

Public Document Pack

BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

SUMMONS TO ATTEND THE MONTHLY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

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

Notice is hereby given that the monthly meeting of the Council will be held remotely via Microsoft Teams on Monday, 2nd November, 2020 at 6.00 pm, for the transaction of the following business:

1. Summons
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Minutes of the Council (Pages 1 - 12)
5. Official Announcements
6. Requests to Address the Council

Three requests have been received to address the Council in relation to Motions which will be considered later on the agenda:

The first is from Ms Chelsea Lavery regarding the motion on a Mental Health Awareness and Support Campaign;

The second is from Ms Cathy Austin in relation to the motion on Implementation of Care Partner Arrangements; and

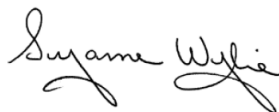
The third is from Ms Marnie Holborrow, Campaign All-IreNHS, regarding the motion on the Campaign for All-Ireland Health Service

7. Minutes
 - a) Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (Pages 13 - 60)
 - b) People and Communities Committee (Pages 61 - 94)
 - c) City Growth and Regeneration Committee (Pages 95 - 120)
 - d) Licensing Committee (Pages 121 - 130)
 - e) Planning Committee (Pages 131 - 154)
 - f) Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee (Pages 155 - 158)
 - g) Brexit Committee (Pages 159 - 162)

8. Motions

- a) Nobel Peace Prize -Henry Reeve Medical Brigade (Pages 163 - 164)
- b) Implementation of Care Partner arrangements in Nursing and Care homes (Pages 165 - 166)
- c) Access to Maternity Wards for Birthing Partners (Pages 167 - 168)
- d) Closure of Ulster Bank (Pages 169 - 170)
- e) Campaign for All-Ireland Health Service (Pages 171 - 172)
- f) Sealing of the Records of Mother and Baby Homes (Pages 173 - 174)
- g) Clean Air Strategy (Pages 175 - 176)
- h) Action on Avoidable Winter Deaths (Pages 177 - 178)
- i) Mental Health Awareness and Support Campaign (Pages 179 - 180)
- j) Secured Serviced City Centre Civic Bicycle Parking Facilities (Pages 181 - 182)
- k) Installation of additional Parklets on arterial routes and in neighbourhood areas (Pages 183 - 184)
- l) Belfast Leisure Centres - Proposed Redundancies (Pages 185 - 186)
- m) Support for Young People and Students (Pages 187 - 188)
- n) Belfast City Council Cycling Champion (Pages 189 - 190)
- o) Belfast Bikes - Pilot Scheme to use Rolloe (Pages 191 - 192)

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



Chief Executive

Please note:

This Council meeting is being organised to ensure it is in accordance with Public Health Agency guidance.

The meeting is being held remotely via Microsoft Teams, and can be viewed by the Public via the Council's website.

Council

MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held Remotely via Microsoft Teams on Thursday, 1st October, 2020
at 6.00 p.m., pursuant to notice.

Members present: The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor
(Alderman McCoubrey) (Chairperson);
The High Sheriff (Councillor Verner);
Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Haire, Kingston,
Rodgers and Sandford; and
Councillors Baker, Beattie, Black, Bradley, Brooks,
Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Matt Collins,
Michael Collins, Corr, De Faoite, Donnelly, Ferguson,
Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Groogan, Groves, Hanvey,
Heading, Howard, Hussey, Hutchinson, M. Kelly,
T. Kelly, Kyle, Long, Lyons, Magee, Magennis,
Maskey, McAllister, McAteer, McCullough,
McDonough-Brown, McKeown, McLaughlin,
McMullan, McReynolds, Mulholland, Murphy,
Newton, Nicholl, O'Hara, Pankhurst, Smyth, Spratt,
Walsh and Whyte.

Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Whyte declared an interest in respect of the item contained within the minutes of the People and Communities Committee meeting of 8th September, under the heading "Belfast Healthy Cities - Contract Extension and Phase VII Application", in that a family member was employed by Belfast Healthy Cities, but was not required to leave the meeting as the item was not raised.

Councillor McDonough-Brown declared an interest in relation to the motion on Funding for the Arts and Creative Industries, in that his mother was the Chief Executive of the Arts Council for Northern Ireland, and left the meeting whilst the motion was being discussed.

Councillor Mulholland referred to the fact that she would, later in the meeting, be proposing a motion on Funding for the Arts and Creative Industries. She explained that she had been advised by the Town Solicitor that her role as a Youth Engagement Manager with the Oh Yeah Music Centre did not conflict with the content of the motion and, therefore, there was no requirement for her to declare an interest.

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Councillor Long pointed out that his wife was the Assembly's Justice Minister and that, should any matters of a pecuniary nature be raised which fell within the remit of the Department of Justice, he would leave the meeting. However, as no matters were raised, he was not required to do so.

The following Members declared an interest in relation to the motion on a Pay Increase for Health Workers and left the meeting whilst the motion was being discussed:

Alderman Copeland – a family member is employed by the NHS;

Councillor Carson – a family member is employed by the NHS;

Councillor Corr – a family member is employed by the NHS;

Councillor Flynn – a relative is employed by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust;

Councillor Garrett – a family member is employed by the NHS;

Councillor Groves – works in a medical practice;

Councillor Heading – a relative is employed by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust;

Councillor Kyle – a relative is employed by the NHS;

Councillor Long – is employed by the NHS;

Councillor McKeown – is employed by the Public Health Agency;

Councillor McMullan – a family member is employed by the NHS; and

Councillor Smyth – is employed by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

The Council noted that, at its meeting on 1st September, Councillor McKeown had declared an interest in relation to the motion on Needle Exchange Facilities, on the basis that he was employed by the Public Health Agency, and had left the meeting for the duration of the discussion.

Minutes of the Council

Moved by the Lord Mayor (Alderman McCoubrey),
Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the monthly meeting of the Council of 1st September be taken as read and signed as correct.

**Meeting of Council,
Thursday, 1st October, 2020**

Official Announcements

The Lord Mayor referred to the recent death of Mr. David Cook, a former Lord Mayor of Belfast, and confirmed that he had, on behalf of the Council, forwarded a letter to Mr. Cook's family expressing his deepest condolences.

Councillors Hutchinson, Long and Whyte highlighted the significant contribution which Mr. Cook had made over the course of his political career.

Change of Membership on Committees/Outside Bodies

The Chief Executive informed the Council that notification has been received from the following Political Parties of proposed changes to Committees and Outside Bodies:

Alliance Party

- Councillor Nicholl to replace Councillor McReynolds on the Licensing Committee;
- Councillor McReynolds to replace Councillor Howard on the Eastside Partnership; and
- Councillor Nicholl to replace Councillor McDonough-Brown on the Forward South Partnership Board.

DUP

- Councillor Spratt to replace Councillor Pankhurst on the Brexit Committee; and
- Councillor Pankhurst to replace Councillor Spratt on the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

The Council approved the changes.

Minutes

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Moved by Councillor Black,
Seconded by Councillor Carson,

That the Minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 18th September, 2020, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

**Meeting of Council,
Thursday, 1st October, 2020**

Amendment

Motion – National Armed Forces Day 2022

Moved by Councillor Pankhurst,
Seconded by Alderman Kingston,

That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 18th September, under the heading “Motion – National Armed Forces Day 2022”, be rejected and accordingly the Council agrees to approve the motion to bid to host Armed Forces Day 2022, with a report on how this would be facilitated, resourced and managed to be brought back to the Committee.

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

<u>For 29</u>	<u>Against 30</u>
The Lord Mayor (Alderman McCoubrey); The High Sheriff (Councillor Verner); Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Haire, Kingston, Rodgers and Sandford; and Councillors Brooks, Bunting, Cobain, Hanvey, Howard, Hussey, Hutchinson, M. Kelly, T. Kelly, Kyle, Long, McAllister, McCullough, McDonough-Brown, McMullan, McReynolds, Mulholland, Newton, Nicholl, Pankhurst and Spratt.	Councillors Baker, Beattie, Black, Bradley, Canavan, Carson, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Corr, De Faoite, Donnelly, Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Gormley, Groogan, Groves, Heading, Lyons, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAteer, McKeown, McLaughlin, Murphy, O’Hara, Smyth, Walsh and Whyte.

Amendment

Fleet Replacement Programme – Lord Mayor’s Car

Moved by Alderman Kingston,
Seconded by Alderman Dorrian,

That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 18th September, under the heading “Fleet Replacement Programme – Lord Mayor’s Car”, be rejected and accordingly the Council agrees that the Audi E-Tron be selected as the replacement vehicle for the Lord Mayor, as recommended within the Committee report.

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

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<u>For 33</u>	<u>Against 26</u>
The Lord Mayor (Alderman McCoubrey); The High Sheriff (Councillor Verner); Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Haire, Kingston, Rodgers and Sandford; and Councillors Brooks, Bunting, Cobain, Flynn, Groogan, Hanvey, Howard, Hussey, Hutchinson, M. Kelly, T. Kelly, Kyle, Long, McAllister, McCullough, McDonough-Brown, McMullan, McReynolds, Mulholland, Newton, Nicholl, O'Hara, Pankhurst, Smyth and Spratt.	Councillors Baker, Beattie, Black, Bradley, Canavan, Carson, Matt Collins, Michael Collins, Corr, De Faoite, Donnelly, Ferguson, Garrett, Gormley, Groves, Heading, Lyons, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAteer, McKeown, McLaughlin, Murphy, Walsh and Whyte.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendment, the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 18th September, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, were approved and adopted.

People and Communities Committee

Moved by Councillor Baker,
Seconded by Alderman Rodgers,

That the Minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 8th September, 2020 be approved and adopted.

Amendment

Alleygating Programme

Moved by Councillor McKeown,
Seconded by Councillor De Faoite,

That the decision of the People and Communities Committee of 8th September, under the heading "Alleygating Programme", be rejected and accordingly the Council agrees that officers identify potential funding streams for the specific model outlined in the original motion to Council and report back by the end of the calendar year on this and on potential mechanisms for the identification of sites, with a view to enabling the City to deliver green, sustainable, protected alleys for local communities, as part of the recovery.

On a recorded vote, twelve Members voted for the amendment and forty-four against, with two "no votes", and it was declared lost.

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<u>For 12</u>	<u>Against 44</u>	<u>No Vote 2</u>
Councillors Matt Collins, Michael Collins, De Faoite, Ferguson, Flynn, Groogan, Heading, Lyons, McKeown, O'Hara, Smyth and Whyte.	The Lord Mayor (Alderman McCoubrey); The High Sheriff (Councillor Verner); Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian, Haire, Kingston, Rodgers and Sandford; and Councillors Baker, Beattie, Black, Bradley, Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Corr, Donnelly, Garrett, Gormley, Groves, Hanvey, Howard, Hussey, M. Kelly, T. Kelly, Long, Magee, Magennis, Maskey, McAllister, McAteer, McCullough, McDonough-Brown, McLaughlin, McMullan, Mulholland, Murphy, Newton, Nicholl, Pankhurst, Spratt and Walsh.	Councillors Hutchinson and Kyle.

Gates at Cherryvale Park

In response to a query from Councillor Long, the Chief Executive confirmed that the consultation on the provision of a second access point to Cherryvale Park would be extended until 1st November.

Adoption of Minutes

The minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 8th September were thereupon approved and adopted.

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Moved by Councillor Brooks,
Seconded by Alderman Dorrian,

That the Minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 9th September, 2020 be approved and adopted.

EuroPride Bid (Belfast Pride)

Amendment 1

Moved by Councillor Maskey,
Seconded by Councillor Beattie,

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That the decision of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 9th September, under the heading “EuroPride Bid (Belfast Pride)”, be amended to provide that the Council agrees also to work with Belfast Pride to build capacity.

The Council agreed to vote on the amendment, when twenty-one Members voted for and thirty-seven Members against and it was declared lost.

Amendment 2

Moved by Councillor O’Hara,
Seconded by Councillor De Faoite,

That the decision of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 9th September, under the heading “EuroPride Bid (Belfast Pride)”, be rejected and accordingly the Council agrees to use the Cultural Strategy’s sector development programme to provide support to Belfast Pride and LGBTQ sector organisations to review governance, address outstanding issues and ensure that the organisation is best placed to deliver projects of significant scale such as the EuroPride 2023 bid.

The Council agreed to vote on the amendment, when forty Members voted for and eighteen against and it was declared carried.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendment, the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 9th September were approved and adopted.

Licensing Committee

Moved by Councillor Donnelly,
Seconded by Councillor Magennis and

Resolved - That the Minutes of the proceedings of the Licensing Committee of 16th September, 2020, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

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Planning Committee

Moved by Councillor Hussey,
Seconded by Councillor T. Kelly and

Resolved - That the Minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee of 2nd and 15th September, 2020, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Brexit Committee

Moved by Councillor Flynn,
Seconded by Councillor T. Kelly,

That the Minutes of the proceedings of the Brexit Committee of 10th September, 2020 be approved and adopted.

Amendment

UK Government Commitment to the NI Protocol

Moved by Councillor McLaughlin,
Seconded by Councillor Flynn,

That the decision of the Brexit Committee of 10th September, under the heading "UK Government Commitment to the NI Protocol", be amended to provide that the Council writes also to Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, expressing its support for the legal action being undertaken by the European Commission against the UK Government over its intention to breach its obligations under the Brexit Withdrawal Agreement by proceeding with the Internal Market Bill.

The Council agreed to vote on the amendment, when thirty-nine Members voted for and nineteen against and it was declared carried.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendment, the minutes of the proceedings of the Brexit Committee of 10th September were approved and adopted.

Motions

**Moratorium on Licences for Fracking and
Exploration and Extraction of Fossil Fuels**

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor Baker proposed:

"This Council recognises that we are in a climate emergency and, being aware of the environmental damage caused by fracking and all forms of exploration and extraction of fossil fuels, calls on the Minister for the

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Economy to place an immediate moratorium on all licences and further calls on the Minister for Infrastructure to urgently implement changes to deny permitted development rights to any company seeking to prospect for oil and or/gas.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Garrett.

The proposer acceded to a request from Councillor Smyth to amend the motion to reads as follows:

“This Council recognises that we are in a climate emergency and, being aware of the environmental and public health damage caused by fracking and the exploration and extraction of hydrocarbons, agrees to write to the Minister for the Economy and to the Minister for Infrastructure to establish their respective intentions regarding (i) the issuing of exploratory licences and (ii) the removal of Permitted Development Rights for hydrocarbon exploration which are currently provided for under Part 16 of the Planning Order (Northern Ireland) 2015.

The Council also calls upon the Northern Ireland Executive to place an immediate moratorium on all petroleum licensing and deny permitted development rights to any company seeking to prospect for oil and or/gas.”

The proposer acceded also to a request from Councillor Ferguson to replace the word “moratorium” with the word “ban” in the final paragraph of the motion.

After discussion, the motion, as amended, was put to the Council and passed as follows:

“This Council recognises that we are in a climate emergency and, being aware of the environmental and public health damage caused by fracking and the exploration and extraction of hydrocarbons, agrees to write to the Minister for the Economy and to the Minister for Infrastructure to establish their respective intentions regarding (i) the issuing of exploratory licences and (ii) the removal of Permitted Development Rights for hydrocarbon exploration which are currently provided for under Part 16 of the Planning Order (Northern Ireland) 2015.

The Council also calls upon the Northern Ireland Executive to place an immediate ban on all petroleum licensing and deny permitted development rights to any company seeking to prospect for oil and or/gas.”

Funding for the Arts and Creative Industries

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor Mulholland proposed:

“This Council acknowledges the contribution of those employed in the Arts, Events and Creative Industries. It understands the impact that lockdown has had on these sectors; on theatres, museums, live music venues,

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comedy clubs, freelancers and individual artists and all other creative outlets that have been in the dark since March, with most having no finite indication of when their activities can recommence safely.

The Council welcomes the allocation of £29million by the Northern Ireland Executive to the Arts, Culture and Heritage sectors, as part of a £1.57 billion investment from the UK Government, purposefully designed to protect these world class industries across the UK.

The Council agrees to write to the Communities Minister, Carál Ní Chuilín, in support of the direct allocation of funds to those within these industries who have been most impacted. The Council agrees also to write to the Finance Minister, Conor Murphy, to encourage any further measures that can be taken to support and protect the creative sectors going forward.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Smyth.

After discussion, the motion was put to the meeting and passed.

Job Retention Scheme

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor Heading proposed:

“This Council notes that the end of the Job Retention Scheme, also known as the Job Furlough Scheme, will take place on 31st October, 2020.

The Council notes that this Government scheme has kept many people in employment and has eased the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on many businesses and services.

The Council further notes that the loss of this scheme and its proposed replacement will have a detrimental effect on local demand and supply of goods and services in Belfast and the wider economy.

The Council agrees, therefore, to write to the Minister for the Economy to ask that she investigate as a matter of urgency how to retain a Job Retention Scheme, including the earmarking of funds to minimise the impact of job losses in retail, hospitality and manufacturing, including the aviation industry.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Lyons.

The proposer agreed, at the request of Councillor Gormley, to amend his motion to read as follows:

“This Council notes that the end of the Job Retention Scheme, also known as the Job Furlough Scheme, will take place on 31st October, 2020. The Council also notes the ending of the existing Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) on the same date.

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The Council notes that these Government schemes have kept many people in employment and have eased the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on many businesses and services.

The Council further notes the proposed replacement of these two schemes with a Jobs Support Scheme and an extended SEISS respectively. Both of these new schemes will run for six months from November 1st. These new schemes provide significantly less financial support than the original schemes and, as such, will have a detrimental effect on local demand and supply of goods and services in Belfast and the wider economy.

The Council agrees, therefore, to write to the Minister for the Economy to ask that she investigate as a matter of urgency how to retain a Job Retention Scheme and a Self-Employment Income Support Scheme at pre-October 31st levels, including the earmarking of funds to minimise the impact of job losses in retail, hospitality and manufacturing, including the aviation industry.”

After discussion, the motion, as amended, was put to the Council and passed.

Pay Increase for Health Workers

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor Michael Collins proposed:

“This Council greatly appreciates and values the role of health workers for their bravery and contribution to work throughout the Covid crisis. The Council also recognises that many health workers have been underpaid for far too long and that this needs challenged immediately.

To this end, the Council gives its full support to the demand of health care workers and their trade unions for an immediate pay increase of between £2,000 and 15%.

The Council supports a significant pay increase for all frontline and essential workers.

The Council will invite local representatives of health and social care trade unions to speak about their pay, staffing demands and the challenges they face working in the health service.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Ferguson.

After discussion, the motion was put to the meeting and passed.

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Racism Free Zone

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor Canavan proposed:

“This Council recognises that racism is a scourge across this society. The Council further recognises the positive contribution made to society by those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds; deplores the discrimination which Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities regularly face; condemns racism in all its forms; and calls on the Council to work together with the sector, local BAME representative groups, schools and colleges, private businesses and public enterprises to ensure that this Council area becomes a racism free zone.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Garrett.

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

**Review of Permission to Belfast City Airport to
enter Victoria Park for the Management of Un-hatched
Eggs under Licence from the NIEA**

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor Flynn proposed:

“This Council notes that the decision to grant Belfast City Airport permission to enter Victoria Park and carry out the management of the bird population, such as the pricking and oiling of un-hatched eggs, has significantly reduced the greylag goose population in the park.

The Council further notes that, as the decision to grant permission for this activity was taken a number of years ago, technology and practices pertaining to managing bird populations in the vicinity of an aerodrome may have moved on.

As such, the Council requests officers to carry out a review of this decision, engage with relevant environmental and wildlife organisations and produce a report for Members to consider options before the next confirmation of the permission is granted to the airport to carry out this activity in Victoria Park.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor M. Kelly.

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

Chairperson

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 23rd October, 2020

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Black (Chairperson);
Aldermen Dorrian, Haire, Kingston and Sandford;
Councillors Beattie, Bunting, Carson, Garrett,
Groogan, Heading, Long, Lyons, McAllister,
McDonough-Brown, McLaughlin, McReynolds,
Murphy, Pankhurst and Walsh.

Also attended: Councillors Gormley and M. Kelly.

In attendance: Mrs. S. Wylie, Chief Executive;
Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources;
Mr. J. Walsh, City Solicitor;
Mrs. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 18th September, omitting those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee, 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 October.

Declarations of Interest

Alderman Kingston declared an interest in relation to item 8e – Request for the use of the Cenotaph for City of Belfast Grand Black Chapter Service, on the basis that he was a member of the City of Belfast Grand Black Chapter and left the meeting whilst the report was being considered.

Restricted Items

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

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the Press and public from the meeting during discussion of these items as, due to the nature of the items, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as

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described in Section 42(4) and Section 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Restricted Items

Medium Term Financial Plan and Efficiency Programme

The Director of Finance and Resources drew the Committee's attention to a report which provided an update on the assessment of the key financial factors which would influence the development of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan for 2021/22 - 2023/24 and the rate setting process for 2021/22, together with an overview of the priorities and work in progress to establish the 2021/22 – 2023/24 Efficiency Programme.

The report outlined the six key elements involved in the annual setting of the District Rate and provided details of the main business as usual cost pressures, growth priorities, the capital finance budget, the Efficiency Programme, the Estimated Penny Product, external income and the cost and impact of Covid-19 to the Council. Further analysis was required to assess the effect of Covid-19 on income levels for the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Halls and GLL, in terms of their current management fees.

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

Finance Update

The Director of Finance and Resources provided the Committee with an update on the revised financial position which it had received at its meeting on 18th September, together with details of a number of recovery proposals which had been approved as part of the Operational and Organisation Recovery Strategy and of the Northern Ireland Executive's additional financial support package for councils.

He referred to the Council's current staffing arrangements and recommended that, in terms of casual workers, the Committee adopt one the following options:

1. to apply the Council's terms of engagement, with no contractual obligation either on the Council to offer work or on the casual worker to accept work, meaning that the Council has a contractual obligation to pay casual workers only for the work undertaken; or
2. to make payments from 1st November, 2020 to 31st March, 2021 to those casual workers who would have been offered casual shifts which may now be reduced in number or cancelled due to Covid-19, with the payments to be calculated on the basis of their average earnings over the same period in the previous year.

The Director then highlighted the significant reduction in income which had been experienced by GLL as a result of Covid-19 and outlined the measures which it was putting in place to protect staff and maintain a sustainable business model. In terms of casual staff, GLL would apply its terms of engagement, which meant that there was no contractual obligation either on it to offer work or on a worker to accept work. It had, therefore, a contractual obligation to pay them only for the work which they undertook.

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Finally, he provided details of the financial impact of Covid-19 upon the Belfast Waterfront and the Ulster Halls, neither of which had operated during the current financial year. He pointed out that the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Board had also applied its terms of engagement to its casual staff, with there being no contractual obligation either on it to offer work or on the worker to accept work. It had a contractual obligation to pay its casual staff only for the work which they undertook.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to adopt Option 2, as set out above and agreed also that GLL be requested to provide for the meeting of the Active Belfast Limited Board on 9th November information on the cost and other implications of applying that option to its casual workers.

**Update on the Operational Recovery
of Council Services**

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided an updated position in relation to the recovery of services, together with the planned response and ongoing management of the second wave of Covid-19 and its potential impact upon the delivery of Council services this autumn.

The Committee agreed, in order to allow officers to work on maintaining recovery as a priority, that Working Groups would continue to be arranged only when there was an urgent matter to be considered and that Area Working Groups would meet on a quarterly basis, unless an urgent issue arose in relation to funding.

**Customer Focus Programme –
Update on Customer Hub Formation**

The Committee was reminded that a key element of the Customer Focus Programme involved the establishment of a Customer Hub which would, in time, deal with customer contact for all Departments and services across all communication/media channels.

The Director of Finance and Resources confirmed that that work was ongoing and reviewed the proposed structure for the Hub, the timeline for its implementation and the consultation process with the Trades Union and staff. Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee approve:

- i. the proposed staffing structure for the Customer Hub, together with the summary recommendations, as set out within the report; and
- ii. the implementation of the staffing structure, including the application of the relevant staff transfer processes and recruitment of required posts.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Update on Marketing and Communications Service

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided an update on the work of the Marketing and Communications Service, including the contribution made by the Service to the delivery of the Belfast Agenda through its work programme and its plans to focus on

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more Ward/DEA led campaigns in response to Covid-19 and inviting Members to support its social media channels to reinforce its messages around the pandemic.

**Decade of Centenaries Programme –
November 2020 to March 2022**

The Committee:

- i. approved the list of events accompanying the report, which had been added to the 1918 - 1922 Decade of Centenaries programme in response to the motion on the Centenary of the Foundation of Northern Ireland, as adopted by the Committee on 23rd August, 2019, and
- ii. approved the submission of an application to the Shared History Fund, for funding to deliver some elements of the programme.

Update on Appraisal of Inner City Kerbside Sort

The Committee noted that the report which was due to be submitted to this meeting on the outcome of the options appraisal on arrangements for future kerbside sort collections in inner City areas would now be presented in November.

Draft Strategic Drainage Infrastructure Plan for Belfast

The Chief Executive reminded the Committee that Belfast's draft Resilience Strategy had identified sustainable drainage and wastewater infrastructure as a critical priority for the City's long-term resilience.

She referred to the draft Strategic Drainage Infrastructure Plan for Belfast, which had been formulated by the multi-agency Living With Water Programme Board and approved by the Northern Ireland Executive, and pointed out that representatives of the Living With Water Programme were in attendance to review the Living With Water in Belfast consultation document which would inform the overall Plan.

Accordingly, Mr. S. Richardson and Mr. S. Wightman, the Director and Manager of the Living With Water Programme, respectively were welcomed to the meeting.

The representatives explained that the Strategic Drainage Infrastructure Plan for Belfast had been drafted in the context of protecting against flooding, enhancing the environment and growing the economy. They provided an overview of the existing infrastructure and current problems being faced across the City, outlined the various solutions which were being proposed and provided details of the main outputs which had been identified. They then reviewed the work programme, the timeline for its implementation and the overall funding requirements and concluded by pointing out that Members would receive further briefings as the Plan progressed.

Messrs. Richardson and Wightman were thanked by the Chairperson, following which the Committee noted the information which had been provided.

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Matters referred back from Council/Motions

Motion - Racism Free Zone

The Committee was reminded that, at the Council meeting on 1st October, the following motion on a Racism Free Zone had been proposed by Councillor Canavan and seconded by Councillor Garrett:

“This Council recognises that racism is a scourge across this society. The Council further recognises the positive contribution made to society by those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds; deplores the discrimination which Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities regularly face; condemns racism in all its forms; and calls on the Council to work together with the sector, local BAME representative groups, schools and colleges, private businesses and public enterprises to ensure that this Council area becomes a racism free zone.”

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

Councillor Canavan highlighted the need for Elected Members to work to eradicate racism across the City and, accordingly, urged the Committee to support her motion.

The Committee adopted the motion and agreed that a report on the issues raised therein be considered, in the first instance, by the Shared City Partnership.

**Installation of a Statue in Remembrance of Frederick Douglass –
Response from the Minister for Communities**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 31st July, it had agreed that a letter be forwarded to the Department for Communities requesting that it give consideration to erecting in Rosemary Street a statue in remembrance of Frederick Douglass, a slavery abolitionist.

The City Solicitor reported that the Minister for Communities had, within her response, indicated that she would be content for her Department to partner the Council in delivering the project. She had indicated also that, if the Council was willing to lead the project by establishing a working group, to include stakeholders such as the Arts Council for Northern Ireland, the Department for Communities and the Department for Infrastructure, her Department would be willing to provide part funding.

The Committee granted approval for the Council to establish and lead the working group tasked with delivering the project and agreed that it should also consider how the City's wider association with slavery during that period in history could be recognised.

**Motion: Public Transport/Parking for Health Workers,
Patients and Visitors – Responses from the Ministers for
Health and Infrastructure**

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 1st September, had passed the following motion on Public Transport/Parking for Health Workers, Patients and Visitors, which had been proposed by Councillor Ferguson and seconded by Councillor Matt Collins:

"This Council greatly values and appreciates the role of health workers, especially given their efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic and believes that proper investment in our health service is necessary to facilitate the incredible effort of health workers.

As such, the Council supports all healthcare workers to be paid a fair and living wage that compensates them appropriately for the critical work they do for all of us in society.

The Council also recognises the negative health inequalities created by air pollution across Belfast, primarily caused by transport emissions, and is supportive of initiatives to ensure that all healthcare workers and patients can avail of active and sustainable travel alternatives.

This Council will write to the Minister for Infrastructure and the Minister for Health:

- to support the extension of the provision of free public transport for all healthcare workers beyond this crisis period due to Covid 19;
- to support the extension of free or reduced cost public transport for those in receipt of PIP and/or Universal Credit;
- to support extensions of the rail and bus networks and active travel infrastructure to improve access to hospitals; and
- to ask for a review of the categories of acute conditions that currently can avail of free car parking to ensure access to those patients most in need.

The Council, as part of its strategic review of the Belfast Bikes scheme, will also explore how it can provide concessionary access for healthcare workers."

The Committee was informed that the Minister for Infrastructure had, within her response, outlined the measures which had been implemented in relation to providing free travel for healthcare workers and had confirmed that those would remain in place until further notice. She had highlighted also the concessionary fares which were already available.

The Health Minister had referred to the policy which had been introduced in 2012 in the Health and Social Care sector, which had set out the direction for car park management, including charging. The policy had set out also the criteria for free and concessionary parking for patients. He had referred also to the Hospital Travel Costs Scheme, which helped those people on low incomes or income-based benefits who may be entitled to reclaim car parking

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charges or other travel expenses for hospital treatment. The Minister had concluded by pointing out that he had no plans to review his Department's policy on car parking provision at this time.

The Committee noted the responses.

**Motion: Review of Housing Fitness Standard –
Response from the Minister for Communities**

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 1st September, had passed the following motion on a Review of Housing Fitness Standard, which had been proposed by Councillor Canavan and seconded by Councillor Magee:

“This Council welcomes the Communities Minister Carál Ní Chuilín’s ambitious programme aimed at addressing housing stress, providing housing solutions and supporting those in greatest need. This council recognises that housing faces many challenges but agrees that it should be a primary focus of government as it is so vital to building and sustaining communities and improving the health and wellbeing of our citizens.

The Council notes that the current housing fitness standard that is applied to private rented housing in this district is the statutory minimum physical standard which focuses on the most basic structural standards for human habitation, and applies to all tenures. It was last updated in 1992. This Council calls on the Department for Communities to carry out a review of the fitness standard, to include a review of sanctions on private landlords for failing to maintain properties, with a view to introducing legislation which offers greater protection to tenants.

Further to the above, Council calls on the Department of Communities to review and strengthen their own rules and regulations regarding the housing fitness standards of existing properties managed by the Housing Executive and various Housing Associations. This Council notes the poor conditions that some social housing tenants are living in and calls on the Minister to urgently address these conditions as a matter of priority.”

The City Solicitor reported that a response had since been received on behalf of the Minister for Communities which had stated that the Department was carrying out a comprehensive review of the role and regulation of the private rented sector, with a view to ensuring that the regulatory framework and supporting policy improved standards for both tenants and landlords. The Minister was currently considering the most appropriate way of implementing the findings of that review.

It had stated also that, in terms of the conditions in the social housing sector, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive had advised that its capital and revenue programmes were designed in such a way as to maintain properties to a decent standard and that maintenance programmes were ongoing.

The Committee noted the response.

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**Motion: Climate Change Act – Response from the
Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs**

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 1st September, had passed the following motion on a Climate Change Act, which had been proposed by Councillor Flynn and seconded by Councillor Groogan:

“This Council welcomes the environmental commitments in the New Decade New Approach Deal. This council is deeply concerned that the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs did not support an Assembly Motion to develop a Climate Change Act for Northern Ireland.

This Council notes that Northern Ireland has fallen behind other parts of the UK in progressing reduction of emissions. A Climate Change Act can help us realise the ambition of the Belfast Agenda to create an environmentally sustainable City. This Council calls on the Minister to immediately prioritise the development of a Climate Change Act with legally binding and ambitious sectoral emission-reduction targets and a just transition to protect jobs through upskilling in less carbon intensive sectors.”

The City Solicitor reported that the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs had, within his response, stated that he had written to the independent expert UK Climate Change Committee seeking clarification on what Northern Ireland’s equitable contribution to the UK’s net zero emissions target would be, in order to ensure that its greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets were credible and evidence-based.

The Minister had stated further that, unfortunately, the Committee was not in a position to respond to his request until after it had provided advice on the UK’s sixth carbon budget, which would be published in December, 2020. In the interim, his officials had provided him with proposals for an options appraisal for a Climate Change Bill in Northern Ireland. The Minister would consider those options along with the advice provided by the Climate Change Committee and would present his findings to the Northern Ireland Executive to agree a way forward.

During discussion, a Member welcomed the progress being made towards the introduction of a Climate Change Act. However, she pointed out that the latest Carbon Intensity Indicator report had confirmed that Northern Ireland’s share of UK emissions had increased and she stressed the need for that to be addressed as a matter of urgency. She requested, therefore, that the Committee agree to write again to the Minister seeking an update on the work which was being undertaken by his Department to address increasing carbon emission levels, including the mechanisms for monitoring, reporting and enforcement, the role of the Chief Inspector of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency in this work, and any assessment of carbon emissions which had been undertaken at a local level.

The Committee noted the response from the Minister and acceded to the Member’s request.

Motion - Support for Mental Health

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on existing and future work plans to challenge the taboo around mental health and suicide, in support of the issues highlighted in the Motion proposed by Councillor M. Kelly and seconded by Councillor Long at the Council meeting on 1st July, 2020.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 The committee is requested to note the content of the report.

3.0 Main Report

Council Motion

- 3.1 In recognition of the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on the current mental health crisis, Councillor Kelly proposed a motion to ensure continuing Council support to challenge the taboos of mental health and suicide and ensure people are aware of the signs and understand the questions to ask someone we are worried about and what help they can get. At its meeting in August, the Committee agreed that a report be prepared detailing how a programme of suicide awareness training for staff and elected members would be facilitated, resourced and managed.

Staff Training and Mental Health Champions

- 3.2 The Council has had in place a positive health and wellbeing training programme (including suicide awareness) in place for staff since 2012. It was developed in response to an initiative launched by the then Lord Mayor, to raise awareness of suicide in the city. Two specific training programmes were rolled out; Positive Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing and Stress Awareness Training for Managers, a programme specifically aimed at managers on how to recognise and manage stress related issues. Since 2012, 645 staff have received training on positive mental health and emotional wellbeing and 434 managers have been trained on stress awareness. The current Covid restrictions have prevented delivery of this programme since March however, Corporate HR, as part of its recovery process, is currently assessing how to deliver both training programmes remotely.
- 3.3 In addition, in 2017, as part of the our employee Health and Wellbeing Strategy, we commissioned Action Mental Health to deliver Mental Health First Aid training for staff. The Mental Health First Aid training mirrors the aims and principles of the certified

SafeTALK training and has similar outcomes in that it equips individuals to recognise the early warning signs of mental health problems; provide initial help and advice and guide a person towards appropriate sources of professional help.

- 3.4 To date, a total of 30 staff have been trained and are recognised mental health first aiders and four additional programmes are planned to be delivered remotely between November and March 2021. Further classroom based programmes to facilitate those staff who do not have access to a PC will be organised as soon as current restrictions allow. It is proposed, with their permission, that the names of those staff who have attended the Mental Health First Aider training programme will be displayed on staff noticeboards and on Interlink for staff to contact, as required.
- 3.5 The opportunity to undertake the online training and become recognised Mental Health First Aiders will be offered to elected members.
- 3.6 The general health and wellbeing programme is further supported by a dedicated employee counselling service, accessible to all employees, through the council's current employee counselling contract with Apeido Associates. Line managers can make referrals to this service or employees can also self-refer on a confidential basis.

The Mersey Care Trust Foundation video.

- 3.7 This short, free online course in Suicide Awareness which is currently used widely by NI Health and Social Care Trusts, will be made available to staff and Elected Members and staff will be encouraged to take time to participate in the training. Managers will be asked to set aside time for staff to do so.

Additional Support

- 3.8 Additional support and guidance is available on the staff intranet site with a section on health and wellbeing which is updated on a continuing basis with helpful information and signposting to further mental health information and resources.
- 3.9 The Local Government Staff Commission's, Health and Wellbeing Group, has recently launched a Mental Health Strategy for local government to assist councils to plan to address the mental health crisis through the provision of support for their staff. It will be used in conjunction with our own staff Health and Wellbeing Strategy to influence future work planning in this area.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.10 The Mental Health First Aid training will be funded by the Local Government Training Group as part of its annual funding provision. Any other costs associated with delivery of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy activity will be covered by the existing corporate Organisational Development budget.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.11 The recommendations in the report will assist the council to deliver on its Section 75 duties and comply with the requirements set out in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. In addition, it will help further the aims and priorities of the Council's Disability Action Plan and Equality Scheme."

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues

Update on Smart Belfast and Belfast Digital Innovation Partnership

The Committee considered the following report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 This paper presents a short impact report on the Smart Belfast work and the development of the Belfast Digital Innovation Partnership.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

1. note the attached Smart Belfast Outcomes and Impact report;
2. agree that the Council contribute £50,000 to the Belfast Digital Innovation Partnership's £300,000 co-investment budget;
3. agree a £20,000 contribution to the £650,000 EIT Digital project tracking the impact of public funding across the Belfast Fintech sector; and
4. note the development of the Digital Futures programme.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Smart Belfast Outcomes and Impact Report

An impact report, summarising the projects and initiatives supported by the Smart Belfast programme during its first three

years of operation, has been circulated to Members. Smart Belfast was set up by the Council in 2017 with the aim of harnessing digital innovation to solve major city challenges while also helping to grow a twenty-first century economy. Its challenge-led approach brings together businesses, our universities, government and citizens to co-create innovative solutions that improve city life.

3.2 Some of the key outputs from Smart Belfast include:

- Leveraged £10.2 million into the city
- Successfully delivered 47 digital projects
- Worked directly with over 200 SMEs and stakeholders
- Hosted over 30 events with 4,100 participants
- Built Northern Ireland's first free-to-use Internet of things network
- Successfully bid for two Horizon 2020 projects with a combined value of €1.2 million
- Won \$1 million to establish the Belfast Office for Resilience
- Led on the development of the £120 million digital bid to City Deal
- Supported four Collaborative Growth networks involving 16 Belfast SMEs
- Showcased the best of Belfast at international tech events in Barcelona, USA and China.

3.3 Tracking the Impact of Public Support for the Fintech Sector

Belfast's fintech sector has been one of the major success stories over the past decade, and a major source of well-paid, high skilled jobs. It is also a sector that has proven surprisingly resilient during the current Covid crisis, with a number of companies expanding their work force. The Fintech sector is likely to be a focus of support as Belfast ramps up its Digital Innovation ambition.

3.4 To support this approach, Smart Belfast is seeking to partner in a £650,000 project funded by EIT Digital to track the impact of public funds in the sector. Local SME Xpand are working with local industry, Belgian SME accelerator 'Start-It' KBC¹ and the city of Antwerp to develop a set of software tools to help connect businesses to finance, to develop KPIs to measure how SMEs are impacted by funding, and to create more efficient, lightweight mechanisms for public officials to track grant spend. The project is also seeking to utilise open banking technologies to reduce the bureaucracy associated with many economic development funds.

3.5 If Belfast commits £20,000 to the project, the Council and its partners get access to the expert learning and software tools being

¹ <https://startit.be>

developed by the project. This would then be used to deliver a three-month project involving the local Fintech sector. It would also represent the first building block for wider engagement across other sectors of the city's digital economy.

- 3.6 Members are asked to approve a £20,000 contribution to the EIT Digital project in tracking the impact of public funds (and thus receiving the benefits of the larger £650,000 project).

3.7 **Belfast Digital Innovation Partnership**

Learning from the success of Smart Belfast, the Council and its city partners are now developing even more ambitious plans focused on the potential of digital innovation to build an economy capable of competing in the twenty-first century.

- 3.8 A new Belfast Digital Innovation Partnership (BDIP), which includes the Council, Queen's University, Ulster University, Belfast Harbour, Invest NI, and Catalyst Inc, has developed a shared ambition which aims to accelerate sustainable and inclusive growth through innovation.

- 3.9 Working with the leadership team from Eindhoven, one of Europe's most successful innovative cities, BDIP partners have drafted an initial project portfolio that aims to attract international investment, support local cluster growth, support a digital skills agenda; contribute to the sustainable development of our city, and work with communities to ensure economic inclusion.

- 3.10 The initial focus, in this post Covid period, will be to engage with innovation companies and policy-makers, on our plans for the coming ten years, ensuring Belfast is recognised globally as the place to invest in digital innovation during recovery. Promotional concepts for the Belfast Smart District were shared with Members at the June 2020 committee meeting.

- 3.11 Prior to a planned public launch in November 2020, the BDIP partners agreed to co-invest £50k to support an operational budget that will begin to deliver on its ambitious pipeline of projects which include:

Innovation District - which covers a 400 acre geographical area of the city from the city centre around the new Ulster University campus up to Catalyst in Queen's Island, will foster a place-based approach to cluster growth in fintech, healthtech and Greentech – while at the same time delivering an inclusive urban regeneration agenda.

Smart Healthy Neighbourhood - to develop an internationally significant digital health demonstrator in the heart of the city. Co-

designed and developed with housing providers, residents, and health stakeholders, and based in the Inner North West area of city centre, this neighbourhood will provide a supportive environment for technologists, researchers, and will seek to attract inward investment from the life and health sciences sector. Elements will include pervasive wireless connectivity (funded via the Belfast City Deal Infrastructure Enabling Fund) and a citizen-focused engagement programme.

Integrated Sustainable Mobility - this project will seek to address the inter-connected issues of connectivity to Queen's island (and the associated growth constraints), the connectivity challenges in a post-Covid city centre, the over-dependence on the private car across the smart district travel to work area, and the need to support active travel as part of the city's health agenda. Such a project will also provide opportunities to enhance research programmes across both universities (including CARL and GII) and support innovative business development opportunities.

Smart Port - Through significant investments in 5G connectivity and open architecture data, the Smart Port will deploy a number of IoT, mobility and Community Platform solutions to unlock new levels of safety, sustainability, and efficiency within Belfast Harbour and throughout Northern Ireland's sea freight logistics chain. Such digital solutions will assist Belfast Harbour to achieve its aims of becoming the world's smartest and greenest regional port and a key economic hub for growth.

- 3.12 The Committee is asked to agree that Belfast City Council, as a key partner, contribute £50,000 to drive forward this ambitious programme.

3.13 Digital Futures Programme

Digital Futures has been developed by Belfast Region City Deal partners, working closely with government and industry to deliver a rapid response to the economic impact of the pandemic. Funded by the Department for the Economy as part of the Skills Intervention Programme, and delivered by a number of FE Colleges across the region, Digital Futures will support 55 graduates over the next six months, giving them opportunities to explore career pathways in Cloud Computing, Data Analytics and Cyber Security.

There is a very tight timeframe for delivery of the programme as the funding has just been awarded this month and all delivery must be completed by the end of March 2021, due to DfE funding timescales. Due to the tight timeframe courses will commence late October/early November and training will be delivered online. Note that the closing date was Monday 19th October.

Each participant will get access to a training allowance of £150 per week throughout the entire duration of the programmes. The internship element of the programme will commence in the New Year and BRCD partners are actively recruiting employers to host internships.

Digital Futures Programmes

Cyber Security: <https://www.swc.ac.uk/digitalfutures>

Data Analytics:

<https://app.mindmill.co.uk/MyMindMill/landing/serc>

Cloud Computing: <https://www.belfastmet.ac.uk/support-for-business/digital-futures/>

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.14 All costs associated with this work and recommendations have been identified within existing budgets.

Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.15 None.”

After discussion, during which the Chief Executive confirmed that the promotion of inclusive growth had featured prominently in the Belfast Digital Innovation Partnership's discussions to date and would continue to do so, 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 Capital programme is a rolling programme of investment which either improves the existing Council facilities or provides new Council facilities. This report seeks approval to move LTP – Templemore to the next stage of the capital programme.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to –

- *Project Movement* - agree that LTP - Templemore is moved to a *Stage 3 – Committed* project, with a maximum £12m budget allocated.

- *Service Yard, Falls Park/City Cemetery* – note that a satisfactory tender has been returned and the project remains within the maximum £420,000 budget.
- *Local Full Fibre Networks Programme* – agree to the procurement of additional fibre ducting assets/ infrastructure to enhance the existing ducting network as part of the Public Sector Asset Reuse (PSAR) project under the overall LFFN programme.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 LTP – Templemore

Members have previously agreed that all capital projects must go through a 3 Stage approval process where decisions on which projects progress are taken by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. This provides assurance as to the level of financial control and will allow Members to properly consider the opportunity costs of approving one capital project over another capital project.

Members are reminded that LTP – Templemore is an agreed Stage 2- Uncommitted project on the council's Leisure Transformation Programme. Members will note that a full update report on the Leisure Transformation Programme is also presented to the Committee. Members are asked to agree that LTP - Templemore moves to *Stage 3 - Committed* with a maximum budget of £12m under the £105m Leisure Transformation Programme. Members will be aware that this project has also received £5m in funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

3.2 Capital Programme - Service Yard, Falls Park/City Cemetery

Members will be aware that the Service Yard/City Cemetery project involves the relocation of the existing service at the City Cemetery site. Members agreed that the project moved to *Stage 3 - Committed* on the Capital Programme in February 2019. The project was held at Tier 0 – Schemes at Risk pending planning approval and the tender return price at which stage the final budget was to be brought back to Committee. A satisfactory tender has been received and the budget remains £420,000 which is within the affordability limits of the Council.

Members are asked to note that the project has since received planning approval and a satisfactory tender has been returned.

3.3 Local Full Fibre Networks Programme

Members will be recall that on 23rd March 2018, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee noted that Council was awarded £11.5m

from the Department of Culture Media and Sport's (DCMS) for the delivery of the Belfast Local Fibre Network Programme. The programme consists of two distinct projects: Public Sector Anchor Tenancy (PSAT) and Public Sector Asset Reuse (PSAR). The PSAR funding totals £206k and was approved to allow us to survey the condition of fibre ducts in the city centre, with a view to making them available to the telecoms market. This in turn will greatly benefit the businesses and residents of the city centre. Following the survey results, Digital Services engaged industry experts to conduct an analysis of the ducting network, and assess the viability of offering them out to the telecoms market. The output will enable a business case to be developed for DCMS. The results of the analysis suggest that demand will be high, but could be greatly enhanced by additional investment in the ducting network to make it more fit for purpose. This investment will cost no more than £190k, and will be funded from external sources. Members are asked to agree the procurement of additional ducting infrastructure to enhance the viability of the existing ducting network as part of the overall LFFN programme.

3.4 Financial and Resource Implications

LTP Templemore and Service Yard City Cemetery - The Director of Finance and Resources has confirmed that these projects are within the affordability limits of the Council.

LFFN – works to be externally funded

3.5 Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment

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

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Leisure Transformation Programme - Assets Update

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 This report updates Members on the development and implementation of the £105m leisure assets capital programme.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report, including that:

- the three new leisure facilities at Lisnasharragh, Brook and Andersonstown have now opened following lockdown and continue to see strong membership numbers, as outlined in paragraph 3.1;
- the demolition of Avoniel is now complete and works have commenced on the new facility and a contractor has now been appointed for the Templemore Baths redevelopment with works due to commence in October 2020, as outlined in paragraph 3.2;
- procurement of the ICT and Business Case consultant for the new leisure facility at Girdwood is underway and will be completed by December 2020, as outlined in paragraph 3.3; and
- the proposed approach to Leisure Phase 3 for those centres not currently included in the transformation programme, as outlined in paragraph 3.4.

3.0 Main Report

- 3.1 The Council is currently embarking on an ambitious 10 year plan to completely transform how it delivers leisure services across the city. The Leisure Transformation Programme (LTP), which includes a £105m capital investment, is designed to ensure everyone across the city has access to modern, fit for purpose, leisure facilities and programmes. The Programme's main objective is to enable active and healthy lifestyles for all citizens whilst also delivering on a number of the key priorities in the Belfast Agenda such as reducing life inequalities across the city, improving neighbourhoods and creating employment and opportunity. A further key objective is to ensure that each centre has its own Unique Selling Point (USP), to avoid duplication and encourage users to move across the city to access different services and programmes

3.2 Update on New Centres

Lisnasharragh and Brook have now re-opened and continue to enjoy strong membership numbers. Despite all leisure facilities experiencing a significant drop off in membership numbers over lockdown, the two centres have recovered strongly. Lisnasharragh currently has 2,950 live pre-paid members (86% of pre-lockdown figures) and Brook 1,613 (90% of pre-lockdown figures). These figures are well in excess of the UK average which shows gym memberships currently averaging around 60%-70% pre-lockdown figures.

Andersonstown- Members will recall that Andersonstown was completed in mid-March and was due to open in late March, just as

the full lockdown was introduced. Following lockdown, the gym and fitness studios were opened on 10th July, with the main pool following on 6th August. Members are asked to note that the plans for the opening of the slides have been placed on hold given the new restrictions announced by the NI Executive on 13th October. Due to social distancing requirements, the splash zone has not been opened and will remain closed until current restrictions are eased to allow safe usage.

3.2 Project Updates – Next Phase (Avoniel and Templemore)

Phase 2 of the Programme is proceeding as follows:

Avoniel – the demolition of the existing buildings is now complete and work is commencing on the site clearance. It is currently envisaged that the new facility will be completed by September 2021.

Templemore – as per the previous update, the Templemore Users' Trust formally vacated the building at the end of June. The contractor procurement process has now been completed and Heron Brothers have been awarded the contract. Responsibility for the site has now passed to the contractor and following a period of mobilisation, works are due to commence on site in late October. It is currently envisaged that the new facility will be completed by April 2022. TUT has now formally signed and returned the User Agreement, granting it priority usage of one of the pools in the new facility, and also have an agreement in place with GLL for access to Shankill Leisure Centre from this November, to continue their swimming programmes in the interim.

3.3 Girdwood Phase 2 – Following authorisation from DFC, procurement of the Integrated Consultancy Team is now underway and will be in place by the end of December. The procurement of a consultant to develop the business case in relation to the project is also underway with an appointment due by end October. Following appointment of the ICT and business case consultant, a period of consultation with key stakeholders will take place to revisit the current options for the new facility which were developed in 2016-18. Following agreement on a preferred option concept designs will be developed which will then be subject to further public consultation before final designs are produced. It is currently envisaged that work on the new facility will commence in early Spring 2022.

3.4 Phase 3 - Other leisure facilities - Ozone, Ballysillan, Whiterock, Shankill, Loughside and Belvoir

The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed earlier this year that a feasibility study would be undertaken on the rest of the

leisure estate which have not been part of the Leisure Transformation Programme to date (Shankill, Whiterock, Ballysillan, Ozone, Loughside and Belvoir) given the age of these facilities. A draft terms of reference for this was agreed by Committee with the next step the appointment of consultants to undertake this work.

The Committee is asked to note that Space and Place Architects have now been appointed to carry out a review of the existing leisure estate and begin to develop options for the future of these six remaining facilities.

Proposed approach – Leisure Phase 3

It is proposed that this piece of the work is broken down into three phases and follows a similar approach to the methodology undertaken for the current phase of the Leisure Programme. Members are asked to note as highlighted in the Medium Term Financial Plan which was brought to Committee last month that no capital financing has been ring-fenced for Leisure Phase 3 which is different from the current phase where the budget envelope had been agreed at the start of the programme.

- **Phase A – Baseline Review** - This phase will consist of a detailed review of the current leisure estate and include a detailed performance analysis of all the current facilities. This will also include identification of gaps, areas of duplication and strategic advice on likely future requirements. This Phase will also look at innovation and key emerging trends in the leisure industry that could help achieve desired strategic outcomes beyond the existing/traditional sports offer;
- **Timescale** – This Phase of the review will be completed by end December and an update will be brought back to Committee early next year;
- **Phase B – Consultation** – Following completion of phase A, Phase B will be initiated which will involve large scale consultation with Members and a wide range of key stakeholders with a view to begin the process of developing options for the remaining six centres;
- **Phase C – Concept Designs** - Phase C would then involve the development of concept designs as required.

3.5 Financial and Resource Implications

Financial – Current Phase - The design costs limits for each centre were agreed by Committee in April 2015, as part of the overall £105m leisure programme.

Phase 3 – No capital financing in place.

Resource - Council to act as delivery partner for Girdwood Phase II ICT engagement. To be managed through current LTP governance arrangements.

3.6 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

There are no direct equality implication”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Assets Management

The Committee approved the following:

- i. Sewer relocation easement and licence for works – Knocknagoney Linear Park**
 - the grant of an easement for a proposed sewer relocation and subsequent licence for works at Knocknagoney Linear Park
- ii. New sewer installation easement and licence for works – Lagan Meadows**
 - the grant of an easement for a proposed new sewer and subsequent licence for works at Lagan Meadows
- iii. Licence Renewal – Ligoniel Community Centre**
 - a new licence agreement between the Council and the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust for their continued use of Ligoniel Community Centre
- iv. Sally Gardens – Lease Extension to Poleglass Community Association**
 - a lease extension to Poleglass Community Association for the community centre at Sally Gardens
- v. Springfield Dam – Acquisition of Land from Invest Northern Ireland**
 - the acquisition of c.0.400 acres of land from Invest Northern Ireland as part of the Springfield Dam project

vi. Encroachment at 133 Mount Eagles Avenue

- the revised terms of an agreed disposal of a small plot of grassland to the owner of 133 Mount Eagles Avenue

vii. Musgrave Park – Northern Ireland Water Sewer Scheme

- the proposed works by Northern Ireland Water at Musgrave Park and the granting of a licence to Northern Ireland Water to carry out these works.

Update on Area Working

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 To seek the Committee’s approval of the minutes of the most recent round of AWGs and any additional recommendations to this Committee arising from the meetings.**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- **AWG Minutes** - approve the most recent round of AWG minutes (West – 24 September, South – 28 September, North – 30 September, East – 8 October); and
- **Physical Programme** - agree the recommendations on reallocations and residual monies from the AWGs under LIF, BIF and SOF Programmes as laid out below in 3.3-3.6.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 KEY ISSUES

The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 20th September 2019, agreed revised Terms of Reference for the AWGs. These were presented to all AWGs at the last round of AWGs in January. It was agreed that they would be circulated to all Groups again. The Groups were reminded that under the Terms of Reference it had been agreed that AWGs would meet quarterly.

Area Working Group Minutes

- 3.2 Members agreed in June 2016 that the Area Working Group minutes would be taken to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for approval going forward in line with the Council’s**

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commitment to openness and transparency and to ensure a consistent approach with other Member-led Working Groups.

Members are asked to approve the most recent round of AWG minutes (*West – 24 September, South – 28 September, North – 30 September, East – 8 October*).

AWG Updates

- 3.3 West AWG** - Members are asked to approve the following project movements, as recommended by the AWG at its meeting on 24th September:

LIF Programme

The West AWG were updated that there was a residual allocation of £85,000 to be re-allocated from the decommitted monies of the Royal British Legion BIF project. In addition the AWG was updated that DFC monies had been secured in principle for two existing LIF projects (Berlin Swifts and St. James's Community Forum) and that there was therefore surplus LIF monies from these project that was available for reallocation (up to £65,000 and £17,000 respectively). The AWG considered the monies available for reallocation and agreed to recommend the following:

Ref No	Project	Proposed Recommendation
WLIF2-25	Woodvale Cricket Club – upgrades to enable the creation of a large upstairs hall	£33,000
WLIF2-26	St Matthew's Parish Hall – upgrades	£35,000
WLIF2-27	West Belfast Orange Hall – toilet upgrades	£17,000
WLIF2-28	Belfast Orange Hall Clifton Street – building upgrades	Up to £65,000 (reallocation from Berlin Swifts)
WLIF2-29 WLIF2-30	Davitts GAC St. John GAC	£17,000 (reallocation from St. James's Community Forum)

- 3.4 South AWG** - Members are asked to approve the following project movement and updates, as recommended by the AWG at its meeting on 28th September.

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Project	Current Stage	Proposed Recommendations
Knockbreda Parish Church Hall – BIF35	Stage 2- Uncommitted	Move to Stage 3 – Committed Works due to commence
Bredagh GAC – BIF19	Stage 3- Committed	Council to act as delivery agent
Sandy Row Community Forum – SOF04	Due Diligence stage	Change of project promoter from Sandy Row Community Forum to Belfast South City Resource Centre

The South AWG Group also agreed to hold a special meeting in October to look project proposals for the Sandy Row area and that both BSCR and Urban Villages be invited to this meeting in order to allow the AWG to fully consider emerging proposals.

- 3.5 **North AWG** - Members are asked to approve the following project movements and updates, as recommended by the AWG at its meeting on 30th September.

LIF Programme

The North AWG was updated that two LIF projects which had previously received in-principle allocations had confirmed that they no longer wished to remain part of the LIF programme (NLIF2-13 Intercomm £75,000 and NLIF2-18 Holy Family Parish Church £15,000). The AWG considered the £90,000 that was available for reallocation and agreed to recommend the following –

Ref No	Project	Proposed Recommendation
NLIF2-22	Sailortown/St Joseph's project – building upgrades	To be allocated £75,000
NLIF2-19	Women's Tec project	To be allocated an additional £15,000 Existing LIF project which had already been allocated £31,667

BIF Programme

The North AWG was updated that the Ulster Scots-Braeheid project (BIF31) which had previously received in-principle allocation of £500,000 had confirmed that they no longer wished to remain part of the BIF programme. The AWG considered this reallocation and

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agreed to recommend the following. It was noted that all proposals would be subject to the normal due-diligence processes, that a maximum budget was allocated and subject to the return of satisfactory tenders.

Project	Current Stage	Proposed Recommendations
Midland Boxing Club – BIF45	N/A	Add as a Stage 1 – Emerging project with a maximum allocation of £400,000
Cultural Community Club- BIF43	Stage 1 – Emerging	Additional £100,000 to the allocated in principle Project had an existing in-principle allocation of £250,000

The AWG further agreed that the Midland Boxing Club attend the next meeting to give a presentation on their proposal.

- 3.6 **East AWG** - Members are asked to approve the following project movement and updates, as recommended by the AWG at its meeting on 8th October.

LIF Programme

The East AWG was updated that one LIF project which had previously received in-principle allocation had confirmed that they no longer wished to remain part of the LIF programme (ELIF2-14 The Dock Café - £15,000). The AWG agreed to recommend the following –

Ref No	Project	Proposed Recommendation
ELIF2-17	Lagan Village Youth and Community Association	To be allocated £15,000

The East AWG also agreed that the Strand Arts Centre, Bloomfield Community Association, Castlereagh Presbyterian Church and the Education Authority re the Lisnasharragh Community Schools project be invited to their next meeting to present an update on the current status of their proposals.

- 3.7 **Financial and Resource Implications**

Financial – LIF/BIF – allocations as outlined above

Resources – Officer time in working with Groups

3.8 Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment

No implications.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Finance, Procurement and Performance

Contracts Update

The Committee:

- approved the public advertisement of tenders, as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 - Table 1 of the report;
- approved the award of STAs in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions, as detailed in Appendix 1 – Table 2 of the report;
- noted the award of retrospective STAs in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions, as detailed in Appendix 1 – Table 3 of the report; and
- approved the modification to contracts in line with the Scheme of Delegation, as detailed in Appendix 1 – Table 4 of the report.

Table 1 – Competitive Tenders

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Estimated Total Contract Value	Senior Responsible Officer	Short description of goods/ services
Tender for the supply of bottled and mains fed water with dispensers across BCC offices & sites (T2119)	Up to 3 years	£50,000	R. Cregan	Bottled water supply and dispenser maintenance across BCC offices and sites.
Provision of de-icing and snow-clearance services (T1986)	Up to 5 years	£600,000	S. Toland / R. Black	Service required to support in-house operations and minimise H&S slip and fall risk for the public and staff around various Council sites.

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Tender for the provision of security guarding services. (T1974)	Up to 4 years	£3.9m (5 Lots)	J. Walsh / S. Toland / R. Black / A. Reid	On site security guarding services to support in house security guarding operations.
Delivery of PCSP's Post Primary Cyber Safety Project in Belfast (fully funded) (T2130)	Up to 3 years	£75 ,000	S Toland / R Black	Project designed to help keep adults safe online
Tender for the delivery of PCSP's Adults at Risk of Harm Project (T2125)	Up to 3 years	£45,000	S Toland / R Black	Project designed to help keep adults at risk safe from harm
Tender for Educational Awareness Programme (Fully Funded) (T2129)	Up to 3 years	£90,000	S Toland / R Black	Commission services to address ongoing issues of sexual abuse through facilitated discussions on 'consent' particularly with vulnerable young people.
Tender for an external mail collection service of out-bound mail (T2123)	Up to 3 years	£600,000	R Cregan	External mail collection across various BCC offices/sites.
Framework for the delivery of Employment Academies (T1983)	Up to 4 years	Up to £6m	A Reid	Framework designed to deliver a more streamlined delivery of current range of employment academies.
Tender for the provision of West Belfast DPSPC's	Up to 3 years	£132,000	S Toland / R Black	West Belfast community safety initiative.

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Community Safety Initiative (T2124)				
Tender for the supply of a range of various vehicles (27 units) as part of fleet replacement programme (T2052)	One off purchase	£2.2m	S Toland / R Black	Replacement of 27 vehicles as part of fleet replacement programme.
Tender for research and guidance to advance IT Strategy Projects (T2128)	Up to 2 years	£45,000	R Cregan	Provides in-depth technical research and guidance to help Digital Services advance the initiatives/projects that support execution of the IT strategy.
Development of ducting infrastructure in Belfast City Centre (Capital Procurement) – Funded by Department of Digital, Culture, Media & Sport.	Up to 6 months	£190,000	R Cregan	Build a duct infrastructure in Belfast city centre that can be made available to the wider telecoms marketplace at a later date.
Peace IV St Comgall's Outreach Programme and Exhibition	Up to 25 months	£170,000	S Toland / R Black	Funded project to engage with local people around the St Comgall's on a cross-community basis
Consultancy to provide assurance in respect of real estate proposals inc progression of the Belfast Destination Hub	Up to 6 months	£50,000	A Reid	Undertake analysis evaluation and provide financial assurance to the councils in respect of real estate proposals

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Consultancy for City Centre Residential Development	Up to 6 months	£50,000	A Reid	Analysis of demand and identification of interventions to progress City Centre Residential
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Table 2- Direct Award Contracts (Single Tender Action)

Title of Tender	Supplier	Total Value
Provision of 'Shared History, Heritage and Identity Content / Narratives for Interpretative Panels on Shared Space Greenway' PEACE IV Programme Services (T2084b)	The Osborne Partnership	£80,000
Provision of Home Security/ Hazard Assessment and Repair Service for Elderly & Vulnerable (fully funded) – up to 12 month extension of contract whilst re-tender exercise is completed.	Bryson Energy	£120,000
Provision of a Case Management System for City and Neighbourhoods Department – up to 2 year extension of contract whilst replacement system is procured and implemented.	Civica UK Ltd	£113,878

Table 3 Retrospective Direct Award Contracts (Single Tender Actions)

Title of Tender	Supplier	Total Value
Provision of PEACE IV Youth Group Residential (T2032b)	Carlingford Adventure Centre	£16,000
Continued Hire of Temporary Accommodation, Toilets and Associated Electrical Generators and Cabling at Roselawn Cemetery	Norespace	£69,852 with potential up to £109,852 if further 6 month extension exercised.

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Table 4 Contract Modification under Delegated Authority

Title of Tender		Senior Responsible Officer
Delivery of a New Enterprise Pathway (T1980a); Increase in contract value from £200,000 to £300,000	North City Business Centre	A Reid
Delivery of Construction Employment Academy (T1912) Increase in contract value from £200,000 to £237,500	Workforce Training Services	A Reid

Commercial and Procurement Service - Pricing Policy

The Committee agreed to defer this report to allow it to be considered alongside the Commercial Plan for commercialisation and income generation, which was due to be presented at the meeting in November.

Equality and Good Relations

Minutes of the Meeting of the Shared City Partnership

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

- i. note the endorsement of the Partnership to the Council's approach to Community Provision Recovery and agree the recommendation that the budgets for Tranche 2 Good Relations Small Grants Scheme and St Patrick's Day be allocated to the ongoing community provision recovery funding programme;
- ii. agree that an amount of up to £1k be allocated to assist with a workshop for the East Belfast Tension Monitoring Group to refocus its priorities and communication; and
- iii. agree the Revised Action Plan Summary 21/22 as requested by TEO, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

Peace IV

- i. delegate authority to the PEACE IV Programme Manager and the relevant Thematic Project Manager to sign off participant's achievement based on the 80% of contracted contact hours with no financial impact to the delivery partner;

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- ii. delegate authority to the Chair of the relevant Theme, in conjunction with the PEACE IV Programme Manager and the relevant Thematic Project Manager to consider requests, on an exceptional circumstances only, achievement of 80% of 26 hrs taking into account any financial and contractual impact, subject to SEUPB approval; and
- iii. note the contents of all PEACE IV update reports and appendices and the agreed changes to projects.

Motion on Hate Crime and Intolerance

- i. write to the NI Executive to ask what plans are in place to support those groups which fall outside of the current good relations duty and if consideration is being given to extension of the categories in line with the Hate Crime legislation; and
- ii. agree that officers look at the Hate Crime Steering Group convened by Safer Cities and other different strands of funding across Council which could assist in funding more proactive work relating to Hate Crime and bring a report back to Committee in due course.

**Signage Scheme Proposal for the
Gaeltacht Quarter Area**

The City Solicitor informed the Committee that the Council had been invited by Forbairt Feirste to participate in a working group which it was proposing to establish to develop a comprehensive signage scheme for the Gaeltacht Quarter.

He explained that the working group, which would include Forbairt Feirste, the Department for Infrastructure and Tourism NI, would examine, for example, welcome signage on the main thoroughfares into the Quarter, directional signage covering the main buildings, places of interest and linear walkways and signage integration with other Quarters and the City centre. It was envisaged that officers from the Council's Building Control Service, Culture and Tourism Unit and Equality and Diversity Unit would participate in the working group initially, however, others might need to become involved to ensure that proposals were aligned with existing Council policies and planned capital and programme investment.

The Committee approved the Council's participation in the Working Group.

Bilingual Street Signage

The Committee considered the following report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 To consider options for the consultation of occupiers for the erection of a second nameplate in a language other than English. Having regard to discussions on the issues the options presented are as follows:**

1. retain the current policy requiring one third of residents petitioning in favour of the erection of a second name plate and two thirds responding positively to the formal consultation with non-respondents treated as, in effect, against.
2. retain the one third requirement through petition trigger but adopt a 50+1 rule with non-respondents, in effect, not taken into account. This would be subject to a minimum response threshold of one third;
3. adopt an entirely new policy position, the trigger for a consultation being an expression of interest by a resident or residents or Councillor with a percentage of residents (suggested at 20% but to be agreed) responding positively being sufficient to erect a second nameplate subject to residual discretion and protections/mitigations as appropriate;
4. the Conradh Na Gaeilge option in which the process is triggered by a request from an occupier with a 10% response threshold and a 50+1 rule;
5. adopt some other position which would be subject to further legal advice.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 The Committee is requested to adopt a position in respect of the options presented or consensus on some other position to enable a policy to be finalised and presented for approval.

3.0 Main Report

Key Issues

- 3.1 Article 11 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1995 requires the Council, in deciding whether to exercise its discretion in relation to the erection of a second nameplate, to have regard to the views of occupiers in a street. Thus any policy position adopted requires a process to enable occupiers to be consulted and given the opportunity to respond. This is important because it is a statutory requirement and something which is required to be taken into account in making decisions.
- 3.2 The current policy is that one third of residents, by way of petition, may trigger a formal consultation in relation to the erection of a second nameplate in a language other than English. If two thirds respond positively the threshold is deemed to be met. The policy treats those who do not respond as essentially not in favour.

The policy was subject to a judicial review in 2014 which was successfully defended.

- 3.3 By way of notice of motion on 3 February 2020 it was proposed that the council change its current policy position regarding the consultation requirements on erecting a second name plate in that whilst the one third trigger through petition would be retained, a 50+1 rule in respect of the consultation would be adopted with non-respondents not counted. Concerns were articulated regarding this position in the context of the proposed policy position not being legally robust which led me to propose that a minimum response threshold mirroring the initial trigger should be adopted. Under this a majority in favour would represent circa 17% of residents with a one third response rate required overall. There has been some legal contention in respect of the advice given. That advice was subsequently supported by counsel's opinion that was previously circulated.
- 3.4 Discussions have ensued and progressed toward an option which does not enjoy universal support in terms of where the threshold should land. There is however a level of agreement in relation to the principles that should underpin the policy. In terms of those who are supportive of changing the existing policy all favour an approach embracing international law and standards.
- 3.5 The position promoted by Conradh Na Gaeilge refers to a simple trigger of a request by a Councillor or resident and a 50+1 rule with non-respondents not counted and a minimum response threshold of 10%. In support the organisation refers to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the UN Special Rapporteur's guide to the implementation of language rights of linguistic minorities. The relevant paragraph of the guidance is as follows:

Street and locality names and topographical indicators intended for the public are important as markers of social identity, culture and history. A good, practical approach adopted in most countries is for the authorities to provide transparent legislation or procedures to allow bilingual or even trilingual signs, usually following the proportionality principle where there is a sufficient concentration or demand for such signs in minority languages. While national legislation varies, the low threshold where it is considered practicable and reasonable to provide such signs tends to vary between 5 per cent and 20 per cent of the local population, with the lowest threshold usually associated with the use of a minority language that also has some kind of official status or for traditional, historical reasons. The criteria for the display of signs in minority languages must be given a clear and unambiguous legislative basis for it to be effectively implemented. Bilingual or multilingual signs used by public authorities

demonstrate inclusiveness, and that various population groups share a locality in harmony and mutual respect.

- 3.6 In the first instance, it is important to remember that how the process is triggered is less important than the consultation itself as it is this that informs decision-making and is formally required by domestic law. A previous proposal by Conradh Na Gaeilge retaining the trigger of a one third petition but with a 50+1 rule in respect of responses has been withdrawn and replaced with the current proposal which contains a minimum response threshold in respect of the consultation.
- 3.7 The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, to which the UK is a signatory, establishes an obligation on state signatories not to create barriers in respect of the use of a minority language. The UN Special Rapporteur guidance may also be taken into account in formulating a policy position and as an aide to understand where treaty obligations land in practical terms. The state obligation arising in respect of the Charter has been taken into account in the preparation of this report and in respect of all of the options that would change the current policy. It is also my opinion that all meet the international legal standard and guidance referred to.
- 3.8 The guidance suggests that a threshold in the range of 5%-20% is acceptable. Thus the threshold suggested in any of the proposals that would change the current policy would appear to meet international standards (Members will recall that it was asserted that the minimum response threshold advocated in option 2 was criticised for not complying with international obligations). The reference to thresholds refers to the 'local population'. Thus any adoption of policy that has its roots in this guidance should refer to the percentage of occupiers in the street responding positively to the formal consultation required for the second nameplate to be erected. Essentially what consultation would seek to establish is if there is a sufficient community of interest to warrant the erection of a second nameplate. In that sense the consultation is not a referendum.
- 3.9 Any policy needs to reflect on the prevailing circumstances in which its adoption is being considered and the legal parameters established by the domestic legislation in which it is rooted. The Special Rapporteur guidance on the use of bilingual signage is caveated by reference to when it is reasonable and practicable to do so. Even the guidance in reflecting a range of acceptable thresholds, which it describes as 'low', implicitly suggests that there may be local or domestic circumstances that need to be taken into account in the formulation of any relevant policy.

- 3.10 The political landscape and maturity of post conflict states are likely to be factors that should be considered in fixing the point at which any such threshold might be set. The guidance also establishes that the status of the language and the extent of any community of users are important factors. Both Irish and Ulster Scots are registered under the Charter. Whilst the policy may relate to any language it is an inescapable fact that the predominant outworking will be for street signage in Irish.
- 3.11 OFMDFM policy, whilst dating back to 2005, emphasised the need for authorities to take positive action to ensure that shared and neutral spaces remain shared and used by all sections of the community. These and the other matters referred to in the preceding paragraph are real world considerations that cannot be swept away by portraying them as obstacles to the implementation of, in this case, a bilingual signage strategy. The guidance clearly allows for consideration of local context. Ultimately these are matters for the parties to take a position on. The domestic obligations in respect of equality and the need to promote good relations also need to be considered in terms of any potential wider impact.
- 3.12 Taking a look at the outworking of the policies is important. As an example a street of 100 occupiers applying the thresholds would have the following results;
- 3.13 Under option 1, the current policy position would require 67 occupiers to respond positively (with non-respondents treated as against).
- 3.14 Under option 2, with a minimum response threshold of one third, the number of positive responses required would be 17 (with 33 responses required).
- 3.15 Under option 3, with a fixed percentage at the upper end of the low threshold (20%) in the UN guidance the number of positive responses required would be 20 (representing a sufficient community of interest).
- 3.16 Under the Conradh Na Gaeilge proposal of a minimum response threshold of 10%, the number of positive responses required would be 6 (with 10 responses required).

Taking account of the legal requirement to have regard to the views of residents I remain of the view that the Conradh Na Gaeilge proposal is not sufficient in terms of discharging that obligation and is likely to be legally susceptible to challenge. There is a balance to be struck in terms of the requirement to take account of views as required by the legislation even if the 'regard' duty falls

at a lower level than some others. There must be some concept of proportionality in arriving at the outcome.

- 3.17 It is important to remember that residual discretion exists and that any policy should not be viewed as a straitjacket. There may be circumstances when notwithstanding the consultation response it may be appropriate to depart from the policy when there are clear reasons for doing so. That may work both ways in terms of outcome.

Principles/Mitigations

- 3.18 In the event that the agreement is reached to change the policy in line with either options 2 or 3 or 4 (the latter contrary to advice) it is suggested that the following principles could be considered in the context of a protocol that the parties may wish to sign up to.

1. That the policy will be used for the promotion of language rights and for the benefit of linguistic communities.
2. That the principles of equality, promoting good relations and respect will underpin the application of the policy in addition to the rights promoted by the policy itself.
3. That, as with any statutory consultation which the council is required to undertake, the City Solicitor may intervene if any complaint is made and a basis for that complaint established.
4. That any decision relating to the erection of a second nameplate in the city centre (business core) will, in addition to the current policy considerations, be subject to a wider public consultation to reflect the community of users.
5. That the policy will cover the corporately designated Gaelteacht Quarter until such time as a policy which may contain specific proposals in respect of a bilingual strategy have been adopted.

- 3.19 **Administrative Considerations – Finance and Resource Implications**

1. Whilst I have indicated that I am less concerned with how the formal consultation is triggered, it is important to remember that any change in policy in terms of the options presented will be likely to increase the number of applications received. For that reason members may wish to fix some petition threshold. This may also help filter those applications that are speculative.

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2. **Given the potential for increased numbers of applications the council will deal with no more than 5 in any given month. If numbers are excessive they will be held in a queue and dealt with in the order in which they have been received. This will also be managed in the context of the existing staffing resource and the established annual budget for street signage.**

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.20 Any proposed change to the policy will be subject to consultation and equality screening.”**

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Beattie,
Seconded by Councillor Lyons,

That the Committee agrees:

- i. to adopt Option 3 within the report, that is, to adopt an entirely new policy position, with the trigger for a consultation being an expression of interest by a resident/residents/Elected Member but with the percentage of residents responding positively being sufficient to erect a second nameplate being set at 15%, rather than the 20% which had been suggested within the report;
- ii. that the City core be included within the revised policy until such time as a policy similar to that in place for the Gaeltacht Quarter was formulated; and
- iii. that a report be submitted to a future meeting outlining the potential for increasing the number of applications which could be processed on a monthly basis.

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

<u>For 14</u>	<u>Against 6</u>
Councillors Beattie, Black, Carson, Garrett, Groogan, Heading, Long, Lyons, McAllister, McDonough-Brown, McLaughlin, McReynolds, Murphy and Walsh.	Aldermen Dorrian, Haire, Kingston and Sandford and Councillors Bunting and Pankhurst.

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Operational Issues

Minutes of the Meeting of the Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum of 15th October.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Customer Focus Working Group

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Customer Focus Working Group of 30th September.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Climate Crisis Working Group

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Working Group on the Climate Crisis of 19th October.

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

The Committee approved the recommendations made in respect of applications received up to 9th October, 2020 as set out below:

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
2021 EVENTS						
Moloney and Kelly on behalf of Transformational Leadership Council	28 July 2022	Celebratory Gala Dinner– welcome dinner event to open a 4 day conference for authors, trainers and business leaders taking place at Culloden Estate. Numbers attending – 100 <i>* Numbers and room layout will be reviewed and revised in line with COVID19</i>	A & B	£825 (Commercial organisers)	No Hospitality	Approve Charge No hospitality

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		<i>social distancing guidelines at the time of this event.</i>				
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**Request for use of the Cenotaph for
City of Belfast Grand Black Chapter Service**

The City Solicitor informed the Committee that a request had been received from the City of Belfast Grand Black Chapter for the use of the Cenotaph on 28th August, 2021 for a service and wreath laying ceremony. The event, which would run from 10.00 a.m. till 11.00 a.m., was being held to mark the Centenary of the formation of Northern Ireland and would involve approximately 1,000 participants, including band members. The People and Communities Committee had previously granted approval for the City of Belfast Grand Black Chapter to use the Lower Botanic Gardens later that day for a family fun event.

He pointed out that the organisers of the Cenotaph event would liaise closely with Council officers, adhere to the social distancing measures in place at that time and meet all associated costs.

The Committee approved the use of the Cenotaph for the event.

**Arrangements for Annual Remembrance
Sunday Ceremony and Armistice Day 2020**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To advise Members of proposals to mark this year’s Remembrance Sunday observance and Armistice Day at Belfast City Hall, in light of public health considerations.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is requested to:

- a) agree to the revised arrangements for Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day taking into account the need to comply with public health and social distancing guidelines and;**
- b) grant authority to inform the VIPs and Associations of the Committee’s decision with immediate effect bearing in mind the timescale required to make the necessary arrangements.**

3.0 Main Report

Remembrance Sunday

- 3.1** Members will be aware that the annual Remembrance Sunday ceremony is a significant event in the civic calendar affording an opportunity for Members, VIPs, Associations and members of the public to commemorate the fallen of two world wars in the Garden of Remembrance.
- 3.2** Members will also be aware that, in association with the Royal British Legion, the ceremony normally invites over 20 VIPs and over 40 Associations to participate in the service as well as drawing a large public audience in Donegall Square West and City Hall Grounds.
- 3.3** Following consultation with the Royal British Legion and other key stakeholders, it is recognised that the observance should be carried out in a dignified and appropriate manner in keeping with the solemnity of the occasion and in accordance with the prevailing public health regulations. This is consistent with guidance the Legion has communicated to its members with a strong message that Remembrance Sunday should be conducted in such a manner as to 'remember our fallen while protecting our communities'.
- 3.4** **As such, the following proposals are suggested for the conduct of Remembrance Sunday on the 8 November, 2020.**
- 1.** Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant for the County Borough of Belfast, Fionnuala J O'Boyle CBE, will enter the Garden of Remembrance to lay a wreath.
 - 2.** Following her departure, the Lord Mayor will lay a wreath on behalf of the city with a chaplain and bugler participating in a short ceremony. At no stage will there be more than 15 people in the Garden of Remembrance at any one time, in line with current public health restrictions. Attendance by Members of Council wishing to be present, will be configured on a proportionality basis, so that the total number of people at the ceremony does not exceed the permitted number.
 - 3.** VIP attendees will be offered the opportunity to attend, and lay wreaths on an individual basis, following the initial ceremony, between 11.45 am and 12.45 pm.
 - 4.** Associations will also be afforded the opportunity to attend and lay individual wreaths in four separate time slots

between 1.15 pm and 3.30 pm. Participation will be limited to 1 individual per association to take account of the higher number of wreath-layers participating in Remembrance Sunday.

Members will recall that a similar system was introduced to mark the Somme Anniversary on 1 July which was well received by all those who took part.

- 3.5 In agreeing to participate, all attendees will observe guidelines set out by Council. Each act of remembrance will be carried out within social distancing guidelines, individuals will remain 2m apart at all times and Lord Mayor's Office and City Hall security will be on hand to greet attendees, oversee participation and ensure compliance with the council plan.
- 3.6 In light of the circumstances prevailing at this time, it will not be possible for the general public to attend to observe either of these ceremonies. It is important that Council is seen to take the lead and demonstrate civic leadership in observing an appropriate act of remembrance while endeavouring to dissuade a public gathering and Council will liaise closely with the Royal British Legion in communicating this shared message in engagement with local associations and the general public.

In addition, the Lord Mayor will record a video message prior to Remembrance Sunday to be utilized across a variety of platforms.

Armistice Day

- 3.7 It is proposed that arrangements for Armistice Day, which will be observed on Wednesday, 11th November at 11 am, should be broadly similar to those outlined above to mark Remembrance Sunday, in terms of attendance by Members of Council.
- 3.8 The proposals as outlined for Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day will be revised in line with any further public health restrictions should they be introduced prior to these dates.

3.9 Financial and Resource Implications

None

3.10 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

None"

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Governance

Standards Committee – Draft Terms of Reference

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the development of draft Terms of Reference for a new Standards Committee

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is recommended to:

- (i) note the attached report; and
- (ii) approve, in principle, the attached draft terms of reference for the Standards Committee

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Background

At its meeting on 18th September, the Committee agreed to introduce additional arrangements to ensure that the Council, its officers and Elected Members maintain the highest standards of conduct in all that they do. Such arrangements included the establishment of a new Standards Committee, the designation of a ‘Monitoring Officer’ responsible for all issues in relation to standards, and the introduction of a number of new governance arrangements aimed at promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Councillors and officers.

3.2 Standards Committee Terms of Reference

It is proposed that the Council establish a Standards Committee whose main functions would be to promote, sustain and safeguard the conduct of Councillors within the Council and the probity of all the Council’s proceedings.

The Terms of Reference for the Committee could include the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct by Members and officers, a commitment to joint working across political groups and between officer and Members, oversight of any training required on all matters relating to standards and conduct, advising the Council on the Code of Conduct for Councillors and oversight of the Members’ Register and Declaration of Interests and associated procedures. The committee will have a role in managing and maintaining the

officer/member interface and relations. It will promote a shared understanding of roles and look at how we work collectively in a political environment.

A copy of the draft terms of reference is attached. These are draft Terms of Reference which will be updated based on the detail of the processes to be developed. Any updates will be brought back to Members for approval.

3.3 Complaints raised by an Officer about a Member

Complaints raised by an officer about a Member are already dealt with under the existing Local Government Employee and Councillor Working Relationship Protocol (issued by the Local Government Staff Commission).

Paragraph 5.9 of that Protocol provides that if an issue cannot be resolved informally and is sufficiently serious, that a formal meeting between the dispute parties, the relevant party group leader and a senior HR representative should take place. The Protocol advises that the minutes of any such meeting be presented to the relevant governance committee in the Council which in this case will be the Standards Committee.

Low level disputes between Members

It is proposed that the Standards Committee will be notified of the outcome of any 'low level disputes' between Members which have been dealt with under a voluntary proposed Local Resolution Protocol which will facilitate mediation of such disputes. Low level disputes are defined as those relating to alleged breaches in respect of the following paragraphs of the Code of Conduct:

- Code para 4.7 - You must not make vexatious, malicious or frivolous complaints against other councillors or anyone who works for, or on behalf of, your council.
- Code para 4.13(a) - You must show respect and consideration for others.

In such cases, the Committee will be advised as to the outcome of the mediation process – for example if no action was taken or if the issue was resolved successfully. The Committee will note that participation in the Local Resolution Protocol is entirely voluntary and any individual councillor is free to make a complaint to the Commissioner for Standards at any time.

Members will note that the introduction of a Local Resolution Protocol to deal with 'low level disputes' will be subject to discussions with both the Department for Communities and the

Office of the Northern Ireland Local Government Commissioner for Standards.

Serious Potential Breaches of the Code of Conduct

It is proposed that, on occasion, it will be possible for the Standards Committee itself to refer a Member to the Local Government Commissioner for Standards if the Committee feels that the Member might have breached the Code of Conduct for Councillors. This may be particularly relevant with regards to issues which are not categorised as low level disputes between Members but which are serious enough to damage the reputation of the Council.

In such a scenario the Monitoring Officer may identify or be notified of a potential breach of the Code of Conduct. After carrying out any necessary initial inquiries the Monitoring Officer will bring a report to the Standards Committee with a recommendation that either no further action is taken or that the Member be referred to the Commissioner for Standards.

There would however be some element of flexibility in matters of urgency or potential criminal matters where a referral may need to be made directly by the Chief Executive or the Monitoring Officer. The Chief Executive and the Monitoring Officer will therefore retain a residual right to refer any Member to the Local Government Commissioner for Standards regardless of whether the Committee has endorsed a recommendation to do so.

3.4 Corporate Ethics / Procurement

It is also suggested that the Standards Committee has an oversight role on consideration of issues in relation to corporate ethics including ethical standards, procurement, trading and investment in line with the developing corporate procurement strategy which is being brought to Members in the coming months.

3.5 Financial and Resource Implications

There will be minor financial implications associated with introducing a new Standing Committee. If the Standards Committee is to meet quarterly then it will require an associated Special Responsibility Allowance be allocated to the Chair and Deputy Chair positions of responsibility and funded from the reallocation of the existing Special Responsibility Allowance fund.

The committee will be serviced by existing resources within Governance and Compliance; and Democratic Services. A budget will be required to cover any associated training and external mediation services.

3.6 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

Any equality, good relations and rural needs assessments implications will be subject to the usual screening processes.

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

These are draft Terms of Reference which will be updated based on the detail of the processes to be developed. Any updates will be brought back to Members for approval.

The draft Terms of Reference for the Standards Committee may include some or all of the following functions:

- promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Elected Members and officers
- a commitment to encourage positive joint working across political groups and between officers and Members and to uphold the high standards of values and behaviours in a relationship of mutual trust
- advising the Council on the Code of Conduct for Councillors including any revisions to the Code
- oversight of any training required to train Members and relevant officers on all matters relating to standards and the promotion of the 12 Principles of Conduct in public life, including the Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors and any associated training identified by the Committee
- oversight of the Members' Register and Declaration of Interests
- to develop, monitor and review any local protocols required to support the standards regime within the Council
- to keep under review the Local Government Employee and Councillor Working Relationship Protocol
- to consider any minutes of a formal meeting held under Section 5.9 of the Local Government Employee and Councillor Working Relationship Protocol
- oversight of the Local Resolution Protocol which will deal with "low level disputes" alleging breaches of the Code of Conduct for

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Councillors and is designed to restore positive working relationships through mediation²

- consideration of any recommendation by the Monitoring Officer to refer any Councillor to the Local Government Commissioner for Standards in respect of any potential breach of the Code of Conduct for Councillors, particularly where the alleged breach relates to a matter which would potentially have a reputational consequence for the Council**
- the Monitoring Officer will retain a residual right to refer any matter to the Commissioner for Standards regardless of whether the Standards Committee has endorsed a recommendation from the Monitoring Officer to do so**
- oversight of any mediation process required to restore internal relationships between political parties, Members and/or officers**
- consideration of update reports into investigations carried out by the Public Services Ombudsman / Commissioner for Standards**
- oversight of the implementation of recommendations made by the Public Services Ombudsman / Commissioner for Standards**
- providing recommendations to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in respect of any amendments which need to be made to the Council Constitution in relation to the standards regime within the Council**
- consideration of issues in relation to corporate ethics including ethical standards, procurement, trading and investment.**

The Committee approved the draft Terms of Reference for the new Standards Committee.

² The Local Resolution Protocol will only deal with minor complaints about councillors made by other councillors. The Protocol will not consider complaints made by officers, members of the public or other third parties. The Protocol will not consider complaints made about officers.

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Issues Raised in Advance by Members

Unit Fees for St. George's Market

The Committee agreed, at the request of Councillor Gormley, that a report be submitted to its meeting in November on the potential for waiving, for a three-month period, rental fees for those businesses operating from the units in St. George's Market, in light of the trading difficulties which they were experiencing as a result of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

Chairperson

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People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 6th October, 2020

MEETING OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Baker (In the Chair);
Alderman Rodgers;
The High Sheriff, Councillor Verner; and
Councillors Black, Bunting, Michael Collins, Corr, de Faoite,
Flynn, Garrett, M. Kelly, Magee, McAteer, McCusker,
McReynolds, Mulholland, Newton, Pankhurst and Smyth.

In attendance: Mr. R. Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services;
Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;
Miss. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer; and
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

Also In attendance: Councillor Gormley.

Apologies

An apology for inability to attend was reported on behalf of Councillor Cobain.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 8th September were taken as read and signed as correct.

Declarations of Interest

Councillors Black, Bunting, Mulholland, Newton and Verner declared an interest in agenda item 5a – Support to Community Partners 2020 Update, in so far as they either worked for or were associated with Groups which had previously applied for micro grant funding. As this was only an update and no decision was being taken it regard to funding, there was no requirement for the Members to leave the meeting.

Restricted

The information contained in the reports associated with the following 2 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 on the following 2 items as, due to their nature, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Section 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

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Finance Update

The Committee was reminded that the Strategic Policy and Resources, at its meeting on 31st July, had received an update on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Council's financial position and a strategy to address the forecast deficit and the mitigation measures, which had and would be taken as the situation evolved. It had agreed to continue to provide Members with a monthly update on the financial position and that the same report would be presented to the subsequent standing Committees for noting and to provide further information on ongoing work.

The Committee noted the September 2020 financial update.

Fresher's Operations in the Holylands and Wider University Area

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on Fresher's operations in the Holylands and Wider university area.

The Committee was reminded that over the last number of years the Council had worked in a co-ordinated manner with key partners to try and manage the issues that regularly arose over Fresher, for example, noise/Anti-Social Behavior/criminal damage. This year there was obviously the added pressure within the context of the Covid 19 pandemic.

The Committee was advised that Members of the Holylands Strategic Interagency groups had raised a number of concerns and priorities regarding the return of students to the Holylands and the Council had agreed that Council officers would look at the challenges identified and engage with the partners to collectively address the issues of concern. As a result, an operational brief had been prepared. This detailed services to be delivered over the period 13th September to 1st October. The Council was also facilitating a weekly Holyland tasking group (established on 7th September), this included representation from a number of partner agencies. The aim of the weekly meetings was to bring all frontline officers together to discuss issues and concerns, new and emerging trends as well as resource pressures. The Director explained that the meetings were being used to agree priorities and to pool resources to try and address problem premises and behaviours. This group continued to meet and the partners were working to join up messaging and to consider the most effective way to carry the relevant public health messaging. Partner organisations continued to apply and deploy additional resources to the area. The on the ground operation was due to be completed on Friday 25th September but the Committee was advised that resources would continue to be provided in the area until required, especially whilst the impact of Covid continued to give rise for concern.

The Committee also noted that officers had been engaging with The Executive Office (TEO) since the 8th September to discuss some fundamental concerns raised around:-

- patterns of living within HMO's. / Social distancing /bubbles /Quarantining;

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- patterns of Mobility/ Student traveling to the area and returning to their home town, households and sport clubs;
- behaviours and;/ the need to reinforce direct messaging to students and the implications of their actions should guidelines not be adhered too
- enforcement/ who would enforce and managing expectations.

Further meetings with Junior Ministers had taken place and there was a request of TEO, from the Council via the Chief Executive, to co-ordinate consideration of current legislation to deal with issues attached to students living in HMOS.

With the permission of the Chairperson, Councillor Gormley addressed the Committee. He welcomed the coordinated approach being taken by the various partner agencies and also outlined his concerns in regard to the problems associated with HMOs.

The Committee noted and welcomed the updated position in relation to ongoing work with partner organisations in respect of the Holylands and wider university area.

Matters referred back from the Council/Motions

The Committee was reminded that, at the Council meeting on 1st October, the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Flynn and seconded by Councillor Kelly, had, in accordance with Standing Order 13(f), been referred to the Committee for consideration:

“The Council notes that the decision to grant Belfast City Airport permission to enter Victoria Park and carry out the management of the bird population, such as pricking and oiling of un-hatched eggs, has significantly reduced the greylag goose population in the park.

The Council further notes that as the decision to grant permission for this activity was taken a number of years ago, technology and practices pertaining to managing bird populations in the vicinity of an aerodrome may have moved on.

As such, this Council requests officers to carry out a review of this decision, engage with relevant environmental and wildlife organisations and produce a report for Councillors to consider options before the next confirmation of the permission is granted to the airport to carry out this activity in Victoria Park.”

Both the proposer of the motion Councillor Flynn and seconder of the motion Councillor Kelly addressed the Committee and outlined the context of the motion.

The Committee agreed that Council officers would carry out a review of the decision which had previously been granted to Belfast City Airport for it to enter Victoria Park to carry out the management of the bird population and agreed that officers would liaise with the relevant organisations and submit a report to a future meeting of the Committee which would enable the Committee to consider if alternative options were available.

Committee/Strategic Issues

Update on Environmental Health Services during Covid

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the operational recovery of City Protection Services following national lock down as a result of the ongoing pandemic. It provides a snapshot of the current status and information on second wave planning.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to

- note the current position regarding service recovery within City Protection

3.0 Main report

3.1 Background:

- 3.2 During the national lockdown which resulted from the Covid 19 Pandemic, there were a number of City Protection services that were able to make agile changes to their processes to allow some services to continue to function. The work to provide critical services during that time was based on City Protection's Business Continuity Plan and the following services remained operational to some extent to provide emergency response services:

- Emergency Planning – the Council's Emergency Plan was activated and resources put in place.
- Houses in Multiple Occupation – emergency response arrangements put in place and agreed with Department for Communities. Licensing applications continued to be received and processed. From 23rd March 2020 to 1st July 2020, approximately 238 HMO licenses were issued.
- Planning Consultation – work continued to support the Council's Planning Service
- Port Health – certain mandatory checks were still required and the office was staffed on a rota basis under strict controls.
- Sewer Baiting – a service using available members of staff was established early on to endeavour to keep the

rat population under control and to provide advice and support on pest control where possible.

- **Scientific Services** – an emergency service in relation to the gas extraction systems were maintained.
- **Animal Welfare and Dog Control** - services continued in response to stray dogs, dangerous dogs and animal cruelty.
- **Air Quality** – air quality monitoring services were established in the early stages of lockdown under direction from DAERA
- **Public Health and Housing, Environmental Protection, Workplace Health and Safety, Food and Consumer Safety** services were reconfigured during lockdown to deliver the critical aspects of those services identified in the Business Continuity Plan.

3.3 Because of the restrictions that were put in place during lockdown a number of less critical services or higher risk were temporarily suspended. These included postal Dog Licensing applications, Radiation Monitoring, Industrial Pollution Control, Off Street Car Parking, Night time Noise Services, Home Safety, Customer Advice, Tobacco Control, Enforcement in relation to dumping/littering and the Pest Control home treatment service.

3.4 While there were many services within City Protection that were able to continue providing certain functions, the restoration of these services and those suspended has presented significant challenges and required considerable modifications of service processes to allow all functions to be carried out in a new controlled operational model that takes into account the risks associated with Covid-19.

3.5 These controls are likely to be with us for a considerable time and will be continuously monitored to ensure that we operate in a safe way that protects both our staff and the public. Like other services, there are challenging resource management issues associated with the new operating model for City Protection and much work was done during recovery to minimise the impact on the Council's deficit.

3.6 **Recovery Process:**

The easing of lockdown restrictions through the NI Executive 5 Stage Roadmap has been one of main drivers in enabling the Council to restore services. City Protection has followed the corporate approach to recovery and has sought input from a number of support services across the council such as corporate health and safety, local trade unions, financial services, digital services and property maintenance. Although

time consuming, given the number of services in City Protection, this has been essential in ensuring the new arrangements are both safe and efficient.

3.7 City Protection Service Status:

Outlined below in column B is the current operational status of City Protection service. Where the service is still partially operating or has been suspended column c provides an estimated date for full recovery within a controlled operating model. As you will see from the table below the majority of City Protection services are now operational.

A. Service/ Function	B. Operational Status	C. Estimated Date for Full Recovery
Air Quality	Operational (controlled operating model)	
Planning Consultations	Operational (controlled operating model)	
Emergency Planning	Operational (controlled operating model)	
Scientific Services	Operational (controlled operating model)	
Animal Welfare	Operational (controlled operating model)	
Dog Control and Licensing	Operational (controlled operating model)	
Housing of Multiple Occupant	Operational (controlled operating model)	

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Port Health	Operational (controlled operating model)	
Public Health and Housing	Operational (controlled operating model)	
Cleansing Enforcement	Partially Operational	Phased step up in place from 21st September 2020 pending release of staff from Crematorium
Workplace Health and Safety (including H&S Reopening a business/Covid regulations)	Operational (controlled operating model)	
Food Safety	Operational (controlled operating model)	
Sewer Baiting	Operational (controlled operating model)	
Night (daytime & night time)	Operational (controlled operating model)	
Private water supplies Risk assessments/sampling (Drinking Water Inspectorate)	Operational (controlled operating model)	
Pest Control - Home Treatments	Partially Operational	Service recovery is dependent on recent restrictions related to BCC area.

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Off street car parking	Operational (controlled operating model)	
Radiation Monitoring	Partially Operational	31/10/2020
Home Safety	Partially Operational	31/10/2020
Industrial Pollution Control	Partially Operational	31/10/2020
Consumer Advice	Temporarily Suspended	Staff redeployed to the Crematorium and Public Office.
Tobacco Control	Temporarily Suspended	Staff redeployed to Crematorium and Covid Restrictions Enforcement Work

3.8 Second Wave Planning:

There is a risk of a second wave and the potential for new restrictions to be imposed. City Protection has learned a lot from the first wave and as a result of recovery planning all services have, or will have, a Covid risk assessment. This will mean should a second wave happen we will have the potential to keep the majority of services operational dependent, of course, on the restrictions imposed. We are currently planning for the second wave to ensure that we can be as prepared as possible to keep services operational.

3.9 Financial and resource Implications

The impact on the Councils financial deficit of recovering City Protection Services has been considered and agreed through the corporate recovery process.

3.10 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

There is no identified equality impact, this will be continuously reviewed through the service recovery process.”

The Committee noted the current position regarding service recovery within City Protection and agreed that the Director of City Services would liaise directly with those

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Members who had highlighted that they were unable to attend the Waste Workshop being held on 7th October.

Potential Restructure of Intermediate Football

The Committee considered a detailed report in relation to the planned restructure of Intermediate Football and noted that correspondence had recently been received from the Irish Football Association (IFA) advising that the proposed restructure was to be discontinued at this time. The correspondence highlighted the financial impact that the ongoing Covid -19 pandemic was having on both local clubs and local Councils and advised that the IFA had taken the decision to act responsibly in an attempt to safeguard the immediate financial viability and sustainability of current intermediate clubs. It stated that it remained the intention of the IFA Board to proceed with the proposed restructure of the football pyramid in due course to provide a clear and equitable pathway for ambitious clubs.

A number of Members welcomed the delay in the proposed restructure given its potential impact for the Council and clubs but noted that it was the IFA's intention to proceed with the proposals in due course.

It was also noted that it was unclear if the proposed changes to the ground criteria, as part of the restructure plans, were to be discontinued indefinitely and the impact that this might have on current or new pitch developments.

The Committee:

- welcomed the delay as it still had a number of concerns in relation to the proposals, including the lack of consultation with football clubs; and
- agreed to invite the IFA's Chief Executive and Chairman to a future meeting to discuss how the Association planned to proceed with the re-structure of the football pyramid and to consider the potential impact of any restructure for the Council and clubs.

Residents' Parking Scheme Update

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting held on 8th September, it had agreed that the Council would write to the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) inviting representatives to attend a future meeting of the People and Communities Committee to discuss the advancement of residents' parking schemes in urban affected communities.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services advised that the DfI had been contacted and they had advised that they were scheduled to attend a special meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee in the near future to provide their bi-annual update on DfI Roads reports and to discuss any associated highways and transportation issues. Subject the Committee's approval, it had been agreed that the update in respect of residents' parking schemes would be considered at this meeting and that Members of the People and Communities Committee be invited to attend, rather than DfI officials attending two separate meetings.

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The Committee agreed that Members of the People and Communities Committee be invited to attend a special meeting of City Growth and Regeneration Committee, where representatives from the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) would be presenting the department's bi-annual update, which would include consideration of residents' parking schemes.

Finance, Procurement and Performance

Support to Community Partners 2020 Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 To update Members on the progress of the funding allocated to support community needs over the summer months and to ask Members for consideration as to how that support can be extended to meet ongoing needs up to end March 2021.**

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to approve the following;**

- Note the update on financial investment in communities as part of the summer funding 2020 and the lessons learned
- Note the additional external funding secured from DfC, Shared City Partnership and Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (in progress) to further support communities
- Agree the continuing grant funding approach for financial investment in communities for the remainder of 20/21
- Delegate authority to the Director (Operational) City & Neighbourhood Services to make operational decisions relating to the running of the remainder of the 20/21 grant funding approach to include making awards, assessing demand for each strand of the overall fund, allocating additional funding should it become available and temporarily pausing a strand/s should demand exceed available budget
- Delegate authority to the Director (Operational) City & Neighbourhood Services to accept new offers of funding in support of communities from external funders e.g. DfC Access to Food and Financial Inclusion Funds with retrospective reporting to Committee
- Agree to extend the existing 20/21 Community Capacity and Revenue Buildings Grant Programmes for a further year until end March 2022 with final funding allocations

subject to Committee consideration when final budget allocation is known from DfC

- To authorise Officers to develop the 21/22 Community Provision Grant Programme as detailed at point 3.21

3.0 Main report

Community Provision Summer Funding Update

3.1 Members will recall in July 2020 a further financial investment of £636,057 (comprised of funding from BCC, DfC, TEO/SCP and DoJ/NIPB/PCSP's) was agreed to support recovery at a community level, which was in addition to the £939K financial investment in communities as part of the COVID-19 emergency response.

3.2 This investment took into account the lessons learned from the COVID-19 emergency response, in particular feedback from community partners and the revised grant process replaced the previous individual grant programmes delivered by the Council.

3.3 The new approach was comprised of two strands (detailed below) and an update is provided on the progress to date on each of these elements:

3.4 Strand 1 – Strategic Funding of Key Area Based Organisations

Proposed Budget: £486,000

Of the 9 lead partners across the city for this fund the position is as follows:

- Proposals received, due diligence completed and delivery commenced – 6 lead partners
- Proposals received, due diligence in progress – 2 lead partners
- Proposal not received – 1 lead partner

The development of proposals and due diligence process has been supported throughout the summer by staff from within our Area Support Teams working closely with lead partners.

3.5 Strand 2 - Micro Grants

Initial Budget: £150,000 (but with delegated authority given to Director (Operational) City and Neighbourhood Services to enhance this subject to demand and should further funding become available.

Maximum allocation per organisation: £1,000 per organisation

- 3.6 In August 2020, Committee agreed that given the significant demand, should further funding be received central government, it could be used to support the extension of the Micro Grant programme under the delegated authority of the Director (Operational) City and Neighbourhood Services.
- 3.7 As indicated at point 3.6 demand for the micro grant has far exceeded expectation and under delegated authority granted to the Director (Operational) City and Neighbourhood Services, further funds had to be added to this grant programme (from additional central government grant funding received, see point 3.12 for further detail).
- 3.8 For Members information, the average turnaround time for the micro grants programme from receipt of application to payment of funds is 17 days. This is enabled by the commitment of our staff in our Area Support Teams, a streamlined process and reductions in unnecessary bureaucracy (in keeping with the Department of Finance Reducing Bureaucracy for the Voluntary and Community Sector Code of Practice 2015).
- 3.9 As updated at Committee in August 2020, Council was expecting further financial support from the Department for Communities through the Community Support Programme, although detail on the exact amount at that stage was not known. Confirmation of the exact amount has now been received and DfC are providing an additional £486,000 to support communities through the Community Support Programme up to end March 2021.
- 3.10 £135,000 of this funding was required to meet the significant demand for micro grants resulting in a total financial investment in communities as detailed below up to end September 2020:

Micro Grant applications received, assessed and grant paid to 15/9/20 – 269

Micro Grant financial investment in community to 15/09/20 - £250,079

Micro Grant anticipated total demand up to end September 2020 - £ 285,079 (304 applications)

This leaves a remaining £351,000 from the additional funding secured from DfC to support further grant funding.

- 3.11 Additionally, given the positive feedback about this way of grant funding and the uncertain delivery environment going forward as a result of COVID-19, both the Shared City Partnership and

Policing and Community Safety Partnership are in the process of committing more funding to support the wider Council approach. This will add a further £180,000 approximately to compliment the DfC investment up to end March 2021.

This gives a total further flexible financial investment available for communities up to end March 2021 of £531,000 at this time.

3.12 Additional restricted funds from DfC

DfC are in the process of making further restricted monies available in the following areas, with DfC setting the terms of reference for each fund as detailed below. Given the time pressures involved, delegated authority is requested for the Director (Operational) City and Neighbourhood Services to progress the delivery of the Access to Food and Financial Inclusion Fund in a co-design manner with the partners detailed below.

3.13 Access to Food – £176,365 (up to end March 2021)

This fund is designed to facilitate strategic consideration of how access to food is addressed in a more strategic and considered manner taking in to account all of the learning from the COVID-19 emergency response, with all relevant community/voluntary and statutory partners involved in the discussion and co-designing the solutions on a council by council basis.

- Within the economically vulnerable group, is it a poverty issue or food poverty issue?
- For the short term, how do we build in more robust assurance mechanisms in terms of impacts of support and who is the most appropriate delivery agent?
- What are the characteristics of those seeking help with food (those in receipt of benefits, those in work etc?)
- To what extent did the issues precede the emergency; are due to the emergency; or will emerge due to the overall economic impact of the emergency?
- How do we move from an emergency response towards a longer term food poverty approach, in the context of the Anti-poverty Strategy?

3.14 Members will also be aware that as Council and community partners transitioned out of the provision of emergency food parcels as part of the DfC scheme, we retained existing contractual capacity with the Red Cross for the following types of community support:

- Provision of essential supplies including emergency food
- Pickup of prescriptions and grocery deliveries
- Emergency financial hardship

3.15 However, demand for access to the Red Cross food parcels is low and there is significant value left should the need arise again for any of these services in the coming months.

3.16 Officers will be engaging with relevant voluntary and community sector partners in the coming weeks for their input to proposals on how the Access to Food funding is used (within the stated objectives from DfC)

3.17 **Financial Inclusion - £175,148**

The aim of the Covid-19 Financial Inclusion Partnership Fund will be to target those most likely to be adversely impacted by the economic fallout of the pandemic, help build financial resilience and improve overall financial wellbeing through access to money management, low cost/affordable credit, promoting savings and linking into holistic debt and income maximisation advice.

It is intended that the Fund will be allocated through Councils to enable 'debt preventative measures' through partnership working by community level organisations, best placed to support individuals as they seek to improve their financial wellbeing and build resilience in the Covid-19 recovery phase.

3.18 Through early targeted support, the Fund aims to:

- Identify those people who would benefit from direct, targeted advice and support;
- Provide access to money management/budgeting advice;
- Ensure early referrals to formal, regulated debt advice services;
- Improve awareness of, and increasing access to, affordable credit from responsible lenders;
- Improve awareness and increase access to income and benefits maximisation;
- Promote a savings culture (for those that can save) to help build resilience to future financial shocks.

Officers will be engaging with the Belfast Advice Group and the participating consortia in the coming weeks for their input to proposals on how this funding is used (within the stated objectives from DfC).

This financial investment at a micro grant level has enabled a significant and extensive programme of activities to take place across the city.

3.19 Examples of programmes/activities for both Strategic Funding and Micro Grants

An extensive programme of activities and service delivery has taken place across the city to include:

- Activity Programmes for young people and youth diversionary/outreach
- Community Arts and video/photography programmes
- Physical activity and community sports programmes
- Literacy/Numeracy workshops and back to school support
- Mental health, wellbeing, mindfulness and resilience programmes
- Capacity Building and Group Support
- Counselling and Talking Therapy
- Environmental Programmes, Community Clean-ups and upcycling from waste
- Digital inclusion programmes
- Family Activities e.g. outdoor cinema
- Good Morning and social contact programmes
- Homeless Outreach
- Men's Sheds
- Silent Discos
- Train the Trainer Health and Well-being
- Volunteer support and development

3.20 Lessons Learned from Summer Community Grant Fund 2020

As has been the case throughout, our approach to supporting communities has been informed by their feedback and the most recent lessons learned about the summer grant fund 2020 are detailed below.

- Communities are trying their best to resume services/activities but the constantly changing operating context makes this very challenging. Having one grant programme with a range of high level outcomes provides a common focus but with sufficient flexibility for unexpected changes.
- Community partners are asking for a more sustained financial investment to take them up to March 2021 to

allow them to properly plan and deliver against the needs of their residents.

- Demand has been much higher than expected for the micro grant indicating an appetite for smaller amounts of money and reduced bureaucracy that can be mobilised quickly for one off/short term events/activities.
- However, there remains a gap for a grant of a higher value to allow community partners to deliver larger programmes/activities over a longer period up to March 2021.
- There also remains a gap in providing financial support to community partners for unexpected premises costs (e.g. screens/signage) or for increased consumables due to COVID-19 (e.g. sanitiser, masks, cleaning products).
- Demand for the micro grant with reduced levels of bureaucracy as resulted in a large number of organisations operating at a community level applying for funding but who had no previous relationship with Council. This now provides a strong platform for us to provide further support for them either in their organisational development and/or access to further funding.
- The administration associated with grants needs to be transitioned to the online grants management software to enable easier access for community partners.

3.21 Continuing Grant Funding Approach 20/21

Taking all of the above in to account, the following is recommended as the continuing grant funding approach up to end March 2021 (using the flexible funding from DfC, Shared City Partnership and Policing and Community Safety Partnerships).

The total budget available at present would be £531,000 but with the potential for additional funds in the future. The approach would have three strands:

1. **Micro Grants** - continuation with next tranche opening in November 2020 for delivery up to end March 2021, with increase in maximum award available to groups to £1,500 (Estimated Fund Value – £150,000)
2. **Small Grants** – introduction of new category of grant with larger maximum value of £5,000 (Estimated Fund Value - £250,000)
3. **Strategic Funding of Key Area Based Organisations** – ongoing support for 9 key area based organisations based on their spend to date of existing allocations, anticipated future need up to end March 2021 and with a

focus on alignment with Belfast: Our Recovery, identification of area strategic priorities and enabling collaboration and partnership working in support of those priorities. As proposals are developed in each area, they will be brought forward to Committee for consideration (Estimated Fund Value - £131,000)

3.22 The above fund values are estimated as demand is difficult to predict in this uncertain operating environment, however, delegated authority is being requested to the Director (Operational) City & Neighbourhood Services to make operational decisions relating to the running of the remainder of the 20/21 grant funding approach to include making awards, assessing demand for each strand of the overall fund, allocating additional funding should it become available, reallocating unspent funding and temporarily pausing a strand/s should demand exceed available budget, with retrospective reporting to Committee on a regular basis.

3.23 On the basis of the learning to date and the ongoing feedback received from communities it is recommended that the existing priorities for funding remain the same as:

- Children and Young People: Summer activities and programmes, negative educational and wellbeing impacts of COVID-19 and digital connectivity
- Civic Pride: Communities are rightly proud of the huge volunteering effort and sense of neighbourliness and community spirit and want to develop that
- Preventing Isolation: the impact of COVID-19 on those shielding has been significant and a huge community effort is needed to support those individuals, with digital connectivity an element
- Emotional Wellbeing: There is widespread concern about then emotional wellbeing concerns of vulnerable individuals, families and communities
- Anti-Social Behaviour: Levels of anti-social behaviour, particularly in parks/open spaces has increased due to people not being at school/work and periods of good weather

3.24 With the addition of the following priorities given the importance of supporting community partners to recover their services and facilities for the benefit of their communities in what is a very uncertain operating environment:

- Unexpected Premises and PPE Costs: In recovering services and opening premises, community partners will have to make small scale physical changes to their

premises and purchase PPE to ensure social distancing. These are unplanned for costs placing an additional financial burden on them. Groups in receipt of an existing revenue buildings grant from Council or other central government funder will not be eligible unless they can provide evidence their existing grants will not cover expected costs up to end March 2021.

- **Connectivity and Inclusion:** Programmes and activities that promote connectivity and inclusion within communities, between communities and between communities and statutory partners as we all navigate the uncertainty of the coming months. This will also support programmes and activities which will enhance and develop grass roots community capacity.

3.25 Thematic Funding

The organisations funded under thematic funding from the initial COVID-19 emergency response as all either continuing with delivery within their allocated budget or in the process of securing additional resources if needed from the Shared City Partnership and/or Policing and Community Safety Partnership/s. No additional requests have been made to Council to date, but Officers continue to work closely with these groups and will connect them with other funders as needed.

3.26 Maximising Participation

As well as promoting the continuing financial investment in communities on Council website and social media to maximise accessibility, Officers will liaise directly with every organisation that had previously made grant applications under the pre-COVID-19 grant processes to update them on what financial support is available for the 20/21 financial year, this will include those organisations who made an application under our small grants programme Tranche 1.

3.27 Capacity and Revenue Buildings Grant 21/22

In March 2020, Council authorised the release of the planned 2020 Capacity and Buildings Revenue grants to applicants. This was a planned grant process and all organisations who made an application, received an award as detailed below:

- **Building Revenue grants - 74 grants totalling £985,405**
These grants are aimed at community development organisations which address the needs of their community by delivering a broad based programme from their building. The building may be used by the local

neighbourhood, or the community may be from across the whole city for a thematic/special interest group.

- **Capacity Building Grants - 34 grants totalling £1,021,336**
These grants are aimed at lead community development organisations that advocate the interests of their local groups, area and residents; and support local community groups to ensure good practice in governance, committee procedures, appropriate policies and financial management.

3.28 Many grant recipients continue to be engaged in COVID-19 response and community partners remain under significant pressure. Taking this in to account and the increasing concern about further pressure at a community level as we move forward in to the winter months with additional COVID-19 impacts, it is recommended that the existing Capacity and Buildings Revenue grants are extended for a further year (up to end March 2022) without further open call. Additionally, other staffing resource pressures at present and with more expected in the coming months, the significant workload operating an open call of this size requires 6 months advance notice which is not possible to facilitate at present.

3.29 Members should note that DfC have changed their financial allocation model regionally to the Community Support Fund, but we do not have exact detail on how or if this will affect Belfast. Taking this in to account, further engagement will be needed with Committee on specific financial allocations to the Capacity and Building Revenue Grant Programmes as further detail becomes available.

3.30 **Wider Community Provision Grant Approach 21/22**

Ongoing engagement with Committee in recent months has demonstrated significant learning from the COVID-19 experience in how we provide financial support to communities in a way that is agile, flexible, accessible and with proportionate levels of bureaucracy. The feedback from community partners is that this approach is working more effectively for them than our previous grant processes to date and they would welcome improvements to our grant programme.

3.31 Taking that in to account, Officers will engage with funders and partnerships to secure participation in reviewing community provision grant programmes as well as seeking the necessary approvals in due course:

- PCSP Small Grants/Policing Committee (DoJ/NIPB/BCC/PCSP)
- Good Relations Grants/Bonfire and Cultural Expression Programme Grants - (TEO/BCC/SCP)
- Community Development Summer Scheme Grants (DfC/BCC)
- Community Development Small Project Grants (DfC/BCC)
- Ur City 2 Grants (Children/Young People in N'hood Renewal Areas) (BCC)
- Parks Events Small Grants (BCC)

The estimated total value of these grants is approximately £900,000.

3.32 Officers are additionally requesting authority to use this opportunity to embed the learning from COVID-19 in to a new approach for 21/22 and beyond. This is a significant piece of work which will require further political and community engagement in the coming months but would be based on the following:

- Improved strategic alignment (including Belfast: Our Recovery) both within Council and with external partners utilising the Community Planning Partnership and associated Boards;
- Focus on outcomes and impact rather than activities and functional areas;
- Encourage co-design and community participation;
- Effective delivery mechanisms to include a streamlined programme, streamlined and consistent processes, innovative community financial investment methods as well as traditional grant funding;
- Reducing bureaucracy and administration to a proportionate level;
- Consideration of citywide as well as area priorities;
- Maximising accessibility and eligibility, particularly for those groups who would have accessed previous schemes.

3.33 Financial Implications

As detailed in the report

3.34 Equality or Good Relations Implications and Rural Needs Assessment

This will be considered throughout and any appropriate issues highlighted to Members. Any amendments to existing scheme

or new scheme will be considered in the context of any equality/Good Relations and rural needs considerations.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Operational Issues

Partner Agreement - Ulidia Playing Fields

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 To advise committee of delays in progressing discussions on an alternative management model in the form of a long-term lease at the site and a request from the Agreement holder for additional support until a decision is made on the management model.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Committee is asked to consider the requested additional support by Rosario YC and:

- to agree to provide a maximum financial payment of up to £2,000 per month for staff costs, subject to vouching of fully evidenced expenditure from November 2020 to March 2021

3.0 Main report

- 3.1 Ulidia Playing Fields is subject to a Partner Agreement with Rosario YC. The Agreement is for a term of five years to the last day of August 2020 with an option to extend for a further two years. The Partner Agreement requires the Club to deliver sports development outcomes based on the Club’s annual plan and to assume responsibility for day to day operation of the site including key holding, cleaning, security, health and safety duties etc. Council supports the Club in the form of four quarterly payments of £5,000 based on satisfactory delivery of the sports development plan and compliance with operational requirements.
- 3.2 During the term of the Agreement Council developed the site and installed a floodlit synthetic pitch.
- 3.3 A meeting was held at the beginning of December 2018, attended by political representatives, club representatives and officers. Rosario YC made a presentation highlighting the scale

and scope of the Club's activities, how their activities support the Belfast Agenda and other relevant strategies, their vision for further development of the site in the future and their ambition to assume full responsibility for running the site.

- 3.4 The club has since presented a sports development plan which details their ambition to extend their programming by developing the site further, this would be based on them holding a long term lease.
- 3.5 Departmental Officers have been working with the club to further progress discussions around their plans and aspiration for a potential Community Asset Transfer, with the club looking at providing detail information demonstrating clear community benefit from their plans. Due to difficulties arising from the Covid19 outbreak progress has been stalled. Officers intend to make contact Rosario in the near future to ascertain how this is progressing.
- 3.6 At the December 2018 meeting the Club highlighted their concerns that the development of the site to include the synthetic floodlit pitch will now require them to operate well beyond their original commitment due to the intensified hourly use, extended opening hours and the move from seasonal to yearlong programming. They further identified additional risks to site users in particular control of parking due to higher volumes of traffic with concurrent bookings at evenings, weekends and outside daylight hours. They requested that Council provide an additional monthly amount of £2,000 to support them in creating part-time posts to operate the site to Council's standards for the term of the Partner Agreement. This request was approved by People and Communities committee in January 2019 to be effective until the end of March 2020. This end date was in anticipation that a new management model would be in place in January 2020.
- 3.7 Following the Covid19 outbreak the staff were furloughed, as activities have resumed at the site staff have now returned to full duties. The Club vice-chair wrote to the Director of Neighbourhood Services on 23rd September 2020 (see appendix 1) requesting that the £2,000 additional payment be resumed until discussions on the management model are completed.
- 3.8 Financial Implications

An amount of £10,000 will be required to support this request from November 2020 to March 2021, there is allowance for this within existing estimates.

3.9 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

There are no additional impacts related to this report.”

The Committee agreed to provide a maximum financial payment of up to £2,000 per month for staff costs, subject to vouching of fully evidenced expenditure from November 2020 to March 2021.

Fixed Penalty Charges

The Director of City Services drew the Members' attention to correspondence which had been received from Newry, Mourne and Down District Council (NMDDC) seeking Belfast City Council's support in respect of a proposal that it had submitted to the DAERA Minister. The Director detailed that NMDDC had requested that the maximum amount payable under a fixed penalty notice in respect of littering and dog fouling offences be increased from the current limit of £80.00 to £250.00, it had also asked the Minister to consider the possibility of devolving powers for the setting of fixed penalty rates to local councils.

A number of the Members stated that they felt that the proposal to raise the maximum fine payable from £80 to £250 was excessive, although there was general agreement from the Committee in respect of the request and also in respect of the suggestion that the powers for the setting of fixed penalty rates be devolved to local councils.

During discussion, several of the Members advised that it would be helpful to receive a report at a future meeting detailing the current enforcement measures in place, to included detail in respect of the actual number of fixed penalty fines issued in respect of dog fouling and littering, staff resources and education prevention measures.

The Committee:

- noted the correspondence from Newry Mourne and Down District Council and agreed that, whilst it felt that the proposal to raise the maximum fine payable for Fixed Penalty Notices in regard to littering and dog fouling offences from £80 to £250 was an excessive rise, it did support, in principle, the devolution of powers for setting Fixed Penalty rates to local councils; and
- agreed that a letter be forwarded to the DAERA Minister outlining support for this proposal with a caveat that the proposed increase in fee might be excessive; and
- agreed that an update report be submitted to a future meeting respect of dog fouling and littering.

Request from Waste Industry Safety and Health Forum NI

The Committee was advised that a request had been received from the Chair of the Waste Industry Safety and Health Forum NI (WISHNI) seeking to appoint Belfast City

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Council's Waste Officer, Ms. Jennifer Stephens, to the role of Deputy Chair of WISHNI for the foreseeable future.

The Director of City Services advised that the role of the Deputy Chair was to continue to support the work of WISHNI, to help deliver on its strategy and to deputise for the Chair in their absence.

The time commitment involved in carrying out this role was estimated at approximately a half day per month. Any additional time commitments would be made in the officer's own time. Fulfilment of the role had been requested for the foreseeable future, with no set timeframe or end date stated. However, should the request be granted, the officer would seek to review the position after two years from the date of appointment.

The Committee approved the request from WISHNI for Jennifer Stephens, Waste Officer, to accept the role as Deputy Chair for WISHNI.

Issues Raised in Advance by Members

Roselawn Crematorium - Alderman Rodgers

Alderman Rodgers commended and thanked the Council's cemetery and crematorium staff for their hard work and dedication in maintaining the service during the ongoing pandemic and sought clarity as to whether any of the current health and safety measures could be relaxed. The Member also highlighted that the gates at the entrance to the facility were in need of being repainted.

In response, the Director of City Service acknowledged that, whilst the current restrictions on the numbers attending funerals at the crematorium was an extremely sensitive matter, it was necessary to ensure that Covid secure measures were in place for the safety of all staff and users of the facility and to ensure that the service remained operational, given that it was the only facility in Northern Ireland. She provided an assurance that this would continue to be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis in line with government guidelines.

The Director advised that Roselawn Crematorium was a listed building, therefore, permission was required from the Historic Environment Division (HED) to undertake maintenance to the gates. This had been applied for and once received the necessary works would be undertaken.

In addition, the Member also suggested that the Council should look at implementing a rolling maintenance programme throughout the city's cemeteries as many of them were falling into a state of disrepair.

The Committee noted the suggestion and the comments of the Director.

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SPECIAL MEETING OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Baker (Chairperson);
Alderman Rodgers; and
Councillors Black, Bunting, Cobain, Flynn,
McReynolds, Mulholland, Newton, Pankhurst
and Smyth.

In attendance: Harry Booker;
John Joe McGrady;
Luke Patterson;
Carter Wickham, Belfast Youth Forum;
Mrs. C. Taggart, Neighbourhood Services Manager;
Mrs. G. O'Hare, Community Development Officer; and
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors Collins, de Faoite, M. Kelly, McAteer and Vener.

Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were recorded.

Belfast Youth Forum Update

In accordance with a previous decision, the Committee was advised that representatives from the Belfast Youth Forum were in attendance to provide an update in relation to the work of the Forum.

The Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, welcomed the representatives to the meeting.

Update in respect of request to meet DoE and PHA

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 8th January, it had agreed that letters be forwarded to the Permanent Secretaries of both the Department of Health (DoH) and the Department of Education (DoE) and also to the Public Health Agency seeking a joint meeting with representatives of the Committee and the Belfast Youth Forum to discuss both the 'Any Use?' Relationship and Sexual Education Campaign and report and the 'Elephant in the Room' mental Health Campaign and report.

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The Members were then referred to responses that had been received from the DoE and the PHA. The Democratic Services Officer confirmed that, to date, no response had been received from the DoH.

The DoE indicated that it would be willing to meet to discuss these important issues, whilst the PHA had sought clarity in respect of the specific matters that the Youth Forum wished to address at the meeting. Due to the ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic, this matter had not been progressed and the representatives were asked how they wished to proceed.

Following discussion, it was agreed that letters would again be forwarded to all three organisations seeking to invite a representative to the next joint meeting of the Committee to discuss both the 'Any Use?' Relationship and Sexual Education Campaign and report and the 'Elephant in the Room' mental Health Campaign and report. The letter to the PHA should explain that the Members of the Youth Forum were keen to learn more about the role of the PHA to help it develop a better understanding of its remit.

**'Any Use' Relationship and Sexual Health
Education Campaign – Luke Patterson**

At the previous joint meeting held in January 2020, the BYF had presented its piece of research to the Elected Members of the People and Communities Committee on Relationship and Sexual Education (RSE). This was entitled 'Any Use?'

The aims of the report were to find out young people's opinions on RSE in Belfast; how useful young people find their current RSE; and if young people understand their rights in relation to RSE.

The research had been undertaken in conjunction with the QUB Centre for Children's Rights and Common Youth who had helped develop an online survey, designed survey questions, collect surveys from young people and analysed the findings. 771 young people had taken part in the survey and some of the main findings included the following:

With regard to the right to receive RSE:

- 72% of young people said they knew they had a right to receive RSE in school;
- 52% of young people said they felt their right to RSE was not being met;
- Only 23% felt that adults trusted young people to make their own choices about relationships and sex;
- The proportion of 14 – 16 year olds saying their right was met (56%) was significantly higher than the proportion of those 17 or over saying this (43%); and
- 58% felt that adults did not trust them and one in five (20%) said they did not know if adults trusted them in this regard.

The report then highlighted how young people described their RSE and, overall, negative word associations dominated those answers with the four most common being basic, unhelpful, useless and bias.

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With regard to learning about sexual relationships, the three most popular sources from which young people said they learned about relationships and sex were through friends and peers (62%); social media (55%); and lessons in school (54%).

The survey then asked a range of questions about RSE in schools and how useful it was. The vast majority of young people (86%) felt that school was the best place to receive RSE, yet only 60% of respondents said that this actually occurred. In relation to how useful their RSE in school was, 66% of young people felt that the information they received was either “not very useful” or “not useful at all”, with only 10% saying that they thought the information they received was “very useful”. The report then highlighted through which subjects RSE was taught in schools and questioned how the young people felt RSE should be delivered in schools and who should deliver it, with the most commonly given response being a qualified RSE teacher. The survey also sought views on what should be taught to young people in RSE, with the most popular subject young people wanted to learn about was personal relationships.

The representatives of the forum then presented its recommendations for government and policy makers which were:

1. To adopt a rights-based and proactive approach to relationship and sexual education;
2. Work with young people to co-produce a RSE curricular programme for schools; and
3. For such a curricular programme to be taught by specialised, qualified and trained staff.

The Committee was advised that following the last meeting, where the findings had initially been presented, the Youth Forum been approached by representatives from the South Eastern Health and Social Care Board who had also been in attendance at the ‘Any Use?’ presentation in the City Hall. They had expressed an interest in replicating the research in other council areas in Northern Ireland. The Youth Forum was pleased with this opportunity, as they felt it would provide them with more substance when lobbying government to support and implement its recommendations. They were currently looking at progressing how this research could be replicated effectively. In addition, the representative reported that Joe Harris, Sexual Health Co-ordinator for the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, had been invited to attend the BYF December meeting to discuss the findings.

The Committee noted that, unfortunately as a result of the current restrictions, the official launch of the report which had been scheduled for March had been delayed. He advised that the BYF were now investigating a digital launch as well as a digital presentation to the Education Committee in Stormont.

Members of the Committee commended the Belfast Youth Forum on its RSE campaign and the production of the report.

Noted.

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Diversity Project – Harry Booker

The Committee was reminded that, at the previous joint meeting with the Committee, the Youth Forum had given a brief overview of its latest piece of work - HOME. The Youth Forum representative advised that, since then, its members had been working with youth worker Mr. Neil Symington and Dr. Jonny Byrne from Ulster University on a piece of research in respect of Black and Minority Ethnic young people's experiences of living in Belfast. He advised that it was the intention of BYF to conduct a number of focus groups with different ethnic youth groups across Belfast. The findings from these focus groups would then be analysed and a report would be prepared which would include recommendations as to how Belfast could be more culturally diverse city. It was also their intention to produce a short film that would focus on some of the BAME young people's experiences.

The representative advised that working with Dr. Byrne had enabled the Youth Forum Members to draw up relevant questions for the focus groups. He reported that these centred around the following five themes:

- A sense of belonging;
- Racism and prejudice;
- School life;
- Living in Belfast; and
- Changes they would like to see.

Unfortunately, as a result of both the summer holidays and the added Covid-19 restrictions, it had proven difficult to organise focus groups. It was the BYF's intention that it would approach schools in the Belfast area and ask them to identify a number of BAME young people and hopefully to carry out the focus groups in a socially distanced way within the school. They could then, hopefully, identify a small number of participants who would engage at a later time to form part of a short film about their experiences.

He concluded by advising that it might be necessary to conduct the forums via Microsoft Teams. Dr. Byrne would analyse the results received from the focus groups and would compile a report based on the findings which would be made available in due course.

A Member stated that she would like to see the young people taking the lead in more elements of research as she felt that they were best placed to progress many of the issues close to their own hearts. She felt that there could also be potential career opportunities in the future arising from experience gained.

The Committee was advised that officers were looking at progressing such an initiative and had held initial discussions with the Education Authority regarding the development of an OCN Level 2 certificate in Representation and Advocacy that would help provide the young people with the required skills and knowledge and also award them a recognised qualification for their efforts.

Noted.

Elephant in the Room” Mental Health Campaign – John Jo McGrady

Members of the Youth Forum presented their “Elephant in the Room Campaign”, a report which explored young people’s awareness of mental health in Northern Ireland.

The Committee was advised that, in July 2016, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child had recommended that the Northern Ireland Government invest heavily in children and young people’s mental health services. Consequently, in October 2016, the Belfast Youth Forum, alongside members from Northern Ireland Youth Forum and the Children’s Law Centre, had organised an event where over 100 young people had expressed their frustrations at the lack of mental health education and support services available in NI and called for the UN’s recommendation to be fully implemented by the NI Government.

In 2017 between members of Belfast Youth Forum and Northern Ireland Youth Forum a Youth Mental Health Committee had been established. The aim of the Mental Health Committee had been to explore issues connected to mental health and young people and to ensure that as many young people as possible had a meaningful say in shaping the future of mental health education and support services. This research would eventually take the form of the ‘Elephant in the Room’ report.

The Members noted that the aim was to establish what young people in NI thought and knew about mental health, in particular:

- Where young people got their information about mental health and how they rated it;
- Where young people liked to go to receive mental health information and support;
- How young people viewed mental health and how it impacted on their ability to speak about it;
- What actions they felt that the government should take to promote positive mental health and well-being in society.

The representative advised that a survey had been developed and 1,117 young people had responded, as well as responses from four focus groups across Northern Ireland. The focus groups had a total of 151 young people who had participated.

He reported that the findings of the research had then been broken down in to three broad themes, as follows:

- Stigma – young people indicated that there was a huge negative stigma attached to mental health which in turn led to a “culture of silence”, where young people were afraid to talk about mental health issues;
- Safe Spaces – 76% of survey respondents stated that young people were afraid to talk about mental health and there was a lack of safe spaces available to talk about it. The overall view from young people was that on-line was a good place to access mental health information, but there was issues with being able to separate fact from fiction.

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In addition, the young people had identified social media as having a negative impact; and

- Schools and Information – according to young people, the three most common places they would source information about mental health were on-line (59%), a family member (48%) and friends (45%). However, young people said the problem was that the quality of the information was inconsistent and it wasn't always useful, for example, it was usually framed in a negative way.

As a result of the findings of the Elephant in the Room report, a number of recommendations had been made, these included:

- To support the creation of a youth-led, government backed mental health campaign, challenging the culture of silence and negative stigma;
- To work with young people to develop a new and positive language around mental health by creating an age appropriate 'mental health dictionary' which could be used as part of a mental health curriculum programme;
- To engage with young people to create and fund safe digital solutions to receive mental health information and support. These digital solutions should be designed by young people for young people;
- To create a compulsory curriculum programme for all schools and colleges on mental health and wellbeing that would help to raise awareness and challenge stigma and allows young people to access consistent mental health information. This curriculum programme should be long term and embedded in schools – as it was felt that one off workshops would not be effective.
- Mental health and wellbeing training for all teachers, school support workers and youth workers to enable effective delivery of the programme.

The representative reported that, since the last joint meeting between BYF and the People and Communities Committee, the Elephant in the Room (EITR) group had been extremely active. In July 2020, young people from the EITR group had appeared before the Executive Working Group on Mental Wellbeing, Resilience and Suicide Prevention to discuss mental health reform. The young people had engaged with Ministers and encouraged them to adopt the recommendations set out in the EITR report.

Following this, in September 2020, the EITR group had met with Minister Carál Ní Chuilín from the Department for Communities (DfC) to discuss how it could support the implementation of the recommendations in the EITR report. He advised that correspondence had recently been received advising that DfC was supportive of the requirement of an app for young people to access accurate and meaningful advice on mental health as part of a Mental Health Strategy which was agreed in the New Decade, New Approach agreement. A follow up meeting was scheduled for October/November. The EITR group also stated that it intended to invite the current Mental Health Champion to the Executive, Professor Siobhan O'Neill, to meet the group. Professor O'Neill had been

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present at the presentation to Executive Working Group on Mental Wellbeing, Resilience and Suicide Prevention in July and was keen to discuss the EITR report further.

The representative advised that the Belfast Youth Forum, Northern Ireland Youth Forum and the Children's Commissioners Youth Panel had also been working together to create a mental health advocacy toolkit for young people titled 'Mind your head', which would help and support young people to take action and to campaign on local mental health issues. He explained that it would aim to help young people organise a mental health campaign project in their community and provide them with a simple steps to follow when doing this. The toolkit was in its final draft stage and would be published in the near future. A presentation on this would be given by BYF at the next joint BYF / People and Communities Committee meeting.

A number of Members commended the Youth Forum in regard to the progress made with the EITR campaign and the establishment of the 'Mind your Head' toolkit and stated that they looked forward to hearing more about it at the next meeting.

Discussion ensued, during which a number of the members of the Youth Forum reflected on their own experiences in relation to mental health issues, particularly over the lockdown period, which had exacerbated mental health problems for many young people. It was noted that many had found the period to be extremely mentally challenging, either they or people that they knew, had struggled with issues such as isolation and loneliness, worries over their schoolwork and tense relationships with their families.

Discussion also ensued in respect of economic and social inequality making it difficult for people to access mental health services. It was further noted that the housing points system was hard to navigate, which presented challenges for young people. Concerning social media, the representatives agreed that whilst it was often perceived to have a negative impact on the mental health of young people it could also be used creatively to promote and share positive mental health campaigns.

The Members noted that, as the pandemic continued, it was important to understand what young people had been experiencing and to establish ways of supporting them to resume to normal life, or the 'new normal', over the coming months and years and to ensure that the necessary support mechanisms were available to them and that this was progressed within the inclusive growth concept.

The Members noted that they were keen to continue to work with the BYF to learn from them and to ensure that the necessary support was available.

Noted.

Sister City Podcast – Carter Wickham

The Committee was advised that, in January 2020, a number of the BYF members had participated in a podcast with young people from the Mayor's Youth Council in Nashville. The podcast can be found on the podcast section of <http://www.radioynp.com/>. A further two podcasts had been scheduled to take place but these had unfortunately been postponed due the Covid-19 pandemic.

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The representative stated that, as the Members would be aware, Belfast City Council had a relationship with Nashville as a 'Sister City' for 25 years. The Belfast-Nashville relationship had been born out of a shared interest and connectivity through music but it had since grown into education, tourism, business, city governance, resilience and, thanks to this project, connecting young people in each city.

The representative explained that, as the next podcast would be taking place later than originally planned, it would involve a new cohort of young people from Nashville. Six young people from Nashville would be taking part, along with five members of the Belfast Youth Forum.

He advised that an initial informal 'meet up' had taken place last Saturday in order to build up relationships, a few more of these would be held prior to recording the next podcast which would address the topic of social unrest and how it looked in each of the two countries.

The Committee noted that as a result of the Covid regulations, recording of the next podcast would have to be done differently, two BYF members would attend (socially distanced) the Youth Action premises to work the equipment, whilst everyone else taking part would dial in to the call via skype. This would be recorded as a podcast and published, probably the next day, on Radio YNP (Youth Network for Peace) and could be accessed using the link above.

The Committee noted that Radio YNP was a youth-led Online Radio Station developed for SEUPB's Youth Network For Peace program, aiming to engage with young people from both sides of the Irish border, to connect them and to make them more aware of the issues facing them in their local areas.

Noted.

Belfast Youth Forum Recruitment

The Committee was reminded that, at the previous joint meeting, it had been agreed that the BYF recruitment process would commence in September and end in October, in line with the academic year.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager asked the Members to note that, at the People and Communities meeting in August 2020, it had agreed, due to the ongoing impact of Covid 19, to extend the current cohort of members' term for another year.

She advised that the next recruitment line would now be as follows:

July 2021-September 2021	Engage with youth providers across Belfast regarding upcoming recruitment
September 2021	Expressions of Interest forms distributed

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Sep / Oct 2021	Youth Forum information session
Oct 2021	Young people invited to attend for interview – 40 young people recruited
Late Oct 2021	Induction night for young people and their families

The Committee also noted that, in response to discussion at the August meeting of the People and Communities Committee, any current vacancies within the Belfast Youth Forum, now or within the next 12 months, would be filled using targeted recruitment to address any gaps in relation to communities underrepresented in the Forum. To facilitate this, contact would be made with Elected Representatives, youth providers, statutory agencies and local communities in order to encourage people residing in these areas to apply. It was further noted that, although targeted recruitment would be used to encourage young people who were underrepresented to apply, applications would also be accepted from young people from all areas and communities within Belfast.

Noted.

Any other business/follow up from previous meeting

The Committee referred to discussion at the previous joint meeting in January and agreed to establish if the Youth Forum's findings in its pilot study 'Poverty: it's not a choice' Campaign had been included in the Council's Inclusive Growth Strategy.

The Democratic Services Officer undertook to establish if this had been progressed and to update the Youth Forum accordingly.

Chairperson

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City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 7th October, 2020

REMOTE MEETING OF CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Brooks (Chairperson);
Aldermen Dorrian and Kingston; and
Councillors Beattie, Donnelly, Ferguson,
Gormley, Hanvey, Heading, Howard,
T. Kelly, Lyons, Maskey, McLaughlin,
McMullan, Murphy, O'Hara, Spratt
and Whyte.

In attendance: Mr. A. Reid, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;
Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development;
Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration
and Development;
Ms. W. Langham, Programme Director (Destination Hub);
Ms. E. Henry, Senior Manager - Culture and Tourism;
Ms. K. Gilliland, Neighbourhood Services Manager (North); and
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor McAllister.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 9th September 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 October, subject to the amendment of the minute under the heading "EuroPride Bid (Belfast Pride)", to provide that the Council agrees to use the Cultural Strategy's sector development programme to provide support to Belfast Pride and LGBTQ sector organisations to review governance, address outstanding issues and ensure that the organisation is best placed to deliver projects of significant scale such as the EuroPride 2023 bid.

Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were reported.

Restricted Items

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

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the press and public from the meeting during discussion of the 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 (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Translink Written Presentation

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 12th August, it had agreed to receive a written presentation from Translink in relation to a major refurbishment of existing rail infrastructure in Belfast through a project called the Central Area Track Renewal (CATR).

The Committee noted the written presentation from Translink in relation to the CATR project.

Destination Hub - Concept Update Report

The Programme Director (Belfast Destination Hub) and Senior Manager - Culture and Tourism presented an update on the progress made with regard to the Destination Hub concept. This included information in relation to an outline business case, site acquisitions, spatial assessments and concept development.

It was highlighted that the Belfast Destination Hub Outline Business Case would be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in October 2020.

After discussion, the Committee:

1. Noted the progress made in relation to the Destination Hub concept;
2. Noted that, following the Destination Hub presentation made to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 18th September, the preferred site for the Destination Hub was agreed and officers had been authorised to examine options for acquisition with a report to be brought back to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee;
3. Noted that a further a presentation on the Destination Hub Outline Business Case would be made to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee; and
4. Noted that the Committee would be provided with a timeline of the acquisition process, once agreed.

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Finance Update

The Committee noted the contents of the report which had been presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in September.

City Connectivity

The Committee was provided with an overview on city connectivity matters, which included an update on the Future City Centre Programme (FCC) which was focused on how the city centre could be re-imagined and addressed the challenges impacting the high street, particularly in the context of COVID recovery.

The Director of City Regeneration and Development advised that The Bolder Vision for Belfast was a key component of the FCC Programme and involved a significant re-think of how the City's streets and places were used to make them attractive, healthy, vibrant and accessible places. She provided an overview of the work programme and advised that regular updates would be brought to the Committee at key stages.

She also provided an update on the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) Blue and Green Infrastructure Fund and the Belfast Urban Greenway.

During discussion, the Director of City Regeneration and Development explained the engagement which had taken place with the Department for Infrastructure regarding connectivity across the city and the intended Anti-Social Behaviour interventions in Castle Street.

The Committee noted:

- That work had commenced on the next stages of a co-cliented Bolder Vision Connectivity Study with the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) and the Department for Communities, which would consider the changing nature of the use of the city centre and provide options and scenarios to inform the future landscape and priority connectivity infrastructure required to support a resilient and connected city; and
- The proposal to scope a 'Belfast Urban Greenway' Initiative as an outworking of the Bolder Vision, which sought to enhance connectivity to and from the city centre and create an urban greenway concept through the city centre. The future delivery would be subject to funding opportunities and required partnership working with various stakeholders, including DfI. The proposal could form a key element of the Bolder Vision project delivery stage.

The Zoo - Performance update Q1 2020/21

The Committee noted the Zoo performance update report for the period April – June 2020 and agreed that a report would be submitted to the Committee in relation to the feasibility study in due course.

DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme Update

The Director of City Regeneration and Development informed the Committee of the progress made in relation to the Department for Communities' (DfC) Town Centre Revitalisation Fund.

She provided an update on the first tranche of grant capital funding which included: Signage, dressing and messaging; Physical interventions and streetscape improvements/Reimagining Public Space Business Grants; and Access and Connectivity – Physical Interventions. She explained the progress which had been made in relation to emerging proposals and physical interventions in the Cathedral Quarter, Church Lane, The Linen Quarter, Castle Place Hub, Marquis Street, together with an update on proposed Parklets and Pavement Café Licence Applications.

During discussion, Members questioned how the business community and community groups, which had been recommended by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in August, were applying for the available grants and suggested that a guidance note would be beneficial to help with proposals for such funding.

In response to question from a Member, the Director of City Regeneration and Development advised that further information would be provided to the Committee in relation to proposals for the removal of Parking Bays associated with the interventions outlined in the report

The Committee:

1. Noted the progress in the delivery of the priority areas and interventions supported under tranche one of the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Fund programme, and noted the status update for the tranche two funding allocation;
2. Noted the level of demand and proposed additional budget, as agreed at the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the 18th September, in relation to the Business Grants;
3. Agreed the proposed priority areas of capital support to be developed under tranche two, pending approval and receipt of the Letter of Offer from DfC in mid-October;
4. Agreed the proposals with regard to the additional £160k of revenue monies within the DfC Revitalisation Fund, pending approval and receipt of the Letter of Offer from DfC in mid-October;
5. Noted the criticality of a partnership approach from the DfI and DfC in providing the rapid deployment of statutory and legislative powers to enable the emerging projects to be implemented in accordance with the objectives of the programme;

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6. Agreed the process of providing Funding Agreements with the BIDs as outlined in the report, and in accordance with the objectives of the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Fund programme;
7. Agreed the process of providing Letters of Offer for community and business groups as outlined in the report, and in accordance with the objectives of the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Fund programme;
8. Noted that further information would be provided in relation to proposals for the removal of Parking Bays associated with the interventions outlined in the report; and
9. Agreed that a note would be provided to the Committee by the Director of City Regeneration and Development in relation to the business community and community groups, as recommended by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in August 2020, bringing forward proposals under the physical interventions and streetscape improvements strand of the DfC Revitalisation Fund.

Festival 2022

The Committee was provided with an update on Festival 2022, an initiative funded by the UK Government in partnership with relevant departments in the devolved governments. It was reported that the focus of Festival 2022 was a celebration of creativity and innovation, with a global outlook, and the project recognised the role of the arts and creative sectors in bringing people together and fostering civic pride and helping to attract inward investment.

The Director of Economic Development advised that, following a meeting on 2nd October between SOLACE and the Department for Communities, it had been proposed that the Council, in partnership with the other councils, would act as a Strategic Delivery Body for the project alongside equivalent organisations in England, Scotland and Wales.

The Committee:

- Noted the contents of the report;
- Agreed for the Council to act as a Strategic Delivery Body in line with the request from the Department for Communities to SOLACE; and
- Agreed to receive future reports to update Members on the plans for 2020-23 in relation to festivals, events and cultural initiatives as part of Covid-19 recovery plans.

Christmas 2020 Proposals

The Director of Economic Development advised that, given the changing nature of the restrictions and the additional regulations which had been put in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic, officers had been engaging with the Christmas Market operators to explore what type of activity might be feasible to operate over the Christmas 2020 period.

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He informed the Committee that, as a result of the significant restrictions, it was proposed that the Christmas Market 2020 would be cancelled in its traditional format and outlined the proposed alternative approach for an Enchanted Garden programme within the City Hall grounds.

He confirmed that officers had also been working with a range of business organisations and other partners across the city to bring forward an animation programme that would help the businesses at this crucial trading period by driving footfall and spend – in a way that respected all social distancing protocols and regulations what had or would be put in place by the Northern Ireland Executive.

The Senior Manager - Culture and Tourism provided the Committee with a presentation in relation to the Council's Christmas Animation proposal and lighting plans.

During discussion, Members suggested that smaller, local Christmas markets could also be explored. The Director of Economic Development advised that such proposals received from traders could be considered and highlighted that St. George's Market would be an anchor for the intended light and animation programme.

He explained further the intended lighting hours of operation and proposed street performers in the City Centre. He also confirmed that the previously approved City Hall Lighting proposals had been incorporated into the scheduled City Hall animation programme.

After discussion, the Committee:

- Noted the update on the Christmas Market and the wider Christmas animation programme;
- Agreed not to proceed with the Christmas Market in its traditional format for this year and, instead, to move ahead with an Enchanted Garden programme within the City Hall grounds (the City Solicitor to take the necessary legal steps in respect of the cancellation of the market in accordance with his existing delegated authority and given notice requirements and urgency, call-in should therefore be suspended); and
- Agreed to delegate responsibility to the Strategic Director of Place and Economy to approve applications from neighbourhoods for local animation activities at Christmas.
- The Committee agreed, in accordance with Standing Order 47 (2) (c), that the decisions would not be subject to call-in, on the basis that an unreasonable delay could be prejudicial to the Council's or the public's interest.

Growing Business and the Economy

Update on Dublin - Belfast Economic Corridor

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on progress to date on work to support the development of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor and to set out the governance structure and next steps in progressing this piece of work.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1** The Committee is asked to:

- Note the contents of this report and progress to date to develop the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor
- Endorse the governance structure and propose member representation to participate on the political advisory group

3.0 Main report

At its meeting on 6 November 2019 members were provided with an update on progress to support the development of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor. At the meeting members noted the outcomes from the research paper undertaken by UU Economic Policy and endorsed the emerging plans for the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor.

- 3.2** The research paper highlighted the key success factors for economic corridors in other locations as having clear articulation of the benefit that will accrue from enhanced levels of engagement over and above what can be expected if partners are to continue to maintain the status quo and pursue their individual economic agendas. The report also detailed the current economic performance of the Corridor and the future prospects for the region based on current trends and highlighted potential areas for cooperation which could create a stronger trajectory for growth. These included sectoral development, research & innovation supports, enterprise supports, environmental resilience and infrastructure.
- 3.3** Since this initial research was undertaken the global economy has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic,

resulting in monumental declines in levels of economic activity across the board. It is clear that the pandemic will impact the partnerships plans to support economic regeneration across the corridor area, and has caused some delays in work progressing, however it highlights the interdependencies across the area and reinforces the need for a coordinated commitment to enhancing the future economic potential of the area.

- 3.4 Officers continue to work in partnership to progress with the recommendations of the research and have been engaging with councils along the economic corridor on a monthly basis.
- 3.5 Since the update brought to this committee in November 2019 there has been agreement by the partnership that now is not the time to proceed with the detailed economic modelling exercise that was previously proposed. However there is recognition that as a partnership we need to begin to progress this and as a first step in the process UU and DCU are working to build upon the initial piece of research that was completed and are developing the CReSS: Corridor Research Seminar Series. By assisting in growing the knowledge base necessary amongst partners, the aim of CReSS is to enhance the potential of the corridor.
- 3.6 In light of the work done to date on the report on The Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor: Current Profile, Potential in Recovery & Opportunities for Cooperation (June 2020) and the COVID-19 pandemic there is significant scope and impetus to grow the knowledge base by exploring: the existing and future research priorities in the context of the shifting pace of previously accepted/understood trends; the importance and role of places and regions; and the role of local government. Growing this knowledge will contribute to the overall aim of enhancing the potentiality of the corridor.
- 3.7 The series will provide a platform for regional, national and international sharing of ideas and initiatives designed to maximise the assets of corridors. The series will support the core priorities of the partnership and provides an opportunity for stakeholders in the network to showcase progress on these objectives with an audience of public officials, academics and the private sector. The out workings of the series will enable the partnership to further develop collaborative opportunities and build these into a future programme of work. Further detail on the series will be shared with the committee when it is finalised.

- 3.8** Work has also been progressing in other areas, since the last update on the corridor work Newry, Mourne and Down District Council have taken the lead in developing the branding and suite of marketing material for the partnership. This is now complete and work is underway to develop a website showcasing the partnership, key projects, linking to the work in each of the council areas.
- 3.9** On 23 June the partnership wrote to the North South Ministerial Council to draw their attention to the important and ongoing work of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor Network and its efforts at promoting cross-border economic development. Highlighting the importance of our collaborative endeavours in maximising the potential of the network to kick-start the economic recovery in each of our respective areas. This correspondence was met with a positive response and an invite for the Dublin Belfast Partnership to meet with representatives from the NSMC in September. Chief Officers from each of the eight councils and the Pro-Vice Chancellors of University College Dublin and the University of Ulster attended the meeting. At that meeting the research was discussed, potential areas of future co-operation and the need for local authorities and NSMC and relevant accountable departments to work together on emerging areas of cooperation.
- 3.10** The governance structure, including roles and responsibilities for the partnership at an advisory, strategic and operational level were discussed and agreed at the last meeting of the chief executives 27th July 2020. The governance structure agreed is included in Appendix 1. The structure includes a Political Advisory Group which will include representation from elected members from each of the partner areas.
- 3.11** This group will provide advice and opportunities to discuss strategic issues in a political context. The role of this group is not to make decisions, but to provide input and direction to achieve the ambitions of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor. All council decisions will be taken by councils through their own formal decision making processes, with progress reports being brought to this committee on a regular basis with an outline of actions, next steps and to approve any key decisions.
- 3.12** Based on this members are now required to nominate three representatives to participate on the advisory group. Meetings of the group will take place quarterly, taking place in each council area on a rotational basis. The group will be supported by the Chief Executive and Director working

groups. The chair of the group will be on a rotational basis for a period of one year and agreed by members of the advisory group.

3.13 Financial & Resource Implications

The activities outlined within this report will be resourced from the 2020/21 Economic Development budget agreed by this Committee on 4 March 2020.

3.14 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

The unit is currently undertaking a process of equality screening on the overall work programme, this will ensure consideration is given to equality and good relation impacts throughout the delivery of this project.”

The Committee:

- Noted the contents of this report and progress to date to develop the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor; and
- Endorsed the governance structure and agreed that nominees for the three Council representatives to participate on the advisory group be submitted in time for the next Party Group Leaders’ Consultative Forum for consideration.

**Growing the Economy and Working & Learning Update:
Programme of Work 2020/21**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 At a meeting of City Growth and Regeneration Committee in March 2020, the work programmes to support the delivery of targets under the Growing the Economy and Working and Learning pillars of the Belfast Agenda and the Inclusive Growth Strategy were agreed.

1.2 Given the current circumstances and the specific ongoing challenges for Belfast residents and local businesses, the purpose of this report is to update Members on:

- The current status of the council-led activities relating to Growing the Economy and Working and Learning pillars of the Belfast Agenda
- Emerging priorities and activities aimed at re-focusing the current work programme to ensure that the

council's activities to help stabilise and grow new and existing businesses, social enterprises and cooperatives in Belfast and to address growing levels of unemployment as a result of COVID-19 are effective at this time.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- **Note the work undertaken to date across a wide range of work areas within the Growing the Economy and Working and Learning pillars of the Belfast Agenda, including the outcomes achieved and scheduled towards year end**
- **Note the changing operating environment and the emerging proposals to ensure that the council interventions remain effective.**

3.0 Main report

3.1 Members will be aware that, at the City Growth and Regeneration Committee meeting on 4 March 2020, approval was given for the delivery of the Growing the Economy and Working and Learning work plans for the current financial year. These work plans were developed as part of the council's contribution towards the commitments identified under these themes within the Belfast Agenda, and to the corporate plan, as well as supporting the council's ambitions to deliver inclusive growth.

3.2 As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, officers have been working closely with local residents, businesses and delivery partners across the city to adapt the support available to ensure that it remains relevant and effective. An update on this refocussed activity was presented to this Committee on 10 June 2020. This report takes account of the work that has been further developed to support the city recovery plans – as discussed at the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 18 September 2020 – focusing on job retention and creation, business support and skills development.

3.3 Growing the Economy update

The pandemic has created a significant shock across most economic sectors. Businesses have been forced to re-examine their business models and ways of working in order to survive. As a result, we have adapted our range of support services to businesses to help them to come through the

current crisis and, importantly, be in a position to work towards recovery and business growth in the future. In practical terms, this meant moving all of our business support to online delivery models to ensure that businesses could still access the support that they need.

- 3.4 Despite the challenging operating environment, there has been some positive work in a range of areas including:

3.5 **Starting a Business:**

Enterprise Pathway – start-up support for unemployed/economically inactive

Prior to the outbreak of COVID 19, we had developed a new business start-up intervention in partnership with DfC to support those who were currently unemployed. This year to date, 20 individuals who have been long-term unemployed/economically inactive are engaged and are receiving personalised business mentoring support to develop business plans and access to financial support to set up their business. Taking account of the demand for the service as a result of the recent spate of redundancies and growing unemployment numbers, we have extended the contract to support an additional 50 residents to make a move towards self-employment, with the potential to cater for more significant numbers if the demand arises.

3.6 **Go for It – start-up support**

By the end of August 2020, we had supported 112 individuals through the Go For It programme supporting the creation of 69 jobs. 90 of these businesses accessed further support 1:1 specialist mentoring support and incentives to enable them to overcome barriers to starting up, and adapt their business within the current climate.

3.7 **High Growth Start-up Support**

We developed a targeted intervention to identify those businesses that demonstrate the potential for high growth and to provide them with the necessary support and resources that they need to achieve their potential. We also re-engaged 36 past participants through our additional support put in place to help companies navigate their way through the pandemic. Since April 2019, we have created 53 jobs and supported a total of 120 high growth start-ups, increased the average turnover growth by £21,607 per company and supported them to secure nearly £1m in investment.

3.8 Social Enterprise and Cooperative Support:

By utilising our membership with CLES, this summer we engaged them to undertake an initial baseline analysis of the social enterprise and cooperative sectors in Belfast, using existing datasets to identify the size and geographical spread. This initial research identified approximately 1202 active organisations which could be considered as part of Belfast's social economy (87 of which were registered on the Mutuals Public Register). Based on this initial research we are now working to engage directly with the sector to further understand what we need to do to enable the development of more social enterprises and cooperatives across the city.

- 3.9** Through our support for social enterprises and cooperatives, we have engaged 29 new social enterprises and 5 cooperatives since April 2020 and also provided enhanced support to those that we had previously engaged with to help them through the challenges created by COVID. This included financial support to 46 social enterprises and cooperatives, providing access to resources to cover their overheads and adapt their businesses to enable them to remain sustainable, unfortunately there was a low uptake of cooperatives with only 3 applying for funding support. Since April we have significantly increased levels of engagement with cooperatives, providing those who are participating on our support with 4 extra days mentoring, covering the cost of registration fees and delivering dedicated training and webinars. There is also a series of future events planned in October and November in partnership with cooperative alternatives.

3.10 Growing a Business

Through our business support we have engaged 178 businesses since April 2020. 126 of these businesses received enhanced resilience support to enable them to adapt and sustain their businesses through the COVID pandemic, and 52 were supported to enhance their procurements skills and access new tendering opportunities. The webinars delivered as part of this support engaged 576 businesses covering topics such as introduction to tendering, business resilience and continuity, selling online and managing cash flow.

- 3.11** One area that has seen significant demand over the last number of months is our digital business support. Our specialist assistance for SMEs to enhance their digital skills

have provided essential support for businesses during COVID-19. Since April, 56 businesses have accessed mentoring support and 115 have engaged in digital webinars.

3.12 Innovation Factory

In keeping with NI Executive guidance, a decision was taken to close the Innovation Factory (IF) on 24 March 2020. The centre remained closed until the 1 July 2020. As part of a corporate decision on fees and charges, elected members agreed to give all tenants a three month rent free period from 1st April 2020 to the 30th June 2020. This rent free period has been gratefully received by tenants and has meant that more than 80% of the businesses that were located at the Innovation Factory before March 2020 have now re-opened their offices. Following the re-opening, the centre has been performing well and is now reporting a 60% occupancy rate. This means that it is on track to achieve an occupancy rate of 71% by the end of the year, as stipulated in the ERDF letter of offer from Invest NI. Following the more recent UK government and NI Executive restrictions regarding workplaces, IF has been able to retain customers, reporting that the flexible workspace option is working better for their business at this point in time and this is reflected in the current performance.

3.13 DfC Revitalisation Support: Business Grant Scheme

Members will be aware that the Northern Ireland Executive established a number of financial support schemes for businesses. In a number of instances, the Department worked closely with the council to promote the scheme and to support uptake. We also supported the administration of some elements of the £25,000 funding for the retail and hospitality and leisure sector. A total of 699 businesses in the Belfast City Council area were successful in accessing this support.

- 3.14** We are currently managing and administering the COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation grant for businesses which has been provided to the council as part of a package of support from DfC. This funding provides businesses with financial support for capital items to enable them to adapt their businesses to increase sales and footfall. To date there have been almost 700 applications for this support. Following an initial allocation of £400,000 towards the scheme, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 18 September 2020 agreed to double the amount available to £800,000. Based on an average funding allocation in the region of £1,600, this should allow us to support up to 500 businesses all across the city.

3.15 As the effects of the pandemic emerge, we continue to work with individuals and businesses to identify what we need to do to rebuild the economy in partnership with our city stakeholders. The Belfast: Our Recovery Plan approved by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 18 September outlines our commitment to promoting sustainable and inclusive growth, investment and employment. Over the remainder of the financial year, we will continue to build on the achievements highlighted above, engaging with local businesses and partners to ensure that our support is informed and impactful. Some key areas of work are likely to include:

3.16

- Scaling up our start-up support and making it more flexible to meet the needs of those needing the support: experience from previous recessions suggests that many people – either by necessity or through a change in circumstances – take the plunge and start their own business. We are constantly working to make our support offer more flexible and to ensure that it is promoted as widely as possible – focusing on self-employment as a positive route to job creation and income generation. In addition to responding to the emerging need, we are currently engaging in a research and reflection piece – in partnership with Invest NI – to identify the future shape of our start-up support. This recognises that entrepreneurship levels in Belfast are traditionally low and that a key characteristic of most successful cities is a vibrant business base with a dynamic start-up support ecosystem. Members will be aware that, since 2015, councils have had responsibility for start-up and enterprise support. As ERDF resources for this work come to an end, we need to understand the likely scale of the emerging ‘ask’ in this area so that we can build a collective response and take account of these issues in our medium-term financial planning

3.17

- Delivering interventions in partnership with Invest NI to ensure there is support in place for those businesses that will be impacted by the EU’s exit from the EU. As the shape of the future requirements emerge, it is important that we provide information, guidance and advice to ensure that businesses can understand the new operating environment and adapt their business to take account of this way of working

3.18

- We continue to build on our support for Social Enterprises and Cooperatives at this time and are working with our procurement team to understand how we can better support the sector to access public procurement opportunities, including taking account of the work around social value procurement

3.19

- We are refocussing our business growth support to target businesses in sectors that have been most negatively impacted by COVID-19 such as tourism, hospitality and retail. This support will enable them to access advice and guidance on remaining resilient, developing their business models to engage new customers and plan for the future, linking into financial support that has been made available through the NI Executive. Working with the Digital Innovation Commissioner, we are also considering how we utilise technology to support businesses in these sectors to increase their customer base

3.20

- We continue to work with our seven partner councils along the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor to identify business and new collaborative opportunities. Progress on this work will be presented in a separate committee paper.

3.21 Working and Learning Update

At the 4 March 2020 meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, members received an update on the extensive programme of work that had been undertaken in the year to date. A series of priority interventions were set out and agreed under four key headings, namely:

- Supporting access to employment
- Focus on young people
- Strategic engagement
- Policy influence and guidance.

3.22 Clearly, COVID-19 has had a significant impact on both our delivery models – with limited or no face-to-face engagement possible for most of the period since March 2020 – and on our ability to delivery employer-led interventions to support long-term unemployed and economically inactive individuals into

employment. Members will be aware of some of the headline economic figures over the last six months:

- Redundancies at their highest level since 2013 – with 601 redundancies in Belfast to date (to July 2020)
- 57% reduction in job vacancies on figures for last year
- July 2020 saw the largest monthly rise in claimant count in the UK since modern records began: for Belfast, between March and July, the number of claimants by residents aged 16 years and over rose by 7,310 to 14,745 (98.3%). In claimant count rate terms, this equates to a 3.3pp increase
- Belfast workers aged 25 to 29 saw the largest proportional increase in claims (1,375, 157.1%), followed by the 40 to 44 age group (840, 146.1%)
- There is now of total of 44,100 furloughed employments in Belfast, accounting for nearly a fifth (17.7%) of all furloughed employments in Northern Ireland. The level of uptake has varied across sectors: 'accommodation and food' has the highest take-up rate (81%), followed by the 'construction' (71%), and 'arts' (70%)
- Around 8,900 people in Belfast are currently claiming the UK government self-employment support allowance (SEISS).

3.23 Taking account the radical changes in the labour market since the initial plans were developed, the team has had to pivot its work significantly. At the outset, it was relatively unclear as to how long this situation may last and what the likely impact would be. As time progresses, it is clear that the labour market will be scarred for some time by the economic implications of the pandemic.

3.24 As the economic generator for the region, this means that the impact of job losses, the large number of employees on furlough and shorter working hours for those working in Belfast will have an impact all across the region. For those Belfast residents who have previously found it difficult to access employment, there is a risk that they will face a double disadvantage: a reduction in available jobs (particularly in those sectors that may have supported entry-level roles such as hospitality and retail) as well as significantly increased competition for any job vacancies.

Details of ongoing work and emerging areas of engagement for each of the work areas are set out below:

3.25 Supporting access to employment

This area of work aims to remove barriers to people out of work to enter into employment and for those in work to

advance in employment. Officers have expanded this programme of work to include the delivery of several employment academies in a variety of sectors including: Hospitality, Childcare, Transport & Logistics, Social Care, Childcare, Construction and Leisure.

- 3.26 Belfast City Council, in partnership with The Executive Office (TEO), also supports five European Social Fund training and skills development projects in the City which specifically target and support long-term unemployed, young people not in education, employment or training and people with disabilities. These include LEMIS+, Springboard, Workforce, Specialisterne and USEL.

3.27 Employment Academies

The end of year results for 2019/20 have been positive, with 544 participants commencing an Employment Academy (70+ still on transport employment academies as well as upskilling programmes) and 354 into employment which represents an average of 75% into employment rate for those successfully completing.

- 3.28 The collapse in demand across many sectors has had a significant impact on ability to deliver this year to date. A full programme of planned activity was suspended in mid-March 2020 with contingencies in place to mitigate against financial, delivery and safety risks. In practical terms, this means that we had to place a temporary pause on the delivery of Employment Academies in transport, hospitality, leisure and construction. For a number of other employers that had indicated a willingness to work with us on Employment Academies (e.g. Translink), their operating environment means that these are currently on hold. Given all of the above, it has been necessary to adjust the targets for Employment Academies from 350 to 270 jobs or better jobs.

- 3.29 While some sectors have stepped back, demand has remained strong in others. We continue to engage with prospective employers for entry-level jobs in sectors such as social care, leisure and logistics as well as Upskilling Academies in social care, childcare/playwork and construction. Activity has included:

3.30

- At the start of lockdown, Officers provided support to Belfast HSC Trust in recruitment of temporary staff as part of COVID-19 preparations across various

occupational areas – driving, call centre, administration, cleaning, auxiliary staff etc.

- In partnership with Department for Communities, Officers have recently provided support to The Range for 120 posts required in opening of their new store at Boucher Road, with 200 people interviewed in September 2020
- Continuation of existing Employment Academies and Upskilling academies in social care, childcare and playwork through online training delivery: these academies include QCF Levels 2-5 qualifications are aligned directly to a better job which the employer is required to evidence as part of the selection process onto the academy
- Ongoing support for Social Care Upskilling Academy at QCF Level 3 and QCF Level 5 for 44 new people as well as a Childcare/Playwork Upskilling Academy for 22 new people to meet growth demand with this sector, directly linked to business growth plans of employers. These Employment Academies target those who are working at entry levels within the respective sectors, with the aim of enabling them to access a better job within their occupation. Officers note that employer applications for access to this academy and linked to business growth has come predominately from childcare providers who are social enterprises, and is largely a response to implementing changes required as a result of changes to the numbers that can be accommodated, while taking account of social distancing
- Three Leisure Employment Academies with 34 places are planned to go live in September and October 2020. These will support the creation of new roles, particularly Recreation Assistants and Swim Teachers
- Driven by sectoral engagement with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC), Social Care Employment Academies are beginning to be delivered using an online format. At this point, we are working on the basis of an indicative 60 academy places which can increase where demand is identified and during September 16 people completed this employment academy with 14 people offered employment to date. A differentiated delivery approach has been designed to ensure a balance of delivery targeted at those who are newly unemployed as well as those who are economically inactive (who are offered access to a QCF Level 2 through the Employment Academy once in employment) to ensure that Inclusive Growth remains

embedded in delivery while also providing interventions for those newly unemployed.

- Sectoral engagement being undertaken with Logistics UK to identify workforce needs across their members with continued demand across warehousing and driving occupations due to COVID-19 and Brexit. From there, academies will be designed/planned for an indicative 90 places which can increase where demand is identified
- Design of an Upskilling Construction Academy in partnership with the Construction Industry Training Board and Construction Employers Federation for those aged 25yrs+, working in skilled trades who do not have a QCF qualification and require this for their CSR Card renewal. Initially, it is proposed that 25 places will be allocated for residents to access the relevant occupational qualification within the financial year. In addition to this, Officers are scoping opportunities within the green economy to identify potential new interventions within a growing sector and one that has been identified as being central to supporting sustainable growth in Belfast.

3.31 European Social Fund (ESF) projects

As set out above, COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the ability of ESF projects to engage with those who are out of work and do not have the digital devices/ connectivity/ capacity to be able to engage virtually. Some projects did not actively recruit new participants in Quarter 1 and Quarter 2, while others (particular those who work with young people) found that, while their participant base was still able to engage, the impact on training delivery and job outcomes remains significantly impacted.

- 3.32 Activity in the first quarter of this financial year is therefore much lower than expected with 367 new participants and 57 job outcomes, representing 50% of expected delivery at this stage. Officers are supporting ESF projects with targeted communication and marketing strategy to drive engagement where possible.

3.33 Focus on Young People

A key focus of the Belfast Agenda is to tackle educational inequalities and to provide support to enable young people to fulfil their potential. The Employability and Skills team has taken forward a number of targeted interventions in this space including:

3.34 Youth Support Programme

This provides targeted support for young people between 14 years old and 24 years old who are at risk of or have already disengaged from formal education or training/employment. Through this programme, at least 160 young people will be supported – either through 121 mentoring or through practical support and training/qualifications.

- 3.35** In recognition of the research above indicating that young people are likely to be disproportionately affected in the downturn, we have scaled up our level of engagement in this programme, with targeted engagement and referrals coming from the Educational Welfare Service.

3.36 Supporting Educational Attainment

Members will be aware that the educational attainment levels at GCSE level in Belfast are significantly lower than in most other council areas. There is a particular gap in those attaining at least a grade C in English and Maths. Given that these are such a fundamental building block for accessing further education or employment opportunities, members agreed to support this targeted intervention through the Citywide GCSE Support Programme. This builds on the successful Easter School and community revision programme that originated in west Belfast and was subsequently extended to parts of east Belfast. Through the council initiative, the programme is now available all across the city. It targets young people in year 12 at risk of not achieving grade C in English and Maths with a target of supporting 365 students p.a. and helping at least 175 of those to achieve Grade C in English/Maths GCSE.

- 3.37** Delivery for this area of work was progressing and on track until COVID-19 cancellation of exams and lockdown. Officers have been working closely with the Department for Education and the Education Authority to consider alternative approaches in the current operating context. Emerging opportunities include supporting Year 12 students predicted at a D grade in English/Maths to achieve a pass grade as well as flexing delivery to different age groups/ subject areas and exploring opportunities for numeracy and literacy catch-up. Challenges remain in the logistics of being able to deliver this programme safely, including the need to maintain 'social bubbles' with the school environment and the fact that external employees/additional teaching staff are not permitted within the school buildings. Officers are therefore working

with the delivery agent and schools to identify potential solutions, including blended learning, utilising teachers within each school to deliver the intensive revision required etc.

3.38 Strategic Engagement

Given that statutory responsibility for Employability and Skills provision continues to remain within the remit of NI government departments, and taking account of the scale of challenge as articulated above, the Employability & Skills team focuses on creating mechanisms to work in partnership with statutory providers as well as influencing their interventions to the benefit of the city. This includes engagement with the emerging City Deal programme – ensuring that Belfast residents can benefit from the opportunities that will be presented from this investment, as well as working with key government departments working in this area.

3.39 Employability NI

Employability NI Programme is a cross governmental approach to co-design and co-commission a sustainable future strategic employment offer which provides a tailored level of support proportionate to need. The programme has been designed in order to:

- Deliver a reduction in economic inactivity and long-term unemployment to bring NI closer in line with UK rates
- Provide increased support for those with health conditions (esp. mental health) and disabilities
- Create a mechanism for government to collaborate with Councils and other Departments to offer local solutions.

3.40 The proposed governance structure for the programme involves the establishment of Local Inclusive Labour Market Partnerships in each council area. Their purpose is to:

- Provide leadership and lead on the integration of services
- Develop local area plans including setting targets for performance
- Manage devolved funding and its delivery through a dynamic purchasing framework
- Manage arrangements for the evaluation of local interventions.

3.41 Council officers have been part of the Programme Board for Employability NI that drove the initial development of the programme. While the operating environment in which the programme will deliver services has changed dramatically, officers have been arguing that the need for enhanced targeting of services at a local level is more critical than ever, in order to support inclusive and sustainable economic growth in the city. Officers are currently working with DfC with a view to exploring how the Community Planning structures can offer a mechanism for mobilising the proposed Local Inclusive Labour Market Partnerships in Belfast. This will be central to our ability to focus government interventions on areas of most need. An update report will be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee.

3.42 Policy Influence and Development

Achieving economic growth through an inclusive approach is a key focus of the Belfast Agenda. The Council is actively engaged in a range of activities that fall within the remit of inclusive growth and social value. A number of work streams are currently being developed and rolled out which seek to utilise the Council's investment and decision-making powers to increase the impact of our expenditure. Key areas of work include:

- Utilising procurement spend to deliver greater economic and social impact through the use of social clauses and social value with a new Social Value Procurement Policy being prepared for approval at SP&R Committee in November 2020 following an all-party working group currently being established.
- The development and implementation of developer contributions aligned to the planning process and developer briefs.

4.43 Developer Contributions

From April 2020, the Employability & Skills team has been consulted with on nine major planning applications in order to establish whether developer contributions relating to employability and skills may be appropriate and, if so, to provide preliminary advice on the nature of the intervention and the potential support mechanisms. Officers are also currently working alongside a developer on one of the city's most significant development schemes that has already received outline planning permission. This work includes engagement with the developer and local community

representatives with regard to the development of an employability and skills plan for the site.

3.44 Financial & Resource Implications

The activities outlined within this report will be resourced from the 2020/21 Economic Development and Employability and Skills budgets agreed by this Committee on 4 March 2020.

3.45 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

Each of the proposed projects referenced in this report is informed by statistical research, stakeholder engagement and complementary policies and strategies. The unit is currently undertaking a process of equality screening on the overall work programme, this will ensure consideration is given to equality and good relation impacts throughout the delivery of each project.”

The Committee was provided with a presentation by the Director of Economic Development.

During discussion, the Director of Economic Development explained further the Council’s work with Co-operative’s, internships and apprenticeships and advised an update on the progress of the Motion – Summer Youth Employment Programme would be provided to the Committee in due course.

The Committee:

- Noted the work which had been undertaken to date across a wide range of work areas within the Growing the Economy and Working and Learning pillars of the Belfast Agenda, including the outcomes achieved and scheduled towards year end;
- Noted the changing operating environment and the emerging proposals to ensure that the Council interventions remained effective; and
- Agreed that an update report on the Motion – Summer Youth Employment Programme, which had been considered by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in September, would be provided to the Committee in due course.

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Issues Raised in Advance by Members

City Wide Strategic Site Assessment Update (Cllr Murphy to raise)

At the request of Councillor Murphy, the Committee agreed that a report be submitted to a future Committee in relation to the Strategic Site Assessments, to include an update on the work which had been undertaken to date.

Chairperson

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Licensing Committee

Wednesday, 14th October, 2020

MEETING OF LICENSING COMMITTEE HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Donnelly (Chairperson);
Aldermen Copeland and Sandford; and
Councillors Bradley, Bunting, Groves,
Hussey, Hutchinson, M. Kelly, T. Kelly, Magee,
Magennis, McAteer, McKeown, Nicholl and Smyth.

In attendance: Mr. A. Thatcher, Director of Planning
and Building Control;
Mr. S. Hewitt, Building Control Manager;
Ms. N. Largey, Divisional Solicitor;
Mr. J. Cunningham, Regulatory Services Manager;
Mr. K. Bloomfield, HMO Unit Manager;
Mrs. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were received from Councillors Howard, McCullough and McCusker.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 16th September 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 October, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

Delegated Matters

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

Licences Issued Under Delegated Authority

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

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

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

**Applications for the renewal of a Licence to operate a
House of Multiple Occupation for 4 Landseer Street**

The HMO Unit Manager provided an overview of the application and explained that, as a valid objection had been received, the application must be considered by the Committee, pursuant to the 2016 Act and legal advice.

He advised that no noise complaints had been received in relation to the property.

The Committee approved the application for the Grant of the renewal of a Licence to Operate a House of Multiple Occupation for 4 Landseer Street.

**Applications for the renewal of a Licence to operate a
House of Multiple Occupation for 7 Pretoria Street**

The HMO Unit Manager provided an overview of the application and explained that, as a valid objection had been received, the application must be considered by the Committee, pursuant to the 2016 Act and legal advice.

He advised that no noise complaints had been received in relation to the property.

The Committee approved the application for the Grant of the renewal of a Licence to Operate a House of Multiple Occupation for 7 Pretoria Street.

**Applications for the renewal of a Licence to operate a
House of Multiple Occupation for 29 St Ives Gardens**

The HMO Unit Manager provided an overview of the application and explained that, as a valid objection had been received, the application must be considered by the Committee, pursuant to the 2016 Act and legal advice.

He advised that no noise complaints had been received in relation to the property.

The Committee approved the application for the Grant of the renewal of a Licence to Operate a House of Multiple Occupation for 29 St Ives Gardens.

**Applications for the renewal of a Licence to operate a
House of Multiple Occupation for 4 Stranmillis Park**

The HMO Unit Manager provided an overview of the application and explained that, as a valid objection had been received, the application must be considered by the Committee, pursuant to the 2016 Act and legal advice.

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He advised that no noise complaints had been received in relation to the property.

The Committee approved the application for the Grant of the renewal of a Licence to Operate a House of Multiple Occupation for 4 Stranmillis Park.

**Applications for the renewal of a Licence to operate a
House of Multiple Occupation for 4 Stranmillis Gardens**

The HMO Unit Manager provided an overview of the application and explained that, as a valid objection had been received, the application must be considered by the Committee, pursuant to the 2016 Act and legal advice.

He advised that no noise complaints had been received in relation to the property.

The Committee approved the application for the Grant of the renewal of a Licence to Operate a House of Multiple Occupation for 4 Stranmillis Gardens.

**Applications for the renewal of a Licence to operate a
House of Multiple Occupation for 50 Stranmillis Gardens**

The HMO Unit Manager provided an overview of the application and explained that, as a valid objection had been received, the application must be considered by the Committee, pursuant to the 2016 Act and legal advice.

He advised that no noise complaints had been received in relation to the property.

The Committee approved the application for the Grant of the renewal of a Licence to Operate a House of Multiple Occupation for 50 Stranmillis Gardens.

**Applications for a new Licence to operate a
House of Multiple Occupation for 32 Stranmillis Park**

The HMO Unit Manager provided an overview of the application and explained that as a valid objection had been received, the application must be considered by the Committee, pursuant to the 2016 Act and legal advice.

He advised that no noise complaints had been received in relation to the property.

He pointed out that the property was previously licensed as an HMO up and until 20th August 2019, at which time the licence had expired. Prior to the expiry of the licence, the NIHMO Unit had written to the owner on 13th August 2019 reminding him that the licence on the property was about to expire. On 2nd October 2019, an authorised officer from the HMO Unit had inspected the property and established that the property was occupied as an HMO by 5 individuals from more than 2 households.

He further advised that officers had written to Mr. Rafferty on 2nd October 2019 asking him if he had a reasonable excuse for operating the accommodation without it being licensed. As no such reasonable excuse was forthcoming, a Fixed Penalty Notice ("FPN") was issued on 14th October 2019 for the sum of £5000.00, offering Mr. Rafferty the opportunity of discharging any liability to conviction for the alleged offence, by paying

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the fixed penalty. Mr. Rafferty accepted the opportunity and paid the FPN on the 28th October 2019.

On 28th November 2019, pursuant to Section 15 of the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, a Temporary Exemption Notice (TEN) was granted until 28th February 2020 after the owner specified the steps he would be taking, with a view to securing the accommodation ceases to be an HMO. The TEN was subsequently extended until 28th May 2020. On 17th July 2020 officers had confirmed that the property was no longer in HMO usage. On 13th February 2020 an application for a new HMO licence was submitted to the NIHMO Unit.

Following the publication of the application, an objection was received in relation to the application. The objection raised general concerns about the overprovision of HMOs in the Stranmillis HMO Policy Area.

The HMO Unit Manager informed the Committee that as it was a new application, the HMO Unit had consulted with the Council's Planning Service which confirmed that on 17th January 2020, a Certificate of Lawful Use or Development was granted with the planning reference **LA04/2019/2946/Idc**.

For the purpose of determining whether or not the granting of a licence would result in an overprovision of HMOs in the locality of the accommodation, the locality was defined as being HMO Policy Area "HMO 2/19 Stranmillis" as defined in the document "Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) Subject Plan for Belfast City Council Area 2015.

The Committee agreed that Mr. Steven Rafferty, speaking on behalf of the applicant, Mr. Niall Rafferty, could address the Committee regarding the application for a new HMO for 32 Stranmillis Park.

Mr. Rafferty explained that because of miscommunications and inaccuracies provided by the HMO Office, the application process had been conducted extremely poorly and that it was the applicant's view that the application should have been considered by the HMO Office as a renewal and not a new application.

Mr. Rafferty advised that the applicant acknowledged that he had allowed the licence to lapse, however, there were several contributing factors, which included some health concerns and changes in the administration process undertaken by Belfast City Council after the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) transferred its Statutory Registration Scheme. He added that at the time of the renewal, he was in the process of changing the managing agent for the property due to misconduct and bad management by the previous agent, however, this had not been accepted as a reasonable excuse for failing to renew the licence within the specified timeframe.

He further advised that the applicant had held a HMO licence for the property for the previous ten years without issue and that, previously, the NIHE would have provided many months' notice for renewal and that an NIHE officer would have made contact by telephone when a licence was due for renewal, a process not undertaken by Belfast City Council, which provided one week's notice before the licence was due to expire.

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Mr. Rafferty further informed Members that the applicant opposed the assumption of overprovision in the Stranmillis area and that the HMO Policy Area “HMO 2/19 Stranmillis” did not represent a true socioeconomic picture of the area in 2020. He asked the Committee to take his submission into consideration and grant the HMO licence.

The Chairperson thanked Mr. Rafferty for his submission to the Committee and following discussion, the Committee agreed to defer the application for the Grant of a Licence to Operate a House of Multiple Occupation for 32 Stranmillis Gardens to its next meeting on 18th November, 2020.

Non-Delegated Matters

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Update

The HMO Unit Manager presented the Committee with an update in respect of the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 Members will be aware that responsibility for HMO’s was transferred to local district councils in April 2019 with the enactment of the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 ‘2016 Act’.**
- 1.2 Members expressed concern at the September’s licensing committee meeting about the ongoing issues in the Holylands and other areas associated with HMOs, particularly around ASB. It was agreed that officers would bring back a report to this meeting outlining what potential action could be taken under HMO legislation to address that and other more medium term priorities, for example amendments to the HMO legislation.**
- 1.3 This paper provides Members with information regarding the action being taken by the NIHMO Unit to address ASB in HMO accommodation and details of the proposed review of the Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing Scheme.**

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the additional measures which have been put in place to allow the NIHMO Unit to address ASB issues and the proposed review of the HMO Licensing Scheme.**

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

Background

- 3.1 On the 20 February 2019 this committee approved the Standard Licensing Conditions for Houses in Multiple**

Occupation (HMOs) in Northern Ireland. The conditions imposed within that document apply to all houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) in Northern Ireland, and will be attached to all licences as they are issued. They are imposed for the purpose of regulating both the management, use and occupation of the HMO, and its condition and contents.

- 3.2 Section 9 of the Standard Licensing Conditions require the licensee to have in place a policy / plan (approved in writing by the council) to deal with any anti-social behaviour linked to licensed premises, either directly or indirectly which is caused by or effects their tenants.**
- 3.3 To assist owners and managing agents in the preparing of their anti-social behaviour plans, Members on the 20 February 2019 approved the guidance document 'Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour in HMO Properties, A Guide for Owners and Managing Agents'.**
- 3.4 Only those properties licensed since the 1 April 2019 have the Standard Licensing Conditions and the requirement to have an ASB plan applied to them, this equates to 22% of licensed HMOs in Belfast. The remaining 78% of licensed HMOs retain the condition in place when they transferred from Statutory Registrations (granted by the NIHE) and became Licences pursuant to the provisions of The Houses in Multiple Occupation (Commencement and Transitional Provisions) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019.**
- 3.5 Section 10(6) of the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 sets out certain matters which the Council must have regard to in deciding whether an owner or managing agent is a fit and proper person. It also allows councils to take into account any other matter which it considers to be relevant. This cannot however include over provision or breach of planning control where the application is for renewal.**
- 3.6 Amongst those mandatory considerations, the council must have regard to any anti-social behaviour engaged in by the owner/ manager the occupants and any anti-social behaviour which may affect their tenants. Officers are of the opinion that the Standard Licensing Conditions including the requirement for an anti-social behaviour ('ASB') Plan allows much more decisive action on the part of the Council and landlords alike when coupled with the progress that has been made on a number of issues recently which are discussed below.**

Information Sharing Protocol

- 3.7 For a number of months Officers have been working on putting processes in place to ensure the proactive and managed sharing of internal data so as to effectively deal with complaints regarding HMO properties in the Belfast area. These arrangements were just recently formalised through an Information Sharing Protocol between the NIHMO Unit, Environmental Protection Unit (EPU), Public Health and Housing Unit (PHHU) and Cleansing Enforcement (CE).

Sharing Information with HMO Owners

- 3.8 The Information Sharing Protocol also regulates the arrangements for the sharing of data with HMO owners in circumstances where matters potentially affect their licence to operate the premises. This is an important development and a departure from our previous position which was based on GDPR concerns. The NIHMO unit will now share with HMO owners, where appropriate, the following information –
1. details of Warning Notices, Fixed Penalty Notices and Abatement Notices served in respect of HMO property concerning night time domestic/neighbourhood noise;
 2. details of Warning Letters or Abatement Notices served in respect of HMO property concerning day time domestic/neighbourhood noise;
 3. details of Abatement Notices served in respect of HMO property where a statutory nuisance has been established as a result of the accumulation of rubbish which may/has attract vermin;
 4. details of Litter Clearing Notices and Fixed Penalty Notices served in respect of HMO property concerning litter and waste; and
 5. details of Covid-2 Prohibition Notices which Council have been advised of by the PSNI in relation to your HMO property
- 3.9 On receipt of the aforementioned information, or on receipt of a complaint from any other source, the HMO owner must maintain a register of such complaints and advise the Council as to how the owner and/or the managing agent dealt with the problem. If a landlord fails to effectively deal with any reported ASB councils can consider varying or revoking the licence. All HMO landlords in Belfast have been advised of this

development and that failure to deal with ASB may affect their licence regardless of whether there is a condition requiring an ASB Plan to be in place.

- 3.10 A temporary resource (subject to further review) has been added to support the NIHMO unit to manage ASB complaints and communication with Landlords.

Varying HMO Licences

- 3.11 Pursuant to Section 22 of the 2016 Act the council can during the terms of an HMO licence vary the licence to remove, add or vary any conditions included in the licence.
- 3.12 Officers are considering how best to commence the process of varying the licences of those properties which are still under the old registration scheme conditions. This process can only be done on an individual case by case basis. The statutory process for varying a licence is cumbersome and any variation is subject to appeal in the Magistrates Court. Whilst courts have started sitting again, contested hearings for non-urgent cases are not proceeding so it is likely to be some time until any contested appeals would be concluded. It is not therefore considered that this is an immediately effective tool to deal with ASB presently occurring in some areas.
- 3.13 Officers are continuing to explore with the DfC the possibility of amending The Houses in Multiple Occupation (Commencement and Transitional Provisions) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019 to apply the standard conditions around ASB to all deemed licences.

Review of the Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing Scheme.

- 3.14 Officers have been liaising with officials from the Department for Communities (DfC) to finalise the terms of reference for the review of the HMO Licensing Scheme and the legislative framework underpinning the Scheme.
- 3.15 The review will relate to the operation of the licensing of houses in multiple occupation in accordance with the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 and the Houses in Multiple Occupation (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2019 which dictate how the licensing scheme should operate.
- 3.16 Officers have put forward suggestions that the review should include a detailed assessment of the resources necessary to meet the demands and expectations of the Departments and

relevant stakeholders. Officers have also suggested that the review should assess if there are any operational / legislative omissions, difficulties or teething issues experienced implementing HMO licensing which may require further development to enhance and improve the workings of the scheme.

- 3.17** The Department has proposed a collaborate approach to the review with councils, tenants and LANI and any other stakeholders identified.
- 3.18** The vast majority of public representations received in respect of licence applications relate to general concerns about ASB, over provision and breach of planning control rather than specific properties. Officers recognise that these have also been a cause of concern for Members, as was particularly highlighted at the September meeting. ASB has been addressed above and Members will be aware the legislation specifically precludes councils from having regard to these issues in respect of renewal applications. Representations have also been received in relation to the ability to apply for Certificates of Lawful Use and how that circumvents the limits placed on the number of HMO's in certain areas.
- 3.19** Officers would welcome the views of Committee as to issues it would like to see addressed in this Review and would ask that Committee agrees to hold a workshop to explore those issues.

Financial & Resource Implications

- 3.20** None

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.21** There are no issues associated with this report."

The Committee noted the additional measures which have been put in place to allow the NIHMO Unit to address ASB issues and during consideration of the proposed review of the HMO Licensing Scheme, it was

Moved by Councillor Smyth,
Seconded by Councillor McKeown,

That the Committee agrees that officers, when liaising with officials from the Department for Communities (DfC) to finalise the terms of reference for the review of the

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HMO Licensing Scheme and the legislative framework, recommend that local residents associations are included as stakeholders.

The Committee agreed to the proposal.

Chairperson

Planning Committee

Tuesday, 13th October, 2020

MEETING OF PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Hussey (Chairperson);
Councillors Brooks, Carson, Matt Collins,
Garrett, Groogan, Hanvey, Hutchinson,
Maskey, McCullough, McKeown, Murphy,
Nicholl and O'Hara.

In attendance: Mr. A. Thatcher, Director of Planning and
Building Control;
Mr. E. Baker, Planning Manager
(Development Management);
Ms. N. Largey, Divisional Solicitor;
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer;
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer; and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies for inability to attend were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 2nd and 15th September 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 October, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

Planning Appeals Notified

The Committee noted the receipt of correspondence in respect of a number of planning appeals which had been submitted to the Planning Appeals Commission, together with the outcomes of a range of hearings which had been considered by the Commission.

Planning Decisions Issued

The Committee noted a list of decisions which had been taken under the delegated authority of the Director of Planning and Building Control, together with all other

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
Tuesday, 13th October, 2020**

planning decisions which had been issued by the Planning Department between 29th August and 2nd October.

**Restricted Item –
Finance Update**

The information contained in the report associated with the following item 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.

The Committee was provided with an update on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Council's financial position, and a strategy to address the forecast deficit and the mitigation measures which had and would be taken as the situation evolved.

Noted.

Planning Applications

THE COMMITTEE DEALT WITH THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN PURSUANCE OF THE POWERS DELEGATED TO IT BY THE COUNCIL UNDER STANDING ORDER 37(e)

Deferred Item

LA04/2016/0559/F - Construction of 4 office blocks – Block A 10 storeys, Block B 14 Storeys, Block C and Block D 3 Storeys plus 4 retail units, plant and car parking with external plaza and associated landscaping on site at the junction of Stewart Street/East Bridge Street and West of Central Station East Bridge Street

The Committee noted that it was due to consider the above mentioned application at its meeting on 15th October. In light of the fact that the membership of the Committee had changed since it had first considered the application, it agreed to defer consideration of the application to a later date, in order to undertake a site visit. The Committee further agreed that a Special meeting would be held to consider the application.

LA04/2020/0865/RM - Mixed-Use building ranging from 3 no. to 5 no. storeys (plus roof plant) comprising ground floor retail/food and beverage/office uses, and offices above. Development includes associated public realm, landscaping and all other associated site works on Lands at existing surface level car park between Nos 108 North Street/1 Gresham Street and No. 25 Gresham Street; and adjacent to Nos. 13 - 23 Winetavern Street

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The Senior Planning officer reminded the Committee that, in February 2020, it had granted permission for the mixed use regeneration and development of a vacant surface level car park and the refurbishment of an existing listed Butchers building, with the erection of new fixed use buildings of between 3 and 9 storeys. He explained that the permission comprised basement level car parking, ground floor retail/restaurant/coffeeshop/workspace uses, with Grade A and SME offices above (LA04/2018/2470/O). The Committee was advised that the principle of the proposed uses and form of the development had already been established through the recent outline planning permission and that the current Reserved Matters application sought approval for the detailed plans and elevations

He outlined the key issues which had been considered in the assessment of the proposed development.

The Members were advised that the site was zoned as an opportunity site in the Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (Draft BMAP 2004 and 2015), and that it was considered that the proposal would develop part of a surface level car park with a piece of high quality architecture heavily influenced by the industrial heritage of the area, creating a well-defined public space and providing a landmark building on one of the main arterial routes into the city centre, North Street.

The Senior Planning officer outlined that the northern section of the city centre had suffered from dereliction and a lack of investment. He explained that it was felt that the proposal would help stimulate the wider regeneration of this part of the city, which had recently been boosted with the arrival of the Ulster University's city centre campus, and proposals to redevelop the former Royal Exchange. The Committee was advised that the high quality finishes and subtleties in design were considered to pay homage to the historical context and would combine with the adjacent proposal (LA04/2020/0325/F) to create a landmark cluster, high quality public realm and a sense of place within a currently undefined part of the city centre.

The Members were advised that no objections or third party representations had been received. The Senior Planning officer highlighted that Shared Environmental Services, DFI Roads, Rivers Agency, Environmental Health, DAERA Waste Management, Building Control and the Urban Design officer had no objections subject to conditions. He advised that the Historic Environment Division (HED) had requested further information.

The Committee's attention was drawn to the Late Items pack. The Historic Environment Division (HED) had sought confirmation of the height of the listed building in relation to proposed shoulder height on Gresham Street, contextual views to show the setback on upper floors, alternative roofscape on Gresham Street and details of finishes to the 'Sawtooth Building'.

The Senior Planning officer explained that HED had been re-consulted with points addressing their response, including 3D visuals. He outlined that officers were of the opinion that sufficient information had been provided within the application pack to enable

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an informed assessment. He highlighted that the heights had been established through the outline approval, and that the heights proposed were within those parameters.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. T. Stokes, agent, to the meeting. He emphasised that he had engaged in a number of design workshops with planners which he felt had resulted in a high quality proposal and an exciting regeneration project for the Smithfield area.

The Committee granted approval to the application, subject to the imposing of the conditions and delegated power to the Director of Planning and Building Control for the final wording of the conditions and resolving any issues as appropriate following the further consultation with HED.

LA04/2020/0325/F - Redevelopment of vacant surface level car park to facilitate the erection of a Mixed-Use building ranging from 4. to 9. storeys in height (plus roof plant) comprising ground floor retail/restaurant/coffee shop/business uses with 'Grade A' offices above, development includes associated public realm, landscaping and all other associated site works on vacant lands at existing surface level car park bound by North Street Winetavern Street and Gresham Street north west and south west of 108 North Street and 1 Gresham Street and north of 23 Winetavern Street

The Senior Planning officer explained that the application, which was linked to the previous Reserved Matters application, sought full permission for the redevelopment of the vacant surface level car park to facilitate the erection of a mixed-use building comprising ground floor retail/restaurant/coffee shop/business uses with 'Grade A' offices above.

The Committee was provided with the key issues which had been considered in the officers' assessment, including the impact on built heritage, developers contributions, impact on the setting of nearby conservation areas, traffic and parking, Pre-Application community consultation, contaminated land and drainage and flooding.

The Senior Planning officer outlined that the principle of the proposed uses and form of the development had already been established through planning permission LA04/2018/2470/O.

He explained that the mix of office and retail uses would add to the diversity of the City Centre, whilst bringing much needed regeneration to the area. The Members were advised that the built form would be located on an expansive surface level car park, thus introducing a landmark building, creating a sense of place and defining a vacant space within what was a previously developed part of the city centre.

The Committee was advised that no objections or third party representations had been received. The Senior Planning officer explained that DFI Roads, Rivers Agency, Belfast City Airport, Environmental Health, DAERA Waste Management and Building Control had no objections to the proposal subject to conditions. The Committee was advised that an objection had been received from the Historic Environment Division (HED)

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in relation to the outline application and that it had requested further information in respect of this application.

A Member sought further clarification relating to the objection from HED. The Committee was advised that HED stated that the proposal failed to satisfy the requirements of paragraphs 6.12 and 6.13 of SPPS and Policies BH7, BH8 and BH11 of PPS6. The Members were advised that HED considered that the setting of the listed buildings in the vicinity of the site was affected adversely by the scale and massing of the new buildings. The Senior Planning officer explained that the height parameters of the buildings had been established through the outline planning permission. Furthermore, given the high quality architecture, officers felt that the scale, massing and design of the proposal were acceptable and that there was sufficient information to fully inform their recommendation to approve the application.

The Committee granted approval to the application, subject to the imposing of the conditions and delegated power to the Director of Planning and Building Control for the final wording of the conditions.

LA04/2019/2387/F - Residential development comprising 151 apartments and ancillary uses including; management suite, communal space, reception area and servicing (refuse/recycling/bicycle storage) and plant equipment; and associated car parking and public realm improvements to Scrabo Street, Station Street and Middlepath Street on Land adjacent to Quay Gate House 15 Scrabo Street, footpaths and public realm at Scrabo Street, Station Street and Middlepath Street

Before presentation of the application commenced, the Committee agreed to defer consideration of the application to enable a site visit to be undertaken to allow the Committee to acquaint itself with the location and the proposals at first hand and to request further information on sustainable transport measures and the travel plan.

The Committee noted, as the application had not been presented, that all Members' present at the next meeting, would be able to take part in the debate and vote on this item.

LA04/2020/0761/F - Demolition of existing buildings and erection of 10 storey mixed use development comprising a cafe on the ground floor and 85no.serviced apartments for both short and long term occupancy on the floors above at 57-59 & 61-63 Dublin Road

The Principal Planning officer provided the Committee with a detailed overview of the proposals. He explained the main issues which had been considered in the assessment of the application, including demolition, scale, height and massing, impact on the character and amenity of the area and the setting of a listed building, access and parking and environmental matters.

He explained that the site was located within the city centre and the plans included a roof top terrace, a gym and balconies providing satisfactory amenity provision. He outlined that a two storey building was currently located on the site and that permission

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had been granted, under LA04/2019/0991/F, in February 2020, for a ten storey building with a ground floor restaurant and 71 apartments above. He explained that the scale, height and massing of the proposed development was the same as the approved development, with minor changes proposed to the design, internal layout and materials.

The Committee was advised that HED considered that the proposal would have an adverse impact on the nearby listed Shaftesbury Square Hospital and that the proposal failed to satisfy Policy BH 11 of PPS 6. The Principal planning officer explained, however, that, given the existing permission, the principle of a 10 storey building had been established on the site and taking account of the scale of existing built development closer to the Shaftesbury Square listed hospital, it was considered that there would be no greater harm to the setting of the listed building with the proposed development. The Members were advised that no third party objections had been received.

A Member queried the amenity space provided. In response, the Principal Planning officer advised the Committee that, given the amenities which were within walking distance of the site, the proposal was deemed acceptable on balance.

In response to questions from Members regarding the gable wall, he confirmed that it would be dealt with through negative conditions.

The Committee's attention was drawn to the Late Items pack, where the agent had submitted amended plan showing separate bin storage arrangements for the commercial and residential elements. The Members were advised that the Waste Management unit had deemed the amendments acceptable.

Moved by Councillor Hussey
Seconded by Councillor Carson,

That the Committee grants approval to the application, subject to the imposing of the conditions and to no new substantive planning issues being raised by third parties, and delegates power to the Director of Planning and Building Control for the final wording of the conditions.

On a vote, eleven members voted for the proposal and three against and it was declared carried.

LA04/2020/0659/F - Refurbishment of existing four storey terrace including alteration, extension to rear, partial demolition and reinstatement. Part change of use from art galleries to two cafes at ground floor. Retention of offices within existing building at second, third and fourth floor. Erection of new 13 storey aparthotel building to rear and associated works including public realm improvements at 29-33 Bedford Street

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with the details of the application which included the demolition of portions of the terrace of 29-33 Bedford Street in order to create an entrance and thoroughfare to the rear of the site where a 13-storey aparthotel was proposed. The application also sought part change of use from art galleries to two

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cafes on the ground floor, with offices within the existing buildings at the second, third and fourth floors to be retained.

He outlined the key issues which had been considered in the assessment of the proposed development, including the principle of hotel and café use at the location, the impact on built heritage and the principle of demolition in the conservation area, scale, height, massing and design, the impact on traffic and parking, site drainage, the consideration of economic benefits, amenity and developers contributions.

The Members were advised that the site was located within the city centre, the Commercial Character Area and the Linen Conservation Area.

The Planning Manager advised that the proposal would generate an estimated 216 direct construction jobs, 129 indirect construction jobs and an economic output (GVA) of £27.6m throughout the construction period. In addition, he explained that the proposal would generate an estimated 116 full-time equivalent jobs once operational.

The Planning Manager explained that DfI Roads, Environmental Health, the NI Environment Agency, Rivers Agency, Historic Environment Division (HED) and NI Water had all been consulted, in addition to the Urban Design Officer, the Conservation Officer, the Economic Development unit and the City Regeneration and Development Team within BCC.

He advised that both HED and the Conservation Officer were now content with the design and proposed interventions to the front terrace, however, they maintained an objection to the 13-storey element on the basis of height, in that they felt it was too dominant on the existing listed building. The Committee was advised that officers felt that the design was respectful to its surrounding environment

The Committee was advised that no objections and one letter of support had been received.

The Committee's attention was drawn to the Late Items pack. The Planning Manager explained that the applicant had been advised that, as the aparthotel rooms did not meet residential standards, a condition was required to ensure they were not used for residential purposes. He explained that, following discussion with the applicant, it was recommended that the condition be amended so that the maximum duration of a stay by an occupant would be 90 days within any 12 month period.

With regards to internal noise levels, the Members were advised that delegated authority was sought for officers to agree the final wording of the condition following further discussion with the Council's Environmental Health team.

The Planning Manager pointed out that, if the Committee granted the application, it would be necessary to notify the Department for Infrastructure (DfI), given the objection from HED in accordance with Section 89 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

A Member queried the access to the hotel, which would be newly created as a "punch through" entrance, with no direct access onto the street. In response, the Planning

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Manager confirmed that it was an unusual and unique proposal but he advised that there were no prescriptive policies which prevented the proposal, and provided clarity in relation to the policy context which had been considered in its assessment. He explained, however, that the terrace itself was not listed although the buildings either side of the development were listed and it was in a Conservation Area. He explained that officers felt that it met all the policy tests. The Director added that the hotel did have access to the street, through a glazed box that would be designed to feel like a covered extension of the courtyard.

In response to a further Member's question regarding HED's objection to the application, the Planning Manager explained that the scheme had been amended from the original plans, with the height of the hotel reduced to 13 storeys. He referred the Committee to the report which outlined that, while HED welcomed the progress that had been made in relation to the revised alignment and the increased separation distance between the historic terrace and the tall element of the design, it still objected to the height of the 13 storey tower element.

In response to a further question, he provided further clarity in relation to the room sizes, which ranged from 20m² to 50m², and he explained that officers required controls to be imposed over occupation to ensure that the rooms were not let out for long-term residential use, as they did not meet space standards for residential accommodation. He outlined the rationale for the 90 day limit, which were widely used by other planning authorities in London boroughs, and he pointed out that the draft LDP included the same guidance.

A Member stated that they had concerns based on the Conservation officer's assessment and HED's objection.

Moved by Councillor Groogan
Seconded by Councillor Matt Collins,

That the Committee agrees to refuse the application as it is contrary to policies BH 11 and 12 of PPS 6, in that the height, scale and massing of the proposed building, in relation to the listed buildings and relation to the Conservation Area, are inappropriate, and delegates power to the Director of Planning and Building Control for the final wording of the refusal reasons.

On a vote, four Members voted for the proposal, eight against and two no votes, it was declared lost.

Moved by Councillor Hussey,
Seconded by Councillor McCullough,

That the Committee grants approval to the application, subject to the imposing of the conditions and delegates power to the Director of Planning and Building Control for the final wording of the conditions and to resolve any issues arising from consultation responses from NIEA and

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Environmental Health with regards to the updated GQRA relating to contaminated land matters and noise standards.

On a vote, eight Members voted in favour, four against and two no votes and accordingly, it was declared carried.

LA04/2020/1356/F - Variation of Approvals LA04/2019/1398/F and LA04/2017/0235/F for 53 residential units as follows: Condition 16 relating to remediation of contamination to include reference to the remedial measures outlined in both the Generic Quantitative Risk Assessment Report dated January 2017 and an updated Ground Gas Risk Assessment and Remedial Strategy dated May 2019 and an updated remedial strategy for the site on lands at former Rosepark House, Upper Newtownards Road

The Principal Planning officer provided the Committee with the technical detail of an application which, under Section 54 of the Planning Act, sought to vary condition 16 of permission LA04/2017/0235/F, which had previously been varied, under application LA04/2019/1398/F. He explained that the application was necessary following further testing and sampling of site material.

The Committee was advised that Environmental Health and DEARA Waste and Contamination had been consulted on the updated information and had no objections to the proposed variation of condition 16 based on the information presented.

The Principal Planning officer explained that the application related to the variation of condition 16 only, and accordingly all other aspects of the application including the layout and design would remain as previously approved. He explained that the proposal would not adversely impact on amenity or public health and was therefore compliant with all relevant policy considerations as set out in the original report.

The Committee granted approval to the application, subject to the imposing of the conditions and delegated power to the Director of Planning and Building Control for the final wording of the conditions.

Chairperson

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Planning Committee

Thursday, 15th October, 2020

SPECIAL MEETING OF PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

- Members present: Councillor Hussey (Chairperson);
Councillors Brooks, Carson, Matt Collins,
Garrett, Groogan, Hanvey,
Maskey, McCullough, McKeown, Murphy,
Nicholl and O'Hara.
- In attendance: Mr. A. Thatcher, Director of Planning and
Building Control;
Mr. E. Baker, Planning Manager
(Development Management);
Ms. N. Largey, Divisional Solicitor;
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer;
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer; and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.
- Also attended: Alderman Rodgers.

Apologies

An apology for inability to attend was reported from Councillor Hutchinson.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Groogan declared an interest in item 2a, LA04/2019/1614/F - Redevelopment of existing all-weather playing field to provide new 3G flood-lit sports pitch, redevelopment of former tennis courts to provide new flood-lit multi use games area (MUGA pitch), pitch side fencing and ball-stop nets, car parking, landscaping and associated site works on land including and adjacent to the existing all-weather sports pitch at Stranmillis University College, in that she had spoken with residents and would be speaking in objection to the application. She confirmed that, after speaking on the item, she would leave the room for the duration of the discussion and not take part in the vote.

She also advised that, in relation to item 3, Havelock House, she had previously made representation in respect of the application and had engaged with objectors and, as such, would not take part in the discussion.

Councillor McKeown advised that he had received a significant amount of correspondence from residents and had facilitated a meeting for the residents with the planners in relation to item 2a, LA04/2019/1614/F, however, as he had not expressed an opinion on the application, nor did he attend the residents' meeting, he would participate in the discussion and vote. In relation to Item 3, Havelock House, he also advised that he had listened to local residents in regards to the associated planning application but

**Special Meeting of Planning Committee,
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that, as he had not expressed a view in respect of it, he was content that he could participate in any discussion on the matter.

Planning Applications

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

(Reconsidered) LA04/2019/1614/F - Redevelopment of existing all-weather playing field to provide new 3G flood-lit sports pitch, redevelopment of former tennis courts to provide new flood-lit multi use games area (MUGA pitch), pitch side fencing and ball-stop nets, car parking, landscaping and associated site works on land including and adjacent to the existing all-weather sports pitch at Stranmillis University College, Stranmillis Road

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 15th September, the item had been deferred due to a number of technical issues which had occurred throughout the consideration of the item. It was noted that the application would be considered from the beginning at a future meeting.

The Chairperson advised the Members that, at that meeting, in light of the recently imposed restrictions due to the Covid 19 pandemic, it had agreed to receive two separate deputations from objectors, of up to five minutes each, and that the agent/applicant deputation would therefore be granted up to ten minutes to speak.

The Principal Planning officer provided the Committee with a detailed overview of the site and the proposed development. He outlined the main issues which had been considered in the assessment of the application, including:

- the principle of the development of at the location;
- visual impacts of the proposal;
- impact on amenity / character of the area;
- impact on built heritage;
- impact on the natural environment;
- impact on transport and other infrastructure; and
- flood risk

He explained that the site was located within the development limits and was identified as whiteland within the BUAP. The Members were advised that the site abutted the Malone and Stranmillis Conservation Areas but fell within the Stranmillis Area of Townscape Character (ATC). He explained that PPS6 and the PPS6 Addendum relating to ATC's were therefore applicable. He advised that, within the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) 2004 and draft BMAP 2015, the site was located within the development limit and, within dBMAP 2004, the site was located within a Local Landscape Policy Area (LLPA).

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He outlined that the main pitch, at the closest points, would be located 29metres from the nearest dwelling at 28 Beechlands, and approximately 51.6metres from the nearest dwelling in Cleaver Park.

The Committee was advised that, whilst the proposal would result in the reduction of the playing surface area to allow for car parking facilities, those facilities were necessary and a policy requirement to support the proposal.

He advised the Members that the proposal would not adversely impact on amenity, traffic, heritage assets or flooding. He explained that the proposed scale, form, massing and materials of structures proposed were considered acceptable and would not adversely impact on the local character of the area. The Committee was advised that existing trees within the site and around the site periphery, in addition to new planting, would filter views of the structures. The Members were advised that changing room facilities had originally been proposed but had been removed from the proposal in order to safeguard the heritage contribution of ancillary buildings. On balance, he explained that the proposal would not result in detrimental visual impacts.

He explained that a number of conditions were necessary to mitigate impacts of the development, including the hours of operation of the facility and a restriction on the use of floodlighting between the months of October and February.

He highlighted that, since the original report had been published in September, Conditions 3 and 15 of the draft conditions had been updated to reflect that vehicular access to the development would be from the Stranmillis Road only and that, prior to commencement of development on site, including demolition, site clearance or site preparation, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) should be produced by the appointed contractor.

The Committee was advised that 116 objections had been received, the details of which were outlined in the report.

The Principal Planning officer reported that DFI Roads, NI Water, Rivers Agency, the Conservation Officer, Environmental Health, the Landscape Section and the Tree officer had been consulted and had no objections to the proposal. He explained that a final response from the Natural Environment Division was outstanding.

The Committee's attention was drawn to the Late Items pack. The Principal Planning officer outlined correspondence which had been received in recent days from objectors and the applicant, including the Planning Department's response to each of the issues. He highlighted that correspondence had been received highlighting recent changes in badger activity in the grounds of Stranmillis College. He explained that DEARA Natural Heritage had been re-consulted on the issue. The Committee was advised that, as Natural Heritage were yet to respond, it was requested that delegated authority be given to the Director of Planning and Building Control to resolve any issues arising from their response as appropriate. He highlighted that if any matters were raised which could not be addressed without a substantive change to the application then it would be brought back before the Committee.

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The Chairperson welcomed Alderman Rodgers to the meeting and he was invited to address the Committee. He stated that he objected to the application for the following reasons:

- the pitches were not in the best interests of the residents;
- the proposed floodlighting would affect residents' privacy;
- litter and noise would be a problem; and
- parking problems in the area would worsen.

The Chairperson then invited Councillor Groogan to address the Committee. She advised the Members that:

- she requested that the Committee would defer consideration of the application due to further information required in relation to recent badger activity in the area, potentially already disturbed by security lighting which had been installed on the site last winter;
- NIEA had only been re-consulted with the most recent information today;
- there had been significant opposition from the applicant/agent to accept conditioning around floodlighting and the badger setts;
- the proposal was in a unique setting in the Stranmillis ATC, it was directly in the middle of the Malone and Stranmillis conservation areas and was in close proximity to a number of listed buildings, TPOs, protected flora and fauna;
- few sites attracted such a level of historic interest and, as such, it required a special level of intervention and measures to uphold the value that the area provided;
- sufficient information had not yet been provided in regards to an appropriate assessment of cumulative amenity impact on the nearby residents due the intensification of site usage, as highlighted by Environmental Health;
- the Committee should ensure it was in receipt of all relevant information, as it would be unreasonable to disregard the environmental concerns which had been raised by objectors without having assurance that the mitigation of the worst potential negative impacts would be conditioned;
- the proposals were contrary to policies BH12 of PP6 and Policy OS4 and OS7 of PPS8.

The Planning Manager advised the Committee that, last month, the Natural Environment Division (NED), within the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), had advised that it was content that there were sufficient mitigation measures in place to ensure that the proposed development would have a minimal impact on the natural heritage interests associated with the site, subject to a number of conditions. He explained that, in the intervening period, a number of representations had been received which highlighted recent badger activity in the area. He advised the Members that NIEA had been re-consulted as a precautionary measure and that, while the officers' recommendation remained that of an approval, it would be subject to no substantive

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issues being raised by the consultee and it would be brought back to the Committee if any amendment or matter raised by the NED would deem it unacceptable.

The Principal Planning officer added that NIEA had been provided with an ecological report, both an original and an updated copy, which addressed the badger activity within the grounds of the college. It had been confirmed that there were no badger setts within the area where work was proposed and that NIEA had no objections in relation to the impact of the work, including floodlighting, on badger activity.

(Councillor Groogan left the meeting at this point and did not participate in the rest of the discussion or the vote)

The Chairperson invited Mr. Gilmer and Mr. Wilson, the first group of objectors, to address the Committee. Together they outlined that they were opposed to the development as:

- the site adjoined a quiet residential area, and that the proposals were on an industrial scale, with a proposed 6 or 7 day usage of the pitches, which indicated commercial enterprise not akin to college life;
- the Students' Union bar was located beside the sports facility;
- the entrance and exit gate would become a turnstile, with a dramatic increase in footfall of people arriving in cars, team buses and taxis;
- the noise impact of increased cars, doors banging, shouting and general traffic;
- the Cleaver area was used as an informal car park and that the yellow lines on the road were ignored, as no traffic wardens were present in the area, and concerns regarding parked cars which created access difficulties for emergency vehicles and bin lorries;
- the brightness of the floodlights would cause difficulty for residents trying to sleep;
- the College had been a bad neighbour and, only when Anna Lo MLA intervened, did the ASB of its students curtail when the College agreed to close the back gate at midnight;
- they worried for destruction of one of the last Conservation areas of Belfast;
- they were concerned for the downward spiral in mental health of their friends and neighbours as their residential amenity would be significantly adversely impacted by the application;
- the application was incompatible within a Conservation area, particularly with commercial activity pollution; and
- they invited the Committee to visit the area to see, first hand, the issues which they faced.

The Chairperson then welcomed Mr. E. Loughrey, agent, and Mr. F. Bryan, Chair of Cleaver Residents' Group, to the meeting, representing the second group of objectors.

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Mr. Loughrey they advised the Committee that:

- PPS 6 Addendum stated that ,where new uses were proposed, that they should respect the unique character and general ambience of Conservation areas, e.g. certain developments may adversely affect the character of a Conservation area through noise, nuisance and general disturbance;
- the case officer had not directly assessed it against the Stranmillis ATC guidance, which advised that it was a pleasant woodland, grassed open space and unique in character, the most important natural habitat of flora and fauna in close proximity to the city centre, and a vital backdrop to the townscape;
- the guidance for Stranmillis College stated that there was a fine balance between the attractive buildings and the landscape, and that new development could interrupt and upset that balance;
- the spatial character around Stranmillis and Cleaver Park was unique and bringing increased commercial activity was an inappropriate extension and alteration, which would result in a visual disruption and would be out of sympathy with the townscape;
- the area was ultra-sensitive to any development;
- the case officer had failed to assess the view from the Stranmillis Conservation area towards the Malone conservation area, and that PPS 6 did not limit assessment of any “restricted vantage points”;
- disputed that the application would benefit the local community, given that over 116 objections had been received from the Cleaver Park residents; and
- the circumstances of the site had changed, in that the College had installed bright lighting on site which had deflected badgers away from the site and that should be considered.

Mr. F. Bryan outlined to the Committee that he represented 140 residents who were unanimous in their objection to the proposal. He outlined that:

- there had been 126 letters of objection submitted from residents of Cleaver in respect of the application, and that they requested that it should be dismissed outright;
- there had been a lack of information forthcoming in respect of questions asked and challenges made by objectors during the whole process;
- he failed to see how the planners were content with the floodlighting, given that their positions had not yet been confirmed;
- planners seemed to be leaning heavily on delegated authority, which emphasised that there were too many questions outstanding in relation to the application;
- that residents had no confidence that the College would behave like a responsible neighbour unless there was an honest broker to oversee its actions;

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- residents had not had any time to consider further late submission by the applicant in the last few hours; and
- residents wished to be consulted on any conditions being applied and that any conditions should be enforceable.

In response to a query from a Member, the Principal Planning officer confirmed that, as included within the Late Items pack, amended plans had been received and that the location of the floodlights had been fixed as detailed within the plans.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. S. Beattie QC, representing the applicant, to the meeting. He outlined that:

- the application constituted permitted development under the extant LDP and BMAP and it had been assessed against PPS8 and relevant policies;
- contrary to Mr Loughrey's suggestion that the site was "ultra sensitive", it was designated as whiteland under the BUAP and was considered open space under PPS8;
- the fact it had been used for car parking at some point was not relevant as there was an existing use as a recreation pitch, which was a strong material consideration;
- they were antiquated pitches in need of updating;
- the visual intrusion test had been considered in the assessment;
- they had no objection to the imposition of conditions in respect of a badger and bat survey before the development commenced;
- the changing of lightbulbs at the site did not constitute development and, even if the badgers had moved due to such a change, the impact on wildlife had been considered by officers;
- the applicant/agent had suggested some wording changes to some of the conditions;
- the allegations of bad neighbourliness and bullying by the College were unfounded, and that the College had implemented its own complaints process;
- Condition 14 was not appropriate as they did not relate to the application, including that the complaints of Anti-Social Behaviour did not relate to the operation of sports pitches and it was wrong to say that residents had a right to agree the condition, when it should be the planning authority;
- DFI had been consulted on a number of occasions, they'd confirmed repeatedly that they had no objections and that considerable weight should be given to that;
- issues regarding parking on double yellow lines was an enforcement issue;
- in relation to the queries regarding the cumulative impact assessment, he explained that the baseline from which the impacts had been assessed were from a zero baseline, which was the most conservative way of doing so. He explained that the full impact of the development was assessed with no assumed historical use and

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that statutory consultees had also confirmed that they were content.

A Member referenced the Late Items pack, whereby the applicant had requested the removal of conditions 4, 5 and 14 and that they also felt that numbers 8 and 18 were unlawful.

Mr. Beattie confirmed to the Committee that the only condition they sought the removal of was Condition 14, which required that a site Management Plan be submitted prior to the operation of the pitches “to include a system for dealing with complaints about anti-social behaviour and noise, and an arrangement for regular liaison with the nearby Cleaver Residents Association, by way of meetings, to recognise the need to respond to any negative aspects that may arise from the redevelopment and its use.”

Mr. Beattie explained that the applicant was requesting that a number of alterations be made to the other proposed conditions, as follows:

- that they did not believe that Condition 4 was relevant, as the application did not seek to amend or create any new adopted roads or footpaths, and it should not have been included;
- that, as there was no proposal to open up a new access or close an existing access, Condition 5 should not have been included;
- that Conditions 6 and 7 could be combined in a more coherent way;
- that Condition 8, relating to the floodlighting, should refer directly to the specific plan drawing, with the condition based upon it;
- in relation to Conditions 15 and 18, that the final say and agreement should be with the Council, rather than the contractor or a third party.

Mr Loughrey advised the Committee that neither he, nor the residents of Cleaver Park, had been made aware of any comments submitted by the applicant in relation to the conditions.

The Chairperson, after consulting with the Director of Planning and Building Control and the Divisional Solicitor, advised the Committee that, ultimately, the matter of conditions was between the Council and the applicant.

A Member referenced the Conservation officer’s view that the application would benefit the local community. The Planning Manager explained that the primary role of the Conservation officer was to comment on the impact of development proposals on the character and appearance of the conservation area, to which the officer had concluded that it would be preserved. He explained that the site was situated at a lower level than the nearby residential streets and that it was tree-lined which provided natural screening. He outlined that it was a matter for the Committee to determine how much weight to apportion in relation to the wider community benefits of the proposal.

In response to a further Member’s question regarding the visual impact of the pitch, the Principal Planning officer explained that the existing surface of the site was a

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relevant material consideration. The proposal to replace the gravel pitch with a 3G pitch was not considered to have a detrimental impact on the character of the area.

The Planning Manager provided further clarity in response to a Member's question regarding the views of the site in winter, with the deciduous trees and the increased use of floodlighting throughout the darker evenings, in relation to the adjacent Conservation areas. The Planning Manager pointed out that Conservation Areas were designated because of the special character of their built environment, which was not as readily enjoyed when it was dark. Officers considered that the proposed floodlighting would not therefore harm the Conservation Areas and their character and appearance would be preserved.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor O'Hara,
Seconded by Councillor Matt Collins,

That the Committee agrees to defer consideration of the application in order to receive further information on the recent badger activity and the cumulative impact on amenity in the development.

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

A number of Members stated that, while they had sympathy with the residents' objections in relation to the parking and floodlighting issues, they did not feel it was justifiable to reject the application given the responses from the statutory consultees.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Hussey
Seconded by Councillor McCullough,

That the Committee grants approval to the application, subject to the imposing of the conditions with delegated power to the Director of Planning and Building Control for the final wording of the conditions, to deal with any matters arising as a result of the additional consultation with NIEA and that the objectors' comments would be considered in relation to the final conditions.

On a vote, five Members voted for the proposal, five Members voted against and two no votes. As there was an equality of votes, the Chairperson exercised his second and casting vote for the motion and it was accordingly declared carried.

Correspondence received

Proposed Listing of Havelock House - Response from HED

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

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- 1.1** Members will recall that the Planning Committee, at its meeting on 15th September, agreed that a letter should be forwarded to Historic Environment Division (HED) in the light of representations expressing a view that Havelock House should be listed and suggesting that a number of issues were not addressed when the building was previously considered for listing. Furthermore HED have been asked to provide a response to representations received in respect of the current planning application.
- 1.2** Council received a response on Friday 9 October from HED outlining how they believe that they have correctly followed due process in assessing the building for statutory listing advising in this case that the building doesn't meet the prescribed criteria. They also summarise their response to the current planning application and suggest that the Council could utilise its own statutory powers to locally list the building.
- 1.3** This report provides an overview of some of the key issues and explains why the suggested approach around local listing would not be appropriate in this instance.

2.0 **Recommendation**

2.1 The Committee is requested to note:-

- the update from HED set out in the report as confirmation that the building does not meet the criteria for statutory listing; and
- the limitations in respect of the potential for local listing cannot be considered in this instance.

3.0 **Main Report**

Key Issues

3.1 The Council, at its meeting on 15th September, agreed that a letter be forwarded to HED with the following motion:

‘In light of the fact objectors have made representations expressing concerns that Havelock House should be a listed building, raising some issues which were allegedly not addressed when the building was considered for listing last year, the Planning Committee requests that HED provide a detailed response to those representations to inform its decision making process in respect of the Havelock House planning application.’

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- 3.2 The Committee may wish to note that Listed Buildings are those designated through listing as being of ‘special architectural or historic interest’ under Section 80 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011. A responsibility that was retained as a function of the Historic Environment Divisions (HED) within the Department for Communities (DfC).**
- 3.3 The Second Survey of all of Northern Ireland's building stock, is currently underway, to update and improve on the first List of buildings of special architectural or historic interest a process which began in 1974.**
- 3.4 Havelock House was not considered for a full survey in the first survey of buildings of special architectural or historic interest which ran between 1969 and 1997, nor was it considered for a full survey during the second survey of this area in 2011.**
- 3.5 Following correspondence with a third party, which had included a listing request, the Department reviewed the record, visiting the building in July 2018. Following further correspondence, a presentation on the history of the building and its use as a television studio by a third party was received by the Department in February 2019.**
- 3.6 The Department has outlined how it assessed all the evidence in relation to Havelock House and determined that the building did not merit a full survey. The building has undergone extensive extension and alterations including the loss of fixtures and fittings/ equipment pertaining to its use as a television studio.**
- 3.7 HED was consulted on the current planning application for the proposed demolition and redevelopment of Havelock House (ref LA04/2020/0067/F), in relation to the impact of the proposed development on several listed buildings, including those on the gasworks site. In the formal response HED advised that it considers that the height of the proposal would be contrary to policy. This will be considered in detail in the Committee Report for the current application in due course.**
- 3.8 In addition to the requested response on the formal Listing HED referred to the potential for the building to be considered as a Historic Buildings of Local Importance. It should be noted that unlike listed buildings, Historic Buildings of Local importance (sometimes referred to as Local Listings) are not protected by statute. Instead they are referenced in paragraph**

6.24 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) as:

‘a building, structure or feature, whilst not statutory listed, has been identified by the council as an important part of their heritage, due to its local architectural or historic significance.’

- 3.9** Whilst local councils can consider the establishment of a list of such assets there is no requirement to draw one up and councils there is considerable discretion as to how these could be identified and managed.

- 3.10** Following the introduction of a process that could support the identification of such assets the SPPS states in paragraph 6.24: ‘Councils may wish to bring forward bespoke local policies for such buildings’ through the Local Development Plan process. The SPPS goes on to state that the ‘significance placed on the historic building of local importance is key to its protection under planning policy and should be established based upon clear evidence’.

- 3.11** The identification of Historic Buildings of Local Importance could be considered as part of the Local Development Plan as one way of defining the structures that are regarded as important. However, the SPPS only requires that councils ‘identify the main built and archaeological heritage features, where they exist within the plan area’. In the consideration of the potential for Historic Buildings of Local Importance it may, therefore, be more appropriate to identify such structures only where these relate to and support area designations and heritage assets such as: Conservation Areas, Areas of Townscape Character and Local Landscape Policy Areas.

- 3.12** As we move forward towards the Independent Examination of the first part of the LDP – the Plan Strategy, initial work has commenced on the more detailed Local Policies Plan (LPP) which includes reviewing our, ‘Areas of Townscape Character’ and other character areas including to develop the evidence to support the development of local policies and designations that can support the strategic objectives for the plan.

- 3.13** Notwithstanding these matters, it is important to highlight that the incumbent planning system including policy development and plan designations are still operating within the transitional arrangements set out within the SPPS (Para. 1.10). Whilst the new Local Development Plan and Plan Strategy mirror the objectives of the SPPS in its desire to protect our built heritage, it is also important to note that the transitional

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arrangements states that the existing suite of Departmental policy and guidance will continue to apply until they are replaced by the Councils own adopted Plan Strategy and then in time more comprehensively by the LPP. As the Belfast Plan Strategy is yet to be adopted, the Council are unable use mechanism such as new policy protections or designations until we move beyond the current arrangements and achieve adopted Plan Strategy status.

Financial and Resource Implications

3.15 None.

Equality or Good Relations Implications

3.16 None.”

The Planning Manager drew the Members’ attention to the Late Items pack, highlighting that correspondence had been received from an interested party in respect of the item. The letter advised that a meeting was scheduled to take place, on 22nd October, between the Minister for Communities and interested parties in respect of Havelock House. The Planning Manager explained that the outcome of the Ministerial meeting, if known, would be reported to the Committee as part of the Case officer’s report when the planning application was to be considered by the Committee.

The Planning Committee noted the contents of the report and the Late Items pack.

Chairperson

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Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee

Monday, 19th October, 2020

MEETING OF BELFAST WATERFRONT AND ULSTER HALL LTD.
SHAREHOLDERS' COMMITTEE
HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Alderman Haire (Chairperson);
Councillors Canavan, Matt Collins,
Flynn, Kyle, McAteer,
Mulholland and Newton.

In attendance: Ms. J. Corkey, Chief Executive, ICC Belfast (Belfast
Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd.);
Mr. I. Bell, Director of Finance and Systems, ICC Belfast
(Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd.);
Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development;
Mrs. C. O'Prey, Head of Audit, Governance and Risk
Services;
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer; and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Alderman Copeland and Councillors Cobain, Groves and M. Kelly.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 17th February were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 2nd March.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

Welcome

The Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, welcomed Ms. J. Corkey, the new Chief Executive of the ICC Belfast, to her first meeting of the Shareholders' Committee and wished her well in her role.

Restricted Items

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

BWUH Ltd. Performance Report – Quarter 2, YTD 2020/2021

The Chief Executive of the ICC Belfast, Ms. Corkey, provided the Members with an update on the company's performance for quarter two, year to date, covering the period 1st April to 30th September, 2020.

She explained that, given that the venues had been closed from 16th March due to the Covid19 pandemic and the major impact it had had on sales revenue, very few Key Performance Indicators had been reported on during the year to date.

The Director of Finance & Systems advised of the loss that was projected for the year and outlined that the company's financial performance had understandably been majorly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Members were reminded that the Council had made a claim for loss of income to the Department for Communities (DfC) to mitigate the impact of Covid-19.

The Chief Executive explained that both venues remained in standby mode and that staff were working hard to retain business and to defer events which had been due to take place in 2020 to future years. She explained the importance of virtual and hybrid events to the business.

The Members were provided with an update on the Corporate Social Responsibility of the business.

The Committee was provided with an update on the staff of BWUH Ltd., including the number which had been furloughed. The Chief Executive outlined that managers had continued to hold 'keep in touch' days with furloughed team members, and that, where possible, she had attended those meetings to interact with the team.

In response to a Member's question regarding those staff members who had been furloughed, the Director of Economic Development advised that a report covering BWUH Ltd. employees would be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for its consideration on 23rd October 2020.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and the update which had been provided.

Extending Directors' contracts to 31st December, 2020

The Director of Economic Development advised the Committee that an extension to the contracts for three of the existing directors of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. had been approved. He explained that the extension, to 31st December, 2020, had

Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders Committee
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been approved, on 30th July, by the Deputy Chief Executive of Belfast City Council, and the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Shareholders' Committee.

The three Directors concerned were Mr. A. Dixon, Mr. R. Holt and Mr. P. McClughan.

The Committee was advised that the extension was to accommodate the pause in the recruitment process which had been caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The previous contracts were scheduled to end by 31st July, 2020.

Noted.

BWUH Internal Audit Update

The Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services (AGRS) provided the Committee with an update on the outcome of an internal audit which had been undertaken at the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall (BWUH) Ltd. in January and February 2020.

She explained to the Members that the focus of the audit was on core financials, risk management and performance management, as well as following up on any outstanding recommendations from previous audits. The Members were advised that the draft report had been agreed with the BWUH Ltd. Acting Chief Executive and that the Executive Summary was presented to the BWUH Ltd. Audit and Risk Committee in April 2020.

The Head of AGRS provided the Committee with an overview of performance management and finance and risk management and the respective improvements which had been recommended.

She advised that management had agreed all the recommendations and had put in place an action plan to implement all actions by the end of May 2020. The Members were advised that the implementation of the actions would be followed up as part of the 2020/2021 internal audit.

The Committee noted that AGRS was reviewing the internal audits that were originally planned to be undertaken in BWUH Ltd in 2020/21 and determining any changes that might be needed to take account of the impact of Covid-19 and any related assurance needs. She explained that that would be done in conjunction with BWUH Ltd. management and would be agreed with the BWUH Ltd Audit and Risk Committee in November 2020.

The Committee was advised that the findings from the 2020/2021 internal audit would be reported to future meetings of the BWUH Ltd. Shareholders' Committee.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and thanked the Head of AGRS for her attendance.

Chairperson

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Brexit Committee

Thursday, 8th October, 2020

MEETING OF BREXIT COMMITTEE HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Flynn (Chairperson); and
Alderman Rodgers; and
Councillors Baker, Brooks, Canavan,
de Faoite, Ferguson, Gormley, Hanvey, Kyle,
Long, McLaughlin, McMullan, Newton,
Spratt, Whyte and Walsh.

In attendance: Mr. J. Walsh, City Solicitor;
Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development;
Ms. K. Walsh, Business Research and Development
Manager;
Mrs. C Sullivan, Policy and Business Development Officer;
Mr. D. Connolly, City Protection Manager;
Mr. R. Connelly, Policy, Research and Compliance Officer;
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology for inability to attend was received from Aldermen Haire and Sandford.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 10th September 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 October, subject to the amendment of the minute under the heading "UK Government Commitment to the NI Protocol" to provide that the Council writes also to Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, expressing its support for the legal action being undertaken by the European Commission against the UK Government over its intention to breach its obligations under the Brexit Withdrawal Agreement by proceeding with the Internal Market Bill.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

Correspondence - Response from The Cabinet Office

It was reported that correspondence had been received from the Cabinet Office responding to concern which had been raised by Council at its meeting on 1st July, 2020

regarding the failure of the UK Government to request an extension to the Brexit transition period.

The Committee noted the response received from the Cabinet Office. .

Presentations

Presentation from Invest NI

The Chairperson welcomed to the meeting Mr. D. Durkan (Executive Director, Strategy) and Mr. D. Roberts (Strategic Policy Manager) representing Invest Northern Ireland (Invest NI).

Mr. Roberts advised the Committee that due, in part, to Covid, the level of readiness across the business sector was highly variable and a lot of work was required in the weeks and months ahead to prepare businesses for the December withdrawal deadline.

He informed the Committee that Invest NI was focusing on keeping businesses informed and advising them on what action they could take and encouraging and helping businesses to engage with other agencies and providers out there, for example the Trader Support Service from HMRC.

He advised that Invest NI was also assessing opportunities for new investment and growth in international markets and free trade agreements with non EU countries and a potential Freeport zone in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Durkan further explained that Invest NI had been developing its own EU Exit microsite and had been holding virtual workshops and advice clinics for all businesses. He advised that an EU Exit Resilience Tool was available online to help businesses understand their current and future needs, create contingency plans and take key actions to prepare for their future.

The Committee was informed that Invest NI had developed a Brexit Preparation Grant to assist with up to 50 percent of one year's salary to a maximum of £20k, to engage a new or existing member of staff in Brexit preparation and provide assistance for rental costs for a market research office located outside the UK for a maximum period of 12 months, travel and accommodation costs outside Northern Ireland, and specialist consultancy support.

In response to a Member's question regarding pursuing opportunities before disruption from a no-deal Brexit occurred, Mr. Durkan informed the Committee that Invest NI had opened up ten more global offices over the previous 18 months and many of those offices had desk space available for businesses to go and position themselves within the international markets. He added that Invest NI had substantially increased its resources in trade and foreign direct investment over the previous two years and increased its trade missions, exhibitions and conferences.

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Thursday, 8th October, 2020**

After further discussion, the Chairperson thanked Mr. Durkan and Mr. Roberts for their attendance and they retired from the meeting.

Invitation to The Executive Office - Brexit Stakeholder Event

The City Solicitor advised the Committee that an invitation has been received from the Committee for the Executive Office which had agreed to hold a Brexit stakeholder event to provide local councils with an opportunity to brief Committee Members on any issues and concerns they might have as a result of the UK's exit from the European Union.

A Member asked for the Committee's concern regarding the lack of detail with regard to the Shared Prosperity Fund to be raised at the Brexit stakeholder event.

The Committee agreed that the Chair of Brexit Committee and the City Solicitor would attend the Brexit stakeholder event on 4th November, 2020 at Parliament Buildings, Stormont.

Restricted Item

Update on Brexit Preparedness (Verbal Update)

The Policy and Business Development Officer explained that officers were continuing to monitor ongoing developments and had commenced the process of reviewing the Brexit readiness arrangements for the Council's critical services and that an update would be presented to the Committee at its meeting in November on potential issues that had been identified and contingency preparation that had been put in place.

The City Protection Manager gave an overview of the current status of delivery programme at Belfast Port. He advised that up to 16 Environmental Health Officers and eight Technical Support Officers were being recruited to carry out checks.

He further reported that it was unlikely that the facility would be fully prepared for 1st January, and that DAERA was assessing contingency arrangements.

The Policy and Business Development Officer advised that she was working with the Foreign Office in Dublin to arrange a virtual tour of both the Belfast and Dublin Ports and an opportunity for discussion with Port officials, and a provisional date had been scheduled for 16th October, 2020.

The Committee thanked the Policy and Business Development Officer and the City Protection Manager for their continued work and noted the presentation.

Chairperson

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Nobel Peace Prize - Henry Reeve Medical Brigade

“This Council recommends Cuba’s Henry Reeve medical brigade for the Nobel Peace Prize, in recognition of its efforts in the fight against the global COVID-19 Pandemic.

The international community is witnessing the solidarity of health professionals who leave their own country to provide emergency assistance to countries in crisis, they are serving on the frontline in the struggle against the outbreak, from Latin America, Africa, Asia and in the heart of Europe.”

Proposer: Councillor JJ Magee

Seconder: TBC

(To be debated by the Council)

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Implementation of Care Partner arrangements in Nursing and Care homes

“This Council recognises the distress, confusion, physical and cognitive deterioration experienced by residents with dementia living in nursing homes, due to the lockdown in Spring 2020 and the subsequent curtailment of visits with relatives to one visit per week. The Council also recognises the pain experienced by relatives of nursing home residents with dementia, many of whom - pre- COVID-19 – cared daily for their loved ones in nursing homes, assisting them with washing, dressing, eating, drinking and exercise and provided them with love and cognitive stimulation.

Whilst Council acknowledges the spread of the COVID-19 virus and adheres to the Executive guidelines on Council on public health, it also supports the “Regional Principles for Nursing and Residential Care homes in N Ireland” (published by the Department of Health on 23rd September, 2020), which establishes the designation of relatives or close friends as “Care Partners” and stipulates that care and nursing homes should facilitate Care Partner arrangements to enable relatives to assist with the communication, physical and emotional needs of their loved ones in care and nursing homes.

This Council calls on the Minister for Health to provide the necessary human, financial and technical resources to nursing and care homes to ensure the immediate practical implementation of safe and secure Care Partner arrangements which will underpin the rights of dementia patients in nursing homes and deliver improved health and well-being outcomes for them and their families.”

Proposer: Councillor Geraldine McAteer

Seconder: Councillor Emma Groves

(To be debated by the Council.)

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Access to maternity wards for birthing partners

“Belfast City Council notes with concern the current restrictions placed around access to maternity wards for birthing partners due to COVID-19. Furthermore, it recognises the varying measures across the Health and Social Care Trust of the Belfast City Council area and agrees to write to the Health Minister asking that further consideration is given to a consistent approach, thus allowing birthing partners to be afforded increased access to pregnancy, maternity and neonatal services”

Proposer: Councillor Tracy Kelly

Seconder: Councillor Sarah Bunting

(To be debated by the Council.)

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Closure of Ulster Bank

“We, the members of Belfast City Council, demand an urgent meeting with the Chief Executive Officer of Ulster Bank and the Nat West Bank Chairperson to discuss the recent revelations that NatWest is considering the complete closure of Ulster Bank, which could result in the loss of over 600 jobs based in Belfast, which directly service Ulster Bank in the Republic of Ireland.

The Council will therefore write to the Secretary of State, Branden Lewis MP, Shadow Secretary of State, Louise Haigh MP. and the four Belfast MPs requesting all-party meetings about Nat West’s proposals. The Council will also write to the Minister for the Economy, Diane Dodds and the Chair of the Assembly’s Economic Committee requesting they meet with representatives of the Financial Services Union.”

Proposer: Councillor Brian Heading

Seconder: Councillor Donal Lyons

(To be debated by the Council)

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Campaign for an All-Ireland National Health Service

"The COVID-19 crisis presents an unprecedented threat to public health. The scale of the crisis clearly demonstrates the critical role of a fully funded and protected public health service.

Council agrees that two divergent public health strategies to deal with a pandemic on the island of Ireland, North and South, is irrational, impractical and dangerous.

Council calls on the Executive to begin developing a fully integrated all-Ireland public health strategy.

Council supports the Campaign for an All-Ireland National Health Service, to deliver an island-wide NHS, free at the point of delivery from the cradle to the grave."

Proposer: Councillor Fiona Ferguson

Seconder: Councillor Brian Heading

(To be debated by the Council.)

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Sealing of the Records of Mother and Baby Homes

“This Council notes with deep concern the recent move by the Irish government to seal the records of mother and baby homes for up to 30 years; also notes the anguish and outcry from victims and survivors of the homes in response to the Dáil vote; resolves to write to the Irish government to express the Council's condemnation at their actions and to call on them to unseal the records; also resolves to write to the Stormont Executive to express dismay at their refusal to conduct an inquiry into near-identical institutions in the North, and to urgently call on them to conduct such an inquiry.”

Proposer: Councillor Michael Collins

Seconder: Councillor Fiona Ferguson

(To be debated by the Council.)

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Clean Air Strategy

“This Council recognises our failure to meet EU legal limits on air pollution values despite significant progress made over recent years. The World Health Organisation and the UK Government recognise that air pollution is the largest environmental health risk we face today. This Council recognises that air pollution leads to between 28,000 and 36,000 early deaths each year in the UK. This Council also recognises that medical evidence is mounting around the dangerous link between Covid-19 and air pollution.

The Belfast Agenda aims for Belfast to be a city that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable, where everyone experiences good health and wellbeing. In order to achieve that vision, we must address air pollution. This Council already supports adopting the more stringent World Health Organisation air pollution limits where appropriate and has moved ahead with the first detailed assessment of air pollution sources across this city since 2010 with the welcome support from the Department. Our ambition for Clean Air Zones in the city cannot be achieved without enabling legislation from the Assembly. This Council passed a motion supporting more stringent targets and ambition for Clean Air Zones in September 2019 and has included addressing air pollution in our corporate priorities. The Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs has committed to bringing forward a ‘Clean Air Strategy discussion document’ which is a roll back from previous commitments in response to Assembly questions. Further delay will lead to continuing early deaths and ongoing breaches of the EU legal limits.

This Council agrees to write to the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs requesting the immediate development of a Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland rather than a discussion document which further delays progress on addressing harmful air pollution in the city.

Proposer: Councillor Mal O’Hara

Seconder: Councillor Áine Groogan

(To be debated by the Council.)

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Action on Avoidable Winter Deaths

“With the winter approaching, Belfast citizens will be increasingly susceptible to Avoidable Winter Deaths – particularly our citizens aged over 65 with underlying health conditions and vulnerable elderly people aged 85+.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, elderly and vulnerable citizens are already at high risk, it is therefore imperative that we redouble our efforts to prevent avoidable winter deaths from happening during the winter 20/21.

The increase in winter deaths is widely understood to be caused by the flu and spells of very cold weather - yet these deaths are avoidable. A combination of high energy prices, fuel poverty, ill health, low income and poor housing can make winter a dangerous time for many older people.

This Council has worked with statutory, community and voluntary partners to deliver the Belfast Warm and Well Project to tackle Avoidable Winter Deaths earlier this year. We call on Council to act decisively to implement a multi-sectoral targeted Avoidable Winter Deaths programme for the winter of 20/21.”

Proposer: Councillor Emma Groves

Seconder: Councillor Geraldine McAteer

(To be referred without debate to the People and Communities Committee.)

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Mental Health - Awareness and Support Campaign

“This Council agrees that Belfast is facing a mental health crisis that has been exacerbated by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This Council agrees to launch an awareness and support campaign in the city centre, at strategic points throughout the city and on social media that targets those with poor mental health. The campaign will focus on posters offering support service details and general questions that have a positive psychological effect for those who read them.

Furthermore, this Council agrees to convene an urgent meeting between the Council, the Executive Office, the Department for Health and statutory agencies to discuss the formation of a community emergency response system that will allow local support services to respond to those in need of urgent and direct help.

Finally, this Council acknowledges and pays tribute to all those charities and services who offer invaluable help to our citizens that undoubtedly save lives on a daily and weekly basis.”

Proposer: Councillor Dale Pankhurst

Seconded: Councillor John Kyle

(To be referred without debate to the People and Communities Committee.)

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Secured Serviced City Centre Civic Bicycle Parking Facilities

“The coronavirus pandemic has forced us all to rethink how we live our lives. However, as we seek to build back better, it is essential that we do this in a safe, sustainable way. Supporting cycling infrastructure in Belfast is key to this, enabling people to get around our city in a way which is good for health and good for the environment.

However, given the regular theft of bicycles in the city centre, it is important that we take steps to provide facilities to enable people to feel secure when they travel there by bicycle.

Therefore, council agrees to the creation of secured, serviced city centre civic bicycle parking facilities, and will reallocate car parking space or other appropriate property in the city centre for this purpose, and work with partners to enable this to happen.

Proposer: Councillor Brian Smyth

Seconder: Councillor Gary McKeown

(To be referred without debate to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.)

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Installation of additional parklets on arterial routes and in neighbourhood areas

“This Council recognises the importance of reimagining and reallocating community spaces as part of our recovery from COVID-19 for the benefit of local residents and businesses.

In line with our commitment in our ‘Our Recovery’ strategy, this Council will seek to install additional parklets on arterial routes and neighbourhood areas through the Department for Communities Revitalisation Programme, by setting out a specific fund for applications from businesses, institutions, community associations and other eligible applicants to be defined.

On the basis of these applications, Belfast City Council will act as the coordinating partner to lead and set out the process that will develop these physical projects from concept design and community engagement to delivery and monitoring and evaluation, working with the applicants as well as the key stakeholders (including but not exhaustive of the Department for Infrastructure, Imtac and the Department for Communities) in consultation with local residents.

Additionally, the Council agrees to engage with local businesses to improve and enhance a café culture across Belfast.

Proposer: Councillor Ross McMullan

Seconder: Councillor Peter McReynolds

(To be referred without debate to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.)

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Belfast Leisure Centres – Proposed Redundancies

“This Council notes with deep concern recent moves by GLL to cut jobs in Belfast leisure centres through proposed redundancies.

The Council greatly appreciates the role of all leisure workers who have made a positive contribution to our services and our community over many years, and the need for fully staffed and funded leisure centres as a vital resource for the physical and mental health of communities emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Therefore, the Council opposes the proposed job losses and calls on GLL to immediately cease any moves toward redundancies; tasks the Chief Executive and the Officer team to engage with relevant trade union representatives; seek an urgent meeting with GLL management to put firmly on the record the Council's opposition; and work toward a financial package that addresses the jobs under threat and ensures no leisure worker loses their job in the weeks and months ahead.”

Proposer: Councillor Matt Collins

Seconder: Councillor Fiona Ferguson

(To be referred without debate to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.)

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Support for Young People and Students

“This Council notes the adverse effect COVID-19 has had on our city’s young people and students. Accordingly, we call upon the Council to facilitate an ad hoc meeting with key stakeholders to amplify the wide range issues and ensure a joined up approach is taken.”

Proposer: Councillor Kate Nicholl

Seconder: Councillor Sian Mulholland

(To be referred without debate to the People and Communities Committee.)

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Belfast City Council – Cycling Champion

“This Council agrees to introduce a Belfast City Council - Cycling Champion within the Council to support active travel and bicycle use; and, agrees to write to the Minister for Infrastructure calling on the publication of the Belfast Bicycle Network.”

Proposer: Councillor Peter McReynolds

Seconder: Councillor Nuala McAllister

(To be referred without debate to the People and Communities Committee.)

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Belfast Bikes – Pilot Scheme to use Rolloe

“Belfast bikes helps encourage citizens and visitors to our city to get around Belfast, while helping reduce our carbon footprint.

Promoting cycling and investing in safe cycle lanes will be paramount in our fight against climate change.

What if we can also help clean the air as we cycle.

A new award winning design called Rolloe transforms the humble bike wheel into an air purifier that sucks in polluted air, filters out the pollutants and releases the clean air back out into the city.

Similar to a motion last year to investigate the potential of city trees, I call on this Council to explore a pilot scheme to use Rolloe on Belfast bikes with the view to use throughout the fleet if successful and help promote all cyclists to explore the usage of Rolloe on their own bikes.”

Proposer: Councillor Danny Baker

Seconder: Councillor Ronan McLaughlin

(To be referred without debate to the People and Communities Committee.)

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