- retained Silver level accreditation
  - Women's Leaders Programme delivered - 5 elected members and 17 officers participated
  - Implemented Menopause Policy and Guidance and established a Menopause Support Group
  - Delivered free and reusable period product pilots
  - Onus Domestic Violence Charter (employer award) – retained Platinum level
  - Onus Safe City Accreditation - retained
  - Ongoing support for the Raise Your Voice Project to help address misogyny, sexual harassment and violence
  - Transgender awareness raising and support events
  - Provision of upskilling academies in low paid sector (childcare, health care etc)
  - Progress on construction of Shankill Shared Women's Centre
- 3.6 Year 3 of the current GAP (23/24) has been updated, costed and is being presented to Committee for approval. It is attached at Appendix One. In addition to the financial resources required,

the plan also identifies the role that individual business units and departments have in delivery of the plan.

#### **LGBT+ Action Plan**

- 3.7 The LGBT+ Action Plan (21-24) was agreed by the Council in July 21 following consultation with the Proud Staff Network and senior LGBT+ champions. It has been developed to ensure that our organisational culture and working environment allows staff to feel comfortable to be their whole selves at work and that policies and practices empower talent development at all levels and the removal of any form of discrimination. It also aims to increase the understanding of the wider workforce of issues facing the LGBT+ communities. Year 2 achievements / projects delivered include:

- LGBT+ inclusion and awareness training
- Trans awareness training
- Understanding and reflecting the experiences of LGBTQ people with disabilities
- Peer and reverse mentoring - staff network / allies including senior champion
- Bi identity awareness training
- Continued promotion, visibility and growth of staff network
- Continued engagement with sector and support for external events
- Staff and family Pride Walk
- Participation in Pride 2022
- TDOR event in City Hall
- The display of Rainbow and Trans flags and lighting up of City Hall.
- Achieved Silver Award in Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index

- 3.8 Year 3 of the current LGBT+ plan (23/24) has been updated, costed and is being presented to Committee for approval. It is attached at Appendix 2. In addition to the financial resources required, the plan also identifies the role that individual business units and departments have in delivery of the plan.

#### **Stonewall Workplace Equality Index (WEI)**

- 3.9 We have participated in the WEI since 2019 and were awarded Silver Level accreditation in 2023, having previously attained Gold Level in 2022. Following detailed feedback from Stonewall on our 2023 submission, we have incorporated recommended actions into our 2023/24 action plan where appropriate.

- 3.10 There was a marked decrease in the number of organisations taking part in the WEI this year, with a reduction of approximately 50% against the previous year. Stonewall has advised that in many cases, organisations will take a year out of the WEI process to reassess and progress the required improvements. It is therefore proposed that the Council does not participate in the WEI this year and uses the time and resources to make the required improvements and the delivery of our planned programme of activities. The staff network 'Proud' is content with this proposal on the basis that efforts and resources are redirected into delivery of the action plan.
- 3.11 Stonewall has informed us that it intends to carry out of a review of the WEI this year. We have informed Stonewall that we would be keen to feed into that review.

#### Disability Action Plan

- 3.12 The Committee should also note that the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 ('DDA') Section 49 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons, and to the need to encourage participation by disabled persons in public life. The Equality and Diversity Unit is in the process of reviewing and revising the Disability Action Plan.

#### Race Action Plan

- 3.13 The Director of City and Organisational Strategy, as Executive Sponsor for Race, has been leading on the development of the Race Equality Action Plan. The development of the plan has considered how we deliver our services and actions that we can take as an employer to create a more diverse workforce, and as a city leader, to influence and bring about change.
- 3.14 The draft action plan is currently with an external expert who we have asked to act as a 'critical friend' before further consultation progresses.

#### Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.15 The cost of delivery of the proposed Gender Action Plan year 3 activities is estimated at £36,000.
- 3.16 The cost of delivery of the LGBT+ Action Plan year 2 is estimated at £9300. Both plans will be met from the existing Organisational Development budget.

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**Human Resources**

- 3.17 The plan also identifies the role that individual business units and departments have in delivery of the plan.

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

- 3.18 The delivery of the Gender and the LGBT+ Action Plans will result in positive outcomes. The promotion of equality and diversity entails more than the elimination of discrimination, it requires proactive action. The actions contained within both plans will not only impact on internal operations but also have a positive impact externally on women and men and the LGBT+ community in our city.”

The Committee approved the Gender Action Plan 2021 - 24 (Year 3) [here](#) and the LGBT+ Action Plan 2021 24 (Year 3) [here](#) and associated costs.

**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 15th June.

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

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

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
<b>2023 EVENTS</b>						
Special Olympics Ulster	24 July 2023	<b>Welcome Reception after World Summer Games 2023</b> to celebrate the athletes and their achievements.  Numbers attending 150	C	No charge as charity	Yes, Drinks reception as sporting achievement	Approve No Charge Drinks Reception  <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer.</i>



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Conradh na Gaeilge	31 July 2023	<b>130 years celebration of Conradh na Gaeilge</b> – reception, entertainment and speeches celebrating this anniversary.  Numbers attending 50 – 100	C	No charge as charity	Yes, Drinks reception as anniversary	Approve No Charge Drinks Reception  <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer.</i>
Belfast One BID	20 August 2023	<b>Belfast One-Way Edit Fashion Show</b> - Reception and showcase of 50 city centre retailers  Numbers attending 350	B	Yes £300	No hospitality	Approve Charge £300 No hospitality
TIMCOM (recycling wooden pallets and packing)	7 September 2023	<b>Annual Meeting Drinks Reception and Dinner</b> to enable a networking opportunity for local members to meet with others within the industry from all across the UK as first event in Belfast.  Numbers attending 50 – 100	B & D	No charge as not for profit	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality

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Action Cancer	10 October 2023	<b>50th Anniversary Celebration lunch</b> for volunteers and work of Action Cancer.  Numbers attending 100	C	No charge as charity	Yes, Drinks reception as achievement	Approve No Charge Drinks Reception  <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer.</i>
British Red Cross	23 October 2023	<b>Our Stories – Our Times: Celebration</b> event reflecting on the History of the British Red Cross in Northern Ireland.  Numbers attending 250	C	No charge as charity	Yes, Drinks reception as achievement	Approve No Charge Drinks Reception  <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer.</i>
Crusaders Football Club	25 November 2023	<b>Crusaders Football Club 125th Anniversary Celebration-</b> Drinks Reception, Dinner and entertainment.  Numbers attending – 200	C & D	No Charge as voluntary organisation	Yes, Wine Reception as significant anniversary	Approve No Charge Wine Reception  <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer for wine on arrival</i>
British Council of Northern Ireland	30 November 2023	<b>Mock COP28</b> The debate engages students from approx. 30 schools in Northern Ireland to debate live and topical COP27 issues	B & D	No (Charity)	No	Recommend to approve, No charge, No hospitality

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		through a climate negotiation simulation.  Numbers attending – 130				
<b>2024 EVENTS</b>						
International Conference on Integrated Care	23 April 2024	<b>Conference Gala dinner</b> for guests attending their 3 day congress taking place in ICC  Numbers attending – 350	A & B	No (Waiver as linked to Visit Belfast)	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality
Young Enterprise NI	25 April 2024	<b>YEA NI Awards 2024</b> Drinks reception, dinner and Awards Ceremony to celebrate the achievements of people across NI who completed YE Programmes.  Numbers attending – 300	C	No (Charity)	Approve No Charge No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality
Gort na móna GAA Club	1 June 2024	<b>Gort na móna GAA Club 50th Anniversary Celebration-</b> Drinks Reception, Dinner and entertainment.	C & D	No Charge as voluntary organisation	Yes, Wine Reception as significant anniversary	Approve No Charge Wine Reception  <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer for</i>

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		Numbers attending – 320				<i>wine on arrival</i>
Moloney and Kelly	13 September 2024	<b>Welcome Dinner for US company Colonial Electric Supply -</b> Drinks Reception, Dinner and Entertainment for company employees who have won a 3 day incentive trip to Ireland.  Numbers attending – 320	A &B	Charge £825	No hospitality	Approve Charge £825 No hospitality
Irish Society of Surgical Pathology	4 October 2024	<b>Conference Gala dinner</b> for delegates attending their 3-day conference taking place in QUB.  Numbers attending – 120	A &B	Charge £825	No hospitality	Approve Charge £825 No hospitality
BSSH (British Society for Surgery of the Hand)	14 November 2024	<b>BSSH Autumn Scientific Meeting –</b> Dinner for guests attending their 2 day congress taking place in ICC  Numbers attending - 230	A &B	No (Waiver as linked to Visit Belfast)	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,  
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**Requests for the use of the City  
Hall Grounds for Events - Summer 2023**

The Committee's attention was drawn to the following requests for the use of the front lawns of the City Hall in 2023:

**Féile Rocks Pride Concert**

This event would take place on 29th July and feature local young and emerging bands from all sections of the community.

**Beat on the Street**

This event, which would take place on 16th September, would be organised by the Beat Carnival Centre and include family fun entertainment, with a music stage, activities and performers.

**Poetry Jukebox**

A poetry jukebox, featuring twenty poems by internationally renowned poets, would be located in the grounds from 2nd October to 6th November to coincide with the Belfast International Arts Festival 2023.

The Committee approved the requests and noted that each organiser would be required to submit an event management plan and risk assessment in advance of their event.

In addition, the Committee granted delegated authority to the Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal Services to approve a request to erect a boxing ring in the grounds of the City Hall on 1st August for a warmup type session, as part of Féile An Phobail, subject to all the usual conditions being met.

**Request to Record Drone Footage of Council Sites  
and other City Centre Landmark Buildings**

The Committee granted approval for a licensed operator to record drone footage of a number of Council buildings and events over four days, beginning on 29th July and continuing into the following week, to be used in future internal and external videos.

Chairperson

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## People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 13th June, 2023

### HYBRID MEETING OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Murray (Chairperson);  
Councillors Bell, Black, Bower, Brooks, Bunting,  
Canavan, Cobain, de Faoite, Doherty, M. Donnelly,  
R-M Donnelly, Flynn, Kelly, Magee, Maghie,  
G. McAteer, McCusker, Ó Néill and Verner.

In attendance: Mr. D. Sales, Director of Neighbourhood Services;  
Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;  
Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;  
Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor; and  
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

#### **Apologies**

No apologies were reported.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 4th April, 2023 were taken as read and signed as correct.

It was reported that the minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 2nd May.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

Councillors Black, Canavan, M. Donnelly, RM Donnelly, Ó Néill and Verner declared an interest in item 2b – Community Support Programme in that they were associated with or worked for an organisation which was in receipt of funding and left the meeting whilst the item was under consideration.

#### **Restricted**

**The information contained in the reports associated with the following 2 items is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.**

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the Members of the Press and public from the Committee meeting during discussion on the following 2 items as, due to their nature, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Section 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

**People and Communities Committee,  
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**GLL Leisure Management Contract - Six monthly  
update on contract compliance and performance**

The Council's contract with Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) commenced on 1st January 2015. Since the dissolution of Active Belfast Limited in June 2022, the Council had assumed direct responsibility for contract management. At its meeting on 18th November the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed that future reports would be presented through the People and Communities Committee.

It was further agreed that contract compliance and performance reports would be presented, at a strategic level, to Committee on a six-monthly basis in November and May. That would allow for sufficient time to collate and verify management information data related to the preceding six-month periods of April to September and October to March.

The six-monthly reports, as submitted, includes detailed quarterly information on the two relevant quarters within each six-month period.

The Committee noted the:

- information provided in paragraph 3.3 of the report in relation to contract compliance;
- information provided at paragraph 3.4 in relation to key performance indicators;
- supporting; narrative presented at paragraph 3;
- facility asset management monitoring information set out at paragraph 3.6; and
- Health and Safety compliance assurances presented at paragraph 3.7.

**Community Support Funding Update**

The Committee was reminded that the Department for Communities (DfC) provided an annual grant to the Council to help deliver the Council's Community Support Programme (CSP).

At its meeting in April, the Committee was advised that on 27 March 2023 the Chief Executive had received correspondence from the Permanent Secretary, DfC, relating to the CSP which stated that the Department could only provide support to cover the three-month period up to 30th June 2023 with the allocations based on the 2022/23 budget settlement. The correspondence added; *"I hope you will understand why this allocation cannot be interpreted as an assurance as to the level of funding available for the remainder of 2023/24, given the absence of clarity on the overall budget settlement for the Department."*

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reported that on 7th June 2023 the Council received further correspondence advising that the department had decided to extend the interim funding arrangements, based on the 2022/23 opening budget allocations, and that these will run from 1st July to 30th September 2023.



**People and Communities Committee,  
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The letter also noted that the department is currently consulting on the Department for Communities Proposed Budget 2023-24 and has produced an EQIA which it was seeking feedback on.

The report also outlined the impact on funding awards and provided an update on the Social Supermarket Fund.

The Committee:

- Noted the further communication from Department for Communities (DfC) which stated that they would issue funding for the Community Support Programme until 30 September 2023;
- Granted approval to offer additional three-month contracts and payments to organisations funded via the Revenue for Community Buildings Grant and Capacity Building Grant; two months extension for Advice Grant; and noted that the payment would be a further 25% of the allocation agreed by the Committee in February for Revenue and Capacity grants and 25% of the area consortia allocation used in 2022/23;
- Granted approval to issue Letters of Offer/Funding Agreements for the first six months of the year (up until 30 September 2023) for activity that was 100% DfC/CSP funded but that Belfast City Council administers on their behalf. This would enable payments for Welfare Reform Tribunal Representation to the Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service and for Welfare Reform Mitigations Face to Face to Generalist Advice Organisations;
- Granted approval to authorize that the Director of Neighbourhood Services could issue further payments to those organisations who are funded through Welfare Reform mitigations (Tribunal and Face to face) through delegated authority if further notification of additional funding was received from DfC; and
- Noted an update on Social Supermarket Funding

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

**Notices of Motion Update**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

**1.1 To provide an update to People and Communities Committee on Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance by Members.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 It is recommended that People and Communities Committee:**

- **Notes the updates to all Notices of Motion / Issues Raised in Advance that the Committee is responsible for as referenced in Appendix 1; and**

**People and Communities Committee,  
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- **Agree to the closure of Issues Raised in Advance and Notices of Motion as referenced in Appendix 1 and noted below.**

**3.0 Main report**

**Background**

- 3.1** Members will recall that the previous Notices of Motion update was presented to People and Communities Committee in June 2022.
- 3.2** This report provides an overview of the progress on those Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance which remained open following the June 22 update.

**Notice of Motion Updates**

- 3.3** There are currently 36 active Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance which the People and Communities Committee is responsible for. An update on those Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance which remain active on the live database is attached at Appendix 1.

**Closure of Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance**

- 3.4** At SP&R Committee on 20th November 2020, it was agreed that Notices of Motion could be closed for one of two reasons:
- **Category 1 - Notices of Motion which contained an action that has been completed.** All Notices of Motion within this category contained a specific task that has since been complete. It is worth noting that, when Committee agree to action a Notice of Motion, there are sometimes additional actions agreed alongside the Notice of Motion. As these are not technically part of the Notice of Motion, they are taken forward through normal committee decision making processes. The Notice of Motion can therefore be closed, but additional actions related to it will continue to be progressed and reported to the committee. These additional actions are not contained in this report, but will be noted in the live database moving forward.
  - **Category 2 - Notices of Motion have become Council policy or absorbed in to a strategic programme of work.** These Notices of Motion did not contain a specific task that could be complete. Instead, they were more strategic in nature and required changes in Council policy and/ or strategy for long term outcomes. Those listed within this

category have all been agreed by Committee and are now either Council policy or are currently being implemented through a Council strategy that is managed by a Standing Committee through the corporate planning process.

- 3.5 Following an update of those Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance on the live database, it is recommended that Members approve the following Motions/Issues for closure.

**Category 1 Recommended Closures:**

- 3.6 **Proposal for pedestrian crossing at new BCC playpark on Upper Dunmurry Lane (Ref 38)**

Following discussion on this Issue Raised in Advance ..'the Committee agreed to write to the Department for Infrastructure in regards to an update on the Pedestrian Crossing requests for Upper Dunmurry Lane and Cherryvale'.

Upper Dunmurry Lane - Whilst DfI had hoped to deliver this scheme in the 2022/23 financial year dependent upon confirmation of budget and availability of contractor resource, unfortunately the scheme is yet to be progressed. Officers will continue to liaise with DfI to progress this request.

Cherryvale - DfI continue to undertake the relevant safety assessments required to progress the installation of this crossing. Officers will continue to keep Members updated going forward. It is therefore recommended that this Issue is closed as the specific actions within have been undertaken.

- 3.7 **Historic Graveyards – (Ref No. 48)**

This Motion proposed that '...Council organise a tour of the two cemeteries for Members; prepare a maintenance and conservation plan; provide a report on the plan and costs and set a timeframe for the completion of the required works'.

Site visits have taken place one of which included Chief Executive, Director of Physical Programmes and Director of City Services. With funding support from DfC, Historic Environment Division, condition surveys have been carried out by a conservation architect. The resulting reports include indicative costings for the work required. Proposed works will now follow the standard council process for development as capital projects. It is therefore recommended that this Motion is closed as the requested actions have now been undertaken.

**3.8 Support for Young People and Students (Ref 123)**

*This Motion proposed that ‘..this Council notes the adverse effect COVID-19 has had on our city’s young people and students. Accordingly, we call upon the Council to facilitate an ad hoc meeting with key stakeholders to amplify the wide range issues and ensure a joined up approach is taken.’*

As previously noted, officers met with Cllrs Kate Nicholl and Sian Mulholland in January 2021 to discuss this Motion and followed up with a short note of key discussion points and potential direction. Feedback from Members on how to progress this Motion was not received. As both the proposer and seconder of this Motion are no longer BCC councillors, and with relevant Community Planning Partners including EA, BHSCT, UU and QUB continuing to support Children and Young People through both Covid response and recovery periods, it is recommended that this Motion is now closed.

**3.9 Recent Violence and Public Disorder (Ref 182)**

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

Following on from previous updates on this Motion, a new Children & Young People Coordinator was recently appointed and is currently refreshing membership and involvement of the BCC Youth Council. Links have also been made with the NI lead for the UK Youth Parliament and we plan to also reach out to the NI Youth Assembly lead and to the EA lead for their youth engagement forums in due course. We will continue to support C&YP actions identified under community planning as well as via our own service areas within CNS - for example in relation to planning for, and responding to, disorder at a local level - our Community Safety team and PCSPs are funding a number of initiatives focused on diversionary activity and linking with key stakeholders through the partnerships (city and areas) re. same.

In light of these ongoing actions, it is recommended that this Motion is now closed.

**3.10 City Centre Safety for Women (Ref 218)**

*‘At the request of Councillor Black, the Committee agreed that an update report be submitted to a future meeting, to include relevant information and feedback, from the PSCPs, Partners and other Stakeholders, on the issue of City Centre Safety for Women’.*

Following on from previous updates on this Issue Raised in Advance, a report and suggested actions focused on 'inclusive and safe' (including those relating to the safety of women in the city centre) are to be considered internally by officers before being discussed more broadly with the PCSPs to see what can be achieved in 2023/24. As the Clean, Green, Inclusive and Safe action plan will pick these issues up going forward, it is recommended that this Motion is now closed.

**3.11 Request to present to Committee – Inclusive Parks (Ref 251)**

A presentation from Playboard NI and the Mae Murray Foundation was received at People and Communities Committee in June 2022 therefore this Issue Raised in Advance can be closed.

**3.12 Cleansing Task Force (Ref 255)**

The first meeting of the Cleanliness Task Force was held on 17 August 2022, with a number of meetings held since. It was agreed at the Cleanliness Task Force held on 28 April 2023 that the Task Force had fulfilled its Terms of Reference and that no further meetings would be required at this time. It is therefore recommended that this Motion is closed.

**3.13 Review of Non-Residential Fees for the re-opening of graves in Blaris Cemetery for Collin Residents (Ref 265)**

This Issue Raised in Advance requested that that a letter be issued to Lisburn and Castlereagh (LCCC) seeking a review of non-residential fees for the re-opening of graves in Blaris Cemetery for Collin Residents. A further Member asked the Committee to write to the Minister for Communities to establish if there were any plans to review the Burial Ground Regulations in relation to fees for burials and to ascertain if the Department had any plans to work with Councils to ensure that residents were not faced with disproportionate charges during a bereavement. The Committee accordingly agreed to issue the letters as requested.

Correspondence was issued to LCCC and DfC as agreed by Committee and responses received. An update report was provided to Committee in October 2022. In their response, Department for Communities advised that the Burial Grounds Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1992 were made under section 181 of the Public Health Ireland Act 1878 Act (the 1878 Act). This section does not provide the Department with the power to make regulations regarding burial fees which is the sole responsibility of Councils. LCCC replied to advise that there was a three year period following Local Government Reform from April 2015 to March 2018 where the resident rate was applied. LCCC advised that their position on this matter has been reviewed following by the Northern Ireland Public Sector Ombudsman following a similar challenge and had been supported in decision making and consistency on the matter. Given that the specific actions have been undertaken and that LCCC have outlined their position on this issue, it is recommended that this is now closed.

**3.14 Support for Parents (Ref 275)**

This Motion proposed.. ‘to support parents, the Council commits to providing a list of existing initiatives which it delivers, with a view to working with the voluntary and community sector, as well as other partners, to explore if such initiatives may be improved, as well as seeking to bring forward new programmes during the cost-of-living crisis. The Council also commits to seeking parents’ views on any further support it will provide to families to ensure that parent voice is a significant factor in the design and implementation of new initiatives that will help tackle the cost-of-living crisis for parents’.

The first action within this Motion regarding support for Parenting Week 2022 has been completed. A number of support programmes for parents are delivered via our community and play centre programming and via external organisations who book our centres. These include Parent and Toddler clubs, After-Schools Programmes, Homework Clubs, Summer Scheme Programmes and Money Saver Events. Our Play Service also provides a number of further targeted support projects including cultural confidence projects for Ethnic Minorities where we deliver sessions to parents and children from ethnic minority backgrounds and project support for Refugees delivered at three hotels in the city and in Botanic Park. The team are also delivering support to a Neurodiverse Parents Group with sessions for parents to talk and share experiences of children with neurodiverse profiles. Given the volume of ongoing work in

relation to this Motion, it is recommended that this Motion is now closed.

**3.15 Bins not being removed from the street (Ref 276)**

This is being progressed as part of the actions arising from the Special P&C committee on the 22nd March 2023 therefore it is recommended that this issue is now closed.

**3.16 Belfast Cycle Network (Ref 288)**

This Motion requested that the Council engage with PSNI and Department for Infrastructure, to develop a long-term, comprehensive strategy to ensure that the Belfast cycle network is kept clean and free from obstructions, such as parked cars and commercial bins.

Officers continue to engage with key partners, in particular DfI, through established Community Planning structures. Processes are in place within council to address any cleansing issues which are raised; however, enforcement of obstructions lies with DfI. Given that the specific actions within have been undertaken, it is recommended that this Motion is now closed.

**3.17 Missed bin collections (Ref 299)**

This is being progressed as part of the actions arising from the Special P&C committee on 22nd March 2023 therefore it is recommended that this issue is now closed.

**Category 2 Recommended Closures**

**3.18 Belfast City Council Cycling Champion (Ref 124)**

This Motion proposed that *'this Council agrees to introduce a Belfast City Council - Cycling Champion within the Council to support active travel and bicycle use; and agrees to write to the Minister for Infrastructure calling on the publication of the Belfast Bicycle Network'*.

An internal officer Connectivity and Active Travel Group has been established and is seeking to ensure that our policies, projects, interventions, funding opportunities and programming are aligned to not only our internal corporate priorities but link with various external structures and plans e.g. Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan, Belfast Cycling Network. This work will also feed into an All Party Member workshop on the sustainable and active work and engagement that Council are undertaking. Officers intend to present a paper to CMT in the coming weeks regarding

a three-year workplace Active Travel Plan which includes the nomination of a senior CMT officer as an Active Travel Champion, therefore it is recommended that this Motion is now closed.

**3.19 Graffiti Removal (Ref 244)**

*This Motion proposed that '...this is not a problem unique to Belfast but is one for which we should consider innovative solutions alongside traditional cleaning methods Council will also work in an inter-agency capacity to address issues around unwanted graffiti across the city. In doing so, Council should consider how its team can be made available to other agencies on a commercial basis'.*

As per recent updates to the Cleanliness Task Force, a database has been established to track problem graffiti areas to enable the alignment of resources. Environmental Education and Outreach Team are working with the Neighbourhood Manager (OSS) on a pilot to support community groups in graffiti removal. Officers continue to work with partner agencies in regard to education and awareness, with a number of environmental school visits undertaken which include the issue of the impact and cost of graffiti. It is officers' intention to write to the Permanent Secretaries of each department to encourage consideration of participation in graffiti removal for team building days/activities. As the specific points within the Motion have been addressed and reporting will be ongoing, it is recommended that this Motion is now closed.

**3.20 Financial & Resource Implications**

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

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

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

The Committee:

- Noted the updates to all Notices of Motion / Issues Raised in Advance that the Committee was responsible for as referenced in Appendix 1 to the report; and
- Agreed to the closure of Issues Raised in Advance and Notices of Motion as referenced in Appendix 1, with the exception of the Review of the Non-Residential Fees for the re-opening of graves in Blaris Cemetery for Collin Residents; and the Belfast Cycle Network. It was agreed also that the Cleansing Task Force be retained.



### **Update on Motion Vaping**

The Director of City Services submitted for the Committee's consideration the following report:

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

- 1.1 To brief the Committee on the motion passed at Council in relating to vaping, which was proposed by Councillor John Kyle and seconded by Councillor Donal Lyons, and to update Members on relevant partner activity underway in this area, along with next steps for consideration and implementation of the motion.

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the updates on current policy context and existing strategic level engagements in relation to tobacco control and vaping issues, and to agree:
- i. to receive a further report on proposals for Elected Member engagement with partners and stakeholders on a range of issues surrounding use of vapes
  - ii. to receive a further report on the use of vapes in Council premises

#### **3.0 Main report**

- 3.1 The Standards and Business Committee at its meeting on 28th March 2023 agreed a proposal for the following motion to be referred to Council for debate:

***'Belfast faces a growing problem of vaping by children and young adults. These products are addictive, damaging to health and often contain illegal substances.***

***The legislation covering their sale is inadequate. While it is illegal to sell them to under 18s there is no registration of retailers, no restriction on the display of the products and no resources to identify illegal and harmful additives.***

***Some disposable vapes are designed to be attractive to children and many are discarded in the street posing an environmental and health risk.***

***In the face of a developing public health crisis this Council will convene a working group with other stakeholders, including the Department of Health, the Public Health Agency and the PSNI to***

*consider measures to strengthen current legislation and enforcement, including the consideration of a ban on the sale of disposable vapes.*

*Furthermore, the Council will ban the use of vapes by under 18s in all its sites and premises.'*

The proposer of the motion addressed the Council and provided an overview of the motion. The motion was seconded by Councillor Lyons and Council agreed that the motion be passed.

#### **Regional policy context and existing partnerships**

- 3.3 Issues surrounding the sale and use of nicotine inhaling product (NIPs), including disposable vapes are currently being considered by a range of agencies, partners and working groups. Design proposals for a Council working group will need to consider the current policy and partnership landscape in this area, to ensure that Belfast City Council's voice is effective in influencing policy and legislative developments, while also ensuring that all impacts of vaping on the city (such as health and environment) are explored.
- 3.4 NIPs are an emergent area of focus as more research on the impacts of these products becomes available. Policy and legislative matters in this area are mostly devolved matters for the NI Assembly and the other regional legislatures in GB. In Scotland retailers who wish to sell NIPs must be registered to do so, however registration is currently not required in England or Northern Ireland. In England, Ministers recently announced they are looking at regulation of NIPs and committed £3 million additional funding for English Authorities to tackle the issue. This includes looking at accessibility to children, the marketing and flavourings of e-cigarettes, the environmental impact of disposables and strengthening the current Regulations.
- 3.5 In Northern Ireland, Belfast City Council participates in a number of regional groups with key partners, including other NI Councils, Department of Health and the Public Health Agency. Whilst these groups have been focused on tobacco control for many years, they are also now looking at how best to deal with the emerging issues around NIPs.
- 3.6 The Tobacco Strategy Implementation Steering Group (TSISG) was set up to oversee the implementation of a ten-year Tobacco Control Strategy for NI and a successor strategy is set to be published in 2024. TSISG are monitoring the various issues around NIPs and will be taken account of when shaping the aims of the new strategy. The Council are represented on the TSISG at

Officer level, along with multiple partner organisations including the Department of Health and Public Health Agency. In addition the Council are also a member of the TSISG Policy, Legislation and Enforcement Sub-Group which focuses on the policy, enforcement, and legislative aspects of the Strategy.

- 3.7 The Tobacco Control Group (TCG) is a regional sub-group of EHNI. All 11 NI Councils are represented and they identify priorities for tobacco control work undertaken by Councils to support the implementation of the NI Tobacco Control Strategy. This year the TCG intend to carry out a scoping exercise to identify the major issues around NIPs and in collaboration with the Department of Health and put forward recommendations to influence future decision making.

3.8 Product safety regulation - MHRA and Consumer Protection Subgroup (EHNI)

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is the competent authority for a notification scheme for manufacturers of e-cigarettes and refill containers within Great Britain and Northern Ireland. MHRA is responsible for implementing technical and safety provisions of the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016 (TRPR), as amended. The Consumer Protection Subgroup of EHNI have engaged with MHRA on a number of occasions detailing concerns regarding enforcement of the Regulations at the ever growing and changing retail level.

3.9 Belfast City Council regulatory activities

Belfast City Council investigate complaints regarding unregistered products which fail to meet the safety requirements of the above Regulations, on most occasions these complaints relate to products with a tank size greater than the prescribed maximum 2ml volume. Council officers also routinely provide advice to businesses and have developed a leaflet (with associated website content) to advise retailers of the product safety requirements regarding e-cigarettes and e-liquids.

- 3.10 Belfast City Council also carries out test purchasing to monitor/ assess compliance with underage sale legislation (selling to under 18s). In 2022/23, 40 fixed penalty notices were issued for underage sales offences. A Restricted Premises Order was also obtained as a result of repeat occurrences, banning a retailer from selling both tobacco and vaping products for a period 12 months.

**Environmental concerns**

- 3.11 Use of disposable vapes creates additional environmental issues including disposal/littering and impacts on waste treatment. Disposable vapes are classed as waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) as they are made of plastic and contain lithium batteries and copper. They are not straightforward to recycle and many end up in landfill, with some estimates saying that over 1.3 million are disposed of weekly. In addition, many are simply discarded on the street, and in public open spaces such as parks.

**Proposal for a working group to consider options for a ban on sales of disposable vapes**

- 3.12 In view of the existing engagement structures and policy development processes currently ongoing at regional level, officers plan to initially consult with relevant partners and groups, to identify the most effective and appropriate options for a specific Belfast City Council engagement on this issue. Officers will bring back a proposal for partner engagement on this issue to a future committee for Member consideration.

- 3.13 **Use of vapes in Council premises:**

With regards to the proposal for 'the Council to ban the use of vapes by under 18s in all its sites and premises', the Corporate Health and Safety Manager will bring a report back to Committee regarding the use of electronic cigarettes in Council sites and premises.

- 3.14 **Finance and Resource Implications**

None

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

None.”

The Committee noted the updates on the current policy context and existing strategic level engagements in relation to tobacco control and vaping issues, and agreed:

- i) to receive a further report on proposals for Elected Member engagement with partners and stakeholders on a range of issues surrounding use of vapes; and
- ii) to receive a further report on the use of vapes in Council premises.

**People and Communities Committee,  
Tuesday, 13th June, 2023**

**Motion: Graffiti - Development of  
Memorandums of Understanding**

The Committee was advised that at the meeting of the Standards and Business Committee held on 28th March, the following motion, which was proposed by Councillor McKeown and seconded by Councillor Whyte, was referred to the Committee for consideration:

*“This Council recognises the impact graffiti has on communities in terms of the environment and appearance of an area, but also on the wellbeing of residents.*

*While the Council has a limited programme of graffiti removal and the role of this is under regular review, it is recognised that this alone cannot meet the widespread need to tackle this issue, nor should it fall solely to the ratepayer to fund this work.*

*The Council will therefore commence work on developing Memorandums of Understanding with utility companies, telecoms companies, government departments and other public bodies to seek agreement that they will remove graffiti on utility boxes and other property within their ownership within a defined, short period of time. Further, the Council will look at whether any additional bye-laws are required to support this work.*

*To enable the simple and quick reporting and redirection of graffiti notifications to responsible bodies under this model, the Council will work with these groups to map and catalogue public infrastructure and its respective ownership, and provide a single point of contact within the Customer Hub for members of the public and council staff to report incidents, which will then be redirected to the responsible body for action under the Memorandums of Understanding.”*

The Committee adopted the motion and agreed that a report on how this would be facilitated, resourced and managed be brought back.

**Committee/Strategic Issues**

**Affordable Warmth Scheme update and  
Service Level agreement**

The Committee agreed to defer, until a special meeting on 26th June, the request from the Department of Communities (DfC) to sign the interim service level agreement provided for the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2024, acknowledging that the DfC had put the Council on notice to terminate the arrangement on 31st August 2023 and that representatives of DfC and the NIHE be invited to attend the meeting.

**Air Quality Detailed Assessment**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

- 1.1 At the People and Communities Committee meeting of 8th October 2019, and upon consideration of agenda item 3b, ‘*Local Air Quality Management Update for Belfast*’, the Committee agreed a proposal that the council would agree to look at undertaking a detailed air quality assessment for the city and to measure particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>). The Committee additionally agreed to bring back a further report on how the Council might undertake such a detailed assessment, to include the measurement of PM<sub>2.5</sub>.
- 1.2 A number of subsequent reports were provided to the People and Communities Committee as to how a detailed review and assessment for nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) might be delivered for the city and on the basis of these reports, a competitive European Tender exercise was undertaken by the council in September 2020 in order to appoint an appropriately experienced environmental consultancy to deliver the detailed assessment project.
- 1.3 Aecom consultants were appointed by the council in early 2021 to deliver the detailed assessment project over an approximate 2-year period, with a final project report scheduled to be presented to the People and Communities Committee by the end of March 2023. The Committee will be aware that Aecom consultants attended a special meeting of the People and Communities Committee on 13th February 2023 in order to provide an overview of the key findings of the Detailed Assessment and to receive comments from the Committee.
- 1.4 The Aecom detailed assessment has therefore considered nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>) and fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) for the city and it has been undertaken in accordance with the provisions of Part III of the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 and of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance (LAQM.TG22).
- 1.5 The detailed assessment has considered nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>) and fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) concentrations in terms of national and European air quality standards and objectives and having regard to the September 2021 World Health Organisation (WHO) Air Quality Guideline values. WHO has advised that the Air Quality Guidelines provide evidence-informed, non-binding recommendations for protecting public health from the adverse effects of air pollutants by eliminating or reducing exposure to hazardous air pollutants and

by guiding national and local authorities in their risk management decisions.

1.6 The Committee is advised that fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) is not in regulation for the purposes of district council local air quality management statutory functions but it has nevertheless been proactively considered for the Belfast City Council area via this detailed assessment. By way of comparator, The Environmental Targets (Fine Particulate Matter) (England) Regulations 2023 have established an annual mean concentration target value for PM<sub>2.5</sub> of 10 mg/m<sup>3</sup> to be achieved by 31st December 2040.

1.7 The Committee is further advised that the detailed assessment project was completed at the end of March 2023 in accordance with the project timeline and tender schedule. This report serves therefore to provide a brief overview of the key outworkings and conclusions of the detailed assessment to the People and Communities Committee and to seek permission to add the Detailed Assessment reports to the Member's Library.

## 2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is invited to:

- Note this covering report concerning the key outworkings and conclusions of the Aecom detailed assessment for nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>) and fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) for the Belfast City Council area and to agree that the detailed assessment project reports covering ambient monitoring, atmospheric dispersion modelling and a summary of the detailed assessment be added to the Members' Library.

2.2 The Committee is additionally invited to note that Air Quality Officers from the Scientific Unit, upon request, will provide Party Briefings on the Detailed Assessment.

## 3.0 Main report

### Key Issues

3.1 The Committee has been advised previously that the detailed assessment project comprises four main components; (i) additional ambient monitoring; (ii) development of an emissions inventory for Belfast; (iii) atmospheric dispersion modelling for the Belfast City Council area and (iv) provision of a final written summary report of the Detailed Assessment project for NO<sub>2</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>.

- 3.2 The detailed assessment has therefore been undertaken for a 2019 base year, in order to overcome the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on ambient air quality concentrations, and for a forward projection year of 2028. This approach reflects Defra and Institute of Air Quality Management Covid-19 guidance that for an air quality study that includes validation against monitoring data, 2019 monitoring data should be used as the last 'typical' air quality year.

3.3 Additional Ambient Monitoring.

Belfast City Council already undertakes a significant range of ambient air quality monitoring across the city using a combination of automatic and passive diffusion type monitoring equipment. For the purposes of the detailed assessment, additional ambient monitoring was undertaken during 2021 by Aecom consultants using Zephyr air quality monitors at locations representative of key nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter emission sources located throughout the Belfast City Council area, i.e. at the A2 Sydenham By-Pass adjacent to George Best Belfast City Airport; at the A55 Upper Knockbreda Road; at Clara Street in east Belfast; at Lombard Street in the city centre; at the A12 Westlink at Henry Place; and at Mount Eagles Glen in southwest of the city.

- 3.3.1 There were no monitored exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide 40 mg/m<sup>3</sup> annual mean objective during 2019 at any Zephyr monitoring site, with the exception of the A12 Westlink site located adjacent to Henry Place (50.3 mg/m<sup>3</sup>). This site falls within the existing M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink corridor Air Quality Management Area and a similar nitrogen dioxide annual mean concentration was recorded for 2019 at the nearby council nitrogen dioxide diffusion tube monitoring site. There were no monitored exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide 200 mg/m<sup>3</sup> 1-hour mean objective (18 exceedances permitted per annum).
- 3.3.2 There were no monitored exceedances of the PM<sub>10</sub> 40 mg/m<sup>3</sup> annual mean objective at any Zephyr monitoring site during 2019 and no monitored exceedances of the PM<sub>10</sub> 50 mg/m<sup>3</sup> 24-hour mean objective.
- 3.3.3 There were no monitored exceedances of the PM<sub>2.5</sub> 20 mg/m<sup>3</sup> annual mean objective / limit value at any Zephyr monitoring site during 2019.



**3.4 Emissions inventory.**

An emissions inventory for Belfast was compiled by Aecom consultants and council Air Quality Officers covering nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter emission sources, including George Best Belfast City Airport, the Belfast Harbour, railways, domestic and industrial combustion sources and the local road network. Road fleet emissions were additionally informed by a series of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) surveys. Data from the emissions inventory was employed in the various atmospheric dispersion modelling studies for the city.

**3.5 Atmospheric dispersion modelling for the Belfast City Council area.**

Atmospheric dispersion modelling was undertaken by Aecom consultants for NO<sub>2</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> for the Belfast City Council area for a 2019 base year and for a forward projection year of 2028. In addition to the citywide modelled grids for 2019 and 2028, modelling was also undertaken at 1,797 discrete receptor locations, representative of residential properties, health care facilities, hospitals, education facilities and other locations considered sensitive to air pollution. The atmospheric dispersion modelling data has been validated, verified and adjusted using ratified Belfast City Council ambient monitoring data, together with calibrated and ratified monitoring data from the six Zephyr air quality monitors, to ensure that it is reflective of ambient conditions in the 2019 base year and the forward projection year of 2028.

**3.5.1** Modelled ambient concentrations were compared with air quality objectives detailed within the Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and with the September 2021 World Health Organization (WHO) Global Air Quality Guidelines in order to identify areas of exceedance across the city.

**3.5.2 2019 city-wide modelled nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) concentrations.**

Annual mean nitrogen dioxide concentrations for 2019 were predicted to be above the UK AQO level of 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup> at 24 discrete sensitive receptor locations. All of these receptors are within or near to the boundaries of the existing Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) along the M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink corridor (AQMA 1) and East Bridge Street / Cromac Street (AQMA 2). Within the uncertainties of the modelling, Aecom have concluded that the exceedances do not warrant any amendment to the boundaries of AQMA 1 and AQMA 2 at this time. Predicted 2019 annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations within AQMA 3, which covers a

section of Upper Newtownards Road, Knock Road and Hawthornden Way, and AQMA 4 which covers the Ormeau Road from the junction with Donegall Pass to the Belfast City boundary at Galwally, were below the UK AQO level at all locations of relevant exposure. Aecom have therefore advised that the results of recent years' monitoring at locations within AQMA 3 and AQMA 4 indicate that the AQO is now being met. Aecom have consequently advised that consideration should be given to the revocation of AQMA 3 and AQMA 4, subject to a continuation of monitored NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations below the AQO in these AQMAs. Aecom's conclusions are consistent with those of the council concerning AQMAs 3 and 4, as detailed within our 2022 Air Quality Progress Report. The 1-hour mean AQO of 200 µg/m<sup>3</sup> was not predicted to be exceeded during 2019.

- 3.5.3 With the exception of the rural areas in the western part of the council's administrative area, predicted 2019 annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations throughout the city exceeded the much more stringent WHO AQG of 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. For the nitrogen dioxide 24-hour mean AQG of 25 µg/m<sup>3</sup> (99<sup>th</sup> percentile, 3-4 exceedances per annum), Aecom have noted that monitoring results would suggest that the 24-hour mean NO<sub>2</sub> WHO AQG is likely to be exceeded across much of the Council's administrative area, particularly in the city centre area and near busy roads.

3.5.4 2028 city-wide modelled nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) concentrations.

For the future assessment year of 2028, predicted annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations are below the UK AQO of 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup> at all locations of relevant exposure throughout the city, the highest annual mean concentration being around 31 µg/m<sup>3</sup> in the vicinity of Stockmans Lane. The 1-hour mean AQO of 200 µg/m<sup>3</sup> is not predicted to be exceeded during 2028.

- 3.5.5 In comparison to the much more stringent WHO AQG for annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations of 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup>, most of the city centre and surrounding areas, particularly close to the major road network, are predicted to exceed this AQG in 2028.

3.5.6 2019 city-wide modelled PM<sub>10</sub> concentrations.

Annual mean PM<sub>10</sub> concentrations in 2019 were predicted to be well below the UK AQO level of 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup> at all locations of relevant exposure throughout the city, with the highest concentration around 21 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. Similarly, the number of exceedances of the PM<sub>10</sub> 24-hour mean (50 µg/m<sup>3</sup>) were predicted to be well below the 35 permitted per annum.

**3.5.7 Annual mean PM<sub>10</sub> concentrations in 2019 exceeded the much more stringent WHO AQG for PM<sub>10</sub> of 15 µg/m<sup>3</sup> at 1,100 of the 1,797 modelled discrete receptors and the contour plots indicated that the AQG was exceeded across most of the city centre area. In many areas, background PM<sub>10</sub> concentrations alone were found to approach or exceed the WHO AQG level.**

**3.5.8 2028 city-wide modelled PM<sub>10</sub> concentrations.**

For the future assessment year of 2028, predicted annual mean PM<sub>10</sub> concentrations are well below the UK AQO of 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup> at locations of relevant exposure throughout the city. As previously, there are no predicted exceedances of the PM<sub>10</sub> 24-hour mean (50 µg/m<sup>3</sup>).

**3.5.9 Annual mean PM<sub>10</sub> concentrations in 2028 are predicted to exceed the much more stringent WHO AQG for PM<sub>10</sub> of 15 µg/m<sup>3</sup> at 645 of the 1,797 modelled discrete receptors, and the contour plots indicate that the AQG is exceeded across a large part of the city centre area. In many areas, background PM<sub>10</sub> concentrations alone are found to approach or exceed the AQG level.**

**3.5.10 2019 city-wide modelled PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations.**

There are no sensitive receptor locations where predicted 2019 annual mean PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations were greater than the 20 µg/m<sup>3</sup> limit value / objective.

**3.5.11 Compared with the much more stringent WHO annual mean PM<sub>2.5</sub> AQG level of 5 µg/m<sup>3</sup>, all modelled receptors have predicted PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations of 5 µg/m<sup>3</sup> or higher. It should be noted that the lowest PM<sub>2.5</sub> background concentration at any location across the city in 2019 was 6.6 µg/m<sup>3</sup>, which itself exceeds the AQG level of 5 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.**

**3.5.12 2028 city-wide modelled PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations.**

There are no predicted 2028 annual mean PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations greater than 20 µg/m<sup>3</sup> and therefore unlikely to be any locations of exceedance of the UK annual mean PM<sub>2.5</sub> AQO.

**3.5.13 Compared with the much more stringent WHO annual mean PM<sub>2.5</sub> Air Quality Guideline level of 5 µg/m<sup>3</sup>, all 1,797 sensitive receptor locations have predicted concentrations of 5 µg/m<sup>3</sup> or higher. It should be noted that the lowest PM<sub>2.5</sub> background concentration at any location across the city in 2028 is 5.9 µg/m<sup>3</sup>, which itself exceeds the AQG level of 5 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.**

**3.6 2019 Source apportionment.**

Source apportionment studies for nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) for 2019 have indicated that within our AQMAs, the predominant contributor to 2019 annual mean nitrogen dioxide concentrations was road traffic emissions, accounting for between approximately 56% and 77% depending on receptor location.

**3.6.1** For PM<sub>10</sub>, the regional background sector was the predominant contributor to 2019 annual mean PM<sub>10</sub> concentrations, accounting for more than 53% of the total modelled PM<sub>10</sub> concentrations. The regional background includes sources from outside of Belfast that the council has no control over, including natural sources such as windblown dust and sea salt, and secondary particulates. Domestic background sources (which include domestic, commercial and institutional space heating) were estimated to typically account for 15% to 19% of the total modelled PM<sub>10</sub> concentrations in 2019. The other background sector, which includes all other local background sources of air pollution, accounted for approximately 11% to 12%.

**3.6.2** In 2019, the source apportionment for PM<sub>2.5</sub> followed a similar pattern to PM<sub>10</sub>. The regional background sector was the predominant contributor to 2019 annual mean PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations, accounting for around 47% to 50% of the total modelled PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations. The regional background includes sources from outside of Belfast that the Council has no control over, including natural sources such as windblown dust and sea salt and secondary particulates. The domestic background was estimated to account for approximately 22% to 34% of the total modelled 2019 PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations, indicating that this is also a significant contributor to ambient PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations. The other background sector accounted for an estimated 8% to 11%.

**3.7 2028 Source apportionment.**

For nitrogen dioxide, the predominant source sector contribution to 2028 annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations at most of the selected receptors remains road traffic emissions, accounting for between approximately 27% and 66% depending on location. However, the domestic background is also an important contributor in 2028 at some receptor locations; the source apportionment results indicating that in certain areas of the city, the domestic background sector is an important secondary contributor, after road traffic, and may become the dominant sector of NO<sub>x</sub> emissions in some localities.

- 3.7.1 For PM<sub>10</sub>, the primary contribution to 2028 annual mean PM<sub>10</sub> concentration for the receptors considered comes from the regional background, accounting for more than 50% of the total modelled PM<sub>10</sub> concentrations. The domestic background, which includes domestic, commercial and institutional space heating, is estimated to typically account for 15% to 20% of the total modelled PM<sub>10</sub> concentrations. The 'other background' sector, which includes all other local background sources of air pollution, accounts for approximately 11% to 12%.
- 3.7.2 The 2028 source apportionment for PM<sub>2.5</sub> follows a similar pattern to that for PM<sub>10</sub>. The primary contribution to 2028 annual mean PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration for receptors considered comes from regional background, accounting for around 44% to 48% of total modelled PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations. The domestic background is estimated to account for approximately 23% to 36% of the total modelled PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations, indicating that this is also a significant contributor to ambient PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations in 2028. The other background sector accounts for an estimated 8% to 11%.

3.8 **Conclusions.**

With regard to nitrogen dioxide, Aecom have recommended that local actions aimed at road traffic are likely to remain the most effective action for reducing ambient concentrations at nitrogen dioxide hotspot locations in the city. Fleet projections indicate that the next few years will see accelerated uptake of low-emissions / zero-emissions vehicles and efforts should continue to be made to support the improvement of the vehicle fleet alongside the continued incentivisation of other transport modes and active travel options. These recommendations are consistent with the objectives of the Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026.

- 3.8.1 This Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) has been produced as part of our statutory duties required by the Local Air Quality Management framework. It outlines the actions that the Council, our statutory partners and other city bodies or organisations will take to improve ambient air quality in Belfast during the years 2021-2026. This AQAP succeeds the previous Action Plan, which covered the period 2015-2020. The Air Quality Action Plan contains mitigation measures to be implemented by the Council and its partner organisations which includes Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA); Department for Infrastructure (DfI), Belfast Planning Service, Translink, Sustrans and Belfast Harbour Commissioners. Such measures include sustainable transport measures, improved cycling infrastructure etc

**3.8.2 For PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>, Aecom have recommended that targeted actions to reduce public exposure to PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> should focus on the sources that contribute to the domestic background sector, as source apportionment has indicated that this sector is accountable for more than 25% of the total modelled particulate matter concentrations across the city. Source apportionment calculations indicate that targeting the domestic background sector with alternative sustainable heating systems, will also have benefits in terms of reducing NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations. DAERA have been informed of the outworking's of this report and they have advised that they continue to work on the Air Quality Strategy for Northern Ireland which will seek to address how air quality can be managed and improved through future policy and/or legislative changes.**

**3.9 Financial & Resource Implications**

The Committee is advised that funding to support delivery of this detailed assessment project has been provided by DAERA during the 2020-2021, 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 Local Air Quality Management grant years. Moreover, management of the detailed assessment project and technical air quality contributions were provided by Air Quality Officers from the council's Scientific Unit.

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

**None."**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Food Service Delivery Plan 2023/24**

The Committee approved the draft Belfast City Council Food Service Delivery Plan 2023-2024.

**Belfast City Youth Council update**

The Committee:

- noted the content of the report relating to the Youth Council;
- agree that the next two scheduled meetings of the Youth Council and People and Communities Committee be cancelled but that the special meeting on 26th June be retained to consider 2 deferred items;
- agreed that youth champions from each party would meet with the existing cohort of the BCYC over the summer months;

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- agreed that officers progress the recruitment and selection of the 2023/25 Youth Council by October 2023 using the process outlined in the report; and
- that the Young People's Co-ordinator be invited to attend the next meeting of the Committee to provide an update on the Youth Council.

**Minutes of Older People's Reference Group meeting**

The Committee:

- noted approved an adopted the minutes from the Reference Group on Older People meeting held on 21st March 2023; and
- agreed that the Greater Belfast Seniors Forum be invited to the next meeting of the Older People's Reference Group on 19th September in the Conor Room, City Hall.

**Collaborative Shared Space Programme –  
Girdwood Community Hub**

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services submitted for the Committee's consideration the following report:

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

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the Girdwood Shared Space and Youth Management proposal and provision of programming with the Hub.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- i. Note that a proprietary funding agreement regarding the Collaborative Shared Space Programme will be agreed via delegated authority for a period of up to 2 years until 31 March 25  
and
- ii. endorse the emerging business case to support the proprietary use of local community organisations to deliver a robust youth engagement and activity programme.

**3.0 Main report**

**Background**

- 3.1** In relation to the Girdwood site, Members will be aware that Council manages the delivery of the Hub , and the Department for Communities (DfC) are currently leading on the wider development of the Girdwood Park site.
- 3.2** Girdwood Community Hub has the principles of shared space built into its core and, to enable the facility to benefit inter and intra community relations, the Council set up a dedicated Community Hub Forum whose role is to promote and help advise on enhancing the hub as a welcoming, open, shared, and safe space. The Girdwood Community Hub Forum is chaired by the Council with representation from local community and voluntary representatives, stakeholders, and statutory agencies alongside two Elected Members.
- 3.3** A working group which reports to the Forum has been set up to cover the programming of the youth space within the Hub and delivery of shared space programmes. This was set up to ensure that work was focussed and coordinated prior to any proposals being brought forward to manage the youth space from the Girdwood Community Trust. As part of this process in the interim, the youth organisations on the working group have been drawing up proposals to deliver shared space programmes to animate the space on the Girdwood site.
- 3.4** Given the importance of subsidiarity in the delivery of youth services at Girdwood and as an interim measure to ensure that the space is animated appropriately, Council has previously supported a collaborative activity programme which is designed and delivered in partnership with local youth providers, namely those from six-neighbouring community/youth organisations - Lower Shankill, Lower Oldpark, Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum and New Lodge Arts, TAMHI and Our Club Our Community
- 3.5** Since the opening of the centre, the Girdwood Hub Forum have supported these neighbouring organisations as they are best placed to deliver youth-based engagement and activity programmes being delivered and have positively impacted on the current aims and objectives around good relations, shared space, and interventions. Critically, these locally based youth organisations have the capacity and grassroots relationships to expedite a rapid response to address issues which arise as well as ASB in parallel to the delivery of an activity-based programme that seeks to change the attitudes of the young people using the



Hub. The period would be for two years with a caveat of a break clause included. This would reduce the risk to Council in the event of a proposal being submitted by Girdwood Community Trust regarding management of the Youth Space and approved by Council in future.(More detail on the background to this is provided in paragraphs 3.10 & 3.11.) This would bring a stop to the short-term funding and the proprietary agreement would cease.

- 3.6 Programme delivery from the local organisations has been shown to contribute to the reduction of ASB at the site and has also delivered on other important outcomes linked to good relations and shared space. The summer programming has always contributed towards Girdwood being considered a safe and welcoming space for all and proves important during times of potential tension. The programme offer is diverse and makes use of the different and innovative aspects of the facility. Delivery is collaborative in nature involving local community youth providers, primarily funded by the Council. The programme is agreed quarterly in advance with the Working Group and includes sessions in arts, IT, sports, personal development, and good relations and encourages access to other services within the Hub.
- 3.7 The programmes also include outreach and detached work which aims to support local young people at risk, reduce ASB on site and encourage involvement in the Youth Space and Hub. The youth programme has developed and evolved and now offers activities 6 days a week. In a climate where central government are announcing reductions in budget such as the Education Authority and TEO, this provision at Girdwood would be most needed to keep a consistency of relevant programming at the surrounding site.

#### Request

- 3.8 Therefore, as in previous years, Officers have developed a business case for approval under the scheme of delegation for the Director of Neighbourhood Services to procure services for youth programming promoting shared space from the six-neighbouring community/youth organisations - Lower Shankill, Lower Oldpark, Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum and New Lodge Arts, TAMHI and Our Club Our Community. The request is for members to note that a proprietary funding agreement has been agreed and would cover the period from April 2023 to end March 2025, with a break clause in place should a Youth Space Management proposal be approved for handover to the Girdwood Community Trust.

- 3.9 To date financial support for the youth programme has been funded through the Girdwood Youth Space budget and includes procurement of facility hire, coaching and facilitator costs, tools and materials and sessional fees for youth workers. Community based staffing in the form of sessional youth workers is currently largely funded by The Executive Office, however, with some organisations facing delays in their letter of offers from TEO delays, this poses financial difficulties for some of the organisations.

**Proposal for Youth Space Management**

- 3.10 Over the development of this project, the local community have expressed an ambition for future community management of Girdwood Community Hub. Given the stated ambition of the local community to develop the capability to support community management in the future, Council agreed that a useful first step to develop confidence by all parties would be to develop and consider an SLA for community management of the dedicated Youth Space. This identified pilot will in effect support the development of trust, relationships, and capacity among the local community groups towards their aspiration of community management.
- 3.11 Members may wish to note that Girdwood Community Trust have submitted a preliminary draft proposal to Council regarding management of the Youth Space and that details are being worked through with Council Officers. When discussions have been finalised, a report will be brought to Members for consideration in due course

3.12 **Financial and Resource Implications**

Programme resources for these services are within service revenue estimates.

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

The aim of the Community Hub and the associated programme is to promote shared space which will contribute to the enhancement of good relations.”

The Committee:

- noted that a proprietary funding agreement regarding the Collaborative Shared Space Programme would be agreed via delegated authority for a period of up to 2 years until 31st March 2025; and

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- endorsed the emerging business case to support the proprietary use of local community organisations to deliver a robust youth engagement and activity programme.

**Annual GLL policies and operational procedures alignment statement**

The Committee noted a report which provided details on annual assurances on GLL policy and procedure alignments as set out in the leisure management contract.

**Six monthly Healthwise and Physical Activity Referral Programmes update**

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided a six-monthly update on the exercise and health referral programmes managed by GLL.

**Attendance at MJ Awards**

The Committee:

- agreed to the council's attendance at the MJ Awards ceremony on 23rd June 2023 and noted that the event will take place before this recommendation will be ratified at the 3rd July Council meeting; and
- approved the attendance of the Chairperson of the People and Communities Committee, or his nominee, and one council officer.

**Physical Programme and Asset Management**

**Playground Improvement Programme**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the successful 2022-2023 Playground Improvement Programme (PIP) and outline plans for new playground refurbishments under the 2023-2024 programme.**

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

**Members should also note that under last year's PIP (2022-23);**

- **Refurbishment of Westlands playground (Waterworks Park) was completed**

- Refurbishment of Sally Gardens playground was completed
- Refurbishment works at Areema playground are nearing completion

**2.0     Recommendations**

**2.1     The Committee is asked to:**

- Agree refurbishment works at the sites below as part of the Playground Improvement Programme (PIP) 2023-2024. This year's programme has been allocated a budget of £580,000 under the Capital Programme for financial year 2023-2024.
  - Loughside Park playground
  - New Lodge playground
  - North Link Playground

**3.0     Main report**

**Playground Improvement Programme**

- 3.1     Since its inception in 2012, the Playground Refurbishment Programme continues to make a positive impact to the overall quality and play value of the city's playgrounds, improving accessibility, providing more inclusive equipment, new safety surfacing, boundary fencing, site furniture and landscaping works. Physical improvements have made the facilities more inviting, inclusive, and fun places for children and parents to visit.**
- 3.2     With continued investment over the last eleven years, Council is achieving the desired improvements at playgrounds selected under the programme. On independent re-inspection, quality scores for the newly refurbished sites below have moved to the higher standard of good – excellent (see Appendix 1 – Refurbished playground images).**
- Westlands playground
  - Sally Gardens playground
- 3.3     Members should note that Play Services Ireland (PSI) Ltd undertook annual inspections at all 105 council-maintained playgrounds earlier this year (see Appendix 2 – Typical inspection report 2023: Loughside playground). The 'mean quality score' they allocated for each site relates to the condition of existing play equipment and compliance with European safety standards BS EN 1176 & 1177: 2020. All playgrounds were then**

ranked in order of their mean quality score, helping to identify facilities in most need of improvement this year (see Appendix 3 – Mean Quality Scores Report).

- 3.4 In reference to the Mean Quality Scores Report, Members should note that the lowest scoring playground (Sally Gardens: ranked 105th) was inspected by PSI Ltd. before the facility was refurbished in April 2023 under PIP 2023-23.
- 3.5 As a result of refurbishment works, selected playgrounds listed under Item 2.1 are expected to move from the quality classification of ‘fair - fairly good’ to ‘excellent’ when re-inspected.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.6 All proposed playground refurbishment works will be funded through the Capital Programme within an allocated budget of £580,000. CNS Landscape Planning & Development Officers will continue to re-design play facilities and project manage all works associated with the delivery of PIP 2023-24.
- 3.7 As with previous years, C&NS OSS Managers will continue to assist with the distribution of information relating to playground improvements to elected members, local communities, and user groups.

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

- 3.8 None.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Short term future of Loughside Recreation Centre**

The Committee was reminded that Loughside Recreation Centre was closed, along with all Belfast City Council leisure centres, in March 2020 in compliance with Covid-19 legislation. While other centres re-opened on a phased basis, as the pandemic restrictions were eased, it was agreed that Loughside would remain closed. Initially this was due to difficulties in complying with social distancing guidelines and related operating restrictions.

As restrictions were further eased and other leisure centres returned to pre-Covid operating models, it was agreed that Loughside should remain substantially closed but that provision be made for access to changing and toilet facilities to cater for users of the outdoor grass pitches. Subsequently one wing (approximately ¼ of the building) was adapted to allow restricted access, via dedicated external doors, to a suite of changing rooms and toilets. There is no access from the newly created ‘changing pavilion’ area to the rest of the building. A Partner Agreement was signed with Loughside FC under which the club

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opens/closes and is responsible for cleaning the ringfenced changing pavilion section of the building. GLL remain responsible for all statutory functions (health and safety, fire alarm checks, legionella flushing, daily inspections, etc.). This operating model has been in place since the end of 2021.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services advised the Committee that re-opening Loughside would require substantial investment, including major roof repairs, a new passenger lift, mechanical and electrical upgrades and various repairs to the fabric of the building. Major issues relating to the fabric of the building had existed since before the pandemic and substantial investment in reactive maintenance was required on an annual basis leading up to 2020 to keep the building open and fully operational.

Alongside the condition of the building, Loughside had for many years recorded very low demand consistently returning the lowest throughput, space occupancy and income figures in the leisure estate.

The long-term future of Loughside RC, along with Ballysillan, Belvoir, Ormeau Park/Ozone, Shankill and Whiterock, was earmarked for inclusion in the Leisure Transformation Programme Phase 4 strategic review.

The Committee granted approval to continue with the current operating model at Loughside Recreation Centre pending the outcome of the LTP Phase 4 strategic review.

**Operational Issues**

**Proposal for dual language street signs**

The Director of Planning and Building Control submitted for the Committee's consideration the following report:

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

- 1.1 To consider applications for the erection of dual language street signs for ten existing streets within the city.**
- 1.2 To consider a request from a resident of Downview Park West, who has written to Belfast City Council requesting to address members at Committee. This resident is objecting to the dual language street nameplate.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

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

- (1) The erection of a second street nameplate in Irish at, Orchardville Avenue, Wynchurch Avenue, Mayfield Square, Hillhead Avenue, St Meryl Park, Chichester Avenue, Ballymurphy Drive, Airfield Heights and Margaretta Park.**

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- (2) Receive a deputation from an objector in respect of the application for Downview Park West at a future meeting of the Committee.

**3.0 Main report**

**Key Issues**

- 3.1 The Council may erect a second street nameplate in a language other than English pursuant to Article 11 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1995.
- 3.2 Members are asked to consider the following applications to erect a second street nameplate showing the name of the street expressed in a language other than English. The second language is Irish.

English Name	Non- English Name	Location	Persons surveyed
Orchardville Avenue, BT10 0JH	Ascaill Orchardville	Finaghy Road North	93
Wynchurch Avenue, BT6 OJP	Ascaill Wynchurch	Off Rosetta Road	113
Mayfield Square, BT10 0QT	Cearnóg Ghort na Bealtaine	Off Blacks Road	169
Hillhead Avenue, BT11 9GD	Ascaill an Mhullaigh	Off Stewartstown Road	67
St Meryl Park, BT11 8FY	Páirc Naomh Muirgheal	Off Glen Road	112
Downview Park West, BT15 5HN	Páirc Radharc an Dúin Thair	Off Downview Park, Antrim Road	177
Chichester Avenue, BT15 5EH	Ascaill Chichester	Off Antrim Road	70
Ballymurphy Drive, BT12 7JJ	Céide Bhaile Uí Mhurchú	Off Ballymurphy Road	99
Margaretta Park, BT17 0JQ	Páirc Margaretta	Off Stewartstown Road	125

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Airfield Heights, BT11 8QU	Arda na hAerpháirce	Off Glen Road	179
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**3.4** The translations were authenticated by Queens University, the approved translator for Belfast City Council.

**3.5** In accordance with the Council's policy for the erection of dual language street signs, surveys of all persons appearing on the electoral register, plus owners or tenants in actual possession of commercial premises, for the above streets were carried out and the following responses were received.

**3.6** **Orchardville Avenue, BT10**

- 37 occupiers (39.78 %) were in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
- 2 occupiers (2.15%) were not in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
- 4 occupiers (4.30%) had no preference either way
- 50 occupiers (53.76 %) did not respond to the survey

One resident from Orchardville Avenue who is not in favour of the dual language nameplate has responded on the survey form that they would prefer that the money was spent on things which directly impact on families. While they believe in equality, they believe that dual language street signage is not the best use of time and money to promote inclusion. This resident is also concerned that the sign could be seen as an endorsement from residents who could become a target for people who are not happy with the signage.

**3.7** **Wynchurch Avenue, BT6**

- 20 occupiers (17.70%) were in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
- 30 occupiers (26.55%) were not in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
- 4 occupiers (3.54%) had no preference either way
- 59 occupiers (52.21%) did not respond to the survey

**3.8** One resident from Wynchurch Avenue who is not in favour of the dual language nameplate has responded on the survey form that they are concerned about the divisive impact of an Irish translation on a street name plate.



**3.9 Mayfield Square, BT10**

- 49 occupiers (28.99%) were in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
- 3 occupiers (1.78%) were not in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
- 1 occupiers (0.59%) had no preference either way
- 116 occupiers (68.64%) did not respond to the survey

**3.10 Hillhead Avenue, BT11**

- 33 occupiers (49.25%) were in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
- 2 occupiers (2.99 %) were not in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
- 1 occupier (1.49%) had no preference either way
- 31 occupiers (46.27%) did not respond to the survey

**3.11 St Meryl Park, BT11**

- 54 occupiers (48.21%) were in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
- 1 occupier (0.89%) had no preference either way
- 57 occupiers (50.89%) did not respond to the survey

**3.12 Downview Park West, BT15**

- 70 occupiers (39.55%) were in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
- 36 occupiers (20.34 %) were not in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
- 71 occupiers (40.11%) did not respond to the survey

One resident from Downview Park West who is not in favour of the dual language nameplate has written in to complain about the time and money being wasted on what they perceive to be trivial issues. Another resident telephoned to raise a concern about their property depreciating in value should the signage be erected

A further resident from Downview Park West has written in and is strongly objecting to the dual language nameplate in a mixed area. The resident feels that a dual language nameplate can be very divisive. The resident has also requested to address the decision makers at Committee.

**3.13 Chichester Avenue, BT15 5EH**

- 12 occupiers (17.14%) were in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
- 10 occupiers (14.29%) were not in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
- 1 occupier (1.43%) had no preference either way
- 47 occupiers (67.14%) did not respond to the survey

**3.14 Ballymurphy Drive, BT12**

- 29 occupiers (29.29%) were in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
- 70 occupiers (70.71%) did not respond to the survey check if these change

**3.15 Margaretta Park, BT17**

- 61 occupiers (48.80%) were in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
- 1 occupier (0.8%) was not in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
- 63 (50.40%) did not respond to the survey

**3.16 Airfield Heights, BT11**

- 53 occupiers (29.61%) were in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
- 126 occupiers (70.39%) did not respond to the survey

**Assessment against policy**

**3.17** The Council's policy on the erection of a second street nameplate requires that at least fifteen percent (15%) of the occupiers surveyed must be in favour of the proposal to erect a second street sign in a language other than English, to progress to Committee for consideration.

**3.18** All of the surveys listed above demonstrate compliance with the threshold contained within the Policy. However the Committee is reminded that the Council retain a residual discretion under the Policy to decide to erect or not to erect a street sign in a language other than English in certain circumstances. This will be done on a case by case basis.

**3.19** The Policy states that it may be appropriate to depart from the procedures in this Policy when there are clear reasons for doing so. This may include taking into account:

- (a) the views of the Occupiers of the street;
  - (b) the results of the initial assessment for the application, including any identified potential adverse impacts on equality, good relations and rural needs;
  - (c) consideration of the local context of the application;
  - (d) any other Council policies or strategies related to the application; and
  - (e) all material considerations relating to the application.
- 3.20 As appears above one of the objectors in respect of the Downview Park West application has asked to make a deputation to the Committee. Committee are asked to consider inviting the resident to a subsequent meeting of the Committee and defer making a decision in respect of that application until it has heard that deputation.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.21 There is a cost of approximately £3,350 to cover the cost of the manufacturing and erection of approximately 28 dual language street signs. The cost for these street signs has been allowed for in the current budget.

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

- 3.22 Each application for a dual language street sign is subject to an initial assessment for any potential adverse impacts on the grounds of equality, good relations and rural needs.
- 3.23 The initial assessments and elected member notification carried out for the 10 applications being considered did not identify any potential adverse impacts to prevent the surveys being carried out. However, the Committee is entitled to take into account the concerns raised by the residents as set out above in arriving to their decision.”

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Magee,  
Seconded by Councillor M. Donnelly,

That the Committee agrees to the erection of a second street nameplate in Irish at Orchardville Avenue, Mayfield Square, Hillhead Avenue, St Meryl Park, Downview Park West, Chichester Avenue, Ballymurphy Drive, Airfield Heights and Margaretta Park; and that the application in respect of Wynchurch Avenue be deferred to enable the occupiers to be resurveyed.

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

**Further Proposal**

Moved but Councillor Cobain,  
Seconded by Councillor Verner,

That, notwithstanding the previous decision, the objector to the application in relation to Downview Park West who had requested to address the Committee be invited to the next meeting.

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

**Proposal for naming new street**

The Committee approved the following applications for the naming of new streets and the continuation of an existing street:

<b>Proposed Name</b>	<b>Location</b>
Grays Lane Mews	Off Grays Lane, BT15 4HT At junction of Shore Road
Gardenmore Walk	Off Gardenmore Road, BT17 0BH At junction of Summerhill Road

<b>Proposed Continuation of Existing Street</b>	<b>Location</b>
Collingwood Avenue, BT7 1QT	Between Carmel Street and Damascus Street, BT7

**Request for use of Dundonald Cemetery –  
Apprentice Boys of Derry**

The Committee noted:

- the use of Dundonald Cemetery on 29th June to facilitate the event subject to the event organisers resolving all operational issues to the Council's satisfaction; and
- the approval by the Director of City Services under delegated authority for the use in advance of the July council to allow the event to take place on the 29th June.

**Requests for the use of Parks for 2023 events**

The Committee considered requests seeking permission for the use of various parks and facilities during 2023, as follows:

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- Live@C.S.Lewis Square – C. S. Lewis Square – Live outdoor music and family funday as part of the Easside Arts Festival 29th – 31st July; and
- Space for Everyone – Cathedral Gardens – launch activity 18th – 26th July.

The Committee granted authority for the aforementioned requests and delegated authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to:

- i. negotiate an appropriate fee which recognises the costs to Council, minimises negative impact on the immediate area and takes account of the potential wider benefit to the city economy, in conjunction with the Council's Commercial Manager;
- ii. negotiate satisfactory terms and conditions of use via an appropriate legal agreement prepared by the City Solicitor, including managing final booking confirmation dates and flexibility around 'set up' and take down' periods, and booking amendments, subject to:
  - the promoter resolving any operational issues to the Council's satisfaction;
  - compliance with Coronavirus restrictions in place at the time of the event; and
  - the promoter meeting all the statutory requirements of the Planning and Building Control Service, including the terms and conditions of the Park's Entertainment Licence.

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

**Pest Control Service Delivery Update**

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided an update on the current status of the Pest Control Service, planned improvements and the work being undertaken towards full resumption of all services.

**Issues Raised in Advance by Members**

**Swimming Buddies - Brook Leisure Centre  
(Councillor Murray to raise)**

The Committee agreed that representatives of swimming buddies, concerned parents and GLL be invited to the special meeting to be held on 26th June.

Chairperson

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# People and Communities Committee

Monday, 26th June, 2023

## SPECIAL HYBRID MEETING OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Murray (Chairperson);  
Councillors Bell, Black, Bower, Brooks,  
Canavan, Doherty, M. Donnelly, R-M Donnelly,  
Flynn, Kelly, Magee, McCusker, Ó Néill and Verner.

In attendance: Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;  
Mr. I. Parker, Building Control Manager; and  
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors Bunting, Cobain, de Faoite and Maghie.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No Declarations of Interest were reported.

### **Affordable Warmth Scheme Update and Service Level Agreement**

The Building Control Manager reminded the Committee that Belfast City Council had been engaged in a partnership with the Department for Communities (DfC) and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) in the delivery of the Affordable Warmth Scheme (AWS) since 2014.

It was reported that the scheme aimed to address fuel poverty for the most vulnerable households in the city by targeting those households that met certain criteria, as identified by Ulster University, to provide home improvement measures such as loft and cavity wall insulation, replacement boilers and new double-glazed windows.

The Building Control Manager reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 13th June, it had considered a report to bring forward a request from the DfC regarding the signing of the interim Service Level Agreement (SLA) from the period 1st April, 2022 to 31st March, 2024 and to inform the Committee that communication had also been received from DfC on 1st June, 2023 giving Councils 3 months' notice, ending the Council's role in the administration of the Affordable Warmth Scheme on 31st August, 2023.

Furthermore, at its meeting on 13th June, the Committee had agreed to defer the decision of the request from the DfC to sign the interim SLA provided for the period 1st April, 2022 to 31st March, 2024, acknowledging that the DfC had put the Council on notice

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terminating the arrangement on 31st August, 2023, and that representatives of DfC and the NIHE be invited to attend a Special meeting of the Committee.

He highlighted that Building Control Officers had liaised with Legal Services regarding the implications of signing or not signing the SLA as requested by the DfC. Legal Services had confirmed:

- Council officers could ask the Committee to consider the request from the DfC to sign the SLA from 1 April 2022 until 31 March 2024, as the notice period had been written into the SLA; and
- There would be no implications for Belfast City Council if the Committee decided not to authorise approval to sign the SLA, as an SLA was not legally enforceable.

The Chairperson introduced Mr. D. Polley, Director of Housing Supply Policy, and Mr. A. Boyce, Head of Affordable Warmth and Energy, representing the Department for Communities, Ms. E. Stubbs, Assistant Director of Regional Services, and Ms. R. O'Neill, Energy Efficiency Schemes Manager, representing the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, to the Committee and they were admitted to the meeting.

Mr. Polley provided a summary of the changes to the Affordable Warmth Scheme. He advised that the decision to remove targeting and therefore council involvement from the AWS had been approved by the Permanent Secretary under the Executive Formation and Exercise of Functions Act. He explained that the impact on public services included a severe pressure on both the AWS 2023/24 capital and resource budgets with capital reduced by 12.5% and resource reduced by 5%. The associated EQIA detailed the potential savings measures, which would allow the Department to live within its Budget allocation including the closure of the AWS. He highlighted that any proposal to close the scheme would significantly impact those people living in fuel poverty, in particular vulnerable, low-income households. Therefore, the decision to remove targeting had been a difficult decision but had been made to mitigate against the risk of closure and to make the Scheme more resilient.

He highlighted the need to simplify the process due to the high administrative costs of the targeted approach and work involved by Council's to find out who would benefit most from the scheme. He stated that the Councils were incurring more expenses than they were being funded for. This had resulted in one Council dropping out of the scheme and another giving notice. He pointed out that the timing of the changes to the scheme had coincided with the budget and the need to give Councils three months' notice.

He explained that, from 1st September, 2023, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive would act as the single delivery provider for the AWS. As part of their proposal, the NIHE would also confirm the contact details for the Scheme going forward. He advised that the Council would submit the approved number of 20 referrals per month up to the 31st August, 2023.

During discussion, the Committee raised concerns to the change to an application process, in that the most vulnerable resident would not be provided for within the application process. The Council staff were praised for their work on the scheme and the difference that it had made to residents across Belfast.



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The representatives answered a range of questions in relation to the scheme changes and closure. Mr Polley explained further how the change to a non-targeting approach would save money in administration costs. He pointed out that referrals were inconsistent across the Council areas and the current referral scheme took a lot of time and staffing costs.

He stated that it was anticipated that more funding would become available for the scheme next year and there were plans to spend more money on energy efficiency work and fuel poverty over the next 10/15 years. He emphasised the need to plan for the future and a larger scheme to ensure a fair transition to net zero for residents. He also highlighted that the DfC would prefer if the Council signed the interim SLA as requested.

In response to a Member's question in relation to current waiting list positions, Ms. Stubbs advised that the NIHE planned a seamless transition for customers and reiterated that the NIHE would continue to receive 20 referrals per month up to the end of August which the Council would prioritise and after that, the application process would start in September.

Ms. Stubbs explained further the transition of the scheme to the NIHE. She advised that they had been working alongside Councils on the Scheme for a number of years so were aware of the needs of the customers. She highlighted that a free phone advice line would be in operation, together with sign posting for other assistance, postal applications, and visiting residents.

One Member highlighted the work being undertaken on an Anti-poverty strategy in the Springfield/Whiterock area, together with the difference that the retrofit scheme in Ballymurphy had made to residents' homes, and reiterated concerns in relation to residents being made aware of the changes to the scheme.

In response, Mr Polley explained further the future of energy efficiency schemes and the maximum budget requirements of the current scheme per home. He highlighted that serious discussion was required to examine what scheme came after the AWS.

One Member suggested that, to reduce the impact of the changes to the scheme, DfC could potentially administer the scheme differently for some of the Councils who would prefer the scheme to remain in its current form. Mr. Polley advised that, as the decision had already been made, and as the Councils had been given the SLA notice period, it could not be revisited.

After discussion, the Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance and they retired from the meeting.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and agreed not to accede to the request from the Department for Communities to sign the interim SLA provided for the period 1st April, 2022 to 31st March, 2024.

Chairperson

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## City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 14th June, 2023

### HYBRID MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Nic Bhranair (Chairperson);  
Alderman Lawlor;  
Councillors Bunting, Canavan, S. Douglas,  
Duffy, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Lyons,  
Maskey, F. McAteer, McCabe, McCormick,  
McDonough-Brown, McDowell, I. McLaughlin,  
McMullan, Murray and Walsh.

In attendance: Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development; and  
Mr. S. Dolan, Senior Development Manager;  
Ms. W. Langham, Programme Director;  
Ms. E. Henry, Strategic Lead,  
Ms. E. Clarke, Creative Programme Manager;  
Ms. L. O'Donnell, Senior Manager - Culture and Tourism;  
Ms. L. Toland: Senior Manager – Economy;  
Mr. A. Cairns, Zoo Manager; and  
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

No apologies were reported.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the 5th April were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 2nd May, subject to the omission of the minute under the heading Committee Plan 2023-24 and End of Year Report 2002-23, which would be taken back to the Committee for further consideration in due course.

### **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Lyons declared an interest in items 3.b) Queen's Island Transport Plan and 4.a) Major Events Update, as he was on the Board of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners.

In relation to items 4.a) Major Events Update and 4.d) Future of Cultural Multi Annual Grants (CMAG), Councillor McCabe declared an interest, in that she was employed by Féile an Phobail.

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The Chairperson and Councillor Walsh declared an interest regarding item 4.c) Update on the development of Neighbourhood/Local Tourism, in that they were employed by Fáilte Feirste Thiar and left the meeting whilst this item was under discussion.

**Restricted Items**

**The information contained in the report associated with the following six items were 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 three 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.

**Future City Centre Programme - Vacant to Vibrant**

The Senior Development Manager provided an update on the progress of the pilot capital grant scheme, 'Vacant to Vibrant', together with the recommendations from the assessment panel.

The Committee:

- Noted the update in relation to the city centre Vacant to Vibrant pilot capital grant scheme; and
- Agreed to the recommended grant awards as outlined within Section 3.17 of the report.

**Zoo - Quarter 4 Update**

The Zoo Manager provided an update on the Zoo performance during the 2022-23 financial year across the following areas:

- Visitor Services;
- Education Services;
- Animal Collection;
- Marketing & Events; and
- Financial performance.

The Committee noted the Zoo performance update report for the 2022-2023 financial year and the change in membership terms and conditions.

**Belfast Zoo - Scale of Charges 2023-24**

The Director of Economic Development provided an update on the Zoo scale of charges increase for the financial year 2023-24.

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He highlighted that, at its meeting in April, the Committee had agreed to defer consideration of the report to allow further financial information to be provided.

**Proposal**

Moved by Councillor Flynn,  
Seconded by Councillor Lyons,

The Committee agrees to defer consideration of the scale of charges to allow Fee Benchmarking information to be provided.

On a vote, two Members voted for the proposal and eighteen against and it was declared lost.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed to the price increases for existing categories and noted that Fee Benchmarking information would be circulated to the Committee.

**Zoo - Conservation Projects Donation Requests**

The Committee was provided with a summary of the requested payments of donation money to the approved conservation projects that were supported by Belfast Zoo.

The Committee:

- I. Noted the amount of donation to each conservation project; and
- II. Approved the donation amount to each conservation project.

**Belfast 2024 update**

The Committee received a presentation from the Creative Programme Manager and Senior Manager - Culture and Tourism in relation to the developments for Belfast 2024 – the Council's ambitious year of creative celebration for Belfast to action in Quarter 2 and Quarter 3 2023/24, which included:

- An update on Belfast 2024 Creative Programme Development including Partners and Open Call;
- Updated B24 Budget allocations;
- Partnership Developments and Partnership Investment;
- An update on streamlined Governance Model;
- Engagement and citizen led development so far; and
- Next Steps.

The Committee:

- Noted the contents of this report and the summary of the strategic case and developments for delivery for *Belfast 2024*, noted details of the developments for Belfast 2024 namely programming and actioning the proposed governance model;

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- Approved the Belfast 2024 outline programme budget of £7.1million;
- Approved the increase in allocation for the local Open Call aspect of programme development from £1.85million and opportunities to enhance current funding programmes within the Culture unit at Council such as the Creative Bursaries and Arts and Heritage Small Grants and Community Festivals Fund;
- Approved the bespoke commissioning partnership with the *Power Plants* project for research and development to the value of up to £20k;
- Approved the additional 3 Creative Bursaries (£30k – giving 16 in total across Culture and Belfast 2024 – 10 had been approved by the Committee in March 22, and a further 3 approved in June 22) for artists to work in residence across the city in the development of and during Belfast 2024 programme;
- Granted delegated authority to the B24 Programme Board for internal approval of expenditure under budget headings noted in the report;
- Approved the progression of applications, pitches and business cases to generate financial, in kind, and match funding commitment from key funders, investors and partners in order to reach fundraising targets for the B24 programme; and
- Noted that a dedicated Committee workshop on Belfast 2024 would be scheduled.

**Markets Unit Update and Development Plan**

The Committee were provided with an update on the development proposals for the city markets in the coming year, together with the proposed re-structured pricing schedule for stall fees and market hire at St George's Market.

**Proposal**

Moved by Councillor Duffy,  
Seconded by Councillor Lyons and

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to stagger the revised Stall Fees with a revised rate of £18 for non-hot food and £28 for hot food coming into effect on 1st September 2023 and a rate of £20 for non-hot food and £30 for hot food following in April 2024.

Accordingly, the Committee:

- Noted the contents of the report, including proposals to move forward with key improvement actions under the Markets Development Plan; and
- Agreed to the revision of fees and charges, as set out in sections 3.11 and 3.12 of the report with the condition that the revised Stall Fee should be staggered with a revised rate of £18 for non-hot food

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and £28 for hot food coming into effect on 1st September 2023 and a rate of £20 for non-hot food and £30 for hot food following in April 2024. The proposed electricity fee and venue hire increases were agreed in line with the recommendation; and

- Agreed that regular quarterly updates be submitted to the Committee on the Markets Performance and Development and that representatives of the Market Traders be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee.

**Requests to Present**

**Renewed Ambition Taskforce**

It was reported that representatives from the Renewed Ambition Taskforce had requested the opportunity to present at the August meeting of City Growth and Regeneration Committee in order to update Members on the 2022 / 2023 programme; and proposed 2023 / 2024 programme of work, including priority issues and objectives for the Partnership moving forward.

The Committee agreed to receive a presentation from representatives of the Renewed Ambition Partnership at the Committee meeting on 9th August 2023.

**Queen's Island Transport Plan**

The Committee considered a request to receive a presentation at a future meeting of the Committee from Belfast Harbour Commissioners (BHC) and Titanic Quarter Limited (TQL) to provide an update on the development of the Queen's Island Transport Plan (QITP).

The Committee agreed to receive a presentation from the Belfast Harbour Commissioners and Titanic Quarter Limited at a future meeting of the Committee to provide an update on the development of the Queen's Island Transport Plan.

**Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP)**

It was reported that Department for Infrastructure were proposing to commence public engagement on the emerging BMTP in the early Autumn. In advance of this, they had offered to meet with the Council to provide an early outline of what was proposed and the process to bring the BMTP to adoption. This offer of pre-launch engagement would provide an opportunity for the Committee to have an early insight and input into the proposed draft Vision, Objectives and Guiding Principles of the BMTP. Officers would then prepare a response to the Consultation documents, taking on board comments from Members, subject to Committee agreement and Council ratification.

The Committee agreed to receive a presentation from the Department for Infrastructure on the emerging draft Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan at a future meeting and requested a copy of the presentation in advance of the meeting.

**Positioning the City to Compete**

**Major Events Update**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the Major Events programme; including:**

- An update on the Maritime event;
- the Way Forward approach to St Patrick’s Day 2024-2026
- an update on the bid for the Fleadh Cheoil na h’Eireann
- an update regarding the UK and Ireland bid to host the European Football Championships in 2028

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 It is recommended that Members:**

- Note the contents of this report on the Maritime Festival.
- Note the contents of the update on St Patrick’s Day including the procurement approach for 2024-2026
- Note the update on the bid for the Fleadh Cheoil, give necessary approval for Officers to continue with the bid process for future years, approve the budget for 2023-24 associated with the bid process (including attendance of a delegation at each event including attendance by Lord Mayor at the Fleadh Cheoil in Mullingar in August), note the costs associated with 2024-25 and 2025-26
- Approve the Letter of Offer for Ards Comhaltas for 2023-2024 activity to a value of £22,000
- Note the update regarding the UK and Ireland bid to host the European Football Championships in 2028

**3.0 Main report**

**3.1 Belfast Maritime Festival 2023**

**3.2 The Belfast Maritime Festival will take place on 9th & 10th September 2023. The event will deliver a diverse programme of local talent, local produce and local crafts aligning to the Cultural Strategy, with the creative theme ‘Made in Belfast’ incorporating the best of Belfast. This will be accompanied by a strong Belfast brand displayed throughout the site.**



- 3.3 A focal point will be the Made in Belfast Village, showcasing local producers and performers – with concepts such as Performed in Belfast, Distilled in Belfast, Stitched in Belfast, Crafted in Belfast, and Baked in Belfast. In addition, there will be a full programme animating all available public realm from Donegall Quay to the Titanic Quarter. There will be a number of other focal points – visiting vessels along Queens Quay, workshops/community design at Hamilton Dock, with Abercorn Basin hosting a range of street performances. As always, the festival will showcase the heritage sites along the Maritime Mile, from St Joseph's Church in Sailortown to the recently re-opened HMS Caroline. Titanic Quarter's STEM sector will offer an insight into industry and innovation within the site.
- 3.4 A new Governance Structure has been established in partnership with Maritime Belfast Trust and Maritime Harbour Commissioners to ensure a more cohesive approach to event planning and to drive forward the ambition set out in the Maritime strategy. The Programme Board will oversee a number of working groups with Maritime Belfast Trust delivering elements of the festival programme, managed via an SLA. The value of this will be circa £85,000 and this will include delivery of the community co-design piece.
- 3.5 The 2023 Maritime event has been successful in securing Tourism NI International Events funding to the value of £60,000, to provide international market visibility and enhancement of the event. Officers are regularly engaging with TNI in respect of Council obligations under this arrangement.
- 3.6 Way Forward St Patrick's Day 2024-2026
- The purpose of this part of the report is to provide Members with a summary of the 2023 event, and the approach on the way forward for 2024-2026.
- 3.7 Each of the current providers has provided a de-brief to Council Officers. Beat Carnival, Duncairn 174 Trust and Feile An Phobail concluded that their respective offering built upon the pilot of 2022.
- Beat Carnival, with logistical support from the Council Events team, delivered the city centre parade/pageant.
  - Duncairn 174 Trust, again with logistical support from the Events staff, delivered the St Patricks Eve Concert at Customs House Square.
  - Feile An Phobail delivered their city-wide Trad Trail.

- **Maywe LLP reported a successful project albeit on a lesser budget than 2022. Tales of our City 2023 was a short workshop series combined with a public facing exhibition of stories at 2 Royal Ave from the residents of the city.**

- 3.8 In addition, Council secured £37,000 of TNI Product Development funding to test new Tourism experiences within the City; this included Ceilli Sessions at the Castle and a trad and taster tour. Through the on-going engagement with Ards Comhaltas, in relation to the Fleadh bid, events took place at St George's Market and 2 Royal Ave.**

**Operationally, there were no issues of note, although feedback from Translink requested consideration on the length of road closures in Donegall square North to accommodate the parade.**

- 3.9 The feedback received on the St Patrick's Day events has been positive.**

- **The socio-economic survey presented that the overall estimated direct spend for the St Patrick's Celebrations excluding accommodation was £679,800.00, and the public rating of the events:**
- **68% gave the Concert a rating of 8- 10, including 32% who rated it as 'Extremely good', while 79% rated the Parade between 8-10.**
- **93% of visitors agreed that the event improves NI's reputation as a host for events like these, with 97% believing that events like this encourage people to come to Belfast, and 94% said that such events improve their sense of well-being and community.**
- **92% felt the St Patrick's Celebrations were inclusive for all people from all cultural heritages.**
- **67% said that the alcohol free policy had a positive influence on their decision to attend the concert.**

- 4.0 Anecdotally other feedback suggested the 2023 festival provided a more cohesive event programme. The additional programming has further served to enhance the visitor experience and connectivity across the event assets.**

- 4.1 Officers felt that the Parade (Beat Initiative), Music Trail (Feile) and Storytelling initiatives (Maywe) clearly work, and have scope to develop. The St Patrick's Eve Concert at Customs House Square (Duncairn) currently requires additional delivery support and as such can present hidden costs, in addition it is unfortunately subject to inclement March evening**

weather and can result in low attendance numbers with low conversion in tickets requested and on the day attendance. It is possible that this element could be revisited as a series of smaller, indoor performances throughout the City over the celebrations.

- 4.2 Members should note that the four organisations have made significant efforts to deliver in 2022, and 2023, with the latter year demonstrating event development. It is clear that the initial two years of investment has built foundations for future activity.

4.3 **2024 Way Forward**

At the April Committee, the Tourism and Events Workplan was presented, and members approved the allocation of £300,000 to St Patricks Day 2024.

- 4.4 Given the considerable investment Council has, and the wider City initiatives around St Patricks Day, there is an untapped opportunity to promote the City offering to international markets of appeal. From the £300k, £10k of the 2024 budget will be used for the purposes of international marketing. Therefore, it is proposed that £290k is available to support programming, If any successful submissions require logistical support from Council, as has been the case previously, this will be considered when allocations are being determined.

4.5 **New Commissioning Approach**

Committee were informed at Sept 22 that a new process would be put in place, and therefore a new procurement process is required. A Tender Initiation Request form for a tender for St Patrick's Celebration Events will be presented at Strategic Policy & Resources on 23 June 2023.

Task	Timeline
Finalise ITT and Specification	By end of June 2023
Advertise and issue tender docs	First week of July
Tender Close	Mid August (min 30 days advert plus extra days to take into account July holidays)
Evaluation Period	Last two weeks of August
Internal approvals	First week of September
Mandatory Standstill	Mid September
Contract Award Date	Third week of September

- 4.6 Officers have, in the interim period, drafted a specification which will seek proposals for events and activities for 2024 and beyond.
- 4.7 It is anticipated that a framework of the events and activities akin to 2022 and 2023 will be established. The number of successful awards from this tender will be determined by the financial asks and the finite resources available.

Criteria have been established to ensure alignment to the Cultural Strategy, while other criteria will address value for money and the long-term support of Council:

- Previous Experience of similar scale cultural programmes/projects
- Capability and Capacity
- Concept and Feasibility
- Co-Design & Inclusivity
- Financial Sustainability
- Partnership Approach
- Cost

- 4.8 It is proposed that the tender will be for a period of three years (1 + 1+ 1) to allow for product development. However, projects will be evaluated on an annual basis. Successful organisations would be expected to co-ordinate activity in support of each other.

- 4.9 **Future Proofing - An Executive Summary - A new approach to St Patrick's Programme in Belfast**

The Council's in-house Creative Lead conducted a review of the current approach to the delivery of the St. Patrick's Programme, including a bench marking exercise of St Patrick's Day celebrations across Ireland and has made recommendations for an enhanced operating model moving forward.

The St Patrick's Programme in Belfast is currently commissioned annually by Belfast City Council (BCC) and delivered by outside providers. The benchmarking exercise has shown that there is considerable scope to develop impact, audience and additional investment. To address this, Council should consider allocation of an Executive work package with responsibility of attracting funding, developing partnerships, enhancing the Programme's international profile, and leading the creative commissioning process. Importantly, this role would also ensure and oversee a staged transition of

fundraising responsibility out of the Council taken on by the external suppliers in Year 2 and Year 3. The sustainability of the event relies on broadening the stakeholders involved and of the evolution of a mixed investment model.

- 5.0 The report suggests that the St Patrick's Programme requires a cohesive creative approach across all elements, supported through the dual roles of a Creative Director responsible for the parade and a Creative Programmer responsible for the wider programme of engagement and events around the city, to develop the creative concept and commission the artists, artworks, and experiences. However, given resource pressures within the unit it is proposed that requirement is fulfilled via submitting organisations nominating a lead Creative Director/Programmer and factored into respective project budgets. This individual will be expected to work closely with Council officials in an oversight capacity for all aspects of programme co-design and creative delivery. They will also work with other peers from other successful contractors or delivery partners.

5.1 Using Belfast 2024 as a pivot

Belfast 2024 will enable additional investment in the St Patrick's programme in 2024, potentially allowing for time the additional finance to be sourced for the following years of the tender and will enable development within Council of a collaborative 'producing' model for the future. Governance structures put in place for Belfast 2024 will provide a blueprint for ongoing cultural oversight.

5.2 All-Ireland Fleadh Cheoil Na h'Eireann

With members approval Council participated in the bid to host the Fleadh Cheoil in 2023 & 2024, however, the event was awarded to Wexford, who have been bidding for the event since 2016. It is anticipated that Wexford will host the event in 2024 and likely in 2025. As Belfast are now invested in a successful bid for future events, there is an expectation that the city will bid again for the 2025 event.

- 5.3 Normally, bids would be submitted in December. Therefore, for the 2025 bid, it is anticipated that the bid will be required to be submitted by mid December 2023.

In addition, there is the expectation of further visits from the committee as per previous years in January & February 2024.

5.4 2024 Bid Review & Lessons Learned

The Belfast bid received very positive feedback from all sources. Members of the Ard Chomhairle suggested that the Belfast bid had created a new standard for bids. As well as preparing the bid document, BCC officers also secured a number of letters of support which were appended. Some further correspondence was also sent to senior and influential members of the Ard Chomhairle from the US Ambassador to the UK and Consul General Narain.

**5.5 There were specific areas for improvement highlighted by voting members and trusted advisors that are detailed below:**

- More Irish language content within the bid document
- More detailed engagement with Provincial Comhaltas
- Greater attendance at Conventions
- Greater focus on disabled access
- More involvement from Ards CCE

**5.6 More Irish language content within the bid document**

After reviewing other bids, it is clear that it is not normal to produce a dual language bid document. The other documents do seem to have some key messages in Irish, acting as taglines for the bid document; this was absent from the Belfast bidding document.

**5.7 More detailed engagement with Provincial Comhaltas**

As well as the four provincial Comhaltas who are voting members of the Ard Chomhairle, a North American Comhaltas and GB Comhaltas are also voting members. In the previous voting cycle, we engaged with the Ulster Provincial Council, GB Comhaltas and North American Comhaltas. Our information confirms that we received support from voting members of these three Comhaltas. The information received to date indicates that the vote was split with the vote being decided by votes from the Chair and General Secretary with the most significant influencing factor being on those votes being the lack of engagement with all 4 provincial councils. This lack of engagement was due to pressures on human and financial resources. Given the weighting and importance of engagement this approach has been revisited for future requirements.

**5.8 Greater attendance at Conventions**

A breakdown of potential future engagement events in 2023:

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee,  
Wednesday, 14th June, 2023**

- All-Britain Fleadh 24-25 June (Stirling, Scotland)
- Connacht Fleadh 29 June - 2 July (Ballina)
- Leinster Fleadh 6-9 July (Dublin)
- Munster Fleadh 13-16 July (Tralee)
- Ulster Fleadh 20-23 July (Dromore, Co. Tyrone)
- Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann, 6-14 August, Mullingar
  - Ard-Ollamh Award Gala dinner (Wednesday night, 9 Aug)
  - Overseas Reception (Thursday night, 10 Aug)
  - Comhaltas National Folk Orchestra event (Friday night, 11 Aug)
- Tionól Ceoil Leo Rowsome, 1-2 September (Monkstown)
- Comhaltas Christmas Dinner, December (Dublin)

**5.6 Greater focus on disabled access**

Accessibility matters will be further considered in revised bid book.

**6.0 More involvement from Ards CCE**

The Belfast bid is in conjunction with the local Fleadh Executive Committee, Ards/Bangor Comhaltas Branch, who must be seen as fronting the bid. This Comhaltas is made up of volunteers. Previously Committee agreed to supporting the work of Ards CCE via a Letter of Offer (£7,500 CGR approval September 2022).

- 6.1** Given the feedback from the unsuccessful bid, it is anticipated that the contribution of the Ards Branch requires an uplift from the previous bid. This uplift will take the form of partnering on convention visits, increased performances at conventions and other key engagements. This will of course incur additional expenditure for members of the Ards Comhaltas which in turn should be recognised given their status as a voluntary organisation. As with all funding agreements council will only recognise verified costs and any balance remaining will be returned to council. Members should note that Ards CCE will be asked to provide summary information on their objectives on each occasion e.g. lobbying, research; and report back to Council on lessons learned.

- 6.2** Members are also asked to note that while this funding will cover the current financial year, the Ards Branch will require a similar funding for 2024-25 and the following year.

The full resource requirements are appended at Appendix 2. This provides members with a summary of expenditure

associated with the on-going bid process, by year, and also identifies the Ards CCE support, which has been carefully considered. It is anticipated that this expenditure will not be exceeded.

**6.3 Council Attendance at future Fleadh events including Mullingar**

5.2.5 addresses the role of the Ards Branch, and the costs associated with supporting the local Comhaltas throughout the bid process.

Members are reminded that the Council, as the key funders of any successful bid, must also maintain a profile at particular events, as outlined in the Costs appended.

**6.4 Next Steps**

Officers are seeking members approval to submit a bid for the event in 2025. While it is unlikely that Belfast will be successful it is normal practice for bidders to continue to bid. Work to the revised Bid book will include inclusion of Irish language, and a greater focus on disabled access. There is also a requirement for a delegation including Lord Mayor to visit the 2023 Fleadh Cheoil in Mullingar in August to show commitment and therefore garner votes. Representatives from Belfast (Council/Ards) are expected at other events.

**6.5 Bid to host the European Football Championships in 2028**

Officers are working closely with key bid stakeholders (Tourism NI, IFA, Central Bid Team and UK Sport) in the interim period, before the official bid announcement in the Autumn. It is further anticipated that preliminary feedback from UEFA on the UK and Ireland bid is imminent and the opportunity to provide clarification to UEFA will have an end of June deadline. Responses will be coordinated in partnership with TNI and the IFA. Further host City briefings from the Central Bid Team are also planned over the Summer months.

**6.6 Financial & Resource Implications**

**Financial and Resource Implications**

There are no financial implications to this report. All expenditure is within existing departmental budgets and approvals.



**The current events development budget for this financial year is £40,000. Members are asked to note if participation in another bidding cycle for the Fleadh Cheoil is to be undertaken that the current provision within the pre-agreed Events Development Budget may not be sufficient to consider other events development work on other major events bid campaigns.**

**6.7 Equality & Good Relations Implications**

**The Cultural Strategy - *A City Imagining* - carried out an extensive EQIA covering the duration of the strategy 2020-2030. Major events are one of the major outputs of the Cultural Strategy with wide and varied ambition. Promotion of opportunity for all Section 75 groups to be celebrated within the programme is important to it's success."**

During discussion, the Director of Economic Development explained further the approach for St. Patrick's Day events for the coming years and the new commissioning approach.

The Committee:

- Noted the contents of the report on the Maritime Festival;
- Noted the contents of the update on St Patrick's Day including the procurement approach for 2024-2026;
- Noted the update on the bid for the Fleadh Cheoil, gave necessary approval for Officers to continue with the bid process for future years, approved the budget for 2023-24 associated with the bid process (including attendance of a delegation at each event including attendance by Lord Mayor at the Fleadh Cheoil in Mullingar in August), noted the costs associated with 2024-25 and 2025-26;
- Approved the Letter of Offer for Ards Comhaltas for 2023-2024 activity to a value of £22,000; and
- Noted the update regarding the UK and Ireland bid to host the European Football Championships in 2028.

**Belfast Stories Update**

The Committee received a presentation from the Programme Director and the Senior Manager - Culture and Tourism in relation to the progress of the Belfast Stories Programme and invited Members to visit the sites included in the Programme.

The Committee also considered the following report:

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

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to:**

- Update Members on the Belfast Stories programme as part of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) including the findings of the public consultation exercise.
- Outline activity to support the next development phase up to the end of RIBA Design Stage 2 and the submission of the Outline Business Case.

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- Note the contents of this report and update on progress against the delivery of the Belfast Stories programme.
- Note the findings of the public consultation exercise, the Equality Impact Assessment and the Rural Needs Screening as summarised in the report and detailed in Appendices 2 & 3.
- Agree the actions as set out in the Engagement Plan detailed in Appendix 4 and summarised at 3.38 to 3.43.
- Note the findings of the Stories Audit detailed in Appendix 5 and summarised at 3.50 to 3.52.
- Agree the actions as set out in the Stories Action Plan detailed in Appendix 6.
- Agree to set up a Members' Working Group to provide advice and oversight on the progression of Belfast Stories as set out in the draft Terms of Reference included in Appendix 7.

**3.0 Main Report**

**3.1 Members will be aware that Belfast Stories is the Council's flagship project under the Belfast Region City Deal and is due to open in 2028/29.**

**3.2 Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed at its meeting on 19th November 2021 to progress a number of key pieces of work, in order to ensure we meet the 2028/29 anticipated opening date including: the appointment of the integrated design team; the appointment of the exhibition design team; and commencement of the stories collection. In May 2022 City Growth and Regeneration Committee agreed to undertake the first public consultation exercise on proposals to date.**

**3.3 Since then, several important milestones have been achieved and are included in the updates provided below. Activities included in the next stage of development are set out for**

agreement and detailed in Appendix 4: Engagement Plan and Appendix 6: Stories Action Plan.

**Programme Update**

- 3.4 Progress against the agreed programme is ongoing.

3.5 **Site Acquisition**

Members will be aware that the majority of the site (95%) was secured by Belfast City Council for Belfast Stories in 2021 with site assembly now complete with the acquisition of the remaining two smaller properties on the site since the last Committee update in May 2022.

3.6 **Business Case**

An interim Outline Business Case was completed in 2020 in advance of the purchase of the site. This work is now being updated to reflect progress and project development with an updated Outline Business Case due to be submitted for approval in 2024, when concept designs will have been further developed to RIBA Stage 2. At this stage the project will then move to departmental casework review with Tourism NI and the Department for Economy. If successful a contract for BRCD funding will be issued.

3.7 **Design Teams**

Work is progressing with Council's physical programmes department to appoint the design teams to enable the project to move to the next phase of development. The procurement of these professional services is ongoing with appointments anticipated in Autumn 2023 of the following teams:

- Integrated Design Team
- Interpretative Planning and Exhibition Design Team
- Project Management and Design Assurance Team.

3.8 **Net Zero Carbon Ambition**

To align with Belfast City Council's Net Zero Carbon Roadmap for Belfast and the Resilience Strategy, a feasibility study was commissioned to assess the viability of using geothermal technology to meet the building's heating and cooling requirements. The study concluded that geothermal energy is a viable option for the site to be considered alongside other sustainable energy solutions. The scope of works for the design teams has included requirements to meet our

ambitions including BREEAM 'Outstanding' sustainability standard to be obtained for the whole project and CEEQUAL 'Outstanding' sustainability standard for the civil/public realm aspects of the scheme. In addition, the building is to be designed to require low energy demand for heating and cooling, as well as utilise onsite renewables. The building design is required to meet Passive House 'Plus' standard to support this need. Further design work will be undertaken by the design teams to determine how these ambitions will be met. Members will be updated in due course.

**3.9 Benefits Realisation**

A Benefits Realisation Framework for Belfast Stories has been developed to define and refine the range of benefits and outcomes linked to the project investment spending objectives and BRCD requirements. A key objective is 'to create and sustain a diversified, vibrant city – an attractive place to live in, invest in and work in' and within this objective we have been examining the potential impacts on the city centre and neighbourhoods, local communities, local residents and the local economy. Crucial to realising the impacts will be identifying the enabling mechanism(s) to deliver against the expected benefits.

- 3.10** An important aspect of the wider benefits of Belfast Stories is the social value opportunity, including better jobs and skills, building ethical and resilient supply chains and promoting wellbeing for citizens. An independent evaluator will support the Belfast Stories team to ensure ongoing review of the benefits and outcomes with an evaluation report due by the end of 2024 to coincide with development of designs to RIBA Stage 2, submission of the outline business case and completion of the second public consultation.

**3.11 Inclusive Growth**

An Inclusive Growth group has been established to ensure that the breadth of opportunities during pre-construction, construction and post opening are maximised. Skills audits considering opportunities in construction, tourism and hospitality, and creative and digital technologies are being completed by the BRCD team and officers will work to ensure these are aligned to corporate priorities across Council including the culture and tourism functions within economic development to support areas such as neighbourhood tourism capacity building.

- 3.12 It is important in the development of the outline business case to be able to demonstrate delivery against social value outcomes. As part of the consultation and engagement process the work strands of the Engagement Plan (Appendix 4) have been developed to ensure all opportunities are maximised that in turn will feed into the overall project Benefits Realisation Framework. This approach will be embedded into all aspects of the programme including opportunities through gathering of stories.

**Public consultation**

- 3.13 Belfast City Council's Consultation and Engagement Framework describes a broad spectrum of two-way communication (from consultation to engagement to involvement) between the council and its residents and stakeholders. It recognises that effective dialogue helps make decisions, policies and services that are better suited to the people they are intended to benefit. It is in line with this that Belfast Stories seeks to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are at its core, supported by a co-designed and inclusive process.
- 3.14 Belfast City Council appointed Smith and Kent Consulting to provide specialist guidance and support, to plan and assist with Belfast Stories consultation and engagement including the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) and Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA).
- 3.15 The overall approach seeks to build long-term relationships while using a variety of methods to engage people on the terms they want to be engaged. There are two broad strands to engagement between May 2022 and September 2024. The process includes public consultations at the beginning and end of this development phase with the first of these now being complete with key findings detailed below. The second strand is ongoing engagement with stakeholders including priority groups and the general public.
- 3.16 As an initial step it was agreed at City Growth and Regeneration Committee in May 2022 that a public consultation would be carried out early in the process.

3.17 **Public Consultation**

The first public consultation on Belfast Stories was delivered from August to November 2022 running for 14 weeks. The consultation focused on:

- Raising awareness of Belfast Stories so that people are excited and want to continue to be engaged in its development.
- Making sure that Belfast Stories can be a positive experience for everyone, including consultation on the EQIA, RNIA and Story Collection Framework.
- Asking people how they would like to continue to be involved in the ongoing engagement.

3.18 The Belfast Stories Public Consultation document is included at Appendix 1.

3.19 **Consultation tools and tactics**

Consultation activity was delivered using different tools in different settings and with different audiences and interest groups. Stakeholders were asked for information that was relevant and useful to the decision-making process. This included the Your Say Belfast online consultation hub that hosted:

- Online survey
- Polls
- Downloadable consultation documents
- ISL and BSL videos

3.20 Overall, the online consultation hub welcomed 2,755 visits and 2,495 unique visitors. The documents and videos were downloaded or viewed 234 times, and 149 responses were received to the online survey and two online polls.

3.21 **Equality, diversity and inclusion**

In August 2022, the Belfast Stories equity steering group was set up comprising of 10 experts by experience including: people from Black, Asian, Middle Eastern, inner city, working class and LGBTQ+ backgrounds; older and younger people; disabled and neurodiverse people; and people with caring responsibilities. Two representatives from Belfast City Council's Belfast Stories and Good Relations teams also joined. There were 4 equity steering group meetings during the public consultation, which were attended by an average of 8 people.

3.22 Working through the equity steering group, Belfast City Council and other networks, Smith and Kent facilitated 16 workshops with people and groups who are generally more at risk of missing out. These were attended by 136 people. Smith and Kent also carried out 10 one-to-one meetings with

organisations representing or advocating for people and groups at risk of missing out.

**3.23 Engagement with sectoral stakeholders**

Belfast Stories team ran 31 workshops with the film, tourism, arts, heritage, the voluntary and community, Irish language and public sectors, engaging 238 representatives, including consultees previously engaged by Lord Cultural Resources in the development of the Stories Collection Framework.

**3.24 Engagement with the general public**

Five public meetings took place across the city with information boards also displayed at Clifton House, Girdwood Community Hub, Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre, Crescent Arts Centre, Ulster University, Spectrum Centre, EastSide Visitor Centre and the James Connolly Visitor Centre.

**3.25 Creative Engagement**

In August 2022, Belfast City Council appointed thrive, the audience development agency for NI, and Daisy Chain Inc., a creative practice, to help raise awareness and build excitement for Belfast Stories using an innovative and participatory approach to engagement.

**3.26** Between September and November 2022, thrive and Daisy Chain Inc. engaged a total of 683 participants through a range of creative tools including on-street interviews, street portraits, events and workshops and physical and pop-up consultation hubs in the city centre and surrounding locations.

**3.27 Summary of key performance indicators**

What we did	How well we did it
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- 2,755 visits and 2,495 unique visitors to Belfast Stories online consultation hub</li><li>- 234 unique visitors viewed or downloaded the consultation documents and videos</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- 100% of workshop participants surveyed enjoyed the consultation</li><li>- 96% of workshop participants felt listened to</li><li>- 60% of survey respondents were female</li></ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 149 responses to online survey and polls</li> <li>- 65 consultation workshops</li> <li>- 1,148 participants engaged through consultation workshops and events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 21% of survey responses from LGBTQ+ community</li> <li>- 20% of survey respondents had caring responsibilities for an older person or disabled person</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>What difference it made</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 82 per cent of those completing the survey or responding at consultation and engagement events are now excited by the concept of Belfast Stories</li> <li>- In the survey, 58 per cent of respondents offered stories, experiences, knowledge and networks they could share to help develop Belfast Stories</li> </ul>	

### 3.28 Feedback

The consultation exercise was also an opportunity for Belfast Stories to better understand what works well and where there are ongoing challenges in engaging with groups and individuals. Lessons were learnt on the consultation tools that were most effective and where a revised approach should be applied in future. The public consultation produced a wealth of useful information that will be carefully considered to inform the development of Belfast Stories and the next stages of consultation and engagement.

3.29 The full details of feedback received are included in Appendix 2. A summary is outlined below presented in line with the three consultation strands of: *Building excitement*; *Making sure Belfast Stories is for everyone*; and *Continuing the conversation*.

### 3.30 Building the excitement

Across all engagement strands, there was remarkable excitement about the concept of Belfast Stories. For example, in survey responses, 81.6 per cent of survey respondents said they were excited about Belfast Stories. However particular areas of feedback focused on:



- Positive feedback on regeneration and restoration of the heritage building
- Concerns over divisive ‘us’ and ‘them’ perspectives on one hand or the ‘sanitisation’ of the city’s stories on the other hand
- Concerns over displacement and/or lack of investment in existing infrastructure.

**3.31 Making sure Belfast Stories is for everyone**

Responses to these questions indicated that the main barriers that would stop people enjoying Belfast Stories included: concerns over the experience not being considered inclusive; potential to be politically partisan; or lack of trust in how the stories would be represented.

**3.32 Specific barriers in relation to using the building included:**

- Cost
- Feelings of it ‘not being for us’
- Specific design considerations
- Lack of interest/ relevance
- Duplication with what is on offer elsewhere.

**3.33 The role of the community and voluntary sector as trusted intermediaries to engage people was emphasised throughout the consultation, to ensure that people most at risk of missing out were engaged with and barriers to access were addressed.**

**3.34 Over two thirds of survey respondents (68 per cent) agreed that the right people had been identified to be part of the equity steering group.**

**3.35 The majority of people (7 out of 10) agreed that the themes developed as part of the Story Collection Framework are a good foundation for gathering stories. Feedback in this area included:**

- Themes considered most resonant were Authentic, Home and Place.
- Potential barriers identified included lack of authenticity, trust, unconvinced by concept and not inclusive.
- Importance of prioritising the role of local people in collecting stories.
- In practice high levels of willingness to share personal stories.

- A substantial number of consultees raised questions relating to the ethics of story gathering, preservation and presentation.

**3.36 Continuing the conversation**

The information published about the consultation emphasised that this was only the first step in six years of planned engagement. For some people, this early stage made engagement difficult with uncertainty over what could meaningfully be fed back at this stage. However, the final question of the public consultation survey asked, ‘What stories, experiences, knowledge and networks can you share to help us develop Belfast Stories?’ Seventy-three substantive responses were received, equating to nearly three in five respondents (60 per cent) who offered a suggestion for the next stage. This information has informed the actions set out in the Engagement Plan detailed in Appendix 4.

**3.37 Recommendations**

The Public Consultation Report made a number of recommendations in relation to ongoing engagement. These are summarised below and detailed in Appendix 2.

**3.38 Recommendation 1: Publish findings and set out details of next stage of engagement informed by consultation.**

**3.39 Recommendation 2: Continue breadth of engagement with stakeholders however ensure specific activities are delivered that address:**

- Communities – building trust and relationship with particular actions to reach geographic communities on the outskirts and in the immediate vicinity.
- Sectors – moving beyond silos to engage on different terms that focus on specific expertise for example interest in or contribution to Belfast Stories – story gathers, tellers, curators etc.
- Tourism sector – need to have specific engagement actions to ensure Belfast Stories can support the overall visitor experience and enhance existing products and providers.
- Commitment to Irish Language and Ulster Scots engagement to explore good relations opportunities, story collection and themes, representation within the building with the option to consider a language policy for the project and specific EQIA if required.

**3.40 Recommendation 3:** Not all planned activity to raise awareness was able to go ahead during the public consultation. A Communications Plan should be developed and integrated with the Engagement Plan. This should include:

- Key messages and a consistent identity with signposting to an updated Belfast Stories website and engaging social media.
- Potential to embed Belfast Stories activity in the calendar of events and festivals across the city.

**3.41 Recommendation 4:** There are a number of suggestions of platforms to support ongoing engagement. These have been considered against current resources and it is proposed that the following are established at this stage of the project with a commitment for further review at the end of this design stage:

- City Stakeholder Forum. This has been revised and it is proposed that this should be a Stories Network to ensure a clear focus to engagement. It is also proposed that within this Network a user panel and/or inclusive design group could be established. Further consideration will be given to this following the appointment of the design teams.
- Equity Steering Group (to continue). The equity steering group has provided vital insight into equality, diversity and inclusion including facilitating conversations with individuals and groups that would otherwise not be known to the Belfast Stories team. The membership of the equity steering group should be reviewed and refreshed to ensure that we are hearing from voices that may otherwise go unheard.
- Stories Panel with a remit to include ethical framework. This would ensure that the Council accesses the necessary expertise and specialist advice to integrate an ethics function into the story gathering processes and tools.

**3.42 Recommendation 5:** There are plans to start gathering stories in 2023. The Engagement Plan includes recommendations for engaging around story gathering. This should focus on active learning by testing processes and tools with groups that are less likely to share stories (because of their culture, identity or circumstances), in particular older people and the very elderly, whose stories are otherwise at risk of being lost. It should also:

- Build on best practice that currently exists, in particular in relation to safeguarding and ethics.
- Uncover the stories and archives that already exist, including at community level.
- Bring different sectors and stakeholders together to share knowledge and experience and build a community of practice through a conference or event.

3.43 **Recommendation 6:** There is a need to ensure that the project team continues to evaluate the effectiveness of its ongoing engagement by adhering to the evaluation framework and using tools.

3.44 Details of actions against each of these recommendations are included in Appendix 4: Engagement Plan.

#### **Stories Audit**

3.45 The collection of Belfast's stories underpins the Belfast Stories concept and is key to the success of the project in meeting its ambition and delivering the benefits. To support this work, Council commissioned Lord Cultural Resources to develop a Stories Collection Framework. The purpose of the Framework is to support the development of the Belfast Stories project and delivery of Council's wider ambitions as set out in the *Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy*, the *Belfast Agenda*, the ten-year cultural strategy *A City Imagining* and the recently finalised tourism plan, *Make Yourself at Home*. This will provide a Framework for future plans and recognises the important role that many city partners representing the community, cultural and tourism sectors have in telling Belfast stories across the city and throughout the year.

3.46 Members will be aware that the Belfast Stories project seeks to strengthen existing structures and networks to ensure that the benefits of the project are realised on multiple levels. The initial concept for Belfast Stories identified the opportunity for a significant new anchor in the city centre that would not only deliver regeneration in the immediate area but also act as an anchor that would help establish a hub and spoke model to strengthen connectivity and flow of visitors across the city.

3.47 Working in collaboration with key stakeholders and subject matter experts across the city we developed the Stories Collection Framework (SCF) in 2022. The Stories Collection Framework outlined the proposed direction on a number of areas including:

- Guiding principles – programmes such as the Decade of Centenaries have established good practice in setting clear guiding principles that inform Council's position and partnership approach.
- Ethical parameters – there are important ethical considerations that must be assessed, and necessary processes put in place to ensure best practice is reached across engagement, collecting and telling of Belfast stories.
- Themes – the purpose of the thematic framework is to assist in what will be a considerable undertaking to collect and arrange stories. This is an organisational tool and is not how the stories will be presented or told as this will be addressed at the next stage when the curatorial approach will be developed as part of public engagement and design processes.
- Partnership approach – this sets out a phased approach to a wider programme and partnership model to support cultural and tourism development in relation to collecting and telling Belfast stories. Whilst this will in turn support the building project, the potential benefits are much wider.
- Governance – Council is not a collecting organisation. This requires significant infrastructure and expertise. The governance is linked to the partnership model that locates Council within a wider stories ecosystem for the city and acknowledges the considerable expertise that exists in partner organisations.

**3.48** The Stories Collection Framework is a flexible tool that will evolve over time. It is critical to ensuring the authenticity and diversity of the stories represented in Belfast Stories and across multiple initiatives. In its present form, the framework seeks to:

- Explore new ways and perspectives of telling the stories of the people of Belfast.
- Bring the people of Belfast into the heart of the initiatives.
- Increase accessibility of existing collections across the city and beyond.
- Identify and address gaps in stories that have not been collected or that lack visibility.
- Encourage long term active engagement with partners creating a network across the city and beyond that will increase opportunities to participate in the cultural life and support neighbourhood tourism.

- Identify efficient and sustainable ways of sharing and putting collections to their best use.

**3.49** One of the key recommendations from the Story Collection Framework as agreed by City Growth and Regeneration Committee in May 2022 was to undertake an initial Stories Audit to better understand what stories have been collected and current levels of access to these collections. The scope of the audit was to:

- Complete an audit of stories, archives and collections relating to the city of Belfast in line with the mapping tool developed as part of the Story Collection Framework.
- Analyse findings including identification of trends and gaps.
- Identify any access issues or barriers to partnership working.
- Recommendations and roadmap for ongoing story collection and partnership programmes.

**3.50** The detailed audit is included at Appendix 5. The research began with sector mapping to identify the range of organisations and bodies involved in collecting. A series of discovery conversations with stakeholders and experts in the field were held, revealing a wide variety of specific collections to be audited and highlighting the depth of knowledge and insight to be gained from collection holders, community representatives and subject matter experts. These complemented the extensive engagement already undertaken as part of the development of the Story Collection Framework and on an ongoing basis by the Belfast Stories project team. Drawing on these discovery conversations four story collection case studies were developed with each one highlighting important considerations for ongoing partnerships, including ethical considerations, accessibility, representation, rights and preservation of collections that can be applied across the audit.

**3.51** The report presents key findings, an initial analysis of the catalogue of story collections, highlighting collections by sector, overarching themes and content tags to provide a sense of the variety of story collections, their context and contents. Finally, the report considers barriers to ongoing partnership working and accessing collections and offers several key recommendations to overcome these. It also proposes a roadmap for ongoing story collection partnership programmes.

3.52 The roadmap for ongoing story collection partnership programmes is included in Appendix 5 with further detail on the actions to be delivered against this roadmap as part of the Stories Action Plan detailed in Appendix 6. These include:

- Establishing a Stories Panel to include relevant expertise and specialist advice.
- Deliver a pilot programme for gathering stories.
- Work with the culture and tourism team to embed a partnership approach to heritage and neighbourhood development and investment in the city.
- Support the creative and engagement programme of Belfast 2024 in the role of Strategic Delivery Partner.

#### Next Steps

3.53 It is proposed that the actions set out in the Engagement Plan (Appendix 4) and the Stories Action Plan (Appendix 6) are delivered in line with the next project development stage that will culminate in a second public consultation, completion of RIBA Design Stage 2 and submission of the Outline Business Case to the Department for Economy. An update will be provided to Committee later in 2023 with detailed engagement with Members throughout 2024.

3.54 Given the strategic importance of the Belfast Stories project, the level of investment and the range of benefits to the city, it is proposed that a Belfast Stories Members' Working Group is established. This group would support regular engagement between Members and the Belfast Stories team and provide advice and oversight as the project develops. Draft Terms of Reference for the group are included in Appendix 7.

#### Financial & Resource Implications

3.55 There are no new financial implications to this report. The budget for the delivery of this phase of development was approved by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in November 2021.

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

3.56 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and is included in Appendix 3. A Rural Needs Impact Assessment was completed, and it was identified that the programme would be unlikely to impact people in rural areas. People in rural areas were invited to consult during the public consultation. The Engagement Plan (Appendix 4) supports

**ongoing engagement to ensure that Equality, Good Relations and Rural Needs implications continue to be addressed and includes integration of mitigating actions identified in the EQIA.”**

During discussion, the Committee raised concerns in relation to the spread of engagement across the city. The Senior Manager advised that the Programme Team welcomed Members’ support on the matter and would liaise with the Committee to further engage with the boundary areas in particular.

During further discussion, officers answered a range of questions in relation to the use of community-based volunteers and story collection methods and the potential benefits of the programme such as employment and tourism across the city.

After discussion, the Committee:

- Noted the contents of the report and update on the progress against the delivery of the Belfast Stories programme;
- Noted the findings of the public consultation exercise, the Equality Impact Assessment and the Rural Needs Screening as summarised in the report and detailed in Appendices 2 & 3;
- Agreed the actions as set out in the Engagement Plan detailed in Appendix 4 and summarised at 3.38 to 3.43;
- Noted the findings of the Stories Audit detailed in Appendix 5 and summarised at 3.50 to 3.52;
- Agreed to the actions as set out in the Stories Action Plan detailed in Appendix 6; and
- Agreed to the formation of a Members’ Working Group to provide advice and oversight on the progression of Belfast Stories as set out in the draft Terms of Reference included in Appendix 7.

#### **Update on the development of Neighbourhood/ Local Tourism**

(Councillor McDowell in the Chair.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the development of the Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme (the ‘Programme’) and to seek Members’ approval of the proposed funding model and next steps.**
- 1.2 In April 2022 Members of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee approved the draft tourism plan, *Make Yourself at Home* together with the Year 1 2022/2023 Action Plan of**



priorities. This included a commitment to developing a Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Fund for local tourism, recognising this as one of 3 catalyst projects alongside Belfast Stories and Year of Culture 2024. *Catalyst 1 - Our Place - Developing Local Tourism*: the Tourism Plan recognises that Regenerative Tourism is driven by the relationship between people and place, with an emphasis on uplifting the importance of community in the context of tourism and in particular, the relationship between the visitor and the host.

- 1.3 The Programme provides an opportunity to support the development and roll out of *Belfast Stories* and align with delivery of the *Tourism Plan*, *Cultural Strategy* and Tourism NI's *Embrace A Giant Spirit* brand and values, to deliver enhanced experiences for visitors and act as a catalyst to support the social, economic and physical regeneration across the city.
- 1.4 It is envisaged that this will be an iterative, phased programme. Significant work has already been undertaken by the Tourism Development Unit on the initial phase of the Programme (Phase 1: Development), in collaboration with the Belfast Stories and Culture Unit teams.
- 1.5 In order to maximise synergies and outcomes across key programmes, it is anticipated that the second phase of the Programme (Phase 2: Implementation) will launch once *Belfast Stories*, the *Heritage Audit and Development Plan* and the *Visitor Experience Action Plan* have progressed to a more advanced stage.
- 1.6 Since 2017, Council has supported 2 neighbourhood tourism organisations (EastSide Tourism and Fáilte Feirste Thiar) to deliver a *City Connections* programme which promotes cohesion between cultural tourism offers in the east and west of the city. It is anticipated that *City Connections* will be replaced by the proposed investment Programme, which will be open to organisations across the city. To facilitate the transition, it is proposed that Council continue to support both organisations in this interim period and provide financial assistance to the end of this financial year (31<sup>st</sup> March 2024).

## 2.0 Recommendations

To progress development of Phase 1 of the Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme, we request Members' consideration of the following:

- 2.1 Members are asked to approve investment in independent sectoral facilitation to conduct developmental engagement which will identify needs, gaps and opportunities, alignment of the City Connections programme and further inform and the parameters of the Programme (Phase 2).
- 2.2 Members are asked to approve investment in a 2-year programme to develop and enhance tourism products and experiences across the city, sharing and distributing the benefits of a vibrant tourism sector throughout local neighbourhoods.
- 2.3 Members are asked to approve interim funding to continue support for the City Connections programme until the end of current financial year.

3.0 **Main report**

3.1 **Strategic Context**

To ensure that an investment programme is developed in a robust and cohesive manner to meet sectoral needs, the Programme will be informed by key interdependent strategic priorities and projects, including *Visitor Experience Action Plan*, the *Cultural Strategy*, *Heritage Audit and Roadmap for Development*, and *Belfast Stories*, as detailed below.

- 3.2 Through investment in the development of high-quality tourism products aligned to our core strategic objectives, visitors may be drawn to neighbourhoods beyond the city centre delivering authentic experiences, promoting increased dwell time and spend, uplifting economic growth and capacity in local communities.
- 3.3 Further opportunity has been identified to enhance and extend the visitor experience and promote a cohesive, expanded visitor journey of exploration beyond the city centre. Creating a regenerative tourism offering that takes into consideration the appeal of neighbourhoods in delivering authentic experiences and the benefits of regenerative tourism.
- 3.4 As Members will be aware, Belfast Stories aims to create a unique visitor experience that captures the city through its powerful stories. Offering visitors, a new way to see and understand Belfast, it will generate authentic experiences that engender a greater sense of connection and belonging, both for local people and visitors to our city.

- 3.5 The offer will become the 'go to' first stop for visitors to Belfast and the wider NI region, orientating visitors and linking them to other city-based / regional visitor attraction.
- 3.6 At the current time, the hierarchy of stories / stories framework is still at a developmental stage, however in time and when fully developed this will become intrinsically linked to the Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme parameters. The development phase will enable industry to fully understand the opportunity presented by Belfast Stories and consider experiences that will enhance and support interconnected Visitor experiences and the role that communities can play in the overarching visitor experience.

3.7 Cultural Strategy

The ten - year Cultural Strategy for Belfast, *A City Imagining* states that in order to truly engage with our visitors and ultimately grow market share, Belfast needs to ensure that visitors connect strongly with the city's people, culture, places and heritage. To help give focus to the challenge of creating unique destination experiences which meet visitor need, the strategy identifies four themes:

- Tell me more (A city of stories) e.g. character and charm of Belfast, make the visitor feel at home
- Not what it seems (A city of contrasts) e.g. intriguing and complex history of Belfast, character of the place
- Hidden depths (A maritime city) e.g. waterways, rivers, loughs and shores
- Homespun (Made in Belfast) e.g. industrial heritage, cultural venues, innovation, creativity.

The proposed Programme will be developed in cognisance of these themes to shape immersive and engaging tourism experiences across the city.

3.8 Heritage Audit

It is also envisaged that the Programme will be shaped in alignment with the *Heritage Audit and Roadmap for Development*, aligning investment that recognises, promotes and protects the city's cultural heritage in all its dimensions, both tangible and intangible including the plurality of the city's cultural narratives. Work on this development plan is currently underway and will provide additional understanding of enabling infrastructure and assets that will support the success of Belfast Stories and visitor engagement.

### **3.9 Tourism Strategy**

In April 2022, Council approved the 'Make Yourself at Home' 10-year Tourism Plan for Belfast, recognising the importance of tourism to the city's economic growth. The *Make Yourself at Home* Tourism Plan places community at its heart. Respect for the local context, to ensure tourism-derived benefits are shared and inclusive, is evident in all four of the strategic themes - Grow, Position, Experience and Sustain.

- 3.10 Need has been identified for a specific programme to support the development of neighbourhood-based tourism experiences. Work to date has demonstrated that some areas of the city are more advanced than others in terms of neighbourhood tourism and leveraging the opportunity it presents. Whilst some areas have organisations undertaking work on visitor servicing and tourism development, it is clear that many neighbourhoods currently lack the capacity to bring forward strong proposals that would appeal to visitors.

The development of a suitable investment programme would be further strengthened by independent engagement with a range of organisations across the city to identify sectoral needs and opportunities and to support and inform future Programme phases.

- 3.11 Benchmarking research work has demonstrated that neighbourhoods are uniquely positioned to offer the visitor the immersive, authentic experiences they are seeking:

- Celebrating local culture, heritage and enterprise.
- Accessing open and green spaces.
- Co-creating authentic Belfast experiences, linked to the city's key stories.
- Enjoying day to night food and hospitality.
- Amplifying and extending the impact of the city's main existing visitor attractions.

- 3.12 Cities across Europe (of comparable size to Belfast) have successfully implemented ambitious programmes which place communities at the heart of regenerative tourism. Research highlights the importance of uplifting capacity, quality of product and visitor experience in local neighbourhoods beyond the city centre and considers how San Sebastian, Ljubljana, and Berlin have employed local tourism initiatives to develop sustainable growth in visitor numbers and product development (*Local Tourism in Belfast: Developing the Offer, Deloitte 2018*).

**Visitor Experience Action Plan**

3.13 At the current time, the *Visitor Experience Action Plan* is at a developmental stage, with a view to driving the effective implementation of the actions set out in the *Visitor Experience Plan*, which identifies neighbourhood tourism as one of six specific gaps in the city's current visitor experience offering. Once fully developed, the Action Plan will prioritise development activity linked to the Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme parameters to address identified need and drive economic growth, sharing the benefits of the tourism sector with communities across the city.

3.14 **Purpose of The Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme**

The Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme aims to:

- Engage in facilitated dialogue with sectoral and community partners across the city to identify needs, gaps and opportunities for tourism offers to drive increased visitor footfall, dwell time and spend in local neighbourhoods.
- Provide short term support (over a maximum period of 2 years) to develop authentic and financially sustainable new cultural tourism products, or enhancements to existing offers, which will bring vitality to local neighbourhoods, local residents and visitors.
- Encourage the development of plans which build capacity for city neighbourhoods to connect to the broader tourism offer, enabling local communities to become part of the Belfast visitor experience.
- Promote enhanced visitor dwell time in the city and extend the economic benefits beyond the city centre.
- Extend the journey of visitors to *Belfast Stories*, encouraging further exploration of its narratives across wider city neighbourhoods.

3.15 **Programme Focus and Scope**

The Programme will facilitate funding of priority outcomes linked to the Tourism Plan and support actions set out under the four strategic themes contained within the *Make Yourself At Home* Tourism Strategy - Grow, Position, Experience and Sustain. It will also provide a flexible approach to Neighbourhood Tourism within the City, while recognising the differing stages of development and capacity across the city. While it is envisaged that the investment programme may be

extended beyond the initial two year period, the first two programme phases will have specific areas of focus:

**Phase One - Programme Development**

- 3.16 In this first phase, significant focus will be placed upon scoping and benchmarking work to inform and define programme parameters, aims and projected outcomes, in alignment with interdependent projects. This work has already been progressed by the Tourism Development Unit, in collaboration with the Belfast Stories and Culture teams.

To further shape Programme parameters, we will prioritise the procurement of independent facilitation services to conduct developmental and engagement activity with the sector and across neighbourhoods in the North, East, South and West of the city. This work will include, but will not be limited to, the following:

- Conducting a needs audit and gaps analysis within neighbourhoods.
- Identify visitor needs and opportunities to increase dwell time and spend in neighbourhoods.
- Engage with sectoral stakeholders to build confidence in neighbourhood tourism offers and explore the development of new products and experiences, or enhancements to existing offers.
- Facilitate sectoral dialogue around issues relating to connectivity, sustainability, accessibility and capacity.
- Advise on potential programme linkages to Council's strategic priorities and Tourism NI's Embrace a Giant Spirit brand values and themes.
- Outline opportunities for the alignment and integration of the previous support delivered via City Connections.

- 3.17 Awareness of the initial phase of the programme will be raised via messaging across the council website and digital channels. Active participation will be sought through an open call to potential partners, stakeholders and collaborators from the city's tourism and community sectors. An audit process will also identify appropriate groups and organisations to shape, inform and benefit from the proposed programme.

- 3.18 It is envisaged that the engagement activity will achieve the following benefits for participants:

- Promote a greater understanding of the economic and social value of neighbourhood tourism to both communities and tourism businesses.

- Enhance understanding of the opportunities presented by *Belfast 2024* and *City Deal* programmes to promote economic growth, build capacity and connect communities into the emerging broader tourism offer.
- Enable local communities to become part of the Belfast visitor experience
- Foster collaborative partnerships and networking synergies to promote the development of clustered tourism offers.

3.19 The work outlined above will further inform the Programme to ensure it is robust and fit for purpose when it is opened during Phase 2 of the proposal. Committee will be updated on the outcomes and learnings resulting from the facilitation work in advance of the programme progressing to Phase 2.

Within this first programme phase, we also propose to continue support for the City Connections programme until the end of this financial year in its current format.

3.20 Phase Two – Programme Implementation

Phase 2 will be scoped in response to the work undertaken in Phase 1, with focus placed upon an open call for projects aligned to council's *Visitor Experience Framework, and Action Plan*, which will provide a co-ordinated approach to product and experience development in the city. Phase 2 will also prioritise the development of high-quality tourism products linked to Belfast's key narratives, which encourage visitors to continue their journey beyond the *Belfast Stories* attraction and extend their experience across the wider city.

3.21 Investment Priorities

The investment priorities for this programme are:

- Product Development: development of new, high quality local tourism products and experiences or enhancements to existing high-quality offers across the city.
- Capacity Building: in collaboration with teams across the Economic Development Unit, the Programme will invest in projects to strengthen community capacity to shape, deliver and contribute to visitor experiences. The ambition is to ensure all parts of the city have the opportunity to benefit from tourism investment.

- It is envisaged that applications will be considered for investment in products at one of three distinct phases; concept, planning, operational.

**3.22 Anticipated Programme Outcomes:**

The Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme will, in the long-term, support the delivery of the Visitor Experience Framework through the development of financially sustainable tourism products which draw visitors into local neighbourhoods, immersing them actively in the locale, promoting increased dwell time and spend in the area and uplifting skill, capacity and confidence in local communities.

It is anticipated that the parameters and outcomes of the programme may evolve throughout the lifetime of the *Make Yourself at Home* Tourism Plan in response to challenges, opportunities and needs identified across the city.

- 3.23** A post-programme evaluation report will be brought to Committee, incorporating lessons learned and recommendations to shape future funding initiatives in response to programme outcomes, opportunities and sectoral needs.

**Timeframe**

Phase 1 (research and development) of the project is currently underway, with facilitation and engagement activity to commence once investment is approved.

It is anticipated that work will continue until March 2024, with a view to Phase 2 (implementation) commencing from April 2024.

Further progress reports will be provided to Committee in due course.

**3.24 Financial and Resource Implications**

Approval of the Committee is sought for a total investment of £500,000 to support the ambitions of this Programme across a two year period.

It is anticipated that budget will be sought from City Deal reserves for the 2023 – 24 and 2025 periods of activity.

**2023 - 24 (Research and development phase)**



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**City Connections current funding                      £50,000**

***Committee meeting on 5 April 2023 approved £25k each to Fáilte Feirste Thiar and EastSide Tourism to support City Connections programme of work, 1 April to 30 September 2023.***

**City              Connections              extension              of              funding,  
1 Oct to 31 March 2024      -      £50,000**

**Independent facilitation services      -      £50,000**

**2024 – 25 (Implementation phase)----- Investment  
programme- £350,000**

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

**The Tourism Plan: *Make Yourself at Home* has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EAIQ) and a Rural Needs Assessment (RNS). Any issues raised during the public consultation have been addressed in the final plan, which was approved at committee meeting on 6 April 2022. No further public consultation will be required will be required for this investment fund.**

**Neighbourhood tourism is one of the outputs of the Tourism Strategy, promotion of opportunity for all Section 75 groups to be celebrated within the programme is important to it's success."**

During discussion, the Director explained further the role of Belfast as a gateway for Tourism across Northern Ireland and confirmed there were plans to cluster relevant visitor experiences later in the programme. He highlighted that there was a Heritage Audit underway which was considering signage, products and wayfinding.

After discussion, the Committee:

- Approved investment of £50,000 for independent sectoral facilitation to conduct developmental engagement which would identify needs, gaps and opportunities, alignment of the City Connections programme and further inform and the parameters of the Programme (Phase 2);
- Approved an investment of £350,000 in a 2-year programme to develop and enhance tourism products and experiences across the city, sharing and distributing the benefits of a vibrant tourism sector throughout local neighbourhoods; and

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- Approved interim funding of a further £50,000 to continue support for the City Connections programme until the end of the current financial year.

(Councillor Nic Bhranair in the Chair.)

**Future of Cultural Multi Annual Grants (CMAG)**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting in August 2019, a new ten-year cultural strategy for Belfast, A City Imagining, had been agreed. As part of this strategy a new investment approach was approved including phased implementation of new funding programmes. Similar to the Belfast Agenda, the recommended investment model for culture proposed a new partnership approach to supporting the cultural sector, with the aim of sustaining and developing accessible cultural activity and infrastructure across Belfast. This investment was central to creating positive cultural, social and economic impacts for the city, delivering on our overall targets for the period, positioning Belfast as a regional driver, and creating the conditions for long-term transformation.

The first phased implementation of the cultural investment model commenced with the opening of a competitive funding programme for cultural multi-annual grants for the period April 2020 to March 2024. It was agreed that these multi-annual grants would cover two main areas:

- Arts and heritage organisations, which had a year-round programme of cultural activity (Anchor four-year grants and enable two-year grants); and
- Festivals and events organisations, which had a festival or event with an audience of 65,000 or more (Imagine four-year grants), or an audience of 10,000 or more (Activate two-year grants) by end of grant period.

The Director of Economic Development advised that, in advance of the new financial year in April 2024, it was planned to launch CMAG in August 2023 with approval of awards and contracts by March 2023. He outlined the following summary of the timeline:

- Open call for application submissions – early August 2023
- Information sessions for applicants – August 2023
- Submission deadline for application – September/October 2023
- Eligibility check, scoring, officer assessment and independent assessment – October to December 2023
- Committee Approval of awards - January 2024
- Council Ratification approval of awards - February 2024

Similar to other grants, Cultural Multi-Annual Grants would be advertised widely and assessments would be made, and scoring applied under three key areas of criteria:

- Quality of programme: this included their vision, content, audience experience and marketing and audience development;

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- Impact of activity: this included how the programme contributed to the four strategic themes (A City Belonging, A City Challenging, A City Creating and A City Exploring) and how they will monitor and evaluate that impact; and
- Readiness for investment: this included planning, financial management, staff, governance, and environmental impact.

The Director of Economic Development provided an overview of the Principles of the Assessment Process, together with the findings of the review of the current scheme. He highlighted that detailed feedback across each area was available in [Appendix 1](#).

He summarised the recommendations from the review, and pointed out that the report highlighted a range of recommendations intended to further enhance the grant process, impact and evaluation, namely:

***Relationship management and support***

- The report highlighted the importance of one-to-one relationship management, stating that 'staff in BCC should also be supported to take on a more developmental role, including training, time to develop relationships and time in lieu to attend funding events and activities.'. Whilst much of this developmental work was impacted by the pandemic and staff changes in the Culture Unit, the importance of relationship management had been reflected in the new structure of the culture team and its corresponding workplans.
- Respondents also reflected the importance of wraparound support, particularly on areas such as accessibility and environmental sustainability. This support, including establishing a Green Arts Forum and a partnership with the University of Atypical to train disability champions, had been reflected in the Culture Workplan 23-24 which was agreed by members in the April 2023 Committee.
- Several respondents also indicated their desire to build relationships with Councillors. To address this need, officers would explore options for information and networking sessions between CMAG clients and members.

***Eligibility criteria***

- Arts and heritage eligibility criteria, including audience and turnover were based on historic baselines. However, the impact of the pandemic had created peaks and troughs and recent baselines were no longer robust. It was therefore recommended that arts and heritage organisations be allowed to base their application on projections (as per festivals and events applicants) with the caveat that historic performance would be used to assess whether projections were realistic.

- Similarly, the pandemic had had an impact on audience numbers over the previous three years. It was recommended that the Council analyse recent monitoring returns to consider whether audience eligibility criteria was still appropriate.
- It was recommended that the Council should consider removing the requirement for a minimum number of volunteers. Instead, it should ensure that it was satisfied that volunteering was considered within the assessment criteria as an indicator of A City Belonging, Challenging or Creating.

***Duration and level of funding***

- To manage expectations, the Council should agree in advance whether applicants could expect a significant change in funding or should request an incremental increase or standstill and communicate this to applicants. The Council should also consider telling applicants the average value of grants made in the first round and the number and value of grants it intended to make in the second cycle.
- The report stated that Council should consider awarding all grants on a four-year basis, subject to developing a longer-term project fund of scale that could support new and emerging organisations. Officers were mindful of this feedback and the desire for longer term funding from across the sector. However, such a material change to the scheme would require extensive screening and consultation and would be considered for any subsequent reviews of CMAG.
- The report recommended that the Council should review existing project funding with a view to introducing a longer-term project fund of scale that would reduce pressure on CMAG and help support a diverse ecosystem. Officials would all engage with the sector to investigate opportunities for dynamic and longer-term project funding.

***Application process, evaluation and monitoring***

- The report identified the need to provide support for applicants through information sessions and advice clinics, alongside clear consistent messaging to ensure that all applicants understand the purpose of the fund. These information sessions had been built into the planned rollout of the programme alongside a communications plan to announce the dates of opening and closing the grant as far in advance as possible. A more enhanced evaluation process, in consultation with grantees, would be implemented to enable evidence to be collected throughout the next four-year cycle.

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- Many respondents across all sectors recommended that the Council should change the names of the funds. It was recommended to change the name of the funds to refer to them by their descriptors (For example: four-year arts and heritage, two-year festivals).

***Assessment process***

- There were several recommendations relating to the assessment process, including providing applicants with more detail on the assessment process and criteria, using external subject matter expertise to assess at least Imagine applications, providing training to new assessors and reviewing the application form should be reviewed to identify any questions or attachments (such as board minutes) that could be removed or made only applicable to four-year applicants. It was also recommended that the administration of all grants should be migrated back to Central Grants Unit. All of these recommendations would be incorporated into the planned rollout of the programme.

***Transition***

- The Council should consider how it would support any existing Imagine or Anchor client that applies unsuccessfully in the second cycle. However, it was not recommended that the Council provides a formal scheme such as Transition. Rather, given the variance in Anchor awards in particular, this should be done on a case-by-case basis.

In relation to Pathfinder for 2023/24, the Director of Economic Development explained that, in February 2022, £79,768 had been agreed in relation to four Pathfinder grants which had been designed to address a specific gap in funding. Members had agreed that awards were extended for a further two years from 2022-24. The programme was designed to support those organisations that had a specific development need and were currently not in a position to drawdown core funding from the public sector. Based on monitoring of these awards to date, agreement was sought to continue this scheme for the second of the two years in line with the portfolio of two-year Cultural Multi-Annual Grants 2022-2024.

He advised that, given that the establishment and future of Pathfinder was directly related to CMAG, officials would continue to assess whether the scheme was still applicable during and after the rollout of CMAG. Recommendations on whether to continue the scheme beyond 2024 would be brought to the Committee for consideration in late 2023.

He pointed out that there were no new financial commitments relating to Cultural Multi Annual Grants and would be met with existing departmental budgets for 2023-24. An allocation of £79,768.00 would be made in 2023/24 year to extend the Pathfinder Awards and again this would be met from existing departmental budgets.

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After discussion, the Committee:

- Noted the contents of the report and agreed to open cultural multi-annual grants in August 2023 for Arts and Heritage organisations and Events and Festivals for funding from 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2028, subject to final recommendations being agreed by Committee in January 2024; and
- Approved the continuation of the Pathfinder Awards in 2023/24.

**Update on Music Strategy**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 At a meeting of City Growth and Regeneration Committee in December 2022, members agreed the music strategy, ‘Music Matters: A Roadmap for Belfast’ including its corresponding priorities. The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on progress to date and seek approval to the allocation of funding to a number of important strands of the music strategy.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- **Note the contents of this report and the progress made against areas of the music strategy, ‘Music Matters: A Roadmap for Belfast’**
- **Approve the allocation of £5,000 towards the costs of an international exchange with London, Ontario Canada**
- **Allocate £20,000 to the creation of a pilot micro grants scheme for artists.**

**3.0 Main report**

- 3.1 At a meeting of City Growth and Regeneration Committee in December 2022, members agreed the final ‘Music Matters: A Roadmap for Belfast’. Mirroring A City Imagining cultural strategy the music strategy has 4 strategic themes, each having 4 strategic priorities. There are a number of actions and recommendations given for each priority catering to many areas of need across the music sector.**

Theme 1: Place artists at the heart - Recognising the value of creators

Theme 2: Nurture the sector - Strengthening the structures to support those who guide and invest in creators

Theme 3: Ignite the live experience - Liberating the live music sector as a major catalyst for cultural and economic growth

Theme 4: Unlock the unifying power of UNESCO - Sharing the gift of music with the people of Belfast.

### **3.2 Update on Music Board**

The Music Strategy sets out governance recommendations for Belfast Music, including the formation of a Belfast Region Music Board, comprising between 15 and 20 members, to bring to life the UNESCO City of Music designation.

The board will help to embed music in all communities across the city to make music a sustainable career option for creators and people who support them. Following agreement of the full Music Strategy in December 2022, an open call was launched for applications to join the Belfast Region Music Board with applications closing in February 2023.

Members received an update on the recruitment process and selection of the board in April 2023. Since this meeting, the final selection of board members is confirmed and details of board members are available in Appendix 1.

- 3.3 As noted by members in the April 2023 Committee, there was a lack of applications from the marching bands community. Officials have engaged with members of this sector and the music board has agreed to co-opt a representative from this sector to the board from June 2023.

The board is meeting monthly, with two meetings held to date, to map further initiatives to roll out in this financial year and beyond. A Chair and Vice-Chair will be appointed at the July meeting.

### **3.4 Update on current initiatives**

In April 2023, Members received an update and agreed financial allocations for a range of ongoing initiatives. At this meeting, members agreed to allocate £20,000 to work in conjunction with the Music Venue Trust (MVT) to run a programme specifically targeted at venues in Belfast. Officials have been engaging with MVT to launch the scheme and this will be announced in mid-June 2023.

- 3.5 On 1st and 2nd June, the Output Conference was delivered as a key event within the City of Music programme, featuring a full programme of panels, workshops and conferences, followed by an evening showcase of live music for free to the public. Activity included music and creative digital showcasing and networking events, business development panels and workshops and meetings and networking with key international creative digital companies. The second day of output featured a community engagement and networking event at 2 Royal Avenue, followed by a Music Industry Session where delegates heard from delegates from Hannover, Germany regarding their journey as a UNESCO City of Music.
- 3.6 Priority 2.2 within Theme 1 of the Music Matters strategy relates to sourcing performance opportunities for Belfast music creators to perform internationally. In April 2023, Members received an update on an international exchange with UCoM City London, Canada, that will begin in July 2023. This opportunity will allow for two folk-music artists, namely Ciara O'Neill and Niall McDowell, to be provided with attendance at a song-writing camp, two pre-festival performances, one main-stage performance at Home County Music and Art Festival, as well as music industry 1-1 meetings across Ontario with agents, bookers and other personnel that will benefit the Belfast artists. In October 2023, two artists and talent agents from Ontario will arrive in Belfast to appear at the Belfast International Arts Festival and take part in a wraparound programme of similar activity. It is proposed to allocate £5000 towards the costs of this exchange, matching the contribution from UCoM City London, Canada
- 3.7 Ongoing development
- UNESCO Music delivery is funded from existing recurring and non-recurring departmental funds. At the meeting of the Special Policy and Resources Committee in April 2021, members agreed an allocation of resources to the delivery of the music strategy. As contained in the Belfast 2024 paper, £900k has been allocated towards City of Music and the Music Strategy for delivery on key developmental activities across 2023/24 and 2024/25 respectively.
- 3.8 There are a range of pre-existing commitments for the remaining financial year, including Gradam Ceoil bursaries, the creation of a music support service, delivery of the Output Conference, the delivery of a Music Industry Mentoring Programme, international exchanges and the Pipeline Investment Fund for music venues.



- 3.9 With the remaining budget for the 2023/24 financial year, Council is collaborating and consulting with the Belfast Music Region Board on the priorities most necessary to fulfil during this period. The budget will be split between the four themes of the strategy and each theme will have priorities that will be completed. It is anticipated that the profile of spend against themes will be:

Theme	Areas covered within initiatives	Budget profile
One – Placing Artists at the Heart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enhancing funding programmes for music creatives – e.g micro-grant scheme for artists</li><li>• Professional development opportunities to educate and equip music creators</li><li>• Opportunities for music creatives to connect and collaborate with their peers locally, nationally and internationally.</li><li>• Series of initiatives to ensure that music is inclusive, accessible and open to everyone in our city.</li></ul>	£90,000
Two - Nurture the Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financial assistance available to freelancers, organisations and businesses whose primary role is to enable, support and develop creators.</li><li>• Professional development opportunities to educate and equip music organisations and businesses</li><li>• Funded opportunities to engage and support the future generation of creative freelancers, cultural leaders and music business entrepreneurs</li></ul>	£70,000

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<b>Three – Ignite the Live Experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of a thriving, sustainable and strong live music sector including a review existing licensing frameworks</li> <li>• Enhance Belfast’s night-time economy, culture and governance</li> <li>• Implementing initiatives to ensure the health and safety, both physically and in terms of mental well-being, of performers and attendees at live music events.</li> <li>• Supporting greening the live music sector</li> </ul>	<b>£40,000</b>
<b>Four - Unlock the unifying power of UNESCO</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced strategic communications to make it easier for locals and visitors to find out about the music events and activities taking place across Belfast.</li> <li>• Ensuring citizens and visiting audiences have access to incredible and unique music experiences</li> <li>• Partner with tourism bodies, Sister Cities and the UNESCO Creative Cities Network to promote Belfast as a world class music destination</li> </ul>	<b>£40,000</b>

**3.10** A detailed and profiled delivery plan, containing initiatives to address these areas, will reviewed and discussed at the Music Board in June and July 223. A further paper outlining the initiatives and their detailed corresponding budgets will be presented to members in August 2023.

**3.11** **Micro-Grant scheme**

Theme 1 of the Music Strategy has a focus on artist development, with priority 9.5 including a commitment to fund

initiatives to alleviate the costs incurred by music creators in Belfast. It is proposed to allocate £20,000 to develop a micro-grant programme, available to individual musicians, to assist with costs incurred within their artform. The structure and criteria for this scheme will be developed in collaboration and consultation with the Belfast Music Region Board and will be launched in Autumn 2023.

### **3.23 Financial and Resource Implications**

- Allocate £5,000 towards the costs of this exchange, matching the contribution from UCoM City London, Canada
- Allocate £20,000 to the creation of a pilot micro grants scheme for artists.

These costs are to be met from existing departmental budgets allocated to music development.

### **3.13 Equality & Good Relations Implications**

This music strategy is part of the overarching cultural strategy for Belfast that has been subject to EQIA. An equality screening has been completed and mitigating actions will be considered as part of any initiatives.”

The Committee:

- Noted the contents of this report and the progress which had been made against areas of the music strategy, “Music Matters: A Roadmap for Belfast”;
- Approved the allocation of £5,000 towards the costs of an international exchange with London, Ontario Canada; and
- Approved the allocation of £20,000 to the creation of a pilot micro grants scheme for artists.

### **Department for Communities' Access and Inclusion Programme 2023-24**

It was reported that the Council was expected to be invited to apply for and administer the Department for Communities' Access and Inclusion Programme 2023-24 on behalf of Belfast based arts, culture (including leisure) or heritage organisations in early July 2023.

The Director of Economic Development explained that the Department expected to formally launch the programme as a competitive process in late June 2023 and the Council had been advised that a total fund of £624,000 was available for this programme.

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He advised that the Department for Communities' Access and Inclusion Programme aimed to:

- i. Improve access to arts, culture and active recreation venues across NI for people with disabilities;
- ii. Make arts, cultural and active recreation venues more inclusive across society; and
- iii. Increase participation in arts, culture and active recreation activities by people with disabilities.

The Director of Economic Development highlighted that the Council oversaw the assessment and recommendation of projects via a competitive open call internally and externally and would be responsible for delivery of all projects in receipt of funding.

The Culture Development Unit managed the 2018/19 and 2019/20 Access and Inclusion Programme within Belfast and received support for 24 projects with total value of £412,554, of which five were Council projects. In 2020/21, they administered 11 Access and Inclusion grants with a total value of £185,443 and 9 Programme grants in 2021/22 with a total value of £143,667.

The Director of Economic Development pointed out that the total fund available in 2022/23 reduced by almost 50%, they administered 3 external projects and one Council project with a total value of £99,701. Examples of projects supported included improved access to the City Hall and the Tropical Ravine; easier access for audience and participants to not for profit cultural venues across the city; installation of new specialised playground facilities and changing spaces; and provision of equipment to provide immersive theatrical experiences for children with complex needs.

He explained that capital works and equipment costs were eligible under this programme. The maximum grant available was £30,000, (the maximum project cost could not exceed £80,000), and applicants were required to contribute at least 10% of the total project costs. To receive a £30,000 grant, therefore, applicants must provide a contribution of at least £3,000.

He advised that, this year, the Department for Communities was particularly keen to welcome applications for Changing Places facilities, accessible equipment for play parks and projects that would impact positively on sustainability and climate change. Projects must be completed on or before 31st March, 2024. The Department for Communities had advised that no extensions would be considered to the project completion date.

He confirmed that contribution of at least 10% of project cost was an eligibility condition. This resource would need to be sourced by the applicant and the Council had staff resources to oversee the administration of the Programme.

During discussion, one Member raised concerns in relation to the time constraints of the programme and the need for the Council to have projects prepared for the anticipated annual funding for successive years. It was suggested that the Council write to the DfC to highlight this reoccurring issue.

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After discussion, the Committee agreed that the Chief Executive exercise his delegated authority to grant permission for the Council to apply for, promote, assess and manage the Access and Inclusion Programme 2023-24.

The Committee also agreed to write to the Department for Communities to reaffirm its concerns in relation to the short timeframe available for the delivery of the Fund.

**Christmas Programme Update**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with further information on the Christmas event as previously requested.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that:**

- In light of further information being provided, Members agree on the approach/format to Christmas 2023
- Note the contents of the report in relation to the Lighting Scheme

**3.0 Main report**

**3.1 Christmas Programme 2023**

On an annual basis, the Council’s Culture and Events Units delivers a series of large-scale public events, which are free to access by both citizens and visitors to the city, on behalf of Belfast City Council. This is further supported by the activity of other teams who support a number of annual programmes and activities and the Markets Unit who manage the delivery of the Christmas Market at City Hall in addition to year-round activity at St George’s and Smithfield markets.

- 3.2 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with further information and the costing of the various options for the delivery of Christmas 2023. This report follows on from a report to City Growth and Regeneration Committee on 8th March 2023, which focused on an Evaluation of the Christmas 2022 Programme.**

- 3.2.1 At the March 2023 meeting, officers further presented an option to merge the old Christmas switch-on format (preferred option prior to the pandemic) with the city-centre-wide**

programme used in 2021 and 2022 which would have seen a small stage at Castle Junction/Donegall Place, allowing the audience within Donegall Place to view the lighting of the Tree and Festive Lighting within the immediate City Centre, without the requirement to close Donegall Square North. The entertainment throughout the City Centre could then be programmed

3.2.2 As per Members request, this report will give cognisance to the resumption of the traditional 'switch on' event while considering health and safety, community engagement and local organisation involvement, choir competitions, a procession, environmental impact, budget availability, comparison of event feedback of recent Christmas programmes and the extension of the lighting schemes. All of which will assist the forward planning of the future Christmas programme for 2023 and beyond.

3.2.3 At April City Growth and Regeneration Committee, a budget of £122,864 was agreed for the Christmas 2023 programme as part of the in-year work programme for the Tourism unit and It is important to note that the Christmas 2023 programme is the launch pad into the 'Belfast 2024' programme and whilst programming will deliver against core thematic alignment, there may also be opportunity for additional budget uplift as part of this.

3.3 Officers have considered and presented three possible programming scenarios and associated budget requirements as below:

3.4 Option 1: Return to the "Pre-Covid" Switch on Style event.

The table below summarises the anticipated expenditure. Forecasts are based on 2019 event costs with an allowance for inflation and additional measures required to facilitate a safe event (as recommended in the external H&S report). These additional measures have distinct cost implications due to the longer build and de-rig period of the event: equipment will be hired for a longer period and will require security for the duration. There will be further road closures to accommodate stakeholders. It is important to note that consultation with both PSNI and Translink is considered in line with event management and the impact of intended road closures to the delivery of their core services and associated cost implications.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Indicative cost</u>
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<b>Entertainment</b>	<b>on stage performance, music and show pieces</b>	<b>£18,000</b>
<b>Production</b>	<b>production management, stage, PA, ancillary equipment, screens,</b>	<b>£65,000</b>
<b>H&amp;S, licensing, legal</b>	<b>licenses, first aid, insurance, H&amp;S advisor, stewarding</b>	<b>£24,000</b>
<b>Traffic Management</b>	<b>road closure, parking bay suspension, traffic management contractor</b>	<b>£8,000</b>
<b>Survey</b>	<b>Socio-economic survey</b>	<b>£8,000</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>£123,000</b>

**3.5     Option 2: Continue with a city-centre wide programme of animation and entertainment as per 2021 and 2022:**

Costs are based on 2022 event costs, with an allowance for inflation.

<b><u>Category</u></b>	<b><u>Description</u></b>	<b><u>Indicative cost</u></b>
<b>Entertainment</b>	<b>Variety of performer throughout city centre, window animation, parade, small allocation to 2RA</b>	<b>£41,000</b>
<b>Lighting</b>	<b>Lighting projections, displays, lighting for window animation, includes equipment</b>	<b>£26,000</b>
<b>Production</b>	<b>production management, Riser stage, PA, ancillary equipment,</b>	<b>£12,000</b>
<b>H&amp;S, licensing, legal</b>	<b>licenses, first aid, insurance, H&amp;S advisor, stewarding</b>	<b>£20,500</b>

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<b>Traffic Management</b>	road closure, parking bay suspension, traffic management contractor	<b>£4,200</b>
<b>Survey</b>	<b>Socio-economic survey</b>	<b>£5,100</b>
	<b>Programming 2 Royal Ave for the evening</b>	<b>£5,000</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>£115,000</b>

It is important to note that neither of the above two options includes provision for subsequent weekends. Since 2019, there has been an allocation for animation of the 4-5 weekends in the run up to Christmas, funded from non-recurrent reserves. Which is not available in 23/24 financial year.

**3.6 Option 3: Combination of a Switch-on event and city-centre wide programme of animation and entertainment as per 2021 & 2022 (as per March Committee report), with an allocation for subsequent weekends.**

A solution could be found in taking attributes of the old format, hosted within the 2021/2022 event space. A 'switch on' element, could take place on a small riser stage/platform at Castle Junction/Donegall Place, close to 2RA - allowing the audience within Donegall Place to view the lighting of the Tree and Festive Lighting within the immediate City Centre, without the requirement to close Donegall Square North. A larger PA system would be required for this element. The entertainment throughout the City Centre would be programmed over a two-hour period and would accommodate the parade element delivered in 2022.

**3.7 An allocation of the budget would deliver activity at 2 Royal Ave (a success in 2022, and wet weather contingency offering) and weekends in the run up to Christmas, supplemented by other city centre activity. However, to accommodate this expenditure there would be a reduction in the allocation to both entertainment and lighting displays.**

<u>Category</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Indicative cost</u>
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<b>Entertainment</b>	<b>Variety of performer throughout city centre, window animation, parade,</b>	<b>£37,700</b>
<b>Lighting</b>	<b>Lighting projections, displays, lighting for window animation, includes equipment</b>	<b>£15,000</b>
<b>Production</b>	<b>production management, Riser stage, Larger PA, ancillary equipment,</b>	<b>£16,000</b>
<b>H&amp;S, licensing, legal</b>	<b>licenses, first aid, insurance, H&amp;S advisor, stewarding</b>	<b>£15,000</b>
<b>Traffic Management</b>	<b>road closure, parking bay suspension, traffic management contractor</b>	<b>£4,200</b>
<b>Survey</b>	<b>Socio-economic survey.</b>	<b>£5,100</b>
<b>Subsequent Weekends</b>	<b>Programming of 2 Royal Ave from opening weekend, throughout period, with additional weekend animation &amp; music</b>	<b>£30,000</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>£123,000</b>

**Health and Safety Consultation:**

**3.8 As per Members request, the Events Team have sought independent health and safety advise on each of the above options, the salient findings of this are as follows:**

- the traditional Switch On Event in front of City Hall, has a long history and evolved over more than two decades
- The challenges faced over that period have influenced the evolution of the event
- The most recent iterations present a variety of health & safety implications for both the public and staff

involved in the build, delivery and de-rig of the event. Similar public civic events, where incidents took place, illustrate the implications on local authorities.

- By contrast the 2021 & 2022 format carries relatively low risk from a health & safety perspective.
- Stakeholders have clearly stated a preference for the more recent format but accept that the 'traditional' switch on could still take place with mitigations in place.
- These mitigations will result in additional resources being required to deliver a safe event, which also meets the expectations of stakeholders.

The full report is attached in Appendix 1

### **3.9 Public Engagement on Christmas (conducted by Thrive)**

This provided insight on people's behaviours and how Christmas events make them feel/shape their sense of place, although did not focus on the format of the switch on event.

Some General key findings on how people in Belfast feel about the city centre:

- Everyone repeatedly mentioned how important publicly owned spaces are to keep people coming in and feeling proud of Belfast, a reflection of civic pride in the architectural heritage which exists throughout the city and a desire to preserve it for future generations to enjoy.
- There was a desire to see more public spaces be used throughout the town centre: outdoor seating, green areas, nice places for people to exist without having to spend money. This connected to the panel's desire for the city centre to be a space where many people live, reflecting the diversity of the rest of the county.

### **3.10 Creative Programming & Alignment with the Cultural Strategy – A City Imagining**

Members are asked to note that the newer format compliments the Cultural Strategy – A City Imagining.

Several priorities are actioned via the Christmas Programme. For example, Priority 1 of 'A City Belonging' is to *develop and deliver a co-design model for all cultural programmes* while Priority 9 under 'A City Creating' specifies to *involve creative and cultural practitioners in service design across Council*; In 2021, 33 Belfast based organisations from the cultural, arts

and theatre/performance sectors were engaged to take part in this event and provide the animation over the 2 nights, with an additional 2 companies coming in from GB and 1 from Ireland. A smaller number were used in 2022, however, this was only one night.

An action under priority 4 is *further develop the city as a gallery* – something the newer format delivers comprehensively through street art, static window displays, and various lighting initiatives. In a similar vein, Priority 5 (A City Challenging) focuses on placemaking - one action being *'deliver playful city initiative to improve the quality, accessibility and openness of public spaces'* The expansive nature of the Christmas programme of 2021 & 2022 across the City centre, transformed underused public spaces into vibrant, bright, intriguing and theatrical space via music, animation and window dressing.

Pending final decision, and as per Members request the Events Team will work with Culture colleagues in the Belfast 2024 Team to deliver 'community engagement and local organisation involvement, choir competitions and a procession'.

### 3.11 Environmental Impact:

As per Members request, Officers have viewed all options presented through the lens of Environmental Impact. Over the last 5-6 years the events team have tried to remove as much physical infrastructure as possible that lends to creative development and delivers a more organic event creating higher levels of sustainability in increasing employment of local talent performing at the event, creating live hubs of music and animation across city centre. The Events team give cognisance to sustainability throughout and where possible utilise existing power supplies, infrastructure and natural spaces lending to live programming, the footprint for the original format exceeds the current format with additional infrastructure requirements.

### 3.12 Future Extension of the Lighting Scheme:

At March Committee, Members were advised that Christmas Lighting Scheme in 2022 was year 3 of the existing Christmas Lighting Scheme. The scheme was identical to the 2021 programme, with the addition of icicles on Ann Street and the positioning and lighting on 12 additional trees on Donegall place. Feedback on the scheme was positive, however, there continues to be requests for an extension of the scheme to

**include arterial routes. This also includes lighting projections and additional illuminations across the city.**

- 3.13 The budget for the Christmas lights has remained unchanged in the last three years and the Economic Development division do not have budget available to fund the expansion of the lighting scheme. Members should also be aware that any extension would require a significant lead in time to secure permissions, infrastructure and lighting.**

**3.14 Financial & Resource Implications**

**There are no financial implications to this report. All expenditure is within existing departmental budgets and approvals.**

**However it should be noted, that in relation to Christmas 2024 neither option 1 or 2 allows for subsequent weekend activity. Should there be a desire to integrate this element under options 1 or 2 additional resource would need to be allocated.**

**Any extension of the existing Festive Lighting Scheme would require additional resources.**

**3.15 Equality & Good Relations Implications**

**None.”**

During discussion, the Director of Economic Development explained further the lighting scheme costs and the additional Health and Safety measures required to return to a “Pre-Covid” Switch on Style event, as outlined in Option 1. In response to a Member’s question regarding events outside the City Centre, he advised that the potential for Christmas events on arterial routes across the city could be investigated, however, the budget of the Programme was limited, and that a report would be submitted to the Committee for consideration in due course.

**Proposal**

Moved by Councillor Maskey,  
Seconded by Councillor Lyons,

Resolved - The Committee agrees to Option 3: Combination of a Switch-on event and city-centre wide programme of animation and entertainment as per 2021 and 2022 (as per March Committee report), with an allocation for subsequent weekends, as outlined in the report, and that a report be submitted to a future meeting regarding the potential for Christmas events on arterial routes across the city.

Accordingly, the Committee:

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- agreed on the approach/format to Christmas 2023 outlined in option 3 –namely a Combination of a Switch-on event and city-centre wide programme of animation and entertainment as per 2021 and 2022 (as per March Committee report), with an allocation for subsequent weekends;
- Noted that a report be submitted to a future meeting regarding the potential for Christmas events on arterial routes across the city; and
- Noted the contents of the report in relation to the Lighting Scheme.

**Growing Business and the Economy**

**Response to Place 10x - Call for evidence**

The Committee was reminded that the Department for the Economy (DfE) had launched its 10X Economic Vision in 2021. This was the Department's plan to create a pathway to transform the economy in a way that is inclusive, innovative and sustainable.

Since its publication, the Department had been working to consider how the practical implementation of overarching objectives set out in the 10X Economic Vision was to be achieved. It had issued a number of related documents such as the Skills Strategy (Skills for a 10X Economy) and had been working on appropriate metrics to track progress. While the budget situation in all departments was currently unclear, it was proposed that DfE investment would be re-profiled to align with the 10X ambition – and this would mean that all delivery supported by the Department would be directed towards activity that could support the 10X ambition.

The Director of Economic Development advised that one of the key considerations for the strategy was the issue of “place”. He explained that, to consider how this should be reflected in departmental investment, the DfE had recently launched a call for evidence relating to sub-regional economic approaches – working title “Place 10X”.

The call for evidence involved the following six prescribed questions:

1. What is the problem we are trying to solve?
2. What geographic areas should Place 10X cover?
3. What is expected of delivery partners?
4. What interventions could or already occur?
5. What does success look like?
6. Is the Department's view of place and use of Place 10X correct?

He highlighted that the issue of place-based approaches to economic development and investment had been a recurring theme in recent policy documents.

In 2022, the 11 councils had commissioned a piece of research on “A place-based approach to supporting economic development in Northern Ireland”. The high-level findings of this work were:

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- Place-based approaches were closely aligned with the devolution debate. However, in practice, they could range from stronger partnership working on basis of agreed plans (for example - community planning model) to additional devolution of responsibilities (regeneration of particular interest in this field);
- The need for all regional approaches to identify sub-regional variations – but with the ability to flex depending on the issue and in line with local geographies/working areas;
- Opportunity to use Shared Prosperity funding to re-position role of councils in developing and delivering solutions that reflected local needs (within an overall framework); and
- City and Growth Deals demonstrate value of aggregating demand – are the current structures the right ones on an ongoing basis and for all economic matters?

A summary of the six questions posed and draft responses to each of these had been collated and were attached in [Appendix 1](#).

The Director of Economic Development pointed out that the Committee should note that this was a ‘call for evidence’ rather than a fully-developed approach to place-based economic development – this would follow once responses to this consultation were analysed.

The Committee noted the Place 10X call for evidence and agreed to the draft response to the call, as set out in [Appendix 1](#).

**Strategic and Operational Issues**

**Notice of Motion - Update**

The Committee was provided with an update on the Motions which had been assigned to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee. It was highlighted that the following three Motions had been recommended for closure:

***Category 1 Recommended Closures:***

- Letter to DfI re Belfast Cycle Network Delivery Plan; and
- Presentation re GP services in Belfast.

***Category 2 Recommended Closure:***

- Development of Community Wealth Building framework.

The Committee:

- Noted the updates to all Motions that this Committee was responsible for as referenced in Appendix 1; and

- Agreed to the closure of the 3 Motions, as outlined.

### **Belfast Bikes Quarter 4 Report**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

- 1.1 To update Members on the performance of the Belfast Bikes scheme for 2022-2023 financial year (year 7 of operation).**

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Committee is requested to:**

- note the update of the Belfast Bikes performance for 2022-2023 financial year (year 7 of operation)
- note the update to the notice of motion regarding free access for young people;
- note the progress regarding phase one and phase two expansion.
- note the update that tender will be prepared for a procurement of a new Public Bike Hire Scheme

#### **3.0 Main report**

##### **3.1 Background**

The Belfast Bikes scheme was launched in 2015 as part Belfast City Council’s physical investment programme. The Department for Regional Development provided initial capital funding for the scheme as part of their Active Travel Demonstration Projects budget. The scheme launched with a network of 30 docking stations and 300 bikes. The scheme has been operated by NSL continually since inception using bikes and supporting infrastructure from ‘Nextbike by TIER’. The scheme currently operates with 455 bikes (including those in reserve for new stands) and 52 docking stations.

##### **3.2 Expansion of the Scheme**

At CG&R on 12 May 2021 it was agreed that an additional four Belfast Bikes docking stations would be deployed using DFI Active Travel funding. All stations below are now operational

- Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre
- Olympia Leisure Centre

- Kennedy Centre
- Waterworks

Council officers are currently liaising with the operator and supplier to improve the supply chain issues for future installations.

- 3.3 At CG&R on 9 June 2021 it was agreed to proceed with an additional 15 docking stations. At SP&R on 18 June 2021 members agreed for £500,000 to be invested in the expansion proposal.
- 3.4 Works are ongoing for the design and installation of eight stations in Phase 1 (to be installed in 2023):
- North: Yorkgate and Shore Road
  - West: St Mary's College and Shankill Road
  - South: Lisburn Road and Malone Road
  - East: Castlereagh Road, Upper Newtownards Road.

There are plans for seven stations in Phase 2

- 3.5 As previously agreed by the committee, discussion and agreement through Area Working Groups is required to determine exact locations and consider those against the Site Expansion Matrix. These site options and discussions with Area Working Groups commenced in November 2022. The AWGs have agreed the exact locations in their respective areas.

#### Operational Performance

3.6 Availability

Following the ongoing challenges sourcing replacement bike parts, this issue has been resolved and the number of bikes on the street during Q4 has increased. The average daily bikes on the street during Q4 was 295.

- 3.7 An additional 180 bikes have been purchased to facilitate the ongoing docking station expansion, and this stock will be filtered onto the street, so availability levels are expected to further increase in coming months.

#### Membership

- 3.8 There were 16,282 registered Belfast Bike users at the end of Q4. Nextbike by Tier the current provider changed their payment operator during Q4 and as such the details of non-



active members are no longer recorded as registered users. Going forward all active users will need to update their information with the new supplier.

- In Q4 'Pay as you go' (PAYG) memberships remained the most popular form of membership, accounting for 83% of users.
- Annual memberships accounted for 15% of users. There is an ongoing trend of users switching from annual membership to PAYG.
- Casual memberships have greatly reduced, accounting for just over 1% of memberships, due to the introduction of PAYG.

### Journeys

- 3.9 There have been 1,350,153 journeys since the scheme was launched including 24,118 journeys during Q4 Year 7.

Although this is a decrease of 20% from the same period in Year 6 (which was an exceptionally busy year for the scheme), journeys during this period also decreased by 24% against Q4 average since the scheme commenced, which poor weather contributed to.

### Vandalism

- 3.10 Members will be aware that vandalism is an ongoing problem. Upgrades to the forks to help prevent the unauthorised removal of bikes has been successful however, damage is now being caused to the rear wheels and to the docking points while bikes are being forced from docking stations.
- 3.11 There were 52 instances of vandalism in Q4. This is much lower than previous periods and lower than the quarterly average by 31%. Vandalism costs payable by the Council for this period is £5,782. Whilst this figure is significantly lower than the previous quarter, it is higher than the quarterly average (£2,734)
- 3.12 Members should note that generally the number of vandalism incidents has decreased in recent times, however vandalism costs have increased due to the higher cost of parts associated with a higher quality of bike. Bikes were upgraded to 'SMART' bikes in 2021. For comparison, in the same period in 2017, there were 154 instances of vandalism at a cost of £5,237 i.e. lower incidents but at a higher cost. See Appendix 1 tables 2 and 3 for annual comparison.

- 3.13 Members should also note that following the upgrade to 'SMART' bikes, the amount of theft has decreased due to GPS tracking in the bike allowing for recovery. The operator is very proactive at retrieving missing bikes.
- 3.14 The bikes operator continues to deliver operational improvements and community engagement initiatives with PSNI to help decrease vandalism incidents.

**Subscriptions and Usage Revenue**

- 3.15 Income from fees and charges in Q4 was £19,930. This is 48% lower than average for this period. This could be due to a number of contributing factors including poor weather and change of payment provider. Income from fees and charges for the 2022-2023 financial year was £176,171

3.16 **MARCOMMS**

Marketing activity during Q4 included:

- Social Media messaging and video promotion on 'Lock it Dock it'
- Article in Winter City Matters magazine (circulation of 160k homes); on new stations at Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre, Olympia Leisure Centre, The Kennedy Centre and the Waterwork.

Belfast Bikes currently has 5.1k followers on Twitter; 1.7k on Facebook; and 1.1k on Instagram.

3.17 **Operator contract**

NSL continues to operate the Belfast Bikes scheme, with a contract renewal available until 2024. Council staff are currently reviewing the scheme and will make future recommendations for the management, operation and potential expansion of the scheme as part of a new procurement package.

3.18 **Sponsorship**

Sponsorship ended in September 2022 and council officers are currently assessing procurement options for a new sponsor of the scheme.

**Response to Notice of Motion**

- 3.19 Following a Notice of Motion from Councillor O'Hara the Committee agreed on 4th March 2020 to investigate 'as part of the current strategic review of the Belfast Bikes Scheme, consideration be given to granting free access to young people 25 years of age and under to the scheme'.
- 3.20 Belfast Bikes operator, NSL, added date of birth (D.O.B.) as an essential criteria for users from 13 October 2022. It would be prudent to wait approximately six months to allow the majority of users to upgrade their information before accurate age demographics can be determined.
- 3.21 However, initial reports indicate 53% of users fall within the '25 and under' age group. Providing free usage to under 25's is likely to have a significant detrimental impact on revenue generated from the bike scheme, which directly contributes to operating costs.

3.22 Update on Covered Cycle Stands city-wide

Whilst Covered Cycle Stands are not part of the Belfast Bikes scheme, both initiatives are aligned to the Bolder Vision with a focus on improvements in the active travel provision and infrastructure across the city. Covered Cycle Stands are part of the Active Travel Enablers project.

3.23 Phase 1

Under the DfI Sustainable and Active Travel elements of the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme, 10 covered cycle stands were funded city-wide. Locations were agreed in previous CGR Committee and the status is as follows:

Gasworks	Installed July 2022
St. George's Market	Stand delivered but still awaiting DfI approval
Grosvenor Community Centre	Installed September 2022
Shankill Leisure Centre	Installed July 2022
Belmont Park	Installed August 2022
Inverary Community Centre	Installed August 2022
Belfast Zoo	Installed August 2022

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<b>Waterworks</b>	<b>Installed August 2022</b>
<b>Belvoir Activity Centre</b>	<b>Installed August 2022</b>
<b>Mary Peter's Track</b>	<b>Installed September 2022</b>

**3.24 Phase 2**

Members received an update on the DfI funding for the Active Travel Enabling Projects in March 2022 that outlined the projects, budget and timeframe for delivery. In terms of the covered cycle stands, officers drew upon the priority areas identified by Sustrans, and these locations were also assessed in terms of the deliverability within the timeframe as well as the key criteria aligned to cycle infrastructure provision.

Following a procurement process, a supplier has been appointed for the next 10 covered cycle stands being delivered currently.

**3.25 Financial & Resource Implications**

**Finance**

There are no specific financial or resource implications contained within this report.

**3.26 Equality or Good Relations Implications**

**None.”**

During discussion, the Director of Economic Development answered a range of Members' questions regarding the installation dates of Phase 1, the potential for an eBikes scheme, sponsorship, patterns of use and return rates. In response to a Member's question regarding the Belfast Cycle Network Plan linking with the Belfast Bikes Scheme, the Senior Development Manager confirmed that the presentation from the Department for Infrastructure on the Metropolitan Transport Plan would set out the proposed plans for the future of sustainable travel.

After discussion, the Committee:

- Noted the update of the Belfast Bikes performance for 2022-2023 financial year (year 7 of operation);
- Noted the update to the notice of motion regarding free access for young people;
- Noted the progress regarding phase one and phase two expansion; and

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- Noted the update that tender will be prepared for a procurement of a new Public Bike Hire Scheme.

**Issues Raised in Advance by Members**

**Cultural Mapping Report (Alderman Lawlor to raise)**

Alderman Lawlor requested an update on the Cultural Mapping Report (Phase One), in particular, the research gaps which had been raised at a previous Committee in relation to the omission of some Musical Venues and Theatres across the City.

During discussion, the Director of Economic Development clarified that the Report was not publicly available and the report was being amended to rectify the issues which had been raised.

The Committee noted that an updated report on the Cultural Mapping Project would be submitted to the Committee in September for consideration and the Director of Economic Development would continue to engage with Members on the issues which had been raised.

Chairperson

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# City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 28th June, 2023

## SPECIAL HYBRID MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Nic Bhranair (Chairperson);  
Alderman Lawlor;  
Councillors Bunting, Canavan, Douglas,  
Duffy, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Maskey,  
F. McAteer, McCabe, McCormick,  
McDowell, McMullan and Murray.

In attendance: Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development; and  
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors I. McLaughlin, McDonough-Brown and Walsh.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No Declarations of Interest were reported.

### **Restricted Items - Presentations**

The information contained in the report associated with the following three items was 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 four 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.

### **Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (Department for Infrastructure)**

The Chairperson introduced Mr. A. Rafferty, Project Manager, representing the Department for Infrastructure, and Mr. D. Murray, Project Manager, representing Atkins, to the Committee and they were admitted to the meeting.

Mr. Rafferty provided an overview of the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) 2035, which included:

- Background of the BMTP;

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- Overview of approach;
- Delivery timescales and phasing;
- BMTP Launch;
- Draft Vision, Objectives and Guiding Principles; and
- Ongoing work

During discussion, the representatives answered a range of questions regarding the links to the Belfast Cycle Network, further consultation, timelines and budgets.

In response to a Member's question in relation to the important connections between the BMTP and Council's Local Development Plan, Mr. Rafferty agreed to receive further technical questions from the Committee for response.

They explained further the multi-mode travel options, the policies to promote modal shifts and active travel options.

One Member suggested that a presentation to the West Belfast Partnership Board would be beneficial.

After discussion, the Chairperson thanked Mr. Rafferty and Mr. Murray for their attendance and they retired from the meeting.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and that, where relevant, the representatives would provide further information on the issues raised.

**Queen's Island Transport Plan (Belfast Harbour Commissioners and Titanic Quarter Limited)**

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. J. O'Neill and Mr. T. Anderson, representing Belfast Harbour, and Mr K. Craig, representing Titanic Quarter Limited, to the Committee.

Mr. O'Neill presented the Queen's Island Transport Plan. He stated that the Titanic Quarter and Belfast Harbour had set out a bold vision to transform Queen's Island into an iconic waterfront destination, a thriving place to live, work and visit.

The representatives provided a summary of the plan which included: Background information, Vision and purpose; Generating economic value; Creating impactful social value; Aligned and exceeding policy; Extensive consultation; Strategic measures; Developer measures; and Monitoring and governance arrangements

During Members Questions, the representatives provided further detail on accessibility, social value and opportunities the QITP might bring, together with engagement with the local communities. Mr. O'Neill provided details of the intended housing to be built and the importance of sustainability to the development.

Mr. O'Neill explained further the opportunities for future apprenticeships and academies and its links with the Belfast Metropolitan College.

One Member advised that the Newtownards Road Development Plan Workshop would welcome a meeting with the representatives to discuss the Plan.



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After discussion, the Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance and they retired from the meeting.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

**Giants Park Limited**

The Chairperson introduced Mr. K. Carlin, representing Carlin Planning, and Ms. N. Isles, representing the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), to the Committee and they were admitted to the meeting.

Mr. Carlin provided a brief overview of the Giant's Park proposed scheme located on a 250-acre (former landfill) landmark development site 3 kms from Belfast City Centre.

He explained that the vision for Giant's Park was to create a visitor experience in Belfast through a combination of commercial, leisure, sporting and mixed-use development, organised into a series of key hubs, each of which would provide a range of activities and attractions.

Mr. Carlin presented a summary of the Master Plan and its guiding principles and explained the proposals for the logistics and distribution hub.

Ms Isles described the Welcome Hub and Adventure Park's vision and mission, together with the key audience groups and benefits of the proposal.

During discussion, Mr. Carlin answered a range of questions in relation to the timeline and funding of the development, its infrastructure and the proposed connectivity of the scheme.

Ms. Isles advised that engagement had been undertaken in regard to outdoor classrooms and Forest Schools.

In response to a Member's question regarding the potential for apprenticeships of the Scheme, especially with the communities located close to the Scheme. The Director of Economic Development confirmed that work was being undertaken with the Council's employability and skills programme in term of the adjacent communities.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

**Standing Order 14 - Submission of Minutes**

In accordance with Standing Order 14, the Committee agreed, as the meeting had been held later than seven clear days before the meeting of the Council, that the minutes of the meeting be submitted to the Council on 3rd July for ratification.

Chairperson

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## Licensing Committee

Wednesday, 21st June, 2023

### MEETING OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM AND  
REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor McKeown (Chairperson)  
Aldermen Rodgers, McCoubrey and McCullough;  
Councillors Anglin, Bradley, Collins, P. Donnelly, Doran,  
D. Douglas, Gormley, Murray, F. McAteer, McCabe,  
McCann, McCusker, McMullan and Ó Néill.

In attendance: Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;  
Ms. N. Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and  
Civic Services;  
Mr. K. Bloomfield, HMO Unit Manager;  
Mr. J. Cunningham, Senior Licensing Officer; and  
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors Lyons and Smyth.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 12th April were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 2nd May, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

### **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor McCabe declared an interest in item 2.f) in that she was employed by Féile an Phobail, and left the meeting whilst the item was being considered.

### **Meeting Times**

At the request of the Chairperson, the Committee agreed that further meetings of the Committee commence at 5.15pm instead of 5pm.

**Delegated Matters**

**THE COMMITTEE DEALT WITH THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN PURSUANCE  
OF THE POWERS DELEGATED TO IT UNDER STANDING ORDER 37(d)**

**Houses in Multiple Occupation Licences  
Issued Under Delegated Authority**

The Committee noted a list of licences for Houses in Multiple Occupation which had, since its last meeting, been issued under the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

**Application for a New Licence to operate  
a House of Multiple Occupation for Flat 1,  
6 Sandhurst Road, Belfast, BT7 1PW &  
Application for a New Licence to operate  
a House of Multiple Occupation for Flat 2,  
6 Sandhurst Road, Belfast, BT7 1PW**

(The Committee agreed to consider these two items simultaneously.)

The HMO Unit Manager outlined the reports to consider applications for two Licences permitting the use of premises as a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) at Flat 1 and Flat 2, 6 Sandhurst Road, Belfast, BT7 1PW.

He reminded the Committee that, at its meeting in April 2023, it had acceded to a request from the applicant's legal representative to defer consideration of this applications until a future meeting to provide them with additional time to consider the Committee report and take instruction from their client. Officers subsequently applied to the county court to allow the Council additional time to consider the application which the court granted until 10th July, 2023.

He advised that suitability of living accommodation for multiple occupation, in determining whether living accommodation was suitable for occupation as an HMO, the Council must have regard amongst other things to:

- (a) the accommodation's location;
- (b) the type and number of persons likely to occupy it;
- (c) the safety and security of persons likely to occupy it; and
- (d) the possibility of undue public nuisance.

He highlighted the Notice of Proposed Decision stated that the Council proposed to refuse the licence on the basis that it was not satisfied the living accommodation was suitable for use as an HMO pursuant to section 8(2)(e) and section 13 of the 2016 Act and a statement of reasons for the proposal was included in the Notice of Proposed Decision.

He advised that the accommodation of the two flats was in HMO Policy Area HMO 2/22 Botanic, Holylands, Botanic. The properties were situated in a primarily residential area, however, the adjacent property at "Lilac House" 4 Sandhurst Road was the

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independent living and advice centre of the charity Autonomie, which worked with young people (16-30 years) with a physical and/or mild to moderate learning disabilities. He stated that Autonomie also offered vital practical and emotional support to families raising a child or young person with disabilities. He advised that Fitzroy Court was located at the junction of Fitzroy Avenue and Sandhurst Road, which was a block of 25 retirement flats operated by Choice Housing. The boundary of Fitzroy Court was approximately 20m diagonally opposite 6 Sandhurst Road.

The HMO Unit Manager advised that Officers had consulted with the Police Service for Northern Ireland ("PSNI") and had received information regarding the calls they had received to the accommodation, including the number and types of incidents.

He advised that, on 21st June, the Council had received further information from the applicant's solicitor which included:

- A letter of support from the Probation Board Northern Ireland for the renewal of Licence at Queen's Quarter Hostel IV Unit, to allow for their continued service delivery;
- Service User rules for Queen's Quarter Housing;
- Licence agreements to occupy temporary accommodation for Queen's Quarter Housing; and
- Queens Quarter Housing Warnings and Exclusion Policy and Referral Procedure.

He raised concerns in relation to the new information which had been received and stated that there was no reference in the fire risk assessment submitted with this application (dated 12th October, 2022) to individuals with arson convictions being housed in the accommodation.

He advised that the Council was required to have regard to the safety and security of persons likely to occupy it, and the applicant had already disclosed that there had been incidents of violence at the accommodation.

The HMO Unit were not aware of there being an IV Unit at 6 Sandhurst Road. If such a unit was in-situ, this would be a material as part of the fire risk assessment and was not mentioned in the FRA submitted on 12th October, 2022 with the applications.

The Committee received a representation from Sgt. K. Morton and PC. D. Watson, representing the PSNI. They drew Members attention to the incident log which provided detail of reported incidents linked to the properties. They described the community impact of the accommodation being used as a HMO, together with the pressure on Policing to safeguard the area.

During discussion, one Member highlighted the critical need for Hostel accommodation and that Queen's Quarter Housing had a long track record of providing this accommodation on behalf of the NIHE.

The Committee received a representation from Ms. L. Morrison, Chief Executive, Autonomie, objecting to the application. She advised that Autonomie was located at 4

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Sandhurst Road from 2014 and was a charity which provided support for complex needs persons, who were a very vulnerable group. She summarised her objections to the application and suggested that both staff and clients had been regularly verbally abused whilst entering the building by those standing outside 6 Sandhurst Road and drug deals had also been witnessed outside the property. She advised that they had to adapt to the situation by installing CCTV and staff now did not want to work alone, due to the fear of leaving the building. She also highlighted the need to safeguard the clients and parents of Autonomie.

During Members' questions, Ms. Morrison explained further the impact of the Hostel's residents on the staff and clients of Autonomie.

The Committee received a representation from Ms. L. Smyth, and Mr. P. MacDermott representing the applicant. Ms Smyth advised that the accommodation provided a service on behalf of the NIHE and was funded by the Department for Communities. She stated that Queen's Quarter Housing had provided services for over 20 years and managed at least six properties within the Holylands area and had worked well with the Council too.

She suggested that this was the first time some of the issues had been raised with Queen's Quarter Housing and it would have been helpful if direct engagement could have happened to address the issues.

She suggested that the people that were being housed in the HMO accommodation were extremely vulnerable and required assistance. She questioned where Hostel residents should be housed and suggested that any concerns for this application could be managed via conditions and enforcement action, and it would be premature to refuse the application.

She suggested that some important aspects of the Committee Reports had not been brought to the Committee's attention and outlined the referral policy and the agreements that were put in place with residents of the HMO, before being housed in the accommodation.

She also suggested that the majority of the objections were on behalf of Autonomie.

During Members' questions, she suggested that the Committee should not conflate wider issues of anti-social behaviour of the area to just the application properties and reiterated that safeguards could be put in place.

In response to this, Ms. Morrison suggested that Autonomie had a log of incidents linked to 6 Sandhouse Road, together with CCTV and reported evidence and highlighted the need to protect the young clients of Autonomie.

During discussion, Ms. Smyth confirmed the property would not be used as an IV Unit but would provide a safe space for residents to dispose of used needles.

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During further discussion, a Member highlighted the vulnerability of those who might reside in the accommodation and those potentially affected by the HMO due to their proximity to the accommodation and highlighted the need to investigate the strategic context of the issues which had been raised, including what housing model worked best for vulnerable adults, where do initiatives such as the Supporting People programme and the Complex Lives project fit in, current supply and demand of hostel accommodation and the spread of hostel accommodation across the city.

**Proposal**

Moved by Councillor Gormley,  
Seconded by Alderman McCoubrey and,

Resolved - The Committee agrees to defer consideration of the applications to enable officers to explore the strategic context of the issues which had been raised in relation to this application and the wider Hostel accommodation in Belfast, and to present this information at a future meeting.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed to defer consideration of the two applications for new Licences to operate a House of Multiple Occupation for Flat 1 and Flat 2, 6 Sandhurst Road, Belfast, BT7 1PW, to enable officers to explore the strategic context of the issues which had been raised in relation to this application and the wider Hostel accommodation in Belfast, and to present this information at a future meeting.

Due to the legislation requirement to determine HMO applications within three months, and in light of the new evidence which had been received from the applicant, the Committee also agreed that the City Solicitor would seek authority from the Court to extend further the period to determine the applications and noted that consent from the applicant had been received to do so.

The Committee also noted that a Special Meeting of the Committee might be required to consider the applications, subject to Court approval and timeframes.

**Licences Issued Under Delegated Authority**

The Committee noted a list of applications which had, since its last meeting, been approved under the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

**Application for the Grant of a 7-Day Annual  
Outdoor Entertainments Licence for the AC Hotel  
by Marriott Belfast**

The Director of Planning and Building Control outlined the application to provide musical entertainment in the form of live music, within an outdoor area at the Hotel's main building. She advised that the Hotel had an existing Indoor Entertainments Licence.

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She advised that the days and hours during which entertainment may be provided under the terms of the Indoor Entertainments Licence were:

- Monday to Saturday 11.30am to 01.00am, and
- Sunday 12.30pm to 01.00am.

The applicant had proposed to provide entertainment within the new outdoor area to 11.00pm. The day and hours proposed were:

- Monday to Sunday: 12:00 pm to 11.00pm

The Director confirmed that no written representation had been received in relation to the application and that the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service and the Police Service of Northern Ireland had not objected.

The Committee approved the application for the grant of the 7-Day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence - Monday to Sunday: 12:00 pm to 11.00pm.

**Application to provide outdoor musical  
entertainment beyond 11.00 pm at Falls Park**

The Director of Planning and Building Control provided an overview of the following report:

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

- 1.1 To consider a request from the organisers of Féile an Phobail to hold a festival event within Falls Park, running from Saturday 5 August to Sunday 13 August 2022, and to permit the entertainment planned to run beyond 11.00 pm on up to 6 occasions.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Taking into account the information presented and any representations received you are required to consider the request to extend the hours of entertainment and, subject to all technical requirements being met, either:**

- 1. Agree if any or all 6 of the events should be permitted to take place beyond the standard hours of licence to 1.00 am; or**
- 2. Refuse to extend any or all of the hours as requested.**

**3.0 Main report**

**Key Issues**



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- 3.1** Members are advised that a 7-Day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence and a 7-Day Annual Indoor Licence for a Marquee has been granted for Falls Park and both have been used to hold events in the past, primarily for this event. The Licences are held by the City and Neighbourhood Services Department and are transferred to the organisers for the duration of their event.
- 3.2** The days and hours during which entertainment may be provided both outdoors and, in a marquee, are Monday to Sunday from 11.30 am to 11.00 pm.
- 3.3** In addition, the following Special Conditions are attached to both the Marquee and Outdoor Entertainments Licences:
- Maximum numbers will be agreed at the discretion of the Building Control Service and will vary depending upon individual concert set up proposals.
  - Prior to any event taking place the promoters are required to demonstrate evidence of early consultation and have in place a robust system of dealing with any complaints, which has been agreed in advance with the Council.
  - Any requests to provide entertainment later than 11.00 pm must be considered by the Licensing Committee and therefore must be made at least 3 months in advance of the proposed event.
  - Should an application to provide entertainment beyond 11.00 pm be granted and the Council then receive a significant number of complaints regarding noise or the complaint is of such significant impact, authority is granted to the Director of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the City Solicitor, to reduce the finishing time for any subsequent nights of the event, in which case the promoter will be required to make contingency arrangements.
- 3.4** The programme of events at the festival continues to be developed. At this time, the organisers have indicated that events are scheduled for 5th, 8th 10th, 11th and 13th August. Additionally, while final confirmation of an act is pending, the organisers have indicated that their request to operate beyond 11.00pm include Saturday 12th August.
- 3.5** The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at their meeting on 21st April 2023, considered applications associated with the Summer Community diversionary festivals programme. The report was inclusive of Féile an Phobail and approval for funding was granted.

- 3.6 It is a Standard Condition of the Outdoor Entertainments Licence that all requests to operate beyond the permitted hours of entertainment must be considered by the Licensing Committee.**
- 3.7 As this is not an application to vary the terms of the Outdoor licence, but a request for Council's permission to extend the hours under an existing Licence Condition, there is no requirement for public advertisement in this case.**
- 3.8 Members are reminded that in 2022 you agreed to grant the organisers permission to operate on all 4 nights of the event beyond the standard hours of 11.00 pm to 1.00 am.**
- 3.9 Members will be aware that in previous years the Committee has granted extensions beyond the standard hours of 11.00 pm for other events and festivals in the City.**

**Rationale for additional hours**

- 3.10 The event has been running for over 30 years as a community festival. The event has grown over the years from being held for 2-3 days to a full 10-to-11-day festival offering a mix of arts and cultural events including music concerts, comedy, tours and walks, debates and discussions, exhibitions / visual arts, theatre, youth and community and sporting events. This year's festival will run from Thursday 3rd August to Sunday 13th August.**
- 3.11 In former years the event organisers consolidated the entertainment events at Falls Park to 3 or 4 nights. This decision was motivated by a desire to limit disruption to the community in close proximity to Falls Park.**
- 3.12 Previously, operating beyond the permitted hours to 1.00am was part of the organisers strategy to mitigate against antisocial behaviour in the greater Belfast area.**
- 3.13 A representative of the event organiser has been invited to attend your meeting.**
- 3.14 A Location Map is attached as Appendix 1.**

**PSNI**

- 3.15 The PSNI have been contacted by the Service in relation to the event. At the time of writing of this report the Service have not**

received a response to this request, we will update Committee at your meeting.

- 3.16 Should Members be minded to recommend approval of the extended hours sought this should be subject to a satisfactory response from the PSNI on the matter.

**Health, safety and welfare issues**

- 3.17 Officers have engaged with the organisers and Officers of the Parks Service in relation to the festival. Officers will participate in the multi-agency meeting held in advance of the event with the event organisers.
- 3.18 The event organisers have confirmed the Event Management Plan in support of the event has been developed. Once this document has been received it will be evaluated by the Service and shared with officers of other council Services.
- 3.19 Officers from the Service have carried out during performance inspections at previous events organised by Féile an Phobail and found that the organisers have adhered to the health, safety and welfare management requirements during that time.

**Noise issues**

- 3.20 The event organiser has engaged with an independent acoustic consultant to develop a noise mitigation strategy. Once received by the Service this strategy will be provided to Environmental Protection Unit (EPU) for appraisal.
- 3.21 A significant consideration for EPU will be the proposal to provide outdoor entertainment after 11.00pm. Members are reminded that the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 gives councils additional powers in relation to entertainment noise after 11.00 pm.
- 3.22 The EPU received a total of 58 noise complaints regarding the festival in 2022. A total of 36 noise complaints were solely attributed to the diversionary event on Monday 8th August 2022. Complaints related to the volume of music and the finishing time of the dance event on this evening.
- 3.23 Complaints received were brought to the attention of the event organisers and following conclusion of the festival a detailed summary of all noise complaints provided for their consideration. No formal action was undertaken by EPU in respect of the noise complaints received.

- 3.24 For this year's festival, there is the potential for 4 consecutive nights of music proposed to run to beyond 11.00pm. The cumulative impact of disturbance from musical entertainment and congregation of large numbers of patrons attending the park has the potential to give rise to community annoyance.
- 3.25 The organisers have identified that they anticipate entertainment will go to 1.00am on one occasion only, the diversionary event on 8th August 2023. On previous years remaining nights of entertainment have finished prior to 1.00am.
- 3.26 The event organisers will again be required to engage with an acoustic consultant and requested to document a noise mitigation strategy for each night of entertainment. The purpose of the strategy will be to demonstrate that noise from the event will not cause unreasonable disturbance to commercial and residential premises. The event organisers will be reminded of the standard licence condition that receipt of significant complaints may lead to further late nights being curtailed.
- 3.27 The organisers will also be required to produce a suitable residents pre-notification letter containing a nominated event organiser contact that that residents may refer concerns or make complaints to. The extent of the letter's distribution, which will take place prior to the event will be agreed with the event organiser by the Service in consultation with EPU officers.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.28 Officers will carry out inspections at the events which will be catered for within existing Service budgets.

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

- 3.29 There are no issues associated with this report."

The Committee agreed to the request from Féile an Phobail to hold a festival event within Falls Park, running from Saturday, 5th August to Sunday 13th August 2022, and to permit the entertainment on six of the events to take place beyond the standard hours of licence to 1.00 am, subject to a satisfactory consultation response from PSNI.

**Objections received outside the 28-day statutory period to an application for the**

**Grant of a 7-Day Annual Outdoor  
Entertainments Licence**

The Director of Planning and Building Control advised the Committee that a late objection had been received in relation to the application for the grant of a 7-Day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence for Topsy Bird (attached as [Appendix 3](#)).

She confirmed that, following the objection, both parties had agreed to communicate to try and resolve the issues, however, a resolution had not been agreed.

The Committee approved the consideration of the objection against the application which had been received outside the 28-day statutory period and to give the objector and the applicant an opportunity of appearing before the Committee at a subsequent meeting.

**Consideration of objections to an application  
for the Renewal of an Entertainments Licence for  
Shaftesbury Bowling and Recreation Centre**

The Director of Planning and Building Control provided an overview of the following report:

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

- 1.1 To consider an application for the Renewal of a 6-Day Annual Indoor Entertainments Licence for the Shaftesbury Bowling and Recreation Centre based on the Council’s standard conditions to provide music, singing, dancing or any other entertainment of a like kind.**

**1.2**

<b><u>Premises and Location</u></b>	<b><u>Ref. No.</u></b>	<b><u>Applicant</u></b>
<b>Shaftesbury Bowling and Recreation Centre, 20A Annadale Avenue, Belfast, BT7 3JJ</b>	<b>WK/202201640</b>	<b>Mr Fred Simpson, 79 Cedar Grove, Holywood, BT18 9QB.</b>

- 1.3 A location map of the premises is attached as Appendix 1.**

- 1.4 The application for renewal of the licence was received on 22 December 2022. In advance of the application being received, representations to the renewal of the licence were received from 2 objectors.**

- 1.5 Further communication was then received from the objectors within the 28-day period confirming they still wished to object to the application.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1** Considering the information presented and representations received in respect of the application you are required to make a decision to either:
- 1.** Approve the application for the Renewal of the 6-Day Annual Entertainments Licence, or
  - 2.** Approve the application for the Renewal of the 6-Day Annual Entertainments Licence with special conditions, or
  - 3.** Refuse the application for the Renewal of the 6-Day Annual Entertainments Licence.
- 2.2** If the application is refused, or special conditions are attached to the licence to which the applicant does not consent, then the applicant may appeal the Council's decision within 21 days of notification of that decision to the County Court.
- 2.3** If the application is refused and an appeal is lodged entertainment may not be provided during the appeal period.

**3.0** **Main report**

**Key Issues**

- 3.1** Two objections have been received from residents living near the Club. The nature of their objections relates to the following:
- Ongoing loud music every Tuesday evening.
- 3.2** Copies of these objections are attached as Appendix 2.

**Liaison meetings**

- 3.3** Following receipt of the objections the Service facilitated a liaison meeting between all parties involved to discuss residents' issues and attempt to resolve them.
- 3.4** Both objectors, Members of the Club Committee and an Officer from the Service met at the Club to discuss resident's concerns on 11 November 2022.
- 3.5** Following discussions, the Club Committee advised they implemented arrangements in relation to noise as requested by residents. However, the residents advise they still wish to pursue their objections.

- 3.6 As required by the Committee Protocol the applicant and each of the objectors were requested to provide their representation in advance of the meeting for consideration.

**Objectors Representation**

- 3.7 The objectors Representation Forms are attached as Appendix 3 and they have been provided to the applicant, as required by the protocol. In general, the representations relate to concerns as follows:

- Ongoing loud music every Tuesday evening.

- 3.8 The residents have been invited to attend your meeting to discuss any matters relating to their objections should they arise.

**Applicants Representation**

- 3.9 The applicant has provided their Representation Form, as required by the Protocol, and a copy of his response is attached as Appendix 4. The applicant has highlighted the measures which have been undertaken to try and address residents' concerns.

- 3.10 The applicants Representation Form has also been provided to the objectors, as required by the protocol.

- 3.11 A summary of the applicant's representation is as follows:

- The Club advised they would monitor noise levels & ask those who use the hall to turn down bass where appropriate.
- They will continue to monitor noise & are happy to meet again.
- Purchased and placed mats below speakers to lessen the vibrations.
- Sealed any unnecessary openings around the club premises.
- Provided complainants with a mobile number they could call if noise was unacceptable.
- Ensured that any of the organisations using the hall in the evening kept the hall's double doors closed when music was being played.
- Offered to have a sound engineer go to the complainants' premises to assess the level of noise & produce a report

**Counter representations**

- 3.12 In response to the Representation Form submitted by the applicant, the objector has advised the music is persistently loud on Tuesday evenings which affects their family's health, well-being and overall quality of life and believe the Club are not taking their concerns seriously.
- 3.13 A copy of this email is included as Appendix 5.
- 3.14 Further to providing the applicant with a copy of the objectors' Representation Forms the applicant has advised they do not have anything additional to add to their earlier submission.
- 3.15 The applicant and/or their representatives will be available at your meeting to answer any queries you may have in relation to the application.

**Details of the Premises**

- 3.16 The area the applicant wishes to be licensed to provide entertainment is the:
- Main Hall which will have a maximum capacity of 200 persons
- 3.17 The days and hours during which the applicant wishes to provide entertainment are:
- Monday to Saturday: 11.30 am to 11.00 pm

**PSNI**

- 3.18 The PSNI have been consulted in relation to the application and confirmed that they have no objection to it.

**NIFRS**

- 3.19 The Northern Ireland Fire Rescue Service has also been consulted in relation to the application and have advised they have no objection to it.

**Health, safety and enforcement inspections**

- 3.20 The premises have been inspected and all works to ensure patron safety in the premises have been completed to the satisfaction of the Service.
- 3.21 The Service became aware of residents' concerns with the premises in March 2022 when complaints were made through



the Council's Noise Hotline Service of loud music from the Club.

**Noise Complaints for year 2022**

- 3.22 Eleven noise complaints were received by the Night Time Noise Team (NTNT) between March 2022 and October 2022.
- 3.23 On four occasions, Officers of the Noise Team witnessed excessive noise levels that warranted action in the form of a verbal warning.
- 3.24 On 11th March 2022 Night Time Noise Team (NTNT) witnessed audible music with a bass element emanating from the bowling club. They advised the level of noise would likely cause sleep disturbance to nearby properties and asked for music to be turned down and any open doors or windows to be closed.
- 3.25 On 23rd April 2022 Night Time Noise Team (NTNT) issued a verbal warning after witnessing loud bass beat music that could be heard over a wide area and would cause a general disturbance to nearby properties.
- 3.26 On 10th June 2022 and on 30th August 2022 NTNT issued verbal warnings as noise levels were again too loud.
- 3.27 The applicant has been informed on all occasions when the Service have been notified of a noise complaint. The applicant has also been advised that in situations of ongoing noise disturbance that it may be necessary to engage with an Acoustic Consultant who can advise on appropriate mitigations to limit noise breakout.

**Noise Complaints for year 2023**

- 3.28 The objector has identified that ongoing noise disturbance from the venue continues to be experienced. Particular reference had been made to dance classes held in the venue on Tuesday evenings. Building Control have reminded the objectors of the need to contact NTNT when disturbed by noise. No noise complaints have been received by Building Control from NTNT in 2023.
- 3.29 Members are reminded that the Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act 2011 gives council's additional powers in relation to the control of entertainment noise after 11.00 pm.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.30 Officers carry out monitoring inspections on premises receiving complaints, but this is catered for within existing budgets.**

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

- 3.31 There are no issues associated with this report.”**

The Committee received a representation from the Objector, in objection to the application. The Objector summarised his objections to the application in relation to the loud music which his household experienced every Tuesday evening, dating back to January 2022. The Objector confirmed that there was no longer an issue with noise levels from the Bowling and Recreation centre at any other time. The Objector advised that multiple formal and informal complaints had been made, however, the Club had not rectified the issue and it continued to be a problem. The Objector suggested that it was having an impact on their family's quality of life and well-being.

The Objector highlighted that the allegation of one of the Objector's swearing at the Club Treasurer during a telephone call was untrue and the phone call had not taken place. The Objector suggested that an incident had also occurred with many cars flashing lights and beeping horns outside of their home as a result of the noise complaints which had been made. The Objector also stated that video evidence had been sent to the Council to show that the loud music was being experienced.

Council officers advised that the new video evidence would need to be reviewed.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed to defer consideration of the application to enable further consideration by Council officers of the new evidence which had been raised by the Objector and to allow the Council to support further mediation between the Applicant and Objector.

**Deferred Review of Pavement Café Licence –  
Voodoo, Fountain Street &  
Deferred Review of Pavement Café Licence –  
City Picnic, Fountain Street**

(The Committee agreed to consider these two items simultaneously.)

The Committee was reminded that, at its meetings in November 2022, December 2022 and April 2023, it had considered the review of the two aforementioned Temporary Pavement Café Licences in Fountain Street.

It was reported that DfI-Roads had notified the Council that, in their view, the Temporary Pavement Cafés needed to be removed or relocated to facilitate the safe movement of traffic in Fountain Street following its reopening to vehicular traffic.

**Licensing Committee,  
Wednesday, 21st June, 2023**

The Committee was also reminded that, at its meeting in April 2023, the Committee had again agreed to defer consideration of the request from the Department for Infrastructure to revoke the original Temporary Pavement Café Licences for Voodoo and City Picnic.

The Senior Licensing Officer provided a presentation of the background and current Pavement Café arrangements at Castle Street/Fountain Street

After discussion, the Committee agreed to again defer consideration of the request from the Department for Infrastructure to revoke the original Temporary Pavement Café for Voodoo and City Picnic to enable the Committee to undertake a site visit to the Castle Street/Fountain Street area to familiarise itself with all of the relevant issues.

It agreed also that the owner of the businesses and representatives of the Department for Infrastructure be invited to attend.

Chairperson

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## Planning Committee

Tuesday, 20th June, 2023

### HYBRID MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Garrett (Chairperson);  
Aldermen Lawlor, McCullough and Rodgers;  
Councillors Anglin, Bell, Bradley, T. Brooks,  
Carson, Doherty, P. Donnelly, Ferguson,  
Groogan, Hanvey, Maskey, McCann and Whyte.

In attendance: Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;  
Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor;  
Mr. E. Baker, Planning Manager (Development Management);  
Ms. C. Reville, Principal Planning Officer;  
Mr. D. O'Kane, Principal Planning Officer; and  
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported for Councillors S. Douglas and Verner.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 18th and 20th April were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council, at its meeting on 2nd May, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

### **Deferred Item**

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the undernoted application in order to receive an outstanding re-consultation response from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and undertake a site visit to view the existing natural grass pitch at the Kingspan Stadium:

- **LA04/2023/2891/F** - Replacement of existing natural grass rugby pitch with new 3G surface and associated under pitch drainage and site works (Additional Information Received. Kingspan Stadium 134 Mount Merrion Avenue, Belfast, BT6 0DG.

**Meeting of Planning Committee,  
Tuesday, 20th June, 2023**

**Abandonments and Extinguishments**

The Committee noted the proposed abandonments and extinguishments.

**Appeals**

The Committee noted the Appeals Decisions.

**Planning Decisions Issued**

The Committee noted the Planning decisions issued between 1st April and 31st May, 2023.

**Miscellaneous Reports**

**Updates to the Planning Application Checklist**

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with an update on the Planning Service's Planning Application Checklist.

He reported that Phase 4 of the Application Checklist had been launched to coincide with the adoption of the Plan Strategy and reflect its new policy requirements.

He highlighted that the updated Application Checklist included the undernoted new information requirements:

- Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation Statement (**Policy HOU7**);
- Affordable Housing Proposal Form (**Policy HOU5 and SPG**);
- Climate Change Statement (**Policies ENV2, ENV3, ENV5, GB1 and TRE1**);
- Community Cohesion and Good Relations Statement (**Policies CGR1 and CGR2**);
- Health Impact Assessment (**Policy HC1**);
- Householder Design Statement (**Policy RD2 and SPG**);
- Housing Mix Statement (**Policy HOU6 and SPG**);
- Masterplanning Statement (**Policy DES2**);
- Specialist Housing Statement (**Policy HOU8**);
- Tall Buildings Design Statement (**Policy DES3**); and
- Wind Energy Statement (**Policy ITU4**).

He stated that the Application Checklist would be subject to continuous improvement.

The Committee noted the report.

**Meeting of Planning Committee,  
Tuesday, 20th June, 2023**

**DfI Consultation on Revised Regional Strategic  
Planning Policy for Renewable and Low Carbon Energy**

The Principal Planning Officer informed the Committee that the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) had published its draft revised policy document for strategic planning policy on renewable and low carbon energy development for public consultation and was seeking views as to whether the proposed revised policy would provide an appropriate regional strategic policy framework for plan-making and decision-taking for all forms of renewable energy and low carbon development.

He reported that officers welcomed the review and broadly agreed that the proposed revised policy could contribute to ensuring that the planning system supported efforts to achieve the targets set out in the Climate Change Act as well as other decarbonising objectives.

He referred the Committee to a proposed response to the consultation and highlighted a number of points which had been raised by officers.

The Committee approved the draft response to DfI's revised regional strategic planning policy on renewable and low carbon energy.

**Live Appeals**

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with an update on four live appeals which related to applications that had been refused by the Committee.

He explained that the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) had written to the Council seeking the current position on a number of live appeals following the adoption of the Plan Strategy and, whilst officers had responded to with regard to appeals against refusal decisions taken under delegated authority, there were four which had been refused by the Committee and, therefore, would be reported back to the Committee.

He summarised the following four applications to the Committee:

- **LA04/2022/1284/F** - Lands bounded by Library Street (to south); Stephen Street (to west); Little Donegall Street (to north); and Union Street (to east), Belfast, BT1 2J;
- **LA04/2020/0844/F** and **LA04/2020/0840/LBC** - Vacant Warehouse at Rathbone Street and former St Malachy's School at Sussex Place, Belfast, BT12 8LN;
- **LA04/2021/2519/F** - Lands at Nos. 348-350 Ormeau Road, Belfast, BT7 2FZ; and
- **LA04/2021/2825/A** - Former Belfast Telegraph Printworks, 124 - 32 Royal Avenue, Belfast, BT1 1DN.

**Meeting of Planning Committee,  
Tuesday, 20th June, 2023**

The Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to provide comments to the Planning Appeals Commission in respect of four live appeals relating to applications which had been refused by the Committee.

**Planning Applications**

**THE COMMITTEE DEALT WITH THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN PURSUANCE OF THE  
POWERS DELEGATED TO IT BY THE COUNCIL UNDER STANDING ORDER 37(e)**

**LA04/2022/0129/F - (Reconsidered item) Amended Proposal:  
2.4m wall to rear of all proposed properties backing onto  
Dermot Hill Housing Development. Proposed social  
housing led mixed tenure residential development comprising  
122 residential dwellings, pedestrian and cycle ways, public  
open space, children's play area, landscaping (including 8  
metre landscaped buffer to western boundary), boundary  
treatments, parking, access (provision of a right turn lane)  
and ancillary site works. Lands north of 14 Mill Race and  
15 Belfield Heights and south of 2-15 St Gerards Manor**

The Planning Manager reported that the application had been considered by the Committee, at its meeting in February, 2023, when it had resolved to grant planning permission and delegate authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and the Section 76 Planning agreement.

He explained that the decision had not been issued because of the need to conclude the Section 76 planning agreement and that, since the Committee's decision, the Belfast Local Development Plan: Plan strategy had been adopted which provided a new policy framework for decision making and therefore the application was being reported back to the Committee in order that it could reconsider the application under the new policy framework.

He outlined the updated policy context, relevant planning policies and updated assessment to the Committee for consideration.

The Committee granted planning permission and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement.



**Meeting of Planning Committee,  
Tuesday, 20th June, 2023**

**LA04/2022/1280/F - (Reconsidered item) Proposed social housing led, mixed tenure residential development comprising of 52 no. dwellinghouses and 87 no. apartments with public open space, children's play park, landscaping, car parking, associated site works and infrastructure and access arrangements from Blackstaff Road (139 no. units in total). Former Kennedy Enterprise Centre (north of Westwood Shopping Centre) Blackstaff Road.**

The Planning Manager reported that the application had been considered by the Committee, at its meeting in February, 2023, when it had resolved to grant planning permission and delegate authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and the Section 76 Planning agreement, and resolve a technical issue which had been raised by DfI Roads.

He informed the Committee that the decision had not been issued because of the need to conclude the Section 76 Planning agreement and that, since the Committee's decision, the Belfast Local Development Plan: Plan strategy had been adopted which provided a new policy framework for decision making and therefore the application was being reported back to the Committee in order that it could reconsider the application under the new policy framework.

He provided the Committee with an overview of the application with regard to the updated policy context, operational policies, proposal maps and relevant planning policies.

The Planning Manager explained that the proposal was contrary to some of the policies in the Plan Strategy but that it would not be unreasonable for the Committee to continue to resolve to approve the application in the planning balance should the Committee continue to give significant weight to the significant unmet need for affordable housing in the area.

The Committee:

- Approved the application, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement to secure the necessary planning obligations as per the addendum report; and
- Granted delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement, resolve the technical highways issue, which had been raised by DFI Roads, and the requirement for more information in relation to thermal comfort, in consultation with Environmental Health.

**Meeting of Planning Committee,  
Tuesday, 20th June, 2023**

**LA04/2019/0081/F - (Reconsidered item) - S.76 –  
12 affordable housing apartments, on former site of  
Maple Leaf at Park Avenue.**

**LA04/2020/2325/F - (Reconsidered item) - 21 dwellings  
(affordable housing), on former site of Maple Leaf  
at Park Avenue**

The Committee agreed to consider the above two applications together.

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with an overview of the applications and explained that both applications had been approved at its meeting in March, 2022, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement.

He explained that the Committee was required to reconsider the application following the adoption of the Belfast Local Development Plan: Plan Strategy and that the applicant had provided a Plan Strategy Statement to demonstrate compliance with the Plan Strategy.

He highlighted the works that had been proposed for the King George V Playing Fields, through a £65k financial contribution as part of the Section 76 agreement and referred the Committee to an updated assessment with additional conditions in relation to environmental mitigations and resilience measures.

He stated that, given the need for social housing in the area, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's support for the proposals, and tenure characteristics of nearby housing, the approach to tenure had been considered to be, on balance, acceptable.

He informed the Committee that the applications had been recommended for approval, with conditions and subject to a Section 76 planning agreement.

The Committee agreed:

- To grant planning permission in relation to application LA04/2019/0081/F with conditions and subject to a section 76 planning agreement;
- To grant planning permission in relation to application LA04/2020/2325/F with conditions and subject to a section 76 planning agreement; and
- To delegate authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions and the Section 76 planning agreements.

**Meeting of Planning Committee,  
Tuesday, 20th June, 2023**

**LA04/2022/0742/F -Proposed new two storey/split level community hub building (including changing rooms) and a single storey modular changing room building with associated car parking; paths and landscape site-works. Paisley Park Sportsplex – West Circular Road**

The Principal Planning Officer outlined the application to the Committee and highlighted the following key issues:

- Principle of development;
- Acceptability of community and leisure facilities at the location;
- Climate change;
- Loss of Open Space;
- Impact on Character and Appearance;
- Impact on Amenity;
- Access and parking;
- Drainage and Waste-water infrastructure; and
- Noise, odour and other environmental impacts.

She reported that, since the publication of the report, a consultation response had been received from Shared Environmental Services (SES) which advised that the project would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

She stated that, having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal had been considered acceptable and added that there would be substantial community benefits through the implementation of the proposed Community Hub that decisively outweighed the loss of open space and would not result in detriment to the overall green infrastructure provision on site.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions, and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the conditions and address any other matters which may arise.

**LA04/2022/1841/F and LA04/2022/1840/A-Proposed new boundary treatment to Newtownards Road and Harland Drive and Floodlighting to Existing MUGA (Full) and Relocation of existing signage at Memorial Garden and Yardmen Sculpture and new Corten Totum signage with park information board (Ad). Dr Pitt Memorial Park- Newtownards Road**

The Principal Planning Officer provided the Committee with an overview of the application highlighted the following key issues:

- Impact on the character and appearance of the area;
- Amenity; and

**Meeting of Planning Committee,  
Tuesday, 20th June, 2023**

- Trees.

She reported that a late representation had been received following re-notification of neighbours in relation to an amended site layout and floodlighting elevation, which referred to potential overshadowing from the planting of a tree in close proximity to a neighbouring dwelling.

She informed the Committee that contact had been made with the agent and the tree concerned would be relocated away from the dwelling to prevent any overshadowing.

She stated that, having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal was considered acceptable.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions, and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the conditions and resolve the following:

- Any matters which may arise from the outstanding consultation response from Belfast City Council Trees Unit; and
- Any representations submitted following the re - notification of neighbours of an amended site layout and floodlighting elevation.

**LA04/2023/3166/F - Change of roof profile from a  
hipped roof to a pitched roof with rear dormer and  
rooflights to front, 28 Wynchurch Road**

The Committee considered the report and granted planning permission, subject to conditions, and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and deal with any other matters which may arise.

**Community Places Funding**

Councillor Groogan explained that she wanted to raise the issue with regard to the funding situation for Community Places which provided free independent planning advice to communities and individuals across Northern Ireland. She stated that it was a concern that the Department for Infrastructure had been considering cutting funding to Community Places and requested that the Committee would write a letter of support to the Department of Infrastructure for Community Places.

The Committee agreed to write to the Department for Infrastructure in support of retaining funding the social enterprise, Community Places.

Chairperson

## **Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee**

Monday, 19th June, 2023

### **MEETING OF THE MEMBERS OF THE BELFAST WATERFRONT AND ULSTER HALL LTD. SHAREHOLDERS' COMMITTEE HELD IN HYBRID FORMAT**

Members present: Councillor Bower (Chairperson); and  
Councillors Brooks, Cobain, Doran, Duffy, Flynn,  
Ferguson, Gormley, Maghie, McAteer, McCabe,  
McDowell, Nelson and Ó Néill.

In attendance: Ms. J. Corkey, Chief Executive, ICC Belfast  
(Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd.);  
Mr. I. Bell, Director of Finance, Risk and Corporate  
Services, ICC Belfast (Belfast Waterfront and Ulster  
Hall Ltd.);  
Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development; and  
Ms. V. Smyth, Democratic Services Officer.

#### **Apologies**

Apologies were reported on behalf of Alderman Copeland and Councillor Canavan.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 13th March 2023 were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 3rd April.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were recorded.

#### **Restricted Item**

**The information contained in the reports associated with the following item 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 item as, due to the nature of the item, 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.

**Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee**  
**Monday, 19th June, 2023**

**Quarter 4 Performance Report**

The Chief Executive, ICC Belfast (Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd.), introduced herself to the new Members and advised that the company's performance was reported to the Committee on a quarterly basis. She referred to the report which included a review of the business performance and an analysis of actual performance against the budget for the year-to-date 2022/23.

The Chief Executive, ICC Belfast (Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd.), reported a positive year with quality events. Actual performance was above target for conferences and entertainment. She highlighted low staff turnover and provided an update on the venue's sustainability journey whereby silver status had been achieved.

The Director of Finance, Risk and Corporate Services provided the Committee with a brief update on Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd.'s (BWUH Ltd.) financial performance for Quarter 4 2022/23. He reported that income was up and in turn overheads had increased.

Discussion ensued in relation to the Capital Sinking Fund. The Director of Economic Development provided the Members with clarity in relation to the fund which provided capital spend to maintain ICC Belfast (Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall).

A Member queried the reference to labour shortages. The Chief Executive, ICC Belfast (Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd.), clarified that this referred to under-represented groups, specifically women, in the crew and production team. She advised that initiatives were in place to promote these areas as career choices with a 'no bar to entry' approach.

A Member commended The Chief Executive, ICC Belfast (Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd.), the Director of Finance, Risk and Corporate Services and ICC Belfast team on the positive financial position. The Member welcomed the education outreach initiatives and requested that thought be given to providing GCSE students with work experience opportunities. The Chief Executive, ICC Belfast (Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd.), confirmed that she was keen to support this.

The Chief Executive, ICC Belfast (Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd.), provided the Members with clarity around the expenditure for casual and permanent staff which she advised was kept under review. In response to a Member's query, she provided an explanation around the reference to the Covid-19 2024/25 and 2025/26 sales pipeline gap which was high due to the impact of Covid-19 on Association rotation schedules and decision making.

The Members noted the contents of this report.

**Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee**  
**Monday, 19th June, 2023**

**Tour of ICC Belfast**

The Director of Economic Development advised that ICC Belfast would host a tour of the venue at the next Committee meeting on 14th August 2023 and details of the arrangements would follow in due course.

Chairperson

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## Climate and City Resilience Committee

Thursday, 15th June, 2023

### MEETING OF THE CLIMATE AND CITY RESILIENCE COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM AND  
REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor R-M Donnelly (Chairperson),  
Councillors Anglin, Bell, Bower, R. Brooks, T. Brooks,  
Carson, Collins, Doherty, M. Donnelly, D. Douglas,  
S. Douglas, Kelly, Maghie, McAteer, McCabe,  
McKeown, Smyth and Walsh.

In attendance: Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;  
Ms. D. Caldwell, Commissioner for Climate and City Resilience;  
Ms. A. Diver, Climate Programme Manager;  
Ms. M. Quigley, Adaptation and Resilience Advisor;  
Mr. R. McLernon, Climate Programme Manager City;  
Ms. B. Roddy, Project Support Officer – Climate;  
Ms. C. Shortt, Monitoring, Learning and Reporting Officer;  
Mr. J. McKearney, Project Support Assistant; and  
Mr. G. Graham, Democratic Services Assistant.

### **Apologies**

An apology for inability to attend was reported on behalf of Alderman Copeland.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 6th April, 2023 were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 2nd May.

### **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor T. Brooks requested that it be recorded that she was a member of the RSUA and that she was employed by QUB School of the Natural Environment.

Councillor Brooks was advised that as the items referred to on the agenda were presentations and that no decision by the Committee was required, there was no conflict of interest and Councillor Brooks was permitted to remain in attendance for the duration of the meeting.

### **Request to Attend the Next Meeting of the Belfast Retro-Hub**

Councillor McCabe requested that, in the absence of ex Councillor Spratt, and based on a motion which he had proposed and she had seconded on the subject of the Belfast

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Retrofit Delivery- Hub, that she be permitted to attend the next meeting of the Retrofit Delivery-Hub.

In response, the Commissioner for Climate and City Resilience reported that she would be content to accede to the request of Councillor McCabe and extended an invitation to any Member of the Committee to attend the next meeting of the Retrofit Delivery-Hub should they wish to do so.

**Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from the Built Environment:  
Presentation of the RSUA Climate Action Report, Alan Ritchie,  
Chair of the RSUA Climate Emergency Committee**

Mr. Ritchie attended in connection with this item and was welcomed by the Chairperson.

Mr. Ritchie stated that the climate action report was concerned primarily with changes which could be made to the built environment and which could impact positively on climate change. He provided an outline on the role of the RSUA in assisting the development plans to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

Mr. Ritchie referred specifically to the areas which the Climate Emergency Committee was examining to impact positively on climate change including:

1. Existing Buildings
2. New Buildings
3. Travel
4. Green
5. Building Materials and
6. Heat and Power

He highlighted the areas under which the Council had control and could influence change, under the afore-mentioned specified headings. In terms of buildings, he specified the need to improve the energy performance and reduce emissions from existing buildings and increase the use made of those buildings. The Members were informed that it was important to publish data on energy production and consumption associated with Council buildings, on an annual basis, including a plan to reduce energy consumption within individual buildings. He highlighted the requirement to modify planning laws in order to increase the use of existing buildings.

The Committee was informed that net-zero carbon emissions was required to be within the brief of the construction of new buildings and that they would be required to be constructed in a manner to ensure longevity. Mr. Ritchie explained that there was a requirement to reduce the carbon used to construct new buildings as, in many cases, carbon debt often exceeded the operational carbon produced.

The Members were informed of the need to reduce embodied carbon, which was the amount of energy used to construct new buildings. Mr. Ritchie emphasised the importance of the Council publishing data on embodied carbon in the construction of those buildings. The

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Committee was provided with the key areas which required attention if the Council was to achieve its climate ambition targets, including:

**Travel by Traditional Motor Vehicles**

The need to reduce travel and increase the level of high-density inner-city housing was identified as a key determinant to reducing carbon emissions by reducing the need to travel. The Committee was informed that new area plans were required to be put in place to facilitate high density residential development. Mr. Ritchie suggested the recruitment of a city architect, in a cross-departmental role, to assist the Council in that regard. He highlighted the need to integrate the public transport system by incorporating cycles lanes and pedestrian pathways.

**Green**

The Members were informed of the need to increase the coverage of native Irish trees to increase the future supply of local timber. It was reported that Northern Ireland was required currently to import a large proportion of its timber and this would negate that requirement. Mr. Ritchie suggested the creation of a fund to develop green spaces, in urban areas, and of the need to increase urban food production, including the increased provision of allotments, vegetable gardens and terraces.

**Building Materials**

The Committee was alerted to the requirement to reduce building material consumption, as part of the building process, and to publish data on the measures taken to reduce embodied carbon. He referred to the need to encourage the use of local building and recycled materials in the building construction process.

**Heat and Power**

The Members were informed of the need to move away from the use of fossil fuels and of the requirement to increase the production of green electricity. Mr. Ritchie highlighted the benefits of facilitating local and community heat and power production within existing communities and new developments.

In response to a question from a Member in regard to how far the Council had progressed in the achievement of reducing its carbon emissions, Mr. Ritchie stated that progress had been made and referred specifically to the new university campus as an example of positive change in building design and social integration.

A Member requested what action could be taken to increase the occupancy of vacant buildings above street level in city centre dwellings. Mr. Ritchie responded by stating that a change in planning policy and financial incentives, through subsidies and grants, might assist and that residents in city centre living required integrated planning and transport with green and eco-friendly spaces throughout the city.

A Member highlighted further the problem associated with a lack of political governance presently and was reminded that the Council could affect change through its local development plans, linked to the Belfast Agenda.

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The Committee was informed that the inclusion of mandatory building standards, by the Council, could not only assist the Council in achieving its carbon emission targets but could encourage inward investment. In terms of payback associated with positive building design, Mr. Ritchie stated that it was not always the case that passive house design cost more to incorporate within the structure of a building. He confirmed that the Council needed to look at long-term investment and that, in general terms, a passive house had ten per-cent of the running costs associated with a standard build. He confirmed that investors tended to invest in long-term programmes.

A Member raised concerns in regard to the lack of connective infrastructure associated with the provision of alternative forms of transport, including safe cycle lanes and the maintenance of both road and cycle surfaces. He highlighted the need to separate alternative forms of green transport from congested and dangerous traffic lanes.

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy, at the request of a Member, agreed to bring back, to a future meeting of the Committee, a report on the gaps which the Council was required to address, in terms of meeting its targets, on delivering the recommendations contained within Mr. Ritchie's presentation.

The Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Mr. Ritchie for his detailed and informative presentation and he departed from the meeting.

Noted.

**An Overview of the Climate Programme**

The Commissioner for Climate and City Resilience provided the Committee with an overview of the climate programme which had commenced in 2019, when the Council declared a climate emergency. She reported that a Resilience Strategy had been formulated subsequently, in 2020, which had included the creation of a carbon roadmap. The Commissioner reported that the Council had a key role and responsibility to deliver on its climate targets and, in so doing, pay particular attention to the operation within its own estate, including the climate consequence associated with its policies and procurement processes.

The Climate Commissioner highlighted the need to unlock the social and economic benefits associated with a climate transition and how the Council could use its estate to lead by example to achieve net-zero and emphasised the need to encourage behavioural change. She stated, that as part of that objective, the Council would accompany its climate plan with a climate investment plan as a means to promote climate actions and to identify new funding opportunities to meet its emission targets.

The Committee was informed of the work which was required to identify and quantify the Council's Scope one, two and three emissions, stating that over seventy per-cent of the Council's emissions were currently category scope three emissions. The Commissioner reported that the Council was evaluating the implementation of energy audits in regard to its buildings and how energy savings might be attained. The Members were informed that the Council had approved a £1 million climate fund to reduce its emissions and improve resilience.

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As part of that investment, it was reported that eighteen projects had been developed as part of that process.

The Committee was informed of the importance of data in building an evidence-based platform regarding de-carbonisation. As part of that process, the Commissioner reported that the Council was undertaking a programme to monitor and record its carbon emissions. The Members were informed that the Council had joined the global reporting framework, Carbon Disclosure Project, during the COP 26 climate conference, receiving a B in year one and an A in year two. She referred to the work undertaken, using heat maps, to identify the most vulnerable areas of the city.

It was reported that the Council was working on a Local Area Energy Plan for Belfast, on a geographical basis, to show the most effective ways to de-carbonise which would provide evidence-based interventions, pulling data from an extensive range of both public and private organisations. The Commissioner reported that it was anticipated that the Council's energy plan would be published in January 2024. She referred to a range of specific projects which had been developed, including the One Million Trees and the UPSURGE projects, which were nature-based solutions to climate change.

The Commissioner informed the Committee that the Council was evaluating the development of Solar PV at locations such as buildings and parks and was looking at options to use hydrogen-based fuel cells to power its vehicle fleet. She highlighted work undertaken regarding sustainable food production, including the establishment of both a sustainable food partnership and heat network for the city.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

**EV charging points: an update on the FASTER Project**

The Climate Programme Manager City submitted the undernoted report on the Council's proposals to expand its electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

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

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the FASTER project, which will increase Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure in the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Members of the Committee are asked to:**

- I. Note that the sites previously agreed by Committee on 13th October 2022, Girdwood Hub, Brook Leisure Centre, and Ballysillan Leisure Centre are now included as primary sites within the live procurement exercise which will appoint a Charge Point Operator to manage**

**Design, Installation and Operation of the Northern Ireland chargepoints.**

- II. Note that a process of assessing EV charger capacity at a range of Belfast Leisure Centre locations has taken place, whereby Ulster University who are technical lead in the project, have worked with NIE to assess sites and have made recommendations on inclusion or omission accordingly.
- III. Note that one previously agreed site, Belvoir Activity Centre, has been omitted due to constraints in the energy capacity on site.
- IV. Note that Shankill Leisure Centre and Ozone Complex were assessed and deemed to have insufficient energy capacity at present for EV chargers.
- V. Note that Olympia Leisure Centre was considered for inclusion however had to be omitted due to time constraints relating to the procurement process and the fact that Olympia Leisure Centre's energy is managed by the IFA through Windsor Park.
- VI. Approve Avoniel Leisure Centre being included on the list of primary locations within Belfast, as a replacement for Belvoir Activity Centre.
- VII. Approve an additional three locations which have been included as reserve sites, should they be required. These are Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre, Grove Wellbeing Centre, and Whiterock Leisure Centre.

**3.0 Main report**

**3.1 Background**

- 3.2 The FASTER Project is a joint cross border project across Scotland, the border Counties of Ireland and Northern Ireland to support the overarching ambition to transition to low carbon transport systems and to demonstrate how each of the three jurisdictions can provide early systems learning in relation to the electrification of transport.
- 3.3 The FASTER Project aims to ensure that the availability of public charging stations is not a major obstacle to Electric Vehicle (EV) market penetration.

- 3.4 Further information about the FASTER Project can be found at [www.fasterevcharge.com](http://www.fasterevcharge.com)
- 3.5 The FASTER Project has been awarded funding for the Project's costs from the European Union's INTERREG VA Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).
- 3.6 The partnership will implement the physical rollout of 73 rapid charging stations in the programme area. The Project aims to ensure that the availability of charging stations is not a major obstacle to Electric Vehicle (EV) market penetration with the proposal to carry out the design, analysis, procurement, installation, and operation of 73 Rapid Chargers across the three programme jurisdictions. There must be cross compatibility between the three jurisdictions which may be achieved using contactless card payments or other methods.
- 3.7 The FASTER Project is led by East Border Region Ltd. There are a total of seven project partners and 16 associate partners from across the three jurisdictions.
- 3.8 The following Project Partners will be directly involved in the planning and delivery of the overall Project:
1. East Border Region Ltd (EBR) (Lead partner)
  2. Louth County Council (Procurement lead in R.O.I)
  3. Dundalk Institute of Technology (DKIT)
  4. Ulster University (Procurement lead in N.I.)
  5. South West College
  6. Highlands & Islands Transport Partnership (HiTRANS)
  7. University of Strathclyde
- 3.9 Other Associate Partners essential to the delivery of the overall project are:
1. Monaghan County Council
  2. Cavan County Council
  3. Leitrim County Council
  4. Sligo County Council
  5. Donegal County Council
  6. Meath County Council
  7. Sustainable Authority of Ireland (SEAI)
  8. IT Sligo
  9. Armagh Banbridge Craigavon Borough Council
  10. Ards and North Down Borough Council
  11. Newry Mourne and Down District Council
  12. Mid-Ulster Council
  13. Fermanagh and Omagh Council
  14. Derry and Strabane Council

15. **Belfast City Council**
  16. **Mid & East Antrim**
- 3.10 In Northern Ireland it is anticipated that up to 22 EV RAPID chargers will be installed through the FASTER project. RAPID chargers are 55kw chargers, capable of fully charging a vehicle in approximately 30 minutes.
- 3.11 Belfast City Council is in the final stages of developing a Belfast EV Strategy, which will set out the city's requirements and recommended approach to be implemented through a partnership approach, aligned to the regional EV Infrastructure Action Plan <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/infrastructure/ev-infrastructure-action-plan-2022.pdf>. However, Council has been involved in two funding proposals which will increase publicly available EV chargers in Belfast by utilising the Council estate. These are the FASTER project, and through the ORCS (On Street Residential Charge Point Scheme). FASTER is focused on Leisure Centres, ORCS is focused on publicly available car parks.
- 3.12 Belfast City Council made an initial submission of sites based on criteria provided by East Border Region (the coordinating body) which were that sites had to be publicly accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This ruled out many of the Belfast Leisure Centres as they are subject to restricted access, leaving Girdwood Hub, Ballysillan Leisure Centre, Belvoir Activity Centre and Brook Leisure Centre.
- 3.13 Of these sites Girdwood Hub, Ballysillan Leisure Centre and Brook Leisure Centre had sufficient energy capacity for the installation of EV chargers. Belvoir Leisure Centre was omitted due to lack of capacity.
- 3.14 Girdwood Hub was deemed to have capacity for a single charger, Ballysillan Leisure Centre was deemed to have capacity for a single charger and Brook Leisure Centre was deemed to have capacity for a double charger.
- 3.15 Subsequently, SEUPB has varied the criteria so that sites which are publicly accessible on a restricted basis can be included, on the proviso that timings are signposted and available through information sources on EV charger availability such as Zapmap <https://www.zap-map.com/>. This variance resulted in the assessment of additional sites as set out below:
- 3.16 Avoniel Leisure Centre – deemed to be suitable for a double EV charger



Grove Wellbeing Centre – deemed to be suitable for a double EV charger

Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre – deemed to be suitable for a double EV charger

Ozone Leisure Centre – insufficient capacity

Shankill Leisure Centre – insufficient capacity

Whiterock Leisure Centre – deemed to be suitable for a double EV charger

- 3.17 Following liaison with the Belfast City Council Energy and CO2 Manager officers recommended the inclusion of Avoniel Leisure Centre as one of the four primary sites, subject to approval from Elected Members.
- 3.18 The remaining sites, Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre, Grove Wellbeing Centre and Whiterock Leisure Centre have been placed on a reserve list, should an opportunity arise due to another site not proceeding. This is subject to approval from Elected Members.
- 3.19 One additional site was considered as a potential reserve; however, Olympia Leisure Centre was unable to be included at this stage due to the FASTER project timeframe for procurement which did not allow additional assessment of capacity and, the fact that Olympia Leisure Centre's energy is managed via Windsor Park under IFA management and would have required further engagement with the IFA, which was not possible in the time available to officers. However, Olympia Leisure Centre will be included in any future plans for use of EV on the Council estate.
- 3.20 Further updates will be provided to Committee on the FASTER Project as the project progresses, the ORCS funding application which has previously been agreed by Council, and on the development of Belfast EV Strategy and next steps.

#### **4.0 Financial and Resource Implications**

The FASTER project is fully funded by SEUPB.

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

- 5.1 Officers are currently developing the Equality, Good Relations and Rural Needs Screening and will incorporate within the emerging programme of work."

In response to a question from a Member in regard to accessibility to the charging points and the various selected leisure centres and the maintenance of the sites, the Climate Programme Manager City reported that, where 24/7 charging was not available, signage would be provided to highlight the operation hours of those sites which did not operate on a 24/7

basis. In response to the Member's further question in regard to the maintenance of EV charging points, it was reported that a charge point operator would be recruited to ensure the maintenance of the various charging points, covering an initial contractual period of seven years.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Consultation on Climate Change Reporting by  
Specified Public Bodies - Developing New Regulations**

The Monitoring, Learning and Reporting Officer submitted the undernoted report regarding the reporting schedule to DAERA on climate change.

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

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on the consultation response to DAERA on climate change reporting.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- i) Note the contents of the consultation**
- ii) Agree submission of response to DAERA**

**3.0 Main report**

**3.1 Climate Change Reporting Requirements**

A climate emergency was declared by the Northern Ireland Assembly in February 2020. In June 2022, the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 received Royal Assent. This Act sets out Northern Ireland's framework for tackling climate change and reducing emissions, by setting (among other things) challenging targets to deliver net zero emissions ('net zero') in Northern Ireland by the year 2050. The Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) is leading on the development of Northern Ireland's first 5-year climate action plan (CAP) as required under the Act. The CAP will contain the Northern Ireland departments' policies and proposals to meet the first 5-year carbon budget for the years 2023-27 (which is a limit on the amount of emissions Northern Ireland can emit) and it will set our longer-term pathway towards net zero by 2050.

The important role of public bodies in tackling climate change is recognised by the Act, by requiring new law (regulations) to be made, which will set a requirement for specified public bodies to report on climate change.

The consultation aims to help guide the department on what should be included within future monitoring requirements from public bodies and establish how often the information should be gathered.

Belfast City Council response includes:

- Adaptation reports should be provided every 2 years - Adaptation strategies tend to run on 3-5 year cycles, setting the direction of travel and the results of programmes can take longer periods of time to bear fruit, however, adaptation action should be continuous, reflecting the amount of change required, making reporting every 2 years valuable to track progress. The first report should be submitted by January 2025 to align with the independent expert climate change advice from the Climate Change Committee
- Mitigation reports should be provided every 2 years - Mitigation action plans are often short term or can at least be measured in clear stages, reflecting the quarterly energy billing and data collection system. There is therefore a need for more frequent updates on progress towards meeting NI and UK overall emissions reduction targets. It also aligns with the United Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) reporting requirements for mitigation. The first report should be submitted by October 2025 to align with outputs from the Climate Change Committee.

**4.0     Financial and Resource Implications**

**4.1     None**

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

**5.1     None.”**

A Member raised concerns on the consultation document proposing that NI Concessionary Fare Scheme be raised from sixty to sixty-five years of age. The Member suggested that the Department should be incentivising individuals to use public transport, given the current climate emergency, and suggested that the Council make a submission, as part of the consultation process, to have the decision reversed.

In response, the Director of City and Organisational Strategy stated that he would endeavour to ascertain which Council department would take a lead in the matter raised and would report back, by way of an officer-led response, to the proposal outlined in the consultation document.

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The Committee approved the officer-led response to the consultation document.

**Issues Raised in Advance by Members**

**Felling of Trees in Orangefield Park –  
Councillor Brian Smyth**

The Member raised the issue of the felling of approximately one hundred and seventy trees in Orangefield Park by contractors, acting on behalf of N.I.E. In that regard, the Member requested to be furnished with information on the circumstances surrounding the decision to fell the trees, the agreement which was in place between the Council and N.I.E., the cost of the tree restoration programme and what legal redress the Council might have in the matter.

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy reported that the matter had been referred to the Council's Legal Services Department and that the Committee would be provided with an update when more information became available.

**Climate and City Resilience Dashboard –  
Councillor Tara Brooks**

The Member requested if it might be possible to summarise the Council's climate adaptation and mitigation measures, in a dashboard format, for the purpose of clarity and ease of public access.

In response, the Climate Commissioner reported that the Council was working on capturing all of its data, in a dashboard format, showing climate actions, targets and outcomes. She stated that she would be happy to provide the Committee with an update in the matter by the Autumn and that climate actions would be linked to the Belfast Agenda.

The Monitoring, Learning and Reporting Officer informed the Members that a pilot study was being undertaken currently, with Amazon, focussing on climate data capture and that it would be possible to furnish the Committee with a draft outline of the dashboard proposals in the Autumn.

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy reported that a new performance team was being recruited, within his directorate, and that this would provide greater transparency and accountability in terms of climate adaptation and mitigation outcomes and would assist in the promotion of inclusive growth for the local economy.

Noted.

Chairperson

## Standards and Business Committee

Tuesday, 27th June, 2023

### MEETING OF THE STANDARDS AND BUSINESS COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM AND  
REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor McDonough-Brown (Chairperson);  
Aldermen Copeland, Lawlor and McCullough; and  
Councillors Bradley, M. Donnelly, P. Donnelly, D. Douglas,  
Duffy, Groogan, Long, Lyons, Magee, F. McAteer,  
G. McAteer, McDowell, R. McLaughlin and McMullan.

In attendance: Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor;  
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and  
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

### Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Kelly.

### Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 28th March were taken as read and signed as correct.  
It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 3rd April.

### Declarations of Interest

No declarations of Interest were reported.

### Motions

The City Solicitor informed the Committee that four motions had been received in  
advance of the Council on 3rd July.

The Committee considered each motion in turn and agreed the following:

### Cathedral Quarter

That the motion in relation to Cathedral Quarter be adopted:

**Proposer: Councillor Groogan,**  
**Seconder: Councillor Flynn,**

***“This Council is frustrated at the lack of progress around redevelopment  
in the Cathedral Quarter, namely the so-called Tribeca scheme.  
The Council notes with concern the continuing decline of listed and***

***heritage buildings within the scheme and the impact that the current impasse has on the surrounding community and businesses. The dereliction, hoardings and abandoned scaffolding in the Cathedral Quarter area detracts from what is otherwise a thriving cultural and social hub in our city centre.***

***This Council wishes to see appropriate and sustainable regeneration of this area, that is sensitive to and in keeping with the built and cultural heritage of the Cathedral Quarter and requests that Project Goat Limited, Castlebrooke Investments and/or any of their subsidiaries or related companies who have an interest in or are responsible for the development of this site come before a future meeting of this Council or suitable Committee at the earliest possible opportunity to present on their plans and work to date to develop the area and to answer questions from members of this Council.”***

#### **CPR Training and Circuit**

That the motion be referred, in the first instance, to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

#### **Department for Infrastructure – Standard of Repairs to Roads and Footpaths**

That the motion in relation to Department for Infrastructure - Standard of Repairs to Roads and Footpaths be adopted:

***Proposer: Councillor Long,  
Seconder: Councillor Nelson,***

***“The Council will write to DFI to raise the issue regarding the standard of repairs to roads and footpaths.***

***In recent months, there have been many complaints from residents about repairs undertaken in Belfast and we would ask for assurances about how repairs are signed off by the Department to ensure that they are made to a satisfactory standard and are providing value for money.”***

#### **Playful Belfast City Streets**

That the motion be referred, in the first instance, to the People and Communities Committee.

**Standards and Business Committee,  
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**Committee Schedule 2023**

**Proposal**

Moved by Councillor McLaughlin,  
Seconded by Councillor Maskey,

That the Committee would commence its meetings at 5.15pm rather than 5.30pm on the scheduled dates previously agreed by the Committee at its meeting in November, 2022.

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

Chairperson

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