

People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 8th October, 2019

MEETING OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Michael Collins (Chairperson);
The Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor McReynolds;
Alderman McCoubrey; and
Councillors D. Baker, Black, Bunting,
Cobain, Corr, Donnelly, M. Kelly, Kyle,
Magee, McCusker, McMullan, Newton,
Smyth and Verner.

In attendance: Mr. N. Grimshaw, Strategic Director of City
and Neighbourhood Services;
Mr. R. Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services;
Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services; and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were reported from Councillors de Faoite, Mulholland and McLaughlin.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 10th and 16th September were taken as read and signed as correct, subject to the variation to the minute of 10th September under the heading "Request for the hire of Botanic Gardens for a series of music events" to note that it was:

"Moved by Councillor D. Baker
Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin and

Resolved - That the Committee agrees to grant authority to Aiken Promotions' for the use of the great lawn at Botanic Gardens for a series of music events with attendances under 5,000 persons in the year 2020, to include set up and take down, and that a report would be submitted for the Committee's consideration in relation to any promoter who was seeking to use the Council's Parks for similar events in future years."

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

Matters referred back from Council / Motions

Alley-Gating Programme

The Committee was reminded that, at the meeting of the Council on 1st October, the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Brooks and seconded by Councillor M. Kelly, had been referred to the Committee for its consideration:

“This Council will undertake a review of the effectiveness of its alley-gating programme to date, and look to build delivery partnerships with other agencies, should internal funding not be available to gate those areas still on waiting list.”

A number of Members stated that the issues of alley-gates was a frequently raised issue amongst residents across the City.

In response to a Member’s question, the Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services reminded the Committee that the Area Working Groups were due to start meeting in January 2020. He confirmed that the current waiting list of streets which were to be considered for alley-gates would be submitted to the relevant Area Working Group for its re-consideration and input at a future date.

After discussion, the Committee:

1. agreed that a report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee on the Alley-Gating Programme; and
2. noted that the Area Working Groups would be meeting in January 2020, and that the locations which were on the waiting list for alley-gates would be provided to each AWG for its re-consideration and further input.

Anti-Social Behaviour - Holylands Area

(Councillors Groogan and McKeown attended in connection with this item)

The Committee was reminded that, at the meeting of the Council on 1st October, a motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Groogan and seconded by Councillor McKeown, had been referred to the Committee for its consideration.

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 **To bring to the Committee’s attention a Notice of Motion regarding addressing Anti-Social Behaviour in the Holylands and the surrounding areas, which was discussed at the Council meeting on 1st October.**

- 1.2 The following motion regarding Anti-Social Behaviour in the Holylands and surrounding area, which was proposed by Councillor Groogan, and seconded by Councillor McKeown,:

‘This Council condemns the persistent and serious anti-social behaviour that residents of the Holylands and the surrounding area endure throughout the year due to the high numbers of HMOs that exist there.

This council will review its policy for dealing with all aspects of anti-social behaviour in the Holylands area, particularly around on-street drinking, noise and littering and bring forward an action plan for tackling the ongoing problems experienced in this area.

This council also notes the worryingly high levels of crime in a small, densely populated area of this city and commits to working with statutory partners to bring back CCTV units to the area as one of the means to tackle this issue.’

- 1.3 In accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the Motion was referred without discussion to the People and Communities Committee

2.1 Recommendation

- 2.1 The Committee is requested to consider the Motion and take such action thereon as may be determined.

3.0 Main Report

Key Issues

Freshers’ 2019 Update

- 3.1 Our night time noise service was operational as usual, 7 days a week from 2000 – 0400. All complaints from the Holylands were prioritised during the fresher’s period.
- 3.2 Safer Neighbourhood Officers and Alcohol Enforcement Officers were committed to the Holyland / Wider University Area Sunday – Thursday between 15th and 26th September. Hours of operation were 1600 – 2200 on Sunday and 1400 – 2200 Monday – Thursday. They were proactively patrolling the area to reduce / prevent anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe.

- 3.3 South Belfast Anti-social behaviour officer carried out joint visits with the universities and followed up on problem premises and public complaints.
- 3.4 Our cleansing and cleansing enforcement teams operated as normal with any issues / areas for attention being passed on by community safety. Our night time cleansing service also assisted with reducing excessive litter within the area.
- 3.5 Our entertainments licensing team proactively engaged with bars and clubs regarding their plans for the period and reminding them of their responsibilities. Premises of concern were flagged up with the team and joint visits did take place with the PSNI.
- 3.6 Figures for the Freshers' Period are being finalised and a meeting has been called by the PSNI to sign off on these for this year.

Background to existing role and actions from the Learning City Interagency Group

- 3.7 The Holylands Interagency Group (now Learning City Interagency Group) was formed in 2005. Since 2009 the Council has chaired this group and it consists of a range of statutory partners committed to working in partnership to tackle the problems associated with large number of students living in the City. The Chair of PACT (Partners and Communities Together) represents local residents on this group. The group also included a representative from the Landlord Association for Northern Ireland (LANI) and the National Union of Students.
- 3.8 In 2012 the Council and other statutory partners adopted the Holyland & Wider University Area Strategic Study. The plan recognised that the problems in the area were not just down to one agency and that in order to realise the improvements identified in the report it needed ownership and commitment from all the stakeholders in the area. Since then partners have worked together and integrated services on the ground in order to make a difference in the area. The short to medium term recommendations in the report have been achieved. The long-term recommendations will be progressed through our local development plan and our Community Plan 'The Belfast Agenda'. A summary of these achievements is outlined below.
- Council developed a Framework for Student Housing in the city in 2014, which has been incorporated into Supplementary Planning Guidance. The Supplementary Planning Guidance sets the strategic

context and agenda for student housing in the city, articulating the need for more purpose built student accommodation and will monitor and maintain an up to date assessment of current supply and future demand for student accommodation.

- Council continues to work with partners to assess the viability of purpose built student accommodation, requirements, and options for public sector to support delivery.
- The Local Development Plan sets the strategic context and agenda for student housing in the city. A report on Preferred Options Paper consultation was published on 26 July 2017 and the consultation on the draft plan strategy has just closed.
- The then 'DSD' (The Department for Social Development) now 'DfC' (The Department for Communities) was approached to consider the potential for implementing recommendations in relation to introducing a 'new homes from old places' initiative in the area, namely to identify a housing association that would acquire properties and make these available to single households. DSD advised that this was not a feasible option due to lack of demand from potential tenants, and the high costs of acquiring/converting properties. Through the Local Development Plan's strategic theme of 'shaping a liveable place' development to enhance the health and wellbeing of communities, neighbourhoods and place will be promoted. Furthermore, the Belfast Agenda's strategic priority 'living here' focuses on making life better for all our residents.
- Council worked with the former Holyland Interagency Group to review the PACT structure and implement a new neighbourhood management approach for the area. A revised PACT structure was agreed and has been in operation since 2014. The Learning City Interagency Group continues to work closely with PACT.

3.9 Every year partners deliver a range of projects in the area in addition to the work of all the relevant enforcement agencies. In 2017/18 partners delivered the following in the area:

- Through continued, effective partnership working with the higher education institutions across the city, procedures to manage student behaviours have been

introduced which include induction and disciplinary procedures.

- Reviewed the effectiveness of legislation and byelaws, relevant to addressing antisocial behaviour. On 17 April 2018, Department of Justice launched an eight week public consultation to review the current criminal legislation framework to tackle anti-social behaviour, including on-street drinking. A corporate Council response was prepared in relation to this consultation which was presented to Committee on 5 June 2018.
- Several physical and environmental improvement projects have been delivered or are in the process of being delivered which include:
 - (i) graffiti removal and re-imaging using the Probation Board NI graffiti bus in addition to Council's graffiti team;
 - (ii) tree planting through the Local Investment Fund;
 - (iii) scoping the regeneration of the area known as 'Horsey Hill' to develop a corridor to link local green spaces;
 - (iv) capacity support to assist the delivery of community led projects;
 - (v) community clean-ups; and
 - (vi) A South Belfast circular economy project is being considered to encourage recycling rates.

Challenges and Next Steps

- 3.10 Partner agencies provide services and numerous initiatives and projects in the area to assist in addressing the impacts on the levels of antisocial behaviour whilst acknowledging that there is always more to be done. The Learning City Interagency Group looks at good practice for new ways to tackle the issues encountered and are committed to continue to work together to integrate services on the ground in a way that is responsive to what makes a difference to local people in an area. This motion highlights a number of options to address problems in the area.
- 3.11 As described above, both the Council and our partner agencies recognise that key challenges remain which may require future legislative and policy change, including the identification of resources to support these. Some of the key areas highlighted during the Council discussion were the need for increased partnership agency response on the street, a need to review the powers of seizure around on-street drinking, how effective our powers are in addressing noise nuisance, and considering how opportunities

presented by the new Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing scheme can be utilised in order to address antisocial behaviour whilst recognising that any changes in the latter will require some time to implement in real terms.

- 3.12 The Chief Executive will shortly be convening a meeting with senior representatives of the PSNI and Vice Chancellors of both Ulster University and Queens University Belfast to consider what further can be done. Community stakeholders will also be invited to attend this meeting.
- 3.13 It is also anticipated that a special meeting of the People and Communities is convened to allow the relevant community stakeholders to raise their concerns – requests have already been received by a number of partners.

Financial and Resource Implications
None related to this report.

Equality, Rural Needs or Good Relations Implications
None.”

During discussion, a number of Members expressed sympathy with those residents living in the Holylands and the Lower Ormeau Road area, given the ongoing anti-social behaviour in the area.

A number of Members stated that anti-social behaviour issues were not confined to the Holylands and Lower Ormeau area but that they were citywide, including the New Lodge, the Falls Park and the Marrowbone Park areas. A further Member stated that she had previously been involved in the Divis interventions a few years ago and that it had taken a significant amount of resources to tackle the issues there.

In response to a Member’s question regarding whether the Council could fund additional Safer Neighbourhood Officers, the Strategic Director advised the Committee that his Department had a finite budget and, if the Committee wanted additional resources on the street, it was within the Committee’s remit and it would have to consider moving resources from elsewhere. He also advised the Members that there was no specific ASB policy and that, in fact, a lot of the behaviour which had been discussed was criminal and therefore fell within the remit of the Police.

A further Member welcomed the motion and stated that they felt that the Holylands area was a special case, given the large concentration of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), the high number of students, the transient population and the nightly on-street drinking.

Two Members who were not on the Committee were granted permission to address the Committee. They stated that the same conversations about the anti-social behaviour in the area had been taking place for years but that a strategic, multi-agency

approach was required to come up with a solution. The Committee was advised that riot police had recently been called to the area and that the trouble consisted of both criminal acts and some sectarian behaviour. The Members stated that the Council needed to take a leading role to show that there was a political will to change the area.

Together, they requested that the Committee hold a Special meeting focusing on ASB in the Wider University and Lower Ormeau Area, and urged that it would take place as soon as possible.

Another Member stated that they had sincere sympathy with residents in the Holylands and that the PSNI needed to take greater measures to tackle the criminal behaviour. He added that around 7,000 students would be moving to North Belfast in the next year or two, and that it was important that the area surrounding the Ulster University campus did not become another hotspot for anti-social and criminal behaviour. He added that the Universities should also take stronger action against perpetrators who were their students.

A further Member stated that the long-term recommendations within the Holyland and Wider University Area Strategic Study, which had been adopted by the Council and other statutory agencies in 2012, would be progressed through the Council's Local Development Plan and the Belfast Agenda. He emphasised the importance of Members attending meetings of the Community Planning Partnership,

The Committee:

1. noted the contents of the report;
2. noted that the Chief Executive would also be convening a multi-agency meeting, including senior PSNI representatives, the Vice Chancellors of both Queen's and Ulster Universities and community stakeholders to consider what further action can be taken; and
3. agreed that a Special Meeting of the Committee be held on the issue of the ongoing Anti-Social Behavior in the in the Wider University and Lower Ormeau Area, with key stakeholders invited to attend.

Committee/Strategic Issues

Waste Collection Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 To provide an update on Waste Collection issues, including:

- **progress on actions included in the high level Waste Collection Improvement Plan, including the domestic and commercial efficiency reviews;**
- **issues around missed bins city wide and proposed actions to address problem areas;**

- information in relation to the 'wheelie box' pilot launch;
- organic waste collections and the impact on operations.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to;

- Note the progress in relation to the performance improvements within the Waste Collection Improvement Plan to date, and recognise the ongoing work along with associated timescales.
- Endorse the procurement of a review of our Fleet needs, to help inform a fit for purpose sustainable Fleet Strategy which is aligned to the corporate ambitions of the Council. Relevant out workings of this review will be shared with the Working Group on Climate Crisis.
- Note the planned actions around addressing the issues of missed collections across the city, the upcoming kerbside wheelie box pilot scheme and the impact of increased tonnages of organic waste in 2019.

3.0 Main Report

Key Issues

3.1 Waste Collection Improvement Plan

As outlined in the report of 4th December 2018 the Logistics Manager and his team have continued to focus on the waste improvement action plan. In terms of domestic collections, all domestic operational crews have gone through a challenge process, whereby individual productivity on a daily basis has been discussed and improvement plans agreed where necessary. This will now become a normal function of efficiency management whereby performance will be challenged on a regular basis.

3.2 In terms of commercial collections the data collection exercise has been carried out and plans are currently being formed as to how this can be best taken forward.

In recent years, however, there has been a fall in revenue for the Council from commercial waste collections, arising from more competition, loss of business to regional contracts and an increase in the provision of free or reduced rate services to churches, charities and educational establishments. There are concerns that this could at some stage undermine the economic feasibility of this service and work is underway to see whether there is value in developing an alternative model.

3.3 To underpin these initiatives and to drive through continuous improvement, there is still a requirement to keep under review the levels of resources for the Waste Collection service and this will be considered under the City Service Fleet and Resource Transition Programme and estimating processes etc.

3.4 Missed Bin Collections

Turning to the issue of missed bins, this item has received increased scrutiny over the past two years as the new Resources & Fleet City Service, has been established and throughout the summer of 2019 in particular. One of the priorities in Waste Collection is to ensure that the number of missed bins are kept to a minimum. It is worth reminding members that on average we collect approximately 154,000 bins a week, so the percentage of missed bins is less than 0.5% although we appreciate the impact even this has on people.

3.5 Recently, the number of missed collections has increased as a result of several factors, the main one being restricted access to streets due to parked cars. Although difficult to quantify, Waste Collection believes this to be a mix of residents parking in their own streets and commuters parking just off main arterial routes and then using public transport to continue their journeys to and from work.

3.6 The number of missed bins reported to the Council's Call Centre spiked over and following the July holiday period, and although Waste Collection has strived to reduce this as quickly as possible, this has not been resolved quickly enough, mainly due to resources being diverted to cope with the increased demands for compostable waste collections outlined below. (See 3.11 to 3.17). Latest figures suggest that levels are now reducing towards the previous year's figures.

3.7 There is a continual emphasis on ensuring that the service is capable of maximising first time collection rates. To counteract the increasing levels of missed bins, a 'Task Force' made up of the Waste Collection Manager and two Assistant Managers has been set up to consider alternatives to address the levels of missed bins being experienced. Several approaches have been identified, and being implemented or will be explored as part of the Improvement Plan, namely:

- **Raising awareness with squads about missed bins using the data - core staff have been instructed to make every effort to get bins emptied 'first time, every**

time' but, should this not be possible, to promptly communicate difficulties.

- 'If the lorry can't get to the bin, can the bin get to the lorry?' Council Health & Safety officers are working with Waste Collection to consider the frequency and distances involved to bring bins from agreed collection points to the vehicle, whether there is a recommended 'maximum distance' an operator can be asked to pull a bin. This remains a work in progress as there is no definitive HSE, Waste Industry Safety and Health Forum (WISH) or other guidance on this and individual risk assessments would be required taking into account road conditions, length of travel, weight of bins, etc. This would be a major undertaking to achieve, and the effects on route efficiency also need to be understood.
- What would be the cost of additional staff to offset the above and reduce operator fatigue to provide longer pulls?
- Selective targeting (e.g. missed Assisted Lifts) as a priority – discussions are underway with the individual crews on how best to introduce a new system of recording missed assisted lifts.
- Better use of ICT with the first draft of 'heat maps' being used to identify difficult areas but this is dependent upon access to critical staff members or additional technical support.
- Feasibility of introducing a second Restricted Access (RA) Squad to target known inaccessible streets although this would require additional resourcing.
- Longer-term, amending the fleet to have a better fit-for-purpose (i.e. procuring narrow body and/or 18T refuse collection vehicles; an initial step has been taken to order 8 x 26T narrow body RCVs which are due to delivered in April/May 2020. These should be capable of accessing narrow streets more easily and positively impact upon missed bins).
- Close dialogue is maintained with Road Service regarding the installation of double-yellow lines and enforcement, and higher level discussions have been held about adopting alternative approaches – such as red or blue lines, clearway zones etc, but these have been deferred pending reestablishment of the Assembly. This is an action raised previously at committee and we will write to the Department for Infrastructure formally to update them on these challenges, the impacts, and seek to get support and action from them on how to address.

3.8 All of the above work and our work around the Departmental transition and improvement project for Resources and Fleet

Services, is underpinned by the Corporate Customer Improvement Programme. This work is ongoing and further reports will be presented at future meetings.

3.9 Development of a Fleet Strategy

Due to the ongoing technological advances and interest to have a cleaner and greener fleet, balanced with a need to look at the types of vehicles we require in the future, that meet operational delivery plans based on the Waste Framework, it is recommended that we comprehensively review our Fleet needs to help inform a fit for purpose, sustainable Fleet Strategy, which is aligned to the corporate ambitions of the Council and will be of wider benefit to the City.

3.10 Although we have internal expertise around fleet management and the future needs under the waste framework, there is recognition that there is a need for some specialist knowledge. It is proposed that the Council will need to procure additional external support to assist us in developing a future proofed Fleet Strategy which reflects current market trends, evolving technological advancements and meeting legislative requirements, assessing the economic impacts and options for introducing the strategy from the existing to a future need for Belfast City Council. We will be procuring this service as soon as possible from within existing budgets.

3.11 Organic Waste Collections

Over the previous two years, the tonnage of food/compostable waste generated over the summer for the last two years increases by 50% and 62% respectively, compared to the following winter months, as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Domestic Organic Weights – Summer V Winter

	2017 Spring & Summer 04/17 to 09/17	2018 Spring & Summer 04/18 to 09/18	2019 Spring & Summer 04/19 to 09/19
Total Shipped at Glenside	12020 Tonnes	12199 Tonnes	12866 Tonnes
	Autumn & Winter 10/17 to 03/18	Autumn & Winter 10/18 to 03/19	
Total Shipped at Glenside	7403 Tonnes	8114 Tonnes	

- 3.12 The current wet and warm summer of 2019, combined with food waste, has resulted in the highest month on month recorded figures to date, with an expectation of tonnages for the six summer months March to September 2019 to be in the region of 12866 Tonnes. See Appendix 1 – ‘Organic waste tonnages 2017-2019’.
- 3.13 Typically, due to the additional weight in individual bins during the summer, bins take longer to load, and lorries fill at a faster rate, requiring a second ship. This has meant utilising the existing finite resources to work additional hours to support service delivery. This in itself has a further knock on effect on services and logistics planning and therefore there have been impacts on the service’s ability to react to pressures in retrieving missed bins in good time on the other waste streams. As a result of the increased tonnages, during this year’s summer months much of the organic waste collection routes have not always been completed within normal working hours, and this has placed a heavy demand on additional working arrangements. For example, in the months April – September 2019, a total of 12,866 Tonnes of domestic organic waste (brown bins) has been collected. Nominal capacity for this waste stream is approximately 9,555 tonnes for the comparable period. This will require reviewing our working arrangements and our existing waste policies.
- 3.14 Recognising the pressures that the increased tonnages are placing on the service and the likelihood that the tonnage presented is likely to continue to increase year on year, the Waste Collection team are currently exploring options on how to maximise resource availability going forward into next year, and as part of the Resources and Fleet Transition Programme, proposals may be brought forward in relation to this as part of the estimating process for 2020/2021.
- 3.15 Kerbside Wheelie Box Pilot
- Members will recall the update provided at last months’ meeting of this committee regarding the Pilot. The Kerbside Wheelie Box Pilot is due to commence on 30th September, 2019. Capital funding of £622k has been received from DAERA to acquire two vehicles and all associated bins and materials for the project.
- 3.16 The scheme will increase the capacity of collections for recyclable materials by providing a weekly collection service whilst encouraging residents to recycle more with the provision of a smaller black bin. New bins have been delivered to residents throughout September 2019 and an

intensive communications campaign has been undertaken. This has included door knocking, leafleting and will continue post project launch with roadshows and staff on the ground answering queries.

It should be noted that there will be an increased requirement for an additional squad to deliver the kerbside box pilot, due to the increased segregation of waste at source (kerbside), and the fact that this trial will deliver a weekly rather than a fortnightly service to residents. These costs, however, are partially mitigated as the proposed area is on the pilot purple box glass collection scheme, with partial resources transferred from this activity to the wheelie-box scheme. In addition, we expect that income from the improved quality of the materials and increased landfill diversion will help offset the additional operating costs. It is expected therefore that the pilot will be nett cost neutral, assessment of this will be kept under review.

3.17 As part of the wheelie box pilot, data will be gathered to evaluate whether the envisaged outcomes are being realised. It is proposed that reviews of initial data will take place after 6 weeks and then after three months. Resources and Fleet would propose to present these initial findings to the P&C Committee at a date soon thereafter.

3.18 Financial / Resource Implications

Consultancy support for the Fleet Strategy will be provided from within existing budgets. Any future route optimisation rebalancing exercises and asset implications arising from the implementation of the Waste Framework may however result in financial and resource implications at a future date.

3.19 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

At this time there are no equality, good relations or rural needs assessment implications associated with this report.”

During discussion, a Member stated that he had been contacted by a number of elderly and disabled constituents in the east of the City who had recently been advised that they were required to bring their bins to the end of an alleyway in order for them to be emptied. The Director of City Services advised the Member that she would investigate the issue and report back to him.

A further Member raised a query regarding numerous missed bin collections which had occurred in North Belfast over the summer months, and specifically the long call waiting times which residents had endured upon phoning the call centre. The Director of City Services explained that the issue with the call centre waiting times had

been rectified shortly after officers had been alerted to the issue. She added that they were working, as part of the Customer Focus Programme, to expedite call processing between the refuse teams out on site, the affected residents and the call centre.

A Member queried whether the Council could seek to increase the capacity or the frequency of brown bin collections over the summer months in order to manage the significantly increased amount of compostable waste. In response, the Director of City Services confirmed that the continued increase in the use of brown bins by residents was to be welcomed but that they were aware of capacity issues over the summer period. She explained that, however, despite continued operational planning it unfortunately came down to the available capacity of the existing fleet.

The Committee adopted the recommendations within the report.

Local Air Quality Management Update for Belfast

(Councillor O'Hara attended in connection with this item).

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 At the People and Communities Committee meeting of 6th August 2019, a Member advanced a Notice of Motion concerning ambient air quality for the city. Actions arising from the Notice of Motion included that the council would agree to engage formally with the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) on areas of concern and to produce reports on:

- **Enhancing monitoring and reporting of air pollution, including recommended limits in line with the more stringent World Health Organisation Standards; and**
- **Introducing a Clean Air Zone in Belfast, in line with UK Government Guidance.**

1.2 This report serves to provide an interim response to the Committee in respect of enhancing the council's current monitoring and reporting of air pollution and regarding the introduction of a Clean Air Zone (CAZ) for Belfast. This interim report has been provided as an update on monitoring and CAZs and in advance of any direct engagement with DAERA or DfI.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- **Consider the contents of the report and to agree that recommendations regarding the adoption of WHO air quality standards and Clean Air Zone / Low Emission**

Zone legislation should be formally provided to DAERA and DfI as part of the council's consultation response to the forthcoming DAERA Air Quality Strategy for Northern Ireland.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Current national statutory obligations in respect of ambient air quality management are broadly established through the requirements of Directive 2008/50/EC on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe as well as the 4th Daughter Directive. The 2008 Directive includes detailed requirements for ambient air quality monitoring, monitoring locations and reference monitoring methodologies for sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, oxides of nitrogen, carbon monoxide, benzene, particulate matter (both PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} fractions), lead and ozone. Limit values for these pollutants have been established with regard to World Health Organisation standards, guidelines and programmes.

3.2 The numerous European ambient air quality management requirements have been transcribed into Northern Ireland legislation via Part III of the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002, the Air Quality Standards Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010 and supporting statutory policy and guidance. Part III of the Environment (NI) Order 2002 places a duty upon councils to periodically review and assess ambient air quality within their districts in order to determine the likelihood of achieving national air quality objectives by relevant compliance dates. These national objectives are broadly analogous to the various EC limit values detailed within the 2008 Directive. The council conducted its first review and assessment of ambient air quality for the city in 2003 and as a consequence, declared four Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) in 2004 for exceedences of nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter objectives. These AQMAs were all declared around arterial road transport routes into and out of the city and source apportionment subsequently revealed that the exceedences were principally connected with road transport emissions. Since this first review and assessment, the council has developed a series of Air Quality Action Plans with partner organisations including DfI, Translink, the Freight Transport Association, the Road Haulage Association and Sustrans. Members will be aware that DfI has responsibility for public transport, roads, road improvement schemes and active travel, etc. The council has also completed a series of further review and assessments, updating and screening assessments and progress reports in order to monitor progress towards achieving the air quality objectives. Particulate matter

concentrations have declined over recent years to the extent that only pollutant of present concern is nitrogen dioxide.

- 3.3 In order to accurately measure compliance with the objectives for nitrogen dioxide, the council has installed a series of real time analysers across the city within our AQMAs and within the city centre at Lombard Street. These real time monitoring sites have been located so as to comply with the requirements of European legislation and the government's local air quality management technical guidance (LAQM.TG(16)). The Lombard Street monitoring site is classified as an urban background site and is therefore not influenced significantly by any single source or road, but rather by the integrated contribution from all sources upwind of the site. This site therefore provides an indication of the underlying levels of air pollution to which residents and workers within the city centre are likely to be exposed. The other monitoring sites for nitrogen dioxide are located within our AQMAs at the Ormeau Road, Upper Newtownards Road, Stockmans Lane and Roden Street. These sites are classified as roadside and are therefore representative of 'worst case' nitrogen dioxide concentrations. It should be noted however, that nitrogen dioxide concentrations are known to drop of rapidly with distance from the kerbside.
- 3.4 These automatic monitors are augmented by a series of around 60 nitrogen dioxide diffusion tubes located at relevant receptor locations across the city. Diffusion tubes are passive samplers consisting of small plastic tubes containing a chemical reagent to absorb the nitrogen dioxide directly from the air. Due to their size, diffusion tubes can be located on the façades of homes and can therefore provide an assessment of nitrogen dioxide concentrations where people live. Automatic analysers have to be located within a special air conditioned enclosure and can therefore only be installed in limited locations. Moreover, diffusion tubes typically cost around £10 per tube whereas a nitrogen dioxide automatic analyser and enclosure may cost upwards of £20,000 to install. Current locations of our diffusion tubes and automatic analysers are summarised in the council's 2019 Progress Report that has recently been technically appraised and accepted by DAERA. As advised previously, all of our diffusion tubes and automatic analysers have been located so as to take account of the government's Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance (LAQM.TG(16)).
- 3.5 LAQM.TG(16) highlights that most local authorities have progressively adapted their monitoring strategy in accordance with air quality issues specific to their administrative area. Defra has also advised that over the years, many local authorities have relocated kerbside

monitoring sites to roadside or other sites relevant to public exposure. Monitoring networks have also been progressively extended to identify all potential hot spots, whilst a number of sites have been moved elsewhere or closed in areas where data showed continued compliance. Defra has therefore concluded that the existing monitoring network for most local authorities has been appropriately adapted to respond to all LAQM requirements.

- 3.6 Members are advised that this adaption approach has been applied to the council's ambient air quality monitoring. It is considered therefore that the current locations of the automatic analysers are appropriate to assess nitrogen dioxide concentrations within the AQMAs. Additional nitrogen dioxide monitoring data is provided through the use of diffusion tubes both within and outside of the AQMAs. The locations of existing diffusion tubes and the need for additional monitoring are periodically reviewed in light of monitoring data, emerging monitoring trends and any significant changes in road transport conditions across the city.
- 3.7 Members are also advised that the cost of the council's air quality monitoring is presently partly funded via the DAERA local air quality management grant. Monitoring not complying with the government's technical requirements would be unlikely to be funded by DAERA and the purchase, installation, ongoing operation and maintenance costs of additional monitoring equipment would likely have to be fully borne by the council.
- 3.8 The Notice of Motion also makes mention of the application of more stringent WHO limits. It should be noted that the WHO published air quality guidelines for particulate matter, ozone, nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide via a 2005 global update. The WHO has stated that the 2005 update represents the most current assessment of air pollution health effects, based on an expert evaluation of the scientific evidence. For nitrogen dioxide, the WHO has proposed a 200 $\mu\text{g}\text{m}^{-3}$ 1-hour mean and a 40 $\mu\text{g}\text{m}^{-3}$ annual mean; equivalent in concentration to European and national air quality standards. WHO has also recommended a 24-hour mean of 20 $\mu\text{g}\text{m}^{-3}$ and a 10-minute mean of 500 $\mu\text{g}\text{m}^{-3}$ for sulphur dioxide whereas the UK and EC have applied a 15 minute mean of 266 $\mu\text{g}\text{m}^{-3}$, a 1-hour mean of 350 $\mu\text{g}\text{m}^{-3}$ and a 24-hour mean of 125 $\mu\text{g}\text{m}^{-3}$ for sulphur dioxide. There have been no exceedances of any sulphur dioxide standards in Belfast since before 2000.
- 3.9 The WHO has also advanced an annual mean of 20 $\mu\text{g}\text{m}^{-3}$ and a 24-hour mean of 50 $\mu\text{g}\text{m}^{-3}$, assessed as the 99th percentile for PM₁₀ whereas the EC and UK have adopted a 40 $\mu\text{g}\text{m}^{-3}$ annual mean and a 24-hour mean of 50 $\mu\text{g}\text{m}^{-3}$ assessed as

the 90.4th percentile. Annual mean PM₁₀ concentrations measured at the Belfast Centre and Stockmans Lane sites during 2018 were 16 $\mu\text{g}\text{m}^{-3}$ and 15 $\mu\text{g}\text{m}^{-3}$ respectively. For PM_{2.5}, the WHO has recommended an annual mean of 10 $\mu\text{g}\text{m}^{-3}$ and a 24-hour mean of 25 $\mu\text{g}\text{m}^{-3}$, assessed as the 99th percentile. For PM_{2.5}, the UK has adopted an annual target of 25 $\mu\text{g}\text{m}^{-3}$ to be achieved by 2020, although this target has not been included by DEARA within council air quality management obligations. However, it is understood that the forthcoming UK Environment Bill 2019 will enshrine World Health Organisation (WHO) limits for particulate matter in UK law. It should however, be noted that Belfast City Council monitors PM_{2.5} concentrations at the Belfast Centre Lombard Street site. In 2018, the PM_{2.5} annual mean was 10 $\mu\text{g}\text{m}^{-3}$ and the maximum daily mean was 39 $\mu\text{g}\text{m}^{-3}$. PM_{2.5} concentrations at Stockmans Lane are likely to be similar.

- 3.10 In the UK, it has been agreed that responsibility for meeting air quality limit values has been devolved to the national administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Accordingly, it is understood that DAERA will shortly consult upon a Northern Ireland specific Air Quality Strategy. As part of that consultation process, the council will have the opportunity to provide a detailed consultation response, including recommendations for enhanced air quality standards and monitoring, in fulfilment of the requirements of the Notice of Motion.
- 3.11 In May 2017, government published the Clean Air Zone Framework for England. Whilst this framework applies only in England, similar Low Emission Zone legislation has been introduced in Scotland. Clean Air Zones (CAZs) are designed to deliver immediate action to improve air quality and health with support for cities to grow whilst delivering sustained reductions in pollution and a transition towards a low emission economy. Where the most persistent pollution problems exist, CAZs enable control to be introduced to encourage only the cleanest vehicles to operate within the CAZ. There are two types of CAZ; (i) non-charging – a defined geographic area used as a focus for improving air quality where actions include the use of non-charged based access restrictions such as setting minimum emission standards, better land use planning, better traffic management, better fleet procurement, working with businesses to recognise and incentivise action and accelerating the transition towards a low carbon economy and accelerating the uptake of Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles; and (ii) charging – zones where, in addition to the above measures, vehicle owners are required to pay a charge to

enter, or move within, a zone if they are driving a vehicle that does not meet the particular standard for their vehicle type within that zone.

3.12 Within Belfast, the current principal area of concern for nitrogen dioxide remains the M1 Motorway and A12 Westlink corridor to include areas around the Stockmans Lane roundabout and York Street. Members will be aware that this route forms part of the Regional Strategic Transport Network, connecting the M1 Motorway to the M2 and M3 motorways and that DfI has published plans to significantly re-engineer the York Street Interchange to ease congestion.

3.13 Where CAZs or LEZs have been introduced in other cities, they have typically either excluded or charged vehicles to enter, based upon the cleanliness of their tailpipe emissions. It is considered that before a CAZ or LEZ could be justified for the M1 Motorway and A12 Westlink corridor, a detailed analysis of the composition of vehicles using the strategic network corridor would have to be undertaken in order to determine whether elevated nitrogen dioxide pollution levels are due to a particular type or Euro class of vehicle or simply due to overall vehicle numbers using this part of the Regional Strategic Transport Network. Moreover, the impact of any vehicle controls to be applied to the M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink corridor would have to be carefully considered in terms of the continuing functionality of the strategic network and in order to ensure that such controls did not simply encourage vehicles to divert through adjacent residential neighbourhoods or through other areas of the city. As highlighted earlier within this report, it is understood that DAERA will shortly consult upon a Northern Ireland specific Air Quality Strategy. It is considered that this consultation exercise will provide an opportunity for the Council to make recommendations to DAERA concerning the need for Clean Air Zone / Low Emission Zone provisions for Belfast and Northern Ireland.

3.14 Financial & Resource Implications

There would be procurement, operational and maintenance costs, as well as staff cost, if the council were to increase its ambient air quality monitoring across the city. As no such financial provisions exist within current budgets, monies to cover these additional costs would likely have to be generated from ongoing efficiencies within existing budgets.

3.15 Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessments

None.”

A Member, who was not on the Committee, was granted permission to address the item. He explained that he felt that the Council should be more ambitious on the issue of Air Quality Management and that it should go further than submitting a consultation response to the forthcoming DAERA Air Quality Strategy for Northern Ireland. He highlighted that the Green Party, in conjunction with Friends of the Earth, had taken measurements of air quality at 128 sites across the City. He stated that there had been three breaches of NO₂ in the City this year, compared to one breach in 2017, which illustrated that the problem was becoming worse. He also pointed out that a detailed assessment had not been completed within Belfast since 2010.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Smyth,
Seconded by Councillor McCusker and

Resolved - that the Council agrees to look at undertaking a detailed assessment and, additionally, to measure Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5}).

The Director of City Services advised the Committee that the updated progress report 2019 was available on the Members' Portal. She explained that Air Quality Management Areas had been in place since 2005 along arterial routes in the city.

In relation to the proposal for a detailed assessment, she explained that the Council had updated screening assessments every three years, whereby the last one had taken place in 2018 and the results of which had informed the report. She highlighted to the Committee that it showed an improving picture but that officers absolutely understood the Members' ambition for change. The Members were advised that the Council had not carried out a detailed screening assessment since 2015 as it hadn't officially needed to do one.

In response to the proposed monitoring of Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5}), she advised the Committee that the measure was not enshrined in UK legislation and so, if the Council was to begin measuring it, other partner agencies might not necessarily take notice of it. However, she explained that, potentially through the Community Planning Partnership, the Council could bring some challenge to the process of developing the new Air Quality Action Plan.

The Committee:

1. considered the contents of the report and agreed that recommendations regarding the adoption of WHO air quality standards and Clean Air Zone / Low Emission Zone legislation should be formally provided to DAERA and DfI as part of the council's consultation response to the forthcoming DAERA Air Quality Strategy for Northern Ireland; and
2. agreed to bring back a further report on how to meet the undertaking for a detailed assessment, and to include the measuring of PM_{2.5}.

Committee Planning Workshop – Feedback

The Committee considered a detailed report on the feedback which had been received at the Committee Planning Workshop on 10th September.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed that a draft Committee Plan would be submitted to a future meeting for its consideration.

Operational Issues

Street Naming

The Committee agreed to grant applications for the naming of two new streets within the City, namely, Northview Lane, off Northview, BT15, and of Finaghy Park Gardens, off Finaghy Park Central, BT10.

Update on Grass Cutting at sites not owned by Belfast City Council

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The committee will recall an update paper presented at the meeting on 4th June 2019.

1.2 After discussion, the Committee:

- Noted the continued actions which were being undertaken as part of the ongoing review of grass cutting arrangements at sites not owned by the Council;
- Agreed that a further report in relation to the review of grass cutting arrangements would be submitted to a future meeting, and
- Agreed to the inclusion of a site at McKinstry Road within the grass cutting arrangements that the Council currently operated with the Department for Infrastructure and Transport NI.

1.3 This report provides an update for Members and outlines recent work undertaken by officers regarding the potential for sponsorship of roundabouts and verges, in partnership with the Department for Infrastructure and Transport NI.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- note the update information regarding grass cutting at sites not owned by Belfast City Council, and

- if Members are content with the initial proposals regarding sponsorship, to endorse officers taking this work forward, with view to a report being brought to the Committee with full details.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Key Issues

Members will recall from the June 2019 report that since 2016/2017, the Council has supplemented grass cutting arrangements for the Department for Infrastructure and Transport NI, by providing five cuts per annum at the following sites:

- Michael Ferguson roundabout;
- Kingsway Embankment, Dunmurry;
- Knock dual Carriageway, and
- Cregagh Road with Knock dual carriageway.

3.2 Members will further be aware that the maintenance of these sites requires financial resources via the departmental budgets.

3.3 In order to identify opportunities for the Council to help defray these costs, officers have undertaken preliminary research into opportunities to generate income via a sponsorship scheme.

3.4 As well as an opportunity to generate additional external funds to supplement existing maintenance budgets, sponsorship schemes can improve the appearance of roundabouts, improve the image of Belfast as a vibrant location for businesses and community groups, and promote the range of businesses already located locally.

3.5 Such schemes are widely used by other Councils, and a number of models for identifying suitable sites, including roundabouts and verges, and initiating such sponsorship schemes, including procurement options, are available. Officers have also met colleagues in the DfI Roads Service, whose Eastern Division work in partnership with Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council to implement a sponsorship scheme in their council area.

3.6 It is intended that with further benchmarking, and discussion with DfI Roads Service, a suitable scheme will be identified that could be applied in Belfast. Such a sponsorship scheme will need to be considered in the context of the wider, ongoing corporate initiative to develop a commercial framework and strategy, and officers will ensure that as the

potential scheme develops, it will be reviewed by the Council's Commercial Working Group and Commercial Panel. Furthermore, officers will continue to engage with DfI in order to maximise the allocation of its resources with the Belfast City Council area.

3.7 Financial and Resource Implications

The development of a sponsorship scheme for roundabouts and verges provides an opportunity to generate additional external funds to supplement existing maintenance budgets.

3.8 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

There are no equality, good relations or rural needs implications associated with this report."

In response to a Member's request regarding the need for the grass to be cut on the McKinstry Road Roundabout, and the potential of using a private contractor, the Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services agreed to consider ways in which the issue could be addressed and to submit a report to a future meeting, highlighting to the Members that there were liability issues to be considered given that the land was not Council-owned.

The Committee:

1. noted the updated information regarding grass cutting at sites not owned by Belfast City Council;
2. agreed that officers would investigate ways as to how the McKinstry Road Roundabout could be addressed, including the potential of hiring a private contractor to cut the grass on a single occasion, and any associated issues and provide an update to the Committee at a future date; and
3. agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting with full details relating to the initial proposals regarding potential sponsorship schemes.

Feasibility of Funding for Cloth Nappy Scheme

The Committee was reminded that the Council had been funding two-week trials of a cloth nappy scheme for over four years, allowing parents the opportunity to trial the use of cloth nappies and to access a refund scheme should they wish to continue once the trial had finished.

The Members were advised that the scheme had proven very popular, which had resulted in Belfast families having to wait between eight to ten weeks to access the trial. The Director of City Services explained that, following a free trial, each kit was returned and reissued to another family and, therefore, having an additional kit in

circulation would therefore alleviate the waiting times. She reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 6th August, it had agreed that officers would investigate the feasibility of the Council purchasing an additional cloth nappy kit for use by Belfast ratepayers in order to reduce the waiting time.

The Committee was advised that, further to discussion with Legal Services, it was recommended that a supplementary agreement be put in place with the service provider stating that if the Council provided direct support in the form of an additional Nappy Trial Kit, with an estimated value of £400 per kit, that it would be exclusively for the benefit of Belfast families.

The Committee approved the establishment of a supplementary agreement with the existing service provider, which would allow the Council to supply an additional cloth nappy kit to the company solely for the benefit of Belfast residents.

Request for the Use of Lower Botanic Gardens – City of Belfast Grand Black Chapter

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 4th June, it had granted approval for the City of Belfast Grand Black Chapter to hold a parade through the Botanic Gardens on 28th August, 2021. The Strategic Director advised the Committee that the parade was to mark the centenary of the formation of Northern Ireland and that it would pass a number of buildings with significance to the Centenary.

The Members were advised that, since that decision, officers had received a request from the City of Belfast Grand Black Chapter to hold a family fun day event in lower Botanic Gardens, adjacent to Stranmillis Embankment on the 28th August 2021, between 12noon and 7.00pm, following the parade from the City Hall to the Botanic Gardens.

The Committee was advised that the event would include market stalls, food vendors, religious service, stewarding, fun rides, live music and that there would be no sale of alcohol during the event. The Strategic Director explained that it would be a requirement of the License Agreement that the organisers would liaise with Queens University P.E. Centre and local communities to minimise any impact that the event might incur in the surrounding area.

It was reported that there may be a requirement to have additional staff on site to facilitate the event and, if that was the case, the costs would be charged to the event organiser.

The Committee agreed approval for the City of Belfast Grand Black Chapter to hold an event in Lower Botanic Gardens on 28th August 2021, subject to, and on condition that, the requestor:

- having resolved all operational issues to the Council's satisfaction;
- an appropriate legal agreement was to be completed, to be prepared by the City Solicitor; and

- that the promoter would meet all the statutory requirements of the Planning and Building Control Service including the terms and conditions of the Park's Entertainment Licence.

Combined Report - Request for the Use of Parks

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Members to host events in our parks, namely:

- Request for Both Lives Matter to hold a 'Both Lives Matter Demonstration' at
- Falls Park on Sunday 13 October 2019.
- Request for MACS NI to hold a Sleep Out event at Victoria Park on Thursday 14 November 2019.
- Request for Street Soccer NI to hold a Sleep Out event at CS Lewis Square on Friday 24 January 2019.

Both Sleep Out events will take place outside normal park opening hours and will require the closure of part of the facility.

2.0 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- Grant authority for these events to take place at these locations by these organisations;
- Grant authority for any subsequent, annual charity Sleep Out events at these locations by these organisations; and
- Authorise the Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services to approve the 'Both Lives Matter Demonstration' under the Council scheme of delegation, due to the late application with the event taking place before the Committee decision can be ratified at the November meeting of Council;
- For each event. grant authority to the Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services subject to satisfactory terms being agreed and on condition that the Event Organiser:
 - completes the appropriate Event Management Plans;

- resolves all operational issues to the Council's satisfaction;
- meets all statutory requirements including Public Liability Insurance cover, Health and Safety, and licensing responsibilities; and
- shall consult with adjoining public bodies and local communities, as necessary.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Key Issues

- Request for Both Lives Matter to hold a 'Both Lives Matter Demonstration' at Falls Park.
 - A request has been received week commencing 23rd September 2019 from Both Lives Matter to hold a 'Both Lives Matter Demonstration' at Falls Park on Sunday 13 October 2019 from 3 - 6pm
 - Both Lives Matter has four primary aims: to reframe the abortion debate in Northern Ireland and beyond; to advocate for better care in pregnancy crisis; to create a life-affirming culture that values each woman and her unborn child; and to safeguard the current law which protects both women and unborn children.
 - The purpose of the event is to have a cross-community, inter-generational, peaceful protest march against the proposed imposition of liberalised abortion laws on Northern Ireland. There will be no charge to participants.
- Request for MACS NI to hold a Sleep Out event at Victoria Park in the Connswater Community Greenway Marquee.
 - A request has been received from MACS NI, an organisation that provides a range of support services for children and young people in Northern Ireland who haven't had a fair deal in relation to housing, homelessness, mental health and participation, to hold a Sleep Out event at Victoria Park on Thursday 14 November 2019 in the Connswater Community Greenway marquee. Set up of the event will take place at 2pm and it will be dismantled by 10am on Friday 15 November 2019.
 - MACS NI is part of a national campaign with other charities across the UK to end homelessness. This Sleep Out event will raise awareness and funds for vulnerable young people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

- The event will not have an admission charge, registration will be done on site and online. The charity will be collecting donations during the event.
- The event will include food vendors, live music and street entertainment. The event organiser will provide marquees/gazebos, stewards, toilets and will arrange pitch hire and electricity for their event.
- Request for Street Soccer NI to hold a Sleep Out event at CS Lewis Square.
 - A request has been received from Street Soccer NI to hold a Sleep Out event at CS Lewis Square on Friday 24 January 2020. Set up of the event will take place at 5pm and it will be dismantled by 12 noon on Saturday 25 January 2020.
 - Street Soccer NI tackles homelessness through providing employment and housing support, built around football activities and working with some of our societies' most excluded and vulnerable people. This event will raise awareness of homelessness by getting participants to experience sleeping out, whilst raising sponsorship for the charity.
 - The event will have an admission charge of £20 and registration will be completed online. The charity will be collecting donations during the event.
 - The event will include football matches and the event organiser will provide marquees/ gazebos and toilets. Caterers will provide breakfast in the morning, for participants.

3.2 Financial & Resource Implications

There are no financial or resource implications.

3.3 Asset and Other Implications

Council Officers will liaise with the organisers in relation to the potential environmental impact of these events.

3.4 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

Equality and Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment will be considered by Officers for each of the events in line with the Council processes.”

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Request to Plant Trees as part of Queen's
Commonwealth Tree Canopy Project**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 4th June, it had agreed the proposed policy for future tree planting requests within Parks and Open Spaces which marked significant occasions and events. At that meeting, the Committee agreed to defer consideration of a request submitted by Emma Little Pengelly MP, to plant five small trees to mark Her Majesty the Queen's Commonwealth Tree Canopy Project, to allow discussion on the proposal to take place at the Party Leaders' Consultative Forum.

The Members were advised that the Party Leaders' Consultative Forum, at its meeting on 26th September, had agreed that the request should be resubmitted to the People and Communities Committee for consideration.

The Committee acceded to the request submitted by Emma Little Pengelly MP, to plant five small trees to mark Her Majesty the Queen's Commonwealth Tree Canopy Project.

**DAERA Consultation on Invasive
Alien Species (IAS) in NI**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to make Members aware of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) consultation in relation to the Management measures for widely spread Invasive Alien Species (IAS) in Northern Ireland and to seek Members' approval of the Council's draft response. The consultation response closes on 23rd October 2019.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to;

- **consider the draft response as set out in Appendix 1 and approve its submission to DAERA, subject to any comments or amendment provided, with the proviso that the response is subject to full Council approval at its meeting on 4th November 2019.**

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

3.1 On the 11th September 2019, DAERA launched a six week consultation in relation to the *Management measures for*

widely spread Invasive Alien Species (IAS) in Northern Ireland'. The purpose of this consultation is to obtain views on the management measures being considered by DAERA for species of Union concern which are widely spread in Northern Ireland. The consultation document is available at <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations>.

- 3.2 Regulation (EU) No. 1143/2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species came into force on 1 January 2015. It imposes strict restrictions on a list of species known as 'species of Union concern'. These are species whose potential adverse impacts across the European Union are such that concerted action across Europe is required. The restrictions mean that (subject to certain defences, or exemptions through permits or licences) species of Union concern cannot be imported into the EU, kept, bred, transported, placed on the market, used or exchanged, allowed to reproduce, grown or cultivated, or released into the environment. There are currently 66 species on the Union list: 30 animals and 36 plants.
- 3.3 Ten species of Union concern that have been identified as being widely spread in Northern Ireland. For these widely spread species, the Regulation requires effective management measures to be put in place, so that their impact on biodiversity, the related ecosystem services and, where applicable, human health or the economy are minimised. Management measures consist of lethal or non-lethal physical, chemical or biological actions aimed at the eradication, population control or containment of a population of widely spread species.
- 3.4 The 10 species identified are

Plants

Nuttall's waterweed (*Elodea nuttallii*),
Chilean rhubarb (*Gunnera tinctoria*),
Giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*),
Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*),
Curly waterweed (*Lagarosiphon major*),
American skunk cabbage (*Lysichiton americanus*),
Parrot's feather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*).

Animals

Grey squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*),
all subspecies of (*Trachemys scripta*) otherwise known as 'slider terrapins' &
New Zealand Flatworm (*Arturdendvus triangulates*)

- 3.5 Belfast City Council in principle, supports the management measures focussed on reducing the impact that the 10 widely spread species of Union concern have on native biodiversity and ecosystem services as well as their wider socio-economic impacts.
- 3.6 The Council welcomes a strategic approach but considers that it is not possible to provide specific comments as the document outlines a range of options/approaches such as control to eradication for the 10 species listed. Naturally management measures will depend on the local circumstances however BCC considers clarification is needed at the local level to identify impacts and costs for each of the listed species.
- 3.7 A copy of the draft response is included as Appendix 1 but in summary the council suggests the following should be completed to assist with the implementation of this legislation and to maximise efforts to control IAS across NI.
- Special criteria should be developed to determine the approach taken ie control or eradication at a local level. It is not possible to comment on specific species given that criteria has not been provided to assess the level or type of action/approach likely to be taken for each species. In addition is DAERA the Competent Authority which determines the approach?
 - The criteria should be unambiguous and evidence based to ensure consistent approaches across NI.
 - Monitoring of actions should also be undertaken to ascertain effectiveness and plan for future action.
 - The resource implication for Council and other land owners would need to be determined and subsequently resourced. Funding should be provided to key stakeholders to enable additional action on the control of IAS.
 - The provision of advice and guidance is essential. Currently there is a lack of guidance from the Department on control options. Costed Case studies and best practice should be developed to enable effective action. This is particularly relevant for the widespread aquatic species listed.
- 3.8 BCC would welcome further engagement with DAERA to clarify and assess specific implications of this legislation for Belfast.

3.9 Financial & Resource Implications

There are none with this report. However, dependent on the approach/level of action deemed necessary by DAERA there may be limited or significant resource implications for the council.

3.10 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

There are none with this report.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Association of Port Health Authorities (APHA) Membership

The Committee noted the nomination of Councillor Heading to the Association of Board Health Authorities Executive Board for a further two year term of office, and authorised the expenditure associated with his attendance at Board meetings.

Solace/Waste Forum Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 To provide an update to Members on the progress made by SoLACE in conjunction with a Waste Forum made up of TAG (NI) officers, supported by NILGA, in assessing councils needs in terms of collaborating on waste and related Services. This a work in progress, but it is important that Members are aware of this emergent collective approach being undertaken by the 11 councils.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to note;

- the update and agree to the resource recommendations.

3.0 Main report

Background

3.1 Prior to the RPA (Review of Public Administration) in 2015, the councils were organised into three voluntary Waste Management Groups;

1. arc21 (11 x councils)
 2. NWRWVG (North West Region Waste Management Group) (7 x councils)
 3. SWaMP2008 (Southern Waste Management Partnership) (8 x councils)
- 3.2 Each group operated through a Joint Committee, albeit on a slightly different basis whereby arc21 and SWaMP2008 were incorporated corporate bodies, whilst the NWRWVG was unincorporated. SWaMP2008 was dissolved in 2015. Arc21 can award contracts as a separate entity and hold assets, while SWaMP2008 did not enter into direct contract award. Similarly, the NWRWVG facilitated joint procurement across its councils (with Derry City Council as lead council), third-party contract awards were made through the individual councils.
- 3.3 The principle objective of the three Groups was to work collectively for their partner councils and others to develop three Waste Management Plans and deliver the various recycling and landfill diversion targets set out in European and domestic legislation.
- 3.4 Since RPA the picture has fragmented. Currently, there are two Waste Management Groups:
- arc21 representing Belfast City, Ards & North Down, Mid & East Antrim, Antrim & Newtownabbey, Newry Mourne & Down and Lisburn & Castlereagh City
 - NWRWVG representing Derry City & Strabane and Causeway & Glens
- 3.5 The three remaining councils (Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon, Fermanagh & Omagh and Mid Ulster), sometimes referred to 'NI Other', are not part of any Waste Management Group although they have worked together and produced a Joint Waste Management Plan.
- 3.6 These arrangements, however, are not seen as sustainable in the longer term. As a consequence, SoLACE NI (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives) requested that through the Technical Advisors Group (NI) (Local Government Technical Advisors Group), the councils review the current set-up with a view to making proposals for future arrangements. TAG subsequently established a Waste Forum. The timing is apt as reviews of DAERA's '*Delivering Resource Efficiency - Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy*' and councils' Waste Management Plans are scheduled for the near future. Organisational changes

within the Waste Management Groups also reinforce the need for a strategic review of current arrangements.

3.7 Given the increasing demands on councils to improve recycling quantity and quality to deliver government targets, develop the Circular Economy, while reducing dependency on landfill, achieving these goals would be enhanced through greater collaboration between councils.

3.8 Members should be aware that NI councils spend in the region of 25-35% of their revenue budget on waste and related environmental services.

3.9 **Main Report**

Following on from a workshop involving both Chief Executives and senior officers from the eleven Councils in October 2018, TAG (NI) were requested to take forward a Strategic Review of the current arrangements for collaboration between councils for waste and related services.

3.10 Following the establishment of the Waste Forum drawing upon senior officer representation from the eleven councils, a specification was developed and agreed for an independent organisation to undertake a review the current arrangements and develop options for potential future structures and governance arrangements (see Appendix 1).

3.11 At its September 2019 meeting, the Specification was signed off by SoLACE NI. Given the need to engage an experienced organisation to carry out this review, it was agreed that the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) should be appointed to undertake this work as they have the necessary skills and experience having worked with many councils and the Waste Management Groups, and are public sector providers.

3.12 SIB's engagement is carried out in accordance with and for the purposes described in The Strategic Investment & Regeneration of Sites (NI) Order 2003 – namely the exercise of strategic investment functions in relation to the Executive and bodies carrying out major investment projects.

3.13 Members should be aware that the review officially commenced with a workshop on 13 September. It is anticipated that the final report will be available in early 2020 and, following approval by SoLACE NI, the outcome will be reported to councils for their consideration.

3.14 Financial & Resource Implications

The fee to support the delivery of the SIB report will be approximately £2,200 per council. This is being supported as part of our waste framework development and within existing budgets. There will also be officer time required to support the process and through the Waste Forum.

3.15 Equality / Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

None.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Development Update

The Committee agreed the minutes and the recommendations arising from the Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Working Group meetings held on 21st August and 2nd October.

Issues Raised in Advance by Members

Use and Condition of Council Pavilions – Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor McReynolds, to raise

In response to the Member’s request, the Committee agreed that a report would be submitted to a future meeting on the use and condition of the pavilions within the Council’s parks across the City, to include reference to their current status, such as whether they were currently being used by any groups and whether any repairs were needed.

Portacabin at Wedderburn Park – Councillor Graham to raise

(Councillor Graham attended in connection with this item)

The Member outlined to the Committee that Finaghy Football Club wanted to place a Portacabin on Council-owned land at the entrance to Wedderburn Park. He explained that the Club had advised that they would cover all costs associated with the Portacabin, including the connection to, and any ongoing costs associated with, electricity and water. The Members were advised that the Portacabin would only be open and operational for a certain number of hours on match days and that they were open to the idea of local community groups also using it.

A number of Members stated that there had been previous difficulties with the mis-use of similar cabins on Council land and that there were a number of issues which had to be taken into consideration in relation to such a request.

After discussion, the Committee agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting to include any issues which would need to be considered by the Council in the consideration of such a request, including planning, leasing and licensing considerations, health and safety issues, and any potential impact that a Portacabin could have on other users of the facility.

**Update on the Pilot Extending Opening Hours
in Council Parks - Councillor M. Kelly to raise**

In response to the Member's request, the Committee agreed that a report would be submitted to a future meeting on the opening hours of Council Parks, to include any relevant motions which had previously been passed.

Chairperson