

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 24th October, 2025

HYBRID MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Brennan (Chairperson);
Alderman McCoubrey; and
Councillors Beattie, Black, Bunting, Cobain,
R-M Donnelly, Ferguson, Garrett,
Long, Maghie, McDonough-Brown, I. McLaughlin,
R. McLaughlin, Murphy, Nelson, Ó Néill,
Smyth and Whyte.

In attendance: Mr. J. Walsh, Chief Executive;
Ms. S. McNicholl, Deputy Chief Executive/Director
of Corporate Services;
Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and
Civic Services;
Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Property and Projects;
Mr. D. Martin, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;
Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and
Development;
Mr. T. Wallace, Director of Finance;
Mr. J. Girvan, Director of Neighbourhood Services;
Ms. C. Sheridan, Director of Human Resources;
Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;
Ms. W. Langham, Programme Director (Belfast Stories)
Ms. E. Henry, Creative and Strategic Lead (Belfast Stories)
Mr. K. Heaney, Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty;
Ms. L-A O'Donnell, Senior Manager - Culture and Tourism;
Mr. J. Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance
Manager; and
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services and
Governance Coordinator.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor de Faoite.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 19th and 26th September 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 October, 2025, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Rois-Marie Donnelly declared an interest under item 7. (a) Minutes of Shared City Partnership in so far as it related to PEACEPLUS in that she worked for an organisation which was funded under the Programme. As the item did not become the subject of debate, she was not required to leave the meeting.

In relation to Item 2. (c) Update of Hardship Programme and 4. (b) Additional Budget Social Supermarket Fund 25/26, Councillor Beattie declared an interest associated with a group/organisation which had applied for or received funding and left the meeting whilst the items were under consideration.

Councillor Smyth declared an interest regarding 7. (a) Minutes of Shared City Partnership in so far as his child was a member of the Rosario Youth Football Club. As the item did not become the subject of debate, he was not required to leave the meeting.

In relation to Item 2. (c) Update of Hardship Programme, Councillor McDonough-Brown declared an interest in that his partner worked for one of the organisations which had received funding and left the meeting whilst the item was under consideration.

Councillor Long declared an interest under item 9. (a) Levels of criminality and violence in the City Centre in that his wife was the Justice Minister and left the meeting whilst the item was under consideration.

Councillor I. McLaughlin declared an interest under item 6. (b) Requests for Funding in that he was associated with the Greater Shankill Partnership and left the meeting whilst the item was under consideration.

Request to Present - Northern Ireland Water

The Committee agreed to receive a presentation from Northern Ireland Water at its meeting on 21st November.

Restricted Items

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

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

The Members were advised that content of 'restricted' reports and any discussion which takes place during closed session must be treated as 'confidential information' and no such information should be disclosed to the public as per Paragraph 4.15 of the Code of Conduct.

**Revenue Estimates 2026/27 and
Medium-Term Financial Planning**

The Committee considered an update on the key issues influencing the rate setting process for 2026/27 and the development of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan for 2026/27 - 2029/30.

The Committee:

- noted the challenges since the last update to be taken into consideration as part of the annual and medium-term rate setting; and
- agreed to monthly rate update reports to enable the striking of the district rate by February 2026.

Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann

The Strategic Director of Place and Economy and Senior Manager - Culture and Tourism provided an update on the planning to support the hosting of Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in Belfast in August 2026.

During discussion, the Senior Manager, Culture and Tourism, advised that the membership of the Executive Committee could be extended to a representative of the Irish Language organisations and that information regarding the Community Sessions would be shared with the Committee.

The Committee:

- Noted the update in relation to the proposed approach to programming;
- Noted the update and in relation to approach to engagement;
- Noted the update in regard to emerging additional medical support requirements and associated references to procurement; and
- Approved attendance of the Lord Mayor and senior officials at the 2026 US Comhaltas Convention and the early release of budget to Ards CCE to allow early booking of flights and accommodation.

Update on Hardship Programme

The Committee was provided with an update on the implementation of the £1.1m 2024-25 Hardship Programme, which sought to help alleviate the impact of poverty and the cost-of-living on vulnerable people across the city, together with an update on the current budget position.

The Committee:

- i. Noted the contents of this report, including the update on the implementation and impact of the 2024/25 Hardship Programme;
- ii. Noted the vastly reduced budget position of £75,000 for the development and delivery of a Hardship Programme in 2025/26 and agreed to the proposed allocations as set out 3.10 of the report;
- iii. Noted the publication of a 'Cost-of-Living Support Guide', attached at appendix 2, and that digital and hard copies would be made available to members; and
- iv. Agreed that the Council write to the Minister for Communities to outline the concerns of the Committee for future support for the Hardship Programme and requested that funding was provided.

City Centre Regeneration Scheme
(Assembly Rooms)

The Committee considered a report in relation to various matters associated with the acquisition of the Assembly Rooms and adjacent properties following a number of Council decisions, and an update in relation to the wider site.

During discussion, the Director of City Regeneration and Development advised that a tour of the site could be arranged in the future.

The Committee noted the following in relation to the acquisition of the Assembly Rooms Cluster and the emerging proposals in respect of the wider site:

- I. the update on the acquisition of the Assembly Rooms Cluster;
- II. the emerging work on the Visioning and Future Use Strategy and agreed that a workshop was convened with Members to input into this and commence the process for consideration of the future uses for the Assembly Rooms Cluster; and
- III. the ongoing work with World Monuments Fund, including potential for assistance with a Conservation Management Plan in partnership with the Council and funding to assist with essential weather proofing works.

Update on Employees on Temporary Contracts
and Agency Workers - Quarter Two

The Director of Human Resources provided an update on the number of employees on temporary contracts, secondments and the number of agency assignees.

During discussion, in response to Members' questions in relation to the provision of Agency Resources, the Director of Human Resources advised that multi-year

agreement options could be considered for the tenders which had been outlined in the report, together with a re-examination of an in-house agency model and a detailed Workforce Supply Strategy.

After discussion, the Committee noted the contents of the report.

**Additional Item - Display of materials
in all council assets**

Councillor Beattie raised concern regarding the UNISON Annual Conference which was currently being held at the ICC. He raised questions in relation to the request by UNISON to display graphics on directional screens located in corridors and reception areas of the venue at their event, which had been declined by the ICC.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Beattie,
Seconded by Councillor R-M Donnelly

That the Committee agrees to adjourn the meeting for one hour to allow the Chief Executive to request further information on the matter and report back to Committee.

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

(The Committee stood adjourned from 11.05 a.m. – 12.33 p.m.)

The Chief Executive provided an update on the matter.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Nelson,
Seconded by Councillor Long and

Resolved - That the Committee agrees that a review and development of the policy framework be undertaken to clarify guidance on any future display of materials in all Council assets, including community centres, and submitted to a future meeting of the Committee for consideration.

Organisational Reviews and Change Programme

The Committee considered an update for the Organisational Reviews and Change Portfolio projects, together with the requests for additional posts.

The Committee:

- Noted the progress on the work programme for the Organisational Reviews and Change Portfolio and timescales going forward;

- Approved an increase to the Corporate Services Business Support establishment headcount; and
- Approved an increase to the Culture Unit establishment headcount.

Belfast Stories Update

The Programme Director (Belfast Stories) and Creative and Strategic Lead (Belfast Stories) presented an update on the design development and progress of the Belfast Stories Project, together with key programme milestones.

Proposal

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

That the Committee approve the recommendations (points 1-7) as outlined in the report and agrees not to proceed with the following recommendations (points 8 – 9), namely:

- to undertake design development to include enhanced studio provision (Media Production Studio) in the planning application for the Belfast Stories scheme and to complete an addendum to the Outline Business Case to include the Media Production Studio; and
- to the financing of the additional capital costs associated with the Media Production Studio as set out at 3.31, subject to legal agreements and the approval by Council and the Department for Economy of an addendum to the Belfast Stories Outline Business Case.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Maghie,
Seconded by Councillor Smyth,

That the Committee approve the recommendations (points 1-7) as outlined in the report and agrees:

- to undertake design development to include enhanced studio provision (Media Production Studio) in the planning application for the Belfast Stories scheme and to complete an addendum to the Outline Business Case to include the Media Production Studio, **subject to future consideration by the Committee**; and
- Defer consideration of the recommendation 'to the financing of the additional capital costs associated with the Media Production Studio as set out at 3.31, subject to legal agreements and the approval by Council and the Department for Economy of an addendum to the Belfast Stories Outline Business Case' so that a

report on Community Consultation can be submitted to the Committee in December.

On a vote, eight Members voted for the proposal and eight against. There being an equality of votes, the Chairperson exercised her second and casting vote against the proposal and it was subsequently declared lost.

The original proposal standing in the name of Councillor Beattie and seconded by Councillor R. McLaughlin was put to the meeting when eight Members voted for it and eight against. There being an equality of votes, the Chairperson exercised her second and casting vote for the proposal and it was subsequently declared carried.

Accordingly, the Committee:

1. Noted the progress made to complete RIBA stage 2;
2. Noted the key programme milestones in RIBA stage 3, including the development of an Inclusive Growth Plan by January 2026 and the submission of the planning application in February 2026;
3. Agreed to Party Briefings during the consultation period to include updated designs and inclusive growth proposals;
4. Agreed to proceed with the programme of work, including obtaining specialist legal and financial advice to support the further assessment of options for the operator model for Belfast Stories;
5. Agreed to progress the setting up of a charitable entity focussed on the collection and preservation of stories with an update and detailed recommendations to be brought back to a future meeting following further legal advice;
6. Approved the Ethical Framework as set out in Appendix 2 and agreed to proceed with the Stories Initiatives as part of the Stories Development Programme as outlined in Section 3.19 – 3.21 and Appendix 3; and
7. Agreed to convene an advisory Stories Panel in line with the terms of reference set out at Appendix 4, subject to approval by Committee of membership following an Expression of Interest process.

Supporting Area-based Community Planning and Community Wealth Building

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on a proposed way forward to design, develop and resource area-based community planning alongside enabling communities to bring forward proposals to transform local places through demonstrator projects and community wealth building initiatives.

The Committee:

Community Ownership

- i. noted the positive feedback received from the recent Party Group briefings.
- ii. Agreed the detailed proposals relating to the creation of the £1.5million 'Community Ownership Fund' as set out at in 3.5 to 3.13 of the report. The proposals related to:
 - Purpose and scope of the fund.
 - Guiding principles which would underpin the fund, including, for example, that it was an 'open call' process and would not result in any ongoing revenue costs for the council.
 - Funding allocation model - proportionate allocation across the city (North, South, East, West, Greater Shankill) based on deprivation and population.
 - Whether a 10% of any area allocation be made available to support feasibility studies as agreed through the Area Working Groups and the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.
 - The types of projects that could be supported through the fund.
 - Who was eligible and who was not eligible to apply to the fund.

The process for consideration and approval – including the role of the Members Area Working Group making recommendations to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration and final approval.

Area-based community planning

- iii. noted the work currently underway across the city in relation to the development of Area-Based Plans and the different stages of maturity which existed;
- iv. In relation to existing area-based plans (including the 'Made in North Belfast' plan and 'Greater Shankill: A Plan to Grow' plan), it was agreed that the Council indicate that it continued to be supportive of the ambition and approach adopted to developing the plan, however, would not be in a position to endorse the plans in totality as many of the proposals had possible financial and resources implications for the Council that would remain subject to established governance and decision-making processes;
- v. agreed that officer representation on any emerging oversight structures linked to community-led area-based plans be agreed on the basis of the principles set out at para 3.24;
- vi. agreed the proposed approach to supporting area-based community planning, as set out at paras. 3.34 -3.40, which would enable the council

to effectively manage its role in supporting the development of such plans as well as delivery of demonstrator projects;

- vii. agreed the funding allocation model as set out at para. 3.39 (e.g. proportionate allocation based on population and levels of deprivation), noting that this was applicable for this current funding allocation and was subject to review if there was additional future funding;
- viii. agreed proposed governance and assurance arrangements as set out at para. 3.41;
- ix. noted the importance and evolving nature of the city centre in terms of residential development and new communities alongside existing communities, and agreed that consideration be given to how an area-based planning approach could be brought forward and the role of elected members and council in facilitating this process;
- x. noted the work underway to start to collate and map existing and/or emerging investments and initiatives by council delivered on an area basis across the city;
- xi. noted continued work of officers engaging with NICS depts, including, but not limited to, DFC and TEO, to actively explore opportunities to leverage additional funding into supporting this process; and
- xii. agreed that engagement takes place with members through Party Group briefings in relation to the possible development of a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) framework. This engagement would be based on the further development of the draft framework considered by the Social Policy Working Group.

FIFA Women's World Cup

The Committee:

- noted the update regarding the UK bid to host the FIFA Women's World Cup in 2035, including legal consultation and development of budget projections; and
- approved the formal commitment to the Host City legal obligations (should the Bid be successful and Belfast is confirmed as a host city for 2035).

EV Update - EV Charging Network on Council sites and Depot Charging Scheme

The Director of Property and Projects updated the Committee on the progress towards an EV Charging Network on Council sites, specifically the implementation Land Assets Assessment (Council sites) and Commercial Agreements. She also sought approval to submit an application for funding to the Government's Depot Charging Scheme.

Proposal

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

That the Committee agrees to defer consideration of the tender process so that a wider list of proposed Phase One sites across the city could be submitted to the Committee.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Long,
Seconded by Councillor Maghie,

That the Committee agrees that officers begin the tender process based on a Concession Operating model as outlined in the report and defer consideration of the specific locations of the proposed Phase One sites so that a broader list could be submitted to the Committee.

On a vote, eight Members voted for the proposal and eight against it. There being an equality of votes, the Chairperson exercised her second and casting vote against the amendment and it was subsequently declared lost.

The original proposal standing in the name of Councillor Beattie and seconded by Councillor R. McLaughlin was put to the meeting and passed.

Accordingly, the Committee:

EV Charging Network on Council Sites

- Noted progress to date; and
- Agreed to defer consideration of the tender process so that a wider list of proposed Phase One sites across the city could be submitted to the Committee.

Depot Charging Scheme

- Approved the submission of an application for funding under the Government's Depot Charging System.

**North Foreshore - Giant's Park Belfast
Limited: Leisure Led Development Update**

The Committee considered an update on the leisure led commercial brief by Giant's Park Belfast Limited at the North Foreshore.

The Committee approved the amendments to the leisure led development proposal at North Foreshore to extend the distribution and logistics offering and to relocate pitstop proposals into the Welcome Hub, subject to detailed terms to be agreed by the Estates Manager and Head of Legal Services.

Matters referred back from Council/Motions

**Motion Update - National Famine
Commemoration Day**

The Committee was advised that a response had been received in relation to a motion regarding Belfast's hosting of the National Famine Commemoration in 2027, which provided further detail on the application process.

The Committee noted the response on behalf of the Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

**Correspondence - Translink –
Belfast Grand Central Station Update**

It was reported that responses had been received from both the Minister for Infrastructure and Translink in relation to the Council's correspondence which had requested consideration of a scheme that would reduce fares to encourage the use of public transport and reduce traffic congestion during the Christmas period in 2025.

The Committee welcomed the update on the public realm works and intended traffic measures which had been outlined.

The Committee noted the correspondence as set out in the report and agreed to write to the Minister for Infrastructure to request a reduction of transport fares for the Christmas period in 2026.

Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues

Belfast Agenda Statement of Progress

The Committee was provided with an update on the Community Planning Partnership's (CPP) development and forthcoming publication of a Belfast Agenda Statement of Progress and accompanying Data Insights Report for the period November 2023-November 2025, which was a legislative requirement for the Council and its community planning partners.

The Committee:

1. noted the statutory requirement for the Community Planning Partnership to publish a Statement of Progress (SoP) for the period November 2023- November 2025;
2. noted the engagement undertaken with and input from community planning partners in developing the draft SoP ([Appendix 1](#));

3. noted the inclusion and contents of the Population Indicator Data Insight Report and the intention to include this with the SoP and all Statements going forward (available via [CLICK HERE](#)); and
4. agreed that the final SoP, taking account of feedback received from Members and community planning partners, be submitted to the Department of Communities.

**Additional Budget Social
Supermarket Fund 2025/26**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek members approval on the allocation of an additional budget of £100,000 to increase the funding allocation to projects supported through the 25/26 Social Supermarket Fund (SSF).

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 Members are asked to;

- approve the allocation of an additional budget of £100,000 to increase the funding allocation to projects supported through the 25/26 Social Supermarket Fund (SSF).
- Approve that this will be allocated on an equal basis to each funded organisation
- Grant delegated authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to make awards on the basis of the approvals above.

3.0 Main Report

Background

- 3.1 At September SP&R meeting members approved the approach for the delivery of the 26/27 Social Supermarket Fund grant programme.
- 3.2 During the meeting, it was recognised that social supermarket projects make a significant contribution to addressing issues of poverty and supporting families and individuals in need. The committee recommended that officers should explore if an additional budget of £100,000 could be made available to support current projects in the 25/26 year.

- 3.3 The finance director has confirmed that this budget is available from in year underspends.**

Members will be aware that funding in 25/26 is being provided to 19 projects who were supported in 24/25. It is recommended that given the relatively low level of additional budget that this will provide for individual projects, the increase should be allocated on an equal basis to all 19 projects. This would provide £5,263 for each project.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.4 All activity outlined in this report can be delivered through existing staff resources. Current funding of £777,811 is available for 25/26 projects through 100% funding from DfC.**

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.5 None identified at present, delivery of the 24/25 scheme has been screened and rural needs assessed.”**

The Committee approved the recommendations as outlined in the report.

**Site Visit to an Operational Heat
Network - Leeds City Council**

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy provided an overview of an opportunity for Members to visit an operational heat network and learn about the development process, hurdles and benefits.

He advised that Leeds PIPES was a heat network led by Leeds City Council and was considered the most suitable for a Heat Network site visit at this time. The Heat network delivered heat from a Recycling and Energy Recovery Facility to both residential homes and public buildings via underground insulated pipes.

He reminded the Committee that the Belfast City Centre Heat Network project had recently completed the initial high-level technical, legal and commercial feasibility stages. As part of the process, the Climate Team had been in contact with a number of local authorities to better understand the different delivery models for a heat network.

He highlighted that this visit would provide an opportunity for Members and Directors to visit an operational heat network to better understand the land use policy context and support provided by the Council, the delivery model, the technology and operation of the network as well as to understand how it had affected local businesses and communities. Participants would also be able to speak to some of the users and operators of the heat network to develop an understanding of the challenges and benefits of delivering a heat network project. These insights would help to inform decision makers on whether the Belfast Heat Network is to progress to a more detailed stage of feasibility.

He pointed out that Leeds PIPES was considered the most appropriate network to visit, as the initial market engagement had suggested that the price of heat would be a key determinant securing off-takers, and hence the Leeds delivery model would be of interest to the Council. He advised that proposed attendees would comprise: Party Group Leaders or their nominees, Committee Chairpersons, Directors and Senior officers (12-15 confirmed attendees) with a view to securing a date in Q1 2026. He advised that costs for the site visits would be met via the existing City and Organisational Strategy budget, in the region of £250 per attendee.

The Committee:

- I. Noted the potential costs and outline itinerary;
- II. Approved travel for Elected Members to begin preparations for a site visit to Leeds City Council; and
- III. Noted that dates for a Quarter 1 2026 visit would be confirmed subject to approval of this proposed visit.

Paternity Pay Provisions

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

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 At the SP&R committee on 20 June 2025, the Committee requested that a further report on the NJC terms and conditions (for maternity pay) and a benchmarking report on Paternity Pay provisions be submitted to a future meeting.
- 1.2 This report informs Committee of the Council’s paternity pay provisions and comparisons with a selection of both private and public organisations as outlined at Appendix 1.

2.0 Recommendations

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

3.0 Main report

3.1 NJC Maternity Scheme

At SP&R committee on 20 June 2025 a report was presented detailing Belfast City Council’s maternity leave and pay scheme.

The report noted that the Council applies the maternity scheme as set out in Part 2 of the NJC National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service for Local Government Authorities (Green Book). Part 2 of the Green Book consists of the Key National Provisions applicable for all local

authorities to all employees covered by NJC and are basic provisions which constitute a standard throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Part 3 of the Green Book meanwhile provides other national provisions which may be modified by local agreement.

On seeking advice from the Northern Ireland Local Government Authority (NILGA), it was confirmed that the provisions provided in Part 2 of the Green Book should only be modified by national agreements. This would include the NJC pay spine, entitlement to sick pay, minimum leave entitlements, the standard working week, the maternity scheme (as reported) among other provisions. However, it should be noted that most local councils have reached local agreements to have a more generous minimum annual leave entitlement than the 23 days, as set out in Part 2 of the Green Book. NILGA aren't aware of any local authorities that have moved away from the GB maternity scheme.

3.2 Paternity Leave and Pay

Unlike its Maternity Scheme, the NJC National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service (Green Book) does not provide for a contractual Paternity Leave Scheme. It does, however, provide an entitlement to Maternity Support leave as below:

Maternity support leave of 5 days with pay shall be granted to the child's father or the partner or nominated carer of an expectant mother at or around the time of birth. A nominated carer is the person nominated by the mother to assist in the care of the child and to provide support to the mother at or around the time of the birth.

Those organisations governed by Green Book terms and conditions will be contractually obliged to provide this to its employees and it has been found through the benchmarking that most will offset this against the statutory paternity leave entitlements and include this within the paternity leave entitlement.

3.3 Statutory Paternity Leave and Pay

Paternity Leave and pay is a statutory entitlement which will apply to employees if they meet the following criteria:

- they are biological fathers
- the husband or partner of the mother who have or expect to have responsibility for the child's upbringing (this includes same sex partners)
- the child's adopter

- the intended parent (if having a baby through a surrogacy arrangement)
- has, or expects to have, responsibility for the child's upbringing

Employees are entitled to two weeks leave paid at the rate of Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP) provided that they have at least 26 weeks continuous service with the employer ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (EWC) - the qualifying week.

The rate of SSP is set each year by government and is currently £187.18 per week or 90% of average weekly earnings (whichever is the lower).

3.4 Belfast City Council Paternity Leave and Pay Provisions

Belfast City Council's Paternity Leave scheme provides for the statutory two weeks' leave, however the payments are enhanced above the rate of SSP as per below:

- Week 1: Full Pay
- Week 2: SPP or 90% of average weekly earnings (whichever is the lower).

This will apply to those employees who meet the criteria as set out above in the statutory requirements, ie they must have 26 weeks continuous service by the end of the 15th week before the expected week of confinement (EWC)

As referred to at 3.2 above the maternity support leave of five days on full pay is included in the paternity leave entitlement.

3.5 Comparisons with Other Organisations

Benchmarking was undertaken against a number of other organisations' paternity leave and pay provisions to include public and private sector. A summary of these is included in Appendix 1.

Many of the organisations benchmarked offer paternity leave and pay provisions which enhance the statutory entitlements. All other local council's that provided their paternity pay scheme offer the same amount of paternity leave pay entitlements as the Council and most of these provided the same enhanced rates of paternity pay. None of these provided greater enhancements than the Council.

Of the other local government organisations the Education Authority, Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service and Translink provide the same entitlements as the Council.

The Northern Ireland Civil Service provides two weeks paternity leave on full pay provided the employee meets the statutory qualifying criteria.

The benchmarking showed that Queen's University Belfast offer enhanced leave and pay, providing employees with up to three weeks leave on full pay, while the Ulster University offer the same entitlement as Council (however it will only apply to employees who have a full year continuous service at the qualifying week, otherwise the statutory provisions apply).

A number of private sector organisations were included as part of the benchmarking exercise. These were a selection of organisations that published their paternity leave and pay schemes. It was found that many provide enhanced paternity leave and pay provisions, over and above the statutory entitlement. There are also variations to the criteria required to be entitled to the leave and pay among the organisations benchmarked (see appendix 1).

The benchmarking indicates that most private sector organisations provide an enhanced rate of paternity leave and pay above the statutory requirement, while local government organisations generally provide for the statutory two weeks leave with an enhancement to full pay for the first week. This generally incorporates the Maternity Support Leave provisions as set out in Part 2 of the Green Book.

Financial & Resource Implications

- 3.6 There are no additional finance or resource implications relating to this report.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.7 There are no equality or good relations implications relating to this report."

During discussion it was:

Moved by Councillor Maghie,
Seconded by Councillor Nelson and

Resolved – That the Committee agrees that officers investigate increasing the level of the Council's Paternity Provision in line with the Civil Service provision as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report.

Accordingly, the Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed that officers investigate increasing the level of the Council's Paternity Provision in line with the Civil Service provision as outlined in [Appendix 1](#) of the report.

Apprenticeship Programme Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on a joint initiative with a number of councils to recruit a Higher-Level Apprentice.

2.0 Recommendation

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

3.0 Main Report

- 3.1 Through SOLACE, several councils agreed to develop a co-ordinated recruitment campaign for Planning Apprentices.
- 3.2 Engagement was undertaken with Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) institutes, and a Higher-Level Apprenticeship (HLA) course was identified as the best vehicle to provide opportunities for students to study a Planning related course while gaining valuable work experience in a Local Authority to better understand the role of a professional Planner and to experience how the entire planning system operates.
- 3.3 The HLA will involve an apprentice working within a Council planning team for 2.5 years while studying at Belfast Met, on day release for a Level 5 HLA in Property, Housing and Planning. The Course content has been reviewed by RTP1 and Planning professionals and provides the essential skills for a planner while providing a pathway to study level 6 and above courses at university.
- 3.4 While there can be no commitment by Council to retain students beyond the HLA course duration, Local Government acknowledges there will be plenty of opportunities for full time jobs given the demand for planners in Local and Central Government.
- 3.5 The Committee is aware that funding for an annual apprenticeship programme was secured via the annual estimating process and ratified at the March 2025 meeting of the Council. The costs for the HLA Planning Apprentice will be met from the corporate budget and once appointed will bring the number of apprentices in the rolling programme to 9.

- 3.6 It is envisaged that the marketing of this opportunity will be carried out jointly between the participating councils and will commence in November with interviews in early December, with each council undertaking out their own recruitment as per their agreed procedures.
- 3.7 It is anticipated Apprentices would commence their employment in January with the course commencing in January at Belfast Met.
- 3.8 A full induction plan and programme of support is being developed to ensure that the HLA apprentice is properly inducted into their new role.

2026/27 apprenticeship programme

- 3.9 Departments will be asked to submit their bids for the 2026/27 apprenticeship programme in Quarter 3. Departments must ensure that a relevant course is identified, and a commitment from line managers to provide the extra supervision and support required to make the apprenticeship a success. Directors, or their nominees will be required to engage with CHR, Development Team to identify suitable courses before a bid can be submitted.
- 3.10 Areas of the business already supported through the programme are unlikely to succeed in future bids whilst the current apprenticeship is ongoing. CMT will be required to make the final decision on which apprenticeship bids are successful for 2026/27.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.11 To date funding of £256,000 has been agreed for this programme in the 2025/26 rate setting process and future investment will need to be considered to enhance the programme.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.12 Recruitment for apprenticeship programmes is carried out in accordance with the Local Government Staff Commission's Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection."

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

Planning Information

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided an update on major planning applications and applications which had been determined by the Planning Committee.

Renewal of the Scheme of Delegation for Planning

The Director of Planning and Place submitted the following report for consideration:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 The Council must prepare a Scheme of Delegation for planning which sets out which decisions on Local and minor applications are delegated to officers. The current Scheme of Delegation was implemented in December 2022. In accordance with legislation, the Council is required to review its Scheme of Delegation every 3 years, i.e. it is next due to be renewed by 31st December 2025.
- 1.2 The recommendation is to renew the existing Scheme of Delegation subject to several small changes.
- 1.3 The proposed amendments to the Scheme of Delegation have been noted by the Planning Committee and are to be agreed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. Under the legislation, the Scheme of Delegation must be approved by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI).

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to agree the proposed minor changes to the Scheme of Delegation ahead of referral to the Department for Infrastructure.

3.0 Main report

Background

- 3.1 Section 31 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 requires a Council to prepare a Scheme of Delegation which enables a person appointed by the Council to determine applications for Local development, consents, agreements or approvals required by condition. All Major applications must by law be considered by the Planning Committee.

- 3.2 Article 9 of the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 states that a council must not adopt a Scheme of Delegation until it has been approved by the Department for Infrastructure. Article 11 states that a council must prepare a Scheme of Delegation at intervals of no greater than three years.
- 3.3 [Development Management Practice Note 15: Councils Schemes of Delegation](#) provides Departmental guidance. It advises that the main benefits of delegation are:
- to enable the Planning Committee to devote its finite time to determining applications that present issues that the Committee are best served to determine;
 - delegation of planning applications to officers is critical to affecting the overall performance of the development management process as it helps to ensure that decisions are taken at the most appropriate level, costs are minimised and members have more time to concentrate on the most complex cases.
- 3.4 The Council first published a Scheme of Delegation in March 2015 ahead of becoming a Planning Authority in April that year. It was then amended in June 2017 following a review (and updated in March 2019 to take account of the Council's new departmental structure). Further amendments were made in January 2020 and December 2022.
- 3.5 The Scheme of Delegation sets out a range of planning functions which are delegated to officers. These include:
- Decisions on certain types of Local application;
 - Decisions on other forms of consent and approval;
 - Preservation of trees;
 - Determinations under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations;
 - Enforcing planning regulations;
 - Temporary listing of buildings;
 - Responding to € and planning application consultations from neighbouring Planning Authorities;
 - Conducting of appeals and public examinations;
 - Responding to planning related consultations from other agencies;
 - Negotiating financial developer contributions of less than £30k.

Renewal of the Scheme of Delegation

- 3.6 The Scheme of Delegation was last amended in December 2022 and was essentially a refinement of the Scheme adopted in 2017.
- 3.7 The current Scheme is considered to be working well, and it is not proposed to make any significant changes.
- 3.8 Delegation rates since 2020/21 are set out in Table 1, below. Historically, the rate of delegated decisions in Belfast comparable with the regional average.

Table 1: % delegated decisions by year

Year	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Belfast Delegation Rate (%)	92.5%	93.2%	94.5%	96.7%	94.7%
Regional Delegation Rate (%)	92.8%	93.1%	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable

- 3.9 The proportion of officer recommendations overturned by the Planning Committee has also been historically substantially lower than the regional average as shown in Table 2, below. This is positive indicator of Elected Members' confidence in officer decisions in Belfast.

Table 2: % officer recommendations overturned by Committee

Year	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Belfast Overturn Rate (%)	3.8%	9.9%	3.5%	5.7%	2.8%
Regional Overturn Rate (%)	13.9%	15.8%	N/A	N/A	N/A

Proposed adjustments to the Scheme of Delegation

- 3.10 It is recommended that the current Scheme of Delegation is renewed subject to the following relatively minor alterations.
1. Paragraph 3.8 – removal of sub-delegation by the Strategic Director of Place and Economy to the Operational Directors for Economic Development and City, Regeneration and Development. This recognises that planning functions should only be

sub-delegated to the Operational Director of Planning and Building Control (the Strategic Director may also sub-delegate below that within the Planning Service).

2. Paragraph 3.8.1 – confirmation that the 28-day period for an Elected Member to request that an application is referred to the Committee is also from the date that an application is re-advertised or re-notified to neighbours. This change is intended to provide further clarity to the referral process and provides a larger window for Members to request that an application is referred to the Committee.
3. Paragraph 3.8.1 – parts of the administration of the referral process is proposed to be dealt with by the Planning Service rather than Democratic Services to reduce ‘hand-offs’. This change is intended to improve efficiency and handling of referral requests.
4. Paragraph 3.8.1 – change to the definition of City Centre to include as defined by the draft Belfast Local Development Plan: Local Policies Plan 2035 once published. Any Elected Member may request that an application in the City Centre is referred to the Committee. The boundary of the City Centre is currently defined by the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2025; the proposed change reflects that this is to be replaced by the new draft Policies Plan once published.
5. Paragraph 3.8.2 – incorporation of the provision under paragraph 3.8.2 (f) of the current Scheme of Delegation that gives officers delegated authority to refuse applications (other those for Major development) where all the necessary supporting documentation has been reasonably requested but not provided within 28 days of the request. It is proposed to move this provision from paragraph 3.8.2 (f) to paragraph 3.8.2 because in its current position, this provision potentially conflicts with the other provisions of paragraph 3.8.2. The intention of this provision has always been that the decision on the application is delegated if reasonably requested supported documentation is not provided within 28 days, irrespective of whether other provisions of the Scheme of Delegation under paragraph 3.8.2 require the application to be referred to the Committee. The objective is to ensure the quality of applications and that they are supported by the

right information. For this provision to be effective, it should be moved to paragraph 3.8.2.

6. Paragraph 3.8.2 (a) ii. and v. – increasing the threshold for delegated decisions on applications for retail and community relates uses from up to 500 sqm to below 1,000 sqm. The proposed increase to the threshold reflects the adoption of the Belfast Local Development Plan: Plan Strategy 2035 and Policy RET2 that requires a retail impact assessment to be submitted for town centre uses of 1,000 sqm gross or above.
7. Paragraph 3.8.2 (i) – removal of ‘partial’ demolition so that only applications for full demolition of a Listed Building are required to be determined by the Committee. The proposed removal of ‘partial’ reflects the fact that many relatively minor proposals technically involve ‘demolition’, such as the removal of the small area of roofing to make way for a rooflight or creation of a new internal doorway. The change would avoid applications for minor demolition proposal having to be referred to the Committee. Elected Members have the reassurance that the provisions of paragraph 3.8.5 require an application to be referred to the Committee where the officer recommendation is to approve and there is an objection from DfC Historic Environment Division.
8. Paragraph 3.8.2 (i) – correction of terminology to ‘Proposal of Application Notice’. The proposed change corrects the terminology in the current Scheme of Delegation which incorrectly refers to ‘Pre-application Notice’.
9. Paragraph 3.8.4 (i) – clarification that this provision concerning the delegation of Developer Contributions of a value not exceeding £30k relates to ‘Financial’ Developer Contributions. The proposed change is to avoid any ambiguity that this provision also relates to the value of ‘in-kind’ Developer Contributions, which is not the intention of this provision.
10. Paragraph 3.8.5 – re-ordering of the sub provisions; change to the grading definition in paragraph 3.8.5 (d); clarification that the provisions only relate to applications for full or outline planning permission (and not other forms of consent); and clarification that paragraph 3.8.5 that requires applications for Major development

to be determined by the Committee does not apply to associated applications such as a Non-Material Change to a Major permission or Discharge of Condition. The proposed changes are intended to generally tidy up the provisions, reflecting legislation that states the types of application that cannot be delegated and must be determined by a Committee, as well as clarification of some of the other provisions.

- 3.11 These changes are shown as 'track changes' in the proposed amended Scheme of Delegation at Appendix 1, highlighted yellow for ease of reference. The current adopted Scheme of Delegation is provided at Appendix 2 for comparison.
- 3.12 By way of context, the report to the 18th November 2022 Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, which set out the proposed changes to the previous Scheme of Delegation can be viewed at [this link](#) (item 19).

Other Schemes of Delegation

- 3.13 Members previously requested examples of other Schemes of Delegation. Hyperlinks to other examples are provided again below.

Derry and Strabane Council (bottom of webpage):

<https://www.derrystrabane.com/getmedia/de1c6642-ab21-481d-b7a6-ae058a567f82/Approved-Delegated-Scheme.pdf>

Newry, Mourne and Down Council:

https://www.newrymournedown.org/media/uploads/planning_scheme_of_delegation.pdf

Horsham District Council (pages 37 and 38 of the Council's Constitution):

[Horsham District Council : Document Constitution of Horsham District Council \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)

Administration of the Elected Member application referral process

- 3.14 Changes are proposed to the process for Members to refer an application to Committee given that current practices resulted in a referral request being missed.

- 3.15 Where Members would like to request that an application is referred to Committee, they should email the Director of Planning and Building Control and the Planning mailbox setting out:
- The reference number of the application
 - Site address and proposal
 - Planning grounds for referral to Committee.
- 3.16 On receipt of the request, the Planning Portal will be updated to ensure that the decision is changed to a Committee decision pending consideration of the referral request. This should ensure that no decisions are issued when a referral request has been made.
- 3.17 The Director of Planning and Building Control will consider the request in consultation with the City Solicitor (where necessary) and will confirm the decision on the request to the Elected Member. Where the referral request is agreed, the Committee report will detail that the application is before the Committee as a result of a Member request and it will detail the Member who made the request and the reasons why.
- 3.18 Following ratification of the Scheme of Delegation, new guidance will be issued to all Elected Members setting out the detail of the new application referral process.

Financial & Resource Implications

- 3.19 The renewal of the current Scheme of Delegation, subject to minor modifications, will enable the Council to continue to determine planning functions in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.20 No adverse impacts have been identified.”

The Committee agreed the proposed minor changes to the Scheme of Delegation ahead of its referral to the Department for Infrastructure.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

Physical Programme Update

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

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1** The Council’s Physical Programme currently includes over 200 capital projects with investment of £150m+ via a range of internal and external funding streams, together with projects which the Council delivers on behalf of external agencies. The Council’s Capital Programme forms part of the Physical Programme and is a rolling programme of investment which either improves existing Council facilities or provides new facilities. This report presents the Half Year Update, requests for stage movement approvals under the Capital Programme along with updates on capital letters of offer and contracts awarded.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1** The Committee is requested to –

- **Physical Programme Half Year Update** - Note the overall update on projects that have been completed recently and projects currently under construction at 3.3 to 3.5 below and in Appendix 1; and that the Property & Projects Department is happy to arrange a site visit to any projects that have been completed or are underway.
- **Awards and Recognition** – note that Shankill Shared Women’s Centre project was recently awarded with the prestigious 2025 REGIOSTARS Awards in the ‘*A Europe Closer to the Citizens*’ category and also the City Cemetery project was a finalist in the Construction Employers Federation (CEF) Restoration Project of the Year 2025.
- **Capital Programme Movements** –
 - **Basketball Courts** – Agree that the project is moved to *Stage 3 – Committed* with a maximum allocation of up to £550,000.
 - **Musgrave Park Sensory Garden** - Agree that the project is moved to *Stage 3 – Committed* with a maximum allocation of up to £100,000 to provide a greater range of equipment and improve the play value and accessibility of the facility.
 - **Girdwood Hub H&S Works** - Agree that the project is moved to *Stage 3 – Committed* with a maximum allocation of up to £310,000.
 - **EV Charging Network Phase 1** - Agree that the project is moved to *Stage 3 – Committed* and held at Tier 0 – Scheme at Risk pending further development of the project and a satisfactory tender return; and that necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate ‘framework’ arrangements) be initiated with a contract to be

awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.

- 2 Royal Avenue Landlord Capital Works – Agree that the project is added to the Capital Programme at *Stage 1 – Emerging* to allow a business case to be developed.
 - City Hall Security Improvements – Agree that the project is added to the Capital Programme at *Stage 1 – Emerging* to allow a business case to be developed.
 - Staff Cycle Racks Installation – Agree that the project is added to the Capital Programme at *Stage 1 – Emerging* to allow a business case to be developed.
- Section 76 Planning Agreement Developer Contribution - Belfast Bike Station Queen's Island – to agree that the S76 Agreement developer contribution be utilised for the installation of Belfast Bike station in the Queen's Island area.
 - Capital Letters of Offer – to note the update in relation to capital letters of offer.
 - Contracts awarded in Q2 2025/26 – to note the update in relation to contracts awarded.

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

Physical Programme Half Year Update

- 3.1 Members will be aware that the Council runs a substantial Physical Programme. This includes the rolling Capital Programme – a multimillion regeneration programme of investment across the city which improves existing Council assets or provides new council facilities. The Property & Projects Department is happy to arrange a site visit to any projects that have been completed or are underway. The Half Year Update below is a brief summary of projects completed as well as a sample of projects currently underway.

3.2 Awards and Recognition

Members are asked to note that two of the Council's completed capital projects have been successful in gaining awards and recognition. The Shankill Shared Women's Centre won at the prestigious 2025 REGIOSTARS Awards in the 'A Europe Closer to the Citizens' category held in Brussels. The centre has been recognised as a dedicated shared space with a vision for a prosperous, more peaceful

and cohesive future for women and their families. Also, the City Cemetery project was shortlisted in the CEF Restoration Project of the Year 2025 category. The CEF Construction Excellence Awards are the most prestigious awards in the Northern Irish Construction Industry.

3.3 Recently completed projects:

- City Cemetery Visitor Centre - Heritage Fund project - project to protect and enhance the existing history and heritage of the cemetery. The final elements of the project including the Victorian Fountain and central steps have been completed.
- Sporting Pitches Investment 24/25 – improvement works to pitches at Falls Park, Mallusk Playing Fields and Strangford Avenue Playing Fields have been completed.
- Playground Improvement Programme 24/25 – improvements have been completed at Michelle Baird Playground.
- Innovation Factory — Access Control – replacement of the access control system providing flexible access to the centre for businesses.
- Beacon Programme - provision of beacons as an alternative to traditional bonfires.
- City Hall – Installation of Stained Glass Window – LGBT and NHS – completion of window celebrating Belfast's LGBTQ+ community.
- Enhancements to a range of Council assets including - IT projects via Digital Services such as Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS); Grazing Lands - Fencing Replacement; OSS and Bereavement Services Machinery Phase 1; Cherryvale Gate; HWRCs Service Bay Works - Palmerston and Ormeau; and Resources & Fleet Portacabin Facilities.
- Castlereagh Presbyterian Church Hall – Belfast Investment Fund (BIF) – refurbishment of Church Hall to include new heating system, toilets, windows, lighting, minor paint works and new lighting. Improvements have made the building more energy efficient to improve its sustainability and increase community usage.
- Mercy Primary, Crumlin Road – Local Investment Fund (LIF) - purchase and installation of new playground equipment.
- Finaghy Bridge (LIF) – floral mural installation and improvements at Finaghy Bridge to cover graffiti.
- Nettlefield Multi-sports storage facility (LIF) - installation of storage facility at Nettlefield Primary school.

- Parklands - Knocknagoney Dale – environmental improvements to Knocknagoney Park under Section 76 Agreement developer contributions for open space.

3.4 Physical projects underway:

- Ballysillan Playing Fields (Urban Villages) - Work continues on site at this £8.4m partnership project with DfI's Living with Water Programme, DfC and Urban Villages. Completion anticipated by Autumn 2026.
- Lagan Gateway Greenway (BIF) – major investment of £5m in a new navigation lock, iconic foot and cycle bridge and new path connections. Phase 2 procurement exercise is nearing completion for works on the Annadale side, linking the pathway to Belvoir Forest Park. Completion anticipated by Autumn 2026.
- North Foreshore Development Sites Infrastructure Works – Work has started on site for the gas extraction system. Contractor is due to start foul pumping station fitout in January 26. NIE is progressing civil works to bring increased capacity from Whitla Street to North Foreshore.
- Strand Arts Centre (BIF) – work continues on the £6.4m major refurbishment of the art deco cinema building. Completion anticipated by Summer 2026.
- Michael Davitt's Community Heritage Centre (NRF) – work is progressing well on the new build community and heritage centre at Davitt's GAC.
- Belfast Orange Hall (NRF) – work has recently commenced on site. The project comprises repairs to roof and refurbishment of facades, external walls, windows and external doors.
- ABC Trust Health and Leisure Hub (Urban Villages) – Phase 2 of the project is on site and due to complete in Autumn 2025. This comprises a community café, boxing club, minor halls, community gym and office space. The final phase, installation of the sports hall is due to be completed by Autumn/ Winter 2025.
- Sandy Row Arts & Digital Hub (BIF and Urban Villages) – work is progressing on the new build development for creative and digital arts entrepreneurs, and it is due to complete in Autumn 2025.
- Titanic People Exhibition (Urban Villages) – redevelopment of the courtyard/ frontage of the existing building at Westbourne Presbyterian Church. Planned completion is anticipated in Winter/ Spring 2026.
- Corporate projects – a range of capital IT projects via Digital Services to ensure business continuity; Waste Plan – Expansion of Glass Collection Scheme, HWRC

and Civic Amenity Sites Containers, Historic Cemeteries – Clifton Street, Strangford Avenue Playing Fields Enabling Works, and ongoing delivery of Fleet Replacement Programme 25/26 via City & Neighbourhoods Services.

- Developer Contributions – progressing open space projects via CNS.
- Playground Improvement Programme 25/26 – projects on the Programme this year are White Rise, Ohio Street, Roddens Crescent, Finvoy Street and Belmont and should be complete by Spring/Summer 2026. Work is underway.
- Alleygating Phase 5 – project progressing with 115 gates to be installed and works to be completed by February 2026.
- Floral Hall Health & Safety Works – works are underway and project is nearing completion.

3.4 Physical projects in development:

The remainder of the Physical Programme covers projects where activity is at earlier stages i.e. tender preparation or before. This includes schemes at the start of procurement at *Stage 3 – Committed* as well as those at *Stage 2 – Uncommitted* and *Stage 1 – Emerging* or equivalent:

Capital Programme: The Capital Programme comprises a vast range of projects including Cathedral Gardens, New Crematorium, Belfast Stories, Reservoir Safety Programme, LTP Girdwood Indoor Sports Facility, Waste Plan projects, St George's Market – New Stalls, Waterfront Hall – Chiller Units, Relocation of Dunbar Link Cleansing Depot, New Cemetery, Access to the Hills – Black Mountain/Upper Whiterock Pathway, Glencairn Park/Ligoniel Park Greenway, City Hall – External Christmas Tree, Wilmont House, Fernhill House and Courtyard, Historic Cemeteries and Historic Tiled Street Signs, City Hall Preservation, 2 Royal Avenue, 35-39 Royal Avenue, Woodvale Park Sensory Garden, Communication Boards, Bridges Improvement Programme, and a range of health and safety projects.

A range of other schemes are also in development including the remaining LIF, BIF, SOF NRF and UV projects.

Capital Programme - Proposed Movements

- 3.5 As outlined above Members have agreed that all capital projects must go through a three-stage process where decisions on which capital projects progress are taken by the Committee. This provides assurance as to the level of financial control and will allow Members to properly consider

the opportunity costs of approving one capital project over another capital project. Members are asked to note the following activity on the Capital Programme:

Project	Overview	Stage movement
Basketball Courts	Creation and upgrade of basketball courts at five Council park sites	Move to Stage 3 – Committed with a maximum budget of £550,000
Musgrave Park Sensory Garden	Upgrade to sensory garden	Move to Stage 3 – Committed with a maximum budget of £100,000
Girdwood Hub H&S Works	Urgent works to the roof of the Girdwood Community Hub building	Move to Stage 3 – Committed with a maximum budget of £310,000
EV Charging Network Phase 1	A publicly accessible electric vehicle charging point network on Council owned assets	Move to Stage 3 – Committed
2 Royal Avenue – Landlord Capital works	Capital works to the ground and first floor to meet its obligations to prospective occupiers and ensure the building is fully fit for purpose.	Add as Stage 1 – Emerging
City Hall Security Improvements	Capital works put forward to make City Hall a safer place for visitors, employees and elected Members.	Add as Stage 1 – Emerging
Staff Cycle Racks Installation	Installation of new cycle racks in CWB, City Hall and other premises to improve provision.	Add as Stage 1 – Emerging

3.6 **Basketball Courts**

In August 2025, this project was moved to Capital Programme at Stage 2 – Uncommitted. The project was part of the additional local schemes as a consequence of UKSPF. The work includes creation or upgrades of basketball courts at five Council park sites including Victoria Park, Alderman Tommy Patton Memorial Park, Ormeau Park, Blacks Road Park and Páirc Nua Chollann. The outline business case has been completed and the project can now progress to delivery stage with the consultation of local key stakeholders. Members are asked to agree that the project is moved to Stage 3 – Committed with a maximum allocation of up to £550,000. The Director of Finance has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council.

3.7 **Musgrave Park Sensory Garden**

This project was moved to Capital Programme at Stage 2 – Uncommitted in August 2025 as part of the additional schemes concerning the recoup of capital funding from UKSPF. The outline business case has been completed and

the project can now progress to delivery stage. Members are asked to agree that the project is moved to Stage 3 – Committed with a maximum allocation of up to £100,000. The Director of Finance has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council.

3.8 Girdwood Hub Health & Safety Works

In March 2025, Members agreed that Girdwood H&S Works was added to the Capital Programme at Stage 1 - Emerging as a programme of health and safety works. A condition survey has identified works that are required in terms of strengthening works to parapet walls, to flat roofs and pitched roof over the main hall and to fix leaks in the roof which have necessitated closure of specific areas including access lifts and therefore causing disruption of activities. The estimated cost for these works will be up to £310k. The project team is liaising with Legal Services and the Insurance team regarding legal recourse and next steps. Members are asked to agree that the project is moved to Stage 3 – Committed with a maximum allocation of up to £310,000, subject to legal recourse. The Director of Finance has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council.

3.9 EV Charging Network

This project was moved to Capital Programme at Stage 2 – Uncommitted in April 2025 in line with the LEV Strategy. It will deliver a publicly accessible electric vehicle charging point network on Council owned assets, working with a commercial partner. Members are asked to note that a detailed report on this is also on the agenda for consideration by Members today. Members are asked to agree that 'EV Charging Network' is moved to Stage 3 – Committed and held at Tier 0 – Scheme at Risk pending further development of the project and a satisfactory tender return; and that necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate 'framework' arrangements) be initiated with a contract to be awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.

3.10 2 Royal Avenue – Landlord Capital works

Potential capital works to the ground and first floor beyond routine maintenance will be required at 2 Royal Avenue to enable the Council, as landlord, to meet its obligations to prospective occupiers and to ensure the building is fully fit for purpose. Members are asked to agree that the project is added to Stage 1 – Emerging to allow the business case to be developed.

3.11 City Hall Security Improvements

The TRIO Solutions Group have completed a survey audit report regarding security arrangements for City Hall and made several recommendations. The proposed project will take these recommendations/ capital works forward to make City Hall a safer place for visitors, employees and elected Members. Members are asked to agree that the project is added to Stage 1 – Emerging to allow the business case to be developed. Further detail on this will be brought back to Members and will be brought to the City Hall Installations Working Group.

3.12 Staff Cycle Racks Installation

The proposed project is for the installation of new cycle racks in Cecil Ward Building and City Hall to include signage, and to review racks in in 9 Adelaide and Duncrue with the view to replacing and upgrading to provide adequate facilities. Members are asked to agree that the project is added to Stage 1 – Emerging to allow the business case to be developed.

3.13 Section 76 Planning Agreement - Belfast Bike Station

In line with the agreed Section 76 Planning Agreements internal procedures, it is proposed that the S76 Developer Contribution in relation to Planning Application No. LA04/2021/2280/F at Olympic Way, Queen's Road, Queen's Island, Belfast be utilised for the installation of Belfast Bike station in the area. The proposal is for the design, mobilisation, installation and commissioning of a new Belfast Bikes docking station including 12 new e-bikes. The total cost of £47,000 is the financial contribution from S76 Agreement. The project will be delivered as soon as the landscaping of the development is complete, anticipated by December 2025. Members will note that expansion of Belfast Bikes is an existing project in the Physical Programme. Members are asked to agree that the S76 Agreement Developer Contribution be utilised for the installation of Belfast Bike station in the Queen's Island area.

3.14 Capital Letters of Offer

Members are asked to note the update in relation to capital letters of offer in Q2 2025/26 at Appendix 2.

3.15 Contracts Awarded

Members are asked to note the award of tenders for capital works including services related to works in Q2 2025/26 at Appendix 3.

3.16 Financial & Resource Implications

Financial Implications –

Basketball Courts – capital allocation of up to £550,000

Musgrave Park Sensory Garden – capital allocation of up to £100,000

Girdwood Hub H&S Works – capital allocation of up to £310,000

The Director of Finance has confirmed that these are within the affordability limits of the Council.

Resource Implications – Officer time to deliver.

3.17 Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment

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

The Committee approved the recommendations as outlined in the report.

Asset Management

The Committee:

The Waterworks Community Garden – Licence Renewal to Grow NI

- approved the Licence renewal for a 5-year term to Grow NI; and
- approved entering into a management agreement with GROW NI for the items secured under the Shared Island Fund.

Shaftesbury Avenue / Ormeau Road – New Licence

- approved a new 10-year licence agreement for the use of a portion of land at Shaftesbury Avenue/Ormeau Road for the relocation of an air quality monitoring station (AQMS).

Parkgate Gardens Open Space – Acquisition of adjoining strip of land

- approved the acquisition of a strip of land of c. 0.0426 acres from Northern Ireland Housing Executive adjoining Parkgate Gardens Open Space.

Deed of Conveyance – Queens Bridge Wastewater Pumping Station Site

- approved the Council and Northern Ireland Water entering into a Deed of Conveyance to regularise the ownership of the Queens Bridge Wastewater Pumping Station Site.

Licence Agreement - Cregagh Youth and Community Centre / Cregagh Green and Playground

- approved a licence agreement between the Council and Teamdot Presents for the siting and use of a storage container at Cregagh Youth and Community Centre / Cregagh Green and Playground for the storage of food, toys and clothes for distribution to vulnerable people and families.

Finance, Procurement and Performance

Contracts Update

The Committee:

- Approved the public advertisement of tenders as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (**Table 1**);
- Approved the award of STAs in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in Appendix 1 (**Table 2**); and
- Approved the modification of the contract as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (**Table 3**).

Table 1: Competitive Tenders

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Est. Max Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services	On published pipeline (Y/N)
Hardware and software warranty and support on Aruba servers and controllers for wired and wireless Network	Up to 3 years	£144,699	S McNicholl	This is to ensure maintenance and support is in place for our Aruba wired and WiFi networks and controllers with associated security measures.	N
Analysis, evaluation and financial assurance services of	Up to 7 years	£2,450,000	D Martin	To appoint a suitably qualified professional consultancy providing services to	N

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Est. Max Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services	On published pipeline (Y/N)
real estate proposals				<p>undertake analysis, evaluation and provide financial and technical assurances to the Council in respect of real estate proposals, across a range of residential led mixed use regeneration projects, particularly with respect to Council's recently appointed Private Sector Partner, and any other commercial opportunities where BCC is a stakeholder.</p> <p>Members at meeting of Sept '25 CGR Committee <i>agreed that the key appointment of a specialist financial and commercial property services provider would be noted in a Contract Report to be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee</i></p> <p>Specialist nature of advice will be required to provide assurance to Members when making high value decisions to effectively transfer land assets to facilitate residential led development</p>	

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Est. Max Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services	On published pipeline (Y/N)
				<p>that may also require some sort of support from Council to bring forward delivery through subvention. It is essential that any decisions made by Council are based on sound and well informed advice.</p> <p>This is essentially a 'call-off' appointment and actual spend will be vouched on the time spent charged at hourly rates procured through a Crown Commercial Services Framework.</p>	
Provision of reusable period products scheme	Up to 3 years	£105,000	D Sales	Supply and deliver reusable period products to individuals on request through landing page maintained by supplier	Y
Provision of energy management services for the Council	Up to 5 years	£250,000	S McNicholl	Service required to support Council's aims and objectives regarding energy supply including securing VFM, budget and risk management and carbon reduction	Y

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Est. Max Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services	On published pipeline (Y/N)
Telephony Service Provision	Up to 1 year	£210,225	S McNicholl	BCC requires telephony service provision for its sites and services to include calling ability, line rental and various broadband connections	N
Supply, delivery and off-loading of rubber crumb for 3g and 4g pitches.	Up to 36 months	£130,000	D Sales	To top up rubber crumb for 3g and 4g pitches as part of scheduled pitch maintenance to ensure operational life span of pitch carpet and ensure H&S considerations for use.	N
Legal and commercial support in submitting a bid for funding from Innovate UK.	Up to 4 months	£41,000	J Tully	To assist in delivering several aspects of the work packages, including the procurement road map, legal review of portfolio PPA, and attendance, preparation and delivery of several workshops and dissemination events.	N
Technical support in submitting a bid for funding from Innovate UK.	Up to 4 months	£40,390	J Tully	To assist in delivering several aspects of the work packages, including the economic appraisal of a thermal store element of the proposed heat network project, production of an economic appraisal	N

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Est. Max Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services	On published pipeline (Y/N)
				report, coordination with other partners and attendance, preparation and delivery of disseminations events.	
Dynamic Market or Open Framework (TBC) for delivery of various Employability & Skills 'E&S' Requirements	Up to 5 years	£6,000,000	D Martin	The current DPS is reaching its financial ceiling and is due to complete in 2026. A successive DPS must be established to ensure continued delivery of E&S solutions in an agile and flexible way, responding to challenges and opportunities within the labour market	Y
Supply and delivery of play equipment	Up to 5 years	£1,250,000	D Sales	Establish a call off framework to purchase new/replacement play equipment to support the delivery of the annual Playground Improvement Programme.	N
Provision of temporary agency workers (neutral vendor model)	Up to 3 years	£19,000,000	C Sheridan	The provision of temporary agency workers to cover short term vacancies in Departments whilst recruitment exercises are undertaken. Current contract expires 31 March 2026.	N

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Est. Max Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services	On published pipeline (Y/N)
Provision of temporary agency workers using call-off framework (where neutral vendor cannot provide a suitable candidate in a timely manner).	Up to 3 years	£1,500,000	C Sheridan	To support the above neutral vendor model. From time to time the neutral vendor is unable to source suitable temporary agency workers within timeframes set. The CCS framework is used in these instances in line with the framework guidelines. This typically applies to more specialist roles in the Council	N
Programme Curation to support the Fringe Programme of the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann.	Up to 1 year	£400,000	D Martin	To appoint a curator(s) to support the delivery of the Fringe Programme of the Fleadh which will complement the Comhaltas core programme of competitions, concerts and the Scoil Éigse, animating the city with inclusive, creative, and celebratory events.	N
Supply of bedding plants, bulbs and maintenance of floral displays	Up to 5 years	£1,000,000	D Sales	To support the display of plants and flowers across the City and Parks. Requirement will be split into 3 lots to maximise levels of competition and support SMEs:	Y

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Est. Max Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services	On published pipeline (Y/N)
				<p>Lot 1 – Supply and delivery of high-quality bedding plants (£480k)</p> <p>Lot 2 – Maintenance, removal and emptying of floral displays service (£340k)</p> <p>Lot 3 - Supply and delivery of forcing and bedding bulbs – (£180k)</p>	
Medical Services to support the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann.	TBC	TBC	K Forster	<p>Further to the STA request below for medical planning services there is an urgent need to commence work on a new tender for medical services to support the Fleadh delivery. An Expression of Interest 'EOI' will be advertised in the coming weeks to determine market interest and capability which will then help to scope the requirement. Further information provided at Nov SP&R.</p>	N
Provision of research & development activity to inform Belfast City Deal advanced	Up to 6 months	£70,000	S McNicholl	This is a technical and commercial R&D piece to inform Belfast Region City Deal partners on investment opportunities for	N

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Est. Max Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services	On published pipeline (Y/N)
wireless investments Fully funding from City Deal.				advanced wireless. It is funded by BRCD. Procurement is via NEPRO3 local govt procurement framework	
Belfast Stories Specialist Legal and Financial Support	Up to 2 years	£200,000	D Martin	Specialist Legal and Financial advice to inform the operator model options in order to support a decision on the operating model by Council by Q3 2025 in advance of the submission of the Belfast Stories Full Business Case by the end of 2026. Belfast Stories update Paper refers.	N

Table 2: Single Tender Actions

Title	Duration	Est. Max Contract Value	SRO	Description	Supplier	STA Reason
The provision of a robust medical plan to cover all medical eventualities that may occur at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2026 and 2027	Up to 2 years	£80,000	K Forster	Urgent need to appoint a service provider to provide a robust and comprehensive medical plan to support Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2026 and 2027.	Dr Aisling Diamond	5

Title	Duration	Est. Max Contract Value	SRO	Description	Supplier	STA Reason
				<p>The NI Ambulance Service are reviewing the level of support the offer to major events which has created the urgent need for this support.</p> <p>The supplier has unique experience combining both emergency medicine and major events and the only known supplier who can provide the services.</p>		
Supply of plastic and paper sacks for waste collection/management	Up to 6 months	£75,000	S Grimes	<p>Urgent need to source stock of plastic and paper sacks to support waste management operations.</p> <p>The replacement tender is taking longer to evaluate due to a number of suppliers failing the testing/sampling process. It is hoped that this process will be completed in the coming weeks and a new supplier appointed;</p>	Brow Packaging Ltd	5

Title	Duration	Est. Max Contract Value	SRO	Description	Supplier	STA Reason
				<p>however, current stock is due to run out before end of November.</p> <p>Through engagement with local suppliers, we have been able secure available stock of our plastic sack types needed with Brow packaging who are a local supplier who can supply within 4 weeks of order placement</p> <p>Orders need to be placed asap to secure required stock and in case of any delays in delivery.</p> <p>Any delays put continued service provision at risk i.e. the Council run out of stock of service critical products.</p>		

Table 3: Modification to Contract

Title of Contract	Original Duration	Modification Required – Time & Value	SRO	Description	Supplier
Provision of dog kennelling facilities and related services (T2161)	Up to 3 years	Additional 1 month and £32,000	S Toland	There has been a general increase in costs associated with the contract and specifically with the unforeseen introduction of new legislation making XL Bully type dogs an illegal breed. Contract to be extended by a period of one month to allow for completion of procurement and tender process, if required. This is a statutory service. Continuity of service is essential.	Nutts Corner Boarding Kennels
Security Guarding services Lot 1 – Manned Guarding Services (T1974)	Up 4 years and 4 months	Additional 1 month and £50,000	N Largey	Due to delays in the planned award of replacement contract (T2537) an additional 1-month extension of contract required for Lot 1 Manned Guarding Services to help facilitate the implementation of the new contract and time for TUPE consultations	Cobra Security Services

				and transfer of approx. 20 guards.	
A Bolder Vision for Belfast Strategy and Implementation Framework T2538	Up to 1 year	Additional 6 months and no increase in value	C Reynolds	Since the Call-off Contract was initiated, there has been extensive pause and prolongation linked to the emerging Eastern Transport Plan (Belfast city centre chapter). A contract modification is therefore required to extend the call-off expiry date to enable the project to be completed.	Jacobs UK Limited
Provision of Building Management and Operations at 2 Royal Avenue T2583	Up to 1 year	Additional 6 months and £130,068	D Martin	To avoid disruption or cessation to the current operation of the venue, an extension to the current 'meanwhile use' contract is requested. This will allow the venue to continue to operate while the current Expression of Interest exercise is concluded, followed by the progression of next steps.	MayWe

Requests for Funding

The Committee considered the following two requests for funding:

1. Greater Shankill Partnerships Greater Shankill Winter Festival - Unfortunately, the Partnership was unable to secure funding from NIHE for this annual event and was seeking funding from the Council of £17,000.
2. Cancer Lifeline - To fund the shortfall in counselling service delivery costs up to the end of the financial year. The amount requested was for £16,920 to deliver 564 sessions of counselling up to March 2026.

The Committee was reminded that there was no established budget for these requests, however, an amount of £354k was available in the Discretionary Funding Reserve for this year.

During discussion, Members raised concern in relation to the receipt of ad-hoc funding requests.

During further discussion, in relation to the Greater Shankill Partnerships Greater Shankill Winter Festival request, one Member suggested the need for funding for Winter Festival's in each of the other areas of the city.

One Member also reminded the Committee of the Street Tree Planting motion which had previously been agreed, which included the proposal for living Christmas trees in each quarter of the city and requested that an update be provided on the motion.

Proposal 1

Moved by Councillor Cobain,
Seconded by Councillor Bunting and

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to the funding request from Cancer Lifeline to provide funding of £16,920 to support the provision of critical community-based counselling services for people affected by cancer.

Proposal 2

Moved by Alderman McCoubrey,
Seconded by Councillor Bunting and

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to the funding request from Greater Shankill Partnership for funding of approximately £17,000 to support the Greater Shankill Winter Festival, and that an additional £17,000 be allocated to other Winter Festival's in each of the other areas of the city and that a report be submitted to the Party Group Leaders Forum to consider how it could be allocated.

Accordingly, the Committee:

1. Agreed to the request from Greater Shankill Partnership for funding of approximately £17,000 to support the Greater Shankill Winter Festival;
2. Agreed that an additional £17,000 be allocated to other Winter Festival's in each of the other areas of the city and that a report be submitted to the Party Group Leaders Forum to consider how it could be allocated;
3. Agreed that an update on Street Tree Planting motion, which included the proposal for living Christmas trees in each quarter of the city, be provided to Members; and
4. Agreed to the request from Cancer Lifeline to provide funding of £16,920 to support the provision of critical community-based counselling services for people affected by cancer.

Equality and Good Relations

Minutes of Shared City Partnership **Meeting, 6th October**

The Committee approved the minutes and recommendations from the Shared City Partnership Meeting held on 6th October, including:

Presentation on Girdwood Community Hub

- The Shared City Partnership noted the presentation and recommended to the Committee that it noted the presentation.

Good Relations Action Plan Quarter Two Update

- The Shared City Partnership agreed to note the update and recommended to the Committee that it also agreed and noted the contents of the report.

TEO Additional Funding Application and Allocation

- The Shared City Partnership noted the contents of the report and approved the application. It also approved the allocation of an additional £27,000 in TEO funding to the next two eligible applications received following the Community Recovery Fund – Open Call and recommended that the Committee noted the report and approved both the application and the funding allocation as detailed in the report.

Community Recovery Fund Update

- The Shared City Partnership agreed to note the update and recommended to the Committee that it also agreed and noted the contents of the report.

Peace Plus Local Community Action Plan (LCAP) Mobilisation Update

- The Shared City Partnership noted the contents of the report and confirmed agreement of the administrative extension to 30th September, 2028 and recommended that the Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed the administrative extension to 30th September, 2028.

Peace Plus Thriving and Peaceful Communities Thematic Update

- The Shared City Partnership recommended that the Committee noted the contents of the report

Peace Plus Celebrating Culture and Diversity Thematic Update

- The Shared City Partnership noted the contents of the report and agreed flexibility on the split of the 24 mentors/mentees for CCD5 Lot 2 up to 75% for mentors and recommended that the Committee agreed the recommendation and noted the contents of the report.

Peace Plus Processes Update

- The Shared City Partnership agreed to note the update and recommended to the Committee that it also agreed and noted the contents of the report.

Update from Partnership Members

- The updates were noted from the East Belfast Community Development Association and the PSNI and were included in the minutes.

Any Other Business

- The Good Relations Manager advised that, following input at the recent Partnership workshop, future Updates from Shared City Partnership Members would be moved to the start of the agenda and that the notes of that workshop would be presented to the Partnership at its meeting in November.

Operational Issues

**Minutes of the Party Group Leaders
Consultative Forum, 16th October**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum of 16th October, 2025.

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

The Committee approved the recommendations as set out below:

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE
Blackie River Centre	17 January 2026	Level 5 Student Graduation to celebrate and acknowledge the achievements of adult learners. Award ceremony followed by lunch. Numbers attending – 30	D	Current rate free as charity
European Youth Parliament United Kingdom	3 March 2026	2026 Northern Ireland Regional Forum of European Youth Parliament UK sees teams of schools debate pre-written Resolutions providing a platform to express their opinions whilst building new skills Numbers attending – 80	B & D	Current rate free as charity
Memory Stones of Love in partnership with Cruse Bereavement Care NI	8 March 2026	An afternoon of commemoration with stories, poems and music as main regional event for COVID-19 National Day of Reflection Numbers attending – 200	D	Current rate free as charity
Ulster Society of Rugby Football Referees	2 May 2026	75TH Annual Dinner for USRFR provides an opportunity to invite senior representatives from their fellow associations in Leinster, Munster and Connaught to join with the Ulster Society in celebrating the season and their significant anniversary with dinner, speeches and awards. Numbers attending – 120	C & D	<i>Event post April 2026 - Charge TBC</i>
Belfast Pride	17 July 2026	Belfast Pride 2026 Launch and Awards annual event with drinks reception, dinner and awards to celebrate the launch of the annual pride festival in Belfast Numbers attending – 320	B & D	<i>Event post April 2026 - Charge TBC</i>
European Regions Airline Association Ltd	7 October 2026	ERA Gala Awards Dinner 2026 brings together the members of the European Regions Airline Association to celebrate the achievements of Regional Airlines operating in Europe with drinks reception, dinner and award ceremony	A & B	<i>Event post April 2026 - Charge TBC</i>

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE
		Numbers attending – 375		
2027				
Institute for Small Business and Entrepreneurship	10 November 2027	Institute for Small Business and Entrepreneurship Conference 2027 Welcome Reception begins their conference which is being staged at the Europa Hotel Numbers attending - 100	A & B	<i>Event post April 2026 - Charge TBC</i>

Human Rights Day 2025 - Flag Requests

The Committee approved the flying of the Human Rights Day flag and the United Nations flag from the City Hall on 10th December, 2025.

Minutes of the Cost of Living Working Group, 14th October

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the Cost of Living Working Group of 14th October, 2025.

Issues Raised in Advance by Members

Levels of criminality and violence in the City Centre (Councillor Beattie to raise)

Councillor Beattie outlined his concerns regarding the ongoing levels of criminality and violence in the City Centre.

After discussion, the Committee agreed that a multi-agency meeting be convened to address the levels of criminality and violence in the City Centre and to consider the short-term actions and long-term strategy to alleviate the issues across the city.

Chairperson