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BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

1st May, 2026

SUMMONS TO ATTEND THE MONTHLY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

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

Notice is hereby given that the monthly meeting of the Council will be held in the Council Chamber, City Hall, Belfast on Tuesday, 5th May, 2026 at 6.00 pm, for the transaction of the following business:

1. Summons
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Minutes of the Council (Pages 1 - 14)
5. Official Announcements
6. Requests to address the Council
 - Deputation re: Notice of Motion on University of Ulster Job Cuts
 - Deputation re: Notice of Motion on PMDD
7. Minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (Pages 15 - 56)
8. Minutes of the People and Communities Committee (Pages 57 - 68)
9. Minutes of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee (Pages 69 - 90)
10. Minutes of the Licensing Committee (Pages 91 - 112)
11. Minutes of the Planning Committee (Pages 113 - 122)
12. Minutes of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee (Pages 123 - 124)
13. Minutes of the Climate and City Resilience Committee (Pages 125 - 132)
14. Minutes of the Standards and Business Committee (Pages 133 - 136)
15. Notices of Motion
 - a) Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD) (Pages 137 - 138)
 - b) Tackling Anti-Social Scrambler and E-Scooter Use in Belfast (Pages 139 - 140)
 - c) Calling for University of Ulster to rescind decision to cut 450 jobs (Pages 141 - 142)

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

John Walsh
Chief Executive

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Council

MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the Council Chamber, City Hall,
on Wednesday, 1st April, 2026 at 6.00 p.m., pursuant to notice.

Members present: The Lord Mayor, Councillor Kelly (Chairperson);
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Doherty);
The High Sheriff (Alderman McCoubrey);
Aldermen Lawlor, McCullough and
Rodgers; and Councillors Abernethy, Anglin,
Beattie, Bell, Black, Bower, Bradley, Brennan,
R. Brooks, T. Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Carson,
Cobain, Collins, de Faoite, M. Donnelly,
P. Donnelly, R.M. Donnelly, Doran, D. Douglas,
S. Douglas, Duffy, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Groogan,
Hanvey, Long, Lyons, Magee, Maghie, McAteer,
McCabe, McCallin, McCann, McCormick,
McDonough-Brown, McKay, McKeown,
I. McLaughlin, R. McLaughlin, Meenehan, Murphy,
Nelson, Ó Néill, Smyth, Verner and Walsh.

Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Black declared an interest in the item "Independently Managed Community Centres" within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that Grosvenor Community Centre was her place of work.

Councillor de Faoite declared an interest in the item "Planning Information" within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that he was on the Board of Governors of Forge Integrated Primary School.

Councillor P. Donnelly declared an interest in the item "Minutes of the Shared City Partnership Meeting" within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that his employer was in receipt of PEACEPLUS funding.

Councillor R. M. Donnelly declared an interest in the item "Minutes of the Shared City Partnership Meeting" within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that her employer was in receipt of PEACEPLUS funding.

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Councillor Duffy declared an interest in the item “Minutes of the Shared City Partnership Meeting” within the within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that his brother was involved in the delivery of PEACEPLUS projects and he worked for the West Belfast Partnership Board.

Councillor Groogan declared an interest in the items “Area-based Community Planning and Community Wealth Building” and “Minutes of the Shared City Partnership Meeting” within the within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that her employer was one of the Partnership Boards and in receipt of PEACEPLUS funding, the item “Vacant to Vibrant Programme Update” within the City Growth and Regeneration Committee minutes, in that her employer was in receipt of a grant through the scheme and the item “Cultural Multi-Annual Grants” within the City Growth and Regeneration Committee minutes, in that she had undertaken freelance work for an organisation that had applied for a grant and the item “Belfast Harbour Commissioners –Draft Masterplan 2025-50”, in that she was a member of the Planning Committee.

Councillor Long declared an interest in the item “Draft NI Executive Early Learning and Childcare Strategy” within the within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that his wife was the Minister for Justice.

Councillor McCabe declared an interest in the item “Minutes of the Shared City Partnership Meeting” within the within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that her employer was in receipt of PEACEPLUS funding and also the item “Cultural Multi-Annual Grants” within the City Growth and Regeneration Committee Minutes, in that her employer was an applicant.

Councillor McCann declared an interest in the item “Minutes of the Shared City Partnership Meeting” within the within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that his aunt was employed by an organisation in receipt of PEACEPLUS funding.

Councillor McKeown declared an interest in the item “Minutes of the Shared City Partnership Meeting” within the within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that his employer had made a presentation at the meeting.

Councillor Murphy declared an interest in the item “Requests for Funding” within the within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that a family member was involved with Ligoniel Rec Football Club.

Councillor Murray declared an interest in the items ”Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2026 Update” and “Requests for use of the City Hall and the provision of Hospitality” within the within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that he was employed by SOS NI.

Councillor Verner declared an interest in the item “Minutes of the Shared City Partnership Meeting” within the within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that her employer was in receipt of PEACEPLUS funding.

Councillor Walsh declared an interest in the item “Minutes of the Shared City Partnership Meeting” within the within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that was a member of the West Belfast Partnership Board.

**Meeting of Council
Wednesday, 1st April, 2026**

Minutes of the Council

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

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the meetings of the Council of 2nd March, 2026, be taken as read and signed as correct.

Official Announcements

Mrs. Greta Rodgers

The Lord Mayor and all political parties present, expressed their deepest condolences to Alderman Rodgers on the recent passing of his wife Greta.

Alderman Rodgers thanked the Lord Mayor and the Council Members for their kind words and support following his loss.

Condolences

The Lord Mayor expressed her condolences to Council officers Liam, Mark and Stephen Mullholland on the recent passing of their father.

Councillor Groogan expressed her condolences to the families of Amy Doherty, Ellie Flanagan and Naomi Connor following their recent deaths

Councillor Long expressed his condolences to the family of former Councillor Peter Tompson on his recent passing.

Councillor Black expressed her condolences to the family of James (Jim) Petticrew, former divisional superintendent of St. John Ambulance and the Lord Mayor agreed to her request to send a letter of sympathy to his family.

Congratulations

Councillor Walsh congratulated Our Lady and St. Patrick's College Knock ladies Gaelic footballers who had recently won the All-Ireland Senior Post-Primary Schools title.

Councillor McCabe congratulated boxer Anthony Cacace on becoming two-time champion of the world after winning his recent fight in Dublin.

Councillor Canavan congratulated St. Dominic's Grammar School basketball team on winning the U19 All-Ireland B Finals and the Lord Mayor acceded to her request to send a letter of congratulations.

Councillor De Faoite congratulated Colin Harvey and Linda Irvine who had been appointed to serve as members of President Connolly's Council of State and the Lord Mayor acceded to his request to send letters of congratulations.

**Meeting of Council
Wednesday, 1st April, 2026**

Councillor Bunting congratulated the Belfast Bands Forum on its successful Commonwealth Day event in City Hall and Imperial Guards Flute Band for its performance and participation in the annual St. Patrick's Day parade. She also congratulated Councillor Doran on receiving a Good Relations Youth Award

Councillor Murray congratulated the Belfast Giants Ice Hockey Team on winning its ninth Elite League title and Cranmore Integrated Primary School on having been awarded the Autism NI Impact Award and the Lord Mayor acceded to his request to send a letter of congratulations to Cranmore Integrated Primary School.

Councillor D. Douglas congratulated Mr. Thomas Warnick and Mr. Jim Bailey on the first East Belfast Pool League Awards event.

Acknowledgements

Alderman Lawlor marked the anniversary of the founding of the Ulster Defense Regiment CGC.

Councillor McKay commended Queen's University students who had taken part in a referendum to reinstate dual language signage at the Students' Union.

Councillor Flynn acknowledged the recent annual Trans Day of Visibility and asked that it act as a reminder to Elected Members to celebrate trans people and the contribution they make to the city.

Councillor Groogan reminded the Council that April was PMDD awareness month.

Councillor De Faoite addressed a recent outbreak of meningitis B and requested that the Council's Corporate Communications be used to promote the uptake of the meningitis B vaccine.

Thanks

The Lord Mayor thanked the Sandy Row Cheerleaders for their participation in the annual St. Patrick's Day parade.

The Lord Mayor thanked Catherine Christy and Fra Shannon for their service as Council officers following their recent retirement.

Change of Position of Responsibility

The Chief Executive reported that notification had been received that Alderman Copeland replace Councillor Groogan on the board of arc21.

The Council approved the change.

**Meeting of Council
Wednesday, 1st April, 2026**

Request to address the Council

The Chief Executive reported that a request to address the Council had been received from Ms. S. Pentel, Mr. R. Coyle and Mr. C. Gallagher regarding Belfast Stories. The Council agreed to receive the deputation in restricted session.

Restricted Item

The information contained in the representation associated with the above item is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Resolved – “That the Council agrees to exclude the members of the press and public from the meeting during the deputation as, due to the nature of the item, 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’ items 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.

Ms. S. Pentel, Mr. R. Coyle and Mr. C. Gallagher made representations to the Council with regard to the Belfast Stories project.

The Lord Mayor thanked Ms. S. Pentel, Mr. R. Coyle and Mr. C. Gallagher for attending and they retired from the meeting.

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Moved by Councillor Brennan,
Seconded by Councillor Beattie,

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

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

At the request of Councillor P. Donnelly, the City Solicitor agreed to make arrangements for the City Hall to be illuminated to mark India’s men’s Cricket Team playing at two-match T201 series at Stormont in June, 2026

**Meeting of Council
Wednesday, 1st April, 2026**

**Area-based Community Planning and
Community Wealth Building**

Amendment

Moved by Councillor De Faoite,
Seconded by Councillor McKeown and

Resolved – “That the Council agrees that the minute under the heading “Area-based Community Planning and Community Wealth Building” be amended to provide that a meeting be convened with relevant stakeholders in south and east Belfast to engage and address the issues which had been raised.”

**Official Announcements during Council
Meetings**

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Groogan,
Seconded by Councillor Smyth and

Resolved – “That the Council agrees that the minute under the heading “Official Announcements during Council Meetings” be amended to reflect that official announcements at Council meetings be limited to one minute in duration, that further consideration be given to a restriction on reference to other political parties and that a report be brought back to the Committee with regard to the democratic efficacy of the Standards and Business Committee”

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendments, the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th March, were approved and adopted.

People and Communities Committee

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

That the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 4th March, be approved and adopted.

**Meeting of Council
Wednesday, 1st April, 2026**

Proposals for Dual Language Street Signs

Amendment 1

Moved by Councillor R-M Donnelly,
Seconded by Councillor de Faoite

“That the Council agrees that the minute under the heading “Proposals for Dual Language Street Signs” be amended to provide that all six applications for the erection of second street nameplates in Irish be approved.

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

Amendment 2

Moved by Councillor Flynn,
Seconded by Councillor Smyth,

“That the Council agrees that the minute under the heading “Proposals for Dual Language Street Signs” be amended to provide that five of the six applications for the erection of second street nameplates in Irish be approved, with the exception of the application for Stormont Park.

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

Compact Mechanical Sweeper

Amendment

At the request of Councillor Canavan, the Council agreed that the minute under the heading “Compact Mechanical Sweeper” be amended to provide that the report regarding options in relation to the operation of a mechanical machine within neighbourhoods be presented to the Committee at its meeting in May, 2026.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendments, the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 4th March, were approved and adopted.

**Meeting of Council
Wednesday, 1st April, 2026**

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Moved by Councillor I. McLaughlin,
Seconded by Councillor Bunting and

“That the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 11th and 23rd March, be approved and adopted.”

Cultural Multi-Annual Grants

Amendment

At the request of Councillor Nelson, the Council agreed that the minute under the heading “Cultural Multi-Annual Grants” be amended to provide that delegated authority be granted to the Director of Economic Development to proceed with the allocation of a discretionary transition fund to support those organisations which had incurred a net reduction in funding under the terms of the Cultural Multi-Annual Grants 2026-28.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendment, the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 11th and 23rd March, were approved and adopted.

Licensing Committee

Moved by Councillor Doran,
Seconded by Councillor Carson and

“That the minutes of the proceedings of the Licensing Committee of 18th March, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.”

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

Amendment

Moved by Alderman McCullough,
Seconded by Alderman Lawlor and

Resolved – “That the Council agrees that a full report be provided to the Committee that would detail the number, distribution and concentration of HMOs across the city, the number and distribution of short-term lets, including Airbnb-style properties, set out the current policy position, including thresholds and area designation, outline the legal position and options available to amend policy, provide a clear timeframe to bring those options forward for decision and an estimate of future growth, based on current trends.”

**Meeting of Council
Wednesday, 1st April, 2026**

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendment, the minutes of the proceedings of the Licensing Committee of 18th March, were approved and adopted.

Planning Committee

Moved by Councillor Murphy,
Seconded by Councillor Carson and

Resolved – “That the minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee of 10th March, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.”

Minutes of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders’ Committee

Moved by Councillor Hanvey,
Seconded by Councillor Walsh and

Resolved – “That the minutes of the proceedings of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders’ Committee of 16th March, be approved and adopted.”

Climate and City Resilience Committee

Moved by Councillor M. Donnelly,
Seconded by Alderman Lawlor and

Resolved – “That the minutes of the proceedings of the Climate and City Resilience Committee of 12th March, be approved and adopted.”

Minutes of the Standards and Business Committee

Moved by Councillor Flynn,
Seconded by Alderman Lawlor and

Resolved – “That the minutes of the proceedings of the Standards and Business Committee of 24th March, be approved and adopted.”

Lord Mayor
Chairperson

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Council

SPECIAL MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the Council Chamber, City Hall,
on Wednesday, 23rd April, 2026 at 6.00 p.m., pursuant to notice.

Members present: The Lord Mayor, Councillor Kelly (Chairperson);
The High Sheriff (Alderman McCoubrey);
Aldermen Lawlor, McCullough and
Rodgers; and Councillors Abernethy, Anglin,
Beattie, Bell, Black, Bower, Bradley, Brennan,
R. Brooks, T. Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Carson,
Cobain, Collins, de Faoite, M. Donnelly,
P. Donnelly, R.M. Donnelly, Doran, D. Douglas,
S. Douglas, Duffy, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Groogan,
Hanvey, Long, Lyons, Magee, Maghie, McAteer,
McCabe, McCallin, McCann, McCormick,
McDonough-Brown, McKay, McKeown,
I. McLaughlin, R. McLaughlin, Meenehan, Murphy,
Nelson, O'Neill, Smyth and Verner.

Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported for the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Doherty) and Councillors Whyte and Walsh.

Declarations of Interest

Councillors Long and R. McLaughlin declared an interest, in that their partners were, respectively, a Junior Minister and a Minister within the NI Executive and left the meeting whilst amendment 1 was under consideration.

Motion - Planning Enforcement (Bobby Sands Statue)

Moved by Alderman McCullough,
Seconded by Councillor Bunting

"This Council:

1. Condemns the unauthorised erection of a statue of Bobby Sands on public land in west Belfast, expresses serious concern at the decision not to pursue enforcement action, and calls for that decision to be reconsidered in line with the Council's planning

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Thursday, 23rd April, 2026**

responsibilities and duty to apply the law consistently and fairly across all communities; and

2. Requests full transparency in respect of this decision, including disclosure to Members of all relevant documentation, correspondence, internal communications, and the legal basis and rationale upon which the decision was made, subject to legal and data protection requirements.”

Amendment 1

Moved by Councillor de Faoite,
Seconded by Councillor McKeown,

“This Council:

- believes all planning matters should be dealt with in a fair, equitable and lawful way;
- Regrets that the NI Executive has failed to advance the recommendations of the Flags, Identity, Culture and Tradition Commission, and calls on all Executive Ministers to recommit to those proposals;
- Further calls upon the NI Executive to address major challenges facing the planning process in Belfast, including the underinvestment in waste water infrastructure, and prolonged delays in responses by statutory consultees in DAERA, DfI and DfC.”

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

Amendment 2

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

“This Council affirms that planning law must be applied consistently, transparently, and without exception across the city.

Accordingly, this Council further agrees that any review of planning enforcement relating to monuments, statues, murals, memorial gardens, or similar structures must apply to all such installations in Belfast, regardless of political, cultural, or community background.

This includes, but is not limited to, memorials, murals, monuments, and gardens of remembrance located in areas associated with nationalist, republican, unionist, or loyalist communities.

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The Council therefore requests that officers bring forward a report outlining:

1. The current enforcement status of all such structures across the city;
2. Any instances where planning permission has not been sought or granted;
3. Options for ensuring consistent enforcement of planning regulations for all communities;
4. Recommendations for improving clarity, communication, and compliance going forward; and
5. This Council recognises that memorials, monuments, murals, and gardens of remembrance across Belfast—regardless of the community in which they are located—hold deep emotional and historical significance for many people. In acknowledging this, the Council agrees that any approach to planning enforcement must be proportionate, sensitive, and respectful of the role these sites play in remembering the dead.

The Council therefore further agrees that, where such structures exist without formal planning permission, priority should be given to engagement, dialogue, and community led solutions rather than immediate enforcement action. This includes considering whether enforcement is necessary or appropriate in cases where a structure’s primary purpose is remembrance and where it poses no safety risk or obstruction.

This approach ensures that planning law is upheld while also recognising the importance of compassion, dignity, and respect for all communities in how Belfast remembers its past.”

On a vote, twenty-three Members voted for the amendment, twenty-seven against and three no votes and it was declared lost.

Accordingly, the substantive Motion standing in the name of Alderman McCullough was put to the Council and, on a vote, twenty-seven Members voted for the Motion, twenty-two against and three no votes and it was declared carried.

Lord Mayor
Chairperson

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Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 24th April, 2026

HYBRID MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Brennan (Chairperson);
Councillors Beattie, Black, Bunting,
Doran, de Faoite, R-M Donnelly, Ferguson,
Garrett, Long, Maghie, I. McLaughlin, R. McLaughlin
Murray, Nelson, Ó Néill, Smyth and Whyte.

Also attended: Councillor R. Brooks

In attendance: 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;
Mr. K. Forster, Director of Economic Development;
Mr. T. Wallace, Director of Finance;
Mr. E. McConville, Director of Communications, Marketing
and External Affairs;
Mr. D. Sales, Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood
Services;
Mr. J. Girvan, Director of City and Neighbourhood Services;
Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;
Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and
Development;
Ms. C. Sheridan, Director of Human Resources;
Mr. S. Leonard, Director of Resources, Fleet, Transport and
Open Spaces and Street Scene;
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 Cobain.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 20th March, were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meetings on 1st April, subject to the following amendments:

Declarations of Interest

Councillor R-M. Donnelly declared an interest under item 8. (a) Minutes of Shared City Partnership, in so far as it related to PEACEPLUS in that she worked for an

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
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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 3. (b) Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann, Councillor Murray declared an interest, in that he was employed by S.O.S NI who were a delivery partner of the Fleadh, as the related interests did not become the subject of debate, he was not required to leave the meeting.

Councillor de Faoite declared an interest under item 5. (j) Planning Information, in that he was on the Board of Governors of Forge Integrated Primary School. As the item did not become the subject of debate, he was not required to leave the meeting.

In relation to item 4.e) Notices of Motion - Quarterly Update, Councillors Long declared an interest, in that his wife was the Justice Minister and Councillor R. McLaughlin declared an interest under the same item, in that his partner was a Junior Minister, and they both left the meeting whilst the item was under consideration.

Regarding item 5. i) Social Supermarket Update, Councillor Beattie declared an interest in that he was employed by a funding recipient and left the meeting whilst the item was under consideration.

Councillor Bunting declared an interest under item 3.e) Request for Funding, in that she was on the Committee of one of the of the centres and left the meeting whilst the item was under consideration.

Councillor Doran declared an interest in relation to item 3.e) Requests for Funding, in that he was associated with some of the applicants and left the meeting whilst the item was under consideration.

Presentations

Irish Athletic Boxing Association (IABA)

The Chairperson welcomed to the meeting Mr. G. Stewart, CEO, Boxing Ireland, Ms. C McAuley, COO (Policy & Governance), Boxing Ireland, Ms. R. Moffett: Operations Manager (Ulster), Mr. P. Barnes Snr: President Antrim Boxing County Board, and Ms. L. McMillan, Club Development Officer (Underrepresented Communities), Boxing Ireland.

Mr. Stewart provided an overview of Boxing Ireland and the 'Built Different' campaign.

Ms. Moffett outlined the success of the Council's Boxing Strategy to date and highlighted the range of activities, memberships and achievements of the Boxing participants from grassroots level to Olympians.

Ms. McAulay advised of the work which had been undertaken in relation to the Equality Commission Report Update. She summarised the action plan regarding the following 9 Key Action Plan Areas:

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 24th April, 2026**

- Elite Pathways and Selection Criteria
- Oversight and Implementation Panel
- IWG Recommendations – Review and Implementation
- Focused Club Development Programme
- Participation and Representation Programme
- Code of Conduct and Behavioural Standards
- Training and Accreditation Systems
- Governance Representation and Office Holders
- Reporting, Monitoring and Delivery Timeframes

During discussion, several Members welcomed the update and highlighted the importance of the sport in Belfast. One Member requested that a copy of the Action Plan be shared with Members.

After discussion, the Chairperson thanked the representatives for their presentation.

Noted.

**Request to present - Retail NI and USDAW
(Sunday Trading consultation)**

The Committee agreed to accede to the request to receive a presentation from Retail NI and USDAW, and also a presentation from Belfast One (Belfast Chamber and Visit Belfast) in relation to the Sunday Trading consultation, at its meeting on 22nd May.

The Committee also agreed to delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Place and Economy to consider any further requests to present on the issue.

Restricted Items

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

**Connswater Community and Leisure
Services Ltd at Ballymacarrett**

The Committee was provided with an update on the status of Connswater Community and Leisure Services Ltd which had responsibility for the Council owned Ballymacarrett Community Centre, together with the implications of the associated insurance risk and subsequent closure of the facility on 20th March, 2026.

During discussion, in response to Members' concerns in relation to lessons learned and the risks involved, the Director of Neighbourhood Services advised that Members should flag any issues regarding Independently Managed Community Centres so that engagement could take place.

In response to a Member's question regarding previous reporting and highlighting of the issue, the Director advised that the previous report that had been considered by the People and Communities Committee would be circulated.

After discussion, the Committee noted the contents of the report and, in particular, the fact that the Ballymacarrett Facility was closed and that the current IMCC arrangement with Connswater Community and Leisure Services Ltd had now ceased.

Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann

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

The Director of Economic Development 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, one Member highlighted the urgent need for the Business Toolkit and the Senior Manager - Culture and Tourism advised that this would be released in the coming days.

One member requested an update each month on the Policing Plan and its completion and another Member requested an update on the Fringe Events Programme and engagement.

After discussion, the Committee noted the progress to date on the development of the Fleadh Cheoil and approved:

- A Single Tender Action with a value of up to £1.257million (all income from the service would come to the Council reducing the net cost significantly);
- A Year 2 Funding agreement with Ards CCE of up to £56.5K; and
- A Funding agreement with the Belfast Bands Forum up to £30K.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
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The Committee also noted that the issues raised would be taken forward by the relevant officers.

Update on Employees on Temporary Contracts and Agency Workers

The Committee noted the update on the number of employees on temporary contracts, secondments and the number of agency assignees.

Organisational Reviews and Change Programme

The Committee considered a report which provided a quarterly update for the Organisational Reviews and Change Portfolio projects.

The Committee noted the progress on the work programme for the Organisational Reviews and Change Portfolio and timescales going forward.

Requests for Funding

The Committee deferred consideration of the report until its Special Meeting on Thursday, 30th April, to allow Members more time to consider the report.

The Committee also agreed to write a letter to the Minsiter of Education in relation to the removal of ring-fenced protection for youth service funding within the Education Authority to request that the Minsiter reconsiders this decision and engages with the Education Authority to ensure that youth services were properly resourced.

Summer Community Diversionary Fund

(Mr. P. Hamilton, Lead Officer Community Safety, attended in connection with this item)

The Committee considered the detail of the assessments undertaken by officers in relation to the funding awards for the 2026 – 2028 Summer Community Diversionary Programme.

The Committee:

- Noted the contents of the report, confirming the assessment process and proposed allocation of funding to applicant organisations;
- Noted that any funding awarded was subject to further engagement with groups and analysis of projects and associated budgets in line with Council due diligence procedures, this would include any outstanding financial and monitoring returns with regards to other Council funding. Funding would not be awarded until approved contracts were issued and signed.
- Approved permission for those organisations which had been successful to use Belfast Parks for their event or activity and to delegate authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to ensure the following:

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- Negotiate satisfactory terms and conditions of use via an appropriate legal agreement prepared by the City Solicitor, including managing final booking confirmation dates and flexibility around 'set up' and take down' periods, and booking amendments, subject to:
 - The completion of an appropriate management plan,
 - The promoter resolving any operational issues to the Council's satisfaction;
 - The promoter meeting all the statutory requirements of the Planning and Building Control Service including the terms and conditions of the Park's Entertainment Licence.

Northern Ireland Football Fund Application

The Committee agreed to support an application to the Northern Ireland Football fund at the maximum value, £1.5m, with 50 per cent match funding, to develop a new full size floodlit artificial pitch, fully accessible changing pavilion at Blanchflower Playing fields, with the facility to be restricted to use by under-represented groups including women and girls and inclusive soccer clubs.

The Committee, given that the funding deadline was in advance of the full Council meeting, agreed that Committee support, in principle, be put forward to satisfy the requirement of the funding application for Council support.

Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy / Belfast Playing Pitches and Outdoor Sports Facilities Strategy

The Committee deferred consideration of the report until its Special Meeting on Thursday, 30th April, to allow further information to be provided in relation to the inclusion of Belvoir Park Football Club and additional sport consultation responses.

Leisure Programme Update

The Committee noted the update provided and:

Programme Level

- **USP approach and facilities mixes**– noted that Committee had previously agreed that the USP approach to the remaining sites be maintained and that it was proposed that the next round of AWGs would have a focus on leisure (North, West and South) with Party Group briefings to be organised in order to start to agree proposed USPs and facilities mixes for the remaining sites.
- **Visit to Belfast Leisure Centres** – noted that a site visit had been organised for all Members to a range of leisure facilities across Belfast to understand current USPs and programming on Tuesday, 28th April.

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- **Whiterock and Shankill Leisure Centres** – agreed that site optimisation plans be developed for these sites that may accommodate both leisure and housing in a wider placemaking perspective and in the context of both the Housing Led Regeneration Programme and the Leisure Transformation Programme with future detail to be brought back to the Committee.
- **Girdwood Indoor Leisure Facility**
Noted the updates in respect to Girdwood Indoor Leisure Facility

Matters referred back from Council/Motions

Notice of Motion - Gender Budgeting

The Committee was advised that, at the meeting of the Standards and Business Committee held on 24th March 2026, the following motion, which was proposed by Councillor McCabe and seconded by Councillor Ó Néill was referred to the Committee for consideration:

“That this Council acknowledges the potential benefits of gender budgeting in addressing systemic gender inequalities for all in our society, as well as improving equality for whom we are providing services for thorough, thoughtful and deliberative financial planning.

That the Council performs a gender data audit including to ensure maximum impact of data and to understand what gaps exist relating to the scope and scale of gender inequality, with the aim of achieving better equality outcomes and more targeted resource allocation. Annual review of progress will determine further steps in auditing and where progress allows for the phased adoption of gender budgeting tools.”

During discussion, one member suggested that engagement with colleagues from Ulster University who had researched the issue and the Women’s Steering Group would also be useful.

After discussion, the Committee noted that, in accordance with Standing Orders, Notices of Motion which commit the Council to expenditure or fall within the remit of a particular Committee must be referred to the appropriate committee for consideration and report.

The Committee noted that the notice of motion had been received and agreed that a subsequent report would be brought back to the Committee outlining a detailed consideration of the motion and the potential cost implications.

Notice of Motion - Disused and Derelict Phone Boxes

It was reported that, at the meeting of the Standards and Business Committee held on 24th March 2026, the following motion, which was proposed by Councillor Bower and seconded by Councillor Abernethy was referred to the Committee for consideration:

“This Council notes the increasing number of disused and derelict phone boxes across Belfast which are often used as spaces for anti-social behaviour, vandalism, and littering. These phone boxes represent a unique opportunity for urban regeneration and community empowerment.

This Council agrees to liaise with BT regarding the process to adopt a phone box and to identify all eligible phone boxes within the Belfast City Council area.

The Council will support those wanting to adopt a phone box by developing a process to help charities, community groups, and local businesses to navigate the legal and logistical requirements of adopting a box.

The Council will also explore the feasibility of a small grant to help groups with the initial costs of refurbishment (e.g., painting, shelving, or installing solar lighting).”

The Committee noted that, in accordance with Standing Orders, Notices of Motion which commit the Council to expenditure or fall within the remit of a particular Committee must be referred to the appropriate committee for consideration and report.

The Committee noted that the notice of motion had been received and agreed that a subsequent report would be brought back to the Committee outlining a detailed consideration of the motion and the potential cost implications.

Notice of Motion - Proposed City Ambassadors Scheme

The Committee was reminded that, at the meeting of the Standards and Business Committee held on 24th March 2026, the following motion, which was proposed by Councillor Long and seconded by Councillor Nelson was referred to the Committee for consideration:

“This Council will introduce a City Ambassadors scheme which recognises those in the city who have made outstanding contributions in various sectors. These individuals will have a formal role in promoting Belfast.

This new scheme will be more inclusive and allow for more diverse recognition than the Freedom of the City scheme and allow us to better recognise the achievements of those in Belfast.”

During discussion, the Committee suggested that engagement should take place with Visit Belfast on what type of schemes might already be in existence and that, given a previous lack of representation, consideration should be given to recognising women in Belfast, if the scheme was to be brought forward.

The Committee noted that, in accordance with Standing Orders, Notices of Motion which commit the Council to expenditure or fall within the remit of a particular Committee must be referred to the appropriate committee for consideration and report.

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The Committee noted that the notice of motion had been received and agreed that a subsequent report would be brought back to the Committee outlining a detailed consideration of the motion and the potential cost implications.

Notice of Motion - Costed Support for the Childcare Sector

It was reported that, at the meeting of the Standards and Business Committee held on 24th March 2026, the following motion, which was proposed by Councillor Maghie and seconded by Councillor Bower was referred to the Committee for consideration:

“That this council notes with regret the amount of parents who received notification of increased childcare costs in the past month and realises the increased financial burden this places on parents in this city.

This council will undertake to bring back a costed report that looks at how council assets can better support childcare provision in Belfast.

Including:

- ***How our parks and open spaces could be utilised to further support the provision of forest schools.***
- ***How community spaces could be utilised to support expansions of childcare places.***
- ***How community groups could be supported to provide childcare places.***
- ***How our training academies could support this work.”***

During discussion, Members suggested that the report should include what work was currently being undertaken by the Council on the issue as an employer and the potential for a flexible hour approach be included, together with potential assistance for social economy projects.

After discussion, the Committee noted that, in accordance with Standing Orders, Notices of Motion which commit the Council to expenditure or fall within the remit of a particular Committee must be referred to the appropriate committee for consideration and report.

The Committee noted that the notice of motion had been received and agreed that a subsequent report would be brought back to the Committee outlining a detailed consideration of the motion and the potential cost implications.

Notices of Motion - Quarterly Update

The Committee considered an update on the progress of all Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance for which it was responsible for.

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After discussion, the Committee:

- Noted the updates to all Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance that the Committee was responsible for;
- Agreed to the closure of Notices of Motion 284, 305, 347, 358, 391, 411, 439, 440, 455, 456;
- Agreed that motion - Together – Building a United Community Strategy (474) remained open until the project progressed; and
- Noted that further updates would be provided in relation to Motion 297 – Comber Greenway, and motion 330 – Clean Indoor Air.

Correspondence Received - Hardship Funding

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting in January, the Council agreed to write to:

- ***the Minister for Communities to express its objection to the confirmation that the Department for Communities hardship funding, provided in 2023/24, would not be available in future years, and to encourage the Minister to look at more equitable ways to tax the profits of energy companies to help fund the service going forward; and***
- ***the Minister of Education to express its concern in relation to the Education Authority's decision to increase the price of school meals, and to state its support of the campaign by trade unions for the delivery of free school meals for all children."***

It was reported that responses had been received which were attached at appendix 1 and 2 of the report.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Correspondence Received - Minister for Infrastructure - Winter Preparedness

The Committee was reminded that, at the Council meeting held on 2nd March, 2026, it was agreed to write to the Minister for Infrastructure to seek clarification on the Winter Preparedness arrangements for Belfast City Centre, specifically in relation to drainage and gully management, in light of the sustained and prolonged rainfall across Northern Ireland and to request the urgent clearance of all drains in order to ensure that the City Centre has no unnecessary barriers to accessibility.

The Committee is advised that a response has been received from the Minister.

In her response she advised that officials from DfI continued to work closely with the Council, BID representatives and other stakeholders through the Belfast City Centre Task and Finish Group which was established in July 2025.

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A number of problem drainage sites have been identified by the Group and DfI officials, along with external contractors, had been working through a programme of remedial works to address the issues raised. In addition, it has been agreed that Belfast City Centre gullies would receive additional cleaning as part of the next drainage maintenance programme due to commence in April 2026.

The Committee was reminded that the correspondence was linked to the Motion - City Centre Gritting Feasibility Study, and a further update would be provided at the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Proposal

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

Resolved – that the Committee notes the smart gully monitoring innovation project in Dublin in helping to identify blocked or at risk gullies in real time and agrees that officers work with the Department for Infrastructure to gather learning from Smart Dublin with the intention of using this information to scope a small pilot in Belfast, focused on known flood prone areas, with a view to improving drainage response, reducing surface water flooding, to include a potential Council contract in removing weeds in alleyways and identifying potential external funding opportunities;

The Committee:

- noted the correspondence as set out in the report;
- noted the smart gully monitoring innovation project in Dublin in helping to identify blocked or at risk gullies in real time and agreed that officers work with the Department for Infrastructure to gather learning from Smart Dublin with the intention of using this information to scope a small pilot in Belfast, focused on known flood prone areas, with a view to improving drainage response, reducing surface water flooding, to include a potential Council contract in removing weeds in alleyways and identifying potential external funding opportunities; and
- agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting to provide an update on the Motion - City Centre Gritting Feasibility Study.

Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues

Gender Pay Gap Report

The Committee was reminded that, the Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 22nd February, 2024 considered the following motion which had been received for submission to the Council on 4th March, 2024:

Gender Pay Gap Recording and Reporting

“That this Council will lead the way in Northern Ireland, adopting robust, transparent and accountable processes for gender pay gap recording and reporting.

The TUC calculated that in 2023 in the UK, the day when the average woman stops working for free compared to the average man is the 23rd of February. The average woman in paid employment effectively works for free for nearly two months of the year compared to the average man in paid employment. Average figures disguise wider disparities, for instance the gap tends to widen if a woman is a mum, or works in education, finance or insurance.

There is no legal obligation to record and report gender pay gap data in Northern Ireland. However, if we don't transparently measure pay by gender, how can we understand and address structural inequalities in our organisation?

Therefore, this Council will record and report:

- ***Its mean gender pay gap in hourly pay***
- ***Its median gender pay gap in hourly pay***
- ***The proportion of males and females in each pay quartile***
- ***A statistical overview of progression/promotion rates for male and female staff***

And will use guidance such as the UK Government Equalities Office - What Works guidance to address the gap.

After the first gender pay gap report, the Council will move to include Disability and ethnicity pay reporting.”

The Director of Human Resources provided an overview of the report findings. She stated that, at 31st March, 2025:

- women earned £1.27 for every £1 that men earned (comparing median hourly pay)
- women made up 51.04% of employees in the highest paid quarter, and 21.93% of employees in the lowest paid quarter.

Mean gender pay gap

- women's mean (average) hourly pay was 16.3% higher than men's.

She advised that, the gender pay gap results for this reporting period showed a pay gap in favour of women, both at the median and mean levels. This outcome was closely linked to the structure of the workforce and the distribution of roles across the organisation.

During discussion, the Director of Human Resources answered a range of questions in relation to overtime, reporting constraints and the methodology of the report.

After discussion, the Committee noted the contents of the report and that reporting on gender pay gaps within pay bands would be investigated.

**Draft Bullying and Harassment Policy
and draft Equal Opportunities Policy**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To present the draft Bullying & Harassment Policy and draft Equal Opportunities Policy for approval.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The committee is asked to:

- Note the contents of this report;
- And agree to adopt the Bullying and Harassment and Equal Opportunities Policies.

3.0 Main Report

One of the people goals in our People Strategy is to make Belfast City Council ‘a place for everyone’, and we have committed to developing a culture of respect and inclusivity by increasing awareness and understanding of diversity issues and implementing policies and procedures that aim to achieve this.

3.2 The Draft Bullying & Harassment Policy and Draft Equal Opportunities Policy demonstrate our commitment to an inclusive workplace where all employees feel welcome, valued and respected. These policies were developed and consulted on through the IR Framework with management and Trade Unions. The policies were agreed at JNCC on 26 March 2026.

Draft Bullying & Harassment Policy

3.3 The Council is committed to providing a good and harmonious working environment free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying, intimidation and victimisation and where all employees are treated with dignity and respect and their rights are protected. The purpose of this policy is to ensure a working environment in which bullying and harassment are understood to be unacceptable and where individuals have the

confidence to complain about bullying and harassment, should it arise, in the knowledge that their concerns will be dealt with promptly, appropriately and fairly and that they will not be made to feel disadvantaged in any way for having raised or pursued a concern in good faith.

- 3.4 This policy covers behaviour in any work-related setting both inside and outside the workplace, by and against fellow employees or customers, suppliers or the public during or outside of working hours, for example business trips or work-related social events or by way of electronic communication including email, social media or by phone such as by text message or app.
- 3.5 This policy applies to all employees of Belfast City Council (the 'Council'). Casual workers will be treated in accordance with the principles inherent in the policy.

Draft Equal Opportunities Policy

- 3.6 The Council is committed to providing equal opportunities and promoting a good and harmonious working environment free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying, intimidation and victimisation and where all employees are treated with dignity and respect and their rights are protected.
- 3.7 The purpose of this policy is to ensure equal opportunities for employees and job applicants and a working environment in which all employees and job applicants will be treated on the basis of merit in a fair, consistent and objective manner and where unlawful discrimination and victimisation is understood to be unacceptable and individuals have the confidence to complain about it, should it arise, in the knowledge that their concerns will be dealt with promptly, appropriately and fairly and that they will not be made to feel disadvantaged in any way for having raised or pursued a concern in good faith.
- 3.8 This policy covers behaviour in any work-related setting both inside and outside the workplace, against fellow employees, job applicants, customers, suppliers and the public and during or outside of working hours, for example business trips or work-related social events or by way of electronic communication including email social media or by phone such as text message or app.
- 3.9 This policy does not cover alleged incidents of unlawful discrimination or victimisation of Council employees by those who are not Council employees. Such matters will be dealt with in accordance with the Protection of Staff from Workplace Violence and Abuse from the Public – Roles and Responsibilities.

3.10 Financial and Resource Implications

None

3.11 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

The policies promote equality of opportunity for people within Section 75 groups by promoting an inclusive workplace and showing our commitment to the creation of a work environment that is free from discrimination, harassment and bullying, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and no one is treated less favourably than any other person or group of persons on the grounds of their sex, age, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender reassignment status, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership status or any other characteristic.”

The Committee noted the contents of this report and agreed to adopt the Bullying and Harassment and Equal Opportunities Policies.

Sustain Exchange Climate Leadership Event – Funding Agreement

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- Inform Committee of a proposal by the non-profit Management and Leadership Network (MLN) to host a prominent climate leadership event ‘Sustain Exchange’ with up to 300 decision-makers attending.
- Request approval for a funding agreement to be put in place between Belfast City Council and the event organiser to the value of £10,140. The event will put the challenges, opportunities and absolute need for positive action associated with climate change on the agenda for local organisations and leaders.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is asked to consider support for this climate leadership conference by approving a funding agreement to the value of £10,140 be entered into with the event organiser.

3.0 Main Report

Background

3.1 It is now beyond doubt that organisations of all shapes, sizes and sectors need to radically reduce their environmental impact both directly and indirectly through their supply chains. The extreme weather experienced across the globe over the past twelve months has further evidenced the reality that the effects of climate change are being felt and the need for decisive action from organisations, championed by their leaders, is now. We are fast approaching the point of no return.

3.2 It is a truly transformative time for organisations as they address climate risks and identify new opportunities in the green economy. The transition is not straightforward. Organisations need help in developing planet positive practices, securing cleaner power, heat and transport solutions. They need help in navigating new markets to find more environmentally sustainable solutions in their supply chain, and they need to do it fast. There has never been a more important time to find specialist help to navigate the transition, and to educate, inform and engage by sharing the existing knowledge and exemplar experience of those at the forefront of the transition.

Purpose and format of event

3.3 The Sustain Exchange Summit will deliver on the objectives above and will connect local decision-makers with international thought leaders as well as those at the forefront of the transition locally.

3.4 The event is expected to attract some 300 local leaders (primarily business leaders but also those from the public, NDPB and third sectors) to a Belfast city centre venue with strong public transport links to ensure the carbon footprint of the event is kept to a minimum. The Sustain Exchange Summit will ensure the messages around the need and importance of positive climate action are heard and that the Council's proactivity in this area will be strongly profiled before and during the event.

Content

3.5 Previous speakers at this event have included the eminent writer, broadcaster and commentator Sir Jonathan Porritt CBE, Norman Crowley (global entrepreneur and founder of CoolPlanet), Sir Tim Smit KBE (Founder of The Eden Project and world-renowned thought leader in sustainability) and John

Elkington (the global godfather of sustainability and creator of the triple bottom line concept). The 2026 Sustain Exchange Summit will again be delivered to a world-class standard and will feature globally-renowned speakers (Mary Robinson is the first in-person speaker to be confirmed). The speakers will encourage and empower attending organisations to consider their own climate impact and take the first (or next) steps in their quest to become 'planet positive'. Previous local speakers at this event have demonstrated how leaders from humble beginnings in Belfast have become game-changers in their respective fields. These include the likes of Dr Andrew Woods from Catagen (Sustain Exchange 2022), Eddie McGoldrick from The Electric Storage Company (Sustain Exchange 2021), Philip Rainey from Weev (Sustain Exchange 2023), Dr Katrina Thompson from Artemis Technologies (Sustain Exchange 2024) and Stephen Dunn from CarbonFit (Sustain Exchange 2025). The 2026 event will once again showcase how leaders from Belfast are leading the charge when it comes to the quest to avoid what is now a 'code red for humanity'. In doing this, MLN plans to galvanise existing businesses to act and to inspire the next cohort of planet positive pioneers to emerge from our city.

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

Management and Leadership Network Experience

- 3.6 The Management and Leadership Network (MLN) is a non-profit which exists to connect decision-makers in NI with the insights of thought-leaders and world-class performers. The rationale is that by enhancing our leadership competence, we will empower local organisations, strengthen our economy, enrich our society and ultimately improve lives.
- 3.7 MLN has worked with some of the most respected leaders on the planet and is vastly experienced in creating and delivering truly world-class events that engage, enrich and elevate attendees. As host, MLN will facilitate the event and invite all speakers to provide their slides in advance so that the idea-sharing session is delivered in a concise, visually impactful and professional manner. Belfast City Council would once again be invited to participate and profile its extensive climate work i.e. the Net Zero Carbon Roadmap for Belfast, Belfast Resilience Strategy, Belfast Climate Commission, One Million Trees Programme etc.
- 3.8 The Sustain Exchange Summit will take place on 23rd October 2026. The total cost of the project will be in excess of £75k. Belfast City Council has been a key partner in the Sustain

Exchange Summit since its inception in 2021 and its support has been crucial in the growth of the initiative and its impact. In order to reduce the financial cost to Belfast City Council and increase collaboration, MLN will seek financial support from additional sources to include the private sector. MLN will give previous sponsors the opportunity to remain as partners. These have included Belfast-based organisations such as Danske Bank, AAB, CarbonFit, International Synergies (circular economy specialists), Belfast Harbour and Mills Selig Solicitors. As well as demonstrating real collaboration, these partnerships have allowed MLN to reduce Belfast City Council's financial contribution from £10,000+vat in 2021 to £10,140 in 2026.

Partner Contribution & Profile Benefits

- 3.9 Should Belfast City Council choose to support the Summit, it would be profiled as an 'Event Partner' alongside several other lead event partners (examples given in 3.5). The Council brand would be prominent on all event marketing collateral as well as 'at-event'. A Council representative would be invited to participate in the event press launch and MLN would be delighted for the Lord Mayor of Belfast to speak at the event. Council would also promote the conference through its social media and other relevant communication channels.

Financial & Resource Implications

- 3.10 Should Members approve sponsorship of the Sustain Exchange Climate Leadership event, £10,140 will be allocated from within the existing Climate Programme budget.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

There are no direct equality or good relations/rural needs implications."

In response to a Member's question regarding the Conference Sponsorship Framework which had previously been requested by the Committee. The Director of City and Organisational Strategy advised that this was being progressed to include economic and community benefits, and post evaluation outcomes.

The Committee:

- agreed to support the climate leadership conference by approving a funding agreement to the value of £10,140 be entered into with the event organiser; and

- noted that a report would be submitted to a future meeting regarding the Conference Sponsorship Framework, to include economic and community benefits, and post evaluation outcomes.

Horizon Cities@Heart Project

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the progress of the Horizon Europe Cities@Heart project which successfully secured funding through the Horizon Europe ‘Innovation Health Initiative’ programme.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee are asked to note the contents of this report including the intention to enter into a MOU with Belfast Healthy Cities in relation to their role in supporting the work required from a Belfast perspective, as set out at para 3.6 below, and the proportionate allocation of the €75,000 grant funding secured from Cities@Heart for administration.

3.0 Main report

Background

- 3.1 Members will recall that at its meeting on the 21 November 2025, the Committee was updated on the continued work of council officials with QUB and Belfast Healthy Cities colleagues to input to a joint funding submission to the Horizon Europe Innovative Health Initiative grant funding call. The intention was to develop and submit an overall €15million funding bid across seven cities (named Cities@Heart) to enable work to be undertaken with the WHO Healthy Cities Network and innovative technology with the aim of reducing recognised cardiovascular risk factors in order to more effectively manage risk and prevent future cardiovascular events.
- 3.2 The Cities@Heart proposal focuses on obesity, hypertension, dyslipidemia and diabetes as key drivers of cardiovascular disease and poor health. It seeks to improve awareness, prevention, detection and management of cardiovascular disease. The intention is to identify effective public health activities which offer potential to scale-up. The project will also seek to develop and deploy strategies to leverage engagement and citizen empowerment, raise awareness of cardiovascular disease, effective prevention, early detection and optimal management to improve outcomes.

- 3.3 The bid involves a range of representatives including public sector, academia and industry experts from across seven municipalities including Izmir (TR), Belfast (NI), Łódź (PL), Cork (IE), Udine (IT), Birmingham (EN) and Utrecht (NL). Each have diverse communities and a commitment to deploy multi-disciplinary health strategies and specific interventions.
- 3.4 Members will be aware of the significant health challenges, including cardiovascular disease, impacting on people across the city and will also be aware that addressing health inequalities has been identified as a key priority set out in the Belfast Agenda. It is intended that the Cities@Heart project would build connections and capacity across a broad array of stakeholders, including citizens, patients, municipalities, healthcare providers, policymakers and industry experts, and support the next generation of health technology to address critical barriers in card

Current position

- 3.5 In January 2026, confirmation was given that the Cities@Heart consortium submission was successful and the €15million funding bid secured. As part of the submission the Council and Belfast Healthy Cities has secured €75,000 for 3 years to assist with the overall administration and input into the emerging programme. It is important to highlight however, that there will be future opportunities for Belfast to develop specific funding bids into the overall €15million programme to support specific Belfast based prototyping or demonstrator projects. Any such bids will be developed in liaison with the other city partners involved (e.g. Healthy Cities, QUB, BHSCT, Public Health Authority and importantly community stakeholders). Any proposed bids would be brought into SP&R Committee for consideration and input in advance of submission.
- 3.6 As previously highlighted to Members, the Council is working closely with Belfast Healthy Cities (BHC) in relation to their role in supporting the work required from a Belfast perspective including, but not limited to, ensuring all relevant city partners are engaged in the developmental work required, capturing and disseminating key information and data, ensuring effective communication and dissemination of key information (e.g. progress updates, key milestones, funding opportunities available to Belfast etc), as well as assisting with the administration, coordination and programme management of Belfast's participation in the overall programme. As Members will be aware the Council shall enter into a MOU with Belfast Healthy Cities to set out how both parties will work

together on the project and how the initial €75,000 administration will be allocated.

Financial & Resource Implications

- 3.7 €75,000 grant funding has been secured as part of the overall bid to support the administration of Belfast involvement in the project. Future funding opportunities may become available as part of the implementation of the Cities@Heart programme and any associated Belfast focused bids which may be considered would remain subject to future Committee consideration in advance of submission.

Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.8 There are no equality/ good relations or rural needs implications arising directly from this report.”

The Committee noted the contents of the report including the intention to enter into a MOU with Belfast Healthy Cities in relation to its role in supporting the work required from a Belfast perspective, as set out at para 3.6 of the report, and the proportionate allocation of the €75,000 grant funding, over three years, secured from Cities@Heart for administration.

City Innovation

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Members on a number of City Innovation programme initiatives including Bloomberg Philanthropies Mayors’ Challenge competition.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

1. Note the outline workplan for the Belfast City Council Alleyways programme (developed in accordance with the Bloomberg’s processes) and the intention to engage with Mid-Falls Alleyways Regeneration group.
2. To approve a budget contribution for a Connected Places Catapult twelve-month embedded role within the Council who will support work on SME scaling and commercialisation associated with City Deal and similar innovation investments.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Bloomberg Philanthropies Mayors' Challenge update

Following Belfast City Council acceptance of a letter of offer (for approx. £750,000) from Bloomberg Philanthropies, work is now underway to design, in collaboration with Bloomberg's facilitators, a two-year programme that will put in place a new sustainable, Belfast City Council 'Alleyway Service Commitment' that's responsive and supportive of the individual needs and ambitions of neighbourhoods across the city.

3.2 As part of the letter of offer Belfast City Council is committed to the following:

- By June 2026 – recruit a programme manager who will lead on the development of this new integrated Council approach and report to a new programme board with direct accountability to the chief executive.
- By July 2026 – Completion of a Bloomberg-approved implementation plan and budget with work-packages that will support the council and its partners to work towards this ambition. This is likely to include activities such as service modelling, baselining costs and savings, testing data gathering and engagement approaches, piloting approaches such as provision of training, materials and possibly microgrants; and working towards a final long-term service proposal for Council to consider by Spring 2028.
- By January 1, 2028 completion and approval of the long-term sustainability plan.
- By Spring 2028 – transforming up to 20 miles of alleyways with interventions that will range for the modest to the transformational.

3.3 At March Committee Members requested that officers consider how the Bloomberg programme might support an application for £70,000 from Mid-Falls Alleyway Regeneration. As this new Council programme is developed it will be important for officers to work closely with those residents and neighbourhoods that have the capability and interest in alleyway transformation. As such officers will be seeking to engage with Mid-Falls Alleyway Regeneration to help inform the new programmes and the range of tools and interventions that reflects the project's long term sustainability ambitions.

Connected Places Catapult Embedded role

- 3.4 The City Innovation Office and City Deal Programme Office have been approached by the Connected Places Catapult with the offer of providing a twelve-month Catapult officer to be embedded with Belfast City Council. The Catapult is establishing similar posts in city regions across the UK, including Scotland and Wales, with the aim of helping regions to best maximise the impact of innovation-style investments such as City Deal.
- 3.5 The person would be a Connected Places Catapult member of staff but would be based in Belfast City Council and work with a group of local stakeholders to manage a workplan based on local needs. This would include supporting pathways to scaling, commercialisation and investment by local SMEs engaged in City Deal initiatives. And working with public procurement teams from councils to enhance our role as first customers for innovation.
- 3.6 Connected Places Catapult are proposing to contribute £45,000 for the post; with an additional contribution of £20,000 being offered by Belfast Region City Deal partners. Members are asked to approve a £25,000 contribution from Belfast City Council to ensure that there is the requisite match funding.

Financial & Resource Implications

- 3.7 Bloomberg Philanthropies will provide funding of \$1.2 million for a two-year programme which includes funding for a Project Manager.

Other expenditure has been identified within existing departmental budgets.

Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.8 Equality and Rural screenings will be completed as part of the Bloomberg programme design process.”

During discussion, the Director of Resources, Fleet, Transport and Open Spaces and Street Scene answered a range of questions in relation to the existing Alleyways Programme and the intended Pilot Phase timescales and structure. He explained that how both processes would work in tandem was being considered, together with a business model and highlighted the importance of a sustainable approach.

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One Member suggested that stakeholders should meet with Area Partnership Boards and Community Networks.

After discussion, the Committee:

1. Noted the outline workplan for the Belfast City Council Alleyways programme (developed in accordance with the Bloomberg's processes) and the intention to engage with Mid-Falls Alleyways Regeneration group;
2. Approved a budget contribution for a Connected Places Catapult twelve-month embedded role within the Council who will support work on SME scaling and commercialisation associated with City Deal and similar innovation investments; and
3. Agreed that a report be submitted to its meeting in May in relation to the overall structure of the Council's Alleyways Programme, to include a timeline for the pilot, resourcing issues, and a list of groups that had expressed an interest in alleyway transformation.

**Potential Additional Funding from Special
EU Programmes Body - Local PEACEPLUS
Action Plans**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To report to committee on the availability of additional in Year Funding from the Special European Union Programme Body (SEUPB) for 2026.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 That the Committee agrees to the approach detailed in the body of the report.

3.0 Main Report

Background

3.1 Following a meeting with SEUPB on 2nd April 2026 Councils were informed that there was a significant underspend within SEUPB, which potentially could be decommitted by EU. SEUPB are seeking proposals from Councils for activity that could be spent by September 2026 and claimed within the 3rd quarter of the financial year. Projects should be linked to existing Local PEACEPLUS Action Plan, as any additional agreed proposal will require a modification to the current Local Action Plan Letter of Offer

Approach

- 3.2 Officers have discussed this and considering the truncated timeline there are a number of project/programmes that have the potential to complete and spend within this small window of time: -
- Fleadh Cheoil 2026 Programme
 - Forth Meadow Greenway Signage
 - Positive Cultural Expression (Beacons)
- 3.3 All the above can be aligned with the current PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan, and Council has the opportunity to bid for funds in the region of €2 - 3 million.
- 3.4 To progress this opportunity further it is proposed that Officers engage directly with SEUPB to formally submit a proposal for additional funding for this year and to explore potential options for 2027.
- 3.5 Members should note that SEUPB indicated that the level of participation will be proportion / reasonable, and that compliance with programme requirements is required, although in some instances, it may be lighter touch.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.6 All financial implications are covered as the additional funding will be provided at 100%. The main resource pressure for Council will be Officer time, to ensure a successful proposal and compliance.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.7 The current Local PEACEPLUS Action Plan has been equality screened and will promote good relations and will enhance equality peace, reconciliation and good relations impacts for the City of Belfast.”

During discussion, Members requested further detail on the process for selecting projects for the potential additional funding and the eligibility criteria.

One Member suggested that 2 Royal Avenue also be put forward for consideration of the fund.

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The Committee:

- agreed to the approach as outlined in the report to submit a proposal to progress the potential additional in Year Funding from the Special European Union Programme Body (SEUPB) for 2026;
- agreed that 2 Royal Avenue project also be considered as a potential project; and
- agreed that a report be submitted to a future committee to confirm what had been approved, how the additional funding would be allocated and the process for selecting projects for inclusion.

Social Supermarket

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

To provide an update for members in relation to the Social Supermarket Fund 26/28 and seek members agreement in relation to the allocation of financial resources.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of the report and agree the allocation of funding to Social Supermarket Fund 26/28 applicants.

3.0 Main report

Background

3.1 At February committee officers provided an update on the assessment of applications to the Social Supermarket Fund 26/28. Members agreed the following;

- the allocation of 25 per-cent bridging funding for those groups which scored 50% and above, in advance of receiving the DfC LoO so that activity could begin from 1st April, 2026.
- that a report be submitted to the Committee within the next three months to confirm the Department for Communities budget, outline how the remaining 75 per cent of funding could be allocated, together with options on how the three groups which had eligible funding but scored below 50% could be assisted.

Key Issues

- 3.2 On 10th April 2026, Council received the Community Support Programme Letter of Offer from the Department of Communities. This included £777,811 for the Social Supermarket Fund. At its February meeting committee agreed an allocation of 25% for all applications scoring 50% and above which was £207,562. If this 25% award was increased to 100% a budget of £830,249 would be required. The Letter of Offer does not provide sufficient funding to make awards at 100% to all projects scoring 50 and above, there is a shortfall of £52,437.
- 3.3 The Letter of Offer provides sufficient funding to award 94% of eligible costs to all projects scoring 50. This level of award requires £780,434 and does not require any additional allocation from council budgets.
- 3.4 Officers have been in contact with the three organisations that scored below 50% to explore what support can be given and signpost to other funders and relevant support services who can provide support to existing users.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.5 The Letter of Offer from DfC provides £777,811. Social Supermarkets are primarily funded through the CSP Letter of Offer, although council has made additional contributions in recent years to provide additional levels of financial support.
- 3.6 Members agreed last September that although funding is primarily from DfC the Social Supermarket Fund should be advertised on a two year basis rather than one. Applications to the fund were for activity from 01 April 2026 until 31 March 2028. Organisations will only receive a Letter of Offer for 26/27 initially. A paper will be brought to committee in January 27 to advise of the financial position in terms of available funding for 27/28.

Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.7 The 26/28 Social Supermarket Fund open call is being screened for Equality, Good Relations and Rural Needs Implications.”

The Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed the allocation of funding to Social Supermarket Fund 2026/2028 applicants.

Planning Update

The Committee noted the update on the Major planning applications and applications that had been determined by the Planning Committee.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

Physical Programme Update

The Director of Property and Projects reminded the Committee that the Council's Physical Programme currently included 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 was a rolling programme of investment which either improved existing Council facilities or provided new facilities.

She presented the half year update, requests for stage movement approvals under the Capital Programme along with updates on capital letters of offer and contracts awarded.

During discussion, the Chairperson requested an update on Woodlands.

The Committee –

- **Physical Programme Half Year Update** - Noted the overall update on projects that had been completed recently and projects currently under construction at 3.3 to 3.5 and in Appendix 1 of the report; and that the Property and Projects Department was happy to arrange a site visit to any projects that had been completed or were underway.
- **Awards and Recognition** – noted that Hosford Community Homes was shortlisted for All-Ireland Housing Awards 2026 in the '*Excellence in Housing Innovation*' category and Berlin Swifts FC was awarded the Irish FA Grassroots Football Awards - Club of the Year 2025.
- **Capital Programme Movements -**
 - **IT Programme — Asset Management System** (Integrated Workplace Management System) - Noted that a satisfactory tender return had been received and that the Director of Finance had confirmed that this project was within the affordability limits of the Council and agreed that a maximum of up to £880,000 be allocated.
 - **IT Programme — Website Content Management System (CMS) Upgrade** - Noted that a satisfactory tender return had been received and that the Director of Finance had confirmed that this project was within the affordability limits of the Council and agreed that a maximum of up to £183,750 be allocated.
 - **Woodvale Park Sensory Garden** – Agreed that the project be moved to *Stage 3 – Committed* with a maximum allocation of up to

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£350,000 (as previously agreed as part of the reallocated SPF funding).

- **Capital Letters of Offer** – noted the update in relation to capital letters of offer.
- **Contracts awarded in Q4 2025/26** – noted the update in relation to contracts awarded.

Asset Management

The Committee:

- i) **Cromac Street Car Park – Licence Renewal**
Approved the renewal of a Licence agreement from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) in relation to the Council operated off-street car park at Cromac Street.
- ii) **Station Street Car Park – Licence Renewal**
Approved the renewal of a Licence agreement from the Department for Communities (DfC) in relation to the Council operated off-street car park at Station Street.
- iii) **Little Victoria Street Car Park – Advertising Station**
Approved the grant of a Licence to Bauer Media Outdoor NI Limited for an advertising station located at Little Victoria Street car park.
- iv) **Ballymacarrett Walkway – Container Licence**
Approved the grant of a Licence to Walk Wheel Cycle Trust for a storage container located at Ballymacarrett Walkway.
- v) **Hanwood Centre Lands – sublease**
Approved of a surrender of the current Licence Agreement with Hanwood Trust Company Ltd and approved the granting of a sublease to Hanwood Trust Company Ltd.

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**); and
- Approved the modification of the contract as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (**Table 2**).

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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)	Prior Committee approval (Y/N) If Y name Committee & Date	External Funding (Y/N)
Provision for the Implementation and Delivery of West Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership's Network Support Project	Up to 4.5 years	£169,312.50	D Sales	West Belfast DPCSP wishes to appoint a contractor to support local structures to identify and address local policing and community safety issues.	Y	N	Y
To provide and supply the hire of 1 x RCV 18t narrow track vehicle with twin rear bin-lifters (including maintenance)	Up to 2 years	£103,480	D Sales	A new lease agreement is required from 01 August 2026 to 31 July 2028 to allow for the continuation of services until the procurement of 1 new 18T RCV is complete. Current lead time of new vehicle is 14 months from point of order.	Y	N	N
Waste Management Services to support the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann	Up to 2 years	£342,000	D Sales	Waste management services to support delivery of the Fleadh 26 with option to cover Fleadh 27, if required. Approved Feb 2026 SP&R. Estimated 2 year value now included.	N	N	N
Replacement Heating Installation & Associated Works at Vehicle Maintenance Workshop & Garages	Up to 12 weeks	£150,000	S Grimes	Replacement heating systems required as current no longer meets the operational requirements. Due to the age and condition of the plant and	N	N	N

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Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Est. Max Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services	On published pipeline (Y/N)	Prior Committee approval (Y/N) If Y name Committee & Date	External Funding (Y/N)
				equipment it is no longer economically viable to repair/maintain.			
Supply & Installation of Replacement Boilers & Associated Works at Belfast Castle	Up to 12 weeks	£100,000	S Grimes	Replacement boilers required as current no longer meets the operational requirements. Due to the age and condition of the plant and equipment it is no longer economically viable to repair/maintain.	N	N	N
Corporate Asset Management System (AMS)	Up to 1 year	£68,000	P Gribben	The Corporate Asset Management System (AMS) is provided by Concerto (Bellrock) and this contract is due to expire on 01/07/2026. Whilst a procurement process is underway to replace the existing system, the implementation will not be complete in advance of the current contract expiration. A new 1-year agreement is required to support the procurement and implementation of a replacement system.	N	N	N

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Table 2: Modification to Contract

Title of Contract	Original Contract Duration & Value	Modification – Period & Value	SRO	Description	Supplier
Email Filtering Service (T2699)	Up to 3 years & £150,000	Additional 6 weeks	S McNicholl	Tender for 3 years was approved at Nov 25 SP&R. During negotiations at award an additional 6 weeks to contract term was required which resulted in a reduction to contract price.	Softcat plc

NICVA Summit 2026

The Committee considered a request from NICVA for a contribution of £20,000 from Belfast City Council to support the 2026 Summit, with the full delivery costs of the event estimated at over £70,000.

It was reported that NICVA had stated that this investment would directly support the delivery of a 'vital platform for collaboration, learning and advocacy, ensuring that organisations across Belfast and beyond could participate and that the value of the voluntary and community sector was clearly demonstrated and strengthened'.

It was highlighted that Council had previously agreed to provide sponsorship of £10,000 to NICVA for their Future Thinking Summit which took place in October 2024.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor R. McLaughlin,
Seconded by Councillor O'Neill,

Resolved – that the Committee agrees to the sponsorship of £10,000 for the NICVA 2026 Summit event.

Summit of the Cities 2026

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting in January, it had agreed to the use of the city hall to host an event titled "Summit of the Cities 2026". This event would bring together leaders and delegates from all 12 cities across the island of Ireland to celebrate their history, share ideas, forge partnerships and accelerate practical action on the issues shaping urban life with panel discussion and speeches.

It was reported that MW Advocate Ltd, which was organising the event, had recently made a request to the Council to sponsor this event to be held on 24th June 2026 in the City Hall. As outlined in the Appendix 1, the focus of the event was shaping the island's urban future – our cities and our communities.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed to sponsor the event to the value of £10,000.

Equality and Good Relations

Minutes of Shared City Partnership Meeting

The Committee approved the minutes and recommendations from the Shared City Partnership Meeting held on the 13th April, including:

Revised Schedule of Meetings

- The Shared City Partnership agreed to change its monthly scheduled meetings from Mondays to Wednesdays from May 2026 and recommends that Strategic Policy and Resources Committee note and agree this change.

Members Update – NIHE Presentation

- Shared City Partnership recommends that members note the presentation.

Good Relations Quarter 4 Update

- The Shared City Partnership recommends that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee note the contents of the report

Community Recovery Fund Update

- The Shared City Partnership recommends that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee notes the contents of the report and agrees the proposed approach.

PEACEPLUS – Local Community Action Plan Secretariat Update

- The Shared City Partnership recommends that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee note the contents of the report

Peace Plus Thriving and Peaceful Communities Thematic Update

- The Shared City Partnership recommends that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee note the contents of the report

Peace Plus Celebrating Culture and Diversity Thematic Update

- The Shared City Partnership recommends that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee note the contents of the report

Community Regeneration and Transformation Thematic Update

- The Shared City Partnership recommends that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee note the contents of the report

Any Other Business

- The Shared City Partnership welcomed Denis Long and Finvola McIntyre to the team and wished Emma Kennedy all the best on her maternity leave.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
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Operational Issues

**Minutes of the Party Group Leaders
Consultative Forum**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum of 16th April, 2026.

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

The Committee approved the recommendation as set out below:

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	CHARGES
Dunlewey Addiction Service	11 June 2026	Celebration of Volunteers – showcase event to celebrate the achievements of service users and recognise the contribution of volunteers. Numbers expected; 50	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NO ROOM HIRE• Any applicable additional charges <i>With 20% charity deduction applied to final total</i>

**Request for use of City Hall grounds
for International Yoga Day**

The Committee:

1. Authorised the use of City Hall grounds on 21st June, 2026 for International Day of Yoga Celebrations; and
2. Authorised the event to take place on the basis of submission of an event management plan and risk assessment and appointment of an event controller to ensure delivery of a safe public event.

**Minutes of Disability Working
Group of 24th March, 2026**

(Councillor R. Brooks attended in connection with this item)

The Committee considered the Minutes of the Disability Working Group.

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After discussion, the Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the Disability Working Group of 24th March, 2026.

The Committee also noted that a report would be submitted to a future meeting in relation to the following issues:

- That need for a Disability Strategy and a time-bound Action Plan;
- The model of delivery for disability related actions to ensure a top-down model of delivery, with co-design built in from the beginning;
- A paper on the Accessibility Roadmap 2035 including the level of resources required and the key stakeholders who could be involved;
- Information brought to the relevant committees that highlight the progress made in improving accessibility and inclusion across the city; and
- The potential to extend the Working Group to external members.

**Minutes of Installations - City Hall/City Hall
Grounds Working Group of 30th March, 2026**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the Installations – CityHall/City Hall Grounds Working Group of 30th March, 2026.

Chairperson

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Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Thursday, 30th April, 2026

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Brennan (Chairperson);
Councillors Beattie, Black, Bunting,
Doran, de Faoite, R-M Donnelly, Ferguson,
Garrett, Long, Maghie, I. McLaughlin, R. McLaughlin
Murphy, Murray, Ó Néill, Smyth and Whyte.

In attendance: 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. T. Wallace, Director of Finance;
Mr. D. Sales, Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood
Services;
Mr. J. Girvan, Director of City and Neighbourhood Services;
Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and
Development;
Mr. S. Leonard, Director of Resources, Fleet, Transport and
Open Spaces and Street Scene;
Mr. P. Hamilton, Lead Officer – Community Safety; and
Mr. J. Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance
Manager; and
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services and Governance
Coordinator.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors Cobain and Nelson.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Bunting declared an interest under item 2.b) Request for Funding, in that she was on the Committee of one of the of the applicants and left the meeting whist the item was under consideration.

Councillor Doran declared an interest in relation to item 2.b) Requests for Funding, in that he was associated with some of the applicants and left the meeting whist the item was under consideration.

Restricted Items

The information contained in the reports associated with the following four 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 four items as, due to the nature of the items, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and 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.

Bonfire Update

The Committee was provided with an update in respect of a number of potential bonfire sites across the City.

Broadway Industrial site

Proposal

Proposed by Councillor Murphy,
Seconded by Councillor Beattie,

That the Committee agrees to serve an abatement notice on the Broadway Industrial site given the issues which had been raised in relation to the location of the Bonfire and the environmental concerns regarding the asbestos on the site, subject to legal advice.

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

Adam Street site

Proposal

Proposed by Councillor O'Neill,
Seconded by Councillor Murphy,

Resolved - That the Committee agrees to write to the Department for Communities, the Department for Infrastructure and the Department of Finance regarding the need for regeneration of the site and highlight the interventions that are required.

Temporary Fencing of Bonfire Sites

The Lead Officer – Community Safety outlined the following six requests for temporary fencing of bonfire sites in the city for consideration: Benmore, Flora Street, Pitt Park, Cregagh Green, Tommy Patton Park, Orangefield Park.

Proposal

Proposed by Councillor Murphy,
Seconded by Councillor O'Neill,

That the Committee agrees not to proceed with temporary fencing of the six bonfire sites.

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

Accordingly, the Committee:

- Agreed to serve an abatement notice on the Broadway Industrial site given the issues which had been raised in relation to the location of the Bonfire and the environmental concerns regarding the asbestos on the site, subject to legal advice;
- Agreed to write to the Department for Communities, the Department for Infrastructure and the Department of Finance regarding the need for regeneration of the site at Adam Street and highlight the interventions that are required; and
- Agreed not to proceed with temporary fencing of the six bonfire sites.

Requests for Funding

The Director of Finance provided an overview of forty-three requests which had been received by the Council for funding.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Beattie,
Seconded by Councillor O'Neill,

Resolved – that the Committee agrees, in relation to the request which had been received at its meeting in March, to fund Glór na Móna - £200k for Croí na Carraige from the Discretionary Fund, and to fund Mid Falls Alleyway Regeneration and the Alleyway Scheme across the City - £100k from the Alleyway Transformation Fund.

During discussion of the Alleyway Transformation Fund, the Director of Resources, Fleet, Transport and Open Spaces and Street Scene reminded the Committee that a report would be submitted to future meeting to outline the business model of the existing Alleyways scheme and the new Alleyways programme (developed in accordance with the Bloomberg's processes), to ensure all of the Alleyway Projects were sustainable.

Accordingly, the Committee:

- agreed to fund Glór na Móna - £200k for Croí na Carraige from the Discretionary Fund, subject to due diligence;
- agreed to fund Mid Falls Alleyway Regeneration and the Alleyway Scheme across the City - £100k from the Alleyway Transformation Fund, subject to due diligence;
- agreed to fund the 126th Girls Brigade - £1,500 towards the core costs of delivering a residential programme;
- agreed to defer the remainder of the funding requests so that further information could be received.

Housing Led Regeneration Update

The Committee considered an update on a number of strands within the Housing Led Regeneration Programme which had been agreed by the City Growth and Regeneration Committee on 15th April 2026.

The Committee:

- I. Noted the reports which had been considered by the City Growth and Regeneration Committee on 15th April, 2026 in relation to the Housing Led Regeneration Programme, as detailed in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report, with City Growth and Regeneration Committee agreement to the recommendations set out within the appended reports;
- II. Noted the previous Committee approvals in relation to the identified sites being brought forward for housing led regeneration purposes and the updates within the City Growth and Regeneration reports, and

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set out in the report, on the proposed delivery route for each of these sites; and

- III. Noted that further detailed reports would be brought back to both the City Growth and Regeneration and Strategic Policy and Resources Committees in respect of all the proposals across the Housing Led Regeneration Programme as the work progressed.

**Physical Activity and Sports Development
Strategy / Belfast Playing Pitches and Outdoor
Sports Facilities Strategy**

The Strategic Director of Neighbourhood Services presented a report on the Belfast Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy (PASD) and the proposed process to deliver on the strategy via accompanying action plans, together with an update on the development of the Belfast Playing Pitches and Outdoor Sports Facilities Strategy which would be one of the key drivers to delivering on the overarching PASD.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services explained the consultation process which had been undertaken in relation to the item.

During discussion, Members raised several points in relation to pitch access, demand data of other sports that required pitches and the engagement with their sporting bodies, support for displaced teams, and the need for a list of existing pitches in the intermediate football league, and the status of the UPSURGE project.

One member requested that Belvoir Football Club be added to the South Belfast Implementation Plan.

In response to a Member's question regarding the usage of Victoria Park, the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services advised that further information would be provided in due course.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Murphy,
Seconded by Councillor O'Neill,

Resolved – that the Committee agrees to write to the Minsiter for Communities to engage with the IFA in relation to the impact on Football Teams on the level of pitches available and request that interventions be made.

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Accordingly, the Committee:

Belfast Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy (PASD)

- I. Noted the contents of the report and final draft PASD which had went through a formal consultation;
- II. Agreed on the overall elements of the PASD and that officers would develop more detailed implementation plans and accompanying monitoring Framework to deliver on the strategy; and
- III. Agreed that the Council publish the new strategy.

Belfast Playing Pitches and Outdoor Sports Facilities Strategy

- IV. Noted the contents of the draft pitches strategy and approved that this document goes to formal consultation which would also consider any equality implications;
- V. Noted the implementation programme as already agreed by Committee 4th February, 2026 (Appendix 4);
- VI. Agreed that officers explored external funding opportunities as they arose and submit applications as appropriate in support of the projects in the implementation programme;
- VII. Noted that Belvoir Football Club be added to the South Belfast Implementation Plan.

The Committee also agreed to write to the Minister for Communities to engage with the IFA in relation to the impact on Football Teams on the level of pitches available and request that interventions were made.

Standing Order 14 - Submission of Minutes

In accordance with Standing Order 14, the Committee agreed, as the meeting had been held later than seven clear days before the meeting of the Council, that the minutes of the meeting be submitted to the Council on 5th May, 2026, for ratification.

Chairperson

People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 14th April, 2026

MEETING OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Cobain (Chairperson);
Councillors Abernethy, Black, Bower, Bradley,
R. Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Collins, M. Donnelly,
R-M Donnelly, Doran, Flynn, Garrett, Magee,
Maghie, Murray, McKeown and Verner.

In attendance: Mr. D. Sales, Strategic Director of City and
Neighbourhood Services;
Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;
Mr. S. Leonard, Director of Open Spaces,
Resources, Fleet and Transport;
Mr. J. Girvan, Director of City and Neighbourhood
Services;
Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building
Control; and
Mr. B. Flynn, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Alderman Copeland.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 4th March were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st April, subject to the following amendments:

- that the minute under the heading 'Proposals for Dual Language Street Signage' was amended to include Onslow Gardens within the list of streets approved for the erection of a second street nameplate in Irish; and
- that the minute under the heading 'Compact Mechanical Sweeper' was amended to provide that a report regarding options in relation to the future operation of a mechanical sweeper within neighbourhoods would be presented to the Committee at its meeting in May, 2026.

Declarations of Interest

In respect of the item 'Summer Schemes – Children with Additional Needs', Councillor Doran declared an interest in that he was associated with an organisation in receipt of funding under the scheme. Regarding the item 'Integrated Advice Partnership and Community Support Fund', Councillors Black, Bradley, Canavan and M. Donnelly declared interests in that they were associated with organisations named within the various funding streams in the report.

All of the above-mentioned Members left the meeting whilst the specific items were under consideration.

Notice of Motion

**Pilot Drug and Pill Testing Facilities
at Major Events and Festivals**

At the meeting of the Standards and Business Committee on 24th March, the following motion, which was proposed by Councillor Murray and seconded by Councillor Smyth, had been referred to the Committee for consideration:

“This Council supports harm-reduction approaches to drug use, particularly in the context of festivals and nightlife events; acknowledges the rising public concerns around drug related harm; and notes that traditional approaches focused solely on enforcement have not eliminated the presence or use of illicit substances at major events.

Accordingly, the Council will:

- support the introduction of pilot drug and pill testing facilities at major events and festivals held in Belfast;
- call upon relevant public bodies including, the Public Health Agency and the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, to explore the feasibility of piloting such a service, alongside those working in the community and voluntary sectors with a proven record of harm reduction; and
- request that an internal report be compiled on the role of the Council in supporting and facilitating such harm reduction services, to include legal and regulatory considerations.”

The Committee adopted the motion and agreed, at the request of both Councillor Flynn and Councillor Smyth, that it be amended with the addition of a further bullet point to reflect the following wording: *“That the Council would work with the Department of Health, the Public Health Agency, concert promoters and event organisers to ensure that the necessary licensing and support mechanisms would be in place so that the services would operate legally and safely at local events on Council sites.”*

Committee/Strategic Issues

**Attendance at Committee
by Irish Football Association**

The Committee agreed to receive, at its meeting on 6th October, a presentation from representatives of the Irish Football Association regarding its review of football grounds’ criteria.

Proposals for Dual Language Street Signage

The Committee agreed to the erection of second street nameplates in Irish at Trench Avenue, Moor Park Avenue, Moor Park Mews, Stewartstown Avenue, Ardmore Avenue,

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Osborne Drive and Harleston Street, in respect of which the 15 per cent required support threshold had been met.

**Dual Language Street Signs – streets
not meeting 15 per cent threshold**

The Committee considered a report regarding the introduction of a process for dealing with applications for dual language street signs in respect of which a fifteen per cent support threshold had not been reached. It was noted that the policy introduced in 2023 had not determined how further applications for a dual language street signs on the same street/road should be dealt with, that is, whether they should remain open or be closed, and, if closed, for what period of time. The report contained a recommendation that applications for the same second language be closed and that further applications would not be accepted for two years from the date of the closure of the original application.

The Director of Planning and Building Control advised the Committee that, since the introduction of the dual language street sign policy, 33 of the streets surveyed had not met with the 15% threshold for the erection of a dual language street sign. In addition, it was reported that 1523 applications for 922 streets were awaiting processing and that, on average, eight applications were being presented for approval to the Committee on a monthly basis.

Discussion ensued and it was suggested that, should the Committee agree to the closure of the further applications for the same language and impose a timeline on their acceptance, it would not take into account changing demographics and preclude new residents from exercising an opinion. However, it was pointed out that there existed no mechanism within the policy to enable residents to request that an application be closed permanently, nor permit residents to apply to have an existing dual language street sign removed in the event of demographics changing.

University Street

In considering a list of streets within the report which had not reached the 15 per cent support threshold, a Member referred specifically to University Street, which had received the support of 14.28 per cent of respondents.

The Committee was reminded that, in March, The Queen's University of Belfast had conducted a poll of students on the introduction of bilingual Irish-English signage policy across the campus, in respect of which 91 per cent of those voting had supported the introduction of the policy. Within the context of the poll, the Member suggested that the Committee should exercise its discretion and vote upon the introduction of dual language street signage in University Street or resurvey the properties. It was noted that 126 surveys had been issued within University Street – 90 to domestic properties and 36 to commercial properties – and that 18 responses had been received in support of the proposal. Other Members pointed out that the policy was clear in the threshold required for the erection of a dual language street sign and that to make an exception for University Street would set an unnecessary precedent.

After further discussion, the Committee agreed to defer consideration of the report to enable the submission of two further reports, one which would clarify a range of issues and queries raised and one specifically in relation to University Street.

Dundonald Cemetery
Somme Commemoration Ceremony

The Committee granted approval to the Dundonald Apprentice Boys of Derry to conduct a Somme Commemoration Ceremony in Dundonald Cemetery on the evening of Thursday 25th June.

In accordance with its decision of 4th June, 2019, the Committee noted that the Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services, or his nominee, had been granted delegated authority to approve the request, subject to the applicant addressing all operational matters to the Council's satisfaction.

DfC Consultation - Amendments to Landlord
Registration Scheme Regulations (NI) 2014

The Committee endorsed a [draft corporate response](#) in respect of the above-mentioned consultation exercise.

DAERA Consultation
'Rethinking our Resources'

(Ms. J. Stephens, Waste Officer, Resources and Fleet, attended in connection with this item).

The Committee considered a [draft corporate response](#) in respect of the above-mentioned consultation exercise.

After discussion, the Committee endorsed the response, subject to it being strengthened to emphasise the importance of the 'reuse and repair' economy and requesting clarity on where the resources would be provided to support councils in delivering any changes identified and recommended.

It was noted that the covering letter to accompany the Council's response would emphasise the previous points and highlight also concern that the on-line consultation platform limited responders to 500 words per answer, which was not sufficient for such exercises that required a more detailed and comprehensive response.

Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL)

Community Engagement and
Underrepresented Target Groups

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided details in respect of the above-mentioned matter.

Service Report 2025

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided details in respect of the above-mentioned matter.

Pride of Place Awards 2026

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reminded the Committee that the Pride of Place Awards sought to recognise the excellent work undertaken by communities across the island of Ireland. The competition highlighted and recognised best practice in delivering community activities, particularly those which demonstrated partnership working with local councils. He recommended that Committee endorse the nomination of five groups from Belfast for the 2026 awards ceremony, which would take place in Dublin on 24th October, that being:

- Glencairn Community Project – Urban Neighbourhoods;
- Connswater Community Greenway – Climate Action and Biodiversity;
- Community Wellbeing Initiative – Community Youth Initiative;
- Sandy Row Digital Hub – Creative Communities; and
- Care Zone – Community Wellbeing Initiative.

The Committee endorsed the nomination of the groups as set out and approved also the expenditure associated with their nomination, the visit to Belfast of the judging panels and the attendance at the ceremony by representatives of the groups, the cost of which was estimated to be in the sum of £10,000, provision for which had been included within existing budgets.

Integrated Advice Partnership and Community Support Funding 2026/27

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

The Committee considered a report which provided an update in relation to several funding streams under the Integrated Advice Partnership and Community Safety Funding for 2026/27. A copy of the report is set out hereunder:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- **advise members that Council has received confirmation from The Department for Communities of an allocation for the Integrated Advice Partnership Fund 2026/27 and seek agreement from members on allocation of this award.**
- **update members on the CSP Funding which is received on an annual basis from DfC**
- **advise members of the correspondence received from the Department in respect of the Welfare Reform Mitigations (face to face) funding and seek their views on how to proceed.**
- **request that members approve release of a further 25% Social Supermarket funding based on the recent DfC correspondence.**

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 Members are asked to

- note the contents of the report,
- consider the allocation options presented for the Integrated Advice Partnership Fund, agree their preferred option and approve payment of 25% following submission of eligible proposals,
- consider DfC's response in relation to Welfare Reform Mitigations (face to face) funding and provide a recommendation on how to proceed.
- approve release of a further 25% Social Supermarket funding based on the recent DfC correspondence.

3.0 Main Report

Background information

3.1 Integrated Advice Partnership Fund

Members will recall that in November 2024 Council received funding from DfC of £248,253.48 through the Integrated Advice Partnership Fund for activity in 24/26. The objective of the fund is to 'Improve the uptake of free, independent regulated debt advice through a collaborative partnership approach.'

- 3.2 Members agreed that council would invite applications from all BCC funded advice organisations. Based on all proposals received covering the duration of the funds, the following funding allocations were agreed which are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1

Area	Organisation	Allocation
City Centre and East Belfast	Advice Space	£94,022.80
South Belfast	Southcity Resource and Development Centre (SRDC)	£36,389.43
North Belfast	The Vine Centre	£60,392.32
West Belfast	Upper Springfield Development Trust (USDT)	£57,448.94
Total		£248,253.49

- 3.3 In September 2025, Council received an additional in-year allocation of £79,784.78 for the Integrated Advice Partnership Fund. Members agreed the option to allocate the funding equally between the four providers. Thus, in addition to the figures presented in Table 1 above, each provider received an additional £19,946.20.

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3.4 We have recently received notification from DfC that the Integrated Advice Partnership Fund 2026/27 is £84,363.13. In addition to this allocation providers can carry underspends for 2025/26 into the 2026/27 financial year.

3.5 Members are asked to consider the following options for the 2026/27 and agree their preferred option. Table 2 provides a breakdown of the allocation per option.

- Option 1 Allocation based on % of the previous funding to each group.
- Option 2 Allocation based on an equal split between the four organisations

3.6

Table 2

Organisations	Previous Allocation	Allocation % Of Total	Option 1 Uplift based on %	Option 2 Uplift Equal Split
Advice Space	£113,969.00	34.7%	£29,309.95	£21,090.79
Southcity RDC	£56,335.63	17.2%	£14,488.10	£21,090.79
Vine Centre	£80,338.52	24.5%	£20,661.04	£21,090.79
Upper Springfield Development Trust	£77,395.14	23.6%	£19,904.07	£21,090.79
Total	£328,038.29		£84,363.16	£84,363.16

3.7 **CSP Letter of Offer**

Currently Council has yet to receive the Community Support Programme (CSP), Letter of Offer 26/27 from DfC. However, on 26th March, the Department issued the correspondence attached in Appendix 1. There was an accompanying email which clarified that council would receive a 25% allocation to cover all CSP activity until 30 June 2026 and that an additional Letter of Offer for the IAPF would follow. On this basis members are asked to approve that officers will seek proposals from funded groups for 26/27 and following review approve allocations and issue 25% funding.

3.8 Welfare Reform Mitigations (face to face)

Members may recall that another element of activity that is 100% funded through the CSP LoO is Welfare Reform Mitigations (face to face). Officers had previously sought approval to combine this element of funding with generalist advice funding as both support similar activities and it provides continuity of funding for delivery organisations. Members had deferred a decision and instructed officers to contact DfC to ask that they administer this support. DfC have responded as outlined below;

The Department provides funding for local advice services to all Councils through the Community Support Programme (CSP), which is match funded by Councils. Councils play an important role as co funders and commissioners of community-based generalist advice, including the additional provision funded under Welfare Mitigations, to meet local needs in their respective areas. At present, the Department has no plans to move away from this approach.

As with all funding to the Voluntary and Community Sector, we recognise the challenges posed by the absence of a multi-year budget settlement. Whilst we cannot confirm exact annual budget levels at this stage, the Executive approved the extension of the additional Welfare Mitigations allocations in December 2024 through to March 2028. This decision reflects the continued demand for advice services and the need to preserve existing sector capacity to support vulnerable individuals navigating the social security system.

For clarity and budgetary purposes, we are unable to combine these funding streams into a single line within the CSP Letter of Offer at this time. However, we would encourage Councils to commission these services together, as the majority of other Councils already do. While multi year budgets have not been possible in recent years, other Councils continue to commission advice services on a multi year basis, including a clause stating that continuation beyond year one is subject to DfC funding being confirmed.

3.9 Members are asked to consider this response and advise how they wish to proceed in relation to Welfare Reform Mitigations (face to face) funding.

3.10 Members may recall that this funding is allocated to specific advice organisations in each area. These were the organisations that were receiving funding from DfC when the fund was initially introduced and administered by the Department of Communities. When council agreed to administer this funding in 2020/21, we also agreed to continue this allocation method. In 25/26, members

agreed that if the named organisation did not submit a proposal in a timely way, proposals would be sought from the consortia through the consortia lead. Table 3 below provides more detail;

Table 3

Consortia – Funded Organisation	% Of Total Allocation	25/26 Allocation
Central - Advice Space	46.74%	£125,585.24
East – EBIAC	13.32%	£35,779.89
West – Neighbourhood Development Association	13.32%	£35,779.89
South - Ballynafeigh Community Development Association	13.32%	£35,779.89
North – Ligoniel Improvement Association	13.32%	£35,779.89

3.11 Social Supermarket funding

Members are also asked to note that this communication relates to Social Supermarket funding and provides 25% funding for 26/27. SP&R agreed at March committee that they would issue 25% funding in the absence of a DfC LoO. Members are asked to approve release of a further 25% based on the recent DfC correspondence. This would provide continuity of service in the absence of a DfC LoO which is unlikely to be received before June committee.

4.0 Financial and Resource Implications

4.1 The administration of this fund will be carried out by existing staff, there is no financial impact for council as 100% funding is being provided by DfC.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services advised the Committee that, since the publication of the papers, correspondence had been received from the Department for Communities confirming that 100 per cent funding would be provided for in 2026/27.

Proposal

In considering the suggested allocation of the 'uplift funding' as set out under 3.6 of the foregoing report, it was:

Moved by Councillor R. Brooks,
Seconded by Councillor Doran,

That the Committee agrees to adopt Option 2 as set out in the table and that the funding be distributed on an equal basis amongst the four organisations.

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On a vote, five Members voted in favour of the proposal and eleven against and it was declared lost. Accordingly, the Committee agreed to adopt Option 1 and to distribute the funding on the percentage basis set out.

After further discussion, the following course of action was agreed:

- that the Chief Executive sign the letter of acceptance;
- that 100% payments be made to eligible applicants for the Integrated Advice Partnership Fund;
- that uplift payments in respect of the aforementioned fund be distributed on the percentage basis (Option 1) across the City;
- that funding for Welfare Reform Mitigations (face-to-face) be allocated in 2026/27 on the same basis as agreed in 2025/26; and
- that 100% payments be issued to eligible applicants in respect of Department for Communities' allocation of Social Supermarket funding.

Summer Schemes - Children with Additional Needs

The Committee noted the contents of a report in relation to the above-mentioned matter which gave an overview of the outcome of the open call for funding for the above-mentioned scheme.

Arising from discussion, a Member reminded the Committee that, at its meeting in June, 2025, it was agreed that a report be submitted examining the costs incurred by groups in building inclusivity within summer schemes, particularly the costs relating to staff training and embedding such practices. In response, the Director of Neighbourhood Services indicated that a report in that regard would be considered at the Committee's meeting in June.

Request for the Use of Parks

The Committee granted authority for the hosting of the following events, subject to the applicants meeting with and adhering to all of the stipulations set out within the report:

- Kibosh Theatrical Tours - Clifton Street Cemetery, 1st to 16th May;
- All Nations Church 'March for Jesus' - Ormeau Park, 16th May;
- Twelfth Demonstration, Barnett Demesne, 13th July;
- EastSide Arts Festival - C.S. Lewis Square, 24th and 25th July;
- Bullhouse Brew Co. - C.S. Lewis Square, 31st July and 1st August; and
- Alzheimer's Society Memory Walk – Ormeau Park, 26th September.

The Committee granted approval to the All Nations Church to host the 'March for Jesus' in 2027 and 2028. In addition, permission was granted to County Grand Orange Lodge of Belfast to host its annual Twelfth of July demonstration at Barnett Demesne up to and including

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2030. The aforesaid extensions would be subject to the organisers resolving all operational matters to the Council's satisfaction

Biodiversity Programme of Work

The Committee considered the contents of a report and its associated appendices which provided an update in respect of the above-mentioned matter.

Arising from discussion, a Member proposed that officers would specifically scope out potential locations along the River Lagan downstream from the Stranmillis Weir to identify locations which might be used for the enhancement of biodiversity, rewilding and/or the creation of wildflower meadows. In addition, officers would consider options for the future use of the compound within the Ormeau Park, which had previously been used by Northern Ireland Water, with a view to formulating plans for its future use. Such a plan would examine, for example, the establishment of a wetland habitat, potentially in conjunction with Northern Ireland Water and/or the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and endorsed the Member's comments as outlined.

Issues Raised in Advance

Stoma-friendly Toilets

In accordance with notice on the agenda, the Committee agreed, at the request of Councillor Abernethy, that a report be submitted to a future meeting that would outline the current and future provision for stoma-friendly toilets across Council's estate.

Pollution Incidents at Cregagh Glen

With the permission of the Chairperson, Councillor Smyth addressed the Committee in respect of the above-mentioned matter. He informed the Members that a series of pollution incidents had occurred within Cregagh Glen which had caused damage to the site, its paths and to the Loop River. He suggested that, whilst the site was owned and managed by the National Trust, the Council should seek to protect the wider environment by identifying those who had been responsible for the pollution incidents and explore the possibility of undertaking legal or enforcement action.

The Committee agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting that would include details on any reported pollution incidents dating back to January, 2024; and which would outline the responses of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA). It was noted that the report would examine also the environmental damage caused to the site and to the Loop River and its aquatic life, any clean-up measures undertaken, an overview of the potential legal options in relation to those causing the pollution and whether the statutory responses had met with legal requirements.

Chairperson

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City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 15th April, 2026

MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor I. McLaughlin (Chairperson);
Alderman Lawlor; and
Councillors Black, Bunting, de Faoite,
S. Douglas, Duffy, Groogan, Hanvey,
Lyons, McAteer, McCabe, McCallin,
McCormick, McKay, R. McLaughlin,
Meenehan, Nelson and Ó Néill.

In attendance: Mr. D. Martin, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;
Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and
Development;
Mr. K. Forster, Director of Economic Development;
Ms. L. Toland, Senior Manager, Economy;
Mr. S. Dolan, Senior Development Manager;
Ms. C. Persic, Development Manager;
Ms. P. Conway, Development Manager;
Mr. J. Uprichard, Business Research And Development
Manager; and
Mr. C. Mealey, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 11th and 25th March, 2026, were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st April, 2026, subject to an amendment to the minutes of the meeting of 25th March, under the heading 'Cultural Multi-Annual Grants', to provide that delegated authority be granted to the Director of Economic Development to proceed with the allocation of a discretionary transition fund to support those organisations which had incurred a net reduction in funding under the terms of the Cultural Multi-Annual Grants 2026-28.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Duffy declared an interest in relation to the item 'Employability and Skills Update' in that his employer was successful in a tender to coordinate the Employability and Skills Provider Network and left the meeting whilst this item was under consideration.

Councillor Groogan declared an interest in relation to the items 'Vacant to Vibrant Programme Update' and '2 Royal Avenue Update' in that her employer was in receipt of

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a grant through the Vacant to Vibrant scheme and she had recently engaged with organisations which had expressed an interest in respect of the long-term use of 2 Royal Avenue's ground floor. She was not required to leave the meeting for either item. Councillor Groogan also declared an interest in relation to the item 'Belfast Harbour Commissioners Draft Masterplan 2025-50 Consultation - Draft Council Response' in that she was a Member of the Planning Committee and left the meeting whilst this item was under consideration.

Councillor R. McLaughlin also declared an interest in relation to the item 'Belfast Harbour Commissioners Draft Masterplan 2025-50 Consultation - Draft Council Response' in that he was on the Board of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners and left the meeting whilst this item was under consideration.

Restricted Items

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

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

Vacant to Vibrant Programme Update

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the Vacant to Vibrant Programme and sought approval for citywide grant awards as recommended by the Vacant to Vibrant assessment panel following the receipt and assessment of recent applications.

The Committee:

- i. noted the update in relation to the Vacant to Vibrant Programme which would be supporting up to 79 businesses/organisations to locate or expand into long-term vacant units; and
- ii. agreed the recommended citywide grant awards as outlined within Section 3.6 of the report.

2 Royal Avenue Update

The Director of City Regeneration and Development provided the Committee with an update in respect of the future long-term use of the ground floor of 2 Royal Avenue.

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The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting in November, 2025, it had agreed that a new two-stage Expression of Interest process be undertaken for the future long-term use of 2 Royal Avenue's ground floor. The Director advised that, as part of Stage One of the process, the Council had received a number of expressions of interest for the long-term occupation of the ground floor, and she provided the Committee with further detail in respect of the submissions. In addition to the expressions of interest, the Director informed the Committee that the Council had also received enquiries from organisations and individuals that wished to be considered as part of the future of 2 Royal Avenue in relation to smaller spaces and hosting events.

The Director set out the proposed next steps and the indicative timeline for Stage Two of the process, which would include respondents submitting detailed proposals and business plans. She also set out the proposed scoring assessment and criteria.

The Committee was provided with an update in relation to capital works and a condition survey of the building, the current meanwhile use of the ground floor, a petition by 'Reclaim The Agenda' hosted on Act Now in relation to the use of 2 Royal Avenue, and the engagement scheduled with Members and relevant partners on the future use of 2 Royal Avenue, as agreed by the Committee at its meeting in October, 2025.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor de Faoite,
Seconded by Councillor Lyons, and

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to defer consideration of the proposed next steps for Stage Two of the Expression of Interest process until its next meeting to enable further engagement to be undertaken, and that Stage One of the process be closed following the meeting of the Council in May and the associated call-in period.

Accordingly, the Committee:

- i. noted the update on Stage One of the Expression of Interest process for the use of 2 Royal Avenue's ground floor, which included the Expressions of Interest received; the approach to the parties which had expressed an interest in a smaller space or hosting events; the condition survey which would help inform any future works that the Council might be required to undertake; the meanwhile use of the ground floor in line with the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2026; the petition on Act Now created by 'Reclaim The Agenda' in relation to 2 Royal Avenue; and the engagement as previously agreed;
- ii. agreed to defer consideration of the proposed next steps for Stage Two of the process until its next meeting to enable further engagement to be undertaken; and
- iii. agreed that Stage One of the process be closed following the meeting of the Council in May and the associated call-in period.

Sandy Row/Grosvenor Road Revitalisation Fund Update

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the Department for Communities funded Sandy Row and Grosvenor Road Revitalisation Schemes. In relation to the Sandy Row Revitalisation Grant Scheme, the report sought approval to allocate underspend, and any further underspend realised, to the delivery of activities as outlined within the report.

The Committee:

- i. noted the update on the Department for Communities funded Sandy Row and Grosvenor Road Revitalisation Schemes; and
- ii. agreed to reallocate the underspend within the Sandy Row Revitalisation Scheme as outlined within section 3.4 of the report.

Housing-Led Regeneration Private Sector Partner Update

(Mr. T. Wallace, Director of Finance, attended in connection with this item.)

The Director of City Regeneration and Development provided the Committee with an update on the Private Sector Partner (PSP) strand of the housing-led regeneration programme of work, which included:

- the Initial Site-Specific Business Plan (ISSBP) for Corporation Street/Exchange Street;
- the potential for a multi-site approach that would see co-ordinated delivery of housing-led regeneration across both Corporation Street/Exchange Street and Gloucester Street (initially identified Seed Sites), along with Additional Opportunity Sites, identified through the Strategic Site Assessment Phase 2, at Seymour House, Sally Gardens and Ashdale car park;
- the future Detailed Site-Specific Business Plans (DSSBP) for various sites which would include greater detail on the proposed scheme deliverables, tenure mix, funding and delivery models, and that this would be brought back to the Committee;
- Site development and the Revised Development Programme; and
- Viability and the range of funding options which included the use of Financial Transactions Capital (FTC) financing.

The Director advised that a further report would be submitted to the Committee at a future meeting on the revision of sequencing for site development and the Development Programme.

During discussion, the Director of City Regeneration and Development answered a range of questions from the Members in relation to the multi-site approach, social and affordable housing, funding options and Council subvention.

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In response to Members' questions, the Director of Finance provided the Committee with further detail in respect of the potential use of the £1 million which was secured through the 2026/27 rate setting process to support housing-led regeneration. He advised that this could be used to leverage additional capital and would be a recurring amount.

After discussion, the Committee:

- i. noted the update provided in respect of the Private Sector Partner and the progress made in relation to the Initial Site-Specific Business Plan for Corporation Street/Exchange Street;
- ii. agreed a multi-site approach which would include Gloucester Street, Seymour House, Sally Gardens and Ashdale car park, along with Corporation Street/Exchange Street;
- iii. noted that this would allow the proposals to move to the next stages of the Detailed Site-Specific Business Plans which would include detail on the proposed scheme deliverables, tenure mix, funding and delivery models, and that this would all be subject to the approval of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee and the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee prior to any Development Agreements with the Private Sector Partner being entered into;
- iv. noted the impact on the Seed Site Development Programme which had been previously agreed by the Committee;
- v. agreed that a further report would be brought back which would seek agreement on the revision of sequencing for site development and the Development Programme;
- vi. noted the various funding options which were currently under review and that the Private Sector Partner was cognisant of addressing the challenges facing the delivery of a viable housing led-regeneration scheme; and
- vii. noted that a further report would be brought back to the appropriate Committee on how the funding secured through the rates setting process for housing-led regeneration could be optimally deployed in developing financing options for the delivery of housing led-regeneration.

Housing-Led Regeneration Programme Update

(Mr. T. Wallace, Director of Finance, attended in connection with this item.)

The Director of City Regeneration and Development submitted for the Committee's consideration a report in respect of a number of strands of the housing-led regeneration programme of work, which included an update on:

- the eleven Strategic Site Assessment (SSA) Phase 2 sites;

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- the development of a Disposal Framework and decision flowchart for the SSA sites;
- delivery via the Private Sector Partner;
- the Cregagh Green and Marlborough Street car park site, and lands at Whiterock and Northumberland Street;
- Housing Association delivery route for the sites as identified;
- the Inner North-West Development Brief; and
- the Housing Association Grant (HAG).

The Director advised that a further detailed report, which would incorporate the findings of the University Ulster Economic Policy Centre (UUEPC) analysis, feedback from delivery partners, and the emerging position from the Subsidy Review, would be brought back to the Committee for consideration.

The Committee:

- i. noted the update on the eleven Strategic Site Assessment Phase 2 sites;
- ii. agreed the application of the Disposal Framework to enable the identification of the optimal delivery route for the identified sites;
- iii. agreed that Seymour House, Sally Gardens and Ashdale car park be included as part of the Private Sector Partner multi-site approach, as set out within the previous report;
- iv. noted that a separate report would be brought back in relation to the Cregagh Green site in the context of a wider placemaking approach which would comprise of adjoining Housing Executive lands;
- v. noted that the Marlborough Street car park site would not progressed at this juncture but would be kept under review for future consideration;
- vi. agreed that consideration would be given to widening the scope and redline boundary of the respective lands at both Whiterock and the Northumberland Street car park to enable consideration of the potential for a mixed-use regeneration scheme that could accommodate both leisure and housing in a wider placemaking perspective and in the context of both the Housing-Led Regeneration Programme and the Leisure Transformation Programme;

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- vii. noted the Council's two-staged approach to determine appropriate Housing Associations for the remaining sites, as outlined within the report, in line with Housing Executive's nomination principles;
- viii. agreed that officers engage with respective identified Housing Associations to determine interest and develop a strategy for potential disposal, and that reports would be brought back to City Growth and Regeneration Committee and the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee as appropriate;
- ix. noted the update provided in relation to the Inner North-West Development Brief and the continued progression of workstreams alongside the Department for Communities, as joint landowner, and the appointed Housing Association in advancing this scheme; and
- x. noted the update on the progress following a Member's request for an assessment of the Department for Communities' changes to the Total Cost Indicator and the Housing Association Grant rates.

A Bolder Vision Strategy Update

The Director of City Regeneration and Development submitted for the Committee's consideration a report which set out the finalised 'A Bolder Vision (ABV) for Belfast' strategy. The report outlined that the ABV strategy had been updated based on the revised interventions which had been agreed by the Committee at its meeting in February, 2026, and reinforced the role of ABV in informing future capital infrastructure schemes and framing the Council's response to the forthcoming Eastern Transport Plan (ETP) and future consultation plans in relation to public realm, mobility, net zero and city connectivity.

The Development Manager presented to the Committee an overview of ABV's development, the key moves contained within the strategy, the supporting interventions and the next steps.

During discussion, the Development Manager answered a range of questions from the Members in relation to the ambition of ABV and the engagement with key stakeholders and communities.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor de Faoite,
Seconded by Councillor Lyons, and

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to write to the Minister for Infrastructure to ask:

- what further measures could be put in place to ensure that the pedestrianisation of Union Street is maintained and protected; and
- to request that consideration be given to the pedestrianisation of spaces within the York Street area.

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Accordingly, the Committee:

- i. approved the updated 'A Bolder Vision' (ABV) final strategy;
- ii. noted that the ABV strategy would inform the Council's position on policy and strategy consultations related to infrastructure, public realm, placemaking, net zero and sustainable travel including the forthcoming Eastern Transport Plan and the design and delivery of aligned projects; and that future draft consultation responses would be brought back to Committee for approval prior to submission;
- iii. agreed to write to the Minister for Infrastructure to ask what further measures could be put in place to ensure that the pedestrianisation of Union Street is maintained and protected; and
- iv. agreed to write to the Minister for Infrastructure to request that consideration be given to the pedestrianisation of spaces within the York Street area.

Draft Belfast Economic Proposition

The Strategic Director of Place and Economy provided the Committee with an update on the development of a new economic proposition to assist with the promotion of the city for investment and international trade opportunities to support long-term sustainable and inclusive growth.

The Committee noted the progress to date on the development of an Economic Proposition for Belfast to support sustainable and inclusive growth.

Requests to Present

Destination CQ Business Improvement District (BID)

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the pending ballot for the third term of the Destination CQ BID and requested that, in advance of the ballot, the BID be invited to present at the next Committee meeting to enable officers to submit the Council's votes in the ballot which would open in July, 2026.

The Committee:

- i. noted the update on the pending ballot for the third term of the Destination CQ Business Improvement District; and
- ii. agreed to receive a presentation from Destination CQ BID at its next meeting to enable officers to submit the Council's votes in the ballot which would open in July and close on 1st September, 2026.

Queen's University Belfast

The Committee acceded to a request for Queen's University Belfast to attend a future meeting to present on its contribution to the city and its future plans and challenges.

Regenerating Places and Improving Infrastructure

**Department for Infrastructure Consultation on the
Dublin Road and Botanic Avenue Pedestrian and
Cycling Improvements - Draft Council Response**

The Director of City Regeneration and Development submitted for the Committee's consideration a report which set out a draft Council response to the Department for Infrastructure's preliminary engagement on the proposed pedestrian and cycling improvements along the Dublin Road, Shaftesbury Square and Botanic Avenue.

The report advised that the draft response, set out within Appendix A of the report, had been prepared in the context of the Council's adopted and emerging strategic frameworks, which included A Bolder Vision for Belfast, the Belfast Agenda, the Local Development Plan (LDP), the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS) Stocktake, the Net Zero Carbon Roadmap, the Resilience Strategy, and the emerging Eastern Transport Plan (ETP).

The Committee:

- i. approved the draft consultation response, as set out within Appendix A of the report, for submission to the Department for Infrastructure;
- ii. agreed that the response would emphasise the need for the scheme to be designed in accordance with:
 - Department for Transport's LTN 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design;
 - Wheels for Wellbeing – A Guide to Inclusive Cycling (4th Edition, 2020);
 - IMTAC's "A New Approach to Travel, Our Streets and Our Places" (2022);
- iii. noted that the scheme represented a significant early delivery opportunity for A Bolder Vision and the Eastern Transport Plan, and that the Council would continue to engage with the Department for Infrastructure to ensure alignment with wider city centre regeneration priorities; and
- iv. noted that the consultation had closed on 10th April, 2026, and that the draft response, as set out within Appendix A, had been submitted to the Department for Infrastructure subject to the Committee's approval and Council ratification in May.

**Belfast Harbour Commissioners
Draft Masterplan 2025-2050 Consultation -
Draft Council Response**

The Director of City Regeneration and Development submitted for the Committee's consideration a report which set out a draft Council response to the Belfast

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Harbour Commissioners Draft Masterplan 2025-2050 consultation. The draft response, set out within Appendix A, was summarised in the report as follows:

That the Council recognised:

- the strategic importance of the Harbour to the city's economic growth and regeneration and welcomed the long-term approach to building the Port capacity, the transition to cleaner energy solutions and the progression for regeneration of the Inner Harbour area in line with the Local Development Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance;
- the important role of the wider Harbour Estate in growing the city's key growth sectors in film, innovation and tourism, as well as the Harbours role in delivering regeneration and sustainable connectivity connections;
- and supported the reclassification of trust ports to provide the Harbour with the ability to increase spending in a prudent way, as agreed by the City Growth and Regeneration Committee in March, 2025; and
- the importance of proper community engagement and encourage the Harbour to continue to ensure that the delivery of the Masterplan is carried out in partnership with city stakeholders and communities.

The Committee agreed the Council's response to the Belfast Harbour Commissioners consultation on its draft Masterplan for 2025-2050.

Growing Business and the Economy

Employability and Skills Update

(Mr. K. Donaghy, Labour Market Partnership Co-Ordinator, attended in connection with this item.)

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

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise members of a range of activity undertaken in 2025/26 to support skills development, economic engagement and job outcomes for key target groups and to set out the proposed workplans for the 2026/27 financial year. The work programme supports the inclusive growth ambitions of the Council by targeting interventions on key cohorts, including:**

- Residents out of work and experiencing barriers to employment/self-employment, including those who are long-term unemployed and economically inactive
- Residents with low skills levels such as a baseline Level 2 equivalent qualification.
- In work, low earning residents.
- Those living in areas of highest multiple deprivation.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the work undertaken and outputs delivered in the financial year to date
- Note and endorse the priority interventions and approach for the 2026/27 financial year.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 2025/26 Update

Members will be aware that the Labour Market Partnership (LMP) is an intervention supported by DfC within all eleven council areas within the region. The LMP provides a platform for engagement with government departments, community partners and business organisations as a means of refocusing regional programmes more effectively within the Belfast area. In addition to LMP resources, the Council also commits resources in each year to support employability and skills interventions focused on those furthest from the labour market.

3.2 Employment & Upskilling Academies

Members will be aware that Employment Academies are one of the key instruments that the Council's Employability and Skills team utilises to support residents to secure a job or a better job. Employment Academies vary depending on employer need but they generally have a number of consistent components, namely:

- Pre-academy matching and selection to ensure all individuals who participate have a meaningful chance of securing employment after successful completion
- Employer-driven content in relation to vocations and employability skills, qualifications, licences etc. related to the specific job role

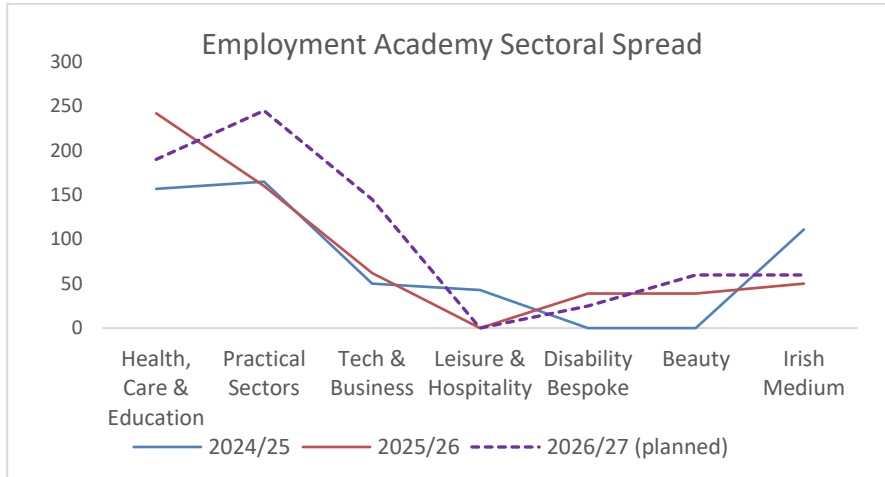
- In-situ work sampling
- Provision of additional supports, from equipment and clothing through to childcare, travel and subsistence
- Employability support particularly focused on the final employment interview.

3.3 Given the volatility in the labour market – and the limited financial resources available to undertake the work – delivery has been driven by a number of factors including:

- The opportunity presented by a number of growth sectors (such as tech, green economy and business services) to support participants into roles with higher earning potential. In recognition of the additional skills support work required, these interventions tend to have a higher per capita cost for participants but offer a positive return on investment in terms of salary levels for those successful in finding work following programme completion
- Ongoing need to work with employers to convince them of the value of alternative approaches to finding talent other than pre-existing qualifications and/or experience. This is particularly the case for our work in higher paid sectors – where employers have tended to recruit using an unnecessary ‘degree first’ approach without considering alternative routes to recruiting the skills they need
- Opportunities to support existing employees who are in low-paid work and/or underemployed by means of upskilling interventions – supporting individuals to improve salary levels by progressing to a better job and thereby embedding a skills-escalator by creating additional entry-level roles. These Upskilling Academies are limited to low paid sectors such as working with children and other caring professions and only triggered when existing mainstream provision is not suitable or accessible.

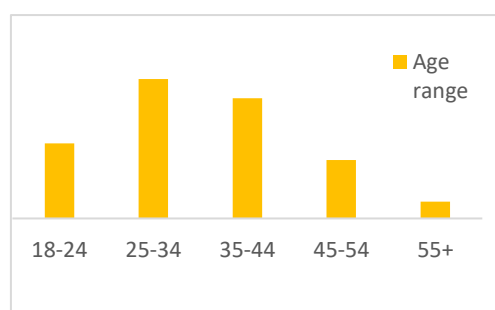
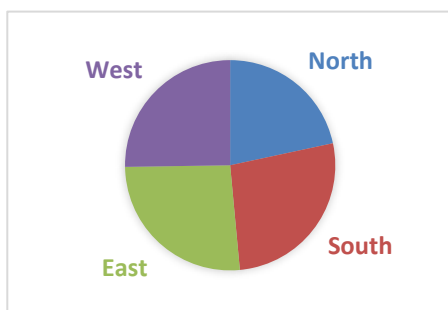
3.4 Across 2025/26 we have made investments in over 850 places for Employment and Upskilling Academies, utilising both council and LMP resources. The availability of these resources as well as having an agile, responsive commissioning model, means that we have been able to respond to opportunities, meeting employer demand and bringing forward solutions that benefit local businesses and residents. The pattern of participation by sector is outlined

below over the last number of years as well as projected 2026/27 activity.



3.5 It is important to note that differences in volume across sectors above is not an indicator of investment levels. Academies targeting higher paid roles are significantly more expensive to deliver due to the skills levels required for the role. For example, a Tech Employment Academy can cost over £4,000 per person, while a Health & Social Care Employment Academy costs under £1,000 per person. Additionally, employment outcomes are continuously monitored and investments subject to review to ensure residents receive the best service possible. All work is underpinned by the implementation of a Quality Assurance Framework.

3.6 While it is too early to report on outcomes due to the fact that academies are still being delivered, of those who completed participant surveys in 2025/26 so far, 22% of participants reported having a disability while 30% were from an ethnic minority. Details of both the age and geographical spread are below.



3.7 While officers can update members on the outcomes of this investment in a future report, the pattern of outcomes tend to remain stable across the last number of years: attrition rates tend to be low with an average of over 90% successfully completing and with an average into-work rate of 75% for those who complete. The level of demand and supply – both from employers as well as those looking for a job or a better job – remains high, although is much more challenging in higher paid sectors such as Tech.

3.8 Provider Engagement

A vital element of our work is our engagement with groups and providers across the city. This underpins the ability of our interventions such as Employment Academies to successfully match people to the opportunities on offer. Officers have continued to expand the E&S Provider Network, with over 150 organisations and groups from across the city covering key target groups (disability, women, young people, justice leavers, care leavers etc.). Members will no doubt be aware of the likely changes to the community-based employability infrastructure due to the reduction in available funding from the Local Growth Fund. We will need to keep the network membership under review in light of the changes. However we consider that the need for that coordination and information sharing will be even greater in the context of reduced resources.

3.9 Digital Badging

Through RSA Cities of Learning, officers continue to expand micro-credentialing through Digital Badges. These badges help recognise the skills and competencies of those who are at risk of being left behind – a significant challenge in Belfast where there is a disproportionately high percentage of people with no or low skills. All Employment Academies are now digitally badged as an alternative validation of achievement. In addition to this, the Council has offered 60 organisations across the city access to Digital Badging for their own participants and/or employees across the lifetime of the project. In total, 484 credentials have been created through Digital Badging with 90% claim rates across managed programmes.

3.10 2026/27 Business Plan

Building on the work undertaken in 2025/26 as well as learning from previous engagement, the indicative plans for 2026/27 are set out below. Priority areas of work will include:

3.11 Labour Market Partnership

While it will take a number of months to fully know the extent and impact of the reduction of funding available through Local Growth Fund (LGF), one new development may mitigate such a steep reduction of support for those experiencing economic inactivity. A Commission for Work and Wellbeing is being established and is resourced through an NI Executive 'Transformation Bid' for those experiencing economic inactivity – using innovative approaches within the 'health and work' agenda as recommended by the Health & Work Steering Group convened by the Belfast LMP in 2025.

3.12 Belfast LMP's approach to 2026/27 includes a focus on the following:

- 1. System leadership: the Partnership has matured over time and has a strategic enabling role. This leadership input will be particularly important in the coming year, given the radical reduction in support services. The focus will need to be on integration rather than expansion, acting as the convenor of a Belfast-wide employability and economic inactivity ecosystem and influencing the LGF Investment Plan in line with the recommendations of the Health & Work Steering Group; principally that a health-first approach is critical to resolving long-standing barriers along the journey to employment experienced by those who are economically inactive**
- 2. Given the limited LMP resources, it is important to position direct delivery where we can best make the most impact, namely on demand-facing services. A key area of work in the coming year will be the development of an Employer Hub – creating a focal point for employer engagement and input. Our current thinking is that this work will be of immediate use for Local Growth Fund projects in particular – given the reductions in their resources. However it is our intention that this model will become a resource for all employer-facing engagement in order to create resource efficiencies and provide more effective service delivery to businesses**
- 3. While the more natural place for LMP to directly resource and deliver is in the 'demand facing' space, the significant reduction of engagement capacity within LGF leaves a gap in the number of people that can be supported. While LMP cannot provide a 'match' to LGF, there may be an ability to purchase additional 'places' for 2026/27 to be able to maintain some additional level of capacity. While this is a 'Plan B' and under consideration until more is known, it could only**

happen if it was predicated on an assurance that other funding/delivery streams come online in 2027 that mirror the capacity we seek to maintain. The Belfast LMP will keep a watching brief before considering this option, noting that underpinning any decision is the fact that LMP (and BCC) do not have the resources to sufficiently fill this gap beyond an 'emergency measure' in this financial year

4. Given that there is a high likelihood of a reduction in skills interventions delivered within LGF projects, LMP will act as a convenor to ensure engagement between LGF and alternative skills delivery which could potentially fill this gap to some extent such as Belfast Met, Invest NI, DfE and DfC.

3.13 Members will be aware that the Labour Market Partnership has now evolved to incorporate the Local Economic Partnership (LEP). At the March 2026 meeting of this Committee, members agreed an outline workplan of priority projects to be supported using LEP resources. Aligning the LEP and the LMP provides an opportunity for a wider discussion around employability, skills, enterprise and economic growth. As the Partnership develops in the coming year, efforts will be made to ensure that resources are being maximised to support economic growth in the Belfast area – always with a focus on inclusive growth.

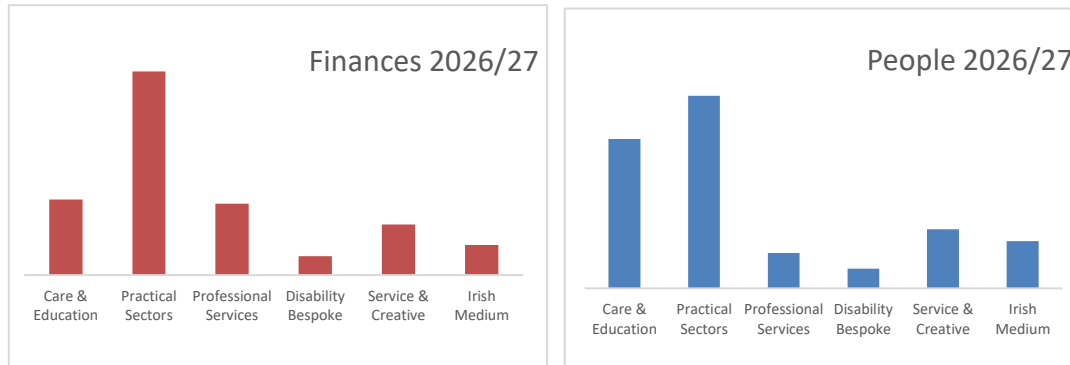
3.14 Employment & Upskilling Academies

Across 2026/27, we expect that the Employment Academies will engage with at least 675 participants with 75% expected to gain employment/self-employment in sectors outlined below.

- Practical sectors such as logistics and construction as well as scoping opportunities within manufacturing and the green economy (heating, electrical etc.).
- Professional services such as administration, business and digital technology
- Care and education sectors including classroom assistants, health and social care, childcare, childminding and playwork
- Creative industries and service sectors, scoping meaningful opportunities to access good jobs as well as self-employment.

3.15 A breakdown of the sectoral spread planned for 2026/27 is outlined below, both in terms of places allocated as well as the

financial investments. As previously noted, differences in volume across sectors above is not an indicator of investment levels and having these together shows this differential.



3.16 The delivery of Employment Academies is underpinned by:

- A focus on growth areas and good jobs – negotiating alternative routes with employers for residents who otherwise could not access due to experience/qualification levels – providing the assurance of aptitude and skills as an appropriate alternative.
- Strong relationships with employers and sectoral bodies who are at the centre of design, such as National House Building Council, CITB, NI Screen, Software Alliance, Logistics UK, NI Social Care Council etc.
- Providing additional support and highly bespoke academies for those with disabilities and migrants (where gaps exist)
- Designing academies such as childminding and beauty which specifically lead to self-employment opportunities with Go Succeed supports built in
- Providing in-programme supports as needed so that barriers to participating are removed – childcare, travel, interpreters etc. as well as in-built aftercare.

3.17 Officers will continue to drive excellence through the implementation of the Quality Assurance Framework that underpins delivery and will undertake an external evaluation of Employment Academies in 2025/26 to consolidate and recognise the Belfast Employment Academy model as an evidenced-based and intelligence-led intervention.

3.18 Digital Badging

In 2026/27 officers will continue to work to expand Digital Badging as a way to increase the currency of this inclusive recognition of skills and competence. This includes supporting DfC to roll out digital badging for all LMP delivery across the region. Alongside other RSA Cities of Learning, officers will also explore ways to increase the functionality of Digital Badging for such as the ability to generate CVs through badges, creating a 'marketplace' for recruitment and improving functionality by the development of an app-based solution.

3.19 Provider Engagement

In 2026/27 we will continue to consolidate this work, reaching into, for example, local Neighbourhood Renewal infrastructure across the city and working closely with other anti-poverty measures within the council such as social supermarkets and advice services. This is even more vital given the significant funding reduction with LGF, which will leave a significant gap in provision for those most economically vulnerable across Belfast.

3.20 Guidance on employability issues

In addition to service delivery, the team will also continue to work with internal and external partners to maximise the benefits to be derived through other support mechanisms. This will include:

- **Developer Contributions:** supporting the Planning team with to ensure that relevant E&S considerations are factored into major developments
- **Social Value:** supporting Corporate Procurement Services with the implementation employability and skills measures.

4.0 Financial and Resource Implications

4.1 The activities outlined in this report will be resourced from the 2026/27 budget for the Employability & Skills section of the Place and Economy departmental budget that was approved as part of the 2026/27 estimates process as well as other sources such as DfC (through the LMP).

5.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

5.1 Each of the proposed projects referenced in this report is informed by statistical research, stakeholder engagement and complementary policies and strategies. Considerations given to equality and good relations impacts at the initial stages of

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project development and monitored throughout delivery. Officers will work closely with the Equality and Good Relations Team on this activity.”

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Ó Néill,
Seconded by Councillor McKay, and

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to:

- recommend that a Jobs and Skills Task and Finish Group be established with the Labour Market Partnership/Local Economic Partnership as the oversight group;
- that work be undertaken to formulate a Skills Strategy for Belfast;
- to support and promote the Department for the Economy’s forthcoming bill on ‘Good Jobs’ and Employment Rights; and
- that work be undertaken to create a pipeline of workers for Good Jobs.

Accordingly, the Committee:

- i. noted the work which had been undertaken and the outputs delivered in the financial year to date;
- ii. endorsed the priority interventions and approach for the 2026/27 financial year;
- iii. agreed to recommend that a Jobs and Skills Task and Finish Group be established with the Labour Market Partnership/Local Economic Partnership as the oversight group;
- iv. agreed that work be undertaken to formulate a Skills Strategy for Belfast;
- v. agreed to support and promote the Department for the Economy’s forthcoming bill on ‘Good Jobs’ and Employment Rights; and
- vi. agreed that work be undertaken to create a pipeline of workers for Good Jobs.

Correspondence

**Minister for Infrastructure Response - Belfast
Cycle Network’s Ravenhill Road Scheme**

The Committee considered a response from the Minister for Infrastructure in relation to the Ravenhill Road/Ormeau Embankment Pedestrian and Cycle Improvements scheme.

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During discussion, a Member highlighted the Minister's response to the Committee's request for the Department for Infrastructure to engage with the Council in respect of support for the installation of lighting infrastructure within the Council's parks. In her response, the Minister advised that the Department "*may provide capital funding support towards the installation of appropriate lighting deemed to be beneficial to enhancing the Belfast Cycling Network, subject to approval of a suitable grant funding business case.*"

Proposal

Moved by Councillor de Faoite,
Seconded by Councillor Lyons,

'That the Committee agrees that a grant funding business case be developed for the installation of appropriate lighting within Council parks.'

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Nelson,
Seconded by Councillor McAteer,

'That the Committee agrees to refer the Minister's response to the People and Communities Committee and highlight the update provided in respect of lighting within the Council's parks.'

On a vote, thirteen Members voted for the amendment and two against and the amendment was declared carried.

Accordingly, the Committee:

- i. noted the response from the Minister for Infrastructure on the Belfast Cycle Network's Ravenhill Road Scheme; and
- ii. agreed to refer the Minister's response to the People and Communities Committee to highlight the update provided in respect of lighting within the Council's parks.

**Department for Infrastructure Response - Issues
Raised at Special Meeting in November 2025**

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) in response to a range of issues raised by Members to the officials from DfI Roads at its special meeting in November, 2025.

Strategic and Operational Issues

City Growth and Regeneration Committee Plan 2026/27

The Strategic Director of Place and Economy submitted for the Committee's consideration the draft City Growth and Regeneration Committee Plan for 2026/27.

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The Committee also considered the Culture, Tourism and Events workplan for 2026/27, which included priority work areas and associated budget allocations.

The Committee:

- i. approved the draft City Growth and Regeneration Committee Plan for 2026/27, subject to additional performance information being brought back to its next meeting;
- ii. approved the priority work areas and budget allocations presented within the Culture, Tourism and Events Workplan for 2026/27, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report; and
- iii. approved the contribution to support the ongoing development of the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor (work to be coordinated through Newry, Mourne and Down District Council) up to a maximum of £35,000.

**Minutes of the City Regeneration Members'
Working Group - 5th March 2026**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the City Regeneration Members' Working Group of 5th March, 2026.

Chairperson

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Licensing Committee

Wednesday, 22nd April, 2026

MEETING OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Doran (Chairperson);
The Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Doherty;
Aldermen McCullough and Rodgers; and
Councillors Abernethy, Anglin, Bradley,
R. Brooks, T. Brooks, Carson,
M. Donnelly, P. Donnelly, D. Douglas, McAteer,
McCann, McDowell, McKay, McKeown and Smyth.

In attendance: Mrs. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;
Mr. K. Bloomfield, NI Housing in Multiple Occupation
(NIHMO) Manager;
Mr. K. McDonnell, Solicitor (Regulatory and Planning);
Mr. S. Hipkins, Building Control Manager; and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies for inability to attend were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 18th March 2026, were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st April.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

Non-Delegated Matters

Quarter 4 (2025-26) statistics on the public level of engagement with the HMO website

The NIHMO Manager highlighted the recent publicity campaign, from 26th January to 6th February, 2026, which had coincided with the commencement of the letting season for students for the 2026/27 academic year. The campaign had encouraged students and other prospective tenants to check that their next shared rental was licensed as a House of Multiple Occupancy (HMO). The Council had boosted social media adverts, website pop-ups, banners, a press release and an article on Interlink to promote the campaign.

He also provided the Committee with statistics on the public level of engagement with the HMO section on the Council's website.

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The Members were advised that, between 1st January and 31st March, 2026, the HMO section of the Council's website had received the following level of engagement:

Webpage	Views
<u>NIHMO</u>	4,233
<u>Know your rights: A guide for HMO tenants</u>	144

During the campaign period, the web page had received 338 views, representing a 55.8% increase compared to the previous two-week period.

The Committee noted the update which had been provided.

NIHMO Service Activity Update 2025/26

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The report is intended to give members an update on the activity of the NIHMO service during the financial year 2025/26.

1.2 Belfast City Council's NIHMO service, on behalf of each of the 11 Northern Ireland Councils is responsible for managing the HMO Licensing Scheme application process, which includes processing all licence requests, validating the requests, checks and inspections of HMO properties, issuing enforcement notices and dealing with breaches of licensing conditions.

1.3 The granting, refusal, variation or revocation of an HMO licence rests with the individual Council.

2.0 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the activity of the NIHMO service during the financial year 2025/26.

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

HMO Licensing

3.1 Table 1 provides a summary of the number of HMO's licensed on 31 March 2026

**Licensing Committee,
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Table 1

Row Labels	Count by Council Area	Permitted Occupancy
Antrim and Newtownabbey	15	70
Ards and North Down	13	80
Armagh City Banbridge and Craigavon	59	331
Belfast	2996	12981
Causeway Coast and Glens	214	927
Derry City and Strabane	250	1202
Fermanagh and Omagh	5	20
Lisburn and Castlereagh	9	46
Mid and East Antrim	12	76
Mid Ulster	18	120
Newry Mourne and Down	18	97
Grand Total	3609	15950

3.2 Table 2 provides a summary of the number of licenses granted and renewed during the financial year 2025/26.

Table 2

Row Labels	New Applications	Renewal Application	Total by Council Area
Antrim and Newtownabbey	0	0	0
Ards and North Down	0	1	1
Armagh City Banbridge and Craigavon	12	5	17
Belfast	150	578	728
Causeway Coast and Glens	16	44	60
Derry City and Strabane	44	33	77
Fermanagh and Omagh	0	1	1
Lisburn and Castlereagh	0	0	0
Mid and East Antrim	4	0	4
Mid Ulster	2	0	2
Newry Mourne and Down	0	1	1
Grand Total	228	663	891

Note: New applications include those properties which had a license in the name of a different licensee and were subsequently sold / transferred.

3.3 Table 3 provides a summary of the number of HMO licence applications that have not been successful (by reason) during the financial year 2025/26

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Table 3

Council	Not received from owner	Breach of planning control	Documentation	Notice of Publication	Overprovision Fee not Paid	Fit & proper person	Grand total
Antrim and Newtownabbey	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Ards and North Down	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Armagh City Banbridge and Craigavon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Belfast	0	4	10	3	0	5	22
Causeway Coast and Glens	1	0	0	2	2	0	5
Derry City and Strabane	0	0	1	3	1	0	5
Fermanagh and Omagh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lisburn and Castlereagh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mid and East Antrim	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mid Ulster	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newry Mourne and Down	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grand Total	1	4	11	8	3	5	34

HMO Inspections

3.4 **Table 4 provides a summary of the number of inspections (by type) undertaken during the financial year 2025/26**

Table 4

Council	No Access	Licensing Inspections	Interim (WIP)	Final	Enforcement	Grand Total
Antrim and Newtownabbey	2	3	0	1	22	28
Ards and North Down	0	6	1	2	6	15
Armagh City Banbridge and Craigavon	1	13	1	5	32	52

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Belfast	37	869	12	262	235	1415
Causeway Coast and Glens	0	71	0	24	6	101
Derry City and Strabane	13	95	3	48	16	175
Fermanagh and Omagh	1	1	0	0	4	6
Lisburn and Castlereagh	0	2	0	1	7	10
Mid and East Antrim	1	6	1	1	23	32
Mid Ulster	0	5	0	1	8	14
Newry Mourne and Down	3	17	0	2	11	33
Grand Total	58	1088	18	347	370	1881

HMO Enforcement

3.5 Table 5 provides a summary of enforcement action taken in Belfast by ward.

Table 5

Row Labels	Section 30(1)	Section 30(2)	Section 31(1)	Section 33(1)	Section 33(2)	Section 5(2)	Section 5(5)	Section 71	Section 72	Section 73	Section 78	Grand Total
BALLYGOMARTIN	1											1
BEECHMOUNT						1			1			2
BLACKSTAFF						1	1		1		1	4
BLOOMFIELD						1						1
CENTRAL	2			1	1	1		5	15	4	4	33
CHICHESTER PARK	1			1						2		4
CLIFTONVILLE						1			1			2
CONNSWATER				1		1	1	4	4			11
DUNCAIRN						1		4	4			9
FALLS PARK								4	4	7		15
FINAGHY						1			1			2
INNISFAYLE						1	1		1		1	4
MALONE								1	1			2
ORMEAU	1	1										2
ROSETTA									2			2
STRANMILLIS	1			1	1							3
SYDENHAM	1					1	1		1		1	5
WATER WORKS	1											1
WINDSOR	5	2	1					4	8			20
Grand Total	13	3	1	4	2	10	4	22	44	13	7	123

Key

Section 30(1) – Non licensed HMO (owner) - £5000 fixed penalty notice
Section 30(2) – Non licensed HMO (agent) - £5000 fixed penalty notice
Section 31(1) – Exceeding permitted occupancy - £5000 fixed penalty notice
Section 33(1) – Breach of licensing conditions - £2500 fixed penalty notice
Section 33(2) – Agent not named on the licence - £2500 fixed penalty notice
Section 5(2) – Evidence of household notice
Section 5(5) – Household notice
Section 71 – Power to obtain information from persons connected to the premises - £200 fixed penalty notice
Section 72 – Power to require persons connected to the premises to produce documents
Section 73 – Additional supporting documents
Section 78 – Powers of entry without warrant

3.6 During the financial year 2025/26 a total of £175,600 was paid following the issue of fixed penalties notices across all Northern Ireland Councils of which £120,200 relates to fixed penalty notices served in Belfast.

4.0 Financial and Resource Implications

4.1 None. The cost of assessing HMO application and officer inspections is provided for within existing budgets.

5.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

5.1 There are no equality or good relations issues associated with this report.”

In response to a Member’s question, regarding the consequences for a landlord who had had enforcement action taken against them, the NIHMO Manager explained that officers had regard to any enforcement action when considering whether a landlord was a “fit and proper person”. He outlined that the Council had approved an HMO Enforcement Policy in 2019. The Members were advised that if a Fixed Penalty notice had been served on a landlord and a second offence was committed, the next stage would be to prosecute through the courts. He highlighted that, if a landlord committed more than one offence, the information would be brought before the Committee for its consideration. The Members were advised further that, if a landlord was deemed not to be a fit and proper person for one property, they would lose their licences for any HMO properties which they held. The HMO Manager clarified that offences within the last five years were taken into consideration, as outlined within the Enforcement Policy.

A further Member requested that, in future service updates, the HMO figures for previous years be included, in order that the Committee would be able to compare the numbers of applications, refusals and enforcement cases.

In response to further questions regarding the time taken from a reported breach to enforcement action, the NIHMO Manager advised the Committee that they had a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) to carry out an enforcement visit within 10 days in 80% of cases.

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He stated that they were currently slightly under performing on that target but that they were currently short staffed and that would hopefully be rectified shortly.

The Director of Planning and Building Control outlined the Planning Enforcement Strategy. She advised the Committee that the Department for Infrastructure had monitored a KPI target of commencing legal action within 39 weeks in 70% of cases.

A number of Members stated that the time taken to prepare cases for court action was clearly time consuming for officers and that it was important that the Council had sufficient resources to meet statutory timeframes without placing an unnecessary burden on staff.

A further Member reiterated that the meeting with the three key Departments needed to take place urgently, to discuss the issue of short term lets and the impact it was having on communities.

The Committee noted the activity of the NIHMO service during the financial year 2025/26.

Delegated Matters

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

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

The Committee noted the applications that had been issued under the Scheme of Delegation during March.

Licences Issued Under Delegated Authority

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

**Application for a New Licence to operate a
House of Multiple Occupation for 167 Dunluce
Avenue**

The NIHMO Manager provided the Committee with an overview of the application.

He outlined that the property had had the benefit of an HMO licence issued by the Council with an expiry date of 1st August, 2023. The ownership of the property had transferred to Mr. M. Baskin in May 2023. The Council had not been made aware of the change of ownership at the time.

In accordance with Section 28 "Change of ownership: effect on licence" of the 2016 Act, the licence in the name of the previous owner ceased to have effect on the date of transfer.

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An inspection of the property had taken place on 4th December, 2025, at which time it was established that the property was being occupied as an unlicensed HMO.

An application for a new HMO licence was received from Mr Baskin on 4th December, 2025.

A Temporary Exemption Notice was granted on 20th January, 2026, with an expiry date of 20th April, 2026.

The NIHMO Manager outlined that, pursuant to the 2016 Act, the Council could only grant a licence if it was satisfied that:

- a) the occupation of the living accommodation as an HMO would not constitute a breach of planning control;
- b) the owner, and any managing agent of it, were fit and proper persons;
- c) the proposed management arrangements were satisfactory;
- d) the granting of the licence would not result in overprovision of HMOs in the locality;
- e) the living accommodation was fit for human habitation and—
 - i. was suitable for occupation as an HMO by the number of persons to be specified in the licence, or
 - ii. could be made so suitable by including conditions in the licence.

The Planning Service had confirmed that a Certificate of Lawful Existing Use or Development (CLEUD) was granted on 15th March, 2022.

It was reported that the NIHMO Unit had consulted with the Environmental Protection Unit in relation to daytime noise; the Public Health and Housing Unit in relation to rubbish accumulation/filthy premises; and the Enforcement Unit in relation to litter and waste and all had confirmed that there had been no relevant enforcement action required in respect of any of the issues in the HMO in the last 5 years.

The NIHMO Manager drew the Committee's attention to the action taken in relation to the occupation of the accommodation as an unlicensed HMO.

For the purpose of Section 12(2) of the 2016 Act, the Council had determined the locality of the accommodation as being Housing Management Area (HMA) "2/21 Ulsterville" as defined in the document Council's Local Development Plan Strategy, which was formally adopted in May, 2023. It was reported that Legal Services had advised that there was a clear requirement in section 8 of the 2016 Act upon the Council to be satisfied that the granting of a licence would not result in overprovision.

The officers had had regard to:

- a) the number and capacity of licensed HMOs in the locality; and
- b) the need for housing accommodation in the locality and the extent to which HMO accommodation was required to meet that need.

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To inform the Council in its consideration of the above provisions, the Council had taken account of the 2023 Strategy given that “Nurturing sustainable and balanced communities was a fundamental aim of the LDP’s housing policies.” In particular, the Council had considered Policy HOU10, which stated:

“Within designated HMAs, planning permission will only be granted for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and/or flats/apartments where the total number of HMOs and flats/apartments combined would not as a result exceed 20% of all dwelling units within an HMA.”

The Committee was advised that, on the date of assessment, 30th March, 2026, 67% of all dwelling units in policy area HMA 2/21 were made up of HMOs and flats/apartments, which in turn exceeded the 20% development limit as set out in Policy HOU10. There were 250 (22%) licensed HMOs with a capacity of 1074 persons in that HMA.

It was outlined that there were a total of 1160 dwelling units in HMA 2/21. The Members were advised that, on 30th March, out of 214 premises available for rent within the BT9 area, there were 93 licensed HMOs which represented 392 bed spaces.

The Committee was advised that the fact that the use of the property as an HMO was permitted for planning purposes was a relevant consideration in determining whether the granting of the licence would result in overprovision.

The Houses in Multiple Occupation Manager reminded the Committee that there was a need for intensive forms of housing and, to meet that demand, HMOs were an important component of the housing provision. HMOs, alongside other accommodation options within the private rented sector, played an important role in meeting the housing needs of people who were single, who had temporary employment, students, low-income households and, more recently, migrant workers and asylum seekers.

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

The Committee was advised that no objections had been received in relation to the application. It was also reported that the accommodation had been inspected by the NIHMO service, on 22nd January, 2026, at which time it complied with the physical standards for an HMO for five persons.

On 30th March, 2026, pursuant to Paragraph 9 of Schedule 2 of the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, officers had issued a Notice of Proposed Decision to the applicant, stating that it proposed to refuse the licence on the grounds of over provision.

The applicant had responded, on 13th April, stating that:

1. At no stage was he made aware that the Council considered there to be an overprovision of HMO properties within the BT9 area, nor that it would be a determining factor in refusal;

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2. The property supported individuals on modest incomes who faced structural barriers in the private rental market;
3. It provided secure, well-maintained accommodation where alternatives were limited; and
4. The rental offering was priced at an accessible level in the context of the current cost-of-living pressures.

The HMO Manager outlined the officers' response to the points raised by the applicant, namely, that:

1. The notes linked to the application form which the applicant confirmed that he had read and understood set out the factors which the Council were required to have regard of when determining an application, including overprovision;
2. The 2016 Act did not allow the Council to have regard to the profile of the current tenants;
3. While the accommodation met the physical standards for usage as an HMO, officers cannot be satisfied that the granting of the HMO licence would not result in overprovision of HMO accommodation in the locality; and
4. The 2016 Act did not allow the Council to have regard to the rent being charged.

The Committee was advised that the applicant was unable to attend the Committee meeting. A copy of his written submission had been circulated to the Members for their information.

A Member highlighted that the property had been operating as an unlicensed HMO for two and a half years.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor T. Brooks,
Seconded by Councillor Abernethy and

Resolved – that the Committee agrees to refuse the application as, in accordance with Section 12 of the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, it could not be satisfied that the granting of the HMO licence would not result in overprovision of HMO accommodation in the locality of the accommodation, as determined under section 8(2)(d) of the Act.

**Consideration of Street Trading
Designation for Glen Road**

The Director of Planning and Building Control presented the following report to the Committee:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Committee will recall that, at your meeting of 17 September 2025, you gave approval to initiate the statutory public notice consultation process for the designation of a site outside 44e Glen Road, for the sale of hot and cold food and non-alcoholic drinks.
- 1.2 This site had been identified as a result of an application received requesting designation to allow trade from this location. A location map is attached as appendix 1.
- 1.3 The statutory designation process involved seeking comments from the relevant statutory bodies and from the public through a public notice placed in two newspapers, with a statutory 28 day period for representations to be made to the Council.
- 1.4 The purpose of this report is to enable the Committee to now consider the designation proposal in conjunction with the representations received and to make a decision on whether or not to pass the designation resolution and designate the proposed site.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is requested to consider the representations received as a result of the public notice consultation process and reconsider the proposal. On the basis of the objections received and consultation responses from PSNI and DfI (Roads) it is recommended that the committee:

– Determine not to pass a designation resolution.

- 2.2 However, should members be minded to pass a Designating Resolution it is recommended that:

- Only the part of the street, specifically the proposed site should be designated so the Council may allocate a street trading pitch;
- An operational date of 1 June 2026 is agreed for the resolution to take effect (This must be not less than one month from the date of passing the resolution);

- Members consider and confirm that they wish to include only hot and cold food and non-alcoholic drinks as the designated commodities; and
- Members consider any other reasonable conditions that should be applied to any subsequent stationary street trading licence issued for the designated site, such as days and hours of trade or duration of licence.

3.0 Main Report

Background

- 3.1 Under the provisions of the Street Trading Act (NI) 2001 a district council has powers to designate and rescind the designation of specific streets or parts of streets as being suitable for street trading. The Act also allows a council to include the commodities or services to be supplied in the designation resolution, and to vary a previous designating resolution in relation to these.
- 3.2 If a street has not been designated under the Act the Council cannot issue a licence for street trading from a stationary position in that street.
- 3.3 The process of considering and reviewing the designation of streets is therefore an essential part of the legal framework within which the Council is enabled to regulate street trading in the City.

Key Issues

- 3.4 The Street Trading Act (NI) 2001 sets out the designation public notice consultation process.
- 3.5 The Council must consult with the PSNI and with the Department for Infrastructure (Roads). and may also consult such other persons as it considers appropriate. Such consultees may include local residents, business and commercial premises in the street or in vicinity of the proposed designated site.
- 3.6 Comments from the public must be sought through a public notice placed in two newspapers, with a statutory 28 day period for representations to be made to the Council.
- 3.7 A synopsis of the comments received as a result of this consultation process is provided below.

PSNI Response

- 3.8 The PSNI did not object but request that the application is further considered by Belfast City Council to ensure there are no public safety issues if the layby is restricted as many shops and business in the immediate area will be operating as usual. See Appendix 2.

DfI (Roads) Response

- 3.9 DfI (Roads) have no objection to the proposal but commented that any vehicle/stall must not be positioned in such a way as to compromise road safety or traffic progression.

Published 28 day Notice and Resident Letter Drop

- 3.10 As a result of the public notice and residential letter drop 14 responses were received all of which were opposing the creation of a trading pitch. The predominant concerns were road / pedestrian safety and increased traffic congestion.

- 3.11 Issues raised were:

- Increased road traffic risks entering onto Glen Road
- Increased traffic
- Noise / Litter
- Impact on Aesthetic
- Obstructing the pavement
- Reduced available parking for existing business
- Damage being caused to residential parked vehicles by congested vehicle movements.

- 3.12 Copies of the responses are attached as Appendix 4.

- 3.13 Members are reminded that the designation process is about the principle of a street trading pitch being at the location. Matters regarding the suitability of a particular person, the stall and the ability to manage the site are considered as part of the subsequent street trading licensing process.

- 3.14 The person requesting a site to be designated, is merely a 'trigger' for the process and they may not be the person who is ultimately granted the street trading licence to operate at the site. Members are reminded that on occasions the Committee has considered multiple competing licence applications for a single designated street trading site.

3.15 If Members pass a Designation resolution, a public notice to that effect must be published for two consecutive weeks in two or more newspapers circulating in the district, the first of which must be published at least 28 days before the date when the resolution is to take effect.

3.16 A copy of the notice must also be sent to any person who made representations relating to the proposed resolution.

4.0 **Financial and Resource Implications**

None.

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

There are no issues associated with this report.”

In response to a Member’s query, the Director of Planning and Building Control outlined that a trader who had been trading at the location had removed their stall when approached by the Council.

After discussion it was

Moved by Councillor T. Brooks,
Seconded by Councillor Abernethy and

Resolved – that the Committee, having considered the representations received as a result of the public notice consultation process and on the basis of the objections received and consultation responses from PSNI and DfI (Roads), agrees not to pass a designation resolution.

Review of Street Trading Licensing Fees - Result of consultation exercise

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 **Purpose of Report**

1.1 At the Committee meeting of the 16 April 2025 it was agreed that consultation on revised street trading fees should be undertaken on the basis of a fee increase that was a calculated mid way increase between an inflationary increase and an increase to reflect cost recovery of processing street trading applications. Minutes of 16 April 2025 Licensing Committee meeting are included as Appendix 1.

- 1.2 At your meeting of the 18 March 2026, the Committee considered representations on the proposed fees for street trading licences, which had been received in response to the consultation process as set out in the Street Trading Act N.I. 2001.
- 1.3 At that meeting, Members agreed to defer a decision on the report and asked that offices bring forward revised proposals for an initial inflationary increase with staged further increases.
- 1.4 This report once again details the consultation and representations received for further consideration and provides the requested amended fee proposals for Members to consider.
- 2.0 **Recommendations**
- 2.1 The Committee is requested to consider the contents of the report and recommended to:
1. Agree to the initial inflationary uplift in year 1 as set out in paragraph 3.19 for Street Trading Licences, effective from the 1 June 2026, and
 2. Agree that in April 2027 and April 2028 an inflationary uplift will be added as well as a further 10% increase in fees.
- 3.0 **Main Report**
- Key Issues**
- 3.1 Members are reminded that the Street Trading Act N.I. 2001 gives the Council powers that it may charge such fees as may be sufficient to cover any reasonable administrative or other costs in connection administering the Street Trading Licence Scheme.
- 3.2 Below is a summary of the current fees and the fees the Committee agreed should be consulted on, following consideration of three fee options, at your meeting of 16 April 2025.

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STATIONARY LICENCE	Current fee	fee consulted on
Application Fee - Non refundable	150	£290
Licensed for Monday to Friday	800	£1,225
Licensed for one day (Mon-Fri)	300	£395
Licensed for Monday to Saturday	1000	£1,390
Licensed for Monday to Sunday	1250	£1,640
Licensed for Saturday	520	£1,010
Licensed for Sunday	580	£1,080
MOBILE LICENCE		
Application Fee - Non refundable	180	£310
Licensed for Monday to Friday	550	£955
Licensed for one day (Mon-Fri)	300	£395
Licensed for Monday to Saturday	800	£1,175
Licensed for Monday to Sunday	1100	£1,450
Licensed for Saturday	300	£795
Licensed for Sunday	380	£875
TEMPORARY LICENCE		
Application Fee - Non refundable	180	£310
Licensed for Monday to Friday, per day	40	£91
Licensed for Saturday	50	£132
Licensed for Sunday or Public holiday	70	£175
Variation of Licence Particulars	100	£250

Consultation/Public Notice

- 3.3 Consultation on the proposed fees was for the statutory public notice 28 day period, as required by the Act. The public notice period closed on 18 February 2026.**
- 3.4 Notice of the consultation was published in the two newspapers as required by the Act, specifically the Belfast Telegraph and the Irish News.**

- 3.5 We also published the proposed fees on the Council's website to coincide with the newspaper public notice period, explaining how representations could be made and that a statement outlining how the proposed fees were prepared was available on request.
- 3.6 trader or have recently held or applied for a street trading licence, notifying them of the proposed fees and the closing date of the consultation period and seeking their views.

Responses

- 3.7 As a result of the consultation a total of five responses were received. A copy of the written responses received is attached as Appendix 2.
- 3.8 Four responses were received from mobile street trading licence holders (ice cream vans). This was four responses from a total 12 mobile street trading licences.
- 3.9 The other response received was from a stationary street trading licence holder, who holds licences in two locations. Therefore, this could be considered two out of 26 current stationary street trading licences.
- 3.10 Summary of points raised in responses
- Understand need for increase – but proposals not fair or appropriate
 - Would adversely affect the service provided to residents, which is of value to communities
 - Austerity and rising living costs already downtown as people make cutbacks on luxury/treat items like ice cream
 - Increased Operating Costs – Fuel, staffing, product.
 - Weather Dependency & Seasonal Trading especially for ice cream trade–restricted revenue opportunities
 - Increased Competition – concession units operating within parks and tourist locations
 - Increased costs of product together with applicable rates cannot be passed onto consumer
 - Would be a barrier to people joining the industry
 - Wouldn't be able to apply for temporary licence as if weather bad couldn't cover cost
 - Fees in other Council areas are significantly less
- 3.11 As the comparison with fees in other council areas was made within responses, a list of these fees alongside the existing and proposed Belfast fees for comparison is given in Appendix 3.

Revised proposals

- 3.12 At the meeting in March 2026, The Committee agreed to defer a decision on an uplift in fees for one month and requested that officers submit a report outlining a short-term inflationary rise of the current Street Trading fees, with proposed future staged increases, for the Committee to consider at its next meeting.
- 3.13 In order to calculate a short term inflationary rise as requested by the Committee, the Inflation figures were updated using the Bank of England inflation calculator, based on the latest available Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation data from Office for National Statistics.
- 3.14 The inflation figure from 2017 (when fees last set) to Feb 2026 has therefore been calculated at 35.4%
- 3.15 To calculate future staged increases and to start moving towards cost-recovery, annual ten percent increases over a further two year period were considered a reasonable approach. Therefore, it is proposed that in years two and three the CPI percentage increase is added to the proposed 10 percent annual increase.
- 3.16 The percentage CPI inflation figures for 12 months up to September 2025 was 3.8% and the latest available figure for percentage CPI inflation is for the 12 months up to February 2026 which is 3%. In the example fee calculations provided CPI for years 2 and 3 has been taken at 3%, whilst obviously this could be higher.
- 3.17 It would be the Building Control Service's intention to bring a further review of the street trading fees to Committee before the end of the third year, comparing the then current fees to a calculated cost recovery level for the work involved in street trading licensing applications and on-site monitoring, with the overall aim of moving closer towards cost-recovery.
- 3.18 It should also be noted that the application fee is paid on first grant and every 3 years on renewal, while the licence fee is paid annually. However, the annual licence fee is set at the time of the licence being issued. Therefore, for many street traders there will be a delay before they must pay an increased fee of either type.

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3.19 Fee Uplift Proposal:

STATIONARY LICENCE	Current fee	fee consulted on	Year 1 = Inflation 2017-Feb 2026 = 35.4%	year 2 = +10% + CPI (eg 3%)	year 3 = + 10% + CPI (eg 3%)
Application Fee - Non refundable	150	£290	203.10	229.50	259.34
Licensed for Monday to Friday	800	£1,225	1083.20	1224.02	1383.14
Licensed for one day (Mon-Fri)	300	£395	406.20	459.01	518.68
Licensed for Monday to Saturday	1000	£1,390	1354.00	1530.02	1728.92
Licensed for Monday to Sunday	1250	£1,640	1692.50	1912.53	2161.15
Licensed for Saturday	520	£1,010	704.08	795.61	899.04
Licensed for Sunday	580	£1,080	785.32	887.41	1002.78
MOBILE LICENCE					
Application Fee - Non refundable	180	£310	243.72	275.40	311.21
Licensed for Monday to Friday	550	£955	744.70	841.51	950.91
Licensed for one day (Mon-Fri)	300	£395	406.20	459.01	518.68
Licensed for Monday to Saturday	800	£1,175	1083.20	1224.02	1383.14
Licensed for Monday to Sunday	1100	£1,450	1489.40	1683.02	1901.81
Licensed for Saturday	300	£795	406.20	459.01	518.68
Licensed for Sunday	380	£875	514.52	581.41	656.99
TEMPORARY LICENCE					
Application Fee - Non refundable	180	£310	243.72	275.40	311.21
Licensed for Monday to Friday, per day	40	£91	54.16	61.20	69.16
Licensed for Saturday	50	£132	67.70	76.50	86.45
Licensed for Sunday or Public holiday	70	£175	94.78	107.10	121.02

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Variation of Licence Particulars	100	£250	135.40	153.00	172.89
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3.20 The legislation does not require a new consultation exercise to be carried out if the Committee decides to set fees different to those that were previously consulted on. However, if the Committee decides to set fees set out in paragraph 3.19 the legislation requires that notice of the decision is published in two newspapers along with the implementation date and that all current street trading licence holders also be notified.

4.0 **Financial and Resource Implications**

4.1 There are significant financial and resource implications associated with this report.

4.2 The proposed Street Trading Licence fees will ensure the cost of the operational and administration processes are proportionate to the licensing scheme. Details outlining the costings associated with administering street trading licences are attached as Appendix 4.

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

There are no issues associated with this report.”

During discussion, a Member stated that, given the ongoing cost of living crisis, he did not feel it was fair on the traders to implement such significant increased prices.

A further Member highlighted that there were some costs which were non-negotiable under the Street Trading Act, such as the fees to advertise twice in the newspapers.

After further discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Carson,
Seconded by Councillor McCann and

Resolved – that the Committee agrees:

1. to the initial inflationary uplift in fees for year 1, as set out below, effective from the 1st June 2026, comprising an inflationary uplift from 2017- Feb 2026 of 35.4%;

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STATIONARY LICENCE	Current fee	fee consulted on	Year 1 = Inflation 2017-Feb 2026 = 35.4%
Application Fee - Non refundable	150	£290	203.10
Licensed for Monday to Friday	800	£1,225	1083.20
Licensed for one day (Mon-Fri)	300	£395	406.20
Licensed for Monday to Saturday	1000	£1,390	1354.00
Licensed for Monday to Sunday	1250	£1,640	1692.50
Licensed for Saturday	520	£1,010	704.08
Licensed for Sunday	580	£1,080	785.32
MOBILE LICENCE			
Application Fee - Non refundable	180	£310	243.72
Licensed for Monday to Friday	550	£955	744.70
Licensed for one day (Mon-Fri)	300	£395	406.20
Licensed for Monday to Saturday	800	£1,175	1083.20
Licensed for Monday to Sunday	1100	£1,450	1489.40
Licensed for Saturday	300	£795	406.20
Licensed for Sunday	380	£875	514.52
TEMPORARY LICENCE			
Application Fee - Non refundable	180	£310	243.72
Licensed for Monday to Friday, per day	40	£91	54.16
Licensed for Saturday	50	£132	67.70
Licensed for Sunday or Public holiday	70	£175	94.78
Variation of Licence Particulars	100	£250	135.40

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2. with a report to be submitted to the February 2027 meeting for the consideration of any future increases in Street Trading Licensing fees.

Chairperson

Planning Committee

Tuesday, 21st April, 2026

HYBRID MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Murphy (Chairperson);
Aldermen Lawlor, McCullough and Rodgers;
Councillors Abernethy, Anglin, Bell, Brennan,
T. Brooks, Carson, Doran, D. Douglas, S. Douglas,
Garrett, Groogan, Magee, McCabe,
McCann and Whyte.

Also attended: Councillor Verner.

In attendance: Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;
Mr. K. McDonnell, Solicitor (Regulatory and Planning);
Mr. E. Baker, Planning Manager (Development Management);
Mr. D. O’Kane, Development Planning and Policy Manager;
Ms. C Reville, Principal Planning Officer;
Ms. L. Walshe, Principal Planning Officer; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology for inability to attend was reported for Councillor Harvey.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 10th March were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st April, 2026.

Declarations of Interest

Councillors D. Douglas and S. Douglas declared an interest in relation to the item under the heading “LA04/2025/2138/F - A blitz memorial sculpture, made from glass fibre reinforced concrete, set on a concrete plinth within the grounds of Westbourne Presbyterian Church - Westbourne Presbyterian Church 149a Newtownards Road” in that they were members of the Church and they left the meeting whilst the item was under consideration.

Committee Site Visits

The Committee noted the site visits.

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
Tuesday, 21st April, 2026**

**Notifications from Statutory Bodies-
Abandonment and Extinguishment**

**Abandonment at Bankmore Street and
proposed extinguishment of a Public Right
of Way at Ratcliffe Street**

The Committee noted the proposed abandonment.

Planning Appeals Notified

The Committee noted the appeals decisions.

Planning Decisions Issued

The Committee noted the planning decisions issued in March, 2026.

Live Applications for Major Development

The Committee noted the list of live applications for major development.

Committee Decisions that have yet to issue

The Committee noted the list of Committee decisions which had not yet been issued

Miscellaneous Reports

Local Applications subject to NI Water Objections

The Committee agreed to delegate to the Director of Planning and Building Control those Local planning applications to which NI Water had objected.

Planning Applications previously considered

**LA04/2025/1350/F - Change of Use from 3 bed
Dwelling (Class C1) to 5-bed, 5-person HMO (sui
generis) - 29 Glencairn Street**

The Principal Planning Officer provided the Committee with an overview of the application and highlighted the following key issues for consideration:

- The principle of an HMO at the location;
- Impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area;
- Impact on residential amenity;
- Traffic, parking and access; and
- Waste and refuse collection.

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She reported that 69 third party objections had been received in relation to the application and the concerns raised included proliferation, house values, requirement for family homes, parking, amenity, noise, refuse, antisocial behaviour, sewage and emergency vehicle access.

She explained that the proposal was compliant with Policy HOU10 in that the 10% HMO threshold on Glencairn Street had not yet been reached and that it was considered that the proposal would not be harmful in terms of traffic, parking, impact on residential amenity or the amenity of the surrounding area.

She reported that DfI Roads, NIEA and SES had offered no objections to the application and that NI Water had recommended refusal, based on network capacity.

She stated that it was recommended that the application be approved, subject to conditions.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Verner to the meeting, who attended to speak in objection to the application.

Councillor Verner explained that she was attending the meeting to seek a refusal of the application and stated that 71 objections had been received in relation to the application citing that it would cause unacceptable harm to residential amenity and parking.

She stated that Waste Management had clearly outlined the current issues with constrained access and that additional bins would further impact on the local residents. She added that the issues would impact house prices and only serve to erode the residential character of a settled community.

She stated that Glencairn Street already had extreme parking issues that caused access challenges for essential services that included ambulance and fire service. She explained that she had been working with a local constituent over the previous year to secure a disabled parking space as, due to the high volume of parked cars, she was having to park over a third of a mile from her property, and she added that she had letters of support from the Council, PSNI and local clergy which acknowledged the current lack of amenity.

She concluded by stating that, if the application was approved, it would contribute to further over intensification of a narrow residential street, increase parking stress and the erosion of a settled community, and she asked the Committee to reject the application.

The Chairperson thanked Councillor Verner for her representation and welcomed Mr. I. Crockard, CBD Architecture, to the meeting, who was speaking on behalf of the applicant.

Mr. Crockard explained that the applicant was a local landlord who already owned two properties on Glencairn Street, both of which were uninhabitable when he purchased them, and that he fully refurbished them to a high standard and had been well maintained homes which were rented to local families.

He stated that the applicant had recently purchased 29 Glencairn Street at auction with the intention of bringing what was currently an uninhabitable property back into use and he explained that the applicant understood that many of the concerns raised by residents

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had been when the property was previously owned by a large HMO developer that operated across Belfast. He added that, after those objections had been raised, the property was placed on the market and was purchased by the applicant.

He stated that the property was in poor condition, was not contributing positively to the street and that the proposal was to fully renovate the house and convert it into a five-bedroom shared property, finished to the same high standard as the other homes that he had already refurbished on Glencairn Street.

He explained that the intended occupants would be nurses working in the local hospital and that the applicant had been working with a nursing agency that recruited nurses from England and travelled to Northern Ireland to help relieve pressure on the health service. He added that the applicant already provided accommodation for key workers through the agency and could provide a letter of recommendation, if required.

Mr. Crockard stated that both the parking survey and the road services assessment had confirmed that there was sufficient parking available in the area even at peak times.

He stated that due to the applicant owning properties either side of the application site, he had a very strong personal interest in ensuring that the property was managed properly.

He concluded by stating that the applicant aimed to continue improving older properties in the area and bringing homes that were uninhabitable back into good use while maintaining positive relationships with the local community and that he was content to comply with any reasonable conditions to ensure the property was managed to the highest standard for both tenants and surrounding residents.

In response to a question from a Member with regard to amenity, parking and the parking survey, Mr. Crockard stated that the parking survey had been carried out independently and within the required parameters, he added that the applicant intended for future tenants to not be car-owners and therefore would not contribute to parked cars within the area.

The Chairperson highlighted that each application needed to be considered on a case by case basis and pointed out that Glencairn Street was significantly narrower than previous applications which had been refused by the Committee and referred to the Planning Appeals Commission.

After a number of comments from Members, the Planning Manager explained that restricted bin collection was clearly material and the lack of amenity space to the rear of the property would be considered as reasonable grounds for refusal.

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Proposal

Moved by Alderman McCullough,
Seconded by Alderman Lawlor,

“That the Committee refuses the application on the basis that the proposal would result in difficulties with refuse collection and a loss of amenity and insufficient amenity space for residents and delegates authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the reasons for refusal.”

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

Planning Applications

LA04/2024/1646/F - Demolition of existing dwelling (no. 50 Gilnahirk Road) to facilitate proposed extension and alterations to existing petrol filling station including extension of retail floor space, extension and realignment of carpark to provide 9 no. additional car parking spaces and pedestrian access, cycle parking, construction of retaining wall and associated landscaping - 46-50 Gilnahirk Road

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the application in order to undertake a site visit.

LA04/2025/2096/F - Variation of Condition 5 of Planning Permission LA04/2019/2387/F relating to Noise Impact Assessment. - Land adjacent to Quay Gate House 15 Scrabo Street Belfast BT5 4D: footpaths and public realm at Scrabo Street Station Street and Middlepath Street

The Principal Planning Officer summarised the application for the Committee which related to the submission of a Final Noise Impact Assessment prior to commencement of construction of the approved development.

She explained that the key areas for consideration were the acceptability of the revised trigger for the timing of the requirement to submit a Final Noise Impact Assessment which, if approved, would change from being required prior to the commencement of development to being required prior to the installation of windows and means of ventilation.

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She reported that Environmental Health had offered no objection to the amended condition and that, having regard to the development plan, planning history on the site and other material considerations, the proposed variation to the condition was considered acceptable.

The Committee granted planning permission to vary Condition 5 and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions.

LA04/2025/2113/F - The construction of a new Sports Hall, Gymnasium and P.E Facility and footbridge connecting to existing GAA playing field - St. Marys Christian Brothers Grammar School St Marys Christian Brothers Grammar School 147a Glen Road, Andersonstown

The Principal Planning Officer provided the Committee with an overview of the application and highlighted the following key areas for consideration:

- Principle of development;
- Layout, scale, massing and design and impact on the character and appearance of the area;
- Open space;
- Impact on natural heritage;
- Flood risk;
- Climate change; and
- Proposed access and car parking.

She stated that the proposal would be built on an existing all-weather pitch that provided limited value to the school with regard to amenity and recreation and that the proposed facility would enhance the overall sports and recreation facilities of the school and that the benefits would far outweigh the partial loss of open space within the school campus.

She reported that DfI Roads, DfI Rivers, Environmental Health, NIEA, NI Water and Shared Environmental Services (SES) had all been consulted and had offered no objection to the proposal, and that no letters of representation had been received following the advertising of the application in the local press.

She stated that, having regard to the development plan, planning history on the site, consultee responses and other material considerations, the proposed development for construction of a new Sports Hall, Gymnasium and P.E Facility and footbridge connecting to existing GAA playing field was considered acceptable and that it was recommended that planning permission be granted.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and to deal with any issues that might arise, provided that they were not substantive.

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**LA04/2021/2839/F & LA04/2022/0071/LBC -
Proposed change of use from offices to 17no.
1 bedroom and 2no. 2 bedroom apartments with
alterations to rear facade and dormers. - 29-32
College Gardens**

The Principal Planning Officer provided the Committee with an overview of the application and outlined the following key areas for consideration:

- Principle of Development;
- Affordable housing;
- Housing density;
- Housing mix;
- Adaptable and accessible accommodation;
- Design and placemaking;
- Impact on listed building;
- Climate change;
- Residential Quality and impact on amenity;
- Access and transport;
- Environmental protection;
- Flood risk and drainage;
- Waste-water infrastructure;
- Waste management;
- Natural heritage; and
- Section 76 planning agreement.

She reported that a Listed Building Consent had been submitted for the alterations required to the building to facilitate the change of use and that the principle of housing at the location was considered acceptable. She added that the proposed design was considered to enhance the Conservation Area and that the reuse of the Listed Building was welcomed.

She stated that no objections had been received from consultees and that one representation had been received which had been addressed within the case officer's report.

She reported that, having regard to the Development Plan and other material considerations, it was recommended that planning permission be granted.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions, the Section 76 planning agreement and to deal with any issues that might arise, provided that they were not substantive.

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**LA04/2023/3795/F & LA04/2023/3656/LBC -
Proposed 360 rotating car parking bay with new
access onto Wellington Park Lane and levels
changes. Removal of boundary vegetation
and wall to accommodate sliding gate
(Amended) - 1 Wellington Park Terrace**

The Principal Planning Officer summarised the application for the Committee and explained that the application site was a Grade B1 Listed Building situated in the Malone Conservation Area, she highlighted the following key areas for consideration:

- Impact on Listed Building;
- Impact on conservation area;
- Roads/access;
- Impact on trees;
- Impact on amenity;
- Other considerations; and
- Matters raised in representation.

She reported that there had been one objection from DfC Historic Environment Division and five third-party objections, all of which had been addressed within the case officer's report.

She stated that, having regard to the development plan, relevant planning policies and other material considerations, it was considered that the application be approved.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions, notify DfI and to deal with any issues that might arise, provided that they were not substantive.

**LA04/2024/0852/F - Retention of change of use
from warehouse and offices to public house
(Linked to adjacent public house) and
entertainment venue/events space including
street food market for on premises consumption
- Common Market 16-20 Dunbar Street**

The Principal Planning Officer provided the Committee with an overview of the application and referred the Members to the following key issues to consider in assessment of the proposed development:

- Principle of public house and event space at this location;
- Impact on amenity;
- Impact on Conservation Area;
- Impact on Listed Building;
- Impact on traffic flow and parking; and

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- Impact existing wastewater infrastructure.

She explained that the application site was located with the city centre boundary in unzoned whiteland within both the BUAP and dBMAP.

She reported that there had been two previous temporary permissions, that the current application was for permanent permission and that there had been no objections received from consultees that included Environmental Health, DfI Roads, Historic Environment Division and NI Water.

She stated that the proposal constituted an appropriate city centre use which proposed minimal external changes and would therefore preserve the character and appearance of the Cathedral Conservation Area.

She stated that, having regard to the development plan, relevant planning policies and other material considerations, the application was considered to be acceptable.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and to deal with any issues that might arise, provided that they were not substantive.

LA04/2025/2138/F - A blitz memorial sculpture, made from glass fibre reinforced concrete, set on a concrete plinth within the grounds of Westbourne Presbyterian Church - Westbourne Presbyterian Church 149a Newtownards Road

The Principal Planning Officer provided the Committee with a summary of the application and explained that the key areas for consideration were that the application site was within the grounds of a Listed Building, DfI Roads and the Historic Environment Division had offered no objections and no third-party representations had been received.

She stated that, having regard to the development plan and material considerations, it was recommended that planning permission be granted.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and to deal with any issues that might arise, provided that they were not substantive.

Restricted Item

**Development Opportunity Sites (DOA) Draft
Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)**

The Development Planning and Policy Manager and the Urban Design Officer explained that the Council had developed two Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

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documents for Development Opportunities Areas which had been identified within the Belfast Local Development Plan: Plan Strategy 2035, which provided a comprehensive masterplan approach to the development of key areas of the city centre.

The Committee noted the SPG for DOA_01 Sailortown, Greater Clarendon and City Quays and DOA_07 Cathedral and NE Quarter, and the associated Consultation Reports and approved both for publication.

Chairperson

Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee

Wednesday, 29th April, 2026

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE MEMBERS OF THE BELFAST WATERFRONT AND ULSTER HALL LTD. SHAREHOLDERS' COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Hanvey (Chairperson);
Alderman Copeland; and
Councillors Bell, Bower, Brennan,
R. Brooks, Ferguson, Flynn, McCabe,
McCann, McCormick, McDowell, McKay,
Ó Néill, Verner and Walsh.

In attendance: Mr. K. Forster, Director of Economic Development;
Mr. R. McConnell, Chief Executive, Belfast Waterfront
and Ulster Hall Ltd.;
Mr. I. Bell, Director of Finance, Risk, and Corporate
Services, Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd.;
Mr. C. Mealey, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was received from Councillor Collins.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Restricted Items

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

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

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

Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee
Wednesday, 29th April, 2026

Reserved Matters – BWUH Ltd. Board
Non-Executive Directors

The Director of Economic Development submitted for the Committee's consideration a report which sought approval for Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall (BWUH) Ltd. to extend the term of a current Non-Executive Director on the BWUH Ltd. Board and to appoint three new Non-Executive Directors to the Board.

The Committee:

- i. approved the extension of a Non-Executive Director on the BWUH Ltd. Board; and
- ii. ratified the appointment of three Non-Executive Directors to the BWUH Ltd. Board.

Collective Partnership Targets

The Director of Economic Development reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 16th March, 2026, it had approved the commencement of BWUH Ltd.'s five-year contract extension from 3rd August, 2026, and noted that the proposed new Collective Partnership Targets and associated Key Performance Indicators would be submitted to its next meeting.

Accordingly, the Director submitted for the Committee's consideration a report which set out proposed new Collective Partnership Targets and provided an update on the development of potential Key Performance Indicators, which would be applicable from the start of BWUH Ltd.'s contract extension in August, 2026.

The Committee was advised that the development of detailed Key Performance Indicators remained in progress and would be aligned to the BWUH Ltd. Business Plan. The Director reported that the Key Performance Indicators would be submitted to the Committee's next meeting in June, 2026, along with the final Collective Partnership Targets.

During discussion, the Director of Economic Development and the Chief Executive of BWUH Ltd. answered several Members' questions on the proposed Collective Partnership Targets and the development of the Key Performance Indicators.

After discussion, the Committee:

- i. agreed the Collective Partnership Targets as set out within the report; and
- ii. noted the ongoing work to develop the Key Performance Indicators for BWUH Ltd.

Chairperson

Climate and City Resilience Committee

Thursday, 16th April, 2026

MEETING OF THE CLIMATE AND CITY RESILIENCE COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor M. Donnelly (Chairperson)
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Doherty);
The High Sheriff (Alderman McCoubrey);
Alderman Copeland;
Councillors Anglin, Bell, R. Brooks, T. Brooks,
Collins, P. Donnelly, S. Douglas,
Ferguson, Groogan, Lyons, Magee,
McCann, Meenehan and Murray.

In attendance: Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;
Ms. D. Caldwell, Climate Commissioner;
Ms. C. Shortt, Monitoring, Learning & Reporting Officer; and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 12th March were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st April.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

Presentation

Great Big Green Week

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. Sara McCracken and Ms. Mary Corfield, The Climate Coalition, to the meeting. Ms. McCracken provided the Committee with an overview of the Great Big Green Week, where more than a million people would come together, from 6th to 14th June, to take action for their communities, for nature and for the climate. She outlined that, from repair cafés and nature walks to community clean-ups and film screenings, people everywhere could come together for good and make a real difference to their communities. In 2025, she explained that more than 1.2 million people had taken part and they wanted to increase the number of participants this year. She advised the Committee that they would love to work alongside the Council on any relevant projects.

**Climate and City Resilience Committee,
Thursday, 16th April, 2026**

In response to a Member's question, the Climate Commissioner outlined that there were a number of sustainability and climate-related projects which the Council was involved in and that it could work with the Corporate Communications team to highlight the positive things which the Council was working on throughout the Great Big Green Week.

In response to a further Member's question, Ms. McCracken explained that they were working on reaching out to as many schools as possible and that she had met with the Eco Schools team. She highlighted that there were free school resource packs available on their website, containing curriculum linked activities for various ages. It was agreed that the link would be circulated to the Committee.

A further Member queried whether the school resource packs were available in Irish. Ms. McCracken advised that they were currently only available in English and Welsh but that she would be happy to take that suggestion back to her team for future consideration.

Moved by Councillor Groogan,
Seconded by Councillor T. Brooks and

Resolved – that the Committee agreed:

- that an ILLUMINATE request be considered by the Director of Legal and Civic Services to light up City Hall, marking the start of the Great Big Green Week, 6th-14th June, 2026; and
- that the Council's Corporate Communications Team would work with the Great Big Green Week to promote and showcase the relevant projects that the Council is working on, through its social media channels.

**Update on Public Body Reporting –
Climate Adaptation report**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To inform members of the requirements for the Council's Climate Adaptation Report that was submitted to DAERA by the statutory deadline of 31st March 2026.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to note:

- I. that the Council is required to submit an adaptation report 31st March 2026 covering a 4 year period from 1st Jan 2026;**

- II. that the contents of the report must outline the current and predicted climate change impacts in relation to the Council's functions i.e. a climate change impact assessment along with the Council's adaptation targets and priority actions;
- III. that the priority actions are based on the Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programmes 2 and 3, the Council's Climate Action Plan (CAP) and any additional adaptation work taking place across Council;
- IV. That all actions submitted in the report are outlined below;
- V. that the adaptation report was submitted to DAERA on the mandatory deadline of 31st March and is attached as an appendix to this report.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Background

In June 2024 members were informed of the Public Body Reporting Requirements under the NI Climate Act 2022. Section 42 of the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 requires DAERA to make new Regulations, which will place climate change reporting duties on specified public bodies. The regulations came into operation in early May 2024, 21 days after they were laid in the Assembly. The first report required under the regulations, the mitigation report was submitted to DAERA in October 2025. The Council was required to prepare and submit an adaptation report for submission by 31st March 2026.

3.2 The first adaptation report must cover the 4 year period beginning 1st January 2026 and include:

- an assessment of the current and predicted impact of climate change in relation to the organisation's functions; and
- the proposals and policies for adapting to climate change in the exercise of its functions, along with implementation timescales.

3.3 The second and subsequent reports are required every 5 years and will include an assessment of the progress the body has made towards implementing the proposals and policies set out in any previous climate change adaptation reports.

Report Contents

3.4 The adaptation report includes information under six headings.

- **Part 1: Profile** – information about the organisation.
- **Part 2: Governance** – what governance structures exist in Council to manage adaptation, strategies and plans that integrate adaptation planning and what objectives relate to it.
- **Part 3 – Impacts**: the Council’s climate risk assessment including the methodology and findings.
- **Part 4 – Actions**: the Council’s adaptation targets and priority actions and how this relates to the NICCAP.
- **Part 5 – Case Studies**: inclusion of up to 5 case studies that illustrate best practice being undertaken by Council.
- **Part 6 – Validation and Authorisation**: validated findings (i.e. through peer review or external experts) and authorisation of the plan with the relevant decision makers within the organisation.

Part 3 – Impacts

3.5 The **Impacts** section sets out the various climate risks and opportunities work completed by the Council to date including the development of climate risk register in 2022 and the assets-based risk assessment in 2023.

The climate risks for the Council include:

- 11 risks under flooding
- 8 risks under extreme heat (including urban heat island effect)
- 5 risks under storms
- 4 risks for extreme cold
- 4 risks that are linked to global and city-wide factors

Each of these risks have been assessed and given a risk score in terms of their likelihood and impact, determined through engagement workshops with departments in 2021-2022.

Part 4 - Adaptation Actions

3.6 The following adaptation actions have been included in the submission:

**Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme 2
(2 actions)**

3.7

1. In bringing forward their Local Development Plans, Councils will take account of climate change adaptation considerations as indicated in the Strategic Planning Policy Statement.
2. Embed adaptation planning cycle across local council planning.

**Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme 3
(16 actions)**

3.8

3. Preparation of a
4. Climate Change Risk Assessment and Action Plan for Belfast City Council
5. Belfast Community Planning Our Planet Board
6. The UPSURGE project testing nature-based solutions
7. Belfast Sustainable Food Programme
8. Belfast Tree Strategy (formerly Preparation of an iTree Eco Report for Belfast)
9. Develop a baseline of Climate Impacts on Finance Councils will create a climate impact 'tagging' system, to create a baseline of financial impacts on council business operations from severe weather events. This will complement existing Met Office information gathering on non-financial impacts of weather events.
10. Councils will be delivering at least the first iteration of a climate adaptation action plan, linked to a regularly reviewed risk register, in alignment with public body reporting duties brought forward by DAERA.
11. Corporate Risk and Adaptation - Climate change adaptation will be embedded in each council corporate plan, recognising the challenges of increasing climate impacts over coming decades.
12. Work with sustainable food places partnerships/communities to develop initiatives which enable more local food growing and community-owned food partnerships.
13. Regional Community Resilience Group (RCRG) will have widened its remit to consider the promotion and development of societal resilience.
14. Regional Community Resilience Group will continue to work with communities impacted by flooding;

15. Councils will ensure that any sustainability/net zero procurement screening includes climate adaptation considerations, to take advantage of co-benefits, ensure consistency and avoid unintended consequences;
16. Councils will ensure local development plans demonstrate how climate adaptation considerations will be embedded in all approval decisions, recognising increasing climate impacts over coming decades;
17. Local Development Plans will specify that developments are designed using the most up-to-date floodplain definitions from Dfl, and councils will publish figures of how many approvals are granted by exception annually;
18. Councils will collaborate through the community planning partnership to undertake work on how adaptation relates to community planning;
19. Green and Blue Infrastructure targets are set by councils to ensure places and people are well informed and more resilient to more intense and frequent flooding and heatwaves.

3.9

BCC Climate Action Plan (13 actions)

20. Initiate a series of building-level Climate Risk Assessments for buildings identified at most risk from extreme weather events;
21. Integrate climate risk scores identified in the CCRA into the BCC Asset Management system and utilise to identify areas for more detailed Climate Risk Assessments on priority sites/buildings and new developments;
22. Raise awareness of nature-based solutions (NbS) as a resilience measure;
23. Develop plan to identify, assess, develop and maintain and enhance existing nature-based solutions for climate resilience;
24. Invest in projects that aim to increase resilience and mainstream nature-based solutions;
25. Apply SUDs policy and guidance (SUDS Manual C753) as standard practice in the Capital Programme;
26. Start to deliver the Tree Establishment Strategy and continue the One Million Trees Programme (linked to action 7);
27. Develop a sustainable/ low carbon procurement policy and supplier guidance documents to support

a transition to an inclusive, net zero and resilient future.

28. Establish an internal Council governance structure that supports sustainable food – potentially reporting to the Climate Programme Board;
29. Develop a sustainable food policy for the Council that addresses waste, sourcing, packaging, emissions measurement and an events protocol;
30. As part of the development of a sustainable/ low carbon procurement policy and supplier guidance documents, include sustainable food requirements such as Veg City, Soil Association's bronze catering mark and the Cool Food Pledge into food provided within Council's estate;
31. Explore the potential and feasibility of increasing the no. of climate friendly meals sold within the Council estate.
32. Develop and launch an accessible climate data platform to track progress on delivering climate adaptation and mitigation actions.

3.10

33. New Actions in 2026 (3 actions)
34. Deliver the Nature in Towns and Cities Project
35. Deliver the Belfast Alleyways Programme
36. Develop a City Climate Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan

3.11 Part 5 – Case Studies

The Council is also required to publish case studies demonstrating adaptation action across the Council. These are:

1. Belfast Tree Strategy
2. Local Development Plan
3. Nature in Towns and Cities & Alleyways
4. Belfast Sustainable Food Programme
5. UPSURGE

The content of these case studies has been developed by the relevant departments across council responsible for delivering them.

Full details of the submission are available in Appendix 3 and 4

3.12 Part 6 – Data Validation

This section verifies and confirms data is validated and approved under the relevant governance structures of Council.

4.0 Financial & Resource Implications

4.1 Many of the actions identified are already resourced and underway. However, there are a number of actions in NICCAP 3 that when published will require a resource and action owner to be identified in Council and a monitoring plan developed. These will come forward within the annual planning cycle for the Council's CAP which will be included in each corporate planning cycle up to the end of the reporting period which is December 2029.

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

5.1 Any good relations or equality implications will be identified as part of the Council's screening process."

6.0 Appendices

1. [The list of 40 public bodies that are required to report under the Act.](#)
2. [Climate change Act 2022 \(section 42\)](#)
3. Draft Adaptation Report Presentation to include impacts, risks, actions and case studies.
4. [Submitted Adaptation Report to DAERA](#)"

The Committee adopted the recommendations within the report.

Moved by Councillor Collins,
Seconded by Councillor Groogan and

Resolved - that the Committee also agrees its support for the "March for Lough Neagh", scheduled for Sunday, 17th May 2026, organised by the Save Lough Neagh campaign, which was seeking to address the ongoing environmental crisis, including toxic algae blooms and demanding action to protect the lake.

Chairperson

Standards and Business Committee

Tuesday, 28th April, 2026

MEETING OF THE STANDARDS AND BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Flynn (Chairperson);
Aldermen Lawlor and McCullough; and
Councillors Bower, Bradley, Carson,
de Faoite, P. Donnelly, D. Douglas,
Long, Lyons, Magee, McAteer, McCallin,
McCormick, McDonough-Brown, McDowell,
I. McLaughlin, R. McLaughlin and Murphy.

In attendance: Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor and Director of Legal
and Civic Services;
Mr. J. Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance
Manager; and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies for inability to attend were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 24th March, 2026, were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st April, 2026.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Long declared an interest in Items 7 and 8, namely “Tackling Anti-Social Scrambler and E-Scooter Use in Belfast” and “University of Ulster to rescind decision to cut 450 jobs”, in that his wife was the Minister of Justice, and he would not participate in the items.

Councillor R. McLaughlin declared an interest in item 8, in that his partner was a Junior Minister in the Executive, and he would not participate in the discussion.

Notices of Motions

Item Withdrawn

The Committee was reminded that the Notice of Motion “Opposing Aspirational Climate Targets” had been withdrawn from the agenda.

**Standards and Business Committee,
Tuesday, 28th April, 2026**

**Notice of Motion to rescind a decision –
Armed Forces Covenant**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 24th March, it had agreed to adopt the following motion:

“That this Council recognises the unique contribution that Armed Forces service leavers have and continue to make to our society; agrees that Veterans and serving personnel should not face any disadvantage as a result of their military service and resolves that this Council will sign up immediately to the Armed Forces Covenant.”

Subsequent to the Committee adopting the motion and the expiry of the call-in period, in accordance with standing order 26 (b), a motion was received requesting that the decision to adopt the motion be rescinded.

“In accordance with Standing order 26 – We the undersigned Members call on Belfast City Council to rescind the Standards and Business Committee of 24th March, 2026, decision to adopt the notice of motion in respect of the Armed Forces Covenant on two grounds:

1. No resource implications were listed in the report of the motion. There will be a resource implication associated with this motion through Council officer time or in any event that would mark the signing of the armed forces covenant. Therefore a referral to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee should have been recommended
2. Furthermore in reference to Standing Order 13 o, the signing of the Armed Forces Covenant being a strategic decision the item should have been referred to full Council.

These are the two options that should have been recommended to the Committee before it could make a decision on this matter.

We therefore call for the decision to be rescinded and to be tabled again at the Standards and Business Committee on 28th April.”

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Murphy,
Seconded by Councillor Bradley,

That the above motion be referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Amendment

Moved by Alderman Lawlor,
Seconded by Alderman McCullough,

That the motion be rejected.

**Standards and Business Committee,
Tuesday, 28th April, 2026**

The City Solicitor drew the Committee's attention to the question of cost considerations within the motion and also whether Standing Order 13 (o) applied, which required that if an issue related to a strategic or constitutional matter, the Committee should refer a Motion to the Council meeting.

After discussion, the proposer of the amendment confirmed that he acknowledged the advice from the City Solicitor and that he wished to proceed with the vote on his amendment.

On a vote on the amendment, standing in the name of Alderman Lawlor, ten Members voted for it, nine against and with one no vote, it was accordingly declared carried.

Further Amendment

Moved by Councillor R. McLaughlin,
Seconded by Councillor de Faoite,

That the decision in relation to the rejection of the motion be amended to provide that the matter be referred to the Council for debate.

On a vote on the further amendment, nine Members voted for it, ten against and with one no vote, it was accordingly declared lost.

Therefore the first amendment, standing in the name of Alderman Lawlor, was put as the substantive motion.

On a vote, ten Members voted for it, nine against and with one no vote, the motion to reject the motion was carried.

Public Acts of Remembrance Events

The Committee noted that the motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Bower and seconded by Councillor Maghie, be referred, in the first instance, to the People and Communities Committee.

Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD)

Moved by Councillor Flynn,
Seconded by Councillor McAteer and

Resolved - That the Committee agrees that the motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Groogan and seconded by Councillor Maghie, be referred to the Council for debate, with no restriction to be placed on the number of speakers.

**Tackling Anti-Social Scrambler
and E-Scooter Use in Belfast**

Moved by Councillor Alderman McCullough,
Seconded by Alderman Lawlor and

**Standards and Business Committee,
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Resolved – That the Committee agreed that the motion, which had been proposed by Alderman McCullough and seconded by Councillor R. Brooks, be referred to the Council for debate, with no restriction to be placed on the number of speakers.

**University of Ulster to rescind decision
to cut 450 jobs**

Moved by Councillor Flynn,
Seconded by Councillor Lyons and

Resolved – That the Committee agreed that the motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Collins and seconded by Councillor Flynn, be referred to the Council for debate, with no restriction to be placed on the number of speakers.

Chairperson

Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD)

“This Council recognises that April is PMDD Awareness Month. PMDD stands for Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder, which is an endocrine disorder and is the abnormal reaction to fluctuations in hormones.

This Council notes that PMDD affects 1 in 20 women and those assigned female at birth and has serious impacts on their mental and physical health. Symptoms can be emotional, physical and psychological including mood swings, fatigue, pain and suicidal ideations, and can affect those with the conditions for up to two weeks of every month. 34% of those with the condition have attempted to take their own life, yet despite how serious the condition can be there is a lack of training and awareness of the condition throughout GPs and medical practitioners. It can take twelve years to get a diagnosis and it can often be misdiagnosed and therefore mistreated as bipolar disorder.

This Council will write to the Department of Health to ask them what training and awareness campaigns they provide for medical practitioners of the symptoms of PMDD and will also write to the Public Health Agency to ask them to launch a public campaign to highlight the condition and how to track the symptoms.

This Council will work with the PMDD Project to hold workshops for councillors and all council staff to provide more awareness and information of how to get help for the condition.”

Proposer: Councillor Groogan

Seconder: Councillor Maghie

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Tackling Anti-Social Scrambler and E-Scooter Use in Belfast

“Belfast City Council expresses serious concern at the growing impact of antisocial scrambler and e-scooter use across the city, which has caused significant distress to residents, poses a clear risk to public safety and, in some cases, has resulted in serious injury and loss of life.

The Council recognises that, when used responsibly and in appropriate settings, such vehicles can have legitimate recreational value; however, their misuse in residential areas, parks and public spaces is causing serious and growing concern across Belfast.

The Council notes ongoing enforcement challenges and the need for stronger, more effective interventions to tackle dangerous use and repeat offending.

Accordingly, the Council agrees to:

- write to the Minister of Justice calling for strengthened powers for the PSNI to seize and, where appropriate, retain or dispose of vehicles being used in a dangerous or antisocial manner;
- call for the introduction of mandatory registration of scramblers and e-scooters at the point of sale;
- support the provision of additional enforcement tools, including the use of drone technology and dedicated resources to assist in identifying and tackling offenders; and
- request a detailed briefing from the PSNI — open to all Members — on enforcement activity, hotspot areas, and barriers to effective action within Belfast.”

Proposer: Alderman McCullough

Seconder: Councillor R. Brooks

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Calling for University of Ulster to rescind decision to cut 450 jobs

“This Council:

- expresses deep concern at the announcement of up to 450 redundancies at University of Ulster;
- stands in solidarity with workers at UU in campuses in Belfast and across the north against these jobs losses;
- calls on and will write to senior University of Ulster management urging them to rescind these proposals to protect jobs and educational provision;
- will also write to the Economy Minister requesting an urgent intervention by the Stormont Executive to protect jobs and educational provision in UU; and
- supports the UCU, UNITE and other trade unions representing workers at UU and supports action to resist the loss of 450 jobs and the resultant impact on educational provision.”

Proposer: Councillor Collins

Seconder: Councillor Flynn

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