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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 and remotely via Microsoft Teams on Monday, 4th September, 2023 at 6.00 pm, for the transaction of the following business:

1. Summons
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Official Announcements
5. Minutes of the Council (Pages 1 - 10)
6. Minutes of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (Pages 11 - 60)
7. Minutes of People and Communities Committee (Pages 61 - 106)
8. Minutes of City Growth and Regeneration Committee (Pages 107 - 160)
9. Minutes of Licensing Committee (Pages 161 - 186)
10. Minutes of Planning Committee (Pages 187 - 212)
11. Minutes of Climate and City Resilience Committee (Pages 213 - 226)
12. Minutes of Standards and Business Committee (Pages 227 - 228)
13. Motion
14. Future Management Structures of Lough Neagh (Pages 229 - 230)

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



Chief Executive

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Council

SPECIAL MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the City Hall and remotely via Microsoft Teams on Saturday, 1st July, 2023
at the hour of 10.45 o'clock a.m., pursuant to Notice.

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

The Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Groogan; and
Aldermen Copeland, Lawlor, McCoubrey,
McCullough and Rodgers;
Councillors Anglin, Black, Bower, Bradley,
R. Brooks, Bunting, Carson, Cobain, Doherty,
M. Donnelly, R-M Donnelly, D. Douglas, S. Douglas,
Duffy, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Lyons, Maghie,
McCabe, McCormick, McDowell, McKeown,
I. McLaughlin, Ó Néill, Verner and Whyte.

Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors T. Brooks, Doran, Ferguson and Kelly.

Battle of the Somme Anniversary

Moved by the Lord Mayor (Councillor Murphy)
Seconded by the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Groogan) and

Resolved – That we, the Lord Mayor and Citizens of the City of Belfast, on the 107th Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme, desire again to record our feelings of gratitude to the brave men of the 36th (Ulster) Division, the 16th (Irish) Division and other forces who, by their glorious conduct in that battle, made an imperishable name for themselves and their people and whose heroism will never be forgotten.

The Council stood in silence for one minute as a mark of respect to all those who had lost their lives in the Battle of the Somme.

Lord Mayor
Chairperson

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Council

MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the Council Chamber, City Hall and remotely, via Microsoft Teams, on Monday, 3rd July, 2023 at 6.00 p.m., pursuant to notice.

Members present: The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor (Councillor Murphy) (Chairperson);
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Groogan);
Aldermen Copeland, Lawlor, McCoubrey, McCullough and Rodgers;
Councillors Anglin, Beattie, Bell, Black, Bower, Bradley, R. Brooks, T. Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Collins, de Faoite, Doherty, M. Donnelly, P. Donnelly, R-M Donnelly, D. Douglas, S. Douglas, Duffy, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Hanvey, Long, Lyons, Magee, Maghie, Maskey, F. McAteer, G. McAteer, McCabe, McCann, McCormick, McCusker, McDowell, McKeown, I. McLaughlin, R. McLaughlin, McMullan, Murray, Nelson, Nic Bhranair, Ó Néill, Verner, Walsh and Whyte.

Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors Doran, Kelly, McDonough-Brown and Smyth.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor McCabe declared an interest as she worked for Féile an Phobail but advised that she did not think there was any conflict within the minutes tabled.

Councillor Canavan declared an interest in relation to the item "Community Support Funding" within the People and Communities Committee minutes, in that she was a Board Member of an organisation which was in receipt of funding.

Councillor Groogan declared an interest in relation to the items "2022-23 Year End Finance Report" and "Hardship Grant/Cost of Living Support 2022/23" within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes and "Community Support Funding Update" within the People and Communities minutes in that she was employed by the Forward South Partnership who were in receipt of funding.

Councillor Whyte declared an interest in relation to the item "Update on the MAC (Metropolitan Arts Centre)" within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes as he did work for a Company who had undertaken work for the MAC.

**Meeting of Council,
Monday, 3rd July, 2023**

Councillor Bunting declared an interest in relation to the item “Summer Community Festivals Programme” within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that she was a member of the Belvoir Area Residents’ Group which had applied for funding.

Alderman Copeland declared an interest in relation to the item “Summer Community Festivals Programme” within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that her daughter worked for the Greater Village Regeneration Trust.

Councillor Lyons advised that as a Member of Belfast Harbour he would excuse himself should any discussion arise in respect of Queen’s Island Transport.

Councillors Black and Verner declared an interest in relation to item “Community Support Programme” within the People and Communities Committee as they either worked for or were associated with an organisation in receipt of funding.

Alderman McCullough and Councillors I. McLaughlin, Nic Bhranair and Ó Néill declared an interest in relation to the item “Update on Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund” within the Strategic Policy and Resources minutes, in that they either worked for or were associated with an organisation that had applied for funding.

Alderman Rodgers advised that he was a Director of Glentoran Football Club.

Minutes of the Council

Moved by the Lord Mayor,
Seconded by Councillor Collins,

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Council of 5th June be taken as read and signed as correct.

Official Announcements

Councillor P. Donnelly congratulated St. Matthews Men’s Soccer Team on achieving the Northern Amateur Football League (NAFL) Division 2A League Championships and wished them well in the upcoming League. The Lord Mayor agreed to extend an invitation to the Team to attend a reception in the Lord Mayor’s Parlour.

Councillor Long and several other Members expressed their concern regarding the recent attacks on Alliance members and also in regard to the homophobic and transphobic language being used across social media platforms and expressed solidarity with those targeted.

A number of Members stated that they were looking forward to the Belfast Pride Festival, which was scheduled to run from Friday, 21st to Sunday, 30th July, stating that they hoped this would offer a more positive view of Belfast and Northern Ireland. Several of the Members stated that they looked forward to participating in the centrepiece Pride Parade on Saturday, 29th July and encouraged others to also join in.

**Meeting of Council,
Monday, 3rd July, 2023**

Councillor Verner congratulated those who had received honours in the King's Birthday Honours List 2023. In particular, retired Director of Finance, Mr. R. Cregan, for services to Local Government, Reverend Tracey McRoberts, for her tireless work in the community and Ms. Agnes Close, a local businesswoman, who had dedicated her efforts campaigning for a Memorial Plot at Belfast City cemetery to remember more than 7000 babies buried there. The Lord Mayor agreed to send letters of congratulations to the recipients.

Councillor D. Douglas extended congratulations to the East Belfast Community Development Agency (EBCDA) on reaching its 10th birthday, noting the work of Councillor S. Douglas, Mr. M. Gibson and Mr. M. Briggs for their vision and drive in establishing the community hub.

At the request of Councillor de Faoite, the Lord Mayor agreed to write to the Secretary of State seeking to set up a meeting with Party Group Leaders to discuss the continued cuts to services for children and young people across Northern Ireland.

Alderman Lawlor extended congratulations to the Glentoran 1923 Committee on reaching its centenary year.

Councillor Maskey extended congratulations to the Lord Mayor on his forthcoming wedding.

Councillor Long noted that July 1st was Happy Canada Day, and he took the opportunity to wish those Canadian citizens throughout the world a Happy Canada Day.

Councillor S. Douglas and Alderman Rodgers congratulated the staff involved in the restoration and expansion of the Templemore Baths which had been repurposed into a visitor centre with modern leisure facilities.

Councillor S. Douglas referred to the City Matters magazine and expressed gratitude to the staff for producing such an excellent publication.

It was noted that this was Ms. L. Caldwell's, Director of External Affairs, Marketing and Communications, last meeting as she had resigned from the Council. On behalf of the Council, the Lord Mayor thanked Lisa for her dedication and commitment to the Council and extended the Council's best wishes to her going forward.

Councillor Maghie extended condolences to the family and friends of murder victim Chloe Mitchell and expressed concern at the high levels of violence against women in Northern Ireland and the need to ensure policy changes to try and end this violence.

Councillor Murray congratulated the team of directors, volunteers and runners at Queen's Parkrun who had recently won the Queen's University Community Impact Sporting Award.

**Meeting of Council,
Monday, 3rd July, 2023**

Request to address the Council

The Chief Executive reported that a request to address the Council had been received from Ms. Shannon Montgomery, Policy and Public Affairs Co-ordinator, British Heart Foundation, in relation to the British Heart Foundation (BHF) CPR motion which was referred by the Standards and Business Committee to the August meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

The Council acceded to the request and, accordingly, Mr. Liam Duggan, Policy and Public Affairs Manager, and Ms. Denise McAnena, Senior Policy and Public Affairs Manager, were welcomed to the meeting by the Lord Mayor.

Mr. Duggan advised that the BHF was seeking the Council's assistance in improving access to defibrillators and promoting lifesaving CPR training.

The representative reported that there was approximately 1,400 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests in Northern Ireland each year and, unfortunately, less than one in ten people survived. Performing CPR, Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation, when someone's heart suddenly stopped beating during a cardiac arrest, dramatically increased their chances of survival and, in many cases, could more than double someone's chances of survival.

He advised that the BHF could help the Council and people of Belfast play their part in saving lives. He highlighted that the BHF offered CPR training opportunities to help equip people to deal with such emergencies. He explained that RevivR offered simple, step-by step training on how to recognise a cardiac arrest and what to do should a person encounter one. The training was free, interactive and took only 15 minutes to complete online. The online training link is available [here](#)

The Council was advised that the BHF had also developed 'The Circuit', a National defibrillator network that mapped out the location and how to access defibrillators across the UK. He explained that it worked with the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service to ensure that in an emergency, the public and emergency services had access to the nearest defibrillator as quickly as possible and he encouraged the Council to ensure that all its defibrillators were registered and ready to use in an emergency. The link to the defib finder is available [here](#)

The representative thanked the Members for their interest in promoting CPR as a life skill and improving access to life saving devices within Belfast.

The Lord Mayor thanked the representatives for their informative presentation and they left the meeting.

The Council noted the information.

Change of Membership on Committees/Outside Bodies

The Chief Executive reported that notifications had been received from the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) of the following changes in membership:

**Meeting of Council,
Monday, 3rd July, 2023**

UUP

- Alderman Rodgers to replace Alderman Copeland as Deputy Chairperson of the Standards and Business Committee.

DUP

- Councillor Doran to replace Councillor Verner on the Planning Committee; and
- Councillor Verner to replace Councillor Doran on the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee.

The Council noted the changes.

Minutes of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Moved by Councillor Black,
Seconded by Alderman McCoubrey,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 16th and 26th June, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Addition

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

At the request of Councillor R. McLaughlin, the Council agreed that a report be submitted to the August meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee providing a final update on the review of the Democratic Services Section and by September for the Equality and Diversity Section, with all staff consultations having been undertaken and the new structures agreed.

Amendment

Summer Community Festivals Programme

At the request of Alderman McCullough, the Council agreed to convene a special meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to further discuss the Summer Community Diversionary Festivals Programme for 2023.

Addition

Update on Contracts

At the request of Councillor McCann, the Council agreed to award Belfast Pride Festival 2023, the sum of £500 towards catering costs for its launch event.

**Meeting of Council,
Monday, 3rd July, 2023**

Amendment

Belfast 2024

Moved by Councillor R. McLaughlin,
Seconded by Councillor McCabe, and

Resolved: That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 26th June, under the heading “Belfast 2024”, be amended to provide that the Council agrees to proceed to progress the Partnership with the Eden Project but that all other matters be deferred to enable Party Group briefings to be held.

Amendment

Revision to the Scheme of Allowances

Moved by Councillor Nelson,
Seconded by Councillor Harvey,

That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 26th June, under the heading “Revision to the Scheme of Allowances” be amended to provide that the Council agrees that a review of all roles under the special responsibility allowances be undertaken.

On a vote, eighteen Members voted for the amendment, thirty-seven against and it was declared lost.

Update on Contracts (Provision of temporary agency workers)

At the request of Councillor Collins, the Council agreed that a report would be submitted to a future meeting which would consider the terms and conditions of temporary agency workers.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing additions and amendments, the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 16th and 26th June were thereupon approved and adopted.

Minutes of People and Communities Committee

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

That the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 13th and 26th June, be approved and adopted.

**Meeting of Council,
Monday, 3rd July, 2023**

Additions

Dual Language Street Signs

At the request of the Chairperson, Councillor Murray, the Chief Executive agreed to submit a report to a future meeting providing guidance to the Members whilst considering requests to receive deputations to Committee.

Air Quality Detailed Assessment

At the request of Councillor de Faoite, the Council agreed that a letter be forwarded to DAERA seeking Air Quality Monitoring stations to be erected around Primary Schools.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing additions, the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 13th and 26th June were thereupon approved and adopted.

Minutes of City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Moved by Councillor Nic Bhranair,
Seconded by Councillor Duffy, and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 14th and 28th June be approved and adopted.

Minutes of Licensing Committee

Moved by Councillor McKeown,
Seconded by Councillor McCabe, and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Licensing Committee of 21st June, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Minutes of Planning Committee

Moved by Councillor Garrett,
Seconded by Councillor Verner, and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee of 20th June, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

**Meeting of Council,
Monday, 3rd July, 2023**

Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee

Moved by Councillor Bower,
Seconded by Councillor Maghie, and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee of 19th June be approved and adopted.

Minutes of Climate and City Resilience Committee

Moved by Councillor R-M Donnelly,
Seconded by Councillor M. Donnelly, and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Climate and City Resilience Committee of 15th June be approved and adopted.

Minutes of Standards and Business Committee

Moved by Alderman Copeland,
Seconded by Councillor Long and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Standards and Business Committee of 27th June, 2023, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Lord Mayor
Chairperson

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Thursday, 5th July, 2023

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM IN HYBRID FORMAT

- Members present: Councillor Black (Chairperson);
Alderman McCoubrey; and
Councillors Bunting, Cobain, de Faoite, M. Donnelly,
R.M. Donnelly, Ferguson, Garrett, Hanvey, Long,
Maghie, Maskey, I. McLaughlin, R. McLaughlin,
Nelson and Nic Bhranair,
- In attendance: Mr. J. Walsh, Chief Executive;
Mr. D. Sales, Director of Neighbourhood Services;
Ms. L. Caldwell, Director of External Affairs, Marketing and
Communications;
Mr. T. Wallace, Director of Finance;
Mrs. S. Toland, Director (Operational) City and
Neighbourhood Services;
Ms. N. Lane, Neighbourhood Services Manager;
Mr. J. Girvan, Neighbourhood Services Manager and
Mr. G. Graham, Democratic Services Assistant.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors Smyth and Whyte.

Declarations of Interest

(Councillor Bunting declared an interest in this matter 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.)

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

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Thursday, 5th July, 2023**

Restricted Item

Summer Community Diversionary Festival 2023

The Committee considered a report which had been prepared by the Director of Neighbourhood Services which provided a range of options in terms of funding proposals in regard to the Summer Community Diversionary Festival 2023.

After discussion, it was

Proposed by Alderman McCoubrey,
Seconded by Councillor Ferguson,

Resolved - That the Committee agree to option 2 as presented in the aforementioned report, to award £47.745, in full, to GVRT, being the only application, under consideration, which had been successful in meeting the criteria at stage 1 of a 2 stage process.

On a recorded vote, ten Members voted for the proposal and four against, and it was accordingly declared carried.

| For 10 | Against 4 |
|---|---|
| Councillor Black (Chairperson) Alderman McCoubrey Councillor Cobain Councillor M. Donnelly Councillor R-M. Donnelly Councillor Ferguson Councillor Garrett Councillor Maskey Councillor I. McLaughlin Councillor R. McLaughlin | Councillor de Faoite Councillor Hanvey Councillor Maghie Councillor Nelson |

Chairperson

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 18th August, 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, Harvey,
Long, Maghie, Maskey, R. McLaughlin, Nelson,
Nic Bhranair and Smyth.

In attendance: Ms. S. McNicholl, Deputy Chief Executive/Director of
Corporate Services;
Ms. N. Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and
Civic Services;
Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development;
Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Property and Projects;
Ms. C. Matthews, Director of Resources and Fleet;
Ms. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and
Development;
Ms. C. Sheridan, Director of Human Resources;
Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;
Mr. T. Wallace, Director of Finance;
Ms. L. Caldwell, Director of External Affairs, Marketing and
Communications;
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors I. McLaughlin and Whyte.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 16th and 26th June 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 July, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 18th August, 2023**

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Long declared an interest in respect of agenda item 5h - Consultation on the Department of Health's Equality Impact Assessment of the 2023-24 Budget Outcome, on the basis that he was employed by the Department of Health.

Councillor Nelson declared an interest in relation to agenda item 5h - Consultation on the Department of Health's Equality Impact Assessment of the 2023-24 Budget Outcome, on the basis that he was employed by an organisation which received funding from the Department of Health.

Councillor Smyth declared an interest in relation to agenda item 5h - Consultation on the Department of Health's Equality Impact Assessment of the 2023-24 Budget Outcome, in that he was employed in the health service.

(As the aforementioned item did not become the subject of discussion, the Members were not required to leave the meeting.)

Councillor Ferguson declared an interest in respect of agenda item 6a – Update on the Physical Programme, in so far as it related to the refurbishment of the Belfast Orange Hall under the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund, on the basis that he was a member of Duke of Schomberg LOL 486, which held meetings in the building and left the meeting whilst that item was under consideration.

Councillor Garrett declared an interest in relation to agenda item 2i – Update on External Funding, in so far as it related to the Colin Community Hub, on the basis that he was on the Board of the Hub and left the meeting whilst that item was being discussed.

Councillor Nic Bhranair declared an interest in respect of agenda item 6a – Update on Physical Programme, in that her employer had applied for funding under the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund for the Mountainview Hotel project and left the meeting whilst that item was under consideration.

Councillor Nic Bhranair also declared an interest in relation to agenda item 7b – Update on Contracts, relating to the public advertisement of a tender for the development of a Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme, in that her employer would be applying to the Programme and left the meeting whilst that item was being discussed.

Councillor Smyth declared an interest in respect of agenda item 2i - Update on External Funding, in so far as it related to the Ballynaveigh Shared Space Project, which included the expansion of Rosario Youth Centre, on the basis that his son played for Rosario Football Club and that he had previously been involved in a fund-raising committee and left the meeting for the duration of the discussion.

Restricted Items

The information contained in the reports associated with the following ten 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 ten 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.

Financial Reporting – Quarter 1 2023/24

The Director of Finance submitted for the Committee's consideration a report providing information on the financial position for Quarter 1 2023/24.

He reported that, at the end of Quarter 1, the financial position for the Council had shown an underspend of £1.4m, representing 3.3% of the net expenditure budget, which could be attributed to employee vacancies. The Quarter 1 Departmental forecast was an underspend of £1.2m, representing 0.7% of the net expenditure budget. He pointed out that this forecast had fallen short of the targeted £3m of in-year savings required as part of the Finance Strategy to deliver a balanced budget and drew the Committee's attention to several issues which would continue to be monitored and reported on within the quarterly updates to the Committee.

The Director went on to provide an update on the forecast reserves balance, rates finalisation and capital projects.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and agreed that the aforementioned underspends be carried over into Quarter 2 2023/24. The Committee agreed also that a report be submitted to its next meeting identifying criteria which could be put in place in future to allocate funding from underspends to groups/organisations.

**Revenue Estimates 2024/25 and
Medium-Term Financial Planning**

The Director of Finance drew the Committee's attention to a report providing an update on the corporate approach to the 2024/25 revenue estimates and medium-term financial planning and outlining the work to be undertaken to identify and deliver opportunities for cost savings, income generation and service delivery review across Departments.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed to receive on a monthly basis an update report on the rates to enable the striking of the District Rate by 15th February, 2024.

Organisational Reviews and Change Programme

The Committee considered a report providing information on the Organisational Reviews and Change Programme, the reviews of the Democratic Services Unit and Equality and Diversity Units and the forthcoming Association of Public Service Excellence annual conference and awards dinner.

The Committee:

- i. noted the progress which had been made on the Organisational Reviews and Change Programme and the timescales moving forward;
- ii. agreed that a special meeting be held in the lead up to the monthly meeting of the Council on 4th September to consider reports on the recommendations arising from the reviews of the Democratic Services and the Equality and Diversity Units and granted approval to the Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services to defer the reports until the monthly meeting of the Committee on 22nd September, should the need arise; and
- iii. granted approval for the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson to attend the Association of Public Service Excellence's annual conference and awards dinner being held in Belfast on 13th and 14th September, at no cost to the Council.

Update on Employees on Temporary Contracts and Agency Workers

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

She reported that, as at 30th June, 220 staff had been filling posts on a temporary basis, 139 of whom had substantive Council posts to return to when no longer required. The other 81 were fixed term contract employees who did not have a substantive post to return to. Between 1st April and 30th June, 23 staff had joined the Council on a temporary contract, with 9 having a substantive post and 14 being on fixed term contracts.

She reported further that, as at 30th June, 259 agency assignees had been engaged by the Council, which was 20 fewer than at 30th March. She outlined the cost of employing agency assignees for the three-month period ending on 30th June and pointed out that this did not represent a financial burden, as it was met through vacant posts.

The Director then stated that the Corporate Contract Manager, who had been appointed in February, was establishing regular compliance and challenge meetings

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 18th August, 2023**

across Departments, with a view to driving down long-term agency usage and that data was being reviewed to assess the potential for creating some permanent flexible roles.

She went on to remind the Committee that it had, at its meeting on 21st October, 2022, granted approval to engage an external consultant to undertake a feasibility study on the potential for establishing an in-house agency. She confirmed that the procurement exercise had been undertaken in April and reviewed the specification which prospective organisations had been asked to fulfil. Only one response had been received and that organisation had not been deemed satisfactory, on the basis that it had failed to meet the requirements of the specification. The contract had not, therefore, been awarded.

She concluded by pointing out that, in view of the apparent lack of capacity within the market to undertake this work at present, officers would continue to focus on addressing agency usage and utilising other Government frameworks to reduce the margin of off-contract spend to as low a level as possible and that the Committee would continue to be provided with regular updates on progress.

After discussion, the Committee noted the information which had been provided and granted approval for officers to review the specification for the engagement of the aforementioned external consultant, in order to attract a higher number of eligible applicants, with a report in that regard to be submitted to its next monthly meeting.

Asset Management

Forth Meadow Community Greenway

The Committee granted approval to enter into a right of way agreement in connection with the use of 0.174 acres of land owned by Invest NI located at Forthriver Business Park, as part of the Forth Meadow Community Greenway.

Site 10, 102 Royal Avenue

The Committee granted approval to enter into a Tenancy at Will agreement with Extern Northern Ireland for the short-term use of the ground floor unit of 102 Royal Avenue, with the Council to receive an income of £1,000 per month for the duration of the agreement.

Ormeau Avenue Car Park

The Committee granted approval to enter into negotiations with the freeholder of lands at the Ormeau Avenue Car Park to remove restrictive title covenants which could impede future development.

John Murray Lockhouse

The Committee granted approval to enter into a deed of variation with the Lower Ormeau Resident's Action Group (LORAG) to amend the current lease of 8th January, 2019 to facilitate the inclusion of an additional portion of land and to seek Ministerial

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 18th August, 2023**

approval to dispose of the lands at less than best value to reflect the community benefit being realised.

Bullring Environmental Improvement Scheme

The Committee approved the acceptance of licences from the Department for Communities, the Department for Infrastructure and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive in connection with the environmental improvement scheme at the Bullring, Lower Shankill, with the licences to be subject to a nominal rent (£1 if demanded).

North Foreshore

The Committee approved the grant of an easement and right of way to Northern Ireland Electricity Networks Limited to facilitate the installation of a new electricity substation within the existing Film Studio site.

Unit 3, St. George's Market

The Committee approved the grant of a licence to a new tenant, with the Council to receive an annual income of £10,000, along with a fixed service charge of 10% and a buildings insurance contribution.

Update on The MAC (Metropolitan Arts Centre)

The Director of Development informed the Committee that the MAC, which had opened in 2012 in the Cathedral Quarter, attracted 320,000 visitors annually and 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.

He reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 26th June, it had been briefed on an ongoing cash flow issue for the MAC, which had included the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's decision to defer its request for funding from the 2023/24 Annual Funding Programme to allow for further consideration of its application. The Committee had agreed at that meeting to allocate the equivalent of six months' funding, that is £75,000, to the MAC.

The Director went on to report that the Chief Executive Officer of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland had since confirmed that she would be requesting her Board to reinstate the MAC into its Annual Funding Programme, following the resolution of issues relating primarily to the organisation's transformation plan.

He pointed out that the Board of the MAC had made progress in redefining its business model and in developing new partnerships, in line with its funders' grant conditions. Should the Board of the Arts Council accede to the Chief Executive Officer's

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request, the MAC would secure additional funding this year, which would assist in stabilising this important cultural facility in the City.

He went on to state that Council officers had, in recent weeks, been liaising closely with the Arts Council and the Board of the MAC, during which the latter had requested the Council to provide funding of £50,000 to aid its ongoing transition and deal with cash flow constraints. However, officers were recommending that the Council release the second tranche of the MAC's Core Multi-Annual Grant funding of £75,000 in full, to enable the organisation to progress its transition and provide additional cash flow until such time as the Arts Council's decision was taken.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed to release the second tranche of the MAC's Core Multi-Annual Grant funding of £75,000 and agreed that Members be provided with an update on the outcome of any discussions between the Council and Castlebrooke Investments on the redevelopment of the Cathedral Quarter.

Update on Belfast 2024

The Director of Economic Development submitted for the Committee's consideration a report on the developments for Belfast 2024, the Council's ambitious year of creative celebration.

After discussion, the Committee:

- i. approved an open call uplift from £1.85 million to £2.7 million to allow for 17 commissions to be contracted for development (an uplift from 13) from September 2023, delivery throughout 2024;
- ii. approved an additional 3 x Creative Bursaries (£30k in total) to work with the Belfast 2024 team as artists-in-residence for Belfast 2024 projects to enhance participation through our engagement programmes;
- iii. approved the proposal for the research and development of Power Plants, to the value of £20k, as outlined within the report;
- iv. approved the local delivery partner for the all-Ireland Belfast 2024 Signature Project, to the value of £250k, as outlined within the report;
- v. approved an uplift to the St. Patrick's Day Programme through the Belfast 2024 budget bringing the City to life by showcasing a bespoke programme led by some of our best emerging talent, to promote UNESCO City of Music status and launch Belfast 2024 to the city - £50k;
- vi. granted approval for Music Heritage Programme to be delivered via Capacity Building budgets (approved by CGR in April 23) and Extended Cultural Programme (approved by CGR in June

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2022) as a partnership between the Culture team and Belfast 2024 to amplify UNESCO City of Music status - £100k in total, to cover up to 5 capacity building grants.

- vii. agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting on animation and other activities which could be delivered in the City centre in the lead up to the launch in March of Belfast 2024; and
- viii. agreed, in order to increase the effectiveness of public consultations moving forward, that events also be held in the evening.

**Sponsorship and Advertising –
Income Generation Pilot**

The Director of Development reminded the Committee that it had, at this and recent meetings, been advised that the Council was facing significant financial and inflationary pressures, which presented challenges in terms of setting the District Rate for 2023/24.

He pointed out that work was underway to identify and deliver opportunities for cost savings and income generation and that extensive benchmarking research had revealed that other local authorities had raised income by offering organisations various advertising and sponsorship opportunities on, for example, car parks, parks, bins, buildings, vehicles and websites.

Council officers had subsequently been developing an advertising and sponsorship pilot scheme, which had focused initially on areas surrounding pitches, bin lorries, car parks and street bins, all of which fell within the remit of the City and Neighbourhood Services Department. A small task and finish group was being established to consider the operational implications of the scheme and a draft media pack had been developed, which included, amongst other things, the Terms and Conditions and key principles which the Council would expect from any organisation wishing to avail of the advertising/sponsorship opportunity.

The Director went on to report that, following discussions with other officers, it was now being proposed that the following additional assets, which fell within the remit of the Place and Economy Department, be included in the pilot scheme:

- Belfast Bikes;
- Belfast Castle;
- Belfast Zoo;
- Belfast Waterfront Hall and ICC Belfast;
- Malone House;

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- Ulster Hall; and
- Selected signature events/festivals.

He added that further benchmarking research had indicated that, when other local authorities had secured sponsorship, they had appointed a sponsorship specialist to provide qualified guidance on the assets and sites included in the pilot scheme and to advise on the potential suitability of each for external advertising and/or sponsorship opportunities.

Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee grant approval to proceed with the pilot scheme, with both the initial and additional assets outlined above to be included and to procure, via a competitive tender process, a sponsorship specialist to provide qualified guidance on the process.

The Committee adopted the recommendations and authorised officers to examine the potential for including roundabouts within this or future schemes and develop an ethical framework to be presented within the next update report for consideration.

Update on External Funding

Investment Area 1.4 – Reimagining Communities

(Submission date – 7th September)

The Committee:

- i. noted the work which was underway on the Reconnected Belfast (Waterworks and Alexandra Park) capital proposal and agreed that this would be the Council's application to the Special EU Programmes Body under PeacePlus Investment Area 1.4;
- ii. noted the requests which had been received for the Council to act as delivery partner, as outlined in paragraph 3.6 of the report and agreed, in principle, to approve the requests, subject to this being reviewed again once the successful bid(s) have been announced by the Special EU Programmes Body;
- iii. delegated authority to officers to review any further requests which may be received in respect of Investment Area 1.4 and for the Council to act a delivery agent, given the submission funding date of 7th September;
- iv. agreed that a letter be forwarded to the Special EU Programmes Body highlighting the challenging timeline for development of bids under this theme; and

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- v. agreed that officers work up a proposal for a Migrant Hub(s) in the City, in the event that the funding call would reopen under Investment Area 1.4 and/or for other suitable funding streams.

Investment Area 1.1 – Local Action Plan Capital Projects

The Committee agreed that Council officers continue to develop the proposals for LBTQIA+ Hub, Sanctuary Theatre, Distillery St, Annadale Open Space and Access to the Hills under PEACEPLUS Investment Area 1.1, including carrying out project-specific co-design exercises, with a further update to be brought to the Committee ahead of the submission date of the Local Action Plan by 14th December, 2023.

Investment Area 5.5 – Geothermal Energy

The Committee approved the request from the Department for Economy for the Council to become an Associate Partner in its bid under Investment Area 5.5 – Geothermal Energy.

Funding Pipeline

The Committee:

- i. noted the work which was underway to develop a potential pipeline of candidate projects which would be progressed to a stage of maturity to enable them to be submitted to emerging funding or investment opportunities and that an update on the emerging Regeneration Framework would be brought back to the Committee for consideration;
- ii. agreed that a series of Party Group briefings be held to enable Members to help inform and prioritise the emerging list of potential candidate projects for funding considerations; and
- iii. noted that a detailed report on the work being undertaken in relation to the future operational model and long-term use of the entire 2 Royal Avenue building (including the LBTQIA+ Hub, subject to Members agreement) would be presented to the Committee in October.

Heritage Development

The Committee agreed to accede to a request from the Belfast Building Trust for the Council to provide a letter of support for an application which it was making to the Heritage Development Trust, which would help to build capacity within the Trust to support the re-use and regeneration of heritage buildings across the City.

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Issues Raised in Advance by Members

Data Protection

(The Committee agreed that this item be moved up the agenda and considered under Restricted Items.)

(Councillor de Faoite declared an interest in this item immediately upon it being raised, on the basis that the named individual referred to had made a complaint against him to the Standards Commissioner, which was currently under review, having been decided, and left the meeting for the duration of the discussion.)

Councillor Beattie drew the Committee's attention to an article which had, on 14th August, been published in a local daily newspaper, relating to information on injunctions in 2017. Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee grant approval to the Chief Executive to undertake an internal investigation on the matter and submit a report on the outcome to a future meeting.

The Committee adopted the recommendation and authorised the Campaigns and Press Office to issue the following press release on behalf of the Council:

"At the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee meeting on 18th August, 2023, Members agreed to undertake an internal investigation in relation to commentary in the media around injunctions in 2017. A report setting out the parameters of the investigation will be brought back to the Committee in due course."

Matters referred back from Council/Motions

Motion – CPR Training and Circuit

The Committee was informed that the Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 27th June, had referred the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Black and seconded by Alderman McCoubrey, to this Committee for consideration:

"This Council notes that cardiac arrest is the ultimate medical emergency, occurring when someone's heart stops pumping blood around the body and they stop breathing normally.

Early cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and a defibrillator shock are vital to a person's chances of surviving a cardiac arrest.

In the North of Ireland, there are around 1,400 cardiac arrests each year which take place outside of hospital. Less than one in ten survive to be discharged from hospital.

The Council recognises that survival rates are higher in places where more people are trained to perform CPR and are willing to intervene.

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The Council commends the work of the British Heart Foundation in providing schools and communities with the resources to learn CPR. Its campaigning work has resulted in CPR training now being a compulsory element of our school curriculum for Key Stage 3 pupils.

The Belfast Agenda envisions a Belfast where everyone fulfils their potential. Empowering young people with the skills to become lifesavers encourages confidence and adds to children's belief that they can make a difference to society.

Early defibrillation is another crucial part of the chain of survival when a cardiac arrest happens. Many defibrillators never get used because emergency services don't know where they are or how to access them – this can cost lives. This is why registering all defibrillators on The Circuit is so vital as it could mean the difference between life and death.

We propose that the Council moves to ensure that all defibrillators located on Council property are registered on The Circuit, are accessible to the public 24/7 and are emergency ready.

We also move to ensure that any future funding for defibrillators provided by the Council includes strict criteria that the funded defibrillator must be registered on The Circuit.

Additionally, it is proposed that the Council takes its lead from our young people and supports the provision of mandatory CPR training for all councillors and council staff. We also commit to raise awareness through all our available channels and platforms and encourage all citizens to avail of CPR training."

The Committee agreed to adopt the motion, with a report to be submitted to a future meeting outlining how it could be facilitated.

Governance

**Appointment of Panel Members for the Recruitment
of Independent Members to the Belfast Policing and
Community Safety Partnership and the Four District
Policing and Community Safety Partnerships**

(Mr. J. Girvan, Neighbourhood Services Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Neighbourhood Services Manager informed the Committee that the process for nominating and appointing Independent Members to the Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership and the District Policing and Community Safety Partnerships consisted of three stages, the first of which an eligibility sift by the Northern Ireland Policing Board. In the second stage, the Council, with support from its Human Resources Department and an external Human Resources service provider appointed by

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the Policing Board, assumed responsibility for shortlisting and interviewing applicants against the published criteria. The third stage in the process required the Policing Board to make appointments from the pool of candidates which the Council deemed to be eligible.

He explained that the current process had now advanced to stage two, with the Council being asked to nominate a panel, consisting of at least two and up to four Elected Members currently sitting on the Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership/District Policing and Community Safety Partnerships, including a Chairperson, to shortlist and interview applicants. To ensure consistency and to address the possibility of an overlap in membership, it was recommended that the same panel be involved in the selection process for both the Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership and the District Policing and Community Safety Partnerships. The panel should, it was pointed out, be representative in terms of gender and community background.

The Committee agreed to appoint four Members to the aforementioned selection panel, with nominations to be sought from the four largest Political Parties on the Council, namely, Sinn Féin, the DUP, the Alliance Party and the SDLP.

Update on Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor

The Director of Economic Development submitted for the Committee's consideration a report providing an update on the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor partnership and seeking three nominees to act as the Council's representatives on the Political Advisory Group.

He reminded the Committee that the partnership, which was comprised of eight councils along the eastern corridor, had been established in order to improve competitiveness and support economic growth across the region. In 2022, the Partnership had completed a Development, Strategy and Action Plan, which had set out a number of strategic objectives, with a core focus on enabling growth, based on improving skills, infrastructure and research and development. The action plan had included a number of priority actions to deliver those objectives and guide a programme of work around, for example, communications, engagement, funding, governance and research.

The Director went on to explain that Newry, Mourne and Down District Council currently held the role of chairperson and secretariat for the partnership. As part of the governance structure, three Members from each of the participating councils were required to serve on the Political Advisory Group, which fulfilled an advisory and consultative role. He pointed out that the Group had last met in January and that, following the Local Government Elections in May, councils had been requested to update their membership. Those nominated would be appointed for a two-year period, with a view to participating in quarterly meetings.

The Committee noted the update on the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor and agreed that nominations to the Political Advisory Group be sought from the three largest Political Parties on the Council, namely, Sinn Féin, the DUP and the Alliance Party.

Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues

Recruitment of Chief Officers

The Director of Human Resources submitted for the Committee's consideration a report seeking approval to recruit on a permanent basis the posts of Strategic Director of City Operations and Strategic Director of Place and Economy, constitute the selection panels and amend the current process for the advertisement job opportunities specifically for these two posts.

She reviewed the timeline for the recruitment of each post and explained that an analysis of information on how applicants had learned about Council job opportunities in 2022/23 had revealed that a hard copy print of job adverts in the three local newspapers was no longer an effective recruitment source or return on investment. It was, therefore, proposed that the aforementioned posts be advertised more widely on sources which had proven to be effective, such as the Council's website, online job boards and social media. A hard copy print of all other Council adverts would continue to appear in the three local newspapers, but this would be kept under review.

The Committee:

- i. granted approval for the posts of Strategic Director of City Operations and Strategic Director of Place and Economy to be recruited on a permanent basis;
- ii. agreed that the selection panel for the post of Strategic Director of City Operations should comprise the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (or their nominees), an SDLP Member on the Committee, the Chief Executive (or his nominee) and a Director;
- iii. agreed that the selection panel for the post of Strategic Director of Place and Economy should comprise the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (or their nominees), Councillor Hanvey, the Chief Executive (or his nominee) and a Director; and
- iv. agreed to amend the current process for the advertisement of the two posts, as set out above.

**Corporate Plan – 2022-23 Year End
Report and 2023-24 Draft Delivery Plan**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 28th March, 2022, it had approved the Corporate Delivery Plan for 2022/23.

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy explained that the Delivery Plan set out the key commitments and priorities for action for that period and the associated

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performance measures for success and had focused on improving the Council's services, as well as advancing programmes of work in support of inclusive economic and community recovery. It had also prioritised the development of key strategic planning frameworks, including the refresh of the Belfast Agenda.

He submitted for the Committee's approval the 2022/23 year-end report and pointed out that significant progress had been made in delivering the priorities set out in the Corporate Delivery Plan and within the context of continuing to operate against the backdrop of the pandemic and widening economic and social challenges facing the City.

He submitted for the Committee's approval also the Corporate Delivery Plan for 2023/24, which set out the focus for the final year of the Council's delivery of its overarching Corporate Plan 2020-24. It set out also the priorities for the year under the strategic themes of Our Services, Inclusive Economic Recovery, Environmental Recovery, Strategic Planning Frameworks and Organisational Foundations.

The Committee approved the Corporate Delivery Plan 2022/23 year-end report [here](#) and the Corporate Delivery Plan 2023/24 [here](#).

Corporate Plan 2024-28

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy reminded the Members that the Corporate Plan was a key governance document which was cited in the Council's constitution as the means by which the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee set the strategic direction of the Council. The Plan identified the strategic aims which the Council sought to achieve for the City, together with priority actions and key performance information.

He explained that the four-year corporate planning cycle was aligned with the Council term, with the aim of having a new Corporate Plan developed and agreed by the April following the Local Government Elections. This provided newly elected Members with the opportunity to work with Council officers over a nine-month period to co-design the Corporate Plan and associated priorities for the next four years. This approach provided a year of overlap of the Corporate Plan into the next Council term in order to provide stability and focus whilst the new Plan was being developed.

He reported that a new Corporate Plan was required for April 2024 and that it would be supported by the Annual Corporate Delivery Plan, Annual Committee Plans, Annual Departmental Plans, the Annual Rate Setting Process and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. In order to agree the draft plans in time for April, 2024, the following timeline was being recommended:

- Party Group Leaders, Committee Chairs and Chief Officers Workshop – late September
- Committee Planning Workshops – early October

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- Draft Corporate Plan/Committee Plans/Departmental Plans –
(CMT 8th November)
- All Member Workshop – November
- Strategic Policy and Resources Committee – 24th November and
15th December
- Draft Corporate Plan and Committee Plans to Committee –
January/February
- Eight Week Public Consultation Period – February/March
- Final Four Year Corporate and Committee Plans agreed – April –
May

The Committee approved the proposed approach and timeline for the development of the 2024 – 28 Corporate Plan and accompanying Committee and Departmental Plans for 2024-25.

Council Improvement Plan 2023-24

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy informed the Committee that the Council had a statutory duty to agree improvement objectives and produce an improvement plan on an annual basis. The Improvement Plan did not include everything which the Council planned to do in that year but focused instead on a smaller set of key improvement priorities.

He reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 17th February, it had approved for public consultation a number of draft corporate improvement objectives for 2023-24, under the headings of Our Services and Facilities, Our Communities, Our Economy, Our Environment and Our City. The consultation had run for approximately eight weeks and had been hosted on the Council's Your Say Belfast engagement platform and promoted through its social media channels. A total of 35 responses had been received, with the majority of those responding to the consultation supporting the proposed improvement objectives. He provided a brief overview of the comments which had been received and confirmed that those had been forwarded to the relevant services for information and, where applicable, had been fed into the ongoing review of the Belfast Agenda.

He confirmed that the Council had, in line with its legislative requirements, drafted a detailed Improvement Plan for 2023-24 [here](#) and recommended that the Committee approve the document.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

People Strategy

The Director of Human Resources submitted for the Committee's consideration the following report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 To present to the Committee the People Strategy, along with plans for its launch and the launch of the Achieving through People Framework.

2.0 Recommendations

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

3.0 Main Report

- 3.1 The People Strategy has been developed in consultation with senior leaders, frontline employees and managers and via the council's Joint Negotiation and Consultation Committee. Its purpose is to set out our approach to leading, managing, developing, supporting, and engaging with each other to deliver our corporate priorities and our Belfast Agenda goals.

It will be launched alongside the Achieving Through People Framework which sets out our organisational values and behaviours and how we want to work together to get things done.

People Strategy Goals

- 3.2 The goals of the People Strategy are as follows:

- The Council will attract, recruit, and retain a talented workforce that is motivated to achieve our ambitious plans for the City;
- The council will engage you and provide opportunities for you to develop and progress within the organisation; and
- The Council will be recognised as an employer that celebrates success, the diversity of our workforce and the wellbeing of you.

- 3.3 The Strategy also sets out the benefits of working for the council, our values and behaviours as detailed in the Achieving Through People Framework (ATP) as well as

planned activity to be delivered over the duration of the Strategy. The proposed timeframes and action ownership is detailed in the People Strategy three-year Action Plan, a copy of which is attached.

- 3.4 Consideration of how the ATP framework can be embedded into existing performance management and personal development planning processes will be prioritised in year 1, for example embedding the Tier 3 Senior Management Appraisal process / cascading it to other tiers in the organisation, and the review of the PDP process, currently applicable to all levels of staff.

Governance, Measurement and Reporting.

- 3.5 CMT will oversee delivery of the People Strategy. Progress on delivery of the actions contained in the strategy will be reported to CMT on a six-monthly basis. The following people performance indicators are proposed to measure the impact of the People Strategy:

- % staff agree that they have opportunities to discuss their personal development
- % staff agree that there are opportunities for career growth
- % staff agree that they receive feedback and that their contribution is valued and recognised
- % staff feel supported by their manager and senior leaders
- % managers agree that have the skills and tools to support and develop their staff.

- 3.6 It is proposed that the performance indicators are measured end of year 1, 2 and 3 of the action plan, through short, targeted employee surveys.

Health and Wellbeing Strategy

- 3.7 Members will be aware that work is ongoing to refresh the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and associated action plan. Following conclusion of consultation with the Trade Unions, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy will be presented to CMT in the coming weeks. It is expected that some of the performance indicators used to measure the impact of the H&WB Strategy will mirror those proposed above for the People Strategy.

Launch, Implementation and Roll Out

- 3.8 The strategy will be launched by the Chief Executive and Directors in early October and a full communication plan to cascade the strategy to all staff is being developed. It will be important for all staff to be made aware of the People Strategy and the Achieving Through People Framework, its content, planned activity and how it will impact/benefit individuals in their current roles and help them consider and plan for their career development.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.9 Costs associated with delivery of the People Strategy will be met from both the existing Corporate OD budget and departmental learning and development budgets.

Human Resources

- 3.10 A full communication and awareness raising exercise for staff and managers will be implemented and Directors will need to ensure that their own senior and middle management structures are fully briefed regarding their responsibility to communicate and roll out the strategy to their teams.

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

- 3.11 An equality and good relations screening and a rural needs screening have been completed for the People Strategy. The screenings have indicated that there are no adverse impacts on equality and good relations or rural needs.”

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

**Common Purpose – Sponsorship
of NI2035 Legacy Programme**

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy informed the Committee that Common Purpose was a not-for-profit organisation which specialised in the delivery of leadership development programmes.

He explained that the organisation had, in October, 2021, developed and delivered the NorthernIreland2035 (NI2035) programme, which had brought together forty young people from different communities, backgrounds, beliefs and experiences. The Council and several other organisations had provided funding for the programme and the Lord

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Mayor at that time and a number of Council officers had been directly involved. An impact report on the programme had highlighted the positive impact for participants in terms of enhancing Civic, Human and Social Capital.

Following the success of that programme, Common Purpose had approached the Council and other potential city partners for sponsorship of £10,000 each to deliver a further NI2035 initiative in the autumn. That would enable the organisation to offer the programme free of charge to up to 100 young people. The Director reviewed the key elements of the programme and confirmed that the Council, as a sponsor, would be positioned at the forefront of the future leadership agenda and in so doing demonstrate its clear commitment to supporting young people across the City.

The Committee agreed to provide sponsorship of £10,000 towards the NI2035 programme, which would be sourced from in-year Departmental budgets.

Sustain Exchange Climate Leadership Event

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy submitted for the Committee's consideration the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of a proposal by the non-profit Management and Leadership Network (MLN) to host a prominent climate leadership event ‘Sustain Exchange’, with up to 300 decision-makers.**
- 1.2 To request approval for a funding agreement to be put in place between the Council and the event organiser to the value of £6,950 +vat.**

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to support the Sustain Exchange climate leadership conference by granting approval for a funding agreement to be put in place between the Council and the event organiser to the value of £6,950 +vat.**

3.0 Main Report

Background

- 3.1 The Sustain Exchange event is organised by the non-profit Management and Leadership Network (MLN) and has run annually for several years, acting as a mechanism for learning and collaboration across business organisations in Belfast in relation to climate and sustainability issues.**

- 3.2 The aim of the event is to support organisations of all shapes, sizes and sectors to radically reduce their environmental impact both directly and indirectly through their supply chains. The Sustain Exchange event recognises that the sectors (private, public and third) need to come together to provide the inspiration, insights and impetus for their leaders to act meaningfully.
- 3.3 It is a transformative time for organisations as they address climate risks and identify new opportunities in the green economy. The transition is not straightforward. Organisations need help in developing planet positive practices, for example securing cleaner power, heat and transport solutions. They need help in navigating new markets to find more environmentally sustainable solutions in their supply chain. There has never been a more important time to find specialist help to navigate the transition, and to educate, inform and engage by sharing the existing knowledge and exemplar experience of those at the forefront of the transition.

Purpose and Format of Event

- 3.4 The Sustain Exchange Summit will deliver on the objectives above and will connect local decision-makers with international thought leaders as well as those at the forefront of the transition locally. The event is expected to attract some 300 local leaders (primarily business leaders but also those from the public, NDPB, social enterprise and third sectors) and will either be delivered as an in-person-only event or a hybrid event which would see 120 leaders gather in-person with some additional 200 leaders attending the event via a live stream. Both delivery models will ensure the messages, around the need and importance of positive climate action, have reach and that sponsoring partners get a level of profile, amongst the NI leadership community, to justify their investment.

Content

- 3.5 Previous speakers at this event have included the eminent writer, broadcaster and commentator Sir Jonathan Porritt CBE and Norman Crowley (global entrepreneur and founder of CoolPlanet). The 2023 Sustain Exchange Summit will again be delivered to a world-class standard and will feature a globally renowned speaker as well as a carefully selected line-up of local leaders who will be challenged to share their story

(exemplar), insights (expert) or support offering (stakeholder). As exemplars these leaders will share their story and associated lessons in an engaging, informative, and entertaining manner. The speakers will encourage and empower attending organisations to consider their own climate impact and take the first (or next) steps in their quest to become 'planet positive'. Previous local speakers at this event have demonstrated how leaders from Belfast have become planet game-changers on a global scale in their respective fields. These include the likes of Dr Andrew Woods from Catagen (Sustain Exchange 2022) and Eddie McGoldrick from The Electric Storage Company (Sustain Exchange 2021). The 2023 event will once again showcase how leaders from Belfast are leading the charge when it comes to the quest to avoid what is now a 'code red for humanity'. In doing this MLN plans to inspire the next cohort of planet positive pioneers to emerge from our city.

- 3.6 The event will also provide the opportunity to make the broader leadership community in NI aware of the proactive work of the Council when it comes to the climate emergency.

Management and Leadership Network Experience

- 3.7 The Management and Leadership Network (MLN) is a non-profit which exists to connect decision-makers in NI with the insights of thought-leaders and world-class performers. The rationale is that by enhancing our leadership competence MLN will empower local organisations, strengthen the economy, enrich our society and ultimately improve lives.
- 3.8 MLN has worked with some of the most respected leaders on the planet and is very experienced in creating and delivering truly world-class events that engage, enrich and elevate attendees. As host, MLN will facilitate the event and invite all speakers to provide their slides in advance so that the idea-sharing session is delivered in a concise, visually impactful and professional manner. Belfast City Council would once again be invited to participate and profile its extensive climate work such as the Belfast Net Zero Carbon Report, Belfast Resilience Strategy, Belfast Climate Commission, Belfast One Million Trees etc.

Date, Venue and Contingence

- 3.9 The Sustain Exchange Summit will take place in October 2023. The total cost of the conference will be in excess of £60k. The Council has been a key partner in the Sustain Exchange Summit since its inception in 2021 and its support has been

crucial in the creation and subsequent growth of the initiative and its impact. In order to reduce the financial cost to the Council and increase cross-sectoral collaboration, MLN will seek financial support from additional sources to include the private sector (most likely two planet-friendly organisations in Mills Selig Solicitors and Danske Bank) as well as local government through Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council (with the Theatre at the Mill being the likely venue for a hybrid event). As well as demonstrating real collaboration, these partnerships have allowed MLN to reduce the Council's financial contribution from £10,000+vat to £6,950+vat. It is important to note that this financial contribution will be crucial in making this event a reality.

Partner Contribution and Profile Benefits

- 3.10 The Council will be profiled as an 'Event Partner' alongside several other lead event partners. The Council brand would be prominent on all event marketing collateral as well as 'at-event'. A Council representative will be invited to participate in the event press launch and MLN will arrange for the Council to deliver a presentation. The Council is requested to promote the conference through its social media and other relevant communication channels.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.11 The Council is being asked to contribute £6,950+vat to support this initiative. This amount has been allocated from within the existing City and Organisational Strategy budget.

- 3.12 **Equality or Good Relations Implications/**

Rural Needs Implications

There are no direct equality and good relations implications."

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Consultation on the Department of Health's Equality Impact Assessment of the 2023-24 Budget Outcome – Council Response

The Committee approved the Council's response to the Department of Health's Equality Impact Assessment of the 2023-24 Budget Outcome [here](#).

**Solar PV Potential – Phase Two of
Department of Economy Collaboration**

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy informed the Committee that the Council's Climate Team had recently undertaken, within the Shared Island Fund, an assessment of the solar PV potential of Council buildings.

The Department for the Economy had, alongside this, carried out an assessment of the solar PV potential of 56 domestic and non-domestic buildings across the City, including eleven owned by the Council. That project had been funded under the Department's PLACE 10X open call process in December, 2022 for research proposals.

He reported that phase two of the Department's research work was due to begin shortly and that there was an opportunity to include additional elements which would benefit the Council. This would include the application of a unique solar opportunity tool to cover two wards of the City and a web based interactive map. The total cost of the project would be £75,000, the majority of which would be covered by the Department for the Economy, as it intended to replicate this process across other areas. The maximum cost to the Council would be £15,000, which would be met from the current City and Organisational Strategy Departmental budget.

The Committee agreed to support phase two of the research project and to allocate £15,000 to it.

**Shared Island Initiative – Update on Cork
Belfast Docklands Proposal**

The Director of City Regeneration and Development submitted for the Committee's consideration the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with an update on the progress of the Cork Belfast Docklands Regeneration Shared Island Initiative.**

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- i. note the update on the progress of the Cork Belfast Docklands Regeneration Initiative under the Shared Island Fund;**
- ii. agree the prioritised project for the Belfast Dockside Regeneration as the Sailortown to Titanic Quarter Active Travel Bridge; and**

- iii. note that further updates on this progress of this funding bid will be brought to future meetings of the City Growth and Regeneration and Strategic Policy and Resources Committees.

3.0 Main Report

Background

- 3.1 As reported to the Climate and City Resilience Committee in March 2023 and ratified by the Council in April, the Council was approached by Cork City Council to work in partnership under the Shared Island Local Authority Development Funding Scheme. Under this funding scheme, more than €4.3m was allocated to 15 lead Local Authorities in the South, working in partnership with 9 Councils in Northern Ireland to develop collaborative cross-border investment projects aligned to the Shared Island Investment priorities of delivering a more prosperous, a more connected and a more sustainable island. Under the conditions of the fund, the Southern Local Authority forms the lead applicant for the bid. €90k was allocated to the Cork-Belfast partnership to develop up a Cork Belfast Solar PV Study and to develop investment opportunities aligned to docklands regeneration. An update on the Cork Belfast Solar PV project was presented to the Climate and City Resilience Committee on 10th August.

Cork- Belfast Docklands Project

- 3.2 The Docklands project focus arose from the opportunity to connect two important maritime economies and drive decarbonisation, growth and innovation. Ports are key hubs for trade and investment and support SME's and employ thousands of workers. Significant capital investment is planned for both the Belfast Waterside and Cork City Docklands areas and these areas represent two of the largest regeneration areas in Europe. Belfast City Council and Cork City Council have secured funding under the Shared Island initiative to assess the synergies and opportunities to overcome the existing challenges within the respective areas. This work will also set out the wider benefits of the proposed Cork-Belfast collaboration under the Shared Island initiative, and to provide a list of potential

catalyst regeneration projects including providing spatial requirements, connectivity infrastructure and place-making requirements and capital investment schedules for the emerging list in conjunction with key stakeholders within each of the respective areas.

- 3.3 The feasibility work will identify opportunities and mechanisms for collaboration aligned to Climate Action, inclusive community connection, heritage, tourism and innovation and to inform/apply for next stages of the application process for the Shared Island Fund. As lead applicant, Cork City Council has commissioned an integrated consultancy team to develop the project across the two locations with a final submission to be made to the Shared Island Fund by September 2023.
- 3.4 The Belfast Docklands project was informed by the ongoing work of the Waterfront Task Force, chaired by the Council's Chief Executive and reported through the CG and R Committee and consisting of key delivery and local stakeholders including Maritime Mile, BHC, TQL, DfC, DfE etc. Aligned to the Bolder Vision Key Move "Embracing the River", this work entailed a detailed assessment of the completed developments, planned development, catalyst opportunities and gaps in infrastructure supported through detailed stakeholder engagement to inform an emerging Action Plan and prioritised project list. Stakeholder and Community Workshops were held in June/July 2023 to agree the emerging work and the priority project list with a view to complete the work in August 2023. Once completed the final document will be presented to the CG and R Committee for consideration and approval and to SP and R as appropriate.
- 3.4 The emerging priority project list that was identified and agreed through the Waterfront Taskforce process include:

Sailortown to TQ Bridge – Providing a new cross harbour cycle and walking swing bridge this connection would complete the Harbour Loop, a continuous connectivity loop from the Lagan Gateway to the uppermost point of the northern dockside providing a continuous active travel corridor along both sides of the Lagan.

The Project will improve connections between the Sailortown Community and the Queen's Island economic

opportunities, restitching the original ship building facilities at Clarendon Dock with maritime facilities on the eastern quays.

The proposed bridge will also provide enhanced connections between the North Belfast communities and the education, tourism, employment and innovation opportunities within Queens Island as well as providing a critical sustainable and active link between Yorkgate Train Station and the Queens Island.

Thompson Dock and Harbour Park – This project would provide a new tourism and event destination in the Thompson Dry Dock adjacent to the new Titanic Distillery combined with a new Harbour Park to provide land and marine based biodiversity provision.

City Centre/City Quays/Queens Island Gateway Scheme – this project would provide a key connectivity link between the opportunities of the City Centre, City Quays and Queens Island. It would provide enhanced active travel provision, biodiversity and increased leisure facilities between these three significant areas of employment and city centre living opportunities.

Kickstart the Waterfront Vision – Introducing meanwhile uses along the Maritime Mile to draw footfall and animation along the waterfront, including water-based activities and marine ecological enrichment.

- 3.6 The projects from both Cork and Belfast were considered through a Multi-Criteria Assessment (MCA) to identify the preferred Shared Island Project. Stage 1 of the MCA undertook a project assessment at a local level with each of the Belfast and Cork Projects undergoing evaluation aligned to the Southern NDP priorities and the Shared Island objectives of Prosperous, Connected, and Sustainable. At Stage 2, the Cork and Belfast projects were paired and evaluated under their potential to progress and elevate at a Shared Island level.
- 3.7 The paired projects are outlined as below and were scored in consideration of the paired projects potential to provide an opportunity for further collaboration & cooperation and how the pair deliver the on the Shared Island regional goals. Following the MCA evaluation process the Cork

Water Street Active Travel Swing Bridge / Belfast Sailortown to TQ Active Travel Swing Bridge emerged as the strongest paired project to bring forward under the Shared Island Docklands Regeneration Initiative. This prioritisation has been agreed across the Waterfront Taskforce partners, subject to finalisation of internal approval processes.

| Cork Project | Belfast Project |
|---|---|
| North Quayside public realm and active travel route | City Centre / City Quays / Odyssey Quays Gateway Scheme |
| South Quayside public realm and active travel route | City Centre / City Quays / Odyssey Quays Gateway Scheme |
| Water Street Cycle/Walking Swing Bridge | Sailortown to TQ Cycle/Walking Swing Bridge |
| Marine Park Phase 2 | Thompson Dock & Harbour Park |

- 3.9 The pairing of the two bridges will provide connections at a local level for both docklands in terms of reconnecting communities to the areas of opportunities, providing enhanced leisure facilities along the Lagan and the Lee, and provide a significant contribution in terms of delivering sustainable and active travel infrastructure to enable the respective dockland areas to meet their climate obligations.**
- 3.10 At a Shared Island level, the bridges provide an opportunity for the two cities to deliver landmark infrastructure projects underpinned with a collaborative approach to delivering the infrastructure, as well as enhancing shared learning through the project delivery and lessons learnt in terms of delivering successful docklands regeneration incorporating marine and land based biodiversity and ensuring effective connections between the docklands to existing and new communities. This project would also serve as an opportunity for the two dockland areas to further explore longer term collaboration aligned to our shared maritime past and the future opportunities for collaboration under key growth sectors including tourism and innovation.**

Next Steps

- 3.11 Pending approval across the relevant Stakeholders governance arrangements, the final submission to the Shared Island Fund will be complete in September 2023. This submission will outline the potential of the preferred paired projects for the Cork and Belfast docklands areas and the paired projects contribution to the objectives of the Shared Island Fund, a feasibility assessment outlining the project steps to delivery including funding requirements, project risks and issues to enable the paired projects to be considered for a next stage of funding through the Shared Island initiative. Updates on the progress of this work will be presented to future meetings of the CG and R and SP and R Committees.

Finance and Resource Implications

- 3.12 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

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

- 3.13 An EQIA/SEA/Rural Needs Assessment will be carried out on the emerging Waterfront Taskforce work and will be considered through the next stages of any potential next steps of the Shared Island process.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Department for Infrastructure Consultation on
Northern Ireland Concessionary Fares Scheme –
Council Response**

The Committee approved the Council's response to the Department for Infrastructures consultation on changes to the Northern Ireland Concessionary Fares Scheme [here](#) and agreed that it should also stress the need to expand the scheme to other categories, particularly young people, to encourage a modal shift in terms of travel choices and to overhaul the current funding model to create a sustainable service which meets public demand.

Update on Northern Ireland Enterprise Support Service

The Director of Economic Development submitted for the Committee's consideration the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the new Northern Ireland Enterprise Support Service (NIESS) – the regional initiative to support business start-up and growth, which will be led by Belfast City Council on behalf of the eleven councils and to seek approval to proceed with the appointment of contractors, pending receipt of the final MoU from the funder.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:

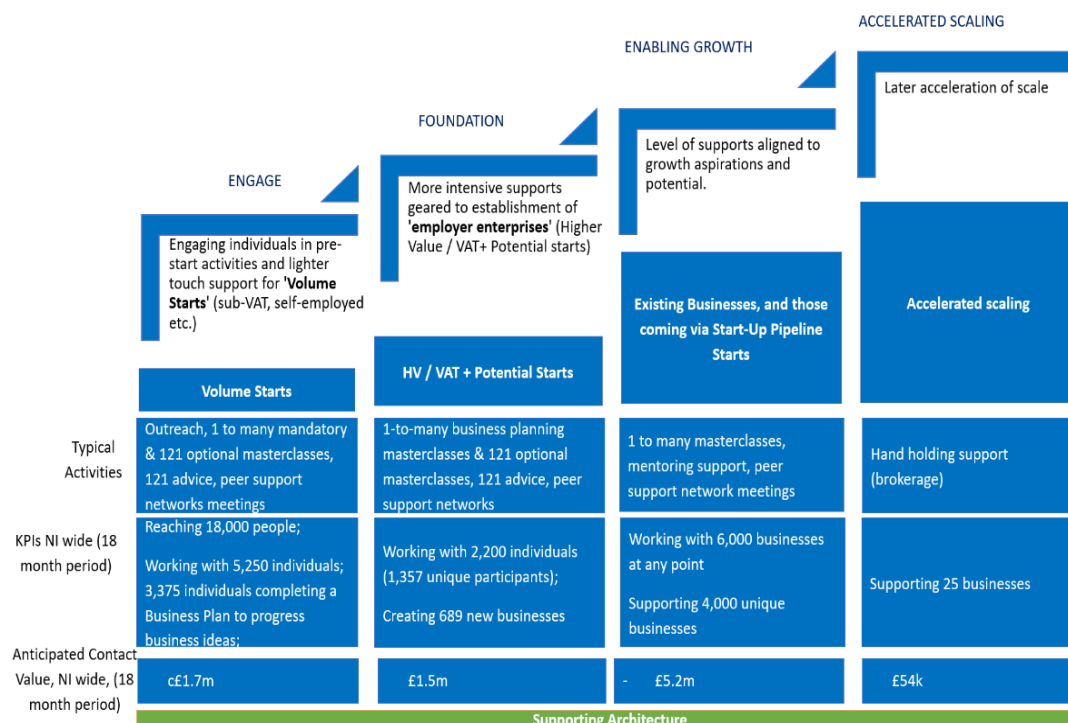
- i. note the update on the new NIESS, including the planned go-live date for the new intervention;
- ii. note that the final funding agreement/MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) has not yet been received from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities;
- iii. note that officers have reviewed and commented on draft versions of the MoU; and
- iv. agree that the Chief Executive can, under delegated authority, authorise the appointment of the contractors for the communications and marketing; call handling and service delivery (Engage and Foundation; Growth and Scaling lots) and any other eligible project expenditure, pending receipt and signature of the final MoU.

3.0 Main Report

- 3.1 At the meeting on 17th February, the Committee agreed that the Council should lead on the submission of an application to UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) for the eleven-council Enterprise Support Service. It also agreed that, subject to additional due diligence and risk management work, the Council should lead on the future development and delivery of the service on behalf of the eleven councils.
- 3.2 Since that time, a significant amount of work has taken place to finalise the detail of the programme content, start the commissioning process of the new service and set in place the delivery structures so that it can become operational from Autumn 2023. Given the complex nature of the work, this has involved input from a range of council teams including Legal Services; Corporate Procurement Services; Finance; Human Resources and Continuous Improvement; Digital Services;

Audit, Governance and Risk; Information Governance and Communications and Marketing. The work is being led by the Enterprise and Business Growth team. A March 2023 workshop, facilitated by Audit, Governance and Risk Services, helped identify initial risks and associated mitigations and these have guided the interactions with the teams since that time.

- 3.3 The service is being funded through the new Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF). This is the UK Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' (DLUHC) fund that was established as a replacement for EU funding (ERDF and ESF). One strand of funding focused on "Supporting Local Business". The Investment Plan for UKSPF in Northern Ireland was launched in December 2022. At that time, the Plan proposed that a central component of the Supporting Local Business strand would be the eleven council Enterprise Support Service. An indicative financial allocation of £17million - £12 million programme delivery and £5million for small grants – was set aside for the service. UKSPF funding is available to March 2025 so the initial programme period will run from Autumn 2023 to March 2025. The service overview is detailed below:



Business Grants – available for foundation and growth businesses – up to £4k/70% project value

Commissioning of Service Delivery

- 3.4 Taking account of the capacity in the marketplace, the procurement approach for delivery of the business support services (i.e., 121 mentoring support; masterclasses; peer support networks) was broken down into two main areas, namely:
- Engage and Foundation
 - Growth and Scaling.
- 3.5 For both areas, there was a significant focus on ensuring that the needs of the local business base could be considered – given the differences in business sectors, composition, and development needs across the council areas.
- 3.6 An initial procurement exercise for both areas was undertaken in March/April 2023. However, for different reasons, it was not possible to appoint preferred suppliers in either of the areas. As a result, additional market engagement was undertaken to re-scope and re-shape the documentation in a way that could ensure delivery of the original ambitions while reflecting market feedback – and taking account of the expectations of each of the 11 council partners. The Growth and Scaling submissions are currently being assessed and bidders will be appointed in the coming week. The Engage and Foundation submissions are due to close on 21st August and preferred bidders should be appointed by the end of August. The start date for the new service is 1st October, 2023.
- 3.7 In addition to the delivery elements, there are several support elements that are being commissioned or developed in parallel. These include:
- Marketing and communications: this work is being led by Derry City and Strabane District Council. They have completed a procurement exercise for a marketing and communications agency to support with a range of activities including advertising, promotional and brand development. While DCSDC will lead on these elements of work, they will work directly with the overall Programme Lead and the wider team based in the Council, ensuring that there is a singular approach to delivery
 - Call handling: the Go for it programme benefitted from a freephone number through which business and entrepreneurs could be directed to the relevant delivery agent. That support will continue under the new

service; however, it will be extended to cover the full scope of enquiries from entrepreneurs and new and existing businesses

- CRM: to track all business engagement with the service and support the development of relevant reports for funders and individual councils, a customer relationship management (CRM) system is being developed. The Council's Digital Services team is taking the lead on this, and they will be supported by other council services such as the Information Governance Unit (IGU) and Legal Services to ensure compliance with all relevant obligations. The CRM will also be guided by the council's finance and grants management teams, ensuring that it can provide adequate assurances and information required, as set out in the funding agreement.

- 3.8 At present, the Council is still awaiting an MoU from the funder. As such, we are not able to proceed with the appointment of any of the contractors. The procurement exercises for the marketing and call handling have already concluded and the Growth and Scaling contract assessment will be complete by mid-August 2023; with the Engage and Foundation to follow by end August. As time progresses, this presents additional risks for service delivery, given that the end date of March 2025 cannot be extended. Officers have already reviewed the document and have provided commentary on the draft versions, in order to ensure that it is in line with our processes. As at 10th August, DLUHC officials has confirmed that the MoU is with their Ministers for signature but that it cannot release it until it is signed off officially. It has provided official confirmation that, "once approved, the project and all delivery partners can benefit from funding towards costs incurred from 1 April 2023, where this has been profiled in the project application".
- 3.9 In the absence of the final MoU, members are asked to delegate authority to the Chief Executive to authorise appointment of the contractors for the communications and marketing; call handling and service delivery (Engage and Foundation; Growth and Scaling lots) and any other eligible project expenditure. All contracts will have appropriate clauses and conditions to confirm that they are subject to funding.
- 3.10 For Belfast – and all councils – this new service represents an important step forward in the councils positioning their intent

to drive their local economies – with an increasing focus on support for indigenous businesses. This is reflected in the draft Belfast Agenda. This new approach also ensures that the councils, as a collective, can have a strong voice in the development of DfE's new Entrepreneurship Strategy which will be a key pillar for the delivery of the 10x ambitions. It is also important to note that there is a limited window of opportunity in which to make progress so councils will be focused on ensuring that the new service works effectively to meet business needs. However, they will also need to consider how they can position the new service to attract additional funding for delivery after March 2025 – recognising the challenges in the public sector investment environment at present.

Programme Governance and Management

- 3.11 The original development work on this service was undertaken under the auspices of the SOLACE Economic Development Group (EDG), of which Belfast is the Chair. The EDG subsequently assigned the detailed work plan activities to a working group comprising all councils – again led by Belfast as the Lead Council. All key programme decisions have been escalated to the SOLACE EDG for endorsement, as delegated by SOLACE.
- 3.12 As the service moves towards the mobilisation phase, new governance structures will be put in place to support contract management, assurance, and reporting. It is proposed that this will include an internal delivery team across the council. This is likely to incorporate the services referenced at 3.2.
- 3.13 Regular reports will also be brought to CMT and to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee. At a regional level, there will be a programme management structure involving the appointed contractors and key officers from the PMO. The Programme Lead will report on a quarterly basis to SOLACE Economic Development Group and any matters requiring escalation to SOLACE will be agreed and actioned at those meetings.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.14 The Council will act as the lead council on behalf of the eleven councils for delivery of the service. To do so, we will establish

a delivery and management team which will be fully resourced through the DLUHC funding.

- 3.15 The final budget is subject to completion of the relevant procurement exercises detailed above. The overall indicative SPF budget is in the region of £5million revenue in year 1 and £7million revenue in year 2, with around £5million available across the funding period for grant support.**

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

- 3.16 An equality impact assessment for the service has been completed. Local targets for delivery in each council area have been established and will be part of the contractual commitments with delivery partners.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Festive Lighting Scheme/Future Christmas Programming

The Director of Development informed the Committee that the installation, storage and maintenance of festive lighting was managed through a third party, who had been appointed through a public procurement process. This contract was currently due for renewal and the Council had received requests to expand the scheme to include arterial routes.

He explained that the supplier of lighting had made the Council aware of significant increases in insurance, energy and labour costs. However, the budget for festive lighting had remained unchanged in the last five years and the Economic Development Unit had no additional funding available to expand the scheme. In previous years, extra funding had been allocated through the Council's non-recurrent budget, which had allowed additional features to be added to the lighting scheme. Funding had also been received from the Department for Communities for revitalisation purposes, which the Council distributed via a funding programme to business clusters on arterial routes for some Christmas related activity.

The Director pointed out the aforementioned increase in supplier costs, coupled with the static budget, would mean that the current city centre lighting scheme would have to be scaled back to concentrate on the central business district and not include arterial routes. The City Growth and Regeneration Committee, at its meeting on 9th August, having been advised to that effect, had referred the matter to this Committee for further consideration.

After discussion, the Committee agreed:

- i. that a special meeting be held to examine the potential for expanding and funding the festive lighting scheme this year;

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- ii. that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the appropriate Committee on the provision of festive lighting from next year onwards; and
- iii. that a letter be forwarded to the Department for Communities advising of the current funding issues being faced by the Council in relation to the provision festive lighting and asking the Department to take that into consideration in terms of potential funding streams.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

Update on the Physical Programme

The Director of Property and Projects submitted for the Committee's consideration the following report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 The Council's Physical Programme currently includes over 400 capital projects via a range of internal and external funding streams, together with projects which the Council delivers on behalf of external agencies. The Council's Capital Programme forms part of the Physical Programme and is a rolling programme of investment which either improves existing Council facilities or provides new facilities. This report includes a stage movement request relating to the Capital Programme, an update on leisure, details on site visits for Members for Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund in line with the approach agreed by Committee, requests for the Council to act as delivery agent and an update on contracts awarded.**

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is requested:**
- i. ***Capital Programme: Stage movement*** – to agree to move the HWRC and CAS Containers project to ***Stage 2 – Uncommitted*** under the Waste Plan Programme due to operational requirements;
 - ii. ***Leisure Programme*** – to note that the Leisure Transformation Programme was recently awarded Runner Up in the "***A whole council approach to tackling health inequalities***" category at the MJ Awards and that a detailed update on Leisure will be brought to the Committee next month;

- iii. ***Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund*** – to note the arrangements for the NRF site visits;
- iv. ***Council as Delivery Agent*** – to agree, in principle, that the Council act as the delivery agent for Colin Community Health and Wellbeing Hub project which is receiving external funding from the Executive Office under the Urban Villages Initiative subject to the Council receiving a management fee for the delivery, full funding packages being in place and further discussions with Legal Services; and
- v. ***Contracts awarded in Q1 2023/24*** – to note the update in relation to contracts awarded.

3.0 Main Report

Capital Programme

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

| Project | Overview | Stage movement |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| HWRC and CAS Containers | The project involves the replacement of containers (compactors and skips) at HWRCs and Civic Amenity sites in order to maintain service continuity and health and safety standards. | Move to Stage 2 – Uncommitted (part of Waste Plan Programme) |

**Proposed Stage Movement - HWRC and CAS Containers
(Compactors and Skips)**

- 3.3 The network of Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) and Civic Amenity Sites (CAS) is an essential business unit within the Resources and Fleet Service. Residents can deposit a significant range of large bulky items for re-use and/or recycling at the sites. The sites accept around 30,000 tonnes of waste per annum and account for almost 25% of the total tonnage of household recycling captured during the year. A number of these containers are coming to the end of their useful/economic life.

The Committee is asked to recommend that the HWRC and CAS Containers project is moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted on the Capital Programme. An Outline Business Case will now be worked up on the proposal with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course.

Leisure Programme

- 3.4 Members are asked to note that the Council's Leisure Transformation Programme was recently awarded Runner Up in the 'A whole council approach to tackling health inequalities' category in the Municipal Journal Awards. The MJ Awards recognise excellence in local councils across the UK in supporting their communities and making an impact and this award recognises the transformational impact that the Leisure Programme has had across the city. Members will also be aware that the £17m Templemore has recently opened and has received positive media and community feedback and was the sixth out of the seven projects under Leisure Phase 3.

Members are asked to note that work is ongoing on finalising the business case for the remaining project under the current Leisure Programme which is the facility at Girdwood. £6m has been ringfenced for this. This is a partnership project with DfC who have funded the business case and the latest draft has been forwarded to them for review. In addition, Members will

be aware that Space and Place Consultants have been appointed to look at the other centres which have not been taken forward under the other leisure phases - Shankill, Ozone, Whiterock, Ballysillan, Belvoir and Loughside. Members previously agreed that the scope of this work be extended to also look at the leisure focused independently managed community facilities. Members will also be aware that there are a number of other inter-linked pieces underway which relate to leisure including the Sports Development and Physical Activity Strategy and the development of the new 10-year Pitches Strategy which has recently been agreed.

Members are asked to note that a detailed update on leisure, to include Girdwood and Leisure Phase 4, will be brought back to Committee next month.

Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund

- 3.5 Members will recall that in June they received an updated timeline for NRF which confirmed that Member site visits would be arranged for September to Stage 2 projects. Site visits have now been arranged in conjunction with the groups and are as follows:

| Date | Time | Sites |
|--------------------|------------------|---|
| Tues 5 Sept 2023 | 9:30am – 12:30pm | South Site visits to three projects – Sólás New Build Project, Lagan Water Access Activity Hub, and the Redevelopment of Riddel's Warehouse project |
| Wed 6 Sept 2023 | 1:30pm – 4:30pm | South Site visits to three projects – GVRT- Branching Out, Redevelopment of Former School of Music, and Market Heritage Hub project. |
| Wed 13 Sept 2023 | 9:30am – 12:30pm | North Site visits to three projects – AYE Youth and Community Hub, USEL- Green Growth & The Circular Economy, and Belfast Orange Hall Refurbishment project |
| Thurs 14 Sept 2023 | 1.30pm – 3.30pm | North Site visits to two projects – CCRF- Cliftonville Community Enterprise and SRG- St Joseph's Restoration project. |

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| | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Wed 20 Sept 2023 | 9:30am - 12:30pm | West Site visits to three projects – The Mountainview Hotel, Croí na Carraige and Michael Davitt's Community Heritage Centre |
| Thurs 21 Sept 2023 | 9:30am - 12:30pm | West (Shankill) <i>Site visits to three projects – Glencairn Community Project, The ACT Initiative Community Hub & Visitor Centre, and The Road</i> |
| Tues 26 Sept 2023 | 9.30am – 1.30pm | East <i>Site visits to four projects – EastSide Container Hotel, Portview Exchange, Impact Belfast and Nevin Spence Centre (NSC) Visitor Experience</i> |

Members are encouraged to attend any and all of these arranged visits and all of the Area Working Groups will also be provided with these details. Invitations for these site visits will be issued by Democratic Services. The meeting point for all visits is City Hall and transport will be provided, returning to City Hall afterwards. Members are asked to RSVP as soon as possible when contacted. The Committee is asked to note the arrangements for the NRF site visits.

Council acting as Delivery Agent

- 3.6** Members will be aware that the Council is asked to deliver externally funded initiatives for a range of funding bodies including Urban Villages (UV) projects and DfC match funded schemes. These requests recognise both the successful track record of the Council as delivery agent as well as the unique role of the Council as civic leader in the city. *In total, the Council is acting as delivery agent for over 90 projects worth in excess of £65m (this includes both completed, live and planned projects).* Members are reminded that the Council's Insurance Unit has advised that the Council's Professional Indemnity Insurance only provides cover for services provided to third parties for a fee. This means that, where it is acting solely as the delivery agent for a third party project, the Council can only rely on its professional indemnity insurance policy if a management fee is received. Committee is asked to note therefore that the Council will be advising in the future that it will only be able to consider acting as the delivery agent for any third party projects if the proposal includes a management fee.

- 3.7 Members are asked to note that the Council has recently received a request to act as the delivery agent in principle for an additional transformational project under the Urban Villages Initiative – the Colin Community Health and Wellbeing Hub. Committee is asked to note that this project is being 100% externally funded with the Executive Office as core funder. An application is also being lodged with SEUPB under PeacePLUS Theme 1.4 (see separate report at SP and R Committee this month). 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.*

3.8 Contracts awarded – Q1 2023/24

Members are asked to note the award of tenders for capital works, including services related to works for Q1 2023/24, in the attached appendix.

3.9 Financial and Resource Implications

Financial – None

Resources – Officer time to deliver as required

3.10 Equality or Good Relations Implications/
Rural Needs Assessment

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

After discussion, during which the Director of Property and Projects confirmed that the forthcoming update report on the next phase of the Girdwood project would make reference to the outcome of the consultation process, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

Finance, Procurement and Performance

Falls Parks Event – Request for Support

(Mr. C. McCann, Lead Officer Community Provision, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee was informed that a request had been received from VC Glendale, a well-known local cycling club, for the use of the Falls Park for its annual Falling Leaves event. The event, which attracted riders and spectators from across Ireland, had become

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a well-established fixture on the cyclocross calendar and it was hoped that another successful event could result in the Falls Park being nominated as the venue for the Irish National Championships in 2025.

It was reported that the People and Communities Committee, at its meeting on 8th August, had granted approval for the use of the Park but had referred to this Committee for consideration an additional request from the organisers for financial support of £8,207 to assist with the delivery of the event, on the basis that the City and Neighbourhood Services Department was not in a position to provide funding from its current budget.

The Lead Officer Community Provision pointed out that the event would have been eligible for Support for Sport funding of £1,000 from the Council, however, the organisers had not submitted an application by the requisite deadline.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Bunting,
Seconded by Councillor Ferguson,

That the Committee agrees not to award £8,207 to VC Glendale for this event, on the basis that it failed to submit an application for funding through the Support for Sport programme and that to provide this funding on an ad hoc basis would set a precedent moving forward.

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

Further Proposal

Moved by Councillor Beattie,
Seconded by Councillor Maskey,

That the Committee agrees to provide funding of £8,207 to VC Glendale, on the basis that this was a successful event and there was the potential for the Falls Park to host the Irish National Championships in 2025.

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

Accordingly, the Committee agreed to award funding of £8,207 to VC Glendale and agreed also that a report be submitted to a future meeting providing details on the outcome of ad hoc requests for financial support which had, in recent years, been presented to Committees and examining ways in which such requests could be dealt with in future through a formal process.

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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.

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 7th August, including the recommendations:

PEACEPLUS

- to agree the ongoing process for developing project concepts to be included in the local action plan submission to the Special EU Programmes Body (subject to further detail being considered by the Partnership);
- to agree that a more detailed report would be submitted to a future meeting on project concepts, governance, management and the proposed implementation plan; and
- to agree that a further meeting be convened to discuss potential priority projects to be included under Theme 1 of the Local Action Plan – Community Regeneration and Transformation (Capital Projects).

PEACE IV

Secretariat

- to note the contents of the report and appendices

Shared Spaces and Services Theme

- to note the contents of the report and related appendix and approve the following:
 - the extension request to 31st December 2023 sent to the Special EU Programmes Body to enable the installation of the signage;
 - the FMCG Governance report (Appendix III); and
 - the proposed approach regarding Volunteer Now payments, having achieved 32% delivery on the Local Ambassadors project.

GOOD RELATIONS

(Updated funding position and Quarter 1 report on the delivery of the Council's Good Relations Action Plan)

- to note the contents of this report, including:
 - the updated position on funding for the Good Relations Action Plan;
 - the revised budget for the Action Plan, as a result of the reduced funding, following receipt of a letter of offer from The Executive Office; and
 - the Quarter 1 update, in particular, the allocation of £154,644 to grants through the Good Relations Small Grant Scheme to those groups listed in appendix 2 of the report.

Membership of the Shared City Partnership

- to note the contents of the report, including the points:
 - that the recruitment process for the Community Representative for North Belfast was ongoing; and
 - that correspondence will be forwarded to the Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce seeking two representatives for 12 months, subject to review and reengagement with Belfast City Centre Management to establish if it would be interested in having a representative on the Shared City Partnership from August 2024.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 18th August, 2023**

**Screening Outcome Report
(Q 4 2022/23 and Q1 2023/24)**

The Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services reminded the Committee that one of the main requirements of the Council's equality scheme was to carry out the screening of new and revised policies. That allowed any impacts related to equality of opportunity and/or good relations to be identified and addressed.

She explained that policies which were identified for screening were placed on an equality screening template and that those were collated on a regular basis by the Equality and Diversity Officer. An overall Screening Outcome report was then produced which, along with the relevant completed screening templates, was published onto the Council's website.

Accordingly, the Committee noted the Screening Outcome Report for Quarter 4 2022/23 and Quarter 1 2023/24.

Operational Issues

**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 4th August, as set out below:

| NAME OF ORGANISATION | FUNCTION DATE | FUNCTION DESCRIPTION | CRITERIA MET | ROOM CHARGE | HOSPITALITY OFFERED | CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND |
|--|------------------|--|--------------|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| 2023 EVENTS | | | | | | |
| Yellow Door catering | 3 November 2023 | Yellow Door 30th Anniversary Celebration- Drinks Reception, Dinner and entertainment. Numbers attending – 150 | C & D | Charge as £825 as commercial company | Yes, Wine Reception as significant anniversary | Approve Charge £825 Wine Reception <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer for wine on arrival</i> |
| Royal College of Nursing NI History of Nursing Network | 13 November 2023 | Celebration of project to commemorate nurses from across Ireland who served in the Second World War – reception including refreshments, presentations | C & D | No Charge as Voluntary group | Yes, Tea and Coffee Reception as Nurses received the Freedom of the City and have memorial plaque in | Approve No Charge Wine Reception <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer for wine on arrival</i> |

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| | | | | | | |
|--|---------------|---|-------|--|--|---|
| | | and stories to celebrate and remember nurses role in WW2 which are included in a new book. Numbers attending – 150 | | | City Hall | |
| 2024 EVENTS | | | | | | |
| Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation – NI region | 28 March 2024 | CIHT 200th Anniversary Celebration- Drinks Reception, Dinner, and entertainment. Numbers attending – 250 | C & D | No Charge as charity | Yes, Wine Reception as significant anniversary | Approve No Charge Wine Reception <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer for wine on arrival</i> |
| Association of Surgeons of Great Britain & Ireland (ASGBI) | 8 May 2024 | ASGBI Annual Congress reception– Dinner and entertainment for guests attending their 3 day congress taking place in ICC Numbers attending - 120 | A & B | No (Waiver as linked to Visit Belfast) | No hospitality | Approve No Charge No hospitality |
| The Royal College of Ophthalmologists | 21 May 2024 | RCOphth Annual Congress reception– Dinner and entertainment 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 |

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
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| | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------|---|-------|--|--|---|
| British and Irish Group for the Study of Personality Disorder | 19 June 2024 | BIGSPD 25th Conference Dinner for guests attending their 3-day congress taking place in ICC | A & B | No (Waiver as linked to Visit Belfast) | No hospitality | Approve No Charge No hospitality |
| RNLI | 22 June 2024 | RNLI 200th Anniversary Celebration- Drinks Reception, Dinner, and entertainment. Numbers attending – 300 | C & D | No Charge as charity | Yes, Wine Reception as significant anniversary | Approve No Charge Wine Reception <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer for wine on arrival</i> |
| Irish Cardiac Society Annual Scientific Meeting Gala Dinner 2024 | 18 October 2024 | BSSH Autumn Scientific Meeting – Dinner for guests attending their 3-day congress taking place in ICC Numbers attending - 170 | A & B | No (Waiver as linked to Visit Belfast) | No hospitality | Approve No Charge No hospitality |

**Request for the use of the City Hall
Grounds – Fragile Space Exhibition**

The Committee approved a request from NI Space Office to place a photographic exhibition in the grounds of the City Hall from 1st to 13th October, in advance of the UK Space Conference taking place in Belfast in November, subject to all the usual conditions being met.

**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 10th August.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 18th August, 2023**

**Request for Artwork to Celebrate the
Oscar Winning Film 'An Irish Goodbye'**

At the request of the Chairperson (Councillor Black), the Committee agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting on the provision of artwork somewhere in the City to mark the success of the above-mentioned film.

Corporate Communications - Language Policy

Councillor R. McLaughlin drew the Committee's attention to the fact that the City Hall had, on the night of 30th July, been illuminated to commemorate the 130th anniversary of the founding of Conradh na Gaelige.

He explained that the Council had, on that date, posted a social media tweet in English to highlight the occasion but had been unable to accede to a request from Conradh na Gaelige to issue the same Tweet in Irish, as the Council currently did not have a corporate communications policy in place and a political consensus had not been reached.

The City Solicitor informed the Committee that the Council's draft Language Strategy Action Plan, which included actions around social media tweets in all languages, had been subject to pre-consultation engagement with the language stakeholder forums and that it was the intention to submit the final version to the Committee in September for approval.

After discussion, the Committee:

- i. granted approval for the Council to issue immediately a social media tweet in Irish marking the 130th anniversary of the founding of Conradh na Gaelige; and
- ii. granted approval, in advance of the Language Strategy Action Plan being approved, for social media tweets marking similar illuminations to be issued in both English and the minority language, with the minority language to be tweeted first, in line with the requirements of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

Chairperson

People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 8th August, 2023

HYBRID MEETING OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

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

Also in attendance: Councillors T. Brooks and McMullan.

In attendance: Ms. N. Lane, Neighbourhood Services Manager;
Ms. C. Taggart, Neighbourhood Services Manager;
Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;
Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building
Control; and
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was received from Councillor Bower who had just had a baby girl and Members extended their best wishes to her.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 13th and 26th June, 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 3rd July.

Declarations of Interest

Councillors Black, Canavan, M. Donnelly, R-M Donnelly, Ó Néill and Verner declared an interest in agenda item 3b – Department for Communities Letter of Officer 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.

Councillors Canavan and Verner declared an interest in agenda item 2a Social Supermarket Update 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.

Councillor Doherty declared an interest in agenda item 7d Period Products Scheme as he had previously collaborated with the Council regarding this scheme.

**People and Communities Committee,
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Presentation

Social Supermarket Fund

The Chairperson welcomed to the meeting Ms. J. Kinnear and Ms. C. McKeown representing the Ashton Community Trust and Ms. C. Henderson representing In this Together who both operated Social Supermarkets within their local areas.

The representatives commenced by providing an overview of their respective social supermarkets and how they operated within their communities.

The Committee was advised of the strength of need in the communities as result of the cost-of-living crisis, resulting in more working two parent families presenting for support on a regular basis amongst many other people who were struggling to make ends meet.

The representatives highlighted that many people were self-referring because they were no longer able to be referred to a food bank after reaching their limit. They explained that to be eligible to join the shop customers had to be on lower incomes and to live locally, with the food sold at around 30% of the normal retail price.

The representatives also provided an overview of other work they undertook within their communities, including trying to address social isolation and loneliness and highlighted the excellent work undertaken by their many volunteers whom the organisations would not exist without.

The Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the representatives for their valuable commitment and work within their respective local communities following which they left the meeting.

Noted.

Restricted

The information contained in the reports associated with the following three 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 4 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.

Social Supermarket Fund – Update

(Ms. M. Higgins, Lead Officer Community Provision, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the activity delivered through the Social Supermarket Fund in 2022/23 and background on the different social supermarket models. It also advised the Members of the allocation from the Department for

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Communities (DfC) through the Social Supermarket Fund for the 2023/24 financial year and sought consideration as to whether they approved the recommended approach for the allocation of the 2023/24 funds to support the activity from 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024.

The Committee was advised that the recommended approach had considered learning from previous schemes and had also been informed by the ongoing work in relation to use of the Hardship/Cost of Living funding that had been made available by DfC for 2023/24. The approach had also been informed by the fact that until the 7th July 2023 there had been no confirmation of the level of DfC funding for this area of work, in fact there had been no financial support for activity since 31st March 2023. This timescale also meant that there would be insufficient time or resources available to manage an open call grants programme in order to support activity quickly, as the administration of open call would have required significant lead in and delivery time and would not have enabled delivery of activity before December 2023. In addition, given the specialised nature of this work, it was noted that it was likely that only a small pool of organisations would be eligible to apply.

The officers outlined to the Members the recommendations for the allocation of the funds, as follows:

- a portion of funding to be allocated to support the establishment of new social supermarket provision, it was recommended that 10% of the overall budget be set aside for this. If these funds had not been used by 1st December 2023, they would be allocated to existing partners on a pro rata basis. Officers would promote this opportunity and seek to work with new organisations. The Director of Neighbourhood Services be granted delegated authority to support new partners and allocate unspent funds to avoid delays in issuing funding;
- based on a review of the demand from organisations and the membership/areas that they serve it was suggested that the area/thematic allocation be changed to 80/20 of the remaining 90% of the budget. The allocation levels suggested would be the maximum amount that each organisation could access. All projects identified in this report would be invited to submit project proposals and these would be assessed through an agreed process to ensure that activity met the aims of the funding programme, was eligible, value for money and could be delivered within timescales. Recommendations would be brought to the Director of Neighbourhood Services in relation to the outcome of the application process and awards would be offered following his approval;
- given the successful delivery in 2022/23, it was recommended that current partners be invited to submit proposals for activity. The recommended area allocations had been identified by using the agreed population/deprivation matrix from north, south, east and west Belfast. There was recognition that these figures were from the 2011 census but new figures were not yet available. Given the increased allocation this year, it was noted that the Members might wish to consider identifying additional delivery partners in those parts of the city where there were fewer area delivery partners;

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- Support for thematic organisations that worked with specific groups of people who might have additional barriers in accessing support was also recommended. Allocations would be based on the numbers of people that accessed services from these different organisations. Some organisations served a much larger membership than others and this would be reflected in the recommended allocation;
- Of the three organisations that had received an allocation in 2022/23 but did not accept an offer, it was recommended that the Men's Advisory Project NI and Transgender NI would not be invited to apply in 2023/24, since their normal service delivery fell outside the scope of this work and their user groups would be able to access support from other funded organisations. North Belfast Advice Partnership was one of the 5 advice consortia which delivered advice services across the city and it was composed of six organisations which delivered advice services in north Belfast. It was therefore recommended that they be invited to take part in the scheme to ensure an opportunity to deliver services for that part of north Belfast.

A Member stated that he had concerns that an open call funding process for the distribution of the funding was not the approach being proposed, several Members concurred that it would be their preferred approach.

The Lead Officer advised that, given that notification of the funding had only been advised on 7th July and the approach would not be ratified by the Council until the beginning of September, there would not be adequate time due to lead in and delivery times to allow for delivery prior to Christmas. In addition, any open call procedure would be administered by the Council's Central Grants Unit and she was unsure whether it would have the capacity to administer it at this late stage, therefore, there was no guarantee it could be delivered using this model.

Following discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Murray,
Seconded by Councillor Flynn,

That the Committee agrees to deliver the allocation of funding for the Social Supermarket Fund through an open call process.

On a vote, 6 Members voted for the proposal and 11 against and it was declared lost.

Further Proposal

Moved by Councillor Flynn,
Seconded by Councillor M. Doherty,

That the Committee agrees to increase a portion of funding to be allocated to support the establishment of new social supermarket provision from 10% to 25% (i.e. 25% of the overall budget be set aside for this).

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On a vote, 7 Members voted for the proposal and 10 against and it was declared lost.

The Committee therefore:

- noted the update in respect of the activity delivered through the Social Supermarket Fund in 2022/23 and the background on different social supermarket models;
- noted the allocation from the Department for Communities (DfC) through the Social Supermarket Fund for the 2023/24 financial year;
- approved the recommended approach, information provided in paragraph 3.12 – 3.16 of the report, for allocation of the 2023/24 funds to support activity from 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024; and
- granted delegated authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to approve the awards, to enhance awards to existing partners or make allocations to relevant organisations if required to ensure in year spend.

Year-End Finance Report 2022-23

The Committee was updated in respect of the financial position of the People and Communities Committee for Quarter 4, which confirmed an overspend of £760k (0.9%) of the 88.3m budget.

The main reasons for this were absorbing the pay rise, £1m of Hardship Fund payments, additional contract costs and transport cost increases. Some of these increases had been offset by additional grant income made available in year, vacancies and posts under review and delays in projects and programmes.

The Committee was advised that a report outlining the year end position for the Council had been submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 26th June, together with the Quarter 4 finance report and year-end treasury position.

The Committee noted the year-end financial position.

**Department for Communities Letter of Offer
Community Support Programme 2023/24**

(Ms. M. Higgins, Lead Officer Community Provision, attended in connection with this item.)

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 27th 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

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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 Neighbourhood Services Manager reported that on 7th June 2023 the Council had 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 would run from 1st July to 30th September 2023.

Following further budgetary consideration by DfC, the Council received the Letter of Offer for 2023/24 on 7th July 2023. The funding allocation was based on the 2022/23 figures which combined nine separate elements, as follows:

| | |
|--|----------------------|
| Community Support General | £829,405.44 |
| Advice Grant | £607,928.42 |
| Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension Tribunal Representation - Appeals | £70,400.00 |
| Consolidated Uplift for CS General, Advice and Appeals (21/22 – carried forward) | £34,316.02 |
| Consolidated Uplift for CSP General, Advice & Appeals (22/23 - also carried forward) | £35,482.57 |
| Consolidated Uplift for CSP General, Advice & Appeals (23/24) | £0.00 |
| Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension Face to Face Advice (including uplift) | £234,779.21 |
| Social Supermarket Funding | £418,744.04 |
| CSP Grand Total | £2,231,055.70 |

The Members were reminded that at previous meetings they had considered proposals to provide funding via the CSP to organisations based on the DfC budget limitations at the time and to mitigate the impact of those decisions on the community groups funded by the Council.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager explained that this Letter of Offer provided the full match funding to deliver on all the CSP funding allocation and, if they were content, officers would administer funding agreements and payments for 2023/24 in line with normal arrangements, where Letters of Offer/Funding Agreements would be issued based on the total allocations/awards outlined in Appendix 1 attached to the report, which listed the full amount that funded organisations would receive in 2023/24, of which part of this allocation was from the CSP. Following receipt of signed Letters of Offer/Funding agreements, payments would be issued on a 50/50 basis.

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- Small Grant Programme 2024/25

The Members were reminded of a previous decision to operate a revised project/activity grant approach during 2020/21 and 2021/22 as a result of the COVID-19 operating environment. In 2022/23 the Council had reverted to its historic programme of small grants provision.

The Members were asked to note that community provision small grants were administered through the Central Grants Unit and applications for projects to be delivered in 2024/25 would open in Autumn 2023, with the following grants open for applications:

- ❖ Good Relations
- ❖ Summer Scheme
- ❖ Parks Events
- ❖ Support for Sport Large Development Grant
- ❖ Support for Sport Small Development Grant
- ❖ Support for Sport Hospitality Grant
- ❖ Support for Sport Sporting Individual Grant

The Committee was advised that information about these funding opportunities would be circulated widely and staff would be available to support applicants, further details of contacts and guidance would be published at www.belfastcity.gov.uk/grants to support the open call.

- Micro/Medium Grants 2024/25

The officer reminded the Members that this had previously been considered at the June meeting of Committee where it had been advised that, *'it is unlikely we will be able to invite calls for a Micro/Medium Grants scheme in 2024/25 given the current budget pressures and return to normal levels of activity within the other regular grant scheme approaches'*.

The officer advised that approval was therefore being sought that micro/medium grant programmes would not operate in 2024/25 and would not be advertised, with any available budget being redirected to support other relevant activities.

Following consideration of the funding allocation of £2,231,055.70 for the 2023/24 financial year, the Committee:

- granted approval for the Chief Executive to accept the offer on behalf of Council and for him to also accept any additional in-year allocations from the DfC relating to the Community Support Programme;
- granted approval for officers to progress funding payments where appropriate following completion of due diligence requirements;
- agreed that the micro/medium grant programmes would not be advertised in October 2023 for 2024/25 activity; and

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- noted the arrangements for the Community Provision small grant programme for 2024/25.

2023 Air Quality Progress Report

The Director of City Services advised that, as a component of the Council's ongoing statutory duties in respect of Local Air Quality Management (LAQM), as established via Part III of the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2022, the Council was required to provide annual Updating and Screening Assessments or Progress Reports to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) for technical appraisal and subsequent publication via the DAERA NI Air website. The Members were advised that previous Council air quality reports were accessible via the following weblink:
<https://www.airqualityni.co.uk/laqm/district-council-reports#511>

The timetable for such reporting was established in *Table 1.2 Phased Approach - Cycle of Reporting for Northern Ireland* of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance (TG22). As part of the 8th round of local air quality management reporting, the Council's 2023 Air Quality Progress Report was due to be submitted to DAERA for technical appraisal by 30th June 2023. The Members were advised that the Council had obtained an extension to the submission date from DAERA to enable the 2023 Progress Report to be considered at Committee prior to its submission to the Technical Appraisers. This approach reflected a decision taken at the People and Communities meeting of 9th November 2021 to review air quality reports prior to their submission to DAERA.

The Members were advised that an Air Quality Progress Report was considered to be in draft format until it had been assessed and accepted by DAERA's independent Technical Appraisers, therefore, the report had been 'restricted' on the agenda.

The Members considered the report, which provided an overview of the 2023 Belfast City Council Air Quality Progress Report and of the key findings, as available at Appendix 1.

A Member stated that he would like to see the Air Quality Management Areas along the Ormeau Road and the Newtownards Road maintained at present and would like this reflected in the report.

The Director of City Services agreed to liaise with DEARA to discuss this matter further.

A further Member referred to the fact that the Council was not the lead authority in respect of some of the areas of concern within the air Quality Action Plan for the city and, given the current funding pressures, it was possible that some actions might not be able to be progressed.

The Committee:

- agreed the 2023 Belfast City Council Air Quality Progress Report, subject to rewording of the suggestion within the report that the Air Quality Management Areas along the Ormeau Road and the Newtownards Road might potentially be revoked;

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- agreed that the report be submitted to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) independent Technical Appraisers immediately after the Committee meeting, noting that the submission was subject to Council ratification and call-in procedures;
- agreed to highlight in the correspondence to DAERA that the Council was not the lead authority in respect of some of the areas of concern within the air Quality Action Plan for the city and that actions falling to other Government departments, for example, DfI might not be realised, given the funding pressures and changes in budget; and
- agreed that the Environmental Protection Manager would liaise directly with Councillor Black regarding the feasibility of the Forth Meadow Greenway being considered for additional assessment around air quality and noise. Agreed that the manager would also engage with DAERA regarding the status of the four existing AQMAs referenced in the report.

Matters referred back from the Council/Motions

Notice of Motion - Playful Belfast City Streets

The Committee was advised that, at the meeting of the Standards and Business Committee held on 27th June, a motion on Playful Belfast Streets, which had been proposed by Councillor McMullan and seconded by Councillor McAteer, had been referred to the Committee for consideration.

With the permission of the Chairperson, the proposer of the motion, Councillor McMullan addressed the Committee and outlined the details of the motion, as follows:

“Following other cities, including London and Dublin, this Council will work with relevant stakeholders to facilitate how residents can organise Playful Streets in Belfast.

Playful Streets are a low cost and easy way to turn residential streets into play spaces allowing children and communities to come together and play through limiting or closing access to vehicles for a few hours.

We will invite Playful Cities Ireland to present to Council members at a future Committee meeting and for council officers to engage with the pilots currently being carried out by Fingal County Council this summer.

This Council will then seek to pilot the same in Belfast in 2024 across the four quarters of the city and the city centre with a view to introduce a council led system through which residents can apply to make their street a Playful Street.”

At the request of Councillor de Faoite, the proposer of the motion, agreed to amend the motion to include School Street Pilots alongside Playful Street Pilots.

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The Committee:

- agreed that a report on how this would be facilitated, resourced and managed would be submitted to a future meeting; and
- it also agreed to receive a presentation at a future meeting from Playful Cities Ireland regarding the scheme and to extend an invitation to the Forward South Partnership to provide an overview regarding the Residents' Parking Scheme in South Belfast.

Committee/Strategic Issues

Pitches Strategy Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 To update the Committee regarding the commissioning of a new 10 year Pitches Strategy for Belfast.**

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- i. Note the timeline for the commissioning and production of the new 10 year Pitches Strategy.
- ii. Note the Terms of Reference for the strategy.

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

- 3.1 Council developed a playing pitches strategy for the period 2011-2021 which was agreed in February 2012. The strategy included action plans under 3 key objectives:**
- Objective 1-Capital Investment
 - Objective 2-Management
 - Objective 3-Sports Development
- 3.2 The growth in participation numbers across a number of sports since the Covid Pandemic has created increased demand for pitches and other outdoor sports facilities.**
- 3.3 Due to the increased demand and a number of approaches from elected members, sports Governing Bodies and Belfast based Sports Clubs the need has been identified to commission a new 10 year “Belfast Pitches Strategy”.**

- 3.4 Any new strategy and the subsequent work arising will need to align with the wider Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy currently under development and any future plans under Leisure Development. The new pitches strategy will need to be supported with a financial strategy in terms of funding opportunities from both council and other partners.
- 3.5 In the interim, officers will continue to work on an area by area basis to identify, agree and secure quick wins for all sports at our existing sites.
- 3.6 Indicative timeline for commissioning and production of strategy

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Agree Terms of reference for the production of the strategy | July 2023 Completed |
| Identify and appoint external consultant to produce the strategy | August - September 2023 |
| Background review of documentation policies and strategies | October 2023 |
| Initial face to face consultation with key stakeholders and schools | November 2023 |
| Review and Mapping | November – December 2023 |
| Wider public consultation to take place online using “Your Say Belfast” | January - February 2024 |
| Analysis of key issues identified with a focus on internal consultation and external feedback | February - March 2024 |
| Interim Draft Report produced and presented to elected members for discussion | March - April 2024 |
| Draft Strategy to be released for public consultation | April - May 2024 |
| Analyse feedback from consultation and amend/update strategy | June 2024 |
| Final Strategy to be presented to elected members | August 2024 |
| Strategy Launched | September 2024 |

3.7 Terms of Reference

Senior officers met with party group leaders and discussed the draft terms of reference and their feedback is incorporated into the terms of reference below.

- i. To produce a strategy for the development and management of all outdoor sport facilities in Belfast, which will maximise opportunities to realise Belfast Agenda outcomes.
- ii. To undertake a baseline assessment of existing outdoor sports facilities in Belfast and to identify which sports are using each facility.
- iii. To map existing Belfast sports clubs, their current home facilities, and their membership profile.
- iv. To provide an analysis of how existing facility provision supports participation in the diverse range of outdoor sports.
- v. To provide an analysis of how existing facility provision supports participation in by a diverse range of users.
- vi. To undertake a baseline assessment of current demand for facilities by outdoor sports.
- vii. To identify the changes required to Belfast's sports facility provision, prioritise changes based on an assessment of future need and create an action plan with short, medium and long term goals.
- viii. To predict the anticipated financial resource requirement to deliver the prioritised changes to facility provision.
- ix. To review the existing process for allocation of Belfast City Council facilities.

3.8 Financial and Resource Implications

Costs associated with the development of the new strategy and engagement of external partners will be met within existing departmental resources. Members are advised that no capital and limited revenue finance is in place to support a strategy action plan at this stage. Financial implications and prioritisation will be included as the strategy is developed.

3.9 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

The draft strategy will be screened in line with the Council's agreed process."

Following discussion, the Committee noted:

- the timeline for the commissioning and production of the new 10-year Pitches Strategy;
- the Terms of Reference for the strategy, noting that the strategy would consider all pitches across the city, not just Council owned facilities, and it would consider less popular sporting activities, with a view to ensuring that the demand for such facilities was future proofed and not based on current demand which was growing;

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- that officers were aware of the new timeline for planning regulations regarding the use of micro plastics and that these were being factored into any future considerations; and
- that updates would be provided to the Committee in due course, including information regarding the key stakeholders.

Belfast City Youth Council Update

As reported at the June meeting of Committee, the Neighbourhood Services Manager advised that the key focus of work currently was reviewing and designing the recruitment process and engagement approach to encourage applications from young people across the city.

The Members noted that over the summer months the Youth Council representatives would be prioritising outreach with youth providers and youth services to promote recruitment. This would include regular social media posts, e-shots, mailing, emailing, telephone calls and face to face contact with a wide range of groups to try and ensure that a diverse range of young people received an opportunity to apply to BCYC. In addition, contact would be made with youth organisations in each of the 10 Council DEAs as well as larger citywide organisations, including the following;

- Youth Work Alliance;
- Voluntary Sector Youth Providers;
- Street Beat;
- Community Restorative Justice;
- Shankill Alternatives;
- Common Youth;
- Transgender NI;
- ACT Initiative;
- Rainbow project;
- EA Youth Service;
- R City;
- NIYF;
- NICCY;
- Extern;
- Volunteer NOW;
- Cara Friend; and
- Belfast Met.

The officer advised that new Youth Champion nominees had been sought from the Party Group Leaders and, once confirmed, these Members would be invited to attend a meeting with the Belfast City Youth Council members.

The Committee noted the content of the report relating to the Belfast City Youth Council and the list of groups that would be contacted as part of the recruitment exercise for new

members and agreed to contact the Young People's Co-ordinator directly if they had any further suggestions.

Active Belfast 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:

- Seek approval for use of Belfast City Council's (BCC) allocation of £90,000 to support Active Belfast Partnership (ABP) in 2023/24 to deliver the programme of activity detailed in the report
- Update members on delivery of the first Participatory Budgeting (PB) programme delivered through the Active Belfast Partnership

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The committee is asked to:

- Approve the use of the BCC allocation of £90,000 to support ABP in 2023/24 to deliver the programme of activity detailed in the report.
- Note the update in relation to delivery of the first Participatory Budgeting (PB) programme delivered through the Active Belfast Partnership

3.0 Main report

Background

3.1 Active Belfast Partnership is a multi-agency partnership supporting physical activity and healthy eating in Belfast. It is jointly funded by BCC (£90,000) and Public Health Agency (PHA). PHA advised on 19th July that they were applying a 3.54% uplift to their allocation for 2023/24 providing £181,141. The BCC contribution remains at £90,000 which means the total budget for 2023/24 is £271,141. Physical activity and healthy eating remain priority areas within the refreshed Belfast Agenda as well as wider health-focussed strategic documents. AB therefore, both as an approach and as a partnership, plays a vital role in facilitating collaboration with key partners to take forward relevant and novel approaches.

3.2 Members may note that in January 2023 approval was given for the Active Belfast Partnership to use £64,000 of the 2023/24 budget to

allocate funding awards made through its Participatory Budgeting programme for the delivery of activity in 2023/24. (£26,000 from BCC and £38,000 from PHA). At that time officers advised that a planning session to identify and agree priorities for 2023/24, alongside associated spend profiles would be held early in 2023 and that committee would receive an update following that meeting. However, due to the absence of key staff the meeting did not take place until May 2023 and the tabling of this report was delayed as a result.

- 3.3 In the interim, SP&R committee considered what level of Council contribution would be directed to support micro-medium grants in June 2023 as part of the spending review. The 2023/24 allocation from Active Belfast of £79,940.00 was included in this discussion and has been included in the overall budget for these awards.

3.4 Proposed Active Belfast 2-23/24 Budget Profile

The table below lists the recommended allocation for 2023/24 following discussions with partners. The PHA uplift which was made available on 19th July has not been reflected in this table and ABP will agree the allocation of this uplift at its next meeting. The rationale for supporting listed projects is as follows;

Previously agreed by BCC for 2023/24;

- PB Project – spend approved in January 2023 to support delivery of this programme which has tested more participative and innovative methods of engaging citizens in programme delivery. Allocations have been made through the ‘Move more, eat well to feel better’ brand.
- Micro-Medium Grants – Given the level of demand for these projects, the quality of applications and number supporting AB priorities there was agreement from partners that supporting these grants would support delivery of AB outcomes. The BCC AB contribution was accepted as part of the allocation of funds by SP&R in June 2023.

3.5 Elements to be agreed by BCC for 2023/24;

- Jog Belfast – This would represent the same amount of funding allocated for 22/23. Allocation of funding will support 7 sites across the City of Belfast, within North, South, West and East to deliver 3 programmes across the year. The Jog Belfast model, and how it is resourced going forward, will be a priority item for consideration by members of the ABP in 23/24
- Active Belfast Innovation Projects – Partners are developing proposals that will support innovative practice

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and the financial resource listed in the table is requested to support delivery.

- **Resources/Training** – This budget is requested to enhance the technical support that is provided by Community Places in relation to delivery of the PB project.

| <u>Proposed</u> | | | |
|--|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| <u>Expenditure 2023/24</u> | BCC | PHA | Total |
| Micro-Medium grants | £ 39,970.00 | £ 39,970.00 | £ 79,940.00 |
| Partnership innovation projects | | | |
| Pilot Participatory funding | £ 26,000.00 | £ 38,000.00 | £ 64,000.00 |
| Business continuity | | | |
| Jog Belfast (£42000 - 7 sites x 3) | £ 9,133.00 | £ 32,867.00 | £ 42,000.00 |
| Active Belfast Innovation Projects | £ 14,457.60 | £ 30,371.60 | £ 44,829.20 |
| Resources/Training | £ 439.40 | £ 4,791.40 | £ 5,230.80 |
| Total expenditure | £ 90,000.00 | £ 146,000.00 | £ 236,000.00 |

3.6 Update on the Participatory Budgeting (PB) pilot

Members may wish to note the following update in relation to the PB programme.

The Move More and Eat Well to Feel Better Participatory Budgeting (PB) pilot, offered local groups the opportunity to apply for up to £1000 to fund projects that would help people in their local area to move more and eat well. Unlike other grant applications, with PB the people of Belfast got to decide which projects got funded by voting for the projects they would like to see happen in their area.

- 46 applications were received (1 was ineligible)
- 31 applicants were constituted, 15 were non constituted
- 4 voting/ decision making events took place. Three were held in venues across the city, one was held online. A total of 2497 voters cast 11,715 valid votes

- 27 projects were successful, 19 were delivered by constituted groups, 8 by non-constituted groups. There was a good spread of successful projects across the city.
- A celebration event which will be attended by all groups will take place in City Hall on 22 November 23.

Up to date information on the initiative can be found at:
<https://yoursay.belfastcity.gov.uk/hub-page/participatory-budgeting>

Financial and Human Resource Implications

- 3.7 All activity outlined in this report can be delivered within existing budgets.
- 3.8 Staff from within the Belfast Health Development Unit (BHDU) will continue to lead on this work. Oversight will be provided at organisational level by Nicola Lane within BCC and David Tumilty within PHA, as well as at a partnership/thematic level with the stakeholders involved in the ABP.

Equality or Good Relations/Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.9 The Participatory Budgeting programme has been equality screened and all other activity will be delivered with due regard to any equality/good relations and rural needs considerations.”

The Committee:

- approved the use of the Belfast City Council allocation of £90,000 to support Active Belfast Partnership in 2023/24 to deliver the programme of activity detailed in the report; and
- noted the update in relation to the delivery of the first Participatory Budgeting (PB) programme delivered through the Active Belfast Partnership.

Quarter 4 Year End Committee Plan - Update

The Committee was presented with the Quarter 4 update report in relation to the Committee Plan that had been agreed by the Committee in June 2022.

The Director of City Services referred the Members to a table in Appendix 1 that provided detail and commentary on the progress of all 33 actions. She explained that this table set out the work undertaken by the Department to deliver the key priorities, to the end of Q4 2022/23. It was highlighted that 33 actions had been identified across the Department's three Directorates. Of these, 4 had been completed, 19 were currently on track, 5 were considered at risk and were slightly delayed and a further 5 actions were considered to be behind schedule and would require additional resources to ensure their completion in the next financial year.

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The Committee was reminded of the resource, capacity and resilience pressures that the City and Neighbourhood Services Department had experienced during 2022-23. It noted that recent recruitment exercises had provided some additional resources which would assist with the progress of those actions currently considered to be delayed, though it was anticipated that some of these actions would be carried into the 2023-24 Department Business Plan, where completion was more realistically achievable.

The Members noted the content of the year-end report and progress against the business plan and that a further report detailing the 2023-24 Committee Plan would be submitted in due course. It further:

- noted the ongoing staff resource pressures which were still having an impact on the delivery of key programs of work, however, welcomed the initiatives being taken by officers to work with Corporate HR on innovation with the recruitment process;
- agreed that officers would investigate if an apprenticeship programme could be introduced within the Pest Control Service;
- encouraged the targeting of woman to driver positions and incentives such as job-share and part-time working being promoted within these roles;
- noted that an update in respect of the use of smaller vehicles within the cleansing fleet would be provided to the next meeting of the Cleansing Task Force;
- noted concern that no progress had been made in respect of biodiversity work due to staff resources and budget, an update was sought in respect of how much it was anticipated this workstream would take to progress; and
- agreed that an update on Alleygates would be submitted to the September meeting providing an update on the recent consultation undertaken.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

The Bullring DFC/BSC Capital Project

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 To update members on the progress of the DFC/BSC funded Bullring capital project including the formal park opening; proposed process for naming the new park and keyholder arrangements for the community garden/allotments and MUGA.**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- 1. Note the update and formal opening arrangements for the new park.**

2. Agree the preparation of a keyholding agreement for the community garden with Lower Shankill Community Association and Denmark Street Community Centre.
3. Note the process for naming the new park including the shortlisted names for the public vote on the Council's Your Say website. The result of that vote will be reported back to this Committee.

3.0 Main report

- 3.1 The Department for Communities, through its Building Successful Communities programme, has funded two public realm projects in Lower Falls and Lower Shankill. The Westlink Sports Activity Park (which was its working title for funding purposes) is situated at the Divis 'Back Path' area located between the rear of Cullingtree Road and the Westlink. Now renamed Páirc an Lonnáin, it was opened to the public in early July 2021 following a major £1m development, creating a valuable new asset for residents in this part of the west of the city.
- 3.2 The Bullring project is larger in scale. The finished asset will, alongside improved hard and soft landscaping, include:
 - A MUGA
 - Play area for 0-3years and 3-6 years
 - Exercise Equipment
 - Self-contained Community Garden including toilet facility
 - Allotments
- 3.3 Appendix 1 contains a Planning Drawing of The Bullring Public Realm proposals.
- 3.4 The expected completion date is the end August 2023. In line with recommendations made by the SP&R committee in October 2016, the Bullring will transfer to council with 3 years of maintenance funding from DFC at an annual value of £35,000. The site will be managed and maintained by the relevant Open Spaces Street Scene team within City and Neighbourhood Services.
- 3.5 The Bullring site includes a securely fenced and gated area for a community garden with raised beds which can be made available to individuals and/or community groups for growing. This area also includes a WC, storage shed and water taps. Throughout the construction period, CNS officers have engaged with DfC and with local community representatives, including Lower Shankill Community Association and Denmark Street Community Centre, via a local stakeholder group, to prepare for the handover of the park. The Parks Outreach and Events Team have been helping prepare for the handover with a particular focus on how the

community garden can be managed over late summer and autumn of 2023.

3.6 Keyholding

Given the importance of facilitating access to the community garden for watering and weeding, across the breadth of times when users will want to work there, it is proposed to enter into a keyholder agreement for the community garden and the MUGA with Lower Shankill Community Association and Denmark Street Community Centre. This reflects the approach at other community gardens and allotments such as Glenbank, Grove, Musgrave and Knocknagoney. In respect of the MUGA, it also follows the approach agreed at Páirc an Lonnáin, where Falls Residents' Association have a keyholder agreement which has allowed them to programme activity on the site outside normal park opening hours.

3.7 Naming

The former Parks & Leisure Committee, at its meeting in August 2008, agreed a policy framework for managing requests to name parks. The policy follows a 4-stage process and has also previously been used to (re)name a bridge on the Connswater Community Greenway, Páirc an Lonnáin (the former Divis Back Path referred to above) and Páirc Nua Chollann (the new park funded by Urban Villages at Colin). These stages are;

- Engagement with key stakeholders to develop a long list of new park names, which reflect;
 - a sense of place, reflecting the geographic location, community, neighbourhood or street where the park, facility or amenity is located.
 - the historical significance of the area or reflects unique characteristics of the site (unique flora / fauna).
- Shortlisted names based on stakeholder feedback and assessed against the policy criteria as outlined above;
- Community consultation on the agreed shortlisted names;
- Recommendation to People and Communities Committee to reflect preferred name identified via the community consultation.

3.8 Names will not be considered which:

- Cause confusion due to duplication or names sounding similar to existing named facilities/locations within the City.
- Unlawfully discriminate within the meaning and scope of the provisions of Section 75, the Good Relations Plan (2007) and the Shared Future agenda.
- Are party-political in intention or use.

3.9 There is strong support in the local area to rename the Bullring site because of previous associations with anti-social behaviour and other incidents in the area where the new park has been built.

3.10 In line with the policy framework, local stakeholders have come together to develop a list of potential names for the former Bullring site and a panel (including nominated members of the Bullring Stakeholder Group which was the local reference group for the development and a local councillor) have considered the submissions against the criteria in the Council's policy framework.

3.11 Engagement took place via the local summer scheme programmes and after schools programmes at the Hammer and Denmark Street Community Centres in June and July 2023. This was successful in gathering ideas from local children and their parents as well as local community groups. A total of 57 suggested names were received and following discussion with the Panel the following three names are proposed for public consultation in line with Council policy:

- 1. Angel Park: In 2010/11 the Lower Shankill Youth Project which operated from Denmark Street Community Centre successfully worked with a number of young people who were engaging in anti-social behaviour in the area to change behaviours. The project came to be referred to locally as the 'Lower Shankill Angels' and NIHE funded a statue of an angel to acknowledge its achievements. The statue is currently located at Peter's Hill but will be relocated to the new park when it is completed;**
- 2. Lower Shankill Park: this proposed name is a straightforward reflection of the geographical location of the new park;**
- 3. Rock Roots Park: this suggestion emerged from engagement with children and their parents during summer programmes and after school programmes. Staff at the community centres discussed the experience of watching**

the park being built with local children, focussing on what they saw. The children spoke about the rocks and rubble on site when development started with 'muck' replaced by grass and how they have seen it transformed from the 'roots' with trees, flowers and plants. From these ideas they settled on a suggested name of Rock Roots Park

- 3.12 In line with the Council's naming policy framework, Committee approval is now being sought to carry out a full public consultation using the Council's Your Say Citizenspace around these naming options. The results of this consultation will then be brought back to Committee seeking approval to select the final name of the park.

It is expected that final recommendations on the official name for the new park at the former Bullring in Lower Shankill will be tabled for consideration again at People and Communities Committee in autumn 2023.

3.13 Financial and Resource Implications

In line with recommendations made by SP&R committee in October 2016, the Bullring will transfer to Council with 3 years of maintenance funding from DFC at an annual value of £35,000. Consideration will need to be given to revenue funding for this asset at the appropriate point in the budget estimating cycle to align to the end of the 3 year DFC funded period. The site will be managed and maintained by the relevant Open Spaces Street Scene team within City and Neighbourhood Services.

3.14 Equality or Good Relations Implications/
Rural Needs Assessment

The naming process followed will be in line with the Council's naming policy and the chosen name will be screened in line with the Council's equality process."

The Committee adopted the recommendations as outlined at 2.0 of the report.

Operational Issues

Proposal for dual language street signs

The Committee agreed to the erection of a second street nameplate in Irish at Mica Drive, Coolnasilla Park South, Haypark Avenue, Eliza Street Terrace, Friendly Street, Rossnareen Avenue, St James Parade, St Judes Square, Lagmore View Road, Ashgrove Park, La Salle Park and Mill Valley Road.

Responsible Dog Ownership

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 To provide members of the People and Communities Committee with an update on addressing better responsible dog ownership, in particular:

- The Committee noted the previous update at the meeting on 7 March 2023 and requested a Members’ Workshop to discuss the issues and potential solutions to dog fouling in the city in more detail.
- Actions taken following the Members’ Workshop on 25 April 2023 on Tackling Dog Fouling in the City; and
- The deferred decision regarding proposed changes to Fixed Penalty Fines for dog fouling offences and littering offences.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the actions and outcomes following the Members’ Workshop on 25 April 2023.
- Reconsider Options 1 – 3 in relation to the new fixed penalty limits for dog fouling and agree a preferred option.
- Consider Option 4 - applying any changes made to the fixed penalty limits for dog fouling offences to littering offences.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 PART 1 – Members’ Workshop

3.2 A Members’ Workshop on responsible dog ownership and the tackling of dog fouling in the city took place on 25 April 2023. An overview of the Dog Warden Service was followed with fouling statistics and trends; the challenges when tackling dog fouling and updates from the various teams in the Council with responsibility for tackling dog fouling.

3.3 Sixteen actions have been grouped under eight headings and since the workshop, officers in the Dog Warden Service, Environmental Education and Outreach Team, Corporate

Marketing and Communications, Open Spaces and Streetscene and the Performance and Improvement Unit have held further workshops and been working through these actions.

DATA

3.4 ACTION 1 – Consider how best to use data from street inspections / street index data or other data sources to identify hot spots and look at impact. Consider how best to provide data to Members.

3.5 A full analysis of the available data was carried out and the key findings were:

- Customer complaints in relation to dog fouling increased by 14% from 21/22 (889) to 22/23 (1013).
- The data from the Council's Quality Monitoring Survey evidences a seasonal trend to dog fouling, where there is increased dog fouling in the winter months (December – February) compared with the summer months (June – August). This same seasonal trend has been identified in customer complaints recorded by the Customer Hub. It shows from about November to March in both 2021/22 and 2022/23 there was a sharp rise in complaints.
- The number of fixed penalties and revenue from the fines are currently low. Fouling detection patrols are resource intensive and are carried out in pairs. We are continuing to review the opportunity for fouling detection patrols against the other demands on the Dog Wardens time.
- There was a greater number of people with dog licences pre-pandemic than post pandemic.

3.6 Outcome 1 - We will continue to use the data from complaints (via public and Members) and the Quality Monitoring Surveys to target hot spot areas and direct resources. Resources permitting, additional fouling patrols will operate between December and February. We are continuing to work towards pre-pandemic levels of enforcement activity. A licensing intervention has been introduced with an additional resource secured to tackle the backlog. Open Spaces and Streetscene will review the available data and determine how best to circulate future performance information.

3.7 ACTION 2 – Benchmark other locations with good practice.

We restricted our benchmarking to Northern Ireland as we felt that other NI authorities would provide information that was most

relevant to Belfast in managing these issues. 8 of the 10 councils responded. We asked a series of questions about fouling patrols; dog enclosures; dog control orders; signage; stencilling; provision of free poo bags and use of dispensers. We also reviewed the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Briefing 2019 which collated a list of good ideas from local authorities across the UK:

- The Green Dog Walkers Scheme
- Rewards for residents reporting fouling
- Chalk stencils with messages being painted onto pavements
- Highlighting fouling with bright coloured sprays
- Glow-in-the-dark posters to target night-time fouling
- Dog Watch Schemes – inspired by Neighbourhood Watch Schemes
- A Council reporting app that allows individuals to identify the location of fouling

3.8 Outcome 2 – Where appropriate the benchmarking findings have been included in the relevant actions below.

3.9 **ACTION 3 – Survey / updated research**

We reviewed available research including that commissioned by BCC and carried out by QUB (Canine Behaviour Centre, School of Psychology) in 2004 and 2009. We have re-engaged with QUB and are hoping to work with the university in the coming academic year to draw up a strategy for new research that will be tailored to our needs. However, the university has stressed that resources are limited and any research will need to be conducted within very tight parameters.

3.10 We also reviewed the most recent research from the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Briefing 2019 which included findings from local authorities across the UK. It notes dog fouling is one of the most prevalent issues for local authority environmental services. It is particularly difficult to tackle for a number of reasons:

- People are aware they could be fined, but many do not think they will ever be caught;
- Fouling can happen at any time of day or night, so patrolling often will not catch the offenders;
- Residents are (rightfully) hesitant to confront residents who persistently allow their dog to foul;
- Prosecution requires good evidence;
- Attempts to introduce new dog controls to combat dog fouling can lead to a public

- backlash;
- The public is still largely unaware that (in many areas) they can dispose of dog waste in any available local authority litter bin;
- Many people do not consider leaving dog waste bags on the ground fouling.

- 3.11 Outcome 3 – We will continue to engage with QUB regarding opportunities for bespoke research. We will seek to increase awareness of successful prosecutions and will work to address the difficulties listed above through our education programme.

MESSAGING - EDUCATIONAL MESSAGING VIA LEAFLET DOOR DROPS

- 3.12 **ACTION 4 – Build on current leaflet drops with public awareness messaging in identified hot spot areas.**

This is a cost effective and visible action. However, it does have limitations. If we leaflet a street with significant dog fouling, it is not necessarily the residents of that street that are allowing dogs to foul in their own street. In an attempt to mitigate for this we will normally leaflet several surrounding streets. Fouling in gated alley ways can be attributed to specific houses with access to the alley way and only those houses would be targeted through leafleting.

Outcome 4 – Dog Wardens will continue to leaflet houses in hot spot areas. Colleagues in our Enforcement Team, who tackle littering, will continue to assist with leaflet drops.

- 3.13 **ACTION 5 – Humanise the message, make messaging local. Harder hitting – health impacts / implications, especially to children.**

- 3.14 The ‘think again’ dog fouling campaign was launched during October/November 2022, with a second burst of activity in February 2023 and it has recently been shortlisted for a CIPR (Chartered Institute of Public Relations) Pride Award for best Integrated Campaign. Our objective was to create a campaign using real insights and research to help influence behaviour change by encouraging dog owners to pick up after their dog, take responsibility and Think Again! The campaign used integrated communications consisting of heavyweight advertising, social media and innovative PR.

- 3.15 Independent research was commissioned to evaluate the paid for advertising element of the campaign and it found that 93% recalled the message; 80% said the artwork was understandable and 72% said its greatest benefit was encouraging dog owners to take responsibility. As the ‘think again’ campaign is so new Marketing

and Corporate Communications have recommended that we do not invest in a new campaign creative until 2025/26 in order to let the 'Think Again' campaign embed and percolate. The current campaign shows the consequences of not cleaning up after your dog. Future campaigns could focus on the perpetrator (hopefully the QUB research will help us identify main perpetrators) and creative approach would also be reviewed at this time to incorporate feedback from the workshop such as the possibility of having Belfast identifiable images within advertising assets.

- 3.16 Outcome 5 – We plan to develop a new campaign creative in 2024/25 (for use in 2025/26) and will use up to date research to identify who to target and how best to deliver the message.

- 3.17 ACTION 6 – Use of social media in future campaigns, particular focus on targeting hot spots, males under 30 etc. and the evaluation of impacts.

Our integrated marketing campaigns already use a wide range of media formats (including social media) to target people during all aspects of their life, when at home before they walk their dog, when they are out walking their dog, when they are online and travelling to and from work. Hotspot areas are currently targeted within current dog fouling campaigns for example during the 'think again' campaign Adshel posters were located at hot spot areas.

- 3.18 Outcome 6 – Marketing and Corporate Communications team will select the most appropriate media channels in future campaigns to target hot spot areas based on findings/feedback and select the most effective ways of reaching perpetrators based on any new research findings.

- 3.19 ACTION 7 – Further promotion of the Green Dog Walker scheme to reward positive behaviour.

Our Environmental Education and Outreach Team promote this scheme in our parks during summer fun days with Scoop Dog and also support this scheme with social media activity. (See Appendix 1 & 2) Anyone signing up to the scheme must have a licence for their dog so the scheme is raising awareness of the licensing requirements too. By taking the Green Dog Walkers' pledge and using a Green Dog Walker's lead, owners commit to:

- always clean up after their dog;
- carry extra dog waste bags;
- give free dog waste bags to other dog walkers.

- 3.20 Outcome 7 – We will continue to promote our successful Green Dog Walker scheme.

3.2.1 MARKETING – SIGNAGE

ACTION 8 – Signage in parks / on street, consider positioning / visibility and work with communities on location.

Our Open Spaces and Streetscene colleagues in parks will continue to use signage at appropriate locations throughout our parks. Whilst we appreciate the role of signage and agree with Members that location is important, we are reluctant to encourage excessive signage. We believe the current level of street signage throughout the city is sufficient. We will however still consider requests for additional signage but need to be cognisant of the requirement for permission from the Department for Infrastructure should we want to erect signage on its property. As an alternative to street signage we have designed a poster (see Appendix 2) which we can be distributed to local communities in hot spot areas for indoor use.

- 3.22 Outcome 8 – Open Spaces and Streetscene will continue to use signage in our parks. The Dog Warden Service and our Environmental Education and Outreach Team will continue to engage with communities and raise awareness of the new poster.**

3.23 ACTION 9 – Signage: Consider materials, design bespoke signs for specific areas. Consider CCTV message as a deterrent, wardens patrolling this area etc.

Through our benchmarking we have determined that all councils in NI use signs with a variety of construction materials including metal, Perspex, cortex and banners. There was a difference of opinion as to whether graphic signage or cute dogs were the best way to engage with dog owners. Some include the level of the fines on signage and others do not. Given the limitation to use DfI property for additional signage we have instead continued to develop our banners (See Appendix 4) that can be used on park and school railings. We will take account of all of the benchmarking information when developing our next campaign during 2024/25.

Members had suggested CCTV signage (similar to PSNI speed camera signage) to be used as a deterrent. We have taken advice and use of such signage, when we have no CCTV would mean we would intentionally be misleading the public and it would put us at odds with our own Code of Conduct. We already use social media as a deterrent by advising of current and future dog fouling patrols.

- 3.25 Outcome 9 – We will consider the benchmarking findings on signage when developing our next campaign. We will continue to use social media about dog fouling patrols as a deterrent.

3.26 **ACTION 10 – Chase Dfl for permission to stencil. Review stencilling and its impact on changing behaviour.**

Through our benchmarking we have determined that 7 of the 8 councils that responded use or have used stencilling. Anecdotally, it is considered to be better at raising awareness in the summertime. We have now received confirmation from Dfl that it does not object in principle to stencilling. However, we are required to contact the appropriate area manager for each location, to obtain permission, in advance of any stencilling. This is because stencilling can cause damage to certain pavement surfaces. We have already carried out a small pilot of stencilling at schools in East Belfast and are now waiting on permission from Dfl for hot spot schools in North, South and West Belfast. A Quality Monitoring Survey will be carried out before and after in N, S and W and we will then evaluate the effectiveness of stencilling.

- 3.27 Outcome 10 – Provided we obtain permission from Dfl we will undertake a small pilot of stencilling when the new school term starts and evaluate its effectiveness.

3.28 **MARKETING – COMMUNITY**

ACTION 11 – Actively encourage reporting, make reporting process for residents straightforward. Consider pros and cons of providing bag dispensers in certain locations for emergency use.

- 3.29 In the last year we have amended our online dog fouling reporting form. It has been broken down into several questions which prompt more detailed information and we have found the information provided is more useful for targeting hot spots / individuals. The ‘think again’ campaign also encouraged reporting and our colleagues who manage the social media channels always make a response when fouling is reported.

- 3.30 We recently ran a Billboard Challenge focused on dog fouling in Spring/ Summer School Term and had an excellent response with 19 schools participating. The Key Stage 2 pupils received an interactive, curriculum-based talk around dog fouling and the issues surrounding it. The pupils then designed their own billboards, and we had 4 winners (N/S/E/W) who had their artwork displayed on a local billboard. (See Appendix 5 & 6). The entries were such high quality we added 4 runners-up, who will receive their entries as a banner for their school. We received positive media coverage of this project.

- 3.31 From our bench marking all the responding councils provide free poo bags in variety of ways e.g. at pop up events, when on fouling patrols, via Green Dog Walker Scheme, in community centres and when sending out licence renewal letters. There were reports of complaints when supplies at council buildings ran out as dog owners mistakenly thought it was the council's role to provide bags. In Belfast we will continue to supply all community centres with free dog bags and a poster encouraging centre users to pick up free bags there.
- 3.32 Based on the costings for the dispensers that were installed in Belfast during the COVID pandemic we estimate each dispenser would cost in the region of £800 - £1000 to purchase and install. There would then be on-going refilling and maintenance costs. We have over 50 parks and open spaces and most have multiple entrances. The bench marking findings demonstrated some difficulties where poo bag dispensers were located outside – in one trial in 4 parks all the dispensers were either destroyed or stolen, another reported that dispensers were 'robbed' almost as soon as they were filled and vandalised dispensers are no longer being replaced. There is the potential when free poo bags are provided in parks for those observed committing an offence to use the lack of poo bags in the park dispenser as a defence. We firmly believe that purchasing poo bags is the responsibility of all dog owners and whilst provision of them at events or during fouling patrols is beneficial, the cost to provide them via dispensers is prohibitive and contradicts the message of responsible dog ownership.
- 3.33 Our Dog Wardens will continue to engage with the public to encourage reporting of dog fouling and to provide free poo bags where appropriate. Our Park Wardens will do the same within our parks.
- 3.34 Outcome 11 – We will continue to encourage reporting and to provide free dog poo bags at events, at community centres, during fouling patrols and in our engagement with visitors to our parks.
- 3.35 **SERVICE DELIVERY**
- ACTION 12 – Continue to deliver a visible response to reports of fouling.**
- 3.36 Through our benchmarking we determined that none of the 8 responding councils patrol 7 days a week as is the case in Belfast. All councils had some scope for variations in the timings of patrols to take account of problem areas, time of year etc. Two of the responding councils have used WISE Enforcement

(an external, self-funding company) to enhance / support their Dog Warden fouling patrols. There was no agreement about the best time of day to detect fouling and it was considered to be extremely difficult to detect and more opportunistic in witnessing rather than at planned locations and times. There was a mix of high viz and low viz patrols across the 8 councils with 3 using a blend of both.

3.37 Outcome 12 – We will continue to deliver a visible response to reports of fouling with the use of social media to highlight our activities.

3.38 ACTION 13 – Consider dog enclosures in parks; more bins; more resources to deal with dog fouling; and more FIDO machines.

3.39 Bench marking revealed that 5 of the 8 responding councils have separate dog enclosures in their parks. Within Belfast there are 2 dog enclosures – one at the Grove and one at Stormont. Previous Committee approval was granted in August 2018 with regards to pilot dog enclosures in the West, South & East, however, due to financial pressures, resourcing and Covid this was not progressed. The financial and resourcing pressures still exist, however, this will be refreshed and updated and taken back through the Area Working Groups and then to Committee for approval.

3.40 Outcome 13 – Officers to revisit and refresh the 2018 report and to include graffiti and other pressures such as Anti-Social Behaviour.

3.41 ENFORCEMENT

Action 14 – Bring back report to Committee on increasing dog fouling fine to maximum of £200.

3.42 Outcome 14 – See Part 2 of this Committee Report.

3.43 LEGISLATION

Action 15 – Consider if new legislation is needed.

3.44 There is provision within the existing legislation for Councils to decide to introduce Control Orders for specific scenarios and in Belfast we have one for dog fouling and one for the maximum number of dogs that can be walked by one person. A legal process which involves public consultation must take place before a council makes a dog control order. Back in 2012/23 the Council did consider Dog Control Orders for dogs on leads and exclusion zones but ultimately decided that more information / consultation was needed prior to introducing additional Dog Control Orders.

- 3.45 All but one of the responding councils have dog control orders including dog exclusion zones and dogs on leads. They apply at various locations e.g. in parks, cemeteries and other specified land owned by the Council and if appropriate at various times. They are restricted to Council owned land because the legislation states: *'No offence is committed where the person has a reasonable excuse for failing to keep the dog on a lead, or the owner, occupier or other person or authority having control of the land has consented (generally or specifically) to the person failing to do so.'*
- 3.46 The primary consideration is to balance the interests of those in charge of dogs against the interests of those affected by the activities of dogs, bearing in mind the need for people, in particular children, to have access to dog-free areas and areas where dogs are kept under strict control, and the need for those in charge of dogs to have access to areas where they can exercise their dogs without undue restriction. Those who responded provided anecdotal evidence that fouling is less likely to happen when a dog is on a lead and our own Dog Wardens agree.
- 3.47 Outcome 15 – We already have Byelaws that require dogs to be kept on leads on certain council owned land but there are difficulties with enforcement (including lack of a fixed penalty) however a feasibility study could be carried out regarding the introduction of a Control Order for Dogs on Leads in our parks, cemeteries etc.

This is to be considered as part of the update report in Action 13.

3.48 **FINANCE**

Action 16 – Report back to Committee in August with costings of options where appropriate.

- 3.49 Where appropriate, estimated costings have been included under the relevant actions throughout the report. In addition a separate Committee Report, including costings for Action 13 will be submitted at a later date.

PART 2 - PROPOSED CHANGES TO FIXED PENALTY FINES FOR DOG CONTROL OFFENCES

- 3.50 In our report for Committee on 7 March 2023 we provided details of The Environmental Offences (Fixed Penalties) (Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 which came into force on 30 December 2022 and amend the previous 2012 Regulations. The effect is to alter the amount of a fixed penalty capable of being specified by the Council for certain fixed

penalties. We detailed 4 options for the Committee to review and after some discussion it was agreed to defer until a future meeting. 4 councils in NI have already increased their fines and we would ask that the options below are considering again.

3.51 OPTIONS

- Option 1 – no change
- Option 2 – increase to maximum of £200 with reduction if paid within 10 days. Suggested reduction to £100 as an incentive to pay the fixed penalty promptly and avoid court action.
- Option 3 – increase but not to maximum with reduction if paid within 10 days. Could be anything from £90 - £190, with any level of reduction.
- Option 4 – Consider applying any changes made to the fixed penalty limits for dog fouling offences to littering offences. The Council previously agreed to set the level of fixed penalty fine for littering at £80, reduced to £60 if paid within 10 days. There would be no additional signage costs as most signs include information about dog fouling and littering.

3.52 Finance and Resource Implications

Part 1

There is currently no additional budget available to implement any of newly the suggested outcomes in this report.

Part 2

There are cost implications if changes are required to signage. We do already have a budget for signage and cost varies depending on the size of the sign and the method of mounting but is in the region of £20 - £25 plus VAT each. The livery on some council vehicles would also need to be removed or updated.

3.53 Asset and Other Implications

None

3.53 Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment

None.”

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The Committee thanked the Director of City Services for the update report and detailed discussion ensued regarding the ongoing issues that had been highlighted at the workshop.

During discussion the following issues were, once again, discussed/highlighted:

- The lack of dog off lead facilities in parks and open spaces
- Undertaking a feasibility study for dog off lead facilities, citing Wallace Park in Lisburn as a good example;
- Noted the introduction of a new streamlined digital process and the rates charges for concessionary fees for dog licencing;
- Enhancing and localising the dog foul media campaign and also promoting and publicising the need for dog licences;
- Welcomed the stencilling campaign in east Belfast and sought to extend it to the south, north and west of the city (to include liaison with DfI in this regard);
- Discussion regarding the provision of free dog foul bags in problem areas within park locations and not just via community centres and publicising that they were available;
- Ensuring adequate bins for disposal were available for the disposal of dog waste and noted the importance of the location of these bins;
- The use of Fido machines and need to benchmark with other Councils;
- Ensuring adequate staff resources, with costings sought for what would be deemed to be necessary to improve the service;
- A suggestion that officers promote and give out advice regarding the Dogs Trust neutering scheme, which was available at a cost of £50 for dogs belonging to owners on means-tested benefits (for a restricted number of breeds);
- Sought the location and details of how many people had signed up to participate in the Green Walkers Scheme; and
- The development of responsible dog ownership campaigns in the Council's parks and playing field locations.

The Director highlighted to the Committee that it had previously decided not to increase the fixed penalty limits for dog and litter offences and asked the Members whether they wished revisit this again in light of discussions.

A number of Members stated that they would be opposed to increasing the fees at this stage and would be keen to see some of the other initiatives implemented prior to this measure being further considered.

Following discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Flynn,
Seconded by Councillor de Faoite,

That the Committee agrees to introduce option 2 and option 4, as detailed in the report.

On a vote, 6 Members voted for the proposal and 13 against and it was declared lost.

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Further Proposal

Moved by Councillor de Faoite,
Seconded by Councillor Flynn,

That the Committee agrees to introduce option 2.

On a vote, 11 Members voted for the proposal and 8 against and it was declared carried.

The Committee therefore:

- agreed to adopt Option 2 in respect of fixed penalty limits for dog fouling and dog fouling offences - to increase the fine to a maximum of £200, with a reduction of £100 if paid within 10 days as an incentive to pay the fixed penalty promptly;
- agreed not to apply any changes to littering offences at this time and noted that an update report would be submitted to committee in due course.

Requests for the use of Parks for 2023 events

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

Committee is asked to note that Council has received a number of requests from event organisers to host events across several city park locations in 2023. Committee is also asked to note that the request for use of Falls Park also includes a request for funding.

- **VC Glendale – Falls Park**
- **Penny for your Mental Health & Money Advice – Sir Thomas & Lady Dixon Park**
- **East side Partnership - Go Greenway Campaign**
- **North Belfast Lantern Parade – Alexandra Park**

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That committee note the request for £8,207 funding support for the Falls Park event. It is recommended that officers will endeavour to signpost the club to other possible external funding streams for this year's event and work with the club in future years to ensure they are aware of our funding streams.**

The Committee is asked to grant authority to each of the applicants for the proposed events on the dates noted and to delegate authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to ensure the following:

- i. Where appropriate negotiate a 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 Councils 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' & take down' periods, and booking amendments, subject to:
 - The promoter resolving any operational issues to the Council's satisfaction.
 - 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.

2.2 Please note that the above recommendations are taken as a pre-policy position in advance of the Council agreeing a more structured framework and policy for 'Events', which is currently being taken forward in conjunction with the Councils Commercial team.

3.0 **Main report**

Key Issues

3.1 If agreed, the event organisers will be required in advance of each event to submit an event management plan for approval by the Council and all relevant statutory bodies. This will include an assessment of how the event will impact upon the surrounding area and measures to mitigate these impacts.

3.2 **VC Glendale Falling Leaves - Falls Park**

VC Glendale are a well-known local voluntary cycling club with a long history of producing some of the country's finest cyclists. The club was founded in 1981 by local Andersonstown men Mark Graham, Brian Holmes and Jimmy Watson to help local cyclists take part in cycling events during a very turbulent time in Belfast. The club quickly had established itself as one of the best cross community cycling clubs in Ireland with some of its members racing in major events such as The RAS (Ireland's premier event) and established races throughout Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales and also representing Ireland at world events. The Falling Leaves event has taken place at Falls Park for the last 8 years and has been supported by BCC during its time at the park.

3.3 This event attracts riders and spectators far and wide from across Ireland as riders race for the points that ultimately influence their grid positions at National Championships. The event has become a well-established fixture on the cyclocross calendar, and it is hoped that another successful event at the venue could result in Falls Park being nominated as the venue for the Irish National championships in 2025.

3.4 This year the organisers have requested financial support from Council to assist with the delivery of the event and have submitted an expenditure budget to the department totalling £8207.00. It is important to note that the department does not have this funding in budget and at period 1 the Parks Events and Outreach team were already reporting an overspend on programming budgets due to the increase in activity and delivery costs.

The event would have been eligible for the Support for Sport grant but unfortunately the organisers did not submit an application. It is also important to note that an allocation of funds to this event outside a grant application process could set a precedent for requests from other event organisers.

3.5 The key dates for the event are as follows;

Saturday 16th September – 10am Set Up
Saturday 16th September – 12pm to 3pm – Race Day
Sunday 17th September - 8am to 4.30pm – Race Day
Sunday 17th September- 8pm – Off Site

3.6 Penny for your Mental Health & Money Advice – Sir Thomas & Lady Dixon Park

MindWise New Vision has requested the great lawn at Sir Thomas & Lady Dixon Park to erect 4 tents to run a fundraising event for their mental health & money advice services. They are planning on carrying out a 24 hour walk around the park and wish to be able to use the park for this activity and raise money for their charity.

3.7 The key dates required are as follows:

Saturday 16th September – 8am Set Up
Saturday 16th September 10am to Sunday 17th September – 24 hour walk
Sunday 17th September 12pm – Leave Site

3.8 The organisation is a registered mental health charity that covers all of Northern Ireland.

3.9 Go Greenway Campaign

Eastside Greenways have submitted a request to Belfast City Council with regards their upcoming Go Greenway Campaign. The Council have worked closely with the organisation which is underpinned by a Memorandum of Understanding and Legal Agreement which was agreed in 2020.

- 3.10** Diversifying income generation is a key priority for EastSide Greenways with a focus on ensuring the sustainability of the organisation beyond the life of the existing endowment.

The partnership has employed the services of a branding company to develop and deliver a new branding campaign which will launch, promote and drive a new area of work focusing on fundraising through donations, corporate sponsorships and membership /patronage options.

- 3.11** Eastside Greenways have requested that the council allow them to fundraise at their upcoming and future events to help raise funds for their campaign and this would be done via selling memberships and collections via charity boxes at any of their events. The group state that their fundraising will help support the following work:

1. Supporting Belfast City Councils ongoing management and maintenance of the Greenway through engagement with volunteers and residents as well as the employment of a team of Greenway Leaders.
2. Developing and delivering an annual animation programme
3. Promoting the Greenway as a destination and as a best practice location through talks, tours and presentations
4. Engaging with local stakeholders year-round, working to address issues arising
5. Delivering on ESG strategic aims and objectives

- 3.12** The group hope that the council will take this into consideration and grant permission for fundraising at their events.

3.13 North Belfast Lantern Parade – Alexandra Park

New Lodge arts have requested the use of Alexandra Park for their annual Lantern Festival. This event has been held annually for a number of years without any issues arising during the course of the event.

- 3.14** The event will include art installations, music, dance & theatre performances. It will also include inflatables for the young members of the community and will end with a Fireworks Display.

- 3.15 The event is ticketed with wristbands costing £2. The ticketed system has been used to date to manage attendance numbers. This is not for profit and all proceeds go towards covering the cost of the wrist band or activity delivered as part of the event.
- 3.16 In order to build the site safely and in a timely fashion, organisers have requested that the park might be closed to members of the public for a period of time on Friday 27 October and that only members of the public with tickets, can access the park on Saturday 28th from 2.00pm until the event ends at 10.00pm.
- 3.17 The Key Dates are as follows.
- Friday 27 October – 8am – Set Up
Friday 27 October – 6pm Event Begins
Saturday 28 October 10pm – End of Event
Sunday 29 October – 12pm – Off Site
- 3.18 **Financial and Human Resource Implications**
- The request for funding of £8,207.00 for the Falls Park event is not included in any revenue budgets and there is no allocation to support ad hoc requests.
- 3.19 **Asset and Other Implications**
- Council officers will liaise with event organisers and promoters in relation to any potential environmental impact from events.
- 3.20 **Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment**
- There are no known implications.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations at 2.0 of the report regarding use of the parks as requested and for permission to fundraise. It noted the request from VC Glendale Falling Leaves seeking financial support from the Council of £8,207 to assist with the delivery of its event at Falls Park and referred the request to the next meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and agreed that officers would liaise with the club to ensure that it was aware of the Council's various funding streams for future events.

Sustainable Period Product Scheme

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 success of the Period Waste Scheme (March 2022 - current) and seek direction on future delivery.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of the report and make a recommendation that the Environmental Education & Outreach team will cease provision from April 2024 given that:

- current demand appears to have been met through the first two pilot programmes;
- there is no available budget to run a third programme
- provision will be established through the new legislation

2.2 The Committee is also asked to authorise the Director of City and Organisational Strategy to submit a formal written response on behalf of council, as outlined at 3.13, to the TEO consultation on the provision of free period products.

3.0 Main report

Background

3.1 The aim of the Period Waste initiative was to raise awareness and encourage increased use of reusable period products. This will have an environmental benefit as it will reduce the amount of period waste that is entering our waste stream and being landfilled, and it will also reduce plastic waste. Disposal of single use menstrual products - tampons, pads and applicators generates 200,000 tonnes of waste per year in the UK¹. In addition, sanitary waste can be made of up to 90% plastic.

3.2 In the most recent BCC Waste Composition Study (2014) it was found that 1.87% of all miscellaneous combustible waste (the largest category of waste we collect) was of a sanitary waste nature (including other absorbent hygiene products but excluding nappies). This means each household was producing on average 3.38Kg of this type of product waste per year.

3.3 This project was primarily focused on waste reduction but also had the benefit of providing a sustainable resource for those affected by period poverty which is an added pressure on individuals and families as a result of the current cost of living pressures.

3.4 The pilot scheme was launched on 30 March 22 to unprecedented demand and in less than 24 hours the pilot had to be closed because of demand. Through the scheme we provided free access to reusable period products to 3,159 people in the Belfast area. Council worked with the social enterprise, 'Hey Girls'.

¹ Calculation by Natracare 2018

(www.heygirls.co.uk) to deliver the scheme, where participants could register and order reusable sanitary products online.

- 3.5 Social media coverage and feedback on the scheme was also very positive. Commentary praised Belfast City Council for bringing the initiative forward. Over 95,000 people were reached through Council social media on the topic with over 225,000 people having viewed twitter posts promoting the scheme.
- 3.6 Market research targeted at participants of the pilot found that 94.2% of respondent use the products they received all or some of the time. 43.5% said they no longer use single use period products and 86.9% say it has lessened their use of single use products. The project has recently been awarded the Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful 'Behaviour Change Award for Tackling Single Use Plastic' for 22/23.
- 3.7 In August 22, SP&R approved expansion of the project and an additional budget allocation so that another tranche of the pilot could be delivered. This was launched in January 2023 and is currently ongoing. To date, 1770 individual orders of products have been processed during this phase of the pilot. As would be anticipated, the rate of requests for products has significantly decreased, given that products are reusable and therefore repeat orders from individuals would not be expected. This pilot continues to be promoted and it is projected that the remaining budget will be utilised by March 2024.
- 3.8 In addition to the extension of the pilot, a project with support from the Climate Change Fund was launched in June 2023. This project engages with partners in the Community Voluntary Sector (CVS) to provide them with reusable sustainable solutions to period poverty which they can then pass on to their service users. Officers have been engaging through women's groups and other CVS groups and have shared information with the Women's Steering Group as well as promoting the initiative through council's social media. Any group interested in becoming involved should email EnvironmentalOutreach@belfastcity.gov.uk

Future Considerations

- 3.9 Period products are essential items for personal care to address a normal biological need and should therefore be available to everyone who needs them, regardless of their economic status.
- 3.10 In recognition of this, the Period Products (Free Provision) Act (NI) was made by the Northern Ireland Assembly in 2022 and requires that period products will be made available from May 2024. The requirements of the Act go beyond seeking to make provision

for those in financial difficulty, there is a recognition that period products are necessary and essential items that should be available free of charge and accessible by all persons who need to use them.

- 3.11 The Executive Office (TEO) is currently undertaking a public consultation process which is seeking views on how best the Executive Office (TEO) can ensure that period products are 'obtainable free of charge' by 'all persons who need to use them', 'while in Northern Ireland'. Further detail on the background is contained in the full consultation document available here: www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-free-period-products.
- 3.12 A reasonable choice is required by the Act. Within the Act 'products' are defined to include tampons, sanitary towels and articles which are reusable. It is anticipated that there will be an expectation that council will be a partner in the delivery of this service though no details are available at this stage.
- 3.13 The TEO consultation survey is predominantly seeking the views of those who use period products and/or who buy products on behalf of other family members. Therefore, whilst it would not be appropriate for council to answer the TEO these questions, it is recommended that council should submit a letter of response outlining our support for the need for period products to be offered to everyone as they are essential items for personal care to address a normal biological need and should therefore be available to everyone who needs them, regardless of their economic status. In addition, we will request early engagement with Council to explore our role in any delivery mechanism which is envisaged. Our response will also highlight the learning we have gained from our pilot initiatives on period poverty (as part of our Gender Equality Plan and linked, Belfast City Council launched a pilot offering free period products for the public in council buildings and facilities and free access to reusable period products and) and stress the importance of ongoing collaboration around this issue.

Recommendations for Reusable Period Product Pilot

- 3.14 The legislative requirement to be introduced by the Period Products (Free Provision) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 will ensure that period products are available to individuals to ensure period dignity. The reasonable choice element will supersede the reusable period product pilot in that individuals can request reusable items within the legislation.

3.15 Given that;

- current demand appears to have been met through the first two pilot programmes;
- there is no available budget to run a third programme
- provision will be established through the new legislation

It is recommended that the pilot does not continue after March 2024.

Financial and Resource implications

3.16 To match the initial scheme would mean a further £50,000 budget which is not within existing budgets.

3.17 For reference, participants could choose to order a Full Cycle Pack (containing 1 x reusable pantyliner, 2 x day reusable pads and 2 x night reusable pads) to the value of £21.40 per pack or approximately £12.99 for a Period Cup Combo (including all associated costs).

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

3.18 The pilot scheme was designed to be accessible to as many residents in the Belfast area as possible.”

Several Members noted that they were pleased with the success of the scheme and hopeful that the introduction of the new legislation would help to ensure that period products would now be available to individuals to ensure period dignity.

A Member encouraged officers to join up with schools to maximise value for the Council scheme prior to its cessation in April 2024.

The Committee noted the report and agreed the recommendations as outlined at 2.0 of the report, with the addition that the Director of City and Organisational Strategy, in his written response, on behalf of Council, as outlined at 3.13 of the report, to the TEO consultation also highlight the Committees’ concern regarding the budget cuts and withdrawal of funding by the Department of Education for the scheme.

Product Safety update

The Committee considered a report highlighting the continuation of funding to support Belfast City Council’s activity in the area of product safety regulation.

The Members were reminded that, at the February 2023 meeting, the Committee had agreed to avail of in year (2022/23) grant funding, totalling £120,000 which had been made available from the Department of Business Enterprise and Skills (Office of Product Standards and Safety, OPSS) to support Councils work in relation to:

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- ensuring that businesses involved in the importation, supply or sale of goods complied with their legal obligations and to ensure that goods presented on the market did not present risk of harm or injury to consumers; and
- building capacity and capability of the service to understand and deliver requirements of the legislation, and to build strong working relationships with key partners and businesses.

The Members were advised that OPSS had now extended both grant funding programmes. Officers had reviewed the 2 available grant funding offers and had confirmed that Belfast City Council would be eligible to claim the available funding, in full, in line with the eligibility criteria.

The Members were advised that it was possible that these programmes might continue beyond the 2023/24 financial year, with further grant funding offers in future years. Therefore, to assist the Council in planning for delivery and to draw down future funding in a timely manner, approval was sought to avail of extended funding opportunities under these programmes should they become available in 2024/25 or beyond.

The Committee agreed to avail of the continued grant funding offers to support Belfast City Council's work on product safety in 2023/24 and any subsequent extensions over future years, if made available.

Issues Raised in Advance by Members

Street Sign Format – Councillor McKeown

With the permission of the Chairperson, Councillor McKeown addressed the Committee and explained that he wished for the Council to take the opportunity presented by the roll-out of new bilingual street signs to:

- explore the use of cló Gaelach, or an appropriate adaptation, for Irish language wording on bilingual street signs in Belfast, bearing in mind that accessibility assessment if required should be judged against the standards for this script format rather than Roman script;
- explore the possibilities to use a distinctive font for English language wording on all street signs to create a unique 'Belfast character' which will be readily identifiable as a feature of the city. This could echo, for example, fonts used on traditional black tiled signs, meeting accessibility requirements; and
- explore options around other scripts that may be required for bilingual signage in future, relating to other languages, to avoid any delays in delivering any such signage.

A number of Members stated that they would not be in support of the suggestions as they thought it was unnecessary and the costs would also be prohibitive, however they noted

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that they were content for a report to be submitted to a future meeting and that the requests could be considered further at this stage.

Lagan Valley Regional Support – Councillor Murray (Chairperson)

The Chairperson advised that he had recently been contacted by representatives from Lagan Valley Regional Park, of which he was a Council appointed member of the Management Committee.

He advised that he had been informed that the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) which, along with Belfast City Council and Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, provided core funding for the park had recently written to the Directors advising that it was withdrawing its element of funding to the park with immediate effect and that it would not be funding any works done to date this year. He stated that, obviously, this was extremely concerning, and he sought permission for the Committee to write outlining its concern and support for the Park.

The Committee agreed to write the Department of Infrastructure stating its concern at the withdrawal of funding from the Lagan Valley Regional Park (LVRP), concern at the lack of notice given and outlining its support for LVRP.

Chairperson

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City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 9th August, 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, I. McLaughlin,
McMullan, Murray and Walsh.

In attendance: Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development;
Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration
and Development;
Ms. L. O'Donnell, Senior Manager - Culture and Tourism;
Ms. L. Toland: Senior Manager – Economy;
Mr. A. Cairns, Zoo Manager;
Ms. C. Persic, Development Manager; and
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor McDowell.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the 14th and 28th June 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 July.

The Committee also noted that the decision under Belfast 2024 of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 26th June, had been amended by the Council at its meeting on 3rd July which impacted the City Growth and Regeneration Committee decision of 14th June.

Declarations of Interest

In relation to item 6.c) Major Events Update, Councillor McCabe declared an interest, in that she was employed by Féile an Phobail.

The Chairperson declared an interest regarding item 6.c) Major Events Update, in that she was a Board Member of An tOireachtas and left the meeting whilst the item was being considered.

Presentation

Renewed Ambition Partnership

The Director of City Regeneration and Development introduced the following report for Members consideration:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- Update Members on the Renewed Ambition Public - Private Partnership 2022 / 2023 programme; and proposed 2023 / 2024 programme of work aimed at attracting inclusive investment for the delivery of regeneration, infrastructure and a modern built environment for Belfast and wider City Region.
- Seek approval to extend the Council’s involvement in the Partnership Programme for 2023 / 2024 and contribution as part of a wider public-private approach.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1

- i. Note the presentation from representatives from the Renewed Ambition Partnership Taskforce, a public private sector partnership, aimed at attracting inclusive investment for the delivery of regeneration, infrastructure and a modern built environment for Belfast and wider City Region. The presentation provides an update on the 22 / 23 programme of work and the proposed approach to the 23 / 24 Programme.
- ii. Approve that Officers continue to support the 23 / 24 programme including governance processes, administering programme funded expenditure and entering into associated contracts on behalf of and with oversight from the Taskforce, and in line with Council’s procurement processes.
- iii. Approve the Council investment (from existing and approved City Regeneration and Development Budget) as part of the wider public private partnership contribution towards the delivery of the 23 / 24 Programme.
- iv. Approve attendance of Senior Officers at the proposed New York Real Estate Investment Showcase as part of the 23 / 24 programme, subject to event plans being sufficiently progressed and support from wider city partners, noting that it will be funded from the wider public private Renewed Ambition Partnership budget.

- v. Approve attendance by the Chairperson of the Committee, or their nominee, along with Senior Officers as appropriate at MIPIM 2024, noting that it will be funded from the wider public private Renewed Ambition Partnership budget.**

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Members will recall that the Committee agreed in June 2023 to receive a presentation from the Renewed Ambition Partnership (RAP) Taskforce 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.**
- 3.2 The Renewed Ambition Partnership (RAP) is a joint public-private initiative that is delivering a programme of work aimed at ensuring Belfast is positioned to continue to attract investment to underpin regeneration, development and infrastructure activities in the city required to deliver our inclusive growth ambitions.**
- 3.3 The Renewed Ambition Partnership is supported by public, private and key anchor institution partners. Partners comprise of Belfast City Council, all BRCD partner Councils, Invest NI, Belfast Harbour, Translink, Housing Association representation, the local development community and representatives from key city infrastructure, regeneration and development projects.**
- 3.4 In terms of context setting, it is relevant to highlight to Members that the Council have been supporting a public private sector approach to ensuring Belfast is positioned to attract inclusive investment and delivering sustainable and inclusive growth for the last eight years.**
- 3.5 The Belfast Agenda (the City's Community Plan) sets bold ambitions and economic development priorities for the city. Delivering inclusive growth and ensuring that no one is left behind is central to this vision. It aims to develop a competitive city region economy by creating 46,000 additional jobs and attracting 66,000 new residents into the city. Positively through the Belfast Agenda Statement of Progress, which is published every two years, significant progress has been made in achieving key short term targets including attracting £1 billion in private sector investment and securing a Belfast Region City Deal. The joint public private sector approach and shared focus created through RAP has been key to achieving this. It is an important platform and lever**

within our wider 'Position the City to Compete' proposition which seeks to build on the city's reputation as a unique destination for investment, tourism, development and supporting inclusive economic growth.

- 3.6 Members will be aware that whilst the city has experienced a positive trajectory in terms of regeneration and investment, there is still more work to be done to achieve the ambitious targets as set out within the Belfast Agenda, and importantly unlocking the wider inclusive benefits of such investment and, ensuring these reach every part of the city. This will require significant private and public sector investment. To give members a sense of investment required, the Belfast Agenda indicates the need for a total investment in the region of £7.5 billion by 2035. This includes the requirement to deliver 31,600 new homes for and development of 550,000 sq m of employment floor space to support the additional jobs.
- 3.7 The priorities within the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS) together with the Future City Programme and city-wide regeneration and investment priorities remain critical to delivering physical and inclusive development in the city. From a Community Planning and city leadership perspective, the cross sectoral City Development Board has identified housing-led regeneration; improving connectivity active and sustainable travel; supporting city-wide development and regeneration and delivering the Future City Centre programme as key priorities for the city's future growth. It is important to note that a number of Renewed Ambition partners are also represented on the City Development Board, underpinning the importance of a collaborative approach to city development.
- 3.8 Through our Inclusive Growth Framework, we are committed to working with our partners including the private sector, anchor institutions, community and voluntary sector and our wider public sector partners to create an inclusive city. The physical and built environment is part of an overall enabling framework to deliver on this.
- 3.9 Members will also be aware of the 'Reset for Growth' report that the Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission produced in 2021. This report set out a number of strategic priorities for action which would help support inclusive economic growth in Belfast. these included delivering a house building programme at scale, creating a sustainable, connected, and animated city centre, focusing on making Belfast a globally significant innovation hub in key sectors and building strong global co-operation frameworks.

Specifically, the Commission highlighted the need for collaborative working with partners, building strategic networks and relationships and developing viable investment propositions to bring to market as being critical to positioning the city globally as an attractive investment location.

4.0 Main Report

4.1 Renewed Ambition Programme 2022 / 2023 Update

As outlined in the accompanying presentation, the RAP 2022/ 2023 programme ran from 1st April 2022 to the 31st May 2023 and delivered a structured programme of work focussed on the five key pillars of Research; Events; Advocacy and Engagement; Communications and Repository aligned to securing investment and regeneration for the Belfast region.

4.2 Benefits achieved through the 2022/2023 Programme

As highlighted previously, to Council, RAP is one lever within the wider 'Position the City to Compete' proposition and forms a key element within the Corporate Plan. It aligns and complements other city partnerships including Innovation City Belfast, Belfast Region City Deal and alongside council-led activities to accelerate city centre living, Smart Belfast, Resilience / Net Zero and our Economic Development activities. It is a key tool in attracting external capital investment required to deliver key regeneration projects across the city.

4.3 Council's participation in the 22/23 programme has delivered a number of benefits in terms of working to achieve our corporate and city level strategic priorities. Members will be aware that in March 2023, the Council launched an Expression of Interest seeking to establish a long-term arrangement with an investor / development partner to bring forward the sustainable, residential-led regeneration of a number of Council assets within the city centre. Through the 22/23 RAP programme the Council were able to promote this opportunity with institutional investors at events such as UKREiiF and MIPIM. Attending these events provided Officers with an opportunity to hold one to one meetings with key institutional investors, banks and pension funds all with strong track records and focus on Environmental, Social and Governance. There was a significant footfall on the Belfast Stands at both events, and requests for impromptu meetings from investors and developers interested in Belfast. This interest can be evidenced in the responses received to the EOI which closed at the end of May.

- 4.4 The Belfast City Regeneration Tracker (Appendix A) was presented to the Committee in March 2023. This provided an overview of regeneration and development activity which took place across the city during 2022, as aligned to the Belfast Agenda and the eight policies set out in BCCRIS. There was positive progress across the range of asset classes throughout 2022, which is expected to continue through 2023 given the scale of schemes commencing or planning to commence. As previously noted by this Committee, in 2022 / 2023 there was a 2% growth in rates base (arising from additional development), which resulted in additional rates growth of £3.3m every year.

4.5 2023 / 2024 Programme

As touched on within the request to present report to Committee in June this year, Members were advised that the governance of the Renewed Ambition Partnership is via a Taskforce comprised of representatives of the public and private sector. Council plays a key role in both the strategic and operational management of RAP; including the development, management and delivery of the Programme of Activity; and supporting the governance processes, administering programme funded expenditure, and entering into associated contracts on behalf of, and with oversight from, the Taskforce. Members are asked to approve Council continuing to take on this role, with officers supporting the 23/24 programme including governance processes, administering programme funded expenditure and entering into associated contracts on behalf of and with oversight from the Taskforce, and in line with Council's procurement processes.

- 4.6 The presentation accompanying this report from the Renewed Ambition Partnership Taskforce sets out the core objectives and workstreams for the 2023 / 2024 programme. It will continue to be delivered as a structured pillared programme of work (Events, Advocacy & Engagement, Communications and Research). The 2023/2024 programme will continue to align to and complement other BCC led activities within the context of 'Positioning the City to Compete' and delivering a 'Global Future' - a key action area from the Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission. This includes work being undertaken by Economic Development, Tourism and Culture, International Relations, Resilience, the SMART team and partnerships including Innovation City Belfast, Belfast Dublin Economic Corridor and BRCD. In addition, the need to continue to work in collaboration with international partners,

including Department for Business and Trade (DBT) and Invest NI to promote investment opportunities in Belfast will be a critical component, notably through the upcoming Northern Ireland Investment Summit.

4.7 For the Council, the key aims and objectives of being part of the Renewed Ambition Partnership and contributing to the programme include:

- Securing investment to assist with delivery of our growth ambitions as outlined in the Belfast Agenda, and aligned to corporate priorities**
- Maximising the benefits of the Belfast Region City Deal investments**
- Identifying and potentially securing longer term institutional investment to support the implementation of agreed regeneration plans for the city, with a particular emphasis on housing led regeneration and city centre living**
- Securing investment in the built environment on a city-wide basis to maximise opportunities to create jobs, support inclusive economic growth alongside enhancing physical and social infrastructure across the city**
- Securing investment in key city infrastructure schemes including waterfront regeneration, connectivity, net-zero and innovation related projects**
- Investment to help address dereliction and support the re-use and preservation of heritage assets**
- Investment in tourism and cultural products to underpin regeneration priorities**
- Investment in clean tech, environmental and sustainability initiatives**

4.8 The Council has a lead role to play in delivering on this shared agenda. Supporting the collaborative partnership approach taken by the Renewed Ambition Programme to showcasing Belfast, locally and globally, to the real estate investment, development and occupier market is critical, as we seek to attract the right investment into the city to drive the delivery of key regeneration projects, including residential, commercial and forthcoming BRCD projects, to provide for sustainable inclusive growth in the city.

4.9 All five BRCD partner Councils have invested in RAP since 2019 and it has been an important forum to showcase the real estate investment potential for the wider Belfast City Region and forthcoming BRCD projects. BRCD, which seeks to deliver a 10-year programme to increase GVA by £470m and

creating up to 20,000 new and better jobs across the Belfast City Region is in delivery phase across 6 Council areas. Within Belfast, it will support the delivery of Belfast Stories, active travel through a new cycle & pedestrian bridge, a Smart District as well as innovative University-led centres of excellence in life & health sciences, artificial intelligence and data analytics and virtual production at Studio Ulster. BRCD is targeting a further £1bn of private sector investment in order to deliver the benefits in terms of jobs and productivity set out within the business cases.

- 4.10 The Renewed Ambition Partnership is supported and funded by public, private and key anchor institution partners, with external funding forming the majority of the overall programme delivery budget. Members are asked to note the proposed approach to the 2023 / 2024 Programme and approve the Council investment (from existing and approved City Regeneration & Development Budget) as part of the wider public private partnership contribution towards the delivery of the 23 / 24 Programme.

4.11 New York 2023 Real Estate Investment Showcase

The RAP Taskforce endorsed exploring the opportunity to organise a focused Real Estate Investment Showcase in New York as part of the 23/24 programme to meet with potential investors and occupiers, to ensure the inclusion of the real estate opportunity in Belfast and the wider region to these audiences. The partnership is engaging with other partners including Invest NI to gauge support and further endorsement. From a Council perspective, officers are working across City Regeneration, Economic Development and International Relations through the wider 'Position the City to Compete' proposition to ensure alignment with the planned International Relations Programme, notably New York New Belfast and on-going engagement with US Diplomats and Consulate. Subject to event plans being sufficiently progressed and support from wider city partners, Members are asked to approve senior officer attendance at the proposed Real Estate Investment Showcase, noting that it will be funded from the wider public private Renewed Ambition Partnership budget.

4.12 MIPIM 2024

Members are reminded that in previous years the Council has participated in the 'Team Belfast' attendance at MIPIM, and more recently in 2023 as part of the Renewed Ambition Partnership. MIPIM is the world's leading built environment

conference and exhibition. The Renewed Ambition Taskforce has recently endorsed a Belfast presence at MIPIIM in March 2024 and its inclusion within the Programme of activity for 2023 / 2024. The presentation to Committee from representatives from the Renewed Ambition Taskforce will provide further detail on how a Belfast Region presence at MIPIIM assists on the delivery of investment that provides for sustainable inclusive growth in the city and wider city region, based on previous experience at MIPIIM and looking forward.

- 4.13 MIPIIM brings together nearly 27,000 public and private sector built environment representatives from across the globe, including all major UK and European cities. It provides city leaders with an opportunity to promote their city to a global audience and connect with potential partners and sources of investment required to unlock built environment regeneration and development, while supporting the built environment industry to bring forward sustainable development and help accelerate on the road to net zero.
- 4.14 From a Renewed Ambition Partnership perspective, partners feel that attending MIPIIM allows Belfast and the Belfast Region to position itself to a global audience and attract the interest of institutional investors, developers, occupiers and funders in the context of bringing forward sustainable development to create a well-connected and culturally vibrant, sustainable city and region. The Partnership has therefore proposed a Belfast City Region presence at MIPIIM 2024, in line with other UK Cities.
- 4.15 The RAP Partnership feel that in order to successfully showcase Belfast and the wider City Region, it requires the civic leadership and attendance of Belfast City Council. The Council's involvement will align to and complement other BCC led activities within the context of 'Positioning the City to Compete' and delivering a 'Global Future' - a key action area from the Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission. Members are asked to approve attendance by the Chairperson of the Committee, or their nominee, along with Senior Officers as appropriate at MIPIIM 2024, noting that it will be funded from the wider public private Renewed Ambition Partnership budget.
- 5.0 Financial & Resource Implications
- 5.1 2023 / 2024 Partnership and Programme Support: Council plays a key role in both the strategic and operational management of RAP; including supporting the governance processes, administering programme funded expenditure,

and entering into associated contracts on behalf of, and with oversight from, the Taskforce, and in line with Council's procurement processes. Subject to Member agreement it is proposed that the Council continues to take on this role, with officers supporting the 23/24 programme including governance processes, administering programme funded expenditure and entering into associated contracts on behalf of and with oversight from the Taskforce, and in line with Council's procurement processes.

- 5.2 Council investment in the 2023 / 2024 Programme:**
The Renewed Ambition Partnership is delivered as a public private sector sponsorship fund and is supported by a range of public, private and key anchor institutions. The partnership comprises of all BRCD partner Councils, Belfast Harbour Commissioners, QUB, and representatives from the developer and built environment supply chain community. They contributed towards the 2022 / 2023 programme, with external and private sector funding forming the majority of the overall programme budget. It is anticipated that the majority of the 2023 / 2024 programme budget will again be funded through external funding.
- 5.3** Council has previously agreed to contribute of £80,000 towards the 2022 / 2023 Programme, and subject to Members agreement it is proposed that Council contribute £80,000 (from existing and approved City Regeneration and Development Budget) as part of the wider public private partnership investment towards the delivery of the 23 / 24 Partnership and Programme.
- 5.4** New York 2023 Real Estate Investment Showcase and MIPIM 2024: The RAP Taskforce are proposing that a Belfast City Region presence at MIPIM 2024 and a proposed New York Real Estate Investment Showcase as part of the 23 / 24 programme, with associated costs being funded through the 23 / 24 Partnership sponsorship budget.
- 5.5** Approval is sought for attendance by the Chairperson of the Committee, or their nominee, along with Senior Officers as appropriate at MIPIM 2024.
- 5.6** Approval is also sought for Senior Officer attendance at the proposed New York Real Estate Showcase; however this is subject to event plans being sufficiently progressed and alignment with strategic Council corporate objectives.
- 5.7** Travel costs for Council attendance at the proposed New York Real Estate Investment Showcase and MIPIM 2024 to be met

**from within existing and approved departmental budgets.
All other costs related to these events would be met from the
2023 / 2024 RAP Public - Private Partnership budget.**

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

None associated with this report.”

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. J. O'Neill and. Ms. A. Conway, representing the Renewed Ambition Partnership, to the Committee.

Mr. O'Neill explained the objectives of the Partnership, namely to:

- Continue to build collaboration and partnership in the city and wider region;
- Continue to promote and market the Belfast region outside Northern Ireland; and
- Increase engagement and advocacy with all key stakeholders, in particular, investors and government.

He provided an overview of its partnership with anchor institutions, key developers and professional agencies, together with its pillared programming of: Research; Programme and Content; Engagement and Advocacy; Media and Communication; and Repository.

The representatives highlighted that their next steps included taking forward their objectives, together with supporting the delivery of BRCD projects by attracting collaborative partners; and Belfast City Council's key inclusive economic and investment strategies.

During discussion, the representatives explained how the best practice initiatives from Denmark, Germany and Greater London, in creating inclusive real estate investment, could be used as part of the framework for Belfast developments to follow at the start of development projects.

They answered a range of questions on community inclusion and engagement, and Planning challenges, opportunities and joint working. In response to a Member's question in relation to social value and economic impact statistics, Mr. O'Neill advised that the main two sources of data included reports undertaken by CBRE and Useful Projects on behalf of the Partnership and further details would be provided.

In relation to the community planning process and community inclusion, the Director of City Regeneration and Development explained that the Renewed Ambition Partnership and City Development Board were aligned and there was community representation on the Board via the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sectoral Advisory Panel.

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After discussion, the Chairperson thanked Mr. O'Neill and Ms. Conway for their attendance and they retired from the meeting.

The Director of City Regeneration and Development drew Members attention to the recommendations.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Walsh,
Seconded by Councillor Duffy and,

Resolved - The Committee approves the recommendations outlined in the report with an amendment to point V. to remove the request of the Chairperson or their nominee, to attend MIPIM 2024.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed to the following:

The Committee:

- I. Noted the presentation from representatives from the Renewed Ambition Partnership Taskforce, a public private sector partnership, aimed at attracting inclusive investment for the delivery of regeneration, infrastructure and a modern built environment for Belfast and wider City Region. The presentation provided an update on the 22 / 23 programme of work and the proposed approach to the 23 / 24 Programme, and the Committee noted that, where relevant, the representatives would provide further information on the issues raised;
- II. Approved that Officers continued to support the 23 / 24 programme including governance processes, administering programme funded expenditure and entering into associated contracts on behalf of and with oversight from the Taskforce, and in line with Council's procurement processes;
- III. Approved the Council investment of £80,000 (from existing and approved City Regeneration and Development Budget) as part of the wider public private partnership contribution towards the delivery of the 23 / 24 Programme;
- IV. Approved attendance of Senior Officers at the proposed New York Real Estate Investment Showcase as part of the 23 / 24 programme, subject to event plans being sufficiently progressed and support from wider city partners, noting that it would be funded from the wider public private Renewed Ambition Partnership budget; and
- V. Approved the attendance of Senior Officers as appropriate at MIPIM 2024, noting that it would be funded from the wider public private Renewed Ambition Partnership budget.

Restricted Items

The information contained in the report associated with the following four 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.

Future City Centre Programme - Vacant to Vibrant

The Committee was provided with an update on the Vacant to Vibrant Grant Programme and the recommendations from the Vacant to Vibrant assessment panel.

During discussion, one Member highlighted that a copy of the boundary map of the City Centre used for the Programme would be useful. A Member also noted the positive impact the initiative was making in terms of rates and employment.

The Committee:

- Noted the update in relation to the city centre Vacant to Vibrant pilot capital grant scheme;
- Agreed to the recommended grant awards as outlined within Section 3.9 of the report; and
- Agreed to the recommended proposal that applications for Grant 3 (meanwhile/pop up) at £2,500 are approved by the Director of City Regeneration and Development under the Scheme of Delegation and reported to the Committee at a future date.

Update on Externally Funded Projects: Active Travel Enablers, Grey to Green and South West Quarter

The Committee was provided with an overview on the Council's Grey to Green, Active Travel Enablers and South-West Quarter Revitalisation delivery projects as previously approved by the Committee in October 2022.

During discussion, in relation to the additional covered cycle locations listed under 3.16 of the report, the Development Manager confirmed that the Better Gym at Connswater could also be placed on the list of back up sites, subject to assessment.

After discussion, the Committee:

- I. Noted the update regarding the Grey to Green City Centre Fund grant, Active Travel Enablers Project grant and DfC South West Quarter funding;
- II. Approved the recommended funding agreements contained within the report, specifically:

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- a. The Grey to Green Grants as included within item 3.7 of the report
 - b. the Grey to Green Business Improvement District (BID) led interventions as included within item 3.8 of the report
 - c. The Secure Cycle Parking grants within item 3.14 of the report and the additional covered cycle locations within item 3.16 of the report
- III. Noted the work ongoing on the South West Quarter Project and the Funding Agreement with the Linen Quarter BID to deliver the DfC funded element of the project; and
- IIII. Noted the upcoming All Party Round Table to discuss the Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel workstreams across Council, would be rescheduled to an alternative date and evening time.

Zoo Collection – Update

The Director of Economic Development outlined the proposal which sought approval to re-locate the two elephants currently at Belfast Zoo.

After discussion, the Committee:

- Approved the transfer of the elephants to Burgers Zoo. In tandem with this, work would continue on a long-term development plan for the zoo which would consider not only the physical development of the zoo but also its collection. Regular reports would be brought to the Committee to seek a direction as this work progressed.; and
- Agreed that a Zoo audit would be undertaken in relation to standards management of its collection and submitted to a future Committee for consideration.

Year-End Finance Report 2022-23

The Committee considered the Quarter 4 financial position for the City Growth and Regeneration Committee including a forecast of the year end outturn.

The Committee noted the report and the associated financial reporting pack.

Regenerating Places and Improving Infrastructure

**Department for Communities Covid Recovery
Revitalisation Programme Update**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

To update Committee on the ongoing DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme including an Extension of Time to the Programme and the budget position.

2.0 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- I. Note the current status of the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme, including the findings of the Final Programme Evaluation Report.
- II. Note that an Extension of Time has been sought for the 'Castle Place Kiosk'.
- III. Note the budget position across the project lines.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Background

The CG&R Committee have received regular updates and provided approvals relating to the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme, providing updates on the £4.039m capital programme including providing approvals on time and budget implications. In August 2022 Members were provided with the mid-term Evaluation Report & the associated brochure along with an update on the remaining projects of the Castle Place Kiosk and the Entries Phase 2. It was also previously agreed that any further underspends realised within the Programme are reallocated under delegated authority to the Director of City Regeneration & Development to meet any additional costs incurred on previously agreed and committed projects with updates on these reallocations to be brought to this Committee at a future date.

3.2 Main Report

The majority of the programme is now complete, with the Entries Phase 2 project to be completed by September 2023 in line with the DfC Letter of Offer Process. As a condition of the Letter of Offer from DfC Evaluation Reports are required on a quarterly basis, and on the completion of the projects. A Summary of the draft Final Evaluation Report is included within this paper.

- 87% of People agreed that they were satisfied with the interventions taken by the council to respond to safety issues raised by the Covid-19 pandemic
- 90% of participating businesses reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the improvements to their businesses.
- 79% survey respondents agreed/strongly agreed that improvements undertaken through the programme

would encourage people to live, work and invest in this area

- 76% of businesses (64 of 84 respondents) reported turnover returning to at least 70% of pre-Covid 19 levels following council interventions in the area.

3.3 In total through this Revitalisation Programme the Council were able to support and deliver a large range of projects, many of which were aligned to the emerging Bolder Vision work promoting better use of outdoor and public space, testing alternative uses of streetscape and providing creative approaches to environmental improvement works. A summary overview of the projects delivered below:

- Grants to Businesses to purchase equipment to help them to continue to trade or trade safely
 - Over £800k in support to 454 small business grants to help SME's to deliver hand sanitisers, signage, safety equipment & control measures to manage social distancing;
- Grants to Business Cluster and Community Groups for physical interventions and streetscape improvements
 - £1.1m to 51 Business Cluster & Community Grant (BCCCG) capital schemes. This included a top up of £450k Councils non-recurring reallocation in 2021 to meet the demand of the scheme.
 - Funding to 35 Community Groups and 16 Business Clusters.
 - 7 projects delivered within the city centre and 44 projects delivered outside the city centre.
 - 16 Community Gardens and Facilities refreshed and redeveloped to attract greater outdoor use including facilities for supporting mental health & sensory spaces.
 - 8 outdoor hospitality locations.
 - 27 shop frontage improvement and local area environmental schemes.
 - 9 grants aligned to upgrading and expanding sports facilities including walking paths and improving outdoor facilities.
 - Given the success of this project, and as agreed through SP&R in June 2022, Council committed a further £600k of funding (including 10% for Integrated Design Team Support) for a further phase of the BCCG's. Officers are currently working through the process to roll this funding out in Autumn 2022 to support a further 20-25 projects.

- **Physical Interventions and Streetscape Improvements (Council Led & BID Led)**

This included the delivery of a range of city centre physical interventions aimed at testing and piloting how we better use the city's streetscape aligned to the Bolder Vision. This included reallocating traditional road and parking spaces for enhanced active and sustainable travel provision, improving access for businesses to utilise city space, to encourage dwell time and improve the attractiveness of the city centre.

- **Castle Place** - Reallocating on-street parking to facilitate a pavement extension and closing one lane to traffic to implement the first stage of the High St cycle scheme. Bringing forward an iconic city centre location and kiosk structure to attract footfall and dwell time
- **Union St** – pedestrianising Union St and building out parklets to enable businesses to utilise additional outdoor space. This approach has encouraged additional businesses to take up vacant space on the street.
- **Warehouse Lane/Exchange Place** – An Entries type approach to draw attention and use to the city's entries including lighting, iconic artwork and covered outdoor space for hospitality.
- **Brunswick St** – closing a section of Brunswick St to deliver an outdoor leisure and hospitality venue, bringing forward a pilot for how the designs of Belfast Streets Ahead Phase 5 can transform the area permanently.
- **Linenhall St** – Reallocation of on-street parking bays to deliver parklets, facilitating dwell time, business spill out and additional green infrastructure on the street.
- **Adelaide St** – due to the approach taken through this Revitalisation Programme, additional funding was secured from DfI to deliver the Adelaide St project. Working with DfI to realign the street, including removing on-street parking bays to facilitate pavement extensions, prioritising public transport and delivering innovative structures with historical references, additional green infrastructure, along with additional seating and cycling parking infrastructure.

- The Linenhall St, Brunswick St and Adelaide St projects all form early pilot schemes aligned to A Bolder Vision and the intention to bring forward the Linen Quarter Sustainable District.
 - Iconic lighting interventions within the Linen Quarter, Cathedral Quarter and BID One Business Improvement Districts.
 - The Entries Phase 2 – bringing forward the next phase of the Entries project to Sugarhouse Lane, Patterson's Place and Wine Cellar St. Phase 1 of the Entries won the CBRE Ireland Excellence in placemaking Awards 2021 and this approach will be further implemented through future phases.
- **Council Led Interventions to Encourage People Safely Back into the City**

Council directly delivered schemes to encourage people back into the city include:

- Hand sanitisers introduced at key locations across the city centre.
 - Social Distance signage and management of touch points and public seating.
 - An enhanced cleansing operation.
 - Enhanced Christmas Animation to promote footfall and visitors through the 2020 Christmas period
 - A targeted marketing campaign operated across social media, radio, TV and press channels to promote Belfast as a safe and vibrant place to visit.
 - A Belfast Gift Card delivered in conjunction with BID One and the retailers during the Christmas period to encourage spend and footfall within this key retail period.
- **Council Led Sustainable & Active Travel Measures**
- Two new Active Travel Hubs delivered at Cathedral Gardens and Queens University Belfast.
 - A modernised Belfast Bike Fleet.
 - Additional Belfast Bike docking locations.
 - An e-cargo bike pilot scheme.
 - 10 covered cycle stands delivered across the Council Estate.

3.4 Programme Learnings

The overall findings from the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme show successful implementation of the projects, enabling business and community groups to operate and recover successfully from the pandemic while delivering extensive green infrastructure and active & sustainable transport initiatives. In total the programme delivered over 535 grants to businesses and community groups, over 70 physical interventions & streetscape improvements delivering over 1200 items of street furniture & cycle infrastructure, 188 public hygiene items and over 65 marketing and animation events.

In addition to this, the successful development and implementation of this £4.039m programme has led to additional funding been allocated from Council, DfI and DfC & private investment through the BIDs. This programme has directly led to the attraction of a further £2.3m of support to deliver the interventions as outlined within this report, contributing to the delivery of the Councils wider objectives in the delivery of the Future City Centre Programme and A Bolder Vision.

3.5 Remaining Project Delivery

Two elements of the programme remain uncompleted, with one project at risk of over-running the September 2032 programme deadline. As such an extension of time to cover this project has been requested from DfC until March 2024. These projects and ongoing mitigating measures are outlined below:

- **Castle Place Kiosk**: following issues raised through the planning process it was agreed to rescind the planning application for the Castle Place Kiosk. Officers are currently seeking an alternative location with a plan to complete in March 2024.
- **Entries Phase 2**: The Entries Phase 2 project is scheduled to complete in September and will see the reopening of the previously closed up Sugarhouse Entry, running between High Street & Waring St.

3.6 Budget Position

As previously agreed the Director of City Regeneration & Development was delegated authority to reallocate realised project underspend within previously agreed projects within the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme, with reports on

the budget position to be brought back to this committee at a future date. Appendix A of this report outlines the final budget positions for the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme and Members are asked to note this report.

4.0 Finance & Resource Implications

4.1 All costs associated with this paper will be met from the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Capital Programme.

5.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

Equality of opportunity and good relations, and disability duties screening is complete on the overall programme with mitigating actions agreed and implemented.”

Noted.

**Department for Infrastructure response to
Committee Correspondence**

The Committee was provided with an overview of the correspondence which had been received from the Department for Infrastructure in response to the following issues which the Committee had raised:

- Follow-Up Correspondence in relation to the Eastern Division Autumn Statement Nov 2022 (copy available [here](#)); and
- Correspondence in relation to the York Street Interchange Place Making and Active Travel Review (copy available [here](#)).

During discussion, in response to Members concerns in relation to the lack of delivery of the Belfast Cycle Network, the Director of City Regeneration and Development explained further the ongoing engagement with the Department for Infrastructure and suggested that all of the issues could be discussed at the forthcoming All Party Round Table on Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel.

The Committee:

- i. Noted the correspondence between the Committee and the Department for Infrastructure in relation to the Eastern Division Autumn Report 2022;
- ii. Noted the correspondence between the Committee and the Department for Infrastructure in relation to the York Street Interchange Place Making and Active Travel Review; and
- iii. Noted that the issues raised in relation to the delivery of the Cycle Network would be discussed further at the All Party Round Table on Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel.

Growing Business and the Economy

Enterprise Support Service Update

The Committee was provided with an update on the new Enterprise Support Service – the regional initiative to support business start-up and growth that would be led by the Council on behalf of the 11 councils.

The Committee was reminded that, at the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in February, it had been agreed that Belfast City Council should lead on the submission of an application to UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) for the 11-council Enterprise Support Service model. It had also been agreed that, subject to additional due diligence and risk management work being undertaken, Belfast City Council should lead on the future development and delivery of the service on behalf of the 11 councils.

It was reported that, since that time, a significant amount of work had been taking place to finalise the detail of the programme content, start the commissioning process of the new service and set in place the delivery structures so that it could become operational from Autumn 2023.

The Committee was reminded that the service represented the councils' collective response to its statutory responsibility – set out as part of Local Government Reform in 2015 – for business start-up, social enterprise and entrepreneurship for specific target groups such as women and young people. Previously, the majority of the targets associated with the statutory responsibility were delivered through the Go for It programme. However, over time, the funding available for Go for It had been reduced significantly to the extent that it provided limited support for new start businesses and those target groups. Councils recognised the need for a more ambitious response so they had commissioned research from the Enterprise Research Centre at Aston Business School which identified a new model and associated targets that could create a much more dynamic business base across the region.

The Committee was advised that the enhanced support service would provide a continuum of support from early-stage enterprise awareness through to starting, growing and scaling a business. The concept was that the service would help people get the right support at the right time – and would also help maximise other available funding streams by helping businesses to navigate the complex support ecosystem.

In order to fund the scaled-up intervention, officers had identified the opportunity presented through the new Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF). This was the UK Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' (DLUHC) fund that was established as a replacement for EU funding (ERDF and ESF). One strand of funding focused on "Supporting Local Business". The Investment Plan for UKSPF in Northern Ireland was launched in December 2022. At that time, the Plan proposed that a central component of the Supporting Local Business strand would be the 11 council Enterprise Support Service. An indicative financial allocation of £17million - £12 million programme delivery and £5million for small grants – was set aside for the service. It was reported that UKSPF funding was available until March 2025 so the initial programme period would run from Autumn 2023 to March 2025.

Commissioning of Service Delivery

Taking account of the marketplace, the procurement approach for delivery of the business support services (that is 121 mentoring support; masterclasses; peer support networks) had been broken down into two main areas, namely:

- Engage and Foundation; and
- Growth and Scaling.

In addition to the delivery elements, there were a number of support elements that were being commissioned or developed in parallel. These included:

- ***Marketing and communications:*** this work was being led by Derry City and Strabane District Council (DCSDC). They had completed a procurement exercise for a marketing and communications agency to support with a range of activities including advertising, promotional and brand development. While DCSDC would lead on these elements of work, they would work directly with the overall Programme Lead and the wider team based in Belfast City Council, ensuring that there was a singular approach to delivery;
- ***Call handling:*** the Go for it programme benefitted from a freephone number through which business and entrepreneurs could be directed to the relevant delivery agent. That support would continue under the new service; however, it would be extended to cover the full scope of the NIESS servicing enquiries from entrepreneurs and new and existing businesses;
- ***CRM:*** in order to track all business engagement with the service and also support the development of relevant reports for funders and individual councils, a customer relationship management (CRM) system was being developed. Belfast City Council's Digital Services team was taking the lead on this and they would be supported by other council services such as the Information Governance Unit (IGU) and Legal Services in order to ensure compliance with all relevant obligations. The CRM would also be guided by the council's finance and grants management teams, ensuring that it could provide adequate assurances and information required, as set out in the funding agreement.

The Committee noted the update on the new Enterprise Support Service, including the planned go-live date for the new intervention.

Belfast Business Promise 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 an update on progress to develop and deliver the Belfast Business Promise, as a key commitment in the Council's Inclusive Growth Strategy and**

undertaken in partnership with Economic Development and Strategy, Policy and Partnership.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- i. Note the progress in relation to the development of the Belfast Business Promise
- ii. Note the ongoing development work to support a successful implementation process including:
 - Organisations who are operating as Partners to support implementation
 - Organisations who have signed up to become member
 - Approach to accreditation
 - Internal support to deliver
 - BCC approach to gaining membership as an organisation

3.0 Main report

3.1 Background

A key commitment in the Council's Inclusive Growth strategy to create a more inclusive city is the co-creation of the Belfast Business Promise which is our inclusive growth city charter. Members will be aware that a cross council team, led by the Strategy, Policy and Partnership in partnership with Economic Development, has been progressing the development of the Belfast Business Promise, alongside an external business working group and the council's Social Policy Working Group (SPWG). In addition, strong relationships have been built with the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter and Scottish Business Pledge Charter teams, providing a wealth of best practice information and learning.

- 3.2 The extensive engagement with organisations, services and businesses carried out to date has shown that there is a strong appetite for such an initiative, and its role in encouraging organisations to maintain and/or adopt high standards in relation to more inclusive business practices which bring about added value to society by proactively driving forward inclusive growth in a meaningful way. The commitment to bringing forward the Belfast Business Promise is reinforced within the refreshed Belfast Agenda, the draft BCC Economic Strategy, the Inclusive Growth Strategy and the work being taken forward by the Renewed Ambition Taskforce and Bolder Vision Strategy.**

3.3 Belfast Business Promise is aligned to and complements other strands of work underway within council including the Anchor Network on Commissioning and Procurement; BCC Social Value Policy and Framework; Social Enterprise Action Plan and BCC Employment Academies.

3.4 There is a real opportunity through the implementation of the Belfast Business Promise to achieve our aim of creating a stronger, more resilient, and fairer city economy and society for Belfast with inclusive economic participation. The Belfast Business Promise membership and network offers a real opportunity to promote the city's aspirations and engage more widely with local businesses and organisations, working in collaboration towards becoming a more inclusive city.

3.5 Progress to date

Pledges

The Belfast Business Promise is a business commitment to support the city's inclusive growth mission by signing up to a number of underpinning pledges around business practices. Organisations are able to use the process to benchmark against eight pledges and gain support from the Belfast Business Promise community and network to continually improve their inclusive practice and performance.

As agreed at SP&R Committee, the Belfast Business Promise has been designed as a free, voluntary membership and accreditation scheme which is open to all employers across Belfast – irrespective of size or sector – to consider and sign-up. It also provides businesses with recognition for demonstrating how they are having a positive social impact through their core business activities.

3.6 The Belfast Business Promise has eight pledges (as set out below in figure 1), which organisations will use to assess business practices and provide evidence of the approaches applied. It is proposed that larger businesses (i.e. currently classified as those with over 250 employees) to commit to doing more in each of the pledge areas.

Figure 1



An underpinning accreditation process has been developed which provides further details on the scope and expectations around level of commitment across each of the pledges.

3.7 Membership structure

It is proposed that the membership to the Belfast Business Promise is tiered as outlined below:

1st Level - Supporter – organisations who commit to evaluating their current business practices and developing an action plan to work towards meeting the pledges. All organisations start their journey as a Supporter, working towards improved performance and making use of the Belfast Business Promise resources and network.

2nd Level - Member – organisations who have made the Supporter commitment and can then demonstrate three core pledges with an additional three pledges chosen from the remaining five, that best fit with their organisational priorities. The initial engagement identified that the following pledges as

high priority and could be considered in agreeing the three core designated pledges.

| | |
|----------|--------------------------------------|
| Pledge 1 | Provide fair wages and contracts |
| Pledge 3 | Support the local and social economy |
| Pledge 8 | Protect our environment |

3rd Level - Ambassador - to achieve the Ambassador level of accreditation businesses must meet all 8 pledges.

3.8 Membership package

It is important that organisations and businesses in Belfast are aware of the potential benefits, support and added value created through the Business Promise. The key elements of the package, include:

- Promotion of their business via a Belfast Business Promise website and through the 'Mark', creating a unique selling point for the business and appeal to customers and employers in terms of showcasing the positive social impact of their core business practices.
- Access to an interactive members' network of like-minded and experienced individuals keen to solve common city issues and to improve business to business collaboration and support.
- Access to a members' support programme to help businesses to meet the pledges and improve their business practices (e.g. learning days around how to incorporate social value into procurement).
- Potential future opportunity to use the Belfast Business Promise accreditation to access BCC employment academies and procurement opportunities.
- Ability to capture and demonstrate the social value contributed through core business activities through an underpinning monitoring and evaluation framework.
- Signposting to best practice information, advice and support through the on-line website and members' programme of activity.
- Improved links through the Promise team and other members to communities and target groups of citizens.
- Access to a list of Belfast Business Promise members and their business profile to identify opportunities to enhance business-to-business working and trade as well as direct linkages to the labour relations agency network and other best practice organisations.

3.9 Pilot Phase: April - November 2023

A pilot phase was agreed to refine and further develop the Belfast Business Promise model in order to continue the collaborative approach to the design of the charter and to support sustainable and effective delivery. This phase has the following ambitions:

- Development of accreditation criteria and the supporting processes.
- Establish expert panel to provide assurance and accredit organisations against the criteria.
- Secure commitment from 20 organisations to sign up to the Belfast Business Promise to test the criteria and shape future delivery and the offer.
- Implement Promise Learning Days and provide practical supports to organisations to meet their selected pledges.

3.10 Progress achieved to date includes:

- Development of accreditation criteria for all pledges.
- Expert panels established to provide accreditation with the first members expected to be accredited by January 2024.
- Established a network of BBP Partners who can provide direct support to in achieving membership status and develop their business practices. These include...
- In the first eight weeks following the go-live date of 24th April 2023, 35 organisations have been engaged and of this, 21 organisations are now signed up to the Belfast Business Promise and going through the process of accreditation. These include:

| Private Sector | Public Sector | Third Sector |
|---|---|--|
| Exploristics Change Over Technologies BT People 1st MSC Group Honeycomb Jobs Babcock | Queen's University Belfast Labour Relations Agency Belfast City Council Ulster University Translink | East Belfast Enterprise Diversity Mark Lighthouse Orchardville NOW Group Social Enterprise NI Footprints Women's Centre GEMS NI |

Further engagement is ongoing to secure partner organisations and special support across pledge areas. Partner organisations include those opposite:

- 3.12 Officers have also hosted two Promise Learning Days where organisations have availed of specialist support across the following pledge areas:

Pledge 1 - Provide fair wages and contracts: facilitated by Labour Relations Agency

Pledge 2 - Provide opportunities into work: facilitated by Belfast City Council – Employability & Skills Team

Pledge 3 - Recruit Inclusively: facilitated by Labour Relations Agency and Diversity Mark

Pledge 4 - Support the local and social economy: facilitated by Juno Planning and Social Enterprise NI

Pledge 7 - Work in partnership with our communities: facilitated by Now Group

Pledge 8 - Protect our environment: facilitated by Climate Essentials

3.13 **BCC Accreditation**

As an organisation, the Council has also signed-up to the Belfast Business Promise demonstrating leadership and commitment to working with employers to deliver on the ambition of creating an inclusive city. Detailed internal discussions have been ongoing with key officers and professions to assess the Council's position in relation to meeting the pledges and the subsequent action planning to ensure continuous improvement.

It is important to recognise the significant progress which has already been made in key areas including Social Value Procurement Policy, the work of the Employability and Skills team and community engagement teams, HR, Legal, Finance etc. and as an organisation we have made strides towards achieving the Belfast Business Promise accreditation ourselves, in particular, providing fair wages and contracts (pledge 1) with the Council achieving accreditation from the Real Living Wage Foundation for paying the Real Living Wage in February 2023 and the progress being made in terms of Protecting our Environment (pledge 8).

3.14 **Financial & Resource Implications**

None at present. A temporary BBP core team has been established consisting of 3 officers until the end of the pilot phase in November 2023 and supported through the delivery

of ongoing activity and programmes of work across Council, from Climate Commission through to HR, Economic Development etc.

3.15 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

As agreed within the initial Inclusive Growth Commitments equality screening, a separate screening is being undertaken as part of the Belfast Business Promise pilot phase. The findings from the initial screening are already being utilised to inform the development and content.”

The Committee:

- i. Noted the progress in relation to the development of the Belfast Business Promise; and
- ii. Noted the ongoing development work to support a successful implementation process including:
 - Organisations who were operating as Partners to support implementation;
 - Organisations who have signed up to become member.
 - Approach to accreditation; and
 - Internal support to deliver BCC approach to gaining membership as an organisation.

Eurocities Update

The Committee was reminded that Belfast had been a member of the Eurocities network for almost 30 years. Eurocities was a network of more than 200 major European cities, across 38 countries, made up of the elected local and municipal governments of the major cities. The activity of the network was structured through a number of thematic working areas, including Cultural Development, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Placemaking and Sustainability. Belfast had participated in a number of the groups, based on particular areas of need or interest to the council and the city at that time, and had also shared learning on a range of topics and had availed of the network to engage with the key EU institutions in order to influence policy.

The Director of Economic Development advised that, whilst the city had limited access to the transnational funds due to its withdrawal from the EU, this network was still nevertheless important in positioning the city and building strong networks to support shared learning and collaboration.

Within Belfast City Council, there were a number of areas in which officers had been engaged and which remained priority areas of focus. These included:

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- Developing an innovative city – link to the Smart Belfast agenda and the work on the Innovation District;
- Transitioning to a net zero and greener economy – link to the work on resilience and climate change, with a focus on developing collaborative activity and accessing new research and insights;
- Internationalising Belfast's cultural proposition – learning from FDI and city positioning work, particularly in post-Covid world; and
- Cultural development and city animation – exploring the role of culture as a driver for city development – including both capital infrastructure and innovative programming.

The Director of Economic Development pointed out that, in 2024, Belfast was due to hold the annual meeting of the Eurocities Culture Forum in September. The Council's bid to hold the event recognised the value of Belfast as a cultural capital and would present another opportunity to position and promote the city during this year of cultural celebration. He explained that Belfast had last hosted the Eurocities Culture Forum meeting in March 2014. During that event, more than 70 representatives from 58 cities attended to find out more about Belfast's work in this space. It presented a great opportunity to shine a light on the city itself but also on the rich cultural and artistic talent.

He suggested that, taking into account the planned event in 2024 and the wider learning and opportunities presented by our engagement in the Eurocities network, it was proposed that the Council renewed its annual membership of the network for this year.

During discussion, the Director of Economic Development explained further the potential economic benefits of remaining a Member of the Programme.

After discussion, the Committee:

- Approved the renewal of Belfast City Council's membership of the Eurocities network, at a cost of €16,300 for one year; and
- Agreed that a report be submitted to the Committee in relation to the future benefits of Eurocities Membership.

Positioning the City to Compete

**Festive Lighting Scheme and Future
Christmas Programming**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 At this committee in June 2023 members were presented with options relating to the Belfast Christmas light switch on and potential follow-on activity across the city. During discussion at that meeting members directed officers to submit a report to a future meeting regarding the potential for Christmas events and lighting on arterial routes across the city.**

This report provides information in relation to that request from elected members.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that Members note the following,

- The provision of festive lighting and animation on arterial routes would require additional investment and lead time, and therefore it is not possible to provide this additional programme for Christmas 2023
- Future Christmas event programming on arterial routes could be supported via an existing Council funding scheme such as the Community Festivals Fund, or Vibrant Business Destinations may be the most suitable.
- The increase in costs outlined at 3.2 coupled with council's static budget is likely to mean that the current city centre festive lighting scheme will need to be scaled back for 2023.

3.0 Main report

3.1 At March Committee, Members were advised that Christmas Lighting Scheme in 2022 was year 3 of the existing Christmas Lighting Scheme. Feedback on the scheme was positive, however, there were additional requests to consider an extension of the scheme to include arterial routes. Further discussion took place at the City Growth and Regeneration Committee held on 14th June 2023. Officers were asked to consider further the feasibility of such an extension.

3.2 The installation, storage and maintenance of our festive lighting scheme is managed through a third party that was appointed via a public procurement process. This contract is currently due for renewal and the supplier has indicated that they have seen significant cost increases relating to insurance, energy costs and labour costs. The budget for the Christmas Festive Lighting Scheme has remained unchanged in the last five years and the Economic Development division have no additional budget available to fund the expansion of the lighting scheme. In addition, we have previously had access to an additional non-recurrent budget, given council's financial pressures this has not been allocated this financial year.

- 3.3 In previous years additional funding was allocated via council non-recurrent budget that allowed additional features to be added to our lighting scheme. We also previously received funding from DfC revitalisation funding that allowed us to distribute monies via a funding programme to business clusters on arterial routes for them to produce some Christmas related activity.
- 3.4 Given councils current financial pressures and reduced levels of budget within Executive Department budgets it is not currently possible for officers to secure the additional budget that would be required for any additional activity on arterial routes.
- 3.5 The aforementioned increase in costs coupled with council's static budget is likely to mean that the current city centre scheme will need to be scaled back by as much as half. This will involve a concentration of lights within the central business district.
- 3.6 Logistical/Operational/Financial Constraints – Lighting on Arterial Routes
- To have impact along the arterial routes, it is anticipated the level of additional investment for lighting would be significant. To install lighting schemes suitable mounting infrastructure and power must be secured from building owners, agents, or managers via a wayleave agreement. The cost and the lead time required to secure the wayleave agreements, and install the mounting infrastructure is significant, and it would not be possible for council or individual business clusters/associations to have the agreements and infrastructure in place for Christmas 2023.
- 3.7 Lights are typically purchased or leased, Belfast City Council leases its lights which allows the lighting scheme to be updated with new features, deploy more energy efficient lights, and avoid the costs relating to ownership that are,
- Purchase
 - Storage
 - Maintenance
 - Depreciation (typically festive lighting schemes have a useful life of 3-5 years)
- 3.8 It is very unlikely that constituted associations in arterial routes would have the capacity or resources to manage a 'local' festive lighting scheme – there is evidence of this from

the Vibrant Business Destination fund and it is a busy period for retailers - therefore any extension of this nature would almost certainly be implemented as part of the council's contractor remit. In addition, in respect of the Revitalisation Scheme, it was reported to be challenging to secure contractors for lighting installations.

- 3.9** In considering the information contained above members should note that given the logistical and financial challenges, and significant lead time to negotiate and secure wayleaves, access agreements and purchase or lease lighting infrastructure any expansion would not be possible until at least 2024. It should also be noted that if council were to be responsible for developing, implementing, and managing Christmas lights and animations along arterial routes additional finance and human resources would be required to recognise the significant work this would involve from several council services.

4.0 Animation on Arterial Routes

At CG&R in June, Members agreed on the approach/format to Christmas 2023 - namely a combination of a Switch-on event and city-centre wide programme of animation and entertainment as per 2021 & 2022 with an allocation for subsequent weekends. Members are asked to note that planning for this event has started, with expenditure incurred.

However, it was also requested that a future report be submitted regarding the potential for Christmas events on arterial routes across the city.

- 4.1** Members should note that the budget allocation for Christmas 2023 is £123,000 as presented at the June CG&R Committee. Within this budget, there was no allocation for Christmas event programming along arterial routes. Officers have considered the implications of resourcing programming and have concluded that significant additional resource would be required – or alternatively the current allocation for the city centre programming be used for arterial programming in future years. Based on knowledge and experience, officers have estimated that up to £10,000-£15,000 (per location) would be required for an impactful Christmas event programme; to cover elements such as staging, a parade, PA stewarding, event management and traffic management. This is on the assumption that the content is local performance.

4.2 Existing Funding Mechanisms

Members should note there is a pre-existing mechanism for groups to secure funding to programme activity during the festive period. The 'Community Festivals Fund' is administered via Culture and the Central Grants Unit. This funding scheme is accessible by community groups but not council. Those groups can apply for funding between £2,500 - £10,000, and this is for arts and heritage activities and/or other cultural events that contribute to the cultural identity of an area or group and celebrates the uniqueness of that area or group. The current scheme is closed. Any festival must take place between November and March. Council receives applications from a range of community groups and arts organisations.

- 4.3 At this committee in October 2021 members agreed the Vibrant Business Destination programme which provided over £500,000 including £475,000 of funding from the department for Communities to increase the footfall and vibrancy of business destinations across the city. The funding provided allowed group to form constituted associations and develop and deliver actions plans for their specific areas. The programme aims to fund 10 action plans along the arterial routes. Christmas events and lighting are eligible investments within the programme conditions.**

4.4 Summary

Members are asked to note the following salient points:

- **The provision of festive lighting and animation on arterial routes would require additional investment and lead time, and therefore it is not possible to provide this additional programme for Christmas 2023**
- **The Council's Christmas Events Programme based on members agreement in June 2023 to have a 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 activity during subsequent weekends is well underway. Members will receive a report detailing those plans at Octobers Committee.**
- **Future Christmas event programming on arterial routes could be supported via an existing Council funding scheme and the Community Festivals Fund is the most suitable.**

- If members direct officers to develop a programme of lighting and animation for arterial routes for 2024 this would need to be considered through the estimates process recognising the need for additional investment.
- The increase in costs outlined at 3.2 coupled with council's static budget is likely to mean that the current city centre festive lighting scheme will need to be scaled back for 2023.

4.0 Financial & Resource Implications

- 4.1 The current budget for Christmas lighting and animation was agreed by Committee in March 2023. There are no additional financial implications contained within this report.**

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

None.”

During discussion, the Director of Economic Development explained further the budget and timing constraints. In response to a Member's question regarding the locations of the Festive Lighting Scheme for 2023, he advised that locations were currently being explored.

The Committee noted:

- The provision of festive lighting and animation on arterial routes would require additional investment and lead time, and therefore it was not possible to provide this additional programme for Christmas 2023;
- Future Christmas event programming on arterial routes could be supported via an existing Council funding scheme such as the Community Festivals Fund, or Vibrant Business Destinations might be the most suitable; and
- The increase in costs outlined at 3.2 coupled with council's static budget was likely to mean that the current city centre festive lighting scheme would need to be scaled back for 2023.

The Committee also agreed that a report on the item be referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in August to allow officers to consider the locations of the proposed reduced festive lighting scheme.

Artist Studios Update

The Committee was provided with an update on the dedicated programme of work and funding scheme to support artist-led organisations in the city.

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The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting in February 2022, it had been agreed to open a new funding scheme for artist led organisations to provide financial and development support for this sector. In April 2023, it had been agreed to continue this support for the second consecutive year and £100,000 had been allocated to support Artist Studios and Makers Spaces in 2023/24.

The Senior Manager - Culture and Tourism advised that the “*Artist Studios and Maker Spaces Organisational Grants 2023/24*” programme was opened on 9th June and closed on 27th June. She highlighted that the purpose of this strand of work was to provide financial and developmental support to organisations similar to the support offered under cultural multi-annual grants (CMAG).

She explained that the Artist Studios and Maker Spaces Organisational Grants 2023/24 scheme was advertised widely. The information and application details were emailed directly to a GDPR compliant mailing list representing over 370 organisations from across the cultural and creative sectors alongside associated social media marketing. An online information session was held in advance of the deadline, as well as organisations availing of one-to-one support sessions with the Culture Development team.

In relation to the Criteria for Decision making, the Senior Manager - Culture and Tourism summarised the criteria and guidance for Artist Studios and Maker Spaces Organisational Grants 2023/24, together with the assessments of the applications. She highlighted that the unit had received 12 applications, one of which was ineligible, for Artist Studios and Maker Spaces Organisational Grants, requesting a total of £197,886. The percentage of funding allocated was based on scoring percentage. She advised that the recommendation was to fund 10 organisations, with support of £100,000.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed to the recommendations for artist studio grants, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

Major Events Update

(Councillor Duffy 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 provide Members with an update on the Major Events programme, including:

- **Belfast Maritime Festival**
- **St Patrick’s Day 2024-2026 Tender**
- **One Young World**
- **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**

- Antrim Coast & Belfast - Northern Ireland Official Bid - World Road Running Championships 2025 – 2026
- Approve officers working with DfC to understand the requirements of a future bid for the Oireachtas na Samhna festival in 2025/26. With future reports coming back to this committee prior to any binding bid being submitted.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that Members:

- Note the update on the Belfast Maritime Festival.
- Note the contents of the update on St Patrick's Day including the procurement approach for 2024-2026
- Note the update on One Young World
- Note and approve support for One Young World Delegates under the 2024 programme development strand.
- Note the update on the bid for the Fleadh Cheoil,
- Note the update regarding the UK and Ireland bid to host the European Football Championships in 2028
- Note the request for support for the World Road Running Championships 2025 – 2026 and the proposal for officers to provide a non-binding letter indicating a road closure application will be submitted if the bid is successful

3.0 Main report

3.1 Belfast Maritime Festival

This year's 'Belfast Maritime Festival' will be held on Saturday 9th and Sunday 10th September 2023, 11am – 6pm, in the Titanic Quarter with a programme that stretches from Queens Quay to HMS Caroline/Titanic Distillers. The aim is to create an inclusive event that appeals to all demographics celebrating all that is good and creative about Belfast, at an accessible location in the city highlighting our current tourism, heritage, culture, and maritime offering and showcasing our existing landmarks.

The event is coordinated and implemented under a governance structure with key working groups reporting to the Programme Board, which consists of senior representatives from Council, Belfast Harbour Commissioners and Maritime Belfast Trust.

3.1.1 The draft programme includes:

- An interactive kid's zone at the front of the SSE, adjacent to Queens Quay which will host several visiting vessels including Granuaile, the Grace O'Malley, and both the Royal Navy and Irish Navy
- Street Theatre in the Arc, with further visiting vessels within Abercorn Marina
- The area around Hamilton Dock (the Nomadic) will host traditional shipbuilding displays and a large-scale community co-design photography project, delivered in partnership with Maritime Belfast Trust.
- The Titanic Slipways will be a hive of activity, hosting the Belfast Bazaar - food and craft markets – and the unique 'Science Street' curated for the festival by NI Science Festival
- Music is a core element of the festival, and the Slipways will be the location for the main stage, hosting a full day of artists. This will be supplemented by other stages at Hamilton Dock and the Soundyard
- Due to major infrastructure programmes, the event footprint on the Co. Antrim side of the river is unfortunately limited, but Sailortown have been engaged to programme activity including within St Joseph's.
- Waterfront Neighbourhood Groups in and around the Lagan will be engaged to participate in the Photography Co-design Project via Maritime Belfast Trust.

3.1.2 Visit Belfast and BCC Corporate Communications have developed a regional and out of state campaign in as per the terms and conditions of TNI's Letter of Offer. The festival press launched on 24 July 2023 with all paid activity commencing 31 July until the 10th of September 2023. The Campaign will consist of outdoor, digital, radio, social media across NI and ROI.

3.2 St Patrick's Day 2024-2026 Tender

The purpose of this part of the report is to provide Members with a brief update on the recent tender exercise. At the April Committee, the Tourism and Events Workplan was presented, and members approved the allocation of £300,000 to St Patricks Day 2024. Furthermore, in June, members were provided with information on the tender exercise required for engaging the creative sector to deliver elements of future St. Patrick's Celebrations. This tender has now been posted,

with submissions expected at the end of August. 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.

3.3 One Young World

3.3.1 Members will be aware that Belfast is hosting the One Young World Global Summit in Belfast from 2-5 October 2023. A global summit with a mission to create a world where leaders are empowered to build a fair, sustainable future for all through identifying, promoting, and connecting the world's most impactful young leaders. Previous host cities include Manchester, Dublin, London, Bogota, Ottawa, and Munich, with Belfast handing on the baton to Montreal for 2024. The Summit provides a global forum for young leaders to experience four days of speeches, panels, networking, and workshops, partnering with 190+ global businesses and educational institutions. It traditionally attracts delegates from 190+ countries, which sees some 2,000 + young delegates visit the host city for four nights, generating an estimated economic impact of £3.4m. As well as the young delegates, the summit attracts some 40+ global leaders, 100+ international journalists and 100's of leading global companies. One Young World will give Belfast global exposure as a young, vibrant, welcoming city as well as providing a legacy for the city on top of an economic return.

3.3.2 The Summit programme for the four days is summarised below:

| | |
|--|--|
| Monday 2nd October 2023 | |
| Arrival & Registration, Exhibition & Side Stage Open | ICC Belfast |
| Opening Ceremony | SSE Arena |
| Delegate Dinner | St George's Market/ICC Belfast |
| Tuesday 3rd October 2023 | |
| Summit Sessions | ICC Belfast |
| Cathedral Quarter Takeover | Cathedral Quarter |
| Counsellor Dinner | City Hall |
| Wednesday 4th October 2023 | |
| Summit Sessions | ICC Belfast |
| Community Dine-Around | Various venues. The Mac, Queens University, and 2 Royal Avenue |
| Thursday 4th October 2023 | |

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| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Summit Sessions | ICC Belfast |
| Closing Ceremony | ICC Belfast |
| Delegate Dinner & After Party | Titanic Belfast / Titanic Quarter |

- 3.3.3 Attendance opportunities for Council officials and members across the week are currently being considered, with invites and briefings being issued in coming weeks.**

BCC is currently seeking budget approval that corresponds to sponsorship opportunities for 20 delegates to attend the event, with a total value of £63,000. This budget is intended to be sourced from existing departmental funds and will be synchronized with the programme development of Belfast 2024. The intent is to ensure that the leadership qualities, knowledge, and ambassadorial roles of the delegates would be incorporated into the development and outreach aspects of the year's programming.

Additionally, the budget includes an initiative to establish a Youth Panel/Forum. This new platform would serve for engagement and culture alongside the advocacy board. The board would also offer a means for other sponsored delegates, supported by organisations such as the Education Authority, SEUPB, HLF, and Deloitte, to maintain an ongoing relationship with the city.

3.4 All-Ireland Fleadh Cheoil Na h'Eireann

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with further information on the status of Belfast's bid to host the Fleadh Cheoil Na h'Eireann.

- 3.4.1 At CG&R in June, Members were briefed on the Lessons Learned from Belfast's bid. The Belfast bid received very positive feedback from all sources. In June, members agreed to commit to supporting the Ards Branch in attendance at several crucial events. In addition, members were furnished with financial information on the bid, including costs associated with Council staff attending Mullingar.**
- 3.4.2 A Belfast delegation will be attending the Fleadh Cheoil in Mullingar from Wednesday 9 - Saturday 12 August 2023, which includes representatives from Belfast City Council and Ards CCÉ. Representation from Belfast is expected at this event to show commitment to the bidding process and to garner votes. The Lord Mayor, Chief Executive and Director of Economic Development will attend the Ard Ollamh Gala Awards dinner on 9 August along with members of Ards CCÉ. The Chief Executive and 2 senior Council officers will also attend the**

Oversea's Reception on 10 August with Ards CCÉ. Three Council officers will also attend the Comhaltas National Folk Orchestra event on the 11 August with Ards CCÉ, one of the main Comhaltas events of the week and a key opportunity for networking and lobbying. Lastly, Belfast City Council's contracted Health & Safety advisor for the Events Team will also attend the event on 10 August for a one-day operational site visit.

3.5 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 was anticipated that preliminary feedback from UEFA on the UK and Ireland bid would require some additional clarifications, but this was managed by the Central Bid Team

A Host City briefing from the Central Bid Team will take place early August. Members will be furnished with regular updates on the bid as and when further information is available.

3.6 Antrim Coast & Belfast - Northern Ireland Official Bid - World Road Running Championships 2025 – 2026

Belfast City Council are being asked to support a bid by the organisers of the Antrim Half Marathon to host the World Road Running Championships in 2025/26. The event consists of several road races,

- A mass participation ½ marathon to take place outside of Belfast
- A 5km elite to take place in Belfast City Centre
- A 1-mile elite race in Belfast City Centre

3.7 It is expected that the event would cost circa £1.5m to host. At this juncture the organisers have not received a commitment of support from Tourism Northern Ireland or another agency in support of the bid.

3.8 The specific support sought from Council at this stage is a course guarantee which in essence,

- Irrevocably undertakes, guarantee, and shall ensure that: The competition course will be made available to the MF to organise and stage the WAS event and shall give access to the MF and its guests in order to conduct visits.

- There is no restriction in respect to WORLD ATHLETICS and / or DENTSU on installing commercial advertising in the Competition Course.

3.9 Officers have reviewed the course guarantee and believe that given Councils power for road closures it would not have the relevant statutory powers to provide such a guarantee. Any event road closure is subject to consultation and cannot therefore not be guaranteed.

4.0 Instead, and in consultation with the bidding party, officers are suggesting providing a non-binding letter stating that if the bid is successful Belfast City Council will apply for the required road closures. But that application is subject to the standard process, including consultation, and cannot be guaranteed, and nor can any other form of support from Belfast City Council at this juncture.

4.1 Officers have been approached by officials from the Department of Communities to begin exploring a potential bid to host Oireachtas na Samhna festival in 2025/26. This is the longest running Arts festival in Ireland and is a celebration of the original Oireachtas – or congregation of authorities – which was first established in the 7th century. This Irish speaking event welcomes people of all ages and descriptions from singers, dancers, poets, writers, storytellers, actors, impersonators, and musical composers.

4.2 The event which typically takes place during the first week of November would be expected to take place in several cultural venues across the city and bring as many as 50,000 visitors to the city.

4.3 At this juncture the resource requirements, or precise role for Belfast City Council is yet to be established, and when this is understood it will be brought back to this committee for consideration. At this stage officers are seeking permission to continue working with DfC to understand the requirements of any future bid and will revert to committee to seek approval from members prior to any bid being submitted that might commit Council to a role or resources.

4.0 Financial & Resource Implications

All expenditure agreed in respect of the the Belfast Maritime Festival, St Patrick's Celebrations, and respective Fleadh and UEFA bids are within existing departmental budgets and approvals.

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There is a request for approval of £63,000 to sponsor the attendance of delegates at OYW though existing departmental funds of programme development for Belfast 2024

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

None.”

During discussion, one Member raised concerns in relation to families from deprived areas accessing the events outlined in the programme.

The Committee:

- Noted the update on the Belfast Maritime Festival;
- Noted the contents of the update on St Patrick’s Day, including the procurement approach for 2024-2026;
- Noted the update on One Young World;
- Noted and approved the support for One Young World Delegates under the 2024 programme development strand;
- Noted the update on the bid for the Fleadh Cheoil;
- Noted the update regarding the UK and Ireland bid to host the European Football Championships in 2028;
- Noted the request for support for the World Road Running Championships 2025 – 2026 and the proposal for officers to provide a non-binding letter indicating a road closure application will be submitted if the bid is successful; and
- Agreed that a report be submitted to a future Committee looking at the range of events and animation taking place in the city.

(Councillor Nic Bhranair in the Chair)

Music Strategy Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report and associated appendix:

“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 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’**

- Agree the actions for remainder of 2023/24 as set out in the report and in Appendix 1 including budget implications to be met from existing departmental budgets.

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.
- 3.2** 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. £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.
- 3.3** In April 2023, members approved a range of initiatives to progress elements of the music strategy. In June 2023, members received an update on current initiatives and approved additional actions. Within both papers, there are a range of pre-existing commitments for the remaining financial year which are now progressing at pace. These include;
- The Pipeline Investment Fund for music venues
 - The creation of a digital music support service and marketing channels
 - The Music Industry Mentoring Programme for 2023/24
 - Continuation of Gradam Ceoil bursaries
 - Expansion of the Output Conference, Ireland’s biggest one-day music conference and live music showcase
 - The City of Music Industry Sessions
 - Support for international exchanges with other UNESCO Cities of Music, namely Hannover, Germany and London, Ontario Canada
 - A micro-grant programme, available to individual musicians, to assist with costs incurred within their art form

- 3.4 In June 2023, members also received an update on the recruitment and selection of the Belfast Region Music Board comprising of 25 members, to bring to life the UNESCO City of Music designation. The board has been meeting monthly since April 2023 to map further initiatives to roll out in this financial year and beyond.
- 3.5 The Belfast Region Music Board met in June and July 2023 to agree a detailed and profiled delivery plan, containing initiatives to address a range of areas, most necessary to fulfil during the remainder of the financial year. These initiatives and associated budgets are detailed in Appendix 1.
- 3.6 UNESCO Music Business Ambassador

Theme two of the strategy has a focus on exploring and developing professional development opportunities to educate and equip music organisations and businesses to build sustainable career pathways within the sector. In particular, action 6.5 aims to pilot the creation of a UNESCO Music Business Ambassador (MBA) – a recurring two-year role to guide City Council in identifying the needs of workers in music and the opportunities for personal development and growth. It is proposed to allocate £30,000 annually to the Music Business Ambassador role to support the following priorities:

- 5.3 : Identify, select and allocate funding for a three-year period to support the development, delivery and promotion of a set of core music business flagship events
- 6.3 : Create more opportunities for cultural leaders and business owners to learn from and share best practice with international counterparts
- 7.1 : Develop a music business accelerator programme to grow micro-businesses into small businesses and beyond
- 7.4 : Develop a Sponsorship Toolkit to help music organisations attract private funding and educate leaders on pitching best practice. Create opportunities for third sector and private sector matching and meet-ups
- 7.6 : Develop an export strategy to support the promotion of music businesses alongside the promotion of musical talent

- 3.7 As this role is developed and recruited, officials will engage with colleagues in Enterprise and Business Growth and other teams across Council to ensure alignment with other support packages provided across Council and explore opportunities to add further value to these initiatives.

3.8 Health and wellbeing

Theme one of the Music Strategy focuses on placing artists at the heart, a portion of which is built upon the aspiration within the Belfast Agenda that Belfast will be a city *'where everyone experiences good health and wellbeing'*.

- 3.9 Two priorities within Theme One are particularly relevant to this ambition:

- 1.8 : Alongside any financial assistance granted to creators, provide recipients with the opportunity to undertake a health and well-being one-to-one session with trained medical experts
- 2.8 : Co-design with sectoral stakeholders and fund a programme of practical well-being events and initiatives to ensure the physical and mental health of music creators is safeguarded and protected throughout the year. This should include a mechanism for reporting and dealing with inappropriate behaviour

- 3.10 The outcome of fulfilling these priorities is that Belfast will have a more inclusive, healthy and safe music community. It is proposed that to complete these priorities, Council should seek to work with music organisations that have a strong focus on health and wellbeing, such as Help Musicians NI and Mental Health England, that could then expand or increase their activity and reach within Belfast through a partnership with the Council. Through these partnerships, which will include a range of events and advice sessions, officials will ensure that these initiatives are also open to non-professional musicians.

3.11 Music Apprenticeships and Internships

Theme two of the Music Strategy focuses on nurturing the sector, with Priority 8 focused on working with stakeholders to drive forward the creation of funded opportunities to engage and support the future generation of creative freelancers, cultural leaders and music business entrepreneurs. This priority includes an action to *'allocate*

funding to increase the number of paid internships and apprenticeships in music businesses'

- 3.12 To achieve this aim, it is proposed to develop a pilot programme with Creative and Culture Skills NI aimed at supporting the next generation of music professionals and enable the growth of the sector by directly addressing skills gaps and shortages. Based on the principles a previously successful internship scheme, namely the NI Creative Employment Programme (NICEP), this programme will include work with employers to establish brand new internships in order to give people new opportunities in the music sector. The programme will provide part funding to cover wage costs for employers who create the new roles.

3.13 Accessibility

A key Priority within Theme one of the Music Strategy recommends that Council consult the live sector *'to encourage the implementation of Access Riders to ensure the needs of disabled musicians and performers are understood and met'* to ensure greater tangible support for artists with disabilities across the city's venues.

- 3.14 Members of the Culture team have recently met with the Musicians' Union to discuss their access rider and their work to encourage its widespread use, supported by its inclusion in all of their live contracts. It is proposed to support this priority through a partnership with the Musicians' Union and the University of Atypical to support awareness raising and normalisation of access rider usage and ensure best practice in engaging the sector.

3.15 Sustainability

Priority 11 of the Music Strategy focuses on sustainability in the music sector, specifically to lead the charge in greening the live music sector, embedding sustainability at the heart of its approach to business operations. Sustainability, including a conference on this area in 2025, was also a key focus of the application to UNESCO to receive City of Music status.

- 3.16 In order to align with these UNESCO ambitions, it is proposed to partner with experts in this area, such as Music Declares Emergency, Julie's Bicycle and Native Events, to provide a practical 'Go Green' toolkit with tangible recommendations and measures for implementation. This will be delivered by building on similar toolkits in other areas whilst promoting the use through a series of events and information sessions.

3.17 International collaborations

As part of Belfast's application and status as a City of Music, member cities are committed to '*work internationally with the UNESCO Cities Network to deliver shared music, skills and learning opportunities.*'

In July 2023, the first stage of our UNESCO City of Music partnership with fellow UCoM city London, Ontario, took place. Belfast artists Ciara O'Neill and Niall McDowell, selected by London Music Office and festival lead Darin Addison, travelled to Canada for a week of experiences that will have a lasting impact upon their career and has cemented a strong relationship between our cities. Highlights of the exchange included:

- Headline sets at Home County Music & Arts Festival which has a typical footfall of around 50,000 over the course of a weekend. This was the first time non-Canadian artists have taken part in the festival in fifteen years.
- A two day song-writing camp including representatives from UNESCO City of Music Ghent, Belgium.
- Extensive media coverage across platforms such as BBC NI and CBC London

3.18 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.

3.19 As well as collaboration between cities, UNESCO Member cities are also expected to take part in official UNESCO events, including the annual UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) conference which will be taking place in Istanbul, Turkey in September 2023. The main objectives of this event are to:

- Exchange on updated, practical information on policies and activities carried out by cities to further implement the objectives of the Network both at the local and international level and stimulate inter-city collaborations.
- Offer a key platform of discussion between UNESCO and Creative Cities on the Organization's priorities of action in the field of culture and development as well as other issues of mutual interests; and
- Showcase and broaden the impact and outreach of the Network and its member cities by nurturing dialogue

with other relevant stakeholders, notably those from the local levels.

Officials from the Culture Development team will be in attendance at this important event to highlight the work that Belfast is undertaking as part of the UNESCO City of Music designation.

3.20 Night-Time Economy

Priority 10 of the Music Strategy focuses on enhancing Belfast's night-time economy, culture and governance to ensure the city is fulfilling its economic and cultural potential after dark.

As members will be aware, officials from Belfast City Council are engaged and represented on the Purple Flag Steering Committee which is looking at a number of actions aligned to continued status as a Purple Flag for the city in partnership with the BIDs. This work includes a review of footfall movement across areas of the city, supporting Translink in making the case for late night services, provision of visitor services, lighting strategies, a night safety charter in partnership with Hospitality Ulster and discussions on role of night Tzar.

3.21 Financial and Resource Implications

UNESCO Music delivery is funded from existing recurring and non-recurring departmental funds. Costs outlined in Appendix 1 are to be met from existing departmental budgets allocated to music development.

3.22 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

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 the report and the progress made against areas of the music strategy, "Music Matters: A Roadmap for Belfast"; and**
- Agreed the actions for the remainder of 2023/24, as set out in the report and in Appendix 1, including budget implications to be met from existing departmental budgets.**

Strategic and Operational Issues

Response to Government Departments
EQIA consultations

The Committee considered the draft Council responses to the Department for the Economy (DfE) and Department for Infrastructure's (DfI) Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) consultation on their 2023-24 budget.

It was reported that, to meet the early deadline for the DfI consultation, Council officers had submitted a draft response for the DfI consultation on 12th June (as attached at Appendix 2) stating that the submission was subject to approval by the Committee and ratification by the Council. DfI was informed that, should any changes be made at the Committee or Council meeting, it would be provided with an updated submission. This draft was also circulated to Party Group Leaders in June via email, with no requests for changes being received.

The DfE consultation response had not yet been submitted. It would be submitted following feedback and approval of the Committee, again with the proviso of full approval or further changes following the Council meeting on 4th September.

DfI state that their budget would be reduced by 0.4% when compared to their 2022-23 budget. However, they stated that, in real terms, the reductions represented a 14% cut in its resource budget, which would require £167m of savings.

The draft response in [Appendix 2](#), comments on these specific proposals and also answers the general areas where DfI requested feedback.

In contrast, DfE have only provided an overview of their proposed budget reductions. The draft response ([Appendix 1](#)) therefore focused on the general areas where DfE had requested feedback.

The Committee approved the draft responses for formal submission as outlined in Appendices 1 and 2.

Chairperson

Special City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 23rd August, 2023

HYBRID MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

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

Also in attendance: Councillor T. Brooks.

In attendance: Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration
and Development;
Ms. L. Toland: Senior Manager – Economy;
Mr. S. Dolan, Senior Development Manager;
Ms. S. O'Regan, Employability and Skills Manager;
Ms. C. Persic, Development Manager; and
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor McMullan.

Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were reported.

Presentations

Sustrans - Low Traffic Neighbourhoods

The Chairperson introduced Ms. Z. Hawa, Ms A. Madden and Ms. P. Mansour, representing Sustrans, to the Committee and they were admitted to the meeting.

Ms. Madden provided an overview of the work which had been undertaken by Sustrans in relation to Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTN).

She advised that the Connectivity, Active, and Sustainable Travel Working Group draft action plan, which was currently out for consultation, included co-design, place based active travel initiatives to encourage walking, wheeling and cycling, together with a goal to develop and implement two exemplar initiatives in line with the Eastern Transport Plan (previously the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan).

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She highlighted that Belfast regularly appeared in the top 5 most congested cities in the UK, costing the Belfast economy £102m in 2022, and more than a third of Belfast households did not have a car, yet suffered the impact of air and noise pollution, road safety concerns and pavement parking in their neighbourhoods.

She outlined the transformative powers and benefits of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods in creating modal shifts, via:

- An alternative, holistic approach;
- Local trips would be walked instead of driven;
- Every property could still be accessed by car, but they might have to travel a bit further;
- Multiple modal filters would make it impossible to drive straight through the area, as each property accessed from 1 boundary road. Lots of streets would become quiet and safe to walk / cycle, traffic stays on main roads, which were designed to manage flow and driving short trips becomes less convenient; and
- A public health tool.

Ms. Hawa and Ms. Mansour described how Belfast could approach LTN design through: Street classification; Cell Definition; Filter Placement; Considerations; and Boundary Road Measures but that this must be done in tandem with the Department for Infrastructure, and that DfI will ultimately have the statutory authority to approve, and to deliver LTN's. Ms. Mansour pointed out that Sustrans was undertaking a demonstration project area in the Holylands, working with the residents to redesign the area in a street led survey and a co-design workshop, culminating in a street closure day in September with cycling and walking related activities and installation of temporary design solutions with the community.

The representatives explained the key elements of LTN delivery and highlighted that the success was dependent on looking beyond boundary roads and complementary measures, deep engagement, robust monitoring and communication, prioritising need, and political will.

During discussion, the representatives answered a range of questions in relation to consultation with the Department for Infrastructure and businesses, funding and the process to implement LTNs and its link to the Eastern Transport Plan, the need for buy-in from road users for LTNs to be successful, and the health benefits, together with the need for a school streets initiative in Northern Ireland,

Ms. Madden highlighted the resource research links within the presentation slides and advised that they would welcome any further questions and opportunities to present to the Council on the issue.

The Director of City Regeneration and Development advised that public engagement for the Eastern Transport Plan, which had been presented to the Committee

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in June, would commence on 4th September and Members might wish to provide feedback to the Department for Infrastructure.

She pointed out that the Connectivity, Active, and Sustainable Travel Working Group had been established under the City Development Board of the Belfast Agenda.

She reminded the Committee that the issues raised could be discussed further at the forthcoming All Party Round Table on Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel.

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.

European Social Fund Peer Group

The Senior Manager – Economy introduced the item and advised that the European Social Fund (ESF) had been replaced by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). She highlighted the importance of partnership working with the employability and skills service providers across Belfast and confirmed that structures were already in place to support this.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. A. Irvine, CEO of East Belfast Mission, and Ms. J. Kinnear, CEO of Ashton Community Trust, representing Belfast Works, to the Committee as the ESF Peer Group was no longer operating.

Mr. Irvine provided an overview of the work which had been undertaken by the European Social Fund Peer Group. He advised that, through the UK's membership of the EU from 2014 until 2024, Northern Ireland had received ESF funding (+35% match funding from the Department for the Economy as well as other match funding, including other government departments and local councils) and this funding had enabled the organisations to support over 17,000 local people who were among the most vulnerable in society with support for:

- The unemployed and economically inactive;
- Disabled people;
- Those not in employment, education or training; and
- Community and family support.

He highlighted that the overall strategic aims of the NI ESF Programme 2014 – 2020 were to combat poverty and enhance social inclusion by reducing economic inactivity and increase the skills base of those currently in work and future potential participants in the workforce.

He stated that Grant Thornton's Impact Evaluation of the Northern Ireland European Social Fund Programme 2014-2020 reported that 91.5% of respondents had said that the NI ESF had increased their chances of finding employment / undertaking training or education. It also stated that:

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- The NI ESF Programme delivered added value through offering a “wrap around” support approach to cohorts of unemployed people who are particularly distant from the labour market and who have complex needs;
- With 11,690 participants having gained employment, a conservative estimate suggested a wage impact of £212 million across one year; and
- For every €1 of NI ESF funding, an additional £0.77 had been generated in wages in a year.

Mr. Irvine highlighted that the reduction in funding from the ESF Funds 2022/23 (52m) to the UK SP Funds for 2022/23 (25m) was 27m. He described the impact this would have on the sector and the concern that the services would dissolve, impacting 17,168 service users and 1,600 members of staff who provide the support. Further concerns included:

- Competition from Local Authorities moving into ‘Delivery’ rather than supporting Community Programmes;
- UKSPF need to raise their Revenue Funding; and
- NI Assembly needed to ‘enter’ this work which is critical to NI economy.

Ms. Kinnear highlighted the experience of the groups delivering the services such as Ashton Community Trust, East Belfast Mission, Upper Springfield Development Trust, Impact Training and GEMS. She stated that the Groups and the Council needed to work together in partnership to carry out employability and skills services in a co-ordinated way.

She suggested that the Council could play a convening role for UKSPF projects to stop duplication and ensure discussions could happen beyond the first round of UKSPF which ended in March 2025.

She also advised that Belfast Works partners, delivering the Shared Prosperity Fund, would like to be involved with the relevant City Deal discussions, as their funding bid covered the City Deal area.

During discussion, Members raised concerns in relation to the lack of funding for the sector and welcomed further partnership working with the service providers.

After discussion, the Chairperson thanked Mr. Irvine and Ms. Kinnear for their attendance and they retired from the meeting.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Chairperson

Licensing Committee

Wednesday, 16th August, 2023

MEETING OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM AND
REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor McKeown (Chairperson);
Aldermen McCullough, McCoubrey and Rodgers;
Councillors Anglin, Bradley, P. Donnelly, Doran,
D. Douglas, Lyons, Murray, F. McAteer, McCabe,
McCann, McCusker, McMullan, Ó Néill and Smyth.

In attendance: Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;
Ms. N. Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and
Civic Services;
Mr. S. Hewitt, Building Control Manager;
Ms. V. Donnelly, City Protection Manager;
Mr. J. Cunningham, Senior Licensing Officer; and
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Collins and Gormley.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 21st June 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 July, 2023, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor McCusker declared an interest 2(f) – Application for the Grant of a 7-Day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence for Holy Cross Boys Pitch in that he was on the Ardbone Festival Committee and left the meeting while the item was under consideration.

Delegated Matters

THE COMMITTEE DEALT WITH THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN PURSUANCE OF THE POWERS DELEGATED TO IT UNDER STANDING ORDER 37(d)

Licences Issued Under Delegated Authority

The Committee noted a list of applications for licenses which had, since its last meeting, been approved under the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

**Competing Stationary Street Trading Licence
applications for Donegall Square East at Centra**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 To consider two separate and competing Street Trading Licence applications to trade at the designated site in Donegall Square East at Centra. The site is for night time use only.**
- 1.2 Members are reminded that the normal process for dealing with competing Street Trading Licence applications is that the Service will bring the matter to your attention for consideration.**
- 1.3 All the applications comply with the designating resolution for the site.**

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Based on the submissions presented and considering any amendments to the applications, the Committee is requested to consider each application in turn, taking into account Section 5 of the Street Trading Licensing Policy outlined in paragraph 3.5, and decide whether it is:**
 - 1. Minded to grant and approve the Licence to Mr. Patrick McCafferty; or**
 - 2. Minded to grant and approve the Licence to Mr. Christopher Hamill; or**
 - 3. Minded to grant and approve the Licence to one of the applicants with additional Conditions, and then;**
 - 4. Minded to refuse the Licence application under the discretionary grounds as outlined at paragraph 3.3 below, of the applicant who has not been granted a Licence.**
- 2.2 When minded to refuse a Licence application, the applicant must be informed that they will be permitted to make representation regarding the refusal to the Council, with such representations to be made not less than 21 days from the date of notice.**
- 2.3 As a consequence, the actual decision to grant and refuse the Licence will be considered at a meeting on a later date. There**

is a right of appeal to the Magistrate's Court against any refusal on these grounds.

3.0 Key Issues

3.1 The Street Trading Act (Northern Ireland) 2001 (the Act) places a statutory obligation on a district council to grant an application for a Street Trading Licence unless there are sufficient grounds to refuse it.

3.2 Section 8 of the Act sets out circumstances in which an application must be refused, however there are no such grounds of refusal applicable to these licence applications.

3.3 Section 9 of the Act sets out discretionary grounds under which a district council may refuse to grant an application.

a. That –

- i. The location at which the applicant wishes to trade as a stationary trader is unsuitable;**
- ii. The space in the designated street in which the applicant wishes to trade as a stationary trader is inadequate for the applicant to do so without causing undue interference or inconvenience to persons or vehicles using the street;**
- iii. The area or areas of the district in which the applicant wishes to trade as a mobile trader are unsuitable for the applicant to do so without causing undue interference or inconvenience to persons or vehicles in the area or areas;**
- iv. There are sufficient traders trading in the street, or at premises adjoining it, in the articles, things or services in which the applicant wishes to trade;**
- v. The nature of the articles, things or services in which the applicant wishes to trade is such that their sale or supply, or their preparation for sale or supply, would adversely affect the general amenity of the area in which the applicant wishes to trade;**

b. That the applicant has, in connection with the application, made a statement which he knows to be false in a material particular;

- c. That the applicant is, on account of misconduct or some other reason relating to trading activities, unsuitable to hold a street trading licence;
 - d. That the applicant has, without reasonable excuse, failed to avail himself to a reasonable extent of a previous street trading licence;
 - e. That the applicant has at any time been granted a street trading licence by the council, which was revoked or could have been revoked on the grounds that he had refused or neglected to pay fees or other charges due to the council in respect of the licence;
 - f. That the applicant has failed to provide the particulars required by the council to deal with the application;
 - g. That the applicant has failed to provide or identify suitable or adequate arrangements for storing any articles, things or receptacles in or with which he proposes to trade.
- 3.4 There is a right of appeal to the Magistrate's Court against any refusal on these grounds.
- 3.5 Members are reminded that the Council, in March 2011, agreed an amended Street Trading Licensing Policy to allow for circumstances where there are two or more applications for the same designated pitch within the City. Attached as appendix 3.
- 3.6 Section 5 of the Policy provides guidance on how to deal with competing licence applications and states that without prejudice to the discretionary grounds for refusing an application the Council may also take the following into account:
- 1. The suitability of the application in the context of the area or street;
 - 2. The suitability of allowing more than one application in the area or street;
 - 3. The commodities or services which each applicant intends to sell or supply;
 - 4. The merits of each application in the context of the character and appearance of the proposed area;
 - 5. Whether a mobile trader/a number of mobile traders

will affect the character and appearance of the proposed area;

6. Any potential adverse impact caused to the character and appearance of the proposed location by the application, by a mobile trader or by a number of mobile traders;
7. The extent to which the sale of the commodity will provide a useful service not otherwise provided in the area.

Details of the competing applications

Applicant 1

- 3.7 Mr. Patrick McCafferty has applied for the grant of a stationary street trading licence to sell hot food and non-alcoholic beverages from a hot food trailer measuring 4.2m by 2.4m. His proposed hours of operation are as follows:
 - Monday to Sunday from 10.00 p.m. to 3.00 a.m.
- 3.8 Mr. McCafferty is currently licensed to trade at night and has been trading at the designated site in Tomb Street since March 2022, selling hot food and non alcoholic beverages. This will be an additional trading site for Mr. McCafferty. During routine inspection we have found Mr. McCafferty has been trading without infringement of his licensing conditions.
- 3.9 Mr. McCafferty is registered with the Council's Environmental Health Food Safety and has a 5* Food Hygiene Rating.
- 3.10 Mr. McCafferty was asked to provide some additional information about his proposal. A brief synopsis of the information is below.
 - If granted the licence for Donegall Square East it would be his intention to surrender the Licence for Tomb Street so as to concentrate his efforts on the Donegall Square East pitch.
 - He has worked throughout Ireland at a number of locations and at events including the National Trust at the Divis Blackmountain summer solstice event, and the Lammas Fair in Ballycastle.
 - He states he uses as much locally sourced products as he can and also uses environmentally friendly

packaging. He offers products at affordable prices, through an extensive menu, (not just burgers) with vegan and vegetarian options.

- Whilst trading in Tomb Street, he does a litter pick once an hour and at the end of every night's trading he makes sure all litter is lifted, this routine would continue if granted the pitch at Donegal Square East.
- He has provided two photos of his trailer, 'The PattyWagon' and towing vehicle.

Applicant 2

3.11 Mr. Christopher Hamill has applied for the grant of a stationary street trading licence to sell hot food and non-alcoholic beverages from a hot food trailer measuring 4.8m by 1.8m. His proposed hours of operation are as follows:

- Monday to Sunday from 10.00 p.m. to 4.00 a.m.

3.12 Mr. Hamill is currently licensed to trade during the day and has been trading at the designated site in Balmoral Road outside 'The Range' since December 2018, selling hot food and non-alcoholic beverages. This will be an additional trading site for Mr. Hamill.

3.13 During routine inspection we have found Mr. Hamill has been trading without infringement of his licensing conditions. In April 2021, he was reminded about leaving his trailer on site after the hours of trading. He acknowledged the issue and resolved the matter.

3.14 Mr Hamill is registered with the Council's Environmental Health Food Safety and has a 5* Food Hygiene Rating.

3.15 Mr Hamill was asked to provide some additional information about his proposal. A brief synopsis of the information is below.

- He informs us that has been operating a catering trailer for 12 years and therefore has experience and knowledge of running a successful site. The trailer that he will be using is a professionally built trailer which is clean and well presented and his staff are trained in food hygiene.
- The general proposal will be hot food such as chips/burgers/chicken/etc. but other alternatives

could be added to the menu if there is a demand for them. He will ensure that the site is cleared of litter each evening. There will be no problem in managing each of the two sites as one is daytime and the other late nights. Staff are currently in place on the daytime site and would also be available to work some evenings.

- He has provided a photo of his trailer.

Consultation

- 3.16 The PSNI and DfI Roads Service were consulted regarding this proposal as the site has been vacant for a number of years. Their responses are attached as Appendix 1.

Police Service of Northern Ireland

- 3.17 The police have no objection.

DFI Roads

- 3.18 The Department have no objection.
- 3.19 The applicants have been invited to appear before Committee and make a brief presentation on matters such as how the business will be operated, the design of the trailer, how the commodities they propose to sell will add to the area and address any concerns with their proposals.
- 3.20 After considering representations from the applicants you will then be required to make a decision that you are minded to grant one of the applications and to refuse the other. Committee must give grounds as to why they are minded to refuse an application.
- 3.21 Committee is reminded that the applicants for the Licence whose application you are minded to refuse will be permitted to make written representation to the Council. As a consequence, the actual decision to grant and refuse the Licences will be considered at a meeting on a later date.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.22 If the Committee grants a Licence, the Stationary Street Trading Licence fee is as follows:
- Application Fee of £150, and

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- **A Licence fee, for Monday to Sunday, of £1250 per annum.**

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

3.23 There are no issues associated with this report.”

The Committee was advised that both applicants were in attendance and were invited by the Chairperson to address the Committee.

Mr. McCafferty indicated that he had already submitted additional information (as set out in the report). He reiterated that he would surrender the Licence for Tomb Street if this application was granted.

Mr. Hamill, who had been in attendance on line was invited to make representation, but did not or could not address the Committee.

The Committee agreed that it was minded to grant a Street Trading Licence at Donegall Square East at Centra to Mr. Patrick McCafferty to sell hot food and non-alcoholic beverages from a hot food trailer measuring 4.2m by 2.4m. from Monday to Sunday from 10.00 p.m. to 3.00 a.m.

As a consequence of the decision to grant the Licence to Mr. McCafferty and the fact that there was only one designated site available, the Committee agreed that it was minded to refuse the application which had been submitted by Mr. Christopher Hamill, on the grounds set out in Section 9 (a) (i) and (iv) of the Street Trading Act (Northern Ireland) 2001, namely, that the location at which the applicant wishes to trade as a stationary trader is unsuitable and there are sufficient traders trading in the street, or at premises adjoining it, in the articles, things or services in which the applicant wishes to trade.

The Committee noted that, when minded to refuse a Licence application, the applicant would be permitted to make representation to the Council regarding the refusal, with such representations to be made not less than 21 days from the date of the notice. Therefore, the actual decision to grant and refuse the Licence would be considered at a meeting at a later date. The Committee noted also that there was a right of appeal to the Magistrate's Court against any refusal on these grounds.

**Reconsideration of Designating Resolution
for Street Trading Sites at Writers Square,
Annadale Embankment and King Street**

The Committee was advised that under the provisions of the Street Trading Act (NI) 2001, a district council had powers to designate and rescind the designation of specific streets or parts of streets as being suitable for street trading. The Act also allowed a council to vary a previous designating resolution in relation to the commodities or services to be supplied in specific streets. If a street or the commodity to be offered had not been designated under the Act the Council cannot issue a licence for street trading from a stationary position in that street.

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The process of considering and reviewing the designation of streets is therefore an essential part of the legal framework within which the Council is enabled to regulate street trading in the City.

The Committee will recall that, at its meeting on 15th February 2023, it had granted approval to initiate the statutory process for the designation of 6 sites at Writers Square and 1 site at Annadale Embankment, which had been identified as a result of expressions of interest received from individuals wishing to trade from new sites. In addition, a previous decision by the Committee to refuse to designate a site in King Street was being reconsidered.

Based on the information presented, the Committee was requested to consider each proposal in turn and to:

1. Approve a Designating Resolution to designate the whole street or part of the street (site/s), where it may allocate street trading pitches. The Designating Resolution will include the operational date and may stipulate either:
 - Only specified articles, things or services or classes of specified articles, things or services that may be sold or supplied; or
 - Specified articles, things or services or classes of specified articles, things or services that are prohibited.

Or

2. Decide not to proceed with any or all of the proposals.

In addition to making any Designating Resolution, the Committee might, having considered all comments, record any reasonable conditions that should be applied to a subsequent licence. For example, these might include hours of trade, days of trade, duration of licence.

The Committee was reminded that, once the site became designated it would subsequently have to consider any applications that might be received for a Street Trading Licence on any of the sites.

At that time, the Committee would assess the suitability and quality of the proposals and might decide to grant or refuse a licence within the requirements of the Act. Any Street Trading Licence granted might also be subject to reasonable conditions which could be used to control the commodities being sold, potential nuisance, etc.

The Members were informed that the designation process involved seeking comments from interested parties, including relevant statutory bodies, through public advertisement and consultation. The Street Trading Act (NI) 2001 required the Council to ensure that each application was fairly and objectively assessed, that all relevant factors were considered and, in doing so, the Council must consult with the:

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- PSNI, and
- Department for Infrastructure - Roads.

The Council may also consult other persons as it considers appropriate. Such consultees might include local residents, business and commercial premises in the vicinity of the site in respect of which the application has been received.

The Committee then proceeded to consider each of the sites in turn:

Writers Square (6 sites)

The proposal was for Commodities to be determined.

The Department for Communities (DfC) own the square and had made the proposal. Any subsequent applicant for a Street Trading Licence would first require agreement from the DfC to use the Square. DfC want to encourage a range of commodities such as arts and crafts, fresh food, hot and cold non – alcoholic beverages. There will be no late night trade.

The DfC has discussed their proposal with Destination CQ Business Improvement District (BID) Board and it had its support.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland and DfI Roads had no objection and no responses were received to the public notice.

Annadale Embankment in layby

The proposal was for hot and cold non-alcoholic beverages, confectionery, ice cream and cold food or similar commodities.

The Police had no objection and acknowledged that no night time hot food traders sites were being considered. The Department for Infrastructure – Roads had no objection to the proposal and no responses were received to the public notice.

A. King Street, second parking bay moving away from Castle Court.

The proposal was for a site to trade in hot and cold food and non-alcoholic beverages at night time.

The Committee was reminded that it had previously agreed to consider a request from Councillor McCusker that the Committee reconsiders its decision, of 10th March 2021, to refuse to designate a proposed new street trading site in King Street.

In seeking to have the decision of 10th March 2021 reconsidered, Councillor McCusker had provided some additional information where the designation applicant had offered to provide security at the proposed trading site on the nights he would be operating.

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The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 10th March 2021, it was agreed that, based on the information presented, including concerns which had been raised by both the PSNI and Belfast City Centre Management, the proposal for a site to trade in hot and cold food and non-alcoholic beverages at night-time, at the second parking bay, moving away from Castle Court, on King Street, be refused.

The Members were advised that the designation process was about the principle of a street trading pitch being at the location. Matters regarding the suitability of a particular person, the stall and the ability to manage the site were considered as part of the licensing process. The person requesting a site to be designated, was merely a 'trigger' for the process and they might not be the person who is ultimately granted the Street Trading Licence to operate at the site. The Members were reminded also that on occasions the Committee had considered multiple competing licence applications for street trading sites.

For Members information, the Council had previously considered a number of sites for the sale of hot food at night-time and determined that those sites would not be designated, including another site in King Street.

The Service had received responses to the re-consultation from the PSNI and DfI Roads.

The police continued to have concerns about the potential for disorder in and around the immediate area of the proposed site location. There was the potential for crowds gathering and loitering in unmanaged queues possibly spilling out onto the main road or causing added anti-social behaviour.

The Department had no objection to the proposal.

Belfast City Centre Management (BCCM) had previously commented that King Street was already a busy location for vehicular traffic, with a taxi depot and the West Belfast Taxi Association Terminal and Tourist Information Desk located there. BCCM believed the introduction of a hot/cold food stall to the area would encourage crowds to gather in the evening and this would pose a major health and safety concern for both pedestrian and vehicle traffic. BCCM's experience had shown hot food stalls introduced to an area has resulted in an increased level of anti-social behaviour, particularly at night time, which was the proposed trading hours for this location.

No update was provided from BCCM, following the cessation of their core funding from the Department for Communities for the engagement and facilitation roles they had carried out in the city centre.

No responses were received to the public notice.

After discussion, the Committee:

Writers Square (6 sites)

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Agreed to designate 6 sites at Writers Square for the purpose of Street Trading, the commodities for which to be determined.

Annadale Embankment in layby

Agreed to designate a site for Street Trading in the layby at Annadale Embankment for the sale of hot and cold non-alcoholic beverages, confectionery, ice-cream and cold food or similar commodities.

King Street, second parking bay moving away from Castle Court

Agreed to defer consideration of the site to enable representatives of the PSNI to attend a future meeting of the Committee to voice their concerns.

**Application for the Grant of a 7-Day Annual
Outdoor Entertainments Licence for The Topsy
Bird, 96-100 Ann Street, Belfast, BT1 3HH**

The Committee was advised that an application had been received for the grant of a 7-Day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence for the Topsy Bird. The applicant proposed to provide entertainment in the form of live musical one or two person acts. The outdoor area was located to the rear of the venue and opened onto Princes Street. The premises currently had an existing Indoor Entertainments Licence.

The days and hours during which entertainment might be provided under the terms of the Indoor Entertainments Licence were:

- Monday to Saturday 11.30 a.m. to 03.00 a.m., and
- Sunday 12.30 p.m. to 03.00 a.m.

The days and hours proposed to provide entertainment within the outdoor area were:

- Friday 4.00 p.m. to 10.30 p.m.
- Saturday 2.00 p.m. to 8.30 p.m.
- Sunday 2.00 p.m. to 8.30 p.m.

The maximum occupancy of the proposed outdoor area would be in the region of between 120 and 180 people. The exact figure would be determined when all technical matters related to the application were resolved to the satisfaction of the Service. The number of persons to be accommodated in the new outdoor area was included in the existing overall maximum occupancy of the indoor area of 430 persons; they were not in addition to that occupancy.

All applications for the grant of Outdoor Entertainments Licences must be brought before Committee for consideration.

The Committee was advised that an objection to the application was received. Further to negotiations between both parties, a noise impact assessment was carried out

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by acoustic consultants acting on behalf of the applicant and the objector. The assessment identified that the limited noise levels had a minimal impact on the Translink Control Room and communication had now been received confirming that the objection has been withdrawn.

However, the objector had concerns that these noise tests had not been carried out during a live performance with patrons present. The Objector has requested that a special condition be attached to the licence to ensure that if noise arising from live entertainment impacts on the Translink Control Room operations then further monitoring of the noise levels would be carried out by the Applicant to establish an acceptable noise level.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service had both been consulted and neither had any objection to the application.

The premises had been subject to inspections as part of the licensing application process and all technical requirements and associated operational and management procedures had been checked and were satisfactory.

The applicant had provided the Service with a noise impact assessment report from an acoustic consultant for the outdoor area. This had been provided to the Environmental Protection Unit for evaluation.

The Building Control Manager requested that, if the Committee was of the mind to grant the Outdoor Entertainments Licence, then delegated authority was being sought to attach any terms and conditions to the Licence regarding the management of noise. Such conditions would only be attached with the full agreement of the licensee.

The Committee was advised that the applicant was in attendance, and he advised the Committee that he would content for the Committee to apply a condition which would allow it to monitor the sound on an ongoing basis.

The Committee approved the application for the grant of the 7-Day Annual entertainments Licence within the outdoor area, subject to any terms and conditions as outlined above in relation to the management of sound.

**Consideration of an objection to an application
for the renewal of an Entertainments Licence
for The Suffolk Inn**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 To consider an application for the renewal of a 7-Day Annual Indoor Entertainments Licence for The Suffolk Inn based on the Council’s standard conditions to provide music, singing, dancing or any other entertainment of a like kind. They are**

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also licensed for any public contest e.g., pool or snooker competitions, and for the playing of pool, snooker, etc.

| 1.2 | <u>Area and Location</u> | <u>Ref. No.</u> | <u>Applicant</u> |
|------------|---|------------------------|---|
| | The Suffolk Inn, 12 -14 Suffolk Road, Belfast BT11 0PB | WK/2020/02218 | Mr Tony Clarke, The Suffolk Inn Ltd, 53 Andersonstown Road, Belfast, BT11 9AG |

1.2 A location map of the premises is attached as Appendix 1.

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 7-Day Annual Entertainments Licence, or
2. Approve the application for the renewal of the 7-Day Annual Entertainments Licence with special conditions, or
3. Refuse the application for the renewal of the 7-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.

3.0 **Main Report**

Key Issues

3.1 One objection has been received from a resident living near the premises. The nature of their objection relates to the following:

- Unacceptable levels of noise from patrons.
- Antisocial behaviour by patrons of premises.

3.2 A copy of the objection is attached as Appendix 2.

Liaison meetings

- 3.3** Following receipt of the objection the Service tried to facilitate liaison meetings between all parties involved to discuss the resident's issues and attempt to resolve them.
- 3.4** Attempts to hold a meeting either online or in person proved unsuccessful. However, the resident still wish to pursue the objection.
- 3.5** As required by the Committee Protocol the applicant and the objector were requested to provide their representation in advance of the meeting for consideration.

Objectors Representation

- 3.6** The objector Representation Form is attached in Appendix 3 and this has been provided to the applicant, as required by the protocol.
- 3.7** In general, the representations relate to concerns as follows:
- persistent, loud and unsociable noise from private events such as DJs, singers and private parties
 - subsequent issues that come from private events being held as the noise is often not regulated
 - significant anxiety and tension it causes within the local surrounding area.
 - residents are anxious every weekend that their property will be damaged and especially concerned about the quality of sleep and wellbeing they will lack.
- 3.8** The objector has been invited to attend your meeting to discuss any matters relating to the objections should they arise.

Applicants Representation

- 3.9** The applicant has provided their Representation Form, as required by the Protocol, and a copy of their 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:
- Shutters down at 11pm to minimise noise

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- Door staff to control two doors to ensure doors were not propped open and trained/spoke to staff to watch out for this
- Drink must be left in the hallway/table when going outside to reduce people standing outside when smoking
- Approached a local taxi firm to make taxis available at the end of the night
- Conversations with DJ about the volume of music.
- Moved speakers to point inwards to the hall.

Counter representations

- 3.12 In response to the Representation Form submitted by the applicant, the objector has advised NTNT have witnessed noise, the proposed amendments are not adhered to, there is broken glass in the street and windows are kept open during the summer.
- 3.13 No counter representation from the applicant has been received.
- 3.14 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

- 3.15 The areas licensed to provide entertainment are the:
- Ground Floor Lounge with a maximum capacity of 220 persons
 - First Floor Lounge with a maximum capacity of 240 persons.
- 3.16 The days and hours entertainment can be provided are:
- Monday to Saturday: 11.30 am to 2.00 am the following morning and,
 - Sunday: 12.30 pm to midnight.

PSNI

- 3.17 The PSNI have been consulted and attended a joint meeting with the Licensee and Council Officers in relation to the application and confirmed that they have no objection to it. This response is contained within Appendix 5.

NIFRS

- 3.18 The Northern Ireland Fire Rescue Service were consulted in relation to the application and have advised they have no objection to it. However following a site visit in January 2022 they did make verbal recommendation regarding a reduction in numbers in the first floor due to management of the premises, this matter continues to be ongoing but will be resolved prior to the renewal of the current application.
- 3.19 A copy of this email is included as Appendix 6.

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.

Noise issues

- 3.21 Nine noise complaints have been received by the Night Time Noise Team (NTNT) since the renewal application was made in November 2021. When responding to the complaints and attending the area, Officers of the Noise Team have witnessed faint music and patron voices and antisocial behaviour.
- 3.22 On two of the occasions, Officers of the Noise Team witnessed excessive noise levels that warranted action.
- 3.23 On 12th February 2022 Night-Time Noise Team (NTNT) witnessed audible music from open doors and very loud bass beat music. They spoke to the Duty Manager to lower the music and close the doors.
- 3.24 On 24th July 2022 NTNT issued a verbal warning to the manager after attending the premises following three separate reports of noise. NTNT witnessed loud music to the ground and first floor, first floor windows all open and noise was escaping through the opened front doors as patrons were leaving.
- 3.25 There is a special condition attached to the premises when entertainment is being provided that all openable windows remain fixed shut.
- 3.26 The applicant has provided an acoustic report as requested by the Service. A copy of this has been forwarded to Environmental Protection Unit.

- 3.27 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

- 3.28 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**

- 3.29 There are no issues associated with this report."**

The Committee was advised that both the objector and the applicant were in attendance to address the Committee.

The Committee was further advised that the objector had requested anonymity and accordingly it was agreed that the live broadcast would be stopped, and no recording would be made in relation to that part of the meeting.

The objector was admitted to the meeting and proceeded to outline the objections to the application as set out in paragraph 3.7 of the report.

The Applicant was then admitted to the meeting to address the objections. She outlined the measures which had been put in place in order to mitigate any noise issues and indicated her willingness to work with the objectors and the Council to address any concerns.

The Committee approved the application for the renewal of the 7-Day Annual Entertainments Licence and delegated conditions to the Director of Planning and Building Control

**Application for the Grant of a 7-Day Annual
Outdoor Entertainments Licence for Holy Cross
Boys Pitch, Butlers Walk, Belfast, BT14 7BZ**

The Committee was advised that an application had been received for the grant of 7-Day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence for Holy Cross Boys Pitch.

The Building Control Manager advised that a 7-Day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence and a 14-Day Occasional Indoor Licence for a Marquee had been granted by Committee in previous years for this event but there was no current licence in force for the events planned for this year.

The applicant had applied to provide outdoor entertainment in the form of live music on the school playing pitch at Butlers Walk for Ardbone Community Festival running from 25 – 27 August 2023.

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The standard days and hours during which entertainment might be provided for outdoor events was Monday to Sunday from 11.30 a.m. to 11.00 p.m. In addition, Special Conditions are attached to Outdoor Entertainments Licences related to setting limits on maximum numbers and implementing a robust system of dealing with complaints.

The applicant proposed to provide entertainment in the form of a DJ for a paint party for young people on Friday 25th August, a dance event on Saturday 26th August and a traditional Irish event on Sunday 27th August.

The Members were reminded that all applications for the Grant of Outdoor Entertainments Licences must be brought before Committee for consideration.

The Building Control Manager informed the Committee that, whilst public notice of the application had been placed in the press, the date of the advertisement was such that the 28-day statutory period during which representations to the application might be made would not expire until 18th August, 2 days after the Committee meeting.

At the time of writing this report no representations had been received to the application. The Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service had both been consulted and neither had any objection to the application.

The Building Control Manager suggested that, should the Committee be minded to grant the Outdoor Entertainments Licence, that this be subject to the proviso that no representations are received within the 28 statutory period to the application.

Subject to the above-mentioned provision, the Committee approved the application for the Grant of the 7-Day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence.

Restricted Item

The information contained in the report 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 following item 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.

Update regarding legal proceedings concerning a decision of the Licensing Committee to refuse an application for a new HMO licence for 30 Eblana Street, Belfast, BT7 1LD

The Committee considered a report which provided an update concerning a decision of the Committee to refuse an application for a new HMO Licence for 30 Eblana Street, Belfast.

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The Committee noted the update on legal proceedings and approved the following:-

- i. The Council shall consent to the Statutory Appeal based on legal advice; and
- ii. agree to the County Court in Belfast granting Mr Enda Hughes a five year HMO licence on the standard terms and conditions.

Non-Delegated Matters

Review of Pavement Café Licensing Workshop

The Committee agreed to the holding of a Pavement Café Workshop within the next 4-6 weeks, the date, time and venue to be agreed in consultation with the Chairperson.

**Report and Proposals from the Department
for Communities Review of Houses in Multiple
Occupation Licensing Scheme**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 When the [Houses in Multiple Occupation Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2016](#) came into effect in April 2019 following the transfer from Northern Ireland Housing Executive's (NIHE) HMO Registration scheme to Councils under a new licensing regime, the Department for Communities (DfC) committed to undertaking a review of the implementation of the new HMO licensing scheme within two years of the transfer.
- 1.2 DfC commenced the Review of the Houses in Multiple Occupation Scheme in December 2020.
- 1.3 This Committee on the [10 March 2021](#) agreed to the Council's proposed response to the Review.
- 1.4 The Department for Communities (DfC) presented their initial findings to this Committee in [May 2021](#)
- 1.5 The final [Report and Proposals from the Review of Houses in Multiple Occupation Licensing Scheme](#) was published on 26 May 2023 which also contains the Council's responses to the issues raised by respondents as part of the Review and DfC's consideration and response to the Councils suggested

amendments to the HMO legislation to improve the impact and effectiveness of the new HMO Act and its implementation.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Committee is asked to note the final Report and Proposals arising from the Review of Houses in Multiple Occupation Licensing Scheme.**

3.0 Main Report

Key Issues

- 3.1 On 22 December 2020, DfC commenced the Review of the Houses in Multiple Occupation Scheme and sought views in relation to the Review by means of an online questionnaire.**
- 3.2 The main objective of the Review was to examine how the scheme was working in terms of the original policy intent which was to improve the conditions for tenants living in HMOs.**
- 3.3 This Committee on the [10 March 2021](#) agreed the Council's response to the Review from an operational perspective, together with a number of suggested legislative amendments that the Council requested to assist with the delivery of the Licensing scheme.**
- 3.4 DfC received 227 responses to the on-line survey with the majority of responses (189) from HMO landlords or agents.**
- 3.5 DfC undertook further engagement with BCC officers, landlords and tenants and presented an interim report to this Committee in [May 2021](#). The Council provided feedback to DfC on the operational and administrative/delivery aspects of the licensing scheme following consideration by this Committee in [November 2021](#).**
- 3.6 The Review looked at the impact of the regulatory scheme on Councils in terms of resources, guidance and legislation with a view to identifying any changes necessary to ensure the legislation achieves its policy intent.**
- 3.7 The [report](#) sets out the operational issues raised during the Review regarding BCC's implementation and delivery of the scheme which covered 18 themes and the BCC response to each issue are contained in the main body of the report (pages 9- 18)**

Those themes being -

1. Cost
2. Guidance
3. Online application process
4. Revision to the definition
5. Environmental issues
6. Determination documentation
7. Planning
8. Over provision
9. Section 28 – change of ownership: effect on licence.
10. Section 29 Death of sole licence holder: effect on licence
11. Communications
12. Council working against landlords.
13. Administration
14. Out of hours contact number.
15. Advert in the paper
16. Minimum room size
17. Section 63 Landlord Training
18. Fee for temporary notice

3.8 As part of the Review, the Council asked DfC to consider making a number of changes to the HMO Act 2016 to assist with the implementation and delivery of the scheme which has been highlighted through engagement with landlords, court cases arising out the Council's interpretation and application of the new legislation and administrative challenges arising from the application of new legislation.

3.9 Some of these proposed changes will be considered by the Department and these are listed below. As these proposed changes mainly involve amending the primary legislation, this will take some time to complete and will require a full NI Assembly to deliver legislative changes along with the relevant Ministerial approvals.

3.10 Proposed Legislative changes agreed to be considered and/or progressed by DfC

(1) Section 6 - Notice regarding continuation of occupation

Section 6 of the 2016 Act sets out the grounds for which a Council may serve a notice of continuation of occupation. Belfast City Council requested that the time limit of 4 months in section 6 is extended to 6 months as with some properties which are let to students, the property may be empty from May to October. The Department have sought

further engagement in order to allow them to consider a change to this section.

3.11 (2) *Temporary Exemption Notice and Extension of Temporary Exemption Notice*

Section 15 of the 2016 Act applies where the owner of an unlicensed HMO makes an application to the Council which specifies steps which may be taken with a view to securing that the HMO ceases to become an HMO and includes a declaration that the owner intends to take those steps. This provision is in place to allow landlords to give tenants notice to leave the property. A temporary exemption notice has an effect for 3 months, Section 16 of the Act allows the notice to be extended for a further 3 months.

3.12 Belfast City Council have requested the ability to charge a fee for such notices. This is currently a free service and charging should be allowed under this provision to bring it into line with the other notices under the scheme for which there is a charge to cover the administrative costs associated with issuing such notices. The Department has agreed to work with the Council to determine the appropriate fee and to propose changes to the legislation to allow such a fee to be charged.

3.13 (3) *Death of a sole licence holder*

Under Section 29 where a sole licensee dies, the licence expires three months after the date of death, unless the Council is satisfied that it is reasonable to extend it in order to wind up the holder's estate. Both Councils and landlords had concerns regarding the 3-month time limit. The Department recognises that 3 months is insufficient time in most cases for winding up an estate. The Department proposes that this time limit is extended to 12 months.

3.14 (4) *Requirement for Council to send a copy of an HMO application to the Statutory Authorities*

Currently, the Council is required to notify the statutory authorities concerning all HMO applications, however there is no requirement for statutory agencies to provide any information they hold in respect of the owner or managing agent under the fit and proper definition. The Council requested that this paragraph be amended to provide a statutory basis upon which other authorities can disclose information in relation to any information they hold in relation to the "fit and proper" person status of the proposed licensee

or managing agent. This would assuage concerns on their part regarding potential breach of data protection legislation.

- 3.15 The Department recommends the removal of the requirement for statutory agencies to be notified of all HMO applications as it is not required, and they do not have the power to compel statutory agencies to share information regarding the “fit and proper person” test.

- 3.16 (5) *Time Limits for Council to process an HMO application.*

Paragraph 12 of Schedule 2 sets out a time limit of 3 months for a Council to process an HMO licence application. Any extension to this time limit must be passed in a Magistrates’ Court. If a decision on a licence has not been made within the time limit, the licence is treated as granted (deemed).

- 3.17 The requirement for an extension to the time limit to be made through a formal application to the Court is incurring significant expenditure legal costs and officer time in resourcing, with the Court service also querying the number of applications received in this regard. The Department recognises the requirement for an application to have a decision in as short a time as possible but also recognises the difficulties faced by Councils in this regard and accepts that with the requirement to ascertain the “fit and proper” status of any landlord or managing agent then deemed licences should where possible be avoided. The Department proposes extending this time limit.

- 3.18 (6) *The Houses in Multiple Occupation Regulation (Fees)*

Under the above Regulations, the maximum fee that can be charged to process a licence application is £45. The licensing scheme on transfer to Councils in 2019 was designed by DFC and by NI Assembly to be self-financing for Councils and their ratepayers. On review by DFC, it is acknowledged that this upper limit of £45 will have to be reviewed to ensure that the income generated by the licensing scheme continues to meet the full costs of operating and delivering the scheme so that this is not a new or additional burden to ratepayers.

- 3.19 Overprovision concerns

The Department has indicated in the report that it will not progress some of the changes requested, such as, changes to definitions including in respect of a house in multiple occupation and living accommodation, the reasoning for

which is set out in the main report. One of the key issues raised by the Council in its response to the Review was the issues around “Over provision” and the inability of the HMO Act to deal with the cumulative impacts of a disproportionately high amount of HMOs in some areas. In particular, the issue of overprovision of HMO properties resulting in high density clusters remains an area of concern as the new licensing regime does not address such areas already in existence.

- 3.20 In this Review DfC acknowledge that the issues around overprovision raised by both Councils and landlords, with very differing views on each side. DfC acknowledged that the policy intention of the new licensing regime is to prevent new areas being over-provided in the future. It does not have the scope to reduce over-provision in existing areas that already have a high number of HMOs and have concluded that the issue of historical overprovision is outside of the scope of the Act and therefore of the Review.
- 3.21 The main purpose of the review was to look at how the licensing scheme was performing and to look at changes required to improve the administration of the scheme. The proposed legislative changes are welcomed by officers; however, it is acknowledged that there are a number of changes that will take time to progress by DfC due to the absence of the NI Assembly.
- 3.22 DfC has acknowledged the operational changes made by Belfast City Council since the introduction of the scheme that will drive an improvement in the areas highlighted as part of the Review, for example, the roll out of the Landlord Training scheme.
- 3.23 In conclusion, the new HMO licensing scheme is now in its final year of the first five year term since it transferred from the NIHE’s Registration system. The Review undertaken by DfC has provided the Council and other stakeholders with the opportunity to provide feedback on the benefits and challenges involved in administering and delivering the scheme. The outcome of the actions proposed by DfC in terms of proposed legislative changes are likely to take time to implement and the proposal in particular to change the threshold of the maximum fees that can be charged will need to be kept under review to ensure that the Council can continue to deliver the service on a self-financing basis.
- 3.24 Financial and Resource Implications

Any delays in changing the legislation to allow the Council to raise fees in excess of the current legal maximum threshold of £45 will have financial implications for the Council as the delivery of the HMO service is based on a self-financing model. Therefore, officers will continue to engage with DfC on this issue and provide an update to members at the earliest opportunity.

3.25 Equality and Good Relations Implications

There are no equality or good relations issues associated with this report.”

The Committee noted the final Report and Proposals arising from the Review of Houses in Multiple Occupation Licensing Scheme.

Notices of Motion – Annual Update

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the Motions that the Licensing Committee was responsible for, in line with the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that all Standing Committees receive regular updates.

The Committee:

- Noted the update to all Notices of Motion that it was responsible for as referenced in Appendix 1 to the report; and
- Agreed to the closure of 2 Notices of Motion, that is, Sexual Harassment (ID 11); and the reconsideration of the refusal of a Designating Resolution for a Street Trading Licence in King Street (ID 242).

Chairperson

Planning Committee

Thursday, 29th 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, Douglas, Ferguson,
Groogan, Hanvey, Maskey, McCann, Nic Bhranair and Verner.

In attendance: Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;
Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor;
Mr. E. Baker, Planning Manager (Development Management);
Ms. U. Caddell, Principal Planning Officer;
Mr. N. Hasson, Senior Planning Officer; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology for inability to attend was reported for Councillor Whyte.

Declarations of Interest

Alderman Lawlor declared an interest in relation to item 5b on the agenda, under the heading LA04/2022/0118/F – The proposed erection of 46No.apartment units over three stories, with associated car parking site and landscaping works and the alteration of an existing vehicular access. 146 Parkgate Avenue, Strandtown, in that he was employed as a Parliamentary and Constituency Assistant for Gavin Robinson MP, who had submitted correspondence in support of the application.

Withdrawn Items

The Committee noted that the following items had been withdrawn from the agenda:

- **LA04/2022/1861/F** - (Reconsidered item) Replacement facade to active facade to facilitate the display of internally illuminated moving images (Temporary Permission for 5 years), 1-3 Arthur Street; and
- **LA04/2023/2640/F** - Front porch extension. Two storey extension to side and rear. Internal alterations and External alterations related to energy efficiency improvements - Air Source Heat Pump, Solar PV panels, triple glazing & external wall insulation with rendered finish, 30 Dorchester Park.

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
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Live Appeals - LA04/2022/1839/F 51 Glandore Avenue, Skegoniell, Belfast - Change of use to house in multiple occupancy.

The Planning Manager reported that the application had been refused under delegated authority in February, 2023 and that the decision to refuse had been appealed. He informed the Committee that the Planning Appeals Commission had requested comments on behalf of the Council with regard to live appeals, following the adoption of the Plan Strategy.

He explained that, at the time of the decision, the primary policy consideration had been the HMO Subject Plan, and that the previous methodology had shown that the number of HMOs in Glandore Avenue to have been exceeded, therefore, the proposal had been contrary to Policy HMO 5 of the HMO Subject Plan and was refused.

He stated that Policy HOU10 applied a different methodology too calculate the baseline, which included the number of HMOs with a licence, and also the number of planning approvals which had not yet been licensed. He explained that there were 80 properties with no HMO licence and therefore the appeal proposal did not exceed 10% of all dwelling units on Glandore Avenue, in accordance with Policy HOU10 and, subsequently, the original refusal reason could not be sustained.

The Committee delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to provide comments to the Planning Appeals Commission in relation to the live appeal against the refusal of application LA04/2022/1839/F, following the adoption of the Plan Strategy, accepting that the policy position had changed in relation to HMOs, but expressing additional concerns in relation to parking and impact on amenity.

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)**

**Local Applications being reported back
following adoption of the Plan Strategy**

Restricted Items

The information contained in the reports associated with the following two 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 two items 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.

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Part Restricted Item: LA04/2019/2653/F - (Reconsidered item) Demolition of existing property and erection of a 9 storey building (overall height 37m) comprising a ground floor retail unit and 8 floors of Grade A office accommodation. Chancery House, 88 Victoria Street, Belfast

The Planning Manager pointed out to the Members that the application had been approved by the Committee, at its meeting in March, 2023, subject to completion of a Section 76 planning agreement and had been brought back to the Committee for re-evaluation following the adoption of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy.

He provided the Committee with an overview of the application and stated that it officers recommended that planning permission would be granted, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement.

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.

Restricted Item: LA04/2022/1503/F - (Reconsidered item) Proposed erection of a freestanding 6.8-metre high screen erected on steel structural supports (9 metres in total height) with associated site work. Lands within Musgrave Police Station 60 Victoria Street, Belfast

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with an overview of the application.

The Committee granted planning permission and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions.

LA04/2022/1499/F - (Reconsidered item) Construction of new community wellbeing centre and cafe incorporating refurbishment and change of use of existing house, with a new adjacent community garden and men's shed facility. The Lockhouse 13 River Terrace Belfast BT7 2EN

The Senior Planning Officer provided the Members with an overview of the application which had been previously approved, subject to conditions, by the Committee at its meeting on 18th April, 2023. He explained that since the decision had been taken, the Belfast Local Development Plan: Plan Strategy, had been adopted which provided a new policy framework for decision making.

He explained how the application had been assessed following the adoption of the Plan Strategy and outlined the following considerations:

- Consultation responses;

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- Principle of development;
- Community infrastructure;
- Open space;
- Environmental quality;
- Trees;
- Climate Change;
- Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS);
- Promoting healthy communities;
- Access and parking; and
- Natural heritage.

He reported that, having regard to the updated assessment and the previous decision of the Committee, in the planning balance, the proposal had been considered acceptable.

The Committee granted planning permission and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions, subject to resolution of the outstanding issues in consultation with Environmental Health.

Previously Deferred Items

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

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with an overview of the application, which had been deferred at the meeting of the Committee on 20th June, 2023, pending a site visit and consultation responses from DAERA NIEA and Shared Environmental Services (SES).

He reported that DAERA NIEA had responded and had offered no objection but had recommended conditions. He stated that SES had advised that the proposal would not affect the integrity of any European sites and recommended a condition that would require a Final Construction Environmental Management Plan relating to drainage.

He informed the Committee that officers had responded to additional queries that had been received from Onslow Ravenhill Residents, which included the request for assurances on the route of construction travel and he advised that this information would be incorporated as part of the Final Construction Environmental Management Plan that would be secured by a planning condition.

The Planning Manager stated that an outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) had been provided by the applicant with the application which estimated construction to last for three to four months with typical site opening hours from 7.00 am to 6.00 pm, Monday to Friday and from 8.00 am to 1.00 pm on Saturdays with no construction undertaken on Sundays or public holidays.

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The Chairperson welcomed Mr. M. Duncan, on behalf of Onslow Ravenhill Residents, to the meeting. Mr. Duncan explained that he was aware that Ulster Rugby needed to compete in both the United Rugby Championship and Champions Cup and the importance of the Kingspan Stadium to the domestic game in Ulster.

He stated Onslow Ravenhill Residents Group had 130 members and was not opposed to stadium improvements but was concerned with the absence of a biodiversity checklist with the application and stated that no final CEMP had been submitted and that it should be approved by both the Council and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency before building work would commence.

He stated that in April, 2023, EU Member States had voted in favour of a proposal to place wide ranging restrictions on the use of microplastics, which was subject to a three month scrutiny by the European Parliament before adoption and that the Planning Committee should take cognisance of the implications before making a decision.

He outlined the benefit of using organic infill as an alternative to microplastics and that the Planning Committee had a responsibility to ensure that all risks to the environment had been considered and asked the Committee not to approve the application until such times as the final CEMP had been submitted and approved.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. J. Petrie and Mr. M. Holmes, on behalf of Ulster Rugby, to the meeting. Mr. Petrie explained that Ulster Rugby had taken the decision to install an artificial pitch at the Kingspan Stadium to provide a world-class playing surface for the province's professional and domestic game.

He stated that, as the governing body for rugby in Northern Ireland, Ulster Rugby had a responsibility to manage and develop a playing surface at its home ground which would allow for the development and progression of the Senior teams, along with its affiliated schools and clubs, and that this was only possible with the provision of a state-of-the-art playing surface with suitable capacity and durability that would allow grassroots players, both youth and adult, male and female, to step on to the same field as the professional teams.

He reported that the deteriorating condition of the current grass surface, from over 200 hours of fixtures per season, had resulted in numerous domestic games having to be moved to alternative venues.

He explained that a new surface would provide greater protection against volatile weather conditions and would provide performance benefits for the professional team as it pursued honours in the United Rugby Championship and European competitions.

Mr. Holmes informed the Committee that Ulster Rugby was not proposing an increase in operations or growth in the volume of activity, but to maintain its current programme by ensuring that the ground underfoot was both safe and of a consistently elite standard. He added that extensive exploratory work had been undertaken to consider all options available, that included hybrid and grass installations and that experts had been employed to provide guidance and direction in the project design to address and alleviate any risks or concerns.

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He explained that the nature of the project made it time critical to the rugby off-season, and that, due to Rugby World Cup, the first competitive home game for the 2023/24 season would take place a few weeks later than usual in October, which offered a unique window of opportunity to complete the construction work.

He stated that Ulster Rugby was aware of the objections and concerns with regard to the application, particularly in relation to flood risk and environmental impact, and he explained that all issues raised had been addressed fully. He added that high specification and a meticulous maintenance programme had been included in the project design which would ensure that all concerns around the migration of rubber crumb and any required algae treatment would be eradicated.

He addressed concerns with regard to the construction phase of the project and informed the Committee that structures would be put in place to ensure that there would be minimal disruption to residents and that virtually all construction traffic would access the ground via the main Mount Merrion entrance.

Mr. Petrie concluded by stating that the 3G pitch at the stadium would be a world class playing surface and that, given the positive impact that rugby had within the community, both for participants and supporters, Ulster Rugby was confident that the project would bring long term benefits for all those associated with the sport.

The Chairperson thanked Mr. Duncan and Mr. Petrie for their submissions and asked the Committee if they had any questions for the representatives.

Several Members raised concern with regard to the environmental impact of the application, in particular the use of microplastics and drainage. Mr. Petrie explained that a more controlled outflow system had been proposed to address any concerns regarding microplastics entering the water system.

Proposal

Moved by Alderman McCullough,
Seconded by Alderman Lawlor,

“That the Committee grants planning permission, subject to conditions, and delegates 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”.

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

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A04/2021/0691/F & LA04/2021/0915/DCA - (Reconsidered item)
Demolition of dwelling and erection of new dwelling,
1D Malone Park, Belfast

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with an overview of the application. He pointed out that a number of late items had been received, and that the agent and solicitor, acting on behalf of the objector, had requested that the application would be withdrawn from the agenda as there had been no consultation on the applicant's Plan Strategy Statements and that there was a number of misrepresentations and omissions, including that there had been no consultation with the immediate neighbour.

He explained that the Plan Strategy Statement was an interpretation of policy and that there was no requirement to consult on the statement and there were no proposed changes to the application.

The City Solicitor highlighted the request to defer the decision to the Committee for consideration.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions, and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions.

Planning Applications

LA04/2021/1317/F and LA04/2021/1318/DCA - Demolition
of existing dwellings and erection of two new dwellings and
associated site works, 450 and 448 Lisburn Road

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with an overview of the applications and highlighted the following main issues for consideration:

- Principle of development;
- Affordable housing and housing mix;
- Adaptable and accessible housing;
- Climate change including SuDS;
- Demolition;
- Impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area;
- Design;
- Impact on Listed Buildings;
- Impact on neighbouring amenity;
- Transport;
- Waste water infrastructure;
- Other environmental considerations; and
- The application site was within the Malone Park Conservation Area.

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He explained that officers were recommending that planning permission be refused as the proposal would result in the unacceptable demolition of two semi-detached dwellings that make a material contribution to the character and appearance of the area and the proposed replacement dwellings would have a harmful impact on the Malone Park Conservation Area by reason of their excessive plot coverage, scale, height and alignment. He added that it was considered that the proposed dwellings would harm the setting of the adjacent Listed Building, 1a Malone Park.

He reported that DfC Historic Environment Division, NI Water and the Council's Conservation Officer had objected to the proposal and that the Council had received three letters of objection and 18 letters of support.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. H. McConnell, RPP Architects and Mr. M. Gordon, Turley to the meeting on behalf of the applicant.

Mr. McConnell explained that the current buildings on the site had been vacant for 20 years and were in such a state of dereliction that they were well beyond viable refurbishment, as detailed in the engineer's report which accompanied the application.

He reported that the upper floors of the buildings had collapsed to the ground floor and that the properties were well known to Building Control and that there had been many visits to the site by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) to address ongoing issues of antisocial behaviour and risk to life, especially to children.

He stated that, given the degree of dereliction, disrepair and near collapse, the repeated issues of recorded antisocial behaviour and the ongoing danger the properties present to the adjacent residents and to the public, the properties made a negative contribution to the distinctive character of the area. He added that the proposal demonstrated that bringing families back to Malone Park, the high-quality design of the homes and the materials used, would enhance the area and the wider streetscape of the Lisburn Road.

He acknowledged the three letters of objection which had been received, but pointed out that none of them were from properties immediately adjacent to the site and that there had been a significant degree of support for the scheme, including the residents of the listed gate lodge property at 1a Malone Park.

He highlighted the planning policies that the proposal aligned with and that the proposed dwellings were in character with the conservation area and supported the surrounding context and would enhance the character of the conservation area.

Following discussion around the safety of the existing buildings, the Director of Planning and Building Control clarified that the assertions around the dangers posed were indeed assertions, and that there was currently no evidence to substantiate the claims and no surveys had been undertaken.

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Proposal

Moved by Councillor P. Donnelly,
Seconded by Councillor Carson,

“That the Committee grants planning permission on the basis that:

- The application meets the desirability criteria of section 104 of the planning act 2011 as the replacement buildings will enhance the character and appearance of the area and this is an opportunity to do so;
- Given the condition of the buildings and the likelihood of further deterioration, even dereliction public safety could become an issue at the site, it is my view that the application meets the public interest criterion and the presumption against demolition should be relaxed as laid out in paragraph 6.18 of the SPPS;
- The current buildings make a negative and nonmaterial contribution to the character of the area, and the design quality, form, and use of materials sympathetic to the area in the replacement dwellings will enhance the character of the area and bring vibrancy to what is a key junction in the south of our city thus meeting the criteria in relation to policy BH2;
- The officer discusses the footprint of the replacement dwellings, this is a mathematical equation which doesn't include the rear return of number 448, and that if this was included (as it was originally a part of the initial footprint of the property) the existing plot coverage would increase in turn changing the equation in square meters and in percentage terms and the 1.5 criteria would be met. That said 0.3 is negligible and in line with other applications where the same issue arose permission was granted, it is not seen as a reasonable reason for refusal in relation to policy BH1 or the Malone Park conservation design guide; and
- Delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise any conditions.”

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

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(Alderman Lawlor left the meeting while the following item was being considered.)

LA04/2022/0118/F - The proposed erection of 46 No. apartment units over three story's, with associated car parking site and landscaping works and the alteration of an existing vehicular access. 146 Parkgate Avenue, Strandtown.

The Planning Manager outlined the application to the Committee and highlighted the following key areas:

- Principle of development;
- Affordable housing and housing mix;
- Adaptable and accessible accommodation;
- Design, layout and impact on the character and appearance of the area;
- Scale, Height, Massing, Design and Layout;
- Access, Traffic and Parking;
- Environmental Health;
- Drainage and Flood Risk / Infrastructure Capacity;
- Impact on the natural environment;
- Ecological Impacts; and
- Climate change.

He informed the Committee that late items had been received, a letter from Connswater Homes that had reiterated the housing need in the area and provided rationale for not providing housing mix as per Policy HOU6, which included difficulties in letting three and four bedroom apartments and that there was a need for smaller families and singles.

He reported a letter had also been submitted by the applicant which provided a rebuttal to the Committee report and reiterated that the proposal was for 100% social housing and stated that the applicant was content for this to be a condition of the proposal.

He concluded by stating that it was recommended that the application would be refused, as the need for social housing had been acknowledged but did not outweigh design and layout issues and the impact on amenity and existing residents.

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. K. McShane, Mr. M. Collins and Mr. B. Smith from CollinsRolston, on behalf of the applicant.

Ms. McShane stated that the applicant had recognised the crisis in housing stock in the area and that, rather than come forward with a private development, intended to put forward a social housing scheme to address the urgent housing requirement.

She explained that the applicant had funds in place and was ready to build the development and allow occupation. She stated that only one letter of concern had been received, which had been addressed and that letters of support had been submitted by Mr. G. Robinson MP and Connswater Homes.

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She reported that a need of 713 new homes had been identified in the area which had been substantiated with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

Ms. McShane stated that the case officer's report had outlined minor areas of design disagreement and that the architectural team had submitted a response, having regard to the Local Development Plan, rather than full adherence. She provided the Committee with rebuttals to the following reasons for refusal:

- Surrounding context and character;
- Open space;
- Impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties;
- Emerging environmental policies in the Local Development Plan;
- HOU5: Adequate management arrangements and communal facilities;
- HOU 5 and 6: Appropriate mix of tenures and a range of different apartment sizes; and
- HOU 7: Wheelchair accessible units.

She concluded by reiterating the critical housing need in the area and asked the Committee to reject the officers recommendation to refuse the application and grant planning permission.

The Committee agreed that consideration of the application would be deferred in order that further engagement could take place between officers and the applicant, to attempt to resolve the issues, and for the Committee to undertake a site visit.

(Alderman Lawlor returned to the meeting.)

**LA04/2022/1924/F - Mixed-use proposal comprising
13 apartments (with 13 car parking spaces)
and coffee shop. 160-164 Kingsway, Dunmurry**

The Senior Planning Officer outlined the application to the Committee and highlighted the following key issues:

- Principle of development;
- Design, Layout and impact upon the character and appearance of the area;
- Climate Change;
- Affordable Housing and Housing Mix;
- Accessible and Adaptable Accommodation;
- Access and Parking;
- Drainage;
- Access and Parking;
- Waste-water Infrastructure; and
- Noise, odour and other environmental impacts including contamination.

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He reported that one objection had been received concerned with density, parking provision, height, scale and massing, however no statutory consultees offered any objection.

He stated that, having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal had been considered acceptable and it was recommended that planning permission would be granted.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Groogan,
Seconded by Councillor Hanvey,

“That consideration of the application be deferred in order that Members could receive more detail on discount market rent.”

Amendment

Moved by Alderman McCullough,
Seconded by Alderman Lawlor,

“That planning permission is granted, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement to secure affordable housing authority is delegated to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement and to deal with any other matters which may arise.”

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

**LA04/2022/2059/F - Residential development comprising of
12no. 3p/2b semi-detached dwelling houses with incurtilage
parking and associated site-works. Lands south of 56
Highcairn Drive. Site located at junction between Highcairn
Drive and Dunboyne Park**

The Senior Planning Officer provided the Committee with an overview of the application, and highlighted the following key areas for consideration:

- Principle of development;
- Affordable housing and Housing Mix;
- Accessible and adaptable accommodation;
- Design, layout and impact on the character and appearance of the area;
- Climate change;
- Access and parking;
- Drainage;
- Waste-water infrastructure;
- Ecological Impacts; and
- Noise, odour, and other environmental impacts including contamination.

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He informed the Committee that two additional objections had been received from the same objector, and that final comments from DfI Roads and DfI Rivers were outstanding.

He stated that, on balance, the proposed scheme could be considered an exception to the policy provisions of Policy OS1 of the Plan Strategy, subject to a Section 76 agreement to secure the provision of social housing and that, having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal had been considered acceptable and officers were recommending that the application would be approved.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions, and a Section 76 planning agreement to secure the development as affordable housing and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and the Section 76 planning agreement.

LA04/2022/0136/ F - Ballysillan Playing Fields, Environmental improvement works and upgrades to Ballysillan Playing Fields, comprising refurbishment of existing bowling pavilion; new intermediate floodlit 3G pitch; new childrens play facilities; new open-air community event space; new fenced dog exercise areas; new pump track; new and improved pathways; replacement floodlights at existing 3G pitch; works to expose parts of the existing culverted river to create a new channel and flood attenuation area; new street furniture including canopies, shelters, picnic tables, seats, lights, cycle stands, fences and bollards; improvements to existing allotment area including path and vehicle track resurfacing, new polytunnels and shed; landscape interventions including planting, woodland management, resurfacing and regrading; and all associated works (revised description and further information received). Ballysillan Road, Belfast.

The Principal Planning Officer outlined the application to the Committee and explained that the site was an existing area of open space and an important community asset.

She stated that the proposal sought to upgrade the existing facilities and included the undernoted elements which would benefit the local and wider community:

- A new 3G pitch;
- Flood attenuation area;
- Bowling pavilion refurbishment;
- Play areas;
- Pump track;
- Dog exercise area;
- Events space;
- Allotment improvements; and
- Pathways, lighting, landscaping and planting.

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She reported that one third party representation had been received which raised concern regarding a proposed community hub to replace the existing community centre on the main Ballysillan Road, however, she pointed out that the application did not include proposals for a community hub.

She stated that the application was recommended for approval, subject to conditions, as it complied with the Plan Strategy and BUAP/dBMAP designations and the consultees had offered no objections.

In response to a question from a Member related to the materials to be used in the construction of the proposed 3G pitch, the Principal Planning Officer explained that typically a rubber infill would be used, however, she would need to clarify the exact materials in the proposal. She further stated that neither DAERA or SES had objected to the proposal, and that a condition could be added to the application that would require officers to liaise with DEARA and SES, specifically with regard to the surface materials of the 3G pitch.

Proposal

Moved by Alderman McCullough,
Seconded by Alderman Lawlor,

“That the Committee grants planning permission, subject to conditions, and delegates 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.”

Amendment

Moved by Councillor T. Brooks,
Seconded by Councillor Hanvey,

“That the Committee grants planning permission, subject to conditions and a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).”

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

The proposal, standing in the name of Alderman McCullough was then put to the Committee and, on a vote, sixteen Members voted for the proposal, one against and two no votes and it was declared carried.

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LA04/2023/2688/F - Application to vary condition 36, of the proposed hotel development, approved under LA04/2022/0293/F, to extend the maximum length of stay of occupants from 30 days to 180 days. Lands directly south of Titanic Belfast and north-west of Hamilton Dock located off Queens Road

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with an overview of the application and explained that condition 36 of the proposed development, which had been approved by the Committee in September, 2022, stipulated that the maximum length of stay of occupants would be 30 days with no return for 30 days, and that the applicant's view was that the stipulation was restrictive, given the location and the potential to attract key customers, such as those working in the construction, technology and film industries.

He explained that the original condition was in place to preclude permanent residential use within the proposed building as the application had not been considered against residential use policies.

He reported that a maximum stay of 180 days had been explored by the applicant in conjunction with Council officers and it had been determined that a 180 day policy had the potential to materially change the hotel/aparthotel use, as approved, to residential use. In light of this, a 90 day maximum stay had been considered as acceptable, and would not trigger a change of use to residential, which would undermine the original approval.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions, including a maximum stay of 90 days (rather than 180 days) 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 might arise.

LA04/2023/3037/F - Section 54 application to vary condition 5 of reference Z/1996/0102 to allow for the sale of optometry and audiology products and equipment including spectacles, contact lenses and hearing aids. Unit 7a, Connswater Retail Park, Belfast, BT5 4AF

The Planning Manager outlined the application to the Committee and pointed out that the applicant had submitted a late addition to the application, which explained that the applicant considered that Holywood Town Centre and Kings Square Local Centre were not suitable centres to meet the needs of the local Connswater catchment and that the proposed site remained a more convenient location to ensure that the existing customer needs were met.

The Committee 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.

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LA04/2023/2567/F&LA04/2023/2539/LBC- Proposed refurbishment of the existing sports buildings located North of main school building. All retained buildings will be re-clad with replacement roof finishes and introduction of PV panels on the roofs. Works include landscaping and courtyard development, Campbell College Belmont Road.

The Principal Planning Officer provided the Committee with an overview of the application and highlighted the following key issues:

- Principle of development;
- Demolition;
- Design;
- Built heritage;
- Climate change;
- Access and parking;
- Drainage and Waste-Water Infrastructure;
- Noise, odour and other environmental impacts;
- Trees and landscaping; and
- Ecological issues

She reported that statutory consultees had offered no objections, subject to conditions and no representations had been received.

She stated that, having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal had been considered acceptable and it was recommended that planning permission would be granted, subject to conditions.

The Committee 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.

Chairperson

Planning Committee

Tuesday, 1st August, 2023

HYBRID MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Garrett (Chairperson);
Aldermen Lawlor and Rodgers;
Councillors Anglin, Bell, Bradley, T. Brooks,
Carson, Doherty, P. Donnelly, Doran, S. Douglas, Ferguson,
Groogan, Hanvey, Maskey, McCann, Nic Bhranair and Whyte.

In attendance: Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;
Ms. U. McMullan, Solicitor – Regulatory and Planning;
Ms. C. Reville, Principal Planning Officer; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies for inability to attend were reported.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

LA04/2023/3613/LBC: 166-174 North Street, Barwood Building - Fire Damage to Listed Building

The Principal Planning Officer outlined the application to the Committee and explained that the key issue for consideration of the application was the effect of the proposed demolition works on the architectural and historic qualities of the listed building.

She reported that Building Control had issued a dangerous structures notice and was in support of the partial demolition of the rear of the building as soon as practicable. She added that DfC Historic Environment Division had no objection to the proposal, in light of the safety concerns.

She stated that, having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, and the unique circumstances, the proposal had been considered as acceptable and recommended that Listed Building Consent would be granted, subject to conditions.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. M. Gordon, Turley, Mr. I. Black, Structural Engineer and Mr. P. Beacom, on behalf of the applicant, to the meeting.

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Mr. Gordon explained to the Committee that the first responsibility with the application has been the health and safety of the public, which had proven difficult despite having a cordon and security in place at the site.

He reported that the applicant understood the responsibility of owning a listed building and the statutory requirements, and that the Strategic Planning Policy Statement provided for exceptional circumstances, such as the previous fire and health and safety risks, and supported a grant of consent.

He concluded by stating that the proposed works were considered necessary, not only for safety, but for the future of what remained of the listed building and that the proposed method of works had been endorsed by the Historic Environment Division.

The Committee agreed to grant Listed Building Consent, subject to conditions, and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the conditions and deal with any other matters which might arise.

Committee Workshop

At the request of the Director of Planning and Building Control, the Committee agreed to hold a workshop on Thursday, 17th August, relating to the implementation of HOU5 and the local policies plan.

Chairperson

Planning Committee

Tuesday, 15th August, 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, S. Douglas, Doran,
Ferguson, Groogan, Hanvey, Maskey, McCann and
Nic Bhranair.

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; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

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

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 20th June, 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 July, 2023, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Doherty declared an interest in relation to item 9b on the agenda, under the heading LA04/2023/2640/F- Front porch extension, Two storey extension to side and rear. Internal alterations and External alterations including change in roof materials, and related to energy efficiency improvements – Air Source Heat Pump, Solar PV panels, triple glazing and external wall insulation with rendered finish (amended description), 30 Dorchester Park, in that he was acquainted with one of the parties, and he left the meeting while the item was under consideration.

Committee Site Visit

The Committee noted the Committee site visits.

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**Notifications from Statutory Bodies, Abandonment
and Extinguishment**

**Abandonment at Great Patrick Street,
Extinguishment Bullring Pathway**

The Committee noted and endorsed the concerns expressed by officers on the proposed abandonment.

Notification of proposed Listed Buildings

The Committee endorsed the listing of the undernoted properties:

- 137 Cavehill Road; and
- Belfast Electric Light Station, 6 Chapel Lane (and 9-13 Marquis Street).

Provision of Accessible Parking Bay

The Committee noted the notices of provision of accessible parking bays at the following locations:

- 34 Knocknagoney Avenue;
- 17 Glanane Drive;
- 54 Fairhill Walk;
- 173 Donegal Avenue;
- 8 Coombe Hill Park;
- Hesketh Park; and

The Committee noted the notice of removal of an accessible parking bay at 8 Canada Street.

Appeals

The Committee noted the appeals decisions.

Planning Decisions Issued

The Committee noted the planning decisions issued between 1st and 30th June, 2023.

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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 following 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.

Quarter 4 Finance Report 2022/23

The Director of Planning and Building Control provided the Committee with an overview of the report.

The Committee noted the content of the report.

Miscellaneous Items

**Delegation of Local Applications
with NI Water Objections**

The Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control, those Local planning applications to which NI Water had objected.

Planning Notice of Motions Annual Update

The Committee noted the update.

**THE COMMITTEE DEALT WITH THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN PURSUANCE OF THE
POWERS DELEGATED TO IT BY THE COUNCIL UNDER STANDING ORDER 37(e)**

Planning Applications previously deferred

**LA04/2022/1861/F- Replacement facade to
active facade to facilitate the display of
internally illuminated moving images
(Temporary Permission for 5 years)
1- 3 Arthur Street**

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with an overview of the application and pointed out that DfI Historic Environment Division had advised that the proposal would not respect the character of the setting of the surrounding listed buildings and would create a

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competing focus to the listed buildings which form the attractive historic perimeter of Arthur Square.

He reported that the Council's Conservation Officer had stated that the proposal was contrary to policy for advertisements in conservation areas and had a massive scale in relation to the proposed host building, therefore, would have a harmful effect on the character, appearance and visual amenity of the conservation area.

He outlined to the Committee the reasons why officers were recommending that the proposal would be refused.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. J. Stevenson, Open Media, Mr. A. Carleton, Alterity Investments, and Mr. M. Worthington, Pragma Planning, to the meeting.

Mr. Worthington explained that the proposal was for a temporary permission for a period of five years to allow any impact of the proposal to be assessed. He stated that the proposal included a provision to provide airtime to the Council at no charge and also a Section 76 agreement specifically for the creation of digital content about the conservation area and listed buildings in the vicinity, and it was hoped that the active façade would not compete with, but rather direct viewers to the surrounding historic environment.

Mr. Carleton of Alterity Investments, the applicant, explained that Alterity Investments was a local private company which had invested in Belfast for over 50 years and created incomes to fund its own charitable trust which donated up to fifty percent of surplus income annually to small local charities and had donated more than £4.5 million since 2018, and were anticipating donating more than £1 million in 2023.

He outlined the potential benefits of installation of the screen, that included free airtime for the Council on open media screens across the UK.

The representatives asserted that the proposed screen would only be seen by less than one percent of the conservation area's footprint and would not obscure any element of a listed building.

Proposal

Moved by Alderman McCullough,
Seconded by Councillor Doran,

"That consideration of the application is deferred to allow for further engagement between the applicant and officers."

On a vote fifteen Members voted for the proposal and four against and it was declared carried.

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(Councillor Doherty left the meeting while the following item was under consideration)

**LA04/2023/2640/F- Front porch extension.
Two storey extension to side and rear.
Internal alterations and External alterations
including change in roof materials, and
related to energy efficiency improvements –
Air Source Heat Pump, Solar PV panels,
triple glazing and external wall insulation
with rendered finish (amended description),
30 Dorchester Park**

The Planning Manager outlined the application to the Committee and pointed out that the objector, from a neighbouring property, had submitted a further letter of objection and had directly contacted the Members of the Committee to make further representations.

He reported that the proposal had originally included the widening of the access and alterations to the boundary wall, however, the applicant had confirmed in writing that those elements of the proposal had been withdrawn and amended plans to show their removal would be submitted in due course, and that the recommendation of approval was subject to the receipt of the amended plans.

He explained that the application was compliant with the Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) and that, having regard to the development plan, the concerns raised through representations and other material considerations, the proposal had been considered acceptable on balance and it was recommended that planning permission was granted, subject to conditions.

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. J. Magill, and Mr. M. Worthington, Pragma Planning, to the meeting, on behalf of the objector.

Mr. Worthington stated that the SPG was a material consideration in accordance with the Local Development Plan and he outlined to the Committee how the application did not meet the SPG and should be refused.

Ms. Magill, the daughter of the neighbouring objector, stated that would be happy for her neighbour to extend his house but objects to the proposal to be built along her boundary.

She explained that the architect's report illustrated how the foundations of her mother's property were likely to be compromised by the proposal. She added that the one metre offset within the planning policy was not a grey area and must be complied with.

She stated that there were no clear reasons provided as to why the SPG should be set aside and planning permission granted.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. G. Colleary, the applicant, and Ms. D. Kyle, Turley, to the meeting.

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Mr. Colleary explained that, since the application had been submitted, various amended plans had been submitted to address any issues which had been identified by officers and concerns from third parties, that included a change to the materials, size, scale and mass of the proposal.

He stated that he had actively tried to minimise the effect on neighbouring properties and had consulted with an engineer, who had advised him that external insulation on the walls of the existing building and proposed extension was the most efficient way to improve the energy efficiency of the property. He added that he planned to install solar panels and a battery pack to make the property as close to energy neutral as possible.

Ms. Kyle reported that the design, scale and massing of the proposal was considered proportionate to the host property and site plot and that it respected the character of the wider area.

She stated that the applicant acknowledged the concerns from third parties that related to the amenity, loss of light and privacy, however, the officer's assessment balanced all the issues against relevant policy and guidance.

She concluded by stating that the proposal was reflective of the scale, mass and design of other properties along the Dorchester Park streetscene and was appropriate to the host plot.

The Committee approved the application with conditions and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and to deal with any other matters that may arise (subject to the receipt of amended plans which remove the original proposed alterations to the access and boundary wall).

LA04/2022/0129/F- Proposed social housing 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 Gerard's Manor, Ballymurphy

The Planning Manager outlined the application to the Committee and reported that DfI Roads and DfI Rivers final consultations remained outstanding.

He pointed out that DfI roads had raised a late issue with regard to the possible need for a Vehicle Restraint System which the applicant had asserted would be a very costly and potentially visually unappealing and had proposed bollard to provide adequate containment for accidental errant vehicles.

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He added that the applicant had submitted a risk assessment to DfI Roads, which was content with the revised mitigation of a boundary fence with concrete posts located at 1.5 metre centres at the rear of the cycleway/footway.

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, and to liaise with DfI Roads and Rivers to resolve any issue that may arise from the consultation responses and deal with any other matters.

New Planning Applications

**LA04/2023/3537/F and LA04/2023/3538/LBC –
Installation of two number bronze statues
on the grounds of Belfast City Hall.**

The Principal Planning Officer provided the Committee with an overview of the application and highlighted the following key areas:

- The principle of the development at this location; and
- Impact on the curtilage of a listed building.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions, and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the conditions and deal with any other matters that may arise.

**LA04/2023/2430/RM - Application for
approval of reserved matters for a medical
facility in accordance with outline planning
permission LA04/2020/0845/O, seeking
approval of layout, scale, appearance and
landscaping details. Land at Kings Hall
and RUAS site south of Upper Lisburn Road/
Balmoral Avenue, west of Harberton Park
and North East of Balmoral Golf Club**

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with a summary of the request for approval of the following reserved matters for Plot 9:

- siting;
- design: including height, scale, massing, form of buildings and floor plans;
- external appearance;
- means of access; and
- landscaping.

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He reported that it was recommended that the application was approved as it complied with the conditions of the Outline Planning Approval and was compliant with the approved Design Code and Parameters Plan.

The Committee granted the reserved matters application, 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 that may arise.

LA04/2021/2772/F - Upgrading of sports facilities to include construction of new clubhouse changing room block, new floodlighting fencing and ball stops, 2 no spectator grandstands (206 persons per stand), 3G goalkeeper training area, dug-outs, turnstiles, associated maintenance infrastructure, landscaping, and parking facilities, Clarendon Playing Fields

The Principal Planning Officer outlined the application to the Committee and reported that since the report had been published, Environmental Health had responded indicating that it had no objection to the application, subject to conditions.

She stated that one further objection had been received with regards to roads and access, and that those issues had already been considered in the case officer report.

She reported that officers were recommending that the application be approved on the basis that it was compliant with relevant policy considerations, there had been three objections which had been considered and statutory consultees had been content, subject to conditions.

Following discussion relating to the materials used in the construction of 3G surfaces, agreed that a report would be brought back, that would outline the Members' responsibilities and considerations in relation to the materials used to build and maintain 3G pitches, that would include Shared Environmental Services' position on 3G pitches.

The Committee granted planning permission and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and deal with any other issues that may arise.

Issue raised in advance by Member

That the Committee invite Conor McKinney of Wild Belfast to a future meeting of the Committee to discuss biodiversity and COP15 ambitions – Councillor Groogan.

The Committee agreed that a schedule of presentations/deputations would be compiled at its Workshop, scheduled to take place on 17th August, 2023.

Chairperson

Climate and City Resilience Committee

Thursday, 10th August, 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, R. Brooks, T. Brooks,
Carson, Doherty, M. Donnelly, D. Douglas,
S. Douglas, Kelly, Maghie, McAteer, McCabe,
McKeown, Smyth and Walsh.

In attendance: Mrs S. McNicholl, Deputy Chief Executive/Strategic
Director of Corporate Services;
Ms. D. Caldwell, Commissioner for Climate and City Resilience;
Ms. A. Diver, Climate Programme Manager;
Mr. D. Martin, Belfast Region City Deal – Programme Director;
Mr. R. McLernon, Climate Programme Manager City;
Ms. B. Roddy, Project Support Officer – Climate;
Ms. C. Shortt, Monitoring, Learning and Reporting Officer: and
Mr. G. Graham, Democratic Services Assistant.

Also attended: Mr. A. Sudmant, Research Fellow, University of Leeds.
Mr. J. McHenry, Vu City.
Mr. S. Pagani, GIA. Architects.
Dr. A. Jacobs, GIA. Architects.
Mr. K. Francis, GIA. Architects.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported on behalf of Alderman Copeland and Councillor Bower.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 15th June 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 July.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor T. Brooks declared an interest in that she was employed by Queen's University Belfast who had been invited to present to the Committee on the potential for rooftop Solar PV, on Council buildings and rooftops, across the city.

**Rooftop solar PV potential in Belfast
Presentation by Vu.City**

Mr. McHenry provided an update on a Shared Island project, undertaken in partnership between Belfast and Cork City Council, to explore the potential for Solar PV on Council buildings.

Mr. Pagani provided the Committee with information on the background and expertise of GIA in the Solar PV industry. He stated that the company had over thirty years of experience in the business and that their specialism was the harnessing of energy from both sunlight and daylight. The Members were informed that GIA's research and development team had allowed them to develop technology to generate solar electricity from a diverse range of roof areas, in a city environment, and to do so within a framework of accuracy and scale.

Mr. McHenry provided the Committee with an overview of the research undertaken in regard to the ten Council buildings selected for potential rooftop Solar PV installation. He stated that, as part of that detailed investigation, an assessment had been undertaken using two methodologies namely:

1. A standard Assessment procedure; and
2. A Climate Based Daylight Modelling technique.

The Members were informed that €500 million had been set aside for capital funding covering the period 2021-2025, some of which had been earmarked for the North/South climate initiative between Belfast and Cork. Mr. McHenry highlighted the different attributes associated with the various solar panels on the market, currently, including conversion and output efficiencies. He stated that it was estimated that the Northern Ireland spend was £8.7 billion on energy per annum and referred to the potential savings associated with the increased use of solar PV panels across the city.

It was reported that 160,000 households were in fuel poverty, and he referred to the targets and timescales, specified within the Climate Act (NI) 2022, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Mr. Pagani provided the Committee with an outline of the Site Performance Assessment required to ascertain the viability and suitability of rooftops, across the city, to accommodate the installation of Solar PV Panels. He referred to the labour-intensive exercise associated with determining which rooftop areas were suitable for Solar PV adaptation, including shading and future building construction which could impede sunlight and the efficiency of the Solar PV panels. Mr. Pagani referred to the technology used to separate the various components of a rooftop surface area in order to maximise the usable space for the installation of rooftop Solar PV panels.

Mr. McHenry provided the Members with a list of the various Council buildings which were under consideration for the installation of Solar PV panels and the potential estimated Solar PV generation, using both SAP and CBDM methodologies. The Committee was informed that, by using GIA, the Council was using the services of a company with a tried and trusted track record, with the capability to operate at scale. He stated further that the GIA

**Climate and City Resilience Committee,
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operated with a high degree of accuracy in terms of its projected energy generation from the installation of its Solar PV panels.

A Member stated that some of the savings attributed to the Girdwood Hub had the potential to form an integral part of the Council's Leisure Transformation Programme. A further Member requested if there was comparative data in regard to the savings made in terms of energy costs associated with the installation of Solar PV panels in cities with a comparative climate profile to Belfast and what criteria was used to identify those sites identified for the potential installation of roof-top Solar PV panels.

In response, Mr. McHenry stated that Council buildings, with the highest energy consumption, were used to identify where the highest energy cost savings could be realised. The Monitoring, Learning and Reporting Officer confirmed that the Council had undertaken an exercise, in conjunction with the energy team, to identify roof design which had included an off-site assessment of those selected buildings. She confirmed that the Council was progressing towards stage 2 of the funding application process.

A Member raised a question in regard to the storage and redistribution of excess energy produced. In response, the Climate Commissioner reported that the Council's Energy and Carbon Manager had confirmed that due to high infrastructure costs associated with energy storage and, given that the Council had the capacity to use all of the green energy produced, it was a more efficient use of resources to expand the installation of addition Solar PV panels.

In response to a question from a Member in terms of comparative data with Cork city, the Monitoring, Learning and Reporting Officer stated that Belfast was ahead of Cork in terms of its data collection exercise and stated that the Committee would be provided with an update, on comparative progress, in terms of green energy production between the two cities. Mr. McHenry, in response to a further question from a Member, stated that, depending on quality and design, some PV panels could have a lifespan of up to twenty-five years with a projected average payback period of ten years.

The Climate Commissioner stated that an application for stage two funding would provide the Council with the resources to commence the installation of roof-top Solar PV panels on those Council selected buildings. She stated that a comprehensive data collection exercise would be required, prior to submission of an application for phase two funding. In response to a question from a Member in regard to the potential restrictions on the installation of Solar PV panels and permitted development, Mr. McHenry stated that such a circumstance, should it arise, would be subject to the particular development proposal. He confirmed that the maintenance of Solar PV panels was minimal and that the Council might wish to engage with a maintenance contract to deliver that service.

The Commissioner for Climate and City Resilience stated that she would consult in the matter with the Energy and Carbon Manager and report back, at a future date, with a proposal on the maintenance of Solar PV panels.

The Committee was informed that individual commercial entities had diverse energy usage profiles in that, while the commercial sector tended to experience high energy usage, other sectors, such as leisure centres, tended to use energy beyond standard daytime hours.

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To that end, Mr. McHenry suggested that the Council might wish to consider energy storage and redistribution in order to guarantee a continuous supply of green energy to those commercial enterprises.

The Monitoring, Learning and Reporting Officer reported that the Department for Energy (DfE) had undertaken research in terms of the potential cost savings associated with the installation of Solar PV panels on residential properties and agreed to report back, on the energy cost savings, associated with that project.

The Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the Members of GIA and the representative from Vu City for the detailed and informative presentation and they departed from the meeting.

Noted.

Belfast Region City Deal Net-Zero Roadmap

Mr. Martin provided the Committee with an introduction and outline of the areas for consideration, in regard to climate change, highlighted within the Net-Zero Roadmap. He emphasised the importance of actions necessary if the Council was to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. To that end, he reported that the Council had agreed to commission an analysis of net-zero options and stated that the roadmap would set the strategic direction for the Council by assisting with future decision making and the provision of an evidence base to direct policy on decisions around climate change and mitigation measures.

Mr. Sudmant informed the Members that the net-zero roadmap was a bottom up, place-based assessment, specific to Belfast and the surrounding region. He explained that the roadmap was focussed on a technical and economic analysis and had been developed in conjunction with stakeholders.

The Committee was provided with detailed analysis as part of the steps necessary to achieve net-zero. It was reported that the Belfast Region emits 8.9 megatons of CO₂ per annum. He confirmed that carbon emissions had reduced by thirty per cent since 1990 and was expected to reduce by fifty per cent between 1990 and 2050. Mr. Sudmant informed the Committee that the technology existed, currently, to mitigate against the majority of the remaining emissions. The Members were informed of the economic and employment benefits associated with a transition to green energy production, including a £1.3 billion energy saving potential by 2050.

Mr. Sudmant highlighted the fact that the Belfast Region (city deal area) had a higher emissions profile than the UK, largely as a result of the impact of agriculture and farming practices. He referred to the opportunity to reduce emissions, emanating from the housing sector, and the financial benefits associated with the introduction of mitigation measures, attached to carbon production, connected to agricultural practices.

The Committee was informed that up to twenty per cent of emissions, attached to the residential sector, could be mitigated and attributed to a financial return. He stated that some measures taken to reduce carbon emissions were not cost-neutral but highlighted the social benefits associated with a reduction in carbon emissions such as, clean air and improved

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health. Mr. Sudmant emphasised the benefits of mitigation measures which added to public value, despite not being cost effective to implement. He referred to the significant challenges required to reduce greenhouse gas emissions attributed to the agricultural sector, including changes to land-use and modified agricultural practices.

In response to a question from a Member in terms of achieving easy wins and the impact of not having a functioning Assembly, to drive climate change, the Programme Director confirmed the need for substantial investment, both public and private. The Commissioner for Climate and City Resilience highlighted the legal and binding obligation, under the Climate Act, which holds governments accountable to achieve specified statutory emission targets by 2050.

The Committee, in recognition that Local authorities could not achieve their climate ambitions in isolation of other statutory agencies, agreed that a joined-up approach, involving a multitude of organisations and stakeholders, was essential.

The Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the Project Director and Mr. Sudmant for their detailed and informative presentation and the Committee noted the information provided.

**Belfast Agenda - overview of climate
and environment interventions**

The Climate Commissioner submitted the undernoted report which provided an overview of the climate and environmental interventions contained within the Belfast Agenda. She stated that modification to the document, following a detailed consultation exercise, had resulted in a much greater emphasis on climate ambitions and emission targets, for the Council, and the city in general:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 To provide members with an overview of the climate and environment interventions included within the Belfast Agenda ahead of the public consultation.**

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- I. Note the climate and environment interventions included within the Belfast Agenda;**
- II. A further update will be provided to Members following the public consultation.**

3.0 Main report

3.1 Background

In the refreshed Belfast Agenda the environmental and climate considerations have been strengthened to reflect the feedback

from the wide range of stakeholders that have been consulted. At the city level this work has been overseen by the Resilience and Sustainability Board as part of the wider community planning partnership. In particular the carbon targets adopted by Council last year have now been embedded in the city's ambitions for 2035. Creating a sustainable nature-positive city is now one of the five main themes with three key priorities over the next four years:

1. Re-naturing the city and improving the food system
2. Creating a sustainable circular economy
3. Innovating to Net Zero

3.2 Re-naturing the city and improving the food system

Under this priority, there are three strategic intents:

- Increase carbon capture and sequestration across Belfast, while reducing flood risk, enhancing biodiversity and improving the health of residents across the city through the One Million Trees project;
- Develop a demonstrator site in Botanic Gardens to test nature-based solutions through the UPSURGE project to strengthen climate resilience;
- Promote the uptake of nature-based solutions across the city to support climate resilience by integrating climate adaptation into strategic plans and urban agendas, by building adaptive capacity to deliver nature-based solutions, by scoping a city-wide regeneration programme to replace impermeable surfaces with green infrastructure, contributing to biodiversity and civic amenity, and by identifying funding opportunities to scale up nature-based solutions

3.3 Creating a sustainable circular economy

Under this priority, there are six strategic intents:

1. Enable the city to decarbonise at scale using the Belfast Local Area Energy Plan to develop a pipeline of investable local energy projects arising from the Local Area Energy Plan and identifying and responding to emerging funding and financing opportunities;
2. Promote sustainable circular economy approaches through the Shared Island funded Circular Economy Feasibility and Business Case in partnership with Dublin City Council, the UP2030 project (which aims to embed net zero in urban planning) and by reducing the carbon / environmental impact of municipal waste;

3. Promote a Just Transition to Net Zero in Belfast by addressing the social risks of the transition (eg. employment shifts, impact on supply chains etc.), identifying social opportunities and co-benefits of the transition and through meaningful dialogue, co-creation and participation in net zero planning through community planning structures and involvement of key community, business and other statutory partners;
4. Increase the use of Electric Vehicles in Belfast and improve access to charge points through the Belfast EV Strategy;
5. Reduce energy consumption (and bills) of housing and public /commercial buildings through the retrofit of buildings; and
6. Decarbonise the heat supply to buildings in the city via a Heat Network and local energy projects.

3.4 Innovating to Net Zero

Under this priority, there are five strategic intents:

1. Develop a Net Zero Park on Queens Island as a stand-out global hub and testbed for innovating and investing in advanced green solutions for energy, transport and manufacturing;
2. Develop a stable supply of green energy to the Net Zero Park and surrounding lands to support the industrial cluster by developing affordable sustainable energy supply, by creating a testbed for multiple green fuels, and by establishing a local hydrogen plant;
3. Accelerate the transition to low carbon manufacturing by supporting industries to measure and manage their carbon footprints, by using smart design and digital twin assets to accelerate innovation, test new business models and enhance supply chain resilience;
4. Support Green Multi-Modal Mobility by creating a living lab across Harbour estate to test new low carbon transport solutions, by supporting low carbon innovation in advanced air, maritime & road transport, and by establishing partnerships with maritime districts
5. Expand an existing cluster of net zero technology companies to create a burgeoning GreenTech sector in NI and help realise the objectives of the Green Growth Strategy.

- 3.5 Climate and environmental considerations are also embedded throughout the other themes. For example, under housing led regeneration and the future city centre priorities. There is also a separate priority (under the Place theme) covering active and sustainable travel.

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3.6 Next Steps

The planned next steps to finalising the draft strategy document and action plans are as follows:

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Early August 2023 | Refreshed Belfast Agenda strategy document and Action Plans launched for consultation. EQIA and RNA consultation also commence |
| July – October 2023 | Review of Belfast Agenda Governance arrangements, performance framework and co-design framework undertaken. |
| 10 October 2023 | Refreshed Belfast Agenda strategy document and action plan consultation ends |
| w/c 6 November 2023 | Refreshed Belfast Agenda formally launched (date to be confirmed) |

4.0 Financial and Resource Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications.

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

5.1 An EQIA and RNA have been undertaken and will be consulted on for a period of 12 weeks.”

A Member highlighted the success in regard to the retrofit of Housing Executive properties in parts of the city. He enquired if funding could be sought from additional external sources, and raised concerns about the lack of a formal Housing Executive policy in regard to the installation of EV charging points attached to those residential properties. The Member referred to the ‘Access to the Hills’ and ‘Living With Water’ initiatives as positive developments in securing an improved green infrastructure for the city.

In response, the Climate Commissioner reported that the Council was researching all potential funding streams, including development proposals to reduce flooding. She stated that the issue would be raised in regard to EV charging points with the Housing Executive. The Climate Commissioner reported that some work had been undertaken with the Department for Social Development, on a joint transition bond, which would allow the Housing

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Executive to borrow money on capital markets, subject to Ministerial approval. She agreed to raise that issue with the Housing Executive and report back to the Committee.

In response to a question from a Member in regard to the timeframe when individuals would be mandated to switch to electric vehicles, the Climate Commissioner reported that the sale of new combustible vehicles would not be permitted after 2030. The Member raised concerns in regard to the lack of drainage infrastructure to mitigate against flooding and how the community might have access to affordable green energy in development proposals for the Harbour Estate and other initiatives.

The Climate Commissioner confirmed that the Council had an EV strategy with targets specified with that strategy. In terms of flooding, she stated that Belfast had a preponderance of non-absorbent surfaces which required to be addressed by introducing more green spaces and tree planting throughout the city. In terms of the question in regard to the Harbour Estate's green development proposals, the Climate Commissioner confirmed that, on the proviso that the Council was successful in securing phase 2 funding, social inclusion was a key part of the transition to a green infrastructure. She confirmed that Queen's University Belfast, the Belfast Metropolitan College and Artemis were engaged in developing apprenticeships and community development plans as part of its green ambitions for the Harbour Estate.

Members raised the issue of rewilding wards, within Belfast, as a potential positive development initiative and stressed the importance of securing community engagement for all green energy development proposals. The Climate Commissioner confirmed that the Council was at an early stage in its green energy development proposals, for the Harbour Estate, and reported that a community engagement plan was being developed currently.

Noted.

**Application for phase 2 funding from Innovate UK
for the Pathfinders: Net Zero Living competition**

The Climate Commissioner provided the Committee with an update on the Council's application proposal for stage 2 funding in regard to the Pathfinders (Net Zero Living Competition). She provided the Members with proposals attached to that funding application and detailed how, if successful, the funding would assist the city in the development of its net zero options.

The Committee noted the information provided and wished the officers success in pursuance of their phase 2 funding application.

Update on Notice of Motion on C40 Membership

The Climate Commissioner submitted the undernoted report in regard to its intention to apply for membership of the C40 group.

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1** This report will update Members on a Notice of Motion raised in Standards and Business Committee on the 25th October 2022 suggesting membership of the C40 network.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1** The Committee is asked to:

- I.** Note the content of the Notice of Motion raised at the Standards and Business Committee on the 25th October 2022.
- II.** Note that having enquired about Belfast joining C40 the Climate Unit was informed that membership is at full capacity. Belfast City Council Climate Unit has registered our interest should membership reopen.
- III.** Note that in relation to climate and resilience networks, Belfast is currently a member of the Global Resilient Cities Network, Core Cities Network, Eurocities Network and ICLEI Network, in addition to the PCAN Network mentioned in the Notice of Motion.

3.0 Main report

Background

- 3.1** At the Standards and Business Committee on the 25th October 2022 Councillor Matt Collins proposed the following notice of motion, which was seconded by Councillor Ferguson and agreed by the Committee:
- 3.2** ‘Belfast City Council notes that the C40 World Mayors Summit occurred between 19 – 21 October 2022 in Buenos Aires. The Council notes that the C40 World Mayors Summit brings together the mayors of global and regional cities, alongside business leaders, philanthropists, campaigners, youth leaders, scientists and residents, to share bold ideas, showcase innovative solutions and stand together to create a sustainable, prosperous and equitable future. This Council notes that it already supports the work of the Belfast Climate Commission and is part of the Place-based Climate Action Network (‘PCAN’). The Council also notes that the C40 Leadership Standards are as follows:

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- 3.3 Plan: City has adopted a resilient and inclusive climate action plan aligned with the 1.5°C ambition of the Paris Agreement, and updates it regularly;**
- 3.4 Deliver: In 2024, city remains on track to deliver its climate action plan, contributing to increased resilience, equitable outcomes and halving C40's overall emissions by 2030;**
- 3.5 Mainstream: City uses the necessary financial, regulatory and other tools at their disposal to address the climate crisis and mainstreams their equitable climate targets into the most impactful city decision-making processes;**
- 3.6 Innovate: City innovates and starts taking inclusive and resilient action to address emissions beyond the direct control of the city government, such as associated with goods and services consumed in their city;**
- 3.7 Lead: Mayor and the city demonstrate global climate leadership and inspire others to act in support of the Paris Agreement.**
- 3.8 These Leadership Standards will guide C40's collective action until at least 2024. The Council considers that this PCAN work would be enhanced by Belfast City Council applying to join C40 as an 'Innovator'. An 'Innovator' city is one that shows exceptional climate leadership at the global level, but do not meet the population/size criteria of a 'Megacity.'**
- 3.9 Accordingly, the Council resolves to recommend to the Lord Mayor of Belfast that she apply on behalf of Belfast City Council and her office to join the C40 network and, in any event, adhering to the C40's leadership standards.'**
- 3.10 Having liaised with contacts in C40 the Climate Unit has been informed that currently (as of April 2023) their membership is at full capacity. C40 are primarily mega cities who will have a population of 3million or more by 2030 and in addition include some innovator cities who are seen as leaders on climate action. However, C40 are not accepting new applications under either category at present. The Climate Unit has registered our interest should this open up again, and C40 have asked to be kept informed of any outstanding climate action similar to the CDP A achieved by Belfast in 2022. Should the situation change, membership will be applied for, and Committee updated accordingly.**
- 3.11 The Belfast Climate Unit Climate Unit will seek to adhere to the C40 leadership standards as set out in the body of this report.**

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- 3.12 Members may be aware that that in relation to climate and resilience networks, Belfast is currently a member of the Global Resilient Cities Network, Core Cities Network, Eurocities Network and ICLEI Network, in addition to the PCAN (Place Based Climate Action) Network mentioned in the Notice of Motion.**

4.0 Financial and Resource Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial or resource implications at present.**

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

- 5.1 There are no direct equality and good relations implications.”**

The Committee noted the information which had been provided by the Climate Commissioner in the aforementioned report.

Issues raised in advance by Members

Proposed agenda items for future meetings

Councillor Brooks requested that the following areas be considered by the Committee on dates, and in a sequence, deemed appropriate by officers and the Chairperson.

1. Cycle Lanes - Councillor Brooks requested the DfI be invited to a future meeting of the Committee, in addition to Sustrans, to provide an update on the Belfast Cycling Delivery Network and how the cycling infrastructure might be improved.
2. Passive House Design - Councillor Brooks requested that the Southwest College, based in Enniskillen, which had undertaken a passive house development, be invited to a future meeting of the Committee to outline their experience of that development project in terms of its cost and pay-back period.
3. Embodied Carbon - Councillor Brooks requested that Dr. Siobhan Cox, from Queen's University Belfast, be invited, to a future meeting of the Committee, to ascertain the calculation methodology and measures which might be put in place to reduce the amount of embodied carbon generated, as part of the Council's future operational and capital projects.
4. EV Charging Points – Councillor Brooks requested that an update be provided, to a future meeting of the Committee, on the development proposals in regard to both the infrastructure and funding of EV charging points, throughout the city.

In response, the Climate Commissioner reported that the issues raised relevant to active travel was the responsibility of the People and Communities Committee and that any

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presentation to the Climate and Resilience Committee, on those issues, would be for notation only.

In regard to the additional issue raised by Councillor Brooks on the Council's vehicle fleet, the Climate Commissioner stated that she would be happy to arrange for the Director (Operational) City and Neighbourhood Services to be invited to provide an update on progress, in regard to the electrification of the Council fleet and for DfI to be invited to provide an update on the expansion of cycle lanes and the development of future cycling infrastructure. She reported, also that she would be content to invite Sony to provide information on the capacity of the network to meet the future demand from electric vehicle charging points.

She agreed to the Member's request to invite Southwest College (Enniskillen) to provide the Committee with an update on their experience with passive house design and that an invitation be extended to Ms. Wendy Langham (Belfast Stories) to provide an update on their ambition to attain 'Passive House Plus' standard for future house construction. The Climate Commissioner confirmed also that Dr. Siobhan Cox, Queen's University Belfast, would be invited to provide the Members with an update on embodied carbon emissions.

The Committee agreed to the presentations requested by Councillor Brooks, on the proviso that the presentations were time limited to allow for adequate debate of the remaining agenda items under discussion.

Date of Next Meeting

The Committee agreed that its next meeting be held on Thursday, 14th September at 5.15 p.m.

Chairperson

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Standards and Business Committee

Tuesday, 29th August, 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 Lawlor, Rodgers; and
Councillors Bradley, M. Donnelly, P. Donnelly, D. Douglas,
Duffy, Groogan, Kelly, Long, Magee, F. McAteer,
G. McAteer, McCormick, McDowell, R. McLaughlin and
McMullan.

In attendance: Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor and Director of Legal
and Civic Services;
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and
Mrs. L McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 27th June 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 July.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of Interest were reported.

Motions

The Committee was advised that five motions had been received in advance of the
Council on 4th September.

The Committee considered each motion in turn and agreed the following:

Urban Wildflower Meadows

That the motion be referred, in the first instance, to the People and Communities
Committee.

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Street Art Walls

That the motion be referred, in the first instance, to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.

Clean Indoor Air Motion

That the motion be referred, in the first instance, to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Save West Wellbeing Suicide Awareness

That the motion be referred, in the first instance, to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Future Management Structures of Lough Neagh

A Member explained that the intention of the motion was to call for Lough Neagh to be brought into public ownership and not within the ownership of the Council. She requested that, having discussed it with the Senior Democratic Services Officer, it could be referred to the Council for debate rather than being referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Accordingly, it was

Moved by the Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Groogan,
Seconded by the Chairperson and

Resolved - That the motion be referred to the Council for debate, with no restrictions on the number of speakers.

Chairperson

Future Management Structures of Lough Neagh

“The Council recognises that the recent spread of toxic blue green algae on Lough Neagh is of major concern to the residents of Belfast. Over 50% of Belfast’s water comes from Neagh. Many people will have seen many recent reports that the Lough is dying. Lough Neagh is largest lake in these islands and has been described as hyper- eutrophic - in other words the Lough suffers from nutrient enrichment mainly from human sewage and agricultural run-off both directly into the Lough and the wider water catchment.

This severe deterioration in water quality is the latest in a number of problems ranging from extractive industries, invasive species, and the depletion in the numbers of fish and birds. If Lough Neagh was a person, it would be described as having multiple organ failure. Over decades the current management and ownership structures have proven incapable of dealing with these complex problems

For such a strategic asset and its importance for drinking water, fishing, culture, recreation and biodiversity, Lough Neagh deserves a more effective form of ownership and a management structure that works in the public interest to deal with these multiple problems.

It is the Council’s view that the public acquisition of Lough Neagh is sought from Lord Shaftesbury, including acquiring the bed of the Lough. Furthermore, the Council supports a new legal right of nature for Lough Neagh that guarantees a model of ownership that protects the rights of Lough Neagh to exist and evolve. Finally, the Council recognises that public acquisition of Lough must involve in the future participation of the Lough Neagh communities in any future decision making for the Lough.”

Proposer: Councillor Brian Smyth

Seconder: Councillor Anthony Flynn

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