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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, City Hall, Belfast on Wednesday, 1st March, 2023 at 6.00 pm, for the transaction of the following business:

1. Summons
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Minutes of the Council (Pages 1 - 10)
5. Official Announcements
 - a) Request to address the Council
6. Minutes of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (Pages 11 - 58)
7. Minutes of People and Communities Committee (Pages 59 - 106)
8. Minutes of City Growth and Regeneration Committee (Pages 107 - 136)
9. Minutes of Licensing Committee (Pages 137 - 148)
10. Minutes of Planning Committee (Pages 149 - 166)
11. Minutes of Climate and City Resilience Committee (Pages 167 - 178)
12. Minutes of Standards and Business Committee (Pages 179 - 186)
13. Motions
 - a) Overdose Prevention Facility in Belfast (Pages 187 - 188)

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

Chief Executive

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Council

MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the Council Chamber, City Hall and remotely, via Microsoft Teams, on Wednesday, 1st February, 2023 at 6.00 p.m., pursuant to notice.

Members present: The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor (Councillor Black) (Chairperson);
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor M. Kelly);
The High Sheriff (Councillor Kyle);
Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Haire, McCoubrey and Rodgers; and Councillors Beattie, Bower; Bradley, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, de Faoite, M. Donnelly, R. M. Donnelly, Doran, Douglas, Duffy, Ferguson, Garrett, Gormley, Groogan, Hanvey, Heading, Howard, Hussey, T. Kelly, Long, Lyons, Magee, Maghie, Maskey, McAteer, McCabe, McCann, McCullough, McDonough-Brown, McKeown, McLaughlin, McMullan, Murphy, Murray, Nelson, Newton, O'Hara, Smyth, Spratt, Thompson, Verner, Walsh and Whyte.

Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Alderman Sandford and Councillors Flynn, Hutchinson and McCusker.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Beattie declared an interest in relation to the minute of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th January, under the heading "Requests for Use of the City Hall and the Provision of Hospitality", on the basis that he was employed by the Blackie River Community Group, which had been included in the list of applications for approval.

Councillor Canavan also declared an interest in relation to the aforementioned item, as she was on the Board of the Blackie River Community Group.

Councillor Groogan declared an interest in relation to the minute of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th January, under the heading "Minutes of the Meeting of the Shared City Partnership", as she was employed by the Forward South Partnership, which had been referred to within the PEACE IV update on Building Positive Relations theme.

As neither item became the subject of discussion, the Members were not required to leave the Chamber.

**Meeting of Council,
Wednesday, 1st February, 2023**

Minutes of the Council

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

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the monthly meeting of the Council of 9th January be taken as read and signed as correct, subject to Councillor Douglas being added to the list of attendees.

Official Announcements

The Lord Mayor highlighted the fact that Alderman Sandford had been in hospital recently and, on behalf of the Council, wished him a speedy recovery.

The Lord Mayor reported that St. George's Market had been named as the Best Large Indoor Market in the United Kingdom in the recent NABMA awards and congratulated the staff on their achievement.

The Deputy Lord Mayor highlighted the fact that the Flybe airline had recently been placed in administration for a second time and it was agreed that the Lord Mayor should seek a briefing with the Trades Unions and the administrator to discuss the matter further.

A number of Members welcomed the fact that the Strand Arts Centre had been allocated funding through the Levelling-Up Fund for refurbishment works.

Councillor McKeown pointed out that the Lyric Theatre had secured joint first place in the 'Theatre of the Year' category in the Stage Awards 2023 and congratulated everyone involved.

Councillor Whyte congratulated local actor Mr. James Martin and the other Irish actors who had been nominated for an Oscar at the forthcoming Academy Awards ceremony.

Councillor Lyons extended his sympathy to the family of Professor Eileen Evason, a renowned social administration lecturer and campaigner for equality and women's rights, who had died recently.

The Lord Mayor informed the Council that Mrs. Maureen McKearney, Assistant Business Manager in the Chief Executive's Department, would be leaving the Council at the end of February, having completed 46 years' service, and wished her well in her retirement.

Councillor Ferguson expressed solidarity with the significant number of workers across the country who were currently involved in strike action.

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Request to Address the Council

The Council approved a request for Mr. Máirtín Mac Gabhann to provide an update on the progress of Dáithí's Law on organ donation and he was welcomed by the Lord Mayor.

Mr. Mac Gabhann informed the Council that his son, Dáithí, had been born with a rare life-threatening heart defect and was currently on the organ donor register awaiting a heart transplant.

He reminded the Council that he had attended its meeting on 3rd September, 2018, to highlight the need for more to be done to encourage people to sign up as an organ donor in Northern Ireland. The Council had subsequently passed a motion supporting the efforts of those organisations seeking to increase the number of people joining the Organ Donation Register.

He reviewed the significant progress which had been made since then and pointed out that the Northern Ireland Assembly had, on 8th February, 2022, passed the final stage of Dáithí's Law. That meant that everyone would be considered as a potential organ donor unless they opted-out or were in an exempted group, in line with the rest of the United Kingdom. It had been the intention to bring the law into effect in the spring of 2023 but this had been delayed, as the secondary legislation required for its implementation could not be passed due to the absence of a functioning Assembly.

He reported that he had, earlier that day, met with the Secretary of State to request him to explore alternative ways of moving the secondary legislation forward as a matter of urgency but had been extremely disappointed with the outcome of that meeting.

Mr. Mac Gabhann concluded by highlighting the importance of Dáithí's Law in terms of offering hope to the local organ donation and transplantation community and saving lives and urged the Council to continue to support his family's ambition to have it implemented without further delay.

The Lord Mayor and a number of Members paid tribute to the Mac Gabhann family, following which the Council agreed that the Lord Mayor would forward a letter to the Secretary of State requesting him, in the absence of the Northern Ireland Assembly, to use the powers available to him to bring forward the secondary legislation required for the full implementation of Dáithí's Law.

Change of Membership on Committees/Outside Bodies

The Chief Executive reported that notification had been received from the Democratic Unionist Party of the following changes to Committees:

- Councillor Doran to replace Alderman Sandford on the Climate and City Resilience Committee;
- Councillor Bunting to replace Alderman Sandford on the Licensing Committee; and

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- Councillor Doran to replace Councillor Thompson on the Licensing Committee

The Council noted the changes.

Minutes of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Moved by Councillor McDonough-Brown,
Seconded by Councillor Beattie,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th and 27th January, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Amendment

Motion – School Street Schemes

Moved by Councillor de Faoite,
Seconded by Councillor McKeown,

That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th January, under the heading “Motion – School Street Schemes” be rejected and, accordingly, the Council agrees to adopt the motion in full.

On a recorded vote, eleven Members voted for the amendment and forty-five against and it was declared lost.

For 11	Against 45
Councillors Matt Collins, Michael Collins, de Faoite, Ferguson, Groogan, Heading, Lyons, McKeown, O’Hara, Smyth and Whyte.	The Lord Mayor (Councillor Black); The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor M. Kelly); The High Sheriff (Councillor Kyle); Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Haire, McCoubrey and Rodgers; and Councillors Beattie, Bower, Bradley, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, M. Donnelly, R. M. Donnelly, Doran, Douglas, Duffy, Garrett, Gormley, Hanvey, Howard, Hussey, T. Kelly, Long, Magee, Maghie, Maskey, McAteer, McCabe, McCann, McCullough, McDonough-Brown, McLaughlin, McMullan, Murphy, Murray, Nelson, Newton, Spratt, Thompson, Verner and Walsh.

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Amendment

Revenue Estimates and District Rate 2023/24

Moved by Councillor Long,
Seconded by Councillor McDonough-Brown,

That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 27th January, under the heading “Revenue Estimates and District Rate 2023/24”, be amended to provide that the Council agrees:

- i. not to allocate funding of £500k to the Summer Diversionary Festival Programme in 2023/24, thereby reducing the District Rate to 7.71%, subject to an equality screening and that, should that fail to be completed before the statutory deadline, the original increase of 7.99%, as agreed by the Committee on 27th January, be implemented; and
- ii. that a Working Group be established to develop an effective, sustainable diversionary scheme, to be implemented in 2024, to build capacity in local communities and that relevant stakeholders be included in the process.

On a recorded vote, twelve Members voted for the amendment and forty-three against and it was declared lost.

For 12	Against 43
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor M. Kelly); and Councillors Bower, Groogan, Hanvey, Long, Maghie, McDonough-Brown, McMullan, Murray, Nelson, O’Hara and Smyth.	The Lord Mayor (Councillor Black); The High Sheriff (Councillor Kyle); Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Haire, McCoubrey and Rodgers; and Councillors Beattie, Bradley, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, de Faoite, M. Donnelly, R. M. Donnelly, Doran, Douglas, Duffy, Ferguson, Garrett, Gormley, Heading, Howard, Hussey, T. Kelly, Magee, Maskey, McAteer, McCabe, McCann, McCullough, McKeown, McLaughlin, Murphy, Newton, Spratt, Thompson, Verner, Walsh and Whyte.

At the request of Councillor McLaughlin, the Council agreed that a letter be forwarded to the Secretary of State and the leaders of the local Political Parties asking them to examine the potential for implementing a policy which would allow the Council to retain the rate growth achieved in the district for a period of five years, which would assist

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it in developing a medium term financial plan, incentivise it to increase the rate base and deal with immediate pressures as a result of the cost-of-living crisis.

At the request of Councillor Whyte, the Council agreed that engagement take place with Land and Property Services and the Department of Finance to establish if the costs incurred by the Council in providing a waste collection service for purpose-built student accommodation which was exempt from paying rates could be clawed back.

The Council agreed also that a letter be forwarded to the Secretary of State and the leaders of the local Political Parties calling for a reform of the current legislation which provided rates exemptions for purpose-built student accommodation.

Dual-Language Street Signage

At the request of Councillor McLaughlin, the Council agreed that the report to be presented to the next meeting of the Committee on the backlog of applications for dual-language street signs should also address the establishment of the Stakeholders' Group and provide up-to-date costings for completing the remaining 330 streets in the Gaeltacht quarter and an update on the Equality Impact Assessment for Olympia Leisure Centre.

Adoption of Minutes

The Lord Mayor called upon the Council to approve and adopt the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th January, including the foregoing additions and omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, and the minutes of the proceedings of 27th January.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Lyons,
Seconded by Councillor de Faoite,

That the Council agrees not to adopt the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th, as amended, and 27th January.

On a recorded vote, seven Members voted for the proposal and forty-five against, with three 'no votes' and it was declared lost.

For 7	Against 45	No Vote 3
Councillors Matt Collins, Michael Collins, de Faoite, Ferguson, Lyons, McKeown and Whyte.	The Lord Mayor (Councillor Black); The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor M. Kelly); The High Sheriff (Councillor Kyle); Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Haire, McCoubrey	Councillors Groogan, O'Hara and Smyth.

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	and Rodgers; and Councillors Beattie, Bower, Bradley, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, M. Donnelly, R. M. Donnelly, Doran, Douglas, Duffy, Garrett, Gormley, Hanvey, Howard, Hussey, T. Kelly, Long, Magee, Maghie, Maskey, McAteer, McCabe, McCann, McCullough, McDonough-Brown, McLaughlin, McMullan, Murphy, Murray, Nelson, Newton, Spratt, Thompson, Verner and Walsh.	
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Subject to the foregoing additions, the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th January, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee and as amended, and the minutes of the proceedings of 27th January were thereupon approved and adopted.

Minutes of People and Communities Committee

Moved by Councillor Murray,
Seconded by Councillor O'Hara,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 10th and 25th January be approved and adopted.

**Department for Communities Private Tenancies
Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 - Update on Powers
for Councils commencing in April, 2023**

At the request of Councillor O'Hara, the Council agreed that the letter which the Committee had agreed to send to the Permanent Secretary in the Department for Communities in relation to resource/funding implications and fines payable should also stress the Council's support for Rent Controls and request an update on the further policy and legislative work being undertaken by the Department to fairly regulate the private rental sector, which the Minister had committed to in the previous mandate.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing addition, the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 10th and 25th January were thereupon approved and adopted.

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Minutes of City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Moved by Councillor Murphy,
Seconded by Councillor McCabe and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 11th and 25th January be approved and adopted.

Minutes of Planning Committee

Moved by Councillor Maskey,
Seconded by Councillor Groogan,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee of 17th, 19th and 25th January, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Amendment

Update on Tree Protection Orders

Moved by Councillor Groogan,
Seconded by Councillor O'Hara,

That the decision of the Planning Committee of 17th January, under the heading "Update on Tree Protection Orders", be amended to provide that the Council agrees to support the reform of the Tree Protection Order system and will ask the Department for Infrastructure to undertake a review of the current legislation to move to a system which provides automatic protection for all trees, requiring notification and approval for all felling, notwithstanding the usual exemptions around health and safety and any others to make the legislation workable.

At the request of Councillor Hanvey, the proposer agreed to withdraw her amendment to allow for a report to be submitted to the Committee in the first instance on how the current Tree Protection Order legislation and systems in place to protect trees might be improved and that it include, at the request of Councillor Garrett, reference to biodiversity net gain.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing addition, the minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee of 17th, 19th and 25th January, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, were approved and adopted.

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**Minutes of Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd.
Shareholders' Committee**

Moved by Councillor Maghie,
Seconded by Councillor Smyth and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Ltd. Shareholders' Committee of 16th January, be approved and adopted.

Minutes of Standards and Business Committee

Moved by Councillor Hanvey,
Seconded by Councillor Duffy and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Standards and Business Committee of 24th January, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee and subject to the amendment to provide that the motions on Ending Hostile Environment and Support for Striking Health Workers had been adopted by the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Motions

End Hostile Environment

The Council noted that this motion had been withdrawn from the agenda, on the basis that it had been adopted by the Standards and Business Committee at its meeting on 24th January.

Support for Striking Health Workers

The Council noted that this motion had been withdrawn from the agenda, on the basis that it had been adopted by the Standards and Business Committee at its meeting on 24th January.

Lord Mayor
Chairperson

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Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 17th February, 2023

MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM AND
REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor McDonough-Brown (Chairperson);
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor M. Kelly);
Aldermen Dorrian and Haire; and
Councillors Beattie, Bradley, Bunting, Ferguson,
Garrett, Groogan, Heading, Long, Lyons, McLaughlin,
McMullan, Murphy, Spratt, Thompson and Verner.

In attendance: Mr. J. Walsh, Chief Executive;
Ms. N. Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and
Civic Services;
Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;
Ms. C. Matthews, Director of Resources and Fleet;
Ms. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and
Development;
Mr. D. Sales, Director of Neighbourhood Services;
Ms. C. Sheridan, Director of Human Resources;
Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;
Mr. T. Wallace, Director of Finance; and
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 20th and 27th January were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council, at its meeting on 1st February, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Groogan declared an interest in item 2 (f) Fuel Poverty Hardship Funding that she was employed by an organisation which distributed funding; and 7 (b) Shared City Partnership as the same organisation was a funding sector partner.

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**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 17th February, 2023**

Councillor Beattie declared an interest in item 2 (f) Fuel Poverty Hardship Funding that he was employed by an organisation which operated a social supermarket;

Councillor Verner declared an interest in item 2 (f) Fuel Poverty Hardship Funding that she was associated with an organisation which operated a social supermarket; and

Councillor Bradley declared an interest in item 2 (f) Fuel Poverty Hardship Funding that she was employed by an organisation which distributed funding.

The above-mentioned Members left the meeting whilst these items were under 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 3 2022/23

The Director of Finance submitted for the Committee's consideration a report which provided information on the financial position for Quarter 2 2022/23, based upon the five step Finance Strategy which had been formulated to protect the financial sustainability of the Council.

He reported that the Quarter 3 financial position for the Council was an underspend of £31k which included funding Covid expenditure and income losses of £2.9m from reserves. The key drivers to this continued to include underspends in employee budgets and additional expenditure controls which had helped offset unbudgeted costs such as the Hardship fund and Cost of Living payments. Delays to programmes, now anticipated to take place in quarter 4, had also contributed to this underspend.

The Quarter 3 Departmental forecast was an overspend of £1.6m, representing 1.0% of the net expenditure budget. This forecast position included absorbing unbudgeted losses, including the Hardship Fund, Cost of Living Payments and the 2022/23 Pay settlement.

The Council had ratified the 2023/24 district rate increase and the associated budgetary gap of £12.5m at its meeting on 1st February. The recommended strategy to fund the gap in 2023/24 would require departmental underspends to balance the shortfall. Should the forecast year end overspend not materialise, consideration would be given to setting aside underspends from 2022/23 to help fund the gap. This would be reported to Members in the year-end financial report in June.

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The Committee:

- noted the Quarter 3 financial report; and
- agreed that reallocations of forecast Departmental underspends would be considered as part of year end reporting taking into consideration the 2023/24 budgetary gap.

**Update on Northern Ireland Council
Strategic Waste Management Arrangements**

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the progress being made on joint working between councils in relation to Waste Management through an update on the SOLACE NI sponsored Strategic Investment Board (SIB) review of current arrangements and their recommendations and which sought permission to move to the next stage of the process.

After discussion, the Committee:

- i adopted, in principle, the recommendations of the SIB Project Business Case report;
- ii approved a funding application with DfC and DAERA in relation to the Subvention Funding required as detailed in the report; and
- iii endorsed the actions of officers to date and to receive future reports in due course.

**Update on City and Neighbourhood
Services Establishment**

The Committee considered a report the purpose of which was to bring forward recommendations to the Committee to support:

- the stabilisation of driver resources in waste collection; and
- the administration support requirements for Bereavement Services

The Committee was advised that there was a wider piece of work to stabilise driver resources in Waste Collection and plan for the future. A cross Departmental group had been established to work on issues impacting the short, medium and long-term driver requirements. This included, for example, establishment numbers, recruitment, managing planned and unplanned absence, standby driver pools, CNS driver academies, and longer-term workforce planning and models. Further reports would be brought back to the Committee in due course.

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In relation to the Bereavement Administration Office, the Committee was informed that it processed almost 4,000 cremations and 1,500 burials per year as well as other Bereavement service requests with an income of approximately £3 million per annum.

The Committee noted the content of the report and agreed to increase the Establishment as follows:

- i 4 Fixed Term Contract HGV driver posts to permanent posts;
- ii 9 current temporary HGV driver posts to permanent posts in the Waste Collection Service; and
- iii 3 administrator posts in Bereavement Administration Support team as permanent.

Entrepreneurship Support Service

The Senior Manager, Economy, submitted a report which updated the Committee on the decision taken by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to support an 11-council Entrepreneurship Support Service, valued at up to £17million over 2 years, from April 2023. This represented a significant scaling up in ambition of the councils' statutory remit around business start-up and targeted entrepreneurship support.

As a condition of the support, DLUHC had confirmed that it wished to work with a "lead council", rather than operate through 11 different contracts. Belfast City Council had been playing a lead role in the research, review and programme development to date. Whilst there was significant risk associated with mobilising a new intervention with a limited funding window, there were also opportunities for the Council to reposition its role in supporting local businesses and to maximise the impact of other investments, including City Deal. It was proposed that the Council takes on the lead role in the commissioning and delivery of the service, subject to all relevant due diligence and risk management being undertaken.

The Committee:

- a. agreed that Belfast City Council should lead on the submission of the application to UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund for the 11-council Entrepreneurship Support Service model; and
- b. agreed that Belfast City Council should lead on the future development and delivery of the services as outlined in the report, subject to additional due diligence and risk management work being undertaken.

Quarterly Update on Organisational Reviews and Change Programme

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided details on the progress on the work programme for the Organisational and Change Portfolio projects.

Fuel Poverty Hardship Fund

The Director Neighbourhood Services submitted a report providing an update to the Committee on recent discussions with the Department for Communities around the possibility of hardship funding being made available to the Council in-year and to present initial options on how this might be administered.

The Committee:

- noted that funding might be made available in-year from the Department for Communities to address hardship within the City;
- agreed to adopt Option 2 as the delivery model, that is, to bolster existing hardship interventions such as social supermarkets and Fareshare;
- agreed that officers initiate preliminary discussions with potential service providers pending confirmation by DFC on funding allocation;
- agreed, in principle, that the Director of Neighbourhood Services would have delegated authority to realign any underspends in the funding made available to bolster existing hardship interventions; and
- agree, in principle, that any further in-year funding which might be made available to the Council, through partners, is also utilised to enhance the approach being recommended within this report.

Asset Management

The Committee approved:

i) Gasworks Northern Fringe Masterplan Site – Disposal of land to Radius Housing Association

- the disposal of c.1.628 acres of land on Site A Gasworks Northern Fringe for a premium of £1,200,000 and the disposal of c. 0.685 acres on Site D Gasworks Northern Fringe for a premium of £440,000 to Radius Housing Association to facilitate the development of 94 housing units on the Gasworks site.

The Committee noted that the disposal and the proposed development of social housing on the site by Radius Housing Association was contingent on the following and accordingly the Committee approved:

ii) Gasworks Northern Fringe Masterplan Site A – Acquisition of Freehold Title from Northern Ireland Housing Executive

- the acquisition of the freehold title of land within Site A Gasworks Northern Fringe from the NIHE for a premium of £150,000.

iii) Gasworks Northern Fringe Masterplan Site A – Payment of Premium to Northern Ireland Housing Executive for Release of Long Leasehold Restrictions

- the payment of a premium of £6,000 to NIHE for release of restrictive use covenants on land within Site A Gasworks Northern Fringe.

The Committee agreed further that a report on the possibility that the income from the sale of any land from this Council to either the NIHE or housing associations could be ring fenced for the development of public homes within the city.

Other

iv) Percy Street Community Centre - Licence to The Lower Shankill Community Association (LSCA)

- approved a short-term Licence to LSCA, with terms to be agreed by the Director of Neighbourhood Services and Director of Physical Programmes.

Levelling Up Fund – Lessons Learned

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the Council's approach to Levelling Up Funding. The report set out the lessons learned through the Council's engagement in the process and both the successful (that is, the Strand Arts Centre) and unsuccessful (that is, 2 Royal Avenue) funding submissions under Levelling Up Round 2.

The Committee noted:

- i. the update provided in respect of the approach taken to Levelling Up Funding, including the securing of significant funding investment for the Strand Arts Centre;
- ii. that, when feedback was received from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in respect of the 2 Royal Avenue application, this feedback would be shared with the Committee highlighting any relevant learning points for future applications for external funding;
- iii. the challenging timescales for funding calls, lack of timely and clear guidance which had been a feature of the previous 2 Rounds of Levelling Up Funding;
- iv. concerns raised by a range of interested parties regarding the decision-making process associated with the Levelling Up Agenda and the formula used by the UK Government in awarding funding to successful applications across the UK; and
- v. the proposed next steps in learning from this Funding Round and also in the development of a corporate process that would ensure that this

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Committee could make decisions on applications for funding opportunities based on priorities and projects agreed by Members.

**Consultancy Cost to Ratepayers –
April 2019 to October 2022**

The Committee:

- noted a report which provided information on the external consultancy cost incurred over the course of the current term;
- agreed that a report on consultancy services in relation to capital works be submitted to a future meeting; and
- agreed that review be undertaken on how decisions on consultancy spending are taken, Committee involvement, how these could be made more transparent and how these costs might be reduced.

**Summer Community Diversionary Festival Programme –
Request to hold a Special Committee Meeting**

The Interim City Solicitor submitted a report seeking approval for the holding of a special meeting of the Committee to award funding through the Summer Community Diversionary Festival Programme.

During discussion, a Member expressed the need to establish a working group to look at issues such as costs associated with individual bonfire sites, clean-up costs, sectarian imagery at bonfires and whether the diversionary fund offered value for money.

In response, the Chief Executive indicated that there were already existing governance arrangements in place and that those issues could be addressed through that forum and the Committee agreed with that course of action.

After further discussion, the Committee agreed that a special meeting of the Committee, if required, be held on 14th April to award funding through the Summer Community Diversionary Festival Programme.

Schedule of Meetings

Arising out of discussion, the Committee noted that, due to the Local Government Elections being moved from 4th till 18th May, the following meetings had been rearranged:

Previously agreed dates

Proposed new dates

Council

Monday 24th April	Tuesday 2nd May
Tuesday 23rd May (Annual meeting of Council)	Monday 5th June

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Strategic Policy and Resources

Friday 14th April	Friday 21st April
Friday 16th June	Friday 23rd June

Matters referred back from Council/Motions

Motion – Winter Outdoor Preparedness Strategy

The Committee was advised the Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 24th January, had referred the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor McMullan and Seconded by Councillor Long, to the Committee for consideration:

Motion - Winter Outdoor Preparedness Strategy

“This Council:

- i notes that the recent spate of icy cold weather in December 2022, which left streets frozen over for days, exposed how poorly prepared the Council is to ensure safe walking, wheeling and cycling across the City; and
- ii notes that other councils have certain measures in place which this Council currently does not, including gritting town centres and high streets and working in conjunction with the Department for Infrastructure to provide additional grit and white salt for use by the council, residents and local businesses.

The Council will work with key stakeholders to put together a funded winter outdoor preparedness strategy and action plan, including a gritting policy, for the City, to be operational by Quarter 3 of the 2023/2024 financial year.”

The motion had been proposed by Councillor McMullan and seconded by Councillor Long.

The Committee agreed to adopt the motion on a Winter Outdoor Preparedness Strategy and that a further report on the possible financial implications, measures which were already being undertaken, details of any Memorandums of Understanding which were already in place and details of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Model be submitted to a future meeting.

Quarterly Update on Motions

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Committee on the progress of all motions for which this Committee is responsible for.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- i note the updates on all motion for which the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is responsible for; and
- ii agree to the closure of motions 1, 2, 3, 16, 34, 56, 67, 83, 114, 130, 148, 149, 156, 157, 176, 178, 179, 181, 192, 194, 200, 201, 204, 206, 212, 214, 219, 222, 229, 233, 234, 268, 271, 272, 281 as referenced in the attached appendix and paragraph 3.4 below.

3.0 Main Report

Background

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

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

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

- 3.2 Following a review exercise, a new database containing all motions and Issues Raised in Advance at Committee was created and quarterly reporting to Committee commenced in March, 2021. Attached is the latest quarterly update showing all active motions and Issues Raised in Advance which the SP and R Committee is responsible for.

Closure of Motions and Issues Raised in Advance

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

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

3.4 The Committee are asked to agree that the following 36 motions are now closed:

Category 1 Recommended Closures:

- **Stained Glass Window – Health Service (Ref no 1) –** This motion called for the Council to agree to the installation of a stained-glass window in the City Hall to commemorate and celebrate the contribution that those working in the Health Service have made to the lives of the citizens of our city. It has been agreed that this will be progressed by the Installations Working Group. Therefore, it is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Stained Glass Window – Explosives Ordnance Disposal Company (Ref no 2) –** This motion called for the Council to agree to the installation of a stained-glass window in the City Hall to acknowledge the work of the Explosives Ordnance Disposal Company, Royal Army Ordnance Corps. It has been agreed that this will be progressed by the Installations Working Group. Therefore, it is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Fire Brigade Union (Ref no 3) –** This motion called for the Council to erect a suitable monument in City Hall or it's grounds in recognition of the service of the Fire Service and the 100th anniversary of the Fire Brigades Union. It has been agreed that this will be progressed by the Installations Working Group. Therefore, it is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **SEND Act and Out of School Hours Provision (Ref no 16) –** This motion called for the Council to arrange a cross party delegation meeting with the Department of Education, Education Authority, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and Out of School Hours Service providers to review resource challenges, share experiences, measure demand and explore best fit options of support to enable all children and young

people to reach their highest aspirations. This meeting was delayed due to the 2019 local government elections and the Covid-19 pandemic but is now currently being arranged via video call. Therefore, it is recommended that this motion is now closed.

- **Unregulated Car Washes (Ref no 34)** – This motion called for a report to be prepared on the number of unregulated car washes across Belfast. The Council has no responsibility for regulating or licensing hand car washes and valet services. Responsibility for Health and Safety at such car washes lies with the HSENI. The NI Environment Agency has responsibility for enforcing the requirements of the Water (NI) Order 1999 and has advised Council officers that, in line with guidance, it would recommend that vehicle washes are connected to mains sewer where possible and a suitable treatment system would be required. The NIEA currently doesn't have any vehicle wash sites in Belfast on their books which hold a consent to discharge. Further enquiries with the NIEA, HSENI and PSNI has not determined that the relevant data can be sourced from elsewhere. Therefore, it is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Public Sector Pay (Ref no 56)** – This motion called for the Council to write to the Minister of Finance to ask him to implement fair pay for civil servants and to the British Secretary of State asking that the British Government fully funds its commitments contained within the New Decade, New Approach agreement. This action is now complete and, therefore, it is recommended that this motion is now closed
- **Review of Hate Crime Legislation in NI (Ref no 67)** – This motion called for the Council to write a letter to Judge Desmond Marrinan, as part of his ongoing review of hate crime legislation in Northern Ireland expressing support for the inclusion of misogyny as a standalone offence and as a category of hate crime, recognising crimes targeted at women including trans women as hate crimes based on misogyny. This action has been completed and, therefore, it is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Frederick Douglass Statute (Ref no 83)** – This motion called for a letter be sent to the Department for Communities requesting it to consider the installation in Rosemary Street of a statue

in remembrance of Frederick Douglass, a slavery abolitionist. The Committee agreed that this work would be progressed by Installations Working Group. Therefore, it is recommended that this motion is now closed.

- **Pay Increase for Health Workers (Ref no 114) –** This motion related to the 2020 pay increase which has been settled and it is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Closure of Ulster Bank (Ref no 130) –** This motion called on the Council to write to relevant MPs requesting an all-party meeting about NatWest's proposals to close Ulster Bank. Responses from MPs were logged November 20, however, implementation of closures commenced. It is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Uplift on Universal Credit (Ref no 148) –** This motion called on the Council to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer requesting it maintain the £20 uplift on Universal Credit in April 2021 and extend the £20 uplift to all legacy benefits. Responses were noted by the Committee on 19.02.21 stating that the Government rejected calls to uplift and it is now recommended that this motion is closed.
- **Black Lives Matters Demonstration (Ref no 149) –** This motion was in relation to calling on having all penalty notices rescinded and prosecutions against Black Lives Matter activists relating to 6th June protests abandoned. This motion was resolved when the PSNI dropped the charges and it is recommended that this is now closed.
- **Child Poverty Task Force (Ref 156) –** This motion called on the Council to write to the Minister for Communities to convene a child poverty task force. The response was noted by the Committee on 19.03.21 outlining that there were no current plans to establish such a task force but that the council would be consulted on in relation to other future linked work. It is therefore recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Student Support (Ref no 157) –** This motion requested communication with university accommodation providers and private landlords who had not provided rent waivers to do so immediately, and release affected

students from private rental contracts without penalty. In addition, a letter was to be sent to Department for the Economy and Department of Finance requesting the development and funding of a Student Support Grant for all full time third level students. The requested letters were sent on 21.12.20 and responses received from the Economy Minister and, as this related to student support during the Covid 19 pandemic, it is recommended that this motion is now closed.

- **Mater Hospital Services (Ref no 176) –** This motion requested a meeting with Cathy Jack and the Minister for Health Robin Swann MLA to discuss plans for the future of the Mater, after Covid-19. The motion related to the provision of services during the pandemic. This was resolved, with services returning to normal from November 2022, and it is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Pay Rise for Public Sector Workers (Ref no 178) –** This motion requested that a letter be sent to the British Government asking it to review its budget allocation to the Executive and to stress to them the need for multi-year budgets with adequate resources to fund pay increases to our health and social care and public sector staff. This issue has since been settled and it is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Statue of Mary Ann McCracken (Ref no 179) –** This motion called on the Council to install a statue of Mary Ann McCracken in the grounds of the City Hall. The Committee approved the installation of the statue and this work is being taken forward by the Installations Working Group. It is, therefore, recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **War Years Remembered (Ref 181) –** This motion called on the Council to engage with War Years Remembered to help find a solution to their current difficulties including a possible relocation to Belfast. The Culture and Tourism team engaged with War Years Remembered and signposted to possible funding schemes. War Years Remembered indicated that they will get back in touch if they require any further assistance. It is, therefore, recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Marking the Centenary of the Ulster Memorial Tower (Ref no 194) –** This motion called for the Council to note

the various historic connections between the Ulster Memorial Tower and Belfast City Council and agree to include recognition of this connection in their Centenary programme. The Committee granted retrospective approval for a Member to attend the Centenary Commemoration of the opening of the Ulster Memorial Tower in France on 18th November and authorised the payment of the associated costs. Therefore, it is recommended that this motion is now closed.

- **Triple Lock Guarantee (Ref no 200) – This motion asked for a letter to be sent to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, requesting him to honour the ‘Triple Lock Guarantee’. The response from HM Treasury was noted by the Committee on 19.11.21 and it is recommended that this motion is now closed.**
- **NHS Pay (Ref no 201) – This motion asked for communication to be sent to the Health Minister, Robin Swann, calling upon him to refuse to bring forward the 3% pay offer, urging him, alongside the First and Deputy First Ministers, to lobby the British Government to award a substantial offer and asking him to bring forward proposals on safe staffing. The response from the Minister of Health was noted by the Committee on 19.11.21 and this motion is now recommended for closure.**
- **Universal Credit (Ref 204) – This motion called on the Council to write to the Minister for Communities to uphold the uplift for the remainder of the financial year and to write to the Prime Minister to recommend he reconsider the removal of the uplift. Responses were received from the two Ministers and we are still awaiting a response from the Prime Minister, therefore, it is recommended that this motion is now closed.**
- **Adopt a Kiosk Scheme (Ref no 212) – This motion called for the Council to prepare a report on the feasibility of joining BT’s Adopt a Kiosk scheme, outlining the options open to the Council for the removal of the kiosks, should a decision be taken not to proceed. Officers have reviewed the BT Adopt a Kiosk scheme and have received advice from BT that whilst the old ‘red phone boxes’ can be utilised in a number of ways, modern phone boxes can only be adapted to accommodate a heart defibrillator. Whilst BCC are unable to provide a dedicated resource to identify**

potential sites across the city for the repurposing of phone kiosks to house defibrillators, or to meet the potential costs associated with installation and maintenance of defibrillators, officers will be happy to direct community groups to BT and the range of organisations' who provide funding for community defibrillators. It is recommended that this motion is now closed.

- **Rent Controls (Ref 214) – This motion called for the Executive to bring forward a rent control scheme for the city. The response was noted by the Committee on 21.12.21 in relation to future plans to be brought forward and it is, therefore, recommended that this motion is now closed.**
- **Publication of information on Members' attendance at meetings (Ref no 219) – This motion requested that the Council, commencing in April 2022, would publish on an annual basis details of Members' attendance at meetings of the Council, Committees and Working Groups, as well as attendances for each year since the commencement of the current Council term. This action was implemented in April 2022 and it is recommended that this motion is now closed.**
- **Insulation inspection and the provision of insulation (Ref 222) – This motion called for the Council to write to the Minister for Communities requesting a review of the affordable warmth scheme. The response was noted by the Committee on 21.01.22 and it, is therefore, recommended that this motion is now closed.**
- **Pay Rise for Leisure Workers (Ref no 229) – This motion called for the Council to meet GLL management and trade union representatives to discuss the feasibility of supporting the joint pay claim submitted by Unite the Union and NIPSA, calling for a 11.75% increase for Belfast City Council terms and conditions members and a 15.75% increase for Castlereagh Borough terms and conditions members, to address retrospective pay legacy issues. An update was provided to the Committee in September 22 and GLL continues to meet regularly with staff, the Trade Unions, and party representatives/Elected Members, on a range of issues. It is proposed that this motion is now closed.**
- **Proposed Closure of Regina Coeli House (Ref no 233) – This motion called for communication to the**

Department of Communities' Minister and the NIHE to meet with the owners and management Committee of Regina Coeli hostel to discuss the withdrawal of this service. Letters were issued to all mentioned within the motion on 25.01.22. The Regina House facility was closed last year and it is, therefore, recommended that this motion is now closed.

- **Irish Sea Border Checks (Ref 234) –** This motion authorised the Council's City Solicitor to commence legal proceedings to compel the Minister and the British Government to comply with protocol requirements, subject to any current derogations in the grace period. The Judicial Review was successful and a response was noted by the Committee in December 2022. It is now recommended that this motion is closed.
- **Suspension of Government Debt Recovery for those in receipt of benefits and universal credit (Ref no 268) –** This motion called upon the Council to write to the Department of Communities' Minister requesting the immediate suspension of government debt recovery for those in receipt of benefits and universal credit. The response from the Department of Communities was noted by the Committee on 21.10.22 and it proposed that this motion is now closed.
- **Freedom of the City and County Borough of Belfast (Ref no 271) –** This motion called for the Council to confer the Freedom of the City and County Borough of Belfast on healthcare workers and those who worked on the frontline during the Covid-19 pandemic. This was granted and an event took place on the evening of 25th August and, therefore, it recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Devolution of Local Transport Powers (Ref 272) –** This motion called on the Council to liaise with relevant personnel and organisations to discuss the devolution of key powers. This motion was declared lost and it is, therefore, recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Christmas Tree Charity Collection (Ref no 281) –** This motion called for the Council to place a collection box beside the Christmas tree in the City Hall and for any funds raised to be channeled through the Lord Mayor's office for distribution to appropriate charities in the city. This was actioned and it is recommended that this motion is now closed.

Category 2 Recommended Closures:

- **Paid Leave for Miscarriage (Ref no 192) –** This motion called upon the Council to bring forward compassionate, fair, and progressive proposals for bereavement leave to provide leave for miscarriage and stillbirth so employees who have been impacted do not have to use sick or annual holiday leave. Through the consultation process with the Trade Unions, enhanced provisions were agreed at JNCC on 15th December 2022, including treating miscarriage as a bereavement and offering 10 days' bereavement leave on full pay to employees who suffer a miscarriage as a day one right and offering 3 days' bereavement leave to an employee who is the partner/surrogate parents for someone who has had a miscarriage. These changes have been implemented as of 01.02.23 and it is now recommended that this motion is closed.
- **Parental Bereavement Pay and Leave (Ref no 206) –** This motion called upon the Council to undertake a review of its bereavement policy, in conjunction with the unions, that sought to establish 2 weeks statutory bereavement leave and pay for all Council workers in line with the Coalition for Bereaved Workers 'Call to Action' document. Through the consultation process with the Trade Unions, enhanced provisions were agreed at JNCC, 15 December 2022, including awarding 10 consecutive days' bereavement leave, not solely in the case of a child under 18, including the case of still birth for the partner, or the death of a close relative or for those who have sole responsibility for the funeral arrangements; award 10 consecutive days' full pay, as a day one right with no qualifying service required and award 1 days paid leave to attend the funeral of an extended family member. These changes have been implemented as of 01.02.23 and it is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Fertility Treatment Leave (Ref no 233) –** This motion called for the Council to implement a new leave provision for staff, which caters for those who need leave for fertility treatment and offers the same protections as sick leave. Through the consultation process with the Trade Unions, enhanced provisions were agreed at JNCC, 15 December 2022, including awarding 10 days full paid leave following any unsuccessful IVF treatment to employees who have

undergone IVF treatment, as a day one right in addition to the paid time off for medical appointments that already exists and offering 3 days' leave to an employee who is the partner/surrogate parents for someone who had unsuccessful IVF treatment. These changes have been implemented as of 01.02.23 and it is recommended that this motion is now closed.

Financial and Resource Implications

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

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

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

The Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed to the closure of the motions as listed, except for the motion on the Mater Hospital Services. It agreed also to the closure of the motion on the Living Wage.

Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues

Council Improvement Objectives 2023-24

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy submitted the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present to the Committee the draft corporate improvement objectives for 2023-24 and to seek approval for these to be issued for public consultation, in line with our statutory performance duty obligations.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to agree the draft improvement objectives for 2023-24 and, subject to any amendments, approve their issue for public consultation in line with statutory guidance. The proposed improvement objectives for 2023-24 are as follows:

Our Services and Facilities

Maintain and where appropriate improve resident satisfaction with the council and the services and facilities that we provide

3.0	Our Communities
	Improve our local areas and enhance how we engage and support residents so everyone can enjoy good quality of life.
	Our Economy
	Help small businesses, including social enterprises and co-operatives, to develop and grow, and by doing so, help create opportunities for local jobs and employment.
	Our Environment
	Help tackle climate change, protect our environment, and improve the sustainability of Belfast.
	Our City
	Revitalise our city and help it to innovate in an inclusive and sustainable way.

Key Issues

- 3.1** We have a statutory duty to agree improvement objectives and produce an annual improvement plan, which must be published by 30th June each year. The Improvement plan does not represent everything that council plans to do, but instead focuses on a smaller set of key improvement priorities, as informed by resident priorities and evidenced by need.
- 3.2** Since 2021-22, we have grouped our improvements objectives under the headings of: Our Services, Our Communities, Our Economy, Our Environment, and Our City. This framework provides a balanced approach to selecting improvements that resonates with our residents. We have therefore retained this format for the year ahead. However, this year, we have also sought to make the improvement plan more user-friendly, streamlining the language and focusing on outward facing council activity to create a clearer alignment between our improvement aims, actions and indicators. Members should note that our longer term strategic or partnership improvement work will continue to be monitored through the corporate plan or Belfast Agenda.
- 3.3** During the public consultation, we will work with departments to develop detailed actions, milestones and performance

indicators and factor in public feedback. Indicative areas of activity have been included for illustration and are attached.

Next Steps

- 3.4 Councils are legally required to consult on their improvement objectives and to publish an Improvement Plan by 30th June each year. Subject to approval, we will issue the improvement objectives for public consultation via our on-line engagement platform for a period of 8 weeks. During this time, we will work with departments to develop detailed actions, milestones and performance indicators and update as needed based on public feedback. This improvement activity will be reflected within the Corporate Plan, committee plans or other strategic programmes, thereby ensuring that improvement is embedded within our planning and delivery processes. A final report and draft improvement plan will be brought to the SP and R Committee for ratification and publication in June.

SP and R – Draft Improvement Objectives for consultation	17th Feb 2023
Improvement Objectives: 8-week consultation	Mar - Apr 2023
Services refine actions and Pls	Mar - May 2023
S P R Committee approves the Improvement Plan for online publication	June 2023
Publish Improvement Plan	By 30th June, 2023

Financial and Resources Implications

- 3.5 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Improvement actions are programmed within normal business planning.

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

- 3.6 There are no equality or rural need implications arising directly from this report.”

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 17th February, 2023**

The Committee approved the draft improvement objectives for 2023/24 and to their issue for public consultation in line with statutory guidance.

IT Equipment Package for Members

The Committee considered in relation to the It Equipment package which would be refreshed for Members following the Local Government Elections in May, 2023.

The Committee:

- i noted that the new IT Equipment package will consist of:
 - a Windows Hybrid device: Dell Latitude 5330 2 in 1 (or equivalent), 1 Bluetooth touch pen (if required), and laptop case; and
 - a Smartphone: Either an Apple iPhone 11 64GB or a Samsung Galaxy A53
- ii noted that the current devices and smart phones used by Members would be redistributed and reused by Council officers where possible; and
- iii endorsed the recommendation that personal printers are no longer provided for home use.

Update on Dual-Language Street Signs

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of main Issues

1.1 At the Committee meeting on 20th January, it was agreed that a report would be brought to the meeting in February providing an update on dual language street signs applications.

1.2 The report:

- provides an overview of applications and current status;
- outlines the stages in the process; and
- outlines the ongoing work in relation to applications within the City centre.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- i note the contents of the report; and
- ii agree the process to be applied to City centre applications.

3.0 Main Report

Key Issues

Applicants and Current Status

- 3.1** Following approval by the Council of the revised Dual Language Streets Signs Policy on 4th July 2022, the Building Control Service received over 500 requests for dual language street signs.
- 3.2** These emailed requests had to be responded to individually, many of which did not contain the required information to validate and process the application. For example, requests which did not include the name of the street or the applicant's full address.
- 3.3** Further emails were sent to applicants requesting the required information. While many responded and provided the information, some did not, and the applications were closed. In writing to confirm the closing of these applications, a further period of time was given to provide the information. All the action above took some time to complete and proved to be much more resource intensive than envisaged. It also involved contacting a limited number of applicants more than once.
- 3.4** The Council's application form went live on 9th September, available on the website through an online form, or via email, by post or in person. Any requests received after that date must be through that formal application form and applicants are advised of this where they have made requests by other means. The reason for this is that the form sets out the required information for a valid application and ensures that all relevant information is provided at the outset. This is in line with other application processes, and with GDPR requirements for the collection and use of data.
- 3.5** As of 6th February 2023, the Service has received 611 requests under the new policy. Some streets have had multiple applications made. Following the aforementioned validation exercise to obtain the requisite missing information, 162 applications proved to be invalid leaving 449 applications to be taken through the process currently. Applications are being processed in batches, in the order received. In relation to the 449 live applications the validity of the applicant is being determined as each batch is processed so it may be the case that the Service discover further invalid applications as

processing proceeds. In addition, it can be confirmed the 449 applications involves 352 unique streets.

Stages of the Application Process

Validation

- 3.6 Once an application is being processed, checks are carried out to ensure the applicant is an occupier of the street. This must be done by attending the Electoral Office for residential applications, which make up the majority of the applications received.

Implementation of the initial assessment process

- 3.7 The initial assessment process, on the grounds of equality and good relations, as described in the public consultation and the EQIA in relation to the policy, was finalised in September and is now being applied to all applications.
- 3.8 This initial assessment is high-level and intended to identify any potential equality or good relations issues. Such assessment is in the context of the considerations set out in the EQIA which accompanied the Policy which set out the various protections in place for minority languages, together with Equality Commission advice that the use of Irish in signage is, in their opinion, a neutral act and that the use of minority languages, particularly Irish and Ulster Scots for common or official purposes would normally or objectively be considered to be a neutral act that would not be discriminatory.
- 3.9 Where adverse impacts on the grounds of equality or good relations are identified as part of this initial assessment the applications will be referred to Committee for direction.

Elected Member Notification

- 3.10 The most recent notification to Members was issued on 26th January. These lists of applications for streets will be issued via Democratic Services as batches are being processed. The purpose of this notification is solely to allow Members to raise equality or good relations concerns in respect of a particular application. Those concerns must be forwarded to the Director of Planning & Building Control who will, in consultation with the City Solicitor, determine whether

the issues raised warrant referral of the application to Committee before a survey takes place.

Electoral Office

- 3.11 Appointments to view files at the Electoral Office have been booked in advance. While these are used to validate that the applicant is an occupier of the street, they are also used to confirm the occupants of the street who will be surveyed.

Survey Preparation and Issue

- 3.12 The issuing of surveys is dependent on the previous stages being undertaken, but the time taken is also determined by the number of properties and occupiers, with some streets involving hundreds of surveys. Surveys are issued with a unique identifier, to ensure they can be tracked, and with a prepaid envelope for return. Results are collated against each application as returned, and the final results provided for the committee report. Occupiers are given 30 days to respond to the survey.

Committee Report

- 3.13 Committee reports will be presented for all applications where the 15% threshold of occupiers in favour of the erection of dual language street sign has been met. The report will include all the results from the surveys, and any findings from the equality and good relations assessment.

Erection of Signs

- 3.14 Following ratification of the Committee decision, erection of the relevant sign will take around 4-6 weeks depending upon the availability of the contract.

Current Position

- 3.15 As outlined at last month's Committee meeting, the first completed application was taken to the People and Communities Committee earlier this month. 5 applications are currently out for survey, with the anticipation that they can be brought to March or April P and C Committee. To date, 6 streets have been surveyed with a total of 707 residents being surveyed. With the further Elected Member notification and initial assessments carried out this will result in more applications being brought to Committee in the months ahead.

City Centre Applications

- 3.16 The EQIA carried out in respect of the Policy states that ‘any decision relating to the erection of a second nameplate in the city centre (business core) will, in addition to the current policy considerations and the survey of occupiers, be subject to a wider public consultation to reflect the community of users.’
- 3.17 Officers have considered a number of options but believe that, from a consistency perspective, it would be appropriate to use the City Centre Boundary as set out in the draft BMAP, excluding the protected housing areas. A map outlining the proposed city centre boundary for the purposes of this Policy is attached.
- 3.18 Officers would also propose that where an application is received for the city centre, that will be subject to public advertisement in accordance with the Council’s policy on placing public adverts. This will be in addition to the survey of the residents of the street. Committee is asked to approve the proposed city centre boundary and the proposed method of wider public consultation for applications in this area.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.19 In December, three additional staff members were recruited on a temporary basis to deal with the volume of applications received. However, as two of these posts were from within the existing team, the process for backfilling and covering their duties is still ongoing. While they are being trained and are processing dual language street sign applications, there are also other duties in their substantive posts to be undertaken. When they are fully released to their new roles and training completed, this will allow for an increase in the number of applications being processed.

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

- 3.20 The process for carrying out initial assessments on the ground of equality and good relations is in place. Where adverse impacts are identified, a further screening will take place and finding presented to Members. This work has been developed working with colleagues in our Equality and Diversity Unit together with an external consultant.”

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 17th February, 2023**

During discussion, Members expressed concern in relation to the length of time being taken to implement the policy, the limited number of applications which had been progressed in comparison to the large number of applications which had been made, the failure to address in the report the Gaeltacht Quarter and the time being taken to bring back a report on the bilingual signage at the Olympia Leisure Centre.

In response, the Interim City Solicitor outlined the measures which were being put in place to try and address the concerns around the implementation of the policy. She also indicated that it had been her intention to bring a detailed report to the March meeting in relation to the Gaeltacht Quarter. In this regard, she also undertook to bring a report on the bilingual signage at the Olympia Leisure Centre.

After further discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Beattie,
Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin,

That the Committee agrees, in principle, to progress with dual-language signage in the Gaeltacht Quarter on block as a cost saving measure, subject to equality screening and when finance becomes available.

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

Accordingly, the Committee:

- i noted the contents of the report;
- ii agreed the process to be applied to City centre applications; and
- iii noted that reports on the Dual-Language Street signs in the Gaeltacht Quarter, the Equality Impact Assessment on the erection of bilingual external naming and internal directional signage at Olympia Leisure Centre would be submitted to the March meeting of the Committee.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

Update on Area Working Groups

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meetings of the South Belfast Area Working Group of 30th January and the East Belfast Area Working Group of 31st January and adopted the following recommendations:

- **Linfield FC/ Boys Brigade and Belvoir FC** - that the BIF proposal which includes Phase 1 - *replacement of Belvoir FC's grass football pitch, including car parking resurfacing and widening access lane* is decoupled from the wider masterplan and to note that any future phases will be taken forward separately by Linfield FC and Boys Brigade.

East Belfast AWG

- **Expansion of Belfast Bikes Scheme 2022/23** - in the first instance, that the new docking station be located at Upper Newtownards Road/ Astoria Gardens (option 2), subject to agreement with landowners and local businesses, and that the Upper Newtownards Road/Sandown Road Carpark (option 3) be the reserve option for the area if the approval for option 2 is not forthcoming.

Asset Management

The Committee:

- i) **Carrick Hill Community Centre – Lease with Carrick Hill Residents Association**
- approved the surrender of the current ground Lease at Carrick Hill Community Centre, subsequent transfer of ownership of the asset to Belfast City Council and a new lease back to Carrick Hill Residents Association.
- ii) **Sally Gardens Community Centre – Lease to Poleglass Community Association**
- approved a new lease with Poleglass Community Association
- iii) **Sally Gardens Community Centre – Licence with Celtic Boys Football Club**
- approved the grant of a licence to Celtic Boys Football Club for a secure storage container at the Sally Gardens sports complex.
- iv) **Falls Park – Licence with Belfast Celtic Football Club**
- approved the grant of a licence to Belfast Celtic Football Club for a secure storage container in Falls Park.
- v) **Forth Meadow Community Greenway – Lease with Northern Ireland Housing Executive**
- approve entering into a lease with Northern Ireland Housing Executive for c. 4 sq. m of land situated at the junction of Ballgomartin Road and Cairnmartin Road to install an illuminated sign as part of the Forth Meadow Community Greenway project.
- vi) **Forth Meadow Community Greenway – Lease with Invest NI**
- approved entering into a lease with Invest NI of c. 16 sq m of land situated at Forthriver Business Park to install a public art sculpture as part of the Forth Meadow Community Greenway project.
- vii) **Forth Meadow Community Greenway – Licence with Braidwater Homes/Coredale**
- approved entering into a licence with Braidwater Homes / Coredale to use part of their land at West Circular Road for the construction of part of the Forth Meadow Community Greenway project.

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- viii) Brook Playing Fields – Agreement with Phoenix Natural Gas Limited**
- approved of a Gas Connection Application Agreement with Phoenix Natural Gas Limited
- ix) Reverend Robert Bradford Memorial Park - Licence with Bluehouse Development Ltd.**
- approved the grant of a Licence Agreement to Bluehouse Development Ltd.
- x) Botanic Gardens (Lower Section) – Licence Agreement with QUB**
- approved the grant of a Licence Agreement to Queen's University Belfast (QUB)
- xi) City of Belfast Playing Fields – Licence to Antrim and Newtownabbey BC**
- approved the licence of two small plots of land of c. 3 sq m situated at the entrance gates to City of Belfast Playing Fields to Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council to enable the placing of 2no. sandbag bins.
- xii) Cromac Street Car Park – Licence with Northern Ireland Housing Executive**
- approved the renewal of a Licence agreement from the Northern Ireland Housing
- xiii) Smithfield Market – Update on Letting of Units**
- noted the recent lettings at Smithfield Market approved under delegated authority to Director of Physical Programmes.

Finance, Procurement and Performance

Update on Contracts

The Committee:

- approved the public advertisement of tenders, as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Table 1 of the Appendix;
- approved the award of STAs, in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in Table 2 of the Appendix, with the exception of those related to advertising at bus stops and for bus internal and external advertising which are deferred to enable information to be provided on the previous expenditure for those contracts;
- approved the modification of the contract, as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Table 3 of the Appendix;
- noted the award of retrospective STAs, in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in Table 4 of the Appendix; and
- approved the extension of the contract with the Now Group for the Bobbin restaurant for a period of 3 months.

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Table 1: Competitive Tenders

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Estimated Total Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services
Deployment of ambient air quality sensor system at Botanic Gardens Belfast (Fully funded)	Up to 34 months	£60,000	D Caldwell	Required as part of the delivery for Horizon 2020 UPSURGE project
Supply and erection of street nameplates	Up to 4 years	£138,000	K Bentley	To supply and erect street nameplates within Belfast
Feasibility study of a Belfast District Heating Initiative and options in relation to energy use, project development and financing	Up to 12 weeks	£60,000	D Caldwell	External expertise required to provide advice and recommendations on a District Heating initiative for Belfast
Supply of mobile column vehicle hoists	Up to 3 years	£40,000	C Matthews	Replacing static 26t ramp recently decommissioned due to unavailability of parts (ramp was 30 years old)
Provision of in-depth technical research and guidance to help Digital Services advance the initiatives/projects that support execution of the IT strategy	Up to 2 years	£45,400	P Gribben	Service required to provided use of proven reference architecture, receive organisation-specific guidance, leverage industry best practices, and enable Digital Services to stay current with changing markets and technologies
Provision of a reusable period waste scheme	Up to 3 years	£141,000	D Sales	Agreed by Council following on from a very successful pilot scheme for individuals ordering similar products online
Fleet Replacement programme 23/24 (purchase/ lease of vehicles during FY)	Up to 1 year	£2.2m	C Matthews	To cover replacement vehicles purchased/ leased during 2023/24 financial year from the annual allocated capital budget considered and approved by the Oversight Board.

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<p>NI Entrepreneurship Support Service 'NIESS' Framework A</p> <p>(Framework value across all 11 councils and using external funding)</p>	Up to 4 years	Up to £26m	J Greer	<p>BCC will act as lead council on behalf of all 11 local authorities to develop and manage the Northern Ireland Enterprise Support Service. The service aims to provide a set of connected Entrepreneurship Support Services where individuals, entrepreneurs or businesses can access a continuum of support to meet their needs, aligned with the relevant stage of their enterprise.</p> <p>This Framework A will include lots to reflect the geographical and service delivery requirements of councils across the region.</p>
<p>NIESS Framework B1</p> <p>(Framework value across all 11 councils and using external funding)</p>	Up to 4 years	Up to £6m	J Greer	<p>As with Framework A; however Framework B1 will include a range of subject matter specialisms with a less focus on organisational capacity (as required with Framework A). This framework will be targeted at SMEs and specialist service providers.</p>
<p>NIESS Framework B2</p> <p>(Framework value across all 11 councils and using external funding)</p>	Up to 4 years	Up to £6m	J Greer	<p>Similar to Framework B1 above but will cover a different range of specialist areas for SMEs and specialist service providers to apply for.</p>

Table 2: Single Tender Actions

Title	Duration	Total Value	SRO	Description	Supplier
Advertising at bus stops	18 months	£140,000	L Caldwell	Advertising council initiatives to the citizens of Belfast and areas of Northern Ireland as required. Clear Chanel is the only company that	Clear Channel

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				provides advertising at bus stops in Northern Ireland	
Bus internal and external advertising	18 months	£140,000	L Caldwell	Advertise council initiatives to the citizens of Belfast and in areas of Northern Ireland as required. Global Outdoor is the only company to provide advertising on Metro and Ulsterbus buses in Northern Ireland	Global Outdoor
Clockwise system	Up to 1 year	£60,313	P Gribben	Continued use of current system required until replacement of system is implemented. (In progress under the HR/Payroll/T&A Project)	Softworks
Port Health Interactive Live Information System (PHILIS) (Fully funded)	Up to 4 years	£73,745	P Gribben	Developed by Suffolk Coastal District Council and which has become the industrial standard for Port Health imported food system. No other supplier exists for a Digitised Food Import System	East Suffolk Council

Table 3: Modification to Contract

Title of Contract	Duration	Modification	SRO	Description	Supplier
T2056 - Peace IV - Delivery of TechConnects – a cross community peace building programme for children & young people using digital technology Lot 3 - Young People (aged 17-24 years)	Up to 29 months	Additional 2 months	D Sales	An extension is requested to 31 March 2023 to allow the project to be completed.	Belfast Metropolitan College

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T1878 - Supply and installation of wet pour repairs	Up to 4 years	Additional 3 months and £20,000	D Sales	Work is underway to complete the tender documents and advertise the new tender but additional time is required to ensure continuity of service whilst tender is evaluated and awarded.	Play and Leisure Services Ltd
T1935 - Supply and erection of street nameplates	Up to 4 years	Additional 3 months and £8,625	J Greer	Work is underway to complete the tender documents and advertise the new tender but additional time is required to ensure continuity of service whilst tender is evaluated and awarded.	Traffic Signs and Equipment Ltd
T1760 - Supply and delivery of general cleaning products and consumables	Up to 5 years	Additional 3 months and £20,000	S Grimes	Work is underway to complete the tender documents and advertise the new tender but additional time is required to ensure continuity of service whilst tender is evaluated and awarded.	Bunzl McLaughlin and Interclean

Table 4: Retrospective Single Tender Actions

Title of Contract	Duration	Value	SRO	Description	Supplier
Requirement for 2 x Business Support Officers for HR (SO2)	Up to 7 months	£46,000	S Toland	The existing contracted provider for T1792 Provision of Temporary Agency Resources: Matrix SCM have confirmed they are unable to	MCS Recruitment

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				fulfil the required roles of Business Support Officer (HR) within the contractually agreed time period.	
T2357 - Delivery of a creative digital capacity building programme	Up to 12 months	£56,000	J Greer	Previously approved by CMT in October 22 and retrospectively by SP&R in November 22. It is being resubmitted as the contract value and duration was underestimated and have been corrected. Previously approved for £50k and 6 months.	Digital Catapult NI

**Update on the Waiving of Building Regulation
Inspection Fees for Applications including Insulation**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of the report is to update The Committee on:

- the implementation for the waiving of Building Regulation inspection fees for those applications involving loft insulation which are not part of funded schemes or maintenance contracts; and
- the timeline of the exercise.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- note the implementation process which has been discussed and agreed with Legal Services and Audit and Risk Services; and
- note the timeline commencing from 1st December 2022 and to be reviewed after a period of 6 months.

3.0 Main Report

Key Issues

- 3.1 The Committee agreed, at its meeting on 8th November, to waive Building Regulation inspection fees for those applications involving installation of insulation which were not part of funded schemes or maintenance contracts.
- 3.2 The waiving of fees will be implemented from the date of Council ratification on 1st December, 2022 until 31st May, 2023 subject to review.
- 3.3 The Building Control Service will identify qualifying applications from 1st December, 2022 and will engage with applicants if their application is considered eligible. The applicant will be required to complete and return a declaration confirming they are personally paying for the insulation work and their application is not part of a funded scheme which includes the payment of the fee.
- 3.4 On receipt of the signed declaration, the refund will be processed, following the normal process.
- 3.5 This process has been discussed with Audit Governance and Risk Services and Legal Service, both of which are satisfied with the approach being taken.
- 3.6 An update report will be presented to the Committee in June.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.7 Based upon the analysis carried out for the four-year period that was presented to the Committee on 8th November, it is estimated that, on average, £81,000 of fees have been paid per year in relation to insulation. If fees were to be waived for a determined period, the loss in fee income could be assumed to be a pro rata value of this annual estimate.

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

- 3.8 There are no direct Equality, Good Relations or Rural Needs implications.”

The Committee noted:

- the implementation process which has been discussed and agreed with Legal Services and Audit and Risk Services; and

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- the timeline commencing from 1st December 2022 and to be reviewed after a period of 6 months.

Equality and Good Relations

**Equality and Diversity: Disability
Action Plan 2022-2025**

The Committee was advised that the Council was subject to a several different duties in relation to disability. As both a service provider and employer it must be compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995, which outlines measures aimed at ending the discrimination faced by many disabled people. It gives disabled people rights in:

- employment;
- access to goods, facilities and services, including transport;
- the management, buying or renting of property; and
- education.

The Council, as a designated public authority, was also subject to two further inter-related duties under Sections 49A and 49B of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Section 49A placed a duty on designated public authorities to have due regard to the need to:

- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons; and
- Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life.

Section 49B placed a duty on each designated public authority to prepare a Disability Action Plan outlining how it proposes to fulfil the Section 49A duty.

Following a disability mapping exercise carried out last year across the organisation, the Equality and Diversity Unit developed a new draft Disability Action Plan 2022-25 which was brought to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee last year and issued for a 12-week public consultation.

The final Disability Action Plan document had no subsequent amendments from feedback received from the public consultation. It had been planned to bring this to the Disability Working Group before bringing for final approval to Committee, however, the last meeting of the Disability Working Group was cancelled due to it being inquorate.

The Committee approved the Disability Action Plan 2022-25.

**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 6th February, including the following:

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PEACEPLUS

- To note the high-level feedback from the Phase 1 Engagement stage, provide feedback and agree to issue the final report to stakeholders (PEACEPLUS – Phase 1 Engagement Report) in advance of a public meeting on 27th February at 2.00 p.m. in the City Hall
- Note the key milestones for Stage 2 development of the local action plan; and the updated timelines for Stage 2 which included an updated position from SEUPB that applications for the programme will open in April 2023.

PEACE IV

CYP Theme

- To note the key project updates relating to:

CYP1 Tech Connects – Afterschool's and Tech Camps (Giga) project closure is being progressed based on achievement of 119% of Lot 1 and 90% of Lot 2.

CYP5 NIHE - the anticipated level of achievement, the additional mitigations proposed and the next steps of discussions with SEUPB.

SSS Theme

- To note the approved project extension to 28th February 2023 with a 10% budget uplift for the Youth Civic Education contract with Youth Link.

BPR Theme

- To note key project updates relating to:

BPR 1 - NIHE- Cross Community Area Networks level of achievement as outlined in the positional paper and the mitigations proposed to address under delivery.

BPR6 - St Comgall's - following further cross-community consultation, the amended Education Resources have been submitted. The resources will be considered by the Programme Board via previously agreed delegated authority.

GOOD RELATIONS

Segregation and the Environment Research

- To note the report and the actions being taken to implement the recommendations in the research, including the provision already made within the previously agreed Good Relations Action Plan.
- To agree to publish and disseminate the report, Segregation and the Environment, after further internal and external engagement has taken place.

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Seachtain na Gaeilge/Irish Language Week 2023

The Interim City Solicitor advised the Committee that Seachtain na Gaeilge/Irish Language Week was marked every year from 1st till 17th March. Prior to COVID-19, the Council marked this by hosting events for schools in the City Hall. COVID-19 necessitated online events and content in 2021 and 2022. Those events were always well attended and the feedback from participants was always excellent.

The Committee would also be aware that the Council's Culture and Tourism team was currently engaged in the development of a programme to celebrate language and develop a series of events to mark Seachtain na Gaeilge, as part of its Extended Cultural Programme which was initially agreed in February 2022 and more recently by the City Growth and Regeneration Committee on 8th February 2023.

Officers from the Council's Legal and Civic Services Department were responsible for developing the Council's Language Strategy Action Plan, in consultation with other Departments and were supporting the work being undertaken by colleagues in the Culture and Tourism team. As part of that support, it was proposed to hold at least two events in the City Hall to mark Seachtain na Gaeilge. One of those would incorporate the inaugural meeting of the Council's Irish Language Stakeholders Forum. Officers were currently engaging with stakeholders about this event and a precise date will be confirmed in due course.

The details of other potential events were still being considered but, in line with the Council's Language Strategy Action Plan, would be aimed at bringing the Irish language community into the City Hall, particularly school children. Members will recall the recent successful Ulster Scots events which took place in November 2022.

The Committee approved the planned events in the City Hall to mark Seachtain na Gaeilge in 2023.

Operational Issues

Late Requests for the use of Belfast Parks for Events

The Committee considered the following report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 The Committee is asked to note that the Council has received a late request from the Shankill Old Boys Flute Band to host its 'Bring Saint Patrick's Day Back to the Shankill' cultural event in Woodvale Park on Saturday 18th March 2023, from 11 a. m. to 3 p.m.**
- 1.2 The Shankill Old Boys Flute Band, along with an additional 30 flute bands, will assemble in Woodvale Park and parade to Lower Shankill Road before returning to Woodvale Park for dispersing.**

The event will result in some disruption of certain sections of the Park.

- 1.3 The Committee is also asked to note a request for the use of Botanic Gardens as the location for the 'It is different for Mummies' exhibition. The exhibition marks the 25th Anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement and is described as an act of reparation for future legacy through acknowledgment. This request has had some back and forth to be able to accommodate the exhibition at the site on suitable dates and is the reason for this late request to this Committee.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- approve the 'Bring St. Patrick's Day Back to the Shankill' demonstration in Woodvale Park and the 'It is different for Mummies' exhibition in Botanic Gardens, subject to the completion of the appropriate Event Management Plans and satisfactory terms being agreed by the Director of Neighbourhood Services and on the condition that the Event Organisers:
 - resolve all operational issues to the Council's satisfaction.
 - meet all statutory requirements including Public Liability Insurance cover, Health and Safety, and licensing responsibilities; and
 - consult with adjoining public bodies and local communities as necessary.

- 2.2 The Committee is asked to 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 a cross Council officer team.

3.0 Main Report

Key Issues

Bring St Patrick's Day back to the Shankill

- 3.1 The Shankill Old Boys Flute Band is a cultural and historical band which has been operating for 4 years. The Shankill Old Boys Flute Band event will be attended by an additional 30 bands and up to 2,000 – 3,000 supporters including the 'West Belfast Orange Order' which is supporting the event. The attendees will assemble

in Woodvale Park and parade to Lower Shankill Road before returning to Woodvale Park for dispersing. This event is a pilot scheme, with the ambition to deliver a vibrant cultural family Saint Patricks Day event for the local community the following year.

- 3.2 Organisers estimate that up to 3,000 people could be in attendance. Organisers will provide toilets, first aid cover and stewards for the event. Set up and assembly of bands will commence at 11 a.m., with the main parade leaving at 1.00 p.m. The event will be dismantled, and the site will be clear by 3 p.m.
- 3.3 The event will result in a period of closure for certain areas of the park to allow for safe set up and derig.

Is it different for Mummies?

- 3.4 This exhibition is promoted by Relatives for Justice. It features Evanna Devine's work and is curated by Giada Tagliamonte. The photographs will be exhibited in Botanic Gardens from 1st April to 19th May. Relatives for Justice, which was founded in 1991, is a Belfast based human rights NGO operating across Ireland, providing holistic support services for the bereaved and injured during the conflict.
- 3.5 A total of 10 to 15 vertical portraits in large formats will be situated in a location within the park that is central with easy access to a wide range of audiences. OSS has agreed a suitable location directly in front of the Tropical Ravine.
- 3.6 **The narrative:** The photographer's lens captures moments of the subjects' mundane life, in the intimacy of their family home. Each of the women's loss is intrinsically troubling. Witnessing the murder of their own child, abduction, an explosion taking away all they had up until a fraction of a second prior... Whilst honouring the unbridgeable loss, this exhibition shines a light on profoundly personal stories of courage, strength and the sheer will to keep pacing ahead.
- 3.7 All images and narrative will be reviewed and approved by the relevant Council Departments prior to installation.
- 3.8 Belfast Photo Festival whICH has exhibited in Botanic Gardens for years is providing advice and assisting the Curator with the operational elements of the exhibition.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.9 There should be no additional costs associated with these requests

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Asset and Other Implications

- 3.10 Council officers will liaise with Event Organisers and promoters in relation to any potential environmental impact from events.**

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

- 3.11 There are no known implications.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**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 9th February.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Castle, Cavehill,
Zoo and North Foreshore Steering Group**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Castle, Cavehill, Zoo and North Foreshore Steering Group of 6th February.

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

The Committee adopted the recommendations in respect of those applications received up to 3rd February, as set out below:

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
2023 EVENTS						
Consulate General of Spain (Edinburgh office)	9 March 2023	Spanish Ambassadors Reception to bestow the Order of Civil Merit on Honorary Vice Consulate. Numbers attending – 60 - 75	D	Yes - £115	No as group wish to bring traditional Spanish food	Approve Charge £115 No hospitality
Northern Ireland Football League	22 April 2023	NI Football League 10th Anniversary and Awards Celebration- Drinks Reception,	C & D	Charge £825	Yes, Wine Reception as significant anniversary	Approve Charge Wine Reception <i>£500 given to their chosen</i>

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		Awards, Dinner and entertainment. Numbers attending – 350				<i>caterer for wine on arrival</i>
Newhill Football Club	2 September 2023	Newhill Football Club 50th Anniversary Celebration- Drinks Reception, Awards, Dinner and entertainment. Numbers attending – 200	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>
Belfast Bible College	8 December 2023	Post-Graduation Reception – reception event to make the graduation and achievements of the students at the college. Numbers attending - 200	C & D	No (Charity)	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality
2024 EVENTS						
The Scout Association, Northern Ireland Scout Council	5 January 2024	Chief Scout's Award and Queen's Scout Award Presentation – 120 young people receiving awards and attending a reception. Numbers attending - 450	B & D	No charge - Complimentary as Charity	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No Hospitality
Holocaust Memorial Day Trust	24 January 2024	Northern Ireland regional ceremony to mark Holocaust Memorial Day 2023 - a time for all to remember the millions of people killed in the Holocaust	C	No (charity)	No hospitality (<i>funding provided</i>)	Approve No Charge No hospitality

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		and subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. The event is the official Northern Ireland commemoration of the Holocaust. Numbers attending – 400 - 500				
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**Requests for the use of the City Hall
Grounds for Various Events in 2023**

The Interim City Solicitor submitted for the Committee's consideration the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To present to the Committee the following requests from various clients for the use of City Hall Grounds:

- Action Cancer Breast Foot Forward Walk – 9th June, 2023
- Belfast One Film Screening – 15th and 16th July, 2023
- Pride Picnic – 22nd July, 2023
- Belfast Mela Carnival Parade Party – 19th August, 2023
- Shine – October 2023

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- i authorise the use of the City Hall grounds on dates listed above; and
- ii authorise the events to take place on the basis of the submission of an event management plan and risk assessment to ensure delivery of a safe public events.

3.0 Main Report

Background Information

3.1 Members will be aware that requests for the use of City Hall are normally dealt with under the authority delegated by the Committee to the Director of Legal and Civic Services using criteria agreed for this purpose. Occasionally however, it is

necessary to place such requests directly before the Committee and those in this report fall into this category.

Key Issues

- 3.2 Several requests have been received for events over the spring and summer period and this report seeks to update the Committee on larger events using the City Hall grounds, due to the larger scale of activities involved it is deemed necessary to seek Committee approval.

The Proposed Events

- 3.3 The proposed events would take place on the front lawns only and areas such as the Titanic Garden and Cenotaph will remain open to the public. Access to the City Hall building will not be affected.
- 3.4 The event would be free to enter. In each case, the organisers would be providing all stewarding/marshalling staff and first aiders and would of course have to comply with the usual conditions including indemnities for damage and submission of a formal event-management plan.

9th June 2023 - Action Cancer Breast Foot Forward Walk

- 3.5 The Breast Foot Forward walk has taken place at the City Hall since 2014. It is Action Cancer's flagship fundraising event and raises circa £60,000 each year. The City Hall is the starting point for the event, with entertainment and warm up activities, before 800 participants take part in 5k or 10k walk around Belfast returning to the City Hall as the end point. This is an annual event in the City Hall calendar and has been delivered without incident.

15th and 16th July 2023 - Belfast One Cinema Screenings

- 3.6 This event aims to encourage people to experience the city centre shops and hospitality while they are in town. Organisers will be offering attendees information about potential offers provided our business members. Belfast One plan to show 4 films per day. Films early in the day will be aimed at young children and families and later films at a slightly older audience. All films will be rated appropriately. The event will be ticketed and access managed. There will be a big screen and audio equipment and additional entertainment by way of face painting and film props. Previous events in 2022 were very popular and were delivered without incident.

22nd July 2023 Belfast Pride Family Fun Day

- 2.7 This event would take place on the front lawns would include a radio roadshow, various performers on a stage, food stalls and children's attractions. The event would last from 12 noon to 5.00 p.m., although access would be required earlier and later in the day for set ups and strip downs. The event would be free and the organisers estimate up to 5,000 people would be in attendance. Previous event in 2022 and 2019 were very popular and were delivered without incident.

19th August 2023 Belfast Mela Carnival Parade Party

- 3.8 In 2022, ArtsEkta launched a new event as part of the festival titled 'Mela Carnival, a spectacular opening to the festival and begin a series of 50 events across a full week which will culminate in the traditional event at Botanic Gardens. The 2022 event was very successful and it wishes to host the event again this year.

A 800-participant carnival parade will begin at Writers Square, proceed onto Royal Avenue into Donegal Place and end at City Hall grounds. ArtsEkta requests the use of the City Hall grounds for a free to access carnival party and celebration event for the participants, family/friends and wider audiences with stage entertainment, performers, food traders and carnival floats.

14th October 2023 - Cancer Research Shine Night Walk

- 3.9 The Shine Night Walk is a 10k walk around Belfast starting and ending at the City Hall. The grounds infrastructure includes stage entertainment, gantry, marquees and warm up activities for 700 participants. The event took place in 2022 and was very successful and well delivered by Action Cancer fundraising team.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.10 There would be no costs for the council as the various organisers would bear any/all stewarding and equipment costs etc themselves. The utilities costs on the day are of a very minor nature and the normal event support in the form of electrical and water provision in the grounds will be provided.

There are no concerns from an asset management point of view, although the organisers would be required to provide the usual insurances, indemnities, and obligations.

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

3.11 There are no direct good relations, equality or rural needs implications arising from this report.”

The Committee:

1. authorised the use of the City Hall grounds on dates listed below; and
2. authorised the events to take place on the basis of the submission of an event management plan and risk assessment to ensure delivery of a safe public events:
 - Action Cancer Breast Foot Forward Walk – 9th June, 2023
 - Belfast One Film Screening – 15th and 16th July, 2023
 - Pride Picnic – 22nd July, 2023
 - Belfast Mela Carnival Parade Party – 19th August, 2023
 - Shine – October 2023

**Request for the use of the City Hall Grounds –
Belfast Photo Festival Photographic Exhibition**

The Committee was reminded that requests for the use of the City Hall were normally dealt with under the authority delegated by the Committee to the Director of Legal and Civic Services, using criteria agreed for this purpose. Occasionally, however, it was necessary to place such requests directly before the Committee and the request set out below falls into this category.

A request has recently received from the organiser of the Belfast Photo Festival (BPF) to hold a photographic exhibition in the grounds of the City Hall from 13th to 30th June, 2023. The BPF was the visual arts festival of Northern Ireland and one of the leading photography festivals in the UK. Launched in 2011, the festival attracted 85,000 visitors across 24 city centre venues and was one of the city's major art events.

The Interim City Solicitor stated that, each year, the City-wide festival included the grounds of the City Hall as a primary location for both photographic exhibitions and other events and she provided details of previous events.

The theme for 2023 was 'Journey', focusing on photography's ability to capture and reflect the world around us, from journeys of self-discovery, migration and spiritual journeys. This exhibition would focus on Vasantha Yoganathan's most renowned body of work, A Myth of Two Souls, which charted an epic 7-year journey across India, Nepal and Sri Lanka, charting a spiritual and personal journey. It would be its debut in Northern Ireland. There will be 24 images in all in the exhibition.

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The exhibition would be installed on the West and East Lawn of City Hall grounds on 10th June and dismantled on 29th June, 2023. It would be free for members of the public to view daily, in line with the opening times of the grounds.

The Good Relations and Corporate Communications Units would review the exhibition images included in the proposal but presently no negative good relations implications have been identified which should stop the exhibition being hosted at the City Hall.

The Committee:

- i. approved the request for Belfast Photo Festival to use the City Hall grounds from 13th to 30th June 2023 to display a photographic exhibition as part of the Belfast Photo Festival; and
- ii. authorised the exhibition in line with similar events previously approved by the Council.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the All-Party
Working Group on the City Centre**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the All-Party Working Group on the City Centre of 26th January.

**The Coronation of Their Majesties
The King and The Queen Consort**

The Committee was advised that a request had been received from a Member for the Council to consider putting in place plans to mark the Coronation weekend. Members would be aware that arrangements had already been made to provide an early May Bank Holiday on Monday 1st May, followed by a Bank Holiday to mark the Coronation on Monday 8th May.

Buckingham Palace had announced details of ceremonial, celebratory and community events which would take place between Saturday 6th and Monday 8th May.

The Coronation Service would take place at Westminster Abbey on Saturday 6th May. This is one of the designated days for flying the Union Flag by DCMS.

On Sunday, 7th May, the Coronation Big Lunch would take place and would be overseen and organised by the Eden Project, funded by The National Lottery. Its aim was to bring people together to boost community spirit, reduce loneliness and support charities and good causes. A special Coronation Concert would be held on the same date.

On Monday 8th May, members of the public would be invited to take part in The Big Help Out, which would encourage people to try volunteering for themselves and join the work being undertaken to support their local areas. This was being organised by The Together Coalition and a wide range of partners such as The Scouts, the Royal Voluntary Service and faith groups. The Big Help Out would highlight the positive impact volunteering has across communities.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 17th February, 2023**

A Coronation Emblem, specially designed for this occasion, represents the rose of England, the thistle of Scotland, the daffodil of Wales and the shamrock of Northern Ireland.

Proposed Programme of Events

Saturday 6th May – Coronation Service

It was proposed to erect a large screen on the west lawn in the grounds of the City Hall to provide a public space for those who wish to view the Coronation Service and ceremonial processions. In keeping with the community theme of bringing people together, a marquee would be placed on the east lawn to provide family activities through a programme of animation such as craft making and a photo-booth.

Sunday 7th May – The Coronation Big Lunch

It was proposed to host a Coronation Big Lunch at the City Hall, to primarily acknowledge the role of volunteering across Belfast which would also reflect other themes of community and diversity. This community lunch would be informal in nature to provide a platform for local people to come together whilst encouraging communities in the city who wished to join in by holding events across Belfast.

Monday 8th May – The Big Help Out

Given the theme of this day, to highlight the positive impact volunteering had across communities, it was not proposed to hold any events at City Hall. Rather, it would provide the opportunity for Civic Dignitaries and councillors more generally to visit local areas to volunteer or see volunteering in action.

The Committee was asked to note that local organisations could apply to the National Lottery 'Awards for All' to mark this occasion through its small grants programme. Projects were required to meet the priorities and eligibility criteria set out for this programme - <http://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/northern-ireland>.

The Committee:

- i. approved the proposed programme of events over the bank holiday weekend of Saturday 6th May to Monday 8th May 2023;
- ii. approved costs in the region of £25,000 to deliver this programme; and
- iii. agreed to illuminate the City Hall on the evening of Sunday, 7th May, 2023.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 17th February, 2023**

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

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Social Policy Working Group of 14th February.

Chairperson

People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 7th February, 2023

HYBRID MEETING OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Murray (Chairperson);
Councillors Bunting, Bower, Canavan,
Cobain, M. Donnelly, R.M. Donnelly, de Faoite,
Flynn, Garrett, Magee, Maghie, O'Hara and Verner.

In attendance: Mrs. C. Matthews, Director of Resources and Fleet;
Mr. D. Sales, Director of Neighbourhood Services;
Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;
Ms. N. Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and
Civic Services; and
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were recorded on behalf of Alderman McCoubrey and Councillors McAteer, McMullan and Newton.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 10th and 25th January, 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 1st February.

Declarations of Interest

The following Councillors declared an interest in item 3 (c) Capacity Building and Revenue Grants as they either worked for or were associated with an organisation in receipt of funding from the DfC and left the meeting whilst the item was under consideration.

- Councillor Canavan – Board of the Blackie River Community Group;
- Councillor Verner – in that she was an employee of the Greater Shankill Partnership (Spectrum Centre);
- Councillor M. Donnelly – Upper Springfield Development Trust; and
- Councillor R. M. Donnelly – West Belfast Partnership Board.

Councillor Garrett also declared an interest as a Member of the West Belfast Partnership Board but as a Council representative on the Board he did not leave the meeting.

**People and Communities Committee,
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Update on Special Meeting

The Committee agreed to convene the special Waste Update committee meeting on Wednesday 22nd March, the date previously reserved for the quarterly housing update meeting, and to request an update paper from the NIHE to be circulated to the Members.

Presentations

Response from Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)
and presentation from George Best City Airport (GBCA)
Re: Bird Strike Management at Victoria Park:
Implications to Air Safety

The Chairperson welcomed to the meeting Mr. M. McDowell, Airfield Operations Manager GBGA, and Mr. K. Mackie, Wildlife Advisory Cons.

Mr. McDowell commenced by providing an overview of the management of Greylag Geese which included detail in respect of the legal responsibilities of airports to ensure that they had a risk management programme to cover a 13km safety zone around the airport, under licence from the NIEA.

Mr. Mackie provided a comprehensive breakdown of the work undertaken with egg control and habitat management to ensure these responsibilities were met, this included detailed information in respect of risk management, greylag geese risk assessment, greylag Management at Victoria Park and the efficacy of long-term egg management at Victoria Park, including consideration of the changes in Geese habitats.

Mr. McDowell advised that the airport valued the NIEA legal agreement and the arrangement with the Council, both were essential as they enabled the airport to continue to discharge its legal responsibilities with regards to air safety. He advised that the current licence with the NIEA was valid until the end of June, however, the current agreement with the Council permitting access to Victoria Park only ran until the end of May, therefore, the airport was seeking the Council to extend its permission in line with the NIEA licence period.

Following a query regarding what might be an acceptable level of grey geese in Victoria Park to ensure both biodiversity and air safety, the representative advised that the airport was required each year to undertake a risk assessment based on the audits carried out and any strikes that had occurred and to ensure that the current control measures were adequate. He stated that these measures had been successful to date, with the risks and associated severity of a collision between geese and an aircraft having been reduced, therefore, the current measures were deemed to be necessary and would be kept in place until they were no longer required.

In relation to a query regarding the fall in the mute swan population in Victoria Park, the representative advised that the decline had been natural and gradual with most of the shift in population having been to The Waterworks.

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Following a request from a Member, the airport representative agreed in future to forward its annual assessment for each bird species along with its licence request.

The Committee:

- noted the response from the NIEA in regard to the safety of resident mute swans; and
- agreed to a request from the GBBCA to extend their current Greylag goose licence with the Council from the end of May to the end of June each year due to changes in Geese habits.

Presentation from Swimming Buddies

The Chairperson welcome Ms. S.J. Reynolds, representing Swimming Buddies, to the meeting.

Ms. Reynolds thanked the Members for the opportunity to present. She advised that Swimming Buddies was an accredited Inclusive Swim Centre for children with other abilities, the first of its kind in Europe. It specialised in teaching neurodiverse children water safety, water therapy and teaching them to swim as well as delivering accredited CPD training programs to the leisure industry on best practices for inclusive programs and facilities.

The representative then provided an overview of the organisation's background. She advised that it had been established in Fleming Fulton School in 2017 and since 2019 it had also worked in partnership with the Brook Leisure Centre delivering an inclusive swim program and pioneering the way forward for the industry to reflect 'best practice' in inclusivity. She advised that the sensory pool and the whole facility at Brook were a perfect environment for neurodiverse children and their families to learn the key lifesaving skill of swimming and she highlighted the following key points:

- Sessions were currently based on a 1:1 learning platform for children between the ages of 4 to 14;
- Over 20,000 swim sessions had been delivered to over 300 families;
- Swimming Buddies was accredited by the international wandering, drowning prevention and inclusive aquatics organisation, Autism Swim; and
- It had 19 coaches who had extensive experience in working with and supporting the needs of neurodivergent children and young adults with differing support needs.

She outlined that what had started as a swim program for children on the autism spectrum had further developed into an inclusive program for a wide spectrum of neurodivergent children with a range of other learning needs. Swimming Buddies offered sessions to children and young adults with a range of disabilities, including physical and learning disabilities, visual and hearing impairments, autism, ADHD, brain injuries and many more. The individual coach's expertise enabled delivery of person-centred learning, adaptable to each Buddie and their needs, including the delivery of sister programmes, Baby Buddies Sensory Swim and the Fit Buddies gym program.

The representative advised that the aim of Swimming Buddies was to expand its service, to offer this valuable life skills to more families and to ensure the leisure facility teams

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throughout the Belfast City Council area were trained and supported to the highest level to fully utilise the purpose-built facilities that were available to local families across the city.

In conclusion, she advised that an all-inclusive approach was not just desirable but necessary and Swimming Buddies was keen to assist the Council in bringing these plans to fruition.

The Committee then viewed a short video showing the work of Swimming Buddies which was available [here](#).

Several Members thanked the representative for her presentation and for the valuable work that Swimming Buddies undertook in the Belfast area. Discussion ensued as to how the Council could best assist the organisation with sharing of its knowledge and also to ensure that, where possible, all areas of play and leisure offerings were inclusive to all in the city.

It was noted that the Council was restricted in what it could do in terms of its current leisure arrangements with GLL. During discussion the Director suggested that GLL representatives could be asked to attend the bi-annual update to the People and Communities Committee which would enable Members to discuss issues such as this directly with them.

The Members were advised that an update report on the Notice of Motion - Inclusive Leisure Services that had been adopted in December was scheduled to be submitted to the April Meeting of Committee and that this would include an update on the current provision offerings with the Councils leisure facilities and also detail where improvements might be required.

The Chairperson thanked the representative for her presentation, and she left the meeting.

Noted.

Restricted

**TEO Request for Proposals to
support Asylum Seekers**

(Ms. N. Lane, Neighbourhood Services Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Director of Neighbourhood Services advised the Committee that the TEO had asked for Councils to submit urgent proposals, at very short notice and lead in time, for projects to support asylum seekers, which would be funded by the TEO through Home Office Dispersal Funding. The Councils had been asked to submit proposals based on spend up to the end of March 2023 and for spend covering the following financial year 2023/24.

He continued that, given the immediacy of the request from the TEO and the extremely tight deadline, officers had held initial discussions with the main organisations that currently delivered projects of scale to asylum seekers.

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The Members were reminded that, in previous submissions to the TEO, the Council had highlighted the considerable pressure that these organisations were under due to the increase in numbers of asylum seekers to Northern Ireland and the many varied demands on the service.

He reported that initial funding proposals had been submitted to the TEO in mid-December, with the TEO advising that Councils would receive notification and documentation regarding the proposals pre-Christmas, however, officers had subsequently been advised on 23rd January that the proposals had been approved by the TEO.

The TEO had indicated that it would provide the Council with initial written correspondence confirming approval for Council spend in-year (up until March 2023) based on the following proposals.

Proposals submitted to and approved by TEO for Asylum Support Funding

Delivery Partner	Project	Costs		Total Cost
		2022/23	*2023/24	
Proposal 1: Red Cross	Asylum Support & Triage Project	£60,000	£120,000	£180,000
Proposal 2: Barnardos	School readiness, transition, and parenting support'	£30,000	£50,000	£80,000
Proposal 3: Conway Education Centre	Conway Education Centre: 'Lets Build'	£20,000	£30,000	£50,000
Proposal 4: Lower Ormeau Residents Group	Community Integration Programme	£16,000		£16,000
Proposal 5: Belfast City Council	Cultural Competence and Unconscious Bias Programme	£20,000		£20,000
Proposal 6: Belfast City Council	Project Management & Coordination Costs	£24,000	£40,000	£64,000
	Total Costs (estimates)	£170,000	£240,000	£410,000

****2023/24 indicative project delivery costs.***

Several Members expressed concern at the tight timescale for the roll out of this funding, which, in essence, had prevented other smaller organisations who might also have been suitable to deliver the funding having been prohibited from being considered as the process could not be put out to an open call procurement process.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager acknowledged the issues and Members concerns. She explained that officers had only two weeks to submit proposals for consideration to the TEO and, based on the urgency of this request, the proposals had not therefore been subjected to a procurement process but had been accepted by the TEO as eligible for Dispersal Funding. She advised that officers were currently seeking confirmation from the TEO in relation to the conditions of funding and whether this could be progressed as

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a direct funding agreement arrangement based on the agreed programme. In addition, as some of the proposals involved the recruitment of specialist staff, therefore, it would not have been feasible to go out to procurement if the spend was to happen in the current financial year.

A Member stated that he understood the time pressures but in future would appreciate the Members being advised as soon as officers became aware of the potential for funding becoming available, rather than at this late stage.

The Members also asked to see the Memorandum of Understanding once it was available.

A Member referred to the recent deputation at the January meeting of Council from End Deportations Belfast and Faith Voices for Reproductive Justice meeting in relation to their ongoing campaign regarding the living conditions of pregnant asylum seekers and refugees and he asked that the Committee agree to write to the Home Office and the Executive Office, calling for the end to the detention of pregnant asylum seekers and refugees at Larne House detention centre and furthermore advocate for the closure of Larne House with a change in focus towards alternatives to detention for refugees and asylum seekers.

The Committee:

- agreed the proposed approach to supporting asylum seekers within the city as set out in the report and approved by TEO;
- agreed that once correspondence had been provided by TEO, in relation to confirming the allocation of funding for Belfast, that the Council go at risk to commence the programme of support until a formal Memorandum of Understanding (funding agreement) had been issued covering the current and next financial year;
- agreed the appropriate approach to the allocation of the funding to the delivery partners to implement the programme and that this be considered as a direct funding agreement arrangement;
- noted that TEO had also agreed that, as part of the funding, the Council would support a Cultural Competence and Unconscious Bias Programme and receive project management and coordination costs; and
- agreed to write to the Home Office and the Executive Office, calling for the end to the detention of pregnant asylum seekers and refugees at Larne House detention centre and furthermore advocate for the closure of Larne House with a change in focus towards alternatives to detention for refugees and asylum seekers.

Request for Use of Parks for Event 2023

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

- 24hr Run – Victoria Park – 17th June;
- Darkness in to Light – Ormeau Park – 5th/6th May;
- Belfast International Photo Festival – Botanic Gardens – 19th May to 8th July;

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- Bloomfield Gospel Drive In – Dixon Playing Fields – Sunday Services Sunday 16th April to Sunday 24th September 2023, 7.00pm – 7.30pm and Tent Outreach Saturday 29th July to Saturday 26th August 8.00pm - 8.30pm; and
- Vegas Circus on Wheels – Boucher Playing Fields:
 - Saturday 18th March – Thursday 30 March - Set Up
 - Friday 31st March - 2 Live Shows
 - Saturday 1st April - 2 Live Shows
 - Sunday 2nd April - 2 Live Shows
 - Thursday 6th April - 2 Live Shows
 - Saturday 8th April - 2 Live Shows
 - Sunday 9th April - 2 Live Shows
 - Monday 10th April – Sunday 16th April - 2 Shows daily
 - Monday 17th April - Tuesday 18th April: De-Rig

The Committee granted authority to each of the applicants for the proposed events on the dates outlined and delegated authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services:

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

The Committee noted that the above recommendations were taken as a pre-policy position, in advance of the Council agreeing a more structured framework and policy for 'Events', which was currently being taken forward in conjunction with the Council's Commercial Team and the Director undertook to establish at what stage this corporate piece of work was at and report back to Committee accordingly.

Following a query, the Director further agreed to submit a report to a future meeting detailing the cost breakdown in respect of the Social Levy Fee for the use of the various parks, including tickets prices.

In response to a query as to whether the requested remedial works had been carried out to the Ormeau car park, the Director undertook to check with maintenance and to advise the Member directly.

Capacity Building and Revenue Grants 2023/26

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reminded the Members that, at its April 2022 meeting, the Committee had approved the implementation of the large grant funding provided through Community Provision for activity from April 2023 – March 2026, this had included approval of the eligibility criteria and maximum allocation for each grant stream. He also drew the Members' attention to specific details of the applications that had been assessed, scored, moderated and independently verified.

The Members were reminded that, at the October meeting, they had been informed that the requests for funding were in excess of the available budget and that officers would present options for how the budget could be allocated. This report had been due to be presented at the December meeting, where the Members had agreed to defer the report to enable further consideration of the budget implications. The Director reported that, at the January meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, it had been agreed to enhance the budget available for this area of work.

The Director continued that, in light of this additional allocation, there was now sufficient budget to allocate all applications scoring 50 and above the level of funding requested (up to the maximum allocation for each grant) and that there was also now sufficient budget to provide a nominal level of support to those applications that had scored below 50.

The Director then referred to the fact that the Members had previously raised concerns in relation to the varying levels of community capacity across the city. He advised that the scores achieved by organisations in this round of funding had been considerably higher than the last round and that a total of 24 new organisations would be receiving support in this round of funding (8 – Capacity, 16 – Revenue) which officers were interpreting as an encouraging sign of increasing capacity in terms of applying for funding.

Members had also requested a breakdown on an area basis of the number of applications received. This had been provided within the updated report, however, the Members were advised that officers could only assign area based on the postal address of the organisation and that some organisations might deliver in areas outside of this, and indeed on a citywide basis.

An analysis showed that for the Capacity Programme, the highest number of eligible applications had been received from organisations based in the Castle, Botanic and Titanic DEAs. For the Revenue Grant Programme, the highest number of eligible applications had been received from organisations based in the Oldpark, Court and Blackmountain DEAs. The lowest number of eligible applications for the Capacity Programme had been received from organisations based in the Balmoral, Collin and Oldpark DEAs. For the Revenue Grant Programme the lowest number of eligible applications had been received from organisations based in the Lisnasharragh, Ormiston and Balmoral DEAs.

The Members were also asked to note that there had been a good representation across both grant programmes from organisations which served communities of interest in addition to those providing support on a geographic basis. For Capacity, 10 out of 42 (24%) and for Revenue, 31 out of 87 (36%) applications from community of interest focused organisations.

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The Committee was advised that officers would continue to review in more depth the applications received from organisations across the city and would work in partnership with those funded organisations as well as other key partners to develop approaches to provide support to those geographic and thematic areas where applications had been of a lower level.

In terms of the applications for the range of broader Council small grants, the applications had closed on Friday, 13th January and had included the following Community Provision grant streams:

- Good Relations;
- 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;
- Community Activity Medium Grant; and
- Community Activity Micro Grant.

The Director advised that initial indications had shown that the level of applications exceeded the available budget for a number of these grant streams. He stated that this was a positive sign as it showed that the sector had recovered capacity to apply for and deliver programmes across a range of service areas.

He reported that in most previous years small grants had been advertised in two Tranches, one for activity from April – September and the other from October – March. He advised that officers would provide further detail on the available budget when assessments and allocations had been completed but asked the Members to note that it was likely that many of the streams would not reopen as there would not be an available budget to support further grants.

The Director reminded the Members that, in addition to the Council funding, a portion of the Department for Communities (DfC) Community Support Programme budget had been allocated to provide funding for the Capacity and Revenue grant streams.

The Members were asked to note that these funding programmes were both awarded on a 3-year basis. The Council was in receipt of a two-year Letter of Offer for 2022/24 but there was no confirmation that the DfC funding would remain at the same level for 2024/26. He advised that the awards would be made based on the notional available budget for the 3 - year time-period, however, asked the Members to note that any reduction in the level of Community Support Programme funding in 2024/25 or 2025/26 might require an increased allocation from the Council. He advised that officers would seek early indications from the DfC in relation to the level of support that would be provided in the Letter of Offer for 2024/26. In addition, in order to mitigate against a significant reduction in the funding provided by the DfC, Letters of Offer would be issued to successful applicants on an annual basis. It was felt that this was good practice and would also provide an opportunity for organisations to reprofile their allocation on an annual basis following submission of monitoring information.

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A Member highlighted his frustrations at the ongoing issues that some organisations and groups in parts of the city had with capacity and once again questioned how they could be assisted to optimise their ability to access the funding streams available.

During discussion the Members noted that there were often significant variances in the capacity from one group, or one area, to another, with many simply not having the expertise to fill in the application forms as they were such small groups/organisations.

Discussion also ensued regarding the geographical challenges, with differing levels of allocation across the District Electoral Areas (DEAs), with the Members highlighting within their own DEAS specific areas where there were low numbers of applications. The Members acknowledged that whilst the current model of administering Capacity and Revenue funding via an open call grants process was good practice and transparent, it did not however allow for low capacity issues to be adequately addressed.

During discussion, the Members agreed that it would be useful to receive a report that specifically considered the geographical challenges and lack of capacity in these areas and how these issues might be addressed. It was also agreed that a briefing note should be prepared and circulated to all the Members that would explain in detail the requirements of the current application process.

The Committee:

- agreed that the awards be issued at the level as outlined in the report for the 2023/24 year;
- granted approval for officers to progress with the funding allocation process, including processing funding agreements and ensuring all monitoring requirements were implemented;
- noted the impact that the high level of applications for small grants would have on available budgets and that it was likely that a number of community provision small grants would not be in a position to make a second call for funding for activity from October 2023 – March 2024;
- agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting considering the geographical challenges and lack of capacity in certain areas and giving consideration as to how this could be addressed; and
- agreed that a briefing note be circulated to all Members that would explain in detail the requirements of the current application process.

Committee/Strategic Issues

Resources and Fleet Waste Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this reports is as follows:

- **To make the Committee aware of the recently published Draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland and**

to invite comments and feedback to be considered for inclusion in Belfast City Council's response.

- To make the Committee aware of the recently published Government response to the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) Consultation.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the Draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland.
- Forward any comments for inclusion in Belfast City Council's response to the consultation by 28th February.
- Note the Government response to the DRS Consultation.

3.0 Main report

Key Issue

Consultation on a Draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland

- 3.1 The Department for the Economy (DfE) has launched a public consultation on the draft Circular Economy (CE) Strategy for Northern Ireland. This draft strategy sets out the Department's vision to create an innovative, inclusive and competitive economy, with responsible production and consumption at its core. A Circular Economy will be a key enabler of the DfE's 10x Economic Vision for a decade of innovation.
- 3.2 This draft CE Strategy also aligns directly with Northern Ireland's draft Programme for Government and the draft Green Growth Strategy. It also makes a significant contribution to many of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- 3.3 In March 2022, the Northern Ireland Executive passed the Climate Change Act. This sets out broad targets for cutting greenhouse gas emissions to:
- 48% lower than the 1990 baseline by 2030.
 - net zero by 2050.
- 3.4 The draft CE Strategy states that our efforts to switch to renewable energy, increase energy efficiency and increase carbon capture technology would only tackle 55% of our global emissions. The

remaining 45%, which relate to how we make and use things, can be tackled by the transition to a Circular Economy¹ .

- 3.5 The main goal of the CE Strategy is to adopt a circular model and reduce our material footprint to live responsibly, build resilience, exploit new opportunities and to secure future prosperity for businesses, people and the planet.
- 3.6 A circular way offers an economic model, that many countries are pursuing, in which we:
- rethink and reduce our use of earth's resources
 - switch to regenerative resources
 - minimise waste
 - maintain the value of products and materials for as long as possible.
- 3.7 DfE has worked together with all Government departments to develop the draft strategy, in collaboration with external stakeholders from local Government, the private sector, academia, the voluntary and community sectors and others.
- 3.8 The overarching target is to halve Northern Ireland's annual material footprint per person to 8 tonnes by 2050. Our material footprint is the total volume of material embodied within the whole supply chain to meet our demands. It measures the global (domestic and foreign) extraction of raw materials required for goods and services used by the residents of Northern Ireland. To live sustainably, the United Nations recommends that we should only be using an average of 6-8 tonnes of resources per year. However, it is estimated that each person in Northern Ireland is consuming well over 16 tonnes of resources per year.
- 3.9 The draft CE Strategy sets out how this can be achieved through; switching to materials that can be reused, increasing use of fuels that can be replenished, designing things to be kept in use for longer and reducing waste.
- 3.10 It is worth noting that many of the original EU targets for waste prevention have now passed into UK law. In relation to waste, Northern Ireland transposed the following European Circular Economy Package (CEP) targets which requires:
- 55% of household waste by 2025
 - 60% of household waste by 2030

¹ 'Completing the Picture: How the Circular Economy Tackles Climate Change¹⁵' by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation (EMF),

- 65% of household waste by 2035
 - no more than 10% going to landfill by 2035
- 3.11 Northern Ireland's Climate Change Act recently introduced a higher target, requiring 70% of waste to be recycled by 2030.**
- 3.12 The draft CE Strategy focuses on four business sectors:**
- Construction and the built environment
 - Bioeconomy
 - Advanced manufacturing
 - Tourism and Hospitality
- 3.13 It focuses on four types of materials:**
- Textiles
 - Food
 - Packaging
 - Electricals
- 3.14 To help create more sustainable production and levels of consumption, the CE Strategy presents twelve proposals for change:**
- Develop and implement a programme to support and promote behaviour change
 - Create clusters and networks to raise awareness and assist collaboration
 - Develop an outcome-focused Circular Economy monitoring framework
 - Embed Circular Economy principles in public procurement
 - Work with businesses to increase circular design
 - Create and support platforms and hubs to share goods and materials
 - Maximise the value of materials locally
 - Establish a Circular Economy funding programme
 - Create a regulatory framework that supports and incentivises greater circulation of goods and materials
 - Invest in research and development to support the valorisation of materials
 - Embed Circular Economy principles at all levels of education
 - Design of future skills programmes and reviews of current programmes to support a Just Transition
- 3.15 The public consultation is open for 10 weeks until Monday 20 March 2023. There will be three virtual consultations for**

anyone wishing to learn more about the draft strategy. These will take place on:

- Thursday 2 February – 10.30am to 11.30am
- Tuesday 7 February – 2.30pm to 3.30pm
- Wednesday 1 March – 6.30pm to 7.30pm

3.16 The draft strategy is available at Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland, alongside supporting documentation including information on how to register for the virtual consultation events. A full copy of the consultation “Draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland” is attached as Appendix I.

3.17 Belfast City Council’s draft response to the consultation will be presented to March’s People and Communities Committee. Should Members wish to discuss any aspect of the consultation or to provide any comments to be considered in our draft response, please contact in the first instance Jennifer Stephens (Waste Officer – Compliance and Research) email - stephensj@belfastcity.gov.uk Comments should be received on or before 28th February in order to formulate a complete response.

Publication of Government Response to the second Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) consultation

3.18 Members may be aware that the proposed Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) is a system where consumers are charged a deposit upfront when they buy a drink in a container that is ‘in scope’ of the scheme. The deposit can be redeemed when the empty container is returned to a designated return point.

3.19 Deposit return schemes are a well-established feature across Europe and the world. They often focus on single-use drinks containers, with the most effective schemes achieving collection rates of over 90%.

3.20 On 20th January 2023, the UK Government, Welsh Government and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) in Northern Ireland published their response to the second consultation on ‘Introducing a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for drinks containers in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland’.

3.21 The aims of the proposed scheme are to boost recycling levels, reduce littering, and promote a circular economy. Key highlights from the response are:

- The Deposit Return Scheme will be introduced from October 2025

- Single-use drinks containers from 50ml to 3 litre containers will be in scope of the Deposit Return Scheme
 - Polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles, steel cans and aluminium cans will be included for England, Northern Ireland, and Wales
 - Glass bottles will be included for Wales only²
 - A Deposit Management Organisation (DMO) will be appointed to manage overall operation of the Deposit Return Scheme
 - Retailers selling in scope containers in store will be required to host a return point, where consumers can return the empty container and be given their deposit refund, subject to some specific exemptions that retailers can apply for
 - Where containers are sold online, it is expected that the scheme will require large grocery retailers to offer consumers a takeback service for those containers
- 3.22 The consultation response presents further detail that will be set out in legislation. This legislation will place obligations on producers of in scope drinks containers, retailers and the Deposit Management Organisation.

Deposit Management Organisation

- 3.23 The Deposit Management Organisation (DMO) will be responsible for managing the overall operation of the Deposit Return Scheme. The DMO will be appointed by Government through an application process.
- 3.24 The Deposit Management Organisation will be an industry-led organisation. The DMO will be made up of a consortium of industry representatives with membership of organisations which represent drinks producers, retailers, importers and logistics.
- 3.25 The DMO will be required to ensure the collection targets are met. The collection targets will be introduced in a phased manner. In year one, at least 70% of in-scope containers that producers place on the market must be collected. In year two, this will increase to 80%, and then 90% from year three onwards.
- 3.26 The DMO will be responsible for setting the deposit level.

² Glass bottles are also part of Scotland's Deposit Return Scheme, along with PET plastic bottles & metal cans.

Next Steps

- 3.27 Regulations, which reflect the policy outcomes set out in the consultation response, are being developed for the DRS.
- 3.28 Engagement will begin soon with prospective consortia interested in being the DMO. Later in the process, UK Government, Welsh Government and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland will formally invite applications for the DMO as part of a fair and open process.
- 3.29 The full consultation is attached as Appendix II and the Government Responses are attached as Appendices III and IV. They can also be accessed electronically:

Consultation on DRS: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/introducing-deposit-return-scheme-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

Government response: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/deposit-return-scheme-summary-2021-consultation-responses-and-publication-government-response>

- 3.30 DAERA intend to host Northern Ireland specific webinars on DRS and EPR on Tuesday 7th (afternoon) and Friday 24th (Morning) February and details of the events will be shared soon.
- 3.31 To find out more about the Deposit Return Scheme visit <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/introducing-deposit-return-scheme-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)

- 3.32 Members should be aware of an emerging subject which is attracting increasing attention within the waste industry, namely that of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs).
- 3.33 POPs are chemicals which can remain intact in the environment for long periods, and if not disposed of properly can have harmful impacts on human health and on the environment.
- 3.34 The Environment Agency (EA) in England has undertaken an investigation and confirmed the widespread presence of large quantities of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and other hazardous chemicals in both the textiles and foam of upholstered domestic seating.

- 3.35** Current legislation³ requires that where POPs breach the permitted level within domestic seating the waste must be destroyed to prevent lasting environmental harm and impacts on the food chain. This means waste containing POPs (sofas, armchairs, upholstered kitchen and dining room chairs, upholstered stools and foot stools, home office chairs, futons, bean bags, floor and sofa cushions) must be incinerated and must not be re-used, recycled or landfilled.
- 3.36** Following this investigation, the EA has issued a series of Regulatory Position Statements (RPS) to Local Authorities in England advising on how POPs should be collected, stored and treated.
- 3.37** The EA also noted that from 1 January 2023, they would be taking enforcement action with regard to non-compliance with the requirements of the RPS. This has created significant challenges for Local Authorities in England due to the time frame involved in adopting operational practices (separate collection & storage) and the lack of facilities which can accept these materials for treatment.
- 3.38** Locally, this subject was raised with DAERA officials by Councils at the January 2023 meeting of the Government Waste Working Group. As a result, DAERA is intending to establish a sub-group to examine the implications for the waste industry with the aim of providing clearer direction (RPS). Dependant on DAERA and NIEA Position Statements, there may be significant implications in relation to the collection methods, storage and segregation arrangements and disposal via incineration of these items.
- 3.39** The Council will continue to work with the Department and the regulator, arc21 and the residual waste treatment contractors to arrive at suitable arrangements for the collection, storage and treatment of this particular waste stream and will update Committee as the matter develops.

Site Visits Household Recycling Centres and Huhtamaki

- 3.40** The Service is liaising with Democratic Services to plan a half-day, Members' site visit to a recycling centre followed by a trip to Huhtamaki in Dollingstown Co. Armagh.
- 3.41** The aim is to provide an overview and raise awareness of the work carried out at a recycling centre and the challenges encountered by staff in carrying out essential, front-line work with the goal of

³ The Persistent Organic Pollutants Regulations 2007 (as amended) and Retained Regulation (EU) 2019/1021 on persistent organic pollutants as amended by the Persistent Organic Pollutants (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020

driving up the city's recycling rate. This will be followed by a trip to Huhtamaki, who take the paper and light card from kerbside collections and convert it into a fibre packaging product (egg cartons, cup holders). During the site visit Members will receive a brief presentation on the role the factory plays in the local economy, the range of products produced and the importance of quality input material (paper & craft card).

- 3.42 It is anticipated that this visit will take place in March 2023 with further details issued in due course.

The Future of Kerbside Recycling Collections – Option 5 – full in-housing of collection services

- 3.43 Members may recall that they requested a full options appraisal on the Future of Recycling Collections. Having presented the findings to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in June 2022, officers were instructed to conduct an in-depth feasibility study regarding Option 5 of the Kerbside Collections economic appraisal, namely the in-housing of all kerbside recycling.
- 3.44 By way of update officers can report that the feasibility study on Option 5 is well progressed with the Service now in receipt of a draft report. Further iterations of this report will be required and the Service is targeting a final version to be available by the end of February 2023. This will then undergo the Council's governance process via SP&R Committee.

Operational Update – Drivers

- 3.45 As a consequence of being unable to fulfil all Christmas and New Year Bank Holiday collections due to a shortage of drivers, Resources and Fleet have instigated a 'task and finish' group to review current arrangements in relation to the numbers and activities of Category C (HGV) drivers within Resources and Fleet.
- 3.46 There is undoubtedly a challenging marketplace. A range of measures is being considered to deal with the market conditions both in the short, medium and longer term.

Public Holiday Arrangements – St Patrick's Day (Friday 17th March)

- 3.47 Planning has commenced for the staffing requirements for 17th March St Patrick's Day bin collections.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.48 None in relation to responding to the consultations.

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

3.49 None in relation to responding to the consultations.

Abbreviations

CE – Circular Economy
CEP - Circular Economy Package
DfC - Department for the Economy
DAERA - Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural
Affairs
DRS – Deposit Return Scheme
DMO – Deposit Management Organisation

A Member referred to the ongoing delay in the roll out of the bottle deposit return scheme and asked the Committee to write to DEFRA seeking an update on the proposed implementation date.

Following a query regarding lack of capacity in the recycling boxes experienced by residents in North Belfast, the Director advised that officers were aware of the issue and were currently looking at ways to resolve the matter.

In response to discussion regarding the cover of waste services over the forthcoming bank holiday periods, the Director undertook to keep the Members fully apprised of the situation.

Following discussion, the Committee:

- noted the Draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland;
- agreed to forward any comments for inclusion in Belfast City Council's response to the consultation by 28th February;
- noted the Government response to the DRS Consultation available [here](#); and
- agreed to write to DEFRA asking why there was such a delay in rolling out the bottle deposit return scheme.

**Anti-Social Behaviour - update on previous
interventions and initiatives in Parks**

The Committee considered the following report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 Members had requested that a report be brought to Committee to take consideration of successful interventions that have been previously undertaken in Parks, in particular Dunville Park, and

how similar initiatives might be applied to other Council parks with Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) problems.

- 1.2 In addition, Committee has asked for a further report to be brought to a subsequent meeting detailing the costs of undertaking repair works to parks damaged by ASB. This report will follow.

2.0 **Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the range of interventions and services which have been previously used within BCC Parks to counteract issues of ASB.

3.0 **Main report**

Background

- 3.1 Belfast City Council have the responsibility to maintain and keep our public parks safe for citizens and accessible for all. In the December report to Committee, in response to requests from Members, BCC officers highlighted the amount of ASB reported within Parks over the last 3 years.
- 3.2 Officers would remind Members to note that the figures presented in the December report may not provide an overall accurate picture of ASB within Parks and therefore, their usefulness in terms of determining patterns or hotspots is extremely limited for the following reasons:
- Residents complaining about ASB in Parks state that they under report what is occurring.
 - The capturing of information relating to ASB within Belfast City Council Parks lies within the responsibility of Park Wardens, ASB Officers, and Safer Neighbourhood Officers. However, Safer Neighbourhood and ASB Officers are not located within parks but are rather deployed in the city centre and neighbourhoods.
 - A team of Park Wardens is located in each quadrant of the city and each Park in the city is patrolled daily, with the more problematic parks receiving more targeted patrols than others.
 - The Park Wardens service operates to the current Parks' closing times (dawn to dusk). However, the BCC and PSNI do plan and carry out interventions outside these hours in response to large events in Parks, reports of ASB and underage drinking etc.

- 3.3** **Belfast City Council has previously used a variety of initiatives to tackle ASB in Parks. Each initiative is unique to the specific circumstances within our Parks. The measures have been based upon available resources on a short, medium or long-term basis.**

Belfast City Council have 3 teams which work across Parks, these include Park Wardens, SNO's and ASB Officers, their role includes:

A team of 9 Safer Neighbourhood Officers work across the city centre, parks and neighbourhoods. SNOs are a frontline enforcement / engagement service whose primary role is to help address issues of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) by:

- providing a visible presence through high visibility foot patrols**
- offer guidance, support, and advice on community safety issues**
- challenge low-level anti-social behaviour**
- enforce laws relating to on-street drinking and environmental crime**
- help to reduce crime and fear of crime**

- 3.4** **The SNO's are deployed across current hotspots which is updated on a daily basis depending on community safety issues across the city centre, parks and neighbourhoods.**

- 3.5** **A team of 5 Anti-Social Behaviour Officers work across the city centre, parks and neighbourhoods. ASB Officers are a frontline engagement service whose primary role is to help address issues of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) by:**

- Facilitating ASB Forums in partnership with PSNI, Housing Providers and Youth Justice Agency**
- Offer guidance, support, and advice on community safety issues**
- Central point of contact for the public to raise issues and redirect them to the most appropriate agency / organisation**
- Central point of contact for Public Utility Companies / Organisations to address issues / concerns raised**
- Challenge low-level anti-social behaviour**
- Support the removal of sharps**
- Support the delivery of the safer city coordinators action plan**

- 3.6** **The team service over 20 community safety forums across the city and will react to any ASB issue when they arise.**

3.7 A team of 24 Park Wardens currently operate from within our Open Spaces and Streetscene (OSS) area teams (8 North, 4 West, 8 East and 4 South) carrying out an important role within our parks and open spaces including security, gate opening/closure, graffiti removal, supporting outreach, enforcing bylaws of the Clean Neighbourhoods Act 2011 as well as addressing ASB issues. Park Wardens are also deployed as required to provide a targeted response to areas of identified ASB during their working hours which reflect the standard opening hours of our parks (dawn to dusk).

3.8 Belfast City Council have delivered a variety of initiatives over the last 12 years which have had a positive impact in tackling ASB within our parks. The detail on some of the successful initiatives are detailed below:

3.9 Medium term Initiatives

Partnership Agreement with the Community

Department for Communities, Belfast City Council and the community identified a derelict site within the Divis area (west Belfast) which had suffered ongoing serious ASB issues over a number of years. This site was re-imagined over a 2 year period with investment to have an outdoor sports area to help support the health and well-being of the community. The site is owned by Belfast City Council and a partnership agreement was established with the local community groups to have a key holder responsibility for the facility which involved the opening/closing of the asset with Groups having the flexibility to use the facility and provide animation through an allocated budget of £15,000. The first year of operations has contributed to zero reported ASB incidents within the facility.

3.10 Dedicated Wardens and Animation

Dunville Park (west Belfast) was redeveloped in 2013 with £2 million investment from Belfast City Council and Department for Communities. The Park was transformed into an animated space with investment in the first 2 years which included dedicated wardens who worked from 8am to 10pm throughout the entire year to maintain the site, engage with the public and to work with community organisations and engage particularly with young people. A small, dedicated animation budget was set aside to allow for seasonal events and weekend sports in the facility. This combination of dedicated staff and programmatic resources of investment contributed to very low levels of ASB reported within the Park over that period.

3.11 Short Term Initiative

Reactive Response

The Páirc Nua Chollann / Colin Park was opened in late 2022 after an investment of over £5 million from the TEO's Urban Village Programme. After the Park opened, a range of ASB involving young people occurred regularly which also created difficulties for the local area. Belfast City Council engaged with a number of stakeholders including community groups and Elected Members regarding the problems and 2 core issues were identified which were times when ASB occurred and the need for animation. To counteract these issues, the time for SNO's to patrol the park was altered from 7pm to an earlier time of 4.30pm and animation of the site was introduced to create a safe welcoming space. Belfast City Council provided a small budget of £15,000 toward animation which provided a short-term intervention which increased usage and helped reduce ASB within the facility. This budget came from a range of CNS services where animation could contribute to a range of mutually beneficial outcomes.

3.12 Future initiatives

The above short, medium and long term solutions highlight the different approaches which has been taken by BCC to help alleviate ASB within Parks.

A key element to gaining any resolution to ASB within parks is partnership working with key stakeholders (Residents, Community & Voluntary Sector, PSNI etc) to identify the core problems and develop joint solutions.

Officers would highlight a variety of initiatives (budget and resources depending) which could be considered in the future to tackle ASB within Council Parks.

The initiatives include:

- Park Wardens focussing on those parks which have the highest level of ASB.
- Partnership Agreements drawn up with appropriate groups from the community and voluntary sector which would include allocating resources to manage the parks opening/closing, animation, and employment of wardens.
- Safer Neighbourhood Officers to be utilised more when patterns of ASB are identified.
- Animation and seasonal budgets to be allocated to Parks to create welcoming spaces which attract more citizens to use the facilities.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.13 The financial and resource implications for each initiative will vary depending on the size of the Park, issues presenting and the intensity and length of any programme. Members should note that any additional initiatives proposed within Parks would have to be considered and prioritised within the context of the current budgets being agreed as part of the rate setting exercise.**

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

- 3.14 There are no Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessments associated with this report.”**

A Member welcomed the report and referred to the success of dedicated Park Wardens in the Divis Back Path in helping to reduce ASB, prior to removal due to funding issues.

Discussion ensued regarding the remit and role of the Safer Neighbourhood Officers (SNOs) and the Park Wardens, including their enforcement powers and limitations and the Members asked that any future report would consider these roles further and how both were tasked and the resources deployed.

Following discussion, the Committee noted the report and agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting considering the remit, role and responsibility of the positions of Park Warden and SNO's, including consideration of the skill set required for the role.

Committee Plan Update

The Director of City Services drew the Members' attention to the mid-year report and progress against the agreed actions within the 2022-23 People and Communities Committee Plan.

The Director advised that the plan detailed the priorities within the framework of the relevant Belfast Agenda themes (Our Services; Economic Recovery; Community Recovery; Environmental Recovery; Strategic Planning Frameworks; and Organisational Foundations) and the CNS Departmental key priority areas (Open Spaces and Streetscene; Community Provision; City Protection and Bereavement; and Resources and Fleet). She highlighted that, as detailed in the plan, it was likely that many of these areas of focus would take several years to deliver, however, this update clearly detailed the key deliverables and priorities for 2022-23.

The Director drew the Members' attention to a table attached as an appendix that provided detail and commentary on the progress of all 33 actions. This set out the work undertaken by the Department to deliver the key priorities, to the end of Quarter 2 2022/23, 6 months into the year. 33 actions had been identified across the Department's three Directorates. Of these, 1 had been completed, 22 were currently on track, 5 were considered

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at risk and were slightly delayed, while a further 5 actions were considered to be behind schedule and would require additional resources to ensure their completion.

The Committee was reminded of the current resource and capacity and resilience pressures on the City and Neighbourhood Services Department. She stated that it was anticipated that recent recruitment exercises would provide additional resources in Quarter 4, and going forward, to assist with the progress of those actions currently considered to be delayed.

The Members were also asked to note that many of the commitments would continue to be delivered with further progress into Quarter 4 and she undertook to keep the Committee updated with the progress.

A Member referred to the glass recycling expansion scheme, expressing disappointment in the ongoing disparity with the scheme as constituents from the former Castlereagh Borough Council still did not have access to the scheme whilst others in the same District Electoral Area did. He also referred to the Responsible Dog Ownership Scheme and stated that he would welcome an update on the proposed pilot in Ormeau Park for a dog run. He also commended the work relation to tree surveys that had been undertaken to identify diseased and damaged trees. The Member concluded by referring to the five-year action plan for the Belfast Open Spaces and Street Scene Plan and stated that he would be keen to see this plan being progressed, along with the required works within the plan.

A Member referred to the work being undertaken by Port Health in relation to the delivery of regulatory functions regarding the NI Protocol. Following discussion in relation to a proposal made by Councillor Bunting that was deemed not competent by the City Solicitor, it was

Moved by Councillor Bunting,
Seconded by Councillor Verner,

That the Committee agrees to defer the report to enable a further report to be submitted to the next meeting which would consider the work of Port Health in the context of the Court Judgement that had been issued in December in relation to legal action against Mr. Edwin Poots MLA.

Amendment

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

That the Committee agrees to note the Committee Plan update.

On a vote on the amendment, 11 Members voted for the proposal and 3 against and it was declared carried.

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The Committee therefore noted the content of the mid-year report and the progress against the agreed actions within the 2022-23 People and Communities Committee Plan.

Following further discussion, the Director of City Services agreed to liaise with Councillors Bunting and Verner directly in regard to a query over the Port Health operational update in regard to the sustainability of the financial model and future arrangements to be agreed nationally that were referenced in the report.

Update on Belfast Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy

The Director of Neighbourhood Services provided the Members with an update on the development of a Belfast City Council Sports Development and Physical Activity Strategy (The Strategy), along with an updated timeline for completion of the Strategy.

He reminded the Members that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting in January 2018, had agreed that a Belfast City Council Sports Development Strategy and associated work plan would be developed. The aim of the Strategy was to provide a framework for future decision making on providing funding to National Governing Bodies of Sport delivering programmes in Belfast in support of existing funding streams and work programmes which would enhance sporting opportunities for Belfast's sporting organisations and individuals.

The People and Communities Committee, in June 2018, had subsequently agreed a proposed Terms of Reference and timeline. The Departmental Change Programme had since prompted consideration of wider opportunities to clarify and align the links between sports development and the Council's strategic funding and programming decisions in the areas of asset development, health improvement and community development.

The Members were reminded that, at the People and Communities meeting in November 2020, it had been agreed that the Terms of Reference would be extended to include the following areas:

- In line with the Belfast Agenda the outcomes were extended to 2035;
- Physical activity programming was considered as part of the pathway into organised sport;
- To be considered and aligned with the Leisure Transformation Programme;
- To be identification of alternative sources of financing/partner opportunities;
- Facility/asset utilisation and management to be maximised through collaborative partnership approaches;
- Facility/asset planning and development to be considered taking account of local, citywide and regional need;
- Sport's contribution to improvement of whole health to be considered in the context of partnership working through the work of the Belfast Community Planning Partnership and associated Boards – particularly the Living Here Board;

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- Sport's contribution to community development to be considered in the context of City and Neighbourhood's Departmental approach to area working and neighbourhood regeneration; and
- The strategy 'working title' to be "Belfast Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy".

In July 2022, following a quotation process, Strategic Leisure had been appointed to support the Council in the production of the Strategy. The Members were advised that initial introductory meetings involving both Council officers and a number of Key Delivery Partners had now taken place, with more than 50 individuals and groups having been involved. In addition, a total of 370 responses had been received via "Your Say Belfast".

The Director then drew the Members' attention to the proposed draft timetable, as follows:

Background review of documentation policies and strategies	September 2022- <i>(Completed)</i>
Establish Board and structures for developing strategy	September 2022-October 2022 <i>Completed</i>
Initial face to face consultation with key stakeholders and schools	September 2022-October 2022 <i>Completed</i>
Review and Mapping	September 2022-October 2022 <i>Completed</i>
Focus groups established and face to face meetings to take place	October 2022 - December 2022 <i>Completed</i>
Wider public consultation to take place online using "Your Say Belfast"	October 2022-December 2022 <i>Completed</i>
Analysis of key issues identified with a focus on internal consultation and external feedback	November 2022-January 2023 <i>Completed</i>
Interim Draft Report produced and presented to elected members for discussion	27 February 2023 12.00 -1.30pm
Review Draft Strategy and produce draft report	March 2023-May 2023
Draft Strategy to be released for public consultation	May 2023- July 2023
Analyse feedback from consultation and amend/update strategy	August 2023
Final Strategy to be presented to elected members	September 2023-October 2023
Strategy Launched	October 2023

The Director highlighted that the draft interim draft report was due to be presented to the Members via a Workshop on Monday, 27th February 2023 from 12:00 p.m. - 13:30 p.m. in the Lavery Room, this would be a hybrid meeting and would also be available via MS Teams.

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The Chairperson advised that the previous Members Workshop in December had been poorly attended and he encouraged the Members to attend, stating that it was their opportunity to participate further in the discussion forming the Strategy.

The Committee noted the progress to date and agreed to the new proposed timeline for development of the Strategy.

**#InTheLoop recycling on the go campaign to
improve the city's on street recycling provision**

(Mr. S. Leonard, Neighbourhood Services Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Director of Neighbourhood Services advised the Members that award-winning, environmental charity Hubbub had recently approached Belfast City Council seeking to explore launching a trial of their #InTheLoop recycling on-the-go campaign to improve the city's on-street recycling provision, alongside a communications campaign. Hubbub had secured new funding from the Coca-Cola Foundation to run a 3-month trial in Northern Ireland and had identified Belfast as potential campaign area.

He advised that Hubbub had been developing and delivering an approach to recycling on-the-go which had first been trialled in 2018 in Leeds, and had been followed in similar trials in Swansea, Edinburgh, Dublin, Wimbledon, Telford and Wrekin and the London Borough of Lambeth. Using the previous trials, Hubbub had tested and refined how innovative design, paired with engaging communications could change behaviour, reduce confusion about recycling and make it easier to recycle.

The Members were shown a design of the bins that would use the #InTheLoop campaign principles, featuring a bright yellow background making it highly visible on the street. This approach would prioritise the collection of high-quality materials (plastic bottles, cans, and glass) and aim to reduce the factors that lead to contamination. Alongside the installation of the new bins, Hubbub would deliver a press launch announcing the trial and a communications campaign, including a paid social media campaign, engagement with the local business improvement district and other local stakeholders. This would raise awareness of the campaign and help to educate consumers about how to recycle correctly, as well as seeking to encourage the use of reusable containers where possible.

The Committee was advised that, should the Members agree to this request, it was anticipated that the campaign would launch around April or May and would be actively promoted and monitored for a period of 3 months. After this point, the Council would have the option to continue the collections but there was no commitment beyond this trial point. The Committee was also advised that an evaluation report would be carried out that would record how effective the trial had been in increasing re-cycling in the pilot bins and with recommendations as to how the pilot could be scaled up.

The Members discussed suitable locations for the placing of the new dual bins (one recycling and one normal street litter bin) throughout the city in order to maximise their potential to ensure that they were positioned where high levels of recyclable material was generated.

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During discussion, the Neighbourhood Services Manager highlighted that, based on current cost estimates, it was estimated that the funding of £22,000 being allocated would fund in the region of 20-25 bins (this total included approximately 12 yellow re-cycling bins and 12 normal black street litter bins).

Moved by Councillor Flynn,
Seconded by Councillor Maghie,

That the Committee agrees to place a trial recycling bin in a park/open space in North, South and West Belfast with the rest in the city centre.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Magee,
Seconded by Councillor de Faoite,

That the Committee agrees to proceed with the pilot based on placing recycling bins in the 4 quadrants of the city and also in the city centre, to ensure an even spread throughout all areas and not just the city centre.

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

The amendment was agreed as the substantive motion.

The Committee approved the request from Hubbub for Belfast to take part in a trial #InTheLoop recycling on-the-go campaign and agreed to proceed with the pilot based on placing recycling bins in the 4 quadrants of the city and in the city centre and noted that an evaluation report would be available following the pilot.

Reference Group on Older People Update

The Director of Neighbourhood Services drew the Members' attention to the minutes of the Reference Group on Older People and provided a brief overview of the items that had been considered, as follows:

- Update on the development of Age-friendly Belfast Plan 2022-2026;
- Update on Extreme Weather and Winter Planning with Older People;
- Update in respect of age-friendly Belfast Older Volunteer of the Year Awards; and
- Update in respect of Age Friendly Staffing and Resources.

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes and the recommendations from the Reference Group on Older People meeting held on 19th December, 2022.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

**Access paths to the Strangford Playing Fields
from Glenveagh Special School - and request
for deputation in March**

The Committee considered the following report:

1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the proposed project at Strangford Playing Fields to create an accessible pathway around the Park.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the update and agree to receive a deputation from Glenveagh Special School at the March meeting of the People and Communities Committee.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Background

Strangford Avenue Playing fields is situated across the road from Glenveagh Special Education school. Glenveagh shares a campus with 3 other special education needs schools: Harberton Special School, Fleming Fulton and Oakwood School. Together the schools service significant pupil numbers. Many also are from outside the immediate area and travel in daily into the school.

Breakdown of School Demographic

Glenveagh School	190 pupils aged 8-19 years old. (20% wheelchair users)
Harberton	300 pupils aged 4-15years old
Oakwood	70 pupils aged 4-8 years old
Fleming Fulton	100 pupils aged 5-18 years old (all physical disabilities)

- 3.2 Outdoor space at the school campus is extremely constrained particularly given the large number of attendees at the schools and the special needs. Strangford Playing Fields is the closest

alternative site for outdoor recreation. Glenveagh School is the closest in proximity to the park, with the Drummond Park entrance directly opposite their school gate.

- 3.3 However, the schools have indicated that they currently cannot use the park to its full potential due to accessibility limitations around the pedestrian entrance and due to the absence of a suitable accessible bit-mac pathway for their pupils who have physical disabilities and who are wheelchair users. The Playing Fields is also widely used by local residents however the lack of a pathway around the Playing Fields also constrains their access limiting the full potential of the Playing Fields as a key local asset.
- 3.4 The school have invested in a pool of adapted inclusive bikes but have nowhere to ride them on the school campus and have limited storage. The school has enquired if the currently disused pavilion within the Playing Fields could be considered as a storage facility for the adapted bikes, alongside the proposed pathway project, enabling easy access to the park and removing the transportation barrier.
- 3.5 Recently a make-shift trail has been created by Belfast City Council parks staff. This trail has been formed by cutting the grass shorter in a loop around the perimeter of the park through the trees, with bark laid in areas. The purpose of this trail was to provide walkers and runners a scenic route around the park. It also aims to protect the pitches by encouraging recreational use around the perimeter. The feedback on the temporary pathway has been very positive however, the current grass terrain of the trail presents a barrier to people with disabilities from enjoying the park fully and is not suitable surface for inclusive bikes or wheelchairs. These constraints have an adverse impact on a significant number of children with a disability across the school campus.
- 3.6 Officers have therefore been investigating the potential for a permanent path network around the Playing Fields which will benefit both residents and the schools.
- 3.7 Project Development to date

Members are asked to note that Glenveagh school presented a proposal for a new accessible path and entrance to Strangford Park at Belfast Healthy Cities convention in 2017. This proposal was brought to the South Belfast Area Working Group in March 2018. The Working Group agreed that officers would look at the amenity of the site at Strangford Avenue Playing Fields in terms of ensuring it was suitable for all local stakeholders and that a

report would be submitted to the Area Working Group in due course.

- 3.8 In January 2019 the South Area Working group received an update with sketch drawings/ plan and costings of the potential trim trail (1100m long x 2.0m wide). This proposal and estimates were developed internally by council officers as a desktop exercise and no survey or site investigation work was undertaken.
- 3.9 In September 2020 Belfast City Council submitted an application to Department for Communities Access and Inclusion Fund to support the proposed project. Unfortunately, the proposed costings were outside the shortlisting criteria and funding was not secured. As part of this application, letters of support were obtained from adjacent schools, Disability Sport NI, Age Friendly and Engage with Age.

Current Status

- 3.10 In May 2022 a feasibility study was completed which outlined 3 options. In addition to a suitable pathway, the feasibility study also looked at an option to re-open the currently dis-used old pavilion as a storage facility of adapted inclusive e.bikes. Architect plans and associated costings have been produced for each of the 3 options.

The recommended option is as follows:

- Trim Trail 562m bit-mac pathway, of minimum 2 metres wide.
 - Entrance gates works at Drummond Park entrance to improve accessibility
 - Pavilion access works (£2k PC Sum)
 - Pavilion refurbishment
 - Link Trail 130m
- 3.11 In November 2022 a further application was submitted to DfC Access and Inclusion Programme. Unfortunately this was also deemed ineligible. Council officers have also approached other funders including DfC's community empowerment division. However to date no eligible funding has secured. Council officers however are continuing to look at potential funding sources and exploring this with partners. Members will be aware of the pressures on the Council's capital financing and there is no Council budget secured for the project. Any council capital funding would be required to go through the Council's three stage approval process as agreed by Members.

- 3.12 Members are asked to note the update and to agree to receive a deputation from Glenveagh Special School at next month's People & Communities Committee**

3.13 Financial and Resource Implications

No budget secured. Officers from Physical Programmes are exploring potential funding sources and continuing discussions with partners.

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

- 3.14 This project supports equality as it aims to enhance accessibility of a council amenity to all its users.**

The Committee noted the update and agreed to receive a deputation from Glenveagh Special School at the March meeting of the People and Communities Committee and at the request of a Member also agreed to include in future discussions Taughmonagh Primary School, Sure Start and Scribbles Day Nursery given their close proximity to the park.

Developer Contribution for Open Space

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members regarding three developer contributions that have been secured, via the Developers Contribution Framework, for council maintained open space and the proposed improvements that City & Neighbourhood Services Department plan to deliver as a result of the financial contributions.**

- 1.2 Details of proposed improvements at each park are outlined in Section 3.9 (Main Report).**

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- Note the developer contributions for open space received to date and agree to recommend to SP&R committee the proposed improvement works at Knocknagoney, Tullycarnet and Belmont Parks outlined in Section 3.7 of this report.**

3.0 Main Report

- 3.1** As members will be aware Council's Developer Contributions Framework was ratified for adoption by Full Council on 6th January 2020. Developer Contributions are a planning tool used to mitigate or manage the impacts of new development. They may be used to ensure that new development is supported by the right infrastructure or make sure that the environmental impacts of proposals are appropriately managed. The Council's Developer Contribution Framework sets out the council's approach to securing Developer Contributions as part of the planning application process.
- 3.2** Policy OS 2 of Planning Policy Statement 8 requires open space to be an integral part of new residential development of 25 units or more, or on sites of one hectare or more. In smaller residential schemes, the need to provide open space will be considered on its individual merits. Exceptions to this policy requirement include apartment developments or specialised housing where a reasonable level of private communal open space is being provided; or where residential development is designed to integrate with and make use of adjoining open space. Policy OS 2 goes on to specify the proportion of a site that needs to be set aside for open space and the requirement for equipped children's play area on larger sites.
- 3.3** In some cases, as an exception to the normal policy approach, the council may consider it more appropriate for residents of the new development to make use of existing or planned open space in the locality rather than require new open space to be provided on-site as an integral part of the development. When assessing this option, account will be taken of any specific reasons why open space cannot be provided on site, the scale and nature of the proposed development, existing and planned open space in the area, accessibility and connectivity to the open space, and its ability to support residents of the new development.
- 3.4** It may be necessary for the developer to enhance the existing or planned open space so that it is able to support the additional population and/or improve the site's connectivity to it. In such circumstances, the developer will be required to pay a Commuted Sum to cover the cost in lieu of providing the open space on the site. This will include the cost of improvements to an existing facility where there would normally be a policy requirement to provide this on site. The value of the Commuted Sum will be calculated on a case by case basis.
- 3.5** In cases where a developer is required to improve existing open space planning officers from Place and Economy Department

liaise with CNS Landscape Planning & Development (LPD) Team to identify council maintained open space in proximity to the proposed development site. LPD officers, in partnership with CNS Operational / Outreach Managers, elected members and local users, help quantify potential physical improvements and provide technical support to planners in terms of design and cost estimation. This information can then be used to help inform negotiations around a developer contribution.

- 3.6 Developer Contributions are a form of Planning Obligation and are normally secured through a Planning Agreement under Section 76 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. A Planning Agreement is a legally binding agreement between the relevant parties, normally between the council, landowner, applicant and any other parties directly involved in fulfilling the agreement.**
- 3.7 As part of the planning process, developer contributions to improve existing open space were secured by colleagues in Place and Economy Department and relate to residential development schemes below. Council has received each of the financial contributions by way of a Planning Agreement.**
- 1. LA04/2019/0025/F - Parklands, Knocknagoney Dale - £90,000**
 - 2. LA04/2017/0235/F - Rosepark House, Upper Newtownards Road - £53,000**
 - 3. LA04/2015/0670/F - Lands at Castlehill Manor, Castlehill Road - £39,750**
- 3.8 City & Neighbourhood Services now wish to deliver a range of open space improvements at council maintained open space referenced in the Planning Agreements or those in closest proximity to the development sites. Council open space to be improved as a result of developer contribution above are:**
- 1. Knocknagoney Park - £90,000 (adjacent to Parklands development site)**
 - 2. Tullycarnet Park - £53,000 (1.6 km from Rosepark House development site)**
 - 3. Belmont Park - £39,550 (1.0 km from Castlehill Manor development site)**
- 3.9 Officers from City & Neighbourhood Services Landscape Planning & Development Team and Open Spaces & Street Scene have been working with elected members, operational managers and local users to prioritise and quantify small scale improvements at each of the parks. The total cost of the works at each park cannot exceed the associated financial contributions received by council. Within this context the proposed improvements at each park are:**

- Knocknagoney Park - construction of a new, accessible pedestrian access between Parklands apartment development and the park, including tree maintenance, remedial landscaping and civil engineering works, new lighting and general improvements to the main, lower park entrance.
 - Tullycarnet Park - refurbishment of the existing outdoor gym area within the park, currently in a poor state of repair, or replacement of the existing outdoor gym facility with a small sensory play area (consultation is currently ongoing with elected members and park user groups from the local neighbourhood)
 - Belmont Park - construction of a new, bound-stone woodland path between the A55 pedestrian footbridge entrance and the Cairnburn Road entrance, installation of accessible picnic benches / hard-standings at the playground area and a hard-standing for a potential park vendor.
- 3.10 It is envisaged that all improvement works will be designed in-house and supervised by officers from our Landscape Planning & Development Team.
- 3.11 Colleagues from Place and Economy Department (Plans & Policy Team) have confirmed council has a period of seven years, from receipt of the financial contribution, to deliver agreed open space improvements. In order to assist with internal monitoring of contributions officers from Place and Economy Department (Plans & Policy Team) have requested that, going forward, members are updated regarding proposed open space improvements before committed sums are released to deliver the works.
- 3.12 Financial and Resource Implications
- The total cost of open space improvement works must not exceed the financial contribution received for each council maintained open space.
 - Council has a period of 7 years, from receipt of the financial contribution, to deliver open space improvements.
 - Open space improvements will be delivered from within existing budget estimates.
 - Members should note that professional fees will not be incurred using this delivery model, therefore 100% of the financial contribution, secured via the Planning

Agreement, can be invested in physical improvements at each site.

3.13 Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessments

None.”

The Members discussed at length the use of developer contributions and how these could be best utilised and managed to ensure delivery for the specific area to which they were aligned. Clarification was sought as to whether there were others in the pipeline and a request for early sight of such.

The Committee was advised that the Elected Members for the specific Ward in the areas the park and/or open space were situated would be consulted as part of the process and that the matter could be taken to the area working group for sign off.

The Members requested that a legal opinion be sought as to whether Developer contributions could be bundled with other capital schemes to ensure as much value could be achieved out of any investment in parks and open spaces. The Members were advised that this had been raised previously at the Planning Committee with a determination already having been made on the matter.

The Committee noted the developer contributions for open space received to date and agree to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee the proposed improvement works at Knocknagoney, Tullycarnet and Belmont Parks as outlined in Section 3.7 of the report and to submit an update report to the next meeting of the East Area Working Group.

Operational Issues

Product Safety Update and OPSS funding

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 This report is to:

- i) update Members on the Council's work to protect consumers in Belfast and Northern Ireland from unsafe consumer products; and**
- ii) highlight available funding to support Belfast City Council's activity in this area.**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- a. Note the Council's ongoing activity and statutory function in relation consumer product safety; and**

- b. Agree to avail of current grant funding opportunities to support Belfast City Council's work on product safety.

Main report

- 3.1 NI councils have a number of statutory obligations in relation to consumer safety legislation, principally the Consumer Protection Act 1987, and Regulations for safety of specific products such as toys, electrical goods, cosmetics etc. More recently the Market Surveillance (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2021 have also been introduced, setting out how councils must carry out certain functions for product safety, including some additional enforcement powers.
- 3.2 Environmental Health officers have undertaken this regulatory function for several decades. In England, Scotland and Wales, this function has been (and continues to be) carried out by Trading Standards Departments of Local Authorities.
- 3.3 Principally, councils must ensure that businesses involved in the importation, supply or sale of goods comply with their legal obligations and to ensure that goods presented on the market do not present risk of harm or injury to consumers. Councils' activity include:
- Identification and investigation of potentially unsafe goods through receipt of consumer complaints, visits to premises and inspections/sampling and testing of products.
 - Receipt and sharing of intelligence surrounding unsafe goods or their supply chains, between relevant authorities, including Council Environmental Health Departments in NI, Trading Standards Officers across GB Local Authorities, the Office of Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) and Border Force.
 - Providing advice and education to businesses to raise awareness of product safety requirements to reduce potential for businesses to procure and place unsafe goods on the market in the future.
 - Taking enforcement actions including steps to remove unsafe goods from the market, or to have the goods made safe.
- 3.4 A range of product safety initiatives are undertaken each year in co-ordination with all 11 district councils. These are co-ordinated

via Environmental Health NI (NI Consumer Protection Subgroup), and may involve partnership working and engagement with agencies and stakeholders operating in related regulatory fields across Government in NI, UK, RoI and beyond. Belfast City Council continues to actively support this work – in 2022/23 initiatives are focusing on:

- Undertaking a campaign to raise awareness of the dangers of button batteries by supporting the OPSS 'Nil by Mouth' campaign, raising awareness with retailers and consumers, market surveillance through partnership with other relevant services within Environmental Health and external agencies.
- Working with Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency to carry out a Part worn tyre initiative to assess the safety and compliance of part worn tyres on the market.
- Developing and disseminating guidance to businesses on the topics of PAS 7050 (publicly available specification) 'Bringing safe products to market' and E-Cigarettes and E-Liquids.
- In conjunction with OPSS, upskilling staff as required on product safety issues including the consistent enforcement of consumer protection regulations, the introduction of new legislation/standards and emerging issues.
- Maintaining closer working relationships with relevant partners across NI, UK and Ireland e.g. Trading Standards NI, Invest NI, NI Fire and Rescue, HSE NI, Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government, Medical and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, The Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CPCC) and Health Products Regulatory Authority, to ensure effective communication and sharing of information where relevant; to develop mutual understanding of respective roles in order to promote cross departmental working and help to resolve cross cutting issues.

3.5 In year funding (in 2022/23) of up to £120,000 has been recently made available by OPSS to Belfast City Council to support activity in these areas of work. Two potential grant funding opportunities are available comprising:

- a. A £65,000 grant available to councils that have specific duties to assess product safety and compliance of higher risk consumer goods arriving at UK and NI ports, to ensure unsafe goods are prevented from entering the UK market. These products are typically identified by OPSS on the basis risk assessments carried out using customs data for specific commodities. Details of potentially dangerous

products are referred to Councils for the relevant ports around GB and NI for intervention. These products typically involve high risk/poor quality manufactured goods arriving from countries across the world such as China, Hong Kong, Taiwan etc. Eligible activities under this grant include the potential to support engagement with businesses to educate and raise awareness while creating a deterrent for importing unsafe goods, building partnerships with relevant trade bodies and other stakeholders, and improving current processes.

- b. A £55,000 grant is also available to councils to build capability and capacity for product safety work. This is to ensure council's are sufficiently equipped to carry out the statutory duties, while also building strong partnerships with businesses, other councils and Government Departments to improve future compliance across the consumer market. A significant portion of Belfast City Council's activity for delivering the NI Consumer Protection workplan in 2022/23 is eligible for this funding.

- 3.6 Officers have reviewed the 2 available grant funding offers and have confirmed that Belfast City Council is eligible to claim the available funding in full, in line with the eligibility criteria.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.7 Following Committee approval in November 2020, Council has previously accessed similar OPSS funding opportunities to support product safety work in years 2020/21 and 2021/22. As a result, the potential for grant funding income in 2022/23 was forecasted as part of earlier financial estimates for the current financial year, to support this work area.

Asset and Other Implications

None.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.8 None.

The Committee:

- noted the Council's ongoing activity and statutory function in relation consumer product safety; and
- agreed to avail of current grant funding opportunities to support Belfast City Council's work on product safety.

**People and Communities Committee,
Tuesday, 7th February, 2023**

Proposal for Dual Language Street Signs

As at least fifteen percent of the total numbers of persons surveyed in the street were in favour of the proposal to erect a second street nameplate in Irish at Ardilea Drive, the Committee approved the application.

Proposal for Naming New Street

The Committee approved the application for naming a new street in the City at Pavilion Park Demesne, off Dub Lane, BT9.

Chairperson

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People and Communities Committee

Monday, 13th February, 2023

HYBRID MEETING OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Murray (Chairperson);
Councillors Bunting, Bower,
de Faoite, Flynn, Magee, Maghie,
McMullan and O'Hara

In attendance: Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;
Alastair Curran, Environmental Protection Manager; and
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were recorded on behalf of Councillors McAteer and Garrett.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations were reported.

Update report on Detailed Assessment for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), Particulate Matter (PM₁₀) and Fine Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5})

The Committee considered the undernoted report and with the aid of PowerPoint the Environmental Protection Manager provided a brief overview of the Local Air Quality Management regime, the Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026 and the context of the work undertaken to reach this stage in the development of the draft detailed assessment atmospheric dispersion model.

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1** The Committee will be aware that at its meeting of 8th October 2019 and upon consideration of agenda item 3b, '*Local Air Quality Management Update for Belfast*', the Committee agreed a proposal that the Council would agree to look at undertaking a detailed assessment and, additionally, to measure particulate matter (PM_{2.5}). The Committee additionally agreed to bring back a further report on how to meet the undertaking for a detailed assessment, and to include the measurement of PM_{2.5}. In accordance with the provisions of the government's local air quality management (LAQM) technical guidance, a detailed assessment is normally required whenever an Updating and Screening Assessment has indicated that there is a risk of an air quality objective not being

achieved. It should be noted that fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) is not presently in regulation (*Air Quality Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003*) for the purposes of the local air quality management but the Council has nevertheless elected to proactively include PM_{2.5} within the scope of the detailed assessment.

- 1.2 Subsequent reports were provided to the Committee as to how such a detailed review and assessment might be delivered for the city and on the basis of these reports, a competitive European Tender exercise was undertaken by the Council in September 2020 in order to appoint an appropriately experienced environmental consultancy to deliver the detailed assessment project.
- 1.3 Aecom consultants were subsequently appointed by the Council in early 2021 to deliver the detailed assessment project over an approximate 2-year period with a final project report to be completed by March 2023 including the findings to be presented to the People and Communities Committee within these timescales. It may be helpful to consider scheduling party briefings on this subject in advance of the final report being tabled at committee. The Aecom detailed assessment has considered nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), particulate matter (PM₁₀) and fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) for the city and has been undertaken in accordance with the provisions of Part III of the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 and of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance (LAQM.TG22), published in August 2022.
- 1.4 In order to enable the Committee to consider the outworkings of the detailed assessment for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), particulate matter (PM₁₀) and fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) and to provide commentary on the emergent findings, Aecom consultants are scheduled to provide a presentation concerning the outworkings of the detailed assessment at the hybrid meeting of the People and Communities Committee on Monday 13th February 2023.
- 1.5 The Committee is advised that the detailed assessment atmospheric dispersion modelling is currently being refined by Aecom consultants with input from Belfast City Council Air Quality Officers. The atmospheric dispersion modelling aspect of detailed assessment project should therefore presently be considered as being in draft format.
- 2.0 **Recommendations**
- 2.1 The Committee is invited to note this covering report concerning the Aecom detailed assessment presentation to be presented at the hybrid meeting of the People and Communities Committee on

Monday 13th February 2023 and to consider party briefings on this subject in advance of the final report being tabled at committee.

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

- 3.1** The Committee will be aware that the detailed assessment project comprises four main components; (i) additional ambient monitoring; (ii) development of an emissions inventory for Belfast; (iii) atmospheric dispersion modelling for the Belfast City Council area and (iv) provision of a final written summary report of the Detailed Assessment project for NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}. These project components will form the basis for the Aecom Committee presentation.
- 3.2** In addition to the various monitoring for NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}, presently being undertaken across Belfast by Belfast City Council and DAERA, a further six small sensor air quality monitors were procured, installed and operated during 2021 by Aecom as part of the detailed assessment project at locations across the city, representative of key emission sources for NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}, including a city centre site; two roadside sites; two urban background sites, reflective of domestic, small industrial, institutional and commercial space heating and regional pollutant contributions; and a site adjacent to George Best Belfast City Airport. It should be noted that data from small sensor air quality monitoring undertaken separately by Belfast Harbour within the port area has also been considered as part of the detailed assessment project. Ownership of the six small sensor air quality monitors procured by Aecom transferred to Belfast City Council in early 2022 and the monitors are now operated by Belfast City Council Air Quality Officers.
- 3.3** An emissions inventory for Belfast has been compiled by Aecom consultants covering important emission sources, including George Best Belfast City Airport, the Port of Belfast, railways, domestic and industrial sources and the local road network. Road fleet emissions have been additionally informed by a series of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) surveys. Data from the emissions inventory has been employed in the atmospheric dispersion modelling aspects of the detailed assessment project. Moreover, the emissions inventory data will provide a useful resource for Belfast City Council in undertaking any subsequent atmospheric dispersion modelling studies for the city or for evaluating and taking forward any local air quality management improvement recommendations arising from the detailed assessment project.

- 3.4 Detailed atmospheric dispersion modelling has been undertaken by Aecom consultants for NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} for the Belfast City Council area for a 2019 base year and for a forward projection year of 2028. 2019 was chosen as the base year as it is the year immediately prior to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and therefore considered to be representative of what were ‘*typical*’ ambient NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} concentrations across Belfast. The atmospheric dispersion modelling data has been validated, verified and adjusted using ratified Belfast City Council ambient monitoring data, together with calibrated and ratified monitoring data from the six small sensor air quality monitors, to ensure that it is representative of ambient conditions in the 2019 base year and the forward projection year of 2028.
- 3.5 Modelled ambient concentrations have been compared with air quality objectives detailed within the Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and with the September 2021 WHO Global Air Quality Guidelines in order to identify any areas of exceedance across the city. In addition, and in light of the outworkings of the detailed atmospheric dispersion modelling, Aecom consultants have provided commentary on the council’s four Air Quality Management Areas that have been declared for a combination of exceedances of the 1-hour and annual mean objectives for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), associated principally with road transport emissions. Source apportionment studies have been carried out by Aecom for a series of modelled sensitive receptors to determine the relative contributions from each of the modelled source sectors.
- 3.6 The final detailed assessment atmospheric dispersion modelling report and the accompanying detailed assessment summary report will contain a series of project conclusions and where necessary, recommendations for further ambient air improvements across the city.
- 3.7 Financial & Resource Implications.
- The Committee is advised that the detail assessment project is being supported by the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) through the local air quality management (LAQM) grant process. Funding support has been provided during the 2020/2021, 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 LAQM grant years.
- 3.8 Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessments

None”

Noted.

Restricted

Presentation - AECOM

The Chairperson welcomed to the meeting Mr. A. Thorpe, representing AECOM, to the meeting.

Mr. Thorpe commenced by thanking the Committee for the opportunity to present on the findings of the draft AECOM report on the detailed assessment project which had been ongoing now for over 2 years.

The representative, with the aid of PowerPoint, presented the Members with a detailed update presentation on key findings of the draft report and draft atmospheric dispersion modelling. He advised that the draft findings had been compiled using the following 4 principal project components:

1. Additional ambient monitoring for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), particulate matter (PM₁₀) and fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5});
2. Development of an emissions inventory for the Belfast City Council area;
3. Detailed atmospheric dispersion modelling to map concentrations of NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} spatially for the Belfast City Council area for a 2019 base year and a forward projection year of 2028; and
4. Analysis and reporting of the atmospheric dispersion modelling data for the city to identify geographic areas of exceedance of national and European health-based ambient air quality standards and of WHO air quality guideline values.

Mr. Thorpe reiterated that, at this stage, the findings were still in draft form as the final detailed assessment atmospheric dispersion modelling report and the accompanying detailed assessment summary report would contain a series of project conclusions and, where necessary, recommendations for further ambient air improvements across the city.

During discussion, the AECOM representative undertook to include a graphic for WHO standards within the final report. He also addressed queries in relation to the measuring of PM_{2.5} and whether there were specific times of the year when spikes in air pollution were more evident. The representative agreed to investigate this further and to report back.

The Environmental Protection Manager advised the Members that a specific report on monitoring would be provided as a component of the detailed assessment project.

Discussion also ensued regarding the rationale used to determine the location of the additional monitoring stations, the high levels of pollution around the A12 Westlink and the declining levels in pollution during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Environmental Protection Manager advised that the Council had now taken over operation of the monitoring stations that had been used for the assessment project and, therefore, in due course, the Council could consider their relocation to different areas of the city to capture alternative data.

**Special People and Communities Committee,
Monday, 13th January, 2023**

The Director of City Services advised that, in advance of the final report being submitted to the People and Communities Committee and given the complexity of the work associated with the draft detailed assessment atmospheric dispersion model, officers would be happy to discuss this directly with a Member or to arrange a Party Briefing should they feel that it would be beneficial to contact her if this was required.

The Chairperson thanked Mr. Thorpe for his comprehensive presentation, and he left the meeting.

The Committee noted the update presentation from AECOM in respect of the key findings of the draft report and draft atmospheric dispersion modelling.

Chairperson

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 8th February, 2023

HYBRID MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Murphy (Chairperson);
Alderman Dorrian;
Councillors Beattie, Bunting, Duffy, Ferguson,
Hanvey, Heading, Hussey, T. Kelly, Lyons,
Maskey, McCabe, McDonough-Brown,
McLaughlin, Murray, Nelson, O'Hara and Whyte.

In attendance: Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration
and Development;
Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development; and
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillor Spratt.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the 11th and 25th January were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st February.

Declarations of Interest

In relation to item 6.b) St. Patrick's Day 2023 Update, Councillor McCabe declared an interest, in that she was employed by Féile an Phobail, and left the meeting whilst this item was under discussion.

The Chairperson, Councillor Murphy and Councillor Duffy declared an interest regarding item 3.b) Business Cluster and Community Grant Programme, in that they had assisted some of the organisations who had applied for the grant programme and left the meeting whilst this item was under discussion.

Matters Referred Back from Council

Notice of Motion - Support the network of WW2-era Pillboxes

It was reported that the Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 24th January, had referred the following motion, which had been proposed by Alderman Dorrian and seconded by Councillor Spratt, to the Committee for consideration:

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee,
Wednesday, 8th February, 2023**

“That this Council supports the development of culture and tourism and in doing so will supporting the concept of regenerating the network of WW2-era pillboxes and other structures across Belfast and beyond, and engages with other local councils and relevant government departments to develop an Action Plan to promote their regeneration, in partnership with the local communities where they are sited.”

The proposer of the motion, Alderman Dorrian, addressed the Committee and provided an overview of the motion and described how the Council could incorporate Communities and promote neighbourhood tourism as part of the strategy. He also highlighted that the Department for Communities had recently undertaken a physical audit of structures.

The Committee adopted the motion and agreed, in the first instance, that a report be submitted to a future meeting on how it might be facilitated, resourced and managed.

Restricted Items

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

Zoo Performance Update - Quarter 3

The Committee was provided with its quarterly update on the performance of the Zoo in the following areas:

- Visitor Services;
- Education Services;
- Animal Collection;
- Marketing and Events; and
- Financial performance.

The Committee noted the Zoo performance update report for the period October to December 2022.

Business Cluster and Community Grant Programme

(Councillor McLaughlin in the Chair)

The Committee was provided with an update on the Business Cluster and Community Grant Programme Tranche 3 and the assessment of applications for consideration.

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee,
Wednesday, 8th February, 2023**

The Committee approved the award of Business Cluster and Community Grants that had been assessed to date for Tranche 3 of the programme as outlined in Section 3.5 of the report.

Request to Present

(Councillor Murphy in the Chair)

Visit Belfast Business Plan

The Committee was reminded that Visit Belfast was the city's Destination Marketing Management Organisation (DMMO) dedicated to marketing Belfast as a city break, conference, day-trip and cruise ship destination. It also, in its visitor servicing role, managed the operation of three gateway Visitor Information Centres (VICs), including Visit Belfast Welcome Centre, the Arrivals Desk at George Best Belfast City Airport and the Arrivals Desk at Belfast International Airport and a range of visitor servicing initiatives on behalf of the Council.

It was highlighted that the Council was the principal funder to Visit Belfast and, as such, received an annual presentation of their business plan as part of the process to approve annual funding.

The Committee:

- Noted the contents of the report and the progress to date; and
- Agreed to receive a presentation on Visit Belfast's 2023-24 Business Plan at the Committee meeting in March 2023, which would include a request for Council support towards the work programme for the coming financial year.

Regenerating Places and Improving Infrastructure

Update on the Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel Strategic Priority

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:

- Outline to Committee the ongoing work across Council and with stakeholders in respect of the Committee's strategic priority of Access, Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel as set out in the CGR Committee Plan, and alignment into the Corporate Plan and refresh

of the Belfast Agenda including the new Connectivity, Active & Sustainable Travel subgroup.

- Seek approval from the Committee to convene an All Party Round Table regarding Connectivity, Active and Sustainable travel that will provide an opportunity for Members to have a focused and informed discussion around this Strategic Priority.
- To advise Members of the request from Sustrans to present to a future meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee in relation to their experience of designing and implementing Low Traffic Neighbourhoods.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i Note the content of this report and the emerging work from the Community Planning: Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel subgroup.
- ii Agree to convene an All Party Round Table regarding Connectivity, Active and Sustainable travel in the city.
- iii Agree to receive a presentation from Sustrans at a future meeting of the Committee in relation to their experience of designing and implementing Low Traffic Neighbourhoods.

3.0 Main report

Background

- 3.1 Members will be aware that Active and Sustainable Travel is a strategic priority of this Committee as set out in the Committee Plan under ‘Access, Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel’, which aligns into the Strategic Priority of ‘City Connectivity’ as set out in the Corporate Plan. Of relevance to highlight is the further synergy to the ongoing refresh of the Belfast Agenda and the priority theme of Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel under the area of City Development.**
- 3.2 Members may also be aware that there are a number of existing Notices of Motion relating to Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel currently open across Council, with regular quarterly reporting to the relevant Committee. Sustrans have noted the recent Notice of Motion on Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and have requested to present to the**

Committee on their experience of designing and implementing these initiatives.

3.3 Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel cuts across a number of different stakeholders, including Council, DfI and other Government departments, Sustrans, Translink, communities, businesses and anchor institutions. This includes the work being taken forward by the Community Planning structures via the Connectivity, Active & Sustainable Travel subgroup as part of the Belfast Agenda refresh and via the Climate & Resilience Board; Council led Physical Programme projects; A Bolder Vision and the strategic and large-scale infrastructure projects being led by public and private sector city partners, including Translink, Belfast Rapid Transit, DfI etc.

3.4 Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel are critical cross cutting levers and span across a number of areas including:

- Policy , including LDP/BMTP etc**
- Strategy, including Bolder Vision**
- Physical Delivery**
- Modal Shift/Behaviour Changing eg Cycle to Work/School etc**
- Climate related.**

There is a need to amplify the intricacies of the ongoing work across Council and with stakeholders around Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel to ensure that there is a complete line of sight and to enable Council to effectively position itself in terms of what we can deliver, who we need to work with and what we need to influence to ensure that the wider associated benefits of connecting people to opportunities and creating a better connected and environmentally sustainable city are realised.

3.5 Following recent discussions between officers and Elected Members regarding various matters associated with active and sustainable travel, and given how it cuts across various Committees and via the Community Planning process, it has been proposed that it may be helpful for Members to convene an All Party Round Table meeting to ensure they can see all this work holistically, which is not always possible via the current structures. It will provide an overview of the various streams of work underway and where they feed into Council's strategic priorities and governance structures.

3.6 There are internal and external plans that aim to improve Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel in the city and the

Belfast Agenda is key to focusing on these priorities and setting out measurable actions that will be delivered by Community Planning partners. As Members are aware the Belfast Agenda is currently going through a refresh and a Sub-Group for the priority area of 'Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel (CAST)' under the City Development Board has been established to co-design a four-year Action Plan The current draft (subject to further engagement) is focused on two strategic intents (and with corresponding draft Action Plans).

- Replacing car journeys with walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport**
- Supporting projects that encourage people to use forms of active and sustainable travel**

- 3.7 The focus of the group is not only to improve connectivity in the city but to also deliver on the many other benefits that are linked to active and sustainable travel such as improving quality of life, health and wellbeing, access to employment, access to education and tackling climate change. The subgroup is co-chaired by Sustrans and Translink and has representation from various city stakeholders including the VCSE Panel. The draft CAST Action Plan along with the draft Action Plans of the other priority areas of the Belfast Agenda are due to go out for public consultation in Spring 2023.**
- 3.8 A Bolder Vision (ABV) is a key lever for delivering Active and Sustainable Travel in the city. ABV is a joint BCC/DfI/DfC initiative that aims to provide a holistic look at the city centre's infrastructure and connectivity with surrounding communities, its streets and places. This Committee has received several reports on the implementation and progression of the A Bolder Vision Strategy that included agreement on the Visioning Principles and Key Moves. The Visioning Principles set out the vision for the city that includes 'prioritising integrated walking, cycling and public transport and ending the dominance of the car,' 'Providing lively, safe and green streets' and 'Removing severance and barriers to movement between the centre of Belfast and the surrounding communities.'**
- 3.9 The strategic direction of the Belfast Agenda and A Bolder Vision sits alongside Council's Physical Programme that oversees the delivery of a number of connectivity projects including Lagan Gateway, Greenways, Belfast Bikes expansion and a range of partnership projects.**

- 3.10 An internal officer Connectivity and Active Travel Group has been established and is seeking to ensure that our policies, projects, interventions, funding opportunities and programming are aligned to not only our internal corporate priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan, Belfast: Our Recovery, LDP and Belfast Agenda but link with various external structures and plans e.g. Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan, Belfast Cycling Network and with key city partners that have clear interdependencies for example the Community Planning Partnership Boards, Innovation & Growth Commission, specific sector groups and NI Executive/Government.
- 3.11 Key to the successful delivery of these priorities is the ability of Council to collaboratively work with external public and private sector partners in relation to strategic opportunities and overcoming challenges. It is important to note that whilst Active and Sustainable Travel is a strategic priority of this Committee and of Council, the powers and responsibility for a significant amount of delivery lie with DfI, including for example, road cycling infrastructure and the delivery of the Department's *Belfast Cycling Network*.
- 3.12 Subject to Members approval, it is proposed to convene an All Party Round Table meeting focused on Connectivity, Active and Sustainable travel, which will provide an opportunity for Members to have a focused informed discussion and to consider ongoing activity, potential opportunities and the work of the Community Planning, CAST Sub Group.
- 3.13 **Financial and Resource Implications**
- No costs associated with this report.
- 3.14 **Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment**
- None associated with this report."

In response to a Member's question, the Director of City Regeneration and Development highlighted that the draft CAST Action Plan, along with the draft Action Plans of the other priority areas of the Belfast Agenda, were due to go out for public consultation in Spring 2023 and would be submitted to the Community Planning Partnership Board where Members would have the opportunity to provide any further feedback.

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee,
Wednesday, 8th February, 2023**

The Committee:

- Noted the contents of the report and the emerging work from the Community Planning: Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel subgroup;
- Agreed to convene an All Party Round Table regarding Connectivity, Active and Sustainable travel in the city; and
- Agreed to receive a presentation from Sustrans at a future meeting of the Committee in relation to their experience of designing and implementing Low Traffic Neighbourhoods.

**Department for Infrastructure – York
Street Interchange Review Presentation**

The Committee was reminded that, in October 2022, the Minister for Infrastructure had published the Placemaking and Active Travel Review report for the York Street Interchange project. It was reported that the Department for Infrastructure and the York Street Interchange (YSI) design team were undertaking engagement and consultation with relevant stakeholders, and as a part of this engagement the YSI team would present the findings of the YSI Placemaking and Active Travel Review at the Special meeting of the Committee on 22nd February. Members had been asked to consider if there were any specific issues which they would like to raise in advance with the Department to be addressed at the Special Committee.

It was highlighted that a copy of the presentation had been received in advance if the Committee (copy available [here](#)).

During discussion, the following questions were put forward to be submitted to the Department for Infrastructure for consideration:

- Are there any financial estimates in relation to the Place Making Review for cycling infrastructure/Belfast Cycle Network; and
- What was the rationale for the dismissal of the YSI alternative design proposal presented by architect, Mr. M. Hackett (Scenario 2).

After discussion, the Committee:

- Noted the contents of the report; and
- Noted the issues raised and that Members would submit any further questions to be compiled and forwarded to the Department for Infrastructure in advance of their presentation to the Committee on 22nd February on the findings of the York Street Interchange Place-Making Review.

Positioning Belfast to Compete

Belfast Bikes Performance Update - Quarter 3

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 To update Members on the performance of the Belfast Bikes scheme in the third quarter (1st October 2022 – 31st December 2022) of year 7 of operation.**

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is requested to:**

- note the update of the Belfast Bikes performance for Year 7 Q3 (Oct-Dec 2022);
- note the update to the notice of motion regarding free access for young people;
- note the progress with regard to phase one and phase two expansion.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Background

The Belfast Bikes scheme was launched in 2015 as part of Belfast City Council's physical investment programme. The Department for Regional Development provided initial capital funding for the scheme as part of their Active Travel Demonstration Projects budget. The scheme launched with a network of 30 docking stations and 300 bikes. The scheme has been operated by NSL continually since inception using bikes and supporting infrastructure from 'Nextbike by TIER'. The scheme currently operates with 428 bikes (including those in reserve for new stands) and 51 docking stations.

3.2 Expansion of the Scheme

At CG&R on 12 May 2021 it was agreed that an additional four Belfast Bikes docking stations would be deployed using DFI Active Travel funding. Installation began in Q1 and current status is as follows:

- Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre was installed on 7 July 2022 and is operational;
- Olympia Leisure Centre was installed on 25 October 2022 and is operational;

- Kennedy Centre installation is currently ongoing and is expected to be operational by the end of January 2023 and is operational
- Waterworks installation has been delayed due to supply chain issues and is expected to be operational by February 2023.

Council officers are currently liaising with the operator and supplier to improve the supply chain issues for future installations.

3.3 At CG&R on 9 June 2021 it was agreed to proceed with an additional 15 docking stations. At SP&R on 18 June 2021 members agreed for £500,000 to be invested in the expansion proposal.

3.4 Works is ongoing for the design and installation of eight stations in Phase 1 (to be installed 2022/23):

- North: Yorkgate and Shore Road
- West: St Mary's College and Shankill Road
- South: Lisburn Road and Malone Road
- East: Castlereagh Road, Upper Newtownards Road.

Seven stations will follow in Phase 2 in the following year (2023/24).

3.5 As previously agreed by the committee, discussion and agreement through Area Working Groups is required to determine exact locations and consider those against the Site Expansion Matrix. These site options and discussions with Area Working Groups commenced in November 2022. The AWGs have agreed the exact locations in South and North; the discussions in East and West are still ongoing.

3.6 Operational Performance

Availability

Following the ongoing challenges sourcing replacement bike parts, the number of bikes on the street have decreased during Q3. The average daily bikes on the street during Q3 was 294.

3.7 An additional 180 bikes have been purchased to facilitate the ongoing docking station expansion, so availability levels are expected to further increase in coming months.

3.8 Membership

There were 76,565 registered Belfast Bike users at the end of Q3.

- In Q3 'Pay as you go' (PAYG) memberships remained the most popular form of membership, accounting for 88% of users.
- Annual memberships accounted for 12% of users. There is an ongoing trend of users switching from annual membership to PAYG.
- Casual memberships have greatly reduced, accounting for 1% of memberships, due to the introduction of PAYG.

3.9 Journeys

There have been 1,326, 035 journeys since the scheme was launched including 33,452 journeys during Q3 Year 7.

Although this is a decrease of 24% from the same period in Year 6 (which was an exceptionally busy year for the scheme), journeys during this period increased by 3% against Q3 average since the scheme commenced.

3.10 Vandalism

Members will be aware that vandalism is an ongoing problem. Upgrades to the forks to help prevent the unauthorised removal of bikes has been successful however, damage is now being caused to the rear wheels while bikes are being forced from docking stations.

3.11 There were 123 instances of vandalism in Q3. Whilst this is lower than previous periods, it is higher than the quarterly average by 36%. Vandalism costs payable by the Council for this period is £11,734. Whilst this figure is lower than the previous quarter, it is significantly higher than the quarterly average (£3,841)

3.12 Members should note that generally the number of vandalism incidents has decreased in recent times, however vandalism costs have increased due to the higher cost of parts associated with a higher quality of bike. Bikes were upgraded to 'SMART' bikes in 2021. For comparison, in the same period in 2017, there were 226 instances of vandalism at a cost of £7,242 i.e. higher incidents but at a lower cost. See Appendix 1 tables 2 and 3 for annual comparison (copy available on the Council's website).

3.13 Members should also note that following the upgrade to 'SMART' bikes, the amount of theft has decreased due to GPS tracking in the bike allowing for recovery. The operator is very proactive at retrieving missing bikes.

3.14 The bikes operator continues to deliver operational improvements and community engagement initiatives with PSNI to help decrease vandalism incidents.

3.15 Subscriptions and Usage Revenue

Income from fees and charges in Q3 was £30,902. This is 22% higher than average for this period. Year to date income from fees and charges is £154,601.

3.16 MARCOMMS

Marketing activity during Q3 included:

- Social Media messaging and video promotion on 'Lock it Dock it'
- Article in Winter City Matters magazine (circulation of 160k homes); on new stations at Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre, Olympia Leisure Centre, The Kennedy Centre and the Waterwork.

Belfast Bikes currently has 5.1k followers on Twitter; 1.7k on Facebook; and 1.1k on Instagram.

3.17 Operator contract

NSL continues to operate the Belfast Bikes scheme, with a contract renewal available until 2024. Council staff are reviewing the scheme and will make future recommendations for the management, operation and potential expansion of the scheme as part of a new procurement package.

3.18 Sponsorship

Sponsorship ended in September 2022 and council officers are currently assessing procurement options for a new sponsor of the scheme. The preferred option is to tender for a 'sponsorship expert' with the required market experience in similar bike schemes, to identify an appropriate sponsor and market value for the Belfast scheme.

3.19 Response to Notice of Motion

Following a Notice of Motion from Councillor O'Hara the Committee agreed on 4th March 2020 to investigate 'as part of the current strategic review of the Belfast Bikes Scheme, consideration be given to granting free access to young people 25 years of age and under to the scheme'.

3.20 Belfast Bikes operator, NSL, added date of birth (D.O.B.) as an essential criteria for users from 13 October 2022. It would be prudent to wait approximately six months to allow the majority of users to upgrade their information before accurate age demographics can be determined.

3.21 However, initial reports indicate 53% of users fall within the '25 and under' age group. Providing free usage to under 25's is likely to have a significant detrimental impact on revenue generated from the bike scheme, which directly contributes to operating costs.

3.22 Update on Covered Cycle Stands city-wide

Whilst Covered Cycle Stands are not part of the Belfast Bikes scheme, both initiatives are aligned to the Bolder Vision with a focus on improvements in the active travel provision and infrastructure across the city. Covered Cycle Stands are part of the Active Travel Enablers project.

2.23 Phase 1

Under the DfI Sustainable and Active Travel elements of the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme, 10 covered cycle stands were funded city-wide. Locations were agreed in previous CGR Committee and the status is as follows:

Gasworks	Installed July 2022
St. George's Market	Stand delivered but still awaiting DfI approval
Grosvenor Community Centre	Installed September 2022
Shankill Leisure Centre	Installed July 2022
Belmont Park	Installed August 2022
Inverary Community Centre	Installed August 2022

Belfast Zoo	Installed August 2022
Waterworks	Installed August 2022
Belvoir Activity Centre	Installed August 2022
Mary Peter's Track	Installed September 2022

3.24 Phase 2

Members received an update on the DfI funding for the Active Travel Enabling Projects in March 2022 that outlined the projects, budget and timeframe for delivery. In terms of the covered cycle stands, officers drew upon the priority areas identified by Sustrans, and these locations were also assessed in terms of the deliverability within the timeframe as well as the key criteria aligned to cycle infrastructure provision.

Following a procurement process, a supplier has been appointed for the next 10 covered cycle stands being delivered in-year.

3.25 Financial and Resource Implications

Finance

There are no specific financial or resource implications contained within this report.

3.26 Equality or Good Relations/ Implications

None.”

During discussion, one Member highlighted the need for an update from the Department for Infrastructure on the Belfast Cycle Network.

After discussion, the Committee:

- Noted the update of the Belfast Bikes performance for Year 7, Quarter 3 (Oct-Dec 2022);
- Noted the update to the notice of motion regarding free access for young people;
- Noted the progress with regard to the phase one and phase two expansion; and

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- Noted that an update on the Belfast Cycle Network would be requested from the Department for Infrastructure for inclusion in its Spring Report Presentation.

St. Patrick's Day 2023 Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on St Patrick’s Day 2023 to include:

- Detail on procurement (design award) and duration
- Outline programming plans

2.0 Recommendations

2.1

- Members are asked to note details of the report specifically the outlined programme.
- Note that a report will be brought to Committee to update Members on the post event evaluation and the proposed creative commissioning process for 2024 and beyond.
- Members are asked to approve the allocation of up to £30,000 from the Extended Cultural Programme agreed by SP&R on 18th February 2022 to support the development and delivery of the described programme by Féile an Phobal during 1st – 17th March.
- Approve a £15,000 contribution in this financial year from existing and approved departmental budgets for the Gradam Ceoil Bursary Scheme in partnership with Duncairn Arts Centre, Red Shoe productions and TG4.
- Approve the financial allocations at 3.6 of £100,000 to Beat Carnival, £50,000 to Feile and Phobal and £80,000 to Duncairn Arts

3.0 Main report

3.1 Background

It was agreed by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in January 2021, that a different approach would be taken to the future development of St Patrick’s Day. Officers designed an open and competitive process to support applications for creative development awards for St Patrick’s Day (SPD) 2022. This opportunity was published in the Council’s cultural

database, promoted on social media and via Council's website as well as through partner organisations and networks.

3.2 Detail on procurement (design award) and duration

Building on the strong foundation of recent years, Council agreed to develop an ambitious approach to St Patrick's Day in the City. This opportunity was designed to allow space for real innovation and experimentation and genuine co-design with the people of the city. Rather than commissioning an external consultant to review the event it was agreed to test a different approach by directly investing in the local sector through Creative Development Awards that could then be progressed to a next stage commission for March 2022. As a result of this process, four organisations were awarded funding in 2022: Duncairn, Beat Carnival, Maywe and Feile.

3.3 2023 Approach

At September 2022 Committee, it was agreed that organisations who had the opportunity to pilot ideas in March 2022 with 'testing' in real time would be taken forward to full delivery in 2023. Officers believed that as per 2022, all four pilots merited support in 2023. Retrospective approval was granted for the 2022 procurement process, which did not include a 'Contest Notice' or an 'Award Notice' as per the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

- 3.4** It was further agreed that a new Design Contest would be run in a timely manner for any required service contracts to support the delivery of St Patrick's Day in 2024 and beyond. This would be conducted with the support of CPS to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations.

- 3.5** As in 2022, it was agreed that Council would have an overarching curatorial, programming, production and co-ordination role to produce a festival of events over multiple days and also lead on the marketing of the event.

- 3.6** At November 2022 Committee, Members were reminded that £240,000 was approved previously by Committee in April 2022 for the St Patrick's Day 2023 event. Further approval was granted to allocate an additional £90,000 from existing Council and department budgets. This brought the overall budget allocation to £330,000. It is proposed that these monies are allocated to,

- **£100,000 Beat Carnival To deliver a commission for the St Patricks Day parade 2023. Service contract to be awarded to Beat using the previous run Design Contest (competitive process).**
- **£50,000 To deliver a music programme city wide for the St Patricks Day celebrations 2023. Service contract to be awarded to Feile using the previous run Design Contest (competitive process) approved at Committee in September 2022.**
- **£80,000 To deliver a commission for the music element of St Patricks Eve concert 2023. Service contract to be awarded to Duncairn using the previous run Design Contest (competitive process).**

3.7 Plans for St Patrick’s Day 2023:

Council Officials are currently engaged on finalising event proposals, refining both themes and event concepts for 2023.

3.8 16th March 2023

The concert on the 16th evening at Custom House Square will again take place as per 2022, with Duncairn leading the creative programming and with Council facilitating production, operational and logistical arrangements. This will be a free, but ticketed event.

3.9 17th March 2023

The Events Team have been guided by health and safety advice over recent months with respect to the 2022 event and as a consequence have engaged with multi-agencies to elongate the parade route by approximately one third. This decision is in large part due to crowd density experienced around the route in 2022, minimising ‘pinch points’ and to assist in improving the visitor experience from a visibility perspective.

3.10 The proposed route for the 2023 parade is as follows: City Hall, Chichester Street, Victoria Street, High Street, Donegall Place and return to City Hall for de - rig. The parade will also incorporate the role of ‘punk’ music and the importance of this to Belfast, re - creating parts of the ‘Good Vibrations’ film and stage show which will tour America later in 2023.

3.11 St George’s Market will be fully operational on St Patrick’s Day. Ards CCE (a key partner in the bid for Fleadh Cheoil) are programming a number of musical and dance performances to take place within the market to enhance the visitor

experience and expand the city - wide offering on St Patrick's Day.

- 3.12 On 17th March within 2RA, Maywe will offer four oral history sessions with community groups, story oral recording and a showcase of stories. Additionally on March 18th, Maywe in conjunction with Ards CCE will host Celtic Storm, a globally acclaimed group of Irish traditional musicians and dancers, which has performed to audiences all over the world. The performance will be lead by a group from Ards CCÉ which includes All Ireland Champion musicians, vocalists and dancers.
- 3.13 Féile will run a series of Irish Traditional Sessions between the 10th – 17th March 2023. This will include 40+ venues across the city and city centre (venues will be confirmed by mid-February) with 30+ Irish traditional musicians performing. There will also be a showcase of Irish traditional music in the city centre on St Patrick's Day during the parade, as well as partnership performances with Duncairn Arts in Custom House Square.

3.14 Gradam Ceoil Bursary Scheme

At the City Growth and Regeneration Committee on Wednesday 8th September 2021, members agreed to support the Gradam Ceoil bursary scheme of a five-year period (2021 – 25) and contribute £15,000 each year.

The Gradam Ceoil Bursary Scheme is a series of three annual awards awarded to young (18–25-year-old) traditional musicians in Belfast, in partnership with Duncairn Arts Centre, Red Shoe productions and TG4.

Each award is valued at £3,000 each and the programme aims are:

- To provide support, training and mentoring
- To support creativity and cultural expression
- Build capacity in online/broadcasting presentation skills (in acoustics and visuals)
- Develop capacity and profile for the traditional music sector in Belfast.

After attracting a high number of quality applications, the 2021/22 scheme selected three young Belfast traditional musicians to award. Highlights from the 2022 awards included the recipients performing at the Gradam Ceoil awards in Dublin for the Irish President, Michael D. Higgins, as well as

an invite to the Lord Mayor's parlour for a reception to celebrate.

It is proposed to continue this important partnership with a £15,000 contribution in this financial year.

3.15 Language as Culture

Members will recall that support up to £30,000 was allocated to Language as Culture within the Extended Cultural Programme that was approved by SP&R on the 18th February 2022, focused on initiatives exploring the diversity of language in our city through cultural activity. Officials from the Culture and Tourism team are currently engaged on the development of a programme through a partnership with Féile an Phobail to celebrate language and develop a weeklong series of events in March 2023 as part of Seachtain na Gaeilge (Irish Language Week).

Seachtain na Gaeilge is an international Irish language festival and one of the biggest celebrations of language and culture that takes place each year in Ireland and in many other countries.

The week coincides with the dates of the Spring Festival, Féile an Earraigh, which is run by Féile an Phobail. To coincide and build on this synergy, Féile an Phobail are aiming to programme events in key city centre spaces that attract footfall and will be visible to the general public. Sites under consideration include at Custom House Square, Writers Square, and Bank Square. Members are asked to approve the allocation of up to £30,000 to support this programme.

3.16 Marketing

From January 2022, the Events Team have been engaging with our internal colleagues in Marketing and Visit Belfast on the development and delivery of an Integrated PR and Marketing Plan for St Patrick's Day.

3.17 Future Planning for City Events (including SPD):

Planning is already underway by the Tourism. Events and Culture Teams to uplift and future proof SPD ahead of 2024. This will also ensure that the necessary benchmarking and research delivery structures, stakeholder engagement and early procurement are confirmed at an early stage ahead of 2024.

**3.18 Equality and Good Relations Implications/
Rural Needs Assessment**

All events will take equality and good relations implications into account and will be reflected in all agreements issued to partner organisations.

3.19 Financial and Resource Implications

There are no new financial implications. The activities outlined in this report will be resourced from the 2022/23 budget for the Culture and Tourism section of the Economic Development division of the Place and Economy Departmental budget.”

During discussion, the Director of Economic Development explained further the approach to this year's celebrations and the partnership between the Culture and Tourism team and Féile an Phobal to develop and deliver the described programme of events.

He highlighted that a report would be submitted to a future meeting to provide an update on the post event evaluation and the proposed creative commissioning process for 2024 and beyond, and further information would be provided to Members in relation to the co-design process and delivery of the described programme for 2023, together with details of community and outreach events.

The Committee:

- Noted the details of the report, specifically the outlined programme;
- Noted that a report would be submitted to a future Committee to update Members on the post event evaluation and the proposed creative commissioning process for 2024 and beyond;
- Approved the allocation of up to £30,000 from the Extended Cultural Programme agreed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 18th February, 2022 to support the development and delivery of the described programme by Féile an Phobal during 1st – 17th March;
- Approved a £15,000 contribution in this financial year from existing and approved departmental budgets for the Gradam Ceoil Bursary Scheme in partnership with Duncairn Arts Centre, Red Shoe productions and TG4;
- Approved the financial allocations of £100,000 to Beat Carnival, £50,000 to Feile and Phobal and £80,000 to Duncairn Arts as outlined in 3.6 of the report; and
- Noted that further information would be provided to Members in relation to the co-design process and delivery of the described programme for 2023, together with details of community and outreach events.

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Belfast Zoo – Supported Charities amendment

The Committee was reminded that, under the terms of the zoo licence issued by NIEA, Belfast Zoo was required to demonstrate that it supported in situ conservation projects. The Parks and Leisure Committee, in January 2015, had approved the support of several local, national and international conservation organisations. These projects would be financially supported by Belfast Zoo by distribution of donations received from visitors. The zoo received donations from visitors who could either choose to add a set donation amount to their admission ticket, or provide donations of any amount via website, cheque, over the phone or in-person at the zoo.

The conservation projects previously approved included:

<i>Project</i>	<i>Species</i>	<i>Country/region</i>	<i>Associated info</i>
Tenkile Conservation Alliance	Tree kangaroo	Southeast Asia	Via EEP
The Lemur Conservation Association (AEECL)	Lemurs	Madagascar/Africa	AEECL
Wildlife Conservation Society Nigeria	Gorillas	Madagascar/Africa	Cross River Gorilla Project
Bird Watch Ireland barn owl project	Barn owls	Northern Ireland	UWT research and nest box project
Lion tamarins of Brazil Fund	Lion tamarins	South America	Via Bengt Holst, EAZA
Sifaka Conservation Trust	Sifaka	Madagascar/Africa	
Guanxi François langur conservation action plan	Francois langur	Southeast Asia	Via EEP/IUCN project
Asian nature Conservation Foundation	Asian elephant	Southeast Asia	Kaziranga National Park
Visayan warty pig Conservation Programme run by Philippines Biodiversity Conservation Foundation	Visayan warty pig	Southeast Asia	Via EEP, Zoological Society for the Conservation of Species and Populations (ZGAP)
The Red Panda Network	Red panda network	China	Via EEP
Moloch gibbon conservation	Moloch gibbon	Southeast Asia	Via EEP / The Aspinall Foundation
White tailed sea eagles	White tailed sea eagle	Northern Ireland	

It was reported that three of the previously selected conservation programmes could no longer be supported:

- ***Francois' langurs – the Fauna and Flora International Species Conservation Programme*** no longer oversees conservation efforts for Francois' langurs;
- ***White-tailed sea eagle program*** was originally a short-term project run by the Golden Eagle project which is no longer in existence;

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee,
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- ***Asian Elephant - The Asian Nature Conservation Foundation (ANCF)***, a not-for-profit charitable trust, is required by Indian law to obtain prior permission from the Government of India to receive funds from foreign sources on a case-by-case basis or through a prescribed license. They do not have the required license therefore are unable to receive donated funds.

However, as, the zoo was currently in the process of building a new lion habitat which was scheduled to open for Easter 2023, to highlight and complement this major new development, the zoo would like to support the Panthera.org conservation programme. It was devoted exclusively to the conservation of the world's 40 species of wild cats, including lions, and the vast ecosystems they inhabit.

The Director of Economic Development highlighted that the supported projects would be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure they remain suitable for support and meet the required criteria.

The Committee:

- Noted that three conservation projects could no longer be supported; and
- Approved a new project to be supported, namely, the Panthera.org conservation programme.

Additional Item

Cultural Mapping for Culture, Arts and Heritage

In agreement with the Chairperson, Alderman Dorrian requested an update on when the Phase One report on Cultural Mapping would be submitted to the Committee for reconsideration.

The Committee noted that the methodology of the Phase One report on Cultural Mapping was being considered further and an updated report would be submitted to the Committee in due course.

Chairperson

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 22nd February, 2023

SPECIAL HYBRID MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Murphy (Chairperson);
Alderman Dorrian;
Councillors Beattie, Bunting, Duffy, Ferguson,
Hanvey, Heading, Hussey, T. Kelly, Lyons,
Maskey, McCabe, McLaughlin, Murray,
Nelson, O'Hara and Spratt.

Also present: Councillors Flynn and McCullough.

In attendance: Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration
and Development;
Ms. N. Largey, Interim City Solicitor;
Mr. S. Dolan, Senior Development Manager; and
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors McDonough-Brown and Whyte.

Declarations of Interest

In relation to item 3.a) Rent Controls, Councillor Hanvey declared an interest in that he owned an Airbnb property in Donegal and left the meeting while the item was being considered.

Councillor McCabe also declared an interest in relation to item 3.a) Rent Controls, in that her husband owned a rental property and left the meeting while the item was being considered.

Presentations

York Street Interchange (YSI) Placemaking and Active Travel Review (PATR)

The Chairperson introduced Mr. P. King, Project Sponsor, and Mr. B. Hassard, Project Manager, representing the Department for Infrastructure (DfI), and Mr. J. McBride, Project Manager, Mr. P. Clarke, UK and Ireland Masterplanning Lead, and Mr. A. Patterson, Landscape Architect, representing AECOM, to the Committee and they were admitted to the meeting.

The representatives reminded the Committee that AECOM had been commissioned to carry out a Placemaking and Active Travel Review (PATR) of the York Street Interchange (YSI) scheme in 2021 and the purpose of the study was to undertake

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further analysis around placemaking to identify opportunities to deliver benefits for communities, particularly in terms of connectivity and the wider living places agenda and to consider how DfI could maximise the social, economic and environmental benefits of the project and its contribution to the future development of Belfast.

Mr. Clarke advised that this had included an international best practice review, connectivity analysis and stakeholder engagement which had resulted in eleven placemaking guiding themes and thirty-one desired outcomes for the area.

Mr. McBride described the proposals for the new cycle infrastructure across the city and summarised the audit outcomes.

Mr. Clarke and Mr. Patterson informed the Committee of the various placemaking scenarios which had been considered which included mapping and illustrative sketches of the options, together with potential active travel, urban greening and streetscape improvements.

It was reported that the five scenarios had been evaluated against the 11 Guiding Principles, and Mr. Clarke provided an overview of the overall conclusions and recommendations of the refinement and development of three of the scenarios. He pointed out that, as part of the engagement strategy, it was recommended that consideration was given to the potential for a programme of stakeholder consultation, community involvement and co-design that could unlock further local insights, support buy-in and create long term social value.

Mr. Clarke highlighted that, following publication of the report, refinement of placemaking and active travel scenarios had been undertaken, such as the alignment with A Bolder Vision for Belfast and an evaluation of selected place making interventions.

Mr. McBride described the realignment options for the development of the M2 and provided illustrations of the Corporation Street studies.

He explained the potential delivery of the active travel network improvements, together with the next steps in the process. This included: Packaging and Phasing of Delivery; Engagement with Delivery Partners around delivery and long-term maintenance; Cost analysis of the interventions and wider economic benefits assessment; and Further engagement with stakeholders on selected topics. He pointed out that the preferred strategies would be developed for recommendations to the future Department for Infrastructure Minister.

During discussion, the representatives answered a range of questions in relation to the review of the transport objectives, additional costs incurred from the initial estimates since 2015, the delivery of the cycle network, the redevelopment of Cityside, the need to increase the daytime economy and the importance of the communities, the alignment to the bolder vision and traffic management issues.

In relation to the impact of the development on the Stella Maris Hostel situated in the area, Mr. McBride advised that there were no plans to demolish the building in the current plans.

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During further discussion, regarding the potential for social housing in the scheme, Mr. Clarke advised that initial meetings had taken place with the Housing Executive but decisions on the type of housing was yet to be confirmed.

The representatives advised that they would provide further details in relation to releasing the findings of the Review of the Strategic Transport Objectives and the timeline for the implementation of cycle lanes on the Limestone Road.

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

Proposal

Moved by Councillor O'Hara,
Seconded by Councillor Ferguson,

Resolved - The Committee agrees to write to the Department for Infrastructure and ask them to review the Strategic Transport Objectives of the York Street Interchange, in light of these objectives being set in 2008 and prior to the declaration of a Climate Emergency by this Council, the NI Assembly and the passage of the Climate Act. The Committee also agrees to request that the Department share the Assurance Review of the York Street Interchange which was provided to the Minister in March 2021.

Accordingly, the Committee:

- Noted the information which had been provided and that, where relevant, DfI would provide further information on the issues raised;
- Agreed to write to the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) to request that it reviewed the Strategic Transport Objectives of the York Street Interchange, in light of the objectives being set in 2008 and prior to the declaration of a Climate Emergency by the Council and the NI Assembly, and the passage of the Climate Act; and
- Requested that DfI share the Assurance Review of the York Street Interchange which was provided to the Minister in March 2021.

**Strategic Planning and Performance
Group – GP Services**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting in December, it had been agreed that representatives of the Strategic Planning and Performance Group be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee to present on how they plan to maintain GP services in Belfast, in particular details of future provision based on the Belfast Agenda population growth ambitions, especially in the City Centre where there are limited GP services.

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The Chairperson welcomed representatives of the Strategic Planning and Performance Group to the meeting: Mrs L. McIlroy, Head of Business Support (Belfast) and Dr G. Meenan, Medical Adviser (Belfast).

Mrs. McIlroy explained that the Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) (formerly Health and Social Care Board – HSCB) was part of the Department of Health (DoH) and was accountable to the Minister for Health. It was responsible for improving and overseeing the delivery of effective, high quality, safe health and social care services within available resources. She advised that the Primary Care Directorate managed and sought to develop the services that people received from:

- General Practitioners (GPs);
- Dentists;
- Community Pharmacists; and
- Opticians.

She described the General Medical Services (GMS) Contract and highlighted that the Belfast Local Government District (LGD) had the largest number of GP Practices in Northern Ireland (77 GP Practices) with Belfast LGD having the highest number of GPs per 100,000 registered patients (77.5), more than one third higher than the number in Mid-Ulster LDG (57.2) which has the lowest, with the average across NI being (70.2).

She provided an overview of GP services and the location spread across Belfast, together with Practice Changes since 2020.

She advised that the current challenges in Primary Care included: Access to Services; Workforce Planning and Development; Multi-Disciplinary Teams; Winter Pressure Support; Recruit, Attract, Retainment; and Support Practices in Crisis.

She pointed out that, in moving forward, the Primary Care would need to continue to transform to meet growing patient demand and highlighted that technology and new ways of working would continue to play an important role, alongside existing arrangements. She advised that the increase in demand for Primary Care services could not be met solely by increasing the number of GPs and Agencies must work in partnership to improve social, economic and environmental determinants of health. She advised that SSPG would need to continue to work to evolve the model of telephone-first consultation to provide more flexibility to patients and prioritise urgent access where necessary.

During Members questions, the representatives explained further the volume of GPs across the city and confirmed that 121 GPs had been trained in the last year. They described the work of the recovery team and the practice referral process.

In answer to a Member's question on the data of full-time equivalent GPs across the city, Mrs McIlroy advised that she would investigate if this data was available and report back to the Committee in due course.

In relation to GP indemnity costs in Northern Ireland, Dr. Meenan reported that there was disparity in Northern Ireland, where GPs were the only GPs in the UK who paid their own indemnity costs, which increased the more they worked.

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During further discussion, Dr. Meenan explained the 'telephone first' approach in operation in GP Practices which resulted in a mix of face to face and telephone consultations. He pointed out that there were a range of other opportunities where patients were treated, such as prescription requests, treatment rooms and chronic disease management reviews. One Member questioned whether this approach would disproportionately impact certain sectors of society.

Due to time constraints, the representatives advised that they would welcome any further questions the Committee might have.

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

The Committee:

- Noted the information which had been provided and that, where relevant, SPPG would provide further information on the issues raised.
- Agreed to write to the Permanent Secretary to request an update on the work being undertaken to resolve GP indemnity in Northern Ireland.

Issues Raised in Advance by Members

Rent Controls (Councillor Beattie to raise)

The City Solicitor advised that, at the Standards and Business Committee on 21st February, the Notice of Motion on *Increase in Average Rent Costs*, which had been proposed by Councillor Ferguson and seconded by Councillor Michael Collins, had been considered with the options to either adopt the motion, refer it for debate at the Council meeting (with or without restrictions) or reject the motion. As the motion had been rejected and was unable to be amended at the Committee, a procedural query had been raised by Councillor Beattie questioning why the Motion could not have been referred to a committee for discussion.

The City Solicitor advised that, after further review of the process, the Motion could have been referred to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, as it was an economic policy that impacted housing in the city, therefore, it was a competent matter for the Committee to consider.

She highlighted that *Issues Raised in Advance by Members* were not ordinarily permitted at a Special Meeting of the Committee. However, due to the procedural error, she was using her discretion, as City Solicitor, in permitting the item to be considered as part of the agenda.

In relation to a query regarding the potential need for both landlords and renters to declare an interest in the item, the City Solicitor advised that she would provide further clarity on the issue before the Council Meeting in March.

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Proposal

Moved by Councillor Beattie,
Seconded by Councillor Duffy,

The Committee notes the cost of privately renting a home in Belfast has risen significantly in recent years, making it increasingly unaffordable for many people, particularly those on low incomes and young families. The Committee: Wants to see costs for renters reduced; Acknowledges that legislation is required to protect renters from unfair rents, improve housing standards and end unfair letting fees; Recognises the introduction of rent controls is one way to help renters. Furthermore, the Executive needs to be back up and running and a Minister in place to progress this.

The Committee agrees to:

- Write to the Department for Communities Permanent Secretary and the Head of the Civil Service to engage with the Council and other key stakeholders concerning rent controls in Belfast; and
- Support local community organisations and advocacy groups in their efforts to campaign for the introduction of rent controls and to ensure that the voices of renters and those affected by the housing affordability crisis were heard.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Ferguson,
Seconded by Councillor O'Hara,

The Committee agrees to include the following addition in the aforementioned letter to the Department for Communities Permanent Secretary and the Head of the Civil Service: to request the powers to control rents locally be vested to the Council to protect renters in the cost-of-living crisis.

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

The original proposal standing in the name of Councillor Beattie and seconded by Councillor Duffy was put to the meeting and agreed.

Accordingly, the Committee noted the contents of the proposal and agreed to:

- Write to the Department for Communities Permanent Secretary and the Head of the Civil Service to engage with the Council and other key stakeholders concerning rent controls in Belfast; and

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- Support local community organisations and advocacy groups in their efforts to campaign for the introduction of rent controls and to ensure that the voices of renters and those affected by the housing affordability crisis were heard.

Chairperson

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Licensing Committee

Wednesday, 15th February, 2023

MEETING OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM AND
REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Matt Collins (Chairperson); and
Councillors Bradley, Bunting, Canavan, Doran, Gormley,
Howard, Hutchinson M. Kelly, T. Kelly, Magee, McAteer,
McCann, McCullough, McKeown, Nelson and Smyth.

In attendance: Ms. N. Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and
Civic Services;
Mr. S. Hewitt, Building Control Manager;
Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control
Ms. V. Donnelly, City Protection Manager;
Mr. K. Bloomfield, HMO Unit Manager;
Ms. L. Hillis, Principal Building Control Surveyor;
Mr. J. Cunningham, Senior Licensing Officer;
Mr. C. McLaughlin, Solicitor (Regulatory And Planning)
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and
Ms. V. Smyth, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Alderman Sandford.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 14th December were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st February, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Delegated Matters

THE COMMITTEE DEALT WITH THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN PURSUANCE OF THE POWERS DELEGATED TO IT UNDER STANDING ORDER 37(d)

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licences Issued Under Delegated Authority

The Committee noted a list of licences for Houses in Multiple Occupation which had, since its last meeting, been issued under the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

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**Application for a New Licence to Operate a
House of Multiple Occupation for Apartment 2,
14 Fitzroy Avenue, Belfast, BT7 1HW**

The HMO Unit Manager informed the Committee that an application had been received for a new Licence to operate a House of Multiple Occupation (HMO) for 14 Fitzroy Avenue. He advised that the Applicant was Mr. A. Dodds and the Managing Agent was Ballygowan Limited trading as Belvoir South Belfast.

He reported that on the 31st January 2023, pursuant to Paragraph 9 of Schedule 2 of the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 ("the 2016 Act"), officers issued a Notice of Proposed Decision. The Notice of Proposed Decision stated that the Council proposed to refuse the licence on the grounds of overprovision. A statement of reasons for the proposal was included in the Notice of Proposed Decision. If the application was refused, the Applicants had a right of appeal to the County Court. An appeal must be lodged within 28 days of formal notification of the Council's decision.

The HMO Unit Manager provided the Members with background to the property which had the benefit of an HMO licence through the Northern Ireland Housing Executive in the name of the existing owner but which had expired on 14th August 2019. Further to this, on the 12th April 2019 a reminder letter was sent to Mr. Dodds informing him of the need to apply to renew the licence.

An inspection of the property took place on the 5th July 2019 in anticipation of an application being submitted, during which the Managing Agent was in attendance, however, the Council did not receive an application to renew the licence.

On 12th October 2022 an application for a Temporary Exemption Notice "TEN" was received and subsequently approved on the 19th October 2022, an extension to the TEN was approved on the 17th January 2023 which would expire on the 17th April 2023. No further extension to the TEN were permitted under the 2016 Act.

On the 27th September 2022 an HMO licence application was received from the owner of the accommodation.

The HMO Unit Manager explained that, as this was a new application, the HMO Unit had consulted with the Council's Planning Service which confirmed that on the 20th August 2007 permission was granted for "Change of use from existing HMO to 2 no. self-contained flats (1 no. HMO) and alterations" with the planning reference Z/2006/2887/F.

Further to this, The HMO Unit Manager added that for the purpose of determining whether or not the granting of a licence would result in an overprovision of HMOs in the locality of the accommodation and, in order to ensure consistency was both a planning and licensing authority, the locality was defined as being HMO Policy Area "HMO 2/22 Botanic, Holylands and Rugby" as defined in the document "Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) Subject Plan for Belfast City Council Area 2015. He reported that Legal Services had advised that there was a clear requirement in section 8 of the 2016

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Act upon the Council to be satisfied that the granting of a licence would not result in overprovision.

The HMO Unit Manager advised that on the date of the assessment, 4th January 2023, there was a total of 1,112 licensed HMOs in HMO policy area "HMO 2/22 Botanic, Holylands, Rugby". This equated to 46.16% of the total dwelling units of 2409 within the policy area which in turn exceeded the 30% development limit as set out at Policy HMO 1. The 1,112 licensed HMOs had a capacity of 4951 persons.

On 25th January 2023 out of 39 premises available for rent within the BT7 area on the website PropertyNews.com there was 9 licensed HMOs which, from the information presented on the website, represented 41 bed spaces. The availability of the HMO accommodation ranged from immediately to August 2023. Anecdotal evidence from previous conversations with HMO managing agents suggested that there was currently a lack of HMO accommodation available in this locality.

He reported that, on 7th December 2022, the Ulster University Director of Campus Life told members of the Council's City Growth and Regeneration Committee that there was an "increase in competition for HMO's particularly from the NIHE, Immigration Services and statutory agencies and there were increasing accommodation issues across the housing sector which required a holistic view and should include the consideration of international student families and graduates looking for professional accommodation."

However, the QUB Director of Student Plus had confirmed to Members that the current trend indicated a significant move of students away from areas such as the Holylands, which had seen a fall in student numbers by 35 percent to purpose-built student accommodation blocks. She had told members that there were 7,000 purpose built managed student accommodation (PBMSA) rooms in the city – the majority built since 2018 and approximately 5,000 in the city centre.

He further reported that, in November 2022, monitoring information produced by the Council's Planning Services for PBMSA indicated that 2154 bedspaces were currently under construction with 646 bedspaces becoming operational in September 2023. With the continued expansion of the PBMSA sector and students transitioning from private rentals in the HMO 2/22 Botanic, Holylands, Rugby policy area to PBMSAs, it was too early to tell whether the increased competition from non-students for HMOs was a temporary problem (which could be managed by the contraction in students residing in existing HMO accommodation within the locality) or evidence of an emerging long-term supply issue.

The HMO Unit Manager added that, in assessing the number and capacity of licenced HMOs as well as the need for HMO accommodation in the locality, officers could not be satisfied that the granting of the HMO licence would not result in overprovision of HMO accommodation in the locality of the accommodation for the purpose of section 8(2)(d) of the 2016 Act.

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The Applicant and Managing Agent had confirmed that they had not been convicted of any relevant offences, and that there had been no relevant enforcement action taken with regard to day or night-time noise, rubbish accumulation, litter or waste.

The HMO Unit Manager referred to Representations on behalf of the Applicant dated 3rd February 2023 and the officer's response to representations made on 3rd February 2023. He provided details and timelines which were contained within the documentation and communications set out in the appendices. Subsequent representations had been submitted from both the Applicant and Managing Agent which had been circulated by Democratic Services to the Members in advance of the Committee meeting. He reported an issue whereby the Applicant had claimed that, in relation to the new application, an officer from HMO Services had told Mr. Dodds via email that the file had been completed on 26th October 2022. The HMO Unit Manager had consulted with the officer and checked the records and stated that there was no evidence that this communication had been sent. The Managing Agent had been asked to supply a copy of the correspondence but it had not been forthcoming. He explained the importance of this because if the file had been completed by 26th October then the Council would have had 3 months to make a determination of the application and as that time had lapsed a deemed licence would have automatically been issued.

The Chairperson welcomed the Applicant, Mr. A. Dodds and the Managing Agent, Mr. S. Hewlett to the meeting.

Mr. Dodds provided the Members with details of the property and described it as a quality property which was lightly occupied for the footprint of the building. He referred to the email that could not be traced and advised that that he had been working on the premise that the property was an HMO. He informed the Committee that he had religiously kept up to date with the requirements of HMO legislation. He added that the situation was galling as he had invested over £100,000 into the property. Mr. Dodds informed the Committee that he had received a grant for the property and the decision to refuse the licence would be counterintuitive. He concluded that he hoped common sense would prevail.

Mr S. Hewlett added that the lack of licence prevailed under the banner of Steve Hewlett Associates. He referred to a 'doorstep' conversation with a Council Technical Officer in 2019. He steadfastly repeated that the officer said that 'the licence would not be a problem' and stated that this could have been a misunderstanding or lack of HMO training during the transition period from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Belfast City Council. He also referred to a conversation which he claimed had taken place between an HMO Technical Officer and a member of Mr. Dodds' staff on 9th November 2022 whereby the officer apparently stated that he could see that the application had been uploaded on 20th to 24th October and didn't know why he was not notified. On that basis Mr. Hewlett felt that the 3-month period of grace had expired when the Council issued the Statement of Refusal at the end of January. He requested to adjourn the decision to give him time to review the paperwork and launch a formal appeal.

The Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services clarified the legal process in relation to the request to defer the decision. She reminded the Members of

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their obligations as a quasi-judicial Committee in that they would have to engage with the request to defer and it was a matter for the Committee to decide how to engage.

A Member referred to the time given to the Applicant and Managing Agent to provide the information requested. The HMO Unit Manager confirmed that the Notice of Proposed Decision had been issued on 31st January 2023 and engagement had taken place with Mr. Dodds and Mr. Hewlett through correspondence. Another Member also questioned the 3 years which had lapsed since the potential administration error.

The Committee agreed to refuse the application on the basis that granting the licence would result in overprovision.

Applications approved under Delegated Authority

The Committee noted a list of applications for licences which had, since its last meeting, been approved under the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

**Application for the Grant of a 14-Day Occasional
Outdoor Entertainments Licence for Drumglass Park**

The Building Control Manager submitted for the Committee's consideration the following report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

**1.1 To consider an application for the grant of a 14-day Occasional
Outdoor Entertainments Licence in respect of Drumglass Park.**

<u>Area and Location</u>	<u>Ref. No.</u>	<u>Applicant</u>
Drumglass Park Lisburn Road Belfast, BT9 6JF	WK/2022/01411	Mr David Sales City and Neighbourhood Services Department Belfast City Council

1.2 A location map is attached as Appendix 1.

2.0 Recommendations

**2.1 Taking into account the information presented and any
representations received Members are required to consider
the application and to:**

- a) Approve the application for the grant of the 14-Day
Occasional Outdoor Entertainments Licence, or
- b) Approve the application for the grant with special
conditions, or
- c) Refuse the application for the grant of the 14-Day
Occasional Outdoor Entertainments Licence.

- 2.2 If an 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. In the case that the applicant subsequently decides to appeal, entertainment may not be provided until any such appeal is determined.

3.0 **Main report**

Key Issues

- 3.1 Drumglass Park is owned by Belfast City Council and was previously licensed to provide outdoor entertainment until the 7 Day Annual Licence expired on 31 July 2015.
- 3.2 Belfast City Council currently holds a 14-Day Occasional Indoor Entertainments Licence for a marquee in respect of Drumglass Park.

Application and representations

- 3.3 As for all licences associated with Council parks the applicant is the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services.
- 3.4 The standard days and hours for an Outdoor Entertainments Licence are:
- Monday to Sunday: 11.30am to 11.00pm.
- 3.5 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.

Representations

- 3.6 Public notice of the application has been placed and no written representation has been lodged as a result of the advertisement.

PSNI

- 3.7 The Police Service of Northern Ireland have been consulted and has confirmed that they have no objection to the application.
- 3.8 A copy of their correspondence is attached at Appendix 2.

NIFRS

- 3.9 The Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service have been consulted in relation to the application and has confirmed that they have no objection to the application.

Health, safety and welfare

- 3.10 Officers from the Service will engage with the applicant and event organisers in the lead up to events to ensure all documentation and technical information is in place.
- 3.11 Additionally, officers will inspect the site during the build of the event space and following its completion to ensure they are satisfied all safety and management procedures are in place.

Noise

- 3.12 The applicant will be required to provide a Noise Management Plan for events which will be provided to the Environmental Protection Unit (EPU) for evaluation. Council Officers work with the promoter in order to assess the noise that may be generated from the event and to minimise the potential for noise disturbance.
- 3.13 Members will also recognise that noise generated by outdoor concerts is likely to lead to some level of disturbance for local residents. Even if guideline levels are met there is no guarantee that complaints will not be received. Conversely, if a recommended level is exceeded this may not necessarily lead to complaints as people may be prepared to tolerate the event because it will only last for a limited period of time.

Applicant

- 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.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.15 None.

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

- 3.16 There are no issues associated with this report.”

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The Committee approved the application for the grant of the 14-Day Occasional Outdoor Entertainments Licence.

**Application for the Grant of a 7-Day Annual
Outdoor Entertainments Licence for Páirc
Nua Chollann, Stewartstown Road**

The Building Control Manager submitted for the Committee's consideration the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 To consider an application for the grant of a 7-day annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence in respect of Páirc Nua Chollann, Stewartstown Road.**

<u>Area and Location</u>	<u>Ref. No.</u>	<u>Applicant</u>
Páirc Nua Chollann, Stewartstown Road Belfast, BT17	WK/202002613	Mr David Sales City and Neighbourhood Services Department Belfast City Council

- 1.2 A location map is attached as Appendix 1.**

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Taking into account the information presented and any representations received Members are required to consider the application and to:**

- a) Approve the application for the grant of the 7-Day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence, or**
- b) Approve the application for the grant with special conditions, or**
- c) Refuse the application for the grant of the 7-Day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence.**

- 2.2 If an 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. In the case that the applicant subsequently decides to appeal, entertainment may not be provided until any such appeal is determined.**

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

- 3.1 Páirc Nua Chollann is a newly developed community event space located on Stewartstown Road which will be operated**

by Belfast City Council. The community event space includes an outdoor gym, an education zone, a cycle 'pump track' and walking and cycling routes.

- 3.2 The application for the grant of an Entertainments Licence at the venue is to support community events which are to be hosted in park.

- 3.3 A site plan for Páirc Nua Chollann is attached as Appendix 2.

Application and representations

- 3.4 As for all licences associated with Council parks the applicant is the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services.

- 3.5 The standard days and hours for an Outdoor Entertainments Licence are:

- Monday to Sunday: 11.30am to 11.00pm.

- 3.6 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.

Representations

- 3.7 Public notice of the application has been placed and no written representation has been lodged as a result of the advertisement.

PSNI

- 3.8 The Police Service of Northern Ireland have been consulted and has confirmed that they have no objection to the application.

- 3.9 A copy of their correspondence is attached at Appendix 3.

NIFRS

- 3.10 The Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service have been consulted in relation to the application and has confirmed that they have no objection to the application.

Health, safety and welfare

- 3.11 Officers from the Service will engage with the applicant and event organisers in the lead up to future events to ensure all documentation and technical information is in place.
- 3.12 Additionally, officers will inspect the site during the build of the event space and following its completion to ensure they are satisfied all safety and management procedures are in place.

Noise

- 3.13 All event organisers seeking to host musical entertainment at the event space will be required to provide a Noise Management Plan which will be provided to the Environmental Protection Unit (EPU) for evaluation. Council Officers work with the promoter in order to assess the noise that may be generated from the event and to minimise the potential for noise disturbance.
- 3.14 Members should also recognise that noise generated by outdoor concerts is likely to lead to some level of disturbance for local residents. Even if guideline levels are met there is no guarantee that complaints will not be received. Conversely, if a recommended level is exceeded this may not necessarily lead to complaints as people may be prepared to tolerate the event because it will only last for a limited period of time.

Applicant

- 3.15 The applicant, and/or their representatives, will be available at your meeting to answer any queries you may have in relation to the application.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.16 None.

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

- 3.17 There are no issues associated with this report.”

The Committee approved the application for the grant of the 7-Day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence.

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 15th February, 2023**

Designation of New Street Trading Sites

The Building Control Manager informed the Members 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. He explained that, if a street or the commodity to be offered had not been designated under the Act, the Council could not issue a licence for street trading from a stationary position in that street. The process of considering and reviewing the designation of streets was therefore an essential part of the legal framework within which the Council was enabled to regulate street trading in the City.

The Building Control Manager advised the Members that the Act set down the procedures which must be followed in considering a designating resolution, including the types of trading which may or may not take place in that street. The main steps the Council must undertake were summarised as follows:

- a) Give public notice of the proposed resolution;
- b) Consult with the PSNI and the Department for Infrastructure and other persons it considered appropriate;
- c) Consider any representations relating to the proposed resolution which it had received;
- d) After the Council had considered those representations it may, if it thought, pass the designating resolution; and
- e) Publish notice of the outcome for 2 consecutive weeks in 2 or more newspapers, giving not less than 28 days between the date of the publication and the date set out by the Council when the resolution would come into effect.

The Building Control Manager advised that a further report would be brought before the Committee at a future meeting detailing the outcome of the process of consultation. He added that, at that stage, Members would be able to determine the designation of the street along with any restriction on the commodity to be sold and any recommendations regarding the restriction on the times of trading.

Proposed Sites

Location	Proposed Commodities/Services
Writers Square (6 sites)	Commodities to be determined
Annadale Embankment in layby	Hot and cold non-alcoholic beverages, confectionery, ice cream and cold food or similar commodities.

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 15th February, 2023**

The Committee considered the applications that had been received for the creation of new designated sites and approved:

- The publication of the statutory 28-day notice of the proposed resolution; and
- To commence consultation with statutory bodies and other persons who may have an interest in the proposals.

Chairperson

Planning Committee

Tuesday, 14th February, 2023

HYBRID MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Whyte (Chairperson);
Alderman Rodgers;
Councillors Bower, Carson, Matt Collins,
Douglas, Garrett, Groogan, Hanvey,
Hutchinson, Maskey, Murphy and Spratt.

In attendance: Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;
Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor;
Mr. E. Baker, Planning Manager (Development Management);
Mr. P. Fitzsimons, Principal Planning Officer;
Ms. C. Reville, Principal Planning Officer;
Mr. M. McErlean, Senior Planning Officer;
Mr. K. Sutherland, Planning Manager (Plans and Policy);
Mr. D. O'Kane, Principal Planning Officer; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies for inability to attend were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 17th, 19th and 25th January were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council, at its meeting on 1st February, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

The Chairperson (Councillor Whyte) declared an interest in relation to item 7a – LA04/2021/1672/O, on the basis that he had previously worked with Radius Housing and left the meeting while the item was being considered.

Councillor Matt Collins declared an interest in relation to item 7g – LA04/2022/0129/F, in that he had met with the housing association and developers and left the meeting while the item was being considered.

Withdrawn Items

The Committee noted that the following items had been withdrawn from the agenda:

- **LA04/2019/2653/F** Demolition of existing property and erection of a 9 storey building (overall height 37m) comprising a ground floor retail unit together with cycle parking and plant areas: and 8 floors of Grade A

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office accommodation. (Amended plans and updated technical information). Chancery House, 88 Victoria Street, Belfast.

- **LA04/2022/1503/F** Proposed erection of a freestanding 6.8-metre high screen erected on steel structural supports (9 metres in total height) with associated site works. Lands within Musgrave Police Station 60 Victoria Street, Belfast.
- **LA04/2021/0319/F** Proposed use of hard standing area as overflow car park with a free draining surface and soft landscaping scheme, to serve existing approved uses on-site. 115 Blacks Road Belfast BT10 0NF – Lands to north of square golf training area east of the 3G Dome south of 45 and 46 Garnock Hill.

Abandonments

**Abandonment of Footpath adjacent
to 29 University Road**

The Committee noted the abandonment and agreed to write to the Department for Infrastructure to request that more detail is provided on the reasons for future proposed abandonments.

Request for Pre-emptive Planning Committee Site Visits

The Committee agreed to undertake the undernoted site visits:

- **LA04/2022/1280/F** Proposed social housing led, mixed tenure residential development comprising of 52 no. dwellinghouses and 87 no. apartments with public open space, children's play park, landscaping, car parking, associated site works and infrastructure and access arrangements from Blackstaff Road (139 no. units in total). Former Kennedy Enterprise Centre (north of Westwood Shopping Centre) Blackstaff Road Belfast BT11 9DT
- **LA04/2022/1046/F**, 18 Annadale Avenue, Proposed demolition of existing building and construction of a residential development consisting of 14 No. units (9 No. apartments and 5 No. terraced dwellings) with associated landscaping and car parking (amended plans received).

Planning Decisions Issued

The Committee noted the Planning decisions issued between 10th and 31st January, 2023.

Appeals

The Committee noted the Appeals Decisions.

Restricted Items

Update on LDP Draft Plan Strategy

The Planning Manager (Plans and Policy) provided the Committee with the revised proposed wording of Policy SP1A – Managing Growth and Supporting Infrastructure Delivery, of the Local Development Plan (LDP), following engagement with the Department for Infrastructure.

The Committee:

- noted the response from DfI that confirmed its acceptance of a further, slightly revised wording for Policy SP1A and supporting text;
- endorsed the proposed Policy SP1A wording, that included detail, in respect of justification and amplification; and
- noted the next steps and potential timescales for the potential adoption of the LDP Plan Strategy.

Planning Applications

(Deputy Chairperson, Councillor Maskey, in the Chair)

LA04/2021/1672/O Outline planning permission (with all matters reserved) for mixed use development on Sites A, B, C, D. Comprising up to 7,710 sqm GEA mixed use to include tourist hostel, residential, office, retail, commercial including community enterprise, community infrastructure and social enterprise floor space (A1 or A2 or B1 or B2 or C1 or C2 or D1) units on Site A, up to 6,980 sqm GEA of Hotel (C2) floorspace on Site B, the erection of a multi-storey car park comprising of up to 231 spaces (4,130 sqm GEA) and up to 7,130 sqm GEA of employment or community (A1 or A2 or B1 or B2) floorspace on Site C and up to 1,110 sqm GEA mixed use to include residential, office, retail, commercial including community enterprise, community infrastructure and social enterprise (A1 or A2 or B1 or B2 or D1) floorspace on Site D. Outline planning permission (with no matters reserved) for the erection of 94 residential dwellings (social housing). Comprising of 44 residential units on Site

The Senior Planning Officer provided the Committee with an overview of the application that included aerial view images, site location photographs and maps and highlighted that a revised Travel Plan had been received with a subsequent consultation response from DfI Roads.

He pointed out to the Committee that consultation responses had been received from DAERA NIEA, NI Water and Environmental Health, along with clarification from the agent on

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the proposed residential parking ratio and specific uses within the mixed-use buildings on Sites A and D.

He reported that it was recommended that the Committee approved the application subject to conditions for the undernoted reasons:

- It was a mixed-use scheme that would provide high quality city centre social housing alongside appropriate city centre uses;
- The creation of vibrant, city centre space;
- Regeneration;
- Enhancement of existing civic spaces and creation of strong mixed-use frontages; and
- Providing connections between commercial, business and office uses, and existing and proposed residential areas.

The Committee granted planning permission subject to conditions and a legal agreement between the Council, as landowner, and the developer/s when the site is leased/disposed of, that would seek the necessary developer contributions.

The Committee delegated authority for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and legal agreement from a land-use planning perspective.

(Chairperson, Councillor Whyte, in the Chair)

LA04/2022/1284/F Erection of Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) development comprising 862 units with additional use of accommodation by further or higher education institutions outside term time, communal facilities, internal amenity courtyard, cycle stores, active ground floor uses including café and retail, and associated bin stores and plant and public realm improvements to surrounding footpaths. Lands bounded by Library Street (to south); Stephen Street (to west); Little Donegall Street (to north); and Union Street (to east), Belfast

The Senior Planning Officer outlined the application for the erection of a Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) development on lands bounded by Library Street, Stephen Street, Little Donegall Street and Union Street. He highlighted the following key issues:

- Principle of development;
- Principle of Student Accommodation;
- Principle of proposed 'out of term' accommodation;
- Principle of ground floor café and retail units;
- Impact on Built Heritage;
- Scale, Massing and Design;
- Open Space Provision;
- Trees and Landscaping;

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- Traffic and Parking;
- Impact on Amenity;
- Contamination;
- Impact on Air Quality;
- Noise;
- Odour;
- Drainage and Flooding;
- Waste Management;
- Other Environmental Matters;
- Impact on Protected Sites;
- Pre-application Community Consultation; and
- Developer Contributions.

He pointed out that since the initial report had been completed, a third party objection had been received and he explained the officers' response to the following areas of concern:

- Need for further student accommodation in an area where student accommodation was plentiful;
- No real benefits to the local community and noise pollution experienced from neighbouring Alma Place PBMSA (Library Street); and
- Reduction of light to adjacent 'Factory Building' (apartments) and resulting loss of sunlight.

He outlined the consultations responses which had been received from the Council's Urban Design Officer, Shared Environmental Services, DfI Roads and the City and Regeneration Team. He added that further supporting and technical information had also been received from the Planning Agent in response to DfI River's queries in relation to storm water and allowance for urban expansion and climate change in drainage modelling.

The Senior Planning Officer reported that it was recommended that the application be approved subject to conditions and the completion of an agreement under Section 76 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 in respect of developer contributions, for the undernoted reasons:

- The development would contribute towards regeneration of entire city centre block;
- Creation of an internal landscaped courtyard;
- No adverse impact on built heritage;
- Need adequately demonstrated;
- Buildings step down in scale towards more domestic scale of Carrick Hill; and
- Four third party objections and one letter of support.

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. C. Ní Chuilín MLA and Mr. F. Dempsey, of Carrick Hill Residents' Association to the meeting.

Ms. Ní Chuilín stated that there was supposed to be 66 family homes developed in Nelson Street which had been subsequently designated to student accommodation, she added that Frederick Street Car Park had been considered for family homes and had been

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now designated as a car park for the university which had not alleviated the student carparking in residential streets.

She further pointed out other sites within the area which had been designated as student accommodation and stated that she believed that the application was not compatible with the Inner North West Masterplan.

She explained that she had been campaigning for regeneration in the area for a long time, but for buildings which were sympathetic to existing buildings and addressed the almost 3000 people living in housing stress which should be a material consideration as part of the planning application.

Mr. Dempsey stated that he felt the local residents had informed the developers during consultation and engagement that they were totally opposed to the development due to the detrimental effect it would have on the local community.

He outlined previous development plans for the area that the local residents had successfully campaigned against, and he asked the Committee to reject the application to benefit the local community.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. P. Stinson of Turley and Mr. C. Deazley, of Like Architects, attending on behalf of the applicant, to the meeting.

Mr. Stinson stated that, contrary to a press article released in advance of the previous meeting of the Committee, he recognised that planning permission had not been granted and could only happen with the endorsement of the Committee and added that he had corrected the record with the reporter.

He explained that he had been involved with the site for many years and appreciated the sensitivities associated with how it fits with its neighbours. He outlined the consultation and engagement had been undertaken with local residents and understood their concern, and that the approach to the design had been as sensitive as possible, particularly to avoid prejudicing future development of adjoining sites which were of importance to the local community.

He stated that the applicant's ambition was to have new bed spaces available for the start of the academic year in 2026 and that the Council had heard directly from the local universities that there was a continuing need for managed student accommodation in the city to support their current student numbers and aspirations for future growth.

He explained that the site was currently a surface level car park and was an opportunity site in draft BMAP and the Inner North West Masterplan, not zoned for any particular use, and that the masterplan referred to underutilised sites as key to the regeneration of the area and it supported densification.

He added that the site had been identified in the Belfast HMO Subject Plan as a Development Node which stated that planning permission would be granted for this type of development in such locations, and that the subject plan identified that PBMSA could meet any ongoing requirement for student accommodation.

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He outlined the fundamental principles of the design which had been informed by a detailed analysis of the historic and evolving context in this part of the city centre and how it aligned with the Inner North West Masterplan and pointed out that the Council's Urban Design Officer and HED had offered no objection to the development.

He highlighted that, as was the case for most other student developments in the city centre, there was no proposed car parking, with secure cycle parking provision for 128 bicycles, and that the building had been designed to provide accessibility for all.

He concluded by stating that the development would bring much needed student accommodation within an HMO node, that would support the continued growth of student numbers in higher education and support the regeneration of the area, and that the design responded sensitively to its historic context and related sympathetically to existing and future development in the area in terms of its scale, form, massing and design.

The Chairperson thanked the attendees for their representations and asked the Members if they had any questions.

In response to a question from a Member regarding consideration given to the Inner North West Masterplan, Mr. Stinson explained that it had been considered and that the scheme had been amended to ensure that the proposal was compatible, however, the Member disputed this, stating that the proposal would overshadow and dominate any future residential development on Stephen Street Car Park and that the City Regeneration Team had raised concern with the development of the wider masterplan and not just height, scale and massing.

A number of Members raised concern with regard to the weighting of the Inner North West Masterplan, the concentration of student accommodation in one part of the city, accessibility, parking and the impact of the proposal on the local community.

The Senior Planning Officer explained that, given the accumulative nature of the number of students residing in the city centre, and the impact on the local community and amenities, that officers had considered in their assessment, the management plans secured through a Section 76 Agreement, to control the students within the site and the local vicinities.

The Planning Manager stated that the officer assessment had been conducted using a suite of relevant planning policies, that the appropriate weighting had been given to each of the policies, and that much greater weighting should be given to the statutory HMO Subject Plan in line with Section 6(4) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2015.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Murphy,
Seconded by Councillor Maskey,

“That the Committee refuse to grant planning permission for the application, with the detailed wording for the reasons for refusal to be set out by officers at its next meeting. The reasons for refusal to include the application's non-compliance with the Inner North West Masterplan.”

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The proposer agreed, at the request of Councillor Groogan, to the following additions to be included in the reasons for refusal:

“Contravention of Policies QD1 of PPS7 and OS2 of PPS8, and Policy BH11 of PPS6 in view of the response from DfC HED.”

Councillor Hanvey declared that he would abstain from voting as he felt that his role and mandate as a Councillor had not been respected by the Chairperson.

The proposal, as amended, was put to the Committee and, on a recorded vote, seven Members voted for, four against and one no vote and it was declared carried.

<u>For 7</u>	<u>Against 4</u>	<u>No Vote 1</u>
Councillor Whyte (Chairperson); and Councillors Carson, Matt Collin, Garrett, Groogan, Maskey and Murphy.	Alderman Rodgers; and Councillors Douglas, Hutchinson and Spratt.	Councillor Bower.

LA04/2022/1479/F - Partial redevelopment of former Kennedy Way Waste Water Treatment Works to include the development of new Mechanical & Electrical (M&E) workshops, storage, changing facilities and ancillary offices (development to include three new buildings 1) the main hub building; 2) a store to hold an alternative bottled water supply; and 3) a generator store), access improvements, parking, service yards, storage areas, contractors compound, boundary fencing, cesspool, solar PV panels and landscaping, Former NI Water Ltd Sewage Treatment Works, Blackstaff Road.

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the item in order to undertake a site visit.

(Alderman Rodgers and Councillor Douglas retired from the meeting)

LA04/2022/0129/F Proposed social housing led mixed tenure residential development comprising 122 residential dwellings, pedestrian and cycle ways, public open space, children's play area, landscaping (including 8 metre landscaped buffer to western boundary), boundary treatments, parking, access (provision of a right turn lane) and ancillary site works. Lands north of 14 Mill Race and 15 Belfield Heights and south of 2-15 St Gerards Manor Ballymurphy Belfast Co. Antrim

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The Principal Planning Officer provided the Committee with an overview of the application and highlighted the following key issues in the assessment of the proposed development:

- Development Plan considerations;
- Principle of Housing at this location;
- Loss of Open Space;
- Scale, massing, design and layout;
- Open Space Provision;
- Impact on existing trees and vegetation;
- Traffic, Movement and Parking;
- Impact on the Environment and Amenity;
- Other Environmental Matters;
- Drainage and Flooding;
- Impact on Protected/ Priority Species and Habitats;
- Developer Contributions/ Section 76 Agreement; and
- Pre-application Community Consultation.

He explained that the principle of housing on the unzoned brownfield site and the accompanying loss of open space had been considered acceptable, given the provision of much needed social housing. He added that the removal of a number of unprotected trees and some boundary vegetation had been considered to have low conservation status and was outweighed by a comprehensive planning scheme that included the augmentation of existing boundary planting and that consultation had confirmed that there would be no adverse impact on protected sites, species or habitats.

He pointed out that a Section 76 Planning Agreement would secure Green Travel measures that would include the provision of Travel Cards.

He reported that ten letters of objection had been received and that the issues raised had been considered, and that no consultees had offered any objection to the application.

He concluded by stating that, having regard to the development plan, relevant policy context and other material considerations, the proposal had been considered acceptable and it was recommended that planning permission was granted, subject to conditions and a Section 76 Agreement.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Garrett,
Seconded by Councillor Murphy, and

Resolved – That the Committee approve the application and delegate authority for the Director of Planning and Building Control to investigate the appropriateness of a condition on the application, and all further major housing applications, that would provide winter grit bin provision and replenishment of one grit bin per 50 units of housing until such time as DfI adopt the scheme and carries out its own statutory assessment of winter provision.

LA04/2020/2105/F Residential development comprising 55no. apartments comprising 6 no social, 6 no intermediate, and 43 no private apartments and associated site works, 1-5 Gaffikin Street, Belfast.

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the item in order to undertake a site visit.

LA04/2022/2018/F and LA04/2022/2019/LBC Proposed alterations to a listed building including provision of new structural opening with pedestrian entrance doors, roller shutters, improved boundary treatments and minor internal renovations, 2 Royal Avenue Belfast

The Principal Planning Officer outlined the application to the Committee and explained that the site was being used as a community, recreational and cultural space to facilitate multi-disciplinary uses on a temporary basis, and that the site was a listed building surrounded by a number of other listed buildings.

She reported that HED and the Conservation Officer had been consulted and had offered no objection to the application.

She concluded by stating that, having regard to the development plan, relevant planning policies and other material considerations, it had been determined that the proposals should be approved.

The Committee approved the applications.

Delegation of Local Applications with NI Water Objections

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 The Planning Committee will recall that at its meetings on 27 June and 14 November 2022 it agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control the determination of a number of Local applications to which NI Water had objected.**
- 1.2 The Council continues to receive objections from NIW to some Local applications. The purpose of this report is to seek the Committee's agreement to delegate to officers those Local planning applications to which NI Water has objected.**
- 1.3 For the avoidance of doubt, it is only those applications which would have been delegated to officers under the Scheme of Delegation were it not for the objection from NI Water which are proposed to be delegated. Therefore, any of the Local applications which it may later transpire require to be referred to the Committee for other reason/s (other than the NI Water objection) will be**

reported to the Committee to determine. Individual Members can also still request that the applications are referred to the Committee under paragraph 3.8.1 of the Scheme of Delegation.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1** That the Committee agrees to delegate to the Director of Planning and Building Control those Local planning applications to which NI Water has objected.

3.0 Main Report

Background

- 3.1** The Committee will be aware from the Committee Workshop on 18 November 2021 that NI Water has objected to a significant number of Local applications on grounds of insufficient waste-water infrastructure capacity.
- 3.2** As advised at the Committee Workshop, officers have been engaging with NI Water to try to resolve those objections. Whilst progress is being made, and NI Water is actively considering a threshold for the scale and nature of development above which they would like to be consulted on future planning application, the objections to these Local applications remain.

Scheme of Delegation

- 3.3** Members will be aware that the Council operates a Scheme of Delegation for Planning which identifies which matters are to be determined by the Committee and which are delegated to officers.
- 3.4** Paragraph 3.8.5 (f) of the Scheme of Delegation (January 2020) states that planning applications are not delegated where '*There is an objection from a statutory consultee and the recommendation of the Planning Officer is to approve.*' This means that those applications are required to be determined by the Planning Committee.
- 3.5** The Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 identifies NI Water as a statutory consultee '*...where a development proposal is likely to significantly impact upon the availability of suitable water and sewerage infrastructure to service development proposals.*'
- 3.6** This means that where NI Water has lodged an objection to a Local application and the officer recommendation is to approve, the application cannot be delegated and must be determined by the Committee.

- 3.7** Therefore, at its meeting on 27 June and 14 November 2022, the Committee agreed to delegate 97 and 25 Local applications respectively with NI Water objections to the Director of Planning and Building Control. This has avoided the potential need to report all 122 applications individually to the Committee. To have reported all those applications to the Committee would have been logistically extremely difficult, costly and would have resulted in further delays for applicants.

Nature of NI Water objections

- 3.8** NI Water has lodged objections to Local applications for one or both of the following reasons.
- a) There is insufficient capacity at the local Waste Water Treatment Plant to support the proposed development; and/or
 - b) There is insufficient network capacity within existing Combined Storm Overflows to support the development.
- 3.9** In broad terms, NI Water is concerned that a lack of infrastructure capacity would give rise to risk of environmental harm including pollution, flooding and adverse impact on existing property. In some cases, NI Water is concerned that the application site may be hydrologically linked to Belfast Lough and may harm its water quality.
- 3.10** However, despite requests, NI Water has to date not provided robust evidence to support individual objections including demonstration of actual specific impacts resulting from individual proposals that stems from their broad concerns outlined above.
- 3.11** Importantly, allowance must be made for existing significant committed development across the city including extant planning permissions. It is highly unlikely that all such development, which includes unimplemented permissions for over 20,000 houses and significant levels of commercial floor space across the city, will come forward at once, if at all. In practical terms it would be unreasonable for the Council to withhold planning permission given the fall-back of the need to connect those developments to existing waste water infrastructure.
- 3.12** In the case of Waste Water Treatment capacity, NI Water advises that there will be increased capacity from July 2023, albeit this will not be sufficient to address long term waste water treatment plant infrastructure requirements.
- 3.13** The Council must be mindful that were it to refuse planning permission based on NI Water's concerns, it would need to provide robust evidence to the Planning Appeals Commission in the event

that the applicant appeals the decision. In the absence of robust evidence, it would be unreasonable to refuse planning permission.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 3.14 Officers have met with Shared Environmental Services (SES). Belfast City Council is the Competent Authority under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) for undertaking an Appropriate Assessment where a proposal is likely to have a significant environmental effect on Belfast Lough, an environmentally protected Special Protection Area (SPA), RAMSAR and Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Water quality of the lough is a key consideration. The Habitats Regulations are framed in such a way that it is not only the impacts of individual development proposals that need to be considered, but also 'in combination' impacts with other development.
- 3.15 Whilst a precautionary approach applies to Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), SES confirms that the onus is on NIW to provide evidence of likely actual impacts, rather than hypothetical impacts. As Competent Authority, the Council may take its own objective view on whether a proposal is likely to have a 'significant effect' on water quality of the Lough. However, having regard to the precautionary approach, where there is clear intensification the Council will consult SES and ask them to undertake a HRA Appropriate Assessment Screening to ascertain whether there would be a likely significant impact. This would also trigger statutory consultation with DAERA NI Environment Agency. The Planning Service will consult SES and DAERA on a case by case basis as required.

Local applications for which delegated authority is sought to determine

- 3.16 The further Local applications to which NI Water has objected and which delegated authority is sought to determine are listed at Appendix 1.
- 3.17 It should be noted that only those applications which would have been delegated to officers under the Scheme of Delegation were it not for the objection from NI Water are proposed to be delegated. Therefore, any of the Local applications listed at Appendix 1 which it transpires need to be referred to the Committee for other reason/s under the Scheme of Delegation will be reported to the Committee to determine. Individual Members can also still request that the applications at Appendix 1 are referred to the Committee under paragraph 3.8.1 of the Scheme of Delegation.

4.0 Financial and Resource Implications

- 4.1** Officers are aware of the infrastructure issues which NI Water are facing and have had regard to that in making this recommendation to Committee. However, each application must be assessed on its own merits and officers have sought detailed evidence to support the objections which have been provided by NI Water. That has not been forthcoming.
- 4.2** The cost and resources involved in individually reporting all Local applications to which NI Water has objected to the Planning Committee would be considerable. It would also require several additional sittings of the Committee.
- 4.3** Regard is also had to the considerable current pressures on the Planning Service and staff with an extremely high volume of live applications on hand due to the longer-term impacts of COVID-19 and ongoing technical issues with the new Planning Portal. The impacts of COVID-19 and other operational pressures were reported in detail to the 15th February 2022 Planning Committee, [item 12a.](#) (hyperlink). In addition, technical issues with the new Planning Portal have reduced the rate of decisions. Combined with several key vacancies, total live applications have increased to around 1,200 application, an approximate 40% increase since pre-pandemic levels. It is very important that the Planning Service implements a range of measures to reduce live applications back down to more manageable levels. This includes securing delegated authority from the Committee for officers to deal with these Local applications subject to NI Water objections.
- 4.4** For the reasons set out above, officers are of the view that it would be appropriate to continue to delegate these applications.

5.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

- 5.1** No adverse impacts identified.”

The Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to determine those Locals applications subject to NI Water objections.

Chairperson

Planning Committee

Tuesday, 14th February, 2023

PRE DETERMINATION HEARING
HELD IN A HYBRID FORMAT AT 4.30 P.M.

Members present: Councillor Whyte (Chairperson);
Alderman Rodgers;
Councillors Bower, Carson, Matt Collins,
Douglas, Garrett, Groogan, Hanvey,
Hutchinson, Maskey, Murphy and Spratt.

In attendance: Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;
Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor;
Mr. E. Baker, Planning Manager (Development
Management);
Mr. P. Fitzsimons, Principal Planning Officer;
Ms. C. Reville, Principal Planning Officer;
Mr. M. McErlean, Senior Planning Officer;
Mr. K. Sutherland, Planning Manager (Plans and Policy);
Mr. D. O'Kane, Principal Planning Officer; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillor Hussey.

Declarations of Interest

The Chairperson (Councillor Whyte) declared an interest in relation to item 2 – LA04/2021/1672/O, on the basis that he had previously worked with Radius Housing and left the meeting while the item was being considered.

Pre-Determination Hearing in respect of LA04/2021/1672/O
Outline planning permission (with all matters reserved) for mixed use
development on Sites A, B, C, D. Comprising up to 7,710 sqm GEA
mixed use to include tourist hostel, residential, office, retail,
commercial including community enterprise, community
infrastructure and social enterprise floor space (A1 or A2 or
B1 or B2 or C1 or C2 or D1) units on Site A, up to 6,980 sqm
GEA of Hotel (C2) floorspace on Site B, the erection of a
multi-storey car park comprising of up to 231 spaces
(4,130 sqm GEA) and up to 7,130 sqm GEA of employment
or community (A1 or A2 or B1 or B2) floorspace on Site C
and up to 1,110 sqm GEA mixed use to include residential,
office, retail, commercial including community enterprise,
community infrastructure and social enterprise (A1 or A2

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or B1 or B2 or D1) floorspace on Site D. Outline planning permission (with no matters reserved) for the erection of 94 residential dwellings (social housing). Comprising of 44 residential units on Site

(The Chairperson, having declared an interest in the item, left the meeting while the item was under consideration.)

(Deputy Chairperson, Councillor Maskey in the Chair.)

The Senior Planning Officer outlined the background of the application and provided the Committee with an overview of the proposal that included aerial view images, site location photographs, plans and maps. He highlighted that a revised Travel Plan had been received with a subsequent consultation response from DfI Roads.

The Deputy Chairperson welcomed Mr. B. McKervery and Mr. D. Madden from DfI Historic Environment Division, Mr. T. Sloan from AECOM, Ms. D. Quinn from Radius Housing, Mr. G. Moore from Consarc, Mr. A. Crozier from TODD Architects and Mr. D. Donnelly from Inislyn to the meeting.

In response to a question from a Member with regard to the requirement for play space if there were to be any additional residential component to the proposal, the Senior Planning Officer indicated that the quantum was fixed and that any additional housing component would not be considered under reserved matters and would require a new application with a full assessment.

In response to a question from a Member regarding the provision for a multi-story car park and if the requirement could be amended, and whether the car park was reflective of the need in the city and not site specific, the Senior Planning Manager indicated that the spaces were to cater for the extension to the hotel, displacement of existing surface level parking was considered. The Planning Manager added that, having regard to the existing use and loss of existing parking spaces combined with the need for the proposed development, in officers' view, the need for the car park was justified.

Mr. B. McKervery stated that the scale of the development was inappropriate and the HED position was that it was an industrial complex with a significant border to the main Ormeau Road and the main consideration was the proposal's mass and height in relation to the listed assets within the Gasworks site and that it diluted the enclosure of an industrial site and would negatively impact on the character of the Gasworks site.

Mr. T. Sloan welcomed the Department's decision to return the application to the Council for final determination. In relation to Mr. McKervery's comments, he stated that the building on site A complied with the BMAP designation and the outline building plots had been given substantial consideration in terms of demand, use, form and density across the masterplan. He added that the final design was reflective of a comprehensive pre-application process and that he was confident that the proposal represented the best possible response to the very constrained urban site.

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He concluded by stating that the proposal would deliver many benefits to Belfast and the proposed residential units would help deliver much needed housing in the area, create jobs and opportunities to develop new businesses. He requested that the Planning Committee endorse the recommendation.

Mr. G. Moore reported that, historically, the Gasworks site would have contained several large buildings and that Site A was outside the historic development limit of the Gasworks site.

Mr. D. Donnelly stated that most cars in future would be electric and would require many charging points within car parks. He added that residents in the area were opposed to openings between the residential and commercial section of the Gasworks.

The Deputy Chairperson thanked the speakers for their contributions.

Chairperson

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Climate and City Resilience Committee

Thursday, 9th February, 2023

MEETING OF THE CLIMATE AND CITY RESILIENCE COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AND REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Walsh (Chairperson);
Councillors Bower, de Faoite, Donnelly, Ferguson,
Gormley, Maghie, McCabe, McCann, McKeown,
McLaughlin, Murray, Smyth, Spratt
and Thompson.

In attendance: Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;
Ms. D. Caldwell, Commissioner for Climate and City Resilience;
Mr. K. Heaney, Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti Poverty;
Ms. A. Diver, Climate Programme Manager;
Mr. J. McKearney, Project Support Assistant;
Mr. R. McLernon, Climate Programme Manager;
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and
Mrs. G. Boyd, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for an inability to attend were received from Alderman Sandford and Councillors Hutchinson and Newton.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 8th December, 2022 were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st February.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Presentation on the Shared Island Initiative by the Shared Island Unit

The Chairperson welcomed Eoghan Duffy and John O'Liodain from the Shared island Unit to the meeting. Mr Duffy thanked the Chairperson for the opportunity to update Members of the Committee on the developments in relation to the Shared Island Initiative. The Members then received a presentation from Mr. Duffy who outlined the elements of the shared island initiative; the first was building a shared island that included delivering longstanding and new cross-border investments. The second was Inclusive dialogue: 14 events; 2,500+ citizens from all communities, traditions and regions. And lastly the policy research programme: High quality evidence and analysis on deepening cooperation and

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connections on the island. Mr Duffy outlined the key deliverables in relation to the Shared Island research programme, drawing members attention to the Early Childhood Education and Care, North and South that was published on 30 January and Migrant Integration and Experience in Ireland and NI that would be launched next month on 6 March. He advised the Members that all research was available to view on their website gov.ie/sharedisland/research. He went on to outline the shared island fund and that it was mainly to deliver strategic investment objectives on Shared Island as set out in Programme for Government and revised National Development Plan (2021-2030). He outlined the shared island fund allocations to date, drawing members attention to the 1 billion euro commitment to 2030 and that over 190 million had been allocated between 2020 – 2022.

Mr Duffy outlined the Shared Island Local Authority Development Funding Scheme providing the overview below:

- Seed capital grants of up to €250,000 for cross-border Local Authority Partnerships.
- 25 awards to 15 Local Authorities in the South working with 9 councils in NI.
- Feasibility projects in progress, to conclude Q4 2023.
- Belfast City Council participating in four feasibility projects:
- Circular Economy Partnership - Belfast and Dublin.
- Development of corridor sectoral enterprise - Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor.
- Harbour Cities - Cork and Belfast.
- Learning Cities - Cork, Belfast, Derry, Limerick.

He highlighted that the objective was to generate well-developed pipeline of cross-border local authority projects and that the impact was Local Authorities cooperating to deliver shared regional development goals and more strategic cooperation by central and local government on the island.

Mr Duffy then provided the update below in relation to the Shared Island Community Climate Action Programme:

- €3m for Shared Island strand to Community Climate Action Programme.
- Projects to include at partner in Northern Ireland (can be a Council).
- 50% of awarded funding for project delivery in Northern Ireland.
- Minister for Environment commenced scheme on 2 February.
- Administered by Community Climate Action Officers in Councils.
- Grants of €5,000 to €100,000.

He advised that the objective was to support Local Authorities to step up climate action in partnership with communities across the island and cross-border projects particularly on: Valuing Networks for Nature: Just Transition; Renewable energy: Flood forecasting; Coastal erosion. The impact of the project was to help to reach climate and energy targets on the island of Ireland and to support collaborative community involvement on climate action.

Mr Duffy concluded his presentation by outlining the objectives for the shared island initiative in 2023. Mr Duffy agreed to share the slide deck with members of the Committee and to provide more information in relation to the projects, in particular the electric vehicle charging infrastructure scheme. After discussion, the committee noted the contents of the presentation.

Noted

Restricted Items

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 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 on Net Zero Belfast Project (Pioneer Places)

The Committee considered the report that was circulated in advance of the meeting and, with the aid of PowerPoint presentation, the Belfast Climate Commissioner reminded Members of the background to the Net Zero Belfast Project. She advised that the purpose of the report was to update them on the successful application to the UK Net zero living: Pioneer places fund. She pointed out that there were a number of items Members should note – mainly the positive outcome of the funding application which had secured £75k Phase 1 funding; that the Phase 1 funding will be used to develop a plan to accelerate the transition to net zero by developing innovative solutions to overcome non-technical systemic barriers to the commercial deployment of green hydrogen technologies; and that the project was expected to start on 1 April 2023 and end by 30 June 2022. She advised that a further update would be provided to Members once the project was underway.

Noted

Update on UP2030

The Committee considered the undernoted report

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on Belfast City Council’s involvement in the UP2030 project, which is funded through Horizon Europe.

2.0 Recommendations

The Members of the Committee are asked to:

- i Note that Belfast, represented by Belfast City Council, is a pilot city within the Horizon Europe UP2030 project, which will focus on the development of a net zero neighbourhood framework and toolkit, the exchange of knowledge between cities and the use of climate tools which support analysis, mapping and engagement in local neighbourhoods.**

- ii Note that in the update brought to City Growth and Regeneration Committee on the 9th November 2022, officers proposed that the Linen Quarter District and neighbouring communities would be the initial focus within the project, however noted that no final decision had been taken regarding the location, and also that should the project focus on the Linen Quarter District, Donegall Pass, Market and Sandy Row areas, this would align with the Bolder Vision Strategy and the Belfast Resilience Strategy, while allowing us to consider issues such as the severance and climate issues brought about by the road infrastructure and other factors such as poor public realm and connectivity.
- iii Note that the City Growth and Regeneration Committee 'noted the progress of a Horizon Europe Urban Planning 2030 bid to support development of a framework that integrated environmental sustainability and urban development aligned to the creation of a net zero neighbourhood as a pilot proposal and the offer of funding to further develop the project which was confirmed not to be definitive of any area at this stage; and approved the participation of the Council as an Associate Member of the Urban Planning 2030 consortium as identified in the report.'
- iv Note that a further update on the Belfast pilot location will be presented to both City Growth and Regeneration Committee and Climate and City Resilience Committees in due course.

3.0 Main report

- 3.1 The Belfast City Council Climate Unit and City Regeneration and Development Division are working together to ensure an integrated approach between urban planning, achieving net zero and aspects of resilience such as supporting play and environmental sustainability in the city centre through engagement with key stakeholders such as young people, families, communities and businesses.
- 3.2 A Bolder Vision for Belfast puts liveability at its core and aims to create a sustainable, connected and vibrant city, and the creation of a people-focused environment with playful streets and spaces for children and families to live and thrive. In December 2020, Belfast launched the Belfast Resilience Strategy alongside the Belfast Net Zero Carbon Roadmap and with the Belfast One Million Trees programme these form key elements of the city's ambitions to achieve carbon neutrality (80% reduction by 2030 and 100% by 2050). Officers have been working collaboratively to align play,

climate neutrality, tree planting and green infrastructure by developing the award-winning Urban Childhood Framework and have been testing these new approaches in the design and implementation of the city centre Cathedral Gardens pop-up park and the new Grey to Green programme.

- 3.3 As a result of our membership in the Resilient Cities Network, Council was invited to participate in a Horizon Europe funding application from the UP2030 (Urban Planning 2030) fund which has been successful. The kick off meeting occurred on 1st and 2nd February 2023, focused on city matchmaking and identification of the tools to be used within participating pilot cities. Horizon Europe is the EU's key funding programme for research and innovation with a budget of €95.5 billion, which looks to tackle climate change, helps to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and boosts the EU's competitiveness and growth and is focused on supporting cities achieve net zero.
- 3.4 UP2030 aims to guide cities through the socio-technical transitions required to meet their climate neutrality ambitions. It will do so by enabling a quantum leap from a 'business as usual', project-by-project decarbonisation approach to a vision-driven, strategy-based approach that is anchored on sound projects and renewed policy development. The approach uses urban planning and design as a vehicle to create better connected, more compact, net-zero neighbourhoods that promote liveability and, through designing with intent, promote mitigation actions.
- 3.5 The UP2030 consortium is made up of 46 partners (see Appendix 1) with a total budget of €11,956,686. Belfast was selected as one of the pilot cities, and has been nominated to receive €204,250 to support research, training and policy development related to the creation of a net zero district through enhanced tree planting, linking to the Resilience Strategy, Belfast Net Zero Carbon Roadmap, the recently formed Belfast Retrofit Hub, and Belfast One Million Trees project, green infrastructure, linking to the Bolder Vision and Council's Grey to Green initiative in the city centre, and play, linking to the Urban Childhood Framework, and Belfast's membership of the Real Play Coalition (a global initiative led by the Lego Foundation, IKEA, ARUP, UNICEF and National Geographic). The Belfast budget will fund staff costs, facilitation and workshop costs.
- 3.6 Through the UP2030 funding, we will create a framework that can be applied to regeneration projects that integrates stakeholder engagement, analysis of the neighbourhood through a net zero lens, potential green infrastructure, potential play opportunities and co-design with young people. The framework will support the integration of play and environmental sustainability into city

design, delivering on ambitions set out in the Belfast Resilience Strategy whereby young people would be involved in the design of places. To maintain alignment with A Bolder Vision and the Resilience Strategy Ambitions, it was proposed that the framework could be tested in the Linen Quarter District, which has the aspirations of becoming the first sustainable and net-zero business district in Northern Ireland. Should that be agreed as the area of focus representatives from neighbouring communities such as Sandy Row, Donegall Pass and the Market area would be invited to participate in the development and out workings of the Net Zero Neighbourhood framework. Lessons learned from this pilot will be used to identify opportunities in other neighbourhoods and bring forward the concept of net-zero districts across the city and the intention is to work across council departments and with city stakeholders to elevate and embed the learning and approaches.

- 3.7 As referred to previously, project delivery will take place over a three-year period, following kick off meetings in February 2023. Belfast has been assigned a liaison partner; an organisation called Mapping for Change who will support the city throughout the project lifespan. Further reports will be brought to this Committee as the project progress.

4.0 **Financial & Resource Implications**

- 4.1 The Horizon Europe UP2030 Project is 100% funded. No additional funding is required from Council however a small team drawn from the Climate Unit and City Regeneration and Development will work together to oversee development and support implementation. The funding is for revenue and does not include any capital costs at this stage.

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

- 5.1 Officers are currently developing the Equality, Good Relations and Rural Needs Screening and will incorporate within the emerging proposals.”

6.0 **Appendix 1**

- 6.1 Horizon Europe UP2030 project consortium partners:

Participating Organisation	Country
FRAUNHOFER GESELLSCHAFT ZUR FORDERUNG DER ANGEWANDTEN FORSCHUNG EV	Germany
Belfast City Council	UK
ADELPHI RESEARCH GEMEINNUTZIGE GMBH	Germany
Buro Happold GmbH	Germany

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Design Clips P.C.	Greece
GreenAdapt Gesellschaft für Klimaanpassung mbH	Germany
I-CATALIST SL	Spain
STICHTING ISOCARP INSTITUTE CENTER OF URBAN EXCELLENCE	Netherlands
Thomas Stellmach Planning & Architecture	Germany
TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITEIT DELFT	Netherlands
UNIVERSITAT INTERNACIONAL DE CATALUNYA	Spain
Global Green Growth Institute	Hungary
ICLEI EUROPEAN SECRETARIAT GMBH (ICLEI EUROPASEKRETARIAT GMBH)	Germany
STICHTING GLOBAL RESILIENT CITIES NETWORK	Netherlands
Urban Climate Change Research Network – European Hub	Italy
AQUATEC PROYECTOS PARA EL SECTOR DEL AGUA SA	Spain
CETAQUA, CENTRO TECNOLÓGICO DEL AGUA, FUNDACION PRIVADA	Spain
PRAVO I INTERNET FOUNDATION	Bulgaria
LABORATORIO NACIONAL DE ENGENHARIA CIVIL	Portugal
ANAPTYXIAKI MEIZONOS ASTIKIS THESSALONIKIS AE - ANAPTYXIAKOS ORGANISMOS TOPIKIS AUTODIOIKISIS	Greece
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY	Turkey
MAPPING FOR CHANGE CIC	UK
THE CHANCELLOR MASTERS AND SCHOLARS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE	UK
UNIVERSITY OF STUTTGART	Germany
VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT BRUSSEL	Belgium
ETHNIKO KENTRO EREVNAS KAI TECHNOLOGIKIS ANAPTYXIS	Greece
FUNDACION CIRCE CENTRO DE INVESTIGACION DE RECURSOS Y CONSUMOS ENERGETICOS	Spain
STICHTING DELTARES	Netherlands
DRAXIS ENVIRONMENTAL SA	Greece
ODTU Gunes Enerjisi Uygulama ve Arastirma Merkezi	Turkey
K3Y	Bulgaria
FONDAZIONE LINKS - LEADING INNOVATION & KNOWLEDGE FOR SOCIETY	Italy
MAGGIOLI SPA	Italy
UNIVERSITAT POLITÈCNICA DE VALENCIA	Spain
Vesela Motika d.o.o.	Croatia

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BUDAPEST FOVAROS ONKORMANYZATA	Hungary
AJUNTAMENT DE GRANOLLERS	Spain
Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality	Turkey
CAMARA MUNICIPAL DE LISBOA	Portugal
LISBOA E-NOVA - AGENCIA DE ENERGIA E AMBIENTE DE LISBOA	Portugal
COMUNE DI MILANO	Italy
STADT MUNSTER	Germany
GEMEENTE ROTTERDAM	Netherlands
DIMOS THESSALONIKIS	Greece
GRAD ZAGREB	Croatia
EIDGENOESSISCHE TECHNISCHE HOCHSCHULE ZUERICH	Switzerland

A member welcomed the inclusion of additional neighbourhoods in the project scope.

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

Update on the management processes and assessment criteria that are used by the One Million Trees Project

The Committee considered the undernoted report

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to give members an update on the One Million Trees programme and to respond to the request that officers come back to this committee with a report on the management procedures and policies of the One Million Trees project.**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- i Note the agreed site assessment criteria and process undertaken to identify if a site is suitable for tree planting including the expertise used across the Delivery Team and specialist expertise determined on a site by site basis;**
- ii Note that the monitoring of planted sites by the Delivery Team includes surveys within the first three years of planting and identification of survival rates;**
- iii Note that the programme has to date planted 63,500 trees with programme of community engagement underway that includes tree planting, business involvement, schools engagement, give a tree a home events, hedgerow and ancient woodland restoration; and**
- iv Consider an invitation to by the Delivery Team to visit some of the sites already planted under the Million Trees Programme later this year.**

3.0 Main report

3.1 Background

In the Climate and City Resilience Committee on 8th December members requested a report on the management procedures of the One Million Trees project. In particular, a focus on any ecological assessments, site selection, bio security measure, monitoring work and who is sought for specialise and technical advice on such matters was requested.

As members will be aware, the One Million Trees Programme has been running since 2020 and is a city-wide partnership and ambition to plant one million trees in Belfast by 2035. It is one of the ambitions of the Belfast Resilience Strategy, and has three key objectives:

- To create an inclusive structure and processes which enable tree planting and the growth of green infrastructure and biodiversity in Belfast;
- To plant at least one million trees within the next 15 years-delivering a step change in our approach to climate adaptation and environmental improvements; and
- To protect the city and the people of the city by increasing carbon capture, reducing harms from air pollution, weather impact and loss of nature and improving health and well-being.

Since the project began 63,500 trees have been planted across the city. A programme of community engagement is underway that includes tree planting, business involvement, schools engagement, give a tree a home events, hedgerow and ancient woodland restoration.

3.2 Governance and implementation arrangements

Belfast City Council agreed it would coordinate the initial phase of the project, liaise with partners and set out recommendations for project implementation. In terms of governance procedures, the Million Trees Steering Group leads the project and is made up of twenty one partners that meet on a biannual basis and agree the strategic direction of the project including to include processes and procedures. The delivery of the project is then taken forward by the Million Trees Delivery team which consists of Belfast Hills Partnership, The Woodland Trust, BCC Climate Team and BCC Trees Team.

The Delivery Team meets fortnightly to coordinate activities under the programme and support the partners to bring forward sites for planting, offering expertise and specialist knowledge on trees, woodland and climate resilience.

3.3 Management procedures and site assessment process

One of the key aims of the Delivery Team is to establish procedures, processes and ensure specialist knowledge and expertise is being used to identify, assess, prepare, plant and monitor sites that are being planted across the city by Million Trees partners.

An agreed site assessment process is applied whenever a potential site comes forward and has been initially scoped for potential suitability by the Delivery Team. This is attached in Appendix 6.1. If the site is over 4 hectares, it is agreed that an Environmental Statement is prepared and in line with the EIA (Forestry) Regulations (NI) 2006. This ensures the impacts of planting the site have been fully identified and assessed before any planting is agreed.

Should the site be identified as having special protections or statutory designations, specialist expertise and/or consultation around wildlife and protected species, habitats, invasive species is used. Along with the specialist expertise and knowledge within Belfast Hills Partnership, the Woodland Trust, and BCC City and Neighbourhood Services team, Million Trees has previously worked with The Conservation Volunteers, John Morris Aboricultural Consultant, Clive Richardson Ecological Consultant, Treeconomics, and RJ Woodland Services.

3.4 Availability of sites for tree planting

Whilst ancient woodland restoration works are ongoing at strategic sites such as Cave Hill, there have been limited sites coming forward for tree planting in Belfast City Council's Estate, with the majority mainly linking in with new capital works and planting existing green spaces and parks. Million Trees Programme is currently supporting the delivery of the Draft Tree Strategy, and it is intended that once this plan is in place that a list of potential sites for planting can be brought forward, appropriate assessments carried out, and planting plans produced. Council officers are currently scoping potential sites and will be working across CNS, Estates, Physical Programmes and Planning teams to bring forward potential sites by September 2023 in time for the next planting season.

3.5 Supply of trees

A current priority of the Million Trees programme is to establish a native and sustainable tree supply for Belfast to ensure provenance of trees can be traced and address biosecurity issues such as the spreading of disease. Grovelands tree nursery which was developed under the MT Programme currently supplies some planting on Council land, but this is not at the scale required to meet the targets of planting one million trees by 2035. Council is currently undertaking some work to scope the feasibility of re-establishing its tree nursery at Beechvale, to ensure trees are being grown locally from seeds, to reduce the risk of disease, improve tree health across the city and create a local supply chain that is resilient and climate proofed.

3.6 Monitoring planted sites

In terms of monitoring planted sites, the Delivery Team currently carries out 'beat up surveys' to check planted sites, monitor the rate of survival on sites and ensure accurate counting of planting numbers is achieved. These usually take place within the first 3 years of planting and are currently reporting an average of less than 5% failure of trees planted. Maintenance and monitoring on sites are the responsibility of the landowner once the site is planted. For any Council planted sites, Park Managers monitor whip planting, with the larger trees planted by the Tree unit maintained by BCC contractors and written into tender specifications from the outset.

To monitor where trees are being planted across Belfast, an annual count is carried out at the end of each planting season with MT partners. The Climate Team is currently developing a Million Trees monitoring page so that trees planted are able to be mapped, logged and monitored across the city. This will be launched as part of this year's tree count and used ongoing as part of the Programme. As part of the Million Trees community engagement plan, best practice guides around planting and maintenance are planned for roll out in the next year.

- 3.7** To aid with members engagement in the Million Trees Programme and to gain further information on the issues raised in the report, the Delivery Team can facilitate a half day site visit for members later this year to view some of the work of the Million Trees programme across Belfast and gain feedback from Members to help shape the future programme for Million Trees.

4.0 Financial & Resource Implications

There are no financial implications

5.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Implications

There are no direct equality and good relations implications.”

Councillor Smyth proposed that Belfast City Council carried out a phase 1 habitat survey on any areas that they are targeting for the one million trees strategy, and that included sites under 4 hectares. The proposal was seconded by Councillor McCann and agreed by the Committee.

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

Noted

Chairperson

Standards and Business Committee

Tuesday, 21st February, 2023

MEETING OF THE STANDARDS AND BUSINESS COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM AND
REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Hanvey (Chairperson);
Alderman Haire; and
Councillors Canavan, de Faoite, R-M Donnelly,
Douglas, Duffy, Ferguson, Flynn, T. Kelly,
Long, Lyons, McAteer, McCabe,
McCullough and Verner.

In attendance: Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor;
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies for inability to attend were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 24th January were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st February.

Declarations of Interest

The Chairperson, Councillor Hanvey, declared an interest in relation to item 2b, Motion – Increase in Average Rent Costs, in that he owned an Airbnb property in Donegal and left the meeting while the item was being considered.

Councillor Canavan declared an interest in relation to item 2b, Motion – Increase in Average Rent Costs, in that her partner owned an Airbnb property and left the meeting while the item was being considered.

Councillor Kyle declared an interest in relation to item 2b, Motion – Increase in Average Rent Costs, in that he was a registered landlord and left the meeting while the item was being considered.

Councillor McCabe declared an interest in relation to item 2b, Motion – Increase in Average Rent Costs, in that her husband owned a rental property and left the meeting while the item was being considered.

**Standards and Business Committee,
Tuesday, 21st February, 2023**

Motions

The City Solicitor informed the Committee that three motions had been received in advance of the Council on 1st March.

The Committee considered each motion in turn and agreed the following:

**Maternity Leave Provision for Mothers
of Babies defined as Premature**

That the motion be referred, in the first instance, to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Increase in Average Rent Costs

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Ferguson,
Seconded by Councillor Flynn,

That the motion be referred to the Council for debate, with no restrictions on the number of speakers.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Duffy,
Seconded by Councillor R.M. Donnelly,

That the motion be rejected.

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

Accordingly, the amendment was put as the substantive motion, with eight Members voting for and five against and it was declared carried.

Overdose Prevention Facility in Belfast

That the motion be referred to the Council for debate, with no restrictions on the number of speakers.

**Summary of NI Local Government Commissioner
for Standards Report "In the Matter of former
Councillor Declan Boyle", Belfast City Council**

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 a summary of the findings of the NI Local Government Commissioner for Standards Report ‘In the Matter of former Councillor Declan Boyle’.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that the Standards and Business Committee:

- note the findings of the NI Local Government Commissioner for Standards in the matter of former Councillor Boyle;
- agree the actions / recommended way forward outlined at paragraph 3.6

3.0 Main report

3.1 Summary of the complaint

The complaint against Former Councillor Boyle related to the suspected breach of the Code in relation to registration and declaration of both pecuniary and significant non-pecuniary interests and the requirement to withdraw from a meeting whilst such matters are being discussed.

In his Investigation Report, dated 11 July 2019, the Deputy Commissioner reported that he had found evidence that would point to former Councillor Boyle having failed to comply with the following code paragraphs:

- Paragraph 5.2 of the Code which requires that a councillor’s interests must be registered within 28 days of a councillor’s election.
- Paragraph 6.1 of the Code which requires the declaration of any pecuniary interest
- Paragraph 6.2 of the Code which states that a councillor must not speak or vote on a matter in which they have a pecuniary interest and must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is being discussed.
- Paragraph 6.3 which requires the declaration of any significant private or personal nonpecuniary interest.
- Paragraph 4.2, you must not conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing your position as a councillor, or your council, into disrepute.
- Paragraph 4.6 which requires a councillor to comply with any request of the Commissioner in connection with an investigation conducted in accordance with the Commissioner’s statutory powers.

The Deputy Commissioner acknowledged the Councillor Boyle's acceptance of breaches of paragraphs: 5.2, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 and 4.6 of the Code. Councillor Boyle did not accept that he had breached the Code of Conduct at Paragraph 4.2, you must not conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing your position as a councillor, or your council, into disrepute. The Deputy Commissioner was content not to pursue the alleged breach 4.2 of the Code.

Councillor Boyle acknowledged that breaches of the Code, whereby interests were not registered or declared, or where interests are declared but a councillor nevertheless remains at a meeting in full, do have the potential to impact on public trust and confidence in the councillor and the work of the Council as a whole.

3.2 Key Findings from the Commissioners' Report

The Acting Commissioner identified the following mitigating factors:

Mitigating factors

- a. Had no prior history of breaching the code.
- b. In general, he cooperated throughout the investigation process.
- c. It was his first and only term of office where the issues prompting the complaints occurred early in that term.
- d. There was some evidence of him honestly holding, although mistaken, a view that his actions did not constitute a failure to follow the provisions of the Code, particularly where such a view has been formed after taking appropriate advice.
- e. His conduct was driven by what he considered to be his adverse personal circumstances, namely a threat made to his and his family's safety some years prior to him becoming a councillor.
- f. Admission that he breached the Code, which contributed to an expeditious conclusion saving time and public money.

Aggravating Factors

- a. Three separate complaints were made, two by members of the public. The conduct was the subject of media reporting, so in the public view. This would not have inspired confidence in the role of Councillors.
- b. The requirement to declare his property holdings was raised with him on several occasions. Only he knew the

extent of his property holdings and this should have caused him to visit the Code on that aspect.

- c. The Acting Commissioner had considered the Commissioner's decision in the 2019 case of Mervyn Rea, concerning the importance of registering and declaring interests, where she said: 'The Commissioner wishes to highlight to councillors generally that a failure to declare a pecuniary interest (direct or indirect) may result in a sanction of disqualification. This is a serious conduct matter which is underpinned by section 28 of the Local Government Act 1972'.

Conclusions

Mr Boyle admitted the breaches of the Code and, regardless of the relevant mitigation, they were serious breaches which required an equally serious sanction. If he had still been a serving councillor, the Acting Commissioner would have suspended him from his role. Suspension would have been a proportionate sanction for his level of breach.

The Acting Commissioner said that only censure or disqualification was an outcome. If the respondent had still been a Councillor, the Acting Commissioner would have suspended him for 3 months.

The Acting Commissioner, with some hesitation, decided on censure as being more proportionate on the circumstances of Councillor Boyle's breaches of the Code.

The Acting Commissioner's decision, made under Section 59(3)(c) of Part 9 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, was to censure Councillor Boyle, in the strongest terms, about his failures in public office.

3.3 Key issues raised in the report

- Councillors must absolutely understand the Code and its Guidance. It is their public duty to do so and, whilst it is appropriate to take advice from officers, it is for Councillors to decide whether there is a conflict of interest.
- All Members are required to register their interests within 28 days and to update the register when circumstances change.
- Officers should ensure that any insufficiency in terms of what has been noted in the register should be brought to the attention of the relevant Member immediately.

- The Code requires that a Member must withdraw from a meeting whilst a matter in which a pecuniary interest has been declared is discussed.
- A failure to declare a pecuniary interest (direct or indirect) may result in a sanction of disqualification. This is a serious conduct matter which is underpinned by section 28 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- Such breaches of the Code, whereby interests are not registered or declared, or where interests are declared but a Member nevertheless remains at a meeting in full, do have the potential to impact on public trust and confidence in the councillor and the work of the council as a whole.
- The Code applies to Members at all meetings of the council, including AWGs. There is therefore the same requirement for Members at those meetings to declare all pecuniary and/or non-pecuniary interests and that all such declarations be recorded.
- There is an equal duty on Councils and their officers to ensure that Members are properly trained for their role, including regular refreshers, in part drawn on the outcomes of such Adjudication Hearings.

3.4 Previous guidance provided to Members

Members will note that the findings of the report confirm the guidance which has been provided previously to Members in relation to the registration and declaration of interests. A report setting out the position in relation to this issue was presented to SP&R Committee in October 2016.

Councillors are required to disclose, or to declare, their personal interests where they relate to a matter coming before a meeting of the council, including a meeting of a committee or a subcommittee.

The fact that a Councillor has disclosed an interest in the Register of Interests does not exempt the Councillor from a duty to declare the interest when it arises at a meeting of the Council.

The requirement to declare such relevant interests also applies in Area Working Groups, Members' dealings with council officers and in unofficial relations with other councillors.

The report indicates that Councillor Boyle correctly registered his interest in his properties in the Holylands area at a number of Council meetings and that this was in accordance with advice provided by the Chief Executive that he make declarations in respect of a specific geographical area in the city.

The report also makes reference to advice provided to Councillor Boyle by Council officials, including the Town Solicitor, that in circumstances where his properties would not benefit any more than other council constituent in relation to a proposal, then he did not need to make a declaration.

Members should note that the advice provided by the Town Solicitor was appropriate and remains valid. It is up to the individual Member to examine each specific matter in hand and to consider whether they have a direct or indirect pecuniary interest in the matter.

Members are reminded that any consideration as to whether to declare an interest (pecuniary or non-pecuniary) must not only be based on the individual member's opinion as to whether they would benefit or otherwise from participating in the discussion but must also consider whether the public perception would be that they might benefit or otherwise from participating.

3.5 Recommended Actions for the Council

Members are asked to agree to the following actions:

- This report will be circulated to all Members and also those officers who would normally be involved in the process of registering or declaring interests.
- Updated Written Guidance on the Declaration and Register of Interests will be provided to all Members and relevant officers
- Officers will deliver a refresher training session focusing on the Register and Declaration of Interests which will be available to all Members in advance of the next Local Government Election in 2023. A refresher will be offered to all new Members following the election as part of their induction process.

3.6 Financial and Resource Implications

No financial or resource implications attached to this report.

3.6 Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment

Any equality, good relations and rural needs assessments implications will be subject to the usual screening processes."

**Standards and Business Committee,
Tuesday, 21st February, 2023**

The Committee:

- noted the findings of the NI Local Government Commissioner for Standards in the matter of former Councillor Boyle; and
- agreed the actions / recommended way forward outlined in the report.

Chairperson

Overdose Prevention Facility in Belfast

'This Council supports the establishment of an Overdose Prevention Facility in Belfast. This Council will work with key partners in the community, voluntary and statutory sector to bring together a partnership to advocate for the establishment of an Overdose Prevention Facility (OPC) for the city. With almost 350 drug related deaths in the city from 2017-2021 and over 1,000 needles recovered each month, a facility like this will save lives and reduce the amount of discarded drug debris. There are over 200 Overdose Prevention Facilities in 14 countries across the world.

While we are conscious that the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 is an inhibitor to the establishment of this service and that it would require some form of special legal dispensation from the Act for the facility to be lawful, it is clear that current policy is not saving lives. In the absence of a local Assembly to deliver reform and innovation that can save vulnerable lives, this Council will act as a civic leader by requesting our City Solicitor and Chief Executive to engage with partners and to lobby Belfast Trust, PSNI, the Departments of Health and Justice and the Attorney General to make the case for special dispensation.

Proposer: Councillor Mal O'Hara

Seconder Councillor Brian Smyth

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