

# Public Document Pack

## BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

29th June, 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 Wednesday, 1st July, 2026 at 6.00 pm, for the transaction of the following business:

1. Summons
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council (Pages 1 - 16)
5. Official Announcements
6. Change of Position of Responsibility
7. Requests to Address the Council
  - Ashton New Lodge Youth Centre
8. Minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (Pages 17 - 60)
9. Minutes of the People and Communities Committee (Pages 61 - 82)
10. Minutes of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee (Pages 83 - 114)
11. Minutes of the Licensing Committee (Pages 115 - 130)
12. Minutes of the Planning Committee (Pages 131 - 150)
13. Minutes of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee (Pages 151 - 154)

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

John Walsh

Chief Executive

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## Council

### ANNUAL MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the Council Chamber, City Hall  
on Monday, 1st June, 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 (Councillor McCoubrey);  
Aldermen Copeland, 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, McCromick, McCusker, McDonough-Brown,  
McDowell, McKay, McKeown, I. McLaughlin,  
R. McLaughlin, Meenehan, Murphy, Murray, Nelson,  
Ó Néill, Smyth, Verner, Walsh and Whyte.

#### Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

#### Apologies

No apologies were reported.

#### Declarations of Interest

#### Minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Councillors P. Donnelly, Duffy, Groogan, McCabe, McCann and Verner declared an interest in relation to the item 'Minutes of the Shared City Partnership Meeting' in that they were employed by or associated with organisations which were in receipt of PEACEPLUS funding.

Councillor Groogan declared an interest in relation to the item 'Request for use of City Hall grounds for Summer Cinema 2026' in that her employer was involved with the event.

Councillor Groogan also declared an interest in relation to the item 'Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme' in that her employer was involved.

Councillor McKeown declared an interest in relation to the item 'Safety Issues in the City Centre', in that his employer had been mentioned at Committee.

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Councillor Smyth declared an interest in the items 'Belfast Stories - Community Grants' and 'Belfast Child - Seamless Pathway for Children and Families' in that he was employed by the Belfast Trust.

Councillor Long declared in interest in item 'Call for Evidence by Criminal Justice Committee' in that his wife was the Minister for Justice.

As the above-mentioned items did not become the subject of debate, the Members were not required to leave the meeting.

Councillors Bunting, D. Douglas, Doran and Verner declared an interest in relation to the item 'Request for Funding' in that they were associated with applicants and left the meeting whilst this item was under consideration.

**Minutes of the City Growth  
and Regeneration Committee**

Councillor Groogan declared an interest in relation to the item 'Vacant to Vibrant Programme Update' in that her employer was in receipt of a grant through the scheme.

Councillor Groogan also declared an interest in relation to the item '2 Royal Avenue Update' in that she had met with some of the groups which were being considered but that she had not expressed any opinion.

As the above-mentioned items did not become the subject of debate, the Member was not required to leave the meeting.

**Minutes of the Council**

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

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the meetings of the Council of 5th May, 2026, be taken as read and signed as correct.

**Change of Membership on Outside Bodies**

The Chief Executive advised the Council that notification had been received from the Alliance Party which indicated that it wished to replace Councillor Bell with Councillor Maghie on the Board of the Eastside Partnership; and Councillor Hanvey with Councillor Murray on Visit Belfast.

The Council noted the changes.

**Official Announcements**

The Lord Mayor referred to the recent retirements of long-standing staff members Joanne O'Prey and Pamela Davidson. The Council wished them well in their retirement.

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Councillor R. Brooks expressed her deepest condolences to former Councillor George Dorrian, his wife Lauren, and to their wider family, on the passing of their beloved daughter, Edie.

Councillor S. Douglas paid tribute to the work of Kinship Care and congratulated them on their first ever Kinship Care Celebration Week. He praised all those who fostered children. At the request of the Member, the Lord Mayor agreed to send a letter of thanks and appreciation to Kinship Care.

**Request to Film Proceedings**

The Chief Executive advised the Council that a request to film parts of the Council meeting had been received from a number of media outlets.

The Council acceded to the request.

**Appointment of Positions of Responsibility 2026/2027**

The Chief Executive drew the Council's attention to a report which identified the persons who had been selected by the Nominating Officer of each Political Party to hold the following Positions of Responsibility in year four of the current Council term:

**Civic Dignitaries**

|                   |                                |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| Lord Mayor        | Councillor Róis-Máire Donnelly |
| Deputy Lord Mayor | Councillor Hedley Abernethy    |

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee**

|                    |                           |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Chairperson        | Councillor Ian McLaughlin |
| Deputy Chairperson | Councillor Arder Carson   |

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee**

|                    |                       |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Chairperson        | Councillor Joe Duffy  |
| Deputy Chairperson | Councillor Sam Nelson |

**People and Communities Committee**

|                    |                             |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Chairperson        | Councillor Jenna Maghie     |
| Deputy Chairperson | Councillor Micheal Donnelly |

**Licensing Committee**

|                    |                        |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| Chairperson        | Councillor Tara Brooks |
| Deputy Chairperson | Councillor Conor McKay |

**Planning Committee**

|                    |                            |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Chairperson        | Councillor Ryan Murphy     |
| Deputy Chairperson | Councillor Natasha Brennan |

**Climate and City Resilience Committee**

|                    |                           |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Chairperson        | Councillor Dónal Lyons    |
| Deputy Chairperson | Councillor Brónach Anglin |

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**Standards and Business Committee**

|                    |                         |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Chairperson        | Alderman James Lawlor   |
| Deputy Chairperson | Councillor Gary McKeown |

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

|                    |                          |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Chairperson        | Councillor Fiona McAteer |
| Deputy Chairperson | Councillor Aine McCabe   |

**Policing and Community Safety Partnership - Chairpersons**

**Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership**

Councillor Tara Brooks (Chairperson)

**North Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership**

Councillor Sam Nelson (Chairperson)

**South Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership**

Councillor Tara Brooks (Chairperson)

**East Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership**

Councillor Séamas de Faoite (Chairperson)

**West Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership**

Councillor Ian McLaughlin (Chairperson)

The Council agreed to appoint the Members to the positions of responsibility as set out above.

**Expressions of Thanks**

The Lord Mayor reviewed her year in office, which she stated had been an incredible honour and that she had truly loved getting out and visiting communities across the City. She outlined that she had been privileged to be the first female Lord Mayor from the Democratic Unionist Party and that she had been so proud to represent her community. She highlighted that she had been delighted to support her chosen charities, Little Heroes, South Belfast Alternatives, Tre-Eco and South Belfast Sure Start. She stated that particular highlights for her had included welcoming His Majesty King Charles III and Her Majesty Queen Camilla to Belfast and to have been the First Citizen at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday. She thanked the Deputy Lord Mayor, the High Sheriff, Council staff, her Party and her husband, family and friends for all of their support and wished the incoming Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor every success for the year ahead.

The Deputy Lord Mayor reflected on his year in office and paid tribute to the Lord Mayor, the High Sheriff, his wife and children and Council staff for the valuable assistance which they had provided. He stated that it had been one of the greatest honours of his life. His highlights had included welcoming the President of Ireland, Catherine Connolly, to Belfast and leading the Pride and Mela parades. He had been grateful to have worked with a number of important charities during his time in office, including the Children's Hospice, Belfast City of Sanctuary and the People's Kitchen. He wished the incoming Lord Mayor and Deputy Mayor well in their forthcoming term of office.

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**Tributes**

Representatives of all the Political Parties paid tribute to the Lord Mayor and the Deputy Lord for the manner in which they had fulfilled their duties during their year in office.

**Installation of Lord Mayor**

The Chief Executive reminded the Council that it had, earlier in the meeting, approved the Positions of Responsibility for 2026/2027 and that Councillor Róis-Máire Donnelly had been nominated to serve as Lord Mayor.

Accordingly, Councillor R.M. Donnelly was installed in Office for the period to end on the date of the annual meeting of the Council in 2027.

Councillor R.M. Donnelly thanked her Political Party for nominating her to serve as Lord Mayor. She stated that she was honoured to be the first Irish-speaking, female Lord Mayor of Belfast. She highlighted that she wanted to put young people, diversity and language rights at the heart of everything that she would do throughout her year in office. She stated that she was particularly looking forward to welcoming the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann to Belfast. She paid tribute to the previous Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor for the manner in which they had carried out their duties. She stated that she was looking forward to the year ahead and to working with the Deputy Lord Mayor and the High Sheriff.

(The Lord Mayor, Councillor R.M. Donnelly, in the Chair.)

**Installation of Deputy Lord Mayor**

The Council was again reminded that earlier in the meeting Councillor Abernethy had, under the Positions of Responsibility for 2026/2027, been nominated to serve as Deputy Lord Mayor.

Accordingly, Councillor Abernethy was installed in Office for the period to end on the date of the annual meeting of the Council in 2027.

He paid tribute to the previous Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor, thanked his Political Party for nominating him, thanked his family and friends for their support, and outlined his main objectives for his term in office. He stated that he was looking forward to the year ahead, to listening and learning, and to working with the Lord Mayor and the High Sheriff.

**Appointment of Members to Committees 2026/2027**

The Chief Executive drew the Council's attention to a report which identified the following persons who had been nominated by the Nominating Officer of each Political Party to the Council's Standing Committees and to the (District) Policing and Community Safety Partnerships for 2026/2027:

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee**

|   |   |                           |
|---|---|---------------------------|
| 1 | <b>Chairperson</b><br>Democratic Unionist Party | Councillor Ian McLaughlin |
| 2 | <b>Deputy Chairperson</b><br>Sinn Féin          | Councillor Arder Carson   |
| 3 | Sinn Féin                                       | Councillor Ciaran Beattie |

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|    |                                    |                             |
|----|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 4  | Sinn Féin                          | Councillor Christina Black  |
| 5  | Sinn Féin                          | Councillor Natasha Brennan  |
| 6  | Sinn Féin                          | Councillor Matt Garrett     |
| 7  | Sinn Féin                          | Councillor Ronan McLaughlin |
| 8  | Sinn Féin                          | Councillor Ryan Murphy      |
| 9  | Sinn Féin                          | Councillor Tomás Ó Néill    |
| 10 | Democratic Unionist Party          | Councillor Sarah Bunting    |
| 11 | Democratic Unionist Party          | Councillor Fred Cobain      |
| 12 | Democratic Unionist Party          | Councillor Jordan Doran     |
| 13 | Democratic Unionist Party          | Councillor Nicola Verner    |
| 14 | Alliance                           | Councillor Michael Long     |
| 15 | Alliance                           | Councillor Jenna Maghie     |
| 16 | Alliance                           | Councillor Micky Murray     |
| 17 | Alliance                           | Councillor Sam Nelson       |
| 18 | Social Democratic and Labour Party | Councillor Dónal Lyons      |
| 19 | Social Democratic and Labour Party | Councillor Séamas de Faoite |
| 20 | Green Party                        | Councillor Brian Smyth      |

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee**

|    |                                       |                                  |
|----|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1  | <b>Chairperson</b><br>Sinn Féin       | Councillor Joe Duffy             |
| 2  | <b>Deputy Chairperson</b><br>Alliance | Councillor Sam Nelson            |
| 3  | Sinn Féin                             | Councillor Christina Black       |
| 4  | Sinn Féin                             | Councillor Áine McCabe           |
| 5  | Sinn Féin                             | Councillor Conor McKay           |
| 6  | Sinn Féin                             | Councillor Ronan McLaughlin      |
| 7  | Sinn Féin                             | Councillor Luke Meenehan         |
| 8  | Sinn Féin                             | Councillor Tomás Ó Néill         |
| 9  | Democratic Unionist Party             | Alderman James Lawlor            |
| 10 | Democratic Unionist Party             | Councillor Sarah Bunting         |
| 11 | Democratic Unionist Party             | Councillor Sammy Douglas         |
| 12 | Democratic Unionist Party             | Councillor Tracy Kelly           |
| 13 | Democratic Unionist Party             | Councillor Ian McLaughlin        |
| 14 | Alliance                              | Councillor Fiona McAteer         |
| 15 | Alliance                              | Councillor Emmet McDonough-Brown |
| 16 | Alliance                              | Councillor Christine Bower       |
| 17 | Social Democratic and Labour Party    | Councillor Séamas de Faoite      |
| 18 | Social Democratic and Labour Party    | Councillor Dónal Lyons           |
| 19 | Green Party                           | Councillor Áine Groogan          |
| 20 | People Before Profit Alliance         | Councillor Michael Collins       |

**People and Communities Committee**

|   |  |                             |
|---|--|-----------------------------|
| 1 | <b>Chairperson</b><br>Alliance         | Councillor Jenna Maghie     |
| 2 | <b>Deputy Chairperson</b><br>Sinn Féin | Councillor Micheal Donnelly |
| 3 | Sinn Féin                              | Councillor Ciaran Beattie   |
| 4 | Sinn Féin                              | Councillor Christina Black  |
| 5 | Sinn Féin                              | Councillor Nichola Bradley  |
| 6 | Sinn Féin                              | Councillor Claire Canavan   |
| 7 | Sinn Féin                              | Councillor Matt Garrett     |
| 8 | Sinn Féin                              | Councillor JJ Magee         |
| 9 | Democratic Unionist Party              | Councillor Ruth Brooks      |

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|    |                                    |                             |
|----|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 10 | Democratic Unionist Party          | Councillor Sarah Bunting    |
| 11 | Democratic Unionist Party          | Councillor Fred Cobain      |
| 12 | Democratic Unionist Party          | Councillor Jordan Doran     |
| 13 | Democratic Unionist Party          | Councillor Nicola Verner    |
| 14 | Alliance                           | Councillor Hedley Abernethy |
| 15 | Alliance                           | Councillor Christine Bower  |
| 16 | Alliance                           | Councillor Micky Murray     |
| 17 | Social Democratic and Labour Party | Councillor Séamas de Faoite |
| 18 | Social Democratic and Labour Party | Councillor Gary McKeown     |
| 19 | Green Party                        | Councillor Anthony Flynn    |
| 20 | Ulster Unionist Party              | Alderman Sonia Copeland     |

**Licensing Committee**

|    |  |                                  |
|----|--|----------------------------------|
| 1  | <b>Chairperson</b><br>Alliance         | Councillor Tara Brooks           |
| 2  | <b>Deputy Chairperson</b><br>Sinn Féin | Councillor Conor McKay           |
| 3  | Sinn Féin                              | Councillor Brónach Anglin        |
| 4  | Sinn Féin                              | Councillor Nichola Bradley       |
| 5  | Sinn Féin                              | Councillor Micheal Donnelly      |
| 6  | Sinn Féin                              | Councillor Pádraig Donnelly      |
| 7  | Sinn Féin                              | Councillor Siobhán McCallin      |
| 8  | Sinn Féin                              | Councillor Caoimhín McCann       |
| 9  | Democratic Unionist Party              | Councillor Ruth Brooks           |
| 10 | Democratic Unionist Party              | Councillor Davy Douglas          |
| 11 | Democratic Unionist Party              | Councillor Bradley Ferguson      |
| 12 | Democratic Unionist Party              | Councillor Tracy Kelly           |
| 13 | Alliance                               | Councillor Hedley Abernethy      |
| 14 | Alliance                               | Councillor Emmet McDonough-Brown |
| 15 | Social Democratic and Labour Party     | Councillor Séamas de Faoite      |
| 16 | Social Democratic and Labour Party     | Councillor Gary McKeown          |
| 17 | Green Party                            | Councillor Brian Smyth           |
| 18 | Ulster Unionist Party                  | Alderman Jim Rodgers             |
| 19 | Traditional Unionist Voice             | Councillor Ron McDowell          |
| 20 | Independent                            | Councillor Paul McCusker         |

**Planning Committee**

|    |  |                             |
|----|--|-----------------------------|
| 1  | <b>Chairperson</b><br>Sinn Féin        | Councillor Ryan Murphy      |
| 2  | <b>Deputy Chairperson</b><br>Sinn Féin | Councillor Natasha Brennan  |
| 3  | Sinn Féin                              | Councillor Brónach Anglin   |
| 4  | Sinn Féin                              | Councillor Arder Carson     |
| 5  | Sinn Féin                              | Councillor Matt Garrett     |
| 6  | Sinn Féin                              | Councillor Áine McCabe      |
| 7  | Sinn Féin                              | Councillor Caoimhín McCann  |
| 8  | Sinn Féin                              | Councillor JJ Magee         |
| 9  | Democratic Unionist Party              | Alderman James Lawlor       |
| 10 | Democratic Unionist Party              | Alderman Dean McCullough    |
| 11 | Democratic Unionist Party              | Councillor Jordan Doran     |
| 12 | Democratic Unionist Party              | Councillor Davy Douglas     |
| 13 | Democratic Unionist Party              | Councillor Sammy Douglas    |
| 14 | Alliance                               | Councillor Hedley Abernethy |
| 15 | Alliance                               | Councillor David Bell       |

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|    |                                    |                         |
|----|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 16 | Alliance                           | Councillor Tara Brooks  |
| 17 | Independent                        | Councillor Eric Hanvey  |
| 18 | Social Democratic and Labour Party | Councillor Carl Whyte   |
| 19 | Green Party                        | Councillor Áine Groogan |
| 20 | Ulster Unionist Party              | Alderman Jim Rodgers    |

**Climate and City Resilience Committee**

|    |  |                             |
|----|--|-----------------------------|
| 1  | <b>Chairperson</b><br>Social Democratic and Labour Party | Councillor Dónal Lyons      |
| 2  | <b>Deputy Chairperson</b><br>Sinn Féin                   | Councillor Brónach Anglin   |
| 3  | Sinn Féin  | Councillor Micheal Donnelly |
| 4  | Sinn Féin  | Councillor Pádraig Donnelly |
| 5  | Sinn Féin  | Councillor JJ Magee         |
| 6  | Sinn Féin  | Councillor Caoimhín McCann  |
| 7  | Sinn Féin  | Councillor Luke Meenehan    |
| 8  | Sinn Féin  | Councillor Séanna Walsh     |
| 9  | Democratic Unionist Party                                | Alderman Frank McCoubrey    |
| 10 | Democratic Unionist Party                                | Alderman Dean McCullough    |
| 11 | Democratic Unionist Party                                | Councillor Bradley Ferguson |
| 12 | Democratic Unionist Party                                | Councillor Andrew McCormick |
| 13 | Alliance   | Councillor David Bell       |
| 14 | Alliance   | Councillor Tara Brooks      |
| 15 | Alliance   | Councillor Michael Long     |
| 16 | Social Democratic and Labour Party                       | Councillor Carl Whyte       |
| 17 | Green Party  | Councillor Áine Groogan     |
| 18 | Ulster Unionist Party                                    | Alderman Sonia Copeland     |
| 19 | People Before Profit Alliance                            | Councillor Michael Collins  |
| 20 | Independent  | Councillor Paul McCusker    |

**Standards and Business Committee**

|    |   |                                  |
|----|---|----------------------------------|
| 1  | <b>Chairperson</b><br>Democratic Unionist Party                 | Alderman James Lawlor            |
| 2  | <b>Deputy Chairperson</b><br>Social Democratic and Labour Party | Councillor Gary McKeown          |
| 3  | Sinn Féin   | Councillor Nichola Bradley       |
| 4  | Sinn Féin   | Councillor Arder Carson          |
| 5  | Sinn Féin   | Councillor Pádraig Donnelly      |
| 6  | Sinn Féin   | Councillor Siobhán McCallin      |
| 7  | Sinn Féin   | Councillor Ronan McLaughlin      |
| 8  | Sinn Féin   | Councillor JJ Magee              |
| 9  | Sinn Féin   | Councillor Ryan Murphy           |
| 10 | Sinn Féin   | Councillor Séanna Walsh          |
| 11 | Democratic Unionist Party                                       | Alderman Dean McCullough         |
| 12 | Democratic Unionist Party                                       | Councillor Davy Douglas          |
| 13 | Democratic Unionist Party                                       | Councillor Bradley Ferguson      |
| 14 | Democratic Unionist Party                                       | Councillor Tracy Kelly           |
| 15 | Alliance  | Councillor Christine Bower       |
| 16 | Alliance  | Councillor Michael Long          |
| 17 | Alliance  | Councillor Fiona McAteer         |
| 18 | Alliance  | Councillor Emmet McDonough-Brown |
| 19 | Green Party   | Councillor Anthony Flynn         |
| 20 | Traditional Unionist Voice                                      | Councillor Ron McDowell          |

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

|    |  |                             |
|----|--|-----------------------------|
| 1  | <b>Chairperson</b><br>Alliance         | Councillor Fiona McAteer    |
| 2  | <b>Deputy Chairperson</b><br>Sinn Féin | Councillor Áine McCabe      |
| 3  | Sinn Féin                              | Councillor Natasha Brennan  |
| 4  | Sinn Féin                              | Councillor Claire Canavan   |
| 5  | Sinn Féin                              | Councillor Caoimhín McCann  |
| 6  | Sinn Féin                              | Councillor Conor McKay      |
| 7  | Sinn Féin                              | Councillor Tomás Ó Néill    |
| 8  | Sinn Féin                              | Councillor Séanna Walsh     |
| 9  | Democratic Unionist Party              | Alderman Frank McCoubrey    |
| 10 | Democratic Unionist Party              | Councillor Ruth Brooks      |
| 11 | Democratic Unionist Party              | Councillor Bradley Ferguson |
| 12 | Democratic Unionist Party              | Councillor Andrew McCormick |
| 13 | Alliance                               | Councillor Christine Bower  |
| 14 | Independent                            | Councillor Eric Hanvey      |
| 15 | Social Democratic and Labour Party     | Councillor Carl Whyte       |
| 16 | Green Party                            | Councillor Anthony Flynn    |
| 17 | Ulster Unionist Party                  | Alderman Sonia Copeland     |
| 18 | People Before Profit Alliance          | Councillor Michael Collins  |
| 19 | Traditional Unionist Voice             | Councillor Ron McDowell     |
| 20 | Independent                            | Councillor Paul McCusker    |

**Policing and Community Safety Partnership Political Members**

**Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership**

Councillor Tara Brooks (Chairperson)  
Councillor Claire Canavan  
Councillor Séamas de Faoite  
Councillor Davy Douglas  
Councillor Joe Duffy  
Councillor JJ Magee  
Councillor Conor McKay  
Councillor Ian McLaughlin  
Councillor Sam Nelson

**North Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership**

Councillor Sam Nelson (Chairperson)  
Alderman Dean McCullough  
Councillor Nichola Bradley  
Councillor Fred Cobain  
Councillor Ron McDowell  
Councillor JJ Magee

**South Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership**

Councillor Tara Brooks (Chairperson)  
Councillor Natasha Brennan  
Councillor Sarah Bunting  
Councillor Pádraig Donnelly  
Councillor Conor McKay  
Councillor Gary McKeown

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**East Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership**

Councillor Séamas de Faoite (Chairperson)  
Councillor Ruth Brooks  
Councillor Pádraig Donnelly  
Councillor Davy Douglas  
Councillor Fiona McAteer  
Councillor Conor McKay

**West Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership**

Councillor Ian McLaughlin (Chairperson)  
Alderman Jim Rodgers  
Councillor David Bell  
Councillor Claire Canavan  
Councillor Micheal Donnelly  
Councillor Caoimhín McCann

The Council agreed to appoint the Members to the Council's Standing Committees and Community and Safety Partnerships for 2026/2027, as set out above.

**Reconsideration of a decision in respect of the Irish Language Policy**

The Council was provided with a copy of the legal opinion which was obtained in relation to the call-in of the Council decision of 1st October, 2025, to approve the draft Irish Language Policy.

The Council noted:

- the contents of the legal opinion;
- that the call-in was not considered to have merit on community impact grounds; and
- that the decision would now be implemented in accordance with Standing Order 48.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee**

Moved by Councillor I. McLaughlin,  
Seconded by Councillor McCallin,

“That the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd May, 2026, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.”

**Requests for Funding**

Moved by Councillor I. McLaughlin,  
Seconded by Alderman Lawlor,

“That the Council agrees that the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd May, 2026, under the above heading be amended to provide that the Committee agrees to fund the 47 discretionary funding support requests as outlined in the report and agrees that the funding,

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totalling £339,242, be allocated from the non-recurrent community capacity building monies included in the Growth Fund for 26/27”.

The following addition, proposed by Councillor McCallin, was agreed by the proposer:

“with a report to come back to the committee on up to £100,000 being allocated for dual language signage in the extended Gaeltacht area as identified in the Irish Language Policy.”

On a vote on the amendment standing in the name of Councillor I. McLaughlin, as amended by Councillor McCallin, thirty-seven Members voted for it, eighteen against, and with one no vote, it was accordingly declared carried.

**Minutes of the Language Strategy Working Group**

Moved by Councillor Walsh,  
Seconded by Councillor Ó Néill and

Resolved – That the Council agrees that the Irish Language Commissioner, Pól Deeds, be invited to attend the next meeting of the Working Group.

**Sunday Trading**

Moved by Alderman McCullough  
Seconded by Councillor Doran

“That the Council agrees that the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd May, 2026, under the above heading be rejected and, accordingly, the Council agrees not to designate the Belfast City Council area as a Holiday Resort designation to enable extended Sunday trading hours for larger retailers.”

On a vote, nineteen Members voted for amendment and 41 against and it was accordingly declared lost.

**Further Amendment**

Moved by Councillor Nelson  
Seconded by Councillor McDonough-Brown

“That the Council agrees that the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd May, 2026, under the above heading be rejected and accordingly agrees to the implementation of the in-principle Council decision from July 2025 and to designate the entire Belfast City Council area as a Holiday Resort designation under Article 6, paragraph (9) of the Shops Sunday (Sunday Trading) (Northern Ireland) Order 1997.”

On a vote, ten Members voted for the amendment, forty-nine against and with one no vote, it was accordingly declared lost.

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**Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme**

Moved by Councillor I. McLaughlin,  
Seconded by The High Sheriff (Alderman McCoubrey)

“That the Council agrees that the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd May, 2026, under the above heading, be amended to provide that a report be submitted to a future meeting seeking to allocate £50,000 from the growth fund for the tourism plan for the Greater Shankill area of the City.”

On a vote, sixteen Members voted for the amendment and thirty-nine against and it was accordingly declared lost.

**Outcome of the Judicial Review in relation to  
Animal Welfare Services and new Animal  
Welfare Legislation**

Moved by Councillor Flynn,  
Seconded by Smyth and

Resolved - “That the Council agrees that the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd May, 2026, under the above heading, be amended to provide that the Committee’s letter to the Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee includes that the Council has concerns that introducing additional animal welfare enforcement responsibilities, without providing adequate resources, risks undermining both existing enforcement activity and the successful implementation of new legislation and, moreover, cannot be improved through legislation alone. It requires properly resourced enforcement services capable of investigating complaints, tackling illegal breeding and protecting vulnerable animals.”

**External Funding for Pre-Accession Assistance**

Moved by Councillor McDowell,  
Seconded by Alderman McCullough,

“That the Council rejects the decision to write to write to the EU Commission and the British and Irish Governments regarding the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA).”

On a vote, seventeen Members voted for the amendment and forty voted against it and it was accordingly declared lost.

**Belfast Stories - Community Grants**

Moved by Councillor Maghie,  
Seconded by Councillor Murray,

“That the Council agrees that the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd May, 2026, under the above heading, be rejected

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and that accordingly the Council agrees to the recommendations as outlined in the report, namely, to:

- Award the recommended 5 creative project grants (up to £30,000) following completion of the assessment and moderation process;
- Note the 12 small grants up to £10,000 approved under delegated authority; and
- In light of the significant demand and high quality of submissions received, as outlined at 3.15, agrees to increase the fund for small grants utilising an additional allocation of £41,560 from the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) reserve to fund 4 additional projects.”

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

**Drumglass Park – SuDs Project**

Moved by Councillor McKeown  
Seconded by Councillor Lyons and

Resolved - “That the Council agrees that the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd May, 2026, under the above heading, be amended to require that NI Water would detail options for physical and programmatic elements, as discussed at the South Area Working Group, that they were prepared to include for the benefit of the community as part of the project, ahead of public consultation, and to engage with Council officers and organisations in the area, given that the project appeared to be advancing at pace.”

**Adoption of Minutes**

Subject to the foregoing amendments, the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd May, 2026, omitting matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee were thereupon approved and adopted.

**People and Communities Committee**

Moved by Councillor Maghie,  
Seconded by Councillor Murray

“That the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 12th May, 2026, be approved and adopted.”

**European City of Sport 2026 Programme**

Moved by Councillor Lyons,  
Seconded by Councillor de Faoite and

Resolved – “That the Council agrees that the decision of the People and Communities Committee of 12th May, 2026, under the above heading, be

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amended to also provide that letters are issued to the Home Office and to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, outlining the economic barrier faced by non-visa nationals who wish to travel from the Republic of Ireland to attend upcoming international cricket matches in Belfast (Ireland versus India and Ireland versus New Zealand) due to the Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) process.”

**Playground Accessibility – Update**

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

Resolved – “That a report be submitted to a future meeting, asking officers to carry out a scoping exercise across all play parks in the city, to aim to have accessible play facilities for children with additional needs in each play park; to consider building new play parks on sites which are not suitable for housing or pitches; to investigate how it could work with the Department for Communities and the Shared Island Fund; and the creation of an exemplary park in each quarter of the City, with accessible play park equipment for children with additional needs.”

**Pitch Partner and Facilities Management Agreements**

At the request of a Member, officers were requested to consider the use of Blanchflower Playing Fields by St. Matthew’s and Doyle Football Clubs within the report coming back to Committee.

**Dual Language Street Signs – Review of Data Survey Process**

A Member requested that, in addition to issuing surveys to individuals listed within streets on the electoral register, that surveys would also be issued also to dwellings where no residents were listed on the electoral register, with a report to be submitted to a future meeting, outlining any additional costs associated with such a decision.

The City Solicitor provided legal advice to the Council in respect of the issue and confirmed that a report considering the Dual Language Street Sign policy was to be submitted to a future meeting of the People and Communities Committee, and that the issues raised would be included within it.

**Requests for the Use of Parks**

At the request of a Member, officers were requested to bring an update on the Social Value Levy Fund to the June meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

**Dog Fouling Programme**

At the request of a Member, officers were requested to bring back information on the number of lamppost bins in storage and the plan for their installation across residential areas.

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**Dual Language Street Signs – University Street and  
Streets Not Reaching 15 Per Cent Threshold**

Moved by Councillor Bunting  
Seconded by Councillor Kelly,

“That the Council agrees that the decision of the People and Communities Committee of 12th May, 2026, under the above heading, be rejected and accordingly that the Council agrees that the dual language street sign applications for University Street, Colinvale, Friendly Way, McAuley Street, Mill Pond Glen, Shaftesbury Avenue and Stewart Street not be erected, and as such, the applications remain closed.”

On a vote, twenty-six Members voted for the amendment and thirty-one against and it was accordingly declared lost.

**Adoption of Minutes**

Subject to the foregoing amendments, the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 12th May, 2026, were thereupon approved and adopted.

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee**

Moved by Councillor Duffy,  
Seconded by Councillor Smyth and

Resolved – That the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 13th and 27th May, 2026, be approved and adopted.

**Licensing Committee**

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

Resolved – That the minutes of the proceedings of the Licensing Committee of 20th May 2026, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

**Planning Committee**

Moved by Councillor Murphy,  
Seconded by S. Douglas and

Resolved – That the minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee of 19th May 2026, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

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**Climate and City Resilience Committee**

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

Resolved – That the minutes of the proceedings of the Climate and City Resilience Committee of 14th May, 2026, be approved and adopted.

**Standards and Business Committee**

Moved by Alderman Lawlor,  
Seconded by Councillor Smyth and

Resolved – That the minutes of the proceedings of the Standards and Business Committee of 26th May, 2026, be approved and adopted.

Lord Mayor  
Chairperson

## Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 19th June, 2026

### HYBRID MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

- Members present: Councillor Carson (Deputy Chairperson);  
Councillors Beattie, Black, Brennan, Bunting, Cobain,  
Doran, de Faoite, Garrett, Long, Lyons, Maghie,  
R. McLaughlin Murphy, Murray, Nelson, Ó Néill,  
Smyth and Verner.
- 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. 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. S. Leonard, Director of Resources, Fleet, Transport and  
Open Spaces and Street Scene;  
Ms. C. Sheridan, Director of Human Resources;  
Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;  
Ms. D. Murtagh, Divisional Solicitor;  
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 the Chairperson, Councillor I. McLaughlin.

### Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 22nd May, 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 June, subject to the following amendments:

- **Requests for Funding** - The Council agreed that the decision under the above heading be amended to provide that the Committee agrees to fund the 47 discretionary funding support requests as outlined in the report and agreed that the funding, totalling £339,242, be allocated from the non-recurrent community capacity building monies included in the

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Growth Fund for 26/27, with a report to come back to the committee on up to £100,000 being allocated for dual language signage in the extended Gaeltacht area as identified in the Irish Language Policy;

- **Minutes of the Language Strategy Working Group** - The Council agreed that the Irish Language Commissioner, Pól Deeds, be invited to attend the next meeting of the Working Group;
- **Outcome of the Judicial Review in relation to Animal Welfare Services and new Animal Welfare Legislation** - The Council agreed that the decision be amended to provide that the Committee's letter to the Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee included that the Council had concerns that introducing additional animal welfare enforcement responsibilities, without providing adequate resources, risks undermining both existing enforcement activity and the successful implementation of new legislation and, moreover, could not be improved through legislation alone. It required properly resourced enforcement services capable of investigating complaints, tackling illegal breeding and protecting vulnerable animals;
- **Belfast Stories - Community Grants** - The Council agreed that the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 22nd May, 2026, under the above heading, be rejected and that accordingly the Council agrees to the recommendations as outlined in the report, namely, to:
  - Award the recommended 5 creative project grants (up to £30,000) following completion of the assessment and moderation process;
  - Note the 12 small grants up to £10,000 approved under delegated authority; and
  - In light of the significant demand and high quality of submissions received, as outlined at 3.15, agrees to increase the fund for small grants utilising an additional allocation of £41,560 from the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) reserve to fund 4 additional projects; and
  -
- **Drumglass Park – SuDs Project** - The Council agreed that the decision be amended to require that NI Water would detail options for physical and programmatic elements, as discussed at the South Area Working Group, that they were prepared to include for the benefit of the community as part of the project, ahead of public consultation, and to engage with Council officers and organisations in the area, given that the project appeared to be advancing at pace.

**Declarations of Interest**

In relation to item 2.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.

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Regarding item 2.c) PEACEPLUS Distillery Street Regeneration Project, Councillor Long declared an interest, in that his wife was the Justice Minister and left the meeting whilst the item was under consideration.

During discussion of item 3.a) Notice of Motion - Pilot Drug and Pill testing at events – Update, as the Public Prosecution Service was raised, Councillor Long also declared an interest, in that his wife was the Justice Minister and left the meeting whilst the item was under consideration.

**Restricted Items**

**The information contained in the reports associated with the following eight 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 eight 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.

**2025-26 Quarter 4 Finance Report**

The Director of Finance presented the Quarter 4 financial position for 2025/26, together with the Treasury Management report for consideration.

The Committee:

- Noted the report and agreed the year end position (Appendix 1);
- agreed to the recommended realignment of £2m from the VR reserve to the APP Losses reserve;
- Agreed to the recommended realignment of year end balances;
- Noted the Quarter 4 Treasury Management report (Appendix 3); and
- Noted that future Finance year-end reports submitted to the Committee would outline regular overspends and comparisons to initial budget allocations.

**Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann**

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

The Strategic Director of Place and Economy and the Senior Manager, Culture and Tourism provided an update on the planning to support the hosting of Fleadh Cheoil na

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hÉireann in Belfast in August 2026 and highlighted that a Briefing Pack would be available for Members soon.

During discussion, Members raised a number of queries in relation to public transport, website information, events list for Members, the availability of private car parks, interim use of vacant market space, safety messaging, park and ride wayfinding, the potential to expand the shuttle bus for the Fall's Park area, and a post Fleadh volunteer event.

In response to a Member's question on the impact pedestrianisation of the City Centre would have on air quality, the Director advised that he would discuss the potential of monitoring air quality with the Environmental Health Unit.

During further discussion, the City Solicitor outlined the legal advice in relation to the Major Events Order application.

**Proposal**

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

Resolved - That the Committee agrees that up to £250,000 be allocated for dressing locations along arterial routes for the Fleadh from specified reserves, and a report be submitted to the Committee on the detail of what was deliverable

Accordingly, the Committee:

1. Noted the contents of the report;
2. Agreed to seek Council agreement to delegate authority to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for urgent decisions in relation to the delivery of Fleadh which were not delegated to officers;
3. Approved expenditure for the provision of a temporary campsite at Falls Park, as outlined under 3.3 of the report;
4. Approved the extension and associated expenditure to Visit Belfast services or via direct contracting, as outlined under 3.5 and 3.10 of the report;
5. Noted the updates on:
  - Residents' parking and mitigating displacement
  - Park and Ride provision
  - Business engagement and toolkit
  - Major Events Order application
  - Event Management Plan
  - Opening ceremony arrangements
  - City dressing proposals;

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6. Encourage Member attendance at the opening ceremony and associated civic events;
7. Agreed that up to £250,000 be allocated for dressing locations along arterial routes for the Fleadh from specified reserves, and a report be prepared on the detail of what was deliverable; and
8. Noted that further updates would be provided on the issues which had been raised.

**PEACEPLUS Distillery Street Regeneration Project**

The Committee considered a report which outlined the proposed approach to SEUPB to submit a minor modification to the existing Distillery Street project.

**Proposal**

Moved by Councillor Black,  
Seconded by Councillor O'Neill and

Resolved - That the Committee agrees that the Project progressed, subject to further consultation with residents on the proposed minor modification to the existing Distillery Street project and agreed to write to the Department of Justice in the interim period to recommend further engagement with residents, once the project works commence.

Accordingly the Committee:

- Noted the update and agreed that the Project progressed, subject to further consultation with residents on the proposed minor modification to the existing Distillery Street project.
- Agreed to write to the Department of Justice in the interim period to recommend further engagement with residents, once the project works had commenced.

**Social Value Levy Fund Update - Stakeholder Engagement and Emerging Projects and Priorities**

The Director of Resources, Fleet and OSS provided an update on the Social Value Levy Fund collected from large-scale commercial events held within Council parks and open spaces and to outline the outcome of member and stakeholder engagement undertaken regarding the future use of the fund.

He summarised the engagement undertaken to date and highlighted the emerging themes, priorities and potential projects identified by stakeholders across the three event locations: Ormeau Park, Botanic Gardens and Boucher Road Playing Fields.

During discussion Members outlined the following additional projects for consideration: St. Brigids Walking Trail, crowd and audio barriers at Stockman's Lane,

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landscaping at Balmoral crossroads, together with potential alternative options for use of the Fund.

After discussion, the Committee:

- a) Noted the contents of the report and the extensive engagement undertaken with elected Members, local residents, community organisations, businesses and stakeholder groups;
- b) Noted the emerging priorities identified through the engagement process;
- c) Noted that officers would continue to develop and cost potential projects in consultation with stakeholders;
- d) Agreed that the fund was used to install Accessible Picnic areas in Musgrave Park and replace the existing planters in the Musgrave Park community garden with Eco planters (Total cost £18k);
- e) In terms of the other options identified through stakeholder engagement, noted that, once fully costed, officers would bring a further report back for members to consider and approve; and
- f) Agreed that an update report be submitted to the Committee in quarter three to include costings and details on the potential projects which had been identified by the Committee: St. Brigids Walking Trail, crowd and audio barriers at Stockman's Lane, landscaping at Balmoral crossroads, together with potential alternative options for use of the Fund.

### **Belfast Stories Update**

(Ms. W. Langham, Programme Director, Belfast Stories  
attended in connection with this item.)

The Programme Director, Belfast Stories, provided an update on: the addendum to the Outline Business Case (OBC) to develop a larger event space in Belfast Stories; the key findings following the Market Engagement Exercise (MEE) on the larger event space; and the Belfast Stories Programme.

### **Proposal**

Moved by Councillor de Faoite,  
Seconded by Councillor Smyth,

That the Committee agrees to defer consideration of the report to allow further work to be undertaken in relation to the operator model and demand for the enhanced studio events space.

### **Amendment**

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

That the Committee agrees not to proceed with the proposed user of the larger space in the Belfast Stories Scheme.

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On a vote, eleven Members voted for the amendment and eight against and it was declared carried. The amendment was put to the Committee as the substantive motion and agreed.

The Committee:

- Noted the contents of the report; and
- Agreed not to proceed with the proposed user of the larger space in the Belfast Stories Scheme.

**Minutes of the Installations - City Hall/City Hall  
Grounds Working Group of 13th May, 2026**

The Committee reviewed the Minutes of the Installations City Hall/City Hall Grounds Group, together with the illustration of the final design of the Health and Social Care stained glass window.

After discussion, the Committee:

- approved and adopted the minutes of the Installations City Hall/City Hall Grounds Group of 13th May, 2026;
- agreed to the final design of the Health and Social Care stained glass window, as outlined in the appendix; and
- noted that an update on the Fire Service stained glass window would be provided in due course.

**Round the World Clipper Race**

The Strategic Director of Place and Economy advised that a request had been received from Clipper Around the World Yacht Race regarding a proposal for Belfast to host a stopover in a future edition of the Clipper Round the World Yacht Race and outlined officer considerations regarding the request for Council financial support.

**Proposal**

Moved by Councillor Murray,  
Seconded by Councillor Long,

That the Committee agrees not to proceed with the potential involvement as host partner for the Race or the allocation of up to £100k.

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

The recommendations as outlined in the report were put to the Committee and agreed.

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Accordingly, the Committee:

- agreed to the potential involvement as host partner for the Race and the allocation of up to £100k, subject to independent assessment of the business case and commitment of funding from the relevant government department agency and Belfast Harbour at the required levels;
- noted that the approach to the festival programming and wrap around support would also be subject to further consideration following such confirmations and assessment of the business case; and
- noted that a week-long event was estimated to cost in the region of £600K.

**An Droichead - Appraisal of Financial Recovery Plan and Consideration of Any Stabilisation Support Request**

The Director of Finance provided an update on the request which had previously been received from An Droichead for a stabilisation grant to support essential childcare, community, cultural and Irish language services while it implemented a financial recovery and restructuring programme.

The Committee:

1. noted the findings of the review of An Droichead's 2024/25 audited accounts, together with the April 2026 and May 2026 management accounts and May 2026 recovery plan;
2. noted that the contents of the report in relation to the recovery plan;
3. agreed to provide one-off financial assistance of £100,000 from specified reserves on a restricted, time-limited and conditional basis, with phased drawdown and enhanced monitoring arrangements; and
4. agreed that officers should complete further due diligence, convene a meeting with other funders, and report back on any detailed funding proposal, including proposed terms, conditions, milestones and monitoring requirements, prior to any payment being released.

**Matters referred back from Council/Motions**

**Notice of Motion - Pilot Drug and Pill testing at events – Update**

The Committee considered the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues**

- 1.1 **The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the work so far relating to the Notice of Motion relating to Pilot Drug and Pill Testing Facilities at Major Events and Festivals.**

The motion was proposed by Councillor Murray and seconded by Councillor Smyth at the Standards and Business Committee meeting held on the 24th March 2026 and subsequently referred to the People and Communities Committee for consideration. The motion was presented to the People and Communities Committee on 14 April 2026 and requested an internal report on the role of Belfast City Council in supporting and facilitating harm reduction services, including legal and regulatory considerations.

1.2 Since consideration of the motion, officers have engaged with the relevant statutory partners including representatives from the Department of Health (DoH), the Public Health Agency (PHA), the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and event stakeholders involved in planning for the 2026 festival and events season.

## 2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- i. Note the contents of this report and the feedback received from statutory partners regarding the legal, regulatory and operational considerations associated with drug and pill testing facilities at events and festivals;
- ii. Note the ongoing work being undertaken by the Department of Health, Public Health Agency and PSNI in relation to harm reduction, public health messaging and event planning; and
- iii. Agree that officers continue to engage with relevant statutory agencies and monitor developments elsewhere within the UK and Ireland. Should there be any future policy developments, pilot programmes or legislative changes which may impact on Belfast City Council's role in this area a report will be brought back into committee.

## 3.0 Main Report

### Background

3.0 Members will recall that the Notice of Motion requested Council support for the introduction of pilot drug and pill testing facilities at major events and festivals and sought consideration of the role Belfast City Council could play in supporting such harm reduction initiatives. Officers have subsequently sought advice from relevant statutory partners to better understand the legal framework, operational

requirements and policy considerations associated with such testing services.

### Legal and Regulatory Considerations

- 3.2 The Department of Health has advised that drug and pill testing services involve significant legal and regulatory considerations under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. Any organisation undertaking testing of controlled substances would require the appropriate licences and approvals to possess, transport, analyse and dispose of controlled drugs.
- 3.3 In Great Britain, such licences are issued by the Home Office. In Northern Ireland, responsibility would fall to the Department of Health's Medicines Regulatory Group.
- 3.4 The Department has advised that no formal application for such a licence has been received to date in Northern Ireland. Should a provider seek to establish an on-site testing facility, a range of issues would require consideration, including:
- Site security arrangements;
  - Testing methodologies and governance arrangements;
  - Safety and welfare considerations for staff and service users;
  - Storage, handling and transportation of substances;
  - Disposal and destruction procedures;
  - Compliance with licensing requirements and controlled drug legislation.
- 3.5 The Department has advised that any proposal would represent a novel application and would require detailed assessment and engagement before any licensing arrangements could be considered.

### Policy and Funding Considerations

- 3.6 The Department of Health has advised that there is currently no central government funding programme available to support drug testing facilities at festivals and events.
- 3.7 Whilst examples of on-site testing facilities exist elsewhere in the United Kingdom, these are generally associated with large-scale or multi-day festivals and operate within differing legal and policy frameworks. The Department has further advised that the current Northern Ireland Substance Use Strategy, Preventing Harm, Empowering Recovery, does not contain actions relating to the introduction of festival-based drug testing services. Any future policy proposal to introduce such services would presumably require consideration at Executive level.

**Existing and Enhanced Harm Reduction and Public Health Measures**

- 3.9 The Committee should note that the Council, Department of Health, Public Health Agency and PSNI are already working collaboratively in preparation for the forthcoming festival season. A significant change will be to include specific drug and alcohol mitigation clauses in the site license between Council and the event promoters. Such clauses will give Council and its supporting partners an opportunity to have early sight of mitigation and medical plans. The PSNI and the PHA have already agreed to appraise such plans in partnership with Council when they are received and provide recommendations as required. Other measures include:
- Increased visibility of drug amnesty bins throughout concert venues;
  - Increased public health messaging and awareness campaigns;
  - Information sharing between relevant agencies;
  - Cross-border engagement with counterparts in Ireland to support aligned messaging and harm reduction approaches;
  - Ongoing monitoring of emerging substances and trends.
- 3.10 The Department of Health has also advised that where concerns arise regarding specific substances, testing can currently be undertaken through existing arrangements involving the PSNI and Forensic Services Northern Ireland, with indicative turnaround times of approximately 48 hours. Increased visibility of the drug amnesty bins will provide better opportunity to support this.

**Belfast City Council Role**

- 3.11 While Belfast City Council has a role in facilitating events and working with partners to promote public safety and wellbeing, responsibility for drug testing services, controlled drug licensing, public health policy and substance misuse strategy rests primarily with central government departments and statutory agencies.
- 3.12 At present, there is no legislative framework, funding mechanism or operational model in place that would enable Belfast City Council to establish or directly deliver drug and pill testing facilities at events.
- 3.13 Officers will continue to engage with relevant partners and monitor developments in legislation, policy and best practice.

**3.14 Members should note that responsibility for drug testing services, licensing and substance misuse policy rests primarily with the Department of Health and other statutory agencies.**

**4.0 Key Issues**

**Financial and Resource Implications**

**4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report at this stage.**

**Any future proposal involving pilot testing facilities would require detailed consideration of resource requirements, governance arrangements, licensing obligations and funding sources.**

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

**4.2 There are no Equality, Good Relations or Rural Needs implications associated with this report at this stage.”**

Durind discussion, a range of suggestions were put forward regarding the legal, regulatory and operational considerations associated with drug and pill testing facilities at events and festivals.

The Committee agreed:

- To request a formal paper from the Department of Health on what would be required to issue a licence in Northern Ireland;
- To request that the Stormont Executive include drug testing in the next update of: Preventing Harm, Empowering Recovery;
- That the Council convene a roundtable with relevant stakeholders such as the Department of Health, Public Health Agencies, PSNI, Universities, Promoters and an experienced provider and potential delivery partner, such as the Loop, to which a nominee from each party would be invited to attend;
- That the Council identifies a pilot event for 2027 and designs an operational model based on best practice and research and works in partnership with others immediately, so that Belfast is prepared for the moment that licensing was enabled; and
- To write to the Prosecution Service and the Attorney General to request that the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 is reviewed in relation to a public interest test on the transportation of material for rapid drug testing from sites to a licensee holder to allow the rapid testing to take place.

**Notice of Motion - Strengthening Disability  
Inclusion and Accessibility across the Council**

The Committee was advised that, at the meeting of the Standards and Business Committee held on 26th May 2026, the following motion, which was proposed by Councillor Ruth Brooks and seconded by Councillor Nicola Verner, was referred to the Committee for consideration:

***Strengthening Disability Inclusion and Accessibility across Council***

***“This Council agrees that:***

- 1. Disability inclusion and accessibility should move towards a dedicated, streamlined corporate function, led by a senior officer and team with clear responsibility for coordinating and delivering this work across the organisation. A report will be brought forward setting out the structure, staffing, resources and reporting lines, and a timescale required, to establish that dedicated function and how it will streamline delivery across the organisation.***
- 2. The Disability Strategy will be brought to committee within three months, with a revised Action Plan to follow, with clear and ambitious actions, responsible officers, cross-departmental responsibilities, timescales and how progress will be monitored and reported.***
- 3. The Accessibility Roadmap 2035 is brought forward as soon as possible, setting out the lead officer or officers for delivery, required resources, key milestones, engagement with relevant Executive departments and how people with disabilities and relevant organisations will be involved from the beginning.***
- 4. More focused reports are brought to each relevant committee, allowing members to be given timely information on progress to improve accessibility and inclusion across the city, and the delivery against the Action Plan and Accessibility Roadmap 2035.”***

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 Motions - 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.

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 50, 176, 337, 393, 402, 420, 446;
- Agreed that Motion 501 - Procedures of the Irish Street Sign Consultation, would remain open; and
- Noted that there would be a review of the Notice of Motion process as part of phase one of the governance review and a report would be submitted for consideration in August.

### **Correspondence Received – Ulster University Job Cuts Responses**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 5th May 2026, Belfast City Council passed the following motion which had been proposed by Councillor Michael Collins and seconded by Councillor Anthony Flynn:

***“This Council:***

- ***expresses deep concern at the announcement of up to 450 redundancies at the University of Ulster (UU);***
- ***stands in solidarity with workers at UU in campuses in Belfast and across the north against these job 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.”***

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It was reported that, subsequently, Democratic Services wrote to the Department from the Economy and the Ulster University on the issues which had been raised, and responses had been received at [Appendix 1](#) and [Appendix 2](#) of the report.

The Committee considered the responses, together with the request from the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Bartholomew, to attend a future meeting of the Committee to discuss how the University and Members could work together to safeguard the provision at all the Ulster University campuses, as outlined in Appendix 2.

The Committee:

- noted the correspondence as set out in the report: and
- agreed that representatives of Ulster University be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee to discuss how the University and Members could work together on the issue.

**Correspondence Received - Department for  
Infrastructure Belfast Region City Deal  
Response**

The Committee noted the [response](#) which had been received from the Minister for Infrastructure in relation to the concerns which had been raised regarding the Infrastructure Pillar update of the Belfast Region City Deal.

**Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues**

**Corporate Delivery Plan 2026/27**

The Committee agreed the draft contents of the [Corporate Delivery Plan](#) as the work planning and prioritisation document for the Council in the financial year 2026/ 27.

**City Innovation Update**

(Ms. B. Murphy, Innovation Broker, attended in connection with this item.)

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 Belfast Alleyways Transformation programme.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- 1. Approve Belfast City Council to commence work, on behalf of Belfast Region City Deal partners, on the**

design and delivery of the Belfast ACTs programme and its associated grants competition. This will include commissioning expert support.

2. To approve the submission of an application to the European Capital of Innovation Award 2027 promoting the Belfast innovation ecosystem and its commitment to inclusive growth.
3. Note the work packages and planned phases of the Alleyways transformation programme.

### **3.0 Main report**

#### **Belfast Region ACTs programme**

- 3.1 Belfast City Council, on behalf of Belfast Region City Deal partners, has submitted a business case proposal to the Department for the Economy to deliver the £9 million Belfast Region Advanced Wireless Connectivity Technologies (ACTs) programme.
- 3.2 This work builds on the success of the recent Belfast 5G Innovation Regions programme which, with £5.1 million of funding for the UK Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, supported five major ‘anchor’ projects including an energy and building management project within the Cecil Ward Building to support long term efficiencies. It also provided grant funding for 15 smaller projects with local companies that allowed them to utilise 5G connectivity to create efficiencies and transformation within their business.
- 3.3 Belfast Region ACTs proposes to maintain this momentum to run three waves of competitions that will provide grants of between £500,000 and £1.5 million to projects that have significant business, industrial or public service needs that could be solved through the innovative adoption of advanced wireless technologies. At the same time, the programme also seeks to stimulate significant investment by the UK’s Mobile Network Operators in business-ready public 5G networks across the Belfast region – which would generate opportunities for the region’s businesses in general. Feedback from the wireless industry and local industry has been extremely encouraging.
- 3.4 Subject to DfE business case approval and legal advice, both of which are expected imminently, Members are asked approve Belfast City Council commence work, on behalf of Belfast Region City Deal partners, on the design and delivery of the Belfast ACTs programme and its associated grants competition. This will include commissioning expert support to design and manage what is a complex technical programme, details of which are included in this month’s contract report.

**3.5 European Capital of Innovation Award 2027 application**

Supported by the European Innovation Council under Horizon Europe, the European Capital of Innovation Awards (also known as iCapital) honours city regions with strong collaborative innovation ecosystems. The competition is open to cities in EU Member States and countries associated to Horizon Europe. The iCapital city for 2026 is Grenoble, France. This year's competition opened on 5 May with submissions due (from city governments only) by 4 August 2026.

**3.6** Winners are selected following evaluations by panels of experts in early autumn. The winning city receives €1 million and two runners-up receive \$100,000 each. The process also allows participating cities to 'benchmark' themselves against their peers and shared criteria, while at the same time offering opportunities to promote themselves internationally as places to invest in innovation and to foster collaborations.

**3.7** Belfast City Council is currently engaging with partners on the Belfast submission. This will be framed around the strengths and uniqueness of the city's innovation ecosystem and its capacity to generate inclusive economic and social impact.

**3.8** Our 'ecosystem' constitutes the city's private, public and academic institutions, our residents and communities, our digital and data infrastructure, the supportive policy environment, programmes and initiatives that allow these elements to work together to maximise the opportunities. The core argument in the submission will be that Belfast is deliberately shaping this ecosystem towards inclusive growth. And that the city is doing so by building on the unique capacity and scale of our community and voluntary sector infrastructure. This approach builds on the recent *Belfast: Inclusive Futures* series.

**3.9** Given the submission deadline of 4 August, Members are asked to approve the submission of an application to the competition which will be framed in this context. This will also require a letter of support from the Lord Mayor.

**3.10 Bloomberg Philanthropies Mayors Challenge update**

Work is underway to design, in collaboration with Bloomberg Philanthropies, a two-year programme that will put in place a new long-term, financially sustainable, Belfast City Council 'Alleyway Service' that's responsive and supportive of the needs and ambitions of neighbourhoods across the city. The programme is expected to deliver the following key outputs by March 2028:

3.11

1. A detailed sustainability plan that identifies a costed model for how Belfast City Council will deliver a citywide alleyways programme over subsequent years once the Bloomberg funding ends. This will address such things as support for residents, council service re-design, the role of partners, financing, administration, future funding models, etc.
2. A Belfast City Council business case for onward delivery of the programme that may include costed proposals for the transformation of services, 'invest to save' propositions, models for new ways of working, etc.
3. 25 miles of transformed alleyways. The programme is not only about designing long-term solutions, it is also about learning how this can work in the real-world conditions by delivering 800 resident-led alley projects with residents.

3.12 To deliver these outputs the programme will have a number of inter-connected work packages.

1. Programme management

To put in place and manage all aspects of programme governance, delivery and co-ordination of work packages, including over-seeing risk, assurance, budget and reporting to Belfast City Council and Bloomberg Philanthropies as the main funder, to recruit and manage staff, commission technical and other support.

2. Data and Insights

Gathering the data and insights required to plan and evaluate the programme including the success of pilots, approaches, engagement with residents, service costs, impact, etc. This will generate evidence for the sustainability plan and any future 'invest to save' business case.

3. Resident mobilisation

A critical success factor for the programme is the mobilisation and continued involvement of residents over the long term. In the past, similar resident-led projects have managed to sustain resident motivation while other projects have failed. This work package will determine the best mix of support, incentives and approaches needed to inspire and maintain engagement and motivation over time.

**4. Stakeholders & Partner engagement**

While the Council will lead on the programme, long term success depends on multi-agency cooperation with organisations such as NIHE, the Department for Communities, the Department for Infrastructure, potential third-party funders and, most importantly, the local community and voluntary sector.

**5. Alleyway Transformation Resources**

There are a range of resources the programme will develop to support residents in their ambition. This may include resource hubs, materials, toolkits and guides, hands-on training, and micro-grants. These will be identified, developed and tested with residents over the life of the programme.

**6. Mobilisation and Delivery**

This is the 'on-the-ground' work of council officers, residents and partners in the delivery of the programme and its pilots. The Bloomberg funding will provide support for a temporary three-person programme team who will work with existing staff from City and Neighbourhoods.

**7. 'Future State' Delivery Model**

This is mapping the various existing council and partners services related to alleyways and developing a low cost, integrated approach that can support the alleyway programme.

**8. Learning & Evaluation**

An obligation to our funders is to ensure that the programme is measured and evaluated at each phase, with a emphasise on determining impact through, for example, a social return on investment model.

3.13 The programme has a number of discreet phases specified by Bloomberg's innovation process. Over the next six months the focus will be on the following:

- Establishing the programme governance
- Recruitment of the three-person team
- Ramp up stakeholders and community engagement and awareness
- Development of element of the alleyways support package for communities
- Delivery of a small number of interventions to inspire and mobilise neighbourhoods

- **Design of a scalable approach ahead of the introduction of a citywide approach.**

**Financial & Resource Implications**

- 3.14 Bloomberg Philanthropies will provide funding of approx. £900,000 for a two-year programme which includes funding for a Programme Manager and two staff.**

**Other expenditure has been identified within existing departmental budgets.**

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

- 3.15 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 sustainability of the Bloomberg Philanthropies Mayors’ Challenge Belfast Alleyways Transformation programme, community engagement, the pilot model, fly-tipping and vandalism, how the Council’s existing Alleyway Scheme could complement the Bloomberg scheme, and the issues with unadopted alleyways.

Several Members suggested the need for the identification of problematic entries and the required interventions, further information on the pilot initiatives, the plans for maintenance and long term sustainability; and potential recurrent funding.

After discussion, the Committee:

1. Approved Belfast City Council to commence work, on behalf of Belfast Region City Deal partners, on the design and delivery of the Belfast ACTs programme and its associated grants competition. This would include commissioning expert support.
2. Approved the submission of an application to the European Capital of Innovation Award 2027 promoting the Belfast innovation ecosystem and its commitment to inclusive growth;
3. Noted the work packages and planned phases of the Alleyways transformation programme and agreed that officers would proceed with the pilot phase; and
4. Agreed that a further report be submitted on both the Bloomberg Belfast Alleyway Transformation Scheme and the Council’s existing Alleyways Programme to include: the identification of problematic entries and the required interventions; the pilot initiatives; maintenance and long term sustainability; and recurrent funding.

## **Accessibility and Inclusion Update**

The Committee considered the following report:

### **“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues**

**1.1 To provide SP&R with an update on the legislative framework around disability and our strategic approach to accessibility. The eventual aim of the development of a strategic approach is to make the city more accessible to all D/deaf, disabled and neurodiverse people and to everyone who lives, works or visits Belfast, irrespective of their service access requirements. This will be a long-term strategy to place accessibility at the heart of how we design and deliver all our services.**

### **2.0 Recommendation**

**2.1 Members are asked to:**

- Note the update in this report; and
- Note that an updated version of the Disability Action Plan will be presented to SP&R Committee in August 2026 for the purposes of public consultation.

### **3.0 Main Report**

**3.1 Over one in four people in Belfast live with a disability. Disability impacts not only the individual but also members of their families, sometimes in a caring role. Now is the right time to develop a more strategic approach to accessibility. The impact of disability is different if you are young or old, having caring responsibilities or don't speak English as your first language. The need for a focus on accessibility isn't new, in the last decade it has come in from the margins as inequalities are better understood, with disabled people often highlighting the unequal opportunities that are afforded to them. Data provided from official sources such as the 2021 Census, with standardised definitions of disability as 'health impairment' are now set alongside social media, where global influencers, promote their disability as part of their identity, bringing voices to the label. Types of disability are often categorised into physical, sensory, hidden and intellectual, with legal definitions focusing on the impact.**

**Over the past decade there has been a shift in understanding from the medical model of disability to the social model, which in turn has increased public awareness of the barriers faced by D/deaf, disabled and neurodiverse people in participating in everyday life. There is a clear need for an ambitious strategy which will shift the emphasis from the medical model, where**

disability is viewed as a problem stemming from the individual, in sharp contrast the social model highlights the environmental barriers which exclude and discriminate. Any shift in public attitudes is challenging, and the strategic approach will need to be delivered over an adequate timeframe.

**3.2 Why do we need an accessibility strategy when we have a Disability Action Plan?**

Our Disability Action Plan, which is a legal requirement with an internal focus, and is overseen by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

Around 2018 Belfast City Council had addressed the limitations placed upon disability by the legal boundaries of the Disability Action Plan and shared our ambitions to develop a more strategic, external approach.

ECNI explained that due to legislation the Disability Action Plan and any strategy should be separated. Frustrations with the complexity of the legal framework contributed, in part, with the prominence of diversity initiatives focused on specific groups of people. A strategic approach to accessibility will also allow us to display civic leadership on the promotion of all of Belfast's citizens, working through an evidence-based approach.

Developing a strategic approach to what is currently called the 'Roadmap to an Accessible City', will build on existing council work and contributions to accessibility within the city, we will also review our current approaches and start new work where it is needed. The strategy will bring added value to initiatives being delivered throughout Departments and aim to harmonise approaches through the city, aiming to bring together best practice and working in partnership to identify where work still needs to be done. We will listen, learn and lead bringing human stories to the statistics.

**3.3 How does Belfast City Council currently promote accessibility?**

Disability inequalities and accessibility measures are mainstreamed, led by each Director within their own Departments. Outlined below are a range of actions delivered across Council, although it should be noted this is not an extensive list.

**1. Promoting accessibility through funding**

- Targeted grant initiatives, including 'The Sounds Atypical Music Grant Scheme', funded by Council and delivered by University of Atypical for Arts and

Disability. Schemes such as this are central to the UNESCO City of Music status, we are proud to offer some fantastic music-led grant schemes within the city.

- Funding initiatives like ‘Suitcases and Skies’ performed by adults with learning disabilities, coming together from groups across north, south, east and west Belfast. This was part of the Belfast Local Community Action Plan supported by Peaceplus, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body

## **2. Promoting accessibility through services**

- In April 2024 council commissioned an external consultant to carry out an audit of play value and accessibility at all council-maintained playgrounds. The scores allocated for each playground relate to existing features, types of play opportunities available and their accessibility for a range of age groups and abilities.
- The Play Value & Accessibility Audit (2024) now informs sites selection under PIP and is used as a design guide to help deliver more accessible playgrounds going forward.
- Council’s Play Equipment Supply Contract (2021-2026) allows us to procure equipment for use in playground improvement works. The supply contract will be retendered in the coming months and will include an additional five items of accessible equipment e.g. wheelchair accessible, swing, see-saw and trampolines, providing a wider palette of equipment to improve accessibility in playgrounds.
- Communication Boards, displaying symbols to help children with limited language skills express themselves, are currently being installed in all council-maintained playgrounds, work is expected to be complete by the November 2026.
- In 2020 council installed special needs swing-seats in all playgrounds with suitable swing frames. There are now support swing-seats in more than 50 council-maintained playgrounds across the city. Installation of support swing-seats will continue to be delivered under PIP.
- An Accessible Signage Working Group, comprised of council officers, consultants and representatives from Council’s Disability Advisory Panel was set up in January 2026 to design a fully accessible entrance sign for use in the Reconnected Belfast project (Waterworks and Alexandra Park). It is hoped this sign could be used as a template in other parks and open spaces.
- Capital funding has been secured to develop a new accessible, sensory play facility at Woodvale Park on

the site of the disused bowling green. It is envisaged that this project can be used as a pilot for other projects moving forward.

- Changing Places facilities have been agreed for Waterworks and Alexandra Park as part of the Reconnected Belfast project; a feasibility study is currently underway for another Changing Places facility in proximity to the Woodvale Park Sensory Garden site.
- Capital funding has been secured to improve accessibility at Musgrave Park Therapy Garden. Improvements include installation of wheelchair accessible equipment and a sensory trail; completion is due in June 2026.
- Accessible bin lifts and braille on bins
- RADAR keys
- Zoomobile, which is an accessible buggy that can carry one wheelchair user and four non-wheelchair users, or four non-wheelchair users.
- Designing routes in our parks for wheelchair accessibility
- ICC Belfast, Waterfront Hall and Ulster Hall were one of the first venues in Belfast and Northern Ireland to receive the Autism NI Impact Award.
- The venues also hold the Bronze Diversity Mark accreditation and are on track to achieving silver accreditation.
- City Hall, Belfast Castle, Belfast Zoo and Malone House are Autism Impact Award Champions and accredited as autism-accessible, welcoming environments.

**3. Promoting accessibility through Council led city-wide initiatives**

- The Belfast Promise includes commitments to make your business more inclusive for disabled people, noting ‘it is not only the right thing to do. It makes good business sense’.
- Our Inclusive Tourism initiative roles out in 2025 provides support for tourism businesses to help them become more inclusive. This was the first support of its kind in Northern Ireland. The funding, awarded as a voucher, could be used to improve the visitor experience in small, but practical, ways, through staff training and awareness raising, support with navigating websites or booking tickets, or to upgrade signage or marketing materials.

**4. Promoting accessibility through communications**

- Video relay services
- Continuing to improve the accessibility of the Council's website
- The role out of Makaton boards in play parks set out above
- Sign posting to other accessible service providers

**5. Promoting accessibility through strategic partnerships**

All our strategies have accessibility to promote inclusion embedded in them

- The Belfast Agenda
- Corporate Plan 2025-2028
- Local Development Plan
- Inclusive Growth Strategy
- Social Value Procurement Policy
- Resilience Strategy
- Belfast Region City Deal
- A Bolder Vision for Belfast
- Belfast Economic Strategy 2022-2030

**6. Promoting accessibility as an employer**

- Council holds the Silver Diversity Mark in recognition of our commitment to promoting equality and diversity within our workforce.
- Council provides reasonable adjustments through its recruitment and selection process and operate a Guaranteed Interview Scheme.
- Council holds the AAA\* Disability Positive accreditation from Employers for Disability NI in recognition of our employment-related disability good practice. Members of our Employee Resourcing team are accredited as 'Disability Positive'.
- Our ABLE staff network meets quarterly and is open to all council staff who consider themselves to have a disability; as well as carers, allies or supporters of people with disabilities.

**3.4 What is an 'Accessible City'?**

With such emphasis on accessibility being 'for everyone; the first steps in developing a strategic approach includes defining the problem you want to solve. We have explored the need for specific focus throughout opportunities including the Disability Advisory Group and International Day for Persons with Disabilities events. From the December 2025 event the evaluation showed:

- The diversity of disability with over twenty different types listed from attendees
- 63% of attendees had experienced a barrier which excluded them, a friend, or family member from accessing work or social life in Belfast.
- An average of 85% of attendees rated the event as found the event content, usefulness, rated the event highly or excellent.
- Twenty-four different reasons were listed displaying pride at Belfast's efforts for disability inclusion and accessibility. These included going beyond legislation and hearing lived experiences.
- There are knowledge gaps on disability inclusion and accessibility, including engaging with people with lived experience of disability, economic benefits of inclusion and ableism.
- Barriers being addressed through our departments include:
  - o Communication
  - o Attitudinal
  - o Physical/Architectural
  - o Technology
  - o Systemic/Policy

Defining what we mean by Belfast as an accessible city will be key to the success of the strategy through clear communication as well as establishing data baselines. If not defined 'accessibility' becomes a new buzzword for good customer service. Emphasising the impact of the process, the Centre for Ageing notes:

Accessibility can mean a variety of different things, from wheelchair access to comprehensive information. For the historic city of Chester, becoming an accessible city has been a careful, long-term process - with real rewards.

A common framework for definition is provided by the European Commission, who organizes the Access City Award, to reward EU cities that are prioritizing accessibility for persons with disabilities. Although Belfast was a past recipient of an award for the sensory garden at Musgrave Park, we are no longer eligible to enter. Nonetheless, the Access City Award provides a vision:

Accessibility is a master-key that opens the door to the city's services, buildings and spaces, so persons with disabilities can take the lead of their lives, live independently and fully participate in the community.

Cities are key actors to ensure accessibility, as they have a direct impact on our everyday life and needs as citizens. A city is accessible when persons with disabilities can, for instance:

- go around the streets and enjoy public areas, such as parks and playgrounds.
- get in public buildings like hospitals, town halls, libraries, and sports halls.
- get the bus, tram and metro to go to work or meet friends.
- communicate with the local administration in person, by phone or online.
- get information in ways that they can read and understand.

The Royal Town Planning Institute recognises the increasing lack of accessibility in sustainable design, with climate change becoming prevalent vulnerable people are being left behind. Transport is again listed as a key concern highlighting the role of barriers in excluding disabled people.

### 3.5 Next steps - how is the strategy being developed?

Legal and Civic Services will lead the overall development, delivery and monitoring of the accessibility strategy. This cannot be achieved without the co-operation from all departments. Collaboration between departments was key to the success of the International Day for Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) in 2025. A meeting of Directors nominees for the IDPD 2026 Planning Group will be held in the coming weeks.

Commitments towards accessibility are actively being delivered and the development of a strategy for changes in education, culture and service delivery must be done in tandem with business as usual.

As a response to the IPDD 2025, training with an Accessibility Consultant was organised and delivered to P&P and CNS. An output of this training has been the inclusion of new Accessibility requirements within the appointment of all integrated design teams on behalf of the council.

The new requirements will see the appointment of an Accessibility Consultant with a view to promoting inclusive design and access for disabled people and incorporate their recommendations. The Accessibility Consultant will be registered with the National Register of Access Consultants (NRAC) and should will undertake a review of the designs at each applicable design stage.

The aim is to ensure that capital projects delivered by the Council are providing inclusive design and access that exceeds the regulatory requirements and minimum standards. Council departments are working together to truly strive toward making Belfast a more inclusive and accessible city for all.

**Key 2026 milestones:**

- Autumn - Public consultation for the Disability Action Plan including external engagement on a strategic approach to accessibility with key stakeholders
- November: launch of Disability History Month on the theme ‘Disability, Politics and Democracy
- December: International Day for Persons with Disabilities event

These milestones align with the 2027-28 programme of actions reported to the Disability Working Group and further updates will be brought back to SP&R in due course.

Members are asked to note the contents of this report and that an updated Disability Action Plan to reflect the Council’s strategic ambitions will be presented to Committee at its meeting in August.

**3.6 Financial and Resource Implications**

Disability and accessibility, like all equality and good relations matters are mainstreamed throughout Council, meaning that the Director of each Departments is responsible for development actions within their remit. As the SRO for disability, City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services has oversight of the legislative framework for disability and accessibility as well as strategic direction.

Members will be aware that there is an ongoing service review in the Council’s Equality & Diversity Unit. This review has been focussed on ensuring there are sufficient resources to drive the Council’s ambitions in relation to accessibility and to better co-ordinate the work that is being undertaken across the Council.

The outcome of this review will be presented to Committee in the coming months.

### 3.7 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

As an employer, a civic leader and provider of goods, facilities and services Belfast City Council is bound by a legal framework around anti-discrimination and the promotion of equality and good relations. Our current approach satisfies the legal requirements, and the development of an accessibility strategy will display commitment as a civic leader representative of all our citizens.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations as outlined in the report.

### Good Jobs Charter Initial Consultation - Draft Response

The Committee was reminded that the Department for Economy was consulting on the nature of the Good Employment and the factors that were considered to form a good job, based on the [Carnegie Job Quality Measures](#), in order to help increase the number of good jobs in the economy.

It was reported that the [consultation survey](#) had a closing date of 31st July 2026.

The Committee:

- Noted the initial consultation on the characteristics and options for a Good Employment Charter and closing date of 31st July, 2026.
- Agreed the proposed [response](#) be submitted to the Department for Economy.

### Physical Programme and Asset Management

#### Physical Programme Update

The Committee:

#### **Capital Programme Stage Movements –**

- **Wilmont House H&S Works** - Noted that a satisfactory tender return had been received and that the Director of Finance had confirmed that the project was within the affordability limits of the Council and agreed that a maximum of up to £400,000 be allocated.
- **Fernhill House H&S Works** - 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 £350,000 be allocated.

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- **Open Spaces and Streetscene (OSS) Machinery Replacement Programme 2026/27** – Agreed that the project was moved to *Stage 3 – Committed* with a maximum allocation of up to £375,000.
- **IT Programme - Fleet Management System** - Agreed that the project be moved to *Stage 3 – Committed* as part of the overall IT Programme and held at Tier 0 – Scheme at Risk pending further development and a satisfactory tender return; and that necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate ‘framework’ arrangements) be initiated with a contract to be awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.
- **IT Programme - Pitch Booking System** - Agreed that the project be moved to *Stage 3 – Committed* as part of the overall IT Programme and held at Tier 0 – Scheme at Risk pending further development and a satisfactory tender return; and that necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate ‘framework’ arrangements) be initiated with a contract to be awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.
- **Staff Cycle Racks Installation** – Agreed that the project be moved to *Stage 3 – Committed* and held at Tier 0 – Scheme at Risk pending further development and a satisfactory tender return; and that necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate ‘framework’ arrangements) be initiated with a contract to be awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.
- **Historic Cemeteries - Friar’s Bush** - Agreed that ‘Friar’s Bush Graveyard’ was extracted from the overall scheme and taken forward as a stand-alone project at *Stage 2 – Uncommitted* on the Capital Programme to allow the business case and application to NHLF to be developed.
- **Depot Charging Scheme 2026/27** - Agreed that the project be added to the Capital Programme at *Stage 1 – Emerging* to allow a business case and funding application to be developed.
- **Belfast Castle** - Agreed that the programme of works be added to the Capital Programme at *Stage 1 – Emerging* to allow a business case to be developed on a phased basis.

**Project Update**

- **Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann –Supporting infrastructure works** - Agreed that required works at sites in support of the delivery of the Fleadh are progressed with a maximum allocation of up to £400,000.

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- **Local Community Ownership Fund** – Noted the update on the Expression of Interest process and that an update would be provided in the Autumn.

### **Asset Management**

The Committee:

- i. **Overflow Parking Area adjacent Cregagh Youth & Community Centre – New Licence** - approved a new licence to Irish Rugby Football Union (Ulster Branch) for their occasional use of the overflow parking area adjacent to Cregagh Youth & Community Centre;
- ii. **Duncrue Complex – Replacement Electricity Substation Lease** - approved a replacement electricity substation lease at Duncrue Complex; and
- iii. **Black Mountain Pathway, Ballygomartin Road – Proposed transfer of land from Woodland Trust** – approved, in principle, the proposed transfer of a small area of land from Woodland Trust to the Council.

### **Area Working Group Update**

The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting of the: South Belfast Area Working Group of 18th May; the West Belfast Area Working Group of 28th May; the North Belfast Area Working Group of 3rd June and East Belfast Area Working Group of 4th June.

### **Finance, Procurement and Performance**

#### **Audit and Risk Panel Annual Report to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee including Draft Annual Governance Statement**

The Committee:

- Noted the summary of the work of the Panel during 2025/26 as set out at Section 3 of the report;
- Approved the draft Annual Governance Statement for 2025/26 at [Appendix A](#), and particularly the disclosure of the significant governance issues contained in the statement; and
- Noted the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Risk Panel on 9th June 2026 at [Appendix B](#).

### **Contracts Update**

The Committee:

- Approved the public advertisement of tenders as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (**Table 1**);

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- Approved the modification of the contract as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (**Table 2**); and
- Noted the update to the council's Procurement Policy to align to the requirements of the Procurement Act 2023.

**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)<br>If Y name Committee & Date | External Funding (Y/N) |
|---|----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|--|-----------------------------|--|------------------------|
| Provision of Data Cabling Services  | Up to 3 years              | £350,000                | S McNicholl | To provide ongoing data cabling services to include ethernet / fibre / break fix /install and mounting of network & telephony equipment across multiple BCC sites. | N                           | N  | N                      |
| Annual Kitchen Extract Canopy Assessment/ Cleaning and Minor Remedial Repairs | Up to 5 years              | £250,000                | S Grimes    | Specialist service to ensure kitchens remain safe and compliant with statutory requirements.   | N                           | N  | N                      |
| Legionella Monitoring & Risk Management Programme                             | Up to 5 years              | £400,000                | S Grimes    | Specialist service to legionella monitoring checks across BCC sites in line with statutory requirements.   | N                           | N  | N                      |
| Annual Lift Maintenance Services and Minor Remedial Repairs                   | Up to 5 years              | £400,000                | S Grimes    | Specialist service to ensure lifts remain safe and compliant with statutory requirements.  | N                           | N  | N                      |

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| <b>Title of Tender</b>   | <b>Proposed Contract Duration</b> | <b>Est. Max Contract Value</b> | <b>SRO</b>  | <b>Short description of goods / services</b>  | <b>On published pipeline (Y/N)</b> | <b>Prior Committee approval (Y/N)<br/>If Y name Committee &amp; Date</b> | <b>External Funding (Y/N)</b> |
|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|---|------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Building Energy Management Systems (BEMS) MTC - callouts, repairs and planned maintenance. | Up to 5 years                     | £600,000                       | S Grimes    | Specialist service to ensure Council's BEMS is maintained and remains operational.  | N                                  | N  | N                             |
| MTC CCTV and Door Access and PA - callouts, repairs and planned maintenance                | Up to 4 years                     | £400,000                       | S Grimes    | Specialist service to ensure Council's CCTV and door access systems are maintained and remain operational.  | N                                  | N  | N                             |
| Subscription of Gartner Technical Professionals (GTP) for Digital Services                 | Up to 3 years                     | £150,000                       | S McNicholl | Digital Services requires this service to support the delivery of complex digital systems and strategic approaches. It provides independent technical guidance, reference architectures, and expert advice that helps teams reduce implementation risk, make informed design decisions, and avoid over reliance on suppliers, while building internal capability and supporting value for money outcomes. | N                                  | N  | N                             |

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| <b>Title of Tender</b>   | <b>Proposed Contract Duration</b> | <b>Est. Max Contract Value</b> | <b>SRO</b>   | <b>Short description of goods / services</b>  | <b>On published pipeline (Y/N)</b> | <b>Prior Committee approval (Y/N) If Y name Committee &amp; Date</b> | <b>External Funding (Y/N)</b> |
|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|---|------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Provision of Reservoir Safety Inspections and Reporting        | Up to 3 years                     | £55,085                        | S Leonard    | Council as asset owner has a responsibility to monitor the condition of reservoirs they own for the protection of the public and residents downstream of reservoir assets.  | N                                  | N  | N                             |
| Framework for press and media photography services             | Up to 4 years                     | £120,000                       | E McConville | Press photography services required to promote a wide range of council initiatives, services and decisions across each council term. These photos are required to be high quality for use by media outlets, with experience needed of working with VIPs in a political setting. | Y                                  | N  | N                             |
| Hardware support for Oracle Solaris servers (for NIHE hosting) | Up to 1 year                      | £33,077                        | P Gribben    | Essential hardware required to support Solaris servers for NIHE hosting.  | N                                  | N  | N                             |
| Catering services at Belfast Zoo                               | Up to 5 years                     | Income based contract          | K Forster    | Belfast City Council intends to provide a supplier to deliver seasonal catering services at Belfast Zoo, covering both summer and winter periods. The service will  | Y                                  | 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) |
|--|----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|---|-----------------------------|---|------------------------|
|  |                            |                         |             | provide high-quality food and beverage offerings to enhance the visitor experience.   |                             |   |                        |
| Provision of Technical Design Authority to deliver support for the Advanced Connectivity Technology Fund | Up to 36 months            | £300,000                | S McNicholl | To support the delivery of the £9m Advanced Connectivity Technology Fund on behalf of Belfast Region City Deal partners, Belfast City Council requires support in designing the scheme and providing technical advice. Funded through City Deal | N                           | N   | Y                      |

**Table 2: Modification to Contract**

| Title of Contract   | Approved Duration & Value          | Modification                    | SRO       | Description  | Supplier           |
|---|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------|--|--------------------|
| Provision of a facilities management service at the Mary Peters Track T1856 | Up to 92 months & £1.1m            | Additional 6 months and £80,000 | D Sales   | To allow sufficient time for further negotiations with ANI and come to an affordable outcome regarding the annual management fee.<br><br>Contract expired May 2026. 1 month being requested retrospectively. | Athletics NI (ANI) |
| Provision of Travel Services T2004  | Up to 5 years and 3 months & £475k | Additional 3 months             | T Wallace | An increase in duration for 3 months to align award of replacement contract with new   | Perk UK Ltd        |

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|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  | call off framework.<br>No impact to the original approved value as the contract is currently underspent. |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

**Commercial and Procurement Services**  
**Social Value Working Group Update**

The Committee was provided with an update on the reports which had been presented to the Social Policy Working Group on 2nd June, which included:

1. Social Value Delivery Report which sets out the delivery of social value outcomes via BCC tender competitions awarded in accordance with the Council's Social Value Procurement Policy; and
2. Draft Sustainable Procurement Policy and Strategy Document for Members consideration before proceeding with a public consultation exercise.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and associated appendices.

**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 3rd and 12th June, including:

***Presentations***

- Presentations were received from Artseka Shared Roots Programme and NICVA's Community Empower Programme, both contracted through Belfast's PeacePlus Local Action Plan Programmes. The Shared City Partnership noted the presentations and recommends to the Strategic Policy and Resources committee to note the presentations.

***Members Updates***

- Updates were received from the East Belfast Community and PSNI representatives and are noted in the minutes for members information.

***Minority Ethnic Integration and Inclusion Programme***

- The Shared City Partnership noted the report and agreed the approach outlined in the report and recommends that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee also note the contents of the report and agree the proposed approach detailed in the Shared City Partnership Minutes.

***Good Relations and Fleadh Programme***

- The Shared City Partnership noted the report and recommends that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee notes the contents of the report and agrees the alignment of resources within the report.

***Community Recovery Fund Update***

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

***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 & Transformation Thematic Update***

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

***Any Other Business***

- **Asylum Dispersal Open Call**  
Shared City Partnership noted that up to 12 projects will be funded through the Open Call each between £10 and £20K under delegated authority, letters of offer are being drafted, a further update will be provided at the next meeting and recommend that Strategy Policy and Resources also note this.
- The Chair of Shared City Partnership thanked the Rev Graeme Kennedy for his time and commitment to Shared City Partnership.

***Minutes of a Special Meeting of Shared City Partnership on 12th June 2026***

- Shared City Partnership noted a number of actions following the recent disorder in Belfast City and recommend that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee note the minutes and the key actions.

## **Diversity Action Plans**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

### **“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

1.1 To agree the budget and appropriate resources for the implementation of the Gender Action Plan (GAP) and LGBTQIA+ Action Plan year 3 activities.

### **2.0 Recommendations**

2.1 The Committee is asked to agree the proposed diversity action plans and associated year 3 costs.

### **3.0 Main report**

Our Equality and Diversity Action Plan outlines how we will promote equality and diversity in our ambitions to create a city in which people love to live, learn, invest, work and visit. It also contributes to our compliance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Actions are categorised under the following corporate plan priorities:

- Growing an inclusive economy
- Living here
- Cross cutting
- Organisational priorities

3.2 As part of the Equality and Diversity Action Plan the Council has committed to developing and delivering a Gender Action Plan, LGBT+ Action Plan and a Race Equality Action Plan. The three year Gender Action Plan and LGBTQIA+ Action Plan were approved at SP&R Committee in October 2024. Actions for Year 3 (2025/26) for both plans have been costed and are being presented to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for approval.

#### **Gender Action Plan (GAP)**

3.3 Gender inequalities are deeply embedded in our social, economic and cultural systems. There is overwhelming evidence that women disproportionately experience disadvantage and discrimination, a reflection of historical unaddressed inequality, but also that inequalities have been exacerbated by austerity, welfare reform and by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Statistics affirm the persistence of gendered inequalities, which continue to inhibit women's life opportunities in Northern Ireland. Men will benefit from gender equality as they too face gender-specific issues such

as lower life expectancy, bad health, lower education levels and are impacted negatively by rigid gender norms.

3.4 The GAP 24-27 was agreed following consultation with Women's Steering Group and the Women's Network Group. Achievements in 2025/26 include:

- Delivery of the annual International Women's Day event for staff in the City Hall
- Delivery of Mock Committees for all relevant officers
- Onus Domestic Violence Charter (employer award) retained Platinum level
- Onus Safe City Accreditation – retained
- Retention of the NI Gender Diversity Chartermark – Silver level (work continues towards Gold level)
- Funded and developed a programme of events for Women's Network Group – Choosing Confidence Workshop
- Funding provided for external IWD event
- Targeting of Employment and Upskilling Academies to women in low paid (female dominate) sectors including the provision of childcare
- Building an entrepreneurial mindset workshop
- Masterclass in Leading Meetings
- Confidence Training workshop
- Belfast Stories consultation workshop
- Staff networks coffee morning
- Good Relations event
- Domestic Abuse Awareness joint event with Proud
- European Week for Waste
- Reduction creative workshop
- Women in Leadership bitesize events
- Allyship and Bystander Interventions workshop, specifically for male colleagues and elected members, running as part of the international 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign.
- In-person workshop on Sexual Harassment and Bystander in the Workplace

3.5 Year 3 actions are set out in Appendix One. In addition to the financial resources required, the plan also identifies the role that individual business units and departments have in delivery of the plan. Chief Officers are asked to allocate the necessary resources to ensure delivery of the actions or ensure where appropriate, that actions are incorporated into existing projects and work plans.

### LGBTQIA+ Action Plan

3.6 The LGBTQIA+ Action Plan for 2024-27, was developed in collaboration with the staff network 'Proud' and this is also being presented, with costs for Year 3, for approval. Please see Appendix Two. The plan has been developed to ensure that our organisational culture and working environment allows staff to feel comfortable to be their whole selves at work and that policies and practices empower talent development at all levels and the removal of any form of discrimination. It also aims to increase the understanding of the wider workforce of issues facing the LGBTQIA+ communities.

3.7 Achievements in 2025/26 include:

- Fundraising bake sale
- Transgender Day of Remembrance
- Mental Health First Aid for Proud network members
- Network Planning Day
- Hosted the annual Transgender Day of Remembrance event in the City Hall.
- Continued promotion, visibility and growth of staff network
- Attended Stonewall's Networking Event
- Participation in Belfast Pride
- Network Planning Day
- The display of Rainbow and Trans flags and lighting up of City Hall.

### Disability Action Plan

3.8 Members will be aware that the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 ('DDA') Section 49 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons, and to the need to encourage participation by disabled persons in public life. Our current Plan runs, approved by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and reported on annually, runs from 2022 until 2025.

3.9 There are many 'live' actions still being delivered which fall under the Disability Action Plan 2022-25. Engagement with key stakeholder groups on the new Disability Action Plan also commenced in 2025. Central to this engagement is understanding the needs of disabled people in Belfast. This information will be combined with statistical data to develop an increased understanding of the actions Council can take, both strategically and operationally. The improvements being made will inform closer alignment of the statutory duties with the corporate planning cycle through establishing more

defined outcomes for all nine equality groups including disability.

- 3.10 An internal 'International Day for People with Disabilities' event was held on 3rd December 2026 at the City Hall which showcased lived experiences from people with disabilities and the work the Council is currently doing to make our services and facilities more accessible and inclusive.
- 3.11 During the last quarter of 2025/26, a draft Disability Action Plan 2026-2029 was developed. A new action measure has been added to the draft Disability Action Plan, highlighting a strategic and leadership commitment for the Council to commit to the planning, the design process and the implementation for Belfast to become an accessible city for people with disabilities residing, working or visiting Belfast.
- 3.12 Detail on all of the actions delivered as part of the Disability Action Plan, the Gender Action Plan and the LGBTQIA+ Action Plan are included in the annual report to the Equality Commission due in August 2026.

#### Race Equality Action Plan

- 3.13 Year 1 of the Race Equality Action Plan (REAP) was incorporated into the Corporate Delivery Plan and focused on foundational actions, with further planning to be undertaken in mid-2026 to agree actions for Year 2 and beyond. The Operational Equality Diversity Network (EDN) will be utilised to link with Departments and support delivery of actions, which will be monitored via the Corporate Delivery Plan. The networks will ensure that future actions are informed by knowledge of ongoing work programmes, resource availability and capacity to deliver.
- 3.14 The next phase of the action plan will include the following themes:
- Improving data for policy development and service quality
  - Reflecting a diverse city
  - Serving a diverse city
  - Supporting a diverse and equal labour market in Belfast
  - Building a safer city
  - Supporting full civic participation
  - Visibility, inclusion and vibrancy for minority cultures in the city
- 3.15 This approach will inform and support a structured public engagement process with minority ethnic and migrant communities, civil society organisations and service

providers. The findings from these steps will be used to inform the subsequent phases of the Race Equality Action Plan.

#### Financial & Resource Implications

- 3.16 The cost of delivery of the proposed Gender Action Plan year 3 activities is estimated at £37,500. The cost of delivery of the LGBTQIA+ Action Plan year 3 is estimated at £9,600. Both plans will be met from the existing Organisational Development budget.

The plan also identifies the role that individual business units and departments have in delivery of the plan.

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

- 3.17 The delivery of the Gender and the LGBT+ Action Plans will result in positive outcomes. The promotion of equality and diversity entails more than the elimination of discrimination, it requires proactive action. The actions contained within both plans will not only impact on internal operations but also have a positive impact externally on women and men and the LGBT+ community in our city.”

The Committee agreed the proposed diversity action plans and associated year 3 costs.

#### Operational Issues

##### Minutes of the Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum of 11th June

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum of 11th June, 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   |
|----------------------|-------------------|---|--------------|---|
| Voicing the Void     | 18 September 2026 | <b>Participating Celebration Event:</b> This event celebrates the achievements of participants in a BCC Recovery Fund-supported project. Throughout the programme, participants | Yes          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>ROOM HIRE OF £450</li><li>Any applicable additional charges</li></ul> |

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| NAME OF ORGANISATION      | FUNCTION DATE    | FUNCTION DESCRIPTION  | CRITERIA MET | CHARGES   |
|---------------------------|------------------|---|--------------|---|
|                           |                  | <p>completed an OCN Level 1 qualification in Storytelling and developed their own unique stories, showcasing their creativity, skills, and personal experiences.</p> <p>Numbers attending - 60</p>  |              |   |
| Corrymeela Community      | 8 October 2026   | <p><b>In The Midst of Trauma – A Collective Journey:</b><br/>Marking the end of a project exploring trauma, North and South of Ireland, funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and The Ireland Funds. It will aim to celebrate key accomplishments and share key learnings and recommendations through the dissemination of a report.</p> <p>Numbers attending - 100</p> | Yes          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ROOM HIRE OF £450</li> <li>• Any applicable additional charges</li> </ul> <p><i>With 20% charity deduction applied to final total</i></p>  |
| Cruse Bereavement Support | 13 December 2026 | <p><b>Light Up The Night – An Occasion to Remember:</b><br/>The event is designed to offer a space of comfort and reflection for all those who find Christmas a particularly difficult due to bereavement.</p> <p>Numbers attending - 400</p>   | Yes          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NO ROOM HIRE</li> <li>• Any applicable additional charges</li> </ul> <p><i>With 20% charity deduction applied to final total</i></p>       |
| Young Enterprise          | 22 April 2027    | <p><b>YEA27 – Young Enterprise NI Awards 2027:</b> Annual awards ceremony and celebration of the success of young local entrepreneurs</p> <p>Numbers attending - 300</p>  | Yes          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ROOM HIRE OF £1250</li> <li>• Any applicable additional charges</li> </ul> <p><i>With 20% charity deduction applied to final total</i></p> |

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**Request for Use of City Hall Grounds - Culture Night**

The Committee was advised that a request had been received from MayWe Events to deliver activity in the City Hall grounds as part of Culture Night 2026 on Friday, 18th September. It was reported that, due to the larger scale of activity involved it was deemed necessary to seek Committee approval for this event.

The Committee:

1. Authorised the use of City Hall grounds on 18th September, 2026;  
and
2. Authorised the activity to take place on the basis of submission of an event management plan and risk assessment to ensure delivery of a safe public events.

**Minutes of the Social Policy  
Working Group of 2nd June, 2026**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the Social Policy Working Group of 2nd June, 2026.

**Minutes of the Language Working  
Group of 8th June, 2026**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the Language Working Group of 8th June, 2026.

Chairperson

## People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 23rd June, 2026

### MEETING OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

- Members present: Councillor Maghie (Chairperson);  
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Abernethy);  
Alderman Copeland; and  
Councillors Beattie, Black, Bower, Bradley,  
R. Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Cobain,  
de Faoite, M. Donnelly, Doran, Flynn, Garrett,  
Magee, Murray, McKeown and Verner.
- In attendance: Mr. D. Sales, Strategic Director of City and  
Neighbourhood Services;  
Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;  
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**

No apologies were received.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 12th May 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 June, subject to the following amendments:

- That the minute under the heading 'European City of Sport 2026 Programme' was amended to provide that letters be issued to the Home Office and to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland outlining the economic barriers faced by non-visa nationals travelling from the Republic of Ireland to Belfast to attend the international cricket matches due to the Electronic Travel Authorisation process;
- That the minute under the heading 'Playground Accessibility – Update' was amended to reflect that a report be submitted to a future meeting requesting that officers carry out a scoping exercise across all play parks in the city to aim to have accessible play facilities for children with additional needs in each play park; to consider building new play parks on sites which are not suitable for housing or pitches; to investigate how it could work with the Department for Communities and the Shared Island Fund; and the creation of an exemplary park in each quarter of the City, with accessible play park equipment for children with additional needs;

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- That the minute under the heading 'Pitch Partner and Facilities Management Agreements' was amended to provide that officers would consider the feasibility that Blanchflower Playing Fields be used by St. Matthew's and Doyle football clubs within the report to come back to the Committee;
- That the minute under the heading 'Requests for the Use of Parks' was amended to reflect that a report providing an update on the Social Value Levy Fund be submitted to the June meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee;
- That the minute under the heading 'Dog Fouling Programme – Update' was amended to reflect that information be provided to the Committee on the number of lamppost bins in storage and the plans for their installation across residential areas; and
- That the minute under the heading 'Dual Language Street Signs – Review of Data Survey Process' was amended to reflect that the City Solicitor had advised that a report would be submitted to a future meeting examining the Dual Language Street Signs Policy.

**Declaration of Interest**

In respect of the items 'Proposal for RAPID Drugs' Disposal Bin - Ormeau Park' and 'Update on The Tobacco and Vapes Act 2026', Councillor McKeown declared interests in that his employer was associated with the items. He retired from the meeting whilst the item 'Update on The Tobacco and Vapes Act 2026' was under discussion, since it had become subject to discussion.

**Matter Arising – Urban Meadows**

(Ms. E. McCullough, Lead Officer, Open Space and Streetscene, attended in connection with this item).

At the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 19th June, it had been requested that a verbal update be provided to the Committee regarding the progress achieved in the creation of 'urban meadows' at the four sites identified across the City, namely, Glencairn Park, Ormeau Park, Belmont Park and Brook Leisure Centre.

The Lead Officer reported that work was ongoing on the projects in conjunction with the Property and Projects Department and that a procurement exercise for the grassland enhancement work would commence in July. Once the contractor was appointed, it was anticipated that work would begin during the autumn period. A further report in this regard would be submitted for the Committee's consideration in due course.

Noted.

**Restricted Items**

**The information contained in the reports associated with the following items were restricted under Part 1, Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 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.

**Greenwich Leisure Limited - Six-Monthly Update**  
**re: Contract Compliance and Performance**

The Committee considered a report in relation to the above-mentioned matter and agreed to note the following:

- The information provided in relation to contract compliance;
- The information provided in relation to key performance indicators;
- The supporting narrative presented;
- The facility asset management monitoring information; and
- The health and safety compliance assurances as presented.

**Healthwise and Physical Activity**  
**Referral Programmes – Update**

The Committee noted the contents of the six-monthly report on the exercise and health referral programmes which were overseen by Greenwich Leisure Limited across Belfast, which included an overview of the various contracts and services, together with key performance indicators.

Arising from discussion, the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services undertook to provide an update in relation to the extent of the use of the Shankill Leisure Centre as part of the activity and referral programmes. In addition, it was agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting that would examine the feasibility of the Council providing support for parkrun initiatives across the City, given their popularity and the associated community health benefits.

**Resources and Fleet Waste**

The Committee considered a report in relation to the above-mentioned matter.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to note the information which had been provided. However, it was agreed to defer consideration of the recommendations contained in the report on the understanding that they would be addressed as part of a wider thematic report that would examine a range of waste management issues raised over previous months and which were linked to the Council's policies and processes.

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**Pitch Partnership Agreements - Legal Matters**

The Committee, at its meeting on 12th May, had agreed to defer consideration of the above-mentioned report to enable officers to consider the feasibility of the Council entering into three-year pitch partnership agreements and the impact, if any, such an amendment might have upon the Pitches Strategy. Accordingly, the Committee considered the deferred report which had been updated to reflect the additional information which had been requested.

The Committee agreed to adopt the recommendations contained within the report. In addition, the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services agreed to provide an update to a Member regarding the provision of a Static Warden at the Marrowbone Park.

**Partnership Agreements 2026/27**

The Committee was reminded that the Council worked in partnership with local organisations to help achieve common strategic objectives. In this regard, support was provided to enable such groups to achieve strategic objectives, measured against outcomes-based frameworks. Accordingly, it was recommended that the Committee approve the payments for 2026/27, in the sum of £82,150, provision for which had been allocated within departmental budgets, as set out below:

- Belfast Hills Partnership - £36,900
- Outscape - £5,250
- Belfast Mela - £20,000
- Belfast International Arts Festival - £20,000

Regarding a request received from the Belfast Hills Partnership for additional discretionary funding in 2026/27, the Committee agreed that the matter be referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

**Matters Referred by the Council/Motions**

**Northern Ireland Housing Executive –  
Tenancy Succession Policy**

Further to the decision of the Standards and Business Committee of 26th May, the Committee considered a motion in respect of the above-mentioned matter, which had been proposed by Councillor Canavan and seconded by Councillor Black, as set out hereunder:

“This Council notes:

- The ongoing housing crisis across the North and the increasing demand for permanent social housing.
- That many families live for long periods in Housing Executive properties and develop vital community roots.
- That the current Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) succession policy prevents family members who have lived long-term in a property from

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succeeding a tenancy following the death of the tenant, where succession has already previously occurred (for example, between husband and wife).

- That this policy can lead to unnecessary displacement, eviction, hardship, and further breakdown of family units.

This Council believes:

- That housing policy should prioritise stability for families and communities.
- That family members or partners who have contributed to and depended on the household should not face eviction due to restrictive succession rules.
- That social housing should be managed in a way that balances fairness, community stability, and objective housing need.

This Council resolves:

- To write to the Minister of the Department for Communities calling on him to undertake a legislative review of the NIHE tenancy succession policy.
- To request the introduction of safeguards to prevent unnecessary eviction or relocation following the death of a tenant, particularly where long-term residence and established community ties exist.
- To support the development of a fair and community-aligned succession policy that protects households while ensuring that social housing is allocated on the basis of objective need.
- To seek engagement with residents' groups, community organisations, and elected representatives in the development of any revised succession policy.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Canavan,  
Seconded by Councillor Black and

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to adopt the motion and agrees further that a letter be forwarded to the Minister for the Department for Communities outlining the issues set out within the motion, subject to the adoption of the resolution by the Council at its meeting on 1st July.

Arising from discussion, the Committee agreed also to write to the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister requesting that an update be provided in relation to a paper which had been submitted for approval by the Minister for Communities regarding the Social Housing Development Programme.

**Policy Prohibiting Key Lock Boxes  
Associated with Short-term Holiday Lets**

Further to the decision of the Standards and Business Committee of 26th May, the Committee considered a motion in respect of the above-mentioned matter, which had been proposed by Councillor McKay and seconded by Councillor Carson. The motion is set out hereunder:

“That this Council agrees to introduce a policy prohibiting lockboxes from being installed on any property, wall, railing, fence, or street furniture other than the dwelling to which they relate.

This measure is needed because the proliferation of lockboxes in areas in Belfast particularly the inner city with high concentrations of short-term holiday lets is causing visual clutter and environmental harm, while also diminishing the amenity of residential streets and shared spaces, the Council should also ensure that any breach is subject to enforcement action and removal.

This approach is consistent with action already taken by other councils and city authorities to restrict or remove external lockboxes associated with short-term holiday lets.”

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor M. Donnelly,  
Seconded by Councillor McKeown and

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to adopt the motion and agrees further that letters be forwarded to the Executive Office and other relevant government departments seeking clarification on how they intended to introduce and expedite measures to address the proliferation of short-term lets and associated lockboxes across the City.

In addition, it was agreed that an all-Members’ workshop be held to consider the wider matter, together with the Council’s powers in this regard, during the autumn period.

**Committee and Strategic Issues**

**Food Service Delivery Plan 2026/27**

The Committee was reminded that the Food Standards Agency, in its monitoring and oversight role, required all councils to prepare annual Food Service Delivery Plans which outlined the key functions and planned activities to enable the delivery of food hygiene, food standards and other food safety related responsibilities.

The Committee approved the Council’s Food Service Delivery Plan for 2026/27 which would be submitted to the Food Standards Agency for review.

Arising from discussion, the Director of City Services undertook to provide further information in relation to queries raised regarding allergens and food temperature regulations, particularly how such regulations were applied to delivery companies.

**Consultation on Animal Welfare  
Policy Reforms in Northern Ireland**

The Committee agreed to adopt a response in respect of the above-mentioned exercise and agreed that it be forwarded to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs by the closing date of 30th June, on the proviso that amendments, if any, made by the Council at its meeting on 1st July be notified to DAERA. The response can be accessed [here](#).

Following a number of comments from a Member, the Committee agreed that the response be strengthened to emphasise that DAERA should remain as the lead agency – particularly in respect of data collection and rehoming duties – in animal welfare and that additional resources should be provided, should any additional duties fall under local councils as a result of the consultation and review. In addition, the Council would encourage DAERA to include mandatory behavioural welfare standards, socialisation requirements, record keeping standards and transparent reporting requirements to ensure consistency across the sector. The Committee endorsed further comments to strengthen the response regarding the need for a review of dog license fees, the promotion of the concept ‘responsible dog ownership’, breeder identification and issues regarding microchipping of owned pet cats.

In addition, it was agreed that a letter be forwarded to the DAERA Minister inviting him to meet with Elected Members in respect of animal welfare issue in Belfast and to request that the Council be invited to partake in any evidence session relating to the consultation exercise.

**Operational Issues**

**Pride of Place Awards 2026**

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 14th April, it had endorsed the nomination of five local groups to categories in the 2026 Pride of Place Awards and approved the attendance of their representatives at the awards ceremony in Dublin on 24th October. Accordingly, the Director sought the Committee’s approval to enable the attendance also at the event of the Chairperson, the Deputy Chairperson, together with the Director of Neighbourhood Services and a departmental officer (or their nominees).

The Committee granted the approval sought and authorised the travel, subsistence and accommodation costs associated with attendance at the ceremony.

**Framework for Supporting Sports Clubs/  
Individuals Travelling to Events outside Belfast**

The Committee considered the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues**

- 1.1 This paper provides a framework funding proposal to support Belfast sports teams and individuals traveling outside Northern Ireland to compete in recognised sporting events where qualification or Governing Body selection has taken place.**

## **2.0 Recommendation**

### **2.1 Members are asked to:**

- Approve the eligibility criteria for funding traveling teams outside NI
- Approve maximum funding allocation per team under delegated authority to £5,000
- Approve increasing funding calls for Individual athletes to four times per year under delegated authority
- Authorise officers to work up an application process in line with council funding procedures

### **3.1 Background Information**

During the rate setting process in 2026, Members agreed to allocate funds of £100,000 to support Belfast sports teams/clubs traveling to competitive events outside of Belfast. Members instructed officers to draw up a framework for a funding allocation model which would open 4 times per year. This would be a standalone funding stream in addition to the current Support for Sport grant process managed under CGU that allocates Small (£1500), Large (£5000) and Hospitality (up to £3000).

3.2 Members will be aware that since a review of Support for Sport in 2012 an allocation of £15,000 is awarded to talented athletes annually under delegated authority. An individual can apply for a maximum of £1000 for costs associated with travel to Governing Body approved competitions and representative squad training outside NI. Currently Individual grants are applied for on behalf of the athlete by the Sport's Governing Body (GB) and managed by CGU. The annual fund is usually allocated fully at Tranche One. This results in many athletes missing out on support due to smaller GB's not having the capacity to apply and/or the notification of selection is late, and application deadlines are missed. Opening the application process to four times per year would increase funding for athletes from minority sports and allow officers to support more applications from women and girls and disability athletes. It is anticipated the funding will be split equally between the 4 financial quarters with an option to roll over any underspend into the next quarter.

### **3.3 Team Travel**

More recently officers have received regular requests for support towards sports teams travelling in a representative capacity outside NI. Council does not have a currently fund travel for sports clubs. Research conducted with neighbouring council's demonstrates a lack of a consistent approach with only four council offering specific club travel grants however the majority

offer individual grants where members of team sports can apply as individual.

Table 1. Council areas providing team travel support

| Council area      | Max Amount | Criteria  |
|-------------------|------------|---|
| Antrim & N'Abbey  | £1500      | Exceptional Team Competitions                               |
| ABC Council       | £2000      | Representative events -must Cost £4K+ to receive max amount |
| Derry & Strabane  | £1600      | Must qualify for event                                      |
| Ards & North Down | £500       | Must be representative competitions                         |

3.4 The fund will open four times per year for both individual and team travel, which will maximise both the range of sports and competitions throughout the seasons.

4.0 **Financial and Resource Implications**

4.1 The Leisure Development Unit would manage the application and verification process in line with good practice and procedures. Leisure Development Unit has the financial resources to cover the cost of the initiative.

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

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

The Committee adopted the recommendations as set out in section 2.1. of the report.

**Party Political Use of Community Centres and Bowling Pavilions**

The Committee was reminded that, since the early 1980s, there had been an agreement that Council-owned community centres and bowling pavilions could not be hired for party political purposes, which was part of the Conditions of Hire agreements. At the request of a number of locally-elected Members, officers had liaised with the Council’s Legal Services Department in this regard with a view to having the restriction eased and, accordingly, the following addendum to clause 1.11 of the Conditions of Hire was recommended for approval:

*“However, community centres/bowling pavilions can be used by political parties for public good i.e., for constituency/advisory clinics, or community engagement purposes, where the activity does not involve campaigning, fundraising, or promotion of a political party or its policies, and is intended to provide a service or information to members of the public. Political Parties will not be able to book a venue during the pre-election ‘Purdah’ period.”*

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**Proposal**

Moved by Councillor Murray,  
Seconded by The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Abernethy),

That the Committee agrees to approve the amendment to the Conditions of Hire document and agrees further that bookings of community centres/bowling pavilions for political purposes be permitted only by Elected Members of the Council.

**Amendment**

Moved by Councillor Bunting,  
Seconded by Councillor Verner,

That the proposal be amended to reflect the inclusion of Belfast's Members of Parliament and Members of the Legislative Assembly in addition to Elected Members of the Council as being permitted to use community centres/bowling pavilions for political purposes.

On a vote, fifteen Members voted in favour of the amendment and four against and it was declared carried. The Committee adopted the amendment as the substantive motion without the requirement for a further vote.

It was noted that the bookings by Elected Members of the Council, Members of Parliament and Members of the Legislative Assembly be considered as 'community-based usage' and no charges would be levied.

**Off-Street Car Parking - Update**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 13th January, it had noted the progress which had been achieved in respect of the implementation of the Draft Belfast Off-Street Parking (Public Car Parks) Order 2026. That Order sought to consolidate and modernise regulations for council-managed car parks, thus assisting local authorities to manage parking on sites previously overseen by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). Accordingly, it was reported that the Council intended to publish a Notice of Intention in respect of the car parks at Shaw's Bridge, Stranmillis, Slievegallion Drive and Parkgate Avenue.

The Committee approved the publishing of the Notice of Intention in respect of the aforementioned car parks; noted the results of a consultation exercise in this regard; and noted that further updates would be submitted in due course.

**Proposals for RAPID Drugs' Disposal Bin - Ormeau Park**

The Committee was informed that the RAPID (Remove All Prescription and Illegal Drugs) initiative allowed for the safe and anonymous disposal of unwanted, unused, or illegal drugs or medicines in secure disposal bins. Officers within the Community Safety unit have worked with the Belfast Drug and Alcohol Coordination Team (BDACT) on several initiatives including the RAPID scheme. BDACT have indicated there exists currently a gap within the Ormeau area and they wished to explore options with the Council to install a RAPID bin within the vicinity of Ormeau Park.

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The Committee agreed that a RAPID bin be erected in the area inside the Ormeau Road entrance to the Ormeau Park. It was noted that discussions would be undertaken with local communities and agencies prior to the installation of the bin.

**The Tobacco and Vapes Act 2026**

(Ms. D. Heron, Senior Environmental Health Officer, attended in connection with this matter).

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided an overview of the provisions contained within the above-mentioned legislation and its implications to the Council.

During discussion in the matter, the Senior Environmental Health Officer advised the Committee that it was anticipated that a number of further restrictions would be introduced. From the 1st June, 2027, she reported, the current rules relating to tobacco advertising would be extended to include vaping products, cigarettes papers, herbal smoking products and other nicotine commodities. In addition, a consultation was ongoing which was proposing to introduce further regulations on tobacco, vaping and nicotine product packaging, device appearance and display restrictions which was expected to be introduced in the near future.

**Friar's Bush Burial Ground**

The Committee considered further the two requests which had been received for the use of Friar's Bush Burial Ground for the purposes of hosting tours. The requests, which had been submitted by the 'Friends of Friar's Bush' and 'Cairde na Cille' (friends of the church), had been deferred at the meeting in May to enable officers to undertake further discussions with the applicants in respect of the specific days they would be granted access to the site. The Director of City Services advised the Committee that, given the Council's access and operational requirements, the recommendations as presented to the May meeting remained unchanged.

The Committee agreed to grant, for a period of one-year, subject to the applicants adhering to all of the stipulations set out within the report, access to the Friar's Bush Burial Ground for the purposes of providing tours, as follows:

- Friends of Friar's Bush – Saturdays, Mondays, Wednesdays Thursdays and Fridays; and
- Cairde na Cille – Sundays and Tuesdays.

The Committee noted also several comments made in relation to staff resourcing at cemeteries during peak periods.

**Requests for the Use of Parks for Events**

The Committee granted approval for the hosting of the following events, subject to the applicants adhering to all of the stipulations as set out within the report:

- The Ark Church - outdoor church services in Waterworks Park (5th July), Marrowbone Park (19th July) and in Woodvale Park (23rd July);

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- Shankill Old Boys' Flute Band – a musical ensemble in Woodvale Park (16th and 17th July);
- Belfast No. 6 Royal Black District Chapter – wreath laying ceremony in Woodvale Park (2nd August); and
- The Cedar Foundation – a one-day celebration event in the Ormeau Park to mark the organisation's 85th anniversary (20th August).

**Use of Parks - East Belfast Cultural Festival**

In respect of four events associated with the East Belfast Cultural Festival, the Committee agreed to defer consideration of the applications to enable further information to be provided to Party Group Leaders and/or at a special Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, prior to the meeting of the Council on 1st July,

**Dog Fouling Action Plan - Post Mounted Bins Update**

(Ms. E. Gowdy, Lead Officer, Open Space and Streetscene, attended in connection with this item).

At its meeting in May, the Committee had requested an update report on the installation of post-mounted litter bins across the City as part of the Council's Dog Fouling Action Plan. Accordingly, the Committee noted the contents of a report in this regard and several queries and suggestions made by Members.

**Dual Language Street Signs re: 'Long Streets'**

The Committee considered the following report:

**1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues**

**1.1 To consider applications for the erection of dual language street signs for two existing streets within the city which have been designated as long streets in line with the policy.**

**2.0 Recommendation**

**2.1 Members are asked to consider the Dual Language Street Sign survey results for Donegall Park Avenue and Oldpark Road which have been identified as "long streets" in line with Policy and either:**

- a) **Agree that dual language streets signs with a second language in Irish be erected along the full length of the streets, and/or**
- b) **Agree that dual language streets signs with a second language in Irish be erected in specified locations within**

the streets taking into consideration the breakdown of survey results along the length of the street and the current/proposed street sign locations shown on maps provided.

Members are further asked to note the survey results for Skegoneill Avenue which failed to meet the 15% threshold in favour of a proposal to have dual language street signs with a second language in Irish erected and agree to this application remaining closed.

**3.0 Main Report**

**Key Issues**

**3.1** Members are reminded of the Committee report in March 2025 which sought approval to survey Oldpark Road, Donegall Park Avenue and Skegoneill Avenue. These streets were identified as 'long streets' in line with policy during the initial assessment process which also identified the potential for adverse impacts in relation to the carrying out of the survey.

**3.2** In relation to long streets the policy states as follows:

*'Consideration will to be given to "long streets" where opinion on whether to have a second language street sign may differ between readily identifiable, substantial lengths of the street. In these circumstances, the decision as to the erection of dual language nameplates in certain portions of the street will be made by Committee, exercising its residual discretion and taking into account advice from officers.'*

**3.3** The Committee agreed that, in respect of the applications for the erection of dual language street signs in Irish for Oldpark Road, Donegall Park Avenue, and Skegoneill Avenue, that surveys of occupiers of those streets should be carried out with further analysis of the results using the proposed approach for "long streets" as set out in the report.

**3.4** Surveys were carried out on all three streets in line with policy and both Oldpark Road and Donegall Park Avenue met the 15% threshold of occupiers in favour of the proposal at survey to have dual language street signs erected with the second language in Irish.

**3.5** Accordingly, members are asked to consider the following applications to erect dual language street nameplates showing the name of the street expressed in a language other than English. The second language is Irish.

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| <b>English Name</b>  | <b>Non- English Name</b>     | <b>Location</b>                                 | <b>Persons surveyed</b> |
|----------------------|------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Donegall Park Avenue | Ascaill Pháirc Dhún na nGall | Between Antrim Road & Shore Road, BT15          | 205                     |
| Oldpark Road         | Bóthar na Seanpháirce        | Between Ballysillan Road and Crumlin Road, BT14 | 756                     |

- 3.6 The translations were authenticated by Queens University, the approved translator for Belfast City Council.**
- 3.7 In accordance with the Council’s policy for the erection of dual language street signs, surveys of all persons appearing on the electoral register plus owners or tenants in actual possession of commercial premises for the above streets were carried out and the following responses were received.**
- 3.8 Donegall Park Avenue, BT15. Survey conducted between 6th November 2025 to 3rd December 2025**
- **74 occupiers (36.10%) were in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.**
  - **53 occupiers (25.85%) were not in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.**
  - **2 occupiers (0.98%) had no preference either way.**
- 3.9 One person commented that they have concerns about erecting dual language signs at the bottom of the Avenue as it would cause conflict or incite vandalism.**
- 3.10 Oldpark Road, BT14 Survey conducted between 9th December 2025 to 14th January 2026.**
- **136 occupiers (17.99%) were in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.**
  - **58 occupiers (7.67%) were not in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.**
  - **5 occupiers (0.66%) had no preference either way.**
- 3.11 One person commented that the upper part (of the Oldpark Road) is a Unionist area and is part of UK.**
- 3.12 One person commented that the section of the Oldpark Road which starts at the bottom junction with Crumlin Road and the top section at the junction of Ballysillan Road are Unionist areas. In relation to the middle section (The Bone) they have no objection to dual language signage being erected. The person believes the survey process causes friction and upset between Catholics and**

Protestants. They also believe money will be wasted as the street signs will be damaged.

- 3.13 One person commented that the Oldpark Road is long and covers a large area. They noted that the bottom and top ends of the Oldpark are Unionist/Loyalist and the middle section (The Bone) is Nationalist/Republican. They also note that the area towards the top end is of mixed religion. They note that it would be a waste of money to erect dual language signs at the top and bottom of the road as they will be vandalised.

#### Additional Survey Analysis

- 3.14 As previously agreed by Council, additional analysis of the results of the surveys has been carried out by officers to confirm any difference of opinion in readily identifiable sections, of the street in line with the policy consideration outlined at 3.3 in the report.
- 3.15 Members can review this analysis which is represented on maps within Appendix A (Donegall Park Avenue) and Appendix B (Oldpark Road). Based on this analysis Members are asked to consider if all the signage locations identified should be replaced with dual language streets signs with a second language in Irish. Alternately members can decide if only specific signs should be replaced / erected and confirm these locations.

#### Application Not Meeting Overall Threshold at Street Survey

- 3.16 Skegoneill Avenue, BT15 Survey conducted between 16th October 2025 to 12th November 2025. 242 persons were surveyed.
- 29 occupiers (11.98%) were in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.
  - 43 occupiers (17.77%) were not in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.
  - 1 occupier (0.41%) had no preference either way.
- 3.17 The current policy on dual language street signs states as follows:

*“If the minimum threshold of fifteen percent is not met, the Applicant will be given two weeks to advise the Council of any special circumstances in relation to the application. If such special circumstances relate to the processing of a survey, the Strategic Director of Place and Economy, in conjunction with the City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services will determine whether such exceptional circumstances exist to refer the matter to Committee. Where exceptional circumstances relate to matters other than the processing of a survey, the matter will be referred*

*to Committee. If there are no special circumstances, the application will end.”*

- 3.18 In this regard the applicant was advised by letter that Skegoneill Avenue failed to meet the threshold and was given two weeks to provide details of any special circumstances pertaining to the application. This correspondence was issued on 14th November 2025 with a deadline of 28th November 2025. No correspondence detailing any special circumstances was received.
- 3.19 Therefore, given that the survey for this street did not meet the minimum 15% threshold to be considered for approval by committee, and that no exceptional circumstances were raised, no further analysis was carried out, and the application was closed.

#### Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.20 If all the signage in Oldpark Road and Donegal Park Avenue are to be replaced there will be a cost of approximately £2490 to cover the manufacture and erection of the dual language street signs. The cost for these street signs has been allowed for in the current budget.

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

- 3.21 Each application for a dual language street sign is subject to an initial assessment and an elected member notification process to identify any potential adverse impacts on equality, good relations and rural needs.
- 3.22 The initial assessment for Donegal Park Avenue, Oldpark Road and Skegoneill Avenue identified that the carrying out of the surveys had the potential to cause adverse impacts on the grounds of good relations.
- 3.23 These applications were subsequently screened and draft screening identified that the carrying out of surveys in themselves had the potential to give rise to community tension, as could the erection of the street signs and therefore had the potential to give rise to adverse impact on the grounds of good relations.
- 3.24 It was acknowledged, however, that the process could alternatively assist in promoting cultural and linguistic diversity. It also determined that the streets met the definition of “long streets” contained in clause 3 (X) of the policy, in that opinion on whether to have a second language street sign may differ between readily identifiable, substantial lengths of the streets.
- 3.25 The elected member notification carried out for Donegal Park Avenue, Oldpark Road and Skegoneill Avenue did not identify any

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**potential for adverse impacts. The applications were presented to Committee prior to survey in line with the agreed process referencing the initial assessment and screening and the streets were approved for survey by Committee and full Council.**

The Committee agreed that Dual Language Street Signs be erected in Oldpark Road in suitable locations taking into account the results of the street survey as illustrated in Appendix 2 to the report; and

The Committee agreed also to defer noting the decision to close the application for Dual Language Street Signs in Skegoneill Avenue to enable the matter – in conjunction with the other streets which had failed to meet the 15% threshold – to be reconsidered within the context of a further report which would review and provide further clarity on the Council's policy.

**Proposal**

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

That Dual Language Street Signs in Irish be erected along the length of Donegall Park Avenue.

**Amendment**

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

That the Committee agrees that Dual Language Street Signs in Irish be erected in Donegall Park Avenue in 'suitable locations' considering the results of the street survey as illustrated in Appendix 1 to the report.

On a vote, ten Members voted for the amendment and nine against. The Committee adopted the amendment as the substantive motion without the requirement for a further vote.

**Proposals for Dual Language Street Signs – Monthly Report**

The Committee agreed to the erection of a dual language street sign, to include Irish, at Ladybrook Park, Flax Street, Blacks Gate Crescent, Upper Castle Park, Teeling View, Larkspur Rise, Laurelbank, Meadow Grove, Fairyknowe Park, Deanby Gardens and Areema Drive.

Regarding the applications which the Committee noted from the report had been closed in respect of Dual Language Street Signs at Knockeden Crescent, Willowfield Gardens, Pilot Street, Caffrey Avenue and Glenwood Green:

**Proposal**

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

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That the Committee agrees to exercise the residual discretion within the policy and approve the applications for Pilot Street, Caffrey Avenue and Glenwood Green.

**Amendment**

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

That the Committee agrees that the applications for Dual Language Street Signs in Irish at Knockeden Crescent, Willowfield Gardens, Pilot Street, Caffrey Avenue and Glenwood Green be reconsidered within the context of a further report which will review and provide additional clarity on the Council's policy.

On a vote, ten Members voted for the amendment and nine against. The Committee adopted the amendment as the substantive motion without the requirement for a further vote.

**Dual Language Street Signs – Streets  
with Potential Adverse Impacts**

The Committee considered the following report:

**1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues**

**1.1 To consider if a street survey of occupiers will be carried out for three applications for the erection of dual language street signs in Irish within the city where potential adverse impacts have been identified by the initial assessments.**

**2.0 Recommendation**

**2.1 Members are asked to consider the report and matters raised in relation to the applications for dual language street signs in Irish received for Fernwood Street, Cliftonpark Avenue and Dromore Street and either:**

- a) Agree that surveys of occupiers of these streets be carried out; or**
- b) Agree that no surveys will be carried out on the grounds of the potential adverse impacts identified and these applications are closed.**

**3.0 Main Report**

**3.1 Key Issues**

**The power for the Council to consider applications to erect a second street nameplate in a language other than English is contained in Article 11 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1995.**

- 3.2 The Dual Language Street Sign policy states that *“each application will be subject to an initial assessment for any potential adverse impacts on equality, good relations and rural needs and where any adverse impacts are identified that information will be brought to Committee.”*
- 3.3 The initial assessments were carried out for these three streets and potential adverse impacts were identified.
- 3.4 Draft equality screenings were therefore carried out, assessing the request for dual language street signs in Irish on Fernwood Street, Cliftonpark Avenue and Dromore Street for equality and good relations issues.
- 3.5 The screenings have identified that the carrying out of surveys and the erection of Irish language street signs in these areas has the potential to give rise to community tension. Conversely the screenings also identified that the process could assist in promoting cultural and linguistic diversity. The findings are outlined in the equality and good relation section below.
- 3.6 The council retains ‘residual discretion’ in relation to these applications. In effect this gives elected members the option not to proceed to survey and/ or halt the erection of a dual language street sign in a street where, in the view of elected members this action would be considered inappropriate.
- 3.7 These applications are therefore being brought to Committee to determine if surveys of residents of these streets will take place, considering the information presented in the report.

#### Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.8 If it is decided to carry out surveys, the resulting tasks are included within existing resources and budgets for the process.

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

- 3.9 An EQIA was carried out on the Dual Language Street Signs policy in 2021-22. This confirmed the initial assessment process to be carried out, which may indicate the requirement for equality screening.
- 3.10 The applications for dual language street signs (with the second language in Irish) at Fernwood Street, Cliftonpark Avenue and Dromore Street were assessed for equality of opportunity and good relations issues through the initial assessment process. This process identified that the potential for adverse impact existed and recommended further screening prior to referral to committee for authority to proceed to survey.

- 3.11 The draft screenings have identified that the carrying out of a survey in itself in these areas has the potential to give rise to community tension, as could the erection of the street signs and therefore has the potential to give rise to adverse impact on the grounds of good relations. It is acknowledged; however, the process could alternatively assist in promoting cultural and linguistic diversity.
- 3.12 The applications were also presented to elected members as part of the elected member notification procedure, and no objections were received.

### **Proposal**

Moved by Councillor M. Donnelly,  
Seconded by Councillor de Faoite,

That the Committee agrees that surveys be conducted on residents in Fernwood Street, Cliftonpark Avenue and Dromore Street in relation to the applications received for the erection of dual language street signs in Irish.

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

### **Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs – Lagan Meadows Consultation re: ‘Quiet Area’**

The Committee agreed to endorse a response to the above-mentioned consultation exercise and Members’ comments thereon, particularly in reference to both Belfast International and Belfast City Airport in respect of the high number of flights that pass over the meadows causing noise pollution. The response can be accessed [here](#).

### **Issues Raised in Advance by Members**

Prior to considering ‘Issues Raised in Advance’ the Chairperson reminded Members of the provisions of Standing Order 46, which related to requests for items to be Included on an agenda. The Standing Order, she pointed out, stated that Members must first raise an issue with the appropriate Chief Officer, with a view to resolving the matter, rather than placing it in front of the Committee. She requested that Members note also that, should there be item on the agenda related to the matter they wish to raise, it would entirely appropriate to do so as part of the overall discussion.

### **Bulky Waste Collection Response Time**

At the request of Councillor R. Brooks, the Committee agreed that a report be submitted in respect of a range of issues regarding the Council’s above-mentioned service that would examine overall performance, resourcing and over-arching policies.

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**Refuse Bags on Pavements in the  
City Centre/Arterial Routes**

At the request of Councillor de Faoite, the Committee agreed that a report be submitted that would outline the Council's policies in relation to the management of refuse bags left on pavements and arterial routes – to include also the University area. Such a report would examine best practice as carried out by other authorities in this regard.

**Changing Pavilion at Cherryvale Playing Fields**

At the request of Councillor de Faoite, the Committee agreed that a condition survey be undertaken at the above-mentioned site and a report be submitted to the Committee that would outline also the current condition of all of the Council's changing facilities.

**Support for Youth Work Charter**

On the proposal of Councillor Bradley, which was seconded by Councillor McKeown, the Committee agreed to endorse the following Youth Work Charter, which had been launched by the Youth Work Alliance, as an advocacy framework to protect, fund and unify the voluntary youth sector.

“This Council notes the publication of the Youth Work Charter by the Youth Work Alliance and recognises the essential role that youth services play in supporting young people, strengthening communities, and improving safety and wellbeing across Belfast.

The Council further notes the ongoing pressures on the youth work sector, including funding uncertainty and the impact this has on open-access provision and the ability of organisations to plan and deliver long-term support. This Council therefore agrees to formally endorse the Youth Work Charter and to express its support for the principles it sets out.

The Council further agrees to write to the Minister for Education calling on the Department of Education to endorse the Charter, to outline how the Minister and the Department intend to implement its commitments, and to ensure that youth services are sustainably and adequately funded, including the reinstatement of ring-fenced funding by the Department for youth services.”

Chairperson

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## City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Thursday, 18th June, 2026

MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE  
ADJOURNED ON 10TH JUNE, 2026.

Members present: Councillor J. Duffy (Chairperson);  
Alderman Lawlor; and  
Councillors Black, Bower, Bunting,  
Collins, de Faoite, S. Douglas,  
Kelly, Lyons, McAteer, McCabe,  
McDonough-Brown, McKay, R. McLaughlin,  
Meenehan, Nelson and Ó Néill.

Also attended: Councillor Flynn.

In attendance: Mr. D. Martin, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;  
Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and  
Development;  
Mr. S. Dolan, Senior Development Manager;  
Ms. L. O'Donnell, Senior Manager, Culture and Tourism;  
Ms. R. Campbell-Palmer, Culture Development Manager;  
Ms. C. Cassin, Markets Development Manager  
Mr. F. Grant, Operations Development Manager;  
Ms. M. Miller, Marketing Manager, City Development; and  
Mr. C. Mealey, Committee Services Officer.

### Apologies

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

### Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 13th and 27th May, 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 June, 2026.

### Declarations of Interest

Councillor R. McLaughlin declared an interest in relation to the presentation from the Belfast City and Region Place Partnership and the item 'Belfast City and Region Place Partnership Update' in that he was on the Board of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners and left the meeting whilst those items were under consideration.

Councillor McDonough-Brown declared an interest within the item 'Vacant to Vibrant Programme Update' in that a member of his family was associated with an applicant to scheme and left the meeting whilst this item was under consideration.

**Presentations**

**Belfast City and Region Place Partnership (BCRPP)**

The Chairperson welcomed to the meeting Ms. M. Doyle, Chair of the Belfast City and Region Place Partnership (BCRPP), and Mr. J. McDonald, Managing Director of GRAHAM Investment Projects.

Ms. Doyle provided the Committee with an overview of the BCRPP, which was a public-private partnership collaboratively working toward the following objectives:

- Strengthen collaboration and partnership working across the Belfast City Region;
- Promote and market the region nationally and internationally;
- Enhance engagement and advocacy with key stakeholders to advance regional investment and development priorities;
- Support delivery of Belfast Region City Deal projects and strategic initiatives; and
- Drive inclusive, sustainable and innovative growth that strengthens communities and delivers long-term prosperity.

She informed the Committee that the BCRPP continued to use a four-pillared approach to programming, namely, investor-focused activity, advocacy and engagement, media and communication, and community engagement.

The Committee was provided with further information on BCRPP's key areas of focus which included detail in respect of strategic communications, BCRPP's supporting approach to the Council-led Belfast Place-Based Growth Proposition, engagement with the Executive and the UK and Irish Governments, and community engagement through the BCRPP Community Forum.

Mr. McDonald outlined some of BCRPP's investor-focused activity including its attendance at the UK Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum (UKREiiF) and MIPIM. He highlighted the value of those events to showcase the region globally to investors and developers.

Ms. Doyle concluded the presentation by setting out the next steps for the partnership for 2026/27 to help build on the collaborative working to support the place-based growth proposition for the city, showcase and position the region as a place to invest, attract inclusive investment to deliver regeneration and development, and maximise the social, environmental and economic benefits of investment and development activity through continued community engagement.

The Chairperson thanked Ms. Doyle and Mr. McDonald for their attendance and presentation, and they left the meeting.

The Committee noted the information provided within the presentation.

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**Destination Cathedral Quarter  
Business Improvement District**

The Senior Manager for Culture and Tourism provided the Committee with an update on the upcoming ballot for a third term of Destination Cathedral Quarter (CQ) Business Improvement District (BID).

The Chairperson welcomed to the meeting Mr. D. Corr, Destination CQ BID Manager.

Mr. Corr presented an overview of the BID, which had been established in 2016 to provide a collective voice for businesses in the area. He reported that, since its establishment, the BID had helped deliver projects to improve trading, increase partnership working, and leverage substantial additional funding for the area.

He informed the Committee that the BID area was the city's leading destination for culture, hospitality, enterprise and learning with a diverse mix of businesses, residents, students and visitors. He stated that the BID area was a key contributor to city's economy and international reputation and highlighted the significant growth opportunities in relation to regeneration and investment.

The Committee was provided with further detail in relation to the BID's plan for 2026-31, which would include work to:

- Provide continued support for businesses;
- Make the area safer, greener and cleaner through environmental improvements, safety initiatives and public realm enhancements; and
- Promote and animate the area through events and cultural programming and marketing to increase footfall and visitor spend.

Mr. Corr highlighted that the BID worked closely with the Council to support city centre objectives in relation to regeneration, economic growth, tourism, cultural activation and to ensure effective engagement with the business community.

He concluded the presentation by requesting the Council's endorsement of Destination CQ BID in the upcoming ballot for a third term to continue and maintain the strategic partnership and ongoing collaboration on regeneration, place-making and city centre development.

The Chairperson thanked Mr. Corr for his attendance and presentation, and he left the meeting.

The Committee:

- i. noted the information provided within the presentation;
- ii. noted the update on the pending ballot for the third term of the Destination CQ BID; and
- iii. agreed to return yes votes for the Council properties located within the BID boundary.

**Restricted Items**

**The information contained in the report 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 item 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 Director of City Regeneration and Development also provided the Committee with an update in relation to applicants V2V126 and V2VCW006. In response to a Member’s question regarding the applicant V2VCW006, the Director advised that the Council would take a flexible approach in supporting the applicant and that further updates would be brought back to the Committee.

The Committee:

- i. noted the update in relation to the Vacant to Vibrant Programme which would be supporting up to 85 businesses/organisations to locate or expand into long-term vacant units;
- ii. agreed the recommended citywide grant awards as outlined within the report; and
- iii. noted the update in relation to applicants V2V126 and V2VCW006.

**Assembly Rooms Cluster Update**

The Director of City Regeneration and Development provided the Committee with an update on a number of workstreams in relation to the Assembly Rooms Cluster.

The Committee was advised that funding from the World Monuments Fund (WMF), which was announced in February, 2026, had assisted in progressing works

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including the development of a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the Assembly Rooms; façade, window treatment and painting; interpretative signage and public realm improvements; and roof repairs. It was reported that the ongoing work would form part of a wider range of works to enhance the physical building and its environs in advance of the 2026 Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann.

In respect of next steps and the future use of the Assembly Rooms Cluster, the Committee was provided with an update on recent Party Group briefings. It was recommended to the Committee that, following the feedback received from those briefings and in advance of future reports to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee and the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, further consideration would be given by Party Group Leaders, at its meeting in June, 2026, on the next stages for determining the future use of the Assembly Rooms, the development and funding strategy, and the potential for a soft market testing exercise in relation to the assets adjoining the Assembly Rooms. The Committee was advised that those matters would subsequently be brought back to either Committee as appropriate. It was highlighted that the draft text for the interpretative panels would also be submitted to Party Group Leaders.

In addition to the update provided, the Committee also considered a request for the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson to attend a WMF reception in the City Hall in September, 2026, as part of WMF's Escapade event.

The Committee:

- i. noted the update on the activity to date, and the planned activity, in relation to the Assembly Rooms Cluster, which included repainting and façade treatment to the Assembly Rooms, a Conservation Management Plan, roof repairs, interpretative signage panels and works to improve the immediate environs in advance of the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann;
- ii. noted the update on the recent Party Group briefings and agreed that, in advance of future reports to City Growth and Regeneration Committee and the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, further consideration would be given by Party Group Leaders, at its meeting in June, 2026, on the next stages for determining the future use of the Assembly Rooms, development and funding strategy and the potential for a soft market testing exercise in relation to the assets adjoining the Assembly Rooms;
- iii. noted that those matters would subsequently be brought back to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee and the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee as appropriate to consider the funding applications in the context of a strategic approach to funding for Council heritage projects, including the potential for the use of the Regeneration Framework, as previously agreed by the Council;
- iv. noted that the draft text for the interpretative panels would be brought to the Party Group Leaders; and

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- v. agreed that the Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson, or their nominees, would attend the World Monuments Fund reception in the City Hall as part of the Escapade event on Thursday 17th September, 2026.

**UUEPC - Review of Housing  
Association Grant Changes**

The Director of City Regeneration and Development submitted for the Committee's consideration a report which provided an update on the University of Ulster's Economic Policy Unit (UUEPC) review of the Department for Communities' (DfC) changes to Total Cost Indicator (TCI) and Housing Association Grant (HAG) rates, and which outlined the emerging implications for the delivery of social housing in Belfast, particularly within the city centre.

During discussion, a Member highlighted the viability challenges which faced housing regeneration delivery across all tenures and stated the need for further engagement with Executive Ministers in respect of those challenges. The Director of City Regeneration and Development outlined the ongoing engagement with the UK Government as part of the Belfast Place Based Growth Proposition and the engagement undertaken by the Belfast City and Region Place Partnership with Executive Ministers in relation to the issues raised by the Member. At the request of the Member, the Director advised that a further report would be submitted to a future meeting in relation to next steps and the potential for further engagement with Executive Ministers on the viability challenges which had been highlighted.

Accordingly, the Committee:

- i. noted the key findings and recommendations from the Ulster University Economic Policy Centre (UUEPC) review including the scale of housing need in Belfast, the cost pressures affecting delivery and the implications of the current Total Cost Indicators (TCI)/Housing Association Grant (HAG) model;
- ii. noted that the findings and recommendations were independent conclusions of the UUEPC;
- iii. noted that the UUEPC review was submitted to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), who was leading the Department for Communities' (DfC) Subsidy Review which was scheduled to be completed by October, 2026;
- iv. noted that the DfC Subsidy Review would form a key part of the evidence base on the challenges of delivering social housing within the city;
- v. noted the wider engagement, which would include a Members' workshop with the Northern Ireland Federation of Housing

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Associations (NIFHA) and Housing Associations to consider the UUEPC findings and identify the issues which the Subsidy Review must address;

- vi. noted that DfC did not release TCI grant-rate data, as requested by the Committee, as this information was restricted to DfC, NIHE and the Housing Associations, and was therefore unavailable to inform the UUEPC's Review; and
- vii. agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting in relation to next steps and future engagement with the Northern Ireland Executive on the housing viability challenges across all tenures within the city.

**Bad Debt Write-Off**

The Committee authorised for an outstanding account of £22,766.87 to be written off in accordance with Section M12 of the Council's Financial Regulations.

**Belfast Zoo Quarterly Performance Update**

The Committee noted an update on the performance of Belfast Zoo for Quarter 4 of 2025/26 which included information in relation to visitor numbers, education services, animal welfare and conservation, marketing and events, health and safety and financial performance.

**Belfast Bikes Quarterly Performance Update**

The Committee considered an update on the performance of the Belfast Bikes Scheme for Quarter 4 of 2025/26, which included information in relation to the operator contract, operational performance, marketing activity, expansion of the scheme, and sponsorship.

During discussion, in response to a Member's request, the Strategic Director of Place and Economy advised that an update would be brought back in relation to engagement with other Council's on the potential to expand the scheme beyond the city's boundary.

After discussion, the Committee noted the update on the performance of the Belfast Bikes Scheme for Quarter 4 of 2025/26.

**Markets Quarterly Update and  
External Market Approval**

The Director of Economic Development submitted for the Committee's consideration a report which provided a performance and financial update of the city's markets for Quarter 4 of 2025/26 and outlined the priority activity for Quarter 1 of 2026/27.

The report also provided the Committee with an update on the Spring Market held in May, 2026, and on the 2026 Christmas Continental Market.

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The Committee also considered a request from the Clothes Cycle Ltd. to run a clothing recycle market at Newforge Sports Complex on 25th July, 2026.

The Committee:

- i. noted the performance and financial update for Quarter 4 of 2025/26;
- ii. noted the priority activities for Quarter 1 of 2026/27 in line with the business plan;
- iii. noted the feedback on the 2026 Spring Market and the plans for the 2026 Christmas Continental Market; and
- iv. approved an external market licence for a Clothes Recycle Market to be held in the Newforge Sports Complex on 25th July, 2025.

**Artist Studio and Creative Workspace Update**

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the work to support the artist studio and workspace sector within the city and outlined a proposed action plan for artist workspaces for year one of a five-year action plan.

The Committee:

- i. noted the contents of the report; and
- ii. approved the year one action plan for artist workspaces, as outlined within Appendix 1 of the report.

**Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2026 Update**

The Committee noted an update on the delivery of the 2026 Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann which was presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 22nd May, 2026.

**Requests to Present**

**Department for Infrastructure - Castle Street Plans**

The Committee considered a request from the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) to attend its next meeting in August, 2026, to provide an update on the potential reopening of lower Castle Street to public transport.

During discussion, a number of Members raised concern regarding the potential reopening of lower Castle Street to public transport and DfI's approach to pedestrianisation within the city centre. The Members highlighted that the reopening of the area to public transport would not align with the 'A Bolder Vision for Belfast' strategy,

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which was approved by the Committee at its meeting in April, 2026, and the proposed vision and objectives of DfI's forthcoming Eastern Transport Plan.

A Member also highlighted the need for the Department's engagement with the business community within the area to take place in advance of DfI attending the Committee and suggested that, in addition to providing an update on the potential reopening of lower Castle Street, that the DfI officials who would be attending provide also an update on the position of the Eastern Transport Plan.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to:

- i. receive a presentation from the Department for Infrastructure at its next meeting in August in relation to the potential reopening of lower Castle Street to public transport; and
- ii. request that the Department for Infrastructure also provide an update on the Eastern Transport Plan.

**Matters referred back from Council/Motions**

**Notice of Motion - Silent Fireworks**

The Committee considered a report which advised that the undernoted motion in relation to silent fireworks, which was proposed by Councillor Flynn and seconded by Councillor Smyth, had been referred to the Committee for its consideration by the Standards and Business Committee at its meeting on 26th May, 2026.

"This Council recognises the distress caused by high-noise fireworks to many residents, including autistic people, those with sensory issues or PTSD, elderly residents, pets, livestock and wildlife.

Council notes that low-noise fireworks are increasingly used at public events and can provide the same visual impact while significantly reducing noise disruption to communities.

Accordingly, Council agrees to:

- Explore the use of low-noise fireworks at Council-run and Council-funded events;
- Include low-noise alternatives in future procurement processes;
- Receive a report on implementation options and costs; and
- Write to the Justice Minister calling for a review of fireworks legislation and the sale of high-noise fireworks in Northern Ireland."

The Committee noted that the notice of motion had been received and agreed that a report would be submitted to a future meeting which would outline a detailed consideration of the motion and any potential resource and financial implications.

### **Regenerating Places and Improving Infrastructure**

#### **Local Growth Fund Consultation Response**

The Committee considered the following report:

##### **“1.0 Purpose of Report**

**1.1 The purpose of the report is to update the Committee on the consultation on the UK Government’s Local Growth Fund – the successor to Shared Prosperity Fund and to seek committee approval of a draft response to the consultation.**

##### **2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- Consider and approve the draft response and agree that this is submitted to NIO**
- Note the update on the ‘Belfast Trailblazer’ that had been referenced in the June 2025 budget statement and agree to issue correspondence to NIO to seek clarity on their plans for this fund.**

##### **3.0 Main Report**

**3.1 The Committee has previously received an update on the Local Growth Fund (LGF) – the successor to the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF). The report noted that there were a number of significant changes from SPF to LGF namely:**

- Management of the fund was to involve ‘collaborative working’ between the regional government departments, NIO and MHCLG (previously no involvement from regional government departments or NIO)**
- Funding was to move from a predominantly revenue-based budget to heavily capital-focused one (indicative split 66% capital; 34% revenue funding).**

**3.2 In December 2025, Belfast City Council lead officers on Go Succeed were advised by MHCLG that there was to be an allocation of £2.53million revenue funding from the Local Growth Fund for one year, representing an overall reduction of around 60% on the previous revenue allocation. At the**

same time, all delivery partners that had previously led on the economic inactivity projects supported under the Shared Prosperity Fund from 2023-2026 were advised that their projects would also be extended for one year – but with a similar reduction in available budgets. These are the only two elements of expenditure that have been allocated from the Local Growth Fund to date this year – and they represent the entirety of the available revenue funding for this period.

**3.3** NIO launched the consultation on the Local Growth Fund on 8 May 2026. The consultation will close on 26 June 2026. NIO expects to present a draft investment plan to Westminster before the recess period, with a similar plan being shared with the NI Executive in parallel. Subject to these respective approvals, they will then begin the process of commissioning service delivery against the agreed priority areas. The consultation seeks views on resource funding from 2027/28 to 2028/29 and capital funding from 2026/27 to 2028/29. It does not seek to revisit the original decisions around the capital and resource split of the funding.

**3.4** The Local Growth Fund in NI will have a budget allocation of £129million funding over the next three years – an indicative allocation of £43million per annum. The indicative annual breakdown is as follows:

|                | 2025/26 | 2026/27 | 2027/28 | 2028/29 |
|----------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| <b>Capital</b> | 3.8*    | 27.4    | 27.5    | 29.8    |
| <b>Revenue</b> |         | 11.8    | 15.5    | 13.2    |
| <b>Total</b>   | 3.8     | 39.2    | 43      | 43      |

*\*Note – this £3.8million was allocated to North City Business Centre for the development of workspace in North Belfast.*

**3.5** The draft strategic framework underpinning the Fund is based around two priorities for growth, namely:

- **Enhancing productivity:** driving higher value-added activity and increasing the efficiency of the economy to create capacity for sustainable long-term growth
- **Promoting active participation in the workforce:** tackling the barriers to employment to increase the working age population’s participation rate and meet immediate labour needs.

**3.6** Each priority includes a number of sub-priorities as follows:

| Priority   | Sub-priority                        |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Enhancing productivity</i>                          | Business support and innovation     |
|  | Strategic infrastructure investment |
|  | Skills enhancement                  |
| <i>Promoting active participation in the workforce</i> | Localised economic inclusion        |
|  | Early intervention                  |

- 3.7 The consultation document notes that, while MHCLG will maintain oversight of the Local Growth Fund, the Northern Ireland Executive departments will ‘plan and oversee delivery of the Fund’ for all future expenditure. In reality, this is likely to mean that both the Department for the Economy (DfE) and the Department for Communities (DfC) will take the lead on agreed priority projects and will be responsible for commissioning and managing delivery.
- 3.8 It also notes that a cross-sectoral Partnership Group will be established to ‘provide insight and advice on delivery’. A Partnership Group existed under the Shared Prosperity Fund and local government had two representatives – one from MUDC and one from BCC. Discussions with NIO have indicated that this Partnership Group will be established once the programme is agreed, rather than advising on the programme content – as was the case for the SPF Partnership Group.
- 3.10 The consultation document is attached to this report (appendix 1) and an outline of indicative responses is also included in appendix 2. The consultation is focused around a number of questions relating to the core priorities (Enhancing Productivity and Promoting Active Participation) and the sub-priorities as well as the proposals around delivery and consideration of the equality implications.
- 3.11 In addition to responding to the questions, there are a number of issues that the Committee should be aware of and that have been woven into the draft response. These include:
- Explicit support for continued investment in Go Succeed with the potential to supplement existing support and integrate other capital interventions

aligned to programme priorities e.g. grant support for digital transformation

- Proposal that the activities supported under 'Promoting Active Participation' should focus on outreach and engagement support and that outcomes should be appropriate and aligned to this support i.e. job outcomes are not always an appropriate outcome to evidence the impact of this work. This will also help streamline the support ecosystem with the SPF-funded activity focusing on the 'supply' side (reaching out to engage key target groups; providing key employability support and helping address barriers to progression) while the LMP activities will then focus more on the 'demand-side' activities i.e. working with employers to design and develop employment support interventions for those further from the labour market and create/ring-fenced specific job roles for individuals that are successful in interviews for those roles
- Potential to use local government as a delivery mechanism for economic growth support activities – direct commissioning rather than open competitions. This reflects a similar approach under Shared Prosperity Fund when councils were a conduit for substantial proportion of delivery.

3.12 A key omission from the current consultation is the reference to the 'Belfast trailblazer' that was noted in the June 2025 budget statement regarding the fund. At that time, it was intended that this would be a proxy for the 'Pride in Place' funding that was made available to towns and cities across the UK. An indicative funding allocation of £2million was set aside for 'a Belfast neighbourhood' for a period of 10 years – similar to the funding that was allocated to Derry and Coleraine in 2023. Officers understand that this indicative allocation has simply been 'rolled into' the overall Local Growth Fund with the expectation that at least £2million will be allocated to Belfast-based projects – but with no ring-fenced mechanism for doing this. It is proposed that formal correspondence is issued to NIO to verify this position.

#### 4.0 Financial & Resource Implications

No specific financial resources.

#### 5.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

No specific equality or good relations implications. NIO will be responsible for the overall equality impact assessment."

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The Committee:

- i. approved the draft Council response and agreed that it would be submitted to the Northern Ireland Office; and
- ii. noted the update on the “Belfast Trailblazer” that had been referenced in the UK Government’s budget statement in June, 2025, and agreed that correspondence be issued to the Northern Ireland Office to seek clarity on its plans for the fund.

**Positioning Belfast to Compete**

**Belfast City and Region Place Partnership (BCRPP) Update**

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

**“1.0 Purpose of Report / Summary of Main Issues**

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to:**

- **Update Committee on the Belfast City & Region Place Partnership (BCRPP) 2025 / 2026 programme.**
- **Seek approval to extend Council’s involvement into the BCRPP to 2026 / 2027.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 Members are asked to:**

- **Note a presentation will be made at Committee from representatives from the Belfast City & Region Place Partnership (BCRPP).**
- **Note the update on the BCRPP 2025 / 2026 programme as set out in this report.**
- **Approve that officers continue to support the delivery of the BCRPP 2026 / 2027 programme including governance processes, administering programme funded expenditure and entering into associated contracts on behalf of and with oversight from the Taskforce, and in line with Council's procurement processes.**
- **Approve Council investment (from existing and approved City Regeneration and Development Budget) as part of the wider public private sector partnership**

contribution towards the delivery of the BCRPP 2026 / 2027 programme.

- Approve attendance by senior officers at MIPIM 2027 as part of the BCRPP 2026 / 2027 programme, noting that the BCRPP presence at MIPIM will be funded from the wider public-private sector BCRPP programme budget.
- Approve attendance of the Chair of the City Growth & Regeneration Committee and the Council's nominated Elected Member / Chair of the BRCD Council Panel, or their nominated representatives, to attend UKREiiF 2027 as part of the BCRPP 2026 / 2027 programme, noting that the BCRPP presence at UKREiiF 2027 will be funded from the wider public-private sector BCRPP programme budget.

**3.0 Background**

- 3.1** The Belfast City & Region Place Partnership (BCRPP) is a joint public–private initiative delivering a structured programme of work to attract inclusive investment that supports regeneration, infrastructure development, and a modern built environment for Belfast and the wider City Region.
- 3.2** The Partnership is supported by a broad coalition of public, private and anchor institutions, including Belfast City Council, all Belfast Region City Deal partner councils, Belfast Harbour, Translink, Queen's University Belfast, and representatives from the local development and regeneration sector.
- 3.3** Members will recall that this Committee agreed in May 2026 to receive a presentation from representatives of the BCRPP in June 2026. The purpose of the presentation is to update Members on the 2025/2026 programme of work and the proposed approach to the 2026/2027 programme, including priority issues and objectives for the Partnership moving forward.
- 3.4** Members may also recall that BCRPP representatives presented to this Committee in June 2025. The Committee subsequently approved Council participation in the 2025/2026 Programme of Work, as part of a wider public–private sector approach and recommended the establishment of a Community Forum/Reference Group. This was intended to provide a mechanism for engagement between the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Sectoral Advisory Panel (for Community Planning) and BCRPP partners.
- 3.5** In terms of context, Belfast City Council has, for over a decade, worked collaboratively with public and private sector

partners to proactively promote Belfast to local, national and international audiences to attract capital investment. This supports the delivery of the growth ambitions set out in the Belfast Agenda and aligns with the Council's strategic priority to position the city to compete globally for inclusive and sustainable investment.

- 3.6 Members will be aware that 'Positioning the City to Compete' is a key deliverable within the 2026/2027 City Growth and Regeneration Committee Plan, as agreed in April 2026, and is also aligned with the Council's International Relations Framework 2025–2028, agreed in November 2025.
- 3.7 The Council plays an important civic leadership role as convener and facilitator, bringing together public and private partners to collectively promote Belfast as a competitive location for investment. This is particularly important in attracting international capital to support regeneration and development, recognising that delivery of growth ambitions requires both public and private sector funding.

4.0 **Main Report**

- 4.1 The Belfast City & Region Place Partnership (BCRPP) 2025/2026 Programme commenced on 1 September 2025 and is delivering a structured programme aimed at attracting inclusive investment to support regeneration, infrastructure and a modern built environment across Belfast and the wider City Region. The Committee presentation will provide an overview of progress and highlight key outputs from the current programme. Key areas of focus for the partnership include:

4.2 **Communications**

The partnership has undertaken proactive, year-round media engagement to reinforce positive messaging around the Belfast region's investment proposition, targeting local, national and international real estate and development audiences, including development of an interactive, digital investment guide showcasing real estate investment and development opportunities across the region.

4.3 **Community Engagement**

Following a request from this Committee in June 2025, the BCRPP has established a Community Forum/Reference Group comprising representatives from the VCSE Sectoral Advisory Panel. While statutory public consultation requirements are already embedded within the Local Development Plan (LDP) and the planning application process, the Forum is intended to provide a broader platform

for engagement with community representatives and to support BCRPP partners in maximising the social, environmental and economic benefits associated with forthcoming investment and development.

Following formal establishment in November 2025, engagement has taken place with VCSE representatives, Council officers and BCRPP representatives on the role of the built environment plays in driving inclusive growth to help identify where local communities can most effectively engage in the city's physical regeneration and development activity. It is envisaged that, moving forward, the Forum will support the dissemination of information to local communities on forthcoming development proposals and will help identify and support additional opportunities for community involvement in future projects.

#### **4.5 Engagement and advocacy**

The Partnership has expanded activity to support two-way engagement with policymakers, the public sector and the real estate community. This includes advancing engagement to support the Belfast City Council led Belfast Place-Based Growth Proposition, which sets out the case for enhanced regeneration funding and proposes the establishment of a City Regeneration Fund focused on housing-led regeneration, green infrastructure and placemaking. The BCRPP has facilitated a number of high-level engagements including convening a joint Ministerial meeting with the Ministers for Finance, Economy, Infrastructure and Communities in September 2025; a meeting with the First Minister and Deputy First Minister held in April 2026; and subsequent follow up meeting with NICS and SIB in May 2025. In addition, following an invite from the BCRPP, the Minister for Communities attended UKREiiF supporting the Region's presence at what has become the UK's leading forum for real estate, regeneration and infrastructure investment.

#### **4.5 Scottish Cities Alliance Devolved Nations Political Leaders Meeting**

Following approval at Committee in February 2026, the Chair of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee and the Council's nominated Elected Member/Chair of the BRCD Council Panel attended UKREiiF to participate in the Devolved Nations Political Leaders Meeting and wider BCRPP activity.

#### **4.6 The Devolved Nations Political Leaders Meeting built on earlier engagement in January 2026 between the Scottish Cities Alliance, the Cardiff Capital Region and Belfast City Council to consider city-regional governance and devolution**

arrangements. The discussions highlighted a shared diagnosis of the 'double squeeze' facing cities in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland — characterised by UK-level decision-making and limited devolved powers — which restricts access to long-term funding, capital flows and policy discretion available to English Mayoral Authorities. Participants felt that deeper, faster devolution tailored to national contexts is required, supported by long-term funding under city control and strengthened multi-level governance between UK Government, devolved governments and city regions. Five areas of common ground were identified: the readiness of cities to deliver growth; the value of governance pluralism; the need for varied pace and models of devolution; opportunities for joined-up engagement through shared instruments; and the importance of a sustained collective voice in UK-level discussions. Participants considered continued group engagement and joint case-making to Westminster. Work is ongoing with representatives of the SCA and Cardiff Capital Region on a continued programme of engagement and next steps.

**4.7 Investment focused events**

The 2025 / 2026 programme has included participation at national and international real estate showcase events, including representation at UKREiiF 2026 and MIPIM 2026, showcasing the Belfast City Region to global investors and developers.

**4.8** At UKREiiF - the UK's leading built environment showcase event, in addition to attending the Devolved Nations Political Leaders Meeting, elected members and senior officials undertook a range of engagements. This included attendance at the Belfast City Region Showcase Reception; the UKREiiF International Investment Dinner attended by senior UK Government Ministers, institutional investors and major UK developers; the City & Regions Breakfast with other UK city leaders; the ministerial roundtable with the NI Minister for Communities and Director of Core Cities UK; roundtable discussions and meetings with national and international investors and developers. Collectively, these engagements helped ensure that the regions' voice was heard within conversations shaping future investment and regeneration priorities across the UK, while also facilitating shared learnings with other Core City elected representatives and senior officers.

**4.9** In addition, senior officers attended MIPIM 2026, the world's leading built environment conference and exhibition which attracts approximately 20,000 public and private sector delegates from across the globe. Attendees included major

European and UK cities such as London, Manchester, Newcastle, Cardiff, Liverpool alongside, for the first time, an Ireland at MIPIM pavilion, an Irish Government led initiative aimed to showcase Ireland as a progressive, high-growth location for international investment. MIPIM provided a platform for Belfast to position itself to a global audience and attract interest from institutional investors, developers, occupiers and funders.

**4.10 BCRPP's presence at UKREiiF and MIPIM has continued to stimulate significant investor and developer interest in Belfast and the wider region. Building on the strong engagement achieved at these flagship events, a coordinated programme of follow-up activity and inward-investment visits is now underway. This includes tailored engagement with:**

- **New-to-market residential developers: major UK, Irish and international homebuilders considering expansion into Belfast and Northern Ireland.**
- **Institutional investors: funds and asset managers with active mandates for housing-led regeneration, mixed-use districts and strategic infrastructure.**
- **End-use occupiers: including FDI companies, commercial and leisure operators, innovation-hub providers and global hotel brands assessing opportunities for expansion into Belfast.**

**4.11 Proposed approach to 2026 / 2027**

The Partnership is governed by a Taskforce comprising representatives from both the public and private sectors. The Taskforce has endorsed continuation of the Partnership into 2026/2027 and the delivery of a structured, pillar-based programme of activity. The presentation to be delivered to Committee by BCRPP representatives will outline the core objectives and proposed programme of activity for 2026/2027.

**4.12 BCRPP partners consistently express strong support for the value and benefits of participating in the wider public-private partnership and taking a coordinated approach to investment-promotion activity. While commercial sensitivities limit the detail that can be shared about specific investments secured for Belfast through this work, partners report a clear and shared view of the partnership's added value. This includes its impact on elevating the overall positioning of the Belfast City Region, enhancing the visibility of real estate investment opportunities, and contributing directly to business and investment activity that has emerged as a result of the partnership's work.**

- 4.13 From a Council perspective, the key aims and objectives of continued participation in the BCRPP, and contribution to the programme, include:**
- **Securing the investment required to support delivery of the city's shared growth ambitions, as set out in the Belfast Agenda, the Local Development Plan, and BCCRIS, while recognising the wider economic benefits, including economic growth, increased rates generation and delivery of corporate priorities;**
  - **Strengthening advocacy and support for the Belfast Place-Based Growth Proposition;**
  - **Maximising the benefits of investment through the Belfast Region City Deal and opportunities presented by the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor;**
  - **Securing investment in the built environment across the city to support job creation, inclusive economic growth, and enhanced physical and social infrastructure; and**
  - **Securing investment in key infrastructure priorities, including waterfront regeneration, connectivity, net zero transition, and innovation-led projects.**
  - **Supporting delivery of the Council's International Relations Framework 2025–2028;**
- 4.14 Council plays a key role in both the strategic and operational management of BCRPP including the development, management and delivery of the Programme of Activity. Members are asked to approve Council continuing to take on this role, with officers supporting the 2026 / 2027 programme including governance processes, administering programme funded expenditure and entering into associated contracts on behalf of and with oversight from the Taskforce, and in line with Council's procurement processes.**
- 4.15 The BCRPP Partnership is supported and funded by public, private and key anchor institution partners, with external funding forming the majority of the overall programme delivery budget. Members are asked to note the proposed approach to the 2026 / 2027 Programme and approve the Council investment (from existing and approved City Regeneration & Development Budget) as part of the wider public private partnership contribution towards the delivery of the 2026 / 2027 Programme.**

- 4.16 Council has facilitated and supported a Team Belfast presence at MIPIM since 2016. Following the positive feedback from MIPIM 2026, the Taskforce has endorsed a Belfast City Region presence at MIPIM 2027, in line with the approach taken by other UK cities and the Irish Government, and has recommended its inclusion within the wider BCRPP programme of activity for 2026 / 2027. The Taskforce considers that, to effectively showcase Belfast and the wider City Region, civic leadership and attendance by Belfast City Council is essential. Members are therefore asked to approve attendance by senior officers at MIPIM 2027, noting that the BCRPP presence at MIPIM will be funded through the wider public-private BCRPP Partnership budget.**
- 4.17 Following positive engagement at UKREiiF 2026, Committee approval is sought for the Chair of City Growth and Regeneration Committee and the Council's nominated Elected Member / Chair of the BRCD Council Panel, or nominated representatives, to attend UKREiiF 2027 to participate in wider BCRPP activity at UKREiiF, including participation in a Belfast City Region Showcase event. Members should note that the BCRPP presence at UKREiiF will be funded from the wider public-private BCRPP Partnership budget.**
- 5.0 Financial and Resource Implications**
- 5.1 The BCRPP Partnership is delivered as a public private sector sponsorship fund and is supported by a range of public, private and key anchor institutions who contribute financially towards the 2025 / 2026 programme, with external and private sector funding forming the majority of the overall programme budget. It is anticipated that the majority of the 2026 / 2027 programme budget will again be funded through external funding.**
- 5.2 Council has previously agreed to contribute of £80,000 towards the 2025 / 2026 Programme, and subject to Members agreement it is proposed that Council contribute £80,000 (from existing and approved City Regeneration and Development Budget) as part of the wider public private partnership investment towards the delivery of the 2026 / 2027 programme.**
- 5.3 Approval is sought for attendance of senior officers at MIPIM 2027. Travel costs for Council attendance at MIPIM 2027 to be met from within existing and approved departmental budgets. All other costs related to the Belfast City Region presence at MIPIM would be met from the 2026 / 2027 BCRPP Partnership programme budget.**

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**5.4 Committee approval is sought for the Chair of City Growth and Regeneration Committee and the Council’s nominated Elected Member / Chair of the BRCD Council Panel, or their nominated representatives, to attend UKREiiF 2027 to participate in wider BCRPP activity at UKREiiF, including attendance at a Belfast City Region Showcase event. Travel costs for Member attendance at UKREiiF 2027 to be met from within existing and approved departmental budgets. All other costs related to the BCRPP presence at UKREiiF will be funded from the 2026 / 2027 BCRPP Partnership programme budget.**

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

**None associated with this report.”**

The Director highlighted the update in respect of community engagement and advised the Committee that, further to its decision in June, 2025, to recommend the establishment of a Community Forum/Reference Group, BCRPP had established a Community Forum in November, 2025, to provide a mechanism for engagement between the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Sectoral Advisory Panel (for Community Planning) and BCRPP partners to help maximise the social, environmental and economic benefits associated with forthcoming investment and development.

She highlighted also the work of the partnership in relation to advocacy and engagement with policymakers, the public sector and the real estate community, which included engagement to support the Council led Belfast Place-Based Growth Proposition and participation at national and international investment focused events.

The Committee:

- i. noted the update on the Belfast City and Region Place Partnership (BCRPP) programme for 2025/26, as set out within the report;
- ii. approved that officers would continue to support the delivery of the BCRPP programme for 2026/27, which would include governance processes, administering programme funded expenditure, and entering into associated contracts on behalf of and with oversight from the BCRPP Taskforce in line with the Council's procurement processes;
- iii. approved Council investment, from existing and approved City Regeneration and Development Budget, as part of the wider public-private sector partnership contribution towards the delivery of the BCRPP programme for 2026/27;
- iv. approved the attendance of Council senior officers at MIPIM 2027 as part of the BCRPP 2026/27 programme, and noted that the BCRPP

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presence at MIPIIM would be funded from the wider public-private sector BCRPP programme budget; and

- v. approved the attendance of the Chairperson and the Council's nominated elected Member/Chair of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) Council Panel, or their nominees, to attend the UK's Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum (UKREiiF) in 2027 as part of the BCRPP 2026/27 programme, and noted that the BCRPP presence at UKREiiF 2027 would be funded from the wider public-private sector BCRPP programme budget.

### **Culture Night Update**

The Senior Manager for Culture and Tourism provided the Committee with an update on the planning and preparation for the 2026 Culture Night for Belfast, which would take place on 18th September, 2026.

The Senior Manager highlighted the update in respect of the programme development and engagement, which included an open call for participation in the 2026 Culture Night, which had opened on 1st June, 2026, targeted communication to the cultural sector, and a programme of scheduled in-person information and planning sessions.

She highlighted that, to further strengthen the geographic spread and sustainability of Culture Night, officers would explore opportunities to enhance engagement with Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) across the city. She advised the Committee that officers would continue to engage with the Department for Communities regarding potential funding support for Culture Night.

The Committee noted the update.

### **Festive Lights Update**

The Committee considered the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report / Summary of Main Issues**

- 1.1 To provide members with a report and overview of the 2025 festive lighting scheme and update on ongoing planning for 2026 provision**

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Note the contents of this report**

**3.0 Main Report**

**3.1 Background and Programme Context**

**The Culture Team currently led on the delivery of the Council's Christmas Lighting Scheme, working in partnership with**

appointed contractors, Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), Estates and Property teams, and private landowners to deliver a city centre-wide festive lighting programme.

In March 2025, a new tender was issued inviting proposals from contractors to deliver the city's Christmas lighting provision. This procurement process reflected a shift in approach, recognising the importance of festive lighting not only as seasonal decoration, but as a strategic cultural and economic intervention supporting city centre vitality.

The tender placed particular emphasis on the role of Christmas lighting in contributing to economic growth, reinforcing Belfast City Centre's position as a major retail, leisure and cultural destination, encouraging increased footfall, and enhancing the overall visitor experience during the peak winter trading period.

This approach aligns with the broader principles of the City's Lighting Strategy, which positions lighting as a core component of public realm quality, place identity, safety, and the activation of the night-time economy.

### **3.2 Strategic Objectives of the Christmas Lighting Scheme**

One of the core objectives of the Christmas Lighting Programme is to improve connectivity and coherence across the city centre, creating strong visual and experiential linkages between key destinations, including:

- Belfast Christmas Market at City Hall
- Victoria Square Shopping Centre
- CastleCourt Shopping Centre
- Primary pedestrian corridors such as Royal Avenue and Donegall Place

The lighting scheme is therefore not intended as a series of isolated installations, but as a coordinated city centre network that supports pedestrian movement, wayfinding, and dwell time across multiple retail, leisure and cultural anchors.

### **3.3 2025 Programme Delivery and Performance**

The 2025 installation was implemented across a significantly expanded footprint of the city. While the scheme was successfully delivered and well received, several infrastructure and operational issues impacted installation timelines. These included upgrade requirements of power supplies, timeliness of external agency approvals, issues incurred with private supply feeds, constraints due to construction on buildings with infrastructure points.

Despite these operational challenges BCC officers worked well with suppliers to secure the necessary approvals and alternative power sources or locations where required

#### **2025 Infrastructure Uplift and Enhancements**

As part of the 2025 programme uplift, Department for Infrastructure (Dfi) lighting columns were upgraded in line with current electrical and safety standards. This enabled the safe addition of column-mounted Christmas lighting features across the city centre.

Additional lighting was installed along Royal Avenue, including illumination of street trees. This intervention was widely recognised by BIDs and private landowners as having a positive impact on the inner city core, contributing to improved ambience and increased evening activity.

New lighting curtain installations were introduced on Castle Place and Fountain Lane, alongside colour-controlled festoon lighting on Garfield Street. Going forward, both the Fountain Lane lighting curtain and the Garfield Street festoon installations have remained in situ, with no additional cost to the Council, providing ongoing value from the initial investment.

Some minor issues were recorded during the season, primarily relating to servicing and loading vehicles coming into contact with lighting elements. In total, there were approximately 6 contractor call-outs related to maintenance and minor repairs.

#### **Festive Lighting Commission and Switch-On Event**

The full festive lighting programme was safely installed and fully operational in advance of the official Christmas Lights Switch-On event. Delivery was achieved within required timescales and in compliance with all relevant health and safety requirements.

Approximately 84 wayleave agreements for the installation of eyebolts and fixings were secured enabling lighting infrastructure to be installed across privately owned frontages and buildings.

The successful completion of these agreements in advance of the Christmas period was critical to programme delivery.

### **3.4 Issues for Long-Term Sustainability and Improvement**

While the 2025 programme was delivered successfully, a number of structural and strategic issues have been

identified which require longer-term planning and intervention to ensure future viability and growth of the programme.

It is clear that a future strategy should address a number of critical and interdependent components:

- **City Spectacle**: Developing a format and programme capable of functioning as a large-scale tourism product.
- **City-Wide Reach**: Exploring how to achieve greater lighting density and presence beyond the core city centre.
- **Pathways**: Building local skills, knowledge and career pathways within cultural sector for lighting and production
- **Infrastructure**: Addressing key infrastructure challenges and mitigating future operational risks, such as the reliance on private electrical feeds and the loss of fixing points.
- **Future Technologies**: a future-focused approach to festive lighting, recognising that lighting technologies are evolving rapidly and audience engagement is shifting towards immersive and interactive experiences.
- **City-Wide Approach**: At present, festive lighting remains heavily concentrated within the city centre core and future considerations should consider support for neighbourhood retail centres

However, it should be noted that development and implementation of this strategic approach would require an uplift to current fund levels.

### 3.5 **Next Steps and Strategic Direction**

Planning is underway for the delivery of the 2026 core scheme and associated switch on event.

Festive lighting budget allocation is £300,000 and, with management support previously facilitated through BCCM. Council have been in ongoing discussions with the BIDs about future provisions of the management of the scheme but for 2026 this will remain as council led delivery.

**Officers will continue to engage with the BIDs to identify additional areas that can be supported through allocation of their own funding.**

**Future intention, aligned with ongoing work on the development of an events action plan, and subject to future budget provision, is to move towards a more strategic, sustainable and place-based approach to Christmas lighting, which:**

- **Supports economic regeneration objectives**
- **Enhances the city's cultural offer and visitor experience**
- **Reduces operational and safety risks**
- **Builds local creative and technical capacity**
- **Enables more equitable city-wide participation**

**3.6 Financial and Resource Implications**

**There are currently no financial implications attached to this report.**

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

**There are no Equality or Good Relation Implications attached to this report.”**

During discussion, the Senior Manager for Culture and Tourism answered questions from the Members in relation to support for organisations along the city's arterial routes seeking to install festive lighting, engagement with the BIDs and the potential to enhance connectivity of the lighting.

After discussion, the Committee noted the update.

**UNESCO City of Music Programme Update**

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the delivery of the UNESCO City of Music programme of activity and the progress across accessibility initiatives, community engagement, international partnerships and sector support.

Further to the Committee's decision at its meeting in April, 2026, to approve the priority work areas and budget allocations of the Culture, Tourism and Events Workplan for 2026/27, which included an allocation for additional UNESCO City of Music activity, the report also outlined a breakdown of the proposed additional activity and associated allocations for the Committee's consideration.

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The Committee:

- i. noted the contents of the report; and
- ii. approved the additional aspects of the UNESCO City of Music 2026/27 Workplan delivery, as set out within Appendix 1 of the report.

**Department for Communities Consultation on  
Museums Policy - Draft Response**

The Director of Economic Development submitted for the Committee's consideration a draft Council response, set out within Appendix 1 of the report, to the Department for Communities' consultation on museums policy.

The Senior Manager for Culture and Tourism advised the Committee that, should the draft response be approved, it would be submitted to the Department for Communities by the consultation deadline, with the caveat that it would be subject to ratification by the Council at its meeting on 1st July, 2026.

The Committee:

- i. noted the contents of report; and
- ii. approved the draft Council response to the consultation, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, and that it would be submitted to the Department for Communities by the consultation deadline, subject to Council ratification at its meeting on 1st July, 2026.

**Strategic and Operational Issues**

**Committee Plan 2025/26 End-of-Year Report  
and 2026/27 Performance Information**

The Strategic Director of Place and Economy submitted for the Committee's consideration a report which provided a copy of the Committee's End-of-Year Performance Report for 2025/26.

At its meeting in April, 2026, the Committee had approved a draft Committee Plan for 2026/27, subject to additional performance information being submitted to a future meeting. Accordingly, a final Committee Plan for 2026/27 which included performance information was submitted for the Committee's consideration.

The Committee:

- i. noted the contents of the Committee Plan's End of Year Report for 2025/26; and
- ii. approved the performance section of the Committee Plan for 2026/27.

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Thursday, 18th June, 2026**

**Notices of Motion Quarterly Update**

The Committee noted the update in relation to the Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance which it was responsible for, as set out within Appendix 1 of the report.

**Minutes of the Zoo Long-Term Financial  
Sustainability Group - 27th May 2026**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Zoo Long-Term Financial Sustainability Group of 27th May, 2026.

Chairperson

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# City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 10th June, 2026

## REMOTE MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

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

Also in attendance: Councillor Flynn.

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; and  
Mr. C. Mealey, Committee Services Officer.

### Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were received from Councillors Kelly and Nelson.

### Adjournment

Moved by Councillor Lyons,  
Seconded by Councillor Groogan and

Resolved – That, in light of the disorder across parts of the city, the  
meeting of the Committee be adjourned.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed that the meeting be adjourned and that the  
business listed on the agenda be considered at a future date in June, 2026, to be  
determined in consultation with the Chairperson.

The meeting was adjourned.

Chairperson

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## Licensing Committee

Wednesday, 17th June, 2026

### MEETING OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor T. Brooks (Chairperson);  
Alderman Rodgers; and  
Councillors Anglin, Bradley, R. Brooks, de Faoite,  
M. Donnelly, P. Donnelly, D. Douglas, Ferguson,  
McCann, McDowell, McKay, McKeown.

In attendance: Mrs. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;  
Mr. S. Hipkins, Building Control Manager;  
Ms. V. Donnelly, City Protection Manager;  
Mr. K. McDonnell, Solicitor (Regulatory and Planning); and  
Mrs. L. McLornan, Committee Services Officer.

#### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors Abernethy, Kelly, McCallin and Smyth.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 20th May 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 June.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor R. Brooks declared an interest in item 2 (b) Application for a New Licence to operate a House of Multiple Occupation; and Councillor de Faoite an interest in item 2(d) Application for a Grant of a 7-Day Annual Entertainments for The Donegal, 11-17 Donegal Street. Both Members left the meeting whilst the items were under discussion.

#### **Delegated Matters**

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

#### **Licences Issued Under Delegated Authority**

The Committee noted the licence applications which had, since its last meeting, been issued under the Scheme of Delegation.

**Licensing Committee,  
Wednesday, 17th June, 2026**

**Application for a New Licence to  
Operate a House of Multiple Occupation**

The HMO 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 a start date of 11th January, 2021, with an expiry date of 11th January, 2026, in the name of the existing owner.

A reminder letter had been sent to the existing owner informing them that they were required to renew the licence before the expiry of the existing one.

The Committee was advised that an application for a new HMO licence was received from the applicant on 19th March, 2026.

An application for a Temporary Exemption notice (TEN) was received on 23rd January, 2026, and granted on 26th January, 2026, with an expiry date of 26th April, 2026. The TEN had subsequently been extended until 27th June, 2026.

The HMO 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 3rd March, 2026.

It was reported that the NIHMO Unit had consulted with the Environmental Protection Unit in relation to nighttime and 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.

**Licensing Committee,  
Wednesday, 17th June, 2026**

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) "2/22 Botanic, Holylands, Rugby" 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.

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, 5th May, 2026, 88% of all dwelling units in policy area HMA 2/22 were made up of HMOs and flats/apartments, which in turn exceeded the 20% development limit as set out in Policy HOU10. There were 1123 (44%) licensed HMOs with a capacity of 294 persons in that HMA.

It was outlined that there were a total of 2545 dwelling units in HMA 2/22. The Members were advised that, on 5th May, 2026, out of 291 premises available for rent within the BT7 area, there were 167 licensed HMOs which represented 671 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.

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.

**Licensing Committee,  
Wednesday, 17th June, 2026**

The Committee was advised that one letter of objection, with two letter of support had been received in relation to the application. It was also reported that the accommodation had been inspected by the NIHMO service, on 12th January, 2026, at which time had it complied with the physical standards for an HMO for five persons.

On 5th May, 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 and advised that she opposed the decision and wished to appear before the Committee.

The Chairperson welcomed the applicant to the meeting. She advised the Committee that the property had operated as an HMO for approximately 20 years. Therefore, granting the licence would not increase the concentration of HMOs within the area but would simply allow the continuation of an established and longstanding use. The property had consistently functioned responsibly as shared accommodation and had formed part of the local housing provision for many years.

She explained that there was an assumption that HMO accommodation in the area was occupied predominately by students, but this was not her experience at the property. She stated that she had personally managed the property for the past 11 years and, during that time, it had primarily been occupied by young professionals. She referred to the reminder which had been sent by the Council and indicated that she had not received a copy. She concluded by requesting the Committee to approve the granting of the licence.

He response to a question from a Member, the HMO Unit Manger advised that the Council was not required to issue renewal letters.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor McKay  
Seconded by Councillor P. Donnelly 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.

**Suspension of HMO Register**

The Committee noted an update in relation to the steps taken regarding the suspension of the HMO register, agreed to maintain the current position and that report on future options be brought back to the Committee.

**Grant of a 14-Day Occasional Outdoor Entertainments Licence and request to provide entertainment beyond 11.00pm for an outdoor area to the rear of Lindsay House at 8 Callender Street**

The Director of Planning and Building Control advised the Committee that an application had been received for the grant of a 14-Day Occasional Outdoor Entertainments Licence for the outdoor area to the rear of Lindsay House located at 8 Callender Street, based on the Council's standard conditions to provide outdoor musical entertainment. She reminded the Members that Fleadh Cheoil na hEireann was taking place in Belfast from Sunday 2 August to Sunday 9 August 2026 and the applicant planned to provide entertainment in this outdoor area from Friday 31 July to Sunday 9 August. The applicant had also requested permission for the musical entertainment to run beyond 11.00pm until 1.00am in the outdoor area on ten nights.

There would be amplified entertainment in the outdoor area, and an acoustic report had been submitted. The Licensee had confirmed that the music noise level would be reduced after 11.00pm to reduce the likelihood of unreasonable disturbance to nearby residents.

The Director reported that, subsequent to the report having been issued, the PSNI had indicated that it had no objections. In addition, the issues which had been raised by the NIFRS could be dealt with as the work progressed to completion at the premises. The other issues were set out in the report in relation to the acoustic report and the neighbourhood pre-notification letter and were being dealt with by the Environmental Protection Unit.

Moved by Councillor McKay,  
Seconded by Councillor Bradley and

Resolved – That the Committee approves the application for the grant of the 14-Day Occasional Outdoor Entertainments License; and agrees that entertainment should be permitted to take place beyond the standard hours of licence to 1.00 am on all ten nights from 31st July till 9th August, 2026, inclusive.

**Application for the Grant of a 7-Day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence for The Donegal, 11-17 Donegal Street**

The Committee was advised that an application for the grant of a 7-Day Annual Entertainments License had been received for The Donegal, 11-17 Donegal Street.

The day and hours that outdoor musical entertainment was proposed to be provided were:

- Monday to Saturday: 12.00 noon to 11.00 pm; and
- Sunday: 12.30 pm to 10:30 pm

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The applicant had applied to provide outdoor entertainment to the rear of their vacant building at 11-17 Donegall Street. Works had commenced to reinstate an existing outdoor area to the rear of the building, which was the area where it was proposed to provide outdoor entertainment.

The granting of an outdoor entertainments licence would not confer nor negate any requirement for planning permission which might be required depending on the duration of the use.

The Members were advised that no written representations had been lodged as a result of the advertisement of the application. Subsequent to the report having been issued, the PSNI had indicated that it had no objections to the application. A response was still outstanding from the NIFRS and the granting of a Licence would be subject to a satisfactory response.

The works to create the outdoor entertainment area were due to be completed on 18 July 2026. If the Committee decided to grant the Outdoor Entertainments Licence, it would not be issued until such time as all works were completed to the satisfaction of the Service.

The applicant proposed to provide non-amplified musical entertainment within the rear outdoor area of his building in the form of traditional music live bands during the Fleadh. Entertainment would not be provided beyond the standard finishing time for outdoor musical entertainment of 11.00 pm.

If a decision was taken to Grant the licence, a condition would be added to the licence relating to the sole provision of non-amplified musical entertainment. The following special conditions are attached to the Outdoor Entertainments Licences.

1. Maximum numbers will be agreed at the discretion of the Building Control service and will vary depending on the individual entertainment proposals.
2. Prior to entertainment taking place, the licensee is required to demonstrate evidence of early consultation with Building Control service and have in place a robust system for dealing with complaints. This is to be agreed in advance.

The Committee approved the application for the grant of the 7-Day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence with special conditions.

**Application for the Grant of a 14-Day Occasional Outdoor Entertainments Licence for a carpark at 38-56 North Street. Application also to consider a request to provide outdoor entertainment beyond 11.00pm, and a request to provide indoor musical entertainment beyond 11.00pm within a marquee**

The Director reported that an application had been received for a 14-Day Occasional Outdoor Entertainments Licence for a car park located at 38-56 North Street. The applicant has also proposed to provide entertainment within the new outdoor area beyond 11.00pm.

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The day and hours proposed were:

- Thursday 6, Friday 7, and Saturday 8 August: 11.30am to 01.00am the following morning

All remaining days of the 14-Day Occasional Licence were to remain as standard hours:

- 11.30am to 11.00pm

There would be no amplified entertainment in the outdoor area.

In addition, the applicant has requested permission to provide entertainment beyond 11.00pm within a marquee to be located at the site. This structure was subject to the conditions of a Marquee Entertainments Licence granted for the site. The day and hours proposed were:

- Thursday 6, Friday 7, and Saturday 8 August: 11.30am to 01.00am the following morning

There would be amplified entertainment in the marquee.

Both the PSNI and the NIFRS had been consulted and responses were still outstanding. Should the Committee be minded to grant the Licence, it would subject to satisfactory responses from both.

The other issues were set out in the report in relation to the acoustic report and the neighbourhood pre-notification letter and were being dealt with by the Environmental Protection Unit.

The Committee:

- Approved the application for the grant of the 14-Day Occasional Outdoor Entertainments Licence with special conditions;
- Agreed that entertainment should be permitted to take place beyond the standard hours of licence to 1.00 am on all three nights from 6th till 8th August, 2026, inclusive; and
- Agreed that, in relation to the marquee, entertainment should be permitted to take place beyond the standard hours of licence to 1.00 am on all three nights from 6th till 8th August, 2026, inclusive.

**Application for the Grant of a 14-Day Occasional  
Outdoor Entertainments Licence for an outdoor  
area to the rear of Oh Yeah, 15-21 Gordon Street**

The Director submitted for the Committee's consideration application for the grant of a 14-Day Occasional Outdoor Entertainments Licence for the outdoor area/carpark to the rear of the Oh Yeah Music Centre at 15-21 Gordon Street, based on the Council's Standard Conditions to provide outdoor musical entertainment.

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The Committee was reminded that Fleadh Cheoil na hEireann would run for 8 days from Sunday 2 August to Sunday 9 August 2026 and the applicant planned to provide entertainment on four days from Thursday 6 August to Sunday 9 August 2026, up to the standard finishing time for outdoor entertainment of 11.00pm.

The PSNI and the NIFRS had been consulted and responses were still outstanding. Should the Committee be minded to grant the Licence, it would subject to satisfactory responses from both.

Musical entertainment was to be amplified and would cease at 11.00pm. The Council's Environmental Protection Unit was to provide a maximum sound level to be adhered to and, if the Committee agreed to grant the Licence, this would be included as a special condition.

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

**Application to provide Indoor (marquee) musical entertainment beyond 11.00pm at Fleadh Cheoil temporary campsite at Titanic Quarter Harland & Wolff**

The Director of Planning and Building Control reported that the Fleadh Cheoil temporary campsite at Titanic Quarter Harland and Wolff had submitted a grant application for a 14-Day Occasional Indoor (Marquee) Entertainments Licence. The Fleadh Cheoil na hEireann campsite in the Titanic Quarter would run for eight nights from Sunday 2nd August to Sunday 9th August 2026 and a request had been received from Nord Events Ltd. to permit entertainment to be provided beyond 11.00pm in a Marquee at the East Belfast Titanic Quarter - Caravan/Motorhome Site.

There was currently no Entertainment Licence in place at the site, however, an application had been received, and it would be issued under delegated authority, providing there were no objections, once the 28 day objection period had expired. This was not an application to vary the terms of the Indoor (Marquee) licence, but a request for the Council's permission to extend the hours once the Entertainment Licence had been granted.

The event organiser had indicated that Indoor (Marquee) music events were scheduled for the nights of Sunday 2 August to Sunday 9 August inclusive. The request was to provide entertainment to midnight on all of these eight nights. There would be no amplified entertainment at the campsite.

The PSNI and the NIFRS had been consulted and responses were still outstanding. Should the Committee be minded to grant the Licence, it would subject to satisfactory responses from both.

The other issues were set out in the report in relation to the acoustic report and the neighbourhood pre-notification letter and were being dealt with by the Environmental Protection Unit.

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The Committee agreed that entertainment should be permitted to take place beyond the standard hours of licence to midnight on all eight nights of the Fleadh campsite from 2nd till 9th August inclusive.

**Application to provide outdoor musical entertainment  
beyond 11.00 pm at Falls Park**

The Committee was advised that a request had been received from the organisers of Féile an Phobail to permit the planned entertainment to run beyond 11.00 pm on up to eight nights during the festival event within Falls Park, running from Friday 24 July to Sunday 9 August 2026.

The Director informed the Committee that Falls Park has a 7-Day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence and a 7-Day Annual Indoor Entertainments Licence for a Marquee and both have been used to hold events in the past, primarily for this event. The Licences were held by the City and Neighbourhood Services Department and were transferred to the organisers for the duration of their event.

As this is not an application to vary the terms of the Outdoor licence, but a request for Council's permission to extend the hours under an existing Licence Condition, there was no requirement for public advertisement in this case.

The event organiser had indicated that outdoor music events were scheduled for Friday 24, Saturday 25, Friday 31 July, Saturday 1, Thursday 6, Friday 7 and Saturday 8, and Sunday 9 August 2026. The request was to provide entertainment beyond 11.00 pm on all of these nights.

The event organiser had indicated that it was intended only to operate to 1.00 am on three occasions. These dates had been identified as Friday 7, Saturday 8 August and Sunday 9 August. The Service was awaiting confirmation from the organisers on the actual finish time of the remaining events for which extension beyond standard hours had also been requested.

The event had been running for over 30 years as a community festival and, in recent years, organisers had consolidated the music events hosted at Falls Park to six nights. That decision was motivated by a desire to limit disruption to the community in close proximity to Falls Park. However, the request for entertainment to go beyond 11.00pm for 2026 would be to increase the number of occasions to eight evenings.

The applicant has indicated that it was intended that entertainment would go on no later than 1.00 am for the events on Friday 7, Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 August, with this request for extended hours on these nights being due to the diversionary nature of the events.

The Committee was reminded that in 2025 it had agreed to grant the organisers permission to operate on 6 nights of the event beyond the standard hours of 11.00 pm to 1.00 am and on all these nights entertainment did continue beyond 11.00 pm.

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A significant factor, which was unique to this year's event, was the operation of a campsite for the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann at a neighbouring location within Falls Park. Féile an Phobail have a stated aim to deliver, in conjunction with Belfast City Council, a safe, accessible and well-managed facility for visitors to the city for the Fleadh Cheoil.

The PSNI and the NIFRS had been consulted and responses were still outstanding. Should the Committee be minded to approve the extended which had been requested, it would subject to satisfactory responses from both.

The other issues were set out in the report in relation to previous noise complaints, the proximity of the campsite for the Fleadh Cheoil nah Éireann, the acoustic report and the neighbourhood pre-notification letter and were being dealt with by the Environmental Protection Unit.

The Committee agreed that entertainment should be permitted to take place beyond the standard hours of licence up to 1.00am on all eight nights.

**Application for the Grant of a 7 Day Annual  
Outdoor Entertainments Licence for Lavery's Bar**

The Committee considered an application for the grant of 7-Day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence based on the Council's standard conditions, to provide outdoor musical entertainment for Laverys Bar, 12-18 Bradbury Bar.

The areas currently licensed to provide entertainment were:

- Ground Floor Bar, with a maximum capacity of 485 persons.
- First Floor Lounge, with a maximum capacity of 300 persons.
- Second Floor, Pool Room Layout, with a maximum capacity of 300 persons.
- Second Floor, Concert Layout, with a maximum capacity of 600 persons.
- Mezzanine, with a maximum capacity of 60 persons.
- Woodworkers Bar, with a maximum capacity of 210 persons.

The days and hours during which the premises are currently licensed to provide entertainment were:

- Monday to Thursday: 11.30 am to 1.00 am the following morning
- Friday: 11.30 am to 2.00 am the following morning
- Saturday: 11.30 am to 3.00 am the following morning
- Sunday: 11.30 am to 12.00 midnight.

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The premise operates as a public bar and nightclub, with entertainment being provided on all floors in the form of live bands and DJs.

The applicant proposed to provide entertainment within three external areas, two of which were beer gardens located to the rear of Laverys Bar and the other was a roof top smoking area.

The proposed occupancy of the areas would be:

- External beer garden, with a maximum capacity of 80 persons.
- External first floor beer garden, with a maximum capacity of 140 persons.
- Roof Top smoking area, with a maximum capacity of 100 persons.

The applicant has applied to provide entertainment in the form of live music or DJ's, within these existing outdoor areas.

The standard outdoor entertainment hours were Monday to Sunday: 11:30am to 11.00pm. However, the applicant has proposed providing entertainment on the following days and hours:

- Monday to Sunday: 11:30 am to 1.00am the following morning

The Members were reminded that all applications for the grant of Outdoor Entertainments Licences must be brought before Committee for consideration.

The Members were advised that no written representations had been lodged as a result of the advertisement of the application. The PSNI had indicated that it had no objections to the application. A response was still outstanding from the NIFRS and the granting of a Licence would be subject to a satisfactory response.

A total of three during performance inspections have been carried out on the premises by Officers from the Service regarding the provision of indoor entertainment in the past 12 months.

The inspections revealed that the conditions of the Entertainments Licence were being adhered to and Officers were satisfied that all operational and management procedures were being implemented effectively.

Given the nature of the entertainment at the venue, an acoustic report outlining the measures to be taken to ensure minimal disturbance to neighbouring residential premises, both due to noise breakout or from patron activity, was requested and forwarded to the Council's Environmental Protection Unit (EPU) for appraisal.

The Committee approved the application for the grant of a 7-Day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence with special conditions.

**Caravan Site Licence application for  
Titanic Quarter, Hamilton Road, Belfast**

The Committee considered the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report**

**1.1 To consider a licence application and seek approval for the grant of a Caravan Site Licence, subject to conditions, in respect of a caravan site at Titanic Quarter, Hamilton Road, Belfast in accordance with the statutory requirements of the Caravans Act (Northern Ireland) 1963 [Caravans Act \(Northern Ireland\) 1963](https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/model-licence-conditions-2025-documents) . In considering any licence application, Councils must have regard to the Model Licence Conditions 2025 – Residential Sites and Holiday Sites issued by the Department for Infrastructure (DfC). <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/model-licence-conditions-2025-documents>**

**2.0 Recommendation**

**2.1 The Committee is requested to;**

- Note the contents of this report concerning the application for a Caravan Site Licence at Titanic Quarter, Hamilton Road, Belfast.
- Consider the grant of the Caravan Site Licence subject to the site being constructed and completed in accordance with the approved plans and in compliance with all statutory requirements, including full Planning Permission, under the Caravans Act (Northern Ireland) 1963 and associated licence conditions following a final site inspection and receipt of satisfactory documentation /certification
- Note that the Scheme of Delegation will be updated to include the Caravans Act (Northern Ireland) 1963
- Delegate authority to the Strategic Director of City Operations for the grant of a Caravan Site Licence in respect of this application

**3.0 Main Report**

**3.1 Under the Caravans Act (NI) 1963, any caravan site operator must hold a valid licence issued by the Council. The Caravans Act (Northern Ireland) 1963 confers upon the Council the power to issue caravan site licences and to attach conditions to the site licence.**

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- 3.2** The Council received an application for a caravan site licence in respect of a site located at Titanic Quarter, Hamilton Road Belfast on 18th May 2026 and this has now been considered by officers.
- 3.3** The applicant is Nord Events Ltd who have been appointed by the Council as the camp site operator for the provision of a caravan site to accommodate 349 holiday/touring caravans at this location for the Fleadh Cheoil na hEireann event (2nd to 10th August 2026). A site plan has been included with the application detailing arrangements such as capacity, amenity area to include WC and showering facilities, waste disposal, hospitality area and car parking arrangements etc (Appendix 1).
- 3.4** As this is a temporary caravan site, it has not yet been constructed and therefore a full compliance inspection and review of all the necessary documentation cannot be completed until the site works are complete which is anticipated to commence mid-July. Therefore, a licence can only be issued following a full inspection of the site arrangements in late July.
- 3.5** The Caravans Act (Northern Ireland) 1963 specifies that a district council may on receipt of an application issue a site licence in respect of land if, at the time when the site licence is issued, the land is entitled to the benefit of a permission for use as a caravan site under the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.
- 3.6** Temporary planning approval for the provision of a caravan site at this location to cover the Fleadh Cheoil for both 2026 and 2027 LA04/2026/0 393F was granted by the Planning Committee on 19th May 2026 subject to a final response and conditions from Environmental Health to address environmental considerations. The Planning Permission has not yet been issued and upon issue, the duration of the caravan site licence will shall run concurrently with the period of the extant planning permission. The licence will cease to have effect when the planning permission expires or otherwise ceases to be valid.
- 3.7** The Caravans Act (NI) 1963 permits the Council to attach conditions to a Site Licence it may think it necessary or desirable to impose on the site operator of the land to protect the occupants of caravans as well as the public at large and will include the following considerations:

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- Restricting the occasions on which caravans are stationed on the land
  - Restricting the total number of caravans which are stationed on the land
  - Controlling the types of caravan on the land
  - Securing that, at all times when caravans are stationed on the land, proper measures are taken for preventing and detecting the outbreak of fire and adequate means of fighting fire are provided and maintained;
  - Securing that adequate sanitary facilities, and such other facilities, services or equipment as may be specified, are provided for the use of persons dwelling on the land in caravans and that, at all times when caravans are stationed thereon for the purposes of human habitation, any facilities and equipment so provided are properly maintained.
- 3.8 Model Caravan site licence conditions developed by DfI were considered and adopted by this Committee on 18th February 2026.  
<https://minutes.belfastcity.gov.uk/documents/s126110/Caravan%20Licensing%20Model%20Conditions.pdf> These model conditions were relied upon to draft the proposed site conditions for consideration in this licence application.
- 3.9 In addition to the model conditions the Council also had regard to the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service Fire Safety Guide for Caravan Site Operators dated April 2026 (Appendix 2). This Guide provides advice and guidance on the minimum fire safety measures that caravan site operators must legally adhere to.
- 3.10 After considering the application, the conditions contained in Appendix 3 are proposed for this licence. Additional conditions are proposed in relation to the provision of certification for the electrical installation, temporary water supplies and a fire risk assessment prior to occupation of the site.
- 3.11 The issue of this licence will be subject to the issue of full planning permission, a satisfactory site inspection, receipt of any requested documentation or required certification after the site construction is completed in July 2026 and prior to the site opening on 2nd August 2026.

**3.12 The Committee should note that under the current Scheme of Delegation, the Caravans Act (Northern Ireland) 1963 has been omitted and therefore should the Committee agree to the grant of a licence in respect of this application for a caravan site at Hamilton Road, Belfast, the Committee are asked to delegate authority to the Strategic Director of City Operations.**

**4.1 Financial and Resource Implications**

The Council shall, on the payment by the applicant of a fee of ten pounds, issue a site licence in respect of the land within two months of that date.

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

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

The Committee:

- Noted the contents of the report concerning the application for a Caravan Site Licence at Titanic Quarter, Hamilton Road, Belfast;
- Granted the Caravan Site Licence, subject to the site being constructed and completed in accordance with the approved plans and in compliance with all statutory requirements, including full Planning Permission, under the Caravans Act (Northern Ireland) 1963 and associated licence conditions following a final site inspection and receipt of satisfactory documentation /certification;
- Noted that the Scheme of Delegation will be updated to include the Caravans Act (Northern Ireland) 1963;
- Delegated authority to the Strategic Director of City Operations for the grant of a Caravan Site Licence in respect of this application; and
- Noted that the conditions which would be attached to the licence as set out in paragraph 3.7 and 3.8 of the report.

Chairperson

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## Planning Committee

Tuesday, 16th June, 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, Hanvey, Magee,  
McCabe and McCann.

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);  
Ms. L. Walshe, Principal Planning Officer;  
Mr. N. Hasson, Senior Planning Officer; and  
Ms. C. Donnelly, Committee Services Officer.

#### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported on behalf of Councillors Groogan and Whyte.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 19th May 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 June, 2026.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

The Chairperson (Councillor Murphy) declared an interest in the item under the heading "LA04/2024/1195/F - Proposed residential development comprising 20 no dwelling units including 8 no semi-detached dwellings, 1 no detached dwelling, 2 no 3-bed apartments and 9 no 2-bed apartments with associated car parking, landscaping and associated works. Lands south of 7-14 Wolfhill Manor, east of No 42 Mill Avenue and west and north west of No 11 Mill Avenue, Ligoniel", in that he had previously engaged with local residents and he left the meeting whilst the item was being considered.

#### **Planning Appeals Notified**

The Committee noted the appeals decisions.

#### **Planning Decisions Issued**

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

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**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**

**NIAO Strategic Review of the Planning Appeals Commission**

The Committee noted the report.

**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**

**LA04/2022/0809/F - Amendments to approved schemes ref. Z/2008/0993/F (erection of 53 No. dwellings) & ref. Z/2013/0120/F (erection of 46 No. dwellings); to reduce overall density from 99 No. dwellings to 92 No. dwellings and associated and ancillary works. - Lands to the south and west of Woodland Grange to the north of Blacks Gate and to the east of Moor Park Mews, Belfast**

The Planning Manager outlined the application to the Committee and explained that the application had been approved by the Committee in October, 2025, December, 2025 and February, 2026, and that DfI Roads had raised late issues with regard to the design of the proposed cycle/pedestrian link. He stated that further design changes were likely which could increase the cost of delivery for the developer.

He explained that final details of the link were still to be finalised and that discussions were ongoing between DfI Roads, the applicant and officers.

The Planning Manager stated that it was recommended that the application be approved, subject to conditions and a Section 76 legal agreement.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the Section 76 planning agreement and conditions, to deal with any issues that might arise from further consultation with DfI Roads, including consideration of viability, and deal with any other matters that might arise, provided that they were not substantive.

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**LA04/2025/0288/F - Retrospective change of use from ground floor taxi passenger terminal, cafe, office and newsagent to a Homeless Centre, Category D1(B). The centre will provide meals, washing and changing facilities and an internal social amenity area for users. The centre will operate Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each week from 4:00 pm up until 10:00 pm (Amended Description) - Existing taxi passenger terminal and former retail unit located within 35a King Street**

The Planning Manager explained that the Committee had deferred the application at its meeting in February as the Environmental Health consultation response remained outstanding, he summarised the application and highlighted the following key issues for consideration:

- Principle;
- Design and placemaking;
- Health and wellbeing;
- Access to transport;
- Impact on amenity; and
- Antisocial behaviour;

He reported that, as some of the odour abatement equipment would be outside the application site, the applicant had accepted a no-cooking condition that would only permit food to be heated, and that Environmental Health officers had offered no objection. He added that, further advice sought from the PSNI had confirmed that there had been no increase in crime or antisocial behaviour in the location of the application site since May, 2025.

He stated that it was recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to conditions.

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

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**Planning Applications**

**LA04/2025/1991/F - Subdivision of the existing cash and carry building and the change of use of 4,750 sq.m gross floorspace for use as a Class A1 retail; erection of new loading bay in service yard; minor external alterations to building; reconfiguration of car park. - Makro, 97 Kingsway**

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

- Principle of the Change of Use;
- Proposed Design and placemaking;
- Proposed Access and Car Parking;
- Climate Change;
- Health Impacts;
- Environmental Protection;
- Waste Water Infrastructure;
- Waste Storage;
- Employability and Skills; and
- Pre-Application Community Consultation

She explained that a consultation from DfI Roads remained outstanding, NI Water had objected to the proposal and that SES required further information to carry out a comprehensive Habitats Regulation Assessment. She added that no third-party objections had been received.

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

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. R. McLeod, Redline Planning, to the meeting, who was attending on behalf of the applicant.

Mr. McLeod stated that the proposal would allow Tesco to relocate from its existing site in Dunmurry, when the lease expires in 2027 and would ensure that Tesco could continue to serve its existing customers and ensure continuity of employment for its employees.

He stated that there would not be any adverse retail impact on an existing town centre and would involve the sustainable reuse of an existing building with minor external design changes.

He pointed out that there had been no third-party objections and that community consultation had been positive, with the local community being in favour of the proposals. He stated that the applicant supported the officer's recommendation for approval.

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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 the outstanding DFI Roads and SES consultations and any other issues that might arise provided that they were not substantive.

**LA04/2025/2215/F - Proposed change of use from offices to nursing home comprising 156 no. bedrooms, ancillary scanning unit and all associated accommodation including dining/ café areas, day rooms and lounges, hairdressers, cinema rooms, treatment rooms and internal courtyard. The proposal also includes ancillary offices, landscaping, cycle parking, external alterations and all other site and associated works. - Halifax Building, 24 Cromac Place**

The Principal Planning Officer summarised the application and highlighted the following main issues for consideration:

- Principle of a Nursing and Residential Care facility at the location;
- Flood risk;
- Design and placemaking;
- Impact on amenity;
- Climate change;
- Open space;
- Access and transport;
- Health impacts;
- Environmental protection;
- Waste-water infrastructure;
- Waste management;
- Section 76 planning agreement; and
- Pre-Application Community Consultation.

She stated that the proposed refurbishment of the building was considered to be of a good design, appropriate to its location and context, that would regenerate a vacant building.

She reported that NI Water had objected to the application on the grounds of insufficient wastewater infrastructure and that there had been no other objections from statutory or non-statutory consultees.

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

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. T. Stokes and Ms. E. McIlwaine from TSA Planning to the meeting, attending on behalf of the applicant.

Mr. Stokes explained that the development had been brought forward by Healthcare Ireland which currently managed and owned 44 care homes in Northern Ireland and a further 200 in Great Britain, providing for a range of specialist care types.

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He stated that the proposal represented one of three projects that Healthcare Ireland had been progressing in Belfast, its development at Donegal Road was previously approved and was progressing to site, and a third project at Netherleigh House in east Belfast

He stated that Healthcare Ireland was partially backed by WELLTOWER, a US-based healthcare real estate investment trust and the UK's largest provider of residential healthcare. He explained that, collectively, the three projects in Belfast represented a significant investment of around £100million into the healthcare sector and would create around 450 new jobs in the city and added that the chronic shortage of bed spaces and need for specialist facilities was well documented.

He concluded by stating that the proposal would bring a vacant and underutilised building back to active use and he pointed out that the building was ideally situated within the city centre boundary and provided access by sustainable modes of transport for employees and visitors. He requested that the Committee endorse the officers' recommendation to approve the application.

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.

**LA04/2024/0570/F - Change of use of an existing hotel, conference centre and offices (sui generis) to a 97-bed care home (Use Class C3(b)) and 1,559sqm diagnostic medical facility (Use Class D1(a)), associated access, car parking, landscaping and open space. - Stormont Hotel, 587 Upper Newtownards Road**

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

- Principle of development at the location;
- Design, placemaking and impact on amenity;
- Access and transport;
- Healthy communities;
- Built heritage;
- Natural heritage;
- Climate change;
- Flood Risk and drainage;
- Waste-water infrastructure;
- Environmental protection;
- Waste management;
- Section 76 planning agreement; and
- Pre-application Community Consultation.

He explained that the site was on unzoned whiteland in accordance with draft BMAP and was part of a wider proposed scheme for a retirement village. He stated that the proposed pedestrian and vehicular access were acceptable and that there had been 47 third party

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objections received from 26 individuals, all of which had been addressed in the case officer's report.

He reported that there had been no objection in principle from any consultees and that, having regard to the Development Plan and other material considerations, it was recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to conditions.

The Chairperson informed the Committee that Ms. A. Wiggam, Turley, was in attendance to answer questions from the Members.

In response to a question from a Member with regard to the proposed number of parking spaces, Ms. Wiggam stated that there would be 57 on-site parking spaces and highlighted that the application site was on the Glider route and was highly accessible through public transport.

A Member asked the Planning Officers how the need for care home beds was quantified within the area. The Planning Manager responded that a needs statement had been requested from the Council's policy team which had provided some broad information on the need and changing demographics within the area. He stated that officers were satisfied that sufficient evidence had been provided to demonstrate the need for the care home element of the proposal.

**Proposal**

Moved by Alderman Lawlor,  
Seconded by Councillor Abernethy,

"That the application be refused on the grounds that the material considerations do not outweigh the application's conflict with Policy TLC2 as the application represented the loss of a viable tourist facility in east Belfast."

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

The Chairperson put the officer's recommendation to the Committee and the Committee resolved to grant planning permission, subject to conditions and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement, and to deal with and any other issues that might arise, provided they were not substantive.

**LA04/2024/0569/O - Outline planning permission with all matter reserved for independent living (Use Class C1) units and up to 62no. assisted living units (Use Class C3), associated internal access roads, communal open space, revised access from Castleview Road, associated car parking, servicing, amenity space and landscaping and demolition of dwellings at Castleview Road (nos. 2,**

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**4, 6, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28 & 30) and Summerhill Parade (nos. 18, 20 & 22) (amended description). - Stormont Hotel, 587 Upper Newtownards Road BT4 3LP and adjacent properties at Castleview Road (nos. 2, 4, 6, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28 & 30), Summerhill Parade (nos. 18, 20 & 22), and rear of 160 Barnetts Road**

The Senior Planning Officer summarised the application for the Committee and referred to the following key areas for consideration:

- Principle of development;
- Housing density;
- Affordable housing;
- Housing density;
- Adaptable and accessible accommodation;
- Design, Placemaking and Impact on Amenity;
- Transport;
- Healthy Communities;
- Built heritage;
- Natural heritage;
- Climate change;
- Flood Risk and drainage;
- Waste-water infrastructure;
- Environmental protection;
- Waste management;
- Section 76 planning agreement; and
- Pre-application Community Consultation.

He stated that it was an outline application with all matters reserved on un-zoned whiteland in accordance with draft BMAP. He reported that 50 third-party representations, from 29 persons had been received, all of which were objections to the scheme and were summarised within the main report. He added that, since publication of the report, two MLAs had submitted concerns with regard to the application, stating that the principle for potential future development on the site would be set for the future, should the outlined application be passed and that, in respect of traffic and parking, the recent Red Bull Soapbox event in the Stormont Estate demonstrated the potential impacts on parking on surrounding streets in an area already subjected to significant parking and traffic congestion.

He added that no objections had been received from consultees, subject to conditions and that the demolition of dwellings at Castleview Road and Summerhill Parade were permitted development.

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

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. J. Devine to the meeting, speaking in objection to the application.

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Ms. Devine explained that she was presenting the views of many local residents who had collectively shared their objections in the Planning Portal. She stated that the objections were on planning grounds and related to the impact the proposal would have on the surrounding residential area, in particular increased traffic and the demolition of homes and the impact this would have on the established residential character of the area.

She outlined how the calculations within the application related to traffic had been taken using the DfI parking standards guide and had concluded that there would be a decrease in traffic. She stated that these figures were misleading and not a true representation of the existing traffic patterns and that the loss of the existing hotel carpark would significantly increase on-street parking, particularly during events held at Stormont Estate.

She stated that the demolition of homes in Castleview Road and Summerhill Parade to make way for independent living units and assisting living units, on balance, may seem like a positive increase in the provision of additional affordable homes, however, the impact on existing homes was concerning, in that the proposal was vague to allow for a flexible design approach at reserved matters stage. She stated that residents were facing the prospect of living alongside buildings up to twice as high as their existing homes and that there was a lack of clarity on the ridge height of the new housing and a lack of assurances that it would not exceed the height of the demolished homes, and, on that basis, local residents were objecting to the application and she asked the Committee to consider the view of local residents and refuse the application.

In response questions from a number of Members with regard to the parking calculations, loss of parking during events taking place at Stormont Estate and proposed heights of dwellings, the Planning Manger explained that the application was an outline application with all matters reserved, so the parking details would be presented at a later stage, should the application be granted.

A Member stated that they had concerns regarding the parking, loss of light, privacy to existing residential properties.

The Chairperson put the officers' recommendation to the Committee and, upon audible dissent, called for a vote.

On a vote, nine Members voted for the recommendation and nine against. There being an equality of votes, the Chairperson exercised his second and casting vote for the recommendation and it was subsequently declared carried.

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

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**LA04/2025/2013/F & LA04/2025/2013/LBC - Change of use of Netherleigh House and existing office blocks (Class B1) to provide residential and nursing care facilities (Class C3 (a) and (b)). Extensions to existing office block including a fourth storey floor, eastern and western gable extension and two front projections from the northern elevation. Erection of 36 no. assisted living apartments over two four storey blocks. Site parking, landscaped amenity areas, woodland trails and all associated site works - Netherleigh House, 1 Massey Avenue**

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

- Principle of development at the location;
- Design and placemaking;
- Impact on the architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building;
- Impact on amenity;
- Trees and landscaping ;
- Environmental protection;
- Access, movement and transport;
- Natural heritage;
- Flood risk and drainage;
- Waste-water infrastructure;
- Health impacts;
- Climate change;
- Pre-Application Community Consultation;
- Waste management; and
- Employability and skills.

He reported that, since publication of the report, the NIEA Regulation Unit had been reconsulted and had responded stating that, as chloroform had been detected in the groundwater, assurances were required that it would create unacceptable risk to groundwater and other environmental receptors and had no objection to the development, provided that conditions and informatives were placed on any decision notice.

He stated that the proposal was of acceptable design and layout, amenity provision and posed no adverse amenity impacts. He added that the Urban Design Officer's concerns had been addressed within the report and that Historic Environment Division had no objections, final responses from NIEA, SES and the Council's Economic Unit were outstanding.

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

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. T. Stokes and Ms. D. McMillan, TSA Planning, and Mr. G. Yates, the applicant, to the meeting.

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Mr. Stokes explained that the proposal would be operated by Healthcare Ireland which primarily focused on care around learning disabilities, mental health, dementia, residential and general nursing services.

He stated that the proposal sought to deliver significant social benefits through high-quality nursing care and accommodation alongside assisted living apartments to address a recognised shortfall in the provision of care that Healthcare Ireland specialised in.

He outlined the proposed redesign of the existing linear office block and explained that the development would make efficient use of previously developed land, would create employment opportunities and deliver high-quality landscaped amenity areas that would promote wellbeing.

He summarised by stating that the proposal would deliver significant community, social and economic benefits, whilst securing a positive future for an important site within the city.

A Member asked how the need for nursing care facilities was assessed. Mr. Stokes responded by stating that in the 2021 census, an aging population indicated a need for specialise residential dementia services would be required, he added that the Local Development Plan Team had stated that there was a need for an additional 120 bed spaces in residential care homes during the plan period.

Mr. Yates explained that similar schemes within Northern Ireland had received requests from the relative health trusts to bed block all beds at the facility which demonstrated the need for those types of facilities due to a lack of beds.

The Principal Planning Officer stated that a recent evidence base through the Local Development Plan which had identified the need for beds and the consultation response from the Local Development Plan Team had demonstrated that there had been a fall in the number of beds available due to the closure of similar facilities.

The Committee granted planning permission and Listed Building Consent, subject to conditions and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement, and to deal with and any other issues that might arise, including resolving final responses from DAERA NIEA: NED, SES and BCC Economic Development Unit, provided that they were not substantive.

**LA04/2026/0021/F & LA04/2026/0022/LBC -  
Conversion of former convent to 28no. apartments  
(1, 2 & 3 bed) involving internal and external  
refurbishment/retention and re-configuration.  
Provision of ground floor extension with partial  
demolition and provision of new stairwell and lift.  
Provision of dormers, rooflights and extension to  
first, second floor and attic levels regarding new  
stairwell and lift. External layout reconfigurations  
to include construction of new access from  
Ormeau Road, amended parking layout, provision  
of cycle parking, bin stores, landscaping,  
substation and associated works. - Former Good**

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**Shepherd Centre at lands at Nos. 511 and 511a  
Ormeau Road**

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with an overview of the application and referred the Members to the following key issues for consideration:

- Principle of housing in the location;
- Housing density;
- Affordable housing;
- Housing mix;
- Adaptable and accessible accommodation;
- Design and placemaking;
- Impact on heritage assets;
- Climate change;
- Residential quality and impact on amenity;
- Open space;
- Access and transport;
- Health impacts;
- Environmental protection;
- Flood risk and drainage;
- Waste-water infrastructure; and
- Natural heritage.

He stated that DfI Roads, HED, NI Water, Environmental Health and the Council's Tree Officer had been consulted and offered no objection to the proposal, and that six third-party objections had been received which raised concerns with regard to impact on trees, wildlife, traffic generation, overlooking, water infrastructure and archaeology.

He reported that, since publication of the case officer's report and additional third-party objection had been received which raised concerns about archaeology, in that the lands within the site boundary had previously been used as a mother and baby home, Magdalene Laundry, children's home and adolescent centre and there was concern that there could be undocumented burial remains.

He explained that DAERA NIEA NED had been consulted in respect of the removal of Tree 37, which had the potential for bat roosts, however, Tree 37 had been removed as part of the extant permission, subject to a soft telling condition and therefore it was recommended that the outstanding consultation to NIEA NED be withdrawn.

He stated that it was recommended that the applications be approved, subject to conditions.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. C. Shanks, Mr. R. Ditty (CBRE) and Mr. S. Maguire (Alskea) to the meeting.

Mr. Shanks explained that the applicant, Alskea, had a track record of delivering high quality housing developments and in recent years had delivered new build housing in addition to the conversion of listed buildings to residential use.

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He explained how Alskea had acquired the site and that the applicant was eager to make an immediate start on the site to ensure the continuity of its workforce.

He stated that residential re-use will renew the building, bring an injection of vitality to the Ormeau Road area and, critically, safeguard the long-term future and historic fabric of the heritage asset.

He concluded by stating that approving the applications would delivery much needed residential units and the vital regeneration of a derelict and underutilised site within south Belfast.

The Committee granted planning permission and Listed Building Consent, subject to conditions and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions, resolve the provision of dedicated disabled parking spaces and further consultation with DfC HED with regard to archaeology, and to deal with any other matters that might arise, provided that they were not substantive.

**LA04/2026/0340/F - Proposed change of use of 144 no. PBMSA units to short term let accommodation outside of term time only. - The Edge, 1 Frederick Street, Belfast, BT1 2LW (formally 48-52 York Street)**

The Committee considered the case officer's report and agreed to grant planning permission, subject to conditions and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions, resolve the relevant Section 77 planning agreement, and deal with any other issues that might arise, provided that they were not substantive.

**LA04/2026/0716/F - Proposed change of use of 342 no. Student rooms to short term let accommodation outside of term time (July & August). - Alma Place, 16 Library Street**

The Committee considered the case officer's report and agreed to grant 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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**LA04/2026/0306/F - Section 54 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 for non-compliance with planning conditions 15 and 16 of planning permission LA04/2021/0516/F (relating to junction improvements and provision of disabled parking spaces) - 140 Donegall Street**

The Principal Planning Officer summarised the application to remove Conditions 15 and 16 of planning permission LA04/2021/0516/F.

She stated that it was recommended that the S54 application and conditions 15 and 16 of planning approval LA04/2021/0516/F be removed and that a modification be made to the S76 Planning Agreement (approved under application LA04/2025/0516/F) to secure an additional 'Bike Station Contribution' of £47,000 to facilitate a new Beryl Bike dock Station at Carrick Hill.

The Committee approved the application to remove Conditions 15 and 16 of planning approval LA04/2021/0516/F and that the Section 76 planning agreement be modified to provide that an additional bike station contribution of £47,000 be secured to facilitate a new Beryl Bike dock station at Carrick Hill.

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

(Having declared an interest in the following item, the Chairperson  
(Councillor Murphy) left the meeting, Deputy Chairperson  
(Councillor Brennan) in the chair.)

**LA04/2024/1195/F - Proposed residential development comprising 20 no dwelling units including 8 no semi-detached dwellings, 1 no detached dwelling, 2 no 3-bed apartments and 9 no 2-bed apartments with associated car parking, landscaping and associated works. Lands south of 7-14 Wolfhill Manor, east of No 42 Mill Avenue and west and north west of No 11 Mill Avenue, Ligoniel**

The Principal Planning Officer outlined the application for the Committee and highlighted the following key issues:

- Principle of housing in the location;
- Housing density;
- Affordable housing;
- Housing mix;
- Adaptable and accessible accommodation;
- Design and placemaking;
- Impact on amenity;
- Impact on built heritage;
- Flood risk and drainage;

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- Waste-water infrastructure;
- Climate change;
- Access and transport;
- Health impacts;
- Environmental protection;
- Natural heritage;
- Trees and landscaping;
- Waste management; and
- Section 76 planning agreement.

She reported that, since publication of the report, Waste Management had provided a response which advised that the plan required revision to align with the guidance and layouts provided, to demonstrate the at the proposed bins could be accommodated.

She stated that there had been no objections received from consultees and that a response was outstanding from Shared Environmental Services (SES). She added that 88 objections had been received and that the issues raised had been addressed within the case officer's report.

She stated that it was recommended that the application be approved, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement.

The Deputy Chairperson welcomed Ms. G. Jobbling (JPE Planning) to the meeting, speaking on behalf of the applicant.

Ms. Jobbling stated that the principle of development had been firmly established through extant permission, however, the proposal would bring forward a more modern development. She added that the proposal would deliver housing that was urgently needed and had been developed directly with a housing association in order to respond to the identified need.

She concluded by stating that the scheme had evolved throughout the planning process and concerns from local residents had been listened to and the applicant had sought to provide reassurances where possible, she added that it was a sustainable brownfield site within the settlement limit that would regenerate a vacant site and generate homes.

In response to a question from a Member with regard to the design being in keeping with the area, being a three-storey apartment block, the Principal Planning Officer stated that, in terms of the design and the layout, the external materials would include red brick and that the form of the development is considered in keeping with the area and added that the extant approval included an apartment block.

**Proposal**

Moved by Councillor Doran,  
Seconded by Alderman McCullough,

“That consideration of the application be deferred in order that the Committee could undertake a site visit.”

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

The Deputy Chairperson put the officers' recommendation to the Committee and the Committee agreed to grant planning permission, subject to conditions, and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to resolve a final response from the BCC Waste Management team, finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement, and to deal with any other matters that might arise, provided that they were not substantive.

**LA04/2025/1839/F & LA04/2025/1841/DCA - Change of use from fast food unit, restaurant, retail and office to hotel with associated restaurant/bar areas, lobby/reception area and other areas ancillary to hotel use at ground floor level, 76no. bedrooms on 1st to 4th floor level and ancillary rooftop store. Includes demolition of all internal walls and partitions at ground floor level and demolition of sections of building at the rear, replacement of windows, reconfiguration and replacement of shopfronts, creation of new openings for windows and removal of rooflights. - Lindsay House, 8 - 14 Callender Street**

The Senior Planning Officer summarised the application for change of use and explained the following key issues for consideration:

- The principle of a hotel at the location;
- Scale, massing and design;
- Impact on built heritage;
- Traffic and road safety;
- Human health/environmental considerations;
- Flooding and drainage;
- Economic considerations; and
- Environment and community.

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

The Committee granted planning permission and Conservation Area Consent, 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 arising from the outstanding information requested by NIW and SES by way of condition, if necessary.

The Chairperson (Councillor Murphy) returned to the meeting.)

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**LA04/2026/0066/F - Erection of 2.4m high perimeter fencing around 1 No. existing soccer pitch and internal 1.2m high spectator rail. Additional tree planting (Amended proposal) - Existing soccer pitches at Wedderburn Park Playing Fields (approx. 20m east of Orpen Ave. and 10m west of Wedderburn Gardens)**

The Senior Planning Officer outlined the application and explained that it was an amended scheme from the initial proposal for a 2.4m high fence around two existing soccer pitches, 6m high ballstop fencing behind each goal unit and fencing, to include pedestrian and vehicular access gates.

He reported that the site was located within Wedderburn Park Playing Fields which was accessible via Orpen Park and Wedderburn Gardens and that the playing fields were a Council operated site with two grassed soccer pitches, located within a larger area of opens space.

He stated that the park was surrounded by residential development and located within the Hunterhouse/Wedderburn/Rathmore Local Landscape Policy Area, situated within the development limit as designated under both versions of dBMAP (2004 and 2014).

He explained that the Council's Tree Officer had requested surveys in relation to the mature trees adjacent to the southern pitch, however, the proposal had since been amended to omit fencing around the southern pitch and the trees would therefore be unaffected.

He stated that no other consultees had offered objections to the proposal and that there had been 262 representations received in respect of the applicant, 89 objections and 173 letters of support.

He informed the Committee that, having regard to the Development Plan and other material considerations, the proposal was considered acceptable and it was recommended that planning permission be granted.

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. J. Dobbin to the meeting, speaking in objection to the application.

Ms. Dobbin stated that she was attending on behalf of Wedderburn Residents' Association and that the application area was a large area to be taken out of commission for recreation for a pitch that will only be used for half of the year.

She stated that, previously, four pitches were used in rotation to protect the grass which would no longer be possible and that the rationale used to refer users to the remaining areas within the park was inaccurate as it did not account for car parking, the children's playground or flower beds.

She explained that positive comments regarding the fencing did not reflect that the fencing was only the first stage of the proposal and that lights, dugouts, spectator areas and additional parking were necessary to meet the enhanced standards for IFA intermediate group football.

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She stated that a public park should not be reconfigured to serve the operational needs of a select few organisations at the expense of wider community benefit and did not align with the Local Development Plan to safeguard open recreation spaces and maintain the character and amenity of green areas across the city.

She stated that the community had been shut out of the discussions that formed the rationale for the proposal until relatively recently and had been a great social frustration and that residents would continue to object to the plans.

In response to questions from Members with regard to the consultation process, future use and similar schemes in the city, the Director of Planning and Building Control advised that she would request that Council officers, who were responsible for submitting Council planning applications to the Committee, attend future meetings in order to be available to answer any questions that Members might have.

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.

**LA04/2026/0659/F and LA04/2026/0505/LBC -  
Fenestration changes to include insertion of new  
windows at first floor level on north facing elevation  
and creation of new access door and new windows  
at ground floor level on north elevation. - 2 Royal  
Avenue**

The Committee considered the Case Officer's report and agreed to grant planning permission and Listed Building Consent, 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.

**LA04/2026/0787/LBC - Proposed Remedial  
works to bandstand roof. - Bandstand,  
Ormeau Park, Ormeau Rd**

The Committee considered the Case Officer's report and agreed to grant Listed Building Consent, 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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**LA04/2025/1651/F - Retention, conversion,  
refurbishment and change of use of existing office  
building (Class A2) and 2 no. vacant retail units  
(Class A1) to hotel accommodation and associated  
facilities and café (sui generis) and extension of  
5th floor (30no. hotel bedrooms in total). - 20  
Rosemary Street**

The Senior Planning Officer provided an overview of the application and pointed out that there was an error in the report, in that it referred to ancillary café rather than bar and restaurant.

He stated that, having regard to the Development Plan and other material considerations, the proposal was considered acceptable and it was recommended 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 and deal with any issues arising from the outstanding information requested by NIW and SES by way of condition if necessary.

**Restricted Item**

**Building Control - Outstanding Accounts**

The Committee agreed that the outstanding accounts be written off in accordance with Section M12 of the Council's Financial Regulations.

Chairperson

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## **Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee**

Monday, 15th June, 2026

### **MEETING OF THE BELFAST WATERFRONT AND ULSTER HALL LTD. SHAREHOLDERS' COMMITTEE**

Members present: Councillor McAteer (Chairperson);  
Alderman Copeland; and  
Councillors Bower, Brennan, R. Brooks,  
Canavan, Collins, Ferguson, Flynn,  
McCabe, McCann, McCormick, McDowell,  
McKay, Ó Néill 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.;  
Ms. A. Fox, Assets Development Officer;  
Mr. F. Grant, Operations Development Manager; and  
Mr. C. Mealey, Committee Services Officer.

#### **Apologies**

No apologies were reported.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings of 16th March and 29th April, 2026, 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 and 5th May, 2026.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **Restricted Items**

**The information contained in the reports associated with the following five 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

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

**Presentation - MCI**

The Committee agreed to reschedule the presentation from MCI to its next meeting on 10th August, 2026.

**Performance Update - Q4 2025/26**

The Chief Executive of Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall (BWUH) Ltd. provided the Committee with an overview of BWUH Ltd.'s performance for Quarter 4 (Q4) Year to Date (YTD) for 2025/26 including occupancy levels, events and delegate days.

BWUH Ltd.'s Director of Finance, Risk, and Corporate Services outlined the financial performance for Q4 YTD which included a breakdown of BWUH Ltd.'s overall actual income and expenditure against targets.

The Committee was presented with an update in relation to:

- Business events;
- Supporting the UNESCO City of Music and European City of Sport status for the city;
- Customer satisfaction;
- Ticket sales;
- Grassroots and legacy initiatives;
- Local community engagement and community events;
- Employment; and
- Event curation and creation.

During discussion, the Chief Executive answered a range of Members' questions in relation to the financial and business performance, BWUH Ltd.'s corporate social responsibility in respect of diversity and inclusion, and employee engagement.

After discussion, the Committee noted the update provided on BWUH Ltd.'s performance for Q4, 2025/26.

**Neurodiversity and Accessibility Update**

The Committee was provided with an update on BWUH Ltd.'s work in respect of neurodiversity and accessibility.

**Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee**  
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BWUH Ltd.'s Chief Executive provided an overview of the work which had been undertaken to date and the progress made in relation to:

- Staff training and development;
- Visitors to the venues;
- Physical enhancements to the venues;
- Accessible communication; and
- Recruitment.

He highlighted some of the awards and accreditations which the venues had received including the Autism NI Impact Award, Diversity Mark and the Association of British Professional Conference Organisers award for 'Best Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at a Conference'.

The Chief Executive also provided the Committee with further information in relation to outreach work, supported partners, and the planned future initiatives to broaden the approach to neurodiversity and improve accessibility across the venues.

During discussion, several Members welcomed the work which had been undertaken in respect of neurodiversity and accessibility. A Member highlighted the importance of communicating and raising awareness of the continued work to improve accessibility within the venues.

After discussion, the Committee noted the progress which BWUH Ltd. had made in respect of neurodiversity and accessibility within its venues and its planned future initiatives.

**Collective Partnerships Targets**

The Director of Economic Development reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 16th March, 2026, it had approved the commencement of a five-year contract extension from 3rd August, 2026, for BWUH Ltd. to operate the ICC Belfast, Waterfront Hall and Ulster Hall. The Committee was reminded also that, at its special meeting on 29th April, 2026, it had agreed new Collective Partnership Targets and noted that proposed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) would be submitted to its next meeting.

Accordingly, the Director submitted for the Committee's consideration a report which outlined proposed KPIs which would be set within each of the Collective Partnership Targets and would be reflected in the BWUH Business Plan. The Committee was advised that the KPIs would be used to report progress against the strategic objectives on a quarterly and annual basis.

During discussion, the Director of Economic Development and BWUH Ltd.'s Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Risk, and Corporate Services answered questions from the Members in relation to the alignment of the agreed Collective Partnership Targets and proposed KPIs to BWUH's Business Plan.

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A number of Members highlighted the need for further information to be provided in relation to measurable targets which would be set against the KPIs and aligned to the BWUH Business Plan.

**Proposal**

Moved by Councillor McCabe,  
Seconded by Councillor Ó Néill and

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to defer consideration of the proposed KPIs to enable further information to be submitted to its next meeting in August, 2026.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed to defer consideration of the proposed KPIs for BWUH Ltd. until its next meeting on 10th August, 2026, to enable further information to be provided.

**Reserved Matters**

The Committee noted that there were no reserved matters which required approval.

Chairperson