

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 23rd August, 2019

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Alderman Kingston (Chairperson);
Aldermen Haire and Spence; and
Councillors Beattie, Black, Carson, Garrett, Groogan,
Hargey, Heading, Lyons, McAllister, Murphy, Nicholl,
Pankhurst and Walsh.

Also attended: Councillors Matt Collins, Ferguson, M. Kelly, McMullan and
O'Hara.

In attendance: Mrs S. Wylie, Chief Executive;
Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources;
Mr. J. Walsh, City Solicitor;
Mr. A. Reid, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;
Mr. N. Grimshaw, Strategic Director of City and
Neighbourhood Services;
Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;
Ms. S. Grimes, Director (Operational) of Physical

Programmes;

Ms. G. Long, Commissioner for Resilience; and
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors Dorrian, Graham, Long and McDonough-Brown.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 21st June 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 July.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Beattie declared an interest in relation to item 1(d) – Request to Present – Belfast Harbour Commissioners, in that he was a member of the Board of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners, and took no part in the decision-making process.

Councillor Groogan declared an interest in relation to item 2(c) – Asset Management, on the basis that she had supported an organisation which had applied, unsuccessfully, to lease the Council's property in the Ormeau Park. As the item did not become the subject of discussion, she was not required to leave the meeting.

Request to Present – Belfast Harbour Commissioners

The Committee acceded to a request from the Belfast Harbour Commissioners to attend a future meeting in order to present the Belfast Harbour Strategy.

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 Committee meeting during discussion of these items as, due to the nature of the items, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Section 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.

Bonfire Framework - All-Party Working Group

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 11th July, it had agreed to establish an All-Party Working Group to put in place a framework to achieve more effective management of bonfires on Council-owned sites/facilities.

The Chief Executive drew the Committee's attention to a draft Terms of Reference for the Working Group, which covered the following elements:

- Background;
- Objectives;
- Membership;
- Governance/decision-making;
- Role of the Chairperson
- Meeting protocols; and
- Minutes.

She recommended that the Committee approve the draft Terms of Reference and agree to the Working Group being chaired by her (or her nominee).

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre

The Director of Finance and Resources drew the Committee's attention to issues which had prevented the contractor from completing work on a small section of the Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre site and outlined the potential implications for the Council.

After a lengthy discussion, the Committee agreed that the Council should do everything within its power to ensure that the contractor fulfilled the contract and agreed that legal advice be sought on the actions open to the Council should the work not be progressed.

The Committee agreed also that the Council should request the Northern Ireland Local Government Commissioner for Standards to investigate the leaking of confidential information which had been discussed on 15th August at the meeting of the Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum.

Financial Reporting – Quarter 1 2019/20

The Director of Finance and Resources submitted for the Committee's consideration a report which set out the Quarter 1 financial position for the Council, including a forecast of the year end outturn. The report included a reporting pack, providing an overview of the financial indicators, together with an executive summary. It provided also a more detailed explanation of each of the relevant indicators and the forecast outturns for the year.

He reported that the Departmental year-end forecast was an over spend of £149k, which represented a variance of 0.1% of the annual net expenditure budget, and that an underspend of £1.92m was forecast for the Capital Financing Budget.

In terms of expenditure, the District Rate forecast by Land and Property Services was a clawback of £1.98m. He explained that, whilst the Estimated Penny Product for 2019/20 had been set at a level which should provide adequate cover for the recurring element of valuation appeal losses and normal backdating, there was a risk that a number of outstanding appeals could incur a substantial backdated penalty, resulting in an impact on the level of general reserves. Officers would be meeting with representatives of Land and Property Services to discuss the forecasted position and an updated position would be submitted to the Committee in November.

In terms of other expenditure, £75k was required to replenish the fuel reserve, following the Committee's decision on 21st June to fund the City-wide Tribunal Service for three months, and approximately £770k would be required, should the Police Service of Northern Ireland's appeal for holiday back pay be upheld. There was, therefore, an anticipated funding shortfall of just over £1m. In light of that shortfall, the balance of general reserves was forecast to decrease to £11.7m by the year end.

Accordingly, he recommended that, given the Departmental and District Rate forecasts, no further reallocations or cash flow payments be considered until the Quarter 2 position was presented to the Committee in November.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Asset Management

The Committee:

- i) Kent Street and Station Street Off Street Car Parks – Renewal of Licence Agreements**
 - approved the renewal of licence agreements for Council operated off street car parks at Kent Street and Station Street;
- ii) Corporation Street Off Street Car Park – Renewal of Licence Agreement**

- approved the renewal of a licence agreement with the Department for Infrastructure for the off street car park at Corporation Street.

iii) Parkgate Avenue Off Street Car Park – New Licence Agreement

- approved a new licence with the Directors of Argento Contemporary Jewellery Ltd for a right to pass and repass across Parkgate Avenue Car Park.

iv) 9 Adelaide – Acquisition of Freehold

- approved the acquisition of the freehold interest in 9 Adelaide otherwise known as 9/13 Adelaide Street and 2/10 Donegall Mews.

v) Lyons Park – New Licence Agreement

- approved a licence agreement with the Belfast Hills Partnership to allow the excavation of a pond within Lyons Park.

vi) Finvoy Street – Acquisition and New Lease

- approved the acquisition of lands at Finvoy Street to facilitate the development of a new Community Centre funded by the Social Investment Fund and to the subsequent lease of this land to Walkway Community Association.

vii) Ormeau Park – New Lease to Bumbles Day-Care Limited

- approved the grant of a new Lease to Bumbles Day-Care Limited, subject to detailed terms to be agreed between the Estates Manager and Legal Services

viii) Proposed Licence to Limelight Ltd for Emergency Escape at Dunbar Link

- granted a licence to Limelight Belfast Ltd for a period of one year for use of Council land to facilitate an emergency access and delegated authority to the Director of Physical Programmes and City Solicitor to approve the terms of the licence agreement.

ix) Olympia Commercial Sites – disposal to a Major Food Retailer

- approved the appointment of a major food retailer as preferred bidder following the revised lower offer received from Kirk Bryson Limited. Approval was granted to enter into a contract with the major food retailer for disposal of the site, subject to planning permission and an agreed timeframe for development completion and other terms, as agreed by the Estates Manager and Legal Services.

x) Ballymacarrett Walkway – Acquisition to Rectify Boundary

- approved the acquisition of two strips of land from Connswater Homes at Ballymacarrett Walkway for a nominal sum, with the costs associated with the transfer being paid by the Council.

xi) The Stables, First Floor Office, Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park – New Lease to Church Mission Society Ireland

- approved the grant of a new Lease to Church Mission Society Ireland, subject to detailed terms to be agreed between the Estates Manager and Legal Services.

xii) St George's Market – New Lease Unit 3 to Harriette Foods Ltd.

- approved the grant of a new Lease to Harriette Foods Ltd., subject to detailed terms to be agreed between the Estates Manager and Legal Services.

xiii) City Lighting Pilot Project – City Revitalisation Project

- granted approval, in principle, to enter into suitable agreements with the owners of buildings in Castle Street and Castle Arcade to facilitate the installation of 12 projector units and a neon artwork as part of the lighting pilot under the enhanced lighting and dressing strategy, subject to detailed terms to be agreed between the Estates Manager and Legal Services.

xiv) Little Donegal Street and Kent Street Car Parks – Contractor's Compound

- granted approval to enter into a licence agreement with Graham Construction for a Contractor's Compound at Little Donegal Street or Kent Street Car Park.

Proposed Governance Arrangements for
Spending Financial Developer Contributions
secured through Section 76 Planning Agreements

The Committee agreed, with fifteen Members voting for and one against, to defer consideration of the report to allow for a briefing to be held. It was agreed that this should follow the briefing on the review of business rates which, subject to approval being granted later in the meeting, would take place on Friday, 27th September at 9.30 a.m.

Innovation and Growth Commission

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 22nd March, it had agreed to the establishment, for one year, of an Innovation and Growth Commission. The Chief Executive reported that the Commission was a collaboration across the Council, Belfast Harbour Commissioners, Queen's University and the University of Ulster, supplemented by a number of strategic advisors from both inside and outside Northern Ireland. The Commission would review economic prospects, consider inclusivity and other challenges and opportunities and produce a growth plan. It would seek also to integrate and join up major strategic projects facing the city of Belfast over the next ten to twenty years.

She pointed out that several key opportunities had emerged recently, such as the Belfast Region City Deal, the development potential of the City centre and Waterfront district and the Belfast – Dublin Economic Corridor, which had the potential to deliver transformational impacts for the City.

She explained that the Innovation and Growth Commission would consider evidence from key sectors, as well as various scenarios, and would seek to develop a growth plan for the City, which would deliver on the priorities identified within the Belfast Agenda, and advise on how to make growth more inclusive. It would do so by ensuring integration between major projects, such as those mentioned above, to maximise potential opportunities for the City. Relationships between the Commission and formal decision-making structures across the City would, therefore, be critical.

She provided details of the initial membership of the Commission and confirmed that she would act as Chair and be accountable for ensuring that it met its goals and worked within its terms of reference. Accountability for the day-to-day operation of the Commission would rest with the Commissioner for Resilience, who would be tasked with providing advice and support, identifying resources and producing final outputs, as part of her requirement to implement a Resilience Strategy for the City. The Commissioner would work alongside the Director of City and Organisational Strategy to ensure that effective mechanisms were in place to support the Commission and its work streams, provide research and ensure that it was linked to Community Planning and the City Deal. The Commission would take evidence from the eight Political Parties represented on the Council and would engage regularly with both the City Growth and Regeneration Committee and the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

After discussion, the Committee noted the information which had been provided, stressed that a greater emphasis needed to be placed on inclusivity and sustainability and agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting outlining how inclusive growth and sustainability would be central to the Commission's work, including additions to membership to reflect this, and how the engagement process would interact with Members and the wider sectors representing these issues.

Matters referred back from Council/Motions

Motion – Domestic Violence

The Committee was reminded that, at the Council meeting on 1st July, the following motion on Domestic Violence had been proposed by Councillor M. Kelly and seconded by Councillor Nicholl:

“This Council is saddened at the levels of domestic violence in Belfast and recognises that this manifests in many different forms, including emotional and economic abuse.

Belfast needs to become a city that has zero tolerance towards domestic violence or abuse – a “Safe City” which is proactive in supporting victims of domestic violence and challenging perpetrators. A Safe City recognises that domestic violence impacts upon many residents, regardless of age, religion, ethnic or cultural background.

This Council pledges to build on the work already achieved by engaging with relevant partners to support victims of domestic abuse and challenge perpetrators and to update the Belfast City Council Domestic Violence Strategy.”

In accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the motion had been referred without discussion to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Councillor M. Kelly, who had proposed the motion, informed the Committee that the Police Service of Northern Ireland had, in the previous year, received 12,000 complaints in relation to domestic violence in Belfast. She welcomed the fact that the Council had updated its Policy on Domestic Violence and Abuse in the Workplace and suggested that it should work with other statutory agencies to develop a wider domestic violence strategy for the City. She concluded by requesting an update on the progress which had been made in designating Belfast as a Safe City and on the Safe Place scheme, in the context of Council properties.

The Committee agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting addressing the issues which had been raised by the Member.

Motion – Water Refill Points

The Committee was reminded that, at the Council meeting on 1st July, the following motion on Water Refill Points had been proposed by Councillor McMullan and seconded by the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor McReynolds):

“This Council recognises the over reliance on single use plastic water bottles. It notes innovative solutions to tackle this issue and support sustainable living, for example, the water refill stations recently installed by Mayo County Council.

The Council agrees to the installation of water bottle refill stations across the Council Estate. This aims to help encourage a growing culture of using personal, reusable bottles to tackle single-use plastic use.”

The motion had, in accordance with Standing Order 13(f), been referred without discussion to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Councillor McMullan, who had proposed the motion, referred to the facility within Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park as being an excellent example of a water refill point and requested that other potential Council locations and models be identified and costings provided. He requested also an update on the motion which had, on 1st February, 2018, been referred by the Council to the People and Communities Committee, around the provision by local shops and business of access to public drinking water.

The Committee agreed that a report, incorporating the issues which had been raised by the Member, be submitted to a future meeting.

Motion – Webcasting of Committee Meetings

The Committee was reminded that, at the Council meeting on 1st July, the following motion on the Webcasting of Committee Meetings had been proposed by Councillor Nicholl and seconded by Councillor Hanvey:

This Council agrees to introduce webcasting of all Committee meetings in order to increase openness and transparency.”

In accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the motion had been referred without discussion to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

The Committee agreed that a report on the matter be submitted to a future meeting.

Motion – Centenary of the Foundation of Northern Ireland

The Committee agreed that this item be considered later in the meeting in the context of the report on the Decade of Centenaries Programme.

Motion – Climate Emergency

The Committee was reminded that, at the Council meeting on 4th March, the following motion on Climate Emergency had been proposed by Councillor Matt Collins and seconded by Councillor Heading:

“This Council congratulates the Extinction Rebellion movement and other activists who have recently protested in Belfast and across the world in order to highlight the threat of catastrophic climate change. The Council recognises this as one of the greatest threats facing citizens in Belfast, and believes that urgent action must be taken in Belfast and globally in order to mitigate the worst impacts of climate change. Accordingly, the Council agrees to immediately declare a “Climate Emergency”.

The Council also urges other local Councils to follow suit, and calls on both British and Irish governments to also declare a climate emergency. Such a call aims to see Belfast move away from fossil fuels and fully toward renewable energy sources. This initiative would see the Council doing everything it can to tackle climate change and reduce carbon emissions, including, for example, ensuring that all new buildings are ecologically friendly, that the retrofitting of homes is a priority, and that public transport is expanded. The Council agrees to immediately establish a multi-agency team across the city, which should include various governmental departments, political parties and other relevant agencies, to ensure that tackling the causes of climate change is an immediate priority.”

The motion had, in accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the motion had been referred without discussion to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

The Commissioner for Resilience outlined the actions which had been undertaken since the motion had been presented to the Council, particularly:

- the recent establishment of the Working Group on the Climate Crisis;
- the establishment, in partnership with Queen’s University, of a Climate Commission for the City;

- the commissioning of a mini-stern to provide an economic analysis on carbon reduction; and
- ongoing engagement and research on the development of a Resilience Strategy, which would be present to the Committee in September for approval.

In view of that work, she recommended that the aforementioned motion be referred to the Working Group for consideration and confirmed that a detailed report, setting out the associated actions, timeframes and costs and aligning with timescales for consultation on the City's Resilience Strategy, would, in due course, be submitted to the Committee for consideration.

Councillor Matt Collins, who had proposed the motion, welcomed the work which was being undertaken across the Council to address climate change and related issues. He highlighted the need for Belfast to declare a Climate Emergency as a matter of priority and suggested that the Lord Mayor host an event to launch the Declaration. He concluded by requesting that the report which had been alluded to by the Commissioner for Resilience be prioritised and submitted to the next monthly meeting of the Committee.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to refer the motion on Climate Emergency to the Working Group on the Climate Crisis. The Committee agreed also that a report be submitted to its monthly meeting in September, setting out proposed actions to be undertaken in advance of Belfast being in a position to declare a Climate Emergency, with the aim of that being before the end of 2019.

Motion – CCTV in Care Homes – Response from Department of Health

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 21st May, had passed the following motion on CCTV in Care Homes, which had been proposed by Councillor Heading and seconded by Councillor Whyte:

“This Council notes the campaign by the Dunmurry Manor Relatives Organisation to highlight the need for CCTV cameras in communal areas of residential homes. The Council calls on the Department for Health to include the provision of CCTV in any contract made with a private home where the care of the elderly is carried out.”

The Democratic Services Officer reported that a letter had subsequently been forwarded to the Permanent Secretary in the Department of Health advising him of the motion.

The Permanent Secretary had, in his response, explained that the compulsory introduction of CCTV into residential and nursing homes was a complex issue and that it would, initially, be likely to require Ministerial agreement, along with the probable introduction of new legislation.

He had highlighted the fact that the Commissioner for Older People had, within his “Home Truths” report into Dunmurry Manor Care Home, included a recommendation for the Department for Health/Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority to produce comprehensive guidance on the potential use of covert and overt CCTV in care homes, compliant with human right and data protection law.

The Permanent Secretary had concluded by pointing out that, as a Health and Social Care Service, advice was currently being developed for any incoming Minister and that the views of stakeholders would be considered as part of that process.

After discussion, the Committee noted the response from the Permanent Secretary and agreed that a further letter be forwarded to him seeking clarification on whether the aforementioned advice had now been drafted and, if so, calling for it to be published.

**Motion – Support for Roads Infrastructure
In Scotland – Consultation Response**

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 4th March, had passed the following motion on Support for Roads Infrastructure in Scotland, which had been proposed by Alderman Kingston and seconded by former Councillor Reynolds:

This Council:

- recognises the long-standing cultural and economic ties between Northern Ireland and Scotland, and that fundamental to increasing the benefit to Belfast from this connection is the need to improve transport connections between Scotland and Northern Ireland;
- welcomes that the ferry services between Cairnryan and Belfast, by Stena Line, 6 times per day, and between Cairnryan and Larne, by P&O, 7 times per day, are among the busiest services in the UK and represent a strong opportunity for economic and tourism growth; however, the inadequate transport infrastructure beyond the ferry terminals at Cairnryan is inhibiting that growth and require investment to bring them up to standard;
- supports the campaign in Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway for investment in the roads infrastructure - along the A77 towards Glasgow/central Scotland and along the A75 towards the Scotland/England border, which are both predominantly single carriageway routes and pass through a number of small towns and villages – and in the rail infrastructure along the same routes, and agrees to write to the Scottish Government in support of calls for a long-term programme of such investment in the transport infrastructure of South West Scotland.”

The Democratic Services Officer reported that the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity had, within his response to the motion, referred to the draft findings of the South West Scotland Transport Study and the review of Scotland’s National Transport Strategy and their ongoing consultations. Accordingly, the Council, at its meeting on 1st July had agreed that officers should engage in the consultation process.

He explained that the consultation on the Transport Study was due to close on the day of the meeting and recommended that the motion, as passed by the Council and set out above, be submitted as the Council's response to the Transport Study. In addition, Political Parties could submit separate responses to reflect their respective positions. He added that the consultation on the review of the draft National Transport Strategy for Scotland was due to close on 23rd October and that, should approval be granted to submit a response, it would be drafted by officers in the Place and Economy Department, given the potential linkages between infrastructure and planning, and submitted to the relevant Committee for approval.

The Committee approved the response to the South West Scotland Transport Study, subject to the title of the Council motion referred to therein being amended to read as "Support for Investment in Transport Infrastructure in South West Scotland and agreed that officers draft a response to the draft National Transport Strategy for Scotland.

Motion – Welfare Mitigation Schemes –
Response from Department for Communities

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 1st July, had passed the following motion on Welfare Mitigation Schemes, which had been proposed by Councillor Canavan and seconded by Councillor Black:

"The policy of austerity and welfare cuts imposed by the British Government is wrong and should be reversed.

This Council recognises that mitigation packages have provided vital support to the most vulnerable members of our society and should continue to be provided as Tory austerity measures continue to impact.

The Council notes with deep concern the range of reports published recently which highlight the serious risk of greater hardship for many within our community, if welfare mitigations do not continue beyond March 2020. These reports include:

- Welfare Reform: Mitigations on a Cliff Edge;
- Cliff Edge Coalition NI; and
- NIAO: Welfare Reforms in NI.

The Council calls on all parties to support the need to continue welfare mitigations beyond March 2020, agrees to write to the Department for Communities calling for it to take all steps necessary to ensure that mitigations schemes will continue to help the most vulnerable in our community and calls for the immediate restoration of the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive so that it can take decisions and actions on this important issue."

The Democratic Services Officer reported that a response had since been received from the Permanent Secretary, Department for Communities. The Permanent Secretary had stated that the legislation made following the Fresh Start Agreement, which had provided authority to make welfare supplementary mitigation payments, would end on 31st March, 2020 and that no funding would be allocated beyond that date. In the continued absence of the Assembly, the Department for Communities was,

therefore, unable to amend the existing welfare supplementary mitigations legislation beyond March, 2020, as such regulations would be subject to Affirmative Resolution.

She had explained that, in line with the Fresh Start Agreement, the Department for Communities had undertaken a review of Welfare Mitigation Schemes. The outcome of that review had been published on 25th March. The Department had held a series of public engagement events with stakeholders, primarily from the advice sector, voluntary/community groups and Housing Associations, in order to obtain feedback on the review.

The Permanent Secretary had concluded by pointing out that the Department for Communities was aware of the challenges which were likely to arise from the termination of the welfare mitigation package and was considering all of the evidence surrounding the potential impact.

After discussion, the Committee noted the response from the Permanent Secretary and agreed that officers seek from the Assembly's All-Party Working Group on Poverty an update on the work which was being undertaken to address the issue of welfare mitigation beyond March, 2020.

Governance

Northern Ireland Local Government Code Of Conduct – Acceptance and Registration of Gifts and Hospitality

The Committee was informed that Paragraph 4.20 of the Northern Ireland Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors stipulated that a Member must:

- a) in accordance with any standing orders of your council and within 28 days of receipt of any gift, hospitality, material benefit or service, which is above a value specified in a resolution of your council, provide written notification to your Chief Executive of the existence and nature of that gift, hospitality, material benefit or service;
- b) not accept from anyone gifts, hospitality, material benefits or services for yourself or any other person, which might place you, or reasonably appear to place you, under an improper obligation; and
- c) discourage gifts and offers of hospitality to any family members which might place you, or reasonably appear to place you, under an improper obligation.

The City Solicitor explained that the value above which a Member was required to inform the Chief Executive of any gift, hospitality, material benefit or service was currently £50 and he recommended that it be maintained at that figure for this Council term.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

**National Association of Councillors –
Attendance at National Executive Meetings**

The Committee was reminded that it had eight Members on the National Association of Councillors (Northern Ireland Region). Alderman Sandford had been appointed to represent the Northern Ireland Region on the Association's National Executive, which would require him to attend a meeting on 9th September in London and on 23rd November in Chester.

The Committee approved the attendance of Alderman Sandford at the aforementioned meetings of the National Executive of the National Association of Councillors and authorised the payment of the appropriate travel and subsistence allowances.

**National Association of Councillors –
Annual Conference**

The Committee was advised that the National Association of Councillors' annual conference would this year be held in Carlisle from 13th till 15th September. The theme for the event would be "Community Hubs and Community Engagement", with a particular focus on the establishment of hubs and how they could be used to improve outcomes for the public and local/national service. In previous years, the Committee had granted authority for any of the eight Members appointed by the Council to the National Association of Councillors (Northern Ireland Region) to attend the conference. The fee per delegate was £350 and there would also be travel and accommodation costs.

The Committee approved the attendance of any of the eight Members appointed to the National Association of Councillors (Northern Ireland Region) at the conference.

**Appointment of Panel for the Recruitment of
Independent Members to the Belfast PCSP
and Four DPCSPs**

The Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services reminded the Committee that the Council was required, under Part 3 of the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, to establish the Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership (BPCSP) and four District Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (DPCSPs).

He reported that independent members of the BPCSP and DPCSPs were appointed by the Northern Ireland Policing Board, which had overall responsibility for the process, from nominations made by the Council. The nomination process consisted of three stages, the first of which involved an eligibility sift by the Policing Board. The shortlisting and interviewing of potential candidates by the Council would follow and, finally, independent members would be appointed by the Policing Board from the appointable pool of candidates.

He explained that the Policing Board was aiming to have new independent members appointed in advance of the BPCSP and DPCSPs being re-constituted by the target date of 1st April, 2020. He confirmed that the nomination process had now reached stage 2 and that, to enable it to move forward, the Council had been requested to nominate a panel, comprised of four Elected Members from the current

DPCSP, including a Chairperson, to shortlist and interview potential candidates. The Council should ensure that the panel was representative in terms of community and gender background and, in order to ensure consistency and to avoid overlap in membership, the same panel would be involved in the selection process for the BPCSP and four DPCSPs. A reserve should also be nominated for each nominated panel member. It was pointed out that the panel members, including reserves, would be required to undertake a half day training session in September and, based on previous recruitment exercises, would be required for two days of shortlisting and eight to ten days for interviewing.

After discussion, the Committee agreed that nominations for the aforementioned positions be sought from the leaders of the four largest Political Parties represented on the Council.

LGBT Stained Glass Window Working Group

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 23rd November, 2018, it had, in response to a Council motion, agreed to establish a Working Group to oversee the installation of an LGBT stained glass window in the City Hall. Following that decision, nominations had been sought from the Party Leaders. However, despite a number of reminders, only two Parties had nominated representatives to the Working Group.

The City Solicitor explained that the cancellation by the Committee of meetings of Working Groups from the end of March until after the Local Government Elections had meant that the LGBT Stained Glass Working Group had never been properly established. Therefore, it had been omitted from the Governance report which had, on 21st June, been presented to the Committee in relation to the reconstitution of Working Groups.

The Committee agreed to re-establish the LGBT Stained Glass Working Group and that it should, in line with other Working Groups, consist of one Member from each of the Political Parties represented on the Council. The Committee agreed also that the Council's LGBT Staff Network and the LGBT community in the City should have an input into the design of the window.

Code of Conduct for Councillors – Response from Northern Ireland Local Government Commissioner for Standards

The City Solicitor informed the Members that, following an adjudication by the Northern Ireland Local Government Commissioner for Standards and consideration by this Committee of a motion highlighting the need for clarity and guidance on the Code of Conduct for Councillors, he had written to the Commissioner seeking clarification on her interpretation of Paragraph 6.9 of the Code and inviting her to attend a future meeting to discuss the motion and the issues relevant to it.

He explained that Paragraph 6.9 of the Code of Conduct dealt with a dispensation permitting Members to vote on issues where their appointment had been made by the Council or otherwise permitting them to remain and speak on an issue when they had an association with an organisation which had been formed for a public purpose. He confirmed that the Commissioner had, within her adjudication report, appeared to have misstated the correct legal position and had now accepted that the position which he had adopted in respect of Paragraph 6.9 had been correct. The

Commissioner had declined the invitation to attend a future meeting of the Committee, on the basis that it would be inappropriate.

Accordingly, his advice to Members regarding dispensations and significant non-pecuniary interests was that, should their relationship with a public body or organisation formed for a public purpose arise, they may participate and vote on decisions affecting that organisation, other than in cases where they were on a management committee and the decision to be taken related to finance or property.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues

Update on Belfast Region City Deal

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To update the Committee on the progress of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD).

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- i. note the progress of the advisory boards in the development of the BRCD;**
- ii. agree that the four Members representing Belfast City Council on the re formatted Joint Members Forum be one each from the four largest Political Parties; and**
- iii. note that the Joint Member Forum has no decision making powers and all investment decisions relating to BCC BRCD projects will be brought to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.**

3.0 Main Report

3.1 At its meeting in June, the Committee received details of the resources and frameworks being put in place to deliver Phase 2 of the BRCD, which includes:

- A Financial Plan and Agreement**
- A Deal Document- detailed document covering all elements included within Heads of terms, including Governance Framework**
- An Implementation Plan- summarising milestones for key deliverables, outputs, resources and risk mitigation for each project**
- Outline Business Cases (OBCs) for the individual BRCD projects**

- 3.2 Members also approved the resources and governance arrangements to develop and deliver the Destination Hub – Belfast City Council’s key city deal project.

Programme Update

- 3.3 In order to support the development of the overall BRCD Programme a number of advisory boards have been set up and they have been working over the summer months to progress the development of the Outline Business Case for the 22 projects. The Innovation strand, being led by the two universities are well advanced with the development of the OBCs underway. They have held a number of consultative workshops with partners, industry and government departments and are now engaging with the UK government as part of this process.
- 3.4 The Employability and Skills workstream has been focussing in the first instance on developing guidance for all other BRCD projects to ensure they maximise inclusive job creation and training opportunities as they are designing their projects and developing OBCs. The Board has also developed a programme of work and are recruiting a dedicated Programme Manager, funded by the regional colleges, to take this forward.
- 3.5 The Tourism and Regeneration Board are also guiding councils through the development of their OBCs and all projects have begun this process or are about to procure specialist advice to assist in their development. Given the nature of these projects this Board has also been engaging with DfE and DfC as well as seeking specific guidance from DoF on business case development.
- 3.6 The Fraunhofer Institute which is leading the way in digital innovation and smart districts / testbeds, have undertaken an initial piece of work to develop proposals on how the digital strand of the BRCD can be taken forward. We are now working with them to develop governance structures and an implementation plan to support the development of the digital OBCs.
- 3.7 The final Investment pillar of Infrastructure is being led by DfI, given they will be solely responsible for the delivery of the projects. They have developed proposals for the role and membership of an infrastructure Advisory Board which includes representation from both Belfast City Council and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council given the two key projects are BRT 2 and the Southern Relief Road. This Board will report through the current BRCD governance structures.

Programme Structures

- 3.8 The BRCD programme office continues to support the overall management and delivery of the programme as well as developing internal frameworks in areas including;
- Governance and Decision Making
 - Financial Planning and Management
 - Programme and Project Management
 - Performance Monitoring and Assurance
 - Communication and Engagement
- 3.9 A key element of the Governance Structure is the Joint Member Forum which during phase 1 of the development of the BRCD provided an opportunity for members from all six partner councils to jointly discuss the emerging programme before formal approval through each individual council.
- 3.10 As with phase 1 of the Programme individual councils will be responsible for all decisions relating to investment in their individual projects and in Belfast SP&R will continue to receive regular updates on the both the council's projects and the overall programme. However it is important the members from all six councils continue to meet through a Joint Members' Forum to provide overall political leadership for the programme and jointly discuss issues, progress and benefits.
- 3.11 In order to allow more discussion and debate at the Forum it has been proposed by the BRCD Executive Board that each council nominates four members to the Forum, a member from each of the four largest parties. As well as championing the opportunity created by the BRCD and building support from key stakeholders the role of the Forum will be to support wider political engagement across the councils and at a regional and national level. This will include engagement events with a larger number of elected members.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.12 All costs associated with the BRCD are within existing budgets.

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

- 3.12 The Approach taken to develop the City Deal has been subject to independent equality screening and rural proofing and states that:

BRCD is inherently inclusive, affording an opportunity for the region to grow in a way that will benefit the economy of Northern Ireland as a whole, thereby enhancing the lives and well-being of its citizens. If during further development of the programme it becomes apparent that there may be an adverse impact on certain groups or communities then the partnership commits to carrying out further Section 75 work and including screening and EQIAs as and when appropriate.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Update on City and Neighbourhood Service
Transition and Improvement Programme**

The Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services submitted for the Committee’s consideration the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 At its meeting on 23rd November 2018, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee noted an update report and progress achieved in relation to the City and Neighbourhood Service (CNS) Transition and Improvement Programme (T&IP).

- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with a further update on the progress of the CNS T&IP.

2.0 Recommendation

The Committee is requested to note the contents of the report and the progress achieved in relation to the CNS T&IP and priorities since November 2018.

3.0 Main Report

Key Issues

- 3.1 The CNS T&IP is part of the Continuous Improvement (CI) programme for the Council. It is one of the biggest, most ambitious and complex change programmes undertaken by the council. It directly supports the delivery of the outcomes, objectives and priorities within the Belfast Agenda, Corporate Plan and the Council’s Improvement plan.

3.2 The programme name was refreshed in April 2019 from “Change” to “Transition and Improvement” to better describe our approach to delivering improved ways of working and service delivery transition. The CNS T&IP will improve customer service, remove duplication, make long-term cost savings, make services more sustainable, and empower staff improve decision-making. The core objectives of the programme are to:

- Improve customer focus;
- Increase efficiencies and creating a fit for purpose service design
- Improve service delivery (city and neighbourhoods)
- Integrating services to enhance working practices
- Delivering the waste agenda

3.3 The programme has evolved as projects have concluded, became part of other programmes, such as Customer Focus to provide better alignment, or are now part of normal business improvements. In 2019/20, the programme will focus on creating fit for purpose services, and improving neighbourhoods. Projects have been prioritised based on organisational and departmental needs and four interrelated priorities were identified, see below:

Priority	SRO	CNS Lead
Creation of an Open Spaces and Streetscene Service	Ryan Black Director (Neighbourhood Services)	Stephen Leonard Neighbourhood Services Manager
Regulatory and Enforcement Services improvements	Siobhan Toland Director (City Services)	Valerie Brown City Services Manager (Regulation)
Resources and Fleet Services improvements (which includes waste management, waste collection and fleet services)	Siobhan Toland Director (City Services)	Tim Walker City Services Manager (Resources and Fleet)
Review of Community Provision (which is the start of a process looking at the umbrella of community-type services i.e. community safety, good relations, community development, health and well-being)	Ryan Black (Neighbourhood Services)	Alison Allen Neighbourhood Services Manager

**Area and neighbourhood working, and better integration and coordination of service provision will be themes running through these priorities, which is a cross cutting priority for the council.*

3.4 An update of the Departmental functional model, previously agreed by Committee in June 2017 and November 2018, has been circulated. There are some minor amendments to the previous versions. The functional model facilitates the development and design of integrated services and the regeneration of neighbourhoods. The model will be further developed as the programme progresses and where applicable structures will be

stabilised to address any temporary arrangements currently in place and provide permanent employment opportunities. In relation to the management structure, the senior leadership posts have been established and filled (i.e. two Director posts, four Neighbourhood Services Managers, City Services Manager (Regulation) and City Services Manager (Resources and Fleet). These managers work collaboratively together and play a pivotal role in leading priorities within the T&IP.

- 3.5 The Continuous Improvement (CI) team is also supporting the delivery of the priorities. A service design approach to transition and improvement has been introduced, focusing on the need to deliver integrated services to customers, making sure that the right people, skills, infrastructure and processes are in place to enable this. The involvement of stakeholders i.e. customers, Elected Members, Trade Unions, management and staff at the outset is crucial and any changes will be designed and delivered in collaboration with them, to help understand needs and improve our ways of working. The CI team are combining this with a programme/ project management approach to help deliver the pace of change required.
- 3.6 The communications and engagement plan has been refreshed for the programme and also supported by project level plans. The Marketing and Communications Team continue to support the programme and priority projects and support managers through the transition and improvement process. Given the number of staff within the CNS Department, to enable effective cascade of key messages, 'toolkits' have been developed for managers to use when communicating with their staff, so that wider audiences are reached and managers are equipped to deliver concise and consistent messages and answer questions. This enables all staff to understand changes and the future vision of our services. Context briefings have been organised for managers and staff to attend over the summer, see project level information below for more detail. Change management workshops have also been organised for managers in August/ September to help them to support their teams through transition.

Priority Project Delivery Progress (since November 2018)

- 3.7 Each of the priority projects are at different stages of development and/ or delivery. A snapshot of progress has been provided for each of the priorities below.

3.7.1 Open Spaces and Streetscene (OSS)

- The OSS vision is to create: *“A service where we see it, do it, or report it. We have pride in our work, maintain environmental standards, and work together to maintain the public realm with and for our city’s residents and visitors.”*
- An important objective is to create permanent employee opportunities, ensuring that local people can avail of good jobs that pay well and provide opportunity for advancements. The new management structure includes a wider career pathway in terms of public realm cleanliness and environmental upkeep (Open Spaces and Streetscene).
- Consultation on the OSS new management structure and JDs is now complete.
- APSE¹ representatives visited the council on the 6/ 7 June 2019, where CNS and the TUs had the opportunity to ask questions about experiences of implementing similar models in other councils.
- Staff engagement on the service vision is underway with context briefings organised for approx. 100 managers and supervisors in August 2019, which will be rolled out to wider staff (approx. 500) in September/ October.
- Good practice study visits have been planned for officers - 10 October 2019 (Nottingham) and 11 October 2019 (Wakefield), two similar sized and well performing authorities.
- Going forward the applicability of frequencies, routes, and quality standards will be assessed. ²Evidence suggests that the success of our anti-litter campaigns and enforcement activities over a number of years have meant that littering has reduced in certain parts of the city. Likewise trends in parks to reduce ornamental planting, install 3G/ 4G pitches and more playgrounds, or introduce wildflower meadows and increase bio-diversity, will mean we plan things differently when compared to historic arrangements. Any changes to service

¹ The Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) is owned by its members and, working on their behalf, maintains and develops a network of local government officers, managers and Councilors from local authorities across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Working on a not-for-profit basis, APSE is dedicated to promoting excellence in the delivery of frontline services to local communities around the UK.

² People and Communities Committee, 13 June 2016: Item 6e. Anti-litter campaign update:
<http://gsintmin01:9077/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=166&MId=8304&Ver=4>

delivery in terms of routes or frequencies will be based on actual need, and aligned to the Customer Focus Programme. An equality screening is underway in relation to service users in addition to a rural impact assessment.

3.7.2 Regulatory and Enforcement Services

- The service vision is to: *“Provide a fit for purpose regulatory service, delivered both city wide and at a neighbourhood level. An integrated service that maximises resources, reduces duplication and is customer focused, responsive, accessible, visible, and evidence based.”*
- The City Services Manager (Regulation) appointed in November 2018.
- Staff engagement workshops (with cross service representation) have been ongoing since January 2019 reviewing how the different services manage front line regulatory interventions such as dog fouling, littering and ASB, and using a simple process mapping to identify good practice and opportunities for working better together.
- A draft regulatory tool kit is being developed to support consistency and cohesiveness in the delivery of regulatory services, particularly in the front line. Further development will include standard process maps for key front line services, competency framework, standardised performance management and a training and development framework.
- Work continues on the service design approach based on the service delivery option agreed i.e. single multi-functional regulatory service, which a focus on developing integrated front line neighbourhood teams.
- Work continues to stabilise the senior and functional management tiers for regulatory services and recruitment of the second City Protection Manager was completed on 14th August 2019.
- A draft proposal is currently being developed outlining how we move to an improved service, incorporating plans for transition and improvement and stakeholder communications and engagement.

3.7.3 Resources and Fleet Services

- Waste collection, waste management and fleet services merged together in 2018 and reporting lines realigned to enhance single point accountability across the functions.
- Regular update reports have been presented to the People and Communities Committee over the past year. These reports have provided updates in relation to the continued interventions being implemented with regards to waste management, waste collection and fleet services. Some update highlights since November 2018 include:
 - Public waste framework consultation concluded and results presented to members in January 2019;
 - Currently exploring options to replace vehicles with modern alternatives;
 - An application for DEARA funding secured to introduce a pilot wheelie box scheme in 2019/20; and
 - Continue to invest in communications and outreach activities to engage with partners and stakeholders to promote 'reduce, reuse and recycle' behaviour change and making it easy for people to do this.
- This is currently being re-scoped and following a prioritisation exercise, an improvement plan will be developed to be implemented over the next 2/3 years. The improvement plan will include the development of a combined service vision and application of the service design approach.
- Additional resources will be required to support this priority work going forward, so that the pace of change required is accelerated.
- Note that the OSS project includes the development of two new multi-functional designations, which will be deployed based on service demand, on a more departmental basis. Around 180 posts will continue to be allocated to Resources and Fleet. These are drivers and general operatives, and will help to develop the conditions where the department and its workforce can be more flexible.

3.7.4 Review of Community Provision

- The review of community provision was commissioned following council approval in November 2018.
- Phase 1 discovery 'think piece' has been completed, which was based on research and informed by feedback from staff

via 5 engagement workshops (attended by 105 staff) and an online survey (32 responses), with participation from the 7 service areas.

- The draft ‘think piece’ report was presented to DMT in June 2019 and a visioning exercise took place on what future community provision might look like.
- Feedback on Phase 1 will be shared with staff in August/ September including the approach for Phase 2.
- Work is underway to scope the work required to take forward Phase 2.

The CNS T&IP and the important priorities and projects outlined above are inter-related and aligned to other improvement programmes delivered across the council, including the Customer Focus programme and the suite of organisational improvement projects being delivered by CI, who will continue to co-ordinate interdependencies. Cognisance will also be taken as we move towards area/ neighbourhood working, which will be a cross-cutting priority for the council.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.8 At present there are no financial or resources implications associated with this report.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.9 As part of the CNS T&IP, where necessary projects, programmes and activities will be subject to equality screening and rural needs assessments in line with the council’s processes.”

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendation.

Belfast Agenda – Statement of Progress

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 This report provides an update for Members on the publication of a Belfast Agenda Statement of Progress in November 2019, which is a legislative monitoring requirement for the Council and its community planning partners.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- a) note the statutory requirement for the Council and its community planning partners to publish a Statement of Progress in November 2019;
- b) note the proposed content of the statement of progress, which is in line with legislative guidance provided by DfC; and
- c) note the proposed timeline associated with the publication of the Statement of Progress.

3.0 Main Report

Key Issues

- 3.1 The Belfast Agenda, the city's first community plan, was published in November 2017 and was led by the Council, in partnership with its community planning partner organisations. It is a long term framework outlining how the Council and its community planning partners will work collaboratively to deliver an ambitious and inclusive vision that will create a better quality of life for all citizens in Belfast.
- 3.2 The Local Government Act (NI) 2014 requires the Council and its community planning partners to make arrangements to monitor progress against meeting the objectives of the Belfast Agenda and the effectiveness of the actions taken in aiming to achieve these objectives. The legislation also requires the Council to publish a statement of progress on progress towards the outcomes and actions taken every two years, with the first statement of progress due for publication in November 2019.
- 3.3 The statement of progress, therefore, provides an opportunity for the Council and its community planning partners to update the public on the actions that have been taken, or are ongoing, and to demonstrate the impact that these actions are having on the achievement of the outcomes outlined in the Belfast Agenda. It also provides an opportunity to take stock in terms of embedding the partnership and collaborative arrangements and our focus and approach going forward.
- 3.4 The key elements of the statement of progress will include a restatement of the vision, a short narrative provided on what our long-term outcomes are trying to achieve and why they are important; recent available data for our population indicators; and an update on the collaborative actions being progressed among partners.

- 3.5 The document will also highlight good news stories, noteworthy achievements and good practice, which have led to sustainable change and improvement, particularly where there has been collaboration, engagement and innovative working.

Reporting against Action Plans

- 3.6 Detailed action plans have been developed in collaboration with city partners to deliver against the commitments outlined in the Belfast Agenda within the context of the 4 priority areas. A detailed update will be provided to Members in September, however, an outline of the main areas of activity underway across each area is summarised below:

- **Living Here**

Key areas of collaborative activity underway include, for example, the development of an integrated approach to address health inequalities within the city with a specific focus on helping to alleviate the significant societal challenges linked to Alcohol, Drugs and Mental Health - lead by the Public Health Agency and BHSC Trust; Development of an inter-agency and coordinated approach to reducing preventable deaths related to cold weather within the city – lead by the BHSC Board; Working with Department for Communities, Northern Ireland Housing Executive and city partners to deliver series of interventions and plan of activity to help support delivery of the housing and population growth ambitions set out within the Belfast Agenda; Development of an inter-agency approach to early intervention and improving outcomes for children and young people – working closely with the Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership and Belfast Area Outcomes Group; Development of an integrated approach to neighbourhood regeneration and area working alongside community planning partners and city stakeholders.

- **Working and Learning**

Key areas of collaborative activity underway include for example, the development of ‘Belfast Works’ Integrated Employability and Skills pathway, which better links residents to employment opportunities and supports individuals to enter, sustain and progress in employment -led by the Council with support from wider partners including Belfast Metropolitan College, Department for Communities, Department for the Economy, Invest NI, Queens University Belfast, Ulster University, Belfast Health Trust, Urban Villages and business sector representatives; Development of an

integrated approach to address educational inequalities/underachievement within the city with a focus on an individual's journey through nursery, primary, post primary and further and higher education - the Education Authority is leading on this work programme alongside the Department for Education, CVS organisations, Queens University Belfast, Ulster University, St Mary's University College, Stranmillis University College, Urban Villages and other CPP partners.

- **City Development**

Key areas of collaborative activity underway include, for example, developing, in partnership with the Department of Infrastructure and other key partners, a Belfast Infrastructure Study which will bring forward specific proposals for enhancing and future sustainability of the city's urban infrastructure which is critical in unlocking and driving future economic growth across the city; Continued work on the production of the Belfast City Local Development Plan 2035, which will set out a clear vision for how Belfast should look in the future; Continued focus on the delivery of the Belfast Regeneration and Investment Strategy and working with city partners to deliver transformational regeneration schemes including the City Centre Revitalisation Programme; Promoting and enhancing the city's competitiveness and attracting investment through specific targeted programmes including the delivery of a shared Belfast city promotional brand and participation in major events to showcase to an international audience the investment opportunities within the city and position Belfast as a key investment location.

- **Growing the Economy**

Key areas of collaborative activity underway include for example, the development of an enterprise framework which will inform a city-wide approach to addressing the key challenges associated with starting and growing a business in Belfast; Increasing the level of enterprise helps diversify the economy and provide improved routes to opportunity to those who are disadvantaged; Development of a Resilience Strategy; Developing the city's cultural and tourism infrastructure and offering and positioning the Belfast as a destination of choice; Development and implementation of an 'Inclusive Growth Strategy' and call to action for CPP partners to support the creation of an inclusive city.

3.7 Work is already underway in collaboration with action leads / key partners to measure progress on Belfast Agenda commitments through monitoring report cards. The statement of progress will provide an update, where possible, on each action that has been completed/commenced from the respective action plan. A more detailed update on activity, outlined in the Belfast Agenda, will be brought to September Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

3.8 Common across all council areas, community planning is at an early stage of development. A key focus up to now has been the formal establishment the Community Planning Partnerships and building relationships, working with partners to define the specific programmes of work, alongside putting in place the infrastructure and support required to enable collaborative action/delivery. Whilst the statement of progress will outline this journey, it will also set out the good progress has been made in many areas and evidence of success.

3.9 Timeline for the publication of the Statement of Progress

Activity	Target Date
Collation of all progress information from internal and external partners to be completed	Mid-August
Produce a first draft to begin formal review process	Early September
Commence review process (internal and external)	9th September
CMT Review	24th September
A draft report reviewed at Community Planning Partnership	30th September
Carry out Party Group Briefings	October
Finalised version and report submitted to Strategic Policy and Resources for approval	22nd November
Final version issued to Community Planning Partnership	25th November
Final document submitted to full Council for ratification	1st December

3.10 Effective communication activity will be central to maximising awareness of the statement of progress and officers are working with corporate communications both in relation to the design, development, publication and circulation of the document e.g. press release, social media activity, website etc. It is envisaged that the publication of the statement of progress and associated publicity will also provide a platform for re-engaging with citizens and stakeholders during 2020 as the Community Planning Partnership prepares for the 1st 4-year review of the Belfast Agenda (due by November 2021).

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.11 There are no additional resource implications as a result of this report. Alignment of resources to the delivery of the Belfast Agenda is part of the ongoing organisational and financial planning processes.

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

- 3.12 The Belfast Agenda has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment at a strategic level and a Rural Needs impact statement at the time of its publication.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

**UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities:
Memorandum of Understanding –
“All-Island Network of Learning Cities”**

The Strategic Director of Place and Economy submitted for the Committee’s consideration the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for Belfast to sign a joint Memorandum of Understanding, as part of an all island Network of UNESCO Learning Cities including Cork, Dublin, Limerick, Derry and Strabane and Belfast.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is requested to:

- (i) agree that Belfast signs a joint Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with an all-island Network of Learning Cities to further enhance relationships with other cities who are members of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities. If agreed, the MOU would be signed by the Lord Mayor;
- (ii) note the engagement and discussions underway around UNESCO and ‘Belfast A Learning City’ to explore and identify opportunities for alignment with Belfast Agenda; and
- (iii) note the recent consultation review undertaken on the future focus of the existing BSP Lifelong Learning Group and the

intention that this will inform the creation of a revised Learning City action plan.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Background

- 3.1** In early 2018, Belfast became a member of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC) with a focus on the use of learning to tackle inequalities within the city. UNESCO GNLC is an international policy-orientated network which supports the sharing of best practice and capacity building; providing access to experts from across the world and allowing Belfast to showcase how the city is using learning to address inequalities and make life better for citizens.
- 3.2** The Belfast Agenda recognises that learning has a vital role in empowering citizens and helping lay the foundations for sustainable social, economic and environmental development and well-being within the city. The principles of learning are fundamental in helping alleviate and address some of Belfast's persistent societal-inequalities such as health, educational attainment and well-being. The inclusive growth focus of the Belfast Agenda is about improving the economy and ensuring the benefits of this can be felt by across the city. Learning is one mechanism through which inequalities can be addressed by raising aspirations, removing barriers and increasing emotional resilience. Enabling individuals to cope better in difficult times, create access to more and better jobs, build good relations, make healthier choices and empower individuals to reach their full potential.
- 3.3** Reflecting the importance of learning it has a key role in the four priority themes of the Belfast Agenda: Working and Learning, Living Here, Growing the Economy and City Development. Key work streams focused upon the importance of learning have been reflected across the Belfast Agenda including a commitment "to develop the city's status as a learning city by becoming a member of UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning Global Network of Learning Cities".
- 3.4** Learning as a concept has far reaching consequences incorporating traditional forms of learning such as educational and skills development through to learning for health and community benefit. Additionally it should be recognised that the scope of the council's statutory responsibility in this area is limited, with the remit for learning spanning across a number of government departments. Action in this area will require collaborative approaches across a range of stakeholders including education, employment, community living and access to services and opportunities.

UNESCO

- 3.5 Developed to promote lifelong learning in urban communities, UNESCO sets out six areas of focus which reflect the major building blocks of a learning city. It includes key features for each of these areas and possible indicators on progress. The six areas of focus are:
- Inclusive learning throughout the education system (from basic to higher);
 - Revitalised learning in families and communities
 - Effective learning for and in the workplace
 - Extended use of modern learning technologies
 - Enhances quality and excellence in learning
 - Fosters a vibrant culture of learning throughout life

Belfast Strategic Partnership (BSP)

- 3.6 The Belfast Strategic Partnership (BSP), comprising Belfast City Council, the Public Health Agency and the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust led on the submission of the UNESCO application supported by the Belfast Health Development Unit. The UNESCO application was submitted by the Council on behalf of the partnership and signed by the Lord Mayor.
- 3.7 Facilitated through the Life Long Learning Group (a subgroup of BSP), the application focused upon the learning as a means to address life inequalities, one of the five priorities of the BSP. The application created a connection between educational attainment, learning opportunities and life inequalities, and the extent to which family, community and environmental influences impact learning opportunities, particularly within population groups facing the highest level of deprivation.
- 3.8 Key activities undertaken to demonstrate the city's commitment to learning has included the recent Belfast Festival of Learning which took place between 4th and 10th March, 2019. This week long programme of activities incorporated interactive learning events and workshops as well as showcasing the range of learning opportunities that exist within the city for health, wellbeing and educational benefit. Events were specifically targeted towards the participation of groups and individuals who have experienced barriers in accessing learning opportunities.
- 3.9 In February 2015, BSP launched the 'Belfast a Learning City' strategic document, including a Learning Charter for Belfast, which sets out a vision of Belfast where learning is used as a positive force to expand and enhance life chances for all citizens in Belfast. The aim of the publication was to ensure that all Belfast citizens have equal access to learning opportunities, creating conditions for a better quality of life for everyone in the city.

**All Island Network of Learning Cities –
Memorandum of Understanding**

- 3.10 The Lord Mayor's office recently received correspondence from the Mayor of Cork inviting Belfast to sign a joint Memorandum of Understanding between a number of cities who are part of an all island Network of UNESCO Learning Cities including Cork, Dublin, Limerick, Derry and Strabane and Belfast. The purpose of the joint MOU is to further strengthen the co-operation across the Network, committing the cities to continue to work together on the Learning City agenda for the next three years, share good practice and support. If the Committee agree to enter into the Memorandum of Understanding it would require the signing of the Lord Mayor on behalf of the City.

Potential Future Focus of a Learning City

- 3.11 Members should note that engagement and discussions are taking place within the context of BSP and with key partners, including a recent consultation exercise undertaken by Colin Neilands, Communitus, to examine the future role and focus of the existing Lifelong Group with the view to inform the possible creation of a revised action plan for developing a learning city and a framework for collective action across partners to address inequalities. It is anticipated that the findings of the consultation exercise will become available in August.
- 3.12 Ongoing discussions are taking place to consider how elements of the existing or emerging plans around UNESCO and Lifelong Learning may be aligned and progressed, as appropriate, under community planning. Key points of note regarding this include:
- The UNESCO Learning City action plan incorporates a broad spectrum of activity that spans beyond the statutory powers of the council into the education, health and employability arenas;
 - A commitment to support the development and implementation of the UNESCO Learning City action plan will require the support from a range of external stakeholders including government departments;
 - Indications suggest there is an increasing expectation that the scale of delivery and ambition of the Life Long Learning action plan will need to be increased. Requests such as the All Island Network of Learning Cities MoU will place an increasing focus

upon this work. Consideration will also need to be given to resource implications and if this can be managed through existing mechanisms.

- 3.13 A further report will be submitted to a future meeting of Committee outlining potential opportunities for further collaboration taking account of the emerging findings/recommendations from the recent consultation undertaken to identify the future focus and priorities for a Learning City Plan.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.14 There are no financial or resource implications attached to this report or the proposed signing of the Memorandum of Understanding. Whilst the current dedicated support being provided around Learning City is through the Belfast Health Development Unit, any renewed focus or proposals for an enhanced programme of activity will need to be considered in terms of resource implications for the council as well as wider community planning partnership if appropriate.

Equality or Good Relations Implications

- 3.15 There are no equality or good relations implications attached to this report.”

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations and agreed that officers engage with members of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities across the United Kingdom, with a view to developing similar relationships.

Update on Inclusive Growth

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 Members will be aware that officers are currently drafting an inclusive growth strategy to outline the council’s commitment to creating an inclusive city.
- 1.2 This report provides the Committee with a high level overview of the commitments contained within the strategy and outlines the next steps that will be undertaken to ensure that a final strategy is presented to committee in September and a public consultation commences in October.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is requested to:

- i. note the wide range of commitments included within the inclusive growth strategy and that it will be accompanied with a one year action / delivery plan;**
- ii. note that a full version of the document will be sent to parties week in the commencing 26th August for review and comment and that officers will engage with political parties to receive comments;**
- iii. note that a final document will be brought before the Committee in September; and**
- iv. agree to an all-party launch of the strategy for consultation in October 2019.**

Main Report

3.1 At the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee meeting on 20th April 2018, Members agreed to a five step approach to developing an inclusive growth framework for the city, and following a series of one to one interviews with Party Group Leaders, Committee Chairs, Chief Officers and an all member workshop, as well as a detailed analysis of the data available in Belfast, an Inclusive Growth statement and definition was agreed.

3.2 Subsequently, at the meeting on 7th December 2018, a draft bespoke Belfast City Council inclusive growth decision-making framework was presented and agreed. This framework is designed to ensure that inclusive growth is placed at the heart of policy, capital and programme decisions. Furthermore, members also agreed, that in the first instance, our efforts would be focused on the following four target inclusive growth groups:

- 1. Workless residents;**
- 2. Residents with low skill levels;**
- 3. In work, low earning individuals; and**
- 4. Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).**

3.3 These inclusive growth groups have been determined based on a review of the evidence and the consultation carried out with Members. Furthermore, these groups align to the ambitions and priorities set out in the Belfast Agenda.

- 3.4 During the one to one interviews and at the workshop, Members consistently highlighted a number of actions they felt needed taken forward as part of inclusive growth. Whilst these are not specifically part of the Inclusive Growth Decision Making Framework, they were felt necessary in moving forward the inclusive growth agenda. Since then officers from within the Strategy, Policy and Partnerships team have been working with departments to develop the Inclusive Growth Strategy.

The focus of the Strategy

- 3.5 The Inclusive Growth Strategy sits within the overarching framework of the Belfast Agenda and is closely aligned to its economic growth ambitions.
- 3.6 The Belfast Agenda is an ambitious plan for the city, with a strong economic focus and farreaching targets for population and jobs growth. In order to address the long term challenges facing people in Belfast such as health and educational inequalities, the need for good relations, ensuring people feel safe and have good living conditions, we need to focus on growing our economy and ensure the benefits are felt by everyone.



- 3.7 The Council has, therefore, rightly set out an ambitious economic growth agenda – this is highlighted by our success and commitment to securing the Belfast Region City Deal, the creation of a range of investment funds and interventions designed to make Belfast a great place to locate and start a business. We are also committed to creating a strong and vibrant city centre – its development is vital for attracting private sector investment, creating revenue and enabling the sustainability of council expenditure and service delivery.

- 3.8 Of course, economic and population growth on its own is not enough. These are a means to an end to help us reduce inequalities and create opportunities for all. Not everyone in Belfast has benefited in the past and unless there is a paradigm shift in our policy framework this will continue. While Belfast currently displays great economic optimism, it is imperative the benefits of this growth are inclusive, where everyone has the opportunity and aspiration to succeed.
- 3.9 The Strategy is one aspect of the work that is underway with partners to ensure that the ambitions of the Belfast Agenda are met. Members are asked to note that further detail on core strands of work being implemented with Community Planning Partners will also be brought to Committee in September.
- 3.10 The document focuses strongly on our *role as an inclusive corporate body* looking at what we do in areas of:
- procurement – social value and sustainability
 - employment – recruitment, fair work and employability and skills
 - investment - decision making framework
 - service design/provision – inclusive
- 3.11 It also focuses on our *influencing and civic leadership role*, acting as a call to action to others across the City.
- 3.12 It has been designed to be a *living document* – therefore, as our expertise and evidence base develops we will strengthen commitments and set targets. To support this a *first year action plan* will be published alongside the consultation document and an updated action plan will be produced for each subsequent year thereafter. Members are asked to note that development of the policies and initiatives required to create an ‘Inclusive Belfast’ will continue alongside the public consultation.
- 3.13 It is important to note that implementation will require ongoing policy development and operational decisions e.g., procurement, City Charter, ring-fencing of budget for apprenticeships etc.

Key Commitments

- 3.14 The table below summaries key commitments:

Chapter	High Level Commitments
Our Inclusive Growth Statement and Cohorts	<p>This defines what inclusive growth means for us as a council and where, over the next few years, we will focus our efforts. It reiterates our inclusive growth cohorts.</p>
Our Corporate Commitments	<p>This details how, as a corporate body, we will contribute toward inclusive growth and provide civic leadership for the city.</p> <p><u>Harnessing procurement to social value</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Social Value Procurement Framework and Toolkit; • Ensure environmental and sustainability considerations will be a key aspect of our social value framework; • Develop local supply base, remove barriers and increase capacity of underrepresented suppliers; • Support development of cooperatives or new business to meet demand; • Develop capacity building programme for local businesses; and • Pilot social value through two council procurement contracts and identify two Belfast based anchor institutions willing to develop their own social value procurement framework. <p><u>Promoting inclusive growth through our role as an employer</u></p> <p>Promotion of fair work and good quality jobs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay Real Living Wage and create a Real Living Wage City; • Mainstream equality, diversity and inclusion; • Work with employee networks to improve employee voice; and • Only endorse the use of casual contracts when both parties enjoy flexibility. <p>Improving participation in employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer apprenticeships and commit to a target number of recruitment campaigns; • Ring-fence 25% of suitable entry level posts for inclusive growth groups and provide pre-recruitment programme support; • Review employability support and design

	<p>targeted workplan with partners; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a city wide Volunteering Strategy and Staff Volunteering Policy. <p><u>Embedding an Inclusive Growth Decision Making Framework</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that our major decisions are aligned to our inclusive growth ambitions; • Test and implement Inclusive Growth Decision Making Framework; and • Encourage our city partners to use the decision making framework.
<p>Creating an Inclusive City</p>	<p><u>City Inclusive Growth City Charter and growth sectors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-design Inclusive Growth City Charter and assessment tools with key anchor institutions and partner organisations; • Work with organisations to seek alignment with CSR activity; • Develop a strategy to access private /philanthropic funding; and • Work with stakeholders to establish digital innovation and tech inclusion group – addressing barriers to participation and setting employment targets. <p><u>Prioritising employability and skills /Belfast Region CityDeal</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and deliver a Belfast Employability Pathway – working with partners to combine our collective requirement power, ring fencing entry level opportunities; • Deliver suite of sectoral employment academies; • Development and launch of citywide GCSE revision programme; • Deliver schools based employment academies supporting young people in year 12 at greatest risk of not achieving/dropping out; and • Improve connectivity of neighbourhoods to opportunity by maximising the opportunity of BRCD to deliver BRT II. <p><u>Promoting inclusive growth through planning powers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and adopt Developers Contribution Framework; and • Continue to pursue the Councils ambitions in

	<p>relation to affordable housing.</p> <p><u>Inclusive Civic Voice</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Test a range of innovative approaches to harness civic voice; and• Develop and test new models of engagement with the CVSE sector.
Holding Ourselves to Account	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop an Inclusive Growth Monitor and Dashboard;• Establish Inclusive Growth Oversight Board;• Continue to learn from best practice; and• Publish a yearly action plan.

Next Steps

3.15 The following steps are recommended:

- A detailed document will be circulated to all parties week commencing 26th August;
- Strategic Policy and Resources Committee 20th September 2019 – bring draft strategy to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for approval. Final draft strategy to be agreed and ratified at 1st October 2019 Council;
- September 2019 – Early testing/engagement of draft strategy with key anchor institutions, businesses and trade unions;
- October 2019 – Public Launch of Inclusive Growth Strategy; and
- October – December 2019 – Undertake public consultation on draft strategy and associated comprehensive equality screening to further inform final strategy.

Financial and Resource Implications

3.16 While the Strategy Policy and Partnership team will continue to prioritise the work on Inclusive Growth, it is anticipated that additional developmental resource will be required to both mainstream the strategy within council and embed and develop the approach externally with partners.

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

- 3.17 The Inclusive Growth Strategy is inherently inclusive and is aimed at bringing about inclusive economic growth to all residents, irrespective of identity. A draft comprehensive screening has been completed and will be consulted on alongside the draft strategy.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

Update on Physical Programme

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 The Council’s Physical Programme covers over 150 live regeneration projects across a range of funding streams including the Capital Programme, Leisure Transformation Programme, Belfast Investment Fund, Local Investment Fund, Social Outcomes Fund and the projects which the Council is delivering on behalf of other agencies. This report outlines:

- an overview of physical projects which have recently been completed
- the Capital Programme and capital financing for 2019/2020
- a request for the Council to act as delivery agent for two externally funded projects

2.1 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is requested to note the update on the Physical Programme as at 3.1 below and that the Physical Programmes Department is willing to arrange a site visit to any projects that have been completed and/or are underway.

Capital Programme and Capital Financing 2019/2020 (to be read in conjunction with the Medium Term Financial Plan and Efficiency Report which is also on the agenda)

- note the update on the Capital Programme for 2019/2020 as outlined in 3.3 below and the update on Capital Financing as outlined in 3.6 below
- note the deficit in capital financing in 2021/22 and 2022/23 and the challenges to be taken into consideration in relation to the future Physical Programme and note that Party Group Briefings will be undertaken as part of the rates setting process to update Members on the status of projects along with the emerging implications for future investment decisions

and in particular the potential impact on the district rate. These will be delivered in conjunction with the Director of Finance and Resources.

- agree to add the 'Upgrade of the Waterfront Escalators' as a Stage 1 – Emerging project onto the Capital Programme due to operational requirements

Role of the Council as delivery agent

- agree in principle that the Council acts as the delivery agent for two projects which are receiving external funding from other sources (the Belfast Islamic Centre and the VOYPIC/Include Youth) subject to the Council receiving a management fee for the delivery, full funding packages being in place and further discussions with Legal Services.

Procurement

- agree that any necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate 'framework' arrangements) be initiated for any Physical Programme's projects including externally funded projects for 2019/2020 as required, with contracts to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.

3.0 Main Report

Key Issues

Update - Capital Programme

- 3.1 The Council's rolling Capital Programme is a significant regeneration programme of investment across the city, which improves the existing Council assets or provides new council facilities. An update on the key projects under the programme is outlined below:

Recently completed physical projects:

- *Navarra Place* - Navarra playground includes MUGA and the removal of an interface structure at the boundary with Serpentine Road (DoJ / MUGA Programme Phase 2)
- *Upgrades to parks, open spaces and playgrounds* – including the refurbished playgrounds at Orangefield Park and Barnett Demesne (Shaws Bridge)
- *Corporate Projects* - including the replacement of the PA system at Waterfront, Wireless LAN, external brickwork at Ulster Hall and roof replacement at City Hall
- *Local Investment Fund* - Lambh Dhearg GAC (WLIF2-06), Cregagh Sports Club (ELIF2-11), Corpus Christi Youth Club (WLIF2-14), Colin Valley Football Club (WLIF2-16) and Brantwood and Loughside Football Club (NLIF061)

Photos of a number of the recently completed projects have been circulated. Members are asked to note that the Physical Programmes Department is happy to arrange site visits for Members/ Party Groups to any physical project.

Capital Programme and Capital Financing 2019/20

Members are asked to note that this section should be read in conjunction with the Medium Term Financial Plan and Efficiency Report which is also on the agenda)

3.2 The Council incurs both capital expenditure and capital financing costs in the delivery of its Capital Programme

- *Capital Expenditure* is the expenditure incurred in the actual delivery of contracts e.g. the actual payments to the contractor for a construction contract.
- *Capital Financing* is the method the council uses to fund the capital expenditure. The capital financing costs include loan repayments (principle and interest); revenue contributions (cash payments to repay or avoid taking out loans); capital receipts and external funding.

3.3 The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee has approved a capital financing budget of £21,524,022 for 2019/2020. Members will be aware however that the Council has already committed financing to a range of physical projects under the Capital Programme and a number of non-recurrent projects which accounts for £7.56m of this. Loan and interest repayments are an additional £12,037,982. The Capital Programme also includes a number of Stage 1- Emerging Projects.

Table 1- Existing Capital Financing Budget 2019/2020

Existing Capital Financing Budget		£21,524,022
Less: Physical Programme Commitments (capital programme and non-recurrent projects)	£7,562,829	
Existing BCC Loans	£11,439,307	
Lisburn/ Castlereagh Transferred Loans	£598,675	
		(£19,600,811)
Balance Remaining		£1,923,211

- 3.4 Members are asked to note that although the above shows that there is a balance remaining of £1.9m the Director of Finance in the Quarter 1 Finance Update Report which is also on the agenda for consideration by the Committee, is recommending that, given the departmental and district rate forecasts, no further reallocations or cash flow payments are considered until the Quarter 2 position is presented to the Committee in November 2019.
- 3.5 *Future financing* - Members are asked to note that there are a range of physical projects which the Council must undertake from a health and safety, legislative and/or operational perspective in order to ensure that the Council fulfils its statutory duties and continues to run 'fit for purpose' services. These will all require capital financing. A number of these are already on the Capital Programme (*Waste Plan – Kerbside Collection system and Waste Transfer Station, Reservoir Safety works, Fleet Programme and IT programme*). These are all either Stage 1 – Emerging or Stage 2 – Uncommitted projects currently which means that final budgets have not yet been agreed however estimates have been used in order to calculate the impact of these on the capital financing budget and the availability of capital financing in the future. Members are asked to note that there is a requirement from an operational perspective to upgrade the escalators within the Waterfront in 2021/2022 and this has also been built into scenario planning in respect of the impact on capital financing. Members are also asked to agree that the upgrade of the escalators is added as a Stage 1- Emerging Project onto the Capital Programme.
- 3.6 The table below shows that just to do the current committed projects on the Capital Programme plus the projects which are required from a health and safety, operational and/or legislative perspective means that there will be a capital financing deficit of £576k in 2021/22 and £574k in 2022/23.

Table 2 – Capital Financing – Impact of current committed projects

	Expenditure financed	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Total Financing Required	£279,616,052	19,600,811	20,061,872	22,100,029	22,098,272	20,706,550
Cap Financing Budget		21,524,022	21,524,022	21,524,022	21,524,022	21,524,022
Capital Financing Available		1,923,211	1,462,150	- 576,007	- 574,250	817,472

3.7 Members will be aware that there is an emerging list of future Physical Projects which have already been raised (detailed in the Medium Term Financial Plan and Efficiency Report) however Members are asked to note that none of these have financing associated with them. This evidences the increasing pressure in terms of overall affordability which the Physical Programme is facing. It is proposed Party Group Briefings will be undertaken as part of the rates setting process to update Members on the status of projects along with the emerging implications for future investment decisions and in particular the potential impact on the district rate. These will be delivered in conjunction with the Director of Finance and Resources.

Council acting as delivery agent

3.8 Members will be aware that over the past couple of years the Council has been requested to deliver a number of externally funded initiatives including Social Investment Fund (SIF) and Urban Villages (UV) projects and projects that received DfC match funding. These requests recognise both the successful track record of the Council as delivery agent as well as the unique role of the Council as civic leader in the city. *In total the Council is acting as delivery agent for over 90 projects worth in excess of £45m (this includes both completed, live and planned projects).* Members are asked to note that the Council's Insurance Unit has advised that the Council's Professional Indemnity Insurance only provides cover for services provided to third parties for a fee. This means that, where it is acting solely as the delivery agent for a third party project, the Council can only rely on its professional indemnity insurance policy if a management fee is received. Committee is asked to note therefore that the Council will be advising in the future that it will only be able to consider acting as the delivery agent for any third party projects if the proposal includes a management fee.

3.9 *Requests for Council to act as delivery agent* – Members are asked to note that the Council has recently been requested to act as the

delivery agent for two projects – the Belfast Islamic Centre and VOYPIC/Include Youth. Committee is asked to note that these projects are being 100% externally funded with DFC being a core funder for both. Final details of the funding package for both projects is being confirmed however the other funders require confirmation of the delivery mechanism for the projects before agreeing funding. There is no Council financial commitment to either project. Committee is asked to *agree in principle to the Council acting as delivery agent for these projects subject to the Council receiving a management fee for the delivery, full funding packages being in place and further discussions with Legal Services.*

- 3.10 Committee is asked to note that amended letters of offer have now been received for a number of projects where the Council is acting as the delivery agent. Amended letters of offer are commonly received to reflect minor adjustments required following tender returns. The majority of these projects are underway or nearing completion and several of these projects are match funded by the Council, either under the various funding streams i.e. LIF/BIF/SOF or through close alignment with ongoing Council initiatives.

Approval to Procure

- 3.11 Members are asked to agree that necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate ‘framework’ arrangements) be initiated for any Physical Programme projects including externally funded projects for 2019/2020 as required, with contracts to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.12 *Financial* – As per report

Resources – Officer time to deliver as required

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

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

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Finance, Resources and Procurement

Medium Term Financial Plan and Efficiency Programme

The Director of Finance and Resources submitted for the Committee's consideration the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 This report provides an update on the assessment of the key financial factors which influence the development of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan for 2020/21 - 2022/23 and the rate setting process for 2020/21, together with an overview of the priorities and work in progress to establish the 2020/21 - 2022/23 Efficiency Programme.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is asked to note the challenges to be taken into consideration as part of the annual and medium term rate setting. A further report on progress will be brought to Committee in September.

3.0 Rate Setting Process

A number of factors must be considered as part of the annual and medium term rate setting process. These include business as usual risks, existing priorities, growth priorities, efficiencies and the rate base.

Business as Usual Risks

3.1 There are three main uncontrollable costs likely to impact on business as usual budgets in the period 2020/21 to 2022/23:

1. *Externally imposed increases to the Council's pay bill.* This includes the nationally negotiated pay awards and employers' pension contributions increase. In April 2018, a National Pay Award of 2% was agreed for Local Government Staff for 2018/19 and 2019/20. The National Pay Award for 2020/21 has not yet been settled. In the interim, a 2% increase will be estimated for 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23. The current NILGOSC Triannual Valuation commenced in April 2019. This will set the increase in the contribution rate for the years 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23. As the previous valuation resulted in a 1% increase in the contribution rate for 2018/19 and 2019/20, for medium term planning purposes an increase of 1% has been assumed for 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23.

2. *Future revenue running costs resulting from capital investment.* The Council's asset base is growing as new schemes become operational. Members will be aware of the pressure faced by the Council to support local investment partnerships. These pressures are further exacerbated by the growing cost pressures and risks associated with the maintenance of an ageing estate. Existing maintenance budgets need to be reviewed to support the asset base.
3. External economic factors such as inflation, Brexit and the current political climate. The uncertainty around Brexit and levels of government funding make it difficult for services to budget for central government and European funding streams. Inflation is a further external pressure – the current CPI rate is 1.9% with a forecast rate of between 1.8% - 2.0% for 2021.

- 3.2 *Existing Priorities:* The organisation has committed to a number of priorities including the Waste Plan, City Deal and Physical Programmes.

The Council will face significant year on year increases in waste disposal costs as the arc21 residual waste contract and interim arrangements become operational. The likely impact of the Waste Plan for the period 2020/21 to 2022/23 will be considered as part of the 2020/21 estimates process.

All City Deals require the councils to make a financial contribution to the delivery of their own capital projects, such as the City's Visitor Attraction. In previous years Members have agreed to include rate supported funding to help build the City Deal fund for Belfast. Proposals to include a further recurring contribution to the fund will need to be considered as part of the 2020/21 estimates process.

Physical Programmes – Members have approved the 2019/20 capital financing budget to support the current Capital Programme. A report on the Capital Programme is also on the agenda for discussion which shows that there will be a capital financing deficit of £576k in 2021/22 and £574k in 2022/23.

- 3.3 *Growth Priorities:* The City Regeneration and Growth Committee on 27th March 2019 agreed a 12 week consultation on the draft Cultural Strategy 2020 – 2030. The findings are due to be presented to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in September 2019. These proposals will be considered as part of the 2020/21 estimates.

Council work on Climate Resilience is currently funded on a non-recurring basis. Consideration will need to be given by Members if this priority to provide recurrent resources in order to develop and implement priority actions in this area.

The Inclusive Growth Strategy which underpins the Belfast Agenda will be considered by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in September. If agreed, its implementation will require a significant corporate commitment including a recurrent funding stream.

Future Physical Programme Priorities – there are a number of emerging future Physical Programme priorities including

- Cultural Strategy
- Pitches Phase 2
- Leisure facilities
- Belfast Zoo
- Parks Upgrades
- Civic Buildings and Grounds
- Waste Plan
- Community provision
- Alleygating
- Neighbourhood Tourism Feasibility
- Neighbourhood Tourism products
- Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund

None of the above have any financing associated with them and Members will need to consider as part of the rate setting process whether they wish to consider building up the capital financing budget to support future physical priorities including the above.

Efficiencies

- 3.4 Over the past 14 years the Council has delivered over £29m year on year cash efficiency savings. In 2018/19 and 2019/20 this was realised through targeting reductions in spend (£2.5m) and increasing income (£0.5m). Revised targets are needed for 2021/21 and future years. Further analysis is underway and an update report including a proposed revised efficiency target will be brought to Committee in September 2019.

Rate Base

- 3.5 Rate income accounts for almost 78% of the Council's income. Council staff will be meeting with LPS and the Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation (IRRV) to provide an assurance on the estimated rate income (estimated penny product) for 2020/21 which will be notified by LPS in November.

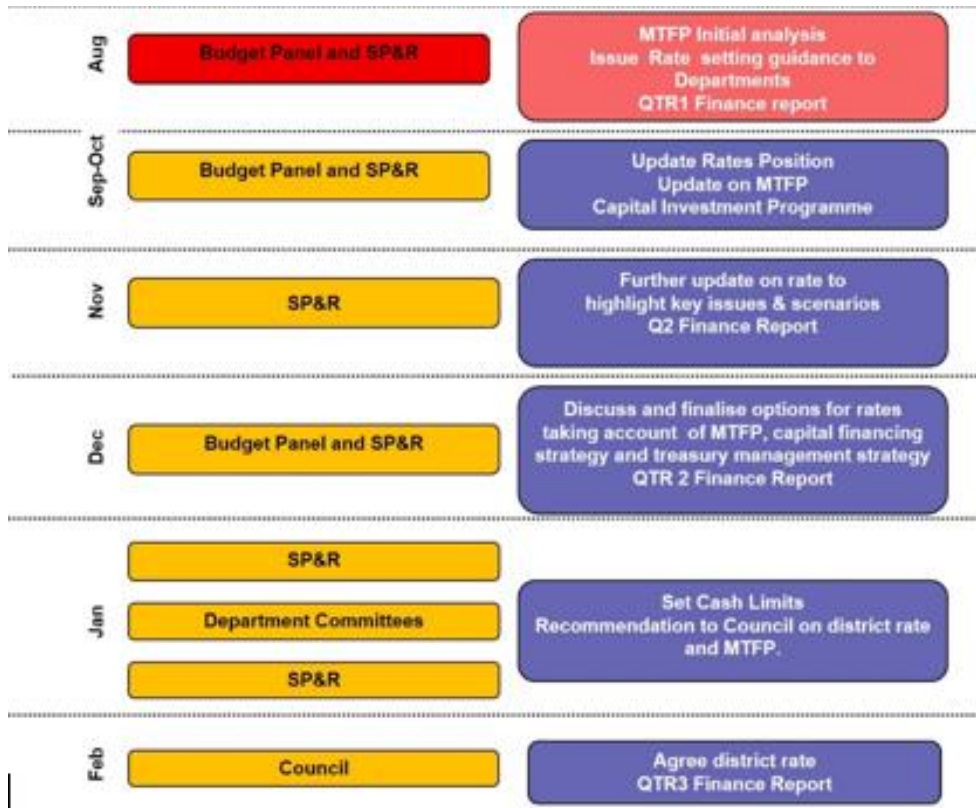
The district rate increases and inflation increases over the past three years are shown below:

Year	BCC District Rate Increase	Rate of Inflation at Rate Setting
2017/18	1.89%	2.7%
2018/19	1.98%	2.7%
2019/20	1.98%	2.3%

Next Steps

- 3.6 Officers will continue to quantify the financial risks in the above areas, their impact on the revenue estimates for 2020/21 and the medium term and develop the efficiency programme to counter the cost pressures.
- 3.7 Progress in these areas will be reported to Committee in September as part of the Rate Setting timetable outlined in Table 1 below.
- 3.8 The high level guidance to be issued by the Director of Finance and Resources in September setting the parameters and timetable for completion of departmental estimates will advise that departments must deliver their business as usual estimates with a zero increase, with the exception of the uncontrollable cost increases. Any departmental growth proposals will be subject to the rate setting challenge process before any recommendations are presented to Committee as part of the process for setting the district rate.

Table 1: 2020/21 Rate Setting Process



Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.10 This report outlines the key areas of financial risk for the Council to be considered as part of the 2020/21 revenue estimates and Medium Term Financial Plan.

Equality Implications

- 3.11 There are no equality implications with this report.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Review of Business Rates

The Committee agreed to hold a briefing session, to which all of the Members of the Council would be invited, on Friday, 27th September at 9.30 a.m. to receive a briefing from the Director of Rating Policy on the review of Business Rates.

Tenders and Contracts

The Committee:

- i. approved the public advertisement and acceptance of tenders, as listed in Table 1 below, through the Council's electronic procurement system;
- ii. granted delegated authority to the appropriate Director, using pre-agreed criteria, to award the most economically advantageous tender;
- iii. approved the extensions as detailed in Table 2 below; and
- iv. agreed to accede to Standing Order 55(b) - exceptions in relation to those contracts set out within Table 3 below and requested, in terms of the contract for the build and hire of a stand at the Property and Investment Event 2020 (MIPIM, which is supported financially by the private sector), that the report which had been requested previously by the City Growth and Regeneration Committee on the benefits derived from attending MIPIM, should be presented as soon as possible and include details of the contractual arrangements in place for next year's event.

Table 1 - New Tenders

Title of Tender	Senior Responsible Officer	Proposed Contract Duration
T1994 - Tender for the Printing of City Matters Magazine	John Tully	Up to four years
T2000 - Tender for the Provision of Insurance Brokering Services	Ronan Cregan	Up to three years
T1964 - Tender for the Provision of Service Evaluation (up to three years approved in April 2019; Dept. have asked that this be increased to four years)	Alistair Reid	Up to four years
T2001 - Tender for the Provision of Window Cleaning Services	John Walsh	Up to three years
T2004 - Tender for the Provision of Travel Services	Ronan Cregan	Up to five years
T1996 - Tender for the Co-Ordination Design Development Fabrication Installation and Maintenance of Projects Installation in Castle Street Belfast	Alistair Reid	Up to two years

T1997 - Tender for City centre Connectivity Study	Alistair Reid	Up to three months
T2003 - Tender for the Development and Delivery of Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the Review of Community Provision	Nigel Grimshaw	Up to two years
T1993 - Tender for the Supply of Gas	Ronan Cregan	Up to five years
T1992 - Tender for the Supply of Electricity	Ronan Cregan	Up to five years
T1991 - Tender for the Management and Sourcing of Energy (Gas and Electricity)	Ronan Cregan	Up to five years
T2005 - Tender for Office Supplies	Ronan Cregan	Up to five years
T2006 - Tender for the delivery of support to policing and community safety networks across West Belfast to develop effective resolution of local concerns and priorities	Nigel Grimshaw	Up to three years

Table 2 - Contract Extension

Title of Tender	Responsible Director	Proposed Extension
T1561 - Tender for the Receipt Stock Control and Delivery of Waste Containers	Nigel Grimshaw	Month by Month until new Contract in place

Table 3 - Direct Award Contracts (Single Tender Action)

Title of Tender	Supplier	Annual Estimate
Hire of Stand at Property and Investment Event 2020	Reed Midem	109,710 Euro

Technical Response to Comments on the Local Development Plan Strategy Growth Scenario	Turley & Edge Analytics	£42,538
Installation, Removal and Management of City Centre Christmas Lights 2019	BCCM	£141,000

Brexit Committee – Proposed Visit to Brussels

The Committee acceded to a request for funding of up to £10,000 from the Brexit Committee to enable an all-Party delegation, together with two officers, to undertake a visit to Brussels from 7th till 10th October to participate in European Week of Regions and Cities. The cost of the visit would be met from within existing Place and Economy Departmental budgets.

Equality and Good Relations

Report – “A Prison Without Walls, Asylum, Immigration and Human Rights”

The Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services submitted for the Committee’s consideration the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 Members will recall that, at the meeting on 21st June 2019, the Committee had recommended that a report be brought back on the recommendations relating to Council arising from the report ‘A Prison Without Walls, Asylum, Migration and Human Rights’. This report was produced by Housing4All in June 2019.

1.2 The purpose of this paper is to provide Members with an overview of the recommendations relating to Belfast City Council and recommendations on how the Council may wish to proceed.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is requested to:

- i. write to the Department for Communities to raise the issue of asylum seekers facing destitution and to seek clarity with regard to what statutory body has responsibility for people in this vulnerable situation; and**
- ii. seek legal opinion to consider the legal implications of the recommendations relating to Belfast City Council.**

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Background

3.2 Housing4All was formed in 2016 to campaign to ensure that all people seeking asylum are given the opportunity to lead dignified and secure lives.

3.3 In 2019, Housing4All launched a report entitled *A Prison Without Walls, Asylum, Immigration and Human Rights*. The report raises issues faced by people seeking asylum including issues relating to destitution, housing conditions, food poverty, children, health matters and the impact of not being able to work.

3.4 The report outlines a number of issues in relation to destitution and the impact of Home Office Policy that restricts asylum seekers from accessing the labour market. The report also highlights that in the UK, unlike in other EU countries, if a person's claim for asylum is refused then the accommodation and financial support that would have been provided by the Home Office is stopped after 21 days. The report notes that as asylum seekers are restricted from accessing public funds and not eligible to access emergency accommodation, once Home Office support is withdrawn, this results in destitution.

3.5 The report estimates that there are over 100 asylum seekers that have been destitute for several years who fall away from established networks of support and go underground, where they are at serious risk of exploitation and abuse.

3.6 The report also highlights that the system of seeking asylum in the UK causes serious damage to the mental health of people who are already suffering because of what they have experienced in the course of their flight. It noted that 'many of the issues could be resolved by lifting the ban on employment for people seeking asylum.'

3.7 A copy of the report has been circulated. It contains a number of recommendations for organisations, including five that have been directed at Belfast City Council.

Recommendation 1

3.8 Belfast City Council and Department for Communities establish a subcommittee in 2019/2020 to develop plans to introduce a digital money, similar to the MONI scheme in Finland, to pay additional financial allowances to asylum seekers outside of Home Office support.

- 3.9 The Finnish Immigration Service has been providing asylum seekers, who do not have bank accounts, with prepaid MasterCard instead of the traditional cash disbursements (MONI Scheme).
- 3.10 The MONI account functions like a bank account, people can use their accounts to buy things, pay bills, and even receive direct deposits from employers. Every transaction is recorded in a public database maintained by a decentralized global network of computers; this enables the Immigration Service to keep track of the cardholders and their spending.
- 3.11 Some analysis of the system in Finland shows that it has helped with the issue around asylum seekers /refugees not having papers and facing long waits to get a bank account which impacts on their ability to bank their wages, pay bills or start to recover their identities. It should be noted that in Finland, unlike the situation in the UK, asylum seekers are permitted to work.
- 3.12 The report recommends that this be introduced ‘to pay additional financial allowances to asylum seekers in Northern Ireland outside of the Home Office support.’
- 3.13 Members will be aware that Immigration policy is an excepted matter under paragraph 8, Schedule 2 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Therefore, Northern Ireland does not have the power to amend immigration policy, which remains the preserve of the Home Office.
- 3.14 However, while immigration policy is made in Westminster, Northern Ireland government departments have previously used powers to address some of the problems faced by those living under immigration control, including asylum seekers and refugees. In its Racial Equality Strategy 2015 – 2025, the Executive Office explains that Northern Ireland departments have exercised their powers to implement a number of initiatives including:
- Setting up a Crisis Fund for vulnerable migrants
 - Providing free English language classes for asylum seekers
 - Ensuring that all asylum seekers have access to free healthcare
 - Providing the legal framework that will give all unaccompanied asylum seeking children and trafficked children an independent legal guardian.³

³ The Executive Office, ‘Racial Equality Strategy 2015-25’ (2015) at para 9.15

- 3.15 The Housing4All report estimates that there are over 100 asylum seekers who have been destitute for several years who fall away from established networks and are at serious risk of exploitation and abuse. This is mainly people who have claimed asylum and have had their claim refused and their £37.75 a week stopped. There are many reasons why people who have failed in their asylum claim may be unable to return to their home country. They physically may not be able to travel, and /or their country of origin may refuse to provide suitable travel documents for them to return. It may also be considerably unsafe for people to return home. Others are gathering the necessary evidence to make a fresh claim for asylum. People in this situation have no home, no access to benefits and no right to work. They become reliant on food parcels, charitable support and are at risk of exploitation. Such a situation has massive physical and mental health implications and impacts on social cohesion leaving people living on the margins of society.
- 3.16 Members may wish to consider writing to the Department for Communities to raise the issue of asylum seekers facing destitution and to seek clarity with regard to what statutory body has responsibility for people in this vulnerable situation at risk of destitution, exploitation and temporarily unable to return home.

Recommendation 2

- 3.17 Belfast City Council establish a sub-committee to develop plans to promote an Aspen Card discount scheme among local business.
- 3.18 While the Home Office is assessing an asylum seeker's claim, asylum seekers receive a weekly payment of £37.75 from the Home Office. This is paid through an aspen card, which is a form of debit card, different from the Moni card, it can be used to get cash from machines and to make payments in shops.
- 3.19 The report recommends that Council work with local businesses to provide a discount scheme for holders of the card, similar to how student discount works.

Recommendation 3

- 3.20 Belfast City Council confidentially provide free places for children to attend extra-curricular activities and summer clubs so that children in families seeking asylum can participate in activities with their peers without discrimination.

- 3.21 After-schools activities and play development sessions are free and open to residents in Belfast. Information about after-school activities is disseminated through the various Community Centres. Play development sessions are open to all communities in Belfast and have been delivered to many new community groupings.
- 3.22 Summer scheme registration is currently set at £4 per child for 4 weeks and £8 per family and is advertised through the Council web site. This pricing policy has been in place for several years, whilst the costs appears value for money for most; it would pose difficulties for asylum seekers who receive £37.75 a week per child. Being part of a local summer scheme offers many benefits for asylum seekers and aids integration and inclusion locally.
- 3.23 This recommendation will be considered by Legal Services and the Equality Unit with regard to potential implications in the context of current legislation.
- 3.24 Officers from the Good Relations Unit and Community Services will work together on how current provision within Community Centres is better advertised to reach sectors such as asylum seekers across Belfast. The Migrant Forum, which the Council Chairs' could be used as a conduit.

Recommendation 4

- 3.25 Belfast City Council, led by the Lord Mayor, seek a meeting with the Home Office to advocate for employment rights for asylum seekers.
- 3.26 People seeking asylum in the UK are generally unable to work. While in theory, some categories of asylum seekers are entitled to apply for work permission,⁴ if such permission is granted, the asylum seeker is required to fill a role on the shortage occupation list, which includes very technical or specialized positions such as classical ballet dancer, prosthetist and reservoir engineer.⁵ In practice, therefore, the large majority of asylum seekers are banned from working while they wait months, and often years, for a decision on their asylum claim.
- 3.27 The Lift the Ban Coalition, made up of 150 organisations from across the UK is calling on the government to give asylum seekers the right to work after six months of waiting for a decision on their

⁴ An asylum seeker who has not received a response to their asylum application for 12+ months and who can show that the delay cannot be attributed to her/him may apply for work permission.

⁵ See Immigration Rules Appendix K: Shortage Occupation List

asylum claim.⁶ The Coalition highlights that the UK's position on work permission is extremely restrictive compared to other European countries and that the UK has adopted a minimalist approach to implementing EU law.⁷ The Coalition argue that granting work permission would bring benefits including: improved mental and physical health of people in the asylum system; helping to challenge forced labour, exploitation, and modern slavery; improved integration within local communities and benefits for the UK economy through tax.⁸

- 3.28 The UK's policy to restrict asylum seekers from the labour market has come under sustained criticism by a number of UN Human Rights bodies.
- 3.29 The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has repeatedly expressed concerns about the challenges faced by asylum seekers in the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights in the UK. In 2016, it expressed particular concerns about restrictions in accessing employment. The Committee advised the UK to ensure that asylum seekers are not restricted from accessing employment while their asylum claims are being processed.⁹
- 3.30 Previous Lord Mayors have raised the issue of asylum seekers being unable to work with the Home Office and have been advised that 'asylum seekers are only allowed to work in the UK if their asylum claim, or further submission, has been outstanding for more than 12 months through no fault of their own. Those who are allowed to work are restricted to jobs on the shortage occupation list.'
- 3.31 The Lord Mayor has recently met with the authors of the report and has agreed to raise the matter again with the Home Office.

Recommendation 5

- 3.32 Belfast City Council and the Department for Communities establish a sub-committee to develop plans for 'Timebanking' which provides non-monetary ways for asylum seekers and non-asylum seekers to exchange goods and services.

⁶ See Lift the Ban Coalition accessible here: <https://www.refugee-action.org.uk/lift-the-ban/>

⁷ In ZO (Somalia) [2010] UKSC 36 the Supreme Court ruled that the UK had failed to meet the minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers as required by Council Directive 2003/9/EC ("the Reception Directive"). The UK responded by permitting all asylum seekers who have waited for 12+ months to apply for work permission but also by limiting such employment to the Shortage Occupation List.

⁸ Lift the Ban Coalition, 'Why people seeking asylum should have the right to work' (October 2018).

⁹ ICESCR/E/C.12/GBR/CO/6. 'UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Concluding Observations on the sixth periodic report of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland' 14 July 2016, at paras 24-25. See also, ICESCR/E/C.12/GBR/CO/5. 'UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Concluding Observations on the fifth periodic report of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland' 12 June 2009, at para 27.

- 3.33 Timebanking is a way of spending one hour of time helping someone out by, for example, mowing someone's lawn, or doing their shopping. For every hour spent, you earn an hour in return. This can be spent on receiving an hour of someone else's time.
- 3.34 No money is exchanged. One hour of sharing skills or helping others is recognised by giving that person one hour as a time credit.
- 3.35 Timebanking is a creative way of incentivising people to take an interest in their communities. The benefits can be immense in terms of building social networks of people, who give and receive support from each other, enabling people from different backgrounds, who may not otherwise meet, to come together and form connections and friendships.
- 3.36 The concept has many benefits for all communities and would complement the Belfast Agenda, however, the Council would have to give consideration as to whether it is best placed to implement the concept and to provide the resource necessary to establish and provide oversight.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.37 The suggested options within this paper do not have any financial implications at this point. However, future financial implications will depend on member's recommendations.

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

- 3.38 This report intends to inform Members, there are no anticipated negative equality and good relations or rural needs implications."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Update on Decade of Centenaries Programme

The Committee considered the following report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 To update the Committee on the Council's Decade of Centenaries Programme.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is asked to note the update of the progress of the programme and that the Council will not develop its own exhibition for the final phase of the Decade.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Background

The Decade of Centenaries Programme marks the anniversaries of key events from 1912 – 1922, one hundred years ago. It aims to promote a greater understanding of our shared, but complex history, in a way that can promote better relationships and foster reconciliation.

3.2 Prior to the onset of the Decade, the Council sought to take a leadership role. From the very first discussions in City Hall on the Decade of Centenaries, Councillors took a positive approach, agreeing that the marking of these events provided the City with an excellent opportunity to broaden our understanding of the past and to develop respect for the complexity of our inter-woven and shared history.

3.3 In 2011, Members of the then Historic Centenaries Working Group had agreed a three phased approach to the whole Decade in chronological order:

- 1912 – 1914;
- 1914 – 1918; and
- 1918 – 1922.

3.4 Members also agreed to a series of principles that would underpin Council activity as well as to guide external events taking place on Council premises, such as the City Hall.

3.5 The first period, 1912-1914, was entitled “Shared History, Different Allegiances” and covered a range of historical events such as the Balmoral Review, the Home Rule crisis, the Ulster Covenant, the Gaelic Revival, the rise of the Suffragette and Labour movements, the formation of the YCV, along with the arming of the UVF and the Irish Volunteers. The Council hosted a large scale exhibition in the City Hall and delivered a range of civic events.

3.6 The second period, 1914-1918, covered the period of World War I, including the Somme and the Easter Rising. The bulk of this activity took place over 2016, under the banner of “Belfast; Reflections on 1916”.

- 3.7** The third period, 1918-1922, which is currently being delivered, is covering the end of World War I, the 1918 Elections, Women's Suffrage, the Anglo-Irish war, the treaty negotiations and ultimately the establishment of the two parliaments on the island.
- 3.8** Major exhibitions were commissioned for the Covenant, the Somme and the Easter Rising and there was a Civic Dinner to mark each of these three events, as had been agreed in 2012. In addition, the Council rolled out an annual programme of events during each year of the Decade, open to the public and free to attend.
- 3.9** In 2016, at the August meeting of the Diversity Working Group, Members requested that officers develop a programme for the remainder of the Decade, from 2017 until 2022. Central to the programme, Members requested that:
- Activity being planned would continue with the objective of having a strong Belfast focus, exploring the human stories of lost lives and be respectful.
 - The current Principles, agreed in 2011, will inform all activity within the final phase of the Decade of Centenaries
- 3.10** The programme contains a number of themes and a series of events within each theme, which were approved by Party Group Leaders and further agreed by the Strategic Policy and Resources meeting on the 20th October 2017.
- 3.11** Members also confirmed that the Shared City Partnership and the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee would form the governance for the programme, with Party Group Leaders also having a regular input into programme development. Party Group Leaders also requested that officers explore the possibility of delivering an exhibition covering a number of themes during this final phase of the Decade.

Exhibition

- 3.12** The two previous exhibitions undertaken for the first two phases of the Decade cost in the region of £50,000 each, which were very well attended by residents and visitors.
- 3.13** However, in relation to developing any exhibition for this final phase, Members should be aware that there is no resource set aside for such. More significantly, the public areas within City Hall have been hugely developed since the last exhibition was staged in 2016. With the new permanent exhibition, there is not the space to develop a comparable temporary exhibition in City Hall. The

only available space for a temporary exhibition would be in the small foyer area in the entrance of City Hall.

- 3.14 Officers are aware however that over the course of the next three years, other organisations will be developing thematic exhibitions on the Decade of Centenaries. One is the Ulster Museum's temporary exhibition on Partition, which will open in the autumn of 2020. The second exhibition is a mobile exhibition titled Ireland's Global Revolution, which has been commissioned by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. It will be displayed at Irish embassies worldwide but would be made available to other venues as well.
- 3.15 At its August meeting, Party Group Leaders were of the view that the Council should not resource and develop its own exhibition for this final phase and requested that officers look at other options for engaging with any exhibition that may be in Belfast over the next three years relating to Decade of Centenaries.

Community Involvement

- 3.16 Members may be aware of the wider Centenaries programme contained within the PEACE IV Local Action Plan, titled Belfast and the World, under the Building Positive Relations theme. This programme is an engagement programme within communities, and is now in its second year. It has already delivered over 30 hours of contact learning and engagement work to 80 participants thus far and contains a budget of £190,891. It will run until December 2021.

Notice of Motion on the Centenary of the Foundation of Northern Ireland

- 3.17 Members will be aware that a Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Dorrian and seconded by Councillor Hutchinson at Council 1st July 2019. The notice reads:

"This Council notes the centenary of the foundation of Northern Ireland in 2021, the commitment to celebrate this as part of the Decade of Centenaries programme and the pivotal role that Belfast City Hall played in the establishment of its political institutions.

The Council agrees that a significant programme is developed by the Council to celebrate, to educate and to fully examine the different perspectives on its creation and to recognise the role of the City Hall."

The Notice of Motion has been referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and will be dealt with in a separate paper.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.18 The costs of the activities alluded to within paragraph 3.11 are being borne by the District Council's Good Relations Programme, which is 75% funded by the Executive Office.

Members are also asked to note that, in terms of those activities, officers have been approached to include the musical War's End in its event on 3rd October 2019. This production, would cost in the region of £4,000 to stage and can be covered within existing budgets.

**Equality and Good Relations Implications/
Rural Needs assessment**

- 3.19 The Decade of Centenaries Programme is part of the Council's District Council's Good Relations Programme, which was screened for equality, good relations and rural needs and was screened out."

The Committee adopted the recommendation and agreed that the motion on the Centenary of the Foundation of Northern Ireland, which had been deferred earlier in the meeting, be incorporated into the Decade of Centenaries Programme and considered in the first instance by the Party Leaders.

Minutes of Shared City Partnership

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Shared City Partnership held on 5th August, including the recommendations to:

PEACE IV Secretariat

1. agree to progress the Supplemental Agreement to the PEACE IV Partnership for new members;
2. approve the amended TSG governance and agree that representatives and advisors should be sought, as outlined; and
3. approve the development and revision of the monitoring and evaluation framework in line with SEUPB and PEACE IV Programme requirements.

PEACE IV CYP

1. note the issues affecting Peace IV Projects; and
2. ratify the revised implementation approach for CYP1 Tech Connects.

PEACE IV SSS

1. note the delays in planning permission; and

2. agree the Resource Allocation criteria and process.

PEACE IV BPR

1. note the issues affecting PEACE IV projects;
2. ratify the 3 month extension, revised deliverable timeframe and flexible delivery approach for BPR1 Cross Community Area Networks – Partner Delivery with NIHE;
3. approve the EU Study Visit criteria and process for BPR4 to enable final submission and formal approval by SEUPB;
4. agree to progress BPR5 Traveller and Roma elements, as outlined;
5. agree that a partner approach and/or collaborative partnership should be introduced for BPR5 Traveller and Roma elements, subject to options appraisal and legal opinion;
6. delegate authority to the PEACE IV programme board and Strategic Director of City to approve the identified delivery approach and project proposal for Traveller and Roma elements, ensuring compliance with PEACE IV programme regulations and timescales.

PEACE IV Underspend

1. Utilise the PEACE IV underspend and progress the proposals for final approval – summarised as
 - extending CYP4 Young Advocates to include a placeshaping element for young people in East Belfast;
 - providing additional connections, landscaping and engineering across the brownfield DfC site from Springfield Road to West Circular Road;
 - approving the addition £26,539 of funding to the Traveller and Roma elements of BPR5; and
 - extending BPR2 Creative Communities project to include an element comprises of a creative project based at St. Comgall's comprising of research, design and interpretation of a community exhibition.

2. agree to commence the development of mini application for submission to SEUPB.

Revised Good Relations Strategy

1. agree the revised Good Relations Strategy, following the public consultation and engagement exercise;
2. agree to include a foreword to the document, which would be signed by Party Group Leaders prior to the launch; and
3. agree that the new Strategy would be launched during Community Relations Week in September, 2019.

Update on the Bonfire and Cultural Expression Programme

1. note the contents of the report, including the recommendation that Mr. J. Byrne be invited to attend the September meeting of the Shared City Partnership to provide an update on his evaluation report of the 2019 Bonfire and Cultural Expression Programme; and
2. agree to retain the previous independent assessor for 2019 as a way to ensure consistency. Officers will then explore a process to appoint an independent assessor and bring this back to the Partnership prior to the commencement of any programme in 2020.

Other Recommendations

1. agree that £3,000 be allocated to the Northern Ireland Human Rights Consortium towards events during Human rights Week in December 2019 promoting good relations as identified by the TEO and the Council's draft Good Relations Strategy, as well as supporting the provision of a venue through the City Hall for particular events, pending availability and suitability;
2. agree that an amount of up to £1500 towards the costs of speakers, AV and lunches be awarded to the Restorative Practices Forum (NI) for the Restorative Practices Forum (NI) International Conference being held on 14th-15th November 2019;
3. agree that the Council would support the research proposal into Adolescent Group Interactions, Attitudes and Behaviour, and that the letter would include a reference to the work of the Community and Voluntary sector' as outlined.
4. agree that up to £2,000 be awarded to the Department of Justice for the delivery of a community-led cross-interface festival on 21st September, 2019 at Townsend Street, subject to confirmation of similar match-funding from other agencies working with the Forum; and

5. note the contents of the report providing an update on District Council Good Relations Programme 2019/20.

Equality and Diversity: Quarter 1 Equality Screening and Rural Needs Outcome Report

The Committee was advised that one of the main requirements of the Council's Equality Scheme was to carry out the screening of new and revised policies. That allowed any impacts related to equality of opportunity and/or good relations to be identified and addressed.

In addition, the Council had a statutory duty under the Rural Needs (Northern Ireland) Act 2016 to consider rural needs in the development of new policies, plans or strategies or in any service design/delivery decisions and was required to ensure that the annual reporting returns were submitted to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.

Accordingly, the Committee noted the summary of equality screening and rural needs impact assessments which had been undertaken from April till June, 2019.

Opportunities Rock Event

The Committee was informed that the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, in partnership with the Council and the Education Authority, was proposing to host a one-day "Opportunities Rock" event in the City Hall on 14th May, 2020 to promote pathways for people with learning disabilities.

The event, which would be held in the Great Hall, would focus upon the themes of citizenship, equality and inclusiveness and would provide an opportunity to inform people with learning disabilities, their parents/carers and others of the opportunities which were available across the City and how they could be accessed. Representatives from further education, training, employment, recreation, social, leisure, sports and transport would be in attendance. It was proposed that the Lord Mayor and the Chief Executive Officers of the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and the Education Authority would participate in the event to demonstrate their organisation's joint commitment to promoting inclusion and upholding the rights of people with learning disabilities to be treated as equal citizens in the City.

The Committee approved the hosting of the "Opportunities Rock" event and noted that the cost would be met by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

Local Council Equality and Diversity Group Corporate Response to Draft Strategy and Action Plan 2019-21

The City Solicitor informed the Committee that the Local Council Equality and Diversity Group was comprised of stakeholder bodies from across the Local Government sector and included Chief Executives, diversity champions, equality and human resource officers, Trades Union officials, Staff Commission members and representatives from external stakeholder groups. The Group, which sought to prioritise and influence equality and diversity initiatives across Local Government, had

been constituted in 2011 and re-constituted in 2015, following the reform of Local Government.

He reported that the Group had undertaken a consultation exercise on its draft Strategy and Action Plan for 2019-21, which had been developed to guide its work in the longer term.

He drew the Committee's attention to the following comments which had been drafted by officers from the Equality and Diversity Unit and Corporate HR and recommended that it be forwarded to the Local Council Equality and Diversity Group as the Council's response to the consultation to the Draft Strategy and Action Plan 2019-21:

“Equality and Diversity Group

Draft Strategy and Action Plan

2019 - 2021

July, 2019

1. Background

The purpose of the Equality and Diversity Group is to prioritise and influence equality and diversity initiatives across local government. The Group attempts to bring together the equality and diversity practices across the sector and in so doing, seeks to integrate the priorities of the Group with the ongoing work of individual councils.

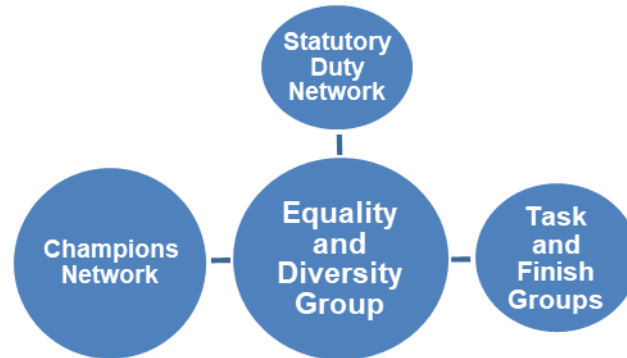
The Group has responsibility for:

- the development of the overall strategic direction for equality and diversity initiatives in local government**
- determining priorities and setting objectives**
- monitoring progress and reporting to the Local Government Staff Commission on a regular basis**

The Group was first constituted in 2011 and was re-constituted in 2015 in the light of the reform of local government. A new Chair, who is the Chief Executive of one of the 11 councils, was appointed by Solace in 2019.

A key feature of the work of the Equality and Diversity Group is the Diversity Champions' Network which is made up of the elected member(s) and officer(s) Champions in each council. The role of the Diversity Champion is to champion equality and diversity in individual councils and to act as first point of contact for enquiries and provide advice, guidance and support on equality and diversity issues within the organisation. The Network provides a forum of support and networking for the Diversity Champions and meets quarterly to provide training and development opportunities for the Champions.

Sub groups such as the Statutory Duty Network continue to meet, together with specific task and finish groups which will be established as required.



2. Membership

The membership of the Equality and Diversity Working Group is drawn from stakeholder bodies across the local government sector and includes Chief Executives, Diversity Champions, Equality Officers and HR Officers in councils, trade union officers and Staff Commission members, as well as representatives from external stakeholder groups.

The current membership comprises:

Chair (Solace)	Anne Donaghy, Chief Executive, Mid and East Antrim BC
LGSC	Lindsay Boal, Commission Member Monica Burns, Commission Member Willie Francey, Commission Member Bernie Kelly, Commission Member Helen Hall, Director of Corporate Services
Disability Action	TBC
Diversity Champions	Cllr. Michael Goodman, Antrim and Newtownabbey BC Cllr. Cáthal Mallaghan, Mid Ulster DC
Community Relations Council	Jacqueline Irwin, Chief Executive
Equality Commission for NI	Patrice Hardy, Equality Manager Kevin Oakes, Equality Officer
NIPSA	Geraldine Alexander, Assistant Secretary
PPMA NI	Paula Donnelly, Head of HR, Derry City and Strabane DC
Statutory Duty Network	Mary Hanna, Policy & Diversity Officer, Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon BC
DemocraShe	Bronagh Hinds
Equality Coalition	Robyn Scott

3. Purpose of the Strategy and Action Plan

This document has been developed to guide the work of the Equality and Diversity Group in the longer term, and to focus on the action plan for 2019 - 2021. It was developed following consultation with

members of the Equality and Diversity Group, the groups which the members represent, and other stakeholders.

In focussing on these activities, continuing to work with our stakeholders and responding to their needs, the Equality and Diversity Group aims to support and assist councils to ensure equality of opportunity and good relations as an Employer, a Service Provider and a Civic Leader.

This will be done by working in partnership with councils:

- to address equality and diversity issues
- to ensure continuity of the ongoing equality and diversity activities
- to support cross-sectoral initiatives
- to involve and inform external stakeholders
- to pilot new equality and diversity initiatives
- to provide training and development initiatives
- to showcase best practice

4. Reporting Mechanisms

Progress on meeting the activities detailed in the action plan will be:

- reported to members of the Equality and Diversity Group at their meetings
- a copy of the minutes of the Equality and Diversity Group meetings will be included on the Staff Commission meeting agendas for information
- a copy of the minutes of the Equality and Diversity Group meetings will be included on the Solace meeting agendas for information
- periodic reports will be sent to councils through the Local Government Staff Commission E-zine, including updates from external stakeholders
- members will report back to the stakeholder group they represent:
 - Solace
 - LGSC
 - PPMA NI
 - Statutory Duty Network
 - Diversity Champions' Network
 - Disability Action
 - Community Relations Council
 - ECNI
 - NIPSA
 - Equality Coalition

5. **Equality and Diversity Framework**

This strategy and action plan supports the Equality and Diversity Framework which details each Council's

- statement of intent
- approach to meeting their equality and diversity obligations
- demonstrates their compliance with them.

The Framework covers everyone who uses council services, facilities and accesses information.

6. **Outcomes/Outputs**

Our priorities include actions to help achieve some of the Draft Programme for Government 2016 – 2021 targets:

Outcome 3: We have a more equal society

Outcome 8: We care for others and help those in need

Outcome 9: We are a shared society that respects diversity

Outcome 10: We are a confident, welcoming, outward looking society

The Strategy and Action Plan will result in the following benefits for the local government sector:

- officers and members will be well informed on equality and diversity issues
- councils will be representative of the communities which they serve
- local government will be recognised for best practice in equality and diversity
- officers and members will be supported and developed through a coaching and mentoring network
- external stakeholders will have a mechanism to share their views and information with councils
- councils will benefit from cross-sectoral working and initiatives
- councils will be able to demonstrate to their citizens that they are committed to equality and diversity in the development of policy and the delivery of services to the whole community which they serve

Strategy and Action Plan
2019 – 2021

<p>Key Strategic Objective: By working with our stakeholders and responding to their needs, we aim to support and assist councils to ensure equality of opportunity and good relations as an Employer, a Service Provider and a Civic Leader</p>	
<p><i>Equality and Diversity Group</i></p> <p>Develop partnerships with other equality groups and networks</p> <p>Review the membership of the Group to include other equality groups and networks</p> <p>Revise the Equality and Diversity Framework and relaunch it at an event for Councils</p> <p>Establish sub-groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to develop a strategy on data including council statistics, NISRA, community planning and ECNI • to identify training required to mainstream equality, good relations and DAPs 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>August 19 and ongoing</p> <p>September 2019</p> <p>October 2019</p> <p>January 2020</p>
<p><i>Diversity Champions</i></p> <p>Review the role of Diversity Champion and provide guidance on how the role should be carried out and how it should link with senior leaders in the council</p> <p>Provide regular training events, for example on the role of Diversity Champions, ethics, dealing with uncomfortable issues/contentious areas</p>	<p>August 2019</p> <p>Ongoing – 2 per year</p>
<p><i>Leadership</i></p> <p>Work in partnership with the ECNI to implement the ECNI S75 Demonstrating Effective Leadership Guidance in councils.</p> <p>Provide a seminar on civic leadership for Diversity Champions and Equality Officers</p>	<p>September 2019</p> <p>February 2020</p>
<p><i>Disability</i></p> <p>Build links with the Solace Disability Champion and develop ways to work in partnership</p> <p>Work with the ECNI to implement the Mental Health Charter across local government</p>	<p>September 2019</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

<i>Good Practice Examples</i> Develop a mechanism to share best practice examples between councils and the wider public sector. Hold an annual seminar to showcase best practice examples Hold an awards event for diversity and inclusion initiatives in councils	Ongoing 24 September 2019 and annually Launch in September 2019 for event in 2020
<i>Consultation</i> Develop a mechanism to facilitate consultation events across councils.	February 2020

Equality and Diversity Group

Draft Strategy and Action Plan 2019 – 2021

Consultation Questionnaire

Do you have any comments on the Background (page1)?

The circulation of the draft Strategy and Action Plan is useful in providing clarity on the background of the group.

Do you have any comments on the Membership (page 2)? Is there anyone else you think we should invite to join the Group?

The terms of reference and the connections to the Statutory Duty Network, including the terms of appointment and nomination process and their application should, in order to demonstrate transparency and efficient use of the public purse be included. In addition, some thought should be given to wider representation of other section 75 groups ie race, LGBT+ etc

Do you have any comments on the Purpose (page2)?

The purpose of the Group should include the identification of inequalities which, in particular, could assist Council's in the community planning process.

Do you have any comments on the Reporting Mechanisms (page3)?

Should representatives of other section 75 groups be added to the membership of the Equality and Diversity Group as mentioned above, the reporting mechanisms should reflect this.

Do you have any comments on the Framework (page 3)?

The definition of the overall aim of the Equality and Diversity Group “to support and assist Council’s to ensure equality of opportunity and good relations as an employer, a service provider and civic leader” is welcome. In addition, it is vital that meaningful outputs and outcomes in each of these areas are achieved.

Do you have any comments on the Outcomes/Outputs (page 4)?

The Council is of the view that alignment to the draft Programme for Government is appropriate. Links to the conditions of wellbeing within the community plans should be considered also.

In relation to the second bullet point contained within the strategy on page 4 which reads “Council’s will be representative of the communities which they serve”, this should be amended to:

“Diverse communities will benefit from the best practice/activities undertaken by councils” or “Councils will attract a more diverse applicant pool for job opportunities”.

It would also be beneficial if local authorities could have access to better data to assist with more informed decision-making.

*Do you agree with the actions which have been identified (page 5-6)?
Yes/No/Any comments?*

- It is not clear from the table included whether the headings in “bold” are themes. If they are themes, other headings related to section 75 groups should be added along with disability.
- Ownership and responsibility for tasks should be included as well as timeframes.
- The inclusion of data strategy action is welcome and will assist with the identification of inequalities going forward as there are significant gaps for S75 groups. Given the importance of this area and the focus on evidence based decision making consideration of a sub-group should be discussed.
- A renewed focus on equality outcomes is welcome, particularly as many councils will now be undertaking reviews of their Equality Schemes and given the time which has elapsed since the review of Local Government.
- The provision of guidance to Councils should consider the work ongoing across key stakeholders in this area, including NILGA and individual local authorities.

- Clarification should also be provided on whether partnership working is being undertaken with NISRA and the Equality Commission

Do you have any other comments you wish to make?

Clarification should be provided on whether Disability has been included as a specific theme due to statutory duties. In addition, the strategy in general could be more reflective of section 75 groups.”

Policy on Domestic Violence and Abuse in the Workplace

The Committee was reminded that domestic abuse was a serious issue which had the potential to affect any employee of the Council, whether as a victim, survivor or perpetrator. As part of the Council’s Gender Action Plan, a specific domestic violence and abuse policy had been developed and implemented in 2012.

The Director of Organisational Strategy submitted for the Committee’s approval a revised Policy on Domestic Violence and Abuse in the Workplace, which applied to all Council employees, including casual and temporary staff, and which had been agreed by both management and Trades Unions. The Policy, which had taken account of best practice in other organisations, sought to support and assist an employee experiencing domestic violence and abuse, as well as providing guidance on managing situations where an employee were deemed to be the perpetrators. Upon being approved, it would be communicated to staff through a comprehensive training and awareness programme, in conjunction with the Trades Unions.

The Committee approved the revised Policy on Domestic Violence and Abuse in the Workplace, as set out hereunder:

“1. DEFINITION:

- 1.1. For the purposes of this policy domestic violence and abuse is defined as any “threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age ethnicity, religion, gender, or sexual orientation) by a current or former intimate partner or family member”. (Definition taken from the DOJ and DHSSPS Strategy document: “Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence” March 2016.)**

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1. Domestic and sexual violence and abuse occurs right across our society and it has devastating consequences for the victims and their families. It has no boundaries as regards to age or gender, gender identity, race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, wealth, disability or geography.**

- 2.2. Domestic violence and abuse is a pattern of behaviour that is characterised by the exercise of control and the misuse of power by one person over another within an intimate or family relationship, including same sex relationships. It is usually frequent and persistent. While domestic violence and abuse most commonly refers to that perpetrated against a partner, it includes violence and abuse against ex-partners, and violence and abuse by any other person who has a close or family relationship with the victim, including parents, children, and siblings. It also includes honour based violence and abuse.**
- 2.3. Domestic violence and abuse does not just refer to physical violence but also to sexual, emotional and psychological, online, financial abuse and coercive control. Coercive control is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse used to harm, punish or frighten their victim. This controlling behaviour is designed to make a person dependent by isolating them from support, exploiting them, depriving them of independence and regulating their everyday behaviour. Domestic violence and abuse is, in many cases, made up of a combination of different forms of abuse. Domestic violence and abuse affects not only adults but may be inflicted on, or witnessed by children. The potential adverse effects on children living with domestic violence and abuse includes poor educational achievement, social exclusion and juvenile crime, substance and alcohol misuse, mental health problems and homelessness.**
- 2.4. Belfast City Council strives to create a working environment that promotes the view that violence against people is unacceptable and that such violence will not be condoned and that everyone has a right to live free from fear and abuse.**
- 2.5. The Council is committed to raising awareness of domestic violence and abuse in the community through the work of the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSP), the Belfast area Domestic and Sexual Violence Partnership and with other local organisations in the Belfast area, including PSNI, Women's Aid and Onus, through its Safe Place initiative.**
- 2.6. The Council also recognises that our employees and colleagues (and potentially their family members) may be experiencing domestic violence and abuse, that home and work issues cannot always be separated and that domestic and sexual violence and abuse can impact greatly on the working life of employees and can result in:**

 - A deterioration in employee performance**
 - Increased and unexplained absenteeism**
 - Poor timekeeping etc.**

These could potentially threaten job security and prospects where the cause of these behaviours is unknown to the employer. The Council is therefore committed to providing appropriate advice and support to affected employees, while they are in work, and in addressing their circumstances outside the workplace. The Council also recognises that employees may be indirectly adversely impacted by a close family member experiencing domestic violence and abuse.

- 2.7. Domestic violence and abuse has a damaging effect on people and can have an adverse impact on their employment, e.g. increased absence levels as a result of physical injuries and/or mental health issues, victims not being allowed out of the house to attend work and performance issues when in work. However, the cause of these effects is often not talked about because victims are frightened of further attack and/or of perceived repercussions on their ability to carry out their job.
- 2.8. This policy demonstrates the Council's commitment to providing guidance for employees and managers to address the occurrence of domestic violence and abuse and its effects on the workplace.

3. PURPOSE

- 3.1. The purpose of this policy is to support employees who are affected by domestic violence and abuse and to establish a framework to assist the Council in providing that support.

4. SCOPE

- 4.1. Belfast City Council acknowledges that while it is mainly women who experience domestic violence and abuse, this policy applies equally to every employee of Belfast City Council, regardless of gender, gender identity, gender expression or sexual orientation. In support of this, it is the Council's policy that anyone who is experiencing or has been affected by domestic violence and abuse can raise the issue, in the knowledge that we will treat the matter effectively, sympathetically and in line with our statutory obligations.
- 4.2. The Council recognises that domestic violence and abuse is not confined to the home and that it is likely that it will impact upon the employee in the workplace. The Council recognises its duty to keep an employee safe within the workplace and would encourage employees to disclose to a line manager or "Trusted Colleague" (see paragraph 8.6) if they have any concerns about their safety in the workplace, or travelling to and from the workplace. Belfast City Council will take all reasonable steps to address these concerns.

4.3. The Workplace Policy on Domestic Violence and Abuse applies to all Council employees (including casual workers and temporary staff). The Council will also take all reasonable steps to support all agency assignees who are placed in Belfast City Council.

5. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

5.1. The aim of the policy is to make the workplace a safe and supportive environment for all employees of the Council who are affected by domestic violence and abuse.

5.2. The objectives of the policy are to set out how the Council will:

- offer support to our employees in addressing problems arising from domestic violence and abuse sympathetically and in confidence (as far as possible);**
- maximise the safety of our employees in the workplace;**
- signpost employees to external support agencies who can carry on support beyond the workplace;**
- deal effectively with perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse among our workforce, as appropriate and to challenge behaviours and attitudes through our awareness raising campaigns.**

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

6.1. Whilst employees experiencing domestic violence and abuse normally have the right to complete confidentiality, in circumstances of child protection or the protection of adults at risk of abuse, there may be a legal obligation on the Council to notify appropriate protection services. It is likely that complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in these situations. For example, where a risk to children or to vulnerable adults is identified, then the Council may have a duty to inform social services. Where this arises the employee will be informed.

7. RIGHT TO PRIVACY

7.1. The Council respects an employee's right to keep private the fact that they have experienced domestic violence and abuse within the statutory limitations outlined in paragraph 6.1 above.

8. PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYEES

8.1. The Council will make every effort to assist an employee experiencing domestic violence and abuse and will consider the following actions where applicable and where the work of the Council and services to citizens will not be compromised by their implementation:

- If an employee needs to take leave from work due to domestic violence and abuse, the length of the leave will be determined by the individual's situation through collaboration with the employee and their line manager subject to balancing both service needs and the needs of the individual.**
- In this context managers and supervisors are encouraged to provide a sympathetic response to requests for special paid or unpaid leave; flexible working and other work-life balance arrangements as a result of domestic violence and abuse, for example flexibility in working hours or time off when required to enable the employee to seek protection, go to court, look for new housing, enter counselling, arrange childcare etc.**
- The Council will consider the requirement for a change of working arrangements on a short-term or long-term basis, as necessary. (For example, moving the employee away from the reception area or from working in a ground-floor office which is visible from the street if required; redeployment or relocation, changing shift patterns, changing hours).**
- Changes to arrangements for the payment of salary, if requested (including a salary advance, if needed, e.g. to acquire alternative accommodation).**

8.2. Belfast City Council recognises that people experiencing domestic and sexual violence and abuse are at increasing risk when they attempt to leave an abusive partner. They may become vulnerable going to and coming from work, or while they are at work as the perpetrator knows where they can be located. This can give rise to health and safety issues including the risk of violence occurring in the workplace.

8.3. Employers have a duty of care under the Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (NI) 1992 also requires employers to assess the risks of violence to employees and make arrangements for their health and safety by effective planning, organisation and control.

8.4. The Council will make support available to employees involved in domestic violence and abuse through line managers, Human Resources, Occupational Health, the Council's confidential

employee counselling service and the network of “trusted colleagues”.

- 8.5.** The Council has set in place a procedure for designating certain staff members to be “trusted colleagues”. These employees will be available as the first point of contact for employees experiencing domestic violence and abuse. They will receive training in responding to disclosures of domestic violence and abuse, information about relevant agencies that offer support and information on current legislation, reports, publications and events to do with domestic violence and abuse. The trusted colleagues will be drawn from a range of areas/locations within the Council but will include staff from Human Resources and trade union representatives. The names and contact numbers for all trusted colleagues will be displayed on all location noticeboards.
- 8.6.** The role of the “trusted colleague” is to:
- Be available and approachable to employees experiencing domestic violence and abuse;
 - Listen, reassure and support individuals;
 - Keep information confidential (subject to the requirements of child and adult protection);
 - Respond in a sensitive and non-judgmental manner;
 - Discuss the specific steps that can be taken to help the employee stay safe in the workplace;
 - Ensure the employee is aware of the options available to them;
 - Encourage the employee to seek the advice of other relevant agencies - see appendices for contact details of support services available.
- 8.7.** The Council is aware that victims of domestic violence and abuse may have performance issues such as absenteeism or lower productivity. When addressing performance and safety issues the Council will make reasonable efforts to consider all aspects of the employee’s situation and/or safety problems and aim to assist the

employee in seeking professional help. The Council will address health and safety concerns in the workplace and will signpost to external agencies to carry on support beyond the remit of the workplace. The Council will commit to collaborative working with external agencies (if desired by employee) to provide a joined-up approach to supporting the employee, inside and outside the workplace.

8.8. While this policy applies to all employees of the Council, it is line managers, in consultation with “trusted colleagues” and when necessary, Human Resources, who will play a key role in implementing it in practice.

8.9. The role of the line manager can be summarised as follows:

- Be aware that employees who are experiencing domestic violence and abuse may demonstrate poor punctuality, attendance, work performance and productivity and should take steps to try to establish this prior to instigating any formal council procedures. Details of possible signs that someone is experiencing domestic violence and abuse are contained in Appendix 1, which can be accessed on mod.gov
- Do not directly confront an employee. It is for the employee to raise the matter. If you have concerns or suspect signs of domestic violence and abuse please contact a Trusted Colleague, your departmental HR team or Corporate HR - Employee Relations unit.
- Where domestic violence and abuse is known, managers should contact Corporate HR (Employee Relations Unit) for advice before any discussion with the staff member takes place, if it is possible to do so.
- If approached managers need to be prepared to listen and should ensure they are approachable and available.
- Where it is alleged that a member of staff is perpetrating abuse during work time or using work resources, the manager will discuss this as a matter of urgency with Human Resources.
- Managers will review the security of personal information held on members of staff and ensure that it is retained in a lockable filing cabinet or cupboard and disposed of securely when it is no longer required.

- **Managers will ensure that a risk assessment is carried out that will provide a plan to address any security concerns in the workplace.**
- **Managers will keep a confidential record of any discussions and of any action taken. This will be kept with the knowledge and consent of the staff member concerned, who will be able to access it.**
- **Managers will use discretion to facilitate time off for appointments, counselling, re-housing, court attendances etc.**
- **Managers will ensure rehabilitative return and support under the Council's Attendance Policy where appropriate.**
- **Managers will consider redeployment if necessary in regard to location of work, in liaison with departmental management, business support and Corporate HR.**
- **Managers will consider changes to working hours, shift patterns or flexible working arrangements.**
- **Managers will offer support through Occupational Health or Employee Counselling or assist with referrals to specialist agencies for on-going help or support.**
- **Managers will take advice from Human Resources staff in regard to issues of employment.**
- **Managers will consider the provision of any relevant training that might provide additional support to employees, e.g. assertiveness training for confidence building.**

9. TRAINING MANAGERS AND TRUSTED COLLEAGUES TO IDENTIFY AND RESPOND APPROPRIATELY

9.1. The Council will develop a programme of training for line managers and trusted colleagues to raise awareness of domestic violence and abuse and to ensure a common understanding of this policy and guidance.

9.2. The training will include:

- **Signs that an employee may be experiencing difficulties;**
- **How to provide initial support;**

- Referrals to other agencies;
- Ways to help the person stay safe in the workplace;
- The importance of understanding that they are not counsellors (counselling is to be left to trained professionals and no one should attempt to act in place of a domestic violence and abuse expert or counsellor).

10. GENERAL EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

10.1. All employees of the Council have a responsibility to:

- Accept primary responsibility for their personal safety and that of their colleagues;
- Familiarise themselves with and follow this policy and bring to the attention of their managers any concerns which they have relating to personal safety;
- Participate in training that has been made available to them on domestic violence and abuse;
- Ensure that no personal information relating to colleagues is passed on to callers.

11. VISIBLE RESOURCES THAT PROVIDE SUPPORT

11.1. The Council will provide contact details for “trusted colleagues” and a range of organisations which can offer support to employees living with domestic violence and abuse. These will be found in highly visible locations as well as in private locations, so that they can be picked up discreetly by employees. Safe Place cards will be left in discrete but accessible locations.

12. PERPETRATORS WHO ARE EMPLOYEES

12.1. With regard to perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse, the Council will undertake to do the following:

- Reserve the right to invoke the disciplinary procedure against any employee who perpetrates violence, including domestic violence and abuse and/or who uses the Council’s time, property or other resources to abuse a partner or family member or to aid another to do so. The Council will establish the facts of the case, in line with the requirements of the disciplinary procedure, before considering if disciplinary action is justified.

- **Refer to the Council’s Criminal Misconduct Guidelines. It may be the case that such an issue is dealt with in the criminal legal system either as an alternative to, or concurrent to, the disciplinary procedure.**
- **Take action, as appropriate, to minimise the potential for a perpetrator to use his/her position or resources to find out the whereabouts, or other details, of his/her partner or ex-partner.**
- **Consider requests for time off to attend appropriate interventions, when perpetrators are seeking help to address their abusive behaviour.**

12.2. In cases where both the perpetrator of domestic violence and abuse and the victim are employed by the Council, action may need to be taken to ensure that both the victim and the perpetrator do not come into contact in the workplace.

13. COMMUNICATING THE POLICY

13.1. The Council will raise awareness of domestic violence and abuse through a variety of methods, including:

- **Preparation and distribution of information to publicise the Council’s policy and to raise awareness of the issues of domestic violence and abuse.**
- **The provision of information about agencies that can offer advice, information and support.**
- **Whilst it is acknowledged that these steps will be effective in the short term in raising awareness, the Council is committed to continue to communicate and raise awareness of domestic violence and abuse in the longer term using methods deemed to be the most effective and appropriate.**

14. REVIEW

14.1. This policy will be reviewed regularly by the Council and, if necessary, revised in consultation with recognised Trade Unions in light of changing legislation and current good practice. Details of the next scheduled review are contained on the front cover of this policy.”

Diversity Action Plans

The Committee was informed that the Council's Equality and Diversity framework, which ran from April, 2017 till March, 2021, set out the means by which the organisation would tackle inequalities and promote diversity in the City. The framework had been built around four key priorities and associated actions, namely, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment, understanding our communities through data and consultation, delivering services accessible to all and developing a skilled and diverse workforce. In terms of the leadership, partnership and organisational commitment key priority, the Council had committed to developing and delivering a Gender Action Plan, an LGBT+ Action Plan and a Race Action Plan.

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy reported that the Women's Steering Group had, in May, 2018, agreed a three-year Gender Action Plan for delivery between April, 2018 and March, 2021. The Year 2 Action Plan, covering 2019/20, was being presented to the Committee for approval, as was an LGBT+ Action Plan for the same period, which had been formulated in collaboration with the LGBT staff network. A Race Relations Plan had still to be developed. The cost of delivering Year 2 of the Gender Action Plan was approximately £40,500, which included £16,000 of approved activity carried over from 2018/19, whilst the delivery of the LGBT+ Action Plan would cost £9,300. Those costs would be met from the existing Organisational Development budget.

The Committee approved Year 2 of the Gender Action Plan (2019/20) and the LGBT+ Action Plan 2019/20, as set out hereunder, together with the associated costs.

**GENDER ACTION PLAN 2018 – 2021
(Year 2019-20)**

WOMEN IN THE COUNCIL			
-to ensure that BCC organisational culture, policies and practices empower talent development at all levels elected members and officers and remove any form of discrimination			
Action	Who	Cost	Year
Hold annual IWD event for staff	HR IWD working group WNG	£6000	2
Deliver 2nd mentoring programme (men and women)	HR	£3000	2
Deliver Women Leaders Programme (members and officers)	WSG HR External facilitator	£12000	2 (postponed from 18/19)
Deliver 2nd work shadowing initiative with CX (linked to mentoring programme)	HR CX office	Staff resources	2
Deliver short modular personal development sessions for WNG members	HR	£3000	2 (c/f from Year 1)
Provide Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor work shadowing opportunities to youth forum members	Lord Mayors Unit Youth Forum	Staff resources	2 (c/f from Year 1.

Participate in NI Gender Diversity Charter assessment against annual targets and activities	CX HR	£2500	2
Commission and start delivery of unconscious bias training - to start with CMT	HR	£1000	2
Continue to facilitate WNG, including Belfast Women in Tec Group	Digital Services/ WNG	Staff Resources	2
Develop/ agree transgender guidance document for staff	HR LGB&T Network	Staff resources	2
Ensure effective promotion of BCC as an employer that values and supports equality and diversity (external website, job info to potential applicants, press releases etc.)	HR MarComms Staff network	Staff Resources	2
Hold event/ workshop for both male and female staff to jointly explore/ discuss gender issues and identify any issues to be addressed	HR Staff networks	£1000	2
WOMEN IN THE COMMUNITY			
-with the purpose of increasing the representation of women in leadership positions throughout communities across Belfast by ensuring that processes are in place to increase women's involvement in decision making in communities			
Fund annual external IWD event.	Equality Unit	£6000	2
Finalise baseline assessment of current engagement and activity in relation to gender	WNG Departments	Staff resources	2 (c/f from Year 1)
Hold Transgender remembrance event	Head of HR LGB&T network	LBGT+ budget	2
Consider use of new exhibition space to further promote/ tell stories of female role models Explore the potential for City Hall tours based around women in the city	Director of Legal Services WSG WNG	Staff Resources TBC	2

WOMEN IN THE ECONOMY			
-to ensure all council policies and strategies influence and facilitate the active and fair participation both women and men in the economy			
Hold a gender capacity building event for community planning partners	WSG HR Policy Unit	£1000	2 (c/f from Year 1)
Develop 'gender lens' ('equality lens') to build into future policy development – in conjunction with wider equality and diversity work to develop a diversity lens as part of Belfast Agenda Action Plan	EEDO HR Policy Unit	£3000	2
Identify employability partners to deliver employability/ outreach initiatives for women. (Link to City Deal proposals)	HR/OD Economic Initiatives	Staff resources	Ongoing opportunities arise
Identify opportunities for pre-recruitment programmes targeted at females furthest removed from the labour market	HR	Staff resources	Ongoing opportunities arise
The Northern Ireland Female Enterprise Challenge - A collaborative programme between the 11 Local Councils, Invest NI, and Women in Business NI (WIB) to promote and support female enterprise. . This programme also includes sponsorship for the WIB conference.	Economic Development	£6,200	2
Enterprise and Employability support for underrepresented groups – Belfast City Council programme of support to enable underrepresented groups (including females) to overcome the barriers to starting a business or accessing employment opportunities.	Economic Development	£90,000	2

WOMEN IN THE CITY			
-to ensure that the needs of women across the city are identified and used to influence and impact upon the regeneration of the city including social infrastructure design and community facilities provision			
As part of the ongoing baseline audit of all Council assets determine if Council assets are 'fit for purpose' in terms of the needs of all genders and that gender needs are looked at as part of the development of any new council asset	Property and Project Department C&NS Place & Economy Dept	Staff resources Potential cost if additional works required	2
As part of the ongoing area working /place shaping work and the Physical Investment Programme look at opportunities of how the needs of women can be better met across the city	Property & Projects Department Place and Economy C&NS A Strategic Hub External stakeholders	Staff resources Potential associated costs for GAP 19/20 & 21/22	2
Work with City Partners on achievement of Safe City status and retain ' platinum level' status	BCC ONUS External partners	£2000	2

TOTAL APPROXIMATE COSTS - £ 40,500k for year 2 (excluding ED funded initiatives)

LGBT+ Action Plan 2019-2020

Theme - Training and Development				
Outcomes	Actions required	Timing	Lead	Indicative costs
Increased awareness of LGBT+ bias	Source and deliver awareness training	2019-20	HR/ Network Chair	£700 total for 2 sessions
LGBT employees feel comfortable to be their whole selves Line managers understand key issues and their responsibilities	Review diversity training to ensure LGBT+ issues covered	2019-20	HR	Staff Resource

Better mental health	Source and deliver the Mental Health First Aider course for up to 10 network members	2019-20	HR	£1000
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Theme – Promoting positive attitudes				
Outcomes	Actions required	Timing	Lead	Indicative costs
All relevant policies are inclusive and use gender neutral language where possible Clear processes in place for staff to raise issues around discrimination/bullying/harassment based on gender and sexual orientation	Review staff policies.	2019-20	HR	Staff Resource
Guidance available for trans employees and their managers and for staff delivering services to the trans community	Develop Transgender policy guidance	2019-20	HR	Staff Resource

Theme – Promotion and ensure visibility of Network including senior champions				
Outcomes	Actions required	Timing	Lead	Indicative costs
Increased awareness of and participation in network	Promote via Interlink/ Email	2019-20	Network Chair	Staff Resource/ Comms
Increased awareness about staff network and senior support	Articles profiling senior champion and allies	2019-20	Chair / Network	Staff Resource/ Comms
	Source promotional material	2019-20	Network	£1000 Staff Resource/ Comms

Confirmed network identity	Agree name for network and promote as appropriate	2019-20	Network	
Potential applicants aware BCC is an employer that values and supports equality and diversity	Ensure relevant info on external website, job info to potential applicants, press releases etc.)	2019-20	HR MarComms Staff network	

Theme – Community Engagement				
Outcomes	Actions required	Timing	Lead	Indicative costs
Bigger and better participation in Pride and more visibility of BCC support for LGBT+ community Visible support for LGBT Community	Participate in Pride	2019-20	Network	£2500
	Build participation with network members and staff	2019-20	Network	Staff Resource
Increased awareness of issues faced by Trans community and awareness of need for remembrance	Hold annual Transgender Day of Remembrance event	2019-20	Network/ HR	£800
Theme – Social Networking				
Outcomes	Actions required	Timing	Lead	Indicative costs
Improved visibility, learning and positive outcomes	Facilitate an event between NI Stonewall organisations	2019-20	Network	£800

Theme – Employee Lifecycle / Organisational Analysis				
Outcomes	Actions required	Timing	Lead	Indicative costs
Feedback from staff re LGBT issues	Circulate Stonewall survey online for at least 4 weeks	2019-20	HR /Marketing and Comms	Staff Resource/ Comms
Position in national benchmarking exercise	Membership of Diversity Champions Programme and participation in Stonewall Equality Index	2019-20	HR and Staff network	£2500
Areas for improvement identified	Consider diversity survey results to identify improvements that are need going forward	2019-20	HR	Staff Resource/ Comms
Ensuring comprehensive info on staff is available and up to date.	Carry out voluntary staff monitoring exercise	2019-20	HR	Staff Resource
	Update application monitoring forms	2019-20	HR	Staff resource

Theme – Inclusive Workplace				
Outcomes	Actions required	Timing	Lead	Indicative costs
Gender neutral facilities for staff	Consider feasibility of gender neutral toilet in City Hall and city centre offices.	2019/20	HR/ Facilities Mgt	Corporate Maintenance Budget approval if work necessary
			Total	£9300

Operational Issues

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

The Committee approved the recommendations made in respect of applications received up to 6th August, 2019, as set out hereunder:

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
2019 EVENTS						
Equality Commission	25 September 2019	Launch of Programme for people with disabilities Showcasing the support on offer to assist them to participate in public life. Numbers attending 30	C	Yes - £115	No hospitality	<i>Approved by Delegated Author</i> Approve Charge £115 No Hospitality
World Mycotoxin Forum (WMF)	13 October 2019	Welcome Reception Welcome reception as part of 3 day conference taking place at ICC Belfast and Titanic Belfast. Numbers attending – 250	A & B	No <i>£300 waived due to links w Visit Belfast</i>	Yes, Wine Reception <i>(linked to Visit Belfast)</i>	Approve No Charge Wine Reception
BDO	7 November 2019 or 6 December 2019	30th Anniversary Celebration Drinks reception to celebrate the 30 th anniversary of BDO' work in Belfast. Numbers attending – 250 – 500	C	Yes - £825 (commercial)	Yes, Wine reception as 30 th anniversary	Approve Charge £825 Wine Reception

2020 EVENTS						
Ciste Infheistiochta Gaeilge	14 March 2020	<p>10th Anniversary Celebration Drinks reception and dinner to celebrate 10 years work across Northern Ireland, including partnerships with Belfast City Council.</p> <p>Numbers attending – 350-400</p>	C & D	No (Charity)	Yes, Wine reception as <i>10th anniversary</i>	Approve No Charge Wine Reception
The National Deaf Children's Society	24 March 2020	<p>Young Authors and Artists Prize Day 2020 Prize-giving ceremony to celebrate artistic achievements of deaf children and young people across Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Numbers attending – 160</p>	C & D	No (Charity)	Yes, Tea Coffee and Biscuits	Approve No Charge Tea and Coffee Reception
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust	27 March 2020	<p>2020 Year of the Nurse and Midwife – Celebration Event Celebration event to recognise achievements of nurses and midwives working in Belfast and showcase their skills.</p> <p>Numbers attending – 250 - 500</p>	C	Yes, £300	No, government organisation	Approve Charge £300 No hospitality

Young Enterprise N	2 April 2020	<p>YEA NI Awards 2020 Drinks reception, dinner and Awards Ceremony to celebrate the achievements of people across NI who completed YE Programmes.</p> <p>Numbers attending 350</p>	Yes A & B	No (Charity)	Yes, Wine Reception	Approve No charge Wine Reception
Leonard Cheshire	22 April 2020	<p>ARBI Launch Celebration of a new services offering specialist support to people in NI with alcohol related brain injury</p> <p>Numbers attending –100</p>	C& D	No (Charity)	Yes, Tea, Coffee Biscuits	Approve No charge Tea and coffee reception
Queen's University, Belfast	29 April 2020	<p>Global Agent Fair Trip – Dinner with drinks reception to promote Belfast as an International study choice.</p> <p>Numbers attending – 100</p>	A & B	No (Charity)	No – government body	Approve No Charge No Hospitality
Odyssey International	8 May 2020	<p>Welcome to Ireland Dinner for R+V Versicherung. Destination showcase event for German Insurance Company Dinner and entertainment for incentive showcase of Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Numbers attending – 250</p>	A & B	Yes, £825 (commercial)	No	Approve Charge £825 No hospitality

SCONUL	11 June 2020	Conference Dinner – Welcome reception and dinner as part of 3 day conference taking place in Belfast. Numbers attending – 150	A & B	No <i>£300 waived due to links with Visit Belfast</i>	Yes, Wine Reception <i>(linked to Visit Belfast)</i>	Approve No Charge Wine Reception
British Association of Forensic Medicine	26 June 2020	Summer meeting BAFM – Conference dinner as part of 3 day conference taking place in Titanic Belfast. Numbers attending – 100	A & B	No <i>£300 waived due to links with Visit Belfast</i>	Yes, Wine Reception <i>(linked to Visit Belfast)</i>	Approve No Charge Wine Reception

Minutes of Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum of 15th August, 2019.

Minutes of Active Belfast Limited Board

The Committee noted the minutes of the meeting of the Active Belfast Ltd. Board of 5th August, 2019.

Minutes of Working Group on the Climate Crisis

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Working Group on the Climate Crisis of 12th August, 2019.

Request for the Use of the City Hall – Chinese Cultural Event

The Committee was informed that a request had been received for the use of the City Hall grounds on the afternoon of Friday, 27th September to host a Chinese Cultural event. The event, which would form part of the China in Northern Ireland Programme 2019/20, would attract between 300 and 500 people and would be in keeping with the Council's obligations in terms of good relations. The organisers had requested also the use of some rooms within the City Hall to provide a reception for VIP guests, however, only the Committee Rooms were available. It was pointed out that there would be only minimal costs to the Council and that those would be met by the International/European Unit.

The Committee granted the use of the City Hall grounds and the Committee Rooms for the aforementioned event.

Issues Raised in Advance by Members

Abortion Imagery

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor Groogan proposed the following:

"This Council notes the ambition set out in the Belfast Agenda that Belfast will be a city that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all. The Council agrees that the public display of graphic abortion imagery in our City centre conflicts with this ambition due to the distress that it can cause to people who have suffered miscarriage and undertakes to investigate whether the display of such signs can be regulated lawfully, either by the Council or by another body, to ensure that those who have suffered miscarriages can continue to use and enjoy our City centre without fear of being re-traumatised."

The Committee agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting addressing the issues raised within the motion.

Chairperson