

# Public Document Pack

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



**Belfast  
City Council**

## **MEETING OF THE CLIMATE AND CITY RESILIENCE COMMITTEE**

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the Lavery Room - City Hall on Thursday, 14th March, 2024 at 5.15 pm, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

### **AGENDA:**

1. Routine Matters
  - (a) Apologies
  - (b) Minutes (Pages 1 - 6)
  - (c) Declarations of Interest
2. Presentation from Living with Water (LLW) Team Re: proposed changes to the LLW programme - Presentation by Simon Richardson and Stuart Wightman. (Pages 7 - 204)
3. Update on Heat Network - (Debbie Caldwell) (Pages 205 - 210)
4. Innovate UK Project - Belfast Net Zero Pathfinder - (Debbie Caldwell) (Pages 211 - 214)



## Climate and City Resilience Committee

Thursday, 8th February, 2024

### MEETING OF THE CLIMATE AND CITY RESILIENCE COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM AND  
REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor R-M Donnelly (Chairperson);  
Councillors Anglin, Bower, R. Brooks,  
T. Brooks, Carson, Collins, Doherty, M. Donnelly,  
D. Douglas, S. Douglas, Kelly, Long, McAteer,  
McCabe, McKeown, Smyth and Walsh.

In attendance: Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;  
Ms. D. Caldwell, Climate Commissioner;  
Ms. C. Shortt, Monitoring, Learning and Reporting Officer and  
Mr. G. Graham, Democratic Services Assistant.

### **Apologies**

Apologies were reported on behalf of Alderman Copeland and Councillor Bell.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 11th January, were taken as read and signed as correct subject to the amendment that Councillor Long was recorded as being in attendance at the meeting.

### **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Doherty declared an interest in that his employer had a collaborative business arrangement with Amazon Business Services (AWS).

### **Amazon Web Services – Climate Data Platform Challenge update**

Councillor Doherty declared an interest as indicated previously and removed himself from the meeting during discussion of this item.

Mr. Adrian Hanley, Local Government Account Manager, Amazon Web Services (AWS), attended in connection with this item and was welcomed by the Chairperson.

The Monitoring Learning and Reporting Officer acknowledged and thanked the teams, both from AWS and the University of Arizona, for their work in the development of a wireframe climate data capture platform. Mr. Hanley provided the Committee with an overview of the investment by AWS in the local economy, including their support provided to the business sector and charitable organisations. The Committee was informed of AWS's commitment to

**Climate and City Resilience Committee,  
Thursday, 8th February, 2024**

offer technical solutions to a wide range of business enterprises and also to the purchase of green energy, as part of their climate commitment, to reduce carbon emissions. He highlighted AWS's commitment to be one hundred per cent renewable, across the UK, by 2025.

Mr. Hanley reported that the Council had challenged AWS to provide a technical solution in regard to the collection, processing, analysis and communication of its climate data. To that end, the University of Arizona had been approached to develop a framework for the creation of a climate data platform using information provided by a range of teams, from across the Council, to ascertain its climate data collection and reporting requirements.

The Members were informed that, as part of that process, a seven-week engagement programme had taken place between Belfast City Council, stakeholders, AWS and the University of Arizona, to develop a prototype data capture platform. As part of the engagement programme, a graphical visual representation had been produced to illustrate how the climate data platform would be presented.

The Members were provided with an example of what a climate data platform might look like, including a range of categories which could be included with its format. Mr. Hanley provided information on the potential functionality of the data platform and how it could be used to simulate climate scenarios dependent on the input of various statistical data.

The Monitoring, Learning and Reporting Officer referred to the benefits of the climate data platform in communicating how the Council had performed, in terms of its climate ambitions, compared to other cities and stated that all data had been source identified and its integrity and accuracy verified.

In response to a question from a Member in regard to the timeline associated with the development of the data platform, the Monitoring, Learning and Reporting Officer stated that a business case was being prepared and that it was hoped that the software development team, within digital services, would be working on the development of a prototype climate platform, commencing in April 2024, using a range of data provided by the Council.

A Member requested information in regard to the installation of pop-up cycle lanes and the impact of that development on carbon emissions, specifically in regard to transport. In response, the Learning, Monitoring and Development Officer stated that, as the data was available a year after the data collection exercise had been completed, she would bring back information to the Committee after publication of the information requested.

In response to a further question from a Member in regard to the data platform being user friendly for those with disabilities, the Learning, Monitoring and Development Officer confirmed that, the Council had a statutory obligation to comply with its legal obligations in that regard

The Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Mr. Hanley for his detailed and informative presentation and he departed from the meeting.

Noted.

**Climate and City Resilience Committee,  
Thursday, 8th February, 2024**

**Shared Island Community Climate Action  
Fund (Strand 1a) (Restricted Item)**

The Director provided the Committee with an update in regard to the involvement of Belfast City Council under the Shared Island Funding Initiative. The Members were informed that Council officers had continued to work with partner Councils in the Republic of Ireland in order to explore and develop potential project areas in line with the Shared Island Programme.

The Members were provided with an outline of the brief attached to Strand 1a of the Shared Island Community Climate Action Fund which provided the opportunity for communities/local authorities to take forward cross-border climate action projects in partnership with organisations in Northern Ireland

The Committee was provided with an overview of the key elements which were eligible for funding under strand 1a, including the funding tiers which were available under the scheme and incorporating the contact details of those authorities and Community Climate Action Officers responsible for the projects and administration of the funding process.

Noted.

**Belfast Agenda refresh - update**

The Director provided the Committee with an update on the work which had been undertaken with stakeholders, as part of a community engagement programme in order to update priority action areas within the Belfast Agenda.

The Director highlighted the significant community engagement programme which had been undertaken to ensure that the priorities were consistent with the needs of the city and that it had both community and business support.

The Committee was provided with an outline of the detailed processes associated with each phase of the engagement and participation programme. The Director stated that the ethos associated with a compassionate city incorporated with inclusive growth were key components of the Belfast Agenda. The Members were informed of a major addition to Belfast Agenda, in terms of climate change, and the objective to achieve a reduction in carbon emissions by eighty per cent, by 2025.

The Director referred to the five themes contained within the Belfast Agenda comprising:

1. Our People and Communities
2. Our Economy
3. Our Place
4. Our Environment and
5. A Compassionate City

The Committee was informed that the Belfast Agenda did not sit in isolation from regional government policy and should be viewed in that context. The Director emphasised the importance attached to securing collaboration with partner organisations, including the

**Climate and City Resilience Committee,  
Thursday, 8th February, 2024**

Executive, to deal with issues such as health inequality and Community and Neighbourhood Regeneration, alongside ensuring a just transition to net-zero.

The Climate Commissioner highlighted a range of interventions which had been undertaken, as part of the Climate agenda including, the “Our Planet” area of focus, including decarbonisation projects. She referred also to the delivery of two retrofit projects in deprived areas and the operation of the Artemis net-zero ferry service.

The Climate Commissioner reinforced the need to ensure a just transition to net zero and of the need to ensure that both the public and business sectors and society, in general, were on board if behavioural change to achieve net-zero was to be achieved.

The Director reported that it was anticipated to launch the Belfast Agenda refresh on 20th March 2024 and emphasised the need for a multi-agency collaborative approach if the ambitions with the Belfast Agenda were to be realised and targets met.

In response to a question from a Member, as to reason for the restriction of the item under the heading, ‘Shared Island Community Climate Action Fund’, the Director agreed that it would be possible to disaggregate the report to exclude the commercially sensitive elements and present the modified report to a future meeting of the Committee, in a non-restricted format.

In response to a further question in regard to the lack of infrastructure for electric vehicle charging and what the Council might do to support infrastructure in that regard, the Climate Commissioner reported that the nature of lease agreements and revenue streams associated with EV charging required to be considered at a strategic level and agreed to report back to the Committee, at a future date, on how the issue identified might be progressed.

A Member raised the issue of support for community energy projects the subject matter of which which the Member had submitted a previous motion to the Council. The Member requested information on how such projects could be developed, with particular reference to the most economically and socially deprived areas of the city. In response, the Climate Commissioner stated that she would submit a report to a future meeting of the Committee on how the Council might expand and develop those projects in an endeavour to support a just transition and meet its net zero commitments.

A Member raised a question in regard to how the city might incorporate its ambitions to become net-zero, within the Belfast Agenda, and highlighted its success, to date, in that regard. In response, the Director reported that the carbon disclosure project, which had provided the city an ‘A’ rating, was a major achievement towards the recognition of the city’s green credentials. The Committee was reminded of the ‘Pathway to net zero’ being an integral part of the Belfast Agenda. The Climate Commissioner reported also that Belfast was rated eleventh in the global sustainability index, which sent a clear and unequivocal message of the city’s commitment to a sustainable, net-zero economy.

In response to a request from a Member to have a simplified graphical representation of where the Council was on its various themes contained within the Belfast Agenda and prior to a the publication of a comprehensive dashboard, the Climate Commissioner reported that, in tandem with the development of a detailed climate dashboard, the Council had undertaken

**Climate and City Resilience Committee,  
Thursday, 8th February, 2024**

an annual review of this progress, on its range of climate ambitions, to the Climate and Sustainability Board, which would be available for the Committee's consideration. The Director informed the Members that the Corporate Performance Management Framework was being amended and would provide a valuable insight into the Council and the progress made to deliver its climate ambitions.

Noted.

Chairperson

This page is intentionally left blank



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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank



# Agenda Item 3



**Belfast**  
City Council

CLIMATE & CITY RESILIENCE COMMITTEE

<b>Subject:</b>	Heat Network Update
<b>Date:</b>	14 March 2024
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Tully, Director Organisational and City Strategy
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Debbie Caldwell, Belfast Climate Commissioner

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</b>	
Insert number <input type="checkbox"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Information relating to any individual</li><li>2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual</li><li>3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li><li>4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter</li><li>5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained</li><li>6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction</li><li>7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</li></ol>	
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
------------	---

1.1	To provide members with an update on the market engagement conducted to date on a potential heat network in Belfast.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to note that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. an internal Heat Network Working Group has been established to inform the development of the Councils approach to incentivising the development of a heat network in Belfast;</li> <li>II. the Group will identify and invite public sector bodies owning buildings in the city centre with a high heat demand to express an interest to engage in further discussions and market engagement as potential heat off-takers;</li> <li>III. the Group will work organise a series of roundtable discussions with potential off-takers, heat developers, investors and other key stakeholders to explore the development of a heat network;</li> <li>IV. the Group will appoint a commercial and legal advisor (subject to SP&amp;R approval) to support the market engagement, advise on legislative and regulatory requirements, potential delivery models and procurement implications; and</li> <li>V. the Group will appoint a technical advisor (subject to SP&amp;R approval) to support the market engagement and advise on technical requirements.</li> </ol>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b>Background</b></p> <p>Belfast has a high dependence on gas and oil for heating buildings across the city and low levels of insulation which is contributing to high emissions of greenhouse gas and high levels of fuel poverty exacerbated by the energy and cost of living crisis. Unlike power and transport, decarbonising heat in buildings can be challenging due to age and quality of the building stock.</p>
3.2	<p>Globally there is a trend towards low carbon district heat networks particularly in dense urban areas like Belfast as a way of tackling fuel poverty and reducing emissions. Belfast's high density of buildings and heat load make it ideal for a heat network – with a potential to supply &gt;2500GWh of heat from low carbon heating. Not surprisingly, heat networks have emerged as a cost-effective measure to decarbonise the city and create employment in the Local Area Energy Plan (due for completion in March 2024).</p>
3.3	<p>A heat network would make a significant contribution to Belfast's emission reduction targets – 66% reduction by 2025; 80% by 2030; 100% by 2050 and also to Northern Ireland's "net-zero" emissions target of 2050. It would also reduce exposure of households and local businesses to price volatility from imported fossil fuels as well as reduce fuel poverty.</p>
3.4	<p>The key components of a heat network include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Energy Centre to produce heat centrally and heat water to ~80°C.</li> <li>2. Pipework to transport the hot water from the energy centre to the buildings.</li> <li>3. Customers (buildings) to buy heat from the Heat Network – each building has a Heat Interface Units which extract heat from the Network.</li> </ol>
3.5	<p>Various low carbon technology options exist including: geothermal, water source heat pump, air source heat pump etc. Heat networks tend to be marginal investments with high upfront costs. Viability can be increased by using waste heat from industrial processes or a direct wire to a wind or solar facility which reduces the electricity costs of heating the water. Multiple revenue streams can be generated from by producing cooling as well as heat and through grid constraint payments.</p>
3.6	<p>A small BCC Working Group has been established to help support delivery including representatives from the Climate Team, Procurement, Physical Programmes, and Legal</p>

	<p>Services. The purpose of the working group is to inform and lead on the development of the Councils approach to incentivising the development of a heat network in Belfast. The intention is to identify the most cost-effective route to incentivise investment in a heat network whilst also building social value and a wide range of benefits for Belfast to include but not restricted to reducing fuel poverty, reducing emissions, creating a secure, stable and affordable supply of low carbon heat, creating jobs and apprenticeships. An update on the market engagement conducted to date is provided below.</p>
3.7	<p><b>Importance of off-takers in incentivising investment</b></p>
	<p>Early market engagement has continued with a range of stakeholders including institutional investors, heat developers, potential heat off-takers, other Councils and legal and commercial firms to understand how a heat network could be developed. This builds on earlier conversations with councils and the UK Infrastructure Bank and a survey of public buildings which could serve as anchor loads for an initial 10km network with 150GWh of heat (estimated to require an investment of approximately £150-200 million).</p>
3.8	<p>Institutional investors have advised that off-taker heat agreements are critical to securing investment. A survey of 27 public sector bodies suggests there is the potential to use large public buildings in the city centre as an initial base load for an initial 10km network with 150GWh of heat (estimated to require an investment of approximately £150-200 million).</p>
3.9	<p>The top 10 of these sites account for 70% of this group's heat consumption. A small group of off-takers with a significant combined heat demand could therefore be sufficient to incentivise private sector investment in a heat network. This would unlock further investment into deprived areas with high levels of fuel poverty.</p>
	<p><b>Additional factors that make a heat network attractive to investors</b></p>
3.10	<p>Early market engagement with heat developers suggests strong private sector interest to invest in a heat network with a strong market preference to design, invest, develop and operate a heat network. Engagement suggests the following measures would make a heat network more financially viable and attractive to private sector investment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provision of land for an energy centre;</li> <li>• provision of grant finance;</li> <li>• source(s) of waste heat which could be added to the network reducing the energy required to raise temperature to 60°C.</li> </ul>
3.11	<p>However, there is still no financial support available for heat schemes in Northern Ireland. Nor is there a regulatory system in place at present although DFE have set up a Heat Networks Stakeholder Group to provide input on Heat Networks consultation drafts and issues which is attended by the Climate Commissioner.</p>
	<p><b>Potential delivery models</b></p>
3.12	<p>Various delivery models exist for heat networks – usually driven by local authorities. These include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. LA raises funds, owns and operates the scheme with delivery partners.</li> <li>2. LA procures a strategic energy partner to develop energy projects within Belfast eg Bristol.</li> <li>3. Joint venture between LA and one or more equity partners who co-develop the project eg Coventry.</li> <li>4. LA and other public sector partners seek a 15 year Heat Supply Agreement from the market for an affordable low carbon low carbon heat supply. Developer invests capex and then develops and operates the scheme eg Bradford.</li> </ol>

3.13	Developers and investors are open to JV arrangements with the Council. However, our initial engagement with the Councils above and a number of legal and commercial firms specialising in complex energy projects suggests that no. 4 is the quickest route to market and simplest way to incentivise a heat network.
3.14	Heat network development is complex requiring specialist expertise and Councils in England that are involved in heat network development have tended to appoint both Technical and Commercial consultants to advise in advance of and during procurement.
3.15	<p><b>Creating a group of potential off-takers</b></p> <p>Recognising that the combined heat demand from buildings owned by the public sector provides significant heat purchasing power, it is proposed to invite public sector bodies with buildings located in the city centre with a significant heat demand, that would seriously consider connecting to a heat network if it were available, to take part in the next phase of market engagement.</p>
3.16	<p>By working together with other public bodies, the Council can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide a combined heat load to attract high quality investors and heat developers enabling an off-balance sheet solution</li> <li>• achieve an affordable and sustainable tariff for heat that reduces over time as more buildings connect to the heat network</li> <li>• be part of the governance structures that determine future growth of the network ensuring that the network can reduce fuel poverty and other social goals</li> </ul>
3.17	<p>Joining forces would also enable the partners to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pool expertise from within each organisation (technical, legal, commercial, financial etc.)</li> <li>• define and communicate off-taker needs in a transparent way to the market</li> <li>• develop an understanding of best practice in heat network development</li> <li>• gain exposure to the range of technical solutions available</li> <li>• Identify the optimum commercial and legal arrangements.</li> </ul>
3.18	<p><b>Update on funding to support project development</b></p> <p>Some of the funding (£150K) recently secured from Innovate UK under the Net Zero Living Pathfinders competition will be used to determine the commercial viability and routes to finance for the heat network. This will include business model analysis (value and finance flows) and defining the optimum legal and commercial arrangements for BCC to catalyse investment. More details of the project are provided in a separate paper - the key point is that there is now an additional financial resource available to support the development of a heat network.</p>
3.19	<p><b>Next steps</b></p> <p>Potential off-takers will be invited to a meeting to: share information and understand the level of interest to engage in further discussions and explore the potential for using the combined heat demand of all interested potential off-takers to incentivise private sector investment in a sustainable, local carbon heat network. The Working group will then:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. organise a series of roundtable discussions with potential off-takers, heat developers, investors and other key stakeholders to explore the development of a heat network.</li> <li>2. appoint a commercial and legal advisor to support the market engagement, advise on legislative and regulatory requirements, potential delivery models and procurement implications;</li> </ol>



This page is intentionally left blank

# Agenda Item 4



**Belfast**  
City Council

CLIMATE & CITY RESILIENCE COMMITTEE

<b>Subject:</b>	Innovate UK Project – Belfast Net Zero Pathfinder
<b>Date:</b>	14 March 2024
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Tully, Director Organisational and City Strategy
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Debbie Caldwell, Belfast Climate Commissioner

**Restricted Reports**

**Is this report restricted?** Yes  No

**Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.**

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

**If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?**

<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sometime in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Call-in**

**Is the decision eligible for Call-in?** Yes  No

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To provide members with an overview on the Belfast Net Zero Pathfinder project.

<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to note that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. funding (£150K) has been secured from the Innovate UK Net Zero Living Pathfinders competition to deliver the Belfast Net Zero Pathfinder project;</li> <li>II. the project will de-risk two of the priority projects identified by the city's Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) and the Decarbonisation Plan for Queens Island (QIDP) area of Belfast;</li> <li>III. the project will enable Belfast to act immediately upon delivery of the LAEP and QIDP to progress two projects using a whole systems approach to decarbonise a local area while also delivering wider benefits to local communities;</li> <li>IV. the funding also allows BCC to intensify its collaboration with ESC to provide a pathway to delivery of the LAEP and the QIDP in partnership with other key stakeholders.</li> </ol>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b>Background</b></p> <p>Belfast City Council (BCC) is in the process of finalising two strategic energy masterplans for the local area to achieve a cost effective and socially just net zero energy system whilst realising co-benefits for the local stakeholders:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Belfast Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP); and</li> <li>2. Queens Island Decarbonisation Plan (QIDB).</li> </ol>
3.2	<p>These plans are innovative because they take a whole energy system approach and provide recommendations for decarbonisation pathway planning. The 'Belfast Net Zero pathfinder' project will focus on overcoming the non-technical barriers that impede the implementation of the LAEP and QIDP (see below). The objective is to accelerate and de-risk the delivery of two priority decarbonisation projects identified in the LAEP and QIDP, specifically: 1) a heat network, and 2) a solar PV renewable power project. The project will run for one year from 1<sup>st</sup> June.</p>
3.3	<p>The project builds on the outcomes of Belfast's phase 1 Pathfinder feasibility study which included provision to utilise Belfast's LAEP and the QIDP to support a whole systems approach to transition the city to net zero. These plans, due for completion in March 2024, provide detailed modelling and analysis of the city's energy system and identify priority decarbonisation projects for immediate implementation.</p>
3.4	<p>The project will focus on overcoming the following non-technical barriers to the delivery of the two decarbonisation projects identified in the LAEP and QIDP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low maturity / readiness of market/supply chain to progress net zero innovation;</li> <li>• Insufficient capacity of the Council to progress decarbonisation projects;</li> <li>• Lack of business model clarity (e.g. off-taker arrangements) that enable an attractive value proposition to investors;</li> <li>• Limited understanding of the optimum legal and commercial arrangements for Council to engage with private sector to enable net zero projects; and</li> <li>• Public resistance to decarbonisation projects and their impact on the local area.</li> </ul>
3.5	<p>Energy modelling and stakeholder engagement (from the LAEP and QIDP both due for completion by March 2024) has identified these two projects as cost effective and deliverable interventions that could deliver significant energy savings and emission reductions while also unlocking growth and job opportunities across the city.</p>



3.6	Tackling these non-technical barriers will enable Belfast to progress two priority projects using a whole systems approach to decarbonise the local area while also delivering wider benefits to local communities.
3.7	By accelerating and de-risking the delivery of two priority decarbonisation projects identified in the LAEP and QIDP, the project will support ongoing efforts by the Council and its partners to reduce emissions from the city's built environment which is the largest source of emissions in the City.
3.8	The project is also resourced to support knowledge exchange through online workshops and participation in the Thriving Places cohort which acts as an enabler for validation and replication of solutions at scale across the UK.
3.9	<p>Project activities include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Project Assessment <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Determine objectives for two priority decarbonisation projects (heat network and solar PV) from the LAEP / QIDP</li> <li>b. Analysis of non-technical barriers to delivery (above)</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Assess the maturity / readiness of market actors (potential off-takers, investors etc) to engage and deliver low-carbon projects</li> <li>3. Develop capacity of key stakeholders including Council to take forward LAEP / QIDP outputs</li> <li>4. Commercial viability and routes to finance <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Business model analysis (value and finance flows)</li> <li>b. Define optimum legal and commercial arrangements for Belfast City Council (BCC) to catalyse investment - this will enhance the capacity of BCC to engage the private sector in developing and delivering complex clean energy projects.</li> </ol> </li> <li>5. Identify opportunities for downstream investments to upskill and empower excluded groups and communities through consultation and engagement</li> <li>6. Assess economic, environmental and social impacts of the interventions</li> </ol>
3.10	The funding also provides a unique opportunity to better understand the opportunities for excluded groups to engage with and benefit from Net Zero projects. WP5 will specifically identify opportunities for communities to benefit so that project delivery supports shared outcomes across a range of stakeholders.
3.11	<p>Key metrics to be tracked on a bi-monthly basis will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project assessment report</li> <li>• Market readiness report</li> <li>• Business model analysis report</li> <li>• Report on legal / commercial arrangements</li> <li>• Number of staff expressing increased competency in progressing projects</li> <li>• Opportunities assessment report</li> <li>• Impact assessment report</li> </ul>
3.12	Insights / recommendations will be delivered through reports and outputs shared via a series of roundtables and workshops.
3.13	Funding for this project will enable BCC to act immediately upon delivery of its energy masterplans removing any inertia and uncertainty that could suppress progress. Effective delivery of these projects will bring long-term benefit to local communities through new economic opportunities and jobs. ESC and other providers will also replicate the insights and

	<p>across ongoing decarbonisation planning activities with an immediate benefit to stakeholders in the applicable local areas.</p>
3.14	<p>This funding allows BCC to intensify its collaboration with ESC to provide a pathway to delivery of the LAEP and the QIDP in partnership with other key stakeholders. The project will arm key stakeholders with the knowledge, analysis and tools to move beyond BAU to translate the plans into concrete projects and achieve the city's net zero ambitions.</p>
3.15	<p>Economic, environmental and social impacts from this funding are expected to be positive due to the displacement of fossil fuels from the energy system and the growth of indigenous renewable energy generation and associated supply chains.</p>
3.16	<p>The project will be delivered by the Climate team in partnership with the Energy Systems Catapult (ESC). ESC and BCC already have a strong working relationship with ESC currently delivering the LAEP and QIDP in collaboration with BCC. ESC also developed the Belfast feasibility study as Phase 1 of the Net Zero Pathfinder project in 2023.</p>
3.17	<p><b>Next steps</b></p> <p>The project team will be mobilised during May ahead of the project start date on 1<sup>st</sup> June. An update will be brought back to Committee in due course.</p>
	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p>
3.18	<p>None</p>
	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p>
3.20	<p>Under WP4 the question of 'who benefits?' from each business model will be addressed enabling Equality, Diversity and Inclusion aspects to be incorporated into downstream investments. Intelligence around diversity, inclusion, fairness and equality in the projects impact on the transition to net zero will also be integrated into the project under WP6.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<p><b>Appendices - Documents Attached</b></p>
	<p>None</p>