Public Document Pack

Democratic Services Section
Legal and Civic Services Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS

15th December, 2020

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet via Microsoft Teams on Friday, 18th December, 2020 at 9.30 a.m., for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

SUZANNE WYLIE

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

1. Routine Matters

(a) Apologies

(b) Minutes

(c) Declarations of Interest

2. Restricted Items

(a) Medium Term Financial Plan and Efficiency Programme (Pages 1 - 10)

(b) Finance Update (Pages 11 - 14)

(c) Update on the Operational Recovery of Council Services (Pages 15 - 26)

(d) Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (Pages 27 - 32)

(e) Recruitment of Inclusive Growth Posts and Establishment of Poverty Commission (Pages 33 - 36)

3. Matters referred back from Council/Motions

(a) Motion – World Environment Day (Pages 37 - 38)

(b) Motion - Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland - Response from Minister of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (Pages 39 - 44)

4. Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues

(a) Update on City Region Growth Deal (Pages 45 - 58)

(b) Belfast Innovation District (Pages 59 - 74)

(c) Northern Ireland Local Government Association Consultation – Transformation and Driving Practical Change in Local Government (Pages 75 - 100)

5. Physical Programme and Asset Management

(a) Update on Physical Programme (Pages 101 - 104)

(b) Asset Management (Pages 105 - 112)

(c) Update on Area Working (Pages 113 - 138)

6. Finance, Resources and Procurement

(a) Belfast City Council Statement of Accounts 2019-20 (Pages 139 - 278)

(b) Update on Contracts (Pages 279 - 284)

7. Equality and Good Relations

(a) Minutes of Meeting of Shared City Shared City Partnership (Pages 285 - 308)

(b) Equality and Diversity - Five Year Review of the Equality Scheme 2015-20 and Annual Report 2019-20 (Pages 309 - 500)

8. Operational Issues

(a) Minutes of Meeting of Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum (Pages 501 - 506)

(b) Minutes of Meeting of Audit and Risk Panel (Pages 507 - 552)

(c) Request for Donation - Northern Ireland Children’s Hospice (Pages 553 - 554)

(d) Requests for the use of the City Hall and the Provision of Hospitality (Pages 555 - 558)

9. Other Business

(a) Bilingual Street Signage – Counsel Opinion on Call-in (Pages 559 - 572)

10. Issues Raised in Advance by Members

(a) Procurement - Employment Academy Framework

(Councillor Beattie to raise)

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of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

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Belfast City Council

Subject:	**Motion – World Environment Day**
Date:	18th December, 2020
Reporting Officer:	John Walsh, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Restricted Reports				
Is this report restricted?	**Yes**		**No**	X
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?				
After Committee Decision				
After Council Decision				
Sometime in the future				
Never				

Call-in				
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	**Yes**	X	**No**	

1.0	**Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues**
1.1	To consider a motion on World Environment Day which was referred to the Committee by the Council at its meeting on 1st December.
2.0	**Recommendation**
2.1	The Committee is requested to consider the motion and to take such action thereon as may be determined.
3.0	**Main Report**
3.1	At the Council meeting on 1st December, the following motion was proposed by Councillor Garrett and seconded by Councillor McLaughlin: "We commend the progressive steps and actions that this Council, its partners and community have begun to take in challenging the existential threat facing the planet through what we recognise as the climate emergency. In recognising this crisis, it is our duty as a Council to take proactive steps in educating, supporting and resourcing our communities to do whatever we can to face down the emergency.

	The United Nations World Environment day takes place on 5th June 2021, with the theme this year focused on Biodiversity. The UN has also proclaimed 22nd May the International Day for Biological Diversity to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues. To support biodiversity and positive actions in tackling the climate emergency, we call on this Council, working with partners to develop a similar initative that other authorities have successfully developed, to freely distribute wildflower seed packs for city residents, schools and community and voluntary organisations. In building on this initiative, the Council will also mark World Environment Day on June 5th by illuminating the City Hall green, animating our social media channels with awareness raising content and developing a programme of digital or physical events within health guidance to support our citizens in challenging climate change.”
3.2	In accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the motion was referred without debate to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.
	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u>
3.3	None associated with this report.
	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u>
3.4	None
4.0	**Documents Attached**
	None

Belfast City Council

STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Subject:	**Motion: Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland – Response from the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs**
Date:	17th December, 2020
Reporting Officer:	John Walsh, City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Restricted Reports				
Is this report restricted?	**Yes**		**No**	X
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?				
After Committee Decision				
After Council Decision				
Sometime in the future				
Never				

Call-in				
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	**Yes**	X	**No**	

1.0	**Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**
1.1	To consider a response from the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in relation to a motion on a Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland.
2.0	**Recommendation**
2.1	The Committee is asked to consider the response.
3.0	**Main Report**
3.1	**<u>Key Issues</u>** The Committee will recall that the Council, at its meeting on 2nd November, passed the following motion which had been proposed by Councillor O'Hara and seconded by Councillor Groogan:

	"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. The Council also recognises that deprived communities are more likely to suffer from the impact of air pollution, and accordingly also recognises this issue as a class issue, impacted by socioeconomic inequalities. The Council, therefore, 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."
3.2	A response has now been received from Minister Poots, a copy of which is attached.
3.3	The Minister welcomes the Council's interest in the development of the first Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland and its commitment to protecting public health. He points out that both he and his officials share the Council's concerns around the environmental health risks created by air pollution and that they were working to develop an effective strategy which would deliver meaningful improvements in air quality across Northern Ireland. They also support the Council's detailed assessment of Nitrogen Oxide and particulate matter within Belfast and have offered £125,000 in this financial year to assist with that project.
3.4	He then addresses the call within the Council motion for the immediate development of a Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland, rather than a discussion document. He explains that air quality is a complex and cross-cutting issue and that it is influenced by policy across government through, for example, agriculture, domestic heating, industry and transport. The impacts of poor air quality can be felt across our society and have consequences for health, the environment and the economy. He is, therefore, adopting a two-stage approach for the development of the Strategy. In the first stage, a discussion document, which presents an-depth analysis of air quality in Northern Ireland and sets out currently policy and evidence, was launched for a twelve week consultation period on 23rd November. The document seeks views on a wide range of matters relating to air quality and includes a series of questions aimed at promoting discussion around air quality issues. It is envisaged that issues relating

	to Clean Air Zones, World Health Organisation standards and socio-economic deprivation would be raised, which the Minister welcomes. However, the document does not set out policy options or articulate a particular policy position.
3.5	The public consultation will, he points out, help to identify gaps in current policy and contribute to developing effective outcome-based measures aimed at reducing levels of air pollution across Northern Ireland and will provide an opportunity for stakeholders to put forward suggestions.
3.6	The Minister goes on to state that, in the second stage, all responses received as part of the consultation will be reviewed and a range of proposals will be formulated. Once he has decided upon a policy direction, officials will begin the process of drafting the first Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland. The Strategy will be more focused and shorter than the discussion document and will contain specific proposals around policy and other measures to improve air quality. It will, he adds, be subject to additional public consultation and, due to the cross-cutting nature of the policy area, will require Executive approval.
3.7	The Minister stresses that the adoption of a two stage approach for the development of the Clean Air Strategy, based upon an analysis of the evidence, assessment of current policy and stakeholder views, will ensure that it receives stakeholder buy in. Rather than delaying the process, this ongoing, thorough best practice approach will result an effective Clean Air Strategy which will deliver positive improvements in air quality for Northern Ireland. He concludes by encouraging the Council to review the discussion document and would welcome its response.
	Financial and Resource Implications
3.8	None associated with this report.
	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment
3.9	None associated with this report.
4.0	**Document Attached**
	Copy of response from the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

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From the Office of the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Eilish McGoldrick
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Legal and Civic Services Department
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Your reference: EMcG 02112020
Our reference: CORR-2032-2020
Date: 24 November 2020

Dear Ms McGoldrick

CLEAN AIR STRATEGY

Thank you for your letter of 16th November 2020 concerning the development of the first Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland.

I welcome Belfast City Council's interest in the development of the Strategy as well as its commitment to protecting public health. I can see from your letter that the Council recognises the environmental health risk created by air pollution. My officials and I share these concerns and seek to develop an effective Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland which will deliver meaningful improvements in air quality across Northern Ireland.

I also support the Council's detailed assessment of nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter within Belfast and my Department has offered £125,000 in this financial year to assist with this project.

I note the Belfast City Council motion passed on 2nd November, proposed by Councillor O'Hara and seconded by Councillor Groogan, requesting the immediate development of a Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland rather than a discussion document.

Air quality is a complex issue. It is influenced by policy across government, for example, through emissions that come from transport, agriculture, industry and domestic heating. Likewise, the impacts of poor air quality are felt right across our society and have consequences for health, the environment and the economy.

Due to the complexities and cross-cutting nature of the issue, I am adopting a two-stage approach in the development of the Clean Air Strategy. Initially a Clean Air Strategy Discussion Document, which presents an in-depth analysis of air quality in Northern Ireland and sets out current policy and evidence, was launched to a 12 week public consultation on

If you are deaf or have a hearing difficulty you can contact the Department via the Next Generation Text Relay Service by dialling 18001 + telephone number.

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

Monday 23rd November 2020. The Discussion Document seeks views on a wide variety of matters relating to air quality. It does not set out policy options or indicate a particular policy position. It includes a series of questions to promote discussion around some of the issues that relate to air quality in Northern Ireland. It is likely that issues relating to Clean Air Zones, World Health Organisation standards and socio-economic deprivation will be raised at that stage and I welcome input from everyone at that time.

The public consultation will help to identify gaps in current policy and contribute to developing effective outcome-based measures that will reduce levels of air pollution across Northern Ireland. The consultation will provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to respond to the document and to put forward any suggestions.

Following this period of public discussion, responses received will be reviewed, options considered and range of proposals formulated. Once I have considered the options and decided on a policy direction, officials shall begin to draft the first Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland. This will be a more focussed and shorter document than the Discussion Document and will contain specific proposals relating to policy and other measures which can improve air quality. This draft Clean Air Strategy will be subject to an additional public consultation and due to the cross-cutting nature of the policy area, Executive approval will also be sought at that time.

Developing the Draft the Clean Air Strategy using a two-staged approach and based on analysis of the evidence, assessment of current policy and legislation and stakeholder views, ensures that final policy direction and Strategy will receive stakeholder buy-in. Rather than delaying the process, this ongoing and thorough, best-practice approach will result in an effective Clean Air Strategy which delivers positive improvement in air quality for the people of Northern Ireland.

I encourage Belfast City Council to review to the forthcoming Clean Air Strategy Discussion Document and I welcome their response to the questions posed in this document.

Yours sincerely



EDWIN POOTS MLA
Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Belfast City Council

Subject:	**Update on City Region Growth Deal**
Date:	18th December 2020
Reporting Officer:	Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources

Restricted Reports				
Is this report restricted?	**Yes**		**No**	X
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?				
After Committee Decision				
After Council Decision				
Sometime in the future				
Never				

Call-in				
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	**Yes**	X	**No**	

1.0	**Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**
1.1	This report is to provide an update to Committee on the progress of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD), including an update on the development of Outline Business Cases (OBCs) and progress on agreeing a phased deal with the NI and UK Governments.
1.2	The Committee receives regular reports on projects within the BRCD which are led by Belfast City Council and considered a report last month on the OBC for the Belfast Destination Hub. The Committee will also be separately considering a report on the Belfast Digital Innovation Partnership, which will play a key role in supporting the delivery of the Belfast Innovation/Smart

	district, the delivery of which is dependent on BRCD funding for global centres of innovation excellence and for next generation digital infrastructure to support testbeds within the district.
1.3	A summary is also attached to this report which provides a brief overview of key regional innovation and digital projects funded through the BRCD that will transform the region's economy, including Belfast's economy, tackling fundamental barriers to inclusive growth, driving increased productivity and helping to drive economic recovery.
2.0	**Recommendations**
2.1	The Committee is asked: • Note the programme overview and the progress that has been made in Outline Business Case (OBC) development for all projects (Appendix 1) and on the development of an agreed approach with the UK and NI Governments to the delivery of a phased deal. • Note the summary attached which includes an overview of the regional innovation and digital projects that will transform the region's economy including Belfast. (Appendix 2)
3.0	**Main report**
	Programme Overview
3.1	In November, the Committee were advised that OBCs were progressing towards completion with work continuing on resolving key issues and challenges particularly in respect of budget profiling and scalability. Detailed engagement has also been taking place with Finance Directors to ensure that financial information within the OBCs has been subject to appropriate levels of assurance and that financial plans are in place in relation to capital investments and revenue financing, so that the transformative investments included within the BRCD can proceed with confidence.
3.2	A full list of projects and the current position in relation to OBC completion is attached at Appendix 1. The table confirms OBCs will have been completed for all projects by the end of December, though as outlined below it is recognised that further revision of OBCs may still be required for projects that are an earlier stage of development. Once these are considered by the relevant BRCD Advisory Board they will be submitted to the BRCD Executive Board. In addition to ensuring that projects are delivering on the priority outcomes for the BRCD, a key role of the Advisory Boards and the Executive Board will be ensuring that the projects which are being recommended for inclusion in the Deal are capable of being delivered within the agreed budget envelopes for each pillar. Significant progress has been made in this regard

	with, for example the projects and programmes within the innovation and digital pillar now aligned with the £350million government funding envelope. Work is continuing to ensure alignment of the tourism and regeneration and infrastructures projects within the available funding envelope.
	Proposed Timescale/Approach
3.3	As previously reported in order to have a deal in place so that funding can begin to flow from 1 April 2021 discussions are ongoing between Partners and the NI and UK Governments in relation to agreeing a "phased" deal to enable a 'Deal Document' to be signed off by the end of the financial year. As with all City Deals, given the long-term nature of the programme, projects are at various stages of development. However, agreeing a deal document is essential to enable delivery and for funding to flow. With sufficiently developed OBCs now created for all projects, the partners are confident that the necessary detail is available to agree with confidence the financial and implementation plans that underpin the deal.
3.4	The approach proposed will see the most advanced projects which are recommended for inclusion in the deal submitted for formal consideration through the Executive Department's casework committee process in parallel with the work to agree the deal document. For those projects which are recommended for inclusion in the deal, but which are less advanced Partners will seek agreement as part of the Deal on release of an initial funding stream to allow the further development of these projects and business cases so that their development can also progress at pace. When sufficiently developed, these projects will then be submitted formally to casework, enabling approval of expenditure on ongoing basis.
3.5	This approach recognises the varying states of readiness of projects across the programme, allowing the Deal Documentation to be completed & agreed and phased delivery to commence. Once the details of the "phased" deal are agreed with government partners a further update report will be brought back to Members.
	Investment Priorities
3.6	Since signing Heads of Terms more than 18 months ago and against the challenging backdrop of the COVID pandemic, BRCD partners have continued to develop OBCs for more than 20 ambitious programmes and projects, aimed at driving economic recovery and boosting the competitiveness of the city region. Outlined below is an update on each of the pillars of

	investment and the timescale for OBC completion for each project/programme is also attached (Appendix 1)
3.7	The summary attached at Appendix 2 provides an update on regional projects that will harness the potential of our most resilient sectors - life and health sciences, digital and creative industries, advanced manufacturing- and drive digital innovation and skills development which are so critical now to creating inclusive growth for both businesses and communities.
	Tourism and Regeneration
3.8	With the exception of one project within Antrim and Newtownabbey, all tourism and regeneration OBCs are developed and will be reviewed by the Tourism & Regeneration Advisory Board in December. Members are reminded that the OBC for the Belfast Destination Hub was agreed at the November SP&R committee.
3.9	The tourism industry has taken a serious hit due to Covid-19 and it is vital that the industry is not only able to recover but thrive in a post Covid-19 environment. BRCD is by its nature a long-term capital programme and the timing of investment in tourism aligns strongly with the need to provide globally visible tourism products to aid travel recovery. The regeneration elements of projects will also enable town and city centres to respond due to the intensified challenges following the pandemic.
	Innovation
3.10	As previously reported, the innovation projects within the BRCD have been significantly rescaled and are now broadly in line with the funding available to support this Pillar. OBCs for the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre **(**AMIC), Global Innovation Institute (GII) and Institute for Research Excellence in Advanced Clinical Healthcare (i-REACH) have been submitted to the Executive Board and it is anticipated that a revised OBC for the Centre for Digital Healthcare Technology (CDHT) will be submitted in January. A first draft OBC for the Screen Media & Innovation Lab (SMIL) has now been considered by the Innovation Pillar Board and submitted to the Executive Board, before being considered by the UK and NI Governments.
	Digital
3.11	Detailed development of the draft Digital Innovation Programme Business Case (PBC) is nearing completion. The business case will prioritise a flexible 'funds-based' approach with the increased use of Challenge Funds alongside an Infrastructure Enabling fund which will

	support connectivity infrastructure, as well as physical enabling infrastructure needed for the development of the Belfast Smart District and Regional Testbeds. It will also ensure that innovation support reaches across priority sectors and the region, through investment in Regional Innovation Hubs. Approval of programme business case by the NI and UK Governments would enable funding to be released for the detailed development of project business cases for challenge funds and an infrastructure enabling fund that would support both the Belfast Smart district and Regional Testbeds.
	Infrastructure
3.12	Interim OBCs for the Newry Southern Relief Road and Belfast Rapid Transit Phase 2 have now been reviewed by the Department for Infrastructure Economists. Interim OBCs have been produced for these projects due to the very early stage of their development, in advance of the necessary consultations on route development. Given the early stage of development of Newry Southern Relief Road and Belfast Rapid Transit Phase 2 there are high levels of optimism bias included in their financial cases and this has contributed to the affordability challenges across the programme. An OBC has been completed for the Lagan Pedestrian & Cycle Bridge.
	Employability and Skills (E&S)
3.13	The Employability & Skills Programme continues to be refined with proposals developed on the following themes, Skills for Growth; Skills for Inclusion and Skills for the Digital Future. Aligning the range of skills and employability programmes of partners, including Further Education Colleges, Universities and Local Councils, with the capital investment projects and needs of industry, is a vital component of delivering the ambitions and benefits of the overall city deal investment. The partners have therefore committed to aligning £30M of existing resources to maximise the impact of the City Deal programme and are working closely with government partners to ensure that plans are strongly aligned with the new skills strategy and NI wide employability programmes. It is anticipated that a final E&S Proposition will be submitted for approval to the Executive Board in February.
	<u>Inclusive Growth</u>
3.14	Inclusive growth is an underlying commitment of the BRCD spanning across all investments and associated work streams. Collaborating partners have sought to integrate inclusive growth across all investment projects and through the employability and skills programme proactive approaches will be undertaken to address skills imbalances and create socially inclusive pathways to support individuals into and progress further in employment. Partners

	have also committed to delivering collaborative approaches aimed at supporting overall inclusive growth ambitions by embedding inclusive growth commitments through their procurement practices, effectively creating additional benefit through their supply chain. As employers, partners are also working collaboratively to explore opportunities for joint delivery of social value through, for example, workforce development, upskilling lower skilled employees, pre-employment programmes for disadvantaged client groups and creation of public sector apprenticeship opportunities.
	Next Steps
3.15	Agreeing the detail of the "phased" deal is now of critical importance and would deliver much needed momentum, confidence and impact whilst recognising the long-term nature of the programme of investment and the further work required. The proposed approach was discussed at the recent meeting of the Council Panel and engagement is taking place with NI and UK Governments to seek to confirm agreement on the process. All the projects included in the Deal Document will have agreed budgets and indicative financial profiles and implementation timescales.
	Financial and Resource Implications
3.16	All costs associated with the BRCD are within existing budgets.
	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment
3.17	The Approach taken to develop the City Deal has been subject to independent equality screening and rural proofing and states that; *'BRCD is inherently inclusive, affording an opportunity for the region to grow in a way that will benefit the economy of Northern Ireland as a whole, thereby enhancing the lives and well-being of its citizens. If during further development of the programme it becomes apparent that there may be an adverse impact on certain groups or communities then the partnership commits to carrying out further Section 75 work and including screening and EQIAs as and when appropriate.'*
4.0	**Documents Attached**
	Appendix 1 - Outline Business Case (OBC) development Appendix 2 - Summary of Regional Innovation and Digital projects

Belfast Region City Deal: Overview of Outline Business Cases (OBCs): **Appendix 1**

Tourism & Regeneration Projects	
Bangor Waterfront Regeneration	OBC due to be completed December 2020
Whitespots Country Park	OBC due to be completed December 2020
Belfast Destination Hub	OBC due to be completed December 2020
Hillsborough Castle & Village	OBC due to be completed December 2020
Carrickfergus Regeneration	OBC due to be completed December 2020
Gobbins Phase 2	OBC due to be completed December 2020
I4C (Ballymena)	OBC due to be completed December 2020
Gateway to the Mournes	OBC due to be completed December 2020
Newry City Centre Regeneration	OBC due to be completed December 2020

Infrastructure Projects	
Belfast Glider Phase 2	Interim OBC completed August
Ormeau-Gasworks Bridge	OBC completed August
Newry Southern Relief Road	Interim OBC completed August

Innovation Projects	
AMIC	OBC completed December 2020
CDHT	OBC completed December 2020
GII	OBC completed December 2020
iREACH	OBC due to be completed January 2020
SMIL	Draft OBC completed December 2020

Digital Programme Business Case	
Digital Innovation Partnership	Draft Programme Business Case due to be completed December 2020
Challenge Fund Programme	
Infrastructure Enabling Fund	
Regional Innovation Hubs	

Employability and Skills (E&S)	
E&S Proposition	Draft E&S Proposition incorporating partnership model, delivery through project integration and social value and via E&S programme is due for completion end January/early Feb 2020



Overview of Regional Innovation and Digital Investments

Innovation

£230M of investment will create world class centres of innovation excellence underpinned by the common thread of digital and data driven innovation, which will ultimately support the delivery of thousands of new and better jobs by driving innovation and increased productivity. These investments are critical in tackling the productivity gap and will be essential if we are to sustain jobs in many of our major employers, attract investment into the high value R&D sections of existing business and grow our indigenous SMEs within the high growth sectors that have proved most resilient to the impact of the pandemic.

Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre (AMIC)

This ambitious project will be transformative for the advanced manufacturing sector in the Belfast Region and indeed Northern Ireland. The 4th industrial revolution presents a set of threats and opportunities for Advanced Manufacturing companies. The manufacturing landscape is changing fundamentally and the future of the industry will rely on smart automation, machine learning, sensors and data. The multiplier effect of all the services needed to support manufacturing, particularly as offerings evolve, make advanced manufacturing a critical industry that needs to be supported, allowing the large number of micro-businesses and SMEs to scale. Talent is obviously key to this and attracting diverse talent into a largely traditional sector remains one of the major challenges that advanced manufacturing businesses are trying to address.

AMIC is a Centre that will have the capability and capacity/scale to define and deliver high quality, industry-focused R&D as required by Northern Ireland's advanced manufacturing sectors. The mission is dual: to provide a comprehensive support to all our industry sectors for cross cutting technologies like digital transformation, automation and high value design; and also invest in our technological areas of strength that can become national capabilities. AMIC comprises three facilities within the Belfast Region that serve to bridge the gap between emerging research and industrial application. AMIC Factory of the Future is an industry-led, advanced digital manufacturing and prototyping facility for industry to test and scale-up new technologies across both broad and niche sectors. AMIC NIACE is an industry-led centre focused on composites technologies. AMIC Campus is not-BRCD funded and serves as a bridge to university research



and skills development in the University setting. AMIC will act as a nationally, and internationally, recognised capability that safeguards the future of the NI manufacturing base.

Global Innovation Institute (GII)

This project aims to transform NI's digital economy by substantially increasing both the volume and range of digital innovation taking place within the region, with a particular focus on driving a Digital One Health agenda**.** GII will provide a novel multi-disciplinary environment, by combining world leading expertise across cyber security, advanced wireless technologies, data science/analytics and scalable computing (*secure – connected – intelligence*), alongside internationally-recognised excellence in food security/sustainability and health sciences *(One Health)*. These unique combinations of skills, combined with a ground-breaking partnership approach to delivering scalable computing solutions, in an exciting new physical co-creation environment, will make GII a game changer for the region. GII will deliver a distinctive programme of research and innovation, harnessing the common technical foundations for innovation in One Health sectors (including privacy-preserving analytics; distributed sensing; Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning), through an approach to data based on principles of trust, transparency and fair value, to stimulate inclusive economic growth. Through strategic public and private sector partnerships, GII will provide a distinctive offering to companies and organisations seeking to navigate the complex landscape of data analytics and Artificial Intelligence.

Institute for Research Excellence in Advanced Clinical Healthcare (i-REACH)

This project will be transformative for the Life and Health Sciences (LHS) sector in the Belfast Region and more widely across Northern Ireland. iREACH has been developed with support, commitment and insight from industry, academia and public sector stakeholders.

The aim is to build a wider healthcare ecosystem to support the development of new treatments that will be rapidly assessed in early phase R&D programmes. This will allow the Belfast Region to leverage additional industrial investment and funding for R&D, attract and retain skilled individuals to ensure sustainability in the LHS sector, drive economic growth and ultimately deliver better health and wellbeing outcomes to people in NI.



iREACH provides the opportunity to develop a connected and aligned ecosystem that will allow the Belfast region to leverage industrial relationships and investment, funding for research translation, and attract and retain appropriately talented and skilled individuals to ensure sustainability in the LHS sector. The development of new treatments, diagnostics and med-tech for patients is complicated, risky, expensive and heavily regulated. Speed of delivery through joined up services is crucial. The ability to establish clinical trials in a high- quality environment and in a timely manner without competing with NHS requirements for radiology, pharmacy, laboratory etc. is important. Dedicated services and facilities are needed to support clinical trial delivery by industry. iREACH will provide co-ordinated access to clinical investigators and patients through a single point of contact for industry, accessible clinical research support infrastructures, and streamlined and timely clinical trial approvals.

Centre for Digital Healthcare Technology (CDHT)

CDHT will accelerate a dynamic and productive open innovation ecosystem for the development of innovative medical technology. It will transform the innovation pathway and will encourage a faster and more successful rate of commercialisation for new products by co-locating academic researchers alongside industry. In addition, it will provide both a community living lab based in the main CDHT building adjacent to the new UU Belfast campus and a clinical innovation living lab based on the Royal Victoria Hospital site. This will support all users to successfully generate, prototype, develop, test and validate new ideas successfully within a unique setting. It is innovative, forward looking and collaborative bringing together key partners including both NI universities, industry (local and international) and key public sector partners.

The project will be a key contributor to the achievement of outcomes within the UK Industrial Strategy, specifically aligning to the Ageing Society Grand Challenge. It will ensure that the UK competes effectively with other leading life science clusters globally, and it will increase economic output, productivity and exports whilst also addressing the Northern Ireland region's productivity deficit.

Screen Media & Innovation Lab (SMIL)

SMIL is a research-led, industry-facing project, developed in response to the identified strategic needs of the screen sector of the creative industries, locally, nationally and internationally. This transformative project seeks to build on the incredible success story that the creative industries



have created for Northern Ireland, already generating over £1billion GVA to the NI economy and employing around 26,000 people, contributing to a wider UK creative sector that employs over 2 million people and generates £111billion in GVA.

At the core of SMIL is a unique facility, developed though partnership between academia and industry, and comprising production and R&D&I capability as follows:

Virtual Production Facilities: including a highly specified Virtual Production stage (of a scale benchmarked against the VP stage used in the production of The Mandalorian), with supporting Motion Capture and 3-D Scanning studios and a SMART Stage. The specification for these facilities has been developed to conform with the standards required by leading global players, such as Netflix and EPIC Games.

Broadcast Studio: A commercial facility, with an audience capacity of 600 integrated with, but separate from the Virtual Production facilities, to operate on a commercial basis, with BBC NI potentially as the primary tenant.

Film Studios: co-located within the Harbour Film Studios complex at the Giant's Park on the North Foreshore in Belfast, where Belfast Harbour is planning a major £45m expansion to quadruple the size of the existing studio complex, the presence of SMIL will enhance and diversify the offering.

Digital

The Digital Innovation Programme will support up to £120M of capital investment across a range of interventions, which will allow us to nurture collaboration and greater place-based investment in digital innovation and to build digital innovation excellence and capability across the Belfast Region. The three capital interventions are summarised below:

Challenge Fund Programme

The Belfast Region Digital Pillar will establish a Challenge Fund programme focusing on a range of Missions designed to address the regional Grand Challenges of Artificial Intelligence & Data, Health & Wellbeing and Sustainability & Resilience through a range of agile financial instruments, including potentially competitive grant funding, equity/debt finance and a Small Business Research Initiative-style programme. The funding will be invested over a 10 year timeframe.



Infrastructure Enabling Fund

In addition, an Infrastructure Enabling Fund will support the Belfast Smart District (developed with Belfast's key anchor organisations) and the development of a Regional Testbed Network outside Belfast through investment in enabling infrastructure and world-class digital connectivity. The funding will also be invested over a 10 year timeframe.

Regional Innovation Hubs

Outside Belfast, the Digital Innovation programme will also invest in the region of £25m to deliver a network of Regional Innovation Hubs to ensure diffusion of innovation, digital infrastructure and skills throughout the region, building further on regional strengths such as the creative sector and advanced manufacturing.

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STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Belfast City Council

Subject:	**Belfast Innovation District**
Date:	18th December 2020
Reporting Officer:	Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	Jayne Brady, Digital Commissioner

Restricted Reports				
Is this report restricted?	**Yes**		**No**	X
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?				
After Committee Decision				
After Council Decision				
Sometime in the future				
Never				

Call-in				
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	**Yes**	X	**No**	

1.0	**Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues**
1.1	To outline plans for the development of a world-class 'Innovation District' that would seek to attract talent and investment and support the wider aims of the new Belfast Digital Innovation Partnership (BDIP) and to seek Committee approval for funding to support a twelve-month development programme for the District.
2.0	**Recommendations**
2.1	The Committee is asked to agree that the Council contributes £50,000 to the development phase of the creation of an Innovation District (as part of a total BDIP co-investment of £325,000).
3.0	**Main Report**
3.1	The new 'Belfast Digital Innovation Partnership' (BDIP), which includes the Council, Queen's University, Ulster University, Belfast Harbour, Invest NI, and Catalyst, is seeking to exploit the

	power of digital innovation to enhance wider regional productivity and generate more and better jobs for all.
3.2	It aims to foster the conditions in which our most exciting SME clusters can grow; our workforce are re-skilled for new jobs; and the world-class research of our universities can translate rapidly into innovative new businesses, products and services.
3.3	In doing so, BDIP partners are also committed to nurturing an urban environment through the development of a Smart District in which industry, academia and the public sector can collaborate on urban challenges such as climate change, technological disruption and the health of our communities. The Covid-19 crisis has not only amplified these challenges and opportunities but has greatly accelerated the time scales against which this environment should be developed.
3.4	The Smart District covers three initial zones that offer rich environments for our innovation community to collaborate on research, for businesses to form and scale; for investments to flourish and next generation urban services to emerge. (See attached Summary Booklet presented to Members in June 2020) The first project underway in the programme is the development of the an Innovation District – a 400 acre area that will extend from the new Ulster campus in the city centre, along Queen's Island, to include the Northern Ireland Science Park and Queen's University's ECIT campus. This will be a world-class, inclusive, mixed-use urban environment for research, innovation, entrepreneurialism and investment.
3.5	The location is already primed as a digital innovation multiplier. There is already a substantial knowledge economy activity with Catalyst supporting a community of over 200 innovative SMEs, and a number of international companies in areas such as fintech and cybersecurity.
3.6	There are also plans for major physical investment both public and private sector investors that can contribute to the ambition. These include proposals for four university centres of excellence which will be partially funded by the Belfast Region City Deal; plans for an advanced wireless network; the city investment in the 'Sixth' building; and the opportunities represented by the new Ulster University campus.

3.7	Lessons have been drawn from elsewhere and show that a successful district requires: • City wide collaboration with strong, influential leadership of the type that BDIP is offering; • An acknowledgement of the power and importance of 'place' and the need to place inclusion and community and its heart; • An internationally recognisable brand that reinforces and aligns with the city's own vision • A strong business model with adequate resources to mobilise effectively. • Proximity of businesses and academia to be able to collaborate and cluster
3.8	Drawing on the success of similar innovation districts in other cities (including Dublin, Liverpool and Eindhoven) the Belfast district would offer: • An internationally high quality location acting as a beacon for talent and inward investment • The critical 'density' to sustain a world-class ecosystem for start-ups, SMEs, academia and multinationals • A place-based multiplier for sustainable, high productivity jobs for the region and for neighbouring communities • A driver to enhance the existing quality of life in the area - a 'go to' location for residents, workers and visitors.
3.9	Following a series of partner workshops, BDIP partners now wish to commence with the delivery of a twelve-month programme to fully develop the Innovation District proposition. This would include three major strands of work: - Creating the commercial proposition and brand strategy - Building an approach to citizen inclusion and skills - A programme for cluster growth (likely to include fintech, Greentech and Healthtech)
3.10	Partners have costed the twelve-month development programme at £325,000 which would fund the necessary resources, staffing, and technical support. Members are asked to agree that Belfast City Council will contribute £50,000 to this programme budget.
	Financial and Resource Implications
3.11	• £50,000 will be financed from the existing Smart Cities budget.

3.12	**Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment** None
4.0	**Documents Attached**
	Smart Cities Booklet

Belfast

Putting our citizens at the heart of Urban Innovation



Our ambition

Belfast is a city of creators and inventors. Innovation is in our DNA. Down the generations we have demonstrated a resilience and an ingenuity firmly grounded in grass-roots entrepreneurship.

We are home to a vibrant and engaged community of businesses, researchers, corporations, SMEs, start-ups and incubators. Together, supported by a determined city leadership, we are collaborating on shared global challenges such as healthy urban living, mobility and sustainable energy.

Our collaborative approach draws from a deep well of research excellence and strong digital economy clusters in areas such as fintech, cyber security, bioscience and artificial intelligence. We have exciting emerging clusters in life and health sciences focusing on data-driven and connected technologies that will transform the health of our citizens.

Smart Belfast is a statement of our collective intent to harness knowledge, assets and investments to drive a transformative once-in-a-lifetime innovation and inclusive economic growth programme. This ambition will be greatly accelerated by a forthcoming £1 billion Belfast Region City Deal investment in research excellence, digital connectivity, skills and economic and regeneration initiatives.



Key strengths

Belfast's knowledge economy sector is the engine of our ambition. Our fintech, cybersecurity, software and IT sectors are amongst the fastest growing in the UK.

Across the region over 40,000 people are employed in the knowledge economy sector with 7,000 employed in research and development.

Data science is an important sub-sector, with companies building strengths in AI technologies. Between them, our two universities are home to six major clusters of AI research excellence including hardware, core data science, medicine and robotics.

Our region's life and health sciences sector generates more than £800 million in sales each year. Our universities are among the UK's top ten locations for bioscience research.

By 2030, Belfast's knowledge economy sector has the potential to deliver an additional £3 billion of GVA and generate 80,000 new jobs.



#1 international investment location for **USA cybersecurity development** projects

#1 global destination for **financial technology investment**

#1 European city for new **medical software development**

One of the **fastest growing creative industry** clusters in the UK

2nd fastest growing **knowledge economy** in the UK



Our foundations for digital innovation

Belfast Digital Innovation Partnership

A city leadership group established by Belfast City Council, Queen's University Belfast, Ulster University, Belfast Harbour and Catalyst, with a collective ambition to weave digital innovation into all aspects of our economy, our infrastructure and urban and healthcare services for the collective benefit of our citizens.

It is an action-orientated group focused on decision-making and delivery. Belfast's first **Digital Innovation Commissioner** works with the group to drive this ambition globally.

The Belfast Innovation Challenge Fund

An initial £60 million fund aimed at industry and researchers to help generate innovative solutions to major urban challenges in areas such as health, mobility and decarbonisation. It will encourage new forms of collaboration between industry, academia, government and wider society.

Centres of Research Excellence

Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University are establishing new centres of research excellence that build on their existing strengths and offer a unique resource to drive economic recovery and urban transformation. These centres are in the heart of Smart Belfast:

- **The Global Innovation Institute:** Offering co-innovation between research and industry, harnessing AI and big data research expertise to deliver a One Health agenda.
- **Centre for Digital Healthcare Technology:** A world-class space for researchers, industry and clinicians to innovate in Life and Health Sciences solutions including connected health and tele-medicine technologies.
- **Institute of Research Excellence for Advanced Clinical Healthcare (iREACH):** A unique ecosystem driven by researchers, industry, the NHS and government to test new drugs and support their integration into health care pathways.
- **Screen and Media Innovation Lab:** Seeking to exploit and embed bleeding edge technologies in the creative industries.
- **Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre:** Supporting industry to adopt rapidly maturing, disruptive technologies such as AI, robotics and next generation wireless networks.

Digital fabric

Industry has committed to making Belfast one of the first UK cities to offer 5G services. The city is enhancing this with additional investments in gigabyte fibre and next generation wireless. Enhanced connectivity will include:

- 10 Gbps fast fibre, additional LTE and WiFi coverage
- Internet of Things networks for urban services
- 5G network densification to support Industry 4.0
- A unique urban data platform for infrastructure and data sharing.

Digital Innovation Office

Providing technical expertise to the partnership, industry, researchers, start-ups and communities to support the design and initiation of programmes. It offers:

- An 'Urban Sandbox' to lower infrastructure, regulatory and other barriers to innovation.
- A Belfast Data Trust for ethical data sharing, analytics and routes to commercialisation.
- Ready access to connectivity, research excellence, innovators, SME networks and industry.
- A vehicle for joint financing and investment.

Smart District

We have strategically selected three initial locations that offer particularly rich environments for our innovation community to collaborate on research; for businesses to form and scale; for investments to flourish; and for next generation urban services to emerge.

Collectively, these locations represent a global showcase of our wider city ambition.



The Innovation District

Built on the foundations of Belfast's engineering excellence, resiliency and creativity, the Innovation District will be a flourishing world-class hub for research, innovation and entrepreneurialism.

The district forms a sweeping arc from Ulster University's new £250 million purpose-built campus, running through City Quays and the Odyssey pavilion, and north along Titanic Quarter to the Catalyst Campus where Queen's University's proposed Global Innovation Institute will be located.

It covers almost 400 acres of the city, with the capacity to create homes for 10,000 people, employment space for over 30,000 jobs and educational space for 25,000 academics and students.

This will be a community for creative innovation where entrepreneurs, innovators, start-ups, researchers and large enterprises collide in a rich, mixed use, digitally connected waterfront environment.





The Smart Core

Belfast's city centre is undergoing a generational transformation as partners look to create an integrated cultural, retail and living environment for the coming decade. Major new investments are planned by both the private and public sectors to meet this ambition. The successful emergence of a transformed city centre is a key priority in the city's recovery.

We have plans to greatly increase the area's residential population, grow new businesses and deliver new forms of urban services.

As the world's urban population grows, the demand for advanced urban services has created a rapidly expanding market, worth an estimated £2.5 trillion by 2025.

The Smart District is an unique opportunity for companies to design and deliver innovative urban services in a supportive real-world environment; one that offers an 'urban sandbox' that reduces the complex barriers to in situ innovation.

The Smart Port

Belfast Harbour is the second largest port on the island of Ireland, handling 70% of Northern Ireland's trade and 20% of that of the entire island of Ireland.

The 2,000 acre Harbour Estate is the largest in the UK and is a key economic hub for the region. It is home to 760 businesses across a vibrant sectoral mix including a number of leading tourist attractions and the largest film studios in the UK, outside of Pinewood Studios.

With substantial investments in infrastructure and digital technologies, Belfast Harbour aims to become a Smart Port and Green Port, as well as the world's best regional port.

Key Investments

Innovation District

1) Global Innovation Institute
A £54m AI hub drawing together the leading-edge skills of three research institutes: The Institute of Electronics, Communications and Information Technology, The Institute of Health Sciences and The Institute of Global Food Security.

2) Catalyst
A 25-acre site providing 300,000 sq ft (with plans to increase to 1 million sq ft) of agile workspace for 3,000 people and 130 companies including Microsoft, IBM, SAP, Philips and Citi Group. Catalyst is a community of like-minded innovators in an entrepreneurial ecosystem, helping to drive the knowledge economy.

3) Titanic Film Studios
One of Europe's largest film studios, attracting producers such as HBO and Universal. Main studio and post-production facility for HBO's fantasy series, Game of Thrones.

4) Titanic Belfast
The world's largest Titanic visitor experience, attracting over six million visitors since it opened in 2012.

5) Belfast Metropolitan College
One of the largest colleges in the UK, providing further and higher education for 40,000 students, with qualifications in areas such as cybersecurity, immersive technology, visual effects and computer games development.

6) Olympic House (P)
150,000ft² of Grade A office space offering a quality, efficient and sustainable working environment.

7) W5's Digital Skills Academy (P)
Microsoft is investing £1 million in a new academy, creating a DreamSpace digital skills experience for school-age young people.

8) Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre (P)
The £86m AMIC will work with industry to develop new manufacturing technologies, including design work at the Advanced Composites and Engineering Centre in Belfast.

9) Belfast Waterside (P)
A £450 million development on 16 acres of prime riverfront land, providing places to live, play, work and stay. It will feature BEON, a space dedicated to training and generating talent, a place where ideas can be tested, developed and shaped.

10) City Quays
A £275 million, eight hectare, office-led waterfront regeneration project located on former docklands.

11) Belfast Harbour Commissioners
Headquarters of Belfast Harbour since 1847.

12) Ulster University campus
£250m investment in Ulster University's new Belfast campus, delivering a world-class facility to 15,000 students and staff.

13) Centre for Digital Health Technologies (P)
A £45m Ulster University centre for digital healthcare and associated living labs in the areas of cardiology, diabetes, respiratory and stroke.

14) The Sixth
A £80m mixed-use scheme with 30,000m² of commercial space, including state-of-the-art workspace and active ground floor uses such as cafés, restaurants and retail.

15) Screen and Media Innovation Lab (P)
A £40m world-leading research and innovation centre to accelerate the creative industries sector in Belfast, already one of the fastest growing creative clusters in the UK and home to over 1,600 companies employing 20,000 people.

Smart Core

16) Belfast Destination Hub (P)
A signature cultural visitor destination in the heart of the city featuring: the Belfast Story contemporary visitor experience; the Belfast Film Centre; creative and digital skills spaces; inspirational architecture and civic spaces.

17) Tribeca Belfast (P)
A prime 12-acre city centre regeneration scheme, investing £500m to deliver 1.5 million sq ft of residential, office, retail, hospitality and cultural space.

18) Belfast Streets Ahead
A major public realm improvement scheme, including surfacing, lighting, landscaping, street furniture and public art.

19) Inner North West
A 42 acre city centre site incorporating residential, commercial, retail and leisure, together offering a sustainable and integrated urban living environment.

20) BT Ireland Innovation Centre
A £28m R&D centre with Ulster University, focused on advanced research in IoT, AI, 5G and data analytics.

21) Ulster Bank Accelerator Hub
Based at Ulster Bank's iconic Belfast headquarters, the hub is home to Entrepreneur Accelerator companies.

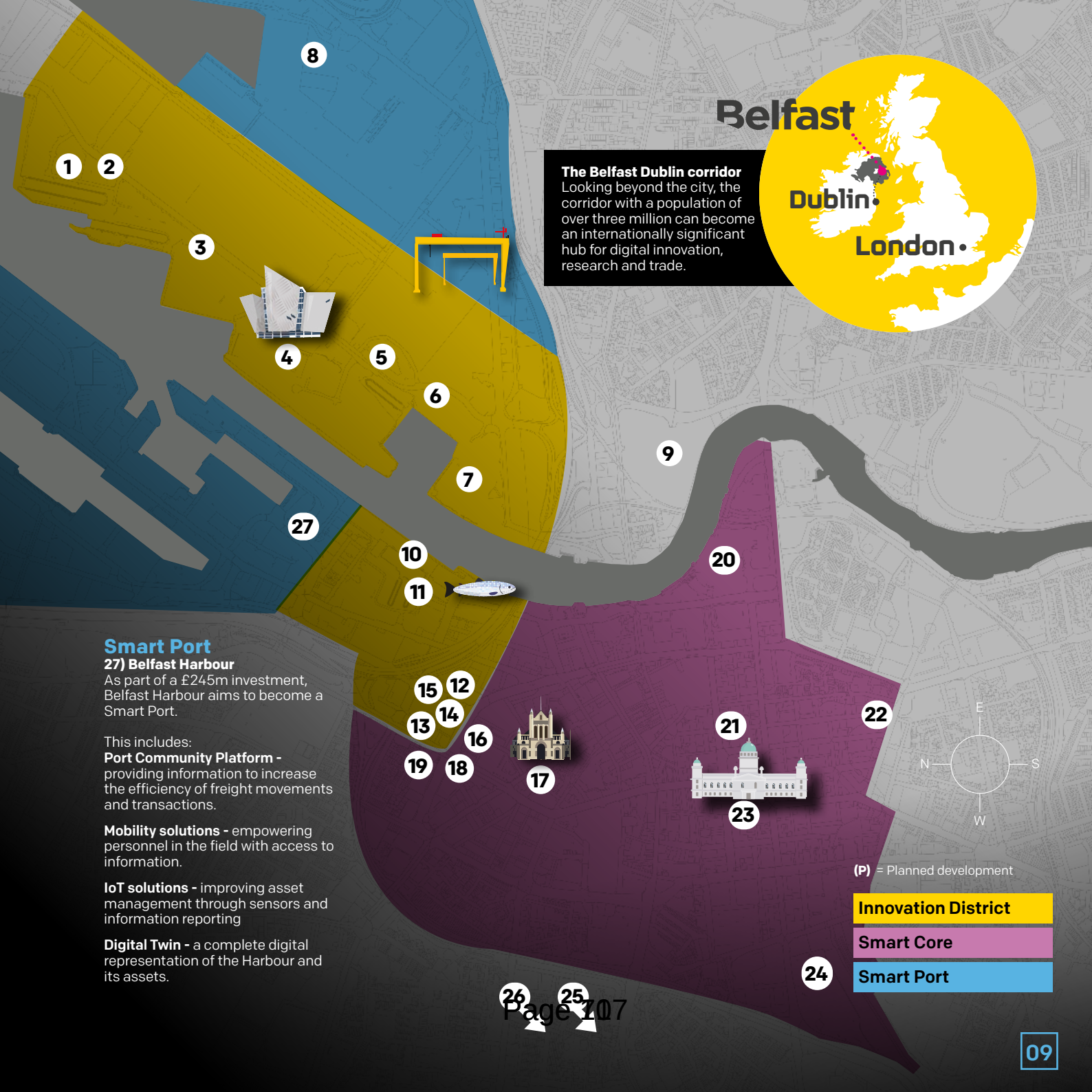
22) Ormeau Baths
Originally a Victorian bathhouse, now an award-winning co-working space for some of our brightest and best tech start-ups. Supported by over 20 global partners and home to Ignite NI, Energia and Digital Catapult NI.

23) Catalyst Belfast Fintech Hub
A partnership with Danske Bank and Catalyst, this co-working space is dedicated to our early stage tech companies that have ambitions to scale in the global finance space.

24) Weaver's Cross (P)
A £380m transport led regeneration project which will link a new high capacity transport hub with mixed-use development opportunities.

25) I-REACH (P)
£49m state-of-the-art, integrated clinical research facility, leading large scale clinical trials, supported by real-world, real-time data.

26) King's Hall Health and Wellbeing Park (P)
A £100m project to create one of the UK's most innovative health and wellbeing hubs, aiming to transform the provision of integrated healthcare.



Smart Port

27) Belfast Harbour
As part of a £245m investment, Belfast Harbour aims to become a Smart Port.

This includes:
Port Community Platform - providing information to increase the efficiency of freight movements and transactions.

Mobility solutions - empowering personnel in the field with access to information.

IoT solutions - improving asset management through sensors and information reporting

Digital Twin - a complete digital representation of the Harbour and its assets.

The Opportunities

As the city responds to the challenges and opportunities of the post-Covid period, we believe the Smart District is well-placed to be an innovation multiplier for the digital transformation of our city.

Global health care cluster

Drawing from the research excellence of our universities and utilising the investments in the Global Innovation Institute, the Centre for Digital Health Care Technologies and i-REACH, we aim to make Belfast a global centre for AI-enabled healthcare technologies.

Industry, government and our universities will work together to foster a dense cluster of 500 life and health sciences companies employing over 20,000 people.

Reimagining our high street

Major retail, residential and public space investments are planned for the city centre over the coming decade. As online retail transactions continue to grow, the Smart District will provide access to technological innovations to support retailers, businesses and city planners, to successfully navigate to a new form of high street.

Healthy urban living

We aim to grow the residential population of our city centre with major investments in student housing and multi-generational homes. As the city balances sustainable densification with post-Covid social distancing challenges, we have the opportunity to work with planners, investors and our life and healthcare innovators to rethink the design of our urban neighbourhoods.

Accelerate our digital economy cluster

The Innovation District is already part of the success story that has made Belfast the number one centre for global FinTech investments. Building on this success and our research excellence in cyber security, coupled with our world-leading AI research, we now are ready to become a world class digital economy cluster.



Reskilling for the AI economy

Working with communities, our universities, colleges, schools and industry to deliver programmes to prepare our citizens for the challenges and opportunities of an AI economy. The recovery, including the leap to remote-learning, presents an opportunity to rethink how we design and deliver vehicles for education and training.

AI is expected to impact on 70,000 jobs across the region. The District, home to Belfast Met - the regional college for digital skills and W5's new DreamSpace - offers an opportunity to work hand in glove with partners to design, test and deliver courses that ensure growth is felt across communities.

Gateway to Europe and beyond

With the UK exiting the European Union, a successful Belfast Port is a critical element of the Belfast and regional economy. With substantial investments in infrastructure and digital technologies, Belfast Harbour aims to become a Smart Port and Green Port, as well as the world's best regional port.

Energy transition

Northern Ireland has enviable levels of installed renewable energy generation, particularly from wind and we have potential for much more. Our challenge is transmission, storage and better energy management. We have the opportunity in the district to test and scale new technologies, including district scale hydrogen networks. And to work with transport agencies, water management bodies, industry and planners to bake-in renewables for a sustainable Belfast.

Active Belfast

Our city remains overly dependent on the private car, particularly for the work commute. The whole district, from City Hall and along the shores of the maritime mile to Titanic Quarter, is ready to make the transition to active modes of travel; last mile delivery solutions; and to prepare for the large scale usage of EV.

Digitally-enabled urban mobility solutions can support the city in this transition – whilst also offering opportunities for new businesses to develop services in a smart mobility market valued at £20 billion globally by 2024.

Belfast Destination Hub

We are developing a new contemporary visitor experience to complement the global success of Titanic Belfast. We have the opportunity to ignite collaboration between state-of-the-art experience designers, the Screen and Media Lab, the NI film and screen industry and the city's cultural sector to explore how we can tell our stories in new and innovative ways. Contemporary cultural tourism expectations requires us to think deeply about how digital innovation can help us tell the story of Belfast to the world and improve the attractiveness and liveability of the city as a leading destination.

BCC910 v5 Published June 2020

Energising Belfast

If you want to hear more or invest in Belfast's digital innovation ambition, we would like to talk to you.

smartbelfast@belfastcity.gov.uk

www.smartbelfast.city

#smartbelfast

One of the major sources of funding for the Belfast Digital Innovation ambition is the Belfast Region City Deal which aims to secure a transformational change in the city region's economy.

Read more: **www.belfastcity.gov.uk/belfastregioncitydeal**

Belfast City Council

Belfast Harbour

Queen's University Belfast

Ulster University

Catalyst Fueling Opportunity

STRATEGIC POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Belfast City Council

Subject:	**Northern Ireland Local Government Association Consultation – Transformation and Driving Practical Change in Local Government**
Date:	18th December 2020
Reporting Officer:	John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy
Contact Officers:	Christine Robinson, Strategy, Policy and Partnerships Manager Mark Mulholland, Policy and Performance Analyst

Restricted Reports				
Is this report restricted?	**Yes**		**No**	X
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?				
After Committee Decision				
After Council Decision				
Sometime in the future				
Never				

Call-in				
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	**Yes**	X	**No**	

1.0	**Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues**
1.1	To present Members with a proposed corporate submission **(Appendix A)**, to NILGA's consultation on 'Transformation and Driving Practical Change in Local Government'.
2.0	**Recommendations**
2.1	The Committee is requested to: a) consider the proposed draft response which has been considered by Party Group Leaders; and b) approve the submission of the corporate response to NILGA. If approved by the Committee, it will be submitted on a holding basis until being ratified by the Council, to meet the submission deadline of 18th December 2020.

3.0	**Main Report**
3.1	NILGA wrote to Council on 8 September 2020, requesting corporate views on local government reform to date, as well as what is needed to sustain councils and revitalise communities as part of post pandemic recovery and towards a more locally driven suite of policies and resources for Northern Ireland.
3.2	This consultation exercise had been issued earlier this year but has been updated to recognise the change in context due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Much of the draft response reflects policy positions, previously agreed by CMT in January 2020 and presented to this committee on 21 February 2020, in response to the APSE Local Government Commission 2030.
3.3	However, this draft response has been also updated to recognise the key areas where local government needs stronger legislative and policy powers to drive forward local area recovery from the pandemic.
3.4	NILGA provided a questionnaire containing eight questions each of which are answered within the draft corporate response provided. In summary the headline policy positions proposed in the draft response as to the future role of local government and any future programme for local government reform are: • central government commitment to work in partnership with local councils, by providing the necessary funding and policy backdrop, from which councils can play a leading role in the sustainable recovery of their local areas; • enhanced devolution to local government including regeneration, planning, skills investment and planning, and local transport planning; • enhanced local investment powers, to ensure that councils have the fiscal levers to tackle issues at community and city level; and • the introduction of legislation/measures that strengthen the relationship between central and local government, including a duty to collaborate to provide for responsive and integrated public services delivery at regional, city and community level.

3.5	Furthermore, in the event of any future transfer of powers to local government. The Council will seek assurances at the outset, that the level of financial resources made available would not only be cost neutral at the point of transfer, but also that councils would be indemnified against any potential future shortfall in funding through an extension of the New Burdens Doctrine **(Appendix B)**. However we make the point that it is vital that the approach to securing the introduction of such a doctrine does not stymie the transfer of certain functions, in particular those of a more strategic nature, such as regeneration. It is important to differentiate between strategic and operational functions in this regard. **Financial and Resource Implications**
3.6	None associated with this report. **Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment**
3.7	None associated with this report
4.0	**Documents Attached**
	Appendix A – Proposed draft response to NILGA consultation questionnaire. **Appendix B** – Overview of the New Burdens Doctrine

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Belfast City Council

DRAFT RESPONSE

NORTHERN IRELAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

TRANSFORMATION AND DRIVING PRACTICAL CHANGE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Belfast City Council (the Council) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the NILGA consultation on Transformation and Driving Practical Change in Local Government.

GENERAL COMMENTS

The Council believe that this is an important and timely piece of work given that five years has passed since the 2015 local government reform programme. We have also experienced the impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic, and the unprecedented impacts that this has placed on society as a whole, and on local government and the future sustainability of local councils.

This engagement exercise presents a real opportunity for local government, as a cohesive sector, to coalesce and create a common agenda which will help inform, influence and establish a strong collegiate position.

Local government reforms that came into effect in April 2015 significantly shifted the role of local government towards one of active place-shaping. These arrangements provided councils with greater responsibility for important powers such as spatial and land-use planning, off-street car parks, local economic development and tourism. However, a residual sense exists across local government that the powers which transferred to councils did not go far enough. It is our position that this could be addressed by implementation of a second tranche of reform.

Further devolution of core place-shaping functions will allow for a more responsive approach to communities' needs and aspirations. Councils have a greater understanding of, and engagement with, their local communities enabling the tailoring of services, improved decision-making and the delivery of local outcomes.

However, given the previous experience of the 2015 reform programme, we must emphasise the importance that if there is to be any further devolution of powers to local government

this must be supported by greater resource, clarity of purpose and occur in a planned and phased manner to ensure continuity and certainty for all stakeholders.

In summary the main issues relating to the future role of local government that the Council wish to highlight include:

- **Central government commitment to work in partnership with local councils, by providing the necessary funding and policy backdrop, from which councils can play a leading role in the sustainable recovery of their local areas;**
- **enhanced devolution to local government including regeneration, planning, skills investment and planning, and local transport planning;**
- **greater powers regarding local taxation measures and enhanced local investment powers, to ensure that that councils have the fiscal levers to tackle issues at community and city level; and**
- **the introduction of legislation/measures that strengthen the relationship between central and local government, including a duty to collaborate to provide for responsive and integrated service delivery at regional, city and community level.**

These issues are discussed in detail in this our submission and our responses to the questions posed.

1. **Covid 19 to date – please highlight the biggest sustainability, strategic and operational issues *facing Council going into 2021*, as triggered primarily by Covid 19. Additionally, how might some or all of these be alleviated by further legislation, policy and/or resource changes in wider government? Council can send additional materials to augment the synopsis presented here.**

The outbreak of COVID-19 has obviously caused massive economic disruption for Belfast, along with the rest of the NI, UK and the world at large. The council have welcomed the range of support measures and interventions that the NI Assembly have put in place to date to help mitigate the impacts of Covid-19 and to minimise economic and financial disruption.

While we continue to provide critical support to local communities, businesses and the local economy through this Pandemic this ongoing situation has highlighted significant and stark sustainability, strategic and operational issues for the council in moving forward.

The issues set out below relating to finance, place and sustainability provide an overview of the concerns which the council face going into 2021 and beyond. It is the view of this council that without further funding, based on continued Barnett consequentials and remodelling how local government is financed in future years the future outlook for local communities, workforce and service delivery is bleak.

Finance (loss of rates and income)

Typically, 75% of a council's income comes from rates. The other 25% of income (grants, rents and fees & charges) has been significantly lost due to the COVID-19 pandemic which has impacted on ability to deliver services.

All councils are experiencing significant impacts on their rates and income base and they are not in a position to compensate for this loss without cutting back on essential services. This has been recognised by the Department for Communities with a series of funding packages brought forward to supplement some of the losses incurred. These packages must continue, and a constructive dialogue and shared diligence between councils and central government must continue. The public health restrictions which have been required to manage Covid-19 has resulted in business closures in key sectors as well as key visitor and recreational facilities

of councils and has had real economic impacts on this council's finances and ability to sustain important services.

In addition to loss of income, the council has also experienced additional costs as a result of Covid-19 and ensuring appropriate social distancing and safety measures are in place. Councils have also played a critical role in providing exceptional support for local communities and businesses and have had to dedicate significant resource to support vulnerable individuals and families, administer government grants and provide forums for engagement with local businesses, across the city.

The council is particularly concerned that these reductions in income and increased costs are likely to continue into the next number of years. While it is appreciated that efficiency measures will be needed, the most critical concern is the impact that vacancy levels (due to failure of business) will have on the rates income which provides the core element (70-80 %) of our budget. If this is significantly reduced, the council will struggle to provide the services our citizens require and expect.

To address these issues, the council believe that the NI Executive needs to guarantee sustainable level of rates income for the next three years as a minimum. This guarantee will need to be supported by councils undertaking significant exercises to identify and make savings, to also meet the losses that they will continue to suffer from their commercial activities.

Impact on Place

The prolonged and uncertain nature of the pandemic and the range of measures and restrictions brought forward has had a devastating impact upon the vitality and functionality of businesses and city/town centres across Northern Ireland. Whilst the uptake of financial support schemes for businesses across all sectors of the economy has been high, many businesses have been faced with closure, significant losses in revenue and disruptions to their cash flow. The scale of impact on the tourism, arts, entertainment and hospitality sectors – key economic sectors and employment drivers - is significant and the future viability of the high street and retail and hospitality is at risk with decreased levels of footfall resulting from safety concerns, social distance measures as well lack of tourists and the shift from office-based to home-working.

Investing in sustainable recovery

This council has and will continue to proactively bring forward measures to mitigate the social and economic effects, across the city, of the Covid-19 crisis on people, jobs, businesses and the local economy. It will be important that central and local government work together with communities, businesses and partners to assess the longer-term impact of the pandemic and on local economies and society.

In relation to a recovery plans for Belfast, the council recognise the need for a two-pronged approach of immediate interventions and support during the current pandemic, as well as building important foundations and identifying key levers to support medium-longer term recovery.

Given the scale and complexity of the challenges we face, it will be important that we work in partnership and bring forward financial support and other policy instruments to help rebuild and stimulate recovery, recognising that businesses/councils have limited cash flow to allocate to planning, administration or match funding arrangements at this time.

Examples of opportunities to support future recovery include:

- Accelerating City & Growth Deals to secure investment, creating jobs and acting as a catalyst for supporting recovery.

- Support and investment in local skills programmes and employability schemes, working with local employers, further and higher education and training providers, so that local skills supply can better match future demand. This is also a key area where there needs to be a new relationship between central and local government, both in designing the new skills strategy and in developing local funding strategies and programmes.

- Investing in communities, creating local assets and facilities and building community capacity and resilience.

- Investing in the revitalisation of our high streets and town centres to support key sectors of the economy, provide economic stability and sustain jobs.

- Maximising the opportunities presented through digital innovation to support key growth sectors, repositioning the economy and enhancing skills and employability.

- Investing in green stimulus as a key driver for economic recovery, with the potential for Northern Ireland to be at the forefront of innovation and clean growth.

- Investing in local regeneration programmes to support business growth and promote and secure FDI and real estate investment.

Q2: RPA to date (new councils since 2015) – please highlight at least two major corporate successes for your Council that RPA has triggered and at least two barriers to success which might be overcome by further legislation, policy and/or resource changes in wider government.

As suggested within general comments on page 1 the local government reform programme has assisted the council in terms of successful delivery in some areas. However, it has by no means removed all barriers by which councils deliver for its citizens and communities.

Two major corporate successes related to the local government reform programme have been:

Belfast Agenda

- The 2015 reform programme provided councils with the responsibility for leading the community planning process to produce a community plan for its district. The purpose of community planning is to improve the connection between all the tiers of Government and wider society work through partnership working to jointly deliver better outcomes for everyone. Community plans identify long-term priorities for improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of districts and the people who live there.

- Locally our view of what local government can deliver has been illustrated in the Belfast Agenda, our city's community plan. The Belfast Agenda was developed in collaboration with partners from across the city, and set the long term outcomes that all stakeholder across the city want to achieve. The Belfast Agenda has demonstrated the potential for collaborative working to create changes in the economy, jobs, skills, tourism, and culture. Providing a vision for the city agreed across the public, education, business and voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors.

Transfer of planning powers

- The transfer of most planning functions to the district councils necessitated the creation of a new planning system for Northern Ireland: requiring new roles, responsibilities and relationships for all those involved in the planning process. Councils took responsibility for:

    - Local development planning – creating a plan which will set out a clear vision of how the council area should look in the future by deciding what type and scale of development should be encouraged and where it should be located;
    - Development management – determining the vast majority of planning applications;
    - Planning enforcement – investigating alleged breaches of planning control and determining what action should be taken.

- Coming up to five years since councils took on this responsibility, it is widely acknowledged that the majority of planning decisions are taken at the most appropriate level, which is by locally elected representatives, who understand the needs their local areas, and can balance their decisions against the legal and policy framework which governs the planning process.

- The ability for councils to create their own local development plan has also been a welcome power particularly given the ability to link with community plans. This approach ensures that councils can take a holistic approach, spatial and needs based, in planning for their areas.

Barriers to success

As well as successes from the 2015 reform programme, the Council accept that barriers remain which cannot be overcome in the absence of changes to the overarching policy and legislative framework which governs the operation of local government.

To address these prevailing barriers some of the main areas that the Council would wish to see greater devolved powers for to address local issues and support citizens, communities and the city would be in relation to:

Regeneration powers

- The Council reiterates the view that the 2015 reform programme did not go far enough in terms of the powers provided to the council. In particular, the decision not to transfer regeneration powers has restricted the Council's ability to deliver transformative place-based plans for local areas and communities. It has also tempered the ambitions and aspirations of local communities, given the separation of local regeneration powers between central and local government. This has diluted our ability to connect land use planning, community planning with wider regeneration ambitions for the city.

- The transfer of Comprehensive Development Powers and the ability to acquire land for regeneration purposes, when used alongside community and land use planning, would help to strengthen and enhance our ability to drive strategic regeneration activity, unlocking and realising the potential of major/flagship schemes and reinvigorating key areas across the city.

- The transfer of regeneration functions would have provided the Council with the ability to ensure an integrated approach to regeneration, addressing blighted areas across the city including, greater alignment of physical regeneration with the future Local Development Plan; and enhance the vitality of the city and further developing the rates base supporting further investment in front-line services.

Duty to co-operate

- Although the production of the city's first community plan the Belfast Agenda is rightly regarded as a success. The Council would suggest that to truly translate the clear benefits of community planning, there is a need for greater collaboration between local government and government departments, in the planning, development, delivery and monitoring of interventions in order to increase their effectiveness for citizens and, in turn, creating a more cohesive society.

- Our existing community planning powers and thematic boards present an opportunity to deliver services tailored to the needs and expectations of local communities. However, it is critical that central government departments and partner organisations work in partnership with local government to ensure these ambitions can be realised across the network of services that communities require.

- The Council would suggest that to address this issue may require future consideration by central government of creating a 'statutory duty to co-operate' in respect of community planning. This duty would place a legal requirement on community planning partners to share information and resources, as appropriate, to ensure that the agreed priorities and outcomes of community plans are achieved.

Q3: Mindful of NI's recovery in a fragile economic period now emerging, should further reform ("RPA part II") - an expansion of Council's role - be accelerated or pushed back in 2021? Would Council support at this time commissioning (across the whole sector) actual evidence of real benefits, during early & mid 2021 in preparation for future reform, working also with the Partnership Panel?

Given its experience with phase one of local government reform, in terms of the lengthy process undertaken, and the number of false start-stops and significant dilution of functions that ultimately transferred to councils. In the event of "RPA part II", the Council will require early assurance and commitment by the NI Executive as to the parameters for a second programme of local government reform, which includes a clear programme timetable, benefits of reform and desired outcomes.

Subject to broad agreement between stakeholders across local and central government as to the nature of a second reform programme. The Council understand that the process for managing any future reform programme will require agreement between local government, the NI Executive and relevant government departments. This collaboration between both tiers of government must be informed by evidence collection and supported by direct engagement on the basis of transparency and partnership.

The Council also believes that any future review of the role of councils and associated reforms recognises the importance of councils as place based leaders. Local government understands its local communities and places it represents. This again highlights the need for any future

transfer of powers to be meaningful and to be of substance. The lack of regeneration powers currently residing in councils curtails our ability to fully deliver and meet the needs of local communities.

Given the current situation we all face due to the Covid-19 Pandemic an immediate expansion of place and regeneration powers to councils would be transformative in promoting strong recovery of local areas out of the Pandemic. Therefore, the council do feel that some aspects of reform should be accelerated and linked to Covid-19 recovery. These additional powers would provide councils with the necessary architecture to deliver on the priorities contained in local area recovery plans.

In addition, the Council would hold the view that any further devolution of powers to local government be considered in the first instance to those authorities that have demonstrated a real impact in terms of the successful delivery of the powers that were devolved to them during the first iteration of local government reform. An assessment should be carried out to ensure authorities have a track record of delivery to include appropriate management of costs.

Any further programme of reform much also recognise that each of the 11 councils have unique and different priorities in relation to their local areas. While there will always be a need for a regional consistency in terms of the broader role of local government. It would be valuable if a second reform programme explores the value and potential benefits of transferring specific functions and tailored devolution to individual councils or in clusters to address local area need.

Q4: At <u>strategic policy level</u> rather than concentrating on specific functions (see 4.), would Council prefer greater legislative powers e.g. to better enable community planning, regeneration, growth / city deals, and locally led decision taking requiring government departments to agree to Council's investment priorities? What specific legislation or actions does Council wish to see?

The Council recognises that our society is currently faced with a myriad of seemingly intractable issues such as Covid-19, employment, climate change, place shaping, housing and poverty that require strong leadership and well managed and resourced intervention.

We believe that some of these issues are best addressed by government at a local level, and in some areas this will require a change in our top-down centralised form of government. This requires central government providing local government with greater powers and responsibilities, provided for in legislation, in areas such as community planning, regeneration, planning, skills investment and local transport planning.

At a strategic policy level the principle of place-based leadership underpins the current direction of this Council in creating inclusive growth and delivering collaborative approaches to addressing many of the intractable social and economic challenges facing the city and its communities.

When properly resourced, it is our belief that this approach is the most powerful tool that local government has to address some of the biggest challenges we now face including, for example; climate change; productivity gaps; skills and employability, tackling inequalities and positioning our place to compete.

Place based policy is crucial for the success of local government, for four main reasons.

1. Cities and city regions can harness local and global economic capacity.
2. Place provides a coherent way to organise.
3. Place offers a way to reconnect and empower people.
4. A focus on place supports community identity and cohesion and is key in addressing exclusion, inequalities and participation by those normally under-represented.

It is important to understand that place-based policy doesn't necessarily mean devolving all powers and functions to local government. There are many areas in which the need for regional and national governance and policy is required. However, it does mean there needs

to be an earnest conversation with communities and across government and wider society as to the right level and scale of local government that is needed.

For this whole place approach to succeed, we would strongly advocate for the further devolution of core place-shaping functions, provided for in legislation, from central government to enable local government as a sector to deliver on these ambitions. These include:

Urban Regeneration: This power is important as it would enable alignment with other council functions to encourage positive and sustainable development at both community and city level. Historically, BCC has consistently put forward the case for the transfer of regeneration functions to Councils to enhance our ability to provide a coherent place-making model across the city. It remains our position that the anticipated transfer of regeneration powers to councils under the 2015 reform programme should be reviewed and extension or devolution of these regeneration powers should be brought forward as soon as practicable to enable BCC to fulfil its ambitions for transforming the city and its communities, based on the wishes and needs of local areas. This issue is also set out in our answer to Q2.

City Skills Agenda: While there is a range of activity taking place across Belfast and work is underway between relevant central government departments and the Council to explore how we can address the skills issues facing the city and constraining growth, the pervasive challenges of long-term unemployment, economic inactivity and a better match of skills demand and supply are not being addressed in a sustainable manner.

The Council recognise that planning at a local place level is the only way to match demand and supply across the City's skills network ensuring a tailored approach as required. The Council need to work alongside over relevant organisations in the public, private, voluntary, community and social enterprise sector to use our shared information to plan better around skills needs and training provision to meet these needs and support inclusive economic growth. To date a one size fits all approach has not addressed the systemic issues facing communities and business, this disconnect has greatly constrained economic growth and hampered the council's ability to address underlying social problems.

Planning: Extended planning powers, particularly around regeneration and local transport planning, would unlock more effective place shaping and provide for the sustained delivery of the physical aspects of the Belfast Agenda. This would also support more effective approaches

to statutory masterplanning and development partnerships with the potential to harness the full benefits of regeneration for local communities often blighted by inequalities. Broader responsibility in relation to built heritage should also be considered to provide for more efficient consideration of both heritage and conservation as part of the planning processes.

Increased functions in relation to roads, transport and housing in order to support place-making and regeneration, would greatly enhance the role of the councils as custodian of place and local communities. While recognising that there is a strategic regional role in these areas for central government departments, we believe that there is scope for local government and departments to work together to ensure that these top level strategic plans can be tailored and varied to suit local issues and needs within each council area.

Community Planning: Establishing a statutory duty to co-operate for community planning partners, to maximise the likelihood of delivering the outcomes and priorities articulated in community plans. This duty should require partners to work together, specifically in relation to sharing resources. This issue is also set out in our answer to Q2.

In respect of the suggested transfer of functions set out above, we recognise some areas may be best managed through partial transfer, as there are broader aspects to many of these matters, i.e. strategic transport networks, regional regeneration initiatives or policy associated with important retained functions, such as housing.

Q4: Please see below a list of typical neighbourhood services of councils in other jurisdictions which are not the responsibility of councils in Northern Ireland. Does Council have a corporate wish to see such services as part of its portfolio / directly influenced by it (specific services can be listed as desirable, or not)?

• **On-street car parking** • **urban and rural regeneration** • **local roads and footpaths** • local maintenance of roads and wider public realm such as gully emptying and gritting • **public housing** • preventative health services • fire services • trading standards • **sewerage infrastructure** • **libraries and museums** • **street lighting**	• **Broadband investment – devolved budgetary control** • **Local public transport** • **further art, culture, sport policy & budget** • **further economic development such as Foreign Direct Investment and Skills Development policy & budget** • conservation of natural and built heritage • Fisheries • others (please specify)

In relation to the table above the typical neighbourhood services in which the Council may have a corporate interest in adding to its portfolio are highlighted in yellow.

However, it must be noted that this is early indicative interest and further detailed discussions and engagement with relevant service areas and elected members will be needed before adopting a definite position.

A critical area of concern which would require full clarity, before any transfer of these services could be contemplated, would be in relation to appropriate financing. Some of the service areas set out in this table have significant funding deficits, and the Council on behalf of its rate-payers would not countenance taking liability or ownership of without relevant guarantees being put in place by central government department. **This highlights the need for a New Burdens Doctrine to accompany transferring functions, see Q6.**

The Council believes that service delivery has the greatest impact when it reflect the needs of a local area and is delivered in an integrated and responsive manner. The Council believes

that issues relating to the scale and scope of area governance, as far as is reasonably possible, be determined by locally elected representatives chosen by local communities.

Local government has demonstrated that a strong centralised approach does not work, whilst a sense of place and a strong commitment to integrated planning and delivery does. The Council supports devolved decision-making and governance in this regard, with as much local input as possible.

Working with partners, local government is well placed to support the planning of services that affect citizens and communities at a local level. Councils have a greater understanding and engagement with their local communities enabling the tailoring of services, improved decision-making and the delivery of local outcomes. Greater devolution of services at a neighbourhood level would allow for a more responsive approach to communities' needs and aspirations.

Better integrated services at a community level can be secured through the promotion of area based regeneration, using integrated neighbourhood working models (as appropriate to the local district); key stakeholders would have flexibility to align into these models as required, recognising council contributions, to achieve better service integration and desired outcomes.

By way of example of our commitment to this approach we have recently adopted an area based approach for our own services, to ensure better delivery of outcomes for residents. This has been supported through the creation of an 'area manager' who in effect has responsibility for integrated service delivery at local neighbourhood level aligned to broader citywide provision. It is our belief that devolution of neighbourhood services will allow for a more responsive approach to communities' needs and aspirations.

Examples of areas outside of current local government functions which may benefit from an area-based (neighbourhood services) approach include:

- Health and social care: local councils can play a role with partner organisations in promoting some aspects of health and social care, such as improving mental and physical wellbeing through the delivery of a range of programmes across our community facilities.

- Public protection: through better regulation to local communities, i.e. managing Housing of Multiple Occupations.

Q6: To protect and ensure adequate resources for councils, NILGA has produced a New Burdens Doctrine, summarised in appendix C. All councils in the rest of the UK are protected by this, in some form to ensure legally that resources are guaranteed to be adequate to meet transferred responsibilities. Does Council consider this protection a "must have" in advance of any further transfer of powers, resources and / or services?

The Council consider that the New Burdens Doctrine or similar assurances should underpin any future legislation or policy which may signal the transfer of functions or powers from central to local government. However it is vital that the approach to securing the introduction of such a doctrine does not stymie the transfer of certain functions, in particular those of a more strategic nature, such as regeneration. It is important to differentiate between strategic and operational functions in this regard.

The Council would also be supportive of the need to ensure that there is a collectively agreed principle that Government as a whole will ensure that any new burdens which may fall on local councils in moving forward are adequately resourced.

Example - Enhanced enforcement role of councils

The recent regulations brought forward by the NI Executive confers additional enforcement responsibilities on councils in relation to non-compliance by particular businesses and sectors of the NI Executive restrictions and guidance. In addition to this, the councils have undertaken to work in partnership with the police to deal with enforcement issues which arise in the hospitality during their normal operating hours. Councils have taken on this role to support their local areas and businesses. There has been no associated funding provided to councils to support the implementation of the extended enforcement role. If the New Burdens Doctrine had been in place then these transfer of additional responsibilities would have been supported with associated transfer of resources.

Therefore examples such as that provided above, highlights the necessity that new burden provisions should be incorporated into any future legislation which either devolves or transfers powers to councils. The legislation must also clearly identify the lead central government department which is responsible for securing the resources needed to fund the net additional cost falling on councils and ensuring the appropriate transfer of resources.

If the new burdens doctrine had underpinned those powers which transferred in 2015, it is likely that this would have resolved issues between local and central government relating to a lack of clarity over responsibility for when resources have not been commensurate with the functions that transferred.

In any case, the Council would seek assurances that the level of financial resources made available for devolution to NI councils was not only cost neutral at the point of transfer but also that councils would be indemnified against any potential future shortfall in funding through an extension of the “New Burdens Doctrine”.

Q7: With investment priorities, budgetary constraints and new ways of working being practiced right now by Council, NILGA believes that *council led* shared services are one element of the future sustainability of local government. Is Council open to engaging in sector wide, strategic discussions around shared services, building on existing work, in order to define a strong vision and approach to this? What are Council's key requirements, if any, in terms of taking such discussions forward?

The Council would be willing to engage in discussion and explore potential around this suggested approach, as we believe there is real opportunity to deliver value for money services alongside service improvements.

However, in light of previous experience relating to a shared services approach, we would note with caution the previous the local government lead, 'Improvement, Collaboration and Efficiency (ICE) Programme' which was taken forward in lead up to the first local government reform programme. This process was extremely resource intensive and there was a number of false dawns regarding moving towards agreed shared services approaches, and many councils chose not to adopt a shared services approach when it came to actual operational implementation, preferring to maintain existing service provision.

Therefore, any approach towards council led shared services must be supported by a coalition of willing partners across the local government sector. It is essential that any move towards a sector wide approach to shared services has clear parameters, agreed to and supported by elected members, highlighting those areas of collaboration which will result in efficiency savings and value for money for participating councils.

Another key requirement for the Council in terms of a sectoral shared services approach is the need for an evidence based approach. For this vision to succeed will require a significant level of trust and transparency between councils in terms of sharing information and resources, to ensure that decisions taken are sourced in evidence and on the best available data.

Q8 Has Council any additional comments or attachments it wishes to provide at this time?

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

In addition to the answers provided above to the specific questions put forward in this consultation. The Council would also wish to put forward some additional general comments for NILGA's consideration. These include:

- The Council recommend that there is a commitment within the emerging Programme for Government to transfer important place-shaping regeneration functions, which complement the existing planning, and economic development functions of councils. If Belfast and the region are to remain competitive and continue to attract investment, it is important that we can respond to the needs and demands of potential investors.

- Any future reform programme provides an opportunity to fundamentally review local government finance particularly if a high degree of devolution was secured. The Council considers that increased financial powers for local government is necessary for securing sustainably funded local government moving forward. The Council believe than any future review of local government powers provides local government with an opportunity to partner to draw together existing interventions at a high level and to offer collective recommendations on financing, including new borrowing powers; simplified loan and borrowing regimes; and government incentives for start-ups in sustainable tax yielding industries.

- The need to consider innovative and new forms of finance and delivery models to unlock development, regeneration and infrastructure priorities within the city and across the region.

- The need to further strengthen the relationship between central and local government on a clear legislative and policy basis. This strengthened relationship should be underpinned by a shared commitment to delivering outcomes for our citizens. Where necessary the Council would recommend that structures are put in place to ensure that each of the 11 councils are engaged in the development of any policy positions and are consulted on all enabling legislation as early and as fully as possible.

- A mechanism should be found for Councils to work alongside government departments in formulating and delivering cross – cutting recovery programmes. It is understood that a Town Centre Task force is to be set up as one potential recovery partnership and Councils would request a seat at this table. However, Councils have many other contributions to make, including the reframing of City Deals as key recovery investments, co-designing future shared prosperity funds, developing innovation hubs and rolling out digital investment.

Appendix B

The New Burdens Doctrine

In England a new burden is:

"any policy or initiative which increases the cost of providing local authority services. This includes duties, powers, or any other changes which may place an expectation on local authorities, including new guidance. In some cases, a new burden may arise as a result of a transfer of function."

The key definition of a New Burden in England is a change that could lead to an increase on council tax, if it was not additionally funded by central government.

The guidance stresses that the NBD in England only applies where central government requires or exhorts authorities to do something new or additional. Action to ensure that they adequately fulfil a role for which they are already funded is not a New Burden.

Wales and Scotland also have initiatives in place to fund new burdens in different ways.

Key Principles of a New Burdens Doctrine for NI

One clear set of rules/guidance for NI.

New Burdens funding provisions should be included in any transfer of powers legislation.

There should be an identifiable department in the lead.

The department lead should be responsible for securing the resources needed to fund the net additional cost falling on local authorities, and for making any necessary resource transfer.

Discussion should take place in relation to how and when resources are transferred to local government.

A review and evaluation process should be a compulsory feature of a new burdens' regime in Northern Ireland both in relation to the adequacy of funding and the application of the NBD generally.

Potential New Burdens and any linked assessments should be flagged up by DfC or other Departments.

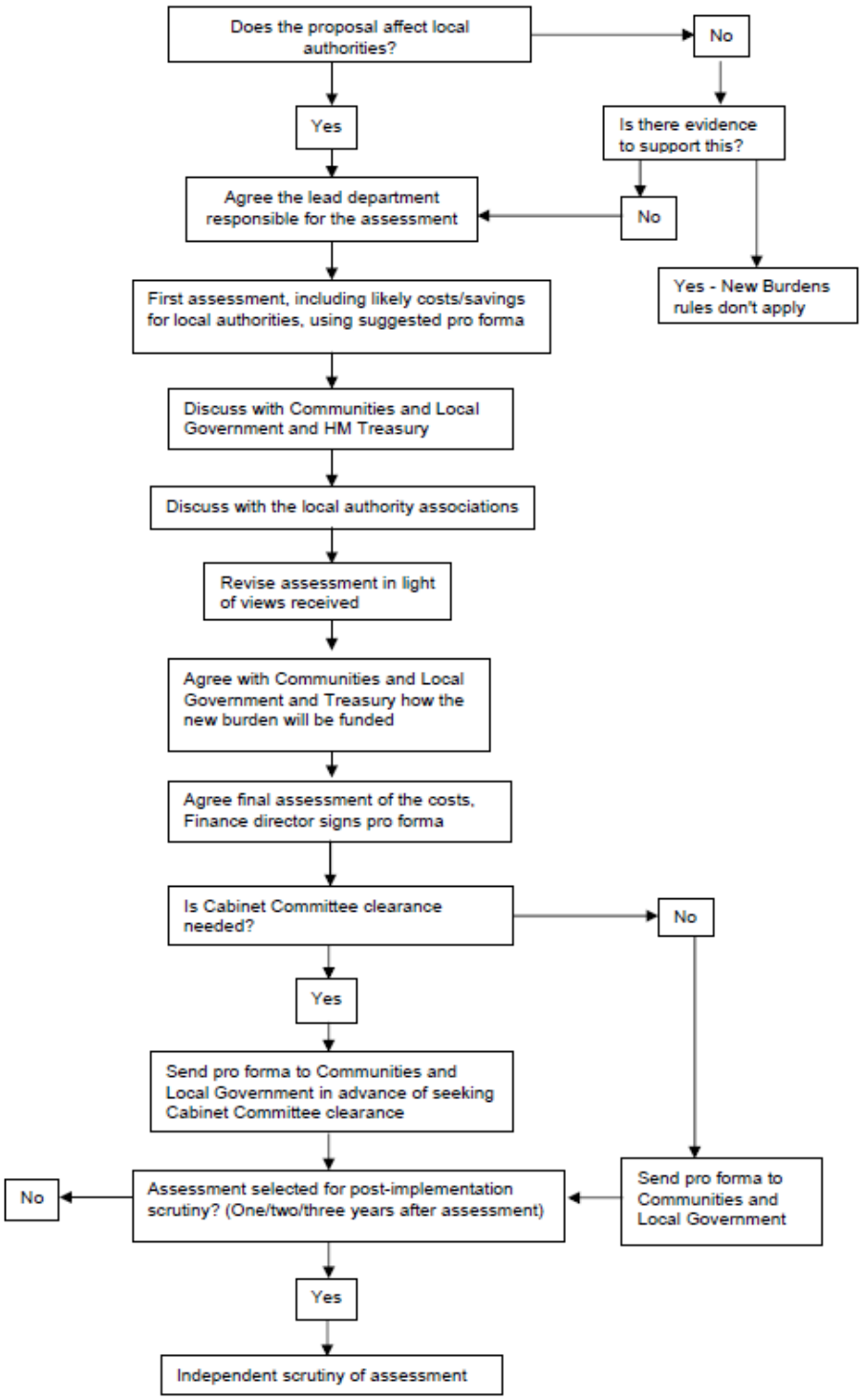
The review and evaluation process should capture data that can be shared across departments and with councils.

The NBD should include a clear requirement to consult throughout the new burdens' assessment process with both the council and NILGA.

The NBD should include timescales within which new burdens assessments should be completed and any grant awarded paid with the ability to extend this in only exceptional

circumstances. This will enable councils to ensure their needs are prioritised including at times when Government may have different priorities.

Key Stages – Flow Chart



Belfast City Council

STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Subject:	**Update on Physical Programme**
Date:	18th December 2020
Reporting Officer:	Sinead Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes
Contact Officer:	Shauna Murtagh, Programme Manager

Restricted Reports				
Is this report restricted?	**Yes**		**No**	X
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?				
After Committee Decision				
After Council Decision				
Sometime in the future				
Never				

Call-in				
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	**Yes**	X	**No**	

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 provides an update on the New Crematorium project and seeks approval from the Committee for the Council to act as the delivery agent for any capital projects as required under the DfC Covid19 Revitalisation Programme including necessary procurement processes.

2.0	**Recommendations**
2.1	The Committee is asked – ▪ *Capital Programme - New Crematorium Project* – To agree the recommendations emerging from the Strategic Cemeteries and Crematoria Working Group and the People & Communities Committee in relation to the design options for the new Crematorium as outlined in 3.3 below ▪ *DfC Covid19 Revitalisation Programme* – To agree that the Council acts as the delivery agent for a range of projects proposed under the Revitalisation funding. Members are further asked to agree that any necessary procurement processes for these projects be initiated as required with contracts to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.
3.0	**Main Report**
3.1	***Update on New Crematorium Capital Project*** Members are asked to agree the recommendations from the Special Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Development Working Group meeting held on 25th November 2020 to update Members on the design options for the new crematorium. These recommendations were agreed by People and Communities Committee at its meeting on 8 December 2020 where it was recommended that they should be presented to SP&R to be endorsed.
3.2	The £18m new Crematorium Project is at *Stage 3 – Committed* within the Capital Programme. Planning and design stages are underway. An Integrated Design Team presented options of the design development to Members of the Working Group on 25th November. Three options were presented as to how to accommodate 200 people in each of the two chapels, whilst providing a more sympathetic space for the regular smaller services of around 50 people with the three options being - • Option 1 – partitioned; provision of 200 seat capacity on ground level with the possibility to partition the space with a moveable wall and curtain; • Option 2 – use of entrance hall: provision of 150 seat capacity in main hall with the possibility to include the entrance hall through moveable acoustic screen to provide 200 seat capacity; • Option 3 – mezzanine: provision of 160 ground floor seat capacity and 40 seat mezzanine After considering the options the Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Development Working Group noted that the preferred option was Option 3 – mezzanine: provision of 160 ground floor seat capacity and 40 seat mezzanine from both a design and operational perspective. This

	Option was agreed by the People & Committee on 8th December from an operational and client perspective. In addition the removal of the function room from the new building development and the potential of the offer of this facility in the re-use of the existing building was recommended by the design team. The integration of a function room in the new crematorium would create the same challenges in the flow of people as in the existing building. This was also supported by the Crematorium Manager who highlighted the operational challenges of a function room in the same building as the chapels where the services take place. Both the Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Development Working Group and the People & Communities Committee agreed this approach
3.3	**Members are asked to agree -** - **the preferred option (Option 3 - provision of 160 ground floor seat capacity and a 40 seat mezzanine) as recommended by both the Working Group and the P&C Committee** - **the removal of the function room from the design of the new crematorium building and explore the option to re-use parts of the existing crematorium as a place where functions can take place.**
	DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme
3.4	Members were advised on 18th September 2020 that external funding is being sought to support the city's Covid recovery plans. A Letter of Offer is now secured for the second tranche of the Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme from Department for Communities and Department of Infrastructure. Tranche 2 comprises £1,790,000 in capital funding from DfC, £2,000 from DEARA, £749,000 from DfI and an allocation of £160,000 of revenue funding from DfC, bringing the overall funding to £4,039,000 (Tranches 1 and 2). A further **Members are asked to agree that the Council acts as the delivery agent for a range of projects proposed under the next tranche of Revitalisation funding. Members are further asked to agree that any necessary procurement processes for these projects (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate 'framework' arrangements) be initiated as required with contracts to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.**
3.5	**<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u>** New Crematorium – Scheme already at Stage 3 – Committed with £18m ring fenced Covid-19 Revitalisation Fund – Externally funded
3.6	**<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment</u>** All capital projects are screened as part of the stage approval process.

4.0	**Documents Attached**
	None

STRATEGIC POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Belfast City Council

Subject:	**Asset Management** **i)** Finvoy Street/Upper Newtownards Road – Licence from Walkway Community Association **ii)** Proposed Temporary Occupancy of International Conference Centre Waterfront Hall (ICC) for use as a Nightingale Court **iii)** Little Victoria Street, Belfast – Licence Agreement
Date:	18th December 2020
Reporting Officer:	Sinead Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes
Contact Officer:	Pamela Davison, Estates Team Leader

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted? **Yes** [ ] **No** [X]

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision [ ]
After Council Decision [ ]
Sometime in the future [ ]
Never [ ]

Call-in

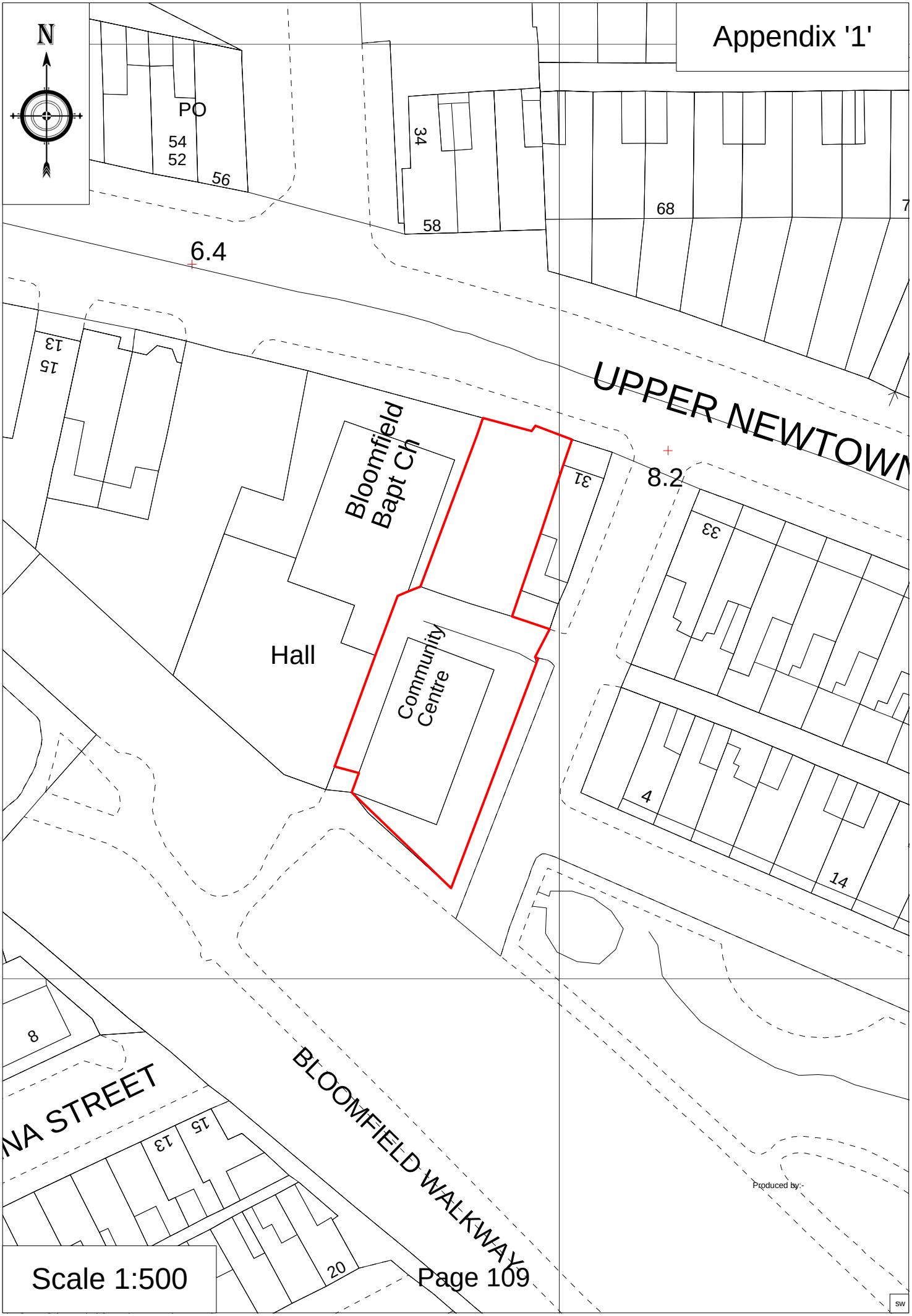
Is the decision eligible for Call-in? **Yes** [X] **No** [ ]

1.0	**Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues**
1.1	The purpose of this report is to seek the Committee's approval in relation to asset related disposal, acquisition and Estates matters.
2.0	**Recommendations**
2.1	**The Committee is asked to -** **i) Finvoy Street – Licence from Walkway Community Association (WCA)**

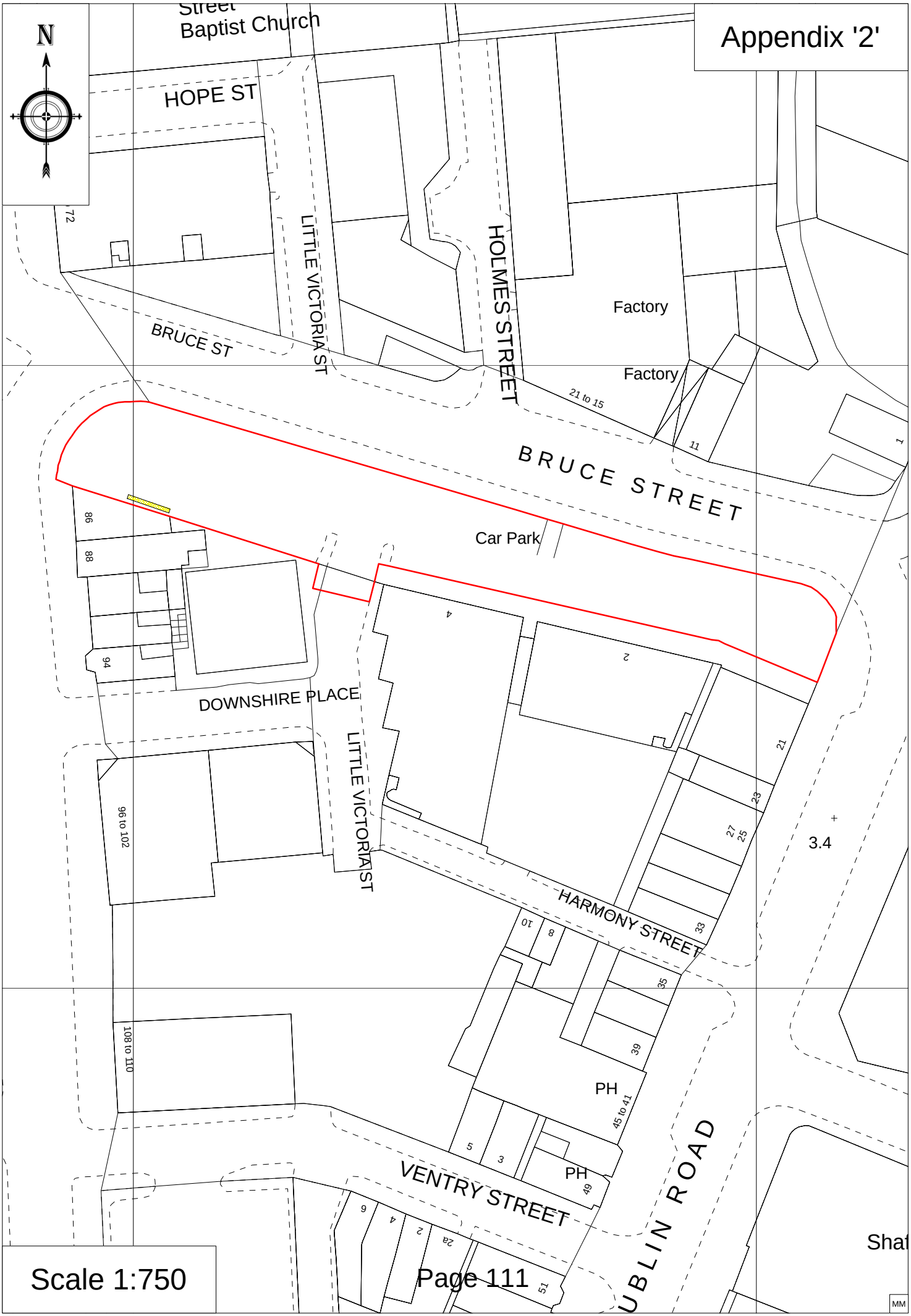
	- approve entering into a Licence for works, access and use of lands at Finvoy Street/Upper Newtownards Road from WCA to facilitate the removal of WCA's former community centre modular building, and the subsequent construction of a new centre funded by the Social Investment Fund (SIF). **ii) Proposed Temporary Occupancy of International Conference Centre Waterfront Hall (ICC) for use as a Nightingale Court** - note the arrangements for a temporary use of the ICC as a Nightingale Court to assist with the back log of cases within the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service and provide adequate social distancing measures. **iii) Little Victoria Street, Belfast – Licence Agreement** - approve the grant of a Licence to Clear Channel NI Ltd at Little Victoria Street Car Park for an advertising site.
3.0	**Main Report**
3.1	**i) Finvoy Street – Licence from Walkway Community Association (WCA)** **<u>Key Issues</u>** WCA currently occupy a two-storey modular building at 1-9 Finvoy Street which is used as a community centre. The building is outdated and no longer fit for purpose and WCA have secured SIF monies to construct a new community centre. To facilitate this new development an extended site totalling 0.152 acres is required which is outlined red on the map attached at Appendix 1. This consists of land owned by the Council and additional surplus land owned by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). SP&R, at its meeting on 23 August 2019, agreed to acquire the DfI lands using SIF funding and lease the entirety of the site to WCA for 50 years. The Council's Project Management Unit are acting as the delivery agent for the Executive Office and will require WCA to licence the site back to the Council to allow the contractor to remove the modular building and to construct the new centre. It is envisaged that the licence will commence as soon as it can be put in place and be required for approximately 12 months. An option to extend in the short term will also be incorporated within the licence to facilitate any unforeseen circumstances or delays etc. **<u>Financial and Resources Implications</u>** Staff resources from the Estates Unit and Legal Services will be involved in the completion of the proposed licence. It has been agreed there will be no licence fee payable. **<u>Equality and Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u>** None associated with this report.

3.2	**ii) Proposed Temporary Occupancy of International Conference Centre Waterfront Hall (ICC) for use as a Nightingale Court** **Key Issues** Members will be aware that the ICC is operated by a Council owned company Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Limited (BWUH) rather than being directly managed by the Council. BWUH and BCC were approached by the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) regarding use of part of the building for holding Nightingale Courts to help fulfil a backlog of court cases which has been increased by Covid 19. An area within ICC of approximately 3,354 sqm (36,102 sq ft) has been identified as being suitable to meet the NICTS requirement. This space is currently available due to the current circumstances relating to Covid 19 which prevent ICC from hosting its normal events. It has been provisionally agreed between the parties that NICTS be granted a licence to occupy the space until 31 March 2021 with potential for it to be extended until June 2021 subject to the space not being required for ICC commercial commitments. The Board of BWUH has approved the arrangement in principle and final terms are being agreed. Under the contract between the Council and BWUH, consent of the Council as landowner is required for granting a licence. Legal Services have confirmed that these arrangements are in line with the terms of the Service Contract between BCC and BWUH. **Financial and Resource Implications** There are no direct financial implications for the Council however a licence fee will be payable by NICTS to BWUH. In addition, NICTS require services including cleaning which will be provided by BWUH and costs recovered. Resources from the Council's Legal Services and Estates Unit will be required in relation to the grant of Council consent. **Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment** None
3.3	**iii) Little Victoria Street, Belfast – Licence Agreement** **Key Issues** At its meeting on 21st September 2018 the SP&R Committee granted approval to enter into a two-year Licence Agreement with Clear Channel NI Ltd for an advertising site at the Car Park in Little Victoria Street. Appendix 2 shows the location of the advertising site. The current Licence has now expired, and new terms have now been agreed with Clear Channel NI Ltd as outlined below. • Commencement Date – 1 April 2020 • Term – 5 years and month to month thereafter

	• Rent - £6,000 per annum exclusive from 1st April 2020 rising to £6,100 from 1 April 2021, to £6,200 from 1 April 2022, to £6,300 from 1 April 2023, to £6,400 from 1 April 2024 • Break option during term – 3 months written notice at any time by either party Members are asked to approve the revised terms as set out above. **Financial and Resources Implications** Financial implications as above. Staff resources from the Estates Unit and Legal Services will be involved in the completion of the Licence Agreement with Clear Channel NI Ltd. **Equality and Good Relations Implications** None associated with this report.
4.0	**Documents Attached**
	Appendix 1 – Map showing extent of land to be licensed from Walkway Community Association Appendix 2 – Map showing the location of the advertising site


Appendix '1'
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6.4
UPPER NEWTOWN
8.2
Bloomfield Bapt Ch
Hall
Community Centre
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33
4
14
15
13
8
BLOOMFIELD WALKWAY
20
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Page 109
SW

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Appendix '2'
N
Street
Baptist Church
HOPE ST
LITTLE VICTORIA ST
HOLMES STREET
Factory
Factory
BRUCE ST
21 to 15
11
1
BRUCE STREET
Car Park
86
88
94
DOWNSHIRE PLACE
LITTLE VICTORIA ST
4
2
21
23
27
25
3.4
96 to 102
HARMONY STREET
10
8
33
35
39
108 to 110
PH
45 to 41
5
3
PH
49
VENTRY STREET
9
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UBLIN ROAD
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Belfast City Council

STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Subject:	**Update on Area Working**
Date:	18th December, 2020
Reporting Officer:	Sinead Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes
Contact Officer:	Shauna Murtagh, Programme Manager

Restricted Reports				
Is this report restricted?	**Yes**		**No**	X
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?				
After Committee Decision				
After Council Decision				
Sometime in the future				
Never				

Call-in				
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	**Yes**	X	**No**	

1.0	**Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues**
1.1	To seek Members' 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 *(North – 25 November, West – 26 November, East – 3 December), as* attached; and • **Physical Programme –** Agree the recommendations on reallocations under the BIF Programme from the North AWG to projects as laid out below in 3.2.

3.0	**Main Report**
	KEY ISSUES **Area Working Group Minutes**
3.1	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 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, as attached.
	Project Updates
3.2	***North AWG*** - Members are asked to note the following project update, as recommended by the AWG at its meeting on 25th November 2020. **BIF Programme** • *Marrowbone Millennium Park project* – The Working Group recommended the reallocation of £250,000 of the anticipated £305,183 underspend from Cancer Lifeline and Grace Family Centre to the Marrowbone Millennium Park project £305,183 • *Love Works* – The Working Group also recommended that a scoping exercise be undertaken in relation to potential capital works for Love Works Cooperative in Duncairn Gardens with an update to be brought back to the next AWG.
3.3	**Financial and Resource Implications** Financial – BIF Programme – all projects already have in-principle ring-fenced allocations agreed by Committee Resources – Officer time in working with Groups
3.4	**Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment** No implications
4.0	**Documents Attached**
	Minutes of the Area Working Groups

North Belfast Area Working Group

Wednesday, 25th November, 2020

NORTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP
HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present:	Councillor Maskey (Chairperson); Councillors Bradley, Cobain, Ferguson, Magee, McAllister, McCullough, Murphy, O'Hara, Pankhurst and Whyte.
In attendance:	Mr. R. Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services; Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes; Ms. M. Higgins, Neighbourhood Services Integration Manager Ms. K. Gilliland, Neighbourhood Services Manager, Mr. D. Salters, Area Cleansing Manager, Mr. M. Collins, Project Sponsor; and Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies were received.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 30th September were agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.

Declaration of Interest

In relation to item 5(a) Area Based Update on Strategic and Micro Funding, Councillors Cobain, Maskey and Murphy declared an interest in that they worked for or were associated with organisations, which had applied for funding.

Request to present - Clifton House Heritage Centre

The Members agreed to invite Belfast Charitable Association to a future meeting of the Working Group to update Members on the work that it was undertaking in north Belfast, its plans for the graveyard and also the Great Place project, as part of the North Belfast Heritage Cluster.

Presentation - Midland Boxing Club

Mr. S. Cochrane, Mr. C. McClure, Mr. J. Howcroft and Mr. C. Frampton attended in connection with this item and were welcomed by the Chairperson.

Mr. McClure gave an overview of the history of the Midland Boxing Club, he stated that it was founded in 1974 and was located between the Tigers Bay and New Lodge interface. He informed the Members that it had become an important part of the local community and had attracted young people from the area where there had been high unemployment, drug and alcohol abuse and had been a means for parents to keep their children off the streets.

Mr Howcroft stated that funding will help the club promote boxing, enhance the facilities, particularly in relation to the uptake of females interested in the sport, as the club currently had no female changing facilities resulting in young people from the area travelling to other clubs which had been able to provide such facilities.

Mr. McClure described the weekly activities of the club which included:

- Boxing training;
- Keep fit classes;
- Mental health keep fit;
- Nutritional awareness sessions;
- Youth development programme;
- Seniors' art club; and
- Senior coffee mornings.

Mr. Frampton explained that the club's priority was being able to attract local young people for boxing and introducing them to other organisations such as the PSNI, PIPS, Suicide Awareness and various drug and alcohol abuse groups.

Mr. McClure added that enhancing the facility would also benefit the local senior population, in that they used the premises for various social events.

Several Members praised the club for its intensions to promote female boxing and agreed to undertake site visits to the facilities, once completed, in order to promote and encourage young females in north Belfast to join the club.

In response to a question from a Member, the Director of Physical Programmes confirmed that the building was in the ownership of the Council, however, it had been leased, long-term, to the Midland Boxing Club.

The Chair, on behalf of the Working Group, thanked the Midland Boxing Club for their presentation and Mr. McClure thanked the Council for its support to the club over the past 47 years.

Alignment with Community Planning –VCSE Panel Conference

Ms I. Sherry and Mr. J. Girvan attended in connection with this item and were welcomed by the Chairperson.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services introduced Ms. Sherry and Mr. Girvan to the Working Group.

Ms. Sherry stated that they had been asked to meet with all the Area Working Groups as a means to introduce the panel and provide the Members of those Working Groups with an update on their work. She explained that that the Voluntary Community Social Enterprise (VCSE) Sectoral Advisory Panel was through the Community Planning Partnership and that the panel was a voluntary contribution of 15 members and had been meeting fortnightly, since June.

She outlined the aims of the panel, which included understanding partnership working and public policy development learning from Scotland and Wales and exploring a number of themes, including accountability, partnership and impact of the panel in playing its full role in community planning in Belfast.

Mr. Girvan added that the panel intended to influence, support and advocate on behalf of the communities that it works across in partnership with the Council.

Ms. Sherry added that the panel was also hoping to engage with regard to the Resilience Strategy on a community level and was hoping that there would be a strong engagement from project boards with the panel.

The Chairperson thanked Ms. Sherry and Mr Girvan for their presentation and wished them success with their upcoming conference on behalf of the Working Group, and they retired from the meeting.

Social and Community Recovery (Presentation)

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reminded the Working Group of discussions at its meeting in January, regarding the Council's area working plan and explained how those early discussions had helped shape the community response to the pandemic and how the Council engaged with community and voluntary partners to ensure that vulnerable individuals living in the community were supported. He added that the response had built a strong foundation in terms of area recovery plans and engagement with local communities.

He explained that area working would take city wide ambitions and make them relevant and bespoke to the needs and priorities of local communities. He emphasised that genuine engagement would be a priority, in order to obtain a holistic perspective of the needs and requirements of each area.

He stated that service delivery would continue but will be tailored to the requirements of north Belfast based on the information received through the development of the area working plans and that a further update would be provided to the Working Group early in the new year.

He concluded by stating that, going forward, it was hoped that the area support teams would be effective in joining up issues and services and make the Council more accessible to all with key points of contact for specific area matters.

The Working Group noted the invaluable support and assistance that the Council had received from the community during the pandemic and welcomed the success of the area working approach that had been adopted and which had assisted with the targeted support being delivered so efficiently.

Area Working

Area Based Update on Strategic and Micro Funding

The Neighbourhood Services Integration Manager provided an update on the following report:

Recommendations

The Working Group is asked to note the contents of the report.

Main report

Members may recall that in July 2020 a package of financial investment was agreed to support recovery at a community level, which was in addition to the initial investment in communities as part of the COVID-19 emergency response. This investment took into account the lessons learned from the COVID-19 emergency response, in particular feedback from community partners about the accessibility of funding.

Funding Approach

The Microgrant funding programme was opened by Council at the beginning of July 2020.
The final budget was approximately £310,000, with a maximum allocation per organisation of £1,000, only one application per organization was considered.

Funding was administered in each geography of the city by the area teams which had been created to deliver support for the COVID emergency response efforts.

Activity delivered through the microgrants had to meet one of the following themes:

- **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.

Funding Impact

Micro grant funding has enabled 322 organisations across Belfast to deliver an extensive programme of activities with an approximate total allocation of £310,000.
92 applications from the north Belfast area were supported at a value of approximately £88,400. This represents 29% of the total number of projects supported citywide.

Programmes delivered in north Belfast focused on all 5 themes; Children &Young People and Emotional Wellbeing were the most common. Activity included:

- **Activity Programmes for young people and youth diversionary/outreach**
- **Community Arts programmes**
- **Physical activity and community sports programmes**
- **Literacy/Numeracy workshops and back to school support**
- **Mental health, wellbeing, mindfulness and resilience programmes**
- **Environmental Programmes, Community Clean-ups and upcycling from waste**
- **Digital inclusion programmes**

Feedback from grant recipients has been extremely positive, those elements that were welcomed include:

- **Higher than average turnaround time for the micro grants programme from receipt of application to payment of funds. In most cases this was completed within 20 working days.**
- **More accessible, 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).**
- **Each grant application had a single point of contact within the area teams. This has enabled more effective communication and resolution of issues when they arise. This has been particularly important for new applicants or lower capacity groups.**

Future funding

Feedback has informed our approach to further resourcing of community provision up to March 21 and beyond. Organizations have highlighted the significant challenges of delivering programmes within the current environment, especially with the tightening and easing of restrictions. Officers are mindful of this and we will seek to retain a flexible approach which supports communities to meet locally identified needs.

Two further rounds of funding will be available from Wednesday 25th November at 9am.

- **COVID-19 Community Recovery Support Fund Microgrant (up to £1, 500)**
- **COVID-19 Community Recovery Support Fund Medium Grant (up to £5,000)**

Financial Implications

All awards made through the summer programme were made in line with available external and internal resources. At the time of writing resources for the planned Microgrant and Medium Funding programme are £150,000 and £250,000 respectively. In the event that demand exceeds available resources we will liaise with funders to meet need.

Equality, Good Relations and Rural Needs Implications

This approach seeks to meet the needs of communities through a responsive approach. Future funding approaches from 2021 onwards will be Equality and Rural Needs screened.

The Working Group noted the information provided

Introduce Multi-disciplinary Area Management Team

The Neighbourhood Services Manager and the Area Cleansing Manager provided an overview of the following report:

Recommendations

The Working Group is asked to note the contents of the report.

Main report

Background

One of the key priorities of the Belfast Agenda is to deliver better outcomes for our neighbourhoods, through developing our emerging area approach, and building capacity within communities.

This area approach recognises the importance of neighbourhood regeneration and developing a place shaping approach to drive the effective use of resources by Council and other partners / stakeholders within specific areas where opportunities exist to maximise impact. The need for Council and other partners to work together with local communities to jointly plan interventions, services and investments, and to ensure these approaches are tailored to meet local priorities and needs, has never been greater.

Over the past two years City & Neighbourhood Services (CNS) has developed its approach to integrating service delivery at an area level across neighbourhood services. Specifically, within community provision the following principles already have political and corporate endorsement as the agreed direction for our services;

- **Support local area problem solving;**

- **Create opportunities for new ways of working;**
- **Support cultural change in support of area working;**
- **Create synergies to pool the great knowledge and experience staff have;**
- **Align to the vision of community provision.**

We have appointed four Neighbourhood Services Managers and more recently we recruited four Neighbourhood Integration Managers to support this area focus. In addition, the work to create the Open Space and Streetscene teams (former parks and cleansing) creates the opportunity to develop links with these staff and staff in other area based C&NS services for the benefit of local communities.

<u>Area teams operating during Covid-19</u>

The current Covid-19 crisis is creating significant economic and social challenges for our communities. However this has also created opportunities for future working. Relationships developed between officers and CVSE partners has been at the forefront, with multiple examples of effective partnership working to address urgent community needs, in localities and across the city.

As part of the Council's Covid-19 response (community hub) the Neighbourhood Integration Managers then set up area support teams which responded quickly and flexibly to the emergency needs that came out of the pandemic.

Now that we are in the recovery phase, and taking on board and account of the Covid-19 collective learning, we are establishing a revised Area Team approach across the city that will work with residents, members and stakeholders to revitalise our city's neighbourhoods by:

- **supporting and working with communities and partners in collectively identifying and tackling identified local issues;**
- **taking innovative approaches;**
- **being flexible and responsive;**
- **creating conditions to build capacity;**
- **empowering communities to build capacity and resilience and creating positive and lasting differences to their quality of life;**
- **address operational challenges in the ever changing environment of Covid-19, through the lens of council procedures, but taking into account local nuances;**
- **lead on the integration and mobilisation of staff in local neighbourhoods,**

maximising opportunities where we can to improve outcomes for our residents;

- **design how we use our resources in a more flexible way, including staff and funding;**
- **participate in and facilitate community engagement and communications activities associated with their catchment area;**
- **Work with our elected members to act as community advocates to identify and address local needs and support effective 'place-shaping';**
- **Promote local area knowledge and understanding;**
- **Strengthen relationships with external agencies, residents, community representatives, partnerships and the wider communities to deliver improved Council services;**
- **Identify area priorities as part of our neighbourhood regeneration approach.**

These expanded teams will begin to meet from late November/early December.

Financial Implications
None

Equality, Good Relations and Rural Needs Implications
This approach seeks to deliver a more collaborative, integrated approach which will help to identify gaps in service and avoid duplication. It will have a positive impact on equality, good relations and rural needs considerations.

The Working Group noted the information provided

Physical Programmes Update

The Director of Physical Programmes reminded the Working Group that, at its previous meeting, discussions took place with regard to underspends from BIF projects which would become available for reallocation.

She informed the Members that the Cancer Lifeline project had completed and its underspend totalled £79,896, which was available for reallocation, and that the Grace Family Centre project, which was nearing completion, had an anticipated underspend of £225,287, which would be confirmed in the following weeks. She reported that the total anticipated underspend was £305,183 and Members were asked to consider reallocating the funds under the BIF programme

She highlighted that the BIF project for Marrowbone Millennium Park had a funding gap of £250,000 and that the Urban Villages Team had been developing a business case for funding the deficit. She asked Members to consider reallocation of the surplus funds.

Following discussion, the Working Group agreed, upon confirmation of the Grace Family Centre underspend becoming available, to allocate £250,000 of the available BIF funding to the Marrowbone Millennium Park project

It was further agreed that the Director of Physical Programmes would consider the technicalities in transferring funds from BIF to LIF and undertake a scoping exercise in relation to potential capital works for Love Works Cooperative in Duncairn Gardens.

Following a suggestion from the Director of Physical Programmes, the Working Group also agreed to invite the Living with Water team to present at a meeting of the Working Group in December.

Date of Next Meeting

The Working Group noted the date of the next scheduled meeting, Wednesday, 24th February 2021.

Chairperson

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West Belfast Area Working Group

Thursday, 26th November, 2020

WEST BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP
HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present:	Councillor Corr (Chairperson); The High Sheriff (Councillor Verner); Alderman Kingston; and Councillors Black, Canavan, Carson, Matt Collins, Donnelly, Garrett, Hutchinson, McCabe, Magennis and Walsh.
In attendance:	Mr. R. Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services; Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes; Mrs. A. Allen, Neighbourhood Services Manager; Mr. S. Lavery, Interim Neighbourhood Services Manager West; Mrs. A. McGlone, Neighbourhood Integration Manager; Mr Liam McKinley Open Spaces and Streetscene Manager; and Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Alderman McCoubrey and Councillors Baker, Beattie, Michael Collins, Heading and McLaughlin.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 29th October were agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.

Declarations of Interest

No Declaration of Interest were reported.

Update in respect Alignment with Community Planning incorporating Social and Community Recovery

Ms I. Sherry and Mr. J. Girvan attended in connection with this item and were welcomed by the Chairperson.

Ms. Sherry stated that they had been asked to meet with all of the Area Working Groups as a means to introduce themselves and provide the Members of those Working Groups with an update on their work. She referred to the composition of the

Voluntary and Community Enterprise Sector Advisory Panel, which had been set up to secure links between the elected Members and the various stakeholders, including the community and voluntary sector, as part of the Community Planning process. She referred to the importance associated with securing community engagement and of the broad skill set provided by the 15 members which comprised the panel. Ms. Sherry and Mr. Girvan referred to the success of the panel's first public conference which had been held recently. She explained the importance of providing a platform to engage with both the Community and voluntary sector and of securing strong links with the various Community Planning boards.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager stated that a report would be presented to Members on the details of the conference. In that regard, Ms. Sherry stated that the services of Stratagem had been used to support the panel and that a report was being compiled currently, which would be made available in the near future.

The Members noted the update which had been provided by both Ms. Sherry and Mr. Girvan and they left the meeting.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services then provided the Working Group with a detailed update in regard to the ongoing work to establish and implement the Neighbourhood Regeneration and Area Working Plan, incorporating the following key strands:

- Belfast Agenda and Governance;
- Integrated Service Delivery;
- Capital Investment;
- Evidence based decision making;
- Local Development Plan;
- City Regeneration; and
- Economic Development

He highlighted the need to integrate services and to develop external partnerships in the pursuit of community engagement and Neighbourhood Regeneration and he referred specifically to the City and Neighbourhood Services approach to integrated service delivery including:

- Open Spaces and Streetscene;
- City Protection;
- Community Provision; and
- Resources and Fleet.

The Working Group discussed the Area Profile for West Belfast, including the Shankill and stated that they were keen for the Council and other partners to work together with local communities to jointly plan interventions, services and investments, and to ensure these approaches were tailored to meet local priorities and needs.

Several of the Members stressed the need to ensure that the focus in regard to community planning remained at a local level. They also noted that the area plans needed to be flexible as these were going to be evolving and reiterated the need to engage and consult with the various stakeholders to work towards building a community infrastructure and to ensure that there was no duplication of work.

The Neighbourhood Integration Manager confirmed that the proposed approach recognised the importance of neighbourhood regeneration and of developing a place-shaping approach to drive the effective use of resources by Council and other partners/stakeholders within specific areas where opportunities existed to maximize impact.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager referred Members to the current approach to integrating service delivery at an area level across neighbourhood services. Specifically, within community provision and noted that the following principles already had political and corporate endorsement as the agreed direction for services:

- Support local area problem solving;
- Create opportunities for new ways of working;
- Support cultural change in support of area working;
- Create synergies to pool the great knowledge and experience staff off staff; and
- To align to the vision of community provision.

The Working Group noted that the current Covid-19 crisis had and continued to create a significant economic and social challenge for communities. However, it had also created opportunities for future working. Relationships had been developed between officers and CVSE partners had been at the forefront, with multiple examples of effective partnership working to address urgent community needs, in localities and across the city.

As part of the Council's Covid-19 response (community hub), the Neighbourhood Integration Managers had set up area support teams which had responded quickly and had been extremely flexible in trying to meet the emergency needs that had arisen as a result of the pandemic.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager (West) advised that as part of the learning exercise a revised Area Team approach was being adopted across the city, which would see officers working with residents, the Elected Members and various stakeholders to revitalise the city's neighbourhoods by:

- supporting and working with communities and partners to collectively identify and tackle priority local issues;
- taking innovative approaches;
- being flexible and responsive;
- creating conditions to build capacity;
- empowering communities to build capacity and resilience and creating positive and
- lasting differences to their quality of life;
- addressing operational challenges in the ever changing environment of Covid-19,
- through the lens of council procedures, but taking into account local nuances;
- leading on the integration and mobilisation of staff in local neighbourhoods,
- maximising opportunities where possible, to improve outcomes for residents;
- designing how resources could be used in a more flexible way, including staff and funding;
- participating in and facilitating community engagement and communications activities associated with their catchment area;

- Working with the Elected Members to act as community advocates to identify and address local needs and support effective 'place-shaping';
- Promoting local area knowledge and understanding;
- Strengthening relationships with external agencies, residents, community representatives, partnerships and the wider communities to deliver improved Council services; and
- Identifying area priorities as part of our neighbourhood regeneration approach.

He concluded by stating that he was keen to meet with community partners and, where possible, to undertake site visits in order to progress the community approach.

The Working Group noted the invaluable support and assistance that the Council had received from the community during the pandemic and welcomed the success of the area working approach that had been adopted and which had assisted with the targeted support being delivered so efficiently.

The Chair, on behalf of the Working Group, also commended the officers and asked that their thanks be conveyed to the many Council staff who continued to work hard maintaining vital council services and supporting our citizens and communities during the pandemic.

Area Working

Area Based Update on Strategic and Micro Funding

The Working Group considered the following report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 To update the Working Group with regard to the Summer Microgrant Funding Programme.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Working Group is asked to note the contents of the report.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Members may recall that in July 2020 a package of financial investment was agreed to support recovery at a community level, which was in addition to the initial investment in communities as part of the COVID-19 emergency response. This investment took into account the lessons learned from the COVID-19 emergency response, in particular, feedback from community partners about the accessibility of funding.

Funding Approach

3.2 The Microgrant funding programme was opened by Council at the beginning of July 2020.

The final budget was approximately £310,000, with a maximum allocation per organisation of £1,000. Only one application per organisation was considered.

Funding was administered in each geography of the city by the area teams, which had been created to deliver support for the COVID emergency response efforts. In order to qualify for funding, activity delivered through microgrants was required to meet at least one of the following themes:

- **Children and Young People: Summer activities and programmes to address the negative educational and wellbeing impacts of COVID-19 and support 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 further;**
- **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 being an element of addressing this challenge;**
- **Emotional Wellbeing: There is widespread concern about the emotional wellbeing concerns of vulnerable individuals, families and communities;**
- **Anti-Social Behaviour: Levels of anti-social behaviour, particularly in parks/open spaces, increased due to increased use by people not at school/work and periods of good weather over the summer.**

<u>Funding Impact</u>

3.3 **Micro grant funding enabled 322 organisations across Belfast to deliver an extensive programme of activities with an approximate total allocation of £310,000. In West Belfast 101 applications were approved.**

3.4 **Programmes delivered in west Belfast focused on all 5 themes; Children &Young People and Emotional Wellbeing were the most common. Activity included:**

- **Activity Programmes for young people and youth diversionary/outreach**
- **Community Arts programmes**
- **Physical activity and community sports programmes**
- **Literacy/Numeracy workshops and back to school support**
- **Mental health, wellbeing, mindfulness and resilience programmes**
- **Environmental Programmes, Community Clean-ups and upcycling from waste**
- **Digital inclusion programmes**

Further detail on projects supported in west Belfast is included in Appendix 1.

3.5 Feedback from grant recipients has been extremely positive, those elements that were welcomed include:

- **Higher than average turnaround time for the micro grants programme from receipt of application to payment of funds. In most cases, this was completed within 20 working days;**
- **More accessible, 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);**
- **Each grant application had a single point of contact within the area teams. This has enabled more effective communication and resolution of issues when they arise. This has been particularly important for new applicants or lower capacity groups.**

<u>Future funding</u>

3.6 Feedback has informed our approach to further resourcing of community provision up to March 21 and beyond. Organisations have highlighted the significant challenges of delivering programmes within the current environment, especially with the tightening and easing of restrictions. Officers are mindful of this and we will seek to retain a flexible approach which supports communities to meet locally identified needs.

3.7 Two further rounds of funding will be available from Wednesday 25th November at 9am. Further detail is available in Appendix 2.

- **COVID-19 Community Recovery Support Fund Microgrant (up to £1, 500)**
- **COVID-19 Community Recovery Support Fund Medium Grant (up to £5,000)**

<u>Financial Implications</u>

3.8 All awards made through the summer programme were made in line with available external and internal resources. At the time of writing resources for the planned Microgrant and Medium Funding programme are £150,000 and £250,000 respectively. In the event that demand exceeds available resources, we will liaise with funders to meet need.

Equality, Good Relations and Rural Needs Implications

3.9 This approach proposed seeks to meet the needs of communities through a responsive programme of grants. Future funding approaches from 2021 onwards will be Equality and Rural Needs screened."

The Working Group noted the update provided and commended the officers on the speed and efficiency shown in distributing the funding streams which had been targeted specifically to support local, grass roots community organisations and delivered to those areas where it was needed most.

Introduce Multi-disciplinary Area Team

The Neighbourhood Services Manager (West) advised that four Neighbourhood Services Managers and four Neighbourhood Integration Managers had now been recruited to support the area approach. In addition, the work to create the Open Space and Streetscene teams (former parks and cleansing) was providing an opportunity to develop links with these staff and staff in other area-based City and Neighbourhood Services for the benefit of local communities.

As part of the Council's Covid-19 response (community hub), the Neighbourhood Integration Managers had set up area support teams which, as previously discussed, had responded efficiently to the emergency needs that had arisen as a result of the pandemic. She drew the Members' attention to membership of the area teams as follows and advised that it was anticipated that the expanded teams would begin to meet from late November/early December:

Appendix 1 – West Belfast Area Team

Area	Job Role	Officers
West	Neighbourhood Services Manager	Stevie Lavery
	Neighbourhood Integration Manager	Alice McGlone
	Open Spaces and Street Scene Manager	Liam McKinley
	Open Spaces and Street Scene Manager (covering Shankill)	David Salters
	Safer City Coordinator (Operational)	Pól Hamilton
	Safer City Coordinator (PCSP)	Suzanne Gowling
	Community Services Area Support Manager	Seoirse Caldwell
	Community Services Area Facilities Manager	Yvonne Coyle
	Area Community Development Officers (Facilities, Resource Unit and Area Support)	**Area** – Alanagh Rea Ciarán Hartley Tommy O'Reilly **Central Resource Unit -** Bill McClinton

		Facilities – Sean Devine Brian Burns
	Good Relations Officer	David Robinson
	Area ASB Officer	Andy Claydon
	Health Development Officer	Jim Morgan
	Sports Development Officer	Claire Moraghan
	Travellers Liaison Officer	Anne Ross
	Children and Young People's Manager	Israel Hontavilla
	Parks Outreach Manager	Michael Culbert

The Working Group noted the update provided and agreed that officers would e- mail contact details for the area support teams and some information on general roles directly to the Members.

Date of Next Meeting

The Democratic Services Officer advised the Members that the next quarterly meeting of the Working Group was scheduled for Thursday, 25th February at 4.30 p.m.

The Director of Physical Programmes advised that the Department for Infrastructure had recently launched the 'Living with Water in Belfast' Consultation Document, this was a draft strategic plan for drainage and wastewater management for the greater Belfast area that was being developed as part of the Living with Water Programme. More information in regard to the consultation was available here

The Director advised that the consultation closed on 29th January and the Working Group agreed to convene a special, one issue, meeting to discuss the consider the consultation document from a West Belfast perspective.

It was agreed that the Democratic Services Officer would liaise with the Chairperson and Director of Physical Programme to identify a suitable date.

Chairperson

East Belfast Area Working Group

Thursday, 3rd December, 2020

MEETING OF EAST BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP
HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Alderman Copeland (Chairperson)
Aldermen Dorrian, Haire, Rodgers and Sandford; and
Councillors Brooks, de Faoite, Flynn, Hanvey, Howard, Hussey, Kyle, Long, McMullan, Mulholland, Newton and Smyth.

In attendance: Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;
Ms. C. Taggart, Neighbourhood Services Manager;
Ms. K. Watters, Neighbourhood Integration Manager;
Mr. C. Willetts, Open Spaces and Street Scene Manager;
Mrs. A. Allen, Neighbourhood Services Manager; and
Mr. G. Graham, Democratic Services Assistant.

Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Michelle Kelly and Howard.

Minutes

The Working Group agreed that the minutes of the meeting of 5th November were an accurate record of proceedings.

Declarations of Interest

Alderman Sandford declared at interest in that he was the President of the Cregagh Football Club relevant to the item under Strategic and Micro Funding. Given that the item under discussion was for update only and that no decision was required, Alderman Sandford was advised by Ms. C. Taggart, Neighbourhood Services Manager, that no conflict of interest was relevant in this instance, as the report was merely for notation given that the decision in regard to the allocation of micro funding had been taken at a previous meeting of the Working Group.

Alignment with Community Planning (Verbal Update)

Ms I. Sherry and Mr. J. Girvan (Ashton Centre) attended in connection with this item and were welcomed by the Chairperson.

Ms. Sherry stated that they had been asked to meet with all the Area Working Groups as a means to introduce themselves and provide the Members of those Working Groups with an update on their work. She referred to the composition of the Voluntary and Community Enterprise Sector Advisory Panel, which had been set up to secure links

between the elected Members and the various stakeholders, including the community and voluntary sector, as part of the Community Planning process. She referred to the importance associated with securing community engagement and of the broad skill set provided by the 15 members which comprised the panel. Ms. Sherry and Mr. Girvan referred to the success of the panel's first public conference which had been held recently. She explained the importance of providing a platform to engage with both the Community and voluntary sector and of securing strong links with the various Community Planning boards.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager stated that a report would be presented to the Members on the details of the conference. In that regard, Ms. Sherry stated that the services of Stratagem had been used to support the panel and that a report was being compiled currently, which would be made available in the near future. In response to a question from the Chairperson, Ms. Sherry confirmed that the elected Members would have an input into the decision-making process and would be able to influence the work and decision-making of the panel. In respect of a further question in regard to the Community Wealth Fund, Ms. Sherry stated that, after meeting with the Minister for Communities and the Department for Communities (DfC), the department was in the process of establishing a Communities Health Well-Being Panel and that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Panel (VCSE) would be invited to participate on the Community Enterprise Sector Advisory Panel. Ms. Sherry offered to provide the Member with an update on the progress of that proposal as and when a formal invite to participate on the panel was received by the Minister.

The Members noted the update which had been provided by both Ms. Sherry and Mr. Girvan and they departed from the meeting.

Social and Community Recovery

Mrs. A. Allen, Neighbourhood Services Manager, provided the Working Group with an update on the details of support measures provided by the Council in respect of the support offered to communities and neighbourhoods during the Covid-19 pandemic. She referred to the links between the Area Working Groups and the Council's internal recovery plan which was cross cutting in terms of a range of Council projects, including, amongst other things, planning policy and City Regeneration initiatives. She stated that details of how the Council planned to develop its social and community recovery plan would be provided to a future meeting of the Working Group and highlighted the fact that this required a multi-agency approach involving stakeholders and central government departments.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager referred to the close working relationship which had been forged between the voluntary and community sectors as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. She referred to the different approaches which required to be undertaken, by the Council, in terms of its social and economic recovery plan, given that all areas of the city were not homogeneous in terms of their needs and expectations. She highlighted the fact that there were variations in capacity, at a community level, throughout the city and that the support of the Council and other organisations would be required to take that into account. She reinforced the requirement for evidence-based decision-making to ensure that policies and actions, taken by the Council, in regard to its Social and Economic Recovery Plan were both relevant and proportionate with evidence, including both statistical information and lived experience. The Neighbourhood Services Manager reinforced the need to invest and support the local business community to assist them in surviving the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. She requested from the Members

an insight on how they believed that community engagement should be undertaken in ways which provided a positive contribution towards protecting and supporting local communities through the current pandemic.

The Working Group raised a number of issues in respect of the dis-connect between the Titanic Quarter and East Belfast, including congestion caused by car parking in the Ballymacarrett area of the city. A Member raised concerns in regard to some of the social problems in east Belfast and referred specifically to the issues of drug-misuse, social isolation and debt. He expressed the wish that the Council, in collaboration with central government, might utilise existing structures and provide additional funding to mitigate against those problems which had been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Working Group expressed its concern in relation to the timeframe required by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) to impose car-parking restrictions in the area, including the disruption caused by commuter car parking and the disruption caused to the Council's waste collection service. Some Members expressed concern in regard to the length of time taken by DfI to implement traffic restrictions in the area, while a further Member stated that he was concerned that any short term traffic control measures might not fit with an overall strategic transport policy by that department. The Members expressed concern also that DfI did not appear to address the issues raised by local elected representatives in terms of connectivity and disability access in the east of the city. The Working Group requested that DfI be invited to address the Area Working Group directly, at a future meeting, where the Members would be provided with an opportunity to develop a structured debate over issues in the area which required to be addressed.

The Director suggested that it might be beneficial to invite ''Living with Water'' representatives to be invited also, which would provide an overview of the strategic drainage plan for the city and, specifically, how that plan might impact on the east of the city. While the Members were aware of limited central government resources to deliver local plans and the fact that some of the aspirations tended to cut across departmental lines, the Working Group requested that DfI, the Department for Communities (DfC), the Active Travel Unit and representatives from Transport N.I. be invited to a future meeting of the Working Group, in March, to answer a structured framework of questions in regard to issues pertaining to East Belfast in particular. The Members agreed further that a structured agenda in preparation for that meeting could be prepared at its scheduled February meeting.

Mrs. Allen, Neighbourhood Services Manager, referred to the work undertaken, as part of the early stages of the Area Recovery Planning process to address many of the issues associated with central government departmental disconnect which had been identified by the Working Group, under the Community Planning process. She stated that the Council would endeavour to galvanise the needs and aspirations of the Working Group, which had been voiced by the Members, with a view to the provision of an agreed political agenda and set of questions, which could be put to the aforementioned departments and organisations, being invited to the March meeting. She stated that further resources to assist with fuel poverty, Mental Health etc. would be provided by the DfC and that she would bring back proposals to the Working Group, following a future decision, by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, on how those resources would be allocated to various organisations, including the community and voluntary sector, to best address the local issues following the Covid-19 pandemic.

Area Based Update on Strategic and Micro Funding

The Neighbourhood Integration Manager provided the Working Group with an update on the allocation of funding to various groups within the east of the city under the Council's Community Response Funding Programme, which had been provided by both the Council and DfC. The Working Group was informed of the collaborative work undertaken with the East Area Working Team in the delivery of the small grants programme. She referred to the first tranche of the programme which permitted groups to apply for funding up to a maximum of £1000 and of the structural arrangements which had been put in place to ensure the rapid and efficient delivery of funds to those groups which had been successful in their application for financial assistance. She referred also to the various priorities which had been identified to secure funding. To that end, it was reported that 63 groups in East Belfast had applied for funding to the value of in excess of £60,000.

The Neighbourhood Integration Manager provided the Working Group with details of funding under the second tranche of the small grants funding programme. She stated the importance of having a dedicated officer to provide assistance and support the various community groups and of the support provided by the East Belfast Community Development association (E.B.C.D.A.). The Working Group was provided with an overview of the work undertaken in the co-ordination and support of food banks, including the distribution of food allocation to those in most need.

The Working Group noted the information which had been provided by the Neighbourhood Integration Manager.

Multi-disciplinary Area Team

Ms. C. Taggart, Neighbourhood Services Manager, provided an overview of the role of the Area Teams in the support of outcomes which were consistent with the Belfast Agenda. She reported that the creation of the Area Teams would assist in the process of building stronger links with the local community and would allow the Council not only to build capacity, but also to deliver improved local and integrated services. She provided for information purposes a list of named officers with role responsibilities for the East Area Team. She agreed also to circulate email and telephone contact details to the Members of the Working Group.

In response to a question from a Member in regard to responsibility for issues pertaining to the Lisnasharragh District Electoral Area (DEA), the Neighbourhood Services Manager stated that the Area Teams were allocated on a D.E.A. basis and that, if the Member required clarification in regard to officer contact details, for any particular issue within that D.E.A, she would be happy to assist in that regard.

In response to a further question in regard to the vacant position of Good Relations Officer, the Neighbourhood Services Manager assured the Member that one of the benefits of the new area team approach was the ability to provide cover in response to Member and community queries, on any community issue, including Good Relations. She encouraged the Member to contact Ms. Kathy Watters, Neighbourhood Integration Manager, or herself, and stated that she would be happy to assist the Member in regard to directing him to the officer/s, who could provide assistance to address any issues the Member might have.

The Working Group thanked the Open Spaces and Street Scene Manager for his diligence and assistance in supporting the Members in the resolution of issues raised by them in their local area.

A Member sought information on appointments to B.C.C. Community Centre Committees and when those appointments would be implemented. The Neighbourhood Services Manager explained that it was normal practice to refresh membership of the Community Centre Committees after local government elections. She stated that, given changes in community infrastructure across the city, since the establishments of the committees in the early 90s, the community interest in the Council's Community Centre Committees had decreased, resulting in only 8 proactive committees operating currently. She explained that this may have happened for a variety of reasons, including a lack of public or sector interest in that locality. She noted that, in many cases, their role as community hubs has been superceded by the emergence of other community partnership and forums, with local organisations content to engage with the Council via their membership of those networks. She reported that those Community Centres which had transferred to Belfast, under Local Government Reform, did not have Centre Committees. The Neighbourhood Services Manager stated, however, that the ongoing Community Provision review would be revisiting the issue, with a view to giving consideration to refreshing membership of the existing Community Centre Committees, in early 2021.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager informed the Working Group that all of the Council's Community Centres were open for bookings from the Council's traditional user groups. She confirmed that the Council was engaging proactively with other statutory partners and service providers to ensure that it utilised centres as a means to add value in the support of the local community, including the provision of, amongst other things, safe spaces to meet and access services during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Noted.

Member Reflections

Ms. C. Taggart, Neighbourhood Services Manager, in response to a question on the roles of the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Officers as opposed to the Safer Cities Co-ordinators, stated that, the Safer City Co-ordinators supported the work of the Policing and Community Safety Partnership teams, while the former provided the Council's general response to nuisance and elements of anti-social behaviour.

Noted.

Area Recovery Planning and Delivery - Next Steps

Mrs. A. Allen, Neighbourhood Services Manager, provided the Working Group with an update on how the Council envisaged making the Community Planning process more meaningful in terms of its aims and objectives to the local community. She referred to its links with the Social and Community recovery process and the intention to translate Community Planning, in general, into more localised plans in terms of the identification of local area needs and priorities.

The Working Group was informed that close partnership links had been formed with a range of stakeholders, including central government departments, with a view to the development of area recovery plans, whereby local needs and priorities would form the basis of action. She stressed the importance attached to the community engagement process stating that a project team had been set up to evaluate area priorities, including ways to encourage community participation in the development of local area plans, as part of that community recovery process. She stated that it was her intention to provide

the Working Group with an implementation time-line associated with the area recovery process, at its February meeting, and that the Community and Voluntary sectors would be an integral part of that recovery design process.

In response to a question from a Member, in regard to the number of City and Neighbourhood Services staff currently working in office and externally based locations, the Community Neighbourhood Services Manager stated that she would consult with Corporate Human Resources with a view to providing the information requested by the Member.

The Working Group noted the information which had been provided.

Date of Next Meeting

The Working Group agreed that its next meeting would be held on Thursday, 4th February, 2021 at 5.00 p.m.

Chairperson

Belfast City Council

STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Subject:	**Belfast City Council Statement of Accounts 2019/20**
Date:	18th December 2020
Reporting Officer:	Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources
Contact Officer:	Trevor Wallace, Head of Finance Helen Lyons, Corporate Finance Manager

Restricted Reports				
Is this report restricted?	**Yes**		**No**	X
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?				
After Committee Decision				
After Council Decision				
Sometime in the future				
Never				

Call-in				
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	**Yes**		**No**	X

1.0	**Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues**
1.1	The purpose of this report is to present to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, the Statement of Accounts of the Council, including the Annual Governance Statement, for the period ending 31st March 2020.
1.2	The Statement of Accounts are an important element of the council's overall corporate governance framework as they provide assurance to Members and ratepayers on the stewardship of the council's finances and its financial position.

1.3	The Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2020, as attached, have been prepared in line with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019/20 based on International Financial Reporting Standards and the Department for Communities Accounts Direction, Circular LG 03/20 dated 17 February 2020.
1.4	I can confirm that the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2020 has been prepared in the form directed by the Department for Communities and in my opinion the Statement of Accounts give a true and fair view of the income and expenditure and cash flows for the financial year and the financial position as at the end of the financial year.
2.0	**Recommendations**
2.1	The Committee is asked to • approve the Council's Statement of Accounts and incorporated Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2020; and • agree that this paper should not be subject to call-in (as indicated above) because it would cause an unreasonable delay which would be prejudicial to the Council's and the public's interests given that the statement of accounts must be published by 31st December 2020.
3.0	**Main Report**
	Key Issues
	Audit Opinion
3.1	It is the Local government Auditors' opinion that: • the financial statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with relevant legal and statutory requirements and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019-20, of the financial position of Belfast City Council as at 31 March 2020 and its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and • the statement of accounts have been properly prepared in accordance with the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and the Department for Communities directions issued thereunder; and • the part of the Remuneration Report to be audited has been properly prepared in accordance with the Department for Communities directions made under the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015; and • the information given in the Narrative Report for the financial year ended 31 March 2020 is consistent with the financial statements.

	Reserves
3.2	**General Fund** The credit balance on the General Fund has increased to £28,692,673 (of which £15,791,541 relates to specified reserves). The movement on the reserves balance is summarised in Table 1 below: ***Table 1: Summary of Reserves Position*** Opening Balance £25.8m In year movement in reserves £ 2.9m **Closing Balance £28.7m** Specified Reserves at year end £15.8m **Balance Available £12.9m**
3.3	**Capital Fund £19,369,748** The Capital Fund is made up of: • Belfast Investment Fund (£723) -created to support key partnership projects to regenerate Belfast and help lever substantial funds from other sources. • Local Investment Fund (£1,171,489) to fund smaller local regeneration projects. • City Centre Investment Fund (£15,154,012) to support the Belfast City Centre Regeneration Investment Plans. • Social Outcomes Fund (£3,043,524) to support City Centre projects which might not generate a direct financial return but would enhance the overall City Centre offer and support the attraction of investment.
3.4	**Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund £8,000,000** This fund, created in year from the Belfast Investment Fund, is to support neighbourhood regeneration and tourism projects in local neighbourhoods.
3.5	**Leisure Mobilisation Fund £887,800** This fund is to support the Leisure Transformation Programme and will cover programme level costs including communications, engagement and procurement costs.
3.6	**Capital Receipts Reserve £9,772,458 and Deferred Capital Receipts £342,300** These are capital receipts which have originated primarily from the sale of assets and which have not yet been used to finance capital expenditure.

3.7 **Other Fund Balances and Reserves £298,224**

This relates to the Election Reserve (£3,300) which has been set up to smooth the cost of running council elections, the BWUH Subvention Fund (£135,499) to support national and international organisations in bringing their conferences to Belfast and the BWUH Sinking Fund (£159,425) to support planned maintenance and future capital works at the new exhibition centre.

3.8 **Debt**

The overall level of trade debtors had increased this year from £2.5m at 31 March 2019 to £4.1m at 31 March 2020. The main reason is an increase in public authority debt at year end. An analysis of trade debtors, inclusive of VAT, for the last two years is shown below:

Table 2 : Analysis of Trade Debtors

	31 March 2020	**31 March 2019**
Less than three months	£3,239,834	£2,131,221
Three to one year	£614,739	£128,050
More than one year	£218,298	£285,208
Total	**£4,072,871**	**£2,544,479**

3.9 **Creditors**

The Department for Communities has set councils a target of paying invoices within 30 days. During the year the council paid 67,810 invoices totalling £182,900,458.

The average time taken to pay creditor invoices was 10 days for the year ended 31 March 2020. The Council paid 50,885 invoices within 10 days, 63,385 invoices within 30 days, and 4,425 invoices outside of 30 days. The council endeavours to process invoices as quickly as possible and has an improvement plan to support this process.

3.10 **Annual Governance Statement (AGS)**

The Statement of Accounts include Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for the year 2019/20, which has been prepared in line with the Accounts Directive provided by the Department for Communities, NIAO guidance and is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government'. Specifically the AGS sets out:

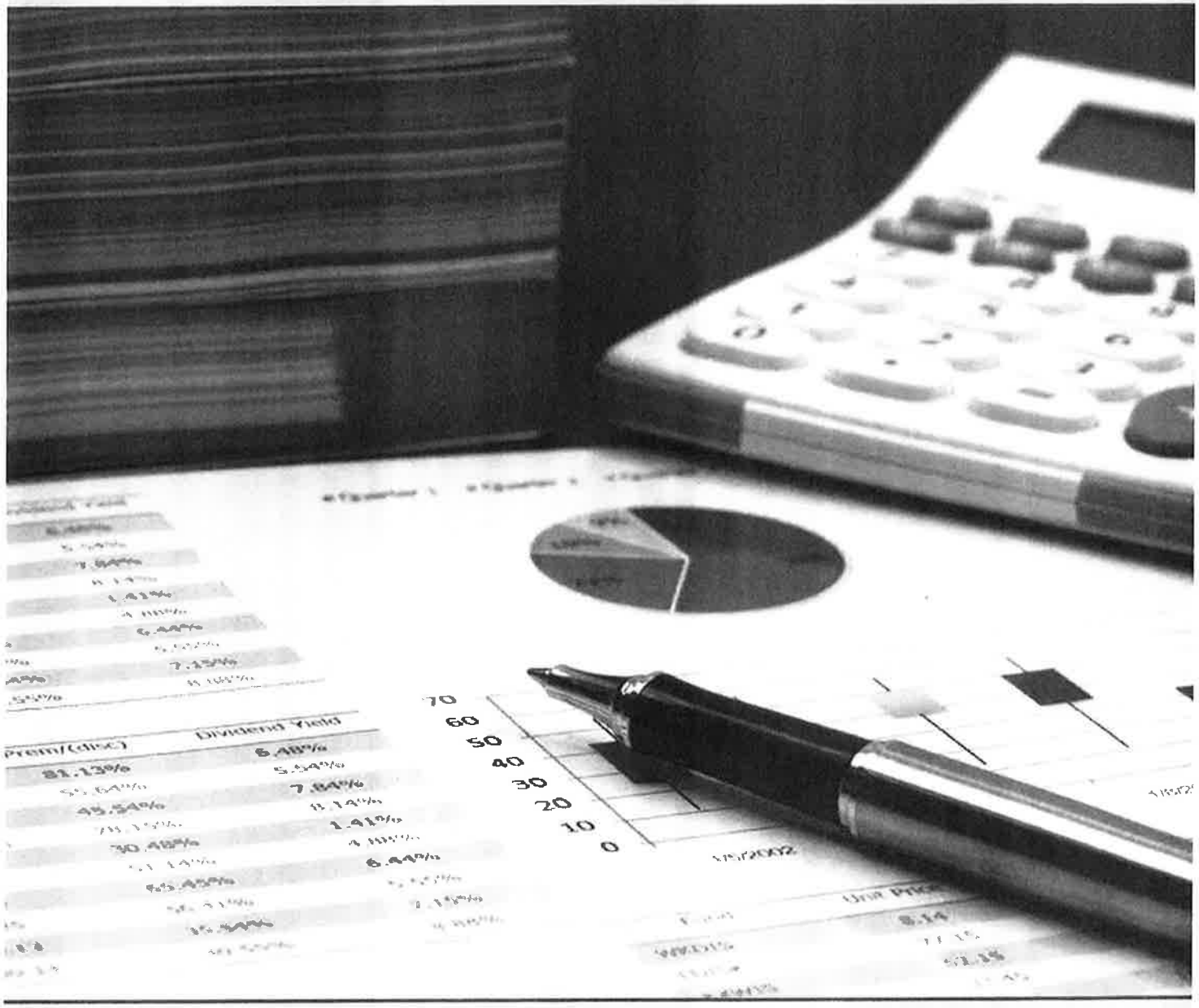
- scope of responsibility of the Council in relation to governance
- the purpose of the governance framework
- the governance framework in place
- review of effectiveness of the governance framework
- significant governance issues to be disclosed.

3.11	The AGS is approved by the Chair of the Strategic Policy and Resources, the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and Resources. It is subject to review by the LGA (NIAO) as part of their annual audit.
3.12 3.13	**Financial and Resource Implications** None **Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment** None
4.0	**Document Attached**
	Detailed Statement of Accounts entitled “Belfast City Council Statement of Accounts 2020”

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Belfast City Council

Statement of Accounts 2020



Belfast City Council

BELFAST CITY COUNCIL
Statement of Accounts
For the year ended 31 March 2020

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Narrative Report

Introduction

Organisational overview and external environment

Belfast City Council remains the largest of Northern Ireland's 11 local authorities, serving a population of 343,542 residents, as well as the thousands of people who travel to the city to work, study and visit each day.



With a net budgeted expenditure of £163.1m in 2019/20, Belfast City Council's 2,211 employees, led by 60 councillors across 10 electoral areas, carry out six principal roles:

- a civic leadership role to ensure a better quality of life for our citizens;
- provision of a number of services and facilities including planning, parks and leisure, refuse and recycling and community services;
- promoting the arts, tourism, community and economic development;
- regulating and licensing activities relating to environmental health, consumer protection, building and public safety;
- a representative role on a number of bodies and boards, including education and health; and
- a consultative role in relation to functions conducted by other government bodies and agencies on issues such as planning, water, roads and housing.

With our role in leading community planning in Belfast we have published the Belfast Agenda 2017-2035, outlining our priorities for the City which will require collaboration with key partners to ensure delivery of these ambitions for the City.

The key services delivered by the Council are outlined below under our Operational Model and the key objectives of the Council are outlined below under Strategic Performance. The key deliverables for year ended 31 March 2020 reflect the priorities articulated by local people and relate to the council's functions as both a civic leader and service provider.

Operational Model

Each year, the Council must ensure it has the resources it needs to deliver services to the standard expected by its ratepayers. Budget plans are submitted to the relevant committees for approval regarding what the Council hopes to do and how much it will cost. This helps the Council understand how much money is required and, taking account of other sources of income, what 'rate' needs to be set for the city to raise the required money.

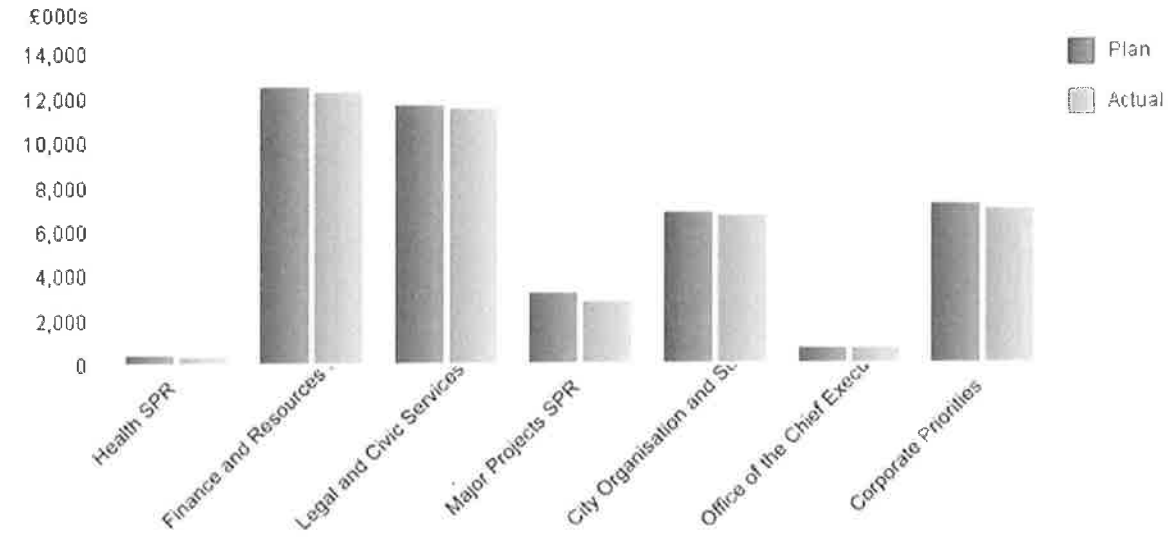
Throughout the year the Council reports to the relevant committees on the financial performance against agreed budget for each committee. The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement shows the accounting cost in the year of providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, rather than the amount to be funded from taxation. Councils raise taxation to cover expenditure in accordance with statutory requirements; this may be different from the accounting cost. The taxation position is shown in both the Expenditure and Funding Analysis and the Movement in Reserves Statement.

The majority of the variance between budget and actual expenditure is disclosed in the Expenditure and Funding analysis in Note 2 and is mainly due to accounting adjustments that are required for the purposes of preparing the financial statements, such as depreciation and impairments, fair value adjustments on investment properties and IAS 19 accounting adjustments. There are also variances due to reclassification of income and expenditure to other income and expenditure for financial accounting purposes such as rental and financing activities.

Each committee is responsible for the delivery of key services to the Council and the main services included in each committee is as follows:

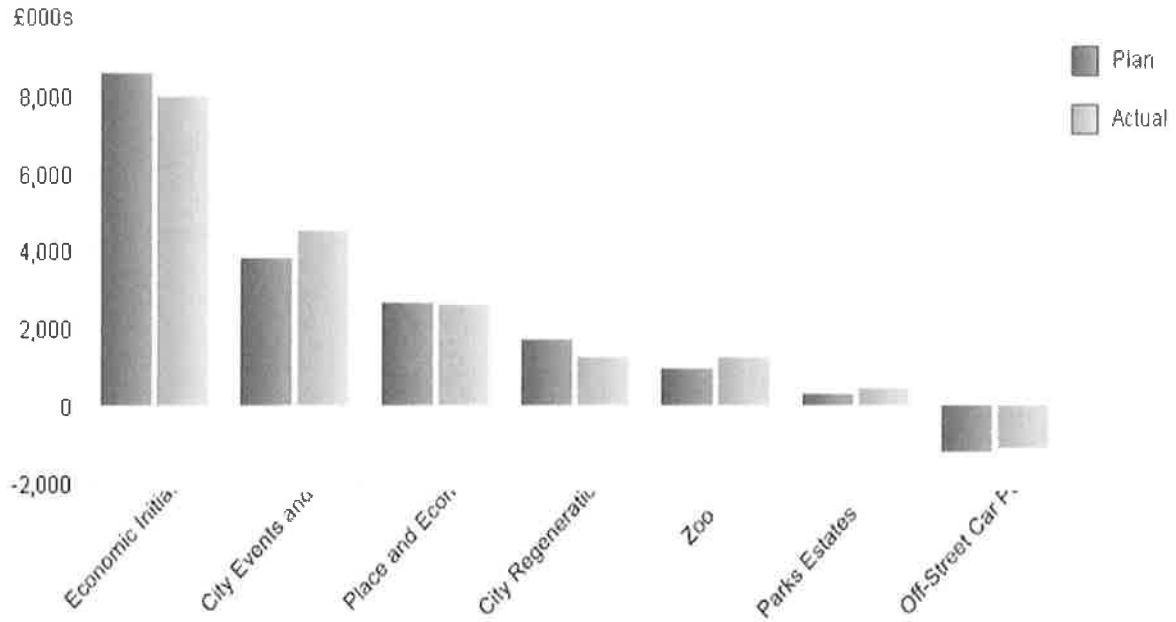
Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

This committee is responsible for setting the strategic direction of the Council through the development of its Corporate Plan and other key corporate and cross cutting strategies and policies. The net expenditure of this committee includes Legal and Civic Services, Finance and Resources, City Organisation Structure and Major Projects and Corporate Priorities with Human Resources and Good Relations. The net expenditure budget for this committee for these services in 2019/20 is £42.5m with actual net expenditure for the year amounting to £41.2m. The graph below outlines the services delivered within this committee and performance against budget. These amounts do not include the accounting adjustments that are required to be included in the net expenditure for this committee in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account. The net expenditure of £52.2m for this Committee includes the accounting adjustments that are required for preparing the financial statements.



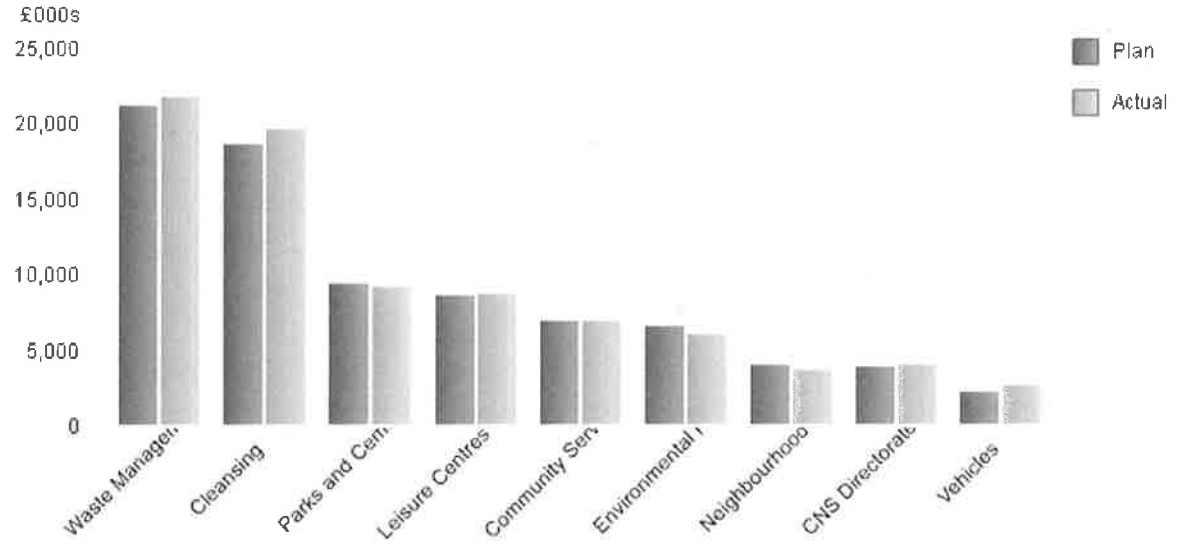
City Growth and Regeneration Committee

This committee is responsible for the development and implementation of strategies, policies, programmes and projects directed to the regeneration and growth of the City in the context of outcomes agreed in the Community and Corporate plans and other corporate strategies. The net expenditure of the committee includes Economic Initiatives and City Regeneration, City Events and Venues including Off-Street Car Parking, Place and Economy and Parks Estates and Zoo. The total budget for net expenditure for this committee for these services was £16.9m and actual net expenditure was £17m. The graph below outlines the services delivered within this committee and performance against budget. These amounts do not include the accounting adjustments that are required to be included in the net expenditure for this committee in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account. The net expenditure of £22.4m for this Committee includes the accounting adjustments that are required for preparing the financial statements.



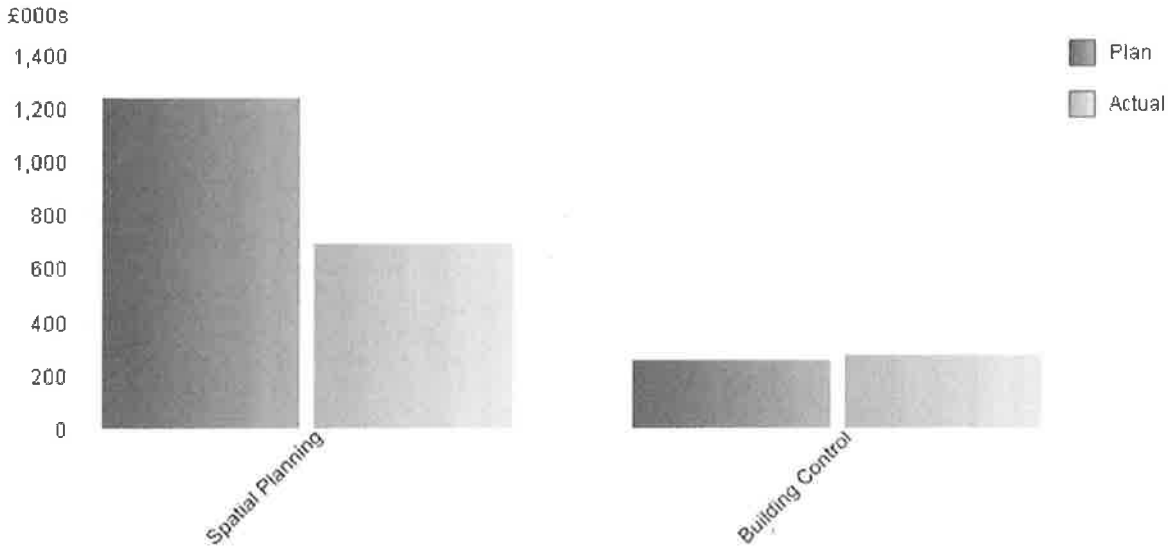
People and Communities Committee

This committee is responsible for the development and implementation of strategies, policies, programmes and projects aimed at improving life at a local level in the context of the outcomes agreed in the community and corporate plans and other corporate strategies. The net expenditure of the committee includes Cleansing, Waste Management and vehicles, Parks, Cemeteries and Leisure Centres, Environmental Health, Neighbourhood and Development and Community Services. The total budget for net expenditure for this committee for these services was £80.8m and actual net expenditure was £82.1m. The graph below outlines the services delivered within this committee and performance against budget. These amounts do not include the accounting adjustments that are required to be included in the net expenditure for each committee in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account. The net expenditure of £104.7m for this Committee includes the accounting adjustments that are required for preparing the financial statements.



Planning and Licensing

These committees are responsible for delivery of all of the Council's planning functions and policy and legislation in relation to licensing issues. The net expenditure includes Planning and Building Control services. The total budget for net expenditure for this committee for these services was £1.5m and actual net expenditure was £1m. The graph below outlines the services delivered within this committee and performance against budget. These amounts do not include the accounting adjustments that are required to be included in the net expenditure for each committee in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account. The net expenditure of £1.8m for this Committee includes the accounting adjustments that are required for preparing the financial statements.



Further information regarding the variances between planned and actual expenditure is included in the individual committee reporting for 2019/20. Total net expenditure budget of £163.1m includes the above services budget of £141.6m and the capital financing budget of £21.5m.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a considerable impact on the Council and has been identified as a significant risk within the Annual Governance Statement. The Government's lockdown, announced on 20th March 2020, has meant that many businesses have been forced to close temporarily significantly impacting on the economy. Furthermore, the Council has had to put considerable resources into ensuring that critical services are delivered during this period and that the most vulnerable in our community are cared for. This comes with additional cost pressures.

Financial Impact

These additional costs have not had a dramatic impact on the financial outturn for 2019/20 as the pandemic only started to make a notable impact on the public's and businesses' behaviour in the last two weeks of March. However, the true scale of its impact on the Council's finances will be felt during 2020/21. The Council is expecting substantial losses across many of its largest streams of income. These include parking, commercial waste, licensing fees, registrars and planning fees. As with any recession, investment income is anticipated to reduce which will create further pressures on the Council's finances. It is difficult to quantify the impact of Covid-19 at this stage with any certainty, but the financial pressure on the Council will be substantial – even after the Executive's emergency Covid-19 funding for local authorities is taken into account. Due to the Council's reliance on fees and charges, rates income and consequently its exposure to the economic cycle, the Council has sought in recent years to build up the general fund balance to ensure the Council is financially resilient in a recession. The Council is therefore in a position to draw upon its general fund reserve balance in 2020/21 to balance its budget and has adequate resources to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the annual statements.

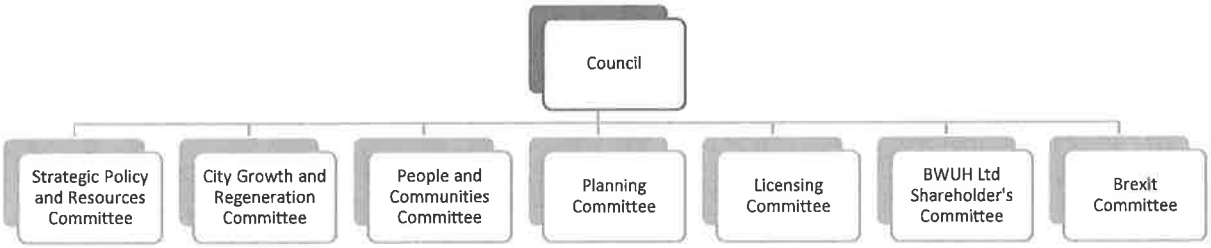
Moving forward

The Council will reset its Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) in recognition of the impact of the pandemic and the Council's strategic objectives. The Covid-19 crisis has meant that the Council has had to review what its most critical services are and which are required to still be operational even during a global pandemic. The changing environment and "new normal" in which we are likely to find ourselves will require the Council to review the services it provides, its delivery models and the outcomes that are of the highest priority. This will also require the Council to review the structural position of its budget and how that needs to change going forward.

The Council continues to revise and refine recovery plans - this is challenging given the degree of uncertainty regarding the pandemic and the still unknown impact on service provision and resources over time. This requires a high degree of flexibility in managing the resources (financial and workforce), to be able to respond quickly to reopen / reclose services whilst dealing with additional challenges associated with abiding by changing COVID – 19 regulations, social distancing and responding to new community and business needs.

Governance

The work of Belfast City Council is overseen by the committee structure outlined below and detailed further in our Governance Statement on pages 15- 31. This Annual Governance Statement for 2019/20 highlights the Council's governance arrangements during the year and how significant governance issues are being addressed and actions implemented. A programme management framework is in place to manage both revenue and capital streams of activity for the Council. Directors and Members have oversight in accordance with the terms of reference for the relevant Committee as well as finance reports covering all aspects of Council expenditure being presented to Committee on a quarterly basis. The Committee structure, which is based on the full council and seven standing committees is illustrated and described below.



As outlined in the Annual Governance Statement on page 16, in response to Covid-19 the Council altered the normal decision-making processes to ensure that the Council followed Public Health Agency guidance on social distancing and essential travel was followed while maintaining continuity of critical services.

Strategic Performance

The strategic performance of the Council is incorporated in the Belfast City Council's Corporate Plan 2020-24, which includes the Improvement Plan. The Belfast Agenda is published on the Council's website and outlines the Council's ambitions for the City by 2035 as well as the immediate priorities for:

- Growing the economy
- Living here
- City Development
- Working and learning

The Council outlines its priorities within the Corporate Plan 2020-24 which was agreed in March 2020 just before the Covid-19 pandemic. These priorities cascade from the longer term outcomes identified in the Council's Community Plan (Belfast Agenda). These priorities are based upon extensive external and internal analysis, including key socio-economic data, analysis of the plans and strategies impacting the city and its communities, performance information and political engagement. In addressing the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, a Covid-19 Recovery Plan was agreed that focuses on the medium to long term response and priorities of Belfast that have arisen as a result of the pandemic. An annual review of the corporate plan will take place in the New Year – as part of this, the Recovery Plan will be incorporated in to the corporate planning process.

The Council has also incorporated six key improvement objectives included within the Improvement Plan to ensure continuous improvement in the exercise of the Council's functions and alignment with the work the Council is doing to formulate the priorities of the Belfast Agenda.

These six key objectives are:

- Build the city's position as a magnet for Foreign Direct Investment
- Make Belfast a great place to do business by supporting entrepreneurs and business starts
- Deliver an integrated approach to employment and skills
- Design and deliver programmes to address health inequalities in the city
- Deliver the integrated tourism strategy to increase numbers of leisure and business tourists
- Deliver city centre regeneration and investment projects

An annual performance assessment of progress against these objectives is contained within the Corporate Performance Assessment Report to include details of the Council's performance against statutory performance indicators set by the Department.

Financial Statements

The Council's financial performance for the year ended 31st March 2020 is as set out in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and its financial position is as set out in the Balance Sheet and Cash Flow Statement.

These financial statements have been prepared in line with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom for the year ended 31st March 2020 (the Code) and the Department for Communities Accounts Direction, Circular LG 03/2020. It is the purpose of this foreword to explain, in an easily understandable way, the financial facts in relation to the Council.

This Statement of Accounts explains Belfast City Council's finances during the financial year 2019/20 and its financial position at the end of that year. It follows approved accounting standards and is necessarily technical in parts.

The annual accounts for 2019/20 have been prepared on the assumption that the Council will continue in existence for the foreseeable future. It is not foreseen that the impact of COVID – 19 will change this position over the period covered by this report.

Group Accounts

The Code requires Local Authorities to consider all their interests and to prepare a full set of group financial statements where they have material interests in subsidiaries, associates or joint ventures. Belfast City Council have prepared group financial statements for the financial year ended 31 March 2020 to include Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Limited (BWUH) and Belfast City Council's contribution to Beltel LLP in relation to the redevelopment of the Belfast Telegraph Building. The results of Beltel LLP are included in the group financial statements. The results of Belfast Gasworks Management Co Ltd for the year ended 31 March 2020 are not deemed material to Belfast City Council accounts and as such are not included in the group financial statements.

The Movement in Reserves Statement

This Statement, as set out on page 42, shows the movement in the year on the different reserves held by the Council, analysed into 'usable reserves' (i.e. those that can be applied to fund expenditure or reduce local taxation) and other reserves. The 'Surplus or (Deficit) on the provision of services' line shows the true economic cost of providing the Council's services, more details of which are shown in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Summary (CIES). These are different from the statutory amounts required to be charged to the General Fund Balance for Local Tax purposes. The 'Net Increase/Decrease before transfers to Earmarked Reserves' line shows the statutory General Fund Balance before any discretionary transfers to or from earmarked reserves undertaken by the Council. The group movement in reserves statement on page 118 includes the reserves of BWUH limited, contributing to an increase of £6.7k on the Group General Fund.

The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

This statement, as set out on page 43, shows the accounting cost in the year of providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, rather than the amount to be funded from taxation. Councils raise taxation to cover expenditure in accordance with regulations; this may be different from the accounting cost. The taxation position is shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement. The group comprehensive income and expenditure statement on page 119 includes the consolidated income and expenditure of BWUH Ltd.

The Balance Sheet

The Balance Sheet, as set out on page 44, shows the value as at the Balance Sheet date of the Council's assets and liabilities. The net assets of the Council (assets less liabilities) are matched by the reserves held by the Authority. Reserves are reported in two categories. The first category of reserves are usable reserves, i.e. those reserves that the Council may use to provide services, subject to the need to maintain a prudent level of reserves and any statutory limitations on their use (for example the Capital Receipts Reserve that may only be used to fund capital expenditure or repay debt). The second category of reserves are those that the authority is not able to use to provide services. This category of reserves includes reserves that hold unrealised gains and losses (for example the Revaluation Reserve), where amounts would only become available to provide services if the assets are sold; and reserves that hold timing differences shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement line 'Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations'. The group balance sheet on page 120 includes relevant balances for BWUH Ltd and Beltel LLP.

The Cash Flow Statement

The Cash Flow Statement shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the Council during the reporting period. The statement shows how the Council generates and uses cash and cash equivalents by classifying cash flows as operating, investing and financing activities. The amount of net cash flows arising from operating activities is a key indicator of the extent to which the operations of the Council are funded by way of taxation and grant income or from the recipients of services provided by the Council. Investing activities represent the extent to which cash outflows have been made for resources which are intended to contribute to the Council's future service delivery. Cash flows arising from financing activities are useful in predicting claims on future cash flows by providers of capital (i.e. borrowing) to the Council. The group cashflow statement on page 121 includes the cash and cash equivalents of BWUH Ltd, Gas Pension Fund and the Council's interests in Beltel LLP.

Expenditure and Funding Analysis

The resourcing of the Council's activities is outlined in the Annual Report, demonstrating the funding available and what services this funding provided for 2019/20.

The objective of the Expenditure and Funding Analysis is to demonstrate to ratepayers how the funding available to the Council (i.e. government grants, rates, fees and charges) for the year has been used in providing services in comparison with those resources consumed or earned by the Council in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices. The main services provided under each committee are summarised in this note and performance against budget is summarised in the Narrative Report. The main variances from budget will arise due to the accounting cost of providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, such as depreciation charges and IAS 19 pension adjustments which are not funded from taxation. These charges are summarised per committee in Note 2a and Note 2b.

The Expenditure and Funding Analysis also shows how this expenditure is allocated for decision-making purposes between the Council's committees. Income and expenditure accounted for under generally accepted accounting practices is presented more fully in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Financial performance

For the year ended 31 March 2020, the Council increased its General Fund to £28.7m. The Budget plans form part of the Revenue Estimates and in 2019/20 the total net expenditure budget for the Council was set at £163.1m.

The Council reported £304k under spend on service delivery at the year end. Performance against budget for each of the Committees is continuously monitored throughout the year. This performance is reported to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on a quarterly basis. The overall

position for the year ended 31 March 2020 is mainly due to ongoing structure reviews where vacant posts are being held prior to reviews being completed.

The Cost of Services on Continuing Operations of £181m as reported in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, also includes the accounting cost of providing services in addition to the amount to be funded from taxation. The total net expenditure reported in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is £12m.

Borrowings

For the 2019/20 year the Council has an authorised borrowing limit of £165m. This is based on the Council's forecast capital expenditure plans over the medium to long term. In conjunction with the Council's Capital Financing Requirement of £138m, this ensures that the Council only borrows for capital purposes. During the year, the Council repaid external loans of £10.2m with Department of Finance. The Council borrowed £15m to fund ongoing capital projects from Department of Finance and on a short term basis £15m was borrowed from other Councils, of which £10m was repaid before year end. At 31 March 2020, the total amount outstanding on external loans was £72.7m, of this total £0.3m represents the outstanding debt of the former Belfast Corporation Services which is now the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, and on whose behalf the Council is administering the loans.

Capital Expenditure

The total net expenditure reported in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement includes allocations of £7.9m to fund capital expenditure. Expenditure on capital projects during the year amounted to £43.9m, the most significant expenditure was on: Andersonstown Leisure Centre £11.9m; Brook Activity Centre £7.3m; Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre £7.2m; Avoniel Leisure Centre £2.1m; and the Fleet Vehicle Replacement Programme £4.2m.

There was one significant impairment during the year, £559k, as detailed on page 87. Olympia Leisure Centre came into operation in 2017 and its value was re-measured to depreciated replacement cost, to reflect its current estimated service potential. The difference between the two methods of measurement results in an impairment.

Strategy and Resource allocation

When setting the district rate for 2020/21 consideration was given to the following key financial factors for the Council:

- The main uncontrollable cost risk to the Council in the short and medium term, continues to be the impact of externally imposed increases to the Council's pay bill, such as the nationally negotiated pay awards, the foundation wages increase and employers' pension contributions increase. These combined with inflation levels exert financial pressure on the District Rate which are beyond the Council's control.

- Likewise, the Council continues to face significant year on year increases in costs in several areas such as the increased revenue costs required for the implementation of the Waste Plan, financial contributions required under the delivery of the City Deal, increased resource requirements to deliver priorities under the Belfast Agenda and continued investment in large scale capital projects combined with the revenue costs of these assets as they become operational.

- The Council's income streams are under risk with the uncertain political environment which could have an impact on both EU and Central Government funding. Work is continuing with Land and Property Services (LPS) and the Institute of Revenues Ratings and Valuations (IRRV) to provide assurances on the rates base in this challenging economic landscape. This work has become increasingly important due to the uncertainty around the short and medium impact on the rates base in light if the current Covid 19 pandemic.

- The Council continues to develop its Efficiency Programme through a targeted work stream of activities delivering savings of £3m in 19/20 and savings of £3.1m in 20/21, and more recently expenditure controls to prioritise resources which should help minimise the burden on the ratepayers.

Outlook

The Council is fully aware that it is continuing to operating in a continually challenging environment with the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic. The Council is committed to delivering business as usual where possible and will continue with our ambitions for the City under the Belfast Agenda and City Deal. The Council strives to deliver at the highest of standards and these efforts have been recognised in the many awards achieved by the Council in the year ended 31 March 2020, including:

- The success of 20 Parks across Belfast awarded Green Flag status
- The Council rolling out the project to deliver full fibre network to connect 200 Council sites across Belfast
- Belfast named Best Kept City NI 2019
- Belfast named Best Events Destination in Conference & Incentive Travel Magazine Awards
- Two new Leisure Facilities open in Belfast as part of £105 million Leisure Transformation Programme
- Leisure Transformation Programme Highly Commended in the World Health Organisation Belfast Healthy City Awards
- Belfast City Centre awarded Purple Flag
- Leisure Transformation Programme shortlisted in Leisure Category for inaugural Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors Social Impact Awards 2020

The Council seeks out opportunities to pursue additional funding streams for the City, adopting innovative approaches to delivering services and working in partnership to ensure the City optimises its resources to deliver on its six key objectives. A few of the current initiatives the Council is currently developing are outlined below:

- Smart City Framework – the Council continues to adopt a leadership role to establishing a City Data Platform, a Smart Belfast portal which is a critical resource for a modern Belfast to stage challenges, promote and share learning and attract investment. This will be the foundation for the rates forecasting model and Planning Growth tool to encourage innovative solutions for increasing economic growth for the City. We are working with over 50 SMEs on smart projects.
- 100RC - Belfast is the only city in Ireland, and one of only five in the UK to have been selected from over 1,000 applicant cities to participate in the 100 Resilient Cities Network- pioneered by The Rockefeller Foundation (100RC). The aim of this network is to partner with cities to build resilience to the shocks and stresses of the 21st Century, share international challenges and lessons learned, and to build a global community of urban resilience experts. This has been particularly useful in responding to the current COVID 19 pandemic. The Belfast Currency project 'Belfast Coin' was a pilot project whereby Belfast City Council successfully applied to join the 100 Resilient Cities City Challenge. During the pilot a number of challenges associated with roll-out of a currency for Belfast were identified, and it was decided not to proceed using the model developed.
- City Deal- the City deal model is the UK Government's innovative strategy for building stronger urban and regional growth via smarter, more localised and growth focused investment decision-making. Recent confirmation of the NI Executive's match funding of new

investment for infrastructure, regeneration, and tourism projects will help the region's economy recover from the effects of Covid-19. There will be overall investment in the Belfast Region City Deal of £850 million, including £150m from the Belfast Region City Deal partners.

The Executive has also agreed to provide up to an additional £100 million for complementary projects where partners can demonstrate a viable capital project which is complementary to the City/Growth Deal proposals.

- The PEACE IV Programme - is a cross-border initiative designed to support peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the border region. Funding of £14.4m was awarded from the European Union PEACE IV Programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) and also includes funding from the Executive Office in Northern Ireland and the Department of Rural and Community Development in Ireland. Belfast City Council continues to work with our partners in delivering on a wide range of projects. Mobilisation of the Council's PEACE IV Local Action Plan is continuing. To date 13 project elements from a possible 15 have been awarded and are actively delivering project activity on the ground. It is envisaged that the two outstanding project elements will be mobilised by December 2020.

The coronavirus pandemic has had a profound impact on all aspects of life in the Belfast City Council area. Through 2020/21 the Council will adopt a pro-active approach to ensure that it responds to the emerging needs of residents and businesses.

In line with all other councils in Northern Ireland and the wider public sector, Belfast City Council is facing a number of challenges. Public finances are under increasing pressure as a result of both the pandemic, ongoing tightening of government spending agendas, amongst other challenges. Key risks and planned mitigations are included in our Governance Statement on pages 26 to 31.

Statement of the Council's and Chief Financial Officer's Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts

The Council's Responsibilities
Under Section 1 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 a council shall make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs. A council shall designate an officer of the council as its chief financial officer and these arrangements shall be carried out under the supervision of its chief financial officer.

Under Regulation 7 of the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 the Council, or a Committee, is required by resolution, to approve the accounts.

These accounts were approved by the Chief Finance Officer on 21 August 2020.

The Chief Financial Officer's Responsibilities

Under Regulation 8 of the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015, the Chief Financial Officer is

The accounts must give a true and fair view of the income and expenditure and cash flows for the financial year and the financial position as at the end of the financial year.

In preparing this Statement of Accounts, the Chief Financial officer is required to:

- observe the Accounts Direction Issued by the Department for Communities including compliance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom

- follow relevant accounting and disclosure requirements and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis, and

- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent,

The Chief Financial Officer is also required to:

- keep proper accounting records that are up-to-date, and

- take reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Annual Governance Statement 2019/2020

The Council's Annual Governance Statement (AGS) follows the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the UK 2019/20 and comprises the following sections:

- Scope of responsibility
- The purpose of the governance framework
- The governance framework
- Review of effectiveness
- Update on the significant governance issues that were declared last year
- Significant governance issues for the year-end 2020

Scope of responsibility

Belfast City Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and is used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Council also has a duty under Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 to make arrangements for continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of strategic effectiveness, service quality, service availability, fairness, sustainability, efficiency and innovation.

In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

The Council has prepared an Annual Governance Statement, which is consistent with the principles of the new CIPFA/SOLACE Framework *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (2016 edition)*. This statement explains how the Council has complied with the code and meets the requirements of the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland 2015) in relation to the publication of an annual governance statement.

The purpose of the governance framework

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, and culture and values, by which the Council is directed and controlled and the activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads its communities. It enables the Council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate services and value for money.

The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to

identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The governance framework continues to be in place at Belfast City Council for the year ending 31st March 2020 and up to the date of approval of the Annual Governance Statement and statement of accounts. The following section sets out the key elements of the governance framework.

The governance framework

Decision making process from the period 13th March 2020 to present

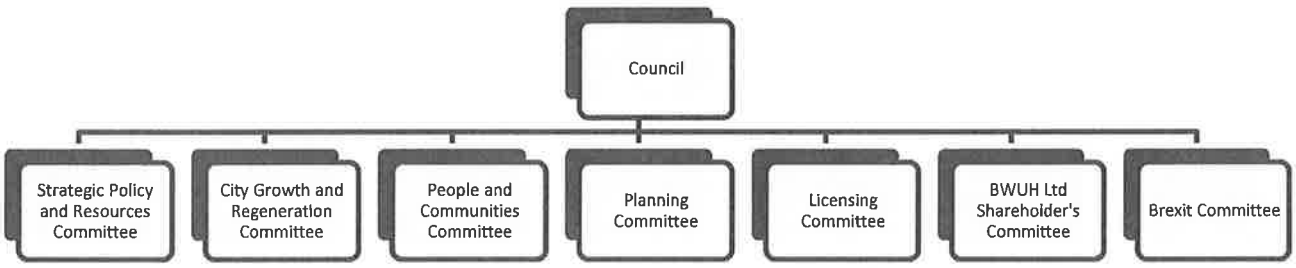
In response to Covid-19 we the Council altered our normal decision-making processes to ensure that we followed Public Health Agency guidance on social distancing and essential travel while maintaining continuity of critical services.

Committee and Council: The committee decision-making process was delegated to the Chief Executive under Standing Order 41 as agreed at a Special Council meeting on 13 March 2020. A process was established where the reports were issued as normal and the views of each party were collated by Democratic Services to enable the Chief Executive to make a decision, based on the levels of democratic support. A Contentious Business Committee, the Party Group Leaders, allowed for discussion of any contentious matters. Committee decision-registers, which continued to be subject to the normal call-in process were published on modern.gov as normal. A 'Procedure for the transaction of business under delegated authority' was agreed with Party Group Leaders. This process was a temporary process with a phased approach being taken to reintroduce committees and Council meetings with a physical annual Council meeting held on Monday 1 June, the first remote Special Council meeting on Monday 8 June, the first remote Strategic Policy & Resources Committee held on Friday 19 June with another remote Council meeting to be held on 1 July. Council and committee meetings resumed in August (some special meetings were held in July) and all were held remotely.

Planning and Licensing Committee: a separate process was established for the Planning and Licensing Committees where it is considered inappropriate to have party positions on particular applications. Therefore the views of each of the individual committee members was collated by Democratic Services before a decision was taken by the Chief Executive under delegated authority.

Following the amendment to Standing Orders in March 2020, the Council also contacted DfI to seek approval of those delegated arrangements as required by planning legislation. However DfI confirmed that since the changes were to Standing Orders as opposed to the Scheme of Delegation there was no requirement for Departmental approval.

Our committee structure, which is based on the full council and seven standing committees is illustrated and described below.



Through the work of committees, our Members oversee the work of the council. All committee decisions need to be ratified by the full council except where committees have been granted delegated authority to make decisions.

The full council, which consists of all 60 elected representatives, is the overarching decision-making body.

The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is responsible for setting the strategic direction of the Council through the development of its corporate plan and other key corporate and cross cutting strategies and policies. It will also ensure effective use of resources and value for money for ratepayers, and oversee the Council's relationship with a number of key agencies and partners.

The City Growth and Regeneration Committee is responsible for the development and implementation of strategies, policies, programmes and projects directed to the regeneration and growth of the city in the context of the outcomes agreed in the community and corporate plans and other corporate strategy.

The People and Communities Committee is responsible for the development and implementation of strategies, policies, programmes and projects aimed at improving life at a local level in the context of the outcomes agreed in the community and corporate plans and other corporate strategy.

The Planning Committee is responsible for all of the Council's planning functions, except those matters, which are delegated to officers or reserved to full Council.

The Licensing Committee is responsible for the consideration of all matters pertaining to policy and legislation in relation to licensing issues.

The Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd Shareholders' Committee is responsible for making the decisions required by the Shareholders' Agreement and ensure that the company complies with the contract for the operation of the venues.

The Brexit Committee is responsible for researching, monitoring, and reviewing the financial, resource or operational impact upon the council and the district as a result of the UK leaving the European Union and for making recommendations to council on such issues (or the relevant standing committee where appropriate).

In addition to the Committees listed in the diagrams above there are ten Working Groups established which include the Audit & Risk Panel, the Budget and Transformation Panel and four Area Working Groups.

In June 2018, the Council appointed a Commissioner for Resilience, fully funded by the organisation '100 Resilient Cities'. The Commissioner who reports directly to the Chief Executive, is working with Council officers and city partners to design and implement a resilience strategy for Belfast, focusing on economic resilience.

The Audit & Risk Panel provides an independent assurance on the adequacy of the Council's risk management framework and associated control environment. It provides an independent scrutiny of the Council's financial and non-financial performance, which is relied upon by the Council, to the extent that it exposes it to risk and weakens the control environment. The Panel reports to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. The Audit & Risk Panel met three times during 2019/20. The Audit & Risk Panel did not meet in June 2019, following the elections in May, as the composition of the Panel had to be agreed by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 21st June and ratified by Council on 1st July, with nominations to the Panel sought from each of the 8 parties thereafter.

The Council's Code of Governance is based on the seven core principles set out in the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework (2016 edition). How we meet these seven core principles is reviewed and updated annually, and in particular for this year, ensuring that our update reflects Covid-19 related changes to our governance arrangements. A summary of the key elements of our governance framework are set out in the following table:

Our seven principles of good governance

A: Behaving with integrity

- Shared values communicated via corporate plan, community plan and key strategies
- Codes of conduct for Members & staff
- PDP / appraisal process for Members & staff
- Gifts and hospitality and conflicts of interest policies & registers in place
- Fraud & whistleblowing policies and investigations
- Good Relations Unit
- Equality & Diversity Framework
- Council constitution, standing orders & scheme of delegation
- Expert professional advice
- Partners and contractors required to comply with relevant policies
- Achieving Through People Framework and development of organisational values and behaviours

B: Ensuring openness

- New process for decision making during Covid-19 pandemic
- Council / committee meetings open to the public and agendas / minutes on website with a process in place for time bound restrictions
- Belfast Agenda developed via extensive consultation and engagement with public "Belfast Conversation" events as well as statutory and other key partners.
- Corporate plan and annual improvement plan are subject to consultation before agreement
- Statement of Community Involvement for production of the Local Development Plan
- Ongoing consultation and engagement with staff & trade unions
- Corporate communications
- Annual financial report and annual report to Equality Commission published on BCC website
- Partnership / legal agreements with GLL, Active Belfast, arc21, BWUH Ltd, Visit Belfast, Bel Tel LLP and Belfast Gasworks Management Company Limited
- "Your Say" consultation hub on BCC website
- Working with Belfast Region City Deal partners

C: Defining outcomes	D: Optimising the achievement of outcomes
• Belfast Agenda outlines long term economic, social and environmental benefits • Development of a Belfast Region City Deal Investment Plan • Cultural Strategy • Corporate plan, incorporating Annual Improvement Plan, outlines the annual contribution to the Belfast Agenda • City centre regeneration & investment strategy • Physical Investment Programme • Leisure transformation programme • Grant funding processes • Equality Impact Assessments	• Covid-19 Respond, Rebuild, Recover Plans in development • Corporate plan aligned to delivery of Belfast Agenda • Consultation and engagement processes • Strategic financial management framework in place, including quarterly challenge process. • Performance management framework • Regular reports on progress of our performance improvement plan to CMT and SP&R • Risk management strategy & framework • Commercial Panel aims to ensure that commercial activity places an emphasis on outcomes

E: Developing capacity & capability	F: Finance, performance and risk management
• Achieving Through People Framework and development of organisational values and behaviours • Development of People Strategy • Benchmarking activity • Efficiency programme • Learning and development policy • Health and wellbeing strategy • Appraisal scheme in place for senior management • PDPs for officers and Members • Member capacity building plan delivered in 2019/20 • Continuing Development Programme in place for the Planning Committee • Party group briefings • Senior Leadership Development Programme	• Strategic financial management framework in place • Efficiency programme • Performance management framework • Financial resilience review • Risk management strategy • Corporate risk management system (MKinsight) and processes / procedures in place • Regular reporting of finance, risk & performance • Audit and Risk Panel • Internal audit function / annual internal audit strategy & plan in place • Recommendations Monitoring process • Data protection policy and procedures • Corporate Fraud Risk Assessment • Covid-19 corporate risk assessment and changes to working practices • Governance over Covid-19 related changes to financial processes

G: Transparency, reporting & effective accountability

- BCC website regularly updated
- Publication of key reports including the annual financial report; annual governance statement; performance improvement report and annual report to Equality Commission
- Committee support framework to approve papers prior to submission to Members
- AGRS (internal audit) annual assurance statement within the annual governance statement
- Internal Audit effectiveness annually reviewed against public sector internal audit standards, with an independent external review every five years
- Internal / external audit recommendations followed up as part of recommendations monitoring process
- Liaison with Information Commissioners Office

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources is the Council's designated Chief Financial Officer under the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, responsible for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs.

The Council's financial management arrangements conform to the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2016).

Having considered all the principles of the CIPFA Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption (2014), subject to the implementation of the Fraud Action Plan, the Council has adopted a response that is appropriate for its fraud and corruption risks and commits to maintain its vigilance to tackle fraud.

The CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit (2019) outlines the five principles that set out the organisation's responsibilities to ensure the Head of Internal Audit (HIA) is able to operate effectively and perform their core duties. The Statement also sets out the core responsibilities of the HIA along with the personal skills and professional standards expected of the HIA. The Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services (AGRS), and the supporting operational arrangements in place, conform to the five principles set out in the CIPFA Statement. This is demonstrated through a self-assessment exercise undertaken by the Head of AGRS. While the principles state that the HIA should not be responsible for preparing the annual governance report, the arrangements within the Council, involve AGRS co-coordinating the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement which is then reviewed and agreed by the Corporate Management Team, Assurance Board and Audit and Risk Panel, before being reviewed by Strategic Policy and Resources committee and signed by the Chair of Strategic Policy & Resources, the Chief Executive and the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources.

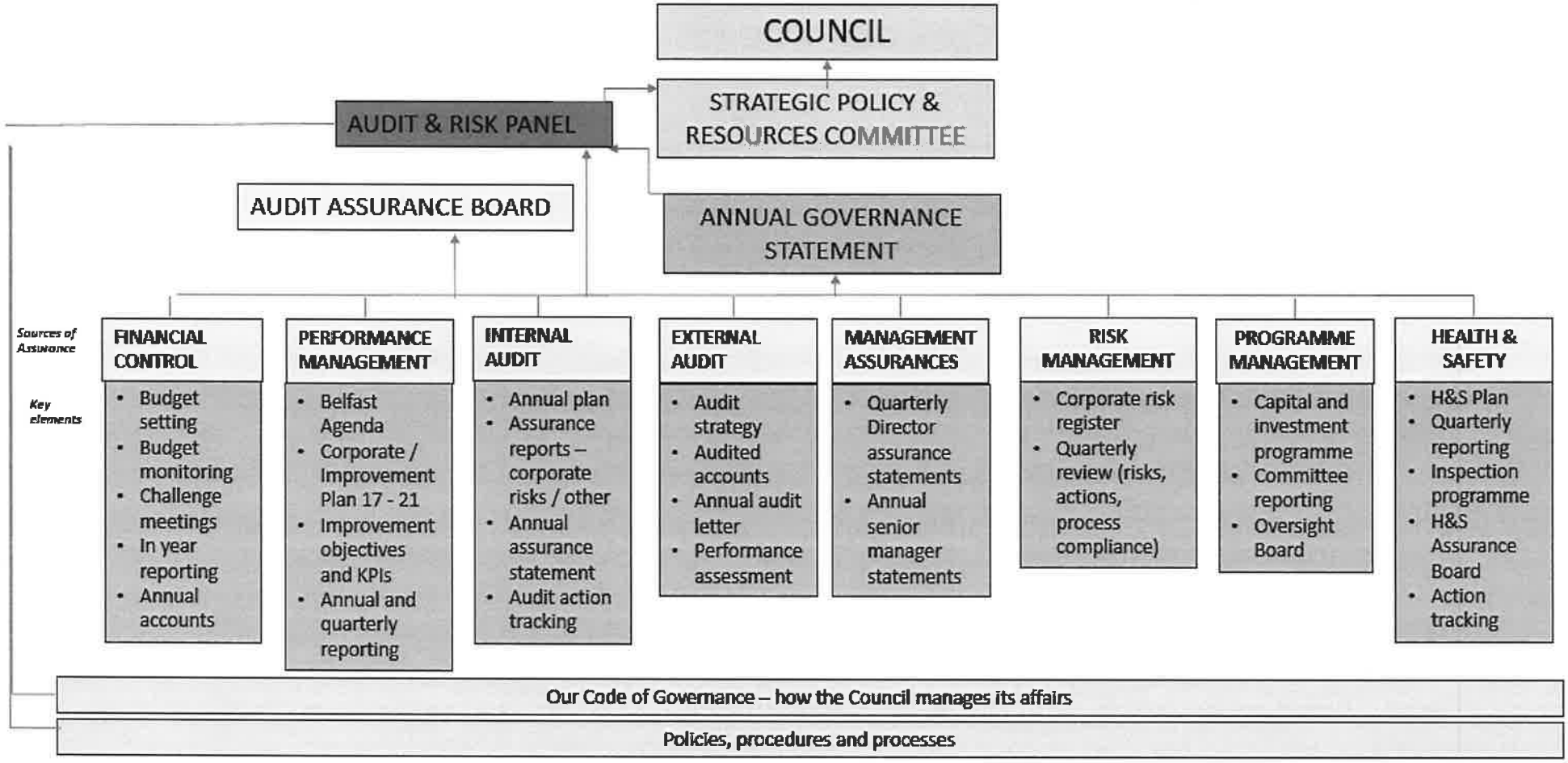
The Council reported one personal data breach to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) during the specified period. In addition, the ICO contacted the Council regarding a complaint it had received from a data subject (a member of the public) in relation to a data breach by the Council. In both cases the ICO took no further regulatory action.

Corporate Management Team (CMT) endorsed the guidance set out in Public Procurement Note (PPN) 02/20 on 8th April 2020. In total, three supplier relief applications were received. One application was approved by CMT on 8th May 2020. The other two applications received were rejected as they failed to comply with the requirements of the PPN.

Review of Effectiveness

The following diagram illustrates the Assurance Framework in place that provides information on compliance with the various elements of the Council's Governance Framework, including performance reports, health and safety reports, finance reports, internal audit reports and risk management reports.

Key Components of the Council's Assurance Framework



The various in year and year-end reports arising from the Assurance Framework are reviewed and approved by the Audit and Risk Panel and Strategic Policy and Resources Committee annually.

In addition, the review of the effectiveness of the Governance Framework is also informed by:

- the annual review and update of the Code of Governance;
- comments or recommendations made by the external auditors during their annual audit; and
- the Head of Audit Governance and Risk Services (AGRS) annual assurance statement for the period ending 2019/20, which gives an opinion on the Council's risk and control environment.

Head of Internal Audit Opinion

An extract from the Head of AGRS Annual Assurance Statement for the period ending 2019/20 is given below:

As Head of AGRS, on the basis of work carried out, I can provide a reasonable assurance regarding the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control. My opinion is based on both the work done up to mid-March 2020 and also the work that we have undertaken since then to provide advice and assurance over changes to the councils framework of governance, risk management and control in direct response to the impact of Covid-19. Specifically my opinion is based on the following:

- *evidence from areas subject to detailed internal audit during 2019/2020, in that AGRS has been able to provide positive statements of assurance with the majority of audits falling into the 'some improvement needed' category - the 2nd tier of assurance in the 4 tier model*
- *`Real-time' assurance and advisory work including the facilitation of readiness workshops for major programmes and projects and project advice and assurance on the implementation of new IT systems.*
- *AGRS review of the financial procedures that were amended by management since 18th March 2020 in order to take account of new working practices, policies and risks due to the impact of Covid-19.*
- *Management assurances on the application of the amended financial procedures and the dynamic management of risks associated with the councils response to Covid-19*
- *application of usual risk management and management assurance processes up to and including quarter ending December 2019, and our review of the management of key corporate risks*
- *the evidence set out in the review of the Council's Code of Governance and Annual Governance Statement regarding the range of key assurance and governance arrangements that the Council has in place to direct / oversee its activities.*

However, some weaknesses and areas for improvement have been identified through audit work. These have been reported in detail to the Council's Assurance Board and Audit and Risk Panel during 2019/20 through quarterly progress reports. In addition, I have highlighted, where appropriate, where further action is required to implement agreed audit actions. The key issues I would highlight in this statement are as follows

- *During 2020, as management time and resources will continue be focussed on supporting plans to respond, recover and rebuild, AGRS will ensure that our audit work is focussed on the areas where assurance is most valuable and is timed and conducted in a way that minimises interruption. At the same time AGRS highlights the increased need for independent assurance over the councils "new normal" risk, control and governance frameworks during a period of significant change, and stresses the importance of management cooperation on these audits and related work to allow sufficient work to be completed on which to provide the annual assurance statement for 20/21.*

- *While AGRS was able to provide positive statements of assurance in the majority of audits completed in 2019/20, four areas resulted in `major improvement' assurance levels:*
  - *follow-up review of domestic waste collection*
  - *management of the corporate risk on safeguarding*
  - *IT asset management and;*
  - *performance management arrangements at Belfast Waterfront Ulster Hall Ltd.*

  It is important that the action plans that are in place to address these are reviewed in the context of Covid-19 and implemented in as timely a manner as possible.

- *The pandemic poses significant challenges to the council, city and community and plans are being developed to respond, recover and rebuild. It is important that we identify and assess the main risks to delivery of these plans to help us prioritise mitigating actions and allocation of resources. To this end AGRS has facilitated a fundamental review of the corporate risk register, which will be followed by review of departmental / service level risks at the appropriate time. It is important that the outcome of this review is agreed, ownership assigned and mitigation plans developed and implemented in a timely manner.*

- *The Corporate and Departmental Fraud Risk Assessments will need to be reviewed in the light of Covid-19. AGRS will support management in this process.*

Finally, looking ahead, the Council will be developing and supporting the implementation of plans in 2020/21 to respond, recover and rebuild the organisation, the city and communities from the impact of Covid-19. These plans will be delivered alongside the delivery and potential reshaping of a number of other transformational programmes including the Belfast Region City Deal, Customer Focus Programme and Continuous Improvement Programme. These present significant risks and opportunities to the Council. AGRS will provide assurance and consultancy services in relation to these programmes.

Public Sector Internal Audit Standards

I can confirm that the AGRS Service has conformed to Public Sector Internal Audit Standards during 2019/20. A quality assurance and improvement programme is in place including internal review of work, annual assessment against professional standards, quarterly progress and performance reporting to the Assurance Board and Audit & Risk Panel. An external review of AGRS took place in 2017/18 and this confirmed the Service's compliance with professional standards

Continued effort has been put into developing and implementing the key elements of an assurance framework within the Council with the key elements being:

- a process whereby senior managers are required to sign annual assurance statements;
- a process whereby Directors are required to sign quarterly assurance statements;
- embedding risk management and developing the arrangements for oversight of the management of these risks;
- business planning and related performance reporting arrangements;
- an Audit and Risk Panel;
- a professional internal audit function, which has been reviewed for effectiveness against the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards; and
- a Health & Safety Assurance Board.

Update on the Significant Governance Issues that were declared last year

Five issues were declared last year and two of these, digital information security and the relationship between elected members and officers, continue to be declared as standalone issues in this year's statement. Three other issues that were declared last year regarding waste management, Belfast Region City Deal and city centre recovery and revitalisation, are consolidated within issues in this year's statement under the headings `Organisational Recovery' and `City and Community Recovery'.

Significant Governance Issues for the year-end 2020

The significant governance issues for the year-end 2020 were identified through a fundamental review of the risks in the Corporate Risk Register and review of the Directors' Annual Assurance Statements.

The most significant issues for the Council are in relation to:

1. Financial position
2. Organisational Recovery
3. City and Community Recovery
4. Digital information security
5. The relationship between Elected Members and officers

More information on these significant governance issues is provided on the following pages.

1. Financial position

The Council set a rate for 2020/21 based on an expenditure budget of £205.7m. The expenditure is budgeted to be financed through £167.3m of rates income and £38.4m of Council generated income including £21.5m of fees & charges, £11.1m from other services and £5.8m of external grants.

The Covid-19 pandemic will have a major impact on the 2020/21 budget. The key financial risks are:

a) Loss of income – the total loss of income which the Council will have to face will depend on how long the Council will need to keep facilities closed, cease to deliver services and the demand for services from customers in a social distancing environment. The Council gave all its tenants, industrial and otherwise, a rental holiday on estates from April 2020 to June 2020 for a 3 month period. This rental holiday relates to the 20/21 financial year and has not been included in 2019/20 accounts.
b) Cash Flow – if the Council is unable to meet its cash flow demands there will be a need to borrow cash and / or exercise the already agreed overdraft facility it has with its bank.
c) Rates Income – the four month (April – July 2020) non-domestic rates relief guarantees the Council its full non-domestic rate. Whilst the rates scheme has been extended, it is not on the same basis as for the first four months. There is a significant risk that the rates collected will be less than estimated because of an increase in non-domestic vacancies and higher levels of rates debt. In order to mitigate this risk local government is requesting the Finance Minister to guarantee councils its rate income based on the Estimated Penny Product (EPP) used to set the district rate. Officers are carrying out an analysis to quantify this risk for both 2020/21 and in future years.
d) Debt – officers are anticipating higher levels of debt and have increased the bad debt provision by £542k. This will be kept under review during the year.
e) Job Retention Scheme – this scheme is currently being used by both GLL (the social enterprise responsible for the operation of 14 leisure centres in Belfast in partnership with the council), and Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall (BWUH) Ltd. This means there has been no liability for the Council other than the payment of the budgeted management fee for both. However, with the amount of relief reducing, there could be significant financial consequences for the Council. For the BWUH Ltd the loss is forecast to be in the region of £1.5m. GLL have indicated that the cost of the removal of the scheme would be around £450k per month.
f) Covid-19 Support – if Members agree to provide further financial support to Covid-19 community work this will not have been budgeted for and will require the finance to be found from existing budgets or reserves.

We are currently quantifying the risks and exploring funding opportunities. This work includes:

- Maximising external support through:
  - Requesting support from government through Department for Communities
  - Seeking support from Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for Zoo costs.
  - Scheme of Emergency Financial Assistance
- Use of Job Retention Scheme
- Reviewing income forecasts for 100 cost centres across 23 income types.
- Reviewing expenditure budgets to identify potential cost savings and spend increases.
- Reviewing BWUH Ltd and GLL financial position.
- Reviewing capital expenditure and the capital financing budget.
- Assessing the in-year and future years rates income.
- Reviewing potential re-alignment of specified reserves, if required.
- Developing a suite of temporary expenditure controls.
- Developing options to balance the budget for 2020/21.

2. Organisational Recovery

On 23 March 2020, in line with recent government advice regarding social distancing, the Chief Executive took the decision to send 'non critical' staff home to work from home and prioritized the continued delivery of critical services throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. During May / June 2020, arrangements were put in place to plan the move from emergency response period into the recovery period. An Organisational Recovery Group has been established, supported by three sub-groups on Assets, Physical Recovery and Homeworking. Six principles of internal recovery have been agreed as follows:

- Protecting the health of all staff and the public
- Ensuring social distancing measures are designed into facilities, and business processes as appropriate
- Adhere to the most up to date government and public health advice and regulation
- Optimise the use of technology and new business processes to deliver remote working and access to services where possible
- Phased and coordinated service recovery across the organisation
- Ensure all the principles are considered in the context of robust financial controls and equality

The Organisational Recovery Group is responsible for ensuring that the challenges associated with organisation recovery are managed in a consistent and coordinated way. Challenges include; adherence to the six principles of internal recovery; compliance with health, safety and wellbeing requirements; management of the additional information security risks arising from large scale remote working; management of the financial impact of recovery and realignment of corporate priorities and programmes. It is important to ensure that there is a clearly agreed corporate focus and direction going forward, that takes into account the financial challenges facing the council.

3. City and Community Recovery

City Recovery

In the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council focused on protecting health and minimising the human cost, providing relief to their communities and delivering essential day-to-day services. Council officers have been working closely with partner organisations in the public, private and statutory sectors to understand the scale of the challenge and develop collaborative solutions to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on the local economy and community, supporting businesses to reopen in a safe way, providing employment opportunities and vibrancy to local communities and city centre.

It is evident that there will be lasting structural changes to the city's economy, its infrastructure, its environment and to its communities, and will likely result in financial and economic uncertainty for some time. Initial estimates are that the NI economy is likely to contract by around 12.7%, with 249,000 private sector workforce estimated to be furloughed/laid off and a significant increase in Universal Credit applications. The sectors most impacted include tourism, hospitality, retail manufacturing and real estate.

The crisis has shone a spotlight on vulnerabilities within key systems and the structures of our economy and society, however, some benefits will be felt by the city from the behavioural change brought about in response to the crisis (such as less car usage, flexible working arrangements, more community interaction, support for front line workers). It is important that we understand what these are, and how feasible it is to sustain these behaviours over time.

Given the scale, complexity and uncertainty which exists, an internal Recovery Leadership Group has been established, with resources aligned to support and principles in place to guide the development and implementation of a phased and integrated recovery programme 'Respond, Rebuild, Recovery, that adheres to the NI Executive's 5 Step Pathway to Recovery. The emerging recovery plan is focused on four interrelated pillars – economic, social and community, environmental and digital innovation. There is also a significant programme of work underway to ensure organisational and operational readiness in terms of staff, services, assets, facilities and processes.

Significant engagement is taking place with relevant government departments involved in the regional response to the pandemic, particularly Department for Communities, Department for Infrastructure, Department of Finance, Department of Health and Department for the Economy. Council officers are also working with our community and city partners to help shape our approach to recovery and help rebuild a new economy in a very different economic climate, maintaining a focus on sustainable and inclusive growth.

Community Recovery

The need for Council and other partners to work together with local communities to jointly plan and maximise the impact of interventions, services and investments, and to ensure these approaches are tailored to meet local priorities and needs, has never been greater.

The current Covid-19 crisis is creating significant economic and social challenges for Belfast, and these impacts will weigh heavily on the city's communities at neighbourhood levels in the coming years.

During the response to Covid-19 the strength of Belfast's vibrant communities and supporting sectors has been at the forefront, with many examples of partnership working to address urgent community needs, in localities and across the city. There has been significant learning as a result of the emergency response both internally within Council and based on feedback from community partners, which will inform our plans for recovery which will include:

- Ability to be responsive to need and empowering communities;
- Meaningful and highly effective relationships between Council, statutory and community partners to aid agile service delivery;
- Creating opportunities for engaging/supporting more volunteering in communities;
- Opportunity to embed area-working concept both internally/externally with partners.

Looking ahead it will be important that we work collaboratively to harness the energy of our communities and city partners, ensuring greater co-ordination and innovation in addressing the specific issues that communities face across the city. As we move forward, there is a need to work with communities to further develop community confidence, capacity and resilience across neighbourhoods through a range of programmes of support.

4. Digital Information Security

IT Asset Management (ITAM) is the practice of managing IT assets covering software, hardware, systems or services throughout their life to maximise value and minimise associated risks, including data leakage, security and increased costs. An internal audit of IT Asset Management found that:

- The processes for the management of IT assets are outlined in an IT Asset Management Strategy and related policies and procedures;
- There are some processes in place to manage the IT asset lifecycle and ensure accurate records are maintained.
- There is a disaster recovery plan in place identifying critical assets and a testing policy to ensure this is effective.

But that there is a need to implement key actions to:

- Establish a management and governance framework over the use of cloud computing services;
- Develop a plan to upgrade or protect servers that are running on unsupported operating systems;
- Extend vulnerability scanning;
- Introduce penetration testing in order to better manage risks in relation to security and data protection.

With large numbers of staff working from home in response to Covid-19, accurately identifying and reconciling where IT equipment and software assets are deployed will need greater co-operation from line of business managers and staff. Digital Services will maintain inventories outside normal processes for IT equipment provided on a temporary basis under extremely short timescales.
It should also be noted that now that the majority of Council officers are remote users and are relying on their home internet services for remote working, it will be more difficult to manage.the risks relating to Cloud applications identified in the IT Asset Management Audit. For this reason Digital Services are currently working with external security specialists to carry out an Information security assessment to highlight the greatest areas of Information Security risk. This work is on-going, information gathering workshops have taken place and a final report is due before the end of December to include:

- An assessment of key risks;
- A review of existing security controls;
- An assessment of controls against and alignment with relevant industry best practice;
- Recommendations for enhancements to the existing security control environment to support our ICT Strategy and to improve the cyber resilience of the Council.

5. The relationship between Elected Members and officers

Belfast City Council is a political organisation and as such, this can often present a challenging working environment for officers, one that is particularly unique in public sector in the UK and Ireland. It is important for Elected Members to be cognisant of the organisation's duty of care to all employees while they fulfil their obligations as Elected Members. The legal rights of staff and individual officers must also be recognised. Governance is in place in order for Members and officers to follow due process. Operating outside that agreed governance could have a detrimental impact on relationships; therefore impacting on the effective delivery of the organisation's overall strategy and priorities, and damaging the image and reputation of the organisation. This could also undermine the confidence and morale of staff who, at all times, are required to carry out their duties in an impartial and balanced way, acting in the best interests of the organisation, and offering their expert advice and opinion without any political influence or bias. Staff need to have confidence that any interaction between officers and Elected Members, particularly on sensitive issues, takes place within that agreed governance, and that Members should consider this when making any comments on public forums or in the media.

A new policy incorporating a standards regime and monitoring is being developed to introduce new safeguards and strengthen those that currently exist for the member / officer interface. Senior officers and Party Group Leaders will continue to meet periodically to ensure alignment of objectives and to promote a shared understanding of the working environment.

Signed: .....
Chair Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Signed: .....
Chief Executive Officer

Signed: .....
Chief Financial Officer

NORTHERN IRELAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODIES'

REMUNERATION REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

INTRODUCTION

The Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 require larger local government bodies to prepare a remuneration report as part of the statement of accounts.

ALLOWANCE AND REMUNERATION ARRANGEMENTS

COUNCILLORS

Allowances are payable by councils to councillors and committee members under Part 3 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and The Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012, which came into operation on 1 April 2012.

Guidance and determinations on Councillors' Allowances applicable from 1 April 2019 were issued by the Department for Communities on 6 March 2019 (Circular LG 07/2019). Details of the allowances paid to individual councillors are published on council websites.

Following local elections on 2 May 2019, 462 councillors were elected to the 11 new Councils for a four year term. Belfast City Council has 60 elected Members representing 10 District Electoral Areas.

SENIOR EMPLOYEES

The remuneration of senior employees employed by the Council is determined by the Council in line with that determined by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services. Senior staff are those staff who are members of the Corporate Management Team, namely the Chief Executive and Directors.

Council appointments of employees are made in accordance with the Local Government Staff Commissions' Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection, which requires appointment to be on merit and on the basis of fair and open competition.

Unless otherwise stated below, the officials covered by this report hold appointments which are open-ended.

ALLOWANCES PAID TO COUNCILLORS

The total amount paid to Councillors by way of allowances, under Part 3 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and the Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 was:

Table 1: Total Allowances paid to councillors (audited information)

Allowance	2019/20		2018/19	
	Total Allowances	Number of Councillors	Total Allowances	Number of Councillors
Basic Allowance	898,245	60	851,196	60
Special Responsibility	103,281	49	106,691	39
Lord Mayor Allowance	34,332	1	34,800	1
Deputy Lord Mayor Allowance	6,250	1	6,250	1
PCSP Allowance	10,800	29	12,360	25
High Sheriff's Allowance	6,250	1	6,250	1
Subsistence	2,098	10	4,223	25
Mileage Allowance	7,249	34	14,248	33
Courses/ Conferences Visits (registration & joining fees)	8,540	12	5,997	20
Telephone rental	285	5	4,410	16
Miscellaneous costs				
Other Travel allowance	4,705	10	9,270	27
TOTAL ALLOWANCES	1,082,035		1,055,695	-

Details of the allowances paid to individual councillors in 2019/20 are published on the council website at www.belfastcity.gov.uk/council/your-council/councillors-allowances

The above table provides further information and details on the allowances paid to councillors to that published on the council website.

Due to the elections on 6 May 2019, there were many newly elected Councillors and details of the current Councillors can be found on the council website.

REMUNERATION OF SENIOR EMPLOYEES

The remuneration of senior employees covers the Corporate Management Team. The following table provides details of the remuneration paid to senior employees:

Table 2 - Table 2: Remuneration (including salary)[audited information]

Officers	2019/20				2018/19			
	Salary (Full year equivalent in brackets where applicable) £'000	Bonus Payments £'000	Benefits in kind £'000	Total £'000	Salary (Full year equivalent in brackets where applicable) £'000	Bonus Payments £'000	Benefits in kind £'000	Total £'000
Chief Executive - Suzanne Wylie	140-145	0	0	140-145	140-145	0	0	140-145
Director of Finance & Resources - Ronan Cregan	110-115	0	0	110-115	110-115	0	0	110-115
Director of Physical Programmes - Gerry Millar*	25-30 (105-110)	0	0	25-30 (105-110)	105-110	0	0	105-110
Director of Physical Programmes - Sinead Grimes**	80-85	0	0	80-85	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Director of City & Neighbourhood Services - Nigel Grimshaw	105-110	0	0	105-110	100-105	0	0	100-105
City Solicitor - John Walsh	105-110	0	0	105-110	100-105	0	0	100-105
Director of City & Organisational Strategy - John Tully	105-110	0	0	105-110	100-105	0	0	100-105
Strategic Director of Place & Economy - Alistair Reid	100-105	0	0	100-105	85-90 (95-100 FYE)	0	0	85-90 (95-100 FYE)
Commissioner for Resilience - Grainia Long	85-90	0	0	85-90	65-70 (80-85 FYE)	0	0	65-70 (80-85 FYE)

*Director of Physical Programmes Gerry Millar left the post on 30 June 2019

**Director of Physical Programmes - Sinead Grimes was appointed on 6 May 2019

Councils are required to disclose the relationship between the remuneration of the highest paid member of the Corporate Management Team and the median remuneration of the Councils workforce.

The banded remuneration of the highest paid member of the Corporate Management Team in the financial year 2019/20 was £140-145k. This was 6 times the median remuneration of the workforce, which was £23,836.

Table 3: Relationship between the remuneration of the highest paid member of the Corporate Management Team and the median remuneration of the Councils workforce (audited information)

	2019/20	2018/19
Salary Band of Highest Paid member of the Executive	140-145	140-145
Median Total Remuneration	23.8	23.1
Ratio	6	6.1

In 2019/20, no employees received remuneration in excess of the highest paid member of the Corporate Management Team.

Total remuneration includes salary, bonus payments and benefits in kind.

Salary
"Salary" includes gross salary and any ex gratia payments.

Benefits in Kind
The monetary value of benefits in kind covers any benefits provided by the employer and treated by HM Revenue and Customs as a taxable emolument.

Exit Packages for staff
The number of exit packages provided to all staff by the Council, together with total cost per band and total cost of the voluntary redundancies as agreed under the Council's voluntary redundancy scheme are set out in the table below:

Table 4: Exit Packages In 2019/20 (audited information)

Severance Package Cost Band	2019/20				2018/19			
	Number of Compulsory Redundancies	Number of Other departures agreed	Total Number of Exit Packages In each Cost Band	Total Cost of Packages In each Cost Band £'000	Number of Compulsory Redundancies	Number of Other departures agreed	Total Number of Exit Packages In each Cost Band	Total Cost of Packages In each Cost Band £'000
£0 - £20,000	0	1	1	8	0	2	2	24
£20,001 - £40,000	0	9	9	259	0	5	5	126
£40,001 - £60,000	0	5	5	254	0	4	4	206
£60,001 - £80,000	0	2	2	134	0	7	7	497
£80,001 - £100,000	0	1	1	85	0	1	1	94
£100,001 - £150,000	0	2	2	237	0	6	6	691
£150,001 - £200,000	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	365
Total	0	20	20	977	0	27	27	2,003

Pension Benefits

The Local Government Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) (the Scheme) which is a funded defined benefit pension scheme, which provides retirement benefits for council employees on a "career average revalued earnings" basis from 1 April 2015. Prior to that date benefits were built up on a "final salary" basis.

From 1 April 2015, a member builds up retirement pension at the rate of 1/49th pensionable pay for each year. Pension benefits in relation to membership between 1 April 2009 and 31 March 2015 were built up at the rate of 1/60th pensionable pay for each year of membership. There is no automatic lump sum provided in respect of membership after 31 March 2009. Pension benefits in relation to any membership before 1 April 2009 were built up at the rate of 1/80th (pension) and 3/80ths (tax-free lump sum) of pensionable pay for each year of membership up to 31 March 2009. At retirement, members may give up some pension for additional lump sum, subject to HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) limits. The conversion rate is £12 additional lump sum for every £1 of pension given up.

Councillors have been able to join the Scheme since May 2011. The Scheme application is modified to reflect the fact that councillors hold an elected office. Councillor members have always accrued pension on a career average basis. Prior to 1 April 2015 pension was accrued at a rate of 1/60th and thereafter at a rate of 1/49th.

The Scheme is funded by contributions made by both employees/councillors and employers. Prior to 1 April 2009, a member's contribution rates were fixed at 6% of their pensionable remuneration (except for those who were entitled to contribute to the Scheme at 5% before 1 February 2003 and have remained in continuous employment). Tiered member contribution rates, determined by the whole-time equivalent rate of pay, were introduced from 1 April 2009. From 1 April 2015, the member contribution rates are determined on the actual rate of pay.

The ranges for the bands for tiered contribution rates are revised by the Department for Communities in April each year in accordance with the increase applied to a pension in payment. The bands, effective from 1 April 2019, were as follows:

Table 5: Employee Contribution Rates

Band	Range	Employee Contribution Rate
1	£0 - £14,800	5.5%
2	£14,801 - £22,600	5.8%
3	£22,601 - £37,700	6.5%
4	£37,701 - £45,700	6.8%
5	£45,701 - £90,400	8.5%
6	More than £90,400	10.5%

Employers' contribution rates are determined by the fund's actuary every three years at the triennial valuation. Contribution rates for the 2019/20 year were set from the triennial actuarial valuation of the fund as at 31 March 2016. A formal triennial actuarial valuation of the Fund as at 31 March 2019 was carried out in 2019/20 and set the employer contribution rates for the 3 years commencing 1 April 2020 as follows:

Table 6: Employer Contribution Rates

Year	Employer Contribution Rate
1 April 2019 - 31 March 2020	20% + 2% deficit contribution
1 April 2020 - 31 March 2021	19.5%
2 April 2021 - 31 March 2022	19.5%*
1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023	19.5%*

*The employer contribution rates for 2021/22 and 2022/23 remain under review due to the possible impact of the Covid-19 crisis.

The Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 were made on 27 June 2014 and The Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment and Transitional Provisions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 were made on 30 June 2014. Both sets of regulations are effective from 1 April 2015.

Councillors have been able to join the Scheme since May 2011 and therefore have not accrued significant benefits thus far. However, the in-year pension contributions made by the Council for all councillors during 2019/20 was £184,788 (18/19 £160,306).

The value of pension benefits of the most senior management of the Council accrued during the year was as follows:

Table 7: Pension Benefits of senior staff in 2019/20 (audited information)

Officers	Accrued Pension and Lump Sum (LS) at pension age as at 31/03/20 £'000	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age £'000	CETV at 31/03/20 £'000	CETV at 31/03/19 £'000	Real increase in CETV £'000
Suzanne Wylie	50-55	0-2.5	1,039	976	39
	105-110 (LS)	0-2.5 (LS)			
Ronan Cregan	50-55	0-2.5	996	923	45
	85-90 (LS)	0-2.5 (LS)			
Sinead Grimes	20-25	5-7.5	302	213	78
	20-25 (LS)	5-7.5 (LS)			
Nigel Grimshaw	5-10	0-2.5	115	83	19
	0 (LS)	0 (LS)			
John Walsh	40-45	2.5-5	773	703	47
	60-65 (LS)	0-2.5 (LS)			
John Tully	0-5	0-2.5	59	29	19
	0 (LS)	0 (LS)			
Alistair Reid	0-5	0-2.5	55	24	20
	0 (LS)	0 (LS)			
Grainia Long	0-5	0-2.5	30	13	10
	0 (LS)	0 (LS)			
Gerry Millar	50-55	0-2.5	1,110	1,084	21
	110-115 (LS)	0-2.5 (LS)			

The Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV)
This is the actuarially assessed capitalised value of the pension scheme benefits accrued by a member at a particular point in time. The benefits valued are the member's accrued benefits and any contingent spouse's pension payable from the scheme. It is a payment made by a pension scheme or arrangement to secure pension benefits in another pension scheme or arrangement when the member leaves a scheme and chooses to transfer the pension benefits they have accrued in their former scheme. The pension figures shown relate to the benefits that the individual has accrued as a consequence of their total membership of the pension scheme, not just their service in a senior capacity to which disclosure applies. CETVs are calculated in accordance with The Occupational Pension Schemes (Transfer Values) (Amendment) Regulations and do not take account of any actual or potential reduction to benefits resulting from Lifetime Allowance Tax which may be due when pension benefits are taken.

The real increase in the value of the CETV
This reflects the increase in CETV effectively funded by the employer. It takes account of the increase in accrued pension due to inflation, contributions paid by the employee (including the value of any benefits transferred from another pension scheme or arrangement) and uses common market valuation factors for the start and end of the period. However, the real increase calculation uses common actuarial factors at the start and end of the period so that it disregards the effect of any changes in factors and focuses only on the increase that is funded by the employer.

Chief Executive

Certificate of the Chief Financial Officer

I certify that:

(a) The Statement of Accounts for the year ended on pages 42 to 133 has been prepared in the form directed by the Department for Communities and under the accounting policies set out on pages 46 to 69 and page 122.

(b) in my opinion the Statement of Accounts gives a true and fair view of the income and expenditure and cash flows for the financial year and the financial position as at the end of the financial year ending 31st March 2020.

Chief Financial Officer

Date

These accounts were approved by resolution of the Strategic Policy & Resource Committee on 18 December 2020

Chairperson

Date

Belfast City Council
Movement in Reserves Statement for the year ended 31 March 2020

The Movement in Reserves Statement shows the movement from the start of the year to the end on the different reserves held by the authority, analysed into 'usable reserves' (ie those that can be applied to fund expenditure or reduce local taxation) and other 'unusable reserves'. The Statement shows how the movements in year of the Council's reserves are broken down between gains and losses incurred in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices and the statutory adjustment required to return to the amounts chargeable to council tax for the year. The Net Increase/Decrease line shows the statutory General Fund Balance movements in the year following those adjustments.

	General Fund Summary	Other Fund Balances and Reserves	Capital Receipts Reserve	Total Usable Reserves	Total Unusable Reserves	Total Council Reserves
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Balance as at 1 April 2018	24,408,596	28,241,306	4,739,457	57,389,359	481,505,711	538,895,070
Movement in reserves during the year						
Surplus/ (Deficit) on the provision of services	(18,000,936)	-	-	(18,000,936)	-	(18,000,936)
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	-	-	-	-	24,971,471	24,971,471
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	**(18,000,936)**	-	-	**(18,000,936)**	**24,971,471**	**6,970,535**
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding under regulations	18,313,728	(89,928)	400,000	18,623,800	(18,583,644)	40,156
Net Increase before transfers to Statutory and Other Reserves	**312,792**	**(89,928)**	**400,000**	**622,864**	**6,387,827**	**7,010,691**
Transfers to / from Statutory and Other Reserves	349,548	(349,548)	-	-	-	-
Other movements	726,052	(8,058)	61,000	**778,994**	(304,704)	474,290
Increase/ Decrease in year	**1,388,392**	**(447,534)**	**461,000**	**1,401,858**	**6,083,123**	**7,484,981**
Balance as at 31 March 2019	25,796,988	27,793,772	5,200,457	58,791,217	487,588,834	546,380,051
Movement in reserves during the year						
Surplus/ (Deficit) on the provision of services	(12,487,676)	-	-	(12,487,676)	-	(12,487,676)
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	-	-	-	-	6,663,428	6,663,428
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	**(12,487,676)**	-	-	**(12,487,676)**	**6,663,428**	**(5,824,248)**
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding under regulations	14,558,904	342,300	4,572,001	19,473,205	(22,498,871)	(3,025,666)
Net Increase before transfers to Statutory and Other Reserves	**2,071,228**	**342,300**	**4,572,001**	**6,985,529**	**(15,835,443)**	**(8,849,914)**
Transfers to / from Statutory and Other Reserves	(856,388)	856,388	-	-	-	-
Other movements	1,680,845	(94,388)	-	1,586,457	(156,902)	1,429,555
Increase in year	**2,895,685**	**1,104,300**	**4,572,001**	**8,571,986**	**(15,992,345)**	**(7,420,359)**
Balance as at 31 March 2020	28,692,673	28,898,072	9,772,458	67,363,203	471,596,489	538,959,692

Belfast City Council
Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for the year ended 31 March 2020

The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement shows the accounting cost in the year of providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, rather than the amount to be funded from taxation. Councils raise taxation to cover expenditure in accordance with statutory requirements; this may be different from the accounting cost. The taxation position is shown in both the Expenditure and Funding Analysis and the Movement in Reserves Statement.

		2019/20			2018/19		
Service Expenditure	Notes	Gross Expenditure £	Gross Income £	Net Expenditure £	Gross Expenditure £	Gross Income £	Net Expenditure £
Strategic Policy & Resources	2	65,875,784	(13,685,316)	52,190,468	78,594,231	(11,644,878)	66,949,353
City Growth & Regeneration	2	32,164,175	(9,715,544)	22,448,631	33,610,670	(10,302,272)	23,308,398
People & Communities	2	120,253,125	(15,574,828)	104,678,297	112,535,363	(16,091,022)	96,444,341
Planning & Licensing	2	8,145,681	(6,360,679)	1,785,002	8,527,144	(6,208,226)	2,318,918
Cost of Services on Continuing Operations		226,438,765	(45,336,367)	181,102,398	233,267,408	(44,246,398)	189,021,010
Other Operating Expenditure/ Income	8	954,852	(1,192,650)	(237,798)	-	(30,080)	(30,080)
Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure	9	9,657,481	(10,744,838)	(1,087,357)	6,074,753	(13,984,884)	(7,910,131)
(Surplus) or Deficit on Discontinued Operations				-			-
Net Operating Expenditure		237,051,098	(57,273,855)	179,777,243	239,342,161	(58,261,362)	181,080,799
Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income	10	1,794,150	(169,083,717)	(167,289,567)	(91,683)	(162,988,180)	(163,079,863)
(Surplus)/Deficit on the Provision of Services		238,845,248	(226,357,572)	12,487,676	239,250,478	(221,249,542)	18,000,936
(Surplus)/Deficit on revaluation of non-current assets	11			(27,846,428)			(9,648,471)
Impairment losses on non-current assets charged to the Revaluation Reserve	11			-			-
Surplus/(Deficit) arising on revaluation of available-for-sale financial assets	11						
Remeasurements of the Net Defined Benefit Liability (Asset)	20			21,183,000			(15,323,000)
Share of Other Comprehensive Expenditure & Income of associates and joint ventures	29		-	-			-
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure				(6,663,428)			(24,971,471)
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure				5,824,248			(6,970,535)

Belfast City Council
Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2020

The Balance Sheet shows the value as at the Balance Sheet date of the assets and liabilities recognised by the Council. The net assets of the Council (assets less liabilities) are matched by the reserves held by the Council. Reserves are reported in two categories. The first category of reserves are usable reserves, ie those reserves that the Council may use to provide services, subject to the need to maintain a prudent level of reserves and any statutory limitations on their use. The second category of reserves is those that the Council is not able to use to provide services. This category of reserves includes reserves that hold unrealised gains and losses (for example the Revaluation Reserve), where amounts would only become available to provide services if the assets are sold; and reserves that hold timing differences shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement line ' Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations'.

	Note	31st March 2020	31st March 2019
		£	£
Fixed Assets	11	789,071,594	746,868,338
Long Term Investments		-	-
Investment In Associates and Joint Ventures	29	3,436,859	3,436,859
Long Term Debtors	15	439,542	603,659
Contract Assets		-	-
Contract Costs		-	-
LONG TERM ASSETS		**792,947,995**	**750,908,856**
Short Term Investments		-	-
Inventories	14	370,474	276,290
Short Term Debtors	15	20,851,890	14,936,338
Cash and Cash Equivalents	24	16,728,224	23,574,416
Assets Held for Sale	11	1,340,000	266,607
Contract Assets	3	378,981	1,947,969
CURRENT ASSETS		**39,669,569**	**41,001,620**
Bank Overdraft	24	-	-
Short Term Borrowing	16	9,739,488	4,000,000
Short Term Creditors	17	32,515,006	30,097,266
Provisions	18	3,131,517	2,894,851
Contract Liabilities	17	277,387	-
CURRENT LIABILITIES		**45,663,398**	**36,992,117**
Long Term Creditors	17	50,386	50,386
Provisions	18	1,822,694	1,789,315
Long Term Borrowing	16	62,967,173	58,888,981
Other Long Term Liabilities	20	182,307,942	146,360,942
Donated Assets Account	21	430,000	430,001
Capital Grants Receipts in Advance	22	416,279	1,018,683
LONG TERM LIABILITIES		**247,994,474**	**208,538,308**
NET ASSETS		**538,959,692**	**546,380,051**
USABLE RESERVES			
Capital Receipts Reserve	25	9,772,458	5,200,457
Deferred capital receipts	25	342,300	-
Capital Fund	25	19,369,748	25,288,151
Leisure Mobilisation Fund	25	887,800	1,441,702
Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund	25	8,000,000	-
Other Balances and Reserves	25	298,224	1,063,919
General Fund	25	28,692,673	25,796,988
		67,363,203	**58,791,217**
UNUSABLE RESERVES			
Capital Adjustment Account	26	467,891,058	470,959,253
Revaluation Reserve	26	187,575,231	164,611,507
Pensions Reserve	26	(182,307,942)	(146,360,942)
Accumulated Absences Account	26	(1,363,705)	(1,357,825)
Provisions Discount Rate Reserve	26	(198,153)	(263,159)
		471,596,489	**487,588,834**
NET WORTH		**538,959,692**	**546,380,051**

Belfast City Council

Cash Flow Statement at 31 March 2020

The Cash Flow Statement shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the Council during the reporting period. The statement shows how the Council generates and uses cash and cash equivalents by classifying cash flows as operating, investing and financing activities. The amount of net cash flows arising from operating activities is a key indicator of the extent to which the operations of the Council are funded by way of taxation and grant income or from the recipients of services provided by the Council. Investing activities represent the extent to which cash outflows have been made for resources which are intended to contribute to the Council's future service delivery. Cash flows arising from financing activities are useful in predicting claims on future cash flows by providers of capital (ie borrowing) to the Council.

	Note	2019/20	2018/19
		£	£
Net Deficit on the provision of services		(12,487,676)	(18,000,936)
Adjustment for non-cash movements	24	41,007,732	46,538,139
Adjust for items included in the net surplus or deficit on the provision of services that are investing and financing activities	24	(10,200,474)	(3,393,017)
Net cash flows from operating activities		**18,319,582**	**25,144,186**
Cash flows from Investing Activities	24	(34,983,455)	(38,113,940)
Net Cash flows from Financing Activities	24	9,817,681	26,125,958
Net increase or decrease in cash and cash equivalents		**(6,846,192)**	**13,156,204**
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		23,574,416	10,418,212
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		**16,728,224**	**23,574,416**

1 Accounting Policies

a General Principles

The Statement of Accounts summarises the Council's transactions for the 2019/20 financial year and its position at the year-end of 31 March 2020. The Council is required to prepare an annual Statement of Accounts in a form directed by the Department for Communities in accordance with regulations 3 (7) and (8) in the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 in accordance with proper accounting practices.

These practices primarily comprise the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19, supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). The accounting convention adopted in the Statement of Accounts is principally historical cost, modified by the revaluation of certain categories of non-current assets and financial instruments.

Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

i) Accruals of Income and Expenditure

- Revenue from contracts with service recipients, whether for services or the provision of goods, is recognised when (or as) the goods or services are transferred to the service recipient in accordance with the performance obligations in the contract.

- Supplies are recorded as expenditure when they are consumed – where there is a gap between the date supplies are received and their consumption, they are carried as inventories on the Balance Sheet.

- Expenses in relation to services received (including services provided by employees) are recorded as expenditure when the services are received rather than when payments are made.

- Interest receivable on investments and payable on borrowings is accounted for respectively as income and expenditure on the basis of the effective interest rate for the relevant financial instrument rather than the cash flows fixed or determined by the contract.

- Where revenue and expenditure have been recognised but cash has not been received or paid, a debtor or creditor for the relevant amount is recorded in the Balance Sheet. Where it is doubtful that debts will be settled, the balance of debtors is written down and a charge made to revenue for the income that might not be collected.

ii) **Cash and Cash Equivalents**

Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits with financial institutions repayable without penalty on notice of not more than 24 hours. Cash equivalents are highly liquid investments that mature in six months or less from the date of acquisition and that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value.

In the Cash Flow Statement, cash and cash equivalents are shown net of bank overdrafts that are repayable on demand and form an integral part of the Council's cash management.

iii) **Contingent Liabilities**

A contingent liability arises where an event has taken place that gives the Council a possible obligation whose existence will only be confirmed by the occurrence or otherwise of uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Council. Contingent liabilities also arise in circumstances where a provision would otherwise be made but either it is not probable that an outflow of resources will be required or the amount of the obligation cannot be measured reliably.

Contingent liabilities are not recognised in the Balance Sheet but disclosed in a note to the accounts.

iv) **Employee Benefits**

Short-term employee benefits are those due to be settled wholly within 12 months of the year-end. They include such benefits as wages and salaries, paid annual leave and paid sick leave, bonuses and non-monetary benefits (e.g. cars) for current employees, and are recognised as an expense in the year in which employees render service to the Council. An accrual is made for the cost of holiday entitlements (or any form of leave, eg time off in lieu) earned by employees but not taken before the year-end which employees can carry forward into the next financial year. The accrual is made at the applicable wage and salary rate. The accrual is charged to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services, but then reversed out through the Movement in Reserves Statement so that holiday entitlements are charged to revenue in the financial year in which the holiday absence occurs.

Termination benefits

Termination benefits are amounts payable as a result of a decision by the Council to terminate an officer's employment before the normal retirement date or an officer's decision to accept voluntary redundancy in exchange for those benefits and are charged on an accruals basis to the appropriate service segment or, where applicable, to a corporate service segment at the earlier of when the Council can no longer withdraw the offer of those benefits or when the Council recognises costs for a restructuring.

Where termination benefits involve the enhancement of pensions, statutory provisions require the General Fund balance to be charged with the amount payable by the Council to the pension fund or pensioner in the year, not the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards. In the Movement in Reserves Statement, appropriations are required to and from the Pensions Reserve to remove the notional debits and credits for pension enhancement termination benefits and replace them with debits for the cash paid to the pension fund and pensioners and any such amounts payable but unpaid at the year-end.

Post Employment Benefits

The majority of employees of the Council are members of the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Pension Fund administered by the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee. The scheme provides defined benefits to members (retirement lump sums and pensions), earned as employees worked for the Council.

The Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Pension Fund

The Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Pension Fund is accounted for as a defined benefits scheme.

The liabilities of the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Pension Fund attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method – i.e. an assessment of the future payments that will be made in relation to retirement benefits earned to date by employees, based on assumptions about mortality rates, employee turnover rates , etc, and projections of projected earnings for current employees.

Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices, using a discount rate based on the Aon Hewitt GBP Select AA Curve over the duration of the Employer's liabilities.

The assets of the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' pension fund attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet at their fair value:

- quoted securities – current bid price
- unquoted securities – professional estimate
- property – market value
- unitised securities – current bid price

The change in the net pensions liability is analysed into the following seven components:

Within the Cost of Services

Current Service Cost – the increase in the present value of the defined benefit obligation (liabilities) resulting from employee service in the current period.

Past Service Cost – (where applicable) the change in the present value of the defined benefit obligation for employee service in prior periods, resulting from a plan amendment (the introduction or withdrawal of, or changes to, a defined benefit plan) or a curtailment (a significant reduction in the number of employees covered by the plan).

Any Gains or Losses on Settlement – (where applicable) arising where a council enters into a transaction that eliminates all further legal or constructive obligations for part or all of the benefits provided under a defined benefit plan.

Within Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure

Net Interest on the Net Defined Benefit Liability (Asset) – the change in the net defined benefit liability (asset) that arises from the passage of time.

Within Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure (Remeasurements)
The Return on Plan Assets – excluding amounts recognised in the Net Interest on the Net Defined Benefit Liability (Asset). This includes interest, dividends and other income derived from the plan assets, together with realised and unrealised gains or losses on the plan assets, less any costs of managing plan assets, and any tax payable by the plan itself other than tax included in the actuarial assumptions used to measure the present value of the defined benefit obligation.

Actuarial Gains and Losses – changes in the present value of the defined benefit obligation resulting from: a) experience adjustments (the effects of differences between the previous actuarial assumptions and what has actually occurred) and b) the effects of changes in actuarial assumptions.

Within the Movement in Reserves Statement Appropriations
Contributions by Scheme Participants – the increase in scheme liabilities and assets due to payments into the scheme by employees (where increased contribution increases pension due to the employee in the future).

Contributions by the Employer - the increase in scheme assets due to payments into the scheme by the employer.

In relation to retirement benefits, statutory provisions require the General Fund balance to be charged with the amount payable by the Council to the pension fund or directly to pensioners in the year, not the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards. In the Movement in Reserves Statement, this means that there are transfers to and from the Pensions Reserve to remove the notional debits and credits for retirement benefits and replace them with debits for the cash paid to the pension fund and pensioners and any such amounts payable but unpaid at the year-end. The negative balance that arises on the Pensions Reserve thereby measures the beneficial impact to the General Fund of being required to account for retirement benefits on the basis of cash flows rather than as benefits are earned by employees.

Discretionary Benefits

The Council also has restricted powers to make discretionary awards of retirement benefits in the event of early retirements. Any liabilities estimated to arise as a result of an award to any member of staff are accrued in the year of the decision to make the award and accounted for using the same policies that are applied to the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' pension fund.

As a result of Local Government Reform on 1 April 2015, staff that transferred from Central Government to the Council retained membership of the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Pension Scheme. The schemes provides defined benefits to members (retirement lump sums and pensions). However, the arrangements for the NICS Pension Scheme mean that liabilities for these benefits cannot ordinarily be identified specifically to the Council. The scheme is therefore accounted for as if it were a defined contribution scheme and no liability for future payments of benefits is recognised in the Balance Sheet.

v) **Events After the Balance Sheet Date**

Events after the Balance Sheet date are those events, both favourable and unfavourable, that occur between the end of the reporting period and the date when the Statement of Accounts is authorised for issue. Two types of events can be identified:

- those that provide evidence of conditions that existed at the end of the reporting period – the Statement of Accounts is adjusted to reflect such events

- those that are indicative of conditions that arose after the reporting period – the Statement of Accounts is not adjusted to reflect such events, but where a category of events would have a material effect, disclosure is made in the notes of the nature of the events and their estimated financial effect.

The Statement of Accounts may subsequently be adjusted up to the date when they are authorised for issue. This date will be recorded on the Statement of Accounts and is usually the date the Local Government Auditor issues the certificate and opinion. Where material adjustments are made in this period they will be disclosed.

Events taking place after the date of authorisation for issue are not reflected in the Statement of Accounts.

vi) **Exceptional Items**

When items of income and expense are material, their nature and amount is disclosed separately, either on the face of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement or in the notes to the accounts, depending on how significant the items are to an understanding of the Council's financial performance.

vii) **Prior Period Adjustments, Changes in Accounting Policies and Estimates and Errors**

Prior period adjustments may arise as a result of a change in accounting policies or to correct a material error. Changes in accounting estimates are accounted for prospectively, i.e. in the current and future years affected by the change and do not give rise to a prior period adjustment.

Changes in accounting policies are only made when required by proper accounting practices or the change provides more reliable or relevant information about the effect of transactions, other events and conditions on the Council's financial position or financial performance. Where a change is made, it is applied retrospectively (unless stated otherwise) by adjusting opening balances and comparative amounts for the prior period as if the new policy had always been applied.

Material errors discovered in prior period figures are corrected retrospectively by amending opening balances and comparative amounts for the prior period.

During 2019/20 the Council revised its Heritage Asset policy and this is included in section xxi of Note 1. Any necessary restatements have been reflected in the relevant notes and statements in the Accounts.

During 2019/20 the Council reviewed its methodology for the estimation of depreciation on vehicles. An improved methodology has been applied during 2019/20 and is reflected in the relevant notes and statements in the accounts, and will be applied for future years to more accurately reflect the pattern of use and consumption of vehicle assets. This change does not alter the Council's current accounting policy for vehicles nor their measurement bases, as set out in section xix of Note 1.

viii) **Financial Instruments**

Financial liabilities are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Council becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured at fair value and are carried at their amortised cost. Annual charges to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for interest payable are based on the carrying amount of the liability, multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument. The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash payments over the life of the instrument to the amount at which it was originally recognised.

For most of the borrowings that the Council has, this means that the amount presented in the Balance Sheet is the outstanding principal repayable (plus accrued interest); and interest charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is the amount payable for the year according to the loan agreement.

Where premiums and discounts have been charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, regulations allow the impact on the General Fund Balance to be spread over future years. The Council has a policy of spreading the gain or loss over the term that was remaining on the loan against which the premium was payable or discount receivable when it was repaid. The reconciliation of amounts charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the net charge required against the General Fund Balance is managed by a transfer to or from the Financial Instruments Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Financial Assets

Financial assets are classified based on a classification and measurement approach that reflects the business model for holding the financial assets and their cashflow characteristics. There are three main classes of financial assets measured at:
- amortised cost

The Council's business model is to hold investments to collect contractual cash flows. Financial assets are therefore classified as amortised cost, except for those whose contractual payments are not solely payment of principal and interest (ie where the cash flows do not take the form of a basic debt instrument).

Financial Assets Measured at Amortised Cost

Financial assets measured at amortised cost are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Council becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured at fair value. They are subsequently measured at their amortised cost. Annual credits to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for interest receivable are based on the carrying amount of the asset multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument. For most of the financial assets held by the Council, this means that the amount presented in the Balance Sheet is the outstanding principal receivable (plus accrued interest) and interest credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure is the amount receivable for the year in the loan agreement.

Any gains and losses that arise on the derecognition of an asset are credited or debits to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Expected Credit Loss Model

The Council recognises expected credit losses on all of its financial assets held at amortised cost, either on a 12-month or lifetime basis. The expected credit loss model also applies to lease receivables and contract assets. Only lifetime losses are recognised for trade receivables (debtors) held by the Council.

Impairment losses are calculated to reflect the expectation that the future cash flows might not take place because the borrower could default on their obligations. Credit risk plays a crucial part in assessing losses. Where risk has increased significantly since an instrument was initially recognised, losses are assessed on a lifetime basis. Where risk has not increased significiantly or remains low, losses are assessed on the basis of 12-month expected losses

Financial Assets Measured at Fair Value through Profit or Loss

Financial assets that are measured at FVPL are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Council becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured and carried at fair value. Fair value gains and losses are recognised as they arrive in the Surplus or Deficit on Provision of Services.

The fair value measurements of the financial assets are based on the following techniques:
- instruments with quoted market prices - the market price
- other instruments with fixed and determinable payments - discounted cash flow analysis.

The inputs to the measurement techniques are categorised in accordance with the following three levels:

- Level 1 inputs - quoted prices (unadjusted) in active markets for identical assets that the authority can access at the measurement date.
- Level 2 inputs - inputs other than quoted prices included within Level 1 that are observable for the asset, either directly or indirectly.
- Level 3 inputs - unobservable inputs for the asset.

Any gains and losses that arise on the derecognition of the asset are credited or debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

ix) **Foreign Currency Translation**

Where the Council has entered into a transaction denominated in a foreign currency, the transaction is converted into sterling at the exchange rate applicable on the date the transaction was effective. Where amounts in foreign currency are outstanding at the year-end, they are reconverted at the spot exchange rate at 31 March. Resulting gains or losses are recognised in the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

x) **Government Grants and Contributions**

Whether paid on account, by instalments or in arrears, government grants and third party contributions and donations are recognised as due to the Council when there is reasonable assurance that:

- the Council will comply with the conditions attached to the payments, and
- the grants or contributions will be received.

Amounts recognised as due are not credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement until conditions attaching to the grant or contribution have been satisfied. Conditions are stipulations that specify that the future economic benefits or service potential embodied in the asset in the form of the grant or contribution are required to be consumed by the recipient as specified, or future economic benefits or service potential must be returned to the transferor.

Monies advanced as grants and contributions for which conditions have not been satisfied are carried in the Balance Sheet as creditors. When conditions are satisfied, the grant or contribution is credited to the relevant service line (attributable revenue grants and contributions) or Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income (non-ring-fenced revenue grants and all capital grants) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Where capital grants are credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, they are reversed out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement. Where the grant has yet to be used to finance capital expenditure, it is posted to the Capital Grants Unapplied Reserve. Where it has been applied, it is posted to the Capital Adjustment Account. Amounts in the Capital Grants Unapplied Reserve are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account once they have been applied to fund capital expenditure.

xi) **Inventories & Long Term Contracts**

Inventories are included in the Balance Sheet at the lower of cost and net realisable value. The cost of inventories is assigned using the FIFO costing formula.

Long-term contracts are accounted for on the basis of charging the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services with the consideration allocated to the performance obligations satisfied based on the goods or services transferred to the service recipient during the financial year.

xii) **Overheads and Support Services**

The majority of overheads and support services are included in the expenditure of the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

xiii) **Landfill Allowance Scheme**

The Landfill Allowances Scheme operates under the Landfill Allowances Scheme (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2005. Local Authorities are allocated annual target figures for the maximum amount of biodegradable municipal waste that can be sent to landfill but there are no tradable allowances. It is not a 'cap and trade' scheme since landfill allowances are not tradable. For this reason, landfill allowances are not recognised as assets on the Balance Sheet.

xiv) **Intangible Assets**

Expenditure on non-monetary assets that do not have physical substance but are controlled by the Council as a result of past events (e.g. software licences) is capitalised when it is expected that future economic benefits or service potential will flow from the intangible asset to the Council.

Internally generated assets are capitalised where it is demonstrable that the project is technically feasible and is intended to be completed (with adequate resources being available) and the Council will be able to generate future economic benefits or deliver service potential by being able to sell or use the asset. Expenditure is capitalised where it can be measured reliably as attributable to the asset and restricted to that incurred during the development phase (research expenditure is not capitalised).

Expenditure on the development of websites is not capitalised if the website is solely or primarily intended to promote or advertise the Council's goods or services.

Intangible assets are measured initially at cost. Amounts are only revalued where the fair value of the assets held by the Council can be determined by reference to an active market. In practice, no intangible asset held by the Council meets this criterion, and they are therefore carried at amortised cost. The depreciable amount of an intangible asset is amortised over its useful life to the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. An asset is tested for impairment whenever there is an indication that the asset might be impaired – any losses recognised are posted to the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Any gain or loss arising on the disposal or abandonment of an intangible asset is posted to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Where expenditure on intangible assets qualifies as capital expenditure for statutory purposes, amortisation, impairment losses and disposal gains and losses are not permitted to have an impact on the General Fund Balance. The gains and losses are therefore reversed out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement and posted to the Capital Adjustment Account and (for any sale proceeds greater than £5,000) the Capital Receipts Reserve.

xv) **Investment Property**

Investment properties are those that are used solely to earn rentals and/or for capital appreciation. The definition is not met if the property is used in any way to facilitate the delivery of services or production of goods or is held for sale.

Investment properties are measured initially at cost and subsequently at fair value, being the price that would be received to sell such an asset in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measureable date. As a non-financial asset, investment properties are measured at highest and best use. Properties are not depreciated but are revalued annually according to market conditions at the year-end. Gains and losses on revaluation are posted to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The same treatment is applied to gains and losses on disposal.

Rentals received in relation to investment properties are credited to the Financing and Investment Income line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and result in a gain for the General Fund Balance. However, revaluation and disposal gains and losses are not permitted by statutory arrangements to have an impact on the General Fund Balance. The gains and losses are therefore reversed out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement and posted to the Capital Adjustment Account and the Capital Receipts Reserve.

xvi) **Leases**

Leases are classified as finance leases where the terms of the lease transfer substantially all the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of the property, plant or equipment from the lessor to the lessee. All other leases are classified as operating leases.

Where a lease covers both land and buildings, the land and buildings elements are considered separately for classification.

Arrangements that do not have the legal status of a lease but convey a right to use an asset in return for payment are accounted for under this policy where fulfilment of the arrangement is dependent on the use of specific assets

The Council as Lessee - Finance Lease

Property, plant and equipment held under finance leases is recognised on the Balance Sheet at the commencement of the lease at its fair value measured at the lease's inception (or the present value of the minimum lease payments, if lower). The asset recognised is matched by a liability for the obligation to pay the lessor. Initial direct costs of the Council are added to the carrying amount of the asset. Premiums paid on entry into a lease are applied to writing down the lease liability. Contingent rents are charged as expenses in the periods in which they are incurred.

Lease payments are apportioned between:
a. a charge for the acquisition of the interest in the property,plant or equipment – applied to write down the lease liability, and
b. a finance charge (debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement)

Property, Plant and Equipment recognised under finance leases is accounted for using the policies applied generally to such assets, subject to depreciation being charged over the lease term if this is shorter than the asset's estimated useful life (where ownership of the asset does not transfer to the Council at the end of the lease period).

The Council is not required to raise district rates to cover depreciation or revaluation and impairment losses arising on leased assets. Instead, a prudent annual contribution is made from revenue towards the deemed capital investment in accordance with statutory requirements. Depreciation and revaluation and impairment losses are therefore substituted by a revenue contribution in the General Fund Balance, by way of an adjusting transaction with the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement for the difference between the two.

Operating Leases:

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as an expense of the services benefiting from use of the leased property, plant or equipment. Charges are made on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease, even if this does not match the pattern of payments (e.g. there is a rent-free period at the commencement of the lease).

The Council as Lessor - Finance Lease

Where the Council grants a finance lease over a property or an item of plant or equipment, the relevant asset is written out of the Balance Sheet as a disposal. At the commencement of the lease, the carrying amount of the asset in the Balance Sheet (whether Property, Plant and Equipment or Assets Held for Sale) is written off to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of the gain or loss on disposal. A gain, representing the Council's net investment in the lease, is credited to the same line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement also as part of the gain or loss on disposal (i.e. netted off against the carrying value of the asset at the time of disposal), matched by a lease asset (long term debtor) in the Balance Sheet.

Lease rentals receivable are apportioned between:
a. a charge for the acquisition of the interest in the property – applied to write down the lease debtor together with any premiums received, and
b. finance income (credited to the Financing and Investment income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement).

The gain credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on disposal is not permitted by statute to increase the General Fund Balance and is required to be treated as a capital receipt. Where a premium has been received, this is posted out of the General Fund Balance to the Capital Receipts Reserve in the Movement in Reserves Statement. Where the amount due in relation to the lease asset is to be settled by the payment of rentals in future financial years, this is posted out of the General Fund Balance to the Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve in the Movement in Reserves Statement. When the future rentals are paid, the element for the capital receipt for the disposal of the asset is used to write down the lease debtor. At this point, the deferred capital receipts are transferred to the Capital Receipts Reserve.

The written-off value of disposals is not a charge against District rates, as the cost of non-current assets is fully provided for under separate arrangements for capital financing. Amounts are therefore appropriated to the Capital Adjustment Account from the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

The Council as Lessor - Operating Lease

Where the Council grants an operating lease over a property or an item of plant or equipment, the asset is retained in the Balance Sheet. Rental income is credited to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Credits are made on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease, even if this does not match the pattern of payments (e.g. there is a premium paid at the commencement of the lease). Initial direct costs incurred in negotiating and arranging the lease are added to the carrying amount of the relevant asset and charged as an expense over the lease term on the same basis as rental income.

xvii) **Surplus Assets**

Surplus assets are non-operational assets that do not meet the conditions to be classified as assets held for sale. They are measured at fair value, reflecting the actual market state and conditions at the balance sheet date (which is the valuation date) with best evidence of fair value in an active market for similar properties in the same location. The council classifies assets to surplus assets on the advice of its estates management officers and in consultation with its external property valuers.
The surplus assets held by the council comprise a number of properties including land, buildings or sites of land and buildings combined, which have not reached the stage where the council can market these for sale advantageously, or where the properties have restrictions that prevent them currently being brought to market.

xviii) **Disposals and Non-Current Assets Held for Sale**

When it becomes probable that the carrying amount of an asset will be recovered principally through a sale transaction rather than through its continuing use, it is reclassified as an Asset Held for Sale. The asset is revalued immediately before reclassification and then carried at the lower of this amount and fair value less costs to sell. Where there is a subsequent decrease to fair value less costs to sell, the loss is posted to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Gains in fair value are recognised only up to the amount of any previously recognised losses in the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services. Depreciation is not charged on Assets Held for Sale.

If assets no longer meet the criteria to be classified as assets held for sale, they are reclassified back to non-current assets and valued at the lower of its carrying amount before they were classified as held for sale: adjusted for depreciation, amortisation or revaluations that would have been recognised had they not been classified as held for sale, and their recoverable amount at the date of the decision not to sell.

Assets that are to be abandoned or scrapped are not reclassified as assets held for sale.

When an asset is disposed of, or decommissioned, the carrying amount of the asset in the Balance Sheet (whether property, plant and equipment or assets held for sale) is written off to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of the gain or loss on disposal. Receipts from disposals (if any) are credited to the same line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement also as part of the gain or loss on disposal (i.e. netted off against the carrying value of the asset at the time of disposal). Any revaluation gains accumulated for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account.

Amounts greater than £5k received for a disposal are categorised as capital receipts and credited to the Capital Receipts Reserve. Receipts are appropriated to the Reserve from the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

The written-off value of disposals is not a charge against district rates, as the cost of non-current assets is fully provided for under separate arrangements for capital financing. Amounts are appropriated to the Capital Adjustment Account from the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

xix) **Property, Plant and Equipment**

Assets that have physical substance and are held for use in the production or supply of goods or services, for rental to others, or for administrative purposes and that are expected to be used during more than one financial year are classified as Property, Plant and Equipment.

Recognition

Expenditure on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of Property, Plant and Equipment is capitalised on an accruals basis, provided that it is probable that the future economic benefits or service potential associated with the item will flow to the Council and the cost of the item can be measured reliably. Expenditure that maintains but does not add to an asset's potential to deliver future economic benefits or service potential (i.e., repairs and maintenance) is charged as an expense when it is incurred. The Council applies a de-minimis level of £25k to Plant & Machinery, Information Technology equipment, Fixtures & Fittings and Office equipment, meaning only assets over £25k are capitalised. Subsequent capital expenditure is only capitalised where it provided an enhancement to the economic benefits of the asset in excess of those previously addressed.

Measurement

Assets are initially measured at cost, comprising:
a. the purchase price
b. any costs attributable to bringing the asset to the location and condition necessary for it to be capable of operating in the manner intended by management
c. the initial estimate of the costs of dismantling and removing the item and restoring the site on which it is located

The Council does not capitalise borrowing costs incurred whilst assets are under construction.

The cost of assets acquired other than by purchase is deemed to be its fair value, unless the acquisition does not have commercial substance (ie it will not lead to a variation in the cash flows of the Council). In the latter case, where an asset is acquired via an exchange, the cost of the acquisition is the carrying amount of the asset given up by the Council.

Donated assets are measured initially at fair value. The difference between fair value and any consideration paid is credited to the Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income line of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, unless the donation has been made conditionally. Until conditions are satisfied, the gain is held in the Donated Assets Account. Where gains are credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, they are reversed out of the General Fund Balance to the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Assets are then carried in the Balance Sheet using the following measurement bases:

- infrastructure, community assets and assets under construction – depreciated historical cost
- short life assets, including road vehicles, plant and equipment, fixtures and fittings, office equipment, and IT and IT equipment – depreciated historic cost as a proxy for current value
- surplus assets – fair value (at highest and best use)
- investment properties – measured initially at cost and subsequently at fair value as outlined in accounting policy note xiv
- all other assets – service potential (current value)

Where there is no market-based evidence of fair value because of the specialist nature of an asset, depreciated replacement cost is used as an estimate of fair value.

Valuation

The Council operates a rolling programme for the revaluation of Land and Buildings with approximately 25% of these being revalued by physical inspection each year and the remainder being revalued by a desktop exercise. Increases in valuations are matched by credits to the Revaluation Reserve to recognise unrealised gains. Exceptionally, gains might be credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement where they arise from the reversal of a loss previously charged to a service.

The Revaluation Reserve contains revaluation gains recognised since 1 April 2007 only, the date of its formal implementation. Gains arising before that date have been consolidated into the Capital Adjustment Account.

Impairment

Assets are assessed at each year-end as to whether there is any indication that an asset may be impaired. Where indications exist and any possible differences are estimated to be material, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated and, where this is less than the carrying amount of the asset, an impairment loss is recognised for the shortfall.

Where impairment losses are identified, they are accounted for by:

a. where there is a balance of revaluation gains for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against that balance (up to the amount of the accumulated gains),
b. where there is no balance in the Revaluation Reserve or an insufficient balance, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Where an impairment loss is reversed subsequently, the reversal is credited to the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, up to the amount of the original loss, adjusted for depreciation that would have been charged if the loss had not been recognised.

The same accounting treatment is applied to revaluation losses as a result of a general fall in asset prices across the board as opposed to a consumption of economic benefit specific to an asset as is in the case of impairment losses.

Depreciation

Depreciation is provided for on all property, plant and equipment assets by the systematic allocation of their depreciable amounts over their useful lives. An exception is made for assets without a determinable finite useful life (i.e. freehold land and certain Community Assets) and assets that are not yet available for use (i.e. assets under construction).

Depreciation is calculated on a straight-line basis on the following classes of tangible asset:

- buildings, installation and fittings are depreciated on their fair value over the estimated remaining lives of those assets as advised by the Independent Chartered Surveyors. Depending on the type of building, installation or fitting the maximum useful life will be a range up to 60 years.
- infrastructure assets, short-life assets, including road vehicles, plant and equipment, fixtures and fittings, office equipment, and IT and IS equipment are depreciated over their estimated useful lives.

Intangible assets are amortised on a straight-line basis over their estimated useful lives. Depreciation is calculated on the following bases:
- straight-line allocation of the estimated useful lives
- depreciation is charged in the month of capitalisation but not in the month of disposal

Componentisation

Where an item of Property, Plant and Equipment asset has major components whose cost is significant in relation to the total cost of the item, the components are depreciated separately.

Componentisation is only applicable to larger value land and buildings or equipment assets. The Council applies the following de-minimis levels in relation to componentisation:
- a component should be valued separately if it is greater than or equal to 3% of the total value of the asset and
- the individual component has a valuation of greater than or equal to £300k

Revaluations

Revaluation gains are also depreciated, with an amount equal to the difference between current value depreciation charged on assets and the depreciation that would have been chargeable based on their historical cost being transferred each year from the Revaluation Reserve to the Capital Adjustment Account.

xx) **Community Assets**

From 1 April 2017, community assets are recognised, measured and accounted for at their depreciated historic cost. The historical cost of a community asset is deemed to be the carrying amount of an asset as at 1 April 2007 or at the date of acquisition, whichever date is the later, and adjusted for subsequent depreciation or impairment (if applicable).

Community assets that consist of land or that have an indeterminable useful life will not be depreciated but will be subject to annual review for impairment. Community assets that are depreciable, or that have depreciable components, and have a determinable useful life will be depreciated systematically at a constant (straight-line) rate over their useful lives, as well as being subject to impairment review if there is evidence of excessive deterioration or that their value to the Council is below their then carrying amount.

Depreciation on community assets will be charged on an annual basis to the appropriate service of the Council in that year against the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

xxi) **Heritage Assets**

Heritage Assets are assets with historical, artistic, scientific, technological, geophysical or environmental qualities that are held and maintained principally for their contribution to knowledge and culture.

Heritage Assets are those assets that are intended to be preserved in trust for future generations because of their cultural, environmental or historic associations. They would be held by this authority in pursuit of our overall objectives in relation to the maintenance of heritage.

The Council's collection of Heritage Assets (Works of Art and Civic Items) is reported in the balance sheet at insurance valuation, which is based on market values, or if it is not possible to obtain a valuation, they are maintained at historical cost less any depreciation, amortisation or impairment losses. These insurance valuations based on market values are updated on a periodic basis. Where no cost can be measured reliably, heritage assets are not held at a monetary value and are not reported in the balance sheet. Such assets will continue to be retained by the Council and will form part of its heritage assets collection, and will be reported in summary by way of a note to the financial statements.
Summary information on Heritage Assets has been provided for transactions in 2018/19 and 2019/20 financial years. Detailed information relating to transactions has not been included for prior years as it would not be practical to do so and there is little value added for the users of the accounts.

xxii) **Provisions**

Provisions are made where an event has taken place that gives the Council a legal or constructive obligation that probably requires settlement by a transfer of economic benefits or service potential, and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation. For instance, the Council may be involved in a court case that could eventually result in the making of a settlement or the payment of compensation.

Provisions are charged as an expense to the appropriate service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year that the Council becomes aware of the obligation, and measured at the best estimate at the balance sheet date of the expenditure required to settle the obligation, taking into account relevant risks and uncertainties.

When payments are eventually made, they are charged to the provision carried in the Balance Sheet. Estimated settlements are reviewed at the end of each financial year – where it becomes less than probable that a transfer of economic benefits will now be required (or a lower settlement than anticipated is made), the provision is reversed and credited back to the relevant service.

Where some or all of the payment required to settle a provision is expected to be recovered from another party (e.g. from an insurance claim), this is only recognised as income for the relevant service if it is virtually certain that reimbursement will be received if the Council settles the obligation.

xxiii) **Reserves**

The Council sets aside specific amounts as reserves for future policy purposes or to cover contingencies. Reserves are created by transferring amounts out of the General Fund Balance. When expenditure to be financed from a reserve is incurred, it is charged to the appropriate service in that year against the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The reserve is then transferred back into the General Fund Balance so that there is no net charge against District Rates for the expenditure.

Certain reserves are kept to manage the accounting processes for non-current assets, financial instruments, retirement benefits and employee benefits and do not represent usable resources for the Council – these reserves are explained in the relevant note to the accounts.

xxiv) **Charges to Revenue for Non-Current Assets**

Services, support services and trading accounts are debited with the following amounts to record the cost of holding non-current assets during the year:

a. depreciation attributable to the assets used by the relevant service
b. revaluation and impairment losses on assets used by the service where there are no accumulated gains in the Revaluation Reserve against which the losses can be written off
c. amortisation of intangible fixed assets attributable to the service.

The Council is not required to raise District Rates to cover depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses or amortisations. However, it is required to make an annual contribution from revenue to contribute towards the reduction in its overall borrowing requirement [equal to either an amount calculated on a prudent basis determined by the Council in accordance with statutory guidance]. Depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses and amortisation are therefore replaced by the contribution in the General Fund Balance [minimum revenue provision (MRP)], by way of an adjusting transaction with the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement for the difference between the

xxv) **Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute**

Expenditure incurred during the year that may be capitalised under statutory provisions but that does not result in the creation of a non-current asset has been charged as expenditure to the relevant service in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year. Where the Council has determined to meet the cost of this expenditure from existing capital resources or by borrowing, a transfer in the Movement in Reserves Statement from the General Fund Balance to the Capital Adjustment Account then reverses out the amounts charged, so that there is no impact on the level of District Rates.

xxvi) **Value Added Tax**

VAT payable is included as an expense only to the extent that it is not recoverable from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. VAT receivable is excluded from income.

xxvii) **The Carbon Reduction Commitment Scheme (CRC)**

The Council is required to participate in the Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme. The scheme is currently in the last year of its introductory phase, which ends on 31st March 2014. The Council is required to purchase and surrender allowances, currently retrospectively, on the basis of emissions, i.e. carbon dioxide produced as energy is used. As carbon dioxide is produced (i.e. as energy is used), a liability and an expense are recognised. The liability will be discharged by surrendering allowances. The liability is measured at the best estimate of the expenditure required to meet the obligation, normally at the current market price of the number of allowances required to meet the liability at the reporting date. The cost to the Council is recognised and reported in the costs of the Councils services and is apportioned to services on the basis of energy consumption. There were no costs to be disclosed in 2019/20.

xxviii) **Landfill Exploration and Evaluation**

The Council considers the facts and circumstances to determine whether an exploration and evaluation asset should be recognised in respect of the landfill site including assessment of the amount, timing and certainty of future cash flows under IFRS 6. The Council's landfill site produces gas to generate electricity and the income from this electricity generation is reducing year on year due to environmental and other uncontrollable variables. In 2019-20 the costs of production of gas were outweighed by the income and resulted net gain of £77k. The Council does not recognise any asset in respect of this gas production as any forecasting or estimating of future income is uncertain. The Council cannot reliably measure or value such an asset under IAS 38.

xxix) **Fair Value Measurement**

The Council measures some of its non-financial assets such as surplus assets and investment properties and some of its financial instruments such as equity shareholdings [other financial instruments as applicable] at fair value at each reporting date. Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. The fair value measurement assumes that the transaction to sell the asset or transfer the liability takes place either:

a) in the principal market for the asset or liability, or
b) in the absence of a principal market, in the most advantageous market for the asset or liability.

The Council measures the fair value of an asset or liability using the assumptions that market participants would use when pricing the asset or liability, assuming that market participants act in their economic best interest.

When measuring the fair value of a non-financial asset, the Council takes into account a market participant's ability to generate economic benefits by using the asset in its highest and best use or by selling it to another market participant that would use the asset in its highest and best use.

The Council uses valuation techniques that are appropriate in the circumstances and for which sufficient data is available, maximising the use of relevant observable inputs and

Inputs to the valuation techniques in respect of assets and liabilities for which fair value is measured or disclosed in the Council's financial statements are categorised within the fair value hierarchy, as follows:
* Level 1 – quoted prices (unadjusted) in active markets for identical assets or liabilities that the authority can access at the measurement date
* Level 2 – inputs other than quoted prices included within Level 1 that are observable for the asset or liability, either directly or indirectly
* Level 3 – unobservable inputs for the asset or liability.

xxx) **Capital Receipts Unapplied**
This represents capital receipts that are held on the balance sheet to finance future capital expenditure. Income from disposal of fixed assets is posted into the capital receipts unapplied account until such time as it is allocated to finance other capital expenditure.

The amount of £112k in capital receipts unapplied relates to the remaining proceeds from a disposal to the NIHE which is being used to finance a playground.

b **Accounting Standards That Have Been Issued but Have Not Yet Been Adopted**

At the balance sheet date, the following new standards and amendments to existing standards have been published, but not yet adopted by the Code of Practice for Local Authority Accounting:

a) Amendments to IAS 28 Investments in Associates and Joint Ventures: Long-term Interests in Associates and Joint Ventures

b) Annual Improvements to IFRS Standards 2015–2017 Cycle

c) Amendments to IAS 19 Employee Benefits: Plan Amendment, Curtailment or Settlement

d) On implementation of IFRS16 for local government, there will be a requirement for Councils that are lessees to recognise most leases on their balance sheet as a right of use assets with corresponding lease liabilities (with exemptions for low value and short term leases)

c **Critical Judgements in Applying Accounting Policies**

In applying accounting policies set out from 1a above the Council has had to make certain judgements about complex transactions or those involving uncertainty about future events. The critical judgements made in the Statement of Accounts are:
Landfill Provision
The calculation of the necessary financial provision for the capping and aftercare costs for the landfill site depends on a judgement around the appropriate discount rate to be used and the number of years over which these costs need to be provided. The landfill provision figures are sensitive to the assumptions used. The impact of amending the interest rates used to discount this provision has been mitigated through the creation of a Provision Discount Rate Reserve to accommodate fluctuations in the current value of the annual calculation of long term provisions for landfill costs.

d **Assumptions Made About the Future and Other Major Sources of Estimation Uncertainty**

Pension Liability

Estimation of the net liability to pay pensions depends on a number of complex judgements relating to the discount rate used, the rate at which salaries are projected to increase, changes in retirement ages, mortality rates and expected returns on pension fund assets. A firm of consulting actuaries AON Hewitt is engaged to provide the Council with expert advice about the assumptions to be applied. The pension figures disclosed in these financial statements are sensitive to the assumptions used.

The approximate impact of changing key assumptions on the present value of the funded defined benefit obligation as at 31 March 2020 and the projected service cost for the year ending 31 March 2021 is set out in Note 20.

2

a **Expenditure and Funding Analysis**

The Expenditure and Funding Analysis shows how annual expenditure is used and funded from resources (government grants, rents, and rates) by local authorities in comparison with those resources consumed or earned by authorities in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices. It also shows how this expenditure is allocated for decision making purposes between the council's committees. Income and expenditure accounted for under generally accepted accounting practices is presented more fully in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

	2019/20			2018/19		
	Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund	Adjustments	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund	Adjustments	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Strategic Policy & Resources	45,216,695	(6,973,773)	52,190,468	46,900,685	(20,048,668)	66,949,353
City Growth & Regeneration	16,699,905	(5,748,726)	22,448,631	17,772,285	(5,536,113)	23,308,398
People & Communities	81,714,666	(22,963,631)	104,678,297	81,126,640	(15,317,701)	96,444,341
Planning & Licensing	888,983	(896,019)	1,785,002	1,799,300	(519,618)	2,318,918
Net Cost of Services	**144,520,249**	**(36,582,149)**	**181,102,398**	**147,598,910**	**(41,422,100)**	**189,021,010**
Other Income and Expenditure	**(147,415,934)**	**21,198,788**	**(168,614,722)**	**(148,987,302)**	**22,032,772**	**(171,020,074)**
Surplus or Deficit	**(2,895,685)**	**(15,383,361)**	**12,487,676**	**(1,388,392)**	**(19,389,328)**	**18,000,936**
Opening General Fund			**25,796,988**			**24,408,596**
Surplus/(Deficit) on General Fund Balance in Year			**2,895,685**			**1,388,392**
Closing General Fund			**28,692,673**			**25,796,988**

2

b

Note to the Expenditure and Funding Analysis

This note provides a reconciliation of the main adjustments to Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund to arrive at the amounts in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The relevant transfers between reserves are explained in the Movement in Reserves Statement

Adjustments between Funding and Accounting Basis 2019/20

Adjustments from General Fund to arrive at the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Amounts	Adjustments for Capital Purposes	Net Change for the Pension Adjustments	Other Statutory Adjustments	Other non-statutory Adjustments	Total adjustments
	£	£	£	£	£
Strategic Policy & Resources	(3,213,467)	(4,918,654)	48,169	1,110,179	(6,973,773)
City Growth & Regeneration	(4,572,468)	(920,616)	(1,851)	(253,791)	(5,748,726)
People & Communities	(17,087,160)	(5,865,716)	(10,755)	-	(22,963,631)
Planning & Licensing	-	(909,674)	13,655	-	(896,019)
Net Cost of Services	**(24,873,095)**	**(12,614,660)**	**49,218**	**856,388**	(36,582,149)
Other Income and Expenditure from the Expenditure and Funding Analysis	24,816,973	(1,937,340)	-	(1,680,845)	21,198,788
Difference between General Fund surplus or deficit and Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	(56,122)	(14,552,000)	49,218	(824,457)	(15,383,361)

Adjustments between Funding and Accounting Basis 2018/19

Adjustments from General Fund to arrive at the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Amounts	Adjustments for Capital Purposes	Net Change for the Pension Adjustments	Other Statutory Adjustments	Other non-statutory Adjustments	Total adjustments
	£	£	£	£	£
Strategic Policy & Resources	(3,284,280)	(17,218,473)	(72,116)	526,201	(20,048,668)
City Growth & Regeneration	(4,065,197)	(575,729)	(19,438)	(875,749)	(5,536,113)
People & Communities	(11,675,580)	(3,652,191)	10,070	-	(15,317,701)
Planning & Licensing	-	(529,803)	10,185	-	(519,618)
					-
Net Cost of Services	**(19,025,057)**	**(21,976,196)**	**(71,299)**	**(349,548)**	**(41,422,100)**
Other Income and Expenditure from the Expenditure and Funding Analysis	25,191,548	(2,512,804)	-	(645,972)	22,032,772
Difference between General Fund surplus or deficit and Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	6,166,491	(24,489,000)	(71,299)	(995,520)	(19,389,328)

Each committee is responsible for the delivery of key services to the Council and the main services included in each committee is as follows:

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
The net expenditure of this committee includes Legal and Civic Services, Finance and Resources, City Organisation Structure and Major Projects and Corporate Priorities with Human Resources and Good Relations.

City Growth and Regeneration Committee
The net expenditure of the committee includes Economic Initiatives and City Regeneration, City Events and Venues including Off-Street Car Parking, Place and Economy and Parks Estates and Zoo.

People and Communities Committee
The net expenditure of the committee includes Cleansing, Waste Management and vehicles, Parks, Cemeteries and Leisure Centres, Environmental Health, Neighbourhood and Development and Community Services.

Planning and Licensing
The net expenditure includes Planning and Building Control services.

3 a Expenditure and Income Analysed by Nature

Expenditure	Notes	2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Employee Benefits Expenses	7	89,672,827	88,602,500
Other Services Expenditure		123,015,131	126,408,328
Support Service Recharges		-	-
Depreciation, Amortisation, Impairment	11	21,084,420	19,025,057
Interest Payments	9	2,038,668	1,811,731
(Gain) on the Disposal of Assets	8	(237,798)	(80,080)
Other Expenditure		3,272,000	3,482,942
Total Expenditure		**238,845,248**	**239,250,478**

Income	Notes	2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Fees, Charges and other service Income		(48,329,017)	(44,276,478)
Interest and Investment Income	9	(10,744,838)	(13,984,884)
District rate income	10	(155,996,334)	(154,776,084)
Government grants and Contributions	10	(11,287,383)	(8,212,096)
Support Service Income		-	-
Other Income		-	-
Total Income		**(226,357,572)**	**(221,249,542)**
Deficit on the Provision of Services		**12,487,676**	**18,000,936**

b Revenue from contracts with service recipients

On transition to IFRS 15, there is no impact on the Belfast City Council revenue recognition for contracts with customers.

Amounts included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for contracts with service recipients:

Revenue from contracts with service recipients	Notes	2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Strategic Policy & Resources		3,932,921	3,923,655
City Growth & Regeneration		3,052,209	911,423
People & Communities		975,138	3,146,839
Total included in Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		7,960,268	7,981,917

Revenue from contracts with service recipients includes services such as the provision of IT support, the provision of off street car parking facilities, and the sale of recyclate. Income is recognised as the contract obligation is satisfied and received in arrears after each event.

The Council has applied the accounting standard to determine revenue recognition under IFRS 15.

Amounts included in the Balance Sheet for contracts with service recipients:

	Notes	31st March 2020 £	31st March 2019 £
Receivables, which are included in debtors		-	-
Contract Assets		378,981	1,947,969
Contract Liabilities		(277,387)	-
Other		-	-
Total included in Net Assets		101,594	1,947,969

4 Adjustments between an Accounting Basis and Funding Basis under Regulations

Amounts included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement but required by statute to be excluded when determining the Movement on the General Fund Balance for the year:

	Notes	2019/20 £	£	2018/19 £	£
Amounts included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement but required by statute to be excluded when determining the Movement on the General Fund Balance for the year:					
Impairments (losses & reversals) of non-current assets		-		-	
Derecognition (other than disposal) of non-current assets	11	-		-	
Revaluation increases/decreases taken to Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	11	1,605,228		(6,312,957)	
Depreciation charged in the year on non-current assets	11	19,364,089	20,969,317	18,313,014	12,000,057
Net Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute	12		-		-
Carrying amount of non current assets sold	11	4,704,852		350,000	
Proceeds from the sale of PP&E, investment property and intangible assets	8, 24	(4,942,650)	(237,798)	(430,080)	(80,080)
Difference between finance costs calculated on an accounting basis and finance costs calculated in accordance with statutory requirements			-		-
Net charges made for retirement benefits in accordance with IAS 19	20		30,234,000		38,826,000
Direct revenue financing of Capital Expenditure	12,25		(7,870,253)		(9,239,567)
Capital Grants and Donated Assets Receivable and Applied in year	10		(5,252,737)		(2,919,677)
Capital Grants Receivable and Unapplied in year	10		(5,087)		(133,188)
Rates Claw-Back Reserve			-		-
Adjustments in relation to Short-term compensated absences	26		5,880		13,595
Adjustments in relation to Lessor Arrangements			-		-
Landfill Regulations Reserve Adjustment			-		-
Provisions Discount Rate Reserve Adjustment	26		(55,098)		57,704
Amounts not included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement but required by statute to be included when determining the Movement on the General Fund Balance for the year					
Statutory Provision for the financing of Capital Investment	26		(7,547,320)		(5,874,116)
Employers contributions payable to the NILGOSC and retirement benefits payable direct to pensioners	20		(15,682,000)		(14,337,000)
			14,558,904		18,313,728

b Net transfers (to)/from statutory and other earmarked reserves:

	Notes	2019/20 £	2019/20 £	2018/19 £	2018/19 £
Capital Fund					
Interest		-		-	
From Capital		-		-	
Other	25c	(2,081,597)	(2,081,597)	247,604	247,604
Leisure Mobilisation Fund					
Interest		-		-	
Other	25d	553,902	553,902	262,632	262,632
Capital Receipts Reserve					
Interest		-		-	
Other	25	-	-	-	-
Other Funds and earmarked reserves					
Interest		(3,300)		(10,688)	
From Other funds		-		-	
Other	25f	674,607	671,307	(150,000)	(160,688)
Unusable reserves					
Capital Adjustment Account		-	-	-	-
			(856,388)		349,548

5 Cost of Services on Continuing Operations

a General power of competence

Under Section 79 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, the Council has the power to do anything that individuals generally may do. Councils have the power to do this with or without charge. The power of competence is not limited to benefitting the area or its residents nor is it limited by existing powers.

There was expenditure of £20k under the power of competence during 2019/20.

b External Audit Fees

The Council has incurred the following costs relating to the annual audit of the Statement of Accounts, certification of grant claims and other services provided by the Councils external auditors.

	2019/20 £	2018/19 £
External Audit Fees	89,000	78,000
National Fraud Initiative	-	1,982
Performance Improvement work	7,500	25,000
	96,500	104,982

The were no other fees payable in respect of any other services provided by the appointed auditor over and above those described above.

The reduction in the Performance Improvement audit fee for 2019/20 will be accounted for in the 2020/21 accounts.

6 Operating and Finance Leases

Council as Lessor

a Finance Leases (Council as lessor)

The Council leases out a number of land assets by long term leases with lease terms from 250 to 999 years. The leases for 250 years are on a perpetual basis and it is assumed the leases will be renewed so the economic substance is similar to disposal. The rental income is either nil or 5p per annum. Rent is not normally received on these properties and future minimum lease income is assumed to be nil.

The present value of lease payments receivable under the finance lease arrangements is recognised as a receivable and included in both short and long term debtors. The difference between the gross amount receivable and the present value of the amounts receivable is recognised as unearned finance income.

No contingent rents were recognised as receivable by the Council.

b Operating Leases (Council as lessor)

The Council, in accordance with its statutory and discretionary responsibilities, leases out property and equipment under operating leases for the following purposes:
- for the provision of community services, such as sports facilities, tourism services and community centres
- for economic development purposes to provide suitable affordable accommodation for small local businesses
- any other purposes

Rental income recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the current year amounts to £6,715,859 (18-19 £6,440,849). No contingent rents were recognised.

The lease contracts are all non-cancellable and do not include an extension option. The lease terms are between 1 and 125 years. Future minimum lease income is set out below:

	2019/20		2018/19	
	Land and Buildings	Vehicles, Plant and Equipment	Land and Buildings	Vehicles, Plant and Equipment
	£	£	£	£
Minimum lease rentals receivable:				
No later than 1 year	6,121,046		6,330,814	
Later than 1 year and no later than 5 years	21,353,343		21,156,154	
Later than 5 years	419,413,365		422,374,653	
	446,887,754	-	449,861,621	-

The assets leased by the Council to third parties are included in the following categories of Property, Plant and Equipment with carrying values of:

	2019/20		2018/19	
	Land and Buildings	Vehicles, Plant and Equipment	Land and Buildings	Vehicles, Plant and Equipment
	£	£	£	£
Cost	96,880,000	-	88,905,000	-
Accumulated depreciation and impairments at 1 April	-	-	-	-
Depreciation charge for the year	-	-	-	-
Impairments	(80,000)	-	4,525,000	-
Revaluations	195,103	-	2,500,000	-
Transfers and reclassifications	404,897	-	1,300,000	-
Disposals	(3,750,000)	-	(350,000)	-
	93,650,000	-	96,880,000	-

Council as Lessee

c Finance Leases (Council as lessee)

The Council has a number of assets of land held by long term leases from 980 to 10,000 years. Rental income is between 1p to £32 per annum, if demanded. Rent is not normally demanded on these properties and therefore future minimum lease payments are assumed to be nil.

The assets acquired under these leases are carried as property, plant and equipment in the Balance Sheet at the following net amounts:

	2019/20	2018/19
	£	£
Other Land and Buildings	676,789	678,204
Vehicles, Plant, Furniture and Equipment	-	-
	676,789	678,204

d Operating Leases (Council as lessee)

The Council is leasing a number of office buildings with lease terms up to 15 years and vehicles/office equipment with lease terms up to 5 years.

The expenditure charged to services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement during the year in relation to these leases was:

	2019/20		2018/19	
	Land and Buildings	Vehicles, Plant and Equipment	Land and Buildings	Vehicles, Plant and Equipment
	£	£	£	£
Minimum lease payments	282,971	144,784	249,809	9,801
Contingent rentals				
Less: Sublease payments receivable				
	282,971	144,784	249,809	9,801

No sub-lease payments or contingent rent payments were made or received. No sublease income is expected as all assets held under operating lease agreements are used exclusively by the Council.

The future minimum lease payments due under non-cancellable operating leases in future years are set out below:

	31st March 2020		31st March 2019	
	Land and Buildings	Vehicles, Plant and Equipment	Land and Buildings	Vehicles, Plant and Equipment
	£	£	£	£
Not later than 1 year	290,041	143,466	284,387	10,116
Later than 1 year and no later than 5 years	941,165	10,474	1,167,802	7,199
Later than 5 years	1,272,247	-	1,456,847	-
	2,503,453	153,940	2,909,036	17,315

7 Employee Costs and Member Allowances

a Staff Costs

	2019/20	2018/19
	£	£
Salaries and Wages	69,303,352	68,192,147
Employers NIC	6,617,311	6,331,569
Employers Superannuation	13,752,164	14,078,784
Total staff costs	**89,672,827**	**88,602,500**

The above staff costs include the costs of voluntary redundancies in 2019/20. These costs total £977,075 (18/19 £2,003,028) and are disclosed separately in Table 4 of the Remuneration Report. In addition, agency costs during the year amounted to £5,626,073 (2018/19 £4,818,572).

The Council's current contribution rate to NILGOSC scheme is 20% plus a 2% Deficit Recovery Contribution.

Average Number of Employees - where FTE represents fulltime equivalent employees

b Average Number of Employees

	2019/20	2018/19
	FTE	FTE
Strategic Policy & Resources	620	627
City Growth & Regeneration	146	153
People & Communities	1,162	1,225
Planning & Licensing	140	145
Total Number	**2,068**	**2,151**

	2019/20 Actual Numbers	2018/19 Actual Numbers
Full-time numbers employed	1,880	1,982
Part-time numbers employed	331	323
Total Number	**2,211**	**2,305**

c Senior Employees' Remuneration

	2019/20	2018/19
	£	£
£50,001 to £60,000	62	52
£60,001 to £70,000	22	15
£70,001 to £80,000	6	6
£80,001 to £90,000	6	4
£90,001 to £100,000	5	6
£100,001 to £110,000	4	4
£110,001 to £120,000	1	1
£120,001 to £130,000	-	-
£130,001 to £140,000	-	-
£140,001 to £150,000	1	1
Total Number	**107**	**89**

d Members' Allowances

	2019/20	2018/19
	£	£
Salaries	-	-
Basic Allowance	898,245	851,196
Mayor & Deputy Mayor's Allowance	40,582	41,050
Special Responsibility Allowance	103,281	106,691
High Sheriff's Allowance	6,250	6,250
Mileage	7,249	14,248
Conference & Courses	8,540	5,997
Travel & Subsistence	6,803	13,493
Miscellaneous Costs	-	-
PCSP Allowance	10,800	12,360
Telephone Rental	285	4,410
Total	1,082,035	1,055,695

e Northern Ireland Civil Service Pension Arrangements

As a result of Local Government Reform on 1st April 2015, staff transferred from Central Government to the Council but remain members of the Northern Ireland Civil Service Pension Scheme.

The Northern Ireland Civil Service Pension arrangements are unfunded multi-employer defined benefit schemes but the Department for Communities is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities. The Government Actuary's Department (GAD) is responsible for carrying out scheme valuations. The Actuary reviews employer contributions every four years following the scheme valuation. The 2016 scheme valuation has been finalised. The outcome of this valuation informed contribution rates from April 2019 for both employers and employees.

For 2019-20, employers' contributions of £327,779 (2018-19 £201,363) were payable to the NICS pension arrangements at one of three rates in the range 28.7% to 34.2% of pensionable pay, based on salary bands.

Employers' contribution rates are determined by the fund's actuary every three years at the triennial valuation. Contribution rates for the 2019/20 year were set from the triennial actuarial valuation of the fund as at 31 March 2016. A formal triennial actuarial valuation of the Fund as at 31 March 2019 was carried out in 2019/20. The contribution rates are set to meet the cost of the benefits accruing during 2019-20 to be paid when the member retires, and not the benefits paid during this period to existing pensioners.

8 Other Operating Income & Expenditure

a Surplus/Deficit on Non-Current Assets (excl Investment Properties)

	2019/20	2018/19
	£	£
Proceeds from sale	(1,192,650)	(30,080)
Carrying amount of non-current assets sold (excl Investment Properties)	954,852	-
	(237,798)	(30,080)

There are additional disposal costs totalling £3.8m included in People & Communities expenditure.

b Other Operating Income/ Expenditure

	2019/20	2018/19
	£	£
Income	-	-
Expenditure	-	-
	-	-

Other Operating Expenditure	2019/20	2018/19
	£	£
(Surplus) / Deficit on Non Current Assets	(237,798)	(30,080)
Other Operating (Income) / Expenditure	-	-
	(237,798)	(30,080)

9 Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure

a Interest Payable and Similar Charges

	2019/20	2018/19
	£	£
Lease/hire purchase interest	-	-
Bank interest	-	-
Government Loan Interest	1,974,258	1,733,342
Commercial Loan Interest	-	-
Other interest	64,410	78,389
	2,038,668	1,811,731

b Interest and Investment Income

	2019/20	2018/19
	£	£
Bank Interest	142,013	82,444
Employee car loan interest	2,153	4,677
NIHE Loan interest receivable	16,410	21,226
Investment income on Fund Balances		
Capital Fund	-	-
Repairs & Renewals Fund	-	-
Election Fund	3,300	10,688
Other Investment income	-	-
	163,876	**119,035**

c Pensions interest costs and expected return on pensions assets

	2019/20	2018/19
	£	£
Net interest on the net defined benefit liability (asset)	3,272,000	3,324,000
	3,272,000	3,324,000

d Surplus/ (Deficit) on trading operations

	2019/20	2018/19
	£	£
Income from trading	-	-
Expenditure	-	-
(Surplus)/Deficit for the year	-	-

e Income, Expenditure and changes in Fair Value of Investment Properties

	2019/20	2018/19
Income/Expenditure from Investment Properties:	£	£
Income including rental income	(6,715,859)	(6,440,849)
Expenditure	596,813	589,022
Net income from investment properties	(6,119,046)	(5,851,827)
Surplus/deficit on sale of Investment Properties		
Proceeds from sale	(3,750,000)	(400,000)
Carrying amount of investment properties sold	3,750,000	350,000
(Surplus)/deficit on sale of Investment Properties:	-	(50,000)
Changes in Fair Value of Investment Properties	(115,103)	(7,025,000)
	(6,234,149)	(12,926,827)

Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure	2019/20			2018/19		
	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Interest Payable and Similar Charges	2,038,668	-	2,038,668	1,811,731	-	1,811,731
Interest and Investment Income	-	(163,876)	(163,876)	-	(119,035)	(119,035)
Pensions interest cost	3,272,000	-	3,272,000	3,324,000	-	3,324,000
Surplus/(Deficit) on trading operations	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other investment income	4,346,813	(10,465,859)	(6,119,046)	939,022	(6,840,849)	(5,901,827)
Changes in Fair Value of Investment Properties	-	(115,103)	(115,103)	-	(7,025,000)	(7,025,000)
	9,657,481	(10,744,838)	(1,087,357)	6,074,753	(13,984,884)	(7,910,131)

10 Taxation and Non Specific Grant Income

a Revenue Grants

	2019/20	2018/19
	£	£
General	(6,029,559)	(5,159,231)
Other	-	-
	(6,029,559)	(5,159,231)

b Revenue Grants - Unapplied

	2019/20	2018/19
	£	£
Government & Other Grants - Conditions met and applied in year	-	-
Other	-	-
	-	-

c Capital Grants and Donated Assets - Applied

	2019/20	2018/19
	£	£
Government & Other Grants - Conditions met and applied in year	(4,523,587)	(2,867,245)
Government & Other Grants - Transfer from receipts in advance	(729,150)	(42,432)
Donated Assets - Conditions met	-	-
Donated Assets - Transfer from donated assets creditor	-	(10,000)
	(5,252,737)	(2,919,677)

d Capital grants from capital receipts unapplied

	2019/20	2018/19
	£	£
Government & Other Grants - Conditions met and not applied in year	-	-
Capital grants from capital receipts unapplied	(5,087)	(133,188)
	(5,087)	(133,188)

e District Rates

	2019/20	2018/19
	£	£
Current year	(157,796,334)	(154,726,084)
Finalisation - previous year	1,800,000	(50,000)
Transitional Relief	-	-
Finalisation - other years	(5,850)	(91,683)
	(156,002,184)	(154,867,767)

Taxation and Non Specific Grant Income	2019/20	2018/19
	£	£
District Rate Income	(156,002,184)	(154,867,767)
Revenue Grants	(6,029,559)	(5,159,231)
Capital Grants from capital receipts unapplied	(5,087)	(133,188)
Capital Grants and Contributions	(5,252,737)	(2,919,677)
	(167,289,567)	(163,079,863)

11 a Long - Term Assets - Current Year

Cost or Valuation	Land	Buildings	Infrastructure Assets	Landfill Sites	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	Community Assets	PP&E Under Construction	Surplus Assets	Total PP&E	Heritage Assets	Assets Held for Resale	TOTAL
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Balance as at 1 April 2019	101,444,001	418,784,515	5,774,607	-	42,744,747	47,025,764	48,154,248	5,689,001	**669,616,883**	9,158,827	-	**678,775,710**
Adjustments between cost/value & depreciation/impairment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(164)	-	**(164)**
Balance as at 1 April 2019	**101,444,001**	**418,784,515**	**5,774,607**	**-**	**42,744,747**	**47,025,764**	**48,154,248**	**5,689,001**	**669,616,883**	**9,158,663**	**-**	**678,775,546**
Additions	38	701,639	-	-	5,152,118	743,971	37,095,535	10,674	**43,703,975**	151,994	-	**43,855,969**
Donations	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluation increases/ (decreases) to Revaluation Reserve	2,546,720	11,560,018	-	-	-	-	-	-	**14,106,738**	51,758	-	**14,158,496**
Revaluation increases/ (decreases) to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	(218,574)	(3,290,973)	-	-	-	(400,302)	-	115,000	**(3,794,849)**	(265,217)	-	**(4,060,066)**
Impairment to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Derecognition - Disposals	-	-	-	-	(1,823,708)	(14,000)	-	(540,000)	**(2,377,708)**	-	-	**(2,377,708)**
Derecognition - Other	-	(4,149,100)	-	-	-	(21,071)	-	-	**(4,170,171)**	-	-	**(4,170,171)**
Reclassifications & Transfers	619,118	43,660,425	-	-	432,197	(8,271,333)	(39,001,412)	1,604,326	**(956,679)**	95,525	-	**(861,154)**
Reclassified to(-) / from(+) Held for Sale	-	-	-	-	-	186,274	-	(1,340,000)	**(1,153,726)**	-	-	**(1,153,726)**
Balance as at 31 March 2020	**104,391,303**	**467,266,524**	**5,774,607**	**-**	**46,505,354**	**39,249,303**	**46,248,371**	**5,539,001**	**714,974,463**	**9,192,723**	**-**	**724,167,186**

Depreciation and Impairment	Land	Buildings	Infrastructure Assets	Landfill Sites	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	Community Assets	PP&E Under Construction	Surplus Assets	Total PP&E	Heritage Assets	Assets Held for Resale	TOTAL
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Balance as at 1 April 2019	-	-	513,171	-	25,547,939	2,925,228	-	-	**28,986,338**	133,740	-	**29,120,078**
Adjustments between cost/value & depreciation/impairment	-	-	-	-	(1,037,101)	-	-	-	**(1,037,101)**	-	-	**(1,037,101)**
Balance as at 1 April 2019	-	-	513,171	-	24,510,838	2,925,228	-	-	27,949,237	133,740	-	28,082,977
Depreciation Charge	-	14,166,164	192,492	-	3,019,763	1,713,203	-	-	**19,091,622**	101,555	-	**19,193,177**
Depreciation written out on Revaluation Reserve	-	(13,687,932)	-	-	-	-	-	-	**(13,687,932)**	-	-	**(13,687,932)**
Depreciation written out on Revaluation taken to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	-	(2,131,861)	-	-	-	-	-	-	**(2,131,861)**	(208,034)	-	**(2,339,895)**
Impairment losses/reversals to Revaluation Reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Impairment losses/reversals to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Derecognition - Disposals	-	-	-	-	(1,503,188)	-	-	-	**(1,503,188)**	-	-	**(1,503,188)**
Derecognition - Other	-	(374,937)	-	-	-	(6,559)	-	-	**(381,496)**	-	-	**(381,496)**
Reclassifications & Transfers	-	2,028,566	-	-	-	(2,028,566)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Eliminated on reclassification to Held for Sale	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Balance as at 31 March 2020	-	-	705,663	-	26,027,413	2,603,306	-	-	**29,336,382**	27,261	-	**29,363,643**
Balance as at 31 March 2020	104,391,303	467,266,524	5,068,944	-	20,477,941	36,645,997	46,248,371	5,539,001	685,638,081	9,165,462	-	694,803,543

b Long - Term Assets - Comparative Year

Cost or Valuation	Land	Buildings	Infrastructure Assets	Landfill Sites	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	Community Assets	PP&E Under Construction	Surplus Assets	Total PP&E	Heritage Assets	Assets Held for Resale	TOTAL
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Balance as at 1 April 2018	100,840,501	414,305,914	5,774,607	-	41,921,733	44,867,100	25,304,135	7,129,001	**640,142,991**	8,631,550	-	**648,774,541**
Adjustments between cost/value & depreciation/impairment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Prior year purchase										-		-
Balance as at 1 April 2018	100,840,501	414,305,914	5,774,607	-	41,921,733	44,867,100	25,304,135	7,129,001	640,142,991	8,631,550	-	648,774,541
Additions	-	385,480	-	-	3,577,125	1,385,146	32,950,225	19,828	**38,317,804**	530,977	-	**38,848,781**
Donations	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluation increases/decreases to Revaluation Reserve	339,640	(3,703,588)	-	-	-	-	893,060	(60,000)	**(2,530,888)**	(3,700)	-	**(2,534,588)**
Revaluation increases/ decreases to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	263,860	(2,116,266)	-	-	-	(2)	5,539	(19,828)	**(1,866,697)**	-	-	**(1,866,697)**
Impairment to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Derecognition - Disposals	-	-	-	-	(1,884,805)	-	-	-	**(1,884,805)**	-	-	**(1,884,805)**
Derecognition - Other	-	-	-	-	(994,916)	-	-	-	**(994,916)**	-	-	**(994,916)**
Reclassifications & Transfers	-	9,912,975	-	-	125,610	960,127	(10,998,711)	(1,300,000)	**(1,299,999)**	-	-	**(1,299,999)**
Reclassified to(-) / from(+) Held for Sale	-	-	-	-	-	(186,607)	-	(80,000)	**(266,607)**	-	-	**(266,607)**
Balance as at 31 March 2019	101,444,001	418,784,515	5,774,607	-	42,744,747	47,025,764	48,154,248	5,689,001	669,616,883	9,158,827	-	678,775,710

Depreciation and Impairment	Land	Buildings	Infrastructure Assets	Landfill Sites	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	Community Assets	PP&E Under Construction	Surplus Assets	Total PP&E	Heritage Assets	Assets Held for Resale	TOTAL
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Balance as at 1 April 2018	-	-	320,679	-	25,353,410	1,443,891	-	-	27,117,980	35,467	-	27,153,447
Adjustments between cost/value & depreciation/impairment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Balance as at 1 April 2018	-	-	320,679	-	25,353,410	1,443,891	-	-	27,117,980	35,467	-	27,153,447
Depreciation Charge	-	13,337,713	192,492	-	3,074,250	1,481,337	-	-	**18,085,792**	98,273	-	**18,184,065**
Depreciation written out on Revaluation Reserve	-	(12,183,059)	-	-	-	-	-	-	**(12,183,059)**	-	-	**(12,183,059)**
Depreciation written out on Revaluation taken to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	-	(1,154,654)	-	-	-	-	-	-	**(1,154,654)**	-	-	**(1,154,654)**
Impairment losses/reversals to Revaluation Reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Impairment losses/reversals to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Derecognition - Disposals	-	-	-	-	(1,884,805)	-	-	-	**(1,884,805)**	-	-	**(1,884,805)**
Derecognition - Other	-	-	-	-	(994,916)	-	-	-	**(994,916)**	-	-	**(994,916)**
Reclassifications & Transfers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Eliminated on reclassification to Held for Sale	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Balance as at 31 March 2019	-	-	513,171	-	25,547,939	2,925,228	-	-	28,986,338	133,740	-	29,120,078
Net Book Values												
Balance as at 31 March 2019	101,444,001	418,784,515	5,261,436	-	17,196,808	44,100,536	48,154,248	5,689,001	640,630,545	9,025,087	-	649,655,632
Balance as at 31 March 2020	104,391,303	467,266,524	5,068,944	-	20,477,941	36,645,997	46,248,371	5,539,001	685,638,081	9,165,462	-	694,803,543

Valuations

The land and buildings assets held by the Council were valued originally as at 1 April 1997 by the Valuations and Lands Agency, in accordance with the statements of asset valuation practice and guidance notes of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors. The Council operates a rolling programme for the valuation of its land and building properties with approximately 25% of these being revalued discretely by physical inspection each year, and the remainder being revalued by a desktop exercise.

In the 2019/20 year, land and buildings including investment properties were valued as at 31 March 2020. The valuations were carried out by Land and Property Services (LPS), a part of the Department of Finance. The valuations were reported by LPS during the initial period of the COVID-19 pandemic, and are made on the basis of "material valuation uncertainty" as per VPS 3 and VPGA 10 of the RICS Global Standards. Consequently, less certainty, and a higher degree of caution, should be attached to these valuations than would normally be the case.

The outbreak of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), declared by the World Health Organisation as a "Global Pandemic" on 11th March 2020, has impacted global financial markets and the UK economy widely. Market activity is being impacted in many sectors. As at the valuation date, the Council's property valuers consider that they can attach less weight to previous market evidence for comparison purposes, to inform opinions of value. Indeed, the current response to COVID-19 means that we are faced with an unprecedented set of circumstances on which to base a judgement. The valuations for the Council's property as at 31 March 2020 are therefore reported on the basis of 'material valuation uncertainty' as per VPS 3 and VPGA 10 of the RICS Global Standards. Consequently, less certainty – and a higher degree of caution – should be attached to them than would normally be the case. For the avoidance of doubt, the inclusion of the 'material valuation uncertainty' declaration above does not mean that the valuation cannot be relied upon. Rather, the declaration has been included to ensure transparency of the fact that, in the current extraordinary circumstances, less certainty can be attached to the property valuations than would otherwise be the case. The material uncertainty clause is to serve as a precaution and does not invalidate the valuation. Given the unknown future impact that COVID-19 might have on both the global and local real estate markets, the Council, through our valuers, will keep these valuations under frequent review.

Capital Commitments

A total of 6 capital contracts were entered into during the period:

Project Name	Date	Capital Commitment
Leisure Programme - submersible lifts	08/05/2019	115,000
Leisure Programme - sports hall/pool inflatable it	18/07/2019	108,000
Leisure Programme - pool equipment	10/08/2019	133,000
Cathedral Gardens	20/09/2019	150,000
New Crematorium at Roselawn	01/10/2019	1,200,000
City Cemetery Visitor Centre	01/03/2020	1,000,000
	Total	**2,706,000**

Effects of Changes in Estimates

In financial year 2018-19, the Council reviewed its accounting policy for community assets, and adopted the historic cost option, where applicable, for the recognition and measurement of community assets as set out in the Code. This was to present more clearly to users of the Council's financial statements the amount of resources invested by the Council in its community assets. During 2019-20, all community assets were reviewed by function and use, and where necessary reclassified to other appropriate classes of assets. Community assets with depreciable components have a depreciation charge applied, but community asset land only is not depreciated.

In financial year 2019-20, the council reviewed its accounting policy for heritage assets. It recognised that its accounting practice to hold a heritage asset at a nominal £1 when its value could not be measured reliably was not in accordance with the "Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom" (the Code). The Code requires that such assets are disclosed in a separate note to the financial statements, which the council has continued to do since the classification of heritage assets was introduced by the Code, but should not be reported in the balance sheet. Accordingly, 164 such assets previously recorded at £1 were derecognised from the balance sheet, but continue to be held by the Council in its collection of heritage assets. This change is detailed further in the Heritage Assets note.

In financial year 2019-20, the council reviewed its accounting estimation technique for depreciation of vehicles. This was made possible by improvements in statistical analysis of the vehicle fleet using the finance system. As a result, more appropriate useful lives were assigned to the different types of vehicles held by the Council. This resulted in changes to the estimation of depreciation charge for vehicles in 2019-20 and in future years; but because this is a change in estimation technique, there is no requirement to restate depreciation in previous years. The impact of this change is reflected in this asset category.

There were no material changes in accounting estimates for other classes of property, plant and equipment during the period.

Surplus Assets

Surplus assets are non-current assets that are not being used to deliver services but which do not meet the criteria to be classified as either investment properties or non-current assets held for sale. Assets held for sale are assets which are not being used to deliver services and whose economic value will be realised by disposal, are actively being marketed, and ordinarily are expected to be disposed of within 12 months of the balance sheet date.

Impairment

There were material impairments to property and investment property during the period. Impairments over £500,000 are detailed in the table below:

Asset	Amount of impairment £	Asset class	Reason
Olympia Leisure Centre	(558,583)	Operational building	Valuation at 31.03.2020
Sum of material impairments over £500,000	(558,583)		

The Olympia leisure centre was brought into operation in January 2017. Its value was remeasured at 31 March 2020 using depreciated replacement cost basis, the valuation method for this type of specialised property, to reflect its current estimated service potential.

11 c Property, plant and equipment

Depreciation
The useful lives and depreciation rates applied to calculate the depreciation are outlined in Note1.

d Intangible Assets

Intangible assets relate to landfill closure costs with a net book value of £nil (2018/19: £nil) and a gross cost before amortisation of £16,700k (2018/19: £16,700k); and purchased licensed software and related implementation costs with a net book value of £618k (2018/19: £333k), and a gross costs before amortisation of £2,796k (2018/19: £2,409k).

Intangible Assets	2019/20	2018/19
	£	£
Balance at start of year:		
Gross carrying amounts	19,108,746	19,108,746
Accumulated amortisation	(18,776,040)	(18,647,091)
Net carrying amount at start of year	332,706	461,655
Additions	-	-
Amortisation for the period	(170,912)	(128,949)
Reclassification and transfer from WIP	456,257	-
Net carrying amount at end of year	**618,051**	**332,706**
Comprising:		
Gross carrying amounts	19,565,003	19,108,746
Accumulated amortisation	(18,946,952)	(18,776,040)
Net carrying amount at end of year	**618,051**	**332,706**

e Investment Properties

The following items of income and expense have been accounted for in the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:

Investment Properties	31/03/2020	31/03/2019
	£	£
Rental Income from Investment Activities	6,715,859	6,440,849
Direct Operating expenses arising from investment properties	(596,813)	(589,022)
Net gain/(loss)	**6,119,046**	**5,851,827**

The following table summarises the movement in the fair value of investment properties over the year:

Investment Properties	2019/20	2018/19
	£	£
Balance at start of the year	96,880,000	88,905,000
Additions	-	-
Disposals	(3,750,000)	(350,000)
Net gains/losses from fair value adjustments	115,103	7,025,000
Transfers to/ from inventories	254,897	
Transfers to/ from property, plant and equipment	150,000	
Other changes	-	1,300,000
Balance at end of the year	**93,650,000**	**96,880,000**

Investment Properties are comprised of the following properties, all held at valuation:

Investment Property	2019/20	2018/19
	£	£
Industrial Estates	72,500,000	73,800,000
Commercial Units	21,150,000	23,080,000
Balance at end of the year	**93,650,000**	**96,880,000**

Summary of the net book values of non-current assets as reported in the balance sheet

Non-current assets	Total PP&E	Heritage Assets	Investment Properties	Intangible Assets	TOTAL
	£	£	£	£	£
Net Book Value as at 31 March 2019	**640,630,545**	**9,025,087**	**96,880,000**	**332,706**	**746,868,338**
Net change in cost or valuation	45,357,580	33,896	(3,230,000)	456,257	42,617,733
Depreciation and Impairment in the year	(350,043)	106,480	-	(170,912)	(414,475)
Net movement for the year	**45,007,537**	**140,376**	**(3,230,000)**	**285,345**	**42,203,258**
Net Book Value as at 31 March 2020	**685,638,082**	**9,165,463**	**93,650,000**	**618,051**	**789,071,596**

Fair Value Hierarchy

Details of the Council's Investment Properties and information about the fair value hierarchy as at 31 March 2020 and 2019 are as follows

2019/20 Recurring fair value measurements using:	Quoted Prices in active markets for identical assets (Level 1)	Other significant observable inputs (Level 2)	Significant unobservable inputs (Level 3)	Fair value as at 31st March 2019
	£	£	£	£
Industrial Estates and Commercial Units	-	93,650,000	-	-
Total	-	**93,650,000**	-	-

2018/19 Recurring fair value measurements using:	Quoted Prices in active markets for identical assets (Level 1)	Other significant observable inputs (Level 2)	Significant unobservable inputs (Level 3)	Fair value as at 31st March 2018
	£	£	£	£
Industrial Estates and Commercial Units	-	96,880,000	-	-
Total	-	**96,880,000**	-	-

Transfers between levels of the fair value hierarchy

There were no transfers between Levels 1 and 2 during the year.

Investment Properties are considered to have enough uniqueness so they no longer can be compared to similar items that are used for reference in an active market, and are valued using inputs other than quoted prices that are observable. As such, they are valued using Level 2 inputs.

Valuation techniques used to determine Level 2 and 3 Fair Values for Investment Properties

Significant Observable Inputs - Level 2

In 2019/20, all Investment Properties were measured using the same methodology as in 2018/19 and additionally for Industrial Estates included within Investment Properties, an assessment is made of their incomes and expenditure over the preceding rolling 5-year period. The inputs used to value these properties have been classified as Level 2, other significant observable inputs.

Highest and best use of Investment Properties

In estimating the fair value of the Council's Investment Properties, the highest and best use of the properties is their current use, reflecting best estimates of fair value given by current prices on a market for similar property in similar locations.

Valuation Techniques

There has been no change in the valuation techniques used during the year for Investment Properties.
Gains or losses arising from changes in the fair value of the investment properties are recognised in Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services - Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line.

Valuation process for Investment Properties

The fair value of the Council's investment properties is measured at market value as at 31 March 2020. All valuations are carried out by Land and Property Services, in accordance with their methodologies and bases for estimation as set out in the professional standards of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. The Council's valuation experts work closely with Council finance officers reporting directly to the Chief Financial Officer on a regular basis regarding all valuation matters.

f Heritage Assets

The Council's collection of heritage assets consists of works of art, civic items, donated works of art, and certain historic buildings and monuments with historical, artistic, scientific, technological, geophysical or environmental qualities that are held and maintained principally for their contribution to knowledge and culture. These assets are reported in the balance sheet at valuation; or at insurance valuation as a proxy for market value; or, if it is not possible to obtain a valuation, they are measured at historic cost less depreciation, amortisation or impairment losses. Insurance valuations are updated on a periodic basis.

Where no cost can be measured accurately for a heritage asset, it is not held on the balance sheet at a monetary value. The item will still be retained in the Council's possession and will form part of its heritage asset collection. There are currently 168 of these items recorded by Belfast City Council.

Heritage assets- additions	31/03/2020	31/03/2019
Neil Shawcross "Writers of Belfast" collection	-	430,000
Portrait of Councillor Nuala McAllister	-	10,850
Tropical Ravine	130,992	90,127
9 Adelaide Art Collection	20,000	
Shapes of Home Painting	1,000	
Botanic Gardens - Palm House (land)	1	
Botanic Gardens - Tropical Ravine (land)	1	
Total	**151,994**	**530,977**

There were a number of reclassifications from property, plant and equipment, and transfers from assets under construction, to heritage assets during the year. Additions were made to the Tropical Ravine building, the Council's art collection and the Baby Haven memorial at City Cemetery. "The Knotted Gun" artwork was donated to the Council. Following a review of the Council's community assets, a number of land properties and monuments were reclassified to heritage assets at either valuation or at no valuation for the purposes of stewardship, in accordance with the Council's heritage asset accounting policy.

From 1 April 2019, 164 heritage assets that do not have a value that can be measured reliably but which were previously carried There were no disposals of heritage assets during 2019/20.

g Assets Held for Sale

Assets Held for Sale	Current	Non Current	Total
	£	£	£
Cost or Valuation			
Balance as at 1 April 2019	266,607	-	266,607
Adjustments between cost/value & depreciation/impairment	-	-	-
Transferred from Non-Current Assets during year	1,340,000	-	1,340,000
Assets Held for Sale Donations	-	-	-
Assets Held for Sale Revaluation increases/decreases to Revaluation	-	-	-
Revaluation increases/decreases taken to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	-	-	-
Assets Held for Sale Impairment @ Cost to Provision of Services	-	-	-
Derecognition - Disposals	(80,333)	-	(80,333)
Derecognition - Other	-	-	-
Reclassified from Current Assets Held for Sale to non current Assets Held for Sale	-	-	-
Transferred to Property, Plant & Equipment during year	(186,274)	-	(186,274)
Balance as at 31 March 2020	**1,340,000**	**-**	**1,340,000**
Impairment			
Balance as at 1 April 2019	-	-	-
Adjustments between cost/value & depreciation/impairment	-	-	-
Impairment losses/reversals taken to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	-	-	-
Derecognition - Disposals	-	-	-
Derecognition - Other	-	-	-
Reclassified from Current Assets Held for Sale to non current Assets Held	-	-	-
Transferred to Property, Plant & Equipment during year	-	-	-
Balance as at 31 March 2020	**-**	**-**	**-**
Net Book Value			
Balance as at 31 March 2020	**1,340,000**	**-**	**1,340,000**
Balance as at 31 March 2019	**266,607**	**-**	**266,607**

Two non-current assets were reclassified to current assets held for sale during 2019/20. The gain on assets classified to held for sale and sold during the year was £130k.

Assets Held for Sale	Current	Non Current	Total
	£	£	£
Cost or Valuation			
Balance as at 1 April 2018	-	-	-
Adjustments between cost/value & depreciation/impairment		-	-
Transferred from Non-Current Assets during year	266,607	-	**266,607**
Assets Held for Sale Donations	-	-	-
Assets Held for Sale Revaluation increases/decreases to Revaluation	-	-	-
Revaluation increases/decreases taken to Surplus or Deficit on the	-	-	-
Assets Held for Sale Impairment @ Cost to Provision of Services	-	-	-
Derecognition - Disposals	-	-	-
Derecognition - Other	-	-	-
Reclassified from Current Assets Held for Sale to non current Assets Held	-	-	-
Transferred to Property, Plant & Equipment during year	-	-	-
Balance as at 31 March 2019	**266,607**	**-**	**266,607**
Impairment			
Balance as at 1 April 2018	-	-	-
Adjustments between cost/value & depreciation/impairment	-	-	-
Impairment losses/reversals taken to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	-	-	-
Derecognition - Disposals	-	-	-
Derecognition - Other	-	-	-
Reclassified from Current Assets Held for Sale to non current Assets Held	-	-	-
Transferred to Property, Plant & Equipment during year	-	-	-
Balance as at 31 March 2019	**-**	**-**	**-**

Three non-current assets were reclassified to current assets held for sale during 2018/19. No non current assets held for sale were disposed of during 2018/19.

h Fair Value Hierarchy for Surplus Assets

Surplus assets are non-operational assets that do not meet the conditions to be classified as assets held for sale. They are measured at fair value, reflecting the actual market state and conditions at the balance sheet date (which is the valuation date) with best evidence of fair value in an active market for similar properties in the same location. The council classifies assets to surplus assets on the advice of its estates management officers and in consultation with its external property valuers.

The surplus assets held by the council comprise a number of properties including land, buildings or sites of land and buildings combined, which have not reached the stage where the council can market these for sale advantageously, or where the properties have restrictions that prevent them currently being brought to market.

Details of the Council's surplus assets and information about the fair value hierarchy as at 31 March 2020 and 2019 are as follows:

2019/20 Recurring fair value measurements using:	Quoted Prices in active markets for identical assets (Level 1)	Other significant observable inputs (Level 2)	Significant unobservable inputs (Level 3)	Fair value as at 31st March 2019
	£	£	£	£
Land	-	1,924,001	-	**1,924,001**
Buildings	-	620,000	-	**620,000**
Land and Buildings combined	-	2,995,000	-	**2,995,000**
Total	-	**5,539,001**	-	**5,539,001**

2018/19 Recurring fair value measurements using:	Quoted Prices in active markets for identical assets (Level 1)	Other significant observable inputs (Level 2)	Significant unobservable inputs (Level 3)	Fair value as at 31st March 2018
	£	£	£	£
Land	-	1,824,001	-	**1,824,001**
Buildings	-	380,000	-	**380,000**
Land and Buildings combined	-	3,485,000	-	**3,485,000**
Total	-	**5,689,001**	-	**5,689,001**

Surplus Assets are considered to have enough uniqueness that they no longer can be compared to similar items that are used for reference in an active market, and are valued using inputs other than quoted prices that are observable. As such, they are valued using Level 2 inputs.

Transfers between levels of the fair value hierarchy

There were no transfers between Levels 1 and 2 during the year.

In 2019/20, all Surplus Assets were measured using the same methodology as in 2018/19. The inputs used to value these properties have been classified as Level 2, other significant observable inputs, due to the uniqueness of these properties.

Highest and best use of surplus assets

In estimating the fair value of the Council's surplus assets, the highest and best use of the assets is their current use, reflecting best estimates of fair value given by current prices on a market for similar property in similar locations.

Valuation Techniques

There has been no change in the valuation techniques used during the year for surplus assets.

The fair value of the Council's Surplus Assets is measured at market valuation as at 31 March 2020. All valuations are carried out externally by Land and Property Services, in accordance with the methodologies and bases for estimation set out in the professional standards of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. The valuations were reported by LPS during the initial period of the COVID-19 pandemic, and are made on the basis of "material valuation uncertainty" as per VPS 3 and VPGA 10 of the RICS Global Standards. Consequently, less certainty, and a higher degree of caution, should be attached to these valuations than would normally be the case. The Council's valuation experts work closely with finance officers reporting directly to the chief financial officer on a regular basis regarding all valuation matters.

12 Capital Expenditure and Capital Financing

The total amount of capital expenditure incurred in the year is shown in the table below (including the value of assets acquired under finance leases and PFI contracts), together with the resources that have been used to finance it. Where capital expenditure is to be financed in future years by charges to revenue as assets are used by the Council, the expenditure results in an increase in the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), a measure of the capital expenditure incurred historically by the Council that is yet to be financed. The CFR is analysed in the second part of this note.

Capital Expenditure		2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Opening Capital Financing Requirement		115,001,044	94,318,811
Capital Investment			
Property, Plant and Equipment	11	43,855,969	38,848,781
Investment Properties		-	-
Intangible Assets		-	-
Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute		-	-
Investments		-	89,928
Sources of Finance			
Capital Receipts		-	-
Government Grants and Other Contributions	10	(5,257,824)	(3,052,865)
Transfers from Earmarked Reserves		-	(89,928)
Sums set aside from Revenue:			
Direct Revenue Contributions		(7,870,253)	(9,239,567)
Minimum Revenue Provision		(7,547,320)	(5,874,116)
Closing Capital Financing Requirement		138,181,616	115,001,044

Explanation of Movements in Year	2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Increase in underlying need to borrow	23,180,572	20,682,233
Assets acquired under finance leases	-	-
Assets acquired under PFI/PPP contracts	-	-
Increase/(decrease) in Capital Financing Requirement	23,180,572	20,682,233

13 Future Capital Commitments

		Gross Cost £	Grant Aid £	Net Cost £
Schemes underway		85,701,258	4,572,896	81,128,362
Other Commitments		52,378,867	6,493,147	45,885,720
Total		138,080,125	11,066,043	127,014,082

Total net expenditure of £17,605,115 has been incurred against these projects in the year ended 31 March 2020.

14 Inventories

Inventories	2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Central Stores	370,474	276,290
Total	370,474	276,290

The cost of inventories written down, recognised as an expense and included in 'services' amounted to £591,234 (18/19 £643,688).

15 **Debtors**

a **Long Term Debtors**

	2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Government Departments	-	-
Other Councils	-	-
Public corporations and trading funds	-	-
Bodies external to general government	-	-
Employee car loans	49,664	59,591
Revenue Grants	-	-
Capital Grants	-	-
Interest Receivable	-	-
Capital Debtors	-	-
Loans and advances	-	-
Finance lease debtors	-	-
Trade debtors	218,298	285,208
NIHE Loans	171,580	258,860
Other	-	-
Impairment of loans and receivables	-	-
Contract Receivables	-	-
Total Long-Term Debtors	**439,542**	**603,659**

b **Short Term Debtors**

	2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Government Departments	856,648	611,491
Other Councils	229,001	58,122
Public corporations and trading funds	-	-
Bodies external to general government	-	-
NIHE loans	87,280	81,950
Employee car loans	41,483	56,516
Revenue Grants	5,856,018	5,933,912
Capital Grants	2,374,703	1,733,211
Interest Receivable	-	-
Capital Debtors	-	-
Value Added Tax	2,524,478	1,848,860
Prepayments	3,999,514	3,527,783
Finance lease debtors	-	-
Other	3,298,710	250,722
Trade receivables	2,389,943	1,117,365
Impairment loss - Trade receivables	(805,888)	(283,594)
Contract Receivables	378,981	1,947,969
Total Short-Term Debtors	**21,230,871**	**16,884,307**

Total Debtors	**21,670,413**	**17,487,966**

Trade debtors, inclusive of VAT, can be analysed by age as follows:

		£
Less than 3 months		3,239,834
Three months to one year		614,739
More then one year		218,298
		4,072,871

16 **Borrowings**

a **Short Term Borrowing**

		2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Loans re-payable within one year		9,739,488	4,000,000
Finance Lease Principal		-	-
Total Short Term Borrowing		**9,739,488**	**4,000,000**

b **Long Term Borrowing**

		2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Between 1 and 2 years		4,000,000	7,136,376
Between 2 and 5 years		4,469,327	5,061,000
Between 5 and 10 years		3,500,000	9,197,934
In more than 10 years		50,997,846	37,493,671
Government Loans Fund		**62,967,173**	**58,888,981**

Total Borrowing		**72,706,661**	**62,888,981**

17 Creditors

a Short Term Creditors

	2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Government Departments	1,585,600	1,818,188
Other Councils	4,040	13,010
Public corporations and trading funds	-	-
Bodies external to general government	-	-
Rates clawback	1,800,000	100,000
VAT	-	-
Remuneration due to employees	403,046	583,873
Accumulated Absences	1,363,705	1,357,825
Loan Interest Payable	346,162	331,903
Capital Creditors	2,096,936	1,450,637
Receipts in advance	6,374,183	4,473,249
Trade creditors	4,801,202	2,499,735
Creditor Accruals	13,740,133	17,468,846
Contract Payables	277,387	-
Total Short Term Creditors	**32,792,394**	**30,097,266**

b Long Term Creditors

Other creditors falling due after more than one year	2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Government Departments	-	-
Other Councils	-	-
Public corporations and trading funds	-	-
Bodies external to general government	-	-
Rates clawback	-	-
Remuneration due to employees	-	-
Accumulated Absences	-	-
Receipts in advance	-	-
Trade creditors	-	-
Other	50,386	50,386
Contract Payables	-	-
Total Long Term Creditors	50,386	50,386
Total Creditors	**32,842,780**	**30,147,652**

c Payment of Invoices

The council has a target, where no other terms are agreed, of paying supplier invoices within 30 days. During the year 19/20 the Council paid 67,810 (18/19 61,520) invoices totalling £182,900,458 (18/19 £163,474,395).

The Council paid:
63,385 invoices within 30 calendar days target (2018/19: 56,029);
50,885 invoices within 10 working days target (2018/19: 39,940); and
4,425 invoices outside of the 30 day target (2018/19: 5,491).

The average number of days taken to pay suppliers during the year was 10 days (2018/19: 15 days).

The Council paid 93% of invoices within the target of 30 days, against the target objective of 90%.

18 Provisions

	Balance as at 1 April 2019 £	(Decrease)/Increase in provision during year £	Utilised during year £	Unused amounts reversed £	Interest cost and/or discount rate changes £	Balance as at 31 March 2020 £
Landfill Closure	3,550,409	(26,957)	(52,732)	-	(21,719)	**3,449,001**
Claims Management	1,133,757	445,220	(73,767)	-	-	**1,505,210**
Total	**4,684,166**	**418,263**	**(126,499)**	**-**	**(21,719)**	**4,954,211**
Current Provisions	2,894,851	418,263	(126,499)	-	(55,098)	**3,131,517**
Long Term Provisions	1,789,315	-	-	-	33,379	**1,822,694**
Total	**4,684,166**	**418,263**	**(126,499)**	**-**	**(21,719)**	**4,954,211**

Comparative Year

Provisions	Balance as at 1 April 2018 £	Increase in provision during year £	Utilised during year £	Unused amounts reversed £	Interest cost and/or discount rate changes £	Restated Balance as at 31 March 2019 £
Landfill Closure	3,530,260	(26,778)	(50,853)	-	97,780	**3,550,409**
Claims Management	1,125,952	45,413	(37,608)	-	-	**1,133,757**
Total	**4,656,212**	**18,635**	**(88,461)**	**-**	**97,780**	**4,684,166**
Current Provisions	2,906,973	18,635	(88,461)	-	57,704	**2,894,851**
Long Term Provisions	1,749,239	-	-	-	40,076	**1,789,315**
Total	**4,656,212**	**18,635**	**(88,461)**	**-**	**97,780**	**4,684,166**

Landfill Closure

The financial provision for the capping and annual monitoring costs required to meet the Council's environmental obligations under the NIEA licence has been agreed on a Local Authority Deed. The discount rates applied on the provision are based on PWLB borrowing rates adjusted for inflation which has resulted in a valuation of £3,449,001.

Claims Management

A provision of £1,505,210 has been made in respect of public liability, employer's liability and other claims/legal cases notified but not processed. Adequate insurance arrangements are in place covering the Council's activities as recommended by the Council's Insurance Brokers. The related insurance premiums paid are accounted for in the financial statements. At 31 March 2020, the total liability for legal cases notified but not processed amounted to an estimated maximum liability of £2,638,755.

19 Financial Instruments

Financial Assets as at 31 March 2020

The Council has the following non-current Investments and debtors:

The Council's contribution to Beltel LLP is included in 'Investments in Associates and Joint Ventures' and is disclosed at the original value of the contribution.

The majority of the long term debtor relate to trade debtors as well as balances with NIHE and car loan balances with employees. The relevant credit losses have been calculated and included in the impairment loss balance.

Current financial assets, namely trade debtors, employee car loans and cash balances have been assessed and relevant credit losses calculated. These amounts are included in the impairment loss balance of £805,888 for 2019/20.

The employee car loan rate is currently 2.2%, in comparison to the HMRC official rate of 2.5%.

Financial Liabilities as at 31 March 2020

The Council is in receipt of loans from the Department of Finance at concessionary interest rates that differ from the prevailing market rates. The fair value of these loans is £76,353,871 (2018-19 £69,174,552).

20 Retirement Benefits

a Participation in the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Pension Fund.

As part of the terms and conditions of employment of its officers and other employees, the Council offers retirement benefits. Although these benefits will not actually be payable until employees retire, the Council has a commitment to make the payments that need to be disclosed at the time that employees earn their future entitlement.

The Council participates in the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Pension Fund administered by the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee. This is a funded scheme, meaning that the Council and employees pay contributions into a fund, calculated at a level intended to balance the pension's liabilities with investment assets.

b Transactions relating to retirement benefits - Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

The Council recognises the cost of retirement benefits in the Cost of Services on Continuing Operations when they are earned by employees, rather than when the benefits are eventually paid as pensions.

However, the charge the Council is required to make against district rates is based on the cash payable in the year, and the real cost of retirement benefits is reversed out in the adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations line, in the Movement on Reserves Statement.

The following transactions have been made in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations line, in the Movement on Reserves Statement during the year:

	Note	2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Net cost of services:			
Current service cost		26,101,000	20,655,000
Past service cost/(gain)*		861,000	14,847,000
Gains and losses on settlements or curtailments		-	-
Net operating expenditure:			
Net interest on net defined benefit Liability (asset)		3,272,000	3,324,000
Total Post-employment Benefits charged to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services		30,234,000	38,826,000
Movement in Reserves Statement:			
Reversal of net charges made for retirement benefits in accordance with IAS 19 and the Code		(30,234,000)	(38,826,000)
Actual amount charged against the general fund balance for pensions in the year:			
Employers' contributions payable to scheme		15,682,000	14,337,000
Net adjustment to General Fund		(14,552,000)	(24,489,000)

The service cost figures include an allowance for administration expenses of £325k (18/19 £250k).

The impact of the McCloud judgement has been allowed for in these figures with the change in allowance over the period being treated as an experience item through Other Comprehensive Income.

Remeasurements recognised in Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	Note	2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Liability gains/(losses) due to change in assumptions		15,149,000	(40,332,000)
Liability gains/(losses) due to demographic changes		25,468,000	29,809,000
Liability experience gains/(losses) arising in the year		3,948,000	(196,000)
Actuarial gains/(losses) on plan assets		(65,748,000)	26,042,000
Other		-	-
Total gains/(losses) recognised in Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure		**(21,183,000)**	**15,323,000**

c

Assets and liabilities in relation to retirement benefits Reconciliation of present value of the scheme liabilities:	Note	2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Balance as at 1 April		749,718,000	696,976,000
Current service cost		26,101,000	20,655,000
Interest cost		17,812,000	17,977,000
Contributions by members		4,379,000	4,190,000
Remeasurement (gains) and losses:			
Actuarial gains/losses arising from changes in financial assumptions		(15,149,000)	40,332,000
Actuarial gains/losses arising from demographic changes		(25,468,000)	(29,809,000)
Actuarial gains/losses arising on liabilities from experience		(3,948,000)	196,000
Other (if applicable)		-	-
Past service costs/(gains)*		861,000	14,847,000
Losses/(gains) on curtailments		-	-
Liabilities extinguished on settlements		-	-
Estimated unfunded benefits paid		(730,000)	(757,000)
Estimated benefits paid		(19,200,000)	(14,889,000)
Balance as at 31 March		**734,376,000**	**749,718,000**

Reconciliation of present value of the scheme assets:	Note	2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Balance as at 1 April		605,603,058	562,027,058
Interest Income		14,540,000	14,653,000
Contributions by members		4,379,000	4,190,000
Contributions by employer		14,952,000	13,580,000
Contributions in respect of unfunded benefits		730,000	757,000
Remeasurement gain/(loss)		(65,748,000)	26,042,000
Assets distributed on settlements		-	-
Unfunded benefits paid		(730,000)	(757,000)
Benefits paid		(19,200,000)	(14,889,000)
Balance as at 31 March		**554,526,058**	**605,603,058**

Belfast City Council employs a building block approach in determining the rate of return on Fund assets. Historical markets are studied and assets with higher volatility are assumed to generate higher returns consistent with widely accepted capital market principles. The assumed rate of return on each asset class is calculated and the overall expected rate of return on assets so derived by aggregating the expected return for each asset class over the actual asset allocation for the Fund at 31 March 2020.

The actual return on scheme assets in the year was a loss of £51,208k (2018/19 gain of £40,695k).

Fair Value of Plan Assets	2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Equity investments	236,228,134	360,333,843
Bonds	214,601,562	142,316,705
Property	55,452,600	67,827,536
Cash	26,062,722	16,351,281
Other	22,181,040	18,773,693
	554,526,058	**605,603,058**

The Council's share of the Net Pension Liability (included in the Balance Sheet):

	2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Fair Value of Employer Assets	554,526,058	605,603,058
Present value of funded defined benefit obligation	(724,096,000)	(738,398,000)
Pension asset/(liability) of Funded Scheme	(169,569,942)	(132,794,942)
Present Value of unfunded defined benefit obligation	(10,280,000)	(11,320,000)
Other movement in the liability (asset) (if applicable)	-	-
Net asset/(liability) arising from the defined benefit obligation	(179,849,942)	(144,114,942)
Amount in the Balance sheet:		
Liabilities	(734,376,000)	(749,718,000)
Assets	554,526,058	605,603,000
Net Asset/(Liability)	**(179,849,942)**	**(144,115,000)**

Scheme History Analysis of scheme assets and liabilities	2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Fair Value of Assets in pension scheme	554,526,058	605,603,058
Present Value of Defined Benefit Obligation	(734,376,000)	(749,718,000)
Surplus/(deficit) in the Scheme	**(179,849,942)**	**(144,114,942)**

Amount recognised in Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure:	2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Actuarial gains/(losses)	(21,183,000)	15,323,000
Expected Return on Plan Assets	-	-
Increase/(decrease) in irrecoverable surplus from membership fall and other factors	-	-
Remeasurements recognised in Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(21,183,000)	15,323,000
Cumulative actuarial gains and losses	(58,346,000)	(37,163,000)
History of experience gains and losses:		
Experience gains and (losses) on assets	(65,748,000)	26,042,000
Experience gains and (losses) on liabilities	3,948,000	(196,000)

The liabilities show the underlying commitments that the authority has in the long run to pay retirement benefits. The total liability of £179,849,942 has a substantial impact on the net worth of the Council as recorded in the Balance Sheet.

However, statutory arrangements for funding the deficit mean that the financial position of the Council remains healthy. The deficit on the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Pension Fund will be made good by increased contributions over the remaining working life of employees, assessed by the scheme actuary.

Analysis of projected amount to be charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for the year to 31 March 2021

	31/03/2021 £	31/03/2021
Projected current cost	24,988,000	87.0%
Net Interest on the net defined benefit liability (asset)	3,978,000	13.0%
Past service cost	-	0.0%
Gains and losses on settlements or curtailments	-	0.0%
	28,966,000	100.0%

The total contributions expected to be made to the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Pension Fund by the council in the year to 31 March 2020 is £13,869k.

History of experience gains and losses

The actuarial gains/losses identified as movements on the Pensions Reserve 2019/20 can be analysed into the following categories, measured as a percentage of assets or liabilities at 31 March 2020.

		2019/20 %	2018/19 %
Experience (gains and (losses) on Assets		-11.86%	4.30%
Experience gains and (losses) on Liabilities		-0.54%	0.03%

e Basis for estimating assets and liabilities

Liabilities have been assessed on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method, an estimate of the pensions that will be payable in the future years dependent on assumptions about mortality rates, salary levels, etc. The Council's Fund liabilities have been assessed by Aon Hewitt Limited, an independent firm of actuaries, estimates for the Council Fund being based on data pertaining to the latest full valuation of the scheme as at 31 March 2020.

Pension scheme assumptions:	2019/20 %	2018/19 %
Mortality assumptions:		
Longevity at 65 current pensioners:	Years	Years
Men	21.8	22.6
Women	25.0	24.9
Longevity at 65 for future pensioners:		
Men	23.2	24.3
Women	26.4	26.7
Inflation/Pension Increase Rate	2.00%	2.20%
Salary Increase Rate	3.50%	3.70%
Discount Rate	2.30%	2.40%
Pension accounts revaluation rate	2.00%	2.20%
Take-up of option to convert annual pension into retirement lump sum:		
Service to April 2009	75%	75%
Service post April 2009	75%	75%

Pension Assumptions Sensitivity Analysis

The pension figures disclosed in these financial statements are sensitive to the assumptions used.

The approximate impact of changing key assumptions on the present value of the funded defined benefit obligation as at 31 March 2020 is set out below.

In each case, only the assumption noted below is altered; all other assumptions remain the same and are summarised in the disclosure above.

Funded Pension Scheme Benefits

Discount Rate Assumption		
Adjustment to discount rate	**+0.1%p.a.**	**-0.1%p.a.**
Present value of the total obligation	724,435,000	752,630,000
% change in the present value of the total obligation	-1.90%	1.90%
Projected service cost	24,157,000	25,844,000
Approximate % change in projected service cost	-3.30%	3.40%
Rate of General Increase in Salaries		
Adjustment to salary increase rate	**+0.1%p.a.**	**-0.1%p.a.**
Present value of the total obligation	742,556,000	734,281,000
% change in the present value of the total obligation	0.40%	-0.40%
Projected service cost	24,988,000	24,988,000
Approximate % change in projected service cost	0.00%	0.00%
Rate of Increase to Pensions in Payment and Deferred Pension Assumption		
Adjustment to pension increase rate	**+0.1%p.a.**	**-0.1%p.a.**
Present value of the total obligation	748,428,000	728,510,000
% change in the present value of the total obligation	1.70%	-1.70%
Projected service cost	25,844,000	24,157,000
Approximate % change in projected service cost	3.40%	-3.30%
Post Retirement Mortality Assumption		
Adjustment to mortality age rating assumption*	**- 1 Year**	**+ 1 Year**
Present value of the total obligation	761,933,000	715,068,000
% change in the present value of the total obligation	3.20%	-3.20%
Projected service cost	25,945,000	24,040,000
Approximate % change in projected service cost	3.80%	-3.80%

* A rating of +1 year means that members are assumed to follow the mortality pattern of the base table above for an individual that is 1 year older then that.

f Major categories of plan assets as percentage of total plan assets

The Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Pension Fund's assets consist of the following categories, by proportion of the total assets held:

	31/03/2020 %	31/03/2019 %
Equity investments	42.60%	59.50%
Government Bonds	26.10%	16.50%
Corporate Bonds	12.60%	7.00%
Property	10.00%	11.20%
Cash	4.70%	2.70%
Other	4.00%	3.10%
Total	**100.00%**	**100.00%**

g Northern Ireland Civil Service Pension Arrangements

The Northern Ireland Civil Service Pension arrangements are unfunded multi-employer defined benefit schemes but the Council is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities. The most up to date actuarial valuation was carried out as at 31 March 2016. This valuation is then reviewed by the Scheme Actuary and updated to reflect current conditions and rolled forward to the reporting date of the DoF Superannuation and Other Allowances Resource Accounts as at 31 March 2020.

h Assets and liabilities in relation to retirement benefits of the Gas Pension Fund

Reconciliation of present value of the scheme liabilities:	Note	2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Balance as at 1 April		1,040,000	1,209,000
Current service cost		-	-
Interest cost		23,000	29,000
Contributions by members		-	-
Remeasurement (gains) and losses:			
Actuarial gains/losses arising from changes in financial assumptions		-	15,000
Actuarial gains/losses arising from demographic changes		-	-
Actuarial gains/losses arising on liabilities from experience		(4,000)	3,000
Other (if applicable)			-
Past service costs/(gains)			-
Losses/(gains) on curtailments			-
Liabilities extinguished on settlements			-
Net benefits paid		(200,000)	(216,000)
Balance as at 31 March		**859,000**	**1,040,000**

Reconciliation of present value of the scheme assets:	Note	2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Balance as at 1 April		1,061,000	1,269,000
Interest income		23,000	30,000
Contributions by members			-
Contributions by employer			-
Remeasurement gain/(loss)		(20,000)	(22,000)
Assets distributed on settlements			-
Net Benefits paid		(200,000)	(216,000)
Balance as at 31 March		**864,000**	**1,061,000**

Analysis of scheme assets and liabilities	Note	2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Fair Value of Assets in pension scheme		864,000	1,061,000
Present Value of Defined Benefit Obligation		859,000	1,040,000
Net Asset/(Liability) recognised on the balance sheet		**5,000**	**21,000**

Funded Pension Scheme Benefits- Gas Pension Fund Sensitivity Analysis

Discount Rate Assumption		
Adjustment to discount rate	**+0.1% p.a.**	**-0.1% p.a.**
Present value of the total obligation	835,000	863,000
% change in the present value of the total obligation	-0.50%	0.50%
Rate of Increase to Pensions in Payment accounts assumption		
Adjustment to pension increase rate	**+0.1% p.a.**	**-0.1% p.a.**
Present value of the total obligation	863,000	855,000
% change in the present value of the total obligation	0.50%	-0.50%
Post Retirement Mortality Assumption		
Adjustment to mortality age rating assumption*	**-1yr**	**+1yr**
Present value of the total obligation	919,000	801,000
% change in the present value of the total obligation	7.00%	-6.80%

* A rating of +1 year means that members are assumed to follow the mortality pattern of the base table above for an individual that is 1 year older than that.

	Note	2019/20 %	2018/19 %
Government Bonds		49.10%	40.70%
Cash		50.90%	59.30%
Total		**100.00%**	**100.00%**

Mortality assumptions:		
Members aged 85 at accounting date	Years	Years
Men	7.0	6.9
Women	7.8	7.8

Inflation/Pension Increase Rate	2.10%	2.20%
Discount Rate	2.30%	2.40%

Gas Pension Fund

The Council's Gas Pension Fund had been established under an agreement between the Council and the Department of Economic Development on 3rd July, 1990. The purpose of the Fund was to provide for the continuation of pension payments to former Gas Department employees and their dependants who were members of various statutory pension schemes. The Gas Pension Fund is maintained to provide for future pension payments to the beneficiaries, the objective being to maintain a fund sufficient to provide all future anticipated payments. No contributions are currently being paid and there are no service members accruing further benefits. Members' benefits are guaranteed by statute. Should the Fund's assets not be sufficient to provide all the benefits, the residual liability for pension payments would fall on Belfast City Council.

The current market value of the Fund at 31 March 2020 is assessed by the Councils actuaries, Aon Hewitt and is disclosed above. The Fund's Financial Statements outlined below do not take account of liabilities to pay pensions and other benefits after 31 March 2020.

At 31 March 2020 there were 23 pensioners left in the Gas Pensions Fund and the balances relating to the Gas Pension Fund are fully consolidated in the Group financial statements.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT	31/03/2020 £	31/03/2019 £
INCOME:		
Investment Income	9,866	9,753
EXPENDITURE		
Pensions Paid	(194,436)	(206,035)
Administration Expenses	(5,361)	(10,230)
Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year	**(189,931)**	**(206,512)**
NET ASSET MOVEMENTS		
Brought forward balance at 01.04.2018	899,929	1,106,441
Unrealised gain at 01.04.2019	165,164	166,625
Opening Value of Fund	**1,065,093**	**1,273,066**
Add Contribution from City Council		
Add surplus/(deficit) for the year	(189,931)	(206,512)
CHANGE IN MARKET VALUES OF INVESTMENTS		
Realised gain for year	0	0
Unrealised gain/(loss) for year	(7,377)	(1,461)
Closing value of fund	**867,785**	**1,065,093**
FINANCED BY:		
UK Index Linked Investments	424,347	431,725
Cash deposits and at bank	439,628	629,560
Debtors	3,810	3,808
	867,785	1,065,093
Bank Balance	-	-
Creditors	-	-
Closing value of fund	867,785	1,065,093

Summary Net Asset/Liability recognised on the Balance Sheet		31/03/2020	31/03/2019
Northern Ireland Local Government Officer's Pension Fund		(179,849,942)	(144,114,942)
Gas Pension Fund		5,000	21,000
Belfast Waterfront & Ulster Hall Limited		(2,463,000)	(2,267,000)
Total Net Asset/Liability recognised on the Balance Sheet		(182,307,942)	(146,360,942)

The figures above include a pension liability in respect of Belfast Waterfront & Ulster Hall Limited (BWUH Ltd). BWUH Ltd became a participating employer in the NILGOSC scheme on 1 April 2016. Belfast City Council has agreed to include and disclose the net liability under this scheme up to 31 March 2020 within the net liability total for Belfast City Council.

Allowance for the McCloud Judgement and GMP Indexation / Equalisation
The above amounts include an allowance for additional liabilities arising from the McCloud Judgement and GMP Indexation and Equalisation cases outlined below.

McCloud Judgement
In December 2018 the Court of Appeal ruled in the 'McCloud/Sargeant' judgement that the transitional protection arrangements put in place when the Firefighters' and Judges' pension schemes were reformed were age discriminatory. While the judgement was not in relation to members with Local Government Pension Scheme (NI) benefits it would be reasonable to assume that the Government will seek remedy for all public sector schemes including Local Government Pension Scheme (NI).

Allowance has been made for the impact of the McCloud judgement. Belfast City Council accounted for a potential McCloud liability as at 31 March 2019 as a Past Service Cost, and any change in the allowance over the period has been treated as an experience item through Other Comprehensive Income.

The Current Service Cost includes a prospective allowance for McCloud liabilities of 3.2% of Pensionable Pay over the accounting period.

GMP Indexation and Equalisation
Guaranteed Minimum Pension (GMP) is a portion of pension that is payable to members who were contracted out of the State Second Pension and accrued benefits in the scheme between 6 April 1978 and 5 April 1997. The LGPS (NI) was contracted out. The GMP was intended to approximately replace the State Pension which members were giving up, however the payment terms of GMP are different between men and women, which was a consequence of the state pension itself being unequal at that time. On 26 October 2018 the High Court ruled in the Lloyds Bank case that equalisation for the effect of unequal GMPs is required. The estimated liability has been based on a typical Local Government pension fund to quantify the value of fully indexing GMP's in line with CPI inflation for those reaching State Pension Age after 5 December 2018. This was calculated to be 0.3% of the liabilities / defined benefit obligation.

Allowance has been made for full pension increases to be paid on GMPs to individuals reaching SPA after 6 April 2016. Any increase in liability at this accounting date has been charged through Other Comprehensive Income.

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Donated Assets Account			Note	2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Opening balance				430,001	10,001
Add: new donated assets received (condition of use not met)				-	430,000
Less: amounts released to the District Fund - Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account				(1)	- 10,000
				430,000	430,001

Analysis of Donated Assets Account

The balance of the Donated Assets Account represents donations received that have yet to be recognised as income, as they have conditions attached to them, which will require the donated assets to be returned, if conditions are not met. The balances at the year end are as follows:

Donated Assets Account	Note	2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Animal Welfare Van		-	-
Councillor Samuel Turpin Mercer Portrait		-	1
Neil Shawcross "Writers of Belfast" collection		430,000	430,000
		430,000	430,001

One donated work of art was previously carried at a nominal value of £1 for the purposes of stewardship. This value has been derecognised under the Council's accounting policy for heritage assets, and its related Donated Asset Account amount released to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account, in accordance with the "Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom" (the Code) and the Council's accounting policy. The asset is still held by the Council in its collection of heritage assets but is not carried at a monetary value.

Capital Receipts Unapplied	Note	2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Opening balance		116,812	250,000
Add: new capital grants received in advance (condition of use not met)		-	-
Less: amounts released		(5,087)	(133,188)
		111,725	116,812

The amount of £250k in capital receipts unapplied relates to the proceeds from a disposal to the NIHE of which £138k has been used to date to finance a playground.

22 Capital Grants Received in Advance

Capital Grants Received in Advance	Note	2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Opening balance		901,871	997,132
Add: new capital grants received in advance (condition of use not met)		159,404	-
Less: amounts released to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement other projects		(27,571)	(52,829)
Less: amounts released to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		(729,150)	(42,432)
		304,554	901,871

Analysis of Capital Grants Receipts in Advance Balance

The balance of Capital Grants Receipts in Advance represents grants received that have yet to be recognised as income, as they have conditions attached to them, which will require the grant to be repaid, if conditions are not met. The balances at the year end are as follows:

Capital Grants Receipts in Advance	Note	2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Whiterock Community Garden Allotments		-	483
BSC 7 Alleygates Lenadoon		-	-
BSC Alleygates Divis		-	499
BSC Bikes Lower Oldpark		-	6,700
BSC Bikes Lower Falls		-	9,744
BSC Bikes Lower Shankill		-	9,859
BSC 26 Alleygates Lenadoon		-	769
Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre		-	500,000
Springfield Dam		304,554	373,817
		304,554	901,871

23 Contingencies

Residential Waste Treatment Project

The arc21 Joint Committee has, with the approval of their Participant Councils, entered into a Contingent Liability Undertaking with the bidding consortium in the procurement for the Residential Waste Treatment Project. Payments made, if any, in accordance with this undertaking will be funded by the Participant Councils.

Landfill Site

The financial provision for the capping and annual monitoring cost of the landfill site, required to meet the Council's environmental obligations under the NIEA licence, has been agreed on a Local Authority Deed and disclosed in Note 18. The remaining area not covered by NIEA licence may require specific capping depending on the future use of this land. The impact of any future capping of this area on the liabilities of Belfast City Council is uncertain and therefore no provision for any such costs has been made.

24 Other cash flow disclosures

a Analysis of Adjustments to Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services

Adjustment to surplus or deficit on the provision of services for noncash movements	Notes	2019/20	2018/19
		£	£
Depreciation	11	19,364,089	18,313,014
Impairment & downward revaluations (& non-sale derecognitions)	11	1,605,228	(6,312,957)
Amortisation (included with depreciation above)		-	-
(Increase)/Decrease in inventories		(94,184)	49,874
(Increase)/Decrease in Debtors		(4,704,741)	1,345,562
Increase/(decrease) in impairment provision for bad debts		522,294	(170,658)
Increase/(Decrease) in Creditors		2,689,248	4,911,557
Increase/(Decrease) in Interest Creditors		-	-
Payments to NILGOSC	20	14,552,000	24,489,000
Carrying amount of non-current assets sold	8a, 11e	4,704,852	350,000
AIC/WIP written off to Net Cost of Services		-	-
Contributions to Other Reserves/Provisions		2,368,947	3,572,747
Movement in value of investment properties-included above in Impairment & downward revaluations (& non-sale derecognitions)		-	-
Amounts posted to CIES from Donated Assets Account	21	(1)	(10,000)
Contract Costs		-	-
Contract Assets		-	-
Contract Liabilities		-	-
Deferred revenue		-	-
		41,007,732	46,538,139

Adjust for items included in the net surplus or deficit on the provision of services that are investing and financing	Notes	2019/20	2018/19
		£	£
Purchase of short-term (not considered to be cash equivalents) and long-term investments (includes investments in associates, joint ventures and subsidiaries)		-	89,928
Proceeds from short-term (not considered to be cash equivalents) and long-term investments (includes investments in associates, joint ventures and subsidiaries)		-	-
Proceeds from the sale of PP&E, investment property and intangible assets		(4,942,650)	(430,080)
Capital grants included in "Taxation & non-specific grant income"		(5,257,824)	(3,052,865)
		(10,200,474)	(3,393,017)

b Cash and Cash Equivalents

For the purposes of the cash flow statement, cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand and in bank and short term deposits and investments (considered to be cash equivalents), net of outstanding bank overdrafts. Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period as shown in the statement of cash flows can be reconciled to the related items in the Balance Sheet as follows:

		2019/20	2018/19
		£	£
Cash and Bank balances		8,728,224	6,574,416
Short Term Deposits (considered to be Cash Equivalents)		8,000,000	17,000,000
Short Term Investments (considered to be Cash Equivalents)		-	-
Bank Overdraft		-	-
		16,728,224	23,574,416

There is currently a balance of £606,630 held within an escrow bank account with the BIG Lottery Fund in relation to the funding of the Connswater Greenway project. This balance is intended for future use within this wider project and funding will be drawn down accordingly. This balance is not included in the above total.

d Cash flows from Investing Activities

		2019/20	2018/19
		£	£
Purchase of PP&E, investment property and intangible assets		43,209,670	39,773,615
Purchase of Short Term Investments (not considered to be cash equivalents)		-	-
Purchase of Long Term Investments		-	89,928
Other Payments for Investing Activities		1,974,259	1,733,342
Proceeds from the sale of PP&E, investment property and intangible assets		(4,942,650)	(430,080)
Proceeds from Short Term Investments (not considered to be cash equivalents)		-	-
Proceeds from Long Term Investments		-	-
Capital Grants and Contributions Received		(5,257,824)	(3,052,865)
Other Receipts from Investing Activities		-	-
Net Cash flows from Investing Activities		**34,983,455**	**38,113,940**

e Cash flows from Financing Activities

	2019/20	2018/19
	£	£
Cash Receipts from Short and Long Term Borrowing	30,000,000	65,000,000
Other Receipts from Financing Activities	-	-
Cash payments for the reduction of the outstanding liability relating to a finance lease and on-Balance Sheet PFI contracts	-	-
Repayment of Short and Long Term Borrowing	(20,182,319)	(38,874,042)
Other payments for Financing Activities	-	-
Net Cash flows from Financing Activities	**9,817,681**	**26,125,958**

25 Usable Reserves

a Capital Receipts Reserve

These are capital receipts which have originated primarily from the sale of assets which have not yet been used to finance capital expenditure.

The Capital Receipts Reserve is credited with the proceeds from fixed asset sales and other monies defined by statute as capital receipts. These are originally credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of the gain/loss on disposal and posted out via the Movement in Reserves Statement to the Capital Receipts Reserve. The reserve is written down when resources are applied to finance new capital expenditure or set aside to reduce an authority's capital financing requirement (or used for other purposes permitted by statute).

Capital Receipts Reserve	Notes	31/03/2020	31/03/2019
		£	£
At 1 April		5,200,457	4,739,457
Movement			
Transfers between statutory & other reserves & the General Fund		-	-
Disposal of Non Current Assets/ Capital Sales	8, 9e	4,572,001	400,000
Capital Receipts used to finance capital expenditure		-	-
Difference between finance and other costs and income calculated on an accounting basis and finance costs calculated in accordance with statutory requirements		-	-
Other Movements		-	61,000
At 31 March		**9,772,458**	**5,200,457**

b Deferred Capital Receipts Account

The Deferred Capital Receipts Account holds the gains recognised on the disposal of non-current assets but for which cash settlement has yet to take place. Under statutory arrangements, the Council does not treat these gains as usable for financing new capital expenditure until they are backed by cash receipts. When the deferred cash settlement eventually takes place, amounts are transferred to the Capital Receipts Reserve.

Deferred Capital Receipts Account	Notes	31/03/2020	31/03/2019
		£	£
At 1 April		-	-
Movement			
Other movements		342,300	-
At 31 March		**342,300**	**-**

c Capital Fund

This fund is authorised under Section 9 of Part 1 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

Capital Fund	Notes	31/03/2020	31/03/2019
		£	£
At 1 April		25,288,151	25,669,445
Transfers between statutory & other reserves & the General Fund	4b	2,081,597	(247,604)
Transfer to Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund		(8,000,000)	
Financing from CCIF		-	(43,762)
Transfers between Capital Fund & CAA to finance Capital Expenditure	12	-	(89,928)
At 31 March		**19,369,748**	**25,288,151**

	£	£
Local Investment Fund	1,171,489	1,425,280
Belfast Investment Fund	723	5,559,723
City Centre Investment Fund	15,154,012	15,154,012
Social Outcomes Fund	3,043,524	3,149,136
Total	**19,369,748**	**25,288,151**

The movement and purpose of these funds is outlined below:

Local Investment Fund			31/03/2020	31/03/2019
			£	£
Opening balance			1,425,280	2,301,028
Add: new contributions to fund				-
Less: financing drawn down from fund		4b	(253,791)	(875,748)
At 31 March			**1,171,489**	**1,425,280**

Local Investment Fund (LIF) is a key part of the Investment Programme that provides funding for smaller initiatives focusing on physical work on buildings or facilities within communities. The balance on this fund as at 31 March 2020 is £1,171,489.

Belfast Investment Fund			31/03/2020	31/03/2019
			£	£
Opening balance			5,559,723	4,080,715
Add: new contributions to fund		4b	3,270,000	3,270,000
Less: financing drawn down from fund		4b	(829,000)	(1,790,992)
Less: transfer to Neighbourhood Rengeneration fund			(8,000,000)	-
At 31 March			**723**	**5,559,723**

There is a balance of £723 on the Belfast Investment Fund at year end 31 March 2020. This fund was established to support partnership projects across the City.

City Centre Investment Fund			31/03/2020 £	31/03/2019 £
Opening balance			15,154,012	15,287,702
Add: new contributions to fund				
Less: amounts drawn down from fund			-	(133,690)
At 31 March			**15,154,012**	**15,154,012**

City Centre Investment Fund (CCIF) is a fund to support the Belfast City Centre Regeneration Investment Plans. The proposed investment principles for the CCIF are as follows:

- the project should make a significant impact on the City Centre economy in terms of "gross value added" and job creation
- the project should make positive and net contribution to the business rates income received by Belfast City Council

Belfast City Council used this fund to support ongoing and potential City Centre regeneration projects. The balance on CCIF at year end 31 March 2020 remains at £15,154,012.

Social Outcomes Fund			31/03/2020 £	31/03/2019 £
Opening balance			3,149,136	4,000,000
Add: transfer from Belfast Investment fund				-
Less: amounts drawn down from fund		4b	(105,612)	(850,864)
At 31 March			**3,043,524**	**3,149,136**

Social Outcomes Fund is set up to support City Centre projects which might not generate a direct financial return but which would enhance the overall City Centre offer and support the attraction of investment into the City Centre. The balance on this fund as at 31 March 2020 is £3,043,524.

d Leisure Mobilisation Fund

This fund is authorised under Section 9 of Part 1 of the Local Government Finance Act (Nothern Ireland) 2011.

Leisure Mobilisation Fund	Notes	31/03/2020 £	31/03/2019 £
At 1 April		1,441,702	1,704,334
Transfers between statutory & other reserves & the General Fund	4b	(553,902)	(262,632)
Transfers between Renewal & Repair Fund & CAA to finance Capital Expenditure	12	-	-
At 31 March		**887,800**	**1,441,702**

The Leisure Mobilisation Fund is a fund to support the Leisure Transformation Programme. This fund will cover programme level costs including communications, engagements and procurement costs.

e Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund

This fund is authorised under Section 9 of Part 1 of the Local Government Finance Act (Nothern Ireland) 2011.

Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund	Notes	31/03/2020 £	31/03/2019 £
At 1 April		-	-
Add: transfer from Belfast Investment Fund		8,000,000	-
Less: amounts drawn down from fund		-	-
At 31 March		**8,000,000**	**-**

The Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund is a fund to support neighbourhood regeneration and tourism projects in local neighbourhoods.

f Other Balances & Reserves

Other Balances & Reserves	Notes	31/03/2020	31/03/2019
		£	£
At 1 April		1,063,919	867,527
Transfers between statutory & other reserves & the General Fund	4b	(671,307)	160,688
Transfer to BWUH Subvention Fund		(187,168)	153,029
Transfer to BWUH Sinking Fund		92,780	(117,325)
At 31 March		**298,224**	**1,063,919**

	£	£
Election Fund	3,300	674,607
BWUH Subvention Fund	135,499	322,667
BWUH Sinking Fund	159,425	66,645
Total	**298,224**	**1,063,919**

The movement and purpose of these funds is outlined below:

Election Fund			31/03/2020	31/03/2019
			£	£
Opening balance			674,607	513,919
Add: new contributions to fund		4b	153,300	160,688
Less: financing drawn down from fund			(824,607)	-
At 31 March			**3,300**	**674,607**

This reserve is used to equalise (smooth) the cost of elections by building up a fund to cover the costs of future elections by making contributions, as and when required, to the reserve.

BWUH Subvention Fund			31/03/2020	31/03/2019
			£	£
Opening balance			322,667	169,638
Add: new contributions to fund			300,903	300,903
Less: amounts drawn down from fund			(188,071)	(147,874)
Less: amounts transferred to Sinking Fund			(300,000)	
At 31 March			**135,499**	**322,667**

BWUH Subvention Fund was established to support national and international corporate organisations in bringing their conferences to Belfast.

BWUH Sinking Fund			31/03/2020	31/03/2019
			£	£
Opening balance			66,645	183,970
Add: new contributions to fund			300,000	
Less: amounts drawn down from fund			(207,220)	(117,325)
At 31 March			**159,425**	**66,645**

BWUH Sinking Fund is a fund to support planned maintenance and future capital works of the new exhibition centre at Waterfront Hall.

g General Fund

This reserve shows the accounting cost in the year of providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, rather than the amount to be funded from District Rates. Councils raise rates to cover expenditure in accordance with regulations; this may be different from the accounting cost. The taxation position is shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

General Fund	Notes	2019/20	2018/19
		£	£
At 1 April		25,796,988	24,408,596
Prior year adjustment			
Applied Capital Grants	10, 12	(5,257,824)	(3,052,865)
Unapplied Capital Grants received in year		-	-
Direct Revenue Financing	4, 12	(7,870,253)	(9,239,567)
Depreciation and Impairment adjustment	4	20,969,317	12,000,057
Statutory Provision for financing Capital Investment	4	(7,547,320)	(5,874,116)
Net Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute	4, 12	-	-
Surplus/(Deficit) on the Provision of Services	CIES	(12,487,676)	(18,000,936)
Transfers between Statutory and Other Reserves and the General Fund	4	(856,388)	349,548
Net movements on Pension Reserve	4, 20	14,552,000	24,489,000
Disposal of Fixed Assets/Capital Sales	3, 4, 11, 23	(237,798)	(80,080)
Difference between finance and other costs and income calculated on an accounting basis and finance costs calculated in accordance with statutory requirements		(49,218)	71,299
Other Movements		1,680,845	726,052
At 31 March		**28,692,673**	**25,796,988**

This fund represents the surplus of income over expenditure. It can be used to supplement income and unexpected expenditure in future years. Of the £28,693k, £15,792k relates to expenditure committed at the year end (18/19 £25,797k, £12,957k committed).

26 Unusable Reserves

a Capital Adjustment Account

The Capital Adjustment Account absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for the consumption of non-current assets and for the acquisition, construction or enhancement of those assets under statutory provisions.

The Account is debited with the cost of acquisition, construction or enhancement as depreciation, impairment losses and amortisations are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, with reconciling postings from the Revaluation Reserve to convert fair value figures to an historic cost basis.

The account is credited with the amounts set aside by the Council as finance for the costs of acquisition, construction and subsequent costs.

The Account contains accumulated gains and losses on Investment Properties and gains recognised on donated assets that have yet to be consumed by the Council.

The Account also contains revaluation gains accumulated on Property, Plant and Equipment before 1 April 2007, the date that the Revaluation Reserve was created to hold such gains.

Capital Adjustment Account	Notes	2019/20	2018/19
		£	£
At 1 April		470,959,253	460,487,377
Applied Capital Grants	10, 12	5,257,824	3,052,865
Unapplied Capital Grants transferred to CAA in year		-	-
Direct Revenue Financing	4, 12	7,870,253	9,239,567
Depreciation & Impairment adjustment	11	(20,969,317)	(12,000,057)
Statutory Provision for financing Capital Investment	4, 12	7,547,320	5,874,116
Net Revenue expenditure funded from Capital under	4, 12	-	-
Disposal of Fixed Assets/ Capital Sales	4, 11	(8,493,528)	(350,000)
Capital Receipts used to finance capital expenditure	4, 12	-	-
Other Movements		5,719,253	4,565,457
Transfers between Capital Fund/Renewal & Repair Fund & CAA to finance capital expenditure	12	-	89,928
At 31 March		**467,891,058**	**470,959,253**

b Revaluation Reserve

The Revaluation Reserve contains the gains made by the Council arising from increases in the value of its Property, Plant and Equipment and Intangible Assets. The reserve is reduced when assets with accumulated gains are:

- revalued downwards or impaired and the gains are lost
- used in the provision of services and the gains are consumed through depreciation, or
- disposed of and the gains are realised.

The reserve contains only revaluation gains accumulated since 1 April 2008, the date the reserve was created. Accumulated gains arising before that date are consolidated into the balance on the Capital Adjustment Account.

The purpose of this account is to build up a balance based on the revaluation (upwards or downwards) of individual assets. All such revaluations (excluding impairment losses that have been debited to Surplus/(Deficit) on the Provision of Services are mirrored in Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure. It is a fundamental principle of this account that it never becomes negative. If an asset was held at current value when derecognised, the balance held on the Revaluation Reserve is written off to the Capital Adjustment Account.

Revaluation Reserve	Notes	2019/20	2018/19
		£	£
At 1 April		164,611,507	159,528,493
Revaluation & Impairment	11	27,846,428	9,648,471
Movements from associates & joint ventures			-
Other Movements		(4,882,704)	(4,565,457)
At 31 March		**187,575,231**	**164,611,507**

c Pension Reserve

Pension Reserve	Notes	2019/20	2018/19
		£	£
At 1 April		(146,360,942)	(136,947,942)
Net Movements on Pension Reserve	4, 20	(14,552,000)	(24,489,000)
Revaluation & Impairment	20	(21,183,000)	15,323,000
Gas pension & BWUH movement		(212,000)	(247,000)
At 31 March		**(182,307,942)**	**(146,360,942)**

The Pensions Reserve absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for post-employment benefits and for funding benefits in accordance with statutory provisions. The Council accounts for post-employment benefits in the Comphensive Income and Expenditure Statement as benefits are earned by employees accruing years of service, updating the liabilities recognised to reflect inflation, changing assumptions and investment returns on any resources set aside to meet the costs

However, statutory arrangements require benefits earned to be financed as the Council makes employer's contributions to pension funds or eventually pays any pensions for which it is directly responsible. The debit balance on the Pensions Reserve therefore shows a substantial shortfall in the benefits earned by past and current employees and the resources the Council has set aside to meet them. The statutory arrangements will ensure that funding will have been set aside by the time the benefits come to be paid.

d Accumulated Absences Account

The Accumulated Absences Account absorbs the differences that would otherwise arise on the General Fund balance from accruing for compensated absences earned but not taken in the year e.g. staff annual leave entitlement carried forward at the end of the financial year. Statutory arrangements are expected to require that the impact on the General Fund is neutralised by transfers to or from this Accumulated Absences Account

Accumulated Absences Account	Notes	31/03/2020	31/03/2019
		£	£
At 1 April		(1,357,825)	(1,344,230)
Difference between finance and other costs and income calculated on an accounting basis and finance costs calculated in accordance with statutory requirements		(5,880)	(13,595)
At 31 March		**(1,363,705)**	**(1,357,825)**

e Provisions Discount Rate Reserve

The Provisions Discount Rate Reserve covers the arrangement, put in place by the Department under its amendment to the 2017/18 accounts direction (see DfC circular LG O5/2018), to accommodate changes in the current value of the annual calculation of long term provisions for landfill costs, which arises as a result of changes to the interest rates used to discount these provisions and landfill cash flows being increased for inflation.

Provisions Discount Rate Reserve	Notes	31/03/2020	31/03/2019
		£	£
At 1 April		(263,159)	(217,987)
Difference between finance and other costs and income calculated on an accounting basis and finance costs calculated in accordance with statutory requirements		55,098	(57,704)
Other Movements		9,908	12,532
At 31 March		**(198,153)**	**(263,159)**

27 Significant Trading Operations

The Council considers a trading operation exists where the service it provides is competitive i.e the user always has the choice to use an alternative supplier to the Council and the Council charges the user on a basis other than a straightforward recharge of the Council's costs in supplying the service. The Council uses a variety of charging mechanisms such as quoted lump sums, fixed periodical charges or rates, or a combination of these.

In deciding whether a trading operation is significant the Council takes both financial and non-financial criteria into account.

Financial criteria taken into account in deciding whether trading operations are significant to the Council are:

- the magnitude of each individual trading operation's turnover when compared with the Council's net revenue budget

- the risk of financial loss the Council may be exposed to in providing the service to the user.

Non-financial criteria taken into account in deciding whether trading operations are significant to the Council are:

- the importance of each individual trading operation to demonstrating the achievement of Council targets and improving performance.

- the exposure of the Council to service reputational loss risk by providing the service

- whether the provision of the service is likely to be of interest to the Council's key stakeholders and their needs.

In applying the aforementioned criteria, the Council considers the letting of industrial estates to be a significant trading operation. The income and expenditure associated with these industrial estates is disclosed below;

Industrial Estate Lettings	2019/20	2018/19
	£	£
Rental Income	5,662,183	5,310,381
Rental Expenditure	(130,335)	(107,713)
Net income	**5,531,848**	**5,202,668**

These significant trading operations form part of Note 9e to these financial statements.

28 Agency Services

The Council provides administration services to Belfast One BID Ltd, Destination CQ BID Ltd and Belfast Central Business District. These entities pay an administration fee to the Council for these services. This fee amounted to £12,316 (2018/19 £30,059) across the 3 entities.

29 Joint Arrangements

During 2019/20 Belfast City Council did not make a financial contribution to Beltel LLP relating to the redevelopment of the Belfast Telegraph Building (18/19 £89,928).

The contribution to LLP is included in the Long term Assets of Belfast City Council. This represents 46% of the net assets of the LLP which is included in Belfast City Council's consolidated balance sheet.

	2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Long term assets	3,231,429	3,231,429
Current assets	242,435	242,435
Current liabilities	(37,005)	(37,005)
Long term liabilities	-	-
Net Assets	**3,436,859**	**3,436,859**

On 1 April 2016, the operations of Waterfront Hall and Ulster Hall were transferred to a company BWUH Limited. Belfast City Council hold the entire share capital of this company, 1 ordinary share at £1 each. Belfast City Council entered into an agreement with BWUH Limited under which the Council pays the company a management fee for the operation of Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall. Payments to and from the company are outlined in Note 30 f.

30 Related Party Transactions

A Related Party Transaction is a transfer of resources or obligations between related parties, regardless of whether a price is charged. Related Party Transaction exclude transactions with any other entity that is a related party solely because of its economic dependence on the Council or the Government of which it forms part. A related party is one that has the ability to control the other party or exercise significant influence over the other party in making financial and operating decisions. This includes cases where the related party entity and another entity are subject to common control but excludes providers of finance in the course of their normal business with the Council and Trade Unions in the course of their normal dealings with the Council. In addition where the relationship with the Council and the entity is solely that of an Agency (see note 28) these are not deemed to be Related Party Transactions.

As part of their duties, Councillors are appointed to represent the Council in a range of other organisations and further details of these arrangements can be found on the Council's website.

Transactions with related parties not disclosed elsewhere in these financial statements are set out below.

Councillors have direct control over the Council's financial and operating policies. In the 2019/20 financial year the Council commissioned £3,175,796 (2018/19 £3,019,697) of works and services from Visit Belfast in which Councillors have an interest. The Council entered into these contracts in full compliance with the Council's standing orders and codes of conduct.

The Council also paid grants of £1,928,687 (2018/19 £1,403,026) to a number of organisations in which Councillors and Council officers had an interest. These grants were made with proper consideration of declaration of interests.

During 2019/20 the Council had expenditure of £488,842 (2018/19 £531,913) to other Councils and income received of £1,035,750 (2018/19 £1,508,972) from other Councils, of which £229,001 (2018/19 £58,122) was outstanding at 31 March 2020. These amounts mainly related to services provided.

The Council also borrowed £15m from other Local Authorities within the UK during 2019/20, with £5m outstanding at 31 March 2020.

a Other Organisations

	Councillors	2019/20	Restated 2018/19
		£	£
Action Cancer	1	420	0
Association of Port Health Authorities	1	124	222
Blackie River Centre	2	22,604	25,112
Belfast City Centre Management Board	2	207,185	238,260
Belfast Harbour Commissioners	4	31,482	36,369
Belfast Hills Partnership	1	0	36,900
Belfast Metropolitan College	1	7,878	11,266
Belvoir Area Residents' Group	1	964	23,990
Board of Ulster Orchestra Society Ltd	1	300,973	319,253
Castlereagh FC 82	1	170	680
Cathedral Quarter Trust	2	99,920	396,989
Colin Neighbourhood Partnership	2	39,430	40,855
Colin Safer Neighbourhood Project	1	800	0
Concorde Community Centre Committee	0	600	240
Cregagh Wanderers Club	1	11,600	8,939
Dee Street Community Centre Committee	6	600	0
Donegall Pass Community Centre Committee	3	0	600
Duncairn Community Centre Committee	4	600	0
Duncairn Community partnership	1	8,251	3,632
Early Years Company Ltd	1	28,541	0
East Side Arts	1	106,230	133,190
Falls Community Council	1	407,491	575,031
Finaghy Community Centre Committee	2	0	0
Grand Opera House Trust	1	37,034	35,000
Greater Shankill Partnership Board	6	94,622	49,414
Greater Village Regeneration Trust	1	67,327	24,184
Groundwork NI	1	1,842	2,929
Hammer Community Centre Committee	0	0	0
Highfield Community Centre Committee	0	0	0
Horn Drive Community Centre Committee	0	0	0
Impact Training	2	10,180	1,000
Intercomm Ireland Ltd	1	3,011	84,766
Inverary Community Centre Committee	1	600	0
knocknagoney Community Centre Committee	5	759	1,420
Lagan Valley Regional Park Advisory Committee	2	0	0
Lagan Village Youth and Community Group	1	20,873	23,276
Lighthouse (Ireland)	1	2,355	0
Ligoniel Amateur Boxing Club	1	7,528	4,812

Ligoniel Community Centre Committee	1	600	0
Linenhall Library Board	1	38,017	35,835
Local Strategic Partnership on Travellers Issues	2	0	1,000
Lyric Theatre Education Advisory Panel	2	100,000	150,978
Morton Community Centre Committee	4	0	0
Mount Vernon Community Development Forum	1	27,196	6,500
National Association of Councillors	6	3,560	3,560
NI Amenity Council	1	2,330	4,660
NI Local Government Association	9	90,740	90,434
Northern Regional College	1	522	0
Oh Yeah Centre, Belfast	1	43,865	0
Queens University Belfast	1	21,670	11225.28
Royal Society of Ulster Architects	1	4,408	1,489
Somme Advisory Council	3	0	1,894
Stratagem NI Limited	1	25,638	864
Ulster-Scots Community Network	1	400	72,400
Upper Andersonstown Community Forum	1	39,860	16,500
Upper Springfield Development Trust	1	6,884	2,950
Visit Belfast	4	3,175,796	3,019,648
Woodvale Community Centre Committee	2	1,003	0
At 31 March		**5,104,483**	**5,498,266**

b Payments to Community Groups

Belfast City Council made payments to the following Community Groups that have Councillors as part of their committee structure;

	Councillors	2019/20	2018/19
		£	£
East Belfast Partnership Board	8	103,947	20,500
North Belfast Partnership Board	1	0	0
South Belfast Partnership Board	4	21,578	20,220
West Belfast Partnership Board	8	26,131	8,784
		151,656	49,504

c Joint Committees

Belfast City Council made payments to the following Joint Committees;

	Councillors	2019/20	2018/19
		£	£
Arc 21	2	9,133,672	7,517,584

The origins of arc21 can be traced back to June 1999, when a small number of Council representatives agreed that a joint approach was the best way to deliver an effective waste management strategy for the region. By 2000, 11 Councils had joined together from the eastern Region Waste Management Group, which was eventually renamed arc21.

At present arc21 has successfully been awarded and is managing waste management contracts on behalf of Councils with a value in the region of £200m.

d Active Belfast Limited

Belfast City Council with Active Belfast Limited entered into an agreement with GLL for the provision of leisure services. These financial statements include expenses of £7,708,057 (2018/19 £7,269,390) for the provision of these services in the year ended 31 March 2020.

e Car Loans to Council Officers

The Council makes car loans available to employees who are designated essential car users. The total amount outstanding in respect of car loans to designated employees as at 31 March 2020 was £91,147 (2018/19 £116,107).

f Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Limited

With effect from 1 April 2016 the Council transferred the operations of Belfast Waterfront Hall and Ulster Hall to a new company BWUH Limited with the Council being the sole shareholder in this new company. During 2019/20 the Council invoiced BWUH Ltd for £2,542,853 for expenditure incurred on it's behalf and also received invoices from the Company for £3,344,674 mainly for the management fee. At 31 March 2020, £424,927 (2018/19 £182,811) was owed to the company by the Council and £796,280 (2018/19 £132,142) receivable from the company.

g Beltel LLP

During 2019/20, Belfast City Council did not make a financial contribution to Beltel LLP (2018/19 £89,928), relating to the redevelopment of the Belfast Telegraph Building (as outlined in Note 29). The Council is represented by two officers on the Management Board of the LLP and Timec 1523 Limited is also represented by two members on the Management Board.

Belfast City Council
Group Movement in Reserves Statement for the year ended 31 March 2020

	General Fund Summary £	Other Fund Balances and Reserves £	Capital Receipts Reserve £	Total Usable Reserves £	Total Unusable Reserves £	Total Council Reserves £
Balance as at 1 April 2018	24,404,895	28,241,306	4,739,457	57,385,658	481,505,711	538,891,369
Movement in reserves during the year						
Surplus/ (Deficit) on the provision of services	(18,469,670)	-	-	(18,469,670)	-	(18,469,670)
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	-	-	-	-	24,971,471	24,971,471
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	**(18,469,670)**	**-**	**-**	**(18,469,670)**	**24,971,471**	**6,501,801**
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding under regulations	18,744,640	(89,928)	400,000	19,054,712	(18,583,644)	471,068
Net Increase before transfers to Statutory and Other Reserves	**274,970**	**(89,928)**	**400,000**	**585,042**	**6,387,827**	**6,972,869**
Transfers to / from Statutory and Other Reserves	349,548	(349,548)	-	-	-	-
Other movements	774,052	(8,058)	61,000	826,994	(304,704)	522,290
Increase/ Decrease in year	**1,398,570**	**(447,534)**	**461,000**	**1,412,036**	**6,083,123**	**7,495,159**
Balance as at 31 March 2019	25,803,465	27,793,772	5,200,457	58,797,694	487,588,834	546,386,528
Movement in reserves during the year						
Surplus/ (Deficit) on the provision of services	(13,148,384)	-	-	(13,148,384)	-	(13,148,384)
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	-	-	-	-	6,663,428	6,663,428
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	**(13,148,384)**	**-**	**-**	**(13,148,384)**	**6,663,428**	**(6,484,956)**
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding under regulations	15,168,831	342,300	4,572,001	20,083,132	(22,498,871)	(2,415,739)
Net Increase before transfers to Statutory and Other Reserves	**2,020,447**	**342,300**	**4,572,001**	**6,934,748**	**(15,835,443)**	**(8,900,695)**
Transfers to / from Statutory and Other Reserves	(856,388)	856,388	-	-	-	-
Other movements	1,731,845	(94,388)	-	1,637,457	(156,902)	1,480,555
Increase in year	**2,895,904**	**1,104,300**	**4,572,001**	**8,572,205**	**(15,992,345)**	**(7,420,140)**
Balance as at 31 March 2020	28,699,369	28,898,072	9,772,458	67,369,899	471,596,489	538,966,388

Belfast City Council
Group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for the year ended 31 March 2020

		2019/20			2018/19		
		Gross	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	Gross	Gross Income	Net Expenditure
Service Expenditure	Notes	£	£	£	£	£	£
Strategic Policy & Resources	2	65,875,784	(13,685,316)	52,190,468	78,594,231	(11,644,878)	66,949,353
City Growth & Regeneration	2	37,728,035	(14,669,696)	23,058,339	39,095,072	(15,365,940)	23,729,132
People & Communities	2	120,253,125	(15,574,828)	104,678,297	112,535,363	(16,091,022)	96,444,341
Planning & Licensing	2	8,145,681	(6,360,679)	1,785,002	8,527,144	(6,208,226)	2,318,918
Cost of Services on Continuing Operations		232,002,625	(50,290,519)	181,712,106	238,751,810	(49,310,066)	189,441,744
Other Operating Expenditure	8	954,852	(1,192,650)	(237,798)	-	30,080	(30,080)
Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure	9	9,708,481	(10,744,838)	(1,087,357)	6,122,753	(13,984,884)	(7,862,131)
Net Operating Expenditure		242,665,958	(62,228,007)	180,386,951	244,874,563	(63,325,030)	181,549,533
Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income	10	1,794,150	(169,083,717)	(167,289,567)	(91,683)	(162,988,180)	(163,079,863)
(Surplus)/Deficit on the Provision of Services		244,460,108	(231,311,724)	13,148,384	244,782,880	(226,313,210)	18,469,670
(Surplus)/Deficit on revaluation of non-current assets	11			(27,846,428)			(9,648,471)
Surplus/(Deficit) arising on revaluation of available-for-sale financial assets	11			-			-
Remeasurements of the Net Defined Benefit Liability (Asset)	20			21,183,000			(15,323,000)
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure				(6,663,428)			(24,971,471)
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure				6,484,956			(6,501,801)

Belfast City Council
Group Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2020

	Note	31st March 2020	31st March 2019 Restated
		£	£
Fixed Assets		792,859,755	750,563,883
Long Term Investments		424,000	431,000
Investment in Associates and Joint Ventures		-	-
Long Term Debtors		439,542	603,659
Contract Assets		-	-
LONG TERM ASSETS		793,723,297	751,598,542
Short Term Investments		-	-
Inventories		370,474	276,291
Short Term Debtors		21,069,791	16,367,024
Cash and Cash Equivalents		20,516,975	27,866,068
Assets Held for Sale		1,340,000	266,607
Contract Assets		378,891	1,947,969
CURRENT ASSETS		43,676,131	46,723,959
Bank Overdraft		-	-
Short Term Borrowing		9,739,488	4,000,000
Short Term Creditors		37,276,256	36,502,814
Provisions		3,131,517	2,894,851
Contract Liabilities		277,387	-
CURRENT LIABILITIES		50,424,648	43,397,665
Long Term Creditors		64,304	50,386
Provisions		1,822,694	1,789,315
Long Term Borrowing		62,967,173	58,888,981
Other Long Term Liabilities		182,307,942	146,360,942
Contract Liabilities		-	-
Donated Assets Account		430,000	430,001
Capital Grants Receipts in Advance		416,279	1,018,683
LONG TERM LIABILITIES		248,008,392	208,538,308
NET ASSETS		538,966,388	546,386,528
USABLE RESERVES			
Capital Receipts Reserve		9,772,458	5,200,457
Deferred capital receipts		342,300	-
Capital Fund		19,369,748	25,288,151
Leisure Mobilisation Fund		887,800	1,441,702
Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund		8,000,000	
Other Balances and Reserves		298,224	1,063,919
General Fund		28,699,369	25,803,465
		67,369,899	58,797,694
UNUSABLE RESERVES			
Capital Adjustment Account		467,891,058	470,959,253
Revaluation Reserve		187,575,231	164,611,507
Pensions Reserve		(182,307,942)	(146,360,942)
Accumulated Absences Account		(1,363,705)	(1,357,825)
Provisions Discount Rate Reserve		(198,153)	(263,159)
		471,596,489	487,588,834
NET WORTH		538,966,388	546,386,528

Belfast City Council
Group Cash Flow Statement at 31 March 2020

	Note	2019/20	2018/19
		£	£
Net Deficit on the provision of services		(13,148,384)	(18,469,670)
Adjustment for non-cash movements		42,021,062	48,275,099
Adjust for items included in the net surplus or deficit on the provision of services that are investing and financing activities		(10,200,474)	(3,393,017)
Net cash flows from operating activities		**18,672,204**	**26,412,412**
Cash flows from Investing Activities		(35,838,978)	(39,163,299)
Net Cash flows from Financing Activities		9,817,681	26,125,958
Net increase or decrease in cash and cash equivalents		**(7,349,093)**	**13,375,071**
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		27,866,068	14,490,997
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		**20,516,975**	**27,866,068**

G1 Group Accounts

The Group Accounting Policies are the same as the Council policies and have not been repeated again in these Notes. The exception to this is in relation to Retirement Benefits which have been treated in BWUH Limited as a defined contribution scheme as the liabilities of the NILGOSC scheme remain with Belfast City Council and have been disclosed in Belfast City Council's financial statements.

Since there are no significant changes to the Consolidated Group Balance Sheet as compared to the Council's Balance Sheet, only those notes affected by group transactions have been included.

G2 Combining Entities

Belfast Waterfront Ulster Hall Limited (BWUH Ltd)

Belfast Waterfront Ulster Hall Limited is a company incorporated under the terms of the Companies Acts to operate the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall. The Authority is the principal shareholder in the company holding 1 ordinary £1 shares and representing 100% of the issued share capital. Under accounting standards, the Authority has a controlling interest in this company. The financial results for the company have been included in the group accounts as a subsidiary.

Net assets of the company were £6.7k at 31 March 2020. The profit on ordinary activities before taxation for the period to 31 March 2020 was £1.2k. No dividend payments were due to, or received by, the Authority in respect of its investment.

As noted in Note 20, the pension liability of BWUH Limited is included in the pension liability of Belfast City Council.

The latest set of accounts is for the year to 31 March 2020 has an unqualified audit certificate.

BELTEL LLP

For the purposes of economic regeneration as part of the City Centre Regeneration objectives the Council made a financial contribution in the form of a loan of now totalling £3,436,859 as at year ended 31 March 2020, to Beltel LLP relating to the redevelopment of the Belfast Telegraph building. This contribution represents 46% of the net assets of Beltel LLP which have been included in the Council's group balance sheet and the breakdown of the net assets is included in Note 29 Joint Arrangements.

Gas Pension Fund

The asset of £5,000 in respect of the Gas Pension Fund is disclosed and recognised in Belfast City Council's balance sheet and Note 20 Retirement Benefits disclosures. The Group balance sheet has included the assets and liabilities giving rise to this asset:

	£
Long term assets	424,347
Current assets	443,436
Long term liabilities	862,783
Net asst	5,000

The Council has not consolidated its interests in Active Belfast Limited, Belfast Gasworks Management Co Ltd and Arc21 as the Council's share of these balance sheets is not deemed material to the group accounts at this point in time.

Financial Impact of combination

The effect of the inclusion of the subsidiaries and associates in 2019/20 was to increase the Council's reserves and net assets by £6.7k representing the net asset in the consolidating entities.

G3 Adjustments between an Accounting Basis and Funding Basis under Regulations

Amounts included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement but required by statute to be excluded when determining the Movement on the General Fund Balance for the year:

	Notes	2019/20 £	£	2018/19 £	£
Amounts included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement but required by statute to be excluded when determining the Movement on the General Fund Balance for the year:					
Impairments (losses & reversals) of non-current assets		-		-	
Derecognition (other than disposal) of non-current assets		-		-	
Revaluation increases/decreases taken to Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services		1,605,228		(6,312,957)	
Depreciation charged in the year on non-current assets		19,396,016	21,001,244	18,382,926	12,069,969
Net Revenue expenditure funded from capital under			-		-
Carrying amount of non current assets sold		4,704,852		350,000	
Proceeds from the sale of PP&E, investment property and intangible assets		(4,942,650)	(237,798)	(430,080)	(80,080)
Difference between finance costs calculated on an accounting basis and finance costs calculated in accordance with statutory requirements			-		-
Net charges made for retirement benefits in accordance with IAS 19			31,257,000		39,630,000
Direct revenue financing of Capital Expenditure			(7,870,253)		(9,239,567)
Capital Grants and Donated Assets Receivable and Applied in year			(5,252,737)		(2,919,677)
Capital Grants Receivable and Unapplied in year			(5,087)		(133,188)
Rates Claw-Back Reserve			-		-
Adjustments in relation to Short-term compensated absences			5,880		13,595
Adjustments in relation to Lessor Arrangements			-		-
Provisions Discount Rate Reserve Adjustment			(55,098)		57,704
Amounts not included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement but required by statute to be included when determining the Movement on the General Fund Balance for the year					
Statutory Provision for the financing of Capital Investment			(7,547,320)		(5,874,116)
Employers contributions payable to the NILGOSC and retirement benefits payable direct to pensioners			(16,127,000)		(14,780,000)
			15,168,831		18,744,640

G4 Fixed Assets

a

Cost or Valuation	Land	Buildings	Infrastructure Assets	Landfill Sites	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	Community Assets	PP&E Under Construction	Surplus Assets	Total PP&E	Heritage Assets	Assets Held for Resale	TOTAL
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Balance as at 1 April 2019	101,444,001	418,784,515	5,774,607	-	43,193,148	47,025,764	48,154,248	5,689,001	**670,065,284**	9,158,827	-	**679,224,111**
Adjustments between cost/value & depreciation/impairment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(164)	-	**(164)**
Balance as at 1 April 2019	101,444,001	418,784,515	5,774,607	-	43,193,148	47,025,764	48,154,248	5,689,001	670,065,284	9,158,663	-	679,223,947
Additions	38	701,639	-	-	5,567,641	743,971	37,095,535	10,674	**44,119,498**	151,994	-	**44,271,492**
Donations	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluation increases/ (decreases) to Revaluation Reserve	2,546,720	11,560,018	-	-	-	-	-	-	**14,106,738**	51,758	-	**14,158,496**
Revaluation increases/ (decreases) to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	(218,574)	(3,290,973)	-	-	-	(400,302)	-	115,000	**(3,794,849)**	(265,217)	-	**(4,060,066)**
Impairment to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Derecognition - Disposals	-	-	-	-	(2,121,928)	(14,000)	-	(540,000)	**(2,675,928)**	-	-	**(2,675,928)**
Derecognition - Other	-	(4,149,100)	-	-	-	(21,071)	-	-	**(4,170,171)**	-	-	**(4,170,171)**
Reclassifications & Transfers	619,118	43,660,425	-	-	432,197	(8,271,333)	(39,001,412)	1,604,326	**(956,679)**	95,525	-	**(861,154)**
Reclassified to(-) / from(+) Held for Sale	-	-	-	-	-	186,274	-	(1,340,000)	**(1,153,726)**	-	-	**(1,153,726)**
Balance as at 31 March 2020	**104,391,303**	**467,266,524**	**5,774,607**	**-**	**47,071,058**	**39,249,303**	**46,248,371**	**5,539,001**	**715,540,167**	**9,192,723**	**-**	**724,732,890**

Depreciation and Impairment	Land	Buildings	Infrastructure Assets	Landfill Sites	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	Community Assets	PP&E Under Construction	Surplus Assets	Total PP&E	Heritage Assets	Assets Held for Resale	TOTAL
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Balance as at 1 April 2019	-	-	513,171	-	25,617,567	2,925,228	-	-	**29,055,966**	133,740	-	**29,189,706**
cost/value & depreciation/impairment	-	-	-	-	(1,037,101)	-	-	-	**(1,037,101)**	-	-	**(1,037,101)**
Balance as at 1 April 2019	-	-	513,171	-	24,580,466	2,925,228	-	-	28,018,865	133,740	-	28,152,605
Depreciation Charge	-	14,166,164	192,492	-	3,041,747	1,713,203	-	-	**19,113,606**	101,555	-	**19,215,161**
Depreciation written out on Revaluation Reserve	-	(13,687,932)	-	-	-	-	-	-	**(13,687,932)**	-	-	**(13,687,932)**
Revaluation taken to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	-	(2,131,861)	-	-	-	-	-	-	**(2,131,861)**	(208,034)	-	**(2,339,895)**
Impairment losses/reversals to Revaluation Reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Impairment losses/reversals to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Derecognition - Disposals	-	-	-	-	(1,503,188)	-	-	-	**(1,503,188)**	-	-	**(1,503,188)**
Derecognition - Other	-	(374,937)	-	-	-	(6,559)	-	-	**(381,496)**	-	-	**(381,496)**
Reclassifications & Transfers	-	2,028,566	-	-	-	(2,028,566)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Eliminated on reclassification to Held for Sale	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Balance as at 31 March 2020	-	-	705,663	-	26,119,025	2,603,306	-	-	**29,427,994**	27,261	-	**29,455,255**
Net Book Values												
Balance as at 31 March 2020	**104,391,303**	**467,266,524**	**5,068,944**	**-**	**20,952,033**	**36,645,997**	**46,248,371**	**5,539,001**	**686,112,173**	**9,165,462**	**-**	**695,277,635**

b

Cost or Valuation	Land	Buildings	Infrastructure Assets	Landfill Sites	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	Community Assets	PP&E Under Construction	Surplus Assets	Total PP&E	Heritage Assets	Assets Held for Resale	TOTAL
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Balance as at 1 April 2018	100,840,501	414,305,914	5,774,607	-	42,003,695	44,867,100	25,304,135	7,129,001	**640,224,953**	8,631,550	-	**648,856,503**
cost/value & depreciation/impairment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Prior Period adjustment										-		-
Balance as at 1 April 2018	100,840,501	414,305,914	5,774,607	-	42,003,695	44,867,100	25,304,135	7,129,001	640,224,953	8,631,550	-	648,856,503
Additions (Note 11)	-	385,480	-	-	4,285,412	1,385,146	32,950,225	19,828	**39,026,091**	530,977	-	**39,557,068**
Donations	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Increases/decreases to Revaluation Reserve	339,640	(3,703,588)	-	-	-	-	893,060	(60,000)	**(2,530,888)**	(3,700)	-	**(2,534,588)**
Revaluation increases/ decreases to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	263,860	(2,116,266)	-	-	-	(2)	5,539	(19,828)	**(1,866,697)**	-	-	**(1,866,697)**
Impairment to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Derecognition - Disposals	-	-	-	-	(2,226,653)	-	-	-	**(2,226,653)**	-	-	**(2,226,653)**
Derecognition - Other	-	-	-	-	(994,916)	-	-	-	**(994,916)**	-	-	**(994,916)**
Reclassifications & Transfers	-	9,912,975	-	-	125,610	960,127	(10,998,711)	(1,300,000)	**(1,299,999)**	-	-	**(1,299,999)**
Reclassified to(-) / from(+) Held for Sale	-	-	-	-	-	(186,607)	-	(80,000)	**(266,607)**	-	-	**(266,607)**
Balance as at 31 March 2019	101,444,001	418,784,515	5,774,607	-	43,193,148	47,025,764	48,154,248	5,689,001	670,065,284	9,158,827	-	679,224,111

Depreciation and Impairment	Land	Buildings	Infrastructure Assets	Landfill Sites	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	Community Assets (Restated)	PP&E Under Construction	Surplus Assets	Total PP&E	Heritage Assets	Assets Held for Resale	TOTAL
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Balance as at 1 April 2018	-	-	320,679	-	25,363,069	1,443,891	-	-	27,127,639	35,467	-	27,163,106
cost/value & depreciation/impairment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Balance as at 1 April 2018	-	-	320,679	-	25,363,069	1,443,891	-	-	27,127,639	35,467	-	27,163,106
Depreciation Charge	-	13,337,713	192,492	-	3,134,219	1,481,337	-	-	**18,145,761**	98,273	-	**18,244,034**
Depreciation written out on Revaluation Reserve	-	(12,183,059)	-	-	-	-	-	-	**(12,183,059)**	-	-	**(12,183,059)**
Revaluation taken to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	-	(1,154,654)	-	-	-	-	-	-	**(1,154,654)**	-	-	**(1,154,654)**
impairment losses/reversals to Revaluation Reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Impairment losses/reversals to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Derecognition - Disposals	-	-	-	-	(1,884,805)	-	-	-	**(1,884,805)**	-	-	**(1,884,805)**
Derecognition - Other	-	-	-	-	(994,916)	-	-	-	**(994,916)**	-	-	**(994,916)**
Reclassifications & Transfers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Eliminated on reclassification to Held for Sale	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Balance as at 31 March 2019	-	-	513,171	-	25,617,567	2,925,228	-	-	29,055,966	133,740	-	29,189,706
Net Book Values												
Balance as at 31 March 2019	101,444,001	418,784,515	5,261,436	-	17,575,581	44,100,536	48,154,248	5,689,001	641,009,318	9,025,087	-	650,034,405
Balance as at 31 March 2020	104,391,303	467,266,524	5,068,944	-	20,952,033	36,645,997	46,248,371	5,539,001	686,112,173	9,165,462	-	695,277,635

Intangible Assets	2019/20	2018/19
	£	£
Balance at start of year:		
Gross carrying amounts	19,208,176	19,208,176
Accumulated amortisation	18,790,126	18,651,234
Net carrying amount at start of year	418,050	556,942
Additions	-	-
Assets reclassified as held for sale		
Revaluation increases or decreases	-	-
Impairment losses recognised or reversed directly in the Revaluation Reserve	-	-
Impairment losses recognised or reversed directly in the Surplus/ Deficit on the Provision of Services	-	-
Amortisation for the period	(180,855)	(138,892)
Other Changes	456,257	-
Net carrying amount at end of year	693,452	418,050

Investment Properties	2019/20	2018/19
	£	£
Balance at start of the year	100,111,429	91,963,283
Additions	7,238	173,146
Disposals	(3,750,000)	(350,000)
Net gains/losses from fair value adjustments	115,103	7,025,000
Transfers to/ from inventories	254,897	-
Transfers to/ from property, plant and equipment	150,000	-
Other changes	-	1,300,000
Balance at end of the year	96,888,667	100,111,429

Investment Property	2019/20	2018/19
	£	£
Industrial Estates	72,500,000	73,800,000
Commercial Units	24,388,667	26,311,429
Balance at end of the year	96,888,667	100,111,429

G5

a

Employee Costs and Member Allowances Staff Costs	2019/20	2018/19
	£	£
Salaries and Wages	71,988,563	70,725,504
Employers NIC	6,819,001	6,536,203
Employers Superannuation	14,196,719	14,521,573
Total staff costs	93,004,283	91,783,280

The above staff costs include the costs of voluntary redundancies in 2019/20. These costs total £977,075 (18/19 £2,003,028) and are disclosed separately in Table 4 of the Remuneration Report. In addition, agency costs during the year amounted to £5,626,073 (2018/19 £4,818,572).

The Council's current contribution rate to NILGOSC scheme is 20% plus a 2% Deficit Recovery Contribution.

Average Number of Employees - where FTE represents fulltime equivalent employees

b

Average Number of Employees	2019/20	2018/19
	FTE	FTE
Strategic Policy & Resources	620	627
City Growth & Regeneration	369	289
People& Communities	1,162	1,225
Planning and Licencing	140	145
Total Number	2,291	2,286

c

	2019/20 Actual Numbers	2018/19 Actual Numbers
Full-time numbers employed	1,927	2,029
Part-time numbers employed	362	333
Total Number	2,289	2,362

d

Senior Employees' Remuneration	2019/20	2018/19
	£	£
£50,001 to £60,000	62	52
£60,001 to £70,000	22	15
£70,001 to £80,000	6	6
£80,001 to £90,0000	6	4
£90,001 to £100,000	5	6
£100,001 to £110,000	4	4
£110,001 to £120,000	1	1
£130,001 to £140,000	-	-
£140,001 to £150,000	1	1
Total Number	107	89

G6 Debtors

a

Long Term Debtors		2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Government Departments		-	-
Other Councils		-	-
Public corporations and trading funds		-	-
Bodies external to general government		-	-
Employee car loans		49,664	59,591
Revenue Grants		-	-
Capital Grants		-	-
Interest Receivable		-	-
Capital Debtors		-	-
Loans and advances		-	-
Finance lease debtors		-	-
Trade debtors		218,298	285,208
NIHE Loans		171,580	258,860
Other		-	-
Impairment of loans and receivables		-	-
Contract Receivables		-	-
Total Long-Term Debtors		439,542	603,659

b

Short Term Debtors		2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Government Departments		856,648	611,491
Other Councils		229,001	58,122
Public corporations and trading funds		-	-
Bodies external to general government		-	-
NIHE loans		87,280	81,950
Employee car loans		41,483	56,516
Revenue Grants		5,856,018	5,933,912
Capital Grants		2,374,703	1,733,211
Interest Receivable		-	-
Capital Debtors		-	-
Value Added Tax		2,524,478	1,848,860
Prepayments		3,999,514	3,527,783
Finance lease debtors		-	-
Other		3,298,710	1,726,399
Trade receivables		2,607,754	1,072,374
Impairment loss - Trade receivables		(805,888)	(283,594)
Contract Receivables		378,981	1,947,969
Total Short-Term Debtors		21,448,682	18,314,993

Total Debtors		21,888,224	18,918,652

G7 Creditors

a

Short Term Creditors		2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Government Departments		1,585,600	1,818,188
Other Councils		4,040	13,010
Public corporations and trading funds		-	-
Bodies external to general government		-	-
Rates clawback		1,800,000	100,000
VAT		-	-
Remuneration due to employees		403,046	583,873
Accumulated Absences		1,363,705	1,357,825
Receipts in advance		6,374,183	4,473,249
Trade creditors		4,801,202	2,499,735
Loan interest		346,162	331,903
Capital Creditors		2,096,936	1,450,637
Creditor Accruals		18,501,382	23,874,394
Contract Payables		277,387	-
Total Short Term Creditors		**37,553,643**	**36,502,814**

b

Long Term Creditors		2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Government Departments		-	-
Other Councils		-	-
Public corporations and trading funds		-	-
Bodies external to general government		-	-
Rates clawback		-	-
Remuneration due to employees		-	-
Accumulated Absences		-	-
Receipts in advance		-	-
Trade creditors		-	-
Other		64,304	50,386
Contract Payables		-	-
Total Long Term Creditors		64,304	50,386

Total Creditors		**37,617,947**	**36,553,200**

G8 Other cash flow disclosures

a Analysis of Adjustments to Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services

Adjustment to surplus or deficit on the provision of services for non cash movements	Notes	2019/20	2018/19
		£	£
Depreciation		19,396,016	18,382,926
Impairment & downward revaluations (& non-sale derecognitions)		1,605,228	(6,312,957)
Amortisation (included with depreciation above)		-	-
(Increase)/Decrease in Inventory		(94,184)	49,874
(Increase)/Decrease in Debtors		(3,491,866)	664,797
Increase/(decrease) in impairment provision for bad debts		522,294	(170,658)
Increase/(Decrease) in Creditors		1,059,137	6,178,708
Increase/(Decrease) in Interest Creditors		-	-
Payments to NILGOSC		15,130,000	24,850,000
Carrying amount of non-current assets sold		4,704,852	350,000
AIC/WIP written off to Net Cost of Services		-	-
Contributions to Other Reserves/Provisions		3,189,586	4,292,409
Movement in value of investment properties-included above in Impairment & downward revaluations (& non-sale derecognitions)		-	-
Amounts posted to CIES from Donated Assets Account		(1)	(10,000)
Contract Costs		-	-
Contract Assets		-	-
Contract Liabilities		-	-
Deferred revenue		-	-
		42,021,062	48,275,099

Adjust for items included in the net surplus or deficit on the provision of services that are investing and financing activities	Notes	2019/20	2018/19
		£	£
Purchase of short-term (not considered to be cash equivalents) and long-term investments (includes investments in associates, joint ventures and subsidiaries)		-	89,928
Proceeds from the sale of PP&E, investment property and intangible assets		(4,942,650)	(430,080)
Capital grants included in "Taxation & non-specific grant income"		(5,257,824)	(3,052,865)
		(10,200,474)	(3,393,017)

b Cash and Cash Equivalents

	Notes	2019/20	2018/19
		£	£
Cash and Bank balances		12,516,975	10,866,068
Short Term Deposits (considered to be Cash		8,000,000	17,000,000
Short Term Investments (considered to be Cash		-	-
Bank Overdraft		-	-
		20,516,975	27,866,068

c

Cash flows from Investing Activities		2019/20	2018/19
		£	£
Purchase of PP&E, investment property and intangible assets		43,625,193	40,481,902
Purchase of Short Term Investments (not considered to be cash equivalents)		-	-
Purchase of Long Term Investments		440,000	431,000
Other Payments for Investing Activities		1,974,259	1,733,342
Proceeds from the sale of PP&E, investment property and intangible assets		(4,942,650)	(430,080)
Proceeds from Short Term Investments (not considered to be cash equivalents)		-	-
Proceeds from Long Term Investments		-	-
Capital Grants and Contributions Received		(5,257,824)	(3,052,865)
Other Receipts from Investing Activities		-	-
Net Cash flows from Investing Activities		**35,838,978**	**39,163,299**

d

Cash flows from Financing Activities		2019/20	2018/19
		£	£
Cash Receipts from Short and Long Term Borrowing		30,000,000	65,000,000
Other Receipts from Financing Activities		-	-
Cash payments for the reduction of the outstanding		-	-
Repayment of Short and Long Term Borrowing		(20,182,319)	(38,874,042)
Other payments for Financing Activities		-	-
Net Cash flows from Financing Activities		**9,817,681**	**26,125,958**

Events after the Balance Sheet Date

The coronavirus pandemic has had a profound impact on all aspects of life in the Belfast City Council area. Through 2020/21 the Council will adopt a pro-active approach to ensure that it responds to the emerging needs of residents and businesses.

On 17 October 2020, the First-tier Tribunal issued its decision in relation to a dispute concerning the VAT liability of charges paid by members of the public for access to sport and leisure facilities provided by Mid-Ulster District Council. HMRC contended that the charges should bear VAT at the standard rate, while Mid-Ulster District Council contended that the charges in dispute did not attract VAT. The appeal by Mid-Ulster District Council was allowed and now the quantum has to be agreed between both parties. However, pursuant to Rule 39 of the Tribunal Procedure (First-tier Tribunal) (Tax Chamber) Rules 2009, any party dissatisfied with the decision has a right to apply for permission to appeal not later than 56 days after the date of this decision. Therefore, at this stage it is too early to assess the impact of this decision on council finances.

Date of authorisation for issue

The Chief Financial Officer authorised these financial statements for issue on December 2020.

STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Belfast City Council

Subject:	**Update on Contracts**
Date:	18th December 2020
Reporting Officer:	Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources
Contact Officer:	Noleen Bohill, Head of Commercial and Procurement Services

Restricted Reports				
Is this report restricted?	**Yes**		**No**	X
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?				
After Committee Decision				
After Council Decision				
Sometime in the future				
Never				

Call-in				
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	**Yes**	X	**No**	

1.0	**Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**
1.1	The purpose of this report is to • Seek approval from the Committee for tenders and Single Tender Actions (STA) over £30,000, and modifications to a contract term; and • Ask the Committee to note retrospective Single Tender Actions (STAs), Contract Modifications under Delegated Authority and the extension of the council's residual waste contract.
2.0	**Recommendations**
2.1	The Committee is asked to: • approve the public advertisement of tenders as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 **(Table 1)** • approve the award of STAs in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in Appendix 1 **(Table 2)**

	• approve the modification of the contract term as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 **(Table 3)** • note the award of retrospective STAs in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in Appendix 1 **(Table 4)**
3.0	**Main Report**
3.1	Competitive Tenders Section 2.5 of the Scheme of Delegation states Chief Officers have delegated authority to authorise a contract for the procurement of goods, services or works over the statutory limit of £30,000 following a tender exercise where the council has approved the invitation to tender Standing Order 60(a) states any contract that exceeds the statutory amount (currently £30,000) shall be made under the Corporate Seal. Under Standing Order 51(b) the Corporate Seal can only be affixed when there is a resolution of the Council. Standing Order 54 states that every contract shall comply with the relevant requirements of national and European legislation.
3.2	Single Tender Actions (STAs) The following STAs are being submitted for approval: • A 2 year contract for maintenance and support of the council's proprietary GPS fleet software with Masternaut at a cost of £120,000. The plan is for a replacement system to be procured by FY 22/23.
3.3	The following retrospective STAs were awarded: • A 4 month contract for the provision of BREXIT support for businesses in the Belfast City Council area through the Innovation Factory, awarded to Oxford Innovation at a cost of £46,000 • An urgent contract awarded to a contractor experienced in working in high risk and contentious circumstances to remove a number of unauthorised street signs that had appeared in different parts of the city at a cost of £19,000 • An urgent two day contract for the procurement of a new motherboard for the Housing Benefit payment server, engineering time and associated cost awarded to Greenblade Solutions Ltd at a cost of £7,000

	Modification to Contract term
3.4	The following contract terms were modified: • A 12 month extension to an existing contract for the continental market at City Hall. Concession contract with projected £100k annual income. Extension required due to markets cancelled during 2020 due to COVID and to allow for re-tender a later time in 2021 when there is greater certainty in marketplace.
	Contract modification under Delegated Authority
3.5	The Committee is asked to note that a 6 month extension of contract has been agreed with our supplier for the Interim Treatment and Disposal of Residual Waste.
	Financial and Resource Implications
3.6	The financial resources for these contracts are within approved corporate or departmental budgets
	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment
3.7	None
4.0	**Documents Attached**
	Appendix 1: Table 1 - Competitive Tenders Table 2 – Single Tender Actions Table 3 - Modification to Contract term Table 4 - Retrospective Single Tender Actions

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Table 1 – Competitive Tenders

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Estimated Total Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods/ services
Tender for the delivery of Belfast District PCSP's Primary School Aged Cyber Safety Project (fully funded) (T2122)	Up to 45 months	£60,000	S Toland / R Black	Project designed to help keep children safe online
Delivery of PCSP's Adult/Young Person Cyber Safety Project in Belfast (fully funded) (T2130)	Up to 45 months	£75,000	S Toland / R Black	Approval granted in Oct 2020; approval sought for increase in contract duration by 9 months
Tender for the delivery of PCSP's Adults at Risk of Harm Project (T2125)	Up to 42 months	£45,000	S Toland / R Black	Approval granted in Oct 2020; approval sought for increase in contract duration by 6 months
Tender for Educational Awareness Programme (Fully Funded) (T2129)	Up to 45 months	£90,000	S Toland / R Black	Approval granted in Oct 2020; approval sought for increase in contract duration by 9 months
Tender for the provision of West Belfast DPSPC's Community Safety Initiative (T2124)	Up to 45 months	£132,000	S Toland / R Black	Approval granted in Oct 2020; approval sought for increase in contract duration by 9 months
Support to deliver A Bolder Vision) (part funded by DfC & DfI)	Up to 1 year	£120,000	A Reid	Work will include development of delivery scenarios, options for delivery & implementation plan
Tender for the Hire of up to and over 7.5T & Glass Collection Vehicles	Up to 5 years	£550,000	S Toland / R Black	Hire of vehicles to support frontline workers and operations.
Capacity Building Programme for Belfast's Culture & Tourism sector as part of the A City Imagined programme	Up to 2 years	£70,000	A Reid	Development of evidence based projects aligned to the Cultural Strategy Implementation Plan

Table 2 - Single Tender Actions

Title of Contract	Supplier	Value	SRO
GPS fleet system – support and maintenance	Masternaut	£120,000	R Cregan

Table 3 - Modification to Contract term

Title of Contract	Supplier	Modification	SRO
Provision of continental markets at City Hall (T1677)	Marketplace Europe	12 month extension. Concession contract – projected £100k income.	A Reid

Table 4 - Retrospective Single Tender Actions

Title of Contract	Supplier	Value	SRO
BREXIT support for businesses in the Belfast City Council area (retrospective reporting)	Oxford Innovation	£46,000	A Reid
Removal of Unauthorised Street Signs (retrospective reporting)	Confidential	£19,500	S Toland / R Black
Hardware replacement & engineer time to Housing Benefit system server (retrospective reporting)	Greenblade Solutions Ltd	£7,000	R Cregan

STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Belfast City Council

Subject:	**Minutes of Meeting of Shared City Shared City Partnership**
Date:	18th December 2020
Reporting Officer:	Ryan Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Nicola Lane, Good Relations Manager

Restricted Reports				
Is this report restricted?	**Yes**		**No**	X
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?				
After Committee Decision				
After Council Decision				
Sometime in the future				
Never				

Call-in				
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	**Yes**	X	**No**	

1.0	**Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues**
1.1	The purpose of this report is to apprise the Committee of the key issues discussed at the Shared City Partnership meeting held on 7th December 2020.
2.0	**Recommendations**
2.1	The Committee is requested to approve the minutes and the recommendations from the Shared City Partnership Meeting held on 7th December 2020 including: • to approve the recommendation that Councillor O'Hara be elected as Deputy Chairperson for the Shared City Partnership for the year until May 2021. • to note the Revised Action Plan 20/21 which was submitted to The Executive Office summarising the subsequent changes that have been approved after the previous submission

	• to note that 5k has been awarded to The Hubb under delegated authority, as previously agreed, as part of the North Belfast Diversionary Project. • to recommend to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee that the contribution to the Clean Green Inclusive and Safe Initiative from the Good Relations Action budget is increased to £7550 so that the project can progress in year. • that Forward South be offered additional support of up to £7k for the Roma helpline until 31 March 2021 to allow a continuation of service and ensure a smooth transition to the Peace IV project. • to note the opening of the 2 funding programmes under the Council's Community Recovery Support Grants Scheme and to forward the information to their contacts as widely as possible • to approve the re-profiling request from Duncairn Community Partnership to upgrade their current technology capability to accommodate the on-line delivery of good relations programmes targeting young people and new communities. • to invite representatives from the IFI Programme to present on their work at a future meeting of the Partnership • to recommend that the Council engages in social media and other relevant communication mediums to provide a message of support to EU nationals living in the city, acknowledging their contribution to Belfast and stipulating that the Council wishes them to stay and would encourage them to apply to the EU settlement scheme. • to also call on all employers and civic society organisations across the greater Belfast area to issue a similar statement as above acknowledging the contributions of EU citizens to Belfast and stipulating that they should stay and encouraging them to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme. **Peace IV** • to note the report in relation to the PEACE IV Secretariat and agree that further clarification from SEUPB in terms of modifications is sought. • following a presentation by MDL on Dialogue & Engagement of Forth Meadow Community Greenway to note the next steps of developing the management model and further engagement with the West Area Working Group. • to note the report and progress on the SSS theme • to note the report and update in relation to projects within the CYP theme. • In regard to the BPR theme, to agree:

	i. that costs (£4,500) and time for the BPR3 NICVA researcher is permitted under the current contract ii. BPR3 the Resource Allocation for Year 1 area cluster projects (£4k) is realigned into the Year 2 cluster area in instances where there is low / no take up and re-engagement. iii. BPR4 Belfast and the World to realign Year 3 targets into year 4 targets.
3.0	**Main Report**
3.1	Key Issues The Shared City Partnership is a Working Group of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee which consists of Elected members and representatives from various sectors across the city. The minutes from the Partnership are brought before the Committee for approval on a monthly basis.
3.2	The key issues on the agenda at the December meeting were: • Election of Deputy Chairperson • Presentation on Forth Meadow Community Greenway Dialogue & Engagement • PEACE IV ➢ Update on PEACE IV Secretariat ➢ Update on PEACE IV CYP Theme ➢ Update on PEACE IV SSS Theme ➢ Update on PEACE IV BPR Theme • Update on Revised Good Relations Plan 20/21 and 21/22 • Reprofiling Request from Duncairn Community Partnership • EU Settlement Scheme More details regarding the above issues and recommendations are included in the minutes of the meeting, as attached.
3.3	**Financial and Resource Implications** All financial implications are covered through existing budgets
3.4	**Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment** The recommendations of the Partnership promote the work of the Council in promoting good relations and will enhance equality and good relations impacts.
4.0	**Document Attached**
	Minutes of the Shared City Partnership of 7th December 2020.

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SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP

MONDAY 7TH DECEMBER, 2020

MEETING OF SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP
HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present:	Councillor Kyle (Chairperson); Alderman Rodgers; and Councillors Magennis, Lyons and O'Hara.
External Members:	Mrs. B. Arthurs, Community and Voluntary Sector; Mrs. O. Barron, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust; Mrs. J. Hawthorne, Northern Ireland Housing Executive; Ms. J. Irwin, Community Relations Council; Mr. M. McBride, Education Authority; Mr. I. McLaughlin, Community and Voluntary Sector; Father. E. O'Neill, Faith Sector; and Ms. Ann Marie White, British Red Cross.
In attendance:	Mr. S. Lavery, Interim Neighbourhood Services Manager; Ms. N. Lane, Good Relations Manager; Ms. D. McKinney, Programme Manager; and Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Councillor Kelly and Mr. J. Currie, Mr. J. Donnelly, Miss. G. Duggan, Mr. S. Hamilton, Mr. M. McGinley and Mr. P. Mackel.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 9th November were taken as read and signed as correct.

Declarations of Interest

Mrs. B. Arthurs declared an interest in item 3 (d), namely, Peace IV Updates and (4) Update on Revised Good Relations Plan 20/21 and 21/22 in that she is an employee of the Forward South Partnership, which acts as the delivery agent for one of the Peace IV projects and she left the meeting whilst both agenda items were being considered.

Election of Deputy Chairperson

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor O'Hara to his first meeting and on behalf of the Partnership asked that its thanks be conveyed to Councillor Smyth for his contribution over the last year.

The Chairperson advised that the position of Deputy Chairperson needed to be considered by the Partnership and he sought nominations.

It was proposed by Alderman Rodgers, seconded by Councillor Magennis and agreed that Councillor O'Hara would be the Deputy Chairperson for the Shared City Partnership for the year until May 2021.

Presentation

Forth Meadow Community Greenway Dialogue & Engagement 2020

The Partnership was reminded that, at its last meeting, it had agreed to receive a presentation from the consultants in regard to the ongoing work in respect of the Forth Meadow Community Dialogue and Engagement, accordingly Ms. M. Dellenbaugh-Losse and Mr. I. Graham were welcomed to the meeting.

Ms. Dellenbaugh-Losse commend by providing an overview of the work undertaken in the last six months. She advised that they had reached out to over 350 individuals remotely, including community groups and local organisations in West Belfast. The work included three online workshops and direct discussions with more than twenty stakeholders, an online survey with over 251 responses and an interactive webinar and a presentation including a live survey.

She detailed that a number of challenges had been encountered throughout the project, given that West Belfast had a complex and broad stakeholder landscape, with many of the existing organisations being primarily single-identity. Whilst there was a large geographical scope with the greenway (12 kilometres), there was very much a local focus and this in itself brought tensions. She continued that there was a clear message from the consultation that the management of the use of the greenway should go beyond organisations and community groups to include residents and youths. In terms of looking for good practice, it was felt that these should include both an urban context and also spaces with cross-community challenges. She advised that the draft consultation report, included examples from the United States as many of the greenways in America go through heavily urbanised areas which are characterised by racial and socio economic tensions.

In terms of the stakeholders consulted, she reported that they had engaged with representatives from the Girdwood Community Hub and Connswater Community Greenway, with each having various aspects which could be drawn on for the Forth Meadow Community Greenway as well as incorporating good practices from America, Germany and the United Kingdom.

Mr. Graham then provided the Members with an overview of the responses received from the individuals who had been consulted. He reported that there was broad support from stakeholders who could see the potential for positive change that the greenway might bring. He detailed the many challenges that the proposal faced, outlining that concern was raised in regard to safety, specifically increased antisocial behaviour through opening up the areas. There was also concern raised in respect of conflict around interfaces and people were keen that the work looked at all communities with the goal of creating a space that was accessible, safe and welcoming.

In terms of establishing governance for the proposal, the presenter acknowledged that the proposal faced ongoing challenges but with individuals and communities working together it was possible and people were willing to support it. He stressed that through the consultation the one thing that became apparent was that residents and people using the greenway wished to have an input into its development and how it was managed going forward and they were keen that the voice of young people was also taken into account. He referred to a range of different governance options and that, as a starting option, some form of oversight committee

could be considered. This would look at the greenway as a whole, incorporating key stakeholders but also look at it from a strategic level as to how it would be used. It would also link in with local user groups to bring in a local perspective. It was suggested that this could possibly take the form of North, Central and South sub-groups that would feed into the oversight committee. The logistics of such an approach, including resource challenges would need to be worked out.

Ms. Dellenbaugh-Losse then referred to the need to try and progress the stakeholder liaison during construction, for example stakeholder workshops to try and embed the idea of shared spaces in this area and she took the Members through a proposed approach for the next three Quarters of 2021.

She concluded by detailing the following four take home messages:

- Programming should be used to create new perceptions, then management structures could be built off of this foundation;
- inclusive co-creation would increase civic pride, feelings of ownership and good relations. This would help form a good basis for faster transfer to community ownership;
- good examples existed locally and abroad but specific adaptation was needed. The organisation should be built to suit the local situation; and
- the Greenway was unique and had enormous potential.

During discussion the presenters confirmed that the Belfast Agenda document had been considered throughout the consultation.

Following a number of questions the Chairperson thanked the representatives for the update provided and they left the meeting.

Peace IV Updates

Update on Peace IV Secretariat

The PEACE IV Programme Manager provided the Members with an update in respect of the Secretariat activity associated with the implementation of the Peace IV Local Action Plan.

The officer reported that the ongoing government restrictions continued to impact the delivery of the programme. Delivery partners were making every effort to continue to engage with participant groups and where possible activity had been adapted to an online platform or would be rearranged.

She updated that:

- Project Modification - requests that had previously been approved by the Partnership were now with the SEUPB for approval; SEUPB new guidance that project amendments were temporary interventions and that delivery contracts should not be amended required further clarity from SEUPB.
- St Comgalls - the public procurement exercise to appoint a suitable contractor for the delivery of the project had commenced on 20th November and submissions from contractors were due by the 11th December. The budget reallocation within the BPR theme had been approved by the SEUPB;

- Programme Workplan - a virtual 10x9 event on the theme of Peace had taken place on 25th November, with input from storytellers across the city, over 70 people had attended; and
- Verification and Audit – the approach and timeframe for the internal audit had been agreed with preliminary information submitted to AGRS.

The Partnership were informed also that the Period 24 claim had been submitted to the SEUPB by the November deadline, with a value of £705,467 across all themes.

Noted.

Update on Peace IV CYP Theme

The Partnership considered the following report which provided information on the Children and Young People's theme of the PEACE IV Local Action Plan:

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

To provide the Shared City Partnership (SCP) with a progress report in respect of the Children and Young People's (CYP) theme of the PEACE IV Local Action Plan.

2.0 Recommendations

The Partnership is requested to recommend to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee that they note the contents of the report.

3.0 Main report

Delivery of CYP projects is ongoing where possible, although government restrictions introduced in October / November have impacted the condensed programmes and residential activity scheduled during this period. Information is available in the agenda pack which outlines project progress to date and an overview of the delivery status against the key project elements is also available.

3.1 Project Updates

CYP 1 – Tech Connects

(6-16 yr olds) GIGA Training (Afterschools & Digital Arts Academies / Tech Camps) 28 participants are actively participating in the project. Digital poverty (access to equipment / internet) and restrictions on face to face are impacting the achievement of targets as 80 children & young people had initially registered interest. The delivery partner can provide access to Ipads & laptops for participants for use during physical delivery sessions.

(17-24 yr olds) Belfast Metropolitan College (Digital Insights Programme)

The first cohort of participants completed a 2 day session on 5-6 November 2020. Recruitment of the second cohort is ongoing with delivery sessions scheduled for 16-17 December 2020. The project is targeting a hard to reach age group via remote delivery which requires participants to have internet access and a suitable device.

It is likely that both delivery partners may need an extended timeframe for delivery should government restrictions continue to impact the achievement of targets.

3.2 CYP 2 - Playing our Part in the City

Active Communities Network continues to liaise with community partners / groups to recruit participants. The condensed activity camp scheduled for Halloween was postponed due to Government Restrictions and is currently being rescheduled for February 21. The delivery partner has advised that the project will be delivered within allocated budget with no additional funding required.

3.3 CYP3 – On the Right Track – Sports and Personal Change elements

The Project Officer continues to liaise with sports clubs and participants. The provision of equipment for clubs whose participation was impacted by COVID 19 is being explored to ensure equal treatment of all participating clubs. In order to deliver programmes safely, participating clubs have enquired of the option to purchase PPE to assure participants/ parents that the clubs are equipped to deliver the programme with the necessary safety requirements.

Personal Change

The delivery partner, Extern is actively recruiting for next intake of participants. The nature of the project enables ongoing delivery of the project.

3.4 CYP 4 – Cooperation Ireland (Young Advocates)

To date 53 from a target of 80 participants have completed this project to date. The young advocates have completed OCN Level 1 in Peer Mentoring, OCN Level 1 in Prejudice and Discrimination, OCN Level 1 in Diversity in Society, Child Safeguarding through Keeping Safe and British Red Cross First Aid Course.

As previously reported, the delivery partner has requested a pause in delivery, which SEUPB has now approved. The TPM will liaise with Co-Operation Ireland to agree the remobilisation of the programme.

3.5 CYP 5 – NIHE Local Area Network Partner Delivery

NIHE is progressing remaining procurement to provide options for content delivery. Due to delays caused by COVID 19, NIHE have experienced lack of venue hire & decreased contact with potential participants.

As an alternative to face to face delivery NIHE has submitted a request for online delivery of a cultural event. This pilot online activity will provide 48 participants from two network with remote engagement packs to enable them to explore other cultures way of celebrating occasions such as Christmas and New Year. A request for an extension to June 2022 is being progressed."

The Partnership agreed that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee be recommended to note the information contained within the report.

Update on Peace IV SSS Theme

The Programme Manager provided an update on the progress made to date in respect of the SSS theme, within the Peace IV Local Action Plan.

She referred to a number of capital projects which were being undertaken as part of the initiative, including:

- **Springfield Dam** - the contactor was finalising works at the site, with a handover to the Council scheduled for early December. She referred to the options which were being considered under the Contractor's Social Clause in regard to the reallocation of £6,000, with the potential to provide support to local schools for biodiversity activity at Springfield Dam. She reported that due to the current restrictions, a low key opening of the site was scheduled to be held in mid-December. Cross community site visits with local community representatives were to be scheduled to coincide with the opening; and
- **Peace IV Network Scheme (Capital Works)** – the contractor for the remaining scheme was being finalised with CPD and approvals would be sought from SEUPB. It was anticipated that the contractors would be on site (at Section 1 – Glencairn) in January 2021.

In regard to programming, the Partnership was informed that MDL had presented its report on usage and management to the Shared City Partnership Members. The next step was to consider the recommendations and to develop an Action Plan for implementation. The Members were advised that the MDL recommendations and next steps would also be reported to the West Area Working Group. The officer reiterated that ongoing dialogue and engagement was critical to the success of the project to guarantee alignment with capital works. To ensure a co-ordinated approach of involvement with key stakeholders, she advised that an Engagement Plan was currently being developed and she drew the Members' attention to the document which had been attached to the agenda. She reported that this plan would be updated to reflect the recommendations of the MDL report.

In regard to the other Programmes:

- **Shared History, Heritage and Identity Content / Narratives for Shared Space -** project initiation discussions with Mediation NI and the Osborne Partnership to develop the narratives for 17 interpretative panels and a publication had taken place. Due to current government restrictions, the delivery partner was currently focusing on research and community engagement with delivery in a community setting planned for January 2021;

- **Shared Space Volunteer Training -** Mobilisation of the project was progressing with the project initiation meeting with Sustrans having taken place on 18th November 2020. A site visit with Sustrans, their community partners Intercomm and Community representatives was planned during December. The current focus of Sustrans was community engagement with delivery of the activity scheduled for early January 2021. The procurement approach for the volunteer training of Shared Space Ambassadors, Heritage and Nature Guides was under consideration;

- **Springfield Dam activities –** It was noted that both volunteer programmes would help to animate the Springfield Dam site. She advised that Council led outreach activity involving the Council's Parks and Community Services department was currently being finalised. Subject to government restrictions, further animation activities were also being explored.

The Partnership were provided with a breakdown of the costs associated with the projects and were informed that the Peace IV costs were recoverable, subject to eligibility from SEUPB. The Period 24 claim of £467K had been submitted to SEUPB for verification. Details of the Department for Infrastructure contribution to the project was being progressed and confirmation of Department for Communities input was being prioritised.

Noted.

(At this stage in proceedings Mrs, B. Arthurs left and did not return to the meeting.)

Update on Peace IV BPR Theme

The Partnership considered the following report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

To provide the Shared City Partnership (SCP) with a progress report in respect of the Building Positive Relations (BPR) theme of the PEACE IV Local Action Plan.

2.0 Recommendations

The Shared City Partnership is requested to recommend to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee that they note the contents of the report, and approve the recommendations as follows:

BPR3

(i) that additional time for the NICVA researcher is permitted under the current contract

(ii) where Yr 1 area clusters indicate low/no engagement, the resource allocation for a cluster project (£4k) is realigned into the Yr 2 Cluster area to maximise benefit from project development on an area basis

BPR4

(i) Realign Year 3 targets into year 4 targets.

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

Delivery of project activity is continuing where possible, although government restrictions introduced in mid-October 20 impacted the delivery of condensed programmes and residential activity that was scheduled for October / November. Information is available in the agenda pack which provides detail on project progress as at October 20. An overview of delivery status against the 5 key project elements is also available.

3.1 BPR1 – Cross Community Area Networks

The project team is continuing to engage participant groups across the majority of the CCAN areas, although further exploratory discussions are required and are underway in East Belfast. With all approvals in place, the tender for the Good Relations programme is to be advertised w/c 23rd November with a view to commence early 2021. The development of a tender for the Place Visioning programme is progressing.

3.2 BPR2 – Creative Communities Project

Artist in residency aspects is to commence imminently in 5 cluster areas. Facilitative sessions with the Inner East- East Belfast Women's groups to develop a project idea has commenced. Exploratory discussions continue with the LGBTQ+ and Malone Integrated College thematic clusters.

3.3 BPR3 – Transform for Change Project

Year 1 cohorts and deliverables were completed October 20 (5.5 months behind schedule). 13 TLP courses delivered across 11 Clusters with 128 participants verified to date from a target of 169. Year 2 has commenced with combined clusters at an area level due to low uptake. All delivery is now online with blended learning approach – 20 hours training and 10 hours self-directed learning.

NICVA has requested approval to cover additional costs (approx. £4,500) for the provision of unforeseen services in moving to an

electronic M&E system due to Covid 19. The Programme Board has recommended that additional time for the NICVA researcher will be permitted under the current contract, however the time charged to the project should reflect the actual time spent on PEACE IV activity and evidenced appropriately and in the event where there are no participants starting / ending in any given month then no input from the researcher should be incurred/charged.

Project workshops for Yr1 clusters are ongoing however engagement is challenging due to Covid-19. Despite extensive efforts to re-engage participants in some Cluster areas there has been no/low interest to pursuing local project development. To maximise benefit to the cluster area, the Programme Board is recommending to the SCP that where area clusters indicate low/no engagement, the project resource allocation (£4K) should be combined into the Yr2 Cluster for a larger project.

The PEACE IV team has requested support from NSM/NIMS for Area Teams to assist in the delivery and progression of project development workshops and ideas, which will strength area working.

3.4 <u>BPR4 – Belfast and the World (BATW)</u>

Following internal promotion, Corrymeela is currently recruiting for new project coordinator to lead the project

Year 2 (2019) participant group of 24 is due to complete December. Year 3 cohorts (Shankill Women's Centre Health and Wellbeing group completed with 23 participants and Ballynafeigh Community Development Association with 14 participant is also due to complete in December 20. A further year 3 cohort is currently being recruited via an open call however despite numerous efforts, participant numbers remain low and therefore it is recommended that the SCP agree to moving this target into year 4 targets.

Study visit to remain on hold due to COVID 19 restrictions and is anticipated that two EU study trips will be held in 2021.

3.5 <u>BPR5 – Supporting Connected Communities - LINCS Projects</u>

The delivery partner continues to engage regularly with the 34 core participants currently active and 64 newly recruited participants. The impacts of Covid -19 and digital poverty continues to affect group sessions.

<u>BPR5 – Traveller element of Supporting Connected Communities</u>

Following a public recruitment exercise for a Traveller Support Officer to lead the project, no appointment has been made. A second public recruitment exercise will be advertised on 26 November with the project expected to commence early 2021.

BPR5 – Roma elements of Supporting Connected Communities

The contract for delivery of this project has been awarded to Forward South Partnership project initiation to commence late November 2020. .

3.6 Financial and Resource Implications

All BPR project delivery partners undertaking delivery modification exercise which will determine the level and impact of COVID 19 crisis.

3.7 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

The draft plan has been equality screened and discussed at the Equality Consultative Forum on 13 May 2015."

The Partnership recommended that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee adopt the recommendations as outlined in the report.

Update on Revised Good Relations Plan 20/21 and 21/22

The Partnership considered the undernoted report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 Council received a Letter of Offer from The Executive Office (TEO) towards the 20/21 District Council Good Relations Programme (DCGRP) based on the action plan submitted to TEO in February 2020.

1.2 Subsequently, a draft Revised Good Relations Action Plan for 2020/21 was approved by the Council in August 2020 and was noted by the Partnership at its October meeting.

1.3 It was understood by Council and TEO that given the current environment, this would likely be the first of a series of revisions to the Belfast City Council Good Relations Action Plan in line with the direction of travel agreed by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 19 June 2020 and approved at Full Council on 1 July 2020. Further revisions to the plan will take in to account emerging community need as part of overall community recovery across Belfast and will be brought forward in due course in that context.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1

- **Members are requested to note the Revised Action Plan 20/21 which was submitted to The Executive Office summarising the subsequent changes that have been approved after the previous submission**

- **Members are asked to recommend to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee that:**

  The contribution to the Clean Green Inclusive and Safe Initiative from the Good Relations Action budget is increased to £7550 so that the project can progress in year.
  Forward South is offered additional support of up to £7k for the Roma helpline until 31 March 2021 to allow a continuation of service and ensure a smooth transition to the Peace IV project.

- **Members are asked to note that 5k has been awarded to The Hubb under delegated authority, as previously agreed, as part of the North Belfast Diversionary Project.**
- **Members are asked to note the opening of the 2 funding programmes under the Council's Community Recovery Support Grants Scheme and to forward the information to their contacts as widely as possible**
- **Members are asked to review the current Revised Action Plan 21/22 summary and suggest potential projects which could be included in a further iteration.**

3.0 <u>Main report</u>

3.1 <u>Current Position</u>

3.1 Council submits an annual Good Relations Action Plan for consideration by TEO in February of each year; TEO then issues a Letter of Offer based on identified need in each Council area and the level of resource available. A Letter of Offer was received for approximately £570,000 on 15th June 2020. This will provide a total allocation of approximately £740,000 for the action plan which required amendment to reflect the level of resource available.

3.2 It was understood by Council and TEO that given the current environment, this would likely be the first of a series of revisions to the Belfast City Council Good Relations Action Plan in line with the direction of travel agreed by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 19 June 2020 and approved at Full Council on 1 July 2020. Further revisions to the plan will take in to account emerging community need as part of overall community recovery across Belfast and will be brought forward in due course in that context.

3.3 To this end, Officers have been reviewing the Plan regularly given the dynamic environment and have brought forward proposals to Members at previous meetings for approval to ensure its objectives can be met and outcomes achieved.

3.4 A copy of the most recent revised Action Plan which incorporates the changes agreed previously by the Partnership

and the associated reprofiling of expenditure is available for information within the agenda pack.

3.5 **Now, Members are asked to consider the following 2 requests for additional support for 2 proposals which have already been incorporated in the current Plan.**

3.6 **Firstly, at the last meeting, Members had agreed to keep the Clean Green Inclusive and Safe Initiative in the budget, to a maximum of 5k. Since then, Officers have been liaising with the BIDS in terms of their ability to contribute towards this contract and have been advised that currently they are not in a position to do so due to impact of the pandemic. As the PCSP has contributed an amount of £15k and the total contract comes to £22,550, Members are asked to approve that the Partnership increase their contribution to £7550 to make up the shortfall so that the project can progress in year.**

3.7 **Secondly, Members will recall that they received a presentation from Forward South regarding the Roma Helpline Project in November. Funding of up to £12,000 had been awarded to the group to provide the service to this vulnerable community until 31st December, 2020, with the option to extend to March 2021 pending evaluation and funding being available.**

3.8 **Members will be aware that Forward South have recently been awarded the contract to deliver the Peace IV Roma Hub project. It was hoped that the project would have been mobilised by December but Officers have been advised that it is unlikely that recruitment for staff will be in place for until the end of February. In the absence of this service, the Roma community will be left without any provision during a critical period and could mean that the Roma community could potentially resort to paying for advice.**

3.9 **The work has been supported by a number of statutory partners who have expressed concern that momentum within the community could be lost. While not in a position to continue their funding, the Trust has also advised that the helpline is still very busy and that the project has successfully moved to a face-to-face clinic once a week which is oversubscribed.**

3.10 **Since the project began it has dealt with 985 individual enquiries and in November alone, 92 new callers and 248 returning callers have received support.**

3.111 **Given the above scenario, and the evidence presented regarding the effective reach of the project, Officers would recommend that the project is offered additional support of up to £7k until 31 March 2021 to allow a continuation of service and ensure a smooth transition to the Peace IV project.**

3.12 **This would also assist with the production of an end of year evaluation and the development of a Roma Small Worlds virtual**

project which could be used repeatedly to tell the story of the Roma community and raise awareness of other cultures and experiences in Belfast.

3.13 Members will also recall that at the last meeting, it was agreed that a budget of 10k would be set aside for diversionary work with young people in North Belfast who were at risk of being involved in anti-social behaviour, which would impact on good relations in the area.

3.14 Members are asked to note that 5k has been awarded to the Hubb under delegated authority, as previously agreed, to deliver an arts based project for young people which will explore racism, understanding, similarities and differences as well as explore the different cultures and religions within the Commonwealth which have shaped our history.

<u>Community Recovery Support Grants</u>

3.5 The Partnership had previously endorsed the Council's approach to Community Provision Recovery and agreed that the budgets for Tranche 2 Good Relations Small Grants Scheme and St Patrick's Day be allocated to ongoing community provision recovery funding programme.

3.16 Members should have received an email regarding the opening of 2 funding programmes to help constituted groups deliver programmes and project activity focused on COVID response in their local areas:

<u>COVID-19 Community Recovery Support Fund Micro-grant</u> – up to £1,500
Micro-Grants applications open on Wednesday 25th November and close on Friday 11th December.

<u>COVID-19 Community Recovery Support Fund Medium Grant</u> – up to £5,000
Medium-Grants applications open on Wednesday 25th November and close on Friday 18th December.

3.7 Funding applications must be for work associated with the following priority areas:

- **Children and young people**
- **Civic pride**
- **Preventing isolation**
- **Emotional wellbeing**
- **Antisocial behaviour**
- **Health and wellbeing of staff or volunteers**
- **Unexpected premises and PPE costs.**

Information on assistance with these areas can be found on our *Coronavirus Belfast Community Support* section on the Council's website:

https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/Community/Health-and-wellbeing/COVID-19-Belfast-Community-Support

3.18 Members are asked to note the above information and to share it with their contacts as widely as possible.

Good Relations Action Plan 21/22

3.19 Members will also be aware that the current funding for the DCGRP was allocated as part of a 3 year cycle beginning in 19/20. As requested by TEO, at the commencement of this cycle, a full Plan for 19/20 along with summary plans for 20/21 and 21/22 were submitted to TEO and approved. This funding is subject to a positive end year project evaluation, budget availability and that the Council match funds the Programme.

3.20 Earlier in the year, TEO had requested that Council review its Year 3 Action Plan Summaries for 21/22 in light of the changes that have been made to the Revised Year 2 Action Plan 20/21.

3.21 A revised action plan summary was submitted by the deadline, and approved by the Partnership. It took into account that current guidelines and restrictions may still be in place and therefore, may be subject to change. A copy of the Revised Action Plan 21/22 summary is available.

3.22 Members are advised that TEO have customarily requested that full Action Plans for the next financial year are submitted by the end of February.

3.23 Officers would intend to bring a further draft revised Plan for 21/22 to the Partnership for approval in January. However, in advance of the next meeting, Officers would ask Members if they have any comments or proposals which should be included taking into account the context of the Council's social and economic recovery framework and the Belfast Agenda.

3.25 In addition, Action Plans are to be based on an audit of good relations issues and need within the Council area. Members will recall that the most recent audit of good relations needs was complete at the end of 2019.

3.25 Action Plans must also be aligned with the Government strategy Together; Building a United Community, under the 4 key priority areas of:

- **Children and Young People**
- **Our Shared Community**
- **Our Safe Community**

- **Our Cultural Expression**

Financial & Resource Implications

All projects for 20/21 can be funded through existing budgets

The 21/22 Action Plan will be 75% funded by TEO with the remaining 25% included in the Council's 21/22 estimates setting exercise. TEO have not confirmed the budget allocation for 21/22 but the Plan will be based on the award granted in 20/21.

Equality or Good Relations Implications and Rural Needs assessment

Screening and a rural needs assessment has taken place for the Good Relations Strategy. The councils' District Council Good Relations Action Plan is one element of this strategy."

Several Members commended the many voluntary groups and organisations who had came together to provide support to vulnerable citizens and communities during the pandemic and asked if these examples could be incorporated as a learning exercise as part of the GR strategic research project being undertaken by Blue Zebra.

The Good Relations Manager confirmed that, as agreed at the last meeting, the consultants, Blue Zebra, would be looking at positive examples and case studies. She advised that further revisions to the plan would take into account emerging community need as part of overall community recovery across Belfast and this would be submitted in due course.

A further Member outlined how effective and useful the Roma helpline had been in promoting the many and varied public health messages and in helping to tackle health inequalities during the pandemic.

The Good Relations Manager asked the Members to review the current Revised Action Plan 2021/2022 summary and encouraged them to suggest potential projects which could considered for inclusion at a later stage.

The Partnership recommended that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee adopt the recommendations as outlined in the report.

Reprofiling Request from Duncairn Community Partnership

The Partnership considered the following report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

To provide the Shared City Partnership (SCP) with a re-profiling request from Duncairn Community Partnership for its consideration.

2.0 Recommendations

The Partnership is requested to recommend to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee that they :

(i) note the contents of the report
(ii) approve the re-profiling request as detailed below.

3.0 Main report – Project Details

3.1 Duncairn Community Partnership (DCP) was awarded funding up to a maximum of £15,000 from the 2020/21 DCGRP for the delivery of a cohesive design scheme for security gates/barriers in Duncairn Gardens.

Members and community partners have advised that this work be postponed with a view to re-engaging in the new financial year (and once current Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted to allow for local consultation).

The group has asked to re-profile their programme funding allocation to upgrade their current technology capability to accommodate the on-line delivery of good relations programmes targeting young people and new communities.

Background

3.2 Since 2012 Duncairn Community Partnership based in Intercomm has been actively engaging with residents, community groups and clergy from our communities to bring about a number of physical changes to the peace barriers in the lower North Belfast area of the New Lodge, Tigers Bay, Mountcollyer and Newington/Parkside. Working in partnership with the community, statutory/government agencies and the PSNI, DCP has had a number of successful achievements and accomplishments with the support of residents from these areas including.

- **The successful opening and ongoing monitoring of a peace gate in Alexander Park erected after the ceasefires**
- **The successful development of Delaware Shared Housing Complex *(located on former Limestone Road Interface site)* and provision of good relations and community development support.**
- **Provision of ongoing support to the CitySide Retail Park Shared Space Initiative (formerly York Gate) to liaise with DCP, PSNI and local communities**
- **The removal of a security barrier at Newington Street.**
- **The removal of a security fence at Hillman Street/North City Business Centre**
- **Successful reimaging of barriers at Lepper Street and Syringa Street**
- **Removal of metal grills from residents' windows on properties along Duncairn Gardens**
- **Opening of 6 pedestrian gates along Duncairn Gardens**
- **The removal and transformation of the dilapidated interface fence at Hillman Court with a replacement wall and smaller fence**

- **The replacement and transformation of security gates adjacent to Star Neighbourhood Centre and Hillman Court leading from Duncairn Gardens to Upper Meadow Street.**
- **The ongoing removal and replacement of a security fence in front of dwellings on North Queen Street near the junction of Duncairn Gardens**
- **Ongoing Community consultation and consent to extend the opening hours of Duncairn Gardens at PUL & CNR security gates**
- **Ongoing positive engagement with youth organisations including EA, Holy Family Youth Centre, Mountcollyer Youth Centre, Limestone Utd and the Star Neighbourhood project to engage with young people involved in interface anti-social behaviour**
- **Community consultation and consent from over 1600 residents to organise an annual programme of events and activities to consult on peace barriers**

3.3 In September 2020 and as a direct result of the pandemic, DCP began utilising its website, Facebook and Twitter to deliver numerous online activities and events in order to consult and keep residents from across our communities updated and informed in relation to our peace barriers removal work. This has proven to be extraordinarily successful with upwards of 9000 hits being recorded on Facebook, Twitter and the Website.

3.4 As a result of these highly successful online programmes and activities a weakness in community IT capability has been identified and the group are now hoping to strengthen and develop the capacity of DCP to become not only an effective online communicator but a valuable community resource with of a state of the art IT facility that can be easily accessible and utilised on a cross community basis by all community and youth groups in the Duncairn and Castle areas. Cross Community Groups and youth groups will have access to professional presentation equipment, website building software, internet access, email, zoom to conduct and hold meetings, and social media to promote their cross-community work.

3.5 The IT suite will also become a valued training suite to host presentations, workshops, online meetings (zoom), discussions, debates and desktop publishing DCP's partner group, Intercomm, are fortunate enough to have secured pod cast equipment and the group hope to secure video equipment in order that potential users of the facility can develop promotional podcasts and videos recording and detailing their cross-community projects. DCP reliance on zoom and other online equipment/software has been critical since the onset of the pandemic. The group have received approaches from other local community groups in the Duncairn area seeking access to the current limited IT facilities. They believe it will be appealing to funders that community groups will be able to produce podcasts and videos as a means of promoting and reporting progress on projects.

3.6 This proposal will provide a valuable community resource whereby residents and young people from the Duncairn and Castle areas will embrace technology as a means of raising their community groups to the forefront of cross community communication, consultation and decision making.

Key Outcomes

3.7 Our Children and Young People

- **The new equipment can be used to help increased awareness for young people on the negative impact that paramilitary influence has on individuals and their communities. This can be achieved through film, interactive distance learning and participation. Intergenerational community relations can be improved by increasing positive peer influence that will help address low educational attainment through distance learning mentoring and examples of good practice**.

Our Shared Community

- **The room when set up and equipped can be used to bring people together from other parts of the world to share their experiences of peace building, reconciliation and sharing good practice. Some good examples of this would be possible learning from South Africa and the new emerging communities from former Eastern bloc countries. Linking with Universities across the globe.**

Our Safe Community

- **Reduction of the negative impact of external influences through the use of media to help increase understanding of ethnic cultures Build people's confidence to address local silent racism. Cultural identity is celebrated in a safe and inclusive manner and is seen as a celebration not something to fear. Interaction with people from different cultures in a safe and respectful manner to build confidence.**

Our Cultural Expression

- **Increased understanding of the diversity of cultures in local areas. Cultural expression and identity is celebrated respectfully Increase in community engagement at cultural events Increased local awareness of other cultures. This can be achieved through the use of group zoom, MS Teams etc. webinars and distance learning in a safe space. Programmes to be developed to look at our main cultural expression and other cultures from people who are newly arrived.**

3.8 Financial & Resource Implications

All costs can be covered through the District Council Good Relations Action Plan. The original proposal is written into the 2020/21 District Council Good Relations Action Plan as funded by TEO.

3.9 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

The aim of the proposal is to work with local residents across identified interface sites to develop and promote on-line youth programming and engagement on local interface working."

The Partnership noted the huge volume of community work undertaken by the Duncairn Community Partnership and other community organisations during the pandemic.

Members discussed the valuable role that community organisations had played during the pandemic and agreed to invite representatives from the International Fund for Ireland to a future meeting to hear more about the work on interfaces within the community.

The Partnership recommended that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agree the re-profiling request from Duncairn Community Partnership as detailed in the report.

EU Settlement Scheme

The Partnership was reminded that the EU Settlement Scheme had been introduced by the Home Office in June 2018.

The Good Relations Manager referred to the scheme and specifically drew the Members' attention to the following extract from the scheme:

'If you're an EU, EEA or Swiss citizen, you and your family can apply to the EU Settlement Scheme to continue living in the UK after 30 June 2021. You can also apply if you're the family member of an eligible person of Northern Ireland…. If your application is successful, you'll get either settled or pre-settled status.'

She advised that the Scheme enabled the above groups to obtain the immigration status they needed to continue to live, work and study in the UK beyond 30th June 2021. In order to apply applicants were required to complete a short 3-step online application form by 30th June 2021.

The Good Relations Manager advised that, from August 2018 to June 2020, Home Office data indicated that 11,740 applications, from the Belfast City Council area, had been made to the EU Settlement Scheme. Although, there was not exact data for the number of people living in Belfast that would be eligible to apply, anecdotal evidence suggested that there was still many who had not applied to the scheme. From August 2018 to June 2020, 56,550 applications had been made to the EU settlement scheme, from applicants in Northern Ireland, the largest number of these (16,890) were from Polish applicants, followed by (8,700) Lithuanian.

Advice NI and a consortium made from the Law Centre and Stronger Together Network had obtained funding from the Home Office to provide information and support to applicants.

The Partnership was advised that information on the projects and the support being providing was available via the following websites:

https://www.adviceni.net/eu-settlement-scheme

https://www.strongertogetherni.org/immigration/eu-settlement-scheme-support-project/

She reported that, commencing 1st January 2021, free movement would end and the UK would introduce a points-based immigration system. The new system would treat EU and non-EU citizens the same. Under the points-based immigration system, anyone coming to the UK for work must meet a specific set of requirements for which they would score points. At this stage Visas would be awarded to those who had gained enough points.

Since the enlargement of the EU in 2004, many EU nationals had come to Belfast and many had made it their home.

The Good Relations Manager proposed that the Council, in line with its good relations commitments to promote a shared and inclusive City, might wish to send out a message of support to EU nationals living in the City, acknowledging their contribution to Belfast and making it clear that the Council wished them to stay as well as encouraging them to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme.

Several of the Members reiterated the valuable contribution that EU citizens make to Northern Ireland's society, in both the workplace and day to day lives, and recognized the impact of the current circumstances and the uncertainty around Brexit on their lives.

She continued that she had received correspondence from Mr. P. Mackel who unfortunately had been unable to attend today's meeting. He had requested that the Partnership would consider extending the recommendation outlined, to also call on all employers and civic society organisations across the greater Belfast area to issue a similar statement, acknowledging the contributions of EU citizens to Belfast by also stipulating that they should stay and encouraging them to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme.

The Members of the Partnership unanimously agreed with these sentiments and recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that the Council:

- be authorised to engage in social media and other relevant communication mediums to provide a message of support to EU nationals living in the City by acknowledging their contribution to Belfast, stipulating that the Council wishes them to stay and encouraging them to apply to the EU settlement scheme; and
- call on all employers and civic society organisations across the greater Belfast area to issue the same statement.

Date of next Meeting

The Partnership agreed that its next meeting would be held on Monday, 11th January at 1:30 p.m.

Chairperson

STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Belfast City Council

Subject:	**Equality and Diversity - Five Year Review of the Equality Scheme 2015-20 and Annual Report 2019-20**
Date:	18th December 2020
Reporting Officer:	John Walsh, City Solicitor / Director of Legal & Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Sarah Williams, Governance and Compliance Manager

Restricted Reports				
Is this report restricted?	**Yes**		**No**	X
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?				
After Committee Decision				
After Council Decision				
Sometime in the future				
Never				

Call-in				
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	**Yes**	X	**No**	

1.0	**Purpose of report or summary of main issues**
1.1	The purpose of this report is to submit for approval the following Equality and Diversity Reports: • Five Year Review of the Equality Scheme (Appendix 1) • Updated Equality Scheme (Appendix 2) • Annual Report 2019/20 (Appendices 3a and b)
2.0	**Recommendations**
2.1	It is recommended that the Committee approves the following in compliance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998: • Five Year Review of the Equality Scheme; • Updated Equality Scheme; • Annual Report 2019/20

3.0	**Main report**
3.1	**Background** Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities to: 1. Report annually to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) on the progress of the implementation of its Equality Scheme 2. Carry out a review of their Equality Scheme every five years and make any relevant updates to a revised Equality Scheme. Also every five years, as recommended by the Equality Commission's revised Section 75 Guide for Public Authorities public authorities should then: 3. undertake an Audit of Inequalities to identify inequalities across the nine Section 75 categories, relevant to a public authority's functions and 4. use the audit information to develop and implement an Action Plan to address inequalities relative to its functions which is recommended to align with the public authority's corporate planning cycle.
3.2	**Key Issues** **Five-Year Review of the Equality Scheme** An Equality Scheme describes certain arrangements that a public authority has set up and which it is obliged to apply and follow as a means of fulfilling the duties imposed on it by the duties set out in Section 75: (1) due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity, and (2) regard to the desirability of promoting good relations. This includes arrangements for (a) training staff, (b) assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted by the authority on the promotion of equality of opportunity, and (c) monitoring any adverse impact of those policies that have been adopted.
3.4	The purpose of a Five Year Review is to examine how the Equality Scheme arrangements have been applied and to assess how effective they have been in assisting the Council to comply with Section 75 duties. A summary of this report is sent to ECNI which sets out: • how the scheme's implementation has benefitted individuals within the Section 75 groups • how leaders within the authority are engaged in the scheme's implementation • challenges and how they have been overcome • lessons learned, and • good practice The Five Year Review of the Equality Scheme is attached at **Appendix 1**.

3.5	**Equality Scheme** The ECNI advises that public authorities are not obliged to make changes to their Equality Schemes, but they may need to be amended to ensure they are up-to-date to reflect any changes that have been made to a public authority's organisational structure, functions or contact details. Such changes should be communicated to consultees however these changes would not require that a new scheme be developed for Commission approval. An updated Equality Scheme reflecting minor structural or functional changes is set out in **Appendix 2.** Once approved, this will be signed by the Lord Mayor and submitted to the ECNI.
3.6	**Annual Report** The Annual Report 2019/20 is a commitment in our Equality Scheme. It is an opportunity to update on progress we have made on implementing the arrangements set out in our Equality Scheme to discharge our Section 75 statutory duties. The date for submission of the Annual Report to ECNI is usually 31 August each year, however, due to the pandemic this has been extended by 3 months.
3.7	**Next Steps** The documents will be submitted to the ECNI once approved by Council. The Equality & Diversity Unit will then lead on the development of a new Audit of Inequalities and Equality Action Plan for the period from April 2021. It is planned that a draft version of these documents will be brought to Committee early next year to be able to issue for public consultation.
	Financial and Resource Implications
3.9	This work is covered by existing budgets.
	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment
3.10	The actions outlined contribute to our legal compliance regarding the promotion of equality and good relations.
4.0	**Documents Attached**
	Appendix 1: Five Year review of the Equality Scheme Appendix 2: Updated Equality Scheme Appendix 3a: Annual Report to the ECNI 2019/20 – Part A: Equality & Good Relations Appendix 3b: Annual Report to the ECNI 2019/20 – Part B: Disability

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Appendix 1

Five Year Review of Equality Scheme
Section 75 of the
Northern Ireland Act 1998

Belfast City Council

Reporting Period
2015-2020

Equality and Diversity Officers

Stella Gilmartin / Lorraine Dennis
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS

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A. Executive Summary

An Equality Scheme describes certain arrangements that a public authority has set-up and which it is obliged to apply, and follow as a means of fulfilling the duties imposed on it by Section 75(1) and (2) of the Northern Ireland Act. These duties are to have:

• due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity, and
• regard to the desirability of promoting good relations.

This includes arrangements for training staff, assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies adopted, or proposed to be adopted, by the authority on the promotion of equality of opportunity, and monitoring any adverse impact of those policies that have been adopted. The purpose of a 5 year review is to examine how those arrangements have been applied and to assess how effective they have been in assisting public authorities to comply with the Section 75 duties.

The review is based on evidence, including, but not limited to:

• An understanding of how senior staff are complying with their scheme commitments and providing appropriate leadership
• Analysis that decision-makers are aware of their obligations
• Section 75 annual progress reports that the public authority has completed • good practice measures that the public authority itself has undertaken
• Evidence that the views of external stakeholders have been considered within the context of the scheme and its implementation

This review covers the period of implementation of the Equality Scheme from April 2015 until March 2020.

B. Introduction

1. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires Belfast City Council to comply with two statutory duties:

a. Section 75 (1)

In carrying out our functions relating to Northern Ireland we are required to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between

- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation
- men and women generally
- persons with a disability and persons without
- persons with dependants and persons without.

b. Section 75 (2)

In addition, without prejudice to the obligations above, in carrying out our functions in relation to Northern Ireland we are required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

The Council's Equality Scheme, approved by the Equality Commission in March 2015 sets out how it proposes to fulfil the duties imposed by Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the northern Ireland Act 1998.

2. Ensuring compliance with the section 75 duties

Our Equality Scheme includes the following undertakings:

a. **Our arrangements for consulting**

We will consult on our Equality Scheme, action measures, equality impact assessments and other matters relevant to the Section 75 statutory duties.

We are committed to carrying out consultation in accordance with the following principles (as contained in the Equality Commission's guidance "Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for Public Authorities (April 2010)".

We will carry out our consultation in a timely, open and inclusive way. Consideration will be given to such issues as accessibility, timing, location, and special requirements e.g. alternative formats and interpreters etc.

b. **Our arrangements for assessing, monitoring and publishing the impact of policies**

The Council will screen all policies in accordance with the Equality Commission guidance. The purpose of screening is to identify those policies that are likely to have an impact on equality of opportunity and/or good relations. If screening has identified that an equality impact assessment is necessary, we will carry out the EQIA in accordance with Equality Commission guidance.
All Screening reports and EQIAss will be available.

c. **Staff training**

We will ensure that all elected Members of Council and staff are made aware of and understands the content of the Equality Scheme. This summary will be disseminated to all staff and the full copy will be placed on the internal website.

d. **Public Access to Information and Services**

We are committed to effective communication with the public and will ensure everyone has full access to and understanding of council information in a format that is appropriate to them.

3. Five year Review of our Equality Scheme

Public authorities who have Section 75 Equality Schemes are obliged to review those schemes periodically. “A public authority shall, before the end of the period of five years beginning with the submission of its current scheme, or the latest review of that scheme under this sub-paragraph, whichever is later, review that scheme and inform the [Equality] Commission of the outcome of the review.” (Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, Guidance on conducting a 5 year review of an Equality Scheme, July 2016)

This means that the review must be done within 5 years of a public authority’s current Equality Scheme being submitted to the Commission for approval, which was granted in March 2015 and the Commission must be informed about the outcome of each review. With our current scheme running for the period from April 2015 until March 2020, this review gathered evidence of the implementation of the scheme during that period; however, its development was impacted by the global pandemic.

C. Consideration of evidence and research

1. How the Scheme has benefitted individuals within Section 75 groups

Strategic initiatives

Belfast Agenda

The main purpose of the Belfast Agenda, the Council's community plan, is to improve the quality of life and wellbeing for all people. The Belfast Agenda was formally launched in November 2017. However, whilst addressing inequalities is inherent within the plan, we are also taking pro-active steps to ensure that inequalities are understood and addressed.

The Belfast Agenda, which sets out a long term vision for the city as a place:

- where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy;
- that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all;
- that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable;
- where everyone experiences good health and wellbeing; and
- where everyone fulfils their potential.

In April 2017, (as a follow-up to the EQIA report on the Belfast Agenda) we met with the Equality Commission to consider how to improve understanding of equality implications within a strategic document such as the Belfast Agenda. As part of the ongoing enabling work of the Belfast Agenda, we agreed to explore the extent to which we could assess each of the population indicators through an equality lens. The first step in this was to finalise the technical report, which will form the basis for monitoring overall progress. This report, which documents and explains the indicators used, has now been drafted and we are engaging with our partners. Consultants have been commissioned to help us define and clarify need and potential priority areas of work based on, in the first instance, statistical evidence. Once completed it will enable us to begin to assess equality implications (data permitting).

The Belfast Agenda is an ambitious plan for the city, with a strong economic focus and far-reaching targets for population and jobs growth. We believe that in order to address the long term challenges facing people in Belfast, such as health and educational inequalities, the need for good relations, ensuring people feel safe and have good living conditions, we need to focus on growing our economy and ensuring the benefits are felt by everyone.

Community Planning Partners

There is an ongoing programme of work linked to the development of the Belfast Agenda and emerging work around civic voice and participation as well as the ongoing implementation of our Consultation and Engagement Framework. A Community Planning Partnership has been established for Belfast, which comprises statutory community planning partners (i.e. named in the legislation), as well as other non-statutory partners (i.e. organisations 'invited' to formally participate on the partnership). To enable community representation, and in recognition of their role within the city, the Belfast Area Partnership boards were invited to join the partnership as full members.

Inclusive Growth Strategy

Key to this is the work to develop our policy and approach to "Inclusive Growth". Although during this reporting period it was still at the data capture and analysis stage, this will be a key influencer and driver for Council policy over the coming years. To support our progress in this area we have commenced work on the development of an Inclusive Growth framework.

People Strategy

The new Director of City & Organisational Strategy, as part of the organisational development agenda, is leading on the development of a new People Strategy. The aim is to refresh the corporate values and ensure that the values of culture of respect, fairness and diversity are identified and championed by the new Corporate Management Team and are consistently embedded across the organisation.

Belfast Region City Deal

Other key strands of work currently underway include the creation of a Belfast Region City Deal and programmes of work to address health inequalities and inequalities in educational achievement. Addressing inequalities, in its widest sense, underpins the whole Belfast Agenda and supporting Council strategies and reflects the issues that people told us were important during the engagement process.

Customer Focus Programme

Belfast City Council has embarked on a customer experience transformation programme to provide more efficient and improved experiences to all our customers. The plans have been developed over the last few years with considerable consultation and engagement with our stakeholders. Over the next three years (2020-2023), we will begin putting in place the foundations to transform our customer experience, offering increasingly easy to use and accessible services.

Cultural Strategy- A City Imagining

It is widely recognised that cities of culture can drive transformation. In 2019, the council launched a Cultural Strategy 2020 - 2030 - A City Imagining to help meet the Belfast Agenda vision for 2035, which imagines a culturally vibrant city. It supports active citizenship and participation in cultural life, respecting the richness and diversity of our different cultural identities.

This 10-year cultural strategy is the result of an intensive, experimental and richly rewarding engagement process. It is an integrated approach to long-term cultural development in the city including: a citizen focused approach, consideration of the long-term sustainability of the cultural sector, a new approach to Events and Festivals, strengthening the tourism proposition in the city through greater understanding of the city's cultural narrative and international appeal and integration of planned major developments such as the Destination Hub into city and neighbourhood tourism.

Corporate Plan

"Respect, fairness and the promotion of equality, good relations and inclusivity" is one of our stated core values that underpin the Corporate Plan. In the Corporate Plan, we draw attention to key strategic programmes such as inclusive growth and a number of organisational improvement programmes which will help ensure those values are demonstrable.

Corporate Consultation and Engagement Plan

Work to embed the new on-line consultation platform (Citizen Space) continued throughout 17/18. Since July 2016, we have undertaken over 90 consultations (public and private) and have received over 18,800 on-line responses. Our new on-line consultation platform and central repository is helping to improve the visibility and information available to residents and consultees; it also enables us to share good practice in-house. The platform allows us to upload various types of media and documentation in a much more user friendly way; for example, videos, drop-down fact boxes etc. This included briefing sessions with Members and senior managers. Council now has 58 officers who hold the Consultation Institute's Certificate of Professional Development.

We also undertook a series of training and capacity building workshops in support of the draft Consultation and Engagement Framework throughout the reporting period and these include a focus on ensuring various sections of the community are given the opportunity to feedback in accessible and inclusive ways. A number of consultations have utilised a mix of on-line survey, events, roadshows and targeted workshops demonstrating that Council understands the need to tailor consultations as opposed to adopting a one-size fits all approach.

The Citizen Space consultation platform has been a great success. The Council is in the process of developing a more comprehensive Consultation and Engagement Strategy and online system which will be completed in 2020.

Activity supporting section 75 groups

Communication and engagement

Equality and diversity are key themes in the future of the marketing and communications strategy outputs. This area is something we consider when taking forward, implementing and executing all internal and external campaigns and we are in the process of designing a new internal communications strategy.

Over the course of the reporting period we ran 49 articles on our internal staff network, 16 in our staff magazine, 6 within our staff Team Brief and 12 within the Chief Executive's blog, which promoted various aspects of equality and diversity, both in relation to service provision and staff. The detail of these articles are available upon request.

Gender

We worked with the Women's Resource and Development Agency to engage women on the Belfast Agenda using a "storytelling approach". This process helped us hear the voices of women who were often marginalised from consultation processes, and was only made possible by utilising the networks and connections of the various women support networks in the city and by adopting a relatively non-traditional form of engagement.

Equality and diversity-related events and activities

In order to raise awareness of equality and diversity related issues and highlight the importance of ensuring, along with partner organisations, that services are designed to be accessible to all, several diverse events and activities have taken place during the reporting period. All these events and activities are recorded in our annual reports. Example of events and activities include:-

- National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) Roadshow – BCC hosted a visit from the NDCS in the grounds of City Hall, attended by the Deputy Lord Mayor,
- DisabledGo training day to raise awareness of various disabilities and issues. Now rebranded as AccessAble during this reporting period,
- Working with Women in Business NI to promote business start-ups,

- Sponsorship of the Women In Business NI Leadership Conference,
- Deaf Awareness Week – BCC hosted a signed tour of the City Hall exhibition with 15 people from the Deaf community and gathered feedback afterwards to further improve the experience.
- We conducted a staff Equality and Diversity survey in 2018 to find out staffs' views on how equality and diversity is managed in the workplace. The results and recommendations for action will be will be followed up through further consultation with the staff network groups.
- Annual International Women's Day event for staff.
- Funding of annual external International Women's Day event
- Annual Transgender Day of Remembrance event
- Marking the annual Transgender Day of Visibility by flying the transgender flag and lighting up the City Hall
- Annual Holocaust Memorial Day event
- Annual Participation in Pride
- Attendance Stonewall best practice events
- Promotion and development of LGB&T, disability and women's staff networks
- Hosting of s Gender Budgeting conference
- Hosting of an International Day for Elimination of Violence against Women event
- Events to mark the annual International Day for People with Disabilities
- Held staff focus group on 'age'
- Participated in Business in the Community's Gender Programme
- Ongoing participation in the NI Diversity Charter Mark
- Participation in Stonewall's Workforce Equality Index
- Delivery of a pilot leadership development programme to help women in communities across Belfast develop their potential.

Our events raise awareness amongst staff and citizens and visibly demonstrates to various communities the Council's commitment to embracing equality and diversity and promotes BCC as an inclusive employer to both the employees and the community it serves. Knock on benefits include increased attendance at employee networks and requests for increased advice and guidance from Equality and Diversity Unit staff.

Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership

The Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership (HASP) held a series of briefings and workshops with a wide range of service providers and older people involving 200 participants during 2017/2018 to develop the draft Age-Friendly Plan 2018/2021. We sought the views of a diverse range of older people for the new Age-Friendly Belfast Plan through The Age-Friendly Belfast survey was distributed in a range of settings and focus groups with 'hard to reach' groups of older people carried out by Age NI peer facilitators.

Through our current Age-Friendly Belfast Plan we promoted equality and good relations through the delivery of the Positive Ageing Month Programme October 2017, the Age-Friendly Volunteer Awards December 2017 and a range of active ageing programmes in our parks and community centres 2017-21.

From recent surveys/consultations we know that 84% of older people in Belfast state that Belfast is a city where they can live life to the full; 70% of older people are happy with the service they receive on public transport (this has increased from 63% in 2015); 75% of older people visit parks in Belfast regularly and there has been an increase of 4% in older people feeling safe in their neighbourhoods.

Children and Young People Framework

The Youth Forum is a great resource for garnering views on BCC policies and strategies. In addition the Youth Forum agrees campaigns for each year. For example 2017/18 as follows: 'Poverty: It's not a choice' - Using their report, the Youth Forum hosted meetings with Councillors from each political party in BCC around their key tasks.

'Elephant in the Room' – The Youth Forum designed and began delivery of a youth led mental health campaign which to date has engaged more than 1,800 young people region wide through a survey and focus groups. The collected data was used to create a young people's mental health report, which was launched in Stormont on 4 October 2018.

Findings from the report will be used to shape key asks for government in relation to young people and mental health which our Youth Forum will use to lobby decision makers and influence policy and service development.

Other initiatives included a "Votes at 16 motion" sponsored and endorsed at Full Council meeting in November 2017 making Belfast the first official pro 'Votes at 16' city in NI.

In December 2017, the Youth Forum ran a sexual health event for young people in partnership with Positive Life NI. Young people's views on sexual health were gathered at the event and this data is being used to influence a new sexual health strategy for NI.

Summer Schemes

Community Services run summer schemes across the city, which aim to provide an accessible and inclusive scheme that meets the needs of all children that attend. Providing over 90 places including children with additional support needs. These include children with autism, Asperger's, ADHD, ASD, Down's syndrome, sight loss, and physical disability.

We are also able to offer places to children who require assistance with the use of epi-pens and inhalers.

Equality and Diversity Unit (EDU)

The EDU team has provided advice in relation to equality screening and relevant equality data available to be used by officers when developing policies and services throughout the course of the year. All staff have access to an equality toolkit on-line and a key issues paper, both of which are updated regularly.

Ad-hoc meetings and training sessions have been carried out on request with officers and briefing papers have been provided for CMT and senior managers in relation to areas of emerging importance. The rural needs assessment is now managed by the EDU staff.

Disability

The Council continually assesses and improves the disability related agenda. We designed a new Disability Action Plan and consulted extensively. We have created excellent networking relationships with a range of relevant stakeholders.

Inclusive Events Guide

This is a guide which was launched in June 2017, providing advice and guidance to council staff on issues to be considered when organising events. It includes first hand experiences from disabled people of what they believe made some events successful and others less so. In addition it also promoted the JAM (Just a minute) card used to make others aware that a person with a learning disability might need a little extra time to complete a particular action. Council staff are required to

complete an event plan when organising an internal or public event and from a good practice point of view, it guides council staff to make sure reasonable adjustments are in place during council events.

AccessAble

We have had a contract with Disabled Go/AccessAble since 2008 and the purpose of the contract is promote disability access at public venues, services, shops and restaurants across the City.

The Council signed up to the BSL & ISL Charter in March 2019.

Language Strategy

The Language Strategy aims to contribute to achieving the aims of the Belfast Agenda, which sets out a long-term vision of the city as a place. The Strategy commits to work across a number of areas of Council services including communications, media, support for the community and support for Council staff. Implementation of the Strategy is based around five language work streams:

- Irish;
- Ulster Scots;
- Sign Languages;
- New communities' languages; and
- Languages and communications for disabled people.

Deaf Community

The Council made a pledge to the Deaf Community that they would consult formally and informally with the local Deaf Community on a regular basis, ensure access for Deaf people to information and services and ensure council staff working with Deaf people can communicate effectively using British Sign Language. These pledges was formulated into our latest Disability Action Plan.

Good Relations

During this reporting period we have developed and implemented the District Council Good Relations Plan and Peace IV Local Action Plan. The District Council Good Relations Plan submits an evaluation of the Programme to The Executive Office on a number of outcomes related to Good Relations i.e. people feel that their cultural diversity is respected and valued. These progress reports are available on request. During this reporting period the Good Relations Unit began the process of designing a new Good Relations strategy.

Following years of conflict, the people of Belfast have made great progress towards normalization. Despite this, there remain key legacy issues that manifest themselves in segregation between communities. The Good Relations Strategy will promote cultural diversity and respect for everyone's cultural identity, not just the legacy issues following conflict but to address issues relating to hate crime and intolerance to show that Belfast is a city for all.

All of this activity in the Council, some of which has been, presented above has developed the capacity of the organisation in relation to equality and diversity; compliance with equality duty and raised awareness of relevant issues when making decisions.

Physical Programmes

The Council's Local Investment Fund (LIF) offers funding to local projects which aim to make a real difference in people's lives at a neighbourhood level by addressing local community need. Since 2012 we have committed £9m million into more than 125 grassroots organisations across the city to regenerate places and facilities that are important to them, providing much needed amenities in local areas.

As part of the project assessment process we introduced equality and good relations as one of the key principles against which proposals were assessed. Completed projects include new improved open spaces for a range of groups, such as, the transformation of waste land to a garden for residential facility for homeless men; creation of a new sensory garden at a residential care home; a new memory garden at a care home for people with dementia– and new or improved community facilities eg new Irish Language school; new Surestart building; new skills and training facility for young people; refurbished women's centre; refurbished boxing club.

In addition to investment in community-led capital investment, the Council's capital programme – programme of investment which either improves the existing Council facilities or provides new Council facilities– has seen the transformation of iconic facilities that has allowed for improved accessibility. Examples include: the introduction of a New Exhibition space at City Hall, Tropical Ravine restoration, and Girdwood Community Hub.

2. How leaders within the authority are engaged in the scheme's implementation

The Council is committed under the direction of the City Solicitor to ensure, good governance procedures are in place and are continually reviewed.

In addition we take our commitments seriously and ensure that an effective Equality Scheme is in place and all officers with Section 75 responsibilities i.e. senior managers, policymakers, those taking policy decisions and equality officers understand its requirements. We ensure staff are trained and they follow the procedures in place.

The quality of the equality assessments - both EQIA's and equality screenings are scrutinised and assisted by the equality team.

We are committed to ensuring the Council is an exemplar organisation in relation to communication and engagement both internally and externally. The importance of the Section 75 duties is regularly communicated, both internally and externally to our stakeholders.

We are in the process of auditing persistent inequalities and ensuring all the key staff are involved in ensuring the new Equality Action Plan is meaningful and effective.

The most significant change to our internal operating equality system has been the introduction of the new Equality and Diversity Network. This network aims to involve the council's leaders in the scheme's implementation. Previously we experienced challenges getting our messages consistently delivered across the Council. This network provides an ideal solution to receiving and disseminating information.

We established a two-tier structure of the Equality and Diversity Network incorporating:

(i) Equality and Diversity Network: Strategic (EDNS)
(ii) Equality and Diversity Network: Operational (EDNO)

The quarterly EDNS, chaired by John Walsh, City Solicitor, provides strategic leadership and direction for delivering the Equality and Diversity Framework/ Equality Action Plan across all departments. This group reports to the Corporate Management Team and onto Strategic Policy & Resources Committee for approval and resource allocation, where necessary.

The EDNO, jointly chaired by the Equality and Diversity Officers and HR Manager, provides an operational management process to implement equality and diversity related activities and report to the EDNS. A high-level officer represents each department and ensures key issues are circulated and communicated effectively to each department. In addition the EDNO ensures the collection of information from their relevant department for annual reporting purposes.

3. Challenges and how they have been overcome

The most significant challenge we face in a large public sector organisation is keeping our staff and elected Members trained on equality, good relations and diversity issues and to keep this training up-to-date, refreshed and relevant.

The other significant challenge is to continue to review our consultation mechanisms to ensure we provide relevant, accessible and inclusive consultation processes.

4. Good practice

Integrated Tourism Framework

The Belfast Integrated Tourism Strategy 2015-2020 set out priorities and activities to help us double the value of tourism to £870 million per year by 2020. The strategy was developed following extensive consultation with tourism partners and stakeholders. It aims to focus everyone's efforts around priority issues. The improvements that it suggests will be delivered in partnership with all organisations that have an interest in increasing tourism into the city.

The main improvements identified were:

- to enhance the city's reputation through better marketing, access to the city, improved services for all visitors and better events that will be accessible and appeal to many;
- to strengthen the tourism sector through quality assurance, training and by developing new products and experiences for visitors.

The Strategy committed to developing a city that welcomes visitors and is easily accessible to all. We ensured that promotion of the city was delivered through multiple platforms to reach all inclusive of S75 groups. Any activity or product experience developed went through full equality screening. Examples of this have included events such as the Twilight Market at St George's market and city animation programmes. This was a good example of mainstreaming and designing appropriate

services to meet the needs of different people representative of the S75 groups, by working collaboratively.

As this strategy closes, this learning and experience has been integrated within the development of the 10 year Cultural Strategy – A City Imagining during 2019, which includes a strategic focus on supporting cultural tourism. This will ensure alignment and ongoing collaboration of partners in the development and delivery of implementation plans.

Neighbourhood Renewal

This cross government strategy is directly targeted at the 10% of wards in NI that experience the highest level of deprivation, 15 of which are in the Belfast area. The strategy operates through locally based community/ statutory partnerships which develop and implement a thematic action plan to target need. Our officers sit on these partnerships supporting the work of sub groups and ensuring alignment with Council programmes and services at a local level.

The Council is moving to a local area approach to neighbourhood regeneration and delivery services to ensure needs of local areas are more effectively addressed. This will be reported in annual reports in due course.

Shared City Partnership

The previously named Good Relations Partnership underwent a review, one of the outcomes being that it changed its name to reflect its current broad remit, to the Shared City Partnership. Under this new title the group continued to meet monthly to direct the work of the Good Relations Unit and also agreed to hold a minimum of 3 meetings a year outside of the City Hall as part of its ongoing review.

The Partnership hosted a Shared City Forum at Girdwood Community Hub on 14 June 2016. The event was opened by the Deputy Lord Mayor Councillor Campbell with a keynote address given by the Partnership Chair, Councillor Kyle. 102 people attended the event which included presentations on the work of the Shared City Partnership and how good relations issues are influencing the development of a Community Plan for Belfast (the Belfast Agenda) as well as a presentation on the work of the NI Life and Times Survey. This event included facilitated sessions to help develop good relations outcomes for the city and examine how city partners can effectively work with local communities to maximise impact through greater engagement and involvement in the design of interventions. This will also assist in the development of the PEACE IV Action Plan for Belfast.

Key findings and feedback from the forum include:-

- 74% of attendees felt that the Forum had increased their knowledge of the Shared City Partnership and the context in which it operates by quite a bit or completely, with the remainder saying it had increased their knowledge a little.
- 100% of attendees felt that their experience of the workshop sessions was useful or would have some impact upon their own work.
- 90% of attendees stated that they would definitely attend similar events in the future.

The findings from the workshops were used to inform the ongoing development of the Belfast Agenda and in support of the Council's PEACE IV application.

Good Relations Audit

The Good Relations Unit undertook its 3 yearly independent audit of Good Relations need within Belfast City Council. The findings and recommendations of the audit identify key areas of work to be included in a Belfast City Council Good Relations Action Plan for 2017-2018. This audit included a review of existing and emerging policy such as Together; Building a United Community (T;BUC) and the Programme for Government. Belfast City Council is leading the development of a community plan for Belfast, 'The Belfast Agenda' and this also informed the content of the audit and action plan.

The audit was conducted between October 2016 and February 2017 and included an online survey as well as focus groups and a large scale event. One of the recommendations of the audit was that Council should seek to promote the range of work to support good relations that takes place across the city. In line with this the Good Relations Unit has produced an information booklet and short film; these can be viewed at www.belfastcity.gov.uk/goodrelations

Employability and Skills

A low skills level among the city's working-age residents is one of key challenges facing Belfast and without a focused and coordinated effort with our key partners this issue is set to continue. To ensure skills are matched to market needs, an Employability and Skills Framework for 2015-2025 was developed by the Economic Development Unit. Linked to the Belfast Agenda, the Employability and Skills Framework supports the need for specific, targeted interventions to ensure residents – especially those far from the labour market, have the opportunity to develop the skills necessary to apply for and secure employment. This Framework places a particular emphasis on ways we can help to improve the skills and employability of working age citizens especially in certain groupings; younger people, people with disabilities and ethnic minorities.

As one of the city's largest employer, we have engaged with a range of partners as part of our community outreach programme. These partners include schools, colleges, universities, disability organisations, Department for the Economy, women's organisations and other employability support organisations. The range of activity undertaken includes:

- provision of work experience opportunities. We have a target of 150 placements each year, including 30 placements for people with disabilities
- training and development opportunities on interview awareness skills using mock interview sessions
- site visits to promote the council as an attractive employer and attendance at careers fairs
- ring fencing of posts to the long term unemployed and delivery of pre-recruitment and training programmes targeted to underrepresented groups.

Social Clauses

We work with all Council contracts to ensure social clauses are implemented and are directly aligned to the priorities of the Council as contained within the Belfast Agenda and the existing social clause policy.

Overall, the implementation of social clauses across Council contracts, has resulted in the creation of over 160 jobs ring-fenced for long-term unemployed or apprentices and third level students. One example of this is the Leisure Transformation Programme (LTP) which provides an insight into the delivery of social responsibility. Using social clauses in LTP, we have engaged with the contractor to agree the delivery plan for economic and social regeneration activities. This outlines the KPIs and measurable medium and long term outcomes for social, economic, employment, environmental and community improvements, which will be monitored through a contract management regime.

A further example is the council's new partnership with Translink to deliver 'Buy Social' clauses during the construction and engineering phase and associated infrastructure of the new Weavers Cross station. It aims to maximise social and economic benefits for communities across the city. The partnership will see the creation of a Construction Employment Academy (CEA) which will host and deliver local interventions to promote these opportunities to local people. The CEA will provide information, training and on-going support to potential new entrants to ensure readiness in nearby communities for these construction jobs. Through 'Targeted Recruitment and Training clauses', the Weavers Cross project could see up to 100 'Buy Social' opportunities generated within the local construction sector through the build and engineering of the new station and associated engineering contracts.

Physical Programmes

The Council's Local Investment Fund (LIF) offers funding to local projects which aim to make a real difference in people's lives at a neighbourhood level by addressing local community need. Since 2012 we have committed £9m million into more than 125 grassroots organisations across the city to regenerate places and facilities that are important to them, providing much needed amenities in local areas.

As part of the project assessment process we introduced equality and good relations as one of the key principles against which proposals were assessed. Completed projects include new improved open spaces for a range of groups, such as, the transformation of waste land to a garden for residential facility for homeless men; creation of a new sensory garden at a residential care home; a new memory garden at a care home for people with dementia– and new or improved community facilities eg new Irish Language school; new Surestart building; new skills and training facility for young people; refurbished women's centre; refurbished boxing club.
In addition to investment in community-led capital projects, the Council's capital programme – programme of investment which either improves the existing Council facilities or provides new Council facilities– has seen the transformation of iconic facilities that has allowed for improved accessibility. The following examples provide a very brief overview of the changes this investment has created:

- the introduction of a New Exhibition space at City Hall – £1.3m investment that has transformed the ground space of the East side of the City Hall. It offers a journey from the city's past to present, showing the vibrancy and diversity of Belfast City Hall across six themed zones over 16 separate rooms; visitor tours are free; sign Language videos are available and for a small fee visitors can enjoy the enriched exhibition content with an audio tour that isavailable in eight languages.
- Tropical Ravine restoration: £3.8m investment (BCC and HLF funding) transformed an old Victorian listed building in to a new public attraction, that has allowed for much greater accessibility through direct stakeholder engagement and feedback. The restored building won Project of the Year at the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Awards 2018 and was commented on being a model of best practice.

- Girdwood Community Hub: A £11.7m investment (BCC, DfC and SEUPB funding) in to a new community and leisure hub on a former Barrack site. Through extensive community dialogue and input, this state of the are facility is a modern, vibrant shared space, where the community can access a range of leisure and learning facilities, and community services. In addition, a changing places facility has been installed at this site.

Awards

Belfast City Council was re-accredited with the gold platinum award for our workplace charter on domestic violence in 2019. In 2019, we also retained the Business in the Community's Gender Charter Bronze Award. In 2017, we were highly commended at Legal Island's Equality and Diversity awards. We were also shortlisted for the Business in the Community Health and Wellbeing award.

In 2018, we were highly commended for the second year at the Employers for Childcare Family Friendly Awards.

Staff Networks

In 2016, the Equality and Diversity Network (EDN) was established. This cross- departmental network will champion and steer the organisation's strategy on all matters relating to diversity and equality in service delivery and employment. It will also monitor departmental actions in their progress in mainstreaming diversity and equality in all activity. During this 5 year period, the staff networks continued to grow and the disability staff networks invited carers, allies and supporters of people with disabilities to join the networks. The groups have benefitted from hearing from a number of guest speakers and from attending a variety of training sessions.

All staff networks groups feed into the development of the equality and diversity action plans.

Women's Pilot Mentoring Programme

This initiative was championed by the Women's Steering Group based on feedback from the Women' Network Group around the desire for more mentoring opportunities to support improving gender balance in the organisation.

12 mentors from WSG mentored and 12 mentees from WNG participated.

The mentees also participated in job shadowing of the Chief Executive as part of the mentoring programme.

During the course of the mentoring programme, mentees expressed a desire to enhance their political awareness. As a result, a “mock” committee meeting was facilitated to allow mentees to gain exposure to this type of environment and enable engagement with members. Both male and female elected members made this a very “real “learning experience for the participants and constructive feedback was provided.

Formal evaluation of the mentoring programme was completed at the end of the pilot. The positive outcomes were summarised as follows:

- Improved confidence for mentees
- Increased networking and engagement – with peers, senior staff and elected members
- Improved relationship building
- Skills development (e.g. mock committee session)
- Improved corporate and political awareness

A number of the mentees have subsequently gained promotion, and they have attributed that success in part to participating in the mentoring programme.

D. Key Questions in the Five Year Review of an Equality Scheme

1. To what extent were senior management involved in ensuring scheme compliance over the 5 year period and what further steps could be undertaken to ensure effective internal arrangements?

The Council's Corporate Plan shapes the future direction of all its services. All Departments are required to include within their annual Departmental Business Plans and Service Business Plans the actions they intend to take which will support and help to achieve the council's corporate priorities.

The Corporate Plan has included 'Promoting Good Relations' as a corporate objective. The Corporate Plan itself included a number of specific actions for the year, indicated how success would be measured and outlined both committee and officer responsibilities in relation to equality and good relations.

The Council's has moved towards a competency based framework Achieving Through People (ATP) framework sets out the values and behaviours that are expected from all employees in carrying out their roles. There is an element which specifically relates to promoting equality and diversity within the workplace and service provision within this, effective managers are expected to "ensure compliance with our Section 75 statutory duties and policies and procedures in relation to equality, good relations and disability".

Within the same element, senior managers are expected to "promote and role model an inclusive working environment and culture that values equality of opportunity and diversity". The ATP framework also sets out that all employees within the organisation are expected to "actively challenge bias, prejudice, discrimination or intolerance".

As we have mainstreamed the equality agenda, all committee reports consider equality early in the process. All committee reports will have considered the equality agenda prior to presentation; early consultation processes are now commonplace. This process ensures the monitoring of the equality agenda throughout Council policy development. This has had a significant impact in focusing all senior staff on the equality agenda.

The Council's commitment to the Equality Scheme, through staffing, resources, time and energy and the comprehensive reporting mechanism has enabled the ongoing development of the equality agenda.

The Review of Public Administration has had a considerable impact on all Councils. In Belfast City Council there was a process of restructuring. Further opportunities to mainstream equality as the most important aspect of development is to build on the lessons of the previous years of the Equality Scheme.

2. **Outline annual direct expenditure of resources to ensure that the statutory duties were complied with, in terms of staff and money over the past 5 years, and comment on the extent that all necessary resources were allocated.**

The Council is committed to the implementation of the Equality Scheme and has provided adequate resources to support the process.

Salaries

The Council has had an Equality and Diversity Officer (job share) in post. They have direct responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the Equality Scheme, supported by other staff members, including managerial and business support. They are the budget holder and are responsible for the Council's agenda in relation to:

- Equality and Diversity
- Disability
- Rural Needs
- Language Strategy

In September 2018 the Council employed an Irish Language Officer, a Language Officer in October 2018 and an Equality and Diversity Support Officer in July 2019.

The Equality Officer is now located in the Legal and Civic Services Department (formerly Chief Executive's), following a restructuring exercise. All direct costs in relation to the Equality Scheme implementation such as consultation, catering, meetings, conferences, consultants and fees for external professional services, i.e. to undertake the equality impact assessments required, are quantifiable as they are centrally controlled within the Legal and Civic Services Department. The following figures indicate staff costs associated with the direct implementation of the Equality Scheme:

Year	FTE Staff	£	Grade	SCP
2014/15	1	£ 50,875.50	P05	47
2015/16	1	£ 53,237.65	P05	47
2016/17	1	£ 53,382.76	P05	47
2017/18	1	£ 56,934.78	P05	47
2018/19	3	£109,255.19	P05/ PO1/ PO1	41/ 33/ 33

However, it should be made clear that the implementation of the equality agenda is not solely the responsibility of the Equality and Diversity team or of one department. As the process of equality mainstreaming has developed and gained momentum throughout the Council, all departments are now responsible for directing their services to meet equality issues as they arise.

The figures listed above therefore do not include the considerably broader allocation of Council resources for equality related issues.

In addition, delivery of the workforce aspects of the Equality and Diversity agenda is managed by the Corporate HR section through the development and delivery of a number of diversity action plans. At a senior level this work is overseen by the Head of HR and HR Manager.

3. Outline how the public authority intends to assess its compliance with the Section 75 duties and for consulting on matters to which a duty under that section is likely to be relevant.

- A Consultative Forum continues to operate comprising Section 75 groups. We provide information on policies and the screening process. Section 75 groups get access to key staff through the Consultative Forum.
- The Equality and Diversity Officer attends a multi-agency autism stakeholder forum.
- Consultation on all new or revised policies has kept Section 75 groups informed of all developments within the Council. We have developed an online consultation process. In addition all information is published on the website keeping the public up to date on all developments within the Council.
- The Equality and Diversity Officer has assisted all Departments in the Council to better target consultation to relevant groups in relation to pre -consultation, consultation and post consultation.
- Relationships with Section 75 groups are maintained by attending meetings, seminars, workshops, AGMs, launches and other general invitations.

4. **Outline impacts and outcomes (for the public authority and/or individuals from the nine equality categories) over the past five years and what further steps could be undertaken to build on these or address underreporting?**

Outcomes for people in Section 75 categories are listed below. Information relating to targets and outcomes for the past five years can be found throughout the body of the text and in Appendix 4.

- Equality is mainstreamed in the Council
- Staff are better trained
- Staff engagement and consultation is better
- Employee monitoring has been established. As a consequence of more informed knowledge of the composition of our employees we will be able to target policies to assist development when and where required. Employees are indicating that they wish to be involved in equality focus groups addressing Section 75 issues.
- A more focused concentration on youth issues. A Youth Forum is well established.
- Specific targeted employee projects relating to female gender development is well supported.
- Work Life Balance policies assists all staff to improve their work life balance. The main areas of interest include flexible working arrangements, leave provision, child care vouchers, occupational health and employment counselling. Whilst all staff benefit from the Work Life Balance policies we can see that people who are in a caring role are greatly encouraged by the option in this policy.
- A disability action plan has been developed during this period building on previous plans.
- The Good Relations Strategy addresses Section 75 (2). Officers have been employed to address the main issues relating to community relations and cultural diversity. A funding programme for cultural diversity and community relations issues continues.

Outcomes

The changes ensuing from the EQIAs directly improve our services and in turn impact on all our customers.

- Improvements in our community outreach work and targeted recruitment drives.
- Improvements in communication to stakeholders
- More awareness of Section 75 issues internally and externally
- Improved policy development processes

- Better partnership working
- Informed decision making
- Increased participation in decision making
- More knowledge of customers
- Addressing representation in the workforce
- Focus on disability issues.

Impacts

- The overall impact is that there is a noticeable difference in the attention afforded to equality of opportunity and good relations issues.
- All committee reports presented to Council are required to have an equality policy statement. This addresses equality in all documents in every Department.
- Annual reports are a good vehicle for recording the development cycle of equality.
- Belfast City Council is beginning to review the effectiveness of the Consultative Forum
- Annual reports are written and circulated internally to senior officers and the Chief Executive before being presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and the Council.
- Work with the Local Government Staff Commission has enabled the Council to share good practice in an informal development mechanism. Regular meetings were held to discuss common issues.

5. **Outline the number of Equality Scheme related consultation exercises undertaken by your authority over the past five years? Set out the number and percentage related to screening exercises and to EQIAs and indicate the extent that your scheme helped you to engage with external stakeholders?**

A variety of methods were used to conduct Equality Scheme related consultations indicated below.

1. Pre consultation
2. Consultation on Scheme
3. EQIA Consultation (Public, focus groups, staff)
4. Pre Consultation on Developing Policies
5. Screening Consultation
6. Consultation Forum

The Equality and Diversity Officer was involved in all EQIA consultations and Equality Consultation Forum meetings.

However, the Council is a large organisation and individual Departments are responsible for conducting their own pre consultation and consultation processes in relation to policy development. It is therefore difficult to ascertain the total number of consultation exercises undertaken throughout the Council.

The Council is committed to effective consultation and conducts its consultation in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Council's Equality Scheme which contains 178 groups and organisations on the AA list with whom the Council consults during the EQIA Process.

Consultation with Section 75 groups is a major element of the Council's commitment to the equality agenda. In addition some Council departments and services are now using a collaborative process with Section 75 groups and other affected groups to inform and develop new Council policies.

In order to address and meet this growing challenge we established a Consultative Forum for Belfast City Council. The Council is aware that Consultative Forums are not a substitute for other forms of consultation and are merely part of the overall process which must include wider consultation and the use of focus groups for specialist issues. In February 2019 the Council undertook a consultation exercise to review its current equality consultative mechanisms. A draft Consultation and Engagement Strategy is currently out for consultation.

The Equality and Diversity Officer created a reporting procedure to mainstream equality at the heart of the Council's decision making process. Every report presented to Council must enclose an equality statement in relation to the screening procedure. This has led to a greater appreciation of the equality agenda. It has embedded equality in the general work structure and practices of Council officers in the early stage of policy development.

Every year the Council's Disability Access Group organises a focus group meeting with organisations representing disability to discuss progress. This is an extremely effective consultation mechanism. The Council has developed excellent working relationships with disability organisations. This work has now been considerably enhanced with the introduction of the Language Strategy and Officers and the establishment of the Disability Advisory panel.

Every year the Council consults with stakeholders in relation to developing policies and the EQIA process. Relevant staff have been trained on pre consultation, consultation and final consultation processes.

The Equality and Diversity Officer is responsible for the co ordination of the formal screening processes for the Council, the dissemination of this information to the stakeholders and ensuring that the responses from stakeholders are satisfactorily addressed.

No. of Equality Consultative Forum meetings that took place during years 1-5 (2015-20)

Period	**Date of ECF meetings**
2014-15	14 May 2014 26 November 2014
2015-16	13 May 2015
	11 November 2015
2016-17	20 April 2016
	25 November 2016
	28 February 2017
2017-18	27 February 2018
2018-19	11 October 2018
	7 February 2019
2019-20	Scheduled for November 2020
Total no. of meetings	**10 with one planned for 2020**

6. **Indicate if your list of consultees was amended during the 5 year period and what further steps could be taken to develop your level of engagement and consultation?**

The list of consultees on the AA has been amended in the past five years. All those on the AA list were contacted by email to check details and enquire if they wished to remain on the list. Most people wanted to remain on the list. Many opted for electronic data, some wished to be removed. We have recently conducted an audit for a second time; this exercise was conducted on the telephone. We have also had requests from organisations to join our consultee list.

7. **To what extent did your authority consult directly with directly affected individuals as well as with representative groups.**

Each department and section has its own stakeholder list. In addition each new policy is assessed and additions to the stakeholder list are added when appropriate.

Belfast City Council consults extensively with the disability sector as described in Section 2b. Both directly affected individuals and representative organisations are consulted. Mencap and Shopmobility are represented on the Consultative Forum.

The Council has expended considerable resources in training staff on consultation processes. Furthermore we have introduced an online citizen's space consultation process and are now consulting on a comprehensive Consultation and Engagement Strategy.

Disability Advisory Panel (DAP) is an independent group of disabled people who come together to discuss Council projects. They provide advice on making events / projects inclusive and accessible.

No. of Disability Advisory Panel meetings that took place during years 3 to 5 (2017-20)

Period	**Date of DAP meetings**	**Notes**
2017-18	27th October 2017	N/A
	10th November 2017	Tropical Ravine
	19th January 2018	N/A
2018-19	27th April 2018	N/A
	13th June 2018	City Hall Exhibition – Tour
	4th October 2018	N/A
	26th October 2018	Half Moon Lake
	21st February 2019	N/A
Total no. of meetings	**8**	

8. **Outline and discuss the number of policies your authority subject to screening over the past five years, setting out the number and percentage of 'policies screened in' on the basis of equality considerations and the percentage 'screened in' on the basis of the good relations duty.**

Council policies are screened in accordance with our Equality Scheme. We prepare a Screening Outcome Report quarterly in line with our Equality Scheme requirements.

All key decision makers in the Council are requested to screen new policies on an on-going basis and submit them to the Equality Team.

We established a system to ensure equality issues are considered in the committee reporting procedure. All committee reports have an attached equality comment which ensures considerations of equality matters at the earliest stage of policy development. This has been a key feature of equality mainstreaming.

The Council will continue to ensure effective screening arrangements by maintaining the equality check in all reporting mechanisms.

No. of screenings undertaken during year 1 (2014-15)

Period	Title of Screening
Jan - May 2014	Centralisation of relevant grants
	Destination Belfast programme
	Public Bike Share Scheme
	Waste and recycling collection operational policy
Jun - Sep 2014	Connswater Community Greenway
	Age Friendly Belfast
	Belfast Welcome Centre
	Good Relations Action Plan
	Revision of a good and harmonious work environment
	Belfast resilience framework
	Corporate GPS-based fleet tracking system
	Leisure Transformation programme
Oct - Dec 2014	Review of the advertising requirements for Entertainment Licensing applications
	Local Government Reform Boundary Extension
	Achieve Belfast Bursary Fund
	Procurement Strategy
	Online Grants Application System

	Policy on the use of Social Clauses in Council Contracts Final
	Introduction of a new kerbside recycling scheme for the collection of glass from households in outer Belfast
	Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Plan
Total	**20**

No. of screenings undertaken during year 2 (2015-16)

Period	Title of Screening
Jan - Apr 2015	Staging of the Tall Ships Races
	Disability Strategy and Action Plan
	Employability and Skills Strategy
	Belfast Integrated Tourism Strategy
	Castlereagh Kerbside Recycling Scheme
	Get Belfast Reading Project
	Belfast Corporate Plan
	Variation to pricing policy for 3G pitch provision at Brook Activity Centre
May - Sep 2015	Equality Action Plan
	Partnership Agreements
	Wheelie Box Recycling
Oct - Dec 2015	Environmental Improvements
	Use of Social Clauses in Council Contracts
	Disciplinary and Grievance
	Attendance Policy
Jan to Mar 2016	Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)
	Linen Quarter
	Shared Parental Leave
	Advertising requirements for planning applications
Total	**19**

No. of screenings undertaken during year 3 (2016-17)

Period	Title of Screening

Apr to Sep 2016	Changes to bereavement policy
	GLLs membership and pricing architecture for Belfast
	Soccer grass pitch allocation policy
	Forthriver Innovation Centre
	Twilight Market
	Belfast Waterfront Convention and Exhibition Centre - Operating Model
Oct to Dec 2016	Belfast City Local Development Plan (LDP) 2035
Jan to Mar 2017	Belfast City Council Volunteer Policy
Total	**8**

No. of screenings undertaken during year 4 (2017-18)

Apr-Jun 2017	Ban on Food Waste in Black Bins
	International relations framework 2017-2021
	Shared Parental Leave Policy
Jul-Sep 2017	City Hall Cenotaph - Upgrading, Refurbishment, Restoration and Enhancement
Oct 2017 - Mar 2018	Decision to cease the practice of providing child care vouchers when an employee who is on maternity leave is receiving SMP only or no pay
	Draft Policy on Linguistic Diversity
	Corporate Plan 2017-2021: Year 2 Update and Improvement Plan 2018-2019
	Belfeast: Food and Drink Festival
	East Bank Development Strategy: Stages 1 and 2
Total	**9**

No. of screenings undertaken during year 5 (2018-19)

Period	Title of Screening
Apr to Sep 2018	Age-friendly Belfast Plan 2018-2021
	Belfast Inner North West Masterplan
	Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) Outline Proposal

	The introduction of a Stacked Wheelie Box recycling scheme to households in Belfast
	Proposal to fill permanent posts by internal trawl
	Stadium Community Benefits Initiative
Oct to Dec 2018	Amateur Boxing Strategy for Belfast 2012-2022 - additional funding to IABA to deliver action plans for 17/18 and 18/19
	Belfast Planning Service Structural Review Voluntary Alignment Process for Staff on NICS Terms & Conditions
	The decision of the People and Communities Committee on 6th November 2018 to approve an application by Radius Housing Association for a dual language street nameplate to be erected at Rose Street, prior to the Rose Street development being fully occupied
	Language Strategy Action Plan October 2018 - March 2020
	Illuminate Project – Access to colour-wash facilities on City Hall façade
Jan to Mar 2019	Achieving Through People Framework
	An Aquatics Strategy for Belfast 2018-2030
	Belfast Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan
	Buddy Scheme Guidance
	Workplace Policy on Domestic Violence and Abuse
	Disability Action Plan 2019-2022
	Draft Developer Contributions Framework – A guide to developer contributions and planning agreements
	New staff rotas at Belfast Zoo from April 2019
Apr to Jun 2019	Corporate CCTV Policy
	Flying of the Rainbow Flag on Pride Day - Saturday 3 August 2019
	Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2021
	Planning application recommendation for office development at Stewart Street, Belfast
Total	**23**

Equality Impact Assessments Completed

No. of policies screened between 2014 and 2019

Year	No. of policies screened
2014-15	27
2015-16	13
2016-17	8
2017-18	9
2018-19	19

As we have mainstreamed the equality agenda, all committee reports consider equality early in the process. All committee reports will have considered the equality agenda prior to presentation; early consultation processes are now commonplace. In addition the extensive staff training on equality has ensured the early consideration of equality matters. This has resulted in an improvement in the screening stage and a reduction in completing full EQIA's.

Changes were made to the equality schedule and new policies were screened. All consultees were notified of the changes. Please refer to 3 (a) for further information.

No. of EQIAs / Stage 7 undertaken during years 1 to 5 (2015-20)

Period	Title of EQIA
2014	No EQIAs undertaken in 2014
2015	Leisure Transformation Programme
2016	Preferred Options Paper 2020-2035
	Belfast Agenda
2018	Belfast Local Development Plan - draft Plan Strategy
2019	Local Development Plan - Phase 1 Preferred Options Paper (POP)
Total	**6**

All EQIA's have reached stage 7 of the EQIA process with the exception of the draft Local Development Plan. The Consultative Forum provides a mechanism to meet the officers involved in policy development and have an open discussion concerning the issues.

9. To what extent were sufficient arrangements put in place to collect data relating to the nine equality categories to monitor the impact of policies and what could your authority do in future to develop monitoring arrangements?

The Council monitors uptake of services as part of its normal procedure but details and standards vary. Consultation with service users is also common with many services having user forums, customer panels etc.

The Equality and Diversity Officer is in the process of facilitating more comprehensive equality monitoring systems throughout the Council's services and facilities.

10. Indicate the number of reports published outlining the results of EQIAs and monitoring over the past five years, and outline what your authority could do in future in relation to improving the publication of EQIA results and monitoring.

- Information is placed on the web, consulted by email and discussed at the Council's Consultative Forum.
- All the Council's major public documents are available in alternative formats on request, i.e. in other languages, in disc or audio cassette, large print or in Braille. Some requests for documents in alternative formats have been received over the past five years. Our new language officer is developing improved methods of providing alternative formats and accessible communication. We have developed a new Accessible communication guide for staff and will launch this in 2020.

11. To what extent did consideration of EQIAs and consultations contribute to a change in policy, as opposed to policy decisions which would probably have been made in any event by your authority?

In general the EQIA process has been instrumental in the mainstreaming of the Council's equality agenda. The consultation process has been incredibly useful when the affected groups respond. Please see below some of the outcomes of the EQIA' process:

The EQIA process has had an impact on the consideration of equality issues in policy development. There is a need to consider that the EQIA format was 'of it's time.' It is envisaged that the same degree of rigorous EQIA focus will not be required in the future as equality mainstreaming becomes

a reality. A shorter more streamlined version is required and would be a more appropriate tool for public service managers in line with our requirements to provide quality services at best value.

12. **The authority's arrangements for training staff on issues relevant to the duties.**

Belfast City Council has expended considerable efforts and resources in training and developing staff and Elected Members over the past five years. The courses listed below are only some of the courses related to equality and diversity issues.

The Council is conscious of the need to keep the training process dynamic and challenging. Training has to be continuous and innovative to keep equality issues at the heart of decision making and policy development. Specialist training such as – equality screening and EQIA's - is also provided to key staff. Specialist equality related training is also available.

Staff Training – Annual Progress Report – number of staff trained

Course Title	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Diversity for employees	225	182	258	358	210
Diversity for managers and supervisors	11	49	41	25	20
Diversity e-learning	239	52	44	393	54
Disability Awareness for employees	228	173	83	66	89
Disability Awareness for managers and supervisors	36	41	10	10	29
Provide emotional health and wellbeing awareness training for staff and Council volunteers	90	187	21	23	57
Provide training for managers in managing	18	7	11	0	161

Course Title	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
stress and mental health issues					
Mental Health, dyslexia and learning disability awareness training	0	11	15	0	0
JAM Card Training	-	-	-	31	-
Bespoke training – Disability Confident Training for employees	-	-	-	7	
Disability Positive Training and Accreditation Seminar	-	-	-	-	12
Equality screening training	-	-	-		50
Tackling inequality workshop	-	-	-	-	28

The authority's arrangements for ensuring and assessing public access to information and to services provided by the authority.

13. To what extent were sufficient arrangements put in place to ensure and assess public access to information and to services provided by the authority?

Sufficient arrangements were put in place to ensure public access to information and services provided by the Council e.g. Council meetings are available to the public live and the minutes are also accessible on the website. All documents are available in alternative formats on request and published equality documents contain a clear statement indicating alternative formats are available.

We communicate extensively with our residents through the distribution of City Matters magazine to every household. This provides information on key issues and has been provided in alternative

formats proactively to 800 households. The Council strives to ensure that all residents have access to information in the way that is suitable to them.

We have improved our understanding of and contribution to making our services more accessible with the introduction of Inclusive Event Plan. This process ensures all events are planned to ensure they are accessible to disabled people and information is provided in a range of formats so that the public can this access information.
The access to information and services throughout the Council is continually being developed and has progressed substantially in the last year with the introduction of a Language Strategy and a Consultation and Engagement Strategy.

Language Strategy

The Council launched its Language Strategy in April 2018. The Strategy commits to establishing a transparent set of principles for promoting, protecting and enhancing the linguistic diversity of the city.

The launch of the Strategy was followed by the recruitment of two language officers in September 2018 and the approval of an Action Plan in December 2018. The current Action Plan covered the period from October 2018 to March 2020.

The Strategy "aspires to create a place where linguistic diversity is celebrated and respected". The Strategy presents an opportunity to address issues relating to Disability Communications moving forward through an agreed action plan. The aims and objectives of the Strategy are to:

- address language and communication challenges and opportunities within the Belfast Agenda outcomes;
- establish a transparent set of principles for promoting, protecting and enhancing the linguistic diversity of the city;
- increase the profile of different languages along with awareness and understanding of associated cultures, heritage and traditions;
- engage with language communities to address language barriers and promote equality of opportunity through the development and integration of different languages into mainstream civic life;
- enhance good relations within the city through the promotion of linguistic diversity and to celebrate the significance of language in the history and culture of the city;

- address staff training and capacity building needs in relation to the role linguistic diversity has in the workplace and in the delivery of services and
- work in partnership to promote linguistic diversity across the city, to move toward our shared vision of inclusive growth, where no one is left behind.

Customer Focus Programme

The Council has embarked on an ambitious customer focus programme which aims to give customers:

- Consistent, joined up, corporate approach, underpinned by standards.
- Customer centricity (first) to improve customer experience.
- Access to the right information at the right time and from anywhere.
- Deliver greater insight and analysis on customer behaviour, driving decisions based upon data.
- Digital First not Digital only to enable inclusivity and channel choice (i.e. digital first where possible).
- Improve the efficiency of processes to support the scale of growth required to meet the Belfast Agenda.

This programme will also incorporate the new guidelines for website accessibility which will ensure increased access to Council information for all.

The authority's timetable for measures proposed in the scheme.

14. **Outline the extent to which measures set out in the action plan original timetable have been implemented. Any detailed information should be included in as an appendix to the report.**

The Council is pleased to report that it has achieved substantial progress during the past five years and no major delays have occurred in fulfilling the equality actions.

Details of how the scheme will be published.

15. **Were scheme commitments in this section delivered and what evidence supports this view?**

The most recent Equality Scheme was approved in April 2015. All our consultees were informed of the newly approved Scheme. All Officers are made aware of the Equality Scheme and their commitments through induction and compulsory Equality and Diversity training.

Opportunities are taken where possible, to communicate the Council's commitment to equality and good relations; these include speeches by the Lord Mayor and Chairs of Committees, and the introductions to the Council's public documents such as the Corporate Plan and Annual Reports. On a more informal basis, the Equality and Diversity Officer has been asked to give advice to various departments on a range of equality issues.

The Equality Scheme is referenced in all specialist equality, diversity and disability related training sessions for example Equality screening, EQIAs and disability awareness training.

The authority's arrangements for dealing with complaints arising from a failure to comply with the scheme.

16. Outline the number and nature of complaints received by your authority, and what your authority could do in future to develop its complaints handling process and learn from complaints.

1 complaint received in relation to the Equality Scheme for 2014-15 re BCC failure to comply with its S75 duties in respect of 3G hybrid pitch at Falls Park.

We take all complaints and queries, related to Equality Scheme process, seriously. We respond immediately by arranging a meeting for all relevant personnel and follow the complaints procedure rigorously. We ensure all relevant senior personnel are advised of the complaint and we address all the issues raised efficiently. We are content with our complaint handling process.

17. A commitment to conducting a review of the scheme within five years of its submission to the Equality Commission and to forwarding a report of this review to the Equality Commission. What has been your authority's experience of conducting this review? To what extent has the Commission's guidance been useful in undertaking the review?

Reviewing any scheme is useful. Reviewing the last five years has given us a great opportunity to see how far the equality agenda has progressed, how it has been mainstreamed and how it has provided us with much needed time to reflect on other areas for development.

E. Main conclusions

1. To what extent has your public authority's approved scheme provided a workable basis for mainstreaming the need to promote equality of opportunity and good relations into policy-making over the past five years?

- Belfast City Council's approved scheme provides a workable framework in which to discharge its statutory duty in relation to equality and good relations.
- The responsibility for the implementation of the scheme rests with the Elected Members of Council and the Chief Executive.
- To facilitate the process of implementation an Equality and Diversity Officer (EDO) was appointed at a principal officer level. This is currently managed on a job share basis. This function is currently under review.
- To give prominence to the equality agenda in the Council the Equality and Diversity function now resides in the Department for Legal and Civic Services. The EDO reports to the newly appointed Legal and Compliance Manager reporting to the City Solicitor / Director of Legal and Civic Services.
- The Equality Unit has increased its staff complement which indicates the importance we place on equality across the organisation. Pending a structural review, the Equality and Diversity Unit now consists of an Equality and Diversity Officer, two Language Officers and an additional Officer, an Equality & Diversity Support Officer and Business Support Clerk.
- The Good Relations Unit remains the core unit for work related to delivering Good Relations Strategy.
- The overall management of disability related issues resides under the Equality and Diversity function. The Disability Action plan is a corporate document. The actions included in the Plan are a testament to the value placed on removing barriers to services and increasing positive attitude to disabled customers.
- Top level commitment from Elected Members and the Chief Executive and the City Solicitor was essential in ensuring that the scheme was mainstreamed.
- The Council's reporting mechanism has changed considerably in the current review period. The Council has embraced Leadership in Equality and Diversity as a core theme as represented by the establishment of the Equality and Diversity Network Strategy and Operational group (EDNS and EDNO).
- The introduction of the Equality and Diversity Network (EDNS) an internal strategic network group led by Directors and chaired by the City Solicitor. The Equality and Diversity Operational

Group (EDNO) an internal operational network led by Policy Officers in each department. Chaired by the senior officers responsible for equality, diversity, HR and good relations.

- During the reporting period staff networks continued to grow and both the LGB&T and disability staff networks invited carers, allies or supporters of people with disabilities to join the networks. The groups have benefitted from hearing from a number of guest speakers and from attending a variety of training sessions.
- All staff networks groups feed into the development of the equality and diversity action plans.
- We are always delighted to be recognised for the work we do.

2. What key lessons have been learnt over the past five years in terms of effectively implementing the approved Equality Scheme?

- It is important to revise training programmes and systems. Whilst we have previously applied a developmental approach to training we have found that we need to take stock every five years. This review mechanism enables us to benchmark ourselves against other high performing organisations. We believe that our employees are given a series of excellent opportunities to learn and develop. The equality agenda is a cumulative learning process.
- Mainstreaming is key to delivering the equality agenda. Achieving ownership within departments is key and we have made great strides doing this. Mainstreaming equality and diversity has improved considerably with the introduction of the Equality and Diversity Network.
- Leadership training is very important, as is a commitment for equality and good relations from the top of the organisation. A structured approach to equality training is being delivered.
- It is imperative to review how we deliver our services, keeping abreast of improvements across other service providers.
- Important to keep staff on board with excellent communication systems and keep messages simple but effective.
- Continually refresh systems in order to deliver mechanisms to keep the equality messages fresh.
- The importance of consultation for both service users and providers.
- Positive relationship building with the Section 75 groups is essential.

3. What more needs to be done to achieve outcomes for individuals from the nine equality categories?

- The Council has developed excellent working arrangements to further our knowledge of the key issues of Section 75. The Belfast Agenda is the Council's community plan and we are working

across multi-agencies in Belfast to improve all services. However we are not complacent. We have launched the Belfast Conversation listening to views about our shared city and how it should develop over the next 15 years.

- Our Belfast Conversation is just one of the ways we're working with residents, community groups and partner organisations to help identify and shape a number of social and economic outcomes for our citizens that will form the basis of the Belfast Agenda - the city's community plan.
- Local Development Plan: On 1 April 2015, as part of local government reform, Belfast City Council assumed responsibility for a number of functions previously carried out by government departments, including statutory town planning responsibilities. Alongside this, Belfast's district boundaries were expanded to take in around 53,000 additional residents, 21,000 households and 1,000 business premises from areas that were formally parts of Lisburn City Council, Castlereagh Borough Council and North Down Borough Council areas. In addition, the reform programme also introduced new Community Planning responsibilities. The new Council has evolved into a series of new ways of doing business and the last five years has witnessed considerable change on how we communicate with our service users. This is still in development. We have completed the Preferred Options Paper and the Local Development Plan and now we move into the final stage.
- Consultation and engagement is a key feature of all our policy development work. We are keen to hear views from the Section 75 groups on how we could improve our understanding of their needs. The Council established an Equality Consultation Forum to discuss emerging policies. This is one of the best mechanisms to enable real and meaningful policy development in terms of equality of opportunity and good relations. We now are in the process of reviewing this forum.
- The Council introduced an online Citizen Space consultation platform and invested considerable resources in training and equipping staff with the skills to consult and engage more effectively.
- The success of the consultation forum and Citizen Space has led to the development of a comprehensive Consultation and Engagement Strategy this is ongoing.
- The Council has developed a Customer Focus Programme to provide quicker and better experiences to all our customers. Over the next three years (2020-2023), we will begin putting in place the foundations to transform our customer experience, offering increasingly easy to use and accessible services.
- The Achieving Through People Framework is a new corporate framework which sets out new organisational values and behaviours for all employees (specified at employee, manager and senior manager levels). Once fully developed, the framework will be rolled out corporately to all staff and aligned to various key people management processes such as senior management

appraisal, staff PDP processes etc. The Framework sets out the effective behaviours that all employees are expected to display.

- The Council is aware that new issues are constantly developing. Continuous employee training is therefore required to keep up to date with all issues. Regular updates in best practice regarding Section 75 issues would be advantageous.
- The Council is aware that other Councils and organisations have a similar remit to ourselves and that it is sometimes more productive to join forces to advance work. We believe that partnership working can be a more efficient and effective way to do business. The statutory duty network organised by the LGSC has been very helpful.
- The Equality Commission events and seminars has been particularly helpful and we require more joined up thinking at joint events.
- Improved communication of our services is vital to keep the public informed. We have produced a magazine entitled 'City Matters' which is delivered to every house in Belfast. This enables us to be more effective and efficient in getting our message across and inform residents of changes and improvements to our services. We are always developing systems to improve communication. City Matters is delivered proactively in alternative formats to over 800 in the city. We aim to ensure that we increase our services to disabled people and ensure everyone is aware of the provision.
- Communication is key, however this is a complex area which requires ongoing review. We are including a page on our website for disability related issues to focus on improving our services.
- A new version of our website was launched in 2020 which aims to improve access for a wide range of people.
- During 2017, we conducted an extensive consultation on a Draft Policy on Linguistic Diversity together with a Proposed Language Framework. The formal consultation on the policy and framework ran from 23 May 2017 to 18 July 2017 and ended with the production of a Consultation Feedback Report. While the consultation endorsed the general strategic approach adopted there was also an evident need to take into account each of the linguistic communities of Belfast, and their diverse needs and priorities.
- Taken collectively the recommendations arising from the Draft Policy on Linguistic Diversity (2017) and from the Consultation Feedback Report (2017) form the basis of the Language Strategy 2018-23.
- Clearer monitoring approach is being developed in departments.

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Equality Scheme for Belfast City Council

Drawn up in accordance with Section 75 and
Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

We are committed to making sure that our services and information are available to all parts of the community. If you need this information in an alternative format or language, please contact us at:

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~~This document is available in a range of formats on request.~~
~~Please contact us with your requirements.~~

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Foreword

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations across a range of categories outlined in the Act[1].

In our equality scheme, we set out how Belfast City Council proposes to fulfil the Section 75 statutory duties.

We will commit the necessary resources in terms of people, time and money to make sure that the Section 75 statutory duties are complied with and that the equality scheme is implemented effectively, and on time.

We commit to having effective internal arrangements in place for ensuring our effective compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties and for monitoring and reviewing our progress.

We will develop and deliver a programme of communication and training with the aim of ensuring that all our staff and elected Members are made fully aware of our equality scheme and understand the commitments and obligations within it. We will develop a programme of awareness raising for our consultees on the Section 75 statutory duties and our commitments in our equality scheme.

We, are fully committed to effectively fulfilling our Section 75 statutory duties across all our functions (including service provision, employment and procurement) through the effective implementation of our equality scheme.

We realise the important role that the community and voluntary sector and the general public have to play to ensure the Section 75 statutory duties are effectively implemented. Our equality scheme demonstrates how determined we are to ensure there are opportunities, for people affected by our work, to positively influence how we carry out our functions in line with our Section 75 statutory duties. It also offers the means whereby persons directly affected by what they consider to be a failure, on our part, to comply with our equality scheme, can make complaints.

On behalf of the Council and our staff we are pleased to support and endorse this equality scheme which has been drawn up in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Commission guidelines.



Lord Mayor Chief Executive

[1] See section 1.1 of our Equality Scheme.

Chapter 1 Introduction

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

1.1 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires Belfast City Council to comply with two statutory duties:

Section 75 (1)
In carrying out our functions relating to Northern Ireland we are required to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between:

- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation
- men and women generally
- persons with a disability and persons without
- persons with dependants and persons without.

Section 75 (2)
In addition, without prejudice to the obligations above, in carrying out our functions in relation to Northern Ireland we are required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

"Functions" include the "powers and duties" of a public authority[2]. This includes our employment and procurement functions.

How we propose to fulfil the Section 75 duties in relation to the relevant functions of Belfast City Council

1.2 Schedule 9 4. (1) of the Act requires Belfast City Council as a designated public authority to set out in an equality scheme how it proposes to fulfil the duties imposed by Section 75 in relation to its relevant functions. This equality scheme is intended to fulfil that statutory requirement. It is both a statement of our arrangements for fulfilling the Section 75 statutory duties and our plan for their implementation.

1.3 We are committed to the discharge of our Section 75 obligations in all parts of our organisation and we will commit the necessary available resources in terms of people, time and money to ensure that the Section 75 statutory duties are complied with and that our equality scheme can be implemented effectively.

Who we are and what we do

1.4 The role of the council is set out in the Local Government Act and the Transitional Regulations (Transitional, Supplementary and Incidental Provisions and Modifications) Regulations (NI) 2014.

[2] Section 98 (1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Under this Act, the council has two primary functions:

The Council as civic leader

As the only democratically elected body representing the people of Belfast, the Council provides leadership and strategic direction to shape, develop and manage the city. The Council continues to work with other organisations to generate wealth, protect the environment, promote equality, improve community relations and encourage local people to participate more in civic life.

Councillors are committed to addressing local needs and to dealing with the issues affecting local communities and the city. As many of these issues extend beyond the direct remit of the Council, the Council will use its convening power to bring together key partners from across the city and lobby to develop innovative solutions to the challenges facing Belfast. The Council's leadership role involves building relationships with the wide variety of organisations working to improve the city for the benefit of everyone.

At every opportunity, the Council seeks to improve the economic, social and environmental development of Belfast and ensure that the city's resources are used in the most effective, efficient way possible to improve the quality of people's lives.

The Council as a service provider

Belfast City Council is the largest of the 11 councils in Northern Ireland. It is responsible for delivering an extensive range of key services such as refuse collection and disposal, street cleansing, local planning, building control and environmental health, off-street parking, community development, leisure, parks and recreational facilities and support for the arts, tourism and economic development. The Council has a range of regulatory and licensing responsibilities in areas such as environmental health, building control, waste control and street cleanliness.

The Council aims to provide the highest quality services to the people and businesses of Belfast. In so doing, the Council seek to ensure that all of its services are accessible and designed for the convenience of the people that use them. The Council will work to make the best use of all its resources to meet local needs and improve the quality of peoples' lives.

1.5 The current organisational structure of the Council, summarising the functions of Departments, is shown on **Appendix 1**.

Chapter 2 Our arrangements for assessing our compliance with the section 75 duties (Schedule 9 4. (2) (a))

2.1 Some of our arrangements for assessing our compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties are outlined in other relevant parts of this equality scheme. For example, consultation in Chapter 3, assessing and monitoring of impact of policies arrangements in Chapter 4, staff training in Chapter 5, access to information in Chapter 6, the complaints procedure in Chapter 8, publication of the revised Equality Scheme in Chapter 9 and review of the Equality Scheme in Chapter 10.

In addition we have the following arrangements in place for ensuring compliance with and reporting on the effective implementation of our Section 75 statutory duties.

Responsibilities and reporting

2.2 We are committed to the fulfilment of our Section 75 obligations in all parts of our work.

2.3 Responsibility for the effective implementation of our equality scheme lies with the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive is accountable to the Council for the development, implementation, maintenance and review of the equality scheme in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, including any good practice or guidance that has been or may be issued by the Equality Commission.

Directors are responsible for the implementation of the Equality Scheme within their individual Departments, including the screening of policies. The Directors are supported by identified ~~departmental policy~~ officers with responsibility for equality ~~compliance~~ issues and liaising with the Equality and Diversity Officer through the Equality & Diversity Network (Operational). The Equality & Diversity Network (Strategic) comprises a group of Directors who oversee all equality-related work across the Council and report on equality-related matters to the ~~Policy Officers' Group, which in turn, reports to~~ Council's Corporate Management Team.

2.4 If you have any questions or comments regarding our equality scheme, please contact in the first instance our Equality & Diversity ~~Officer~~ Unit at the address given below and we will respond to you as soon as possible:

Equality and Diversity Unit
Belfast City Council
Room 117, City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS

Tel: (028) 9027 0511
Email: equality@belfastcity.gov.uk

Freephone: (0800) 0855 412
Text phone: (028) 9027 0405
SignVideo: http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/contact/ContactUs.aspx

2.5 Objectives and targets relating to the statutory duties will be integrated into our strategic and operational business plans[3].

2.6 Employees' job descriptions and performance plans reflect their contributions to the discharge of the Section 75 statutory duties and implementation of the equality scheme, where relevant.

2.7 The Council prepares an annual report on the progress we have made on implementing the arrangements set out in this equality scheme to discharge our Section 75 statutory duties. The Section 75 annual progress report will be sent to the Equality Commission by 31 August each year and will follow any guidance on annual reporting issued by the Equality Commission. The Council also commits to reporting on the progress made in delivering on the Section 75 statutory duties and the action plan in its Corporate Plan Review and Update.

2.8 The latest Section 75 annual progress report is available on our website

http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/equality

or by contacting the Equality & Diversity ~~Officer~~ Unit at the address at 2.4 above.

2.9 The Council liaises closely with the Equality Commission to ensure that progress on the implementation of our equality scheme is maintained.

2.10 The Equality & Diversity Officer has made a series of presentations to Departmental Management teams, the Policy Officers' Group and other relevant staff. We are reviewing our Equal Opportunities and Equality & Good Relations training to reflect the revised Equality Scheme and its commitments.

The Council is committed to the promotion of the revised Equality Scheme and will use various media to reach a wide range of audeinces ~~redesign its website to ensure that equality information is displayed more prominently~~. The Council's ~~Equality Reference Guide and Equality Toolkit~~ information for staff will be revised alongside the revised Equality Scheme.

Action plan/action measures

2.11 An action plan to promote equality of opportunity and good relations will be developed within six months from the date of approval of this Equality Scheme, ~~within six~~

[3] See Appendix 4 'Timetable for measures proposed' and section 2.11 of this equality scheme.

~~months of 1 April 2015 ie from the date of the new Council taking on new functions~~ in accordance with Equality Commission guidelines.

2.12 The action measures that will make up our action plan will be relevant to our functions. They will be developed and prioritised on the basis of an audit of inequalities. The audit of inequalities will gather and analyse information across the Section 75 categories[4] to identify the inequalities that exist for our service users and those affected by our policies[5].

2.13 Action measures will be specific, measurable, linked to achievable outcomes, realistic and time bound. Action measures will include performance indicators and timescales for their achievement.

2.14 We will develop any action plans for a period of between one and five years in order to align them with our corporate and business planning cycles. Implementation of the action measures will be incorporated into our business planning process.

2.15 We will seek input from our stakeholders and consult on our action plan before we send it to the Equality Commission and thereafter when reviewing the plan as per 2.16 below.

2.16 We will monitor our progress on the delivery of our action measures annually and update the action plan as necessary to ensure that it remains effective and relevant to our functions and work.

2.17 The Council will inform the Commission of any changes or amendments to our action plan and will also include this information in our Section 75 annual progress report to the Commission. Our Section 75 annual progress report will incorporate information on progress we have made in implementing our action plans/action measures.

2.18 Additional arrangements for assessing compliance with the section 75 duties:

Council has introduced a set template (see **Appendix 6**) for all Committee reports. This template has a specific section titled “equality and good relations implications” and ensures that Departments must detail any equality and good relations implications of the matter under discussion. This demonstrates Council’s commitment to mainstreaming equality and good relations across all of its work and is a key element in our compliance and monitoring process.

2.19 Once finalised, our action plan will be available on request from the Equality & Diversity Officer at the address at 2.5~~4~~ above.

The action plan will also be available on the Belfast City Council website:

[4] See section 1.1 of this equality scheme for a list of these categories.

[5] See section 4.1 of this equality scheme for a definition of policies.

http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/equality

If you require it in an alternative format please contact the Equality & Diversity Officer at the address at 2.4 above.

Chapter 3 Our arrangements for consulting

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (a)) - on matters to which a duty (S75 (1) or (2)) is likely to be relevant (including details of the persons to be consulted).

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (b)) on the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted by us on the promotion of equality of opportunity.

3.1 We recognise the importance of consultation in all aspects of the implementation of our statutory equality duties. We will consult on our equality scheme, action measures, equality impact assessments and other matters relevant to the Section 75 statutory duties.

3.2 We are committed to carrying out consultation in accordance with the following principles (as contained in the Equality Commission's guidance "Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for Public Authorities (April 2010)".

3.2.1 All consultations will seek the views of those directly affected by the matter/policy, the Equality Commission, representative groups of Section 75 categories, other public authorities, voluntary and community groups, our staff and their trades unions and such other groups who have a legitimate interest in the matter, whether or not they have a direct economic or personal interest.

Initially all consultees (see **Appendix 3**), as a matter of course, will be notified (by email or post) of the matter/policy being consulted upon to ensure they are aware of all consultations. Thereafter, to ensure the most effective use of our and our consultees' resources, we will take a targeted approach to consultation for those consultees that may have a particular interest in the matter/policy being consulted upon and to whom the matter/policy is of particular relevance. This may include for example regional or local consultations, sectoral or thematic consultation etc.

3.2.2 Consultation with all stakeholders will begin as early as possible. We will engage with affected individuals and representative groups to identify how best to consult or engage with them. We will ask our consultees what their preferred consultation methods are and will give consideration to these. Methods of consultation could include:

- Face-to-face meetings
- Focus groups
- Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
- Questionnaires
- Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/opt out of the consultation
- Internet discussions or
- Telephone consultations.

This list is not exhaustive and we may develop other additional methods of consultation more appropriate to key stakeholders and the matter being consulted upon.

3.2.3 We will consider the accessibility and format of every method of consultation we use in order to remove barriers to the consultation process. Specific consideration will be given as to how best to communicate with children and young people, people with disabilities (in particular people with learning disabilities) and minority ethnic communities. We take account of existing and developing good practice, including the Equality Commission's guidance *Let's Talk Let's Listen – Guidance for public authorities on consulting and involving children and young people (2008)*.

In addition we will utilise the following existing Belfast City Council fora: Equality Consultative Forum, comprising representation from Section 75 organisations; our Youth Forum; our Seniors' Forum; and our Migrant Forum.

Information will be made available, on request, in alternative formats[6], in a timely manner, usually within 10 working days. We will ensure that such consultees have equal time to respond.

3.2.4 Specific training is provided to those facilitating consultations to ensure that they have the necessary skills to communicate effectively with consultees. We will develop and deliver a programme of communication and training with the aim of ensuring that all our staff and elected Members are made fully aware of our equality scheme and understand the commitments and obligations within it. We will develop a programme of awareness raising for our consultees on the Section 75 statutory duties and our commitments in our equality scheme. This will be delivered through the Consultative Forum mechanism.

3.2.5 To ensure effective consultation with consultees[7] on Section 75 matters, we will develop a programme of awareness raising on the Section 75 statutory duties and the commitments in our Equality Scheme by undertaking the following:

- Email notification to all consultees within one month of our Equality Scheme and Action Plan being approved by the Equality Commission
- Quarterly Equality internal meetings to discuss targets and progress on the Equality Scheme and actions related to Council functions and business
- As appropriate, arranging pre-consultation meetings with key Section 75 groups and representatives to discuss specific policy issues
- Publish on the internet, and as appropriate, circulate equality progress updates, commitments in key action plans and minutes

3.2.6 The consultation period lasts for a minimum of twelve weeks to allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves as part of the process of forming a view.

[6] See Chapter 6 of our equality scheme for further information on alternative formats of information we provide.

[7] Please see Appendix3 for a list of our consultees.

However, in exceptional circumstances when this timescale is not feasible (for example implementing EU Directives or Britain and north of Ireland wide legislation, meeting Health and Safety requirements, addressing urgent public health matters or complying with Court judgements), we may shorten timescales to eight weeks or less before the policy is implemented. We may continue consultation thereafter and will review the policy as part of our monitoring commitments[8].

Where, under these exceptional circumstances, we must implement a policy immediately, as it is beyond our authority's control, we may consult after implementation of the policy, in order to ensure that any impacts of the policy are considered.

3.2.7 If a consultation exercise is to take place over a period when consultees are less able to respond, for example, over the summer or Christmas break, or if the policy under consideration is particularly complex, we will give consideration to the feasibility of allowing a longer period for the consultation.

3.2.8 We are conscious of the fact that affected individuals and representative groups may have different needs. We will take appropriate measures to ensure full participation in any meetings that are held. We will consider for example the time of day, the appropriateness of the venue, in particular whether it can be accessed by those with disabilities, how the meeting is to be conducted, the use of appropriate language, whether a signer and/or interpreter is necessary, and whether the provision of childcare and support for other carers is required. Officers organising consultation should refer to Council's Equality ~~Reference Guide~~ Toolkit (available on Council's ~~website~~intranet site).

3.2.9 We make all relevant information available to consultees in appropriate formats to ensure meaningful consultation. This includes detailed information on the policy proposal being consulted upon and any relevant quantitative and qualitative data.

3.2.10 In making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted, we take into account any assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy.

3.2.11 We provide feedback to consultees in a timely manner. A feedback report is prepared which includes summary information on the policy consulted upon, a summary of consultees' comments and a summary of our consideration of and response to consultees' input. The feedback is provided in formats suitable to consultees. (Please see also 6.3).

3.3 A list of our consultees is included in this equality scheme at **Appendix 3**. It can also be obtained from our website at:

http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/equality

or by contacting the Equality & Diversity ~~Officer~~ Unit at the address at 2.4 above.

[8] Please see below at 4.27 to 4.31 for details on monitoring

3.4 Our consultation list is not exhaustive and is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it remains relevant to our functions and policies.

We welcome enquiries from any person/s or organisations wishing to be added to the list of consultees. Please contact the Equality & Diversity Officer to provide your contact details and have your areas of interest noted or have your name/details removed or amended. Please also inform us if you would like information sent to you in a particular format or language.

Chapter 4 Our arrangements for assessing, monitoring and publishing the impact of policies

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (b); Schedule 9 4. (2) (c);
Schedule 9 4. (2) (d); Schedule 9 9. (1); Schedule 9 9.(2))

Our arrangements for assessing the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted on the promotion of equality of opportunity

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (b))

4.1 In the context of Section 75, 'policy' is very broadly defined and it covers all the ways in which we carry out or propose to carry out our functions in relation to Northern Ireland. In respect of this equality scheme, the term policy is used for any proposed, amended or existing strategy, policy initiative or practice and/or decision, whether written or unwritten and irrespective of the label given to it, e.g. draft, pilot, high level or sectoral.

4.2 In making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted, we take into account any assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy, as required by Schedule 9 9. (2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

4.3 The Council uses the tools of screening and equality impact assessment to assess the likely impact of a policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations. In carrying out these assessments we will relate them to the intended outcomes of the policy in question and will also follow Equality Commission guidance.

Screening

4.4 The purpose of screening is to identify those policies that are likely to have an impact on equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

4.5 Screening is completed at the earliest opportunity in the policy development /review process. Policies which we propose to adopt will be subject to screening prior to implementation. For more detailed strategies or policies that are to be put in place through a series of stages, we will screen at various stages during implementation.

4.6 The lead role in the screening of a policy is taken by the policy decision maker who has the authority to make changes to that policy. However, screening will also involve other relevant team members, for example, equality specialists, those who implement the policy and staff members from other relevant work areas. Where possible we will include key stakeholders in the screening process.

4.7 The following questions are applied to all our policies as part of the screening process:

- What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories? (minor/major/none)

- Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equality categories?

- To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? (minor/major/none)

- Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

4.8 In order to answer the screening questions, we gather all relevant information and data, both qualitative and quantitative. In taking this evidence into account we consider the different needs, experiences and priorities for each of the Section 75 equality categories. Any screening decision will be informed by this evidence.

4.9 Completion of screening, taking into account our consideration of the answers to all four screening questions set out in 4.7 above, will lead to one of the following three outcomes:

1. the policy has been 'screened in' for equality impact assessment
2. the policy has been 'screened out' with mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted
3. the policy has been 'screened out' without mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.

4.10 If our screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is 'minor' in respect of one, or more, of the equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, we may on occasion decide to proceed with an equality impact assessment, depending on the policy. If an EQIA is not to be conducted we will nonetheless consider measures that might mitigate the policy impact as well as alternative policies that might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

Where we mitigate we will outline in our screening template the reasons to support this decision together with the proposed changes, amendments or alternative policy.

This screening decision will be 'signed off' by the appropriate Head of Service/ Director within the Council.

4.11 If our screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is 'major' in respect of one, or more, of the equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, we will normally subject the policy to an equality impact assessment. This screening decision will be 'signed off' by the appropriate Head of Service/Director within the Council.

4.12 If our screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is 'none', in respect of all of the equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, we may decide to screen the policy out. If a policy is 'screened out' as having no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations, we will give details of the reasons for the

decision taken. This screening decision will be 'signed off' by the appropriate Head of Service/Director within the Council.

4.13 As soon as possible following the completion of the screening process, the screening template, signed off and approved by the senior manager responsible for the policy, will be made available on our website

http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/equality

and on request from the Equality & Diversity ~~Officer~~ Unit at the address at 2.4 above.

4.14 If a consultee, including the Equality Commission, raises a concern about a screening decision based on supporting evidence, we will review the screening decision.

4.15 Our screening reports are published quarterly [see below at 4.20 - 4.23].

Equality impact assessment

4.16 An equality impact assessment (EQIA) is a thorough and systematic analysis of a policy, whether that policy is formal or informal, and irrespective of the scope of that policy. The primary function of an EQIA is to determine the extent of any impact of a policy upon the Section 75 categories and to determine if the impact is an adverse one. It is also an opportunity to demonstrate the likely positive outcomes of a policy and to seek ways to more effectively promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

4.17 Once a policy is screened and screening has identified that an equality impact assessment is necessary, we will carry out the EQIA in accordance with Equality Commission guidance. The equality impact assessment will be carried out as part of the policy development process, before the policy is implemented.

4.18 Any equality impact assessment will be subject to consultation at the appropriate stage(s). (For details see above Chapter 3 "Our Arrangements for Consulting").

Our arrangements for publishing the results of the assessments of the likely impact of policies we have adopted or propose to adopt on the promotion of equality of opportunity
(Schedule 9 4. (2) (d); Schedule 9 9. (1))

4.19 We make available publicly the results of our assessments (screening and EQIA) of the likely impact of our policies on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations.

What we publish

4.20 Screening reports

These are published quarterly. Screening reports detail:

- All policies screened by the Council over the three month period
- A statement of the aim(s) of the policy/policies to which the assessment relates
- Consideration given to measures which might mitigate any adverse impact
- Consideration given to alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity;
- Screening decisions, i.e:
  - whether the policy has been 'screened in' for equality impact assessment.
  - whether the policy has been 'screened out' with mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.
  - whether the policy has been 'screened out' without mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.
- where applicable, a timetable for conducting equality impact assessments
- a link to the completed screening template(s) on our website

4.21 Screening templates

Please refer to 4.13 above for details on the availability of our screening templates.

4.22 Equality impact assessments

EQIA reports are published once the impact assessment has been completed. These reports include:

- A statement of the aim of the policy assessed
- Information and data collected
- Details of the assessment of impact(s)
- Consideration given to measures which might mitigate any adverse impact
- Consideration given to alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity
- Consultation responses
- The decision taken
- Future monitoring plans.

How we publish the information

4.23 All information we publish is accessible and can be made available in alternative formats on request. Please see 6.3 below.

Where we publish the information

4.24 The results of our assessments (screening reports and completed templates, the results of equality impact assessments) are available on our website:

http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/equality

and by contacting the Equality & Diversity ~~Officer~~ Unit at the address at 2.4 above.

4.25 In addition to the above, screening reports (electronic link or hard copy on request if more suitable for recipients) which include all policies screened over a 3 month period are also sent directly to all consultees on a quarterly basis.

4.26 We will inform the general public about the availability of this material through communications such as the Council's *City Matters* magazine.

Our arrangements for monitoring any adverse impact of policies we have adopted on equality of opportunity (Schedule 9 4. (2) (c))

4.27 Monitoring can assist us to deliver better public services and continuous improvements. Monitoring Section 75 information involves the processing of sensitive personal data (data relating to the racial or ethnic origin of individuals, sexual orientation, political opinion, religious belief, etc). In order to carry out monitoring in a confidential and effective manner, the Council follows guidance from the Office of the Information Commissioner and the Equality Commission.

4.28 We monitor any adverse impact on the promotion of equality of opportunity of policies we have adopted. We are also committed to monitoring more broadly to identify opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations in line with Equality Commission guidance.

4.29 The systems we have established to monitor the impact of policies and identify opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations are:

- The collection, collation and analysis of existing relevant primary quantitative and qualitative data across all nine equality categories on an ongoing basis

- The collection, collation and analysis of existing relevant secondary sources of quantitative and qualitative data across all nine equality categories on an ongoing basis

- An audit of existing information systems within one year of approval of this equality scheme, to identify the extent of current monitoring and take action to address any gaps in order to have the necessary information on which to base decisions

- Undertaking or commissioning new data if necessary.

4.30 If over a two year period monitoring and evaluation show that a policy results in greater adverse impact than predicted, or if opportunities arise which would allow for greater equality of opportunity to be promoted, we will ensure that the policy is revised to achieve better outcomes for relevant equality groups.

4.31 We review our EQIA monitoring information on an annual basis. All other information on monitoring will reviewed annually and will be made available through our Equality Consultative Forum and published on our website.

Our arrangements for publishing the results of our monitoring
(Schedule 9 4. (2) (d))

4.32 Schedule 9 4. (2) (d) requires us to publish the results of the monitoring of adverse impacts of policies we have adopted. However, we are committed to monitoring more broadly and the results of our policy monitoring are published as follows:

4.33 EQIA monitoring information is published as part of our Section 75 annual progress report [see 2.7]. We review our EQIA monitoring information on an annual basis. All other information on monitoring will be reviewed annually and made available through our Equality Consultative Forum and published on our website.

4.34 All information published is accessible and can be made available in alternative formats on request. Please see below at 6.3 for details.

Chapter 5 Staff training
(Schedule 9 4.(2) (e))

Commitment to staff training

5.1 We recognise that awareness raising and training play a crucial role in the effective implementation of our Section 75 duties.

5.2 Our Chief Executive wishes to positively communicate the commitment of the Council to the Section 75 statutory duties, both internally and externally.

To this end we have introduced an effective communication and training programme for all staff and an awareness raising programme for all elected Members of Council. We will ensure that our commitment to the Section 75 statutory duties is made clear in all relevant publications.

Training objectives

5.3 The Council has drawn up a detailed training plan for its staff and elected members which will aim to achieve the following objectives:

- to raise awareness of the provisions of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, our equality scheme commitments and the particular issues likely to affect people across the range of Section 75 categories, to ensure that our staff and elected Members fully understand their role in implementing the scheme
- to provide those staff involved in the assessment of policies (screening and EQIA) with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively
- to provide those staff who deal with complaints in relation to compliance with our equality scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to investigate and monitor complaints effectively
- to provide those staff involved in consultation processes with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively
- to provide those staff involved in the implementation and monitoring of the effective implementation of the Council's equality scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively.

Awareness raising and training arrangements

5.4 The following arrangements are in place to ensure all our staff and elected Members are aware of and understand our equality obligations.

- We will develop a summary of this equality scheme and make it available to all staff.
- We will provide access to copies of the full equality scheme for all staff; ensure that any queries or questions of clarification from staff are addressed effectively.

- Council staff will receive a briefing on this equality scheme within 4 working weeks of the approval of this scheme. This will be achieved through inclusion in the monthly staff briefing report.
- The Section 75 statutory duties form part of induction training for new staff.
- Focused training is provided for key staff within the Council who are directly engaged in taking forward the implementation of our equality scheme commitments (for example those involved in research and data collection, policy development, service design, conducting equality impact assessments, consultation, monitoring and evaluation).
- Where appropriate, training will be provided to ensure staff are aware of the issues experienced by the range of Section 75 groups.
- When appropriate and on an ongoing basis, arrangements will be made to ensure staff are kept up to date with Section 75 developments.
- Policy staff will receive a full briefing on the scheme through the ~~Policy Officers' Group~~Equality & Diversity Network (Operational).
- Council's own publications, *City Matters* (external) and *Intercomm* (internal), will include articles on the revised equality scheme and its contents.

5.5 Training and awareness raising programmes will, where relevant, be developed in association with the appropriate Section 75 groups and our staff.

In order to share resources and expertise, the Council will, where possible, work closely with other bodies and agencies in the development and delivery of training.

Monitoring and evaluation

5.6 Our training programme is subject to the following monitoring and evaluation arrangements:

- We evaluate the extent to which all participants in this training programme have acquired the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve each of the above objectives.

- The extent to which training objectives have been met will be reported on as part of the Section 75 annual progress report, which will be sent to the Equality Commission.

- Equal Opportunities and Good Relations training is mandatory for all staff and refresher training is provided every three years.

Chapter 6 Our arrangements for ensuring and assessing public access to information and services we provide

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (f))

6.1 The Council is committed to ensuring that the information we disseminate and the services we provide are fully accessible to all parts of the community in Northern Ireland. We keep our arrangements under review to ensure that this remains the case.

6.2 We are aware that some groups will not have the same access to information as others. In particular:

- People with sensory, learning, communication and mobility disabilities may require printed information in other formats.
- Members of minority ethnic groups, whose first language is not English, may have difficulties with information provided only in English.
- Children and young people may not be able to fully access or understand information.

Access to information

6.3 To ensure equality of opportunity in accessing information, we provide information in alternative formats on request, where reasonably practicable. Where the exact request cannot be met we will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided.

Alternative formats may include Easy Read, Braille, audio formats (CD, mp3 or DAISY), large print or minority languages to meet the needs of those for whom English is not their first language.

We will respond to requests for information in alternative formats in a timely manner, usually within 10 working days.

Information can be made available for children and young people, people with disabilities and minority ethnic communities through the various Council hosted Fora listed at 3.2.3. The Council also liaises with a variety of representative organisations outside these fora to produce information in alternative formats and languages as required. The Council will continue to take into account existing and developing good practice in relation to making information accessible.

6.4 The Council is committed to making information available online through our website www.belfastcity.gov.uk. Our own magazine, *City Matters*, published several times a year, is distributed to over 130,000 addresses in Belfast.

Access to services

6.5 The Council is committed to ensuring that all of our services are fully accessible to everyone in the community across the Section 75 categories. The Council also adheres to the relevant provisions of current anti-discrimination legislation.

- All Council staff have received Disability Awareness training.

- The Council's website has been designed with accessibility in mind and follows the accessibility guidelines issued by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and the Royal National Institute for the Blind. Our website is maintained at Level AA of the W3C Web Accessibility Guidelines (known as WCAG 2.1) and is speech enabled.

- The Council's own magazine, *City Matters,* published several times a year, is distributed to over 130,000 addresses in Belfast. We have adopted the BS 8300 standard in relation to compliance with DDA 1995 in this regard and *City Matters* is made available in alternative formats on request.

- Council has extended its contract with *AccessAble,* a web-based accessibility information service which currently provides detailed accessibility information for over 750 venues in Belfast.

Assessing public access to information and services

6.6 We monitor our functions annually, in relation to access to information and services, to ensure equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted.

These include:

- monitoring of complaints
- the annual up-dating of statistical information, such as the Baseline Profile of Belfast, which is used in the development of Council's corporate planning process
- the conducting of a major public consultation exercise every 2-3 years to find out the views of the residents of Belfast have about living in the city and about Council services
- monitoring the uptake of our services as part of our normal procedure
- a comprehensive monitoring system for employees of the Council across all section 75 categories
- making reasonable adjustments for staff with specific needs
- annual monitoring of the website regarding plain English.

Chapter 7 Timetable for measures we propose in this equality scheme
(Schedule 9 4. (3) (b))

7.1 **Appendix 4** outlines our timetable for all measures proposed within this equality scheme. The measures outlined in this timetable will be incorporated into our business planning processes.

7.2 This timetable is different from and in addition to our commitment to developing action plans/action measures to specifically address inequalities and further promote equality of opportunity and good relations. We have included in our equality scheme a commitment to develop an action plan. Accordingly, this commitment is listed in the timetable of measures at **Appendix 4**. For information on these action measures please see above at 2.11 – 2.19.

Chapter 8 Our complaints procedure

(Schedule 9 10.)

8.1 The Council is responsive to the views of members of the public. We will endeavour to resolve all complaints made to us.

8.2 Schedule 9 paragraph 10 of the Act refers to complaints. A person can make a complaint to a public authority if the complainant believes he or she may have been directly affected by an alleged failure of the authority to comply with its approved equality scheme.

If the complaint has not been resolved within a reasonable timescale, the complaint can be brought to the Equality Commission.

8.3 A person wishing to make a complaint that the Council has failed to comply with its approved equality scheme should contact:

Equality and Diversity ~~Officer~~Unit
Belfast City Council
Room 117, City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS

Telephone: (028) 9027 0511
Email: equality@belfastcity.gov.uk

Freephone: (0800) 0855 412
Text phone: (028) 9027 0405
SignVideo: http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/contact/ContactUs.aspx

8.4 We will in the first instance acknowledge receipt of each complaint within 10 working days.

8.5 The Equality & Diversity Officer will carry out an internal investigation of the complaint and will respond substantively to the complainant within 30 working days of the date of receiving the letter of complaint. Under certain circumstances, if the complexity of the matter requires a longer period, the period for response to the complainant may be extended to 2 months. In those circumstances, the complainant will be advised of the extended period within one month of making the complaint.

8.6 During this process the complainant will be kept fully informed of the progress of the investigation into the complaint and of any outcomes.

8.7 In any subsequent investigation by the Equality Commission, the Council will cooperate fully, providing access in a timely manner to any relevant documentation that the Equality Commission may require.

Similarly, the Council will co-operate fully with any investigation by the Equality Commission under sub-paragraph 11 (1) (b) of Schedule 9 to the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

8.8 The Council will make all efforts to implement promptly and in full any recommendations arising out of any Commission investigation.

Chapter 9 Publication of our equality scheme

(Schedule 9 4. (3) (c))

9.1 Our equality scheme is available free of charge in print form and alternative formats from the Equality & Diversity ~~Officer~~Unit, who can be contacted at the address at 2.4 or 8.3 above.

9.2 Our equality scheme is also available on our website at:

http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/equality

9.3 The following arrangements are in place for the publication in a timely manner of our equality scheme to ensure equality of access:

- We will email a link to our approved equality scheme to our consultees on our consultation lists. Other consultees without e-mail will be notified by letter that the scheme is available on request. We will respond to requests for the equality scheme in alternative formats in a timely manner, usually within 10 working days.

- We will make every effort to communicate widely the existence and content of our equality scheme. This may include press releases, prominent advertisements in the press, the internet and direct mail shots to groups representing the various categories in Section 75.

- Our equality scheme is available on request in alternative formats such as Easy Read, Braille, large print, audio formats (CD, mp3, DAISY) and in minority languages to meet the needs of those not fluent in English.

- We will also use the following existing Belfast City Council fora: Equality Consultative Forum, comprising representation from Section 75 organisations; our Youth Forum; our Seniors' Forum; and our Migrant Forum to ensure that we communicate our equality scheme effectively to children and young people, older people, people with disabilities and minority ethnic communities.

9.4 For a list of our stakeholders and consultees please see **Appendix 3** of the equality scheme, visit our website at:

http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/equality

or contact the Equality & Diversity ~~Officer~~Unit, who can be contacted at the address at 2.4 or 8.3 above.

Chapter 10 Review of our equality scheme

(Schedule 9 8. (3))

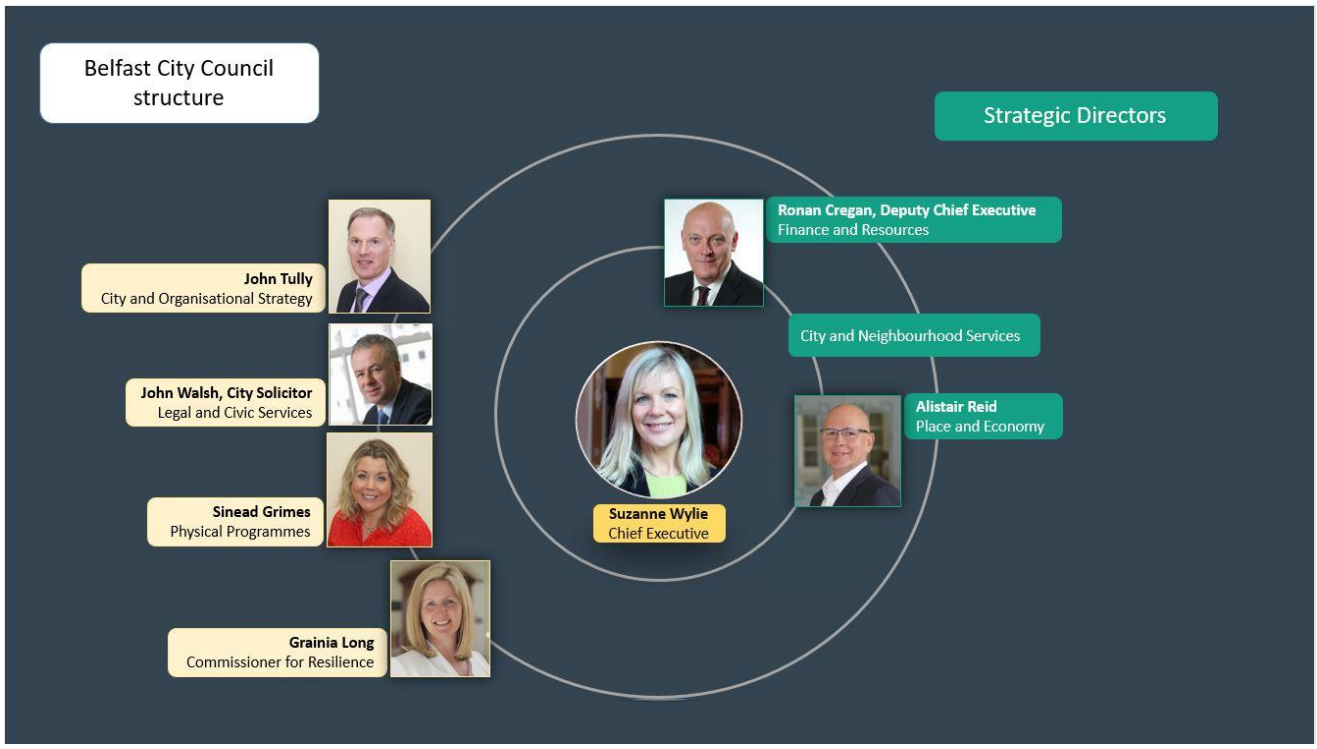
10.1 As required by Schedule 9 paragraph 8 (3) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 we will conduct a thorough review of this equality scheme. This review will take place either within five years of submission of this equality scheme to the Equality Commission or within a shorter timescale to allow alignment with the review of other planning cycles.

The review will evaluate the effectiveness of our scheme in relation to the implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties relevant to our functions in Northern Ireland.

10.2 In undertaking this review we will follow any guidance issued by the Equality Commission. A report of this review will be made public on the Council's website and sent to the Equality Commission.

Appendix 1 Organisational chart

~~A new structure is currently being completed by council and will be included here once approved.~~



Appendix 2 Groups relevant to the Section 75 categories for NI purposes

This list is for illustration purposes only and is not exhaustive.

Category	Example groups
Religious belief	Buddhist; Catholic; Hindu; Jewish; Muslims, people of no religious belief; Protestants; Sikh; other faiths. For the purposes of Section 75, the term "religious belief" is the same definition as that used in the Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order[9]. Therefore, "religious belief" also includes any perceived religious belief (or perceived lack of belief) and, in employment situations only, it also covers any "similar philosophical belief".
Political opinion[10]	Nationalist generally; Unionists generally; members/supporters of other political parties.
Racial group	Black people; Chinese; Indians; Pakistanis; people of mixed ethnic background; Polish; Roma; Travellers; White people.
Men and women generally	Men (including boys); Trans-gendered people; Transsexual people; women (including girls).
Marital status	Civil partners or people in civil partnerships; divorced people; married people; separated people; single people; widowed people.
Age	Children and young people; older people.
Persons with a disability	Persons with disabilities as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
Persons with dependants	Persons with personal responsibility for the care of a child; for the care of a person with a disability; or the care of a dependant older person.
Sexual orientation	Bisexual people; heterosexual people; gay or lesbian people.

[9] See Section 98 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, which states: *"In this Act…"political opinion" and "religious belief" shall be construed in accordance with Article 2(3) and (4) of the Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order 1998."*

[10] ibid

Appendix 3 List of consultees (Schedule 9 4. (2) (a))

This consultation list is an indicative one and is not exhaustive; it is updated on an annual basis to ensure that it remains relevant to Council's functions and policies.

Action Ability Belfast
Action Deaf Youth
Action on Hearing Loss
Age NI
Alliance Party of Northern Ireland
Alzheimer's Society NI Belfast
Ardoyne Community Centre Committee
Ardoyne Association Advice Centre
Arthritis Care NI
Arts Council NI
Association of Baptist Churches in Ireland
Autism NI
AWARE NI
Ballynafeigh Community Development Assoc
Barnardo's Northern Ireland
Belfast Baha'I Community
Belfast Chinese Christian Church
Belfast Health & Social Care Trust
Belfast Islamic Centre
Belfast Jewish Community
Belfast Lions Club
Brain Injury Matters
Braniel Community Centre
British Deaf Association
Bryson An Munia Tober
Business Services Organisation
Cara Friend
Carers Northern Ireland
Carew 11 Family & Training Centre
CAUSE
Centre for Independent Living
Children's Law Centre
Chinese Welfare Association Northern Ireland
Communication Workers Union
Community Dev. & Health Network NI
Community Foundation
Concorde Community Centre
Co-Operation Ireland
Council for the Homeless NI
Cregagh Youth & Community Centre
Culturlann McAdam Ó Fiaich
DAERA
Dee Street Community Centre
Democratic Unionist Party
Diocese of Connor
Disability Action NI
Disability Network Real
Disability Sports NI
Divis Community Centre
Donegall Pass Community Centre
East Side Partnership
Education Authority
Employers' Forum on Disability
Equality Coalition
Equality Commission Northern Ireland
Evangelical Alliance Northern Ireland
Falls Community Council
Féile An Phobail
Finaghy Community Centre
Forbairt Feirste
Gay & Lesbian Youth in NI
Glen Road Community Centre
GMB
Greater Shankill Partnership Board
Green Party
Guide Dogs Northern Ireland
Hammer Community Centre
Here NI
Highfield Community Centre
Horn Drive Community Centre
Housing Rights Service
Indian Community Centre
Inverary Community Centre
Irish Congress of Trade Unions
Knocknagoney Community Centre
Lenadoon Community Forum
Ligoniel Community Centre
Local Government Staff Commission
Markets Community Centre
Mencap Northern Ireland
Methodist Church in Ireland
Mind Wise NI
Morton Community Centre
MS Society NI
Multicultural Group-Windsor Women's Centre
NAS Northern Ireland
NASUWT Northern Ireland
National Children's Bureau Northern Ireland

NDCS Northern Ireland
Neurological Alliance of Ireland
Newtownards Road Women's Group Ltd
NI Chest Heart and Stroke
NI Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers
NI Community Relations Council
NIACRO
NICVA
NIPSA
North Belfast Senior Citizen's Forum
North Queen Street Community Centre
Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce
Northern Ireland European Women's Platform
Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association
Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
Northern Ireland Muslim Family Association
Northern Ireland Policing Board
NOW Group
OI Kwan Chinese Women's Group
Parkinson's UK in Northern Ireland
People Before Profit Alliance
Playboard
Play Resource Centre
Pobal
Police Service of Northern Ireland
Probation Board for Northern Ireland
Progressive Unionist Party
Queen's University Belfast
Queerspace
Rainbow Project
RNIB
Royal British Legion
Rural Development Council NI
Sandy Row Community Centre
Save the Children Fund
Sense Northern Ireland
Shankill Women's Centre
Shopmobility Belfast
Simon Community Northern Ireland
Sinn Fein
Social Democratic and Labour Party
South Belfast Partnership Board
Sport Northern Ireland
Stroke Association NI
Suffolk Community Centre
The Cedar Foundation
The Communication Advice Centre
The Focus Trust
Tourism Northern Ireland
Traditional Unionist Voice
Tullycarnet Community Centre
UCU Northern Ireland
Ulster-Scots Community Network
Ulster Unionist Party
UNISON NI
Unite The Union
University of Atypical
USEL
Victim Support N.I.
Visual Access (NI) Ltd
Volunteer NOW
WAVE Trauma Centre
West Belfast Partnership Board
Whiterock Community Centre
Windsor Women's Centre
Women's Aid Federation N.I.
Women's Forum Northern Ireland
Women's Resource & Development Agency
Women's Support Network
Woodvale Community Centre
Workers Party
Youth Council for Northern Ireland
Youth for Christ Northern Ireland
Youth Initiatives
Youth Justice Agency
Youth Link Northern Ireland
Youth Action Northern Ireland

Appendix 4 Timetable for measures proposed (Schedule 9 4.(3) (b))
This table has been updated with new dates.

Measure	Lead responsibility	Timetable
Section 75 Annual Progress Report [2.7]	Equality & Diversity Officer / Chief Executive	31 August (annually)
Action Plan Consultation on draft action plan [2.15]	Equality & Diversity Officer	~~Jan -~~ Mar - May 2021
Finalised action plan published [2.19]	Equality & Diversity Officer /Chief Executive	June~~April~~ 2021
Arrangements for monitoring progress in place [2.16]	Equality & Diversity Officer	June~~April~~ 2021
Consultation list reviewed and updated [3.4]	Equality & Diversity Officer	July (annually)
Screening Reports [4.15]	Equality & Diversity Officer	Quarterly
Monitoring Review of monitoring information [4.31] 4.33] 6.6]	Departmental Managers/ Equality & Diversity Officer	Annually
Training Development of summary information on scheme [5.4]	Equality & Diversity Officer	Annually
Development of overall training programme [5.5]	Equality & Diversity Officer	Annually
Evaluation of training [5.6]	Equality & Diversity Officer	Annually
Communication Assessing access to information and services [6.6]	City & Organisational Strategy ~~Corporate Communications~~	Annually

Measure	Lead responsibility	Timetable
Communication of equality scheme [9.3] Notification of consultees [9.3]	Equality & Diversity Officer Equality & Diversity Officer	-Within one month of Scheme's approval Within one month of Scheme'
Review Review of equality scheme [10.1]	Equality & Diversity Officer	In line with ECNI guidelines – within Five years (Mar 2025)
Any other measures proposed	Equality & Diversity Officer	Ongoing

4.31 We review our EQIA monitoring information on an annual basis. All other information on monitoring will reviewed annually and will be made available through our Equality Consultative Forum and published on our website.

Our arrangements for publishing the results of our monitoring
(Schedule 9 4. (2) (d))

4.32 Schedule 9 4. (2) (d) requires us to publish the results of the monitoring of adverse impacts of policies we have adopted. However, we are committed to monitoring more broadly and the results of our policy monitoring are published as follows:

4.33 EQIA monitoring information is published as part of our Section 75 annual progress report [see 2.7]. We review our EQIA monitoring information on an annual basis. All other information on monitoring will be made available through our Equality Consultative Forum and published on our website.

Appendix 5 Glossary of terms

Action plan
A plan which sets out actions a public authority will take to implement its Section 75 statutory duties. It is a mechanism for the realisation of measures to achieve equality outcomes for the Section 75 equality and good relations categories.

Adverse impact
Where a Section 75 category has been affected differently by a policy and the effect is less favourable, it is known as adverse impact. If a policy has an adverse impact on a Section 75 category, a public authority must consider whether or not the adverse impact is unlawfully discriminatory. In either case a public authority must take measures to redress the adverse impact, by considering mitigating measures and/or alternative ways of delivering the policy.

Audit of inequalities
An audit of inequalities is a systematic review and analysis of inequalities which exist for service users and those affected by a public authority's policies. An audit can be used by a public authority to inform its work in relation to the Section 75 equality and good relations duties. It can also enable public authorities to assess progress on the implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties, as it provides baseline information on existing inequalities relevant to a public authority's functions.

Consultation
In the context of Section 75, consultation is the process of asking those affected by a policy (ie, service users, staff, the general public) for their views on how the policy could be implemented more effectively to promote equality of opportunity across the 9 categories. Different circumstances will call for different types of consultation. Consultations could, for example, include meetings, focus groups, surveys and questionnaires.

Equality impact assessment
The mechanism underpinning Section 75, where existing and proposed policies are assessed in order to determine whether they have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity for the relevant Section 75 categories. Equality impact assessments require the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data.

Equality of opportunity
The prevention, elimination or regulation of discrimination between people on grounds of characteristics including sex, marital status, age, disability, religious belief, political opinion, dependants, race and sexual orientation. The promotion of equality of opportunity entails more than the elimination of discrimination. It requires proactive measures to be taken to secure equality of opportunity between the categories identified under Section 75.

Equality scheme
A document which outlines a public authority's arrangements for complying with its Section 75 obligations. An equality scheme must include an outline of the public authority's arrangements for carrying out consultations, screening, equality impact assessments, monitoring, training and arrangements for ensuring access to information and services.

Good relations
Although not defined in the legislation, the Commission has agreed the following working definition of good relations: 'the growth of relations and structures for Northern Ireland that acknowledge the religious, political and racial context of this society, and that seek to promote respect, equity and trust, and embrace diversity in all its forms'.

Mainstreaming equality
The integration of equal opportunities principles, strategies and practices into the everyday work of public authorities from the outset. In other words, mainstreaming is the process of ensuring that equality considerations are built into the policy development process from the beginning, rather than being bolted on at the end. Mainstreaming can help improve methods of working by increasing a public authority's accountability, responsiveness to need and relations with the public. It can bring added value at many levels.

Mitigation of adverse impact
Where an equality impact assessment reveals that a particular policy has an adverse impact on equality of opportunity, a public authority must consider ways of delivering the policy outcomes which have a less adverse effect on the relevant Section 75 categories; this is known as mitigating adverse impact.

Monitoring
Monitoring consists of continuously scrutinising and evaluating a policy to assess its impact on the Section 75 categories. Monitoring must be sensitive to the issues associated with human rights and privacy. Public authorities should seek advice from consultees and Section 75 representative groups when setting up monitoring systems. Monitoring consists of the collection of relevant information and evaluation of policies. It is not solely about the collection of data, it can also take the form of regular meetings and reporting of research undertaken. Monitoring is not an end in itself but provides the data for the next cycle of policy screening.

Northern Ireland Act
The Northern Ireland Act, implementing the Good Friday Agreement, received Royal Assent on 19 November 1998. Section 75 of the Act created the statutory equality duties.

Policy
The formal and informal decisions a public authority makes in relation to carrying out its duties. Defined in the New Oxford English Dictionary as 'a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government party, business or individual'. In the context of Section 75, the term **policies** covers all the ways in which a public authority carries out or proposes to carry out its functions relating to Northern Ireland. Policies include unwritten as well as written policies.

Qualitative data
Qualitative data refers to the experiences of individuals from their perspective, most often with less emphasis on numbers or statistical analysis. Consultations are more likely to yield qualitative than quantitative data.

Quantitative data
Quantitative data refers to numbers, typically derived from either a population in general or samples of that population. This information is often analysed by either using descriptive statistics, which consider general profiles, distributions and trends in the data, or inferential statistics, which are used to determine 'significance' either in relationships or differences in the data.

Screening
The procedure for identifying which policies will be subject to equality impact assessment, and how these equality impact assessments will be prioritised. The purpose of screening is to identify the policies which are likely to have a minor/major impact on equality of opportunity so that greatest resources can be devoted to improving these policies. Screening requires a systematic review of existing and proposed policies.

Schedule 9
Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 sets out detailed provisions for the enforcement of the Section 75 statutory duties, including an outline of what should be included in an equality scheme.

Section 75
Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act provides that each public authority is required, in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between:-

- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status and sexual orientation;
- men and women generally;
- persons with a disability and persons without; and
- persons with dependants and persons without.

Without prejudice to these obligations, each public authority in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland must also have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

Appendix 6 Copy of Belfast City Council Committee template

Belfast City Council

Subject:	
Date:	
Reporting Officer:	
Contact Officer:	

Restricted Reports				
Is this report restricted?	**Yes**	☐	**No**	☐
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?				
After Committee Decision		☐		
After Council Decision		☐		
Some time in the future		☐		
Never		☐		

Call-in				
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	**Yes**	☐	**No**	☐

1.0	**Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**
2.0	**Recommendations**
3.0	**Main report**
	<u>Key Issues</u>

	Financial & Resource Implications Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment
4.0	**Appendices**

Appendix 3a

Belfast City Council

Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties

Annual Progress Report 2019-2020

Contact:

• Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Equality Scheme	Name: Telephone: Email:	Lorraine Dennis/Stella Gilmartin/Lisa McKee 028 90320202 equality@belfastcity.gov.uk
• Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan	As above Name: Telephone: Email:	x (double click to open)

Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:

https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/council/equality/annual-reports.aspx

Signature:

This report has been prepared using a template circulated by the Equality Commission.

It presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and good relations duties, and implementing Equality Scheme commitments and Disability Action Plans.

This report reflects progress made between April 2019 and March 2020

PART A – Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Scheme

Section 1: Equality and good relations outcomes, impacts and good practice

1 In 2019-20, please provide **examples** of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved.

Please relate these to the implementation of your statutory equality and good relations duties and Equality Scheme where appropriate.

Please see Appendix 1 to Annual Progress Report 2019-2020 attached.

The actions included in the Equality and Diversity Framework 2017-2021 were approved by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 22nd September 2017. In addition, a number of strategic actions have been developed also and are currently being delivered including:

Development of a Cultural Strategy for Belfast
Local Development Plan
City Deal
Belfast Open Spaces Strategy
Capital Projects
City and Neighbourhood Transition and Improvement Programme
Social Clauses
Social Value Procurement Framework
Urban Villages Programme
Leisure Transformation Programme

2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2019-20 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

Please see Appendix 1 attached, which provides an update on all actions and gives insight into outcomes.

3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2019-20 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

X Yes ☐ No (go to Q.4) ☐ Not applicable (go to Q.4)

Please provide any details and examples:

The application of the Equality Scheme, specifically through the screening and consultation process resulted in changes and processes and service delivery with the following equality mitigation actions highlighted during the screening as follows:

Language Strategy Action Plan 2020-2021

The Council launched its Language Strategy in April 2018 and it will run until 2023. During 19-20 a new language action plan was developed for the year 2020-2021 incorporating the actions to be delivered. These actions and targets aimed at the Language Strategy implementation will enable the Council to provide a greater variety of services through languages other than English.

This action plan builds on that which ran from December 2018- March 2020 and will bring forward those actions which were not fully completed and new actions including:

- The development of new internal governance structures for monitoring how language issues impact on the Council
- The development of consultation groups involving relevant stakeholders
- The development of protocols governing what information is translated into languages other than English and the process for doing this
- Staff training and awareness courses in relation to language issues and procuring a translator
- Language classes for staff who wish to avail of them
- A range of external and internal events which promote the profile of the languages in the language strategy and develop links with the relevant language communities

The screening of the new Action Plan highlighted minor positive impacts on the section 75 categories of religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, disability and dependants. These are outlined as follows:

Religious belief, political opinion and racial groups:

The Language Strategy Action Plan was developed and written with the intention of increasing equality of opportunity and access to services to people regardless of religious belief. There was extensive and lengthy consultation with various language communities including Irish, Ulster-Scots and ethnic minorities to assess their needs and to hear what level and types of service they would like to see from the council. Since their appointment, the Irish Language Officer and the Language Officer have engaged extensively within language communities on what support they needed from the council and the action plan is laid out in a way which reflects those opinions.

In the context of Northern Ireland, it is often perceived that political, religious and racial background are interrelated and the action plan will take positive steps to address this in the context of language.

Age:

There are a range of opportunities emanating from the Language Strategy Action Plan which can benefit users of various languages across differing age spans. The action plan has the potential to positively impact on young people who attend an Irish-medium

school or those who are learning a new language. In addition, it will also potentially impact positively on the following:

- The children of D/deaf adults
- The families of people with disabilities
- Older people who are experiencing hearing loss
- Older people learning another language

Disability:

As one of the strands of the Language Strategy focuses on languages and communications for people with disabilities, there are opportunities in the action plan to increase and make services more accessible for people with disabilities.

Dependants:

The Action Plan has the potential to raise awareness of the services that people who have a dependant who is D/deaf or disabled, or a child of a D/deaf adult, can use and impact on them positively. The Plan will also raise awareness of the barriers and challenges faced by families with dependants in terms of access to services.

3a With regard to the change(s) made to policies, practices or procedures and/or service delivery areas, what **difference was made, or will be made, for individuals**, i.e. the impact on those according to Section 75 category?

Please provide any details and examples:

For examples and details, please see 3 above

3b What aspect of the Equality Scheme prompted or led to the change(s)? *(tick all that apply)*

☐ As a result of the organisation's screening of a policy *(please give details):*

☐ As a result of what was identified through the EQIA and consultation exercise *(please give details):*

☐ As a result of analysis from monitoring the impact *(please give details):*

☐ As a result of changes to access to information and services *(please specify and give details)*:

X Other *(please specify and give details)*:

The Equality and Diversity Unit liaised with our Sign Language Users' Forum to provide feedback on our new Language Action Plan in relation to website accessibility and communications etc. The Language and Disability Action Plans are aligned in terms of achieving outcomes around disability and communications and we sought the views of the Disability Advisory Panel also. Feedback clearly demonstrated that more work was required in order to overcome barriers in respect of language and communication.

In addition, feedback was received from the Irish Language community, the Ulster-Scots community and elected members which demonstrated the need to progress those issues highlighted within the strategy such as communications, signage and website accessibility. Subject to ratification by the Council, the Action Plan will become operational at the earliest opportunity.

Section 2: Progress on Equality Scheme commitments and action plans/measures

Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)

4 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2019-20 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☐ Yes, organisation wide

X Yes, some departments/jobs

☐ No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment

☐ No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Section 75 responsibilities for staff, managers and senior managers are outlined in our Achieving Through People Framework which sets out our organisational values and the behaviours that we expect our staff to demonstrate. Specific Section 75 responsibilities are considered when a job description is revised or a new job description is written. In this reporting year, one new senior job description (Governance and Compliance Manager) included specific section 75 responsibilities.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2019-20 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

X Yes, organisation wide

☐ Yes, some departments/jobs

☐ No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment

☐ No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

We have ensured that equality and diversity were included in draft committee and departmental planning templates. The Director of City and Organisational Strategy has worked with the senior management team to refresh the corporate values and priorities and to ensure they are fully embedded across the organisation. This includes a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion as indicated in our 'organisational wheel' (part of civic leadership) and reflected in our core values of Integrity and Responsibility. A new CMT Oversight Board has been established to monitor progress and help ensure that our corporate plan is delivered effectively.

In addition, the Equality and Diversity Framework 2017-2021 is still being implemented and sits alongside corporate planning and supports the Belfast Agenda.

6 In the 2019-20 reporting period were **objectives/ targets/ performance measures** relating to the Section 75 statutory duties **integrated** into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? *(tick all that apply)*

X Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan

☐ Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning

☐ Yes, in some departments/jobs

☐ No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation's ongoing corporate plan

☐ No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2019-20 report

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Within the new Corporate Plan 2020-2024, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion were agreed as corporate priorities and committed to the following:

"We will develop a new five-year Equality Scheme for the Council, implement a city-wide approach to linguistic diversity and develop a four-year Disability Strategy". Implementation of the Corporate Plan, including this priority, is undertaken through a monthly Oversight Board and will be reported to Committee on a six monthly basis.

In addition, the Equality and Diversity Framework outlines the main actions planned to address inequalities during the reporting period. Updates on outcomes are provided at the attached appendix. All of these actions were integrated into planning at the appropriate level. Equality and Inclusion is also a standard item on many departmental team agendas thus influencing operational planning.

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2019-20 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:	4	Actions ongoing:	39	Actions to commence:	1

Please provide any details and examples (*in addition to question 2*):

Appendix 1 provides an update on all of the actions included in our Equality and Diversity Framework 2017-2021. Thirty nine of these actions are on-going and will be reviewed in our Audit of Inequalities. In addition, number of strategic actions have been developed and are currently being delivered including:

Development of a Cultural Strategy

Local Development Plan

City Deal

Belfast Open Spaces Strategy

Capital Projects

City and Neighbourhood Transition and Improvement Programme

Social Clauses

Social Value Procurement Framework

Urban Villages Programme

Leisure Transformation Programme

8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2019-20 reporting period *(points not identified in an appended plan)*:

A review of the Equality and Diversity Framework 2017-2021 was undertaken previously and issues were identified in a range of areas. These are now under review and will be addressed during 2020-2021.

9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2019-20 reporting period, the following have been identified: *(tick all that apply)*

- X Continuing action(s), to progress the next stage addressing the known inequality
- ☐ Action(s) to address the known inequality in a different way
- X Action(s) to address newly identified inequalities/recently prioritised inequalities
- ☐ Measures to address a prioritised inequality have been completed

Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)

10 Following the initial notification of consultations, a targeted approach was taken – and consultation with those for whom the issue was of particular relevance: *(tick one box only)*

X All the time ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never

11 Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2019-20 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:

Flying of Rainbow Flag on 3rd August 2019

A Notice of Motion was agreed at the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 22nd March to fly the Rainbow Flag on 3rd August (Pride Day), this decision was subsequently amended at the Council's meeting on 1st April 2019, with the removal of the statement in brackets.

"The Committee agreed to the motion to fly the rainbow flag over City Hall on 3rd August 2019, subject to and equality screening being undertaken and to a report being submitted to the Committee on those dates that are included (in the illuminate programme) where there is a festival or celebration also held in the city and how they could receive dual recognition of a flag and illuminate the building".

Within the given timeframe, consultation with key stakeholders was undertaken to inform the assessment on paying due regard to the promotion of good relations. Information from previous consultees including the City Hall: Promoting a Good and Harmonious Environment and Flying the Union Flag were utilised.

A summary is outlined below:

- Consultation with the ECNI provided information in line with previously stated positions in their guidance notes including:

  - Promoting a Good and Harmonious Working Environment (2009)
  - Equality Commission advice on Good Relations in Local Councils (2015)
  - Guidance note on section 75, Northern Ireland Act 1998 and section 49A Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (2015)

- Community Relations Council considered the policy to be outside of the good relations grounds and therefore did not provide a response.
- A meeting was held with the Council network for LGBT+ staff and allies.
- A legal opinion was provided encompassing previous legal opinions back to 2000.

12 In the 2019-20 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently <u>used</u> by consultees**: *(tick all that apply)*

X Face to face meetings

X Focus groups

X Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing

X Questionnaires

X Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation

X Internet discussions

X Telephone consultations

X Other *(please specify)*: Citizenspace

Please provide any details or examples of the uptake of these methods of consultation in relation to the consultees' membership of particular Section 75 categories:

The Council's Equality and Consultative Forum which is made up of a range of representatives from Section 75 groups has been consulted on various policies including:

- Boodles Dam – works to decommission the Dam
- Decision to erect bilingual/multi-lingual signage in citywide council leisure centres
- Draft Inclusive Growth Strategy
- Draft Corporate Plan 2019-2023
- Draft Consultation and Engagement Framework
- Putting You First, Transforming Customer Experience Vision

In addition, the Disability Advisory Panel, which comprises members with a range of disabilities, was consulted on a range of policies and adaptations to Council facilities and the Sign Language Video project.

13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2019-20 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

X Yes ☐ No ☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

See question 12 above. In addition, screenings have accompanied policies, procedures and strategies which have been issued for consultation on the Council's Citizen Space platform. We are currently working on putting in place mechanisms which will encourage more use of this platform in relation to equality and diversity. In addition, we are currently reviewing our Equality Consultative Forum.

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2019-20 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

X Yes ☐ No ☐ Not applicable – no commitment to review

Arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/council/equality-and-diversity/equality-screening-reports

15 Please provide the **number** of policies screened during the year (*as recorded in screening reports*):

21

All our screenings can be accessed on our website at the following webpage:

https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/council/equality/screening-outcome.aspx

16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2019-20:

9	Policy consultations conducted with **screening** assessment presented.
1	Policy consultations conducted **with an equality impact assessment** (EQIA) presented.
	Consultations for an **EQIA** alone.

17 Please provide details of the **main consultations** conducted on an assessment (as described above) or other matters relevant to the Section 75 duties:

A range of consultation methods were employed for the above, including Citizen Space, a range of focus groups; staff consultations; information in City Matters; website and circulation to the council's equality list. In relation to the equality screening assessments each report highlights the consultation methodology. These are available on request. In addition, we conducted an EQIA in relation to the development of our Cultural Strategy for Belfast and consulted widely (both externally and internally) in relation to the Council's new Customer Focus Programme.

18 Were any screening decisions (or equivalent initial assessments of relevance) reviewed following concerns raised by consultees? *(tick one box only)*

☐	Yes	X	No concerns were raised	☐	Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Arrangements for publishing the results of assessments (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

19 Following decisions on a policy, were the results of any EQIAs published during the 2019-20 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

X Yes ☐ No ☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The Council is developing 'A City Imagining' which is the new 10 year cultural strategy for Belfast. This is a new strategic framework for the city and is set firmly within the context of the Belfast Agenda and the Local Development Plan to create a vision and coherent framework for Belfast that will fully embed culture in the wider city agenda and to enable Belfast's vision to be a 'culturally vibrant city'. The ten year Cultural Strategy for Belfast recognises that over the years, the Council has made a commitment to strengthening and promoting the cultural scene in Belfast.

The Cultural Strategy sets out priorities on how we will deliver on the Belfast Agenda's vision for Belfast to be a culturally vibrant city. It was adopted by Council in October 2019 following a significant programme of engagement, and was subject to an equality impact assessment at a strategic level.

The draft strategy expresses an agreed cultural statement for the city which has been shaped by the significant programme of public engagement over an 18 month period. This statement and vision will be taken forward through four crosscutting themes and 16 priorities. Implementation Plans were developed in 2019/20 for each of the priorities. The Strategy also includes a number of key strategic milestones that outlines the significant steps the Council will work towards over 10 year lifespan of the strategy. The associated documentation has been published on our website.

Arrangements for monitoring and publishing the results of monitoring (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

20 From the Equality Scheme monitoring arrangements, was there an audit of existing information systems during the 2019-20 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☐ Yes ☐ No, already taken place

X No, scheduled to take place at a later date ☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details:

There are some gaps in relation to the collection and availability of data regarding section 75 groups at both a regional-level and organisational-level. This has been highlighted with the Equality Commission and will continue to be addressed. This work is on-going.

21 In analysing monitoring information gathered, was any action taken to change/review any policies? *(tick one box only)*

X Yes ☐ No ☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Language Strategy Action Plan 2020-2021

The Equality and Diversity Unit liaised with our Sign Language Users' Forum to provide feedback on our new Language Action Plan in relation to website accessibility and communications etc. The Language and Disability Action Plans are aligned in terms of achieving outcomes around disability and communications and we sought the views of the Disability Advisory Panel also. Feedback clearly demonstrated that more work was required in order to overcome barriers in respect of language and communication.

In addition, feedback was received from the Irish Language community, the Ulster-Scots community and elected members which demonstrated the need to progress those issues highlighted within the strategy such as communications, signage and website accessibility. Subject to ratification by the Council, the Action Plan will become operational at the earliest opportunity.

22 Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2019-20 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

None.

23 Please provide any details or examples of monitoring that has contributed to the availability of equality and good relations information/data for service delivery planning or policy development:

Belfast City Council had identified the need to support Sign Language users; British Sign Language and Irish Sign Language in accessing their services. We recognised the barriers in telephone communication and face to face communication with council staff for Sign Language users. We are committed to removing these barriers and the provision of a Video Relay Service and Video Remote Interpreting service will pave the way in ensuring Sign Language users can communicate effectively with Council staff via Registered Sign Language Interpreters.

A pilot for a period of 12 months was delivered by the Council from May 2019, to provide a Video Relay Service and Video Remote Interpreting service for British Sign Language users. We wanted to be in a position to monitor the effectiveness of the service within a pilot timeframe before rolling it out on a long term contract.

The following was provided during the pilot:

- Video Relay Service – installed and in use via the Council's Contact Us webpage;
- Video Remote Interpreting – installed at reception desks at the following Council venues; Cecil Ward, Olympia Leisure Centre and Belfast Zoo

The scheme has been successful and further options to extend the scheme will be progressed during 20/21.

Staff Training (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 5)

24 Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2019-20, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

The Council has developed a suite of training courses to raise awareness of its section 75 statutory duties. Diversity and disability awareness training are mandatory whilst other courses are optional. Many courses have been developed in association with external organisations ie New Group; Employers for Disability NI; Signature (forwarding body for BSL Courses); 2000 Weeks.

In addition to this, the Council's Disability Staff Network provided input into the revision of the Disability Awareness training. Evaluation forms are completed at the end of each training session and feedback provided assists with the development/refreshing of the course content. Post training evaluation measures a number of areas including clarity of objectives, relevance of course content, knowledge of trainers etc.

Diversity training for employees (classroom based) – 78 employees attended

Employees must attend either classroom based or on-line refresher training every three years. The training content includes the benefits of diversity to individuals and the organisation; main pieces of NI equality legislation; significance of legislation on policies and procedures; identifying when discrimination/harassment occurs; knowing rights and responsibilities of employees, managers, sources of help and guidance; how BCC promotes good relations. Delivery is a mix of trainer delivery, group exercises, video clips and case studies. The total average evaluation score for this course was 9.6 out of 10.

Diversity training for Managers (classroom based) – 6 employees attended

In addition to the content contained within the employee course, the manager training also includes manager responsibilities, manager behaviours, tribunal information, dealing with inappropriate behaviours and developing good management practice.

On-line Diversity training employees and managers – 42 employees attended

Disability Awareness training – 51 employees attended

Training content covers the following areas of disability: physical/mobility; sensory (visual and hearing); learning; hidden (autism, dyslexia, mental health, cancer, epilepsy); speech. Topics covered include unlawful discrimination (employment and goods, facilities and services), reasonable adjustments; including health and wellbeing initiatives eg Every Customer Counts; Inclusive Events Guide. Delivery is a mix of trainer and case studies. The total average evaluation score for this was 9.7 out of 10. Manager training covers the above and includes additional information relating to their responsibilities in considering and facilitation reasonable adjustments,

Positive Mental Health – 50 employees attended

The total average evaluation score for this was 9.3 out of 10.

Stress Awareness for Managers – 31 employees attended. The total average evaluation score for this was 9.5 out of 10.

Mindfulness – 27 employees attended

Pilot Mental Health First Aid – 18 people attended

Neurodiversity – 18 people attended

Pilot British Sign Language – 10 employees attended

The total average score for this course was 9.9 out of 10.

The Equality and Diversity Unit also delivered the undernoted training during 19-20:

Communications Tactics – 11 employees attended

2 Equality and Diversity Framework Workshops - - 28 employees attended

Equality Screening Training – 11 employees attended

25 Please provide **any examples** of relevant training shown to have worked well, in that participants have achieved the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve the stated objectives:

Evaluations of courses revealed the following scores (scored out of 10) in terms of participants saying that they could use what they warned right away:

Diversity – 9.5

Diversity Awareness – 9.6

Positive Mental Health – 9.3

Stress Awareness 9.2

BSL - 9.7 (skills can be applied to the job). A member of staff had the opportunity to put her skills into use in the course of her work. A staff member was also able to deal with a customer using BSL. The customer was impressed that the Council was providing training to its frontline staff and was satisfied that her query cold be dealt with quickly and efficiently and our staff member was delighted that she could put her learning into practice.

Feedback from Mental Health First Aid – "I can categorically state that this has been one of the most relevant, practical and helpful courses I have ever attended in BCC. From trainers to content and delivery, this course covered various mental health topics providing a multi-diverse audience with a safe space talk and share personal life challenges but more importantly ask questions".

The evaluation carried out has also generated ideas as to how we can do more to support staff with mental health issues and consideration of these is already being taken forward.

Public Access to Information and Services (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 6)

26 Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2019-20, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

Please see 23 above in relation to Video Relay Service

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

27 How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2019-20?

Insert number here: None

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

Section 3: Looking Forward

28 Please indicate when the Equality Scheme is due for review:

The Council's Equality Scheme is currently being reviewed.

29 Are there areas of the Equality Scheme arrangements (screening/consultation/training) your organisation anticipates will be focused upon in the next reporting period? *(please provide details)*

In line with the guidance received from the Equality Commission, the implementation of Section 75 will be an area of focus during 20/21. The Council continues to implement an ambitious transformation programme, which will impact on service provision and service re-design.

30 In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next (2020-21) reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)*

- X Employment
- X Goods, facilities and services
- X Legislative changes
- X Organisational changes/ new functions
- ☐ Nothing specific, more of the same
- ☐ Other (please state): See question 29 above

Appendix 1: Equality and Diversity Framework 2017-21 (Equality Action Plan) - Update 2019/2020

This document is an update on actions delivered to address inequalities by Belfast City Council in the period between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020. It is not a standalone document and should be read in conjunction with the Equality and Diversity Framework April 2017 – March 2021.

Priority A: Leadership, Partnership and Organisational Commitment

We know that strategic leadership – both political and managerial – is key to improving equality and good relations outcomes, and promoting diversity. This organisational commitment goes hand in hand with working in partnership to make the best use of our resources in an ever challenging environment. Fairness in how we comply with legislation, procure goods and services and communicate with our rate payers will highlight Belfast's growth as a diverse city.

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
A1 Address inequalities through the Belfast Agenda	COS	The Belfast Agenda is a shared "city" framework aimed at improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all people living in Belfast. The Local Government Act places a duty on local councils to initiate, facilitate and maintain community planning in their area. However the council is only one of a number of statutory partner organisations responsible for delivering the Belfast Agenda. During 2019-20, community planning governance was further developed as two additional Boards (Growing the Economy and City Development; and Resilience and Sustainability) were established to drive the delivery of the agreed action plans for the medium term priorities. A Portfolio Office was also established within the City and Organisational Strategy department to programme manage planned activity. This involved a series of actions taking an evidence based approach to target both health inequalities and educational inequalities within the city. The Statement of Progress, assesses and provides many examples of the progress that has been made towards delivering the outcomes from the Belfast Agenda.
A2 Embed Equality and Diversity in new Corporate Plan	COS / L&CS	Within the new corporate plan (2020-24), Equality, Diversity and Inclusion was agreed as a corporate priority and committed to the following: "We will develop a new five-year Equality Scheme for the Council, implement a city-wide approach to linguistic diversity and develop a new four year disability strategy." Implementation of the corporate plan, including this priority, is undertaken through a monthly Oversight Board and will be reported to Committee on a six monthly basis.
A3 Develop and deliver an integrated plan	CNS	An integrated plan to address health inequalities was developed and delivered in partnership with the Public Health Agency, Belfast HSC Trust and HSC Board. The plan included action on the thematic areas of physical activity and nutrition Active Belfast), emotional wellbeing,

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
to tackle health inequalities across the city		lifelong learning, injecting drug misuse and avoidable winter deaths. Work on healthy ageing (Age-Friendly Belfast) was also included within the integrated plan and is covered in a separate update. **Lifelong learning:** Key deliverables included organising the 2020 Belfast Festival of Learning which focused on the theme of 'using learning to build resilience' and supported the promotion of learning for life, for education, for work and for living together. 137 events were organised for the festival but Covid-19 meant that most events had to be postponed indefinitely. The March 10th festival launch event, with 110 attendees, promoted the festival and Belfast Learning City message of using learning to tackle inequalities. Belfast celebrated joining the Irish Network of Learning Cities and Belfast Lord Mayor signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the other 4 Learning Cities in Ireland to formalise the network. **Active Belfast:** Active Belfast through Physical Activity & Healthy Eating Programmes Grants, Physical Activity Referral and Jog Belfast supported over 7,700 people to get more active and eating healthily, working in partnership with primary and secondary healthcare and local communities. **Emotional wellbeing:** **Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing** Work continues in the delivery of the Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing with a range of resources including literature being designed for use with young people. Awareness raising sessions continue to be delivered across the city to a range of organisations including Council, Sure Start, Healthy Living Centre's Community Development and Youth Organisations. In 2019/20 over 100 people attended the awareness raising sessions. **Workshop to Review Mental Health/ Suicide Prevention Structures in Belfast** The workshop identified the need to streamline the range of activity and structures across the city within this area of work. A model for going forward was agreed and is being implemented currently. The model reduced the number of groups in the city to allow a strategic approach to the delivery of services. The following groups now deliver on this area of work. Belfast Protect Life Implementation Group (Strategic), Belfast Community of Interest (Operational) and Belfast Community Response Steering Group. **Literature Review and Critical Appraisal: Alcohol and Drugs and Mental Health/Suicide Prevention** This process undertook a critical review of a variety of related reports publicised over the last 7-year period and produced a report on key findings and conclusion. **Avoidable Winter Deaths (working title Belfast Warm and Well):** Available data was utilised to establish a risk map for Belfast and from this targeted interventions were launched in the areas with the highest levels of multiple risk (Shankill and surrounding area; Andersonstown and surrounding area). Included with the interventions was the mobilisation of local assets within each area to identify vulnerable households, the appointment of a single point of referral and the creation of a directory of support services. The targeted interventions were delivered between December 2019 and March 2020, before being reduced due to the Covid-19 outbreak. In total 91 households were supported by the interventions, with 49 households living within the 20% most deprived wards of the city.

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
		Injecting drug misuse: A collaborative workshop was convened by the Belfast Strategic Partnership and brought together all of the key service providers and stakeholders currently working to address the issue of injecting drug use in Belfast City. This included Council, BCCM, BHSCT, BIDs, HSCB, NIHE, PHA, PSNI, and voluntary organisations such as Addiction NI, Extern, Carlisle House, Welcome Centre, and Service User representatives. The purpose of the workshop was to agree how each agency/stakeholder could better collaborate to tackle the issue of injecting drug use in Belfast going forward. The report identified the following areas which continue to be progressed: the structures we want to enable collaboration (both strategic and operational); evidence of the need for collaboration and priority areas in the Injecting Drug User Field.
A4 Deliver Disability Strategy (encompassing DDA and DDO measures)	L&CS	The Council is committed to complying with legislation related to disabled people. As part of this commitment we pay particular attention to our disability duties under Disability Legislation, this includes DDA and DDO legislation and section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Disabled people should have freedom, dignity, choice and control over their lives. Our Disability Action Plan aims to remove the barriers that stop people from enjoying equal access to our services. As a Council we already have a strong reputation in respect of recognising the needs of disabled people. In general this addresses: • Promoting employment good practice and training our staff • Communicating, consulting and engaging with disabled people • Increasing our customer base and satisfaction • Deliver of language strategy (eg loop system, sign video) • Develop partnership and networks with key stakeholders • Ensure compliance with legislation and mainstreaming across all services Equality and Diversity is mainstreamed across the Council. We produce an Equality and Diversity Framework which indicates our overall direction. During this period we have also developed a new three year Disability Action Plan 2019/2022.
A5 Deliver an integrated plan to improve good relations	CNS	The Council's new Good Relations Strategy was launched in September 2019 following a consultation on the Plan and associated equality impact assessment. Furthermore, as requested by The Executive Office which funds the District Council Good Relations programme, a good relations audit was undertaken from June 2019 – December 2019. The conclusions and recommendations were approved by Council in March 2020 and the Action Plan for 20/21 was based on the audit findings. Through the Strategy and Action Plan, Council aims to improve good relations by promoting good community and race relations between people of different religious, ethnic or political backgrounds. **Examples of outcomes and / or impacts of key policy / service delivery development** The Strategy has been identified as a corporate priority and contains 5 outcomes including transformational leadership, shared and connected spaces and an intercultural city.

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
		The audit identified the need for more strategic funding and in so doing has altered part of the way in which the Shared City Partnership will look at specific good relations issues impacting on the City. The DCGRP Action Plan, by its nature, is focused on promoting better relationships with groups and individuals with different religious, ethnic or political backgrounds. **Examples and details of good practice in consultation** A 12 week public consultation process was completed on 11th April 2019 which offered communities the opportunity to comment on what were the most important good relations issues within the City. This was accompanied by a draft equality screening which had specific questions on equality issues. In addition, the consultation on the good relations strategy and audit included a number of focus groups or stakeholder discussions including the equality consultation forum, the Migrant Forum, the NI Faith Forum and BCC Youth Forum. **Examples where equality monitoring information has contributed to better informed service delivery planning/policy development** As a result of the of the Audit, the recommendation for engagement and access to funding issues affecting some interface and BME communities or other minority communities was taken on board within the development of the 20/21 Action Plan. Council will review and update its criteria for Shared City funding to ensure a focus on strategic good relations issues including but beyond cross-community contact. The focus of such engagement and resource allocation should be targeted towards addressing behaviour and attitudes that reflect and reinforce segregation, and toward tackling visible manifestations of division.
A6 Develop an Age-Friendly Action Plan 2018-21 through HASP and deliver programmes of work supporting older people and encouraging Active Ageing	CNS	"An age-friendly city is one in which organisations work together to make sure the quality of life for people is enhanced as they age". We are acutely aware of the challenges which may face many people and families within the city as they age including housing conditions, social isolation and poverty. Since publishing the Belfast Agenda, and as a member of the World Health Organisation's global network of Age Friendly Cities, Belfast's Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership has continued to engage and consult with older people in Belfast and are progressing our Age-friendly Belfast plan 2018- 2021. The partnership has been delivering a range of actions to address priorities including, for example: • addressing loneliness and social isolation through public campaigns, training and development for key services • promoting the role of older people through Positive Ageing Month and recognising older volunteers through an annual awards programme • hosting series of local and citywide age-friendly tea dances, slipped discos and Be Prepared events • supporting the establishment of four dementia friendly neighbourhoods -(three more since 2017). There are 4,041 dementia friends and 33 dementia champions in Belfast. • addressing mental health issues through promotion of the Take 5 steps to wellbeing through sessions in six local older people's forums and supporting Greater Belfast Seniors Forum and Libraries NI to host an older people's mental health event in City Hall in May 2019 We are currently working to adapt our plan during COVID 19, we are getting IT out to older people, some refurbished BCC devices and looking at developing this further, and working regionally to develop an advice booklet to support older people at home over the next 6 months.

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
A7 Develop and deliver an integrated children and young people framework and work programme	CNS	Young people play a vital role in the development of the city. The Youth Forum continues to facilitate and engage with young people across the city focusing on a range of campaigns including Mental Health (Elephant in the Room Campaign), Relationship and Sexual Education, Racism and Diversity, and Poverty. The Youth forum has produced a range of publications with recommendations from Young People about issues that affect their lives. These reports have been shared with Politicians, Permanent Secretaries, Government Departments and other agencies. Members of the Forum have met with Committees at Stormont and lobbied to have their voices heard. The Forum meets with the People and Communities Committee 3 times a year to present reports and discuss how Council can engage meaningfully with young people. In addition to its own campaigns the Youth Forum has engaged with Council Departments and been involved in consultations such as the Belfast Agenda and Resilience. The young people are also leading in the design and delivery of joint projects and campaigns with NI Children's Commissioner and NI Youth Forum.
A8 Deliver LGBT Action Plan	COS	This workforce action plan has been developed to ensure that our organisational culture and working environment allows staff to feel comfortable to be their whole selves at work and that policies and practices empower talent development at all levels and the removal of any form of discrimination. It also aims to increase the understanding of the wider workforce of issues facing LGBT+ communities. Key deliverables and outcomes for 18/19 were as follows: **Training** Network members attended bias training in January 2020. Evaluation conducted. Diversity training is currently under review in conjunction with Corporate HR to ensure LGBT+ issues are covered. Mental Health first Aid training delivered for network members in February 2020. **Policy** Staff policies are currently under review to ensure: • They are inclusive and use gender neutral language

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
		• There are clear processes in place for staff to raise issues around discrimination/ harassment/ Bullying based on gender/ sexual orientation. Transgender guidance drafted. **Promotion/ visibility** Agreed name for network- "PROUD". This was promoted via staff intranet. Membership of the network has increased from 30 to 46 members over the past year. Eight articles have been included on staff intranet to raise awareness of different LGBT+ events/ initiatives e.g. Pride fundraisers; Transgender Day of Remembrance; participation in Stonewall Diversity event; LGBT awareness week, profiling of an LGBT senior champion and ally. Promotional material has been procured- lanyards, pens and cups. A significant number of staff across the organisation have requested these items. Information relating to the LGBT+ staff network is included in the jobs section of the website; promoted at induction, diversity and disability awareness training. **Community Engagement** A number of staff participated in Belfast Pride. More BCC vehicles utilised. A family friendly event was held internally to help build participation between network members and staff and to increase attendance at Pride. A Pride flag was displayed at City Hall to celebrate Pride. Annual Transgender Day of Remembrance was held in City Hall in November and City Hall lit in colours of Trans flag to coincide with Transgender Day of Visibility every year on 31 March. **Networking** BCC co- sponsored and attended the Stonewall Diversity event held in February 2020. **Organisational analysis** Circulated the Stonewall survey to all staff and completed the Stonewall Workforce Equality Index. Feedback willbe incorporated into future action planning as appropriate. Feedback from internal staff survey in 2018 will also be considered for future action plans. Communications and monitoring form for voluntary monitoring survey drafted. The application monitoring form will be amended to capture sexual orientation and gender identity data, once wording finalised. Gender-neutral toilets in City Hall have been provided.

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
A9 Deliver Gender Action Plan	COS	Activity in Belfast City Council's Gender Action Plan is grouped under the following themes **Women in the Council** Held annual IWD event for staff. Participated in the NI Gender Diversity Charter assessment- bronze level retained. Piloted unconscious bias training to staff. This will be incorporated into general diversity training going forward. Suitable deliverer for CMT still to be sourced. Women's Network Group Women in Tech Group ongoing. Transgender guidance drafted. Work undertaken to improve the promotion of BCC as an employer that values and supports equality and diversity (external websites, job information to potential applicants, press releases etc). A workshop had been scheduled (30 March) for both male/ female staff to jointly explore/discuss gender issues and identify any issues to be addressed -postponed due to Covid- 19 and will be rescheduled asap. **Women in the Community** Funded annual external IWD event. Held event to mark Transgender Day of Remembrance **Women in the Economy** Work is ongoing with all employability partners to ensure appropriate levels of female representation across all S75 categories. This includes exploring potential targeted female initiatives linked to the emerging City Deal projects. The first female enterprise programme to be delivered across Northern Ireland between the 11 Local Councils, Invest NI and Women in Business.was launched in 2019 It engaged with 230 females in the first year of delivery with over 100 women within Belfast attending events. The Enterprise Pathways programme has had 10 participants to date, five of which were female. The Go for It programme supported 197 females to develop a business plan. **Women in the City** The baselining process for assets has commenced and well underway via the Asset Management System project - it is planned to be fully rolled out by September 2020, however this date may be affected by the Covid-19 pandemic (external contractor; resource availability). It is intended that an Asset Management Board will be created, to oversee the management on council assets going forward including needs of all stakeholders with the opportunity identify issued/needs.

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
		Council is currently supporting a number of projects which will look at opportunities of how the needs of women can be better met across the city including: • Provided funding (Belfast Investment Fund) for a new Grace Centre • Development of a new Shankill Women's Centre- funding secured and procurement of a design team ongoing • Involvements in the delivery of Urban Villages capital investment programme e.g. completion of Footprints Women's Centre. Retained Platinum Status- ONUS Charter. Ongoing work to achieve Safe City status.
A10 Deliver Race Action Plan	CNS	See A5 Deliver an integrated plan to improve good relations. This work will be carried out in 20/21.
A11 Deliver a city and neighbourhood community safety programme	CNS	Belfast (D)PCSP Equality Schemes and Disability Action Plans developed with support from NI Equality Commission and other PCSPs across NI. The Belfast PCSP and DPCSPs developed a Strategic Assessment and Action Plan for 2019/2020 during the reporting period in preparation for the development of a Strategic Direction for 2019- 2023. The PCSP, through this Action Plan, aims to improve community safety by tackling actual and perceived crime and anti-social behaviour, as well as supporting community confidence in policing. **Examples of outcomes and / or impacts of key policy / service delivery development** Christmas Safety Event utilised Council's guidance to ensure the day was accessible to everyone. It included translators, the hearing loop targeted groups who usually don't attend, particularly people with disabilities. **Examples and details of good practice in consultation** A 12 week public consultation process was launched on 4th March 2019 to offer communities the opportunity to comment on whether we were addressing important issues in the right way. The following specific equality considerations were included as questions within the consultation; 1. The Action Plan will be equality screened. Are there any equality issues you would like to comment on in relation to any Section 75 groups? 2. Do you believe that the Strategic Assessment and Action Plan provide opportunity to better promote positive attitudes towards disabled people? 3. Do you feel that the Strategic Assessment and Action Plan provide an opportunity to actively increase the participation by disabled people in public life? **Examples where equality monitoring information has contributed to better informed service delivery planning/policy development** Interrogation of NISRA data and completion of our PCSP Strategic Assessment has informed the 2019/2020 PCSP Action Plan process e.g. we were able to identify that people who are disabled or have a long standing illness are more likely to be fearful of burglary

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
A12 Develop the Equality & Diversity Network	L&CS / COS	On 3rd October 2018, the Council's Corporate Management Team approved the re-establishment of the Equality and Diversity Network. Previously an EDN was established during 2015 to bring together all equality and diversity work strands across the Council. The Council is recognised as a leader in best practice in the delivery of the equality and diversity agenda and, given the ambitions of the Belfast Agenda in addressing inequalities and developing inclusive communities, the network was re-established to incorporate a comprehensive equality and diversity agenda related to both workforce and service delivery. The Equality and Diversity Framework 2017-21 sets out our actions to be delivered and how the council will respond to new thinking on equality outcomes and the new challenges as reflected in our corporate and improvement plans. The new network will aim to ensure that resources are identified and in place in each Department to ensure compliance with our statutory duties and that we act on our commitments to promoting equality and diversity in all areas of the work we do. To ensure a "one council" approach, effective communication, reporting and governance structures will be implemented. Inaugural meetings of both the strategic and operational levels were held during 19/20, governance was developed including the reporting to the corporate management team, led by the Chief Executive. The work plan for the EDN is informed by best practice and includes the ECNI's S75 Demonstrating Effective Leadership guidance. It was agreed that the strategic level will be chaired by the City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services and corporate direction will come from Nigel Grimshaw (Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services), John Tully (Strategic Director, City and Organisational Strategy) and Alistair Reid (Strategic Director Place and Economy). Meetings of the strategic tier took place on 10/4/19 and 16/9/19. The operational level will be jointly chaired by the Equality and Diversity Officers and HR Manager and will provide an operational management process to implement equality and diversity related activities and report to the strategic level. A schedule of meetings coinciding with equality and diversity planning and event cycles eg Equality Screening Outcome Reports, Annual Reports and the Equality Consultative Forum will operate. Departments have nominated other relevant officers to participate at the operational level and budgets have been identified. Throughout 19-20 the operational tier met on 30/5/19, 05/09/19 and 12/02/20.
A13 Implementation of Equality Scheme	L&CS	Our current Equality Scheme was approved in 2015 and will run until 2020. Training was provided to 70 staff in key areas during 18/19 and queries are monitored to determine themes where further action is required. The Scheme has impacted on key areas throughout Council including the introduction of the Equality and Diversity Network. We have developed our project plan for the five year review of our Equality Scheme to examine how our arrangements have been applied and assess our effectiveness in complying with section 75 duties. Our Equality and Diversity Network Operational, which comprises key departmental representatives will assist together with staff from our Equality and Diversity Unit and any findings will be progressed through the Strategic tier of the Network which comprises the City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services and Strategic Directors. In addition, we are currently reviewing the operation, role and remit of our Equality Consultative Forum in conjunction with our consultees, ECNI and key officers within the organisation. It is envisaged that this review will enable better alignment with the new governance arrangements in respect of the Belfast Agenda. Recommendations arising from the review will be presented to the Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and Consultative Forum members for consideration and approval.
A14 Review and develop new Equality	L&CS	The Audit of Inequalities and the development of the 5 year action plan commenced in January 2020 and it is likely that this will be completed during by the next reporting period.

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
Scheme 2020-25		
A15 Hold bi-annual meetings of Equality Consultative Forum	L&CS	One meeting was held during the period 2019-20, the topics presented at the meeting held on 10 December 2019 are listed below: - Boodles Dam – works to decommission the Dam - Decision to erect bilingual/multi-lingual signage in citywide council leisure centres - Draft Inclusive Growth Strategy - Draft Corporate Plan 2019-2023 - Draft Consultation and Engagement Framework - Putting You First, Transforming Customer Experience Vision It should be noted that the role of the Equality Consultative Forum is currently under review and it is anticipated that this review will be completed during the next reporting period and, due to the Covid 19 pandemic, it has not been possible to schedule a further meeting. The next meeting which will be held remotely is planned for November 2020.
A16 Review the role of the council's external Equality Consultative Forum	L&CS	In light of the significant reorganisation of structures and services, we commissioned an independent review of its current equality consultation mechanisms, including distribution lists and consultative forum. The review included an evaluation of our current practices related to the inclusion of marginalised voices as defined by section 75 and working in partnership with key stakeholders internally and externally. The scope of this included detailed interviews with key stakeholders, with a view to improving relationship between the BCC Equality Forum and the Belfast Agenda and the effectiveness of the existing dialogue. Recommendations on the outcome of this review will be progressed during 2020/2021.
A17 Scope option to develop an internal and external Equality Forum within the emerging Community Planning Partnership	COS	As part of the selection process to appoint a Sectoral Advisory Panel for the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors, we ensured that there was broad representation of gender, background, geographic areas and minority groups. Equality issues and needs will form part of the future engagement programme with the VCSE panel.

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
A18 Develop and deliver a communications plan to promote equality and diversity in the organisation internally and externally	COS	The Marketing and Corporate Communication team (Internal Communications, Brand and Marketing, Campaigns: Press and Social and Online Customer Experience) worked with the Equality and Diversity team around key projects, initiatives and events managed by them and ensured that these initiatives were supported internally via promotion on Interlink and externally via City Matters, Social media, Council website and PR. Examples include the promotion of the Sign Video facility for the Deaf. Internally, the team has promoted learning around the accessibility legislation for public sector website.

The actions listed above were included in the Equality and Diversity Framework 2017-21 approved by the Strategic and Policy Resources Committee on 22 September 2017. In addition a number of strategic actions have also been developed and are under delivery, these are summarised below:

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
A19 - Develop a Cultural Strategy	P&E	The Council is developing 'A City Imagining' which is the new 10 year cultural strategy for Belfast. This is a new strategic framework for the city and is set firmly within the context of the Belfast Agenda and the Local Development Plan to create a vision and coherent framework for Belfast that will fully embed culture in the wider city agenda and to enable Belfast's vision to be a 'culturally vibrant city'. The ten year Cultural Strategy for Belfast recognises that over the years, the Council has made a commitment to strengthening and promoting the cultural scene in Belfast. The Cultural Strategy sets out priorities on how we will deliver on the Belfast Agenda's vision for Belfast to be a culturally vibrant city. It was adopted by Council in October 2019 following a significant programme of engagement, and was subject to an equality impact assessment at a strategic level. The draft strategy expresses an agreed cultural statement for the city which has been shaped by the significant programme of public engagement over an 18 month period. This statement and vision will be taken forward through four crosscutting themes and 16 priorities. Implementation Plans were developed in 2019/20 for each of the priorities. The Strategy also includes a number of key strategic milestones that outlines the significant steps the Council will work towards over 10 year lifespan of the strategy. An Equality Impact Assessment on the Ten Year Cultural Strategy for Belfast including the review of all relevant research was prepared for the purposes of consultation (the public consultation closed on10th July 2019). This consultation informed the final EQIA report and the further development of a future investment model which was produced to resource and support the delivery of the strategy in 2019/20. During the development of the strategy, a specialist consultant was appointed to work on planning, and facilitating, more than a dozen deep dive project sessions for a range of disabilities as part of the pre-consultation process. The consultant was uniquely placed to

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
		understand the challenges faced by disabled people and has been working with various support groups for people with disabilities. Each session was targeted to a specific disability group as each had varying needs and issues regarding access to cultural events in the City. Data from consultations with 3,264 people were analysed. We held 86 events, including a creative lock-in, and 1,089 members of public attended our city centre consultation hub. We held specific sessions with Section 75 specialist groups including Sure Start, Disability groups, VOYPIC, a Refugee and Asylum Seekers Group and the Council's Youth Forum and Older People's Forum. This analysis informed the strategy and resultant implementation plans which are designed to deliver a people-focused approach, allow people to express their cultural identities, and support high quality cultural events that are accessible, diverse and inclusive.
A20 - Local Development Plan	P&E	The Local Development Plan sets out how the council area should develop up until 2035. It is vital to the delivery of the outcomes in the Belfast Agenda and it will provide a 15 year planning framework to support economic and social outcomes in the city, while providing the delivery of sustainable development. Stage 1 of the process, the preparation of the LDP Plan Strategy (PS) is at an advanced stage, recently submitted to the Department for Infrastructure. The Plan Strategy is a document that has undergone significant public engagement and sets out the Councils strategy to guide the future development of Belfast. The Plan Strategy has been subject to a full Equality Impact Assessment to ensure all legislative obligations (including Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and the Disability Discrimination Order 2006) have been met and that the promotion of equality of opportunity is at the core of the LDP. The draft Plan Strategy was published in the autumn for a formal consultation that closed on 15th November 2018. The 109 submissions received were published on the Council's website on 1st March 2019 for a further eight week consultation period to allow for counter-representations. As with the POP, Plan Strategy also underwent a full public consultation, with a series of stakeholder engagement events, including consultation with Section 75 groups and the Council's own Equality Consultative Forum. **Social and Affordable Housing** This is being brought forward as part of the Development Plan within a new proposed policy. In the interim, developers are being encouraged to provide a level of social/affordable housing. For example, in June 2019, Sirocco outline application approved for c650 residential units with a Section 76 agreement requiring 20% for social and affordable housing. **Public Realm** Developers are being encouraged to offset the impacts of a development by making developer contributions and one of the main catalysts is that of public realm. For example Clarence Gallery, Clarence Chambers and Belfast Telegraph redevelopments all include public realm improvements in line with Streets Ahead which will ensure that the access to those developments and the pedestrian routes around them are of appropriate quality and specifications. **Open Space** Planning Policy Statement 8 and Creating Places require new residential developments to provide communal open space and where applicable, play facilities. Similarly to the public realm, this ensures accessible environments for all

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
A21 - City Deal	F&R	City Deals were first established in 2010 as a UK-wide initiative to give local areas specific powers and freedoms to help support economic growth, create jobs or invest in local projects. A City Deal is an agreement between government and a city, giving the city and its surrounding area certain powers and freedom to: • take charge and responsibility of decisions that affect their area; • do what they think is best to help businesses grow; • create economic growth; • decide how public money should be spent. Initial work on the development of a City Deal for the Belfast Region (BRCD) commenced in 2017 and ultimately resulted in the emergence of 22 projects within four interrelated themes of Innovation and Digital; Tourism-led Regeneration; Infrastructure; and Employability and Skills for which, during this Phase 2 of the Programme, OBCs will be put in place. Together with contributions from partner organisations the ambition is to deliver £1billion of investment in the Belfast Region's economy through the Deal, with funding derived from HM Treasury, the NI Executive, the six Councils, the Further and Higher Education sectors and private sector contributions. **Purpose** Through a programme of targeted support and investment, the Region City Deal aims to enhance inclusive economic and structural growth that delivers more and better jobs, along with greater connectivity across the region, with a positive impact on the most deprived communities but also with a fair and proportionate spread of benefits for people from across all communities **Actions and Outcomes** All partners have received guidance about the development of their OBCs at the outset of this process following the Heads of Terms. This included a reminder of the need to ensure they remained in compliance with equality legislation. Work is ongoing with an Equality Officer to develop more detailed guidance about how this should be taken forward. **Next Steps** To encourage proactive approaches the PMO has compiled an initial summary of the examples of positive/innovative ideas already emerging from some of the projects. Given that the BRCD projects are the responsibility of individual partners within councils, colleges and universities, it is their own equality teams which will support them in taking this forward. The BRCD will continue to remind them of their obligations and will seek assurances at appropriate intervals that they are following this advice.
A22 – Belfast Open Spaces Strategy	CNS	BCC's Open Spaces Strategy is designed to protect, create, enhance and connect open spaces across the city. It incorporates principles to provide welcoming shared spaces; improve connectivity; improve health and well-being; support place making and the built environment; increase resilience to climate change; protect and enhance the natural environment and support learning. Specific achievements include:

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
		– Created an up to date and robust data-set reflecting and describing Belfast's open spaces (public & private) Creation of a draft Open Spaces Strategy & high level action plan which was consulted on from June – September 2019 and the findings brought to Committee in March 2020 (please note that the finalisation of the strategy document and development of the action plan has been delayed due to Covid 19).
A23 – Capital Projects	PP	The Council's physical investment programme is a £325 million citywide commitment to making Belfast a better place to live, work, visit and invest. The programme, which includes around 350 projects, includes major schemes to boost the economy, create jobs and also improve the quality of life in our neighbourhoods. The programme is not simply about building new facilities or assets. Investment decisions are taken in line with the strategic aims and objectives of the Belfast Agenda. The physical programme's capital projects are delivered under various funding streams such as Capital Programme, Leisure Transformation Programme, Belfast Investment Fund (investment of £250k or more), Local Investment Fund (investment of under £250k), Urban Villages programme in Belfast; Social Investment Fund capital investment is a number of projects in Belfast. The year 2019/20 was a significant year for the council and the department in terms of the ongoing delivery of the physical programme. We spent £40.5 million to complete 21 major physical developments in the communities across the city. The key projects include; • Leisure Transformation Programme (LTP) – Flagship projects included the new leisure centres at Lisnasharragh and Brook which officially opened in December 2019. The Andersonstown Leisure Centre works is recently completed (March 2020). The LTP programme came top in the leisure category for the inaugural Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) **Social Impact Awards 2020**, which took place on 21 May. • Other major investments include the completion of eight community facilities, two refurbished parks and open spaces, sports pitches and three upgraded play parks at Lower Ormeau/ Ravenhill, McClure St and Geeragh Community Centre. These projects improved accessibility and local provisions. • In addition a range of corporate projects have been undertaken including the allotment works at Ballysillan, St George Market, and the surface replacement works at Cregagh & Shaftesbury pitches. In addition, we are the delivery agent on behalf of the Executive Office on the Urban Villages Initiatives programme. The Urban Villages Initiative is a headline action within the NI Executive's Together Building a United Community (T:BUC) strategy. The Initiative is designed to improve good relations outcomes and develop thriving places where there has been a history of deprivation and community tension. During the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, Belfast City Council, in partnership with The Executive Office, developed the designs, engaged with stakeholders and delivered 12 capital projects at a value of £3.3million. Project included: • Footprints Women's Centre – the renovation and refurbishment of the drop in area within Footprint's Women's Centre and the downstairs training/education/support rooms, to accommodate a new Community Food Exchange facility;

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
		• The Foundry training Café - a training café at the Foundry in the City East Enterprise Centre to provide a training operation in a "real" catering business environment for local people, including those with learning disabilities, unemployed or economically inactive, to learn catering and hospitality skills, which supports them in securing employment; • Glenbyrn Play Park – a newly constructed play park on waste ground in the Glenbryn neighbourhood of Greater Ballysillan. The park provides facilities for toddler to young teenage children in a safe and accessible location agreed with the community. The area previously had no play facilities, with the nearest accessible facilities some 1km away at Ballysillan Road; Reverend Robert Bradford Play Park - Refurbishment of existing community park, with community consultation and engagement tailored to ensure a wide spectrum of community groups – different ethnic backgrounds, age groups, toddler groups, youth groups – had an opportunity to input and shape this space to be a more inclusive space for all.
A24 - City and Neighbourhood Transition and Improvement Programme	CNS	The City and Neighbourhood Transition and Improvement Programme commenced in 2016 and complements the Council's approach to continuous improvement. It is an ongoing programme comprising of a series of projects, activities and tasks which together, will enable the Department to deliver our ambitions for the City and our commitment to providing modern, integrated, high-quality, consistent and cost effective services that make a real difference to the City's residents and their communities. It should be noted that the Transition and Improvement Programme sits in a wider corporate context as such, there is an inter-reliance between the corporate and departmental objectives.
A25 - Social Clauses	P&E	Social Value is the additional benefit to the community from the commissioning or procurement process which is over and above the direct purchasing of goods, services and works, including *economic, environmental and social well-being* or community benefits that can be delivered to a local area. A Social Value Act was introduced in England and Wales in 2013, and in Scotland in 2014. Unfortunately, an equivalent act – shaped to reflect the priorities of Northern Ireland has not yet been introduced. We are committed to work with stakeholders to ensure that a social value act is established in Northern Ireland. The Council's Economic Development Unit screens relevant contracts as highlighted to the unit through Commercial and Procurement Services and the Physical Projects team to identify if social clauses should be integrated and develop the clauses for inclusion. This is specific to each individual contract. Delivering Social Value delivers the ambitions of the Belfast Agenda. Our research suggests that developing social value clauses can deliver a range of positive benefits for Belfast and can really improve quality of life of Belfast constituents. Based on the themes of the Belfast Agenda; this could include *Working & Learning - Promote local skills and employment* • More opportunities for disadvantaged people • Reducing the number of long term unemployed getting back into employment • Improved skills for local people

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
		• Number. of apprentices *Growing the Economy - Supporting Growth of Business Community* • More opportunities for SMEs and VCSEs *Living Here - Healthier, Safer and more Resilient Communities* • Creating a healthier community • Volunteering hours *City Development - Environment: Protecting and improving our environment* • Climate impacts are reduced Savings in CO2 emissions
A26 - Social Value Procurement Framework	F&R	Social value in procurement is defined as "the additional benefit to the community over and above the direct purchasing of goods, services and outcomes". Using its buying power, Belfast City Council will enter into procurement contracts that make a real difference to Belfast residents, including building a local supply chain that is connected to its wider social responsibilities. This could include, but is not limited to, opportunities such as • Creating supply chain opportunities for small business and social enterprises • Improving market diversity • Encouraging community engagement Delivering environmental benefits for local communities. Currently; contracts are screened to identify if social clauses should be integrated and develop the clauses for inclusion, in line with procurement guidance notes from the Department of Finance's Construction & Procurement Delivery (CPD) Service and relevant legislation. This includes removing barriers to procurement and increasing the capacity of under-represented suppliers to compete by: • Dividing contracts into lots, so that there is more opportunity for SME organisations to bid and • Ensuring the minimum financial turnover required does not exceed twice the estimated contract value. • Ensuring we only ask the minimum, proportionate number of quality (award) questions to establish a bidder's ability and proposals to deliver a contract. • Ensuring that we provide advice and guidance on our procurement processes. • Encouraging local businesses to engage in tenders for council contracts though publishing a forward plan of tender opportunities and where appropriate offering pre-tender 'meet the buyer' local market engagement sessions.

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
		We know Procurement *can* play a role in delivering Social Value. We've gone someway, within the Council, to develop our thinking but we also have some way to go. The development of the framework is being overseen by the Commercial Panel. Our current thinking is that *Themes* must aligned with the Belfast Agenda and specific to the contract and determined by Belfast City Council (based on knowledge of the market and pre-market engagement activity). In addition, there are the implementation decisions to be made, including *Internal staffing resources* - Corporate Procurement Services, Legal Services, Economic Development and Commissioners across the Council. *Supplier implications* – We need to provide a 'enabling environment' for suppliers. For example, if contractors have a commitment to recruit the long term unemployed, then the Council (through the Council's Economic Development Unit) can provide them with access to a pool of individuals to recruit from. In any such case, any proposed policy will have to have committee approval, undertake public consultation, equality and rural screening and a refreshed proposal will go back to committee for final approval, before developing guidance documents and training for staff and contractors, clearly identifying the Council's ambitions, processes to be applied and sources of support/assistance
27 - Urban Villages Programme	PP	We are the delivery agent on behalf of the Executive Office on the Urban Villages Initiatives programme. The Urban Villages Initiative is a headline action within the NI Executive's Together Building a United Community (T:BUC) strategy. The Initiative is designed to improve good relations outcomes and develop thriving places where there has been a history of deprivation and community tension. During the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, Belfast City Council, in partnership with The Executive Office, developed the designs, engaged with stakeholders and delivered 12 capital projects at a value of £3.3million. Projects included: • Footprints Women's Centre – the renovation and refurbishment of the drop in area within Footprint's Women's Centre and the downstairs training/education/support rooms, to accommodate a new Community Food Exchange facility; • The Foundry training Café - a training café at the Foundry in the City East Enterprise Centre to provide a training operation in a "real" catering business environment for local people, including those with learning disabilities, unemployed or economically inactive, to learn catering and hospitality skills, which supports them in securing employment; • Glenbyrn Play Park – a newly constructed play park on waste ground in the Glenbryn neighbourhood of Greater Ballysillan. The park provides facilities for toddler to young teenage children in a safe and accessible location agreed with the community. The area previously had no play facilities, with the nearest accessible facilities some 1km away at Ballysillan Road;

Action	Lead Dept /s	Update on delivery 2019/20
A28 - Leisure Transformation Programme	PP/CNS	Our Strategic Leisure Operator (GLL) has signed up to a Programme to align their policies and operating procedures with those of the Council. The latest report in this regard to the ABL stated 'As of April 2019, BCC and GLL policies and operational procedures in relation to Equality and Diversity are closely aligned with no significant variances or areas of concern to address. In this regard, GLL also provides a regular progress update to the ABL on the participation by underrepresented target groups in centres managed by GLL in Belfast. New Leisure Centres at Lisnasharragh and Brook officially opened in December 2019. The Council's Leisure Transformation Programme came to in the Leisure Category for the inaugural Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Social Impact Awards 2020 which took place on 21st May

Priority B: Understanding our communities through information and consultation

Our society is becoming more diverse. Today it is impossible to assume we know the composition of our communities – we have to find that out through gathering information known as data. The prosperity and cohesion of all people and communities can be affected by age, gender, marital status; if you have, or have not, a disability or dependents, religious and/ or racial background, political opinion and different sexual orientations. It is also important to understand the different needs within communities, for examples there are many forms of disability, and like the other Section 75 characteristics, every individual straddles all of the groups in some way, with great differences, as well as similarities between socio-economic groups.

Consultation and engagement with our communities will also help us to understand their needs better and we need to use different ways of will involving communities and neighbourhoods.

Action	Responsibility	2019/20 update
B1 Develop an appropriate system to collect information about communities'	Strategy, Policy & Partnership Manager / Statistician / EDO	In order to gain a better understanding of issues and needs so that more informed decisions can be made, the Council is currently developing an appropriate system to collect information about communities' needs and aspirations. This is an ongoing programme of work linked to the data development agenda of the Belfast Agenda and emerging work around civic voice participation as well as the ongoing implementation of our consultation and engagement framework. During April 2018, a technical report was published for all population and stretch goals included within the Belfast Agenda. Work is ongoing to disaggregate this information to lower level geographies. Gaps in relation to S75 groups will continue to be addressed.

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Action	Responsibility	2019/20 update
needs and aspirations.		
B2 Services use relevant city data when developing policies and services	Corporate and Departmental Policy Officers / EDO P&E	The SPP unit continued to work with services and departments to improve how data is accessed and utilised across council. This included working with services and departments to ensure that they incorporated relevant Belfast Agenda population indicators and stretch goals into their planning processes as appropriate. We facilitated three OBA based 'turning the curve' workshops, with council services and community planning partners, which helps ensure data and monitoring forms part of policy decisions. Work has also begun, in collaboration with QUB and community planning partners, to explore better use of area based data. A community planning dashboard, titled "Belfast Agenda: City View" was developed to visualise data relating to a sample of Belfast Agenda population indicators and stretch goals. Due to the council's domain name policy this has not been promoted. Work continues to develop the city's evidence base aligned to the Belfast Agenda outcomes framework and particularly how this data breaks down by equality groupings **Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan** The Council publicly consulted on the draft Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan (GBIP) in 2019 - in tandem with the draft Belfast Open Spaces Strategy (BOSS), led by City and Neighbourhood Services. The GBIP is a high level plan for the city, aligned to the Local Development Plan. It recognises the many functions of the city's green areas and water features, including health, biodiversity and environmental resilience. As part of the consultation process, 337 people completed postcard questionnaires at 6 events that took place across the city. Consultations were held with the Council's Youth Forum and a group from Age Friendly Belfast. 96 detailed responses were received online via Citizenspace and in hard copy. The consultation demonstrated support for the vision that by 2035 green and blue infrastructure will be strategically planned to enhance ecosystem services that benefit all living, working in and visiting Belfast. However, based on the feedback some revisions were made to improve or clarify draft wording, maps and diagrams. The Council adopted the Green & Blue Infrastructure Plan in January 2020. **Sundays in the City programme** The council undertook a significant public consultation to develop a "Sundays in the City" programme seeking views on how to attract new users to Belfast city centre on Sundays. 1440 people responded to the online CitizenSpace survey (more than 70% were Belfast residents). In addition, the following consultation took place: • Independent survey-based market research to target city centre stakeholders and users to seek their views. • In-depth one-to-one interviews with city stakeholder groups, including Trade Union representatives. • Focus groups with a number of target groups including older people, younger people, disabled people, family groups. The analysis considered frequency and ease of accessing the city centre as well as identifying improvements that could be made to attract more families and others to the city centre on a Sunday. Suggested improvements include: creating play facilities/open space, more frequent public transport scheduled and reducing the number of cars in the city. This analysis has highlighted the need

Action	Responsibility	2019/20 update
		for additional programming to encourage everyone to use the city centre including those with dependants. It will be used to inform the development of a programme of cultural animation and an associated marketing programme.
B3 Develop a city dashboard to share city data including equality-related information between community planning partners and publish to citizens	Strategy, Policy & Partnership Manager / Statistician	A community planning dashboard, titled "Belfast Agenda: City View" was developed to visualise data relating to a sample of Belfast Agenda population indicators and stretch goals. Due to the council's domain name policy this has not been promoted. Work continues to develop the city's evidence base aligned to the Belfast Agenda outcomes framework and particularly how this data breaks down by equality groupings.
B4 Establish an appropriate mechanism for Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) representation and facilitate participation of CVS in the community planning process	Director of City & Neighbourhoods / City Solicitor/ Strategy, Policy & Partnership Manager	During 2019-20, we undertook best practice research and carried out engagement with the sector to co-produce options for enhancing the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector's representation and participation in community planning. The Community Planning Partnership (CPP) approved the recommended model and approach in September 2019 to establish a Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise Sectoral Advisory Panel comprising 15 members and a complimentary citywide network. A selection process was undertaken by NICVA on behalf of the CPP's and the final list of 15 Panel members were appointed in March 2020. Stratagem NI have been appointed to provide a programme of support for the Panel, including secretariat, facilitation, engagement-planning, and training roles.
B5 Roll out corporate consultation and engagement plan	Strategy, Policy & Partnership Manager / Policy Officer	In order to ensure effective and inclusive public engagement, a high-level review of the draft consultation and engagement framework has been completed and as a result, an action plan to update and present a new draft framework to the new council has been agreed. In the meantime, the investment in employee capacity development continued with refresher training for existing Consultation Institute CPD holders held in June. A procurement review of the existing on-line consultation platform, Citizen Space, was undertaken and a new platform is currently being rolled out.

Priority C: Services accessible to all

Providing services, whether provided directly or procured/commissioned, remains central to what we do and through the Equality Action Plan this priority will be central to how we do business.

Action	Responsibility	2019/2020 Update
C1 Demonstrated promotion of equality and diversity embedded in departmental business plans	All Chief Officers COS	Included in draft committee and departmental planning templates. The Director of City & Organisational Strategy worked with the council's senior management team to refresh the corporate values and priorities and to ensure they are fully embedded across the organisation. This includes a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion as indicated in our 'organisational wheel' (part of Civic Leadership) and reflected in our core values of Integrity and Responsibility. A new CMT oversight board has been established to monitor progress and to help ensure that our corporate plan is delivered effectively.
	P&E	The Place and Economy Department is represented on the Council's Equality & Diversity Network Strategic and Operational groups with staff identified as equality contact points in each of the divisions to cascade equality information and support the mainstreaming of equality across the Department's work. Staff also participate in corporate 'network' groups that have been established such as Proud. Work is underway to identify improvements to the Department's approach to managing these issues. The Department contributes to delivering the Belfast Agenda and inclusive growth through its various work streams, such as: • encourage and support enterprise;

		• support employability and skills, particularly for those who are furthest from the labour market and may face multiple barriers. Work has commenced with QUB to develop our approach to monitoring inequalities, based on deprivation measures and including S75 via a Geographic Information System. This will increase our understanding of the end user and outcome based on a geospatial data. • delivery of the Cultural Strategy encouraging and recognising the value of diversity in our communities • developing the city centre as an accessible and shared space that is welcoming to all. **Employability and Skills (Youth Initiatives)** Research was commissioned to identify gaps and barriers that prevent disadvantaged young people accessing guidance and information regarding their education, training and employment choices. Gaps identified included a lack of meaningful work experience, inconsistent quality of careers advice and guidance, and disjoints between different statutory stakeholders. This research shaped policy and embedded equality and diversity in to project delivery.

Action	Responsibility	2019/20 update
	CNS	The **annual events programme,** delivered through the City Events Team have continued to deliver events • that are diverse, varied and free to access; • that profiled groups from across the city from a range of cultural, ethnic and mix-ability organisations and • that were designed to be intergenerational, non-religious and to comply with DDA guidance and created so patrons were attracted to safe and welcoming shared spaces. Examples in 2019/20 include the Maritime Festival held in April, Halloween and Christmas celebrations. An inclusive events plan is completed for each event. **City Centre Connectivity Study** The City Centre Connectivity Study (Draft Vision) aim is to agree a shared approach to creating a more attractive, accessible, safe and vibrant city centre, which will improve economic, societal, health and environmental wellbeing for all. Section 75 specialist groups (Belfast Seniors Forum, IMTAC and Guide Dogs NI and the City Council's Youth Forum) attended our Visioning Workshop with 27 key civic partners in the City Hall. As part of the overall study, a community visioning workshop was held with representatives from residents' associations and community groups to better understand and address connectivity issues experienced along the key arterial routes and how these affect communities on the periphery of the city centre. Key issues discussed was the need to provide improved access for people walking and cycling to and from the city centre. Good accessibility across busy roads was important for older people, parents with younger children people from all communities and those accessing goods, services and employment in the city centre. As a result, early engagement and input from Section 75 groups shaped the vision and principles for the overall study and key themes were refined and changed to reflect their input. Following the Community and Stakeholder Workshops. The final document, "A Bolder Vision" specifically references issues of community cohesion and segregation, belonging and safe and shared spaces. The proposed next stages of the project are planned to include further detailed engagement and detailed equality impact assessments of the emerging proposals and a 12 week public consultation. When planning and carrying out our functions we aim to set equality and diversity at the heart of the way we do business, through our strategic and business planning processes, by ensuring its core position in service delivery is embedded in day to day business. Some examples are as follows: • All friends groups encouraged to welcome stakeholders with disabilities at meetings and events are accessible by all • Sports and leisure development target disability specific programmes, thus increasing participants with disabilities
Action	**Responsibility**	**2019/20 update**

Page 437	F&R	• Playground refurbishments include a range of inclusive play items • Age friendly events consistently take into consideration the needs of older people with disabilities eg accessible venues, sign language, interpreters, accessible transport and hearing loop Belfast Zoo has incorporated shorter routes which remove several steep inclines and an electric buggy is now available to assist visitors • Sensory play programmes are accessible for all children • Improvements in relation to access to Council owned carparks e.g. drop kerbs, pay and display machine relocation, revision of blue badge provision and charges Provision of accessible toilets for all Council managed toilets. Implementation of 3 Changing Places Toilets. Review of Council Toilet Strategy is still underway. Unfortunately, progress in relation to the above has been delayed due to the covid-19 pandemic <u>Customer Focus Programme</u> **Customer Focus Vision** The council's customer vision document 'Putting you first. Transforming Customer Experience' was published in October, 2019. It clearly sets out the customer focus programme's aim of improving the council's customer experience and service provision for all our customers and stakeholders. Through its statement of intent it promises inclusive well designed customer focused and accessible services. • The vision promotes positive images of disabled people. • It was available to all sections of the community in a choice of formats. **Customer Focus Vision, Equality Screening Consultation** The Customer Focus Vision equality consultation took place from November, 2019 to February, 2020**.** Our Putting You First customer vision sets out how we plan to provide our customers with a quality and appropriate customer experience and service. Understanding customers' needs and expectations is an important part of our equality and customer research in order to help shape our customer experience. In keeping with the council's statutory obligations under equality and rural screening requirements, and as part of the programme's customer research, two consultation methods have been used to date: A -Public Consultation on-line using Citizenspace B-Public Consultation at venues across Belfast The online consultation took place for a period of 12 weeks from 11th November, 2019 to 2nd February 2020. A venues based consultation took place in venues across the city from 13th to 24th January, 2020. The locations chosen for the consultations were:

Action	Responsibility	2019/20 update

		• Olympia Leisure Centre • Grove Wellbeing Centre • Kennedy Shopping Centre • Girdwood Community Hub • City Hall • Connswater Shopping Centre Over 450 customers were engaged in the consultation programme and the information gathered used to inform the customer focus programme's on going implementation. **Presentations** A number of presentations were made to key equality groups, including, • Migrants Forum, 2019-20 • Disability Advisory Group, 2019-20 • Equality Consultative Forum 2019-20 • Sign Language Users Forum February 2019-20 **Customer Function Detailed Design Plan** The Customer Function Detailed Design Plan was developed in conjunction with PA Consulting, appointed as Council's Strategic Delivery Partner. It sets out the implementation of the customer focus programme's vision from Initial Operating Capacity (IOC) to Full Operating Capacity (FOC). Implicit in the plan is a more professional and better structured/resourced customer facing hub –incorporating a new contact hub and website- which will improve accessibility for all customers and enable a more proactive approach to meeting both our equality goals and our disability duties. **Service Design Journey Mapping,** The customer focus programme in partnership with PA Consulting and Fathom, an experienced customer research company, focused on representing the voice of the user within the service design process, including key equality and disabled representatives, to ensure our user insights were representative of the entire community to drive design performance.

Action	Responsibility	2019/2020 update
		Customer Service Standards A new corporate Service Standards Policy was developed and includes ensuring that future staff training in customer service delivery will incorporate the principles of equality, good relations adhere to our disability duties and will use, for example, the most up to date tools such as Big Word and SignVideo. **Sign Video** We were the first council in Northern Ireland to provide a dedicated sign language service for Deaf residents and visitors. The pilot scheme was introduced at three Belfast City Council venues allowing Deaf people to independently communicate with hearing people via a British Sign Language interpreter in real time, on a video relay system. This service is also accessible for the telephone channel via the Council's website and during the Covid-19 emergency has been redirected to the Community Response Hub. The Sign Video facility is available in the Council's Cecil Ward Building, at Belfast Zoo and Olympia Leisure Centre. Prior to Covid -19, funding was awarded from the Department for Communities to purchase an additional 14 iPads to roll out to other venues including the City Hall, 12 leisure centres and Tropical Ravine. The initiative has come about as part of council's language strategy, and the scheme is in line with Council's review of how residents and users access services, as part of its customer focus programme**.** **Channel Management Planning** An important component of the customer focus programme- outlined in our vision document, *Putting You First, Transforming Customer Experience* - is the preference of many of our customers to have access to our services using the most convenient channels possible and, in particular, recognising the exponential growth of digital channels. Channel shift to digital is a key programme benefit, while still maintaining the highest levels of customer service across all channels- *digital first, not digital only*. And a significant opportunity for key equality and disabled groups to have improved access to council services. People will use different channels not just for different types of interactions,but also to suit their own convenience. An integrated channel strategy to encourage channel shift to more cost effective digital channels is required but one that also takes into account the varied ways in which customers may want to interact with the council. <u>Audit Plan for 2019/2020</u> The Council's AGRS have delivered the Audit Plan 19/20 and provided assurance and consulting advice over the key programmes and initiatives which underpin the Equality and Diversity Framework.
Action	**Responsibility**	**2019/20 update**
	L&CS	<u>Language Action Plan</u> The Council launched its Language Strategy during April 2018. A Language Strategy Action Plan 2020-2021 was then developed to deliver those actions as part of the strategy. The aim of which was to present a range of actions and targets enabling the Council to provide a greater range of services through languages other than English. Thus increasing equality of opportunity.

		Throughout 2019-2020, the Equality and Diversity Unit held a number of events as part of this strategy as follows: • Valuing Languages – closed screening Film Project (21/6/19) • Irish Language Family Parks Event (5/8/19) • Valuing Languages Film Project Launch (25/11/19) • International Day for People with Disabilities (3/12/19) • Burns Week Celebrations (28/1/20) • International Mother Tongue Day (21/2/20) • Irish Language Week Event (11/3/20) It is worth noting that the Valuing Languages Film project was a collaboration with Queen's University Belfast's School of Film Studies to show the increasing linguistic diversity in Belfast and how this impacts on day to day life. Languages featured included Irish, Ulster Scots, Polish, Arabic, BSL and ISL and Chinese. The Film also looked at the communication challenges faced by people with disabilities. **Sign Language Users Forum** The Council signed up to a BSL & ISL Charter in March 2019 and one of the pledges was to set up a Sign Language Users' Forum to provide input on council services. The Forum consists of 12 Sign Language users who either live or work in Belfast and they first met in June 2019. The Forum has met three times so far and has constructively provided feedback on new developments including the Customer Focus Programme, the new website, the Disability Action Plan 2019-22 and the Language Action Plan. **Sign Video Project** The Council identified the need to support sign language users; British and Irish Sign Language in accessing their services. The barriers in telephone and face-to-face communication with council staff and sign language users was identified. We are committed to removing these barriers. A pilot programme commenced in May 2019, originally a pilot for 12 months. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, SignVideo in March 2019 agreed to extend the pilot for an additional 6 months which will come to an end in October 2020. The SignVideo provision is currently available on the Council's Contact Us webpage and at three venues including the Belfast Zoo, the Cecil Ward Building and the Olympia Leisure Centre. Successful funding from the Department of Communities in January 2020 enabled the Council to purchase 14 new iPads for a SignVideo service at 12 leisure centres, the Tropical Ravine and the City Hall. This provision will be in place later this year. The Customer Focus Programme will oversee the delivery of this service including a new procurement exercise from November 2020.

<table>
<tr><th>Action</th><th>Responsibility</th><th>2019/20 update</th></tr>
<tr><td>C2 Support departments in carrying out equality screenings of emerging policies</td><td>City Solicitor / EDO</td><td>Screenings completed during 2019/20 are listed below:
<table>
<tr><th>Title of Screening</th><th>Screening Decision</th></tr>
<tr><td>Cultural Strategy</td><td>Screened In – Necessary to conduct a full EQIA</td></tr>
<tr><td>Flying the Rainbow Flag on Pride Day 3/8/19</td><td>Screened Out - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Planning Application for Office Development at Stewart Street, Belfast</td><td>Screened Out - No EQIA necessary (no impacts)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Corporate CCTV Policy</td><td>Screened Out - No EQIA necessary (no impacts)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Waterworks Pitch (Westland)</td><td>Screened Out - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2021</td><td>Screened Out - No EQIA necessary (no impacts)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Development of an Openspaces and Streetscene structure leading to restructuring of the current Parks and Street Cleansing Services</td><td>Screened Out - No EQIA necessary (no impacts)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Customer Focus “Putting You First, Transforming Customer Experience”</td><td>Screened Out - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Language Strategy Action Plan 2020-2021</td><td>Screened Out - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Corporate Plan 2020/2024</td><td>Screened Out - No EQIA necessary (no impacts)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Open Spaces Streetscene Service</td><td>Screened Out - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)</td></tr>
</table></td></tr>
<tr><td>Dept</td><td>Responsibility</td><td>2019/2020 update</td></tr>
</table>

		Request for a permanent plaque to commemorate WWI Nurses	Screened Out - No EQIA necessary (no impacts
		Boodles Dam	Screened Out - No EQIA necessary (no impacts)
		Reservoir Safety Programme	Screened Out – No EQIA necessary (no impacts)
		Future City Centre Programme	Screened Out – No EQIA necessary (no impacts)
		Employability and Skills Programme	Screened Out – Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)
		Business Growth Programme	Screened Out – Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)
		Start a Business Activity	Screened Out – Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)
		City for Investment Service	Screened Out – No EQIA necessary (no impacts)
		Final Belfast Green & Blue Infrastructure Plan	Screened Out - No EQIA necessary (no impacts)
		Final Developer Contributions Framework	Screened Out - No EQIA necessary (no impacts)
		Data gaps across all functions remain for S75 groups and this is an increasingly significant issue, we have initiated discussions with key stakeholders.	
C3 Annual reporting to the Equality Commission	City Solicitor / EDO	A system of departmental returns was introduced following restructuring and made a significant contribution to the collation of information for the annual report. In addition, co-ordination and feedback from the EDN operational tier has contributed significantly to the annual reporting process.	

Action	Responsibility	2019/20 update
C4 Advice and guidance for services to promote participation and inclusion for underrepresented groups	City Solicitor / EDO / departments P&E	Themes identified in the advice and guidance sought included interdependencies between equality and good relations outcomes and monitoring. Updated guidance on monitoring from ECNI would be welcomed. **Employability & Skills – Employment Academies** Disability information is collected from participants on our Employment Academies prior to starting and any adjustments needed are taken into account to ensure opportunities are available to all and venues are accessible. Work is in progress with Hearing Loss to gain advice on appropriate adjustments and systems that can be provided to increase access to our programmes. We currently have the ability to agree bespoke supports such as childcare costs (currently through Access to Opportunity) to enable participation in our programmes.
C5 Facilitated testing of website by people with different abilities, including online forms and transactions	Marketing & Corporate Communications	User research carried out by people with different abilities in February 2020, which feeds in to redesign of website.
C6 Benchmarking of website by an external organisation	Marketing & Corporate Communications	Annual reviews of website by Plain English Campaign SOCITM BetterConnected+ website accessibility assessment.
C7 Scoping development of a range of inclusive communication channels to meet different needs	Marketing & Corporate Communications	Signvideo implemented on the contact page of Belfast City Council website in May 2019. Work on this project started in early 2019. Signvideo is a Video Relay Services and Video Remote Interpreting provider who provides British Sign Language (BSL) video interpreting services. British, Irish and International sign language video clips for Belfast City Hall Exhibition and Tropical Ravine placed on Youtube. Browsealoud is implemented on Belfast City Council website, Belfast Zoo website, Public-I website, Minutes3 website and online forms. This software adds speech, reading, and translation to our websites to facilitate access and participation for people with Dyslexia, Low Literacy, English as a second language, and those with mild visual impairments. The new website aims to conform to the latest accessibility requirements under The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations: (http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2018/852/contents/made)

Priority D: Skilled and diverse workforce

The ability to deliver responsive services to increasingly diverse communities will depend in a large part on the composition, skills, understanding and commitment of a workforce in how we build their capacity and understanding of the need to promote equality and diversity. Through the development of a workforce which is broadly representative of the communities it serves the Council will deliver better outcomes for all.

Action	Timescale	2019/20 Update
D1 Learning and development programme developed and delivered	Ongoing	A corporate programme is developed and delivered annually on general equality and diversity and good relations. Other bespoke courses are procured from time to time and staff have the opportunity to attend courses delivered by external providers e.g. neurodiversity; unconscious bias **Mandatory** Diversity training for employees- 78 participants Diversity training for managers- 6 participants Diversity e-learning (employees and managers)- 42 Disability awareness- employees- 51 participants Absence management training- 20 participants **Optional** Positive Mental Health- 5 participants Stress Awareness for Managers- 31 Mindfulness- 27 participants Mental Health First Aid- 18 participants Neurodiversity- 75 participants Pilot- British Sign Language- 10 participants Unconscious Bias- 11 participants Dementia Awareneness – 33 participants
	P&E	P&E Department staff attend equality and diversity training, so that we can meet the needs of those who tend to be under-represented. In addition, to assist in service delivery staff have also attended specific sessions such as:

Action	Timescale	2019/20 Update
		• Our Skills and Employability team have attended the Migrant Forum to better understand the needs of black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) people and ensure our employability programmes are accessible. • Members of our City Events Team have also attended autism awareness sessions. The Economic Development team have built strong relationships with a range of disability specialist organisations (Disability Action, Orchardville, Action on Hearing Loss, NIUSE, NOW Group, USEL) to develop interventions to support the development of their businesses and to ensure that our employment academies and are accessible to people with disabilities.
D2 Mechanisms to monitor the diversity of the workforce and applicants are further developed	2017-18	Profile of workforce is broadly representative of the community it serves Development of the new HR/Payroll system, as required, to enable the council to fulfil its statutory monitoring and reporting obligations. The fair employment monitoring form and voluntary monitoring form is currently being reviewed.
D3 Implementation of Organisational Development Strategy	2017-21	The council's diversity action plans are now delivered under the umbrella of the Equality and Diversity Framework and the People Strategy, which is currently under development. (See A8, A9, A10) and the Disability Strategy (encompassing DDA & DDO measures)
D4 – Achieving through our People		Our Achieving Through People Framework is a new corporate framework which sets out new organisational values and behaviours for all employees (specified at employee, manager and senior manager levels). Once fully developed it will be rolled-out corporately to all staff and aligned to various key people management processes such as senior management appraisal, staff PDP processes etc. During August/September 2018, a series of focus groups were held with staff from business support, operational, managers, team leader/supervisors, professional, Trade Unions and representatives from the Council's staff networks (Disability/Women/LGBT). The framework is in its final stages of development. Once implemented further screening will be carried out to assess which has been achieved against what was planned. The framework will also closely be aligned to the corporate People Strategy, which is currently being developed and monitoring the application of this will be a key feature going forward. Within the framework, there is an element which specifically relates to promoting equality and diversity within the workplace and within this, effective managers will be expected to ensure compliance with our section 75 duties and policy and procedures in relation to equality, good relations and disability.

Action	Timescale	2019/20 Update
		Within the same element, senior managers are expected to "promote and role model an inclusive working environment and culture that values equality of opportunity and diversity". The ATP framework also sets out that all employees within the organisation are expected to actively challenge bias, prejudice, discrimination or intolerance.

Glossary

COS – City & Organisational Strategy Department

CNS – City & Neighbourhood Services Department

EDO – Equality and Diversity Officer

GRU – Good Relations Unit

HR/OD – Human Resources and Organisational Development

F&R – Finance & Resources Department

LSC – Legal & Civic Services

P&E – Place & Economy Department

PP – Physical Programmes

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Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties **Appendix 3b**

Annual Progress Report 2019-20

PART B - Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) and Disability Action Plans

1. Number of action measures for this **reporting period** that have been:

39	15	4
Fully achieved	Partially achieved	Not achieved

2. Please outline below details on all **actions that have been fully achieved** in the reporting period.

2(a) Please highlight what **public life measures** have been achieved to encourage disabled people to participate in public life at National, Regional and Local levels:

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs[i]	Outcomes / Impact[ii]
National[iii]			
Regional[iv]			
Local[v]			

All our work is at a Belfast level.

However, we impact at many levels by promoting excellence in equality; sharing good practice and promoting leadership.

Belfast City Council has a range of activities across all departments, which promote the two duties. To this end, we have added a few actions below which highlight our commitment to the Duties. For a full report on all actions for the year, please refer to our updated Disability Action Plan 2019/2022.

2(b) What **training action measures** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Ensure all managers are aware of the provisions of the Attendance Policy, which allow for special consideration of disability issues	Corporate training provided every three months for managers who are new to managing absence	Develop the capacity of the organisation to support staff with disabilities, in relation to attendance management
2	Provision of Sign Language courses for employees	Pilot completed in October 2019. 9 employees completed and passed Pilot course delivered. 10 people completed the training. 100% pass rate achieved	Develop the capacity of the organisation to support people with disabilities, focusing on communication
3	Provide emotional health and wellbeing awareness training for staff and council volunteers (internal)	5 Positive Mental Health sessions delivered One Mindfulness session delivered Score out of 10- an average score of 9.3 from participants said they could use what they learned right away	The capacity of staff/ volunteers will be increased to help them manage their own emotional health and well-being
4	Provide training for managers in managing stress and mental health issues (internal)	4 sessions delivered Score out of 10- an average score of 9.2 from participants stated that they could use what they learned right away	The capacity of staff/ volunteers will be increased to help them manage their own emotional health and well-being
5	Review pilot programme for mental health first aiders	Pilot Mental Health First Aid programme evaluated and success of programme led to decision to roll out future programmes. One additional session delivered 18 people attended	Develop the capacity of staff to help them manage their own mental health and to help support others
6	Deliver equality screening training based on an analysis of priority areas and job roles	One Equality Screening training was completed.	Awareness of disability and the disability duties when compiling policies and making decisions will be increased

2(c) What Positive attitudes action measures in the area of Communications were achieved in this reporting period?

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Facilitate biennial event on a current theme linked to council priorities e.g. Festival of Learning or Accessible Belfast Evaluate feedback and develop an action plan to improve disability initiatives where appropriate	An event held with external/internal press and communications; International Day of People with Disabilities highlighting public and employment accessibility. Attendance by a wide range of relevant organisations and disabled people Feedback used to improve further events and future policies/initiatives	Public attitudes to disabled people are more positive and negative attitudes are challenged.
2	Produce a film project, showcasing the diverse language and disability groups	Showcase video clips produced by QUB. Film launched in November 2019. Video clips showcased included Sign Languages and Disability Communications	Public attitudes to disabled people are more positive and negative attitudes are challenged.
3	Raise awareness of council's Disability Event Plan	A number of completed event action plans received	Disabled people can participate fully in all activities facilitated by the council and are encouraged to do so
4	Increase information in Sign Language to Sign Language users at City Hall and Tropical Ravine	Sign Language videos completed and launched at both venues	Disabled people are able to choose between options in terms of the way they receive and benefit from council services
5	Review the locations of portable loop systems across our venues	Installation of portable loop systems at Belfast City Hall, Belfast Castle, Malone House and Roselawn Cemetery	Disabled people are able to choose between options in terms of the way they receive and benefit from council services
6	Liaise with AccessAble to monitor and review the new App for people with disabilities accessing facilities and services in the City of Belfast.	Monitoring of AccessAble app on-going and increased satisfaction accessing facilities and services in the City of Belfast	Disabled people have appropriate support so that they can participate in the cultural life of the city on an equal basis
7	Improve accessibility in contacting and communication for Deaf Users	Video Relay Service (VRS) and Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) pilot on going and will end in October 2020. The VRS service is accessible on the website and the VRI at Cecil Ward	Disabled people are aware of the availability of accessible information and make use of it

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
		Building, Belfast Zoo and Olympia Leisure Centre	
8	Increased provision of an accessible formats in City Matters Magazine	Audio recordings are produced and distributed to people with sight loss at the same time when the magazine is distributed to every household in Belfast City Council - Digital Services An audio version of each edition of City Matters (Belfast residents magazine) is produced normally 4 editions per year along with versions in Braille and Large Print	Disabled people are aware of the availability of accessible information and make use of it
9	Consult with City Matters team to include disabled related articles in City Matters magazine, sharing accessible information with the council and Community Partners	26 disability related articles have been printed since June 2019	Disabled people are aware of the availability of accessible information and make use of it
10	Meet with key staff to discuss and explore the preparation and production of council documents in alternative formats	1 meeting held to discuss arrangements for council documents in alternative formats An audio version of each edition of City Matters (Belfast residents magazine) is produced normally 4 editions per year along with versions in Braille and Large Print An audio version of each edition of City Matters (Belfast residents magazine) is produced normally 4 editions per year along with versions in Braille and Large Print	Disabled people are aware of the availability of accessible information and make use of it
11	Consult with Marketing & Corporate Communications to explore the introduction of accessible changes being made on council's website and social media platforms (to include easy reading, audio, Sign Language translation and subtitles on video)	3 meeting held with Marketing & Corporate Communications. The Marketing and Communications team have built accessibility into the procurement of the new website. It will meet the WCAG 2.1 requirements The Online Team promotes accessibility throughout the council internally through articles in Interlink, face-to-face briefings and Team Brief articles	Council increases the level of inclusive/accessible communications so that disabled people can access information as independently as possible and make informed choices

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
12	Provide information to disabled people on aspects of council services which specifically affect them through; minimum of 4 articles per year in City Matters, minimum of 2 targeted information leaflets per year, accessible information on the council website Include articles related to disability and ensure photography of disabled people are included	Imaged introduced in City Matters magazine during 2019 11 disability images were printed in the City Matters magazine. 4 City Matters magazines provided in audio format. Over 3 editions printed in 2019 (Summer, Autumn, Winter) and the Spring edition in 202 approximately 12 positive images were featured along with 26 articles relating to disability.	Disabled people are aware of how council services can support them Promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people
13	Include disabled related information in staff e-briefings, staff newsletters/magazines, staff meetings, email, intranet, internet (Internal) Include annual disability days on Interlink and consider awareness raising activty	10 articles included on staff intranet relating to disability related awareness days/weeks 1 articles highlighting the event to mark International Day of People with Disabilities 2 Disability Staff Network meeting articles 8 articles specific to health and wellbeing 12 other articles e.g. awareness raising sessions (Action on Hearing Loss) 13 articles relation to charity fundraising events by staff	Staff will be engaged and awareness will be raised about particular disabilities
14	Printed documents and brand campaigns to feature positive images of disabled people	Marketing and Corporate Communications adopts an inclusive approach to external and internal communications including the use of articles and photographs of disabled people when opportunities arise. In 2019-2020 approximately 11 positive images of disabled people were used in City Matters, Belfast's residents magazine which is distributed to over 155,000 homes in Belfast.	Promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
		Images have been used on the council's home page to promote Signvideo, play areas, Changing Places	
15	Communication tools for people with learning disabilities to be introduced at customer centres e.g. City Hall reception, Belfast Zoo	Sign Language translation was introduced in the Visitor Centre in May 2019. Free audio tours were introduced in August 2019, and can be downloaded via Cloud Guide App in English. The Visitor Centre is fitted with an induction hearing loop and some staff are trained in deaf awareness and BSL skills. We support the JAM initiative and signage is displayed in Visitor Centre. Zoo holds an annual sensory event for visitors on the autism spectrum.	Council increases the level of inclusive/accessible communications so that disabled people can access information as independently as possible and make informed choices

2 (d) What action measures were achieved to 'encourage others' to promote the two duties:

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	The Disability Advisory Panel (DAP) to attend and participate in consultation processes and to provide advice and guidance on various capital projects	The Disability Advisory Panel met 4 times – on a quarterly basis. - The project teams leading on the Springfield Dam, PEACE IV and DfC Connecting Open Spaces project, engaged with the Disability Advisory panel to discuss the emerging concept designs. A site visit was conducted to a similar example to explain and explore adaptations and changes. A number of amends were made to the designs, for example, accessible friendly fishing stands. - The Boodles Dam project has taken a number of design aspects into consideration: The gate operates in two modes, with one as a release of the sliding latch by use of a RADAR key where the gate maybe opened beyond the normal closing point allowing large mobility vehicles and some path maintenance equipment to pass through. In addition the works include a 2m path around the dam which will facilitate access by people with disabilities. - The Council's Local Investment Fund (LIF) offers funding to local projects which aim to make a real difference in people's lives at a neighbourhood level by addressing local community needs - it supports a wide range of local community groups, including many groups that have users with a range of mobility and disability. One particular project – new sensory garden of residents of a care home – consulted on the specific needs and input view of older people with	Improved opportunities for disabled people to engage with and influence policy makers

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
		disabilities, which resulted in path widening around the garden; specific heights of garden furniture; improving paving and access points to the garden; improved gates to allow better access. - In 2019 the Department was successful in securing a bid for capital funding to improve accessibility for people with disabilities, to improve some key public assets eg to automate all the doors at the Tropical Ravine, at Botanic Park. Accessibility has also been improved at the facility, with the introduction of sensory facilities for sight and hearing-impaired visitors - The Council's Leisure Transformation Programme is a significant programme of capital investment to a range of new Leisure facilities across the city. In the new Leisure centres – Lisnasharragh, Andersonstown and Brook – each have Changing Places Facilities installed as part of these new facilities. - Specific to one of the Council's new leisure centre – Brook Leisure Centre– it has a state-of-the-art new sensory swimming pool (the first of its kind as a public swimming pool) with specific lighting, submersible lifting platforms and a number of adaptations to improve accessibility for people with disabilities.	
2	Establish and facilitate a Sign Language Users Forum	A Sign Language Users Forum met 3 times during 2019/20	Improved opportunities for Sign Language Users to engage with and influence policy makers and to educate employees

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
3	The Disability Staff Network to provide support on future action planning	4 staff network meetings arranged. 3 held including presentation from Carers NI, 2 x future planning/development of network (branding, updating terms of reference etc) and 1 meeting cancelled due to Covid-19 – RNID had been invited	Disabled people are provided with appropriate support to enhance employability and obtain employment
4	Participate in careers/employability activity targeted towards disabled people i.e. careers fairs, mock interviews, site visits, employability talks	1 mock interview session delivered 1 Special schools careers fair attended. Corporate HR attends the Belfast Special Schools Business Education Partnership meetings and has offered to provide site visits and mock interview sessions- no uptake in 2019/2020. Similar assistance was offered to disability organisations- one organisation took up offer of mock interview	Disabled people have the opportunity to find out about the range of job opportunities available and are provided with appropriate support to enhance employability and obtain employment
5	Ensure all managers are aware of the provisions of the Attendance Policy, which allow for special consideration of disability issues.	Corporate training provided every three months for managers who are new to managing absence	Develop the capacity of the organisation to support staff with disabilities, in relation to attendance management
6	Analyse staff Equality and Diversity survey and identify areas for improvement for action planning going forward	High level results published in August 2019. Agreed actions following feedback will be incorporated into future action plan, as appropriate	Improved opportunities for disabled people to engage with and influence policy makers
7	Review of existing stakeholder engagement with disability groups to use parks and open spaces	A new updated version of the' A Walk in the Park' publication was produced and there has been increased demand for copies.	Improved range of ways to provide access to parks and open spaces
8	Deliver the Inspiring Communities theme which identifies disabled people as a priority area and removing barriers to participation to ensure all sections of the	Delivered 10 small capital enhancement projects that will increase access for disabled	Disabled people have appropriate support so that they can participate in the cultural life of the city on an equal basis

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
	community engage with high quality culture, arts and heritage	people to quality cultural product and experiences	
9	Consult and engage with the sector in relation to the emerging LDP draft plan strategy, which will provide the planning framework to shape the future growth of the City up to 2035	The council formally consulted on the LDP draft plan between August and November 2018. During this time the LDP team completed 66 engagement events to promote consultation and engagement with the draft Plan Strategy. These included public information and drop in events and specific engagement with under-representative groups such as the Senior's Forum and Equality Consultative Forum (multiple identities including age and disability). Of respondents who completed the equality monitoring section of the draft Plan Strategy consultation responses, 44 respondents (40%) said they had a disability.	Feedback encouraged from disabled people and their representative groups in how we can encourage greater participation by disabled people in public life and provide opportunities for disabled people to engage with and influence policy makers
10	Deliver targeted outreach to encourage and support disabled people to consider enterprise and start a business	For many disabled people, starting a business provides greater flexibility and choice around working hours, working conditions and for many, provides greater independence than working for someone else. Data collated from the Go for It Programme indicated a 12% increase from 18/19 among those declaring a disability. 26% of participants declared a disability. Additionally, our Economic Development Team have proactively engaged with Disability Action to guide our outreach activities via our Enterprise Working Group. This ensures that our outreach services are flexible to meet the needs of disabled people and our officers and contractors are fully understand sources of support available to assist disabled people.	Disabled people who are considering starting a business are supported

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
11	Engage with under-represented groups via umbrella organisation representation on the Enterprise and Business Growth Working Group Put in place reasonable adjustments to support disabled people access support programmes designed to help them start a business	Disability Action are engaged in our Enterprise and Business Growth Working Group which took place once in 2019/20. A second meeting was not held due to resourcing issues. All programme and support is flexible to take account of the needs of disabled people. The Economic Development Team regularly engage with disability specialist organisations such as USEL, NOW Group and the Orchardville Society to develop interventions to support the development of their businesses. Each of these organisations have participated in our business support programmes.	Programmes and activities are promoted to persons with a disability through suitable mediums

2 (e) Please outline any additional action measures that were fully achieved other than those listed in the tables above:
Please see attached updated Disability Action Plan 2018/2019

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
1	Analyse staff Equality and Diversity survey and identify areas for improvement for action planning going forward	High level results published in August 2019. Agreed actions following feedback will be incorporated into future action plan, as appropriate	Improved opportunities for disabled people to engage with and influence policy makers
2	Review and consider opportunities to engage disabled people in the Belfast Employability Pathway (Belfast Workplace) Provide specific adaptations/support to enable participants to take part in council employability initiatives	The Skills and Employability Team operated a pilot 'Loaf Employment Academy' specifically designed for and engaged 40 people with disabilities (mainly learning disabilities) with an expected 50% into employment rate. As part of section 75 monitoring, disability information is collected from participants on each academy prior to starting to take account of adjustments needed to ensure opportunities are available to all. Of those participants that were monitored 321 did not highlight any disability and 18 reported that they had a disability (around 5%). The team have engaged extensively with a range of disability organisations – Disability Action, Orchardville, Action on Hearing Loss, NIUSE, USEL to ensure that the academies are accessible to people with disabilities. In practice, people with a range of disabilities are selected onto, complete and gain employment. Adjustments and adaptions are made to help disabled people take part in employability initiatives. For example, a sign language interpreter was provided for a participant on our Social Care	Disabled people are supported to access employability initiatives

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
		Employment Academy and by making this adjustment, they were able to obtain employment. Participants' support assistants have attended interviews and training with them and this adaptation has enabled them to participate in our Employment Academies. Following survey feedback at a Stakeholder Workshop in December 2019, the Skills & Employability team's engagement with Disability Action/NIUSE has established stronger and smoother pathways from the disability sector provision onto the council's academies. Given the impact of Covid-19, the Skills and Employability team aims to ensure that employability academies reach the correct target audience and shorten referral pathway to organisations who work with disadvantaged groups. Although plans are still being developed, it is expected to include disability organisations.	
3	Maintain dedicated health and well-being page on Interlink (internal)	A health and well-being section exists on Interlink under the Support & Development section of the site and is updated on regular basis.	Staff will be engaged and awareness will be raised about health and wellbeing initiatives.
4	To promote and review disabled toilet access and engage with disability groups to encourage wider use	The waste service continues to provide toilet provision for all, ensuring that the facilities meet a broad spectrum of needs. To ensure the Council improves the awareness of disabled toilet facilities for people with disabilities, the service has	Improve awareness of disabled toilet facilities for people with disabilities Improve accessibility to Changing Places facilities across the City

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
	To promote the Changing Places facilities across the City and review the existing process	met with several relevant professional organisations such as British Toilet Association, & Disability Action to get a lead on best or new approaches, terminology and thinking. As well as this the service meets (through community engage) the G8 group, who represent various community groups across the City, to ensure the agenda of toilet provision and residents needs in an age friendly Belfast is taken into any reviews or approaches The waste service has always encouraged a proactive approach to providing public toilets and has been a champion of the provision of Changing Places toilets and will continue to work with professional associations, and Council services to extend the range of Changing places toilets. The service however has no remit over the installation of these toilets. There are now 10 changing places facilities across the City, of which 3 are provided by Belfast or Belfast related services.	Improve social inclusion for people with disabilities
	To provide information and training (where necessary) to front-line staff about RADAR key, including its use and how to apply for it	The waste service maintains a relationship with and represents the Council to the Changing Places Org, http://www.changing-places.org/ and ensures all Belfast CP facilities are registered. Appropriate staff within the new customer hub/contact services are all briefed on the processes to obtain a RADAR key, and promotion of the RADAR scheme is provided on the Council website.	

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
5	Scope and research the accessibility of Belfast City Centre to identify gaps and opportunities, to enable disabled people to participate fully in city centre life. This will include initiatives to promote accessibility in the city centre from an economic development and perspective.	Scoping and research into the accessibility of the city centre to support the development of a diverse and vibrant city centre has been undertaken from a number of angles. This includes the development of: • the Cultural Strategy which has a priority to support high quality cultural events that are accessible, diverse and inclusive; • the Sundays in the City programme, which identified improvements to public transport to improve access into the city centre; • the City Centre Connectivity Study which has produced a Bolder Vision which sets the ambition to transform the city centre to be a healthy, shared, vibrant and sustainable space. To maximise the impact, these workstrands will be taken forward in an integrated way under the Future City Centre programme.	Develop the capacity of the organisation to support disabled people to access the city centre
6	Ensure that the Inclusive Events Checklist is completed for all events that are being held in council facilities	Improvements were made at the Autumn Fair so that the event was more Dementia friendly i.e. revised signage, provision of quiet space. Seven Inclusive Events plans were completed in 2019	Persons with a disability are able to attend and fully engage in events and programmes delivered by council
7	Have the new Changing Places Toilet facility accessible 9am-10pm Monday to Sunday	Monitor the number of users and take action as required	Those with complex needs and disabilities have access to facilities to enable them to

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
			participate in the life of the city throughout the week

3. Please outline what action measures have been **partly achieved** as follows:

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	Review membership of Equality Consultative Forum (ECF) and increase representation of disabled people and representing organisations	New ECF Terms of Reference established % attendance at each meeting from cross section of disability organisations/individuals % of staff/members who understand purpose of the ECF and find it useful Effective feedback mechanism established, and used by members	Feedback encouraged from disabled people and their representative groups in how we can encourage greater participation by disabled people in public life and we can prove that we act on this feedback	The Equality Consultative Forum review is still ongoing. Due to the Covid -19 this action has been delayed.
2	Arrange a minimum of 3 Forum meetings per year and additional meetings as required	Minimum of 3 Forum meetings held	Feedback encouraged from disabled people and their representative groups in how we can encourage greater participation by disabled people in public life and we can prove that we act on this feedback	1 Equality Consultative Forum took place in 2019. Due to the Covid -19 has been partially achieved. The next meeting which will be held remotely is planned for Nov-20
3	Review recruitment process in respect of adjustments provided to applicants with autism and learning difficulties	% of changes implemented	Disabled people are provided with appropriate support to enhance employability and obtain employment	Guidance on role of support worker has been drafted. To be finalised/ approved.

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
4	Consider all requests for reasonable adjustments as part of the selection process	% of reasonable adjustments requested and provided	Disabled people are provided with appropriate support to enhance employability and obtain employment	3 reasonable adjustments were requested and 3 were provided at interview stage- 100% of requests were provided. The Guaranteed Interview Scheme was not applied mainly because we have not been applying short-listing criteria when internally trawling posts and external recruitment limited as a result of ongoing corporate change process to mitigate potential staff redundancies
5	Facilitate at least 30 work experience placements for people with disabilities Participate in annual job shadowing initiative promoted by NIUSE (internal)	30 placement opportunities facilitated, including three via the job shadowing initiative	Disabled people have the opportunity to participate in work experience	25 placement opportunities facilitated. This represents 83% of the total number agreed. N.B. due to significant ongoing operational changes, the total number of placements facilitated was also reduced. 82% of the overall target was facilitated
6	Provide ongoing advice and support to employees in relation to reasonable adjustment requirements	Monitor number of reasonable adjustments requests and those subsequently provided	Develop the capacity of the organisation to support staff with disabilities	Database of reasonable adjustments created. 176 reasonable adjustments, both permanent and temporary

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
	Investigate options around how staff could be encouraged and feel confident in declaring a disability via internal HR system Conduct a voluntary monitoring exercise	Create database of types of reasonable adjustments made Publish results from investigation /voluntary monitoring and make recommendations as appropriate		were made, 77 of which were DDA related. Examples include purchase of equipment, phased return to work; redeployment; use of discretion, support for medical appointments, sign video; access to work support costs; light duties; homeworking Voluntary monitoring survey yet to be conducted. Put on hold due to Covid-19. Discussions to take place with Disability Staff Network/trainers and IT team regarding suggestions to increase disclosure.
7	Address licensing of Pavement Cafes when the council receives guidance from the Department for Infrastructure	Monitor implementation of licensing Pavement Cafes	Disabled people have appropriate support so that they can participate in the cultural life of the city on an equal basis	The council awaits further guidance from the Department of Infrastructure to progress this action.
8	Engage with city centre retailers to consider how to support disabled people as part of customer focus support programmes	Number of businesses that participate	City centre retailers are encouraged to support accessibility for disabled people	The Economic Development unit provided support to Shopmobility to enable people with mobility requirements to access shops and services in the city centre. The organisation also received mentoring support to sustain their organisation and

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
				investigate social enterprise opportunities. The Economic Development team had planned to work in partnership with city stakeholders to deliver a range of workshops for city retailers that would include accessibility in the city centre. This will be initiated again in the 20/21 work programme, to take account of the impact of the COVID-19.
9	Language Officer to represent council at the Coalition on Deafness Effective partnership working with the British Deaf Association	Attend at least 1 Coalition on Deafness meeting Develop and implement a 3 year BSL and ISL Charter Action Plan in partnership with the British Deaf Association	Public attitudes to disabled people are more positive and negative attitudes are challenged	No Coalition meeting took place in 2019. Implementation of BSL and ISL Charter ongoing.
10	Consult with internal staff and Mencap to explore the introduction of appropriate communication tools for people with learning disabilities at customer centres e.g. City Hall, Belfast Zoo	A number of communication tools for people with learning disabilities at customer centres	Disabled people have appropriate support so that they can participate in the cultural life of the city on an equal basis	Initial discussions have taken place. The JAM card accessibility communication tool is in place at various customer centres.
11	Create a translation protocol document for Sign Language Users and disabled people accessing council's online	A number of identified BCC online material and electronic	Sign Language Users are aware of accessible	A 'Making Communications Accessible' Guide is currently being finalised. This Guide will list protocols for translation

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
	material and electronic documents	documents to be produced in accessible formats	communication within the council	and communication accessibility.
12	Provision of tailor-made course to employees	Deliver 2 tailor made disability courses to employees	Develop the capacity of the organisation to support people with disabilities, focusing on communication	None were delivered. Four neurodiversity training sessions delivered.
13	Roll-out Diversity Awareness training programmes for council employees: - continue delivery of disability equality awareness training; - continue to seek nominations from staff with disabilities to provide specific awareness raising session around disability - continue providing access to diversity e-learning programme; - continue delivery of classroom based diversity training; - identify and target awareness raising sessions on specific areas of disability	Deliver 12 disability awareness training sessions to managers and employees Deliver 12 diversity awareness training sessions to managers and employees All new staff to attend training within 6 months of commencing employment All Tier 3 Managers to attend Equality and Diversity module	Develop the capacity of staff to ensure awareness of the legal obligations in relation to employment and service delivery	11 dates were agreed. Five training sessions delivered. Six cancelled due to low registration Thirteen dates were agreed. Nine sessions delivered. Four cancelled due to low registration 33% of new staff attended diversity training within six months of starting employment 21% new staff attended disability awareness training within six months of starting employment

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
	- incorporate equality and diversity module into Tier 3 Training - Unconscious bias training will be rolled out to Corporate Management Team	All Corporate Management Team to attend Unconscious Bias training		Senior leadership programme delivery delayed as a result of COVID 19. Currently sourcing provider.
14	Research the possibility of including disability awareness sessions for Members in the Members Training Programme and include Disability Action Plan in the members Induction Programme Upload the Disability Action Plan to the Members Portal	Communicate outcomes of research and plan next steps if applicable Disability Action Plan uploaded to the Members Portal	Develop the capacity of Members to ensure awareness of the legal obligations in relation to employment and service delivery	Disability Action Plan has been uploaded to the Members' Portal. Disability Awareness training for members is still under consideration
15	To promote and review disabled toilet access and engage with disability groups to encourage wider use To promote the Changing Places facilities across the City and review the existing process To provide information and training (where necessary) to front-line staff about RADAR key, including its use and how to apply for it	Report on the review of existing process and the number of stakeholder organisations engaged for 19/20 Increase in choice of available Changing Places facilities across the city from 3 to 5 over the next 24 months Ensuring a continuing presence of Changing Places facilities are available on BCC and Changing Places website	Improve awareness of disabled toilet facilities for people with disabilities Improve accessibility to Changing Places facilities across the City Improve social inclusion for people with disabilities	Changing Places facilities were provided at the Spring Fair but were not available for the Summer Rose Fair as no provider.

4. Please outline what action measures **have <u>not</u> been achieved** and the reasons why.

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	Identify opportunities to ring-fence certain posts to long-term unemployed, including those with a disability and ensure any pre-recruitment and training programme caters for any reasonable adjustments	No pre recruitment and training programmes delivered in 2019/2020. External recruitment limited as a result of ongoing corporate change process to mitigate potential staff redundancies. Ring-fencing certain posts has been included in the Draft Inclusive Growth strategy and will be progressed when feasible.
2	Continue to promote/communicate our options for access to information/forms/ people/services in relation to council buildings	Due to the Covid -19 this action has been delayed. This action is now part of the Language Officer role.
3	Promote the range of alternative formats that are available	Due to the Covid -19 this training has been delayed.
4	Organise specialist training/workshop for Project Sponsors/Project Managers/APMs regarding the relevant DDA issues on capital build scheme	Due to the Covid -19 this training has been delayed.

5. What **monitoring tools** have been put in place to evaluate the degree to which actions have been effective / develop new opportunities for action?

The council is currently reviewing all monitoring information and our systems for gathering relevant information in a meaningful and timely manner.

(a) Qualitative

The new Disability Action Plan 2019-2022 has been developed during this reporting period.

(b) Quantitative

Monitoring milestones in action plans and reporting to ECNI in annual report.

6. As a result of monitoring progress against actions has your organisation either:

- made any **revisions** to your plan during the reporting period or
- taken any **additional steps** to meet the disability duties which were **not outlined in your original** disability action plan / any other changes?

No. This report relates to a one year action plan (2019/2020) and the council has now developed a new three year Disability Action Plan 2019-22.

7. Do you intend to make any further **revisions to your plan** in light of your organisation's annual review of the plan? If so, please outline proposed changes?

This report relates to a one year action plan (2019/2020) and the council has now developed a new three year Disability Action Plan 2019-22.

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[i] **Outputs** – defined as act of producing, amount of something produced over a period, processes undertaken to implement the action measure e.g. Undertook 10 training sessions with 100 people at customer service level.

[ii] **Outcome / Impact** – what specifically and tangibly has changed in making progress towards the duties? What impact can directly be attributed to taking this action? Indicate the results of undertaking this action e.g. Evaluation indicating a tangible shift in attitudes before and after training.

[iii] **National** : Situations where people can influence policy at a high impact level e.g. Public Appointments

[iv] **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level

[v] **Local :** Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local fora.

Appendix 1: Disability Action Plan 2019-22 – Update 2019-20

Strategic priority	Outcomes	Action Measures	Timescale	Responsibility	Performance Indicators	Status at end of 2019/20
Strategic Priority 1 **Encouraging the participation of disabled people in public life**	Feedback encouraged from disabled people and their representative groups in how we can encourage greater participation by disabled people in public life and we can prove that we act on this feedback	Review membership of Equality Consultative Forum (ECF) and increase representation of disabled people and representing organisations	2019	EDO	New ECF Terms of Reference established % attendance at each meeting from cross section of disability organisations/individuals % of staff/members who understand purpose of the ECF and find it useful Effective feedback mechanism established, and used by members	The Equality Consultative Forum review is still ongoing. Due to the Covid -19 this action has been delayed. Partially
	Feedback encouraged from disabled people and their representative groups in how we can encourage greater participation by disabled people in public life and we can prove that we act on this feedback	Arrange a minimum of 3 Forum meetings per year and additional meetings as required	2019	EDO	Minimum of 3 Forum meetings held	1 Equality Consultative Forum took place in 2019. Partially Due to the Covid -19 has been partially achieved.
	Improved opportunities for disabled people to engage with and influence policy makers	Carry out a targeted consultation to identify the potential impact of living in a rural area for	2020	EDO	Report on the key findings and make recommendations as appropriate	

		those with a disability within the council area				
	Improved opportunities for disabled people to engage with and influence policy makers	The Disability Advisory Panel (DAP) attend and participate in consultation processes	2019	EDO/Language Officer EDO/Language Officer	4 projects per year to receive advice and guidance from the DAP Number of changes made to policies/services as a result of their input	Quarterly meetings completed including consultations on at least 4 projects. Changes were made to various services due to advice and input from the DAP. Completed
	Improved opportunities for disabled people to engage with and influence policy makers	The Disability Advisory Panel to provide advice and guidance on various capital projects	2021	EDO/Language Officer	A reduction in disability related complaints by 10% each year Disability Advisory Panel to meet at least 3 times per year	DAP met 4 times during 2019/2020. Completed
	Improved opportunities for Sign Language Users to engage with and influence policy makers and to educate employees	Establish and facilitate a Sign Language Users Forum	2019	Language Officer	A Sign Language Users Forum to meet at least twice a year	Sign Language Users Forum met 3 times during 2019/20 Completed
	Disabled people are provided with appropriate support to enhance employability and obtain employment	The Disability Staff Network to provide support on future action planning	2019	HR	Disability Staff Network to meet at least 3 times a year	Four staff network meetings arranged. Three held -presentation from Carers NI 2x future planning/ development of network (branding; updating terms of reference etc) One meeting cancelled due to Covid 19- RNIB had been invited

						Completed
	Disabled people are provided with appropriate support to enhance employability and obtain employment	Identify opportunities to ring-fence certain posts to long-term unemployed, including those with a disability and ensure any pre-recruitment and training programme caters for any reasonable adjustments	2019	HR	Consider suitability of campaigns for pre-recruitment and training programmes Ring-fence 20% of places available on pre-recruitment and training programmes to people with disabilities	No pre recruitment and training programmes delivered in 2019/2020. External recruitment limited as a result of ongoing corporate change process to mitigate potential staff redundancies. Ring-fencing certain posts has been included in the Draft Inclusive Growth strategy and will be progressed when feasible. Not completed
	Disabled people are provided with appropriate support to enhance employability and obtain employment	Review recruitment process in respect of adjustments provided to applicants with autism and learning difficulties	2019	HR	% of changes implemented	Guidance on role of support worker has been drafted. To be finalised/ approved. Partially
	Disabled people are provided with appropriate support to enhance employability and obtain employment	Consider all requests for reasonable adjustments as part of the selection process	2019	HR	% of reasonable adjustments requested and provided	3 reasonable adjustments were requested and 3 were provided at interview stage- 100% of requests were provided. The Guaranteed Interview Scheme was not applied mainly because we have not been applying short-listing criteria when internally trawling posts and

						external recruitment limited as a result of ongoing corporate change process to mitigate potential staff redundancies Partially
	Disabled people have the opportunity to find out about the range of job opportunities available and are provided with appropriate support to enhance employability and obtain employment	Participate in careers/employability activity targeted towards disabled people i.e. careers fairs, mock interviews, site visits, employability talks	2019	HR	Attend 4 events a year	1 mock interview session delivered 1 Special schools careers fair attended. Corporate HR attends the Belfast Special Schools Business Education Partnership meetings and has offered to provide site visits and mock interview sessions- no uptake in 2019/2020. Similar assistance was offered to disability organisations- one organisation took up offer of mock interview Completed
	Disabled people have the opportunity to participate in work experience	Facilitate at least 30 work experience placements for people with disabilities Participate in annual job shadowing initiative promoted by NIUSE (internal)	2019	HR	30 placement opportunities facilitated, including three via the job shadowing initiative	25 placement opportunities facilitated. This represents 83% of the total number agreed. N.B. due to significant ongoing operational changes, the total number of placements facilitated

						was also reduced. 82% of the overall target was facilitated Partially
	Develop the capacity of the organisation to support staff with disabilities, in relation to attendance management	Ensure all managers are aware of the provisions of the Attendance Policy, which allow for special consideration of disability issues	2019	HR	All staff who assume responsibility for managing attendance to attend training within 6 months of taking up that role	Corporate training provided every three months for managers who are new to managing absence Completed
	Develop the capacity of the organisation to support staff with disabilities	Provide ongoing advice and support to employees in relation to reasonable adjustment requirements Investigate options around how staff could be encouraged and feel confident in declaring a disability via internal HR system Conduct a voluntary monitoring exercise	2019	HR/Departments	Monitor number of reasonable adjustments requests and those subsequently provided Create database of types of reasonable adjustments made Publish results from investigation /voluntary monitoring and make recommendations as appropriate	Database of reasonable adjustments created. 176 reasonable adjustments, both permanent and temporary were made, 77 of which were DDA related. Examples include purchase of equipment, phased return to work; redeployment; use of discretion, support for medical appointments, sign video; access to work support costs; light duties; homeworking Voluntary monitoring survey yet to be conducted. Put on hold due to Covid-19. Discussions to take place with Disability Staff Network/trainers and IT team regarding suggestions to increase disclosure. Partially

	Improved opportunities for disabled people to engage with and influence policy makers	Analyse staff Equality and Diversity survey and identify areas for improvement for action planning going forward	2019	HR	Publish high level results from staff survey and agree action plan for future initiatives, as appropriate	High level results published in August 2019. Agreed actions following feedback will be incorporated into future action plan, as appropriate Completed
	Improved range of ways to provide access to parks and open spaces	Review of existing stakeholder engagement with disability groups to use parks and open spaces	2019	City & Neighbourhood Services Department	Report on the review of stakeholder engagement in 19/20	A new updated version of the' A Walk in the Park' publication was produced and there has been increased demand for copies. Completed
	Feedback encouraged from disabled people and their representative groups in how we can encourage greater participation by disabled people in public life and provide opportunities for disabled people to engage with and influence policy makers	Consult and engage with the sector in relation to the emerging LDP draft plan strategy, which will provide the planning framework to shape the future growth of the City up to 2035	2019	Place and Economy Department	The Local Development Plan and Policy Team will carry out appropriate targeted engagement with the disability sector at significant stages, during the progress of the Local Development Plan	The council formally consulted on the LDP draft plan between August and November 2018. During this time the LDP team completed 66 engagement events to promote consultation and engagement with the draft Plan Strategy. These included public information and drop in events and specific engagement with under-representative groups such as the Senior's Forum and Equality Consultative Forum (multiple identities including age and disability). Of respondents who completed the equality monitoring section of the draft Plan Strategy consultation

						responses, 44 respondents (40%) said they had a disability. There was no further engagement during 2019/20 as the LDP process does not provide for general engagement at this stage. The next significant LDP engagement stage, following the Independent Examination and adoption of the Plan Strategy, is the draft Local Policies Plan stage, which envisaged in early 2022. Completed
	Disabled people who are considering starting a business are supported	Deliver targeted outreach to encourage and support disabled people to consider enterprise and start a business	Ongoing/ 2019- 2022	Place and Economy Department	Increase in % participants with disability on enterprise awareness initiatives	For many disabled people, starting a business provides greater flexibility and choice around working hours, working conditions and for many, provides greater independence than working for someone else. Data collated from the Go for It Programme indicated a 12% increase from 18/19 among those declaring a disability. 26% of participants declared a disability. (Note, information is provided on a voluntary basis, as it is not compulsory for clients to disclose; however, it does provide an indication of statistical evidence for monitoring purposes). Additionally, our Economic Development Team have proactively engaged with Disability Action to guide our outreach activities via our Enterprise Working Group. This

						ensures that our outreach services are flexible to meet the needs of disabled people - and our officers and contractors are fully understand sources of support available to assist disabled people. Completed
	Programmes and activities are promoted to persons with a disability through suitable mediums	Engage with under-represented groups via umbrella organisation representation on the Enterprise and Business Growth Working Group Put in place reasonable adjustments to support disabled people access support programmes designed to help them start a business	Ongoing/ 2019- 2022	Place and Economy Department	Hold 2 meetings per year minimum with representative bodies/stakeholder groups	Disability Action are engaged in our Enterprise and Business Growth Working Group which took place once in 2019/20. A second meeting was not held due to resourcing issues. All programme and support is flexible to take account of the needs of disabled people. The Economic Development Team regularly engage with disability specialist organisations such as USEL, NOW Group and the Orchardville Society to develop interventions to support the development of their businesses. Each of these organisations have participated in our business support programmes. Completed
	Disabled people are supported to access employability initiatives	Review and consider opportunities to engage disabled people in the Belfast Employability Pathway (Belfast Workplace)	Ongoing/ 2019- 2022	Place and Economy Department	6 monthly retrospective measurement of participant numbers on disability focused employment initiatives	The Skills and Employability Team operated a pilot 'Loaf Employment Academy' specifically designed for and engaged 40 people with disabilities (mainly learning disabilities) with an expected 50% into employment rate.

		Provide specific adaptations/support to enable participants to take part in council employability initiatives				As part of section 75 monitoring, disability information is collected from participants on each academy prior to starting to take account of adjustments needed to ensure opportunities are available to all. Of those participants that were monitored 321 did not highlight any disability and 18 reported that they had a disability (around 5%). The team have engaged extensively with a range of disability organisations – Disability Action, Orchardville, Action on Hearing Loss, NIUSE, USEL to ensure that the academies are accessible to people with disabilities. In practice, people with a range of disabilities are selected onto, complete and gain employment. Adjustments and adaptions are made to help disabled people take part in employability initiatives. For example, a sign language interpreter was provided for a participant on our Social Care Employment Academy and by making this adjustment, they were able to obtain employment. Participants' support assistants have attended interviews and training with them and this adaptation has enabled

						them to participate in our Employment Academies. Following survey feedback at a Stakeholder Workshop in December 2019, the Skills & Employability team's engagement with Disability Action/NIUSE has established stronger and smoother pathways from the disability sector provision onto the council's academies. Given the impact of Covid-19, the Skills and Employability team aims to ensure that employability academies reach the correct target audience and shorten referral pathway to organisations who work with disadvantaged groups. Although plans are still being developed, it is expected to include disability organisations. Completed
	Disabled people have appropriate support so that they can participate in the cultural life of the city on an equal basis	Deliver the Inspiring Communities theme which identifies disabled people as a priority area and removing barriers to participation to ensure all sections of the community engage with high quality culture, arts and heritage	Ongoing/ 2019- 2020	Place and Economy Department	Deliver small capital enhancement projects that will increase access for disabled people to quality cultural product and experiences 10 projects 19-20	To remove participation barriers and ensure disabled people are fully engaged with high quality culture, arts and heritage experiences, our Tourism, Culture, Heritage and Arts Unit delivered the Access and Inclusion Programme which has facilitated eight capital enhancement projects. Completed

	Improved opportunities for disabled people to engage with and influence policy makers	Consult and engage with Disability Advisory Panel in relation to the physical programme/ capital projects of the council	2019	Property and Projects Department	Number of changes made to policies/services as a result of their input	- The project teams leading on the Springfield Dam, PEACE IV and DfC Connecting Open Spaces project, engaged with the Disability Advisory panel to discuss the emerging concept designs. A site visit was conducted to a similar example to explain and explore adaptations and changes. A number of amends were made to the designs, for example, accessible friendly fishing stands. - The Boodles Dam project has taken a number of design aspects into consideration: The gate operates in two modes, with one as a release of the sliding latch by use of a RADAR key where the gate maybe opened beyond the normal closing point allowing large mobility vehicles and some path maintenance equipment to pass through. In addition the works include a 2m path around the dam which will facilitate access by people with disabilities. - The Council's Local Investment Fund (LIF) offers

						funding to local projects which aim to make a real difference in people's lives at a neighbourhood level by addressing local community needs - it supports a wide range of local community groups, including many groups that have users with a range of mobility and disability. One particular project – new sensory garden of residents of a care home – consulted on the specific needs and input view of older people with disabilities, which resulted in path widening around the garden; specific heights of garden furniture; improving paving and access points to the garden; improved gates to allow better access. - In 2019 the Department was successful in securing a bid for capital funding to improve accessibility for people with disabilities, to improve some key public assets eg to automate all the doors at the Tropical Ravine, at Botanic Park. Accessibility has also been improved at the facility, with the introduction of sensory facilities for sight and hearing-impaired visitors

						- The Council's Leisure Transformation Programme is a significant programme of capital investment to a range of new Leisure facilities across the city. In the new Leisure centres – Lisnasharragh, Andersonstown and Brook – each have Changing Places Facilities installed as part of these new facilities. - Specific to one of the Council's new leisure centre – Brook Leisure Centre– it has a state-of-the-art new sensory swimming pool (the first of its kind as a public swimming pool) with specific lighting, submersible lifting platforms and a number of adaptations to improve accessibility for people with disabilities. Completed
	Disabled people have appropriate support so that they can participate in the cultural life of the city on an equal basis	Address licensing of Pavement Cafes when the council receives guidance from the Department for Infrastructure	TBC	Planning and Building Control	Monitor implementation of licensing Pavement Cafes	The council awaits further guidance from the Department of Infrastructure to progress this action. Partially
	City centre retailers are encouraged to support accessibility for disabled people	Engage with city centre retailers to consider how to support disabled people as part of	2019	Place and Economy	Number of businesses that participate	The Economic Development unit provided support to Shopmobility to enable people with mobility requirements to access shops and services in the city centre. The organisation also received

		customer focus support programmes		Depart ment		mentoring support to sustain their organisation and investigate social enterprise opportunities. The Economic Development team had planned to work in partnership with city stakeholders to deliver a range of workshops for city retailers that would include accessibility in the city centre. This will be initiated again in the 20/21 work programme, to take account of the impact of the COVID-19. Partially
	Those with complex needs and disabilities have access to facilities to enable them to participate in the life of the city throughout the week	Have the new Changing Places Toilet facility accessible 9am-10pm Monday to Sunday	Jan 2019	Facilitie s Manag ement	Monitor the number of users and take action as required	City Hall Changing Places available. Partially

Strategic priority	Outcomes	Action Measures	Year	Respon sibility	Performance Indicators	Status at end of 2019/20
Strategic Priority 2 **Promoting positive attitudes**	Public attitudes to disabled people are more positive and negative attitudes are challenged	Facilitate biennial event on a current theme linked to council priorities e.g. Festival of Learning or Accessible Belfast	2019 2019	EDO and HR	2 events held with external/internal press and communications	1 event held on International Day of People with Disabilities Day highlighting public and employment accessibility. Key speakers included Direct Access, NI Employers for

towards Disabled People		Evaluate feedback and develop an action plan to improve disability initiatives, where appropriate		EDO and HR	Attendance by a wide range of relevant organisations and disabled people Feedback used to improve further events and future policies/initiatives	Disability and People with Disabilities. A successful event incorporated with a choir performance from a group with people with learning disabilities. Attended by a wide range of organisations and disabled people. Feedback was positive and the Council will organise a similar event in 2021. International Day for People with Disabilities event held in December 2019 Completed
	Public attitudes to disabled people are more positive and negative attitudes are challenged	Produce a film project, showcasing the diverse language and disability groups	2019	Language Officer	Showcase video clips produced by QUB incorporating Sign Languages and Disabled communications	Film was launched in November 2019. Video clips were showcased including Sign Languages and Disabled Communications. Completed
	Public attitudes to disabled people are more positive and negative attitudes are challenged	Language Officer to represent council at the Coalition on Deafness Effective partnership working with the British Deaf Association	2019 2019	Language Officer Language Officer	Attend at least 1 Coalition on Deafness meeting Develop and implement a 3 year BSL and ISL Charter Action Plan in partnership with the British Deaf Association	No Coalition meeting took place in 2019. Implementation of BSL and ISL Charter ongoing. Partially
	Disabled people can participate fully in all activities facilitated by the	Raise awareness of council's Disability Event Plan	2021	Language Officer/	A number of completed event action plans received	Completed

	council and are encouraged to do so			Departments		
	Disabled people are able to choose between options in terms of the way they receive and benefit from council services	Increase information in Sign Language to Sign Language users at City Hall and Tropical Ravine	2020	Language Officer Facilities Management	Sign Language videos to be made available at City Hall Visitors Exhibition and Tropical Ravine	Sign Language videos completed and launched at both venues. Completed
	Disabled people are able to choose between options in terms of the way they receive and benefit from council services	Review the locations of portable loop systems across our venues	2019	Language Officer Facilities Management	Portable Loop Systems in place at a number of identified venues	Installation of Portable Loop Systems at Belfast City Hall, Belfast Castle, Malone House and Roselawn Cemetery. Completed
	Disabled people have appropriate support so that they can participate in the cultural life of the city on an equal basis	Consult with internal staff and Mencap to explore the introduction of appropriate communication tools for people with learning disabilities at customer centres e.g. City Hall, Belfast Zoo	2019	Language Officer	A number of communication tools for people with learning disabilities at customer centres	Initial discussions have taken place. The JAM card accessibility communication tool is in place at various customer centres. Partially
	Disabled people have appropriate support so that they can participate in the cultural life of the city on an equal basis	Liaise with AccessAble to monitor and review the new App for people with disabilities accessing facilities and services in the City of Belfast	2019	Language Officer	Increased satisfaction accessing facilities and services in the City of Belfast	Monitoring of AccessAble app on-g Completed oing.
	Disabled people are aware of the availability of accessible	Improve accessibility in contacting and	2019	Language Officer	Pilot and deliver a Sign Language Video Relay Service and Video Remote Interpreting Service. VRS	VRS and VRI pilot on-going since May 2019. The pilot will end in October 2020.

	information and make use of it	communication for Deaf Users		Facilities Management	on website and VRI at Cecil Ward Building, Belfast Zoo and Olympia Leisure Centre	Completed
	Sign Language Users are aware of accessible communication within the council	Create a translation protocol document for Sign Language Users and disabled people accessing council's online material and electronic documents	2020	Language Officer	A number of identified BCC online material and electronic documents to be produced in accessible formats	A 'Making Communications Accessible' Guide is currently being finalised. This Guide will list protocols for translation and communication accessibility. Partially
	Disabled people are aware of the availability of accessible information and make use of it	Increased provision of an accessible City Matters magazine for disabled people	2019	Language Officer/ Comms	Audio version of each quarterly City Matters magazine produced	Ongoing. Recordings are produced and distributed to people with sight loss at the same time when the magazine is distributed to every household in Belfast. An audio version of each edition of City Matters (Belfast residents magazine) is produced normally 4 editions per year along with versions in Braille and large print Completed
	Disabled people are aware of the availability of accessible information and make use of it	Consult with City Matters team to include disability related articles in City Matters magazine, sharing accessible information within the council and Community Partners	2019	Language Officer/ Comms	A number of disability related articles to be added to the City matters magazines	Ongoing since June 2019. 26 disability related articles have been printed. Marketing and Corporate Communications team liaises with Equality & Diversity officers on updated disability

						information/opportunities and promotes these across key external channels such as City Matters (Belfast resident's magazine) 4 editions per year and also on the Council's external digital channels (website) where applicable Completed
	Disabled people are aware of the availability of accessible information and make use of it	Meet with key staff to discuss and explore the preparation and production of council documents in alternative formats	2019	Language Officer/ Comms	Arrange at least 2 meetings per year with key staff	1 meeting held to discuss arrangements for council documents in alternative formats. An audio version of each edition of City Matters (Belfast residents magazine), normally 4 editions each year, is produced along with versions in Braille and large print Completed
	Council increases the level of inclusive/accessible communications so that disabled people can access information as independently as possible and make informed choices	Consult with Corporate Communications to explore the introduction of accessible changes being made on council's website and social media platform (to include easy reading; audio; Sign Language translation and subtitles on video)	2020	Language Officer/ Comms	3 meetings held with Corporate Communications Consult with Corporate Communications to identify a number of audio providers and to assign a provider for the new council's website	Marketing and Communications team have built accessibility in to the procurement of the new website. It will meet WCAG 2.1 requirements. The Online Team promotes accessibility throughout the council internally through articles in Interlink, face-to-face briefings and Team Brief articles. Completed

	Disabled people are aware of how council services can support them Promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people	Provide information to disabled people on aspects of council services which specifically affect them through: minimum of 4 articles per year in City Matters; minimum of 2 targeted information leaflets per year; accessible information on the council website Include articles related to disability and ensure photography of disabled people is included	2019 2019	Corporate Communications/ Lead Communicators/ Language Officer	% of images in printed documents featuring positive images of disabled people Number of documents provided in alternative formats % of people who found the information relevant and useful assessed by appropriate evaluation tool	Images introduced in City Matters magazine during 2019. 11 disability images were printed in the City Matters magazine. 4 City Matters magazines provided in audio format. Completed Over 3 editions printed in 2019 (Summer, Autumn, Winter) and the Spring edition in 202 approximately 12 positive images were featured along with 26 articles relating to disability. Completed
	Staff will be engaged and awareness will be raised about particular disabilities	Include disability related information in staff e-briefings, staff newsletters/ magazines, staff meetings, email, intranet, internet (internal) Include annual disability days on Interlink and consider awareness raising activity	2019	HR/EDO	% of internal communications documents which featured disability related information % of people who found the information relevant and useful assessed by appropriate evaluation tool	10 articles included on staff intranet relating to disability related awareness days/ weeks 1 article highlighting the event to mark International Day for People with Disabilities Two Disability Staff Network meeting articles Eight articles specific to health and wellbeing 12 other articles e.g. awareness raising sessions (Action on

						Hearing Loss); blood donation session, information sessions on welfare/ changes to benefit system; Workable NI 13 articles relating to charity fundraising events by staff Completed
	Council increases the level of inclusive/accessible communications so that disabled people can access information as independently as possible and make informed choices	Communication tools for people with learning disabilities to be introduced at customer centres e.g. City Hall reception, Belfast Zoo	2019 - 2022	Departments	Appropriate communication tools introduced at selected relevant sites	Sign Language translation was introduced in the Visitor Centre in May 2019. Free audio tours were introduced in August 2019, and can be downloaded via CloudGuide App in English. The Visitor Centre is fitted with an induction hearing loop and some staff are trained in deaf awareness and BSL skills. We support the JAM initiative and signage is displayed in Visitor Centre. Zoo holds an annual sensory event for visitors on the autism spectrum. Completed
	Awareness of disability and the disability duties when compiling policies and making decisions will be increased	Deliver equality screening training based on an analysis of priority areas and job roles	2019	EDO	100% of priority one and priority two staff identified are trained Increased understanding and use of appropriate screening tools and methodology assessed by audit of screenings carried out and staff feedback	One Equality Screening training was completed. Completed

	Develop the capacity of the organisation to support people with disabilities, focusing on communication	Provision of Sign Language courses for employees	2019	HR/Language Officer	1 pilot introduction to BSL course 12 employees (2 from each Department) to be able to communicate in Sign Language	Pilot completed in October 2019. 9 employees completed and passed Pilot course delivered. 10 people completed the training. 100% pass rate achieved Completed
	Develop the capacity of the organisation to support people with disabilities, focusing on communication	Provision of tailor-made course to employees	2019	HR/Language Officer	Deliver 2 tailor made disability courses to employees	None were delivered. Four neurodiversity training sessions delivered. Partially

	Develop the capacity of staff to ensure awareness of the legal obligations in relation to employment and service delivery	Roll-out Diversity Awareness training programmes for council employees: - continue delivery of disability equality awareness training; - continue to seek nominations from staff with disabilities to provide specific awareness raising session around disability - continue providing access to diversity e-learning programme; - continue delivery of classroom based diversity training; - identify and target awareness raising sessions on specific areas of disability - incorporate equality and	2019	HR	Deliver 12 disability awareness training sessions to managers and employees Deliver 12 diversity awareness training sessions to managers and employees All new staff to attend training within 6 months of commencing employment All Tier 3 Managers to attend Equality and Diversity module All Corporate Management Team to attend Unconscious Bias training	11 dates were agreed. Five training sessions delivered. Six cancelled due to low registration Thirteen dates were agreed. Nine sessions delivered. Four cancelled due to low registration 33% of new staff attended diversity training within six months of starting employment 21% new staff attended disability awareness training within six months of starting employment Senior leadership programme delivery delayed as a result of COVID 19. Currently sourcing provider. Partially

		diversity module into Tier 3 Training - Unconscious bias training will be rolled out to Corporate Management Team				
	Develop the capacity of Members to ensure awareness of the legal obligations in relation to employment and service delivery	Research the possibility of including disability awareness sessions for Members in the Members Training Programme and include Disability Action Plan in the members Induction Programme Upload the Disability Action Plan to the Members Portal	2019	HR	Communicate outcomes of research and plan next steps if applicable Disability Action Plan uploaded to the Members Portal	Disability Action Plan has been uploaded to the Members' Portal. Disability Awareness training for members is still under consideration Partially
	The capacity of staff/ volunteers will be increased to help them manage their	Provide emotional health and wellbeing awareness training for staff and	2019	HR/Occ Health	Deliver 4 Positive Mental Health training sessions	5 Positive Mental Health sessions delivered

	own emotional health and well-being	council volunteers (internal)			Deliver one mindfulness programme % of staff who found the training useful	One Mindfulness session delivered Score out of 10- an average score of 9.3 from participants said they could use what they learned right away Completed
	The capacity of staff/ volunteers will be increased to help them manage their own emotional health and well-being	Provide training for managers in managing stress and mental health issues (internal)	2019	HR/Occ Health	Deliver 4 stress awareness training sessions % of staff who found the training useful	4 sessions delivered Score out of 10- an average score of 9.2 from participants stated that they could use what they learned right away Completed
	Staff will be engaged and awareness will be raised about health and wellbeing initiatives.	Maintain dedicated health and well-being page on Interlink (internal)	2019	HR/Corporate Communications	Include monthly updates on Interlink	A health and well-being section exists on Interlink under the Support & Development section of the site and is updated on regular basis. Completed
	Develop the capacity of staff to help them manage their own mental health and to help support others	Review pilot programme for mental health first aiders	2019	HR	Evaluation of programme used to inform decision on roll out of programme	Pilot Mental Health First Aid programme evaluated and success of programme led to decision to roll out future programmes. One additional session delivered 18 people attended Completed
	Promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people	Printed documents and brand campaigns to feature positive images of disabled people	2019	Corporate Comm	% of documents/campaigns which feature positive images of disabled people	Marketing and Corporate Communications adopts an inclusive approach to external and internal communications

				unicati ons		including the use of articles and photographs of disabled people when opportunities arise. In 2019-2020 approximately 11 positive images of disabled people were used in City Matters, Belfast's residents magazine which is distributed to over 155,000 homes in Belfast. Images have been used on the council's home page to promote Signvideo, play areas, Changing Places Completed
	Disabled people are able to access the information they need in the format most accessible to them	Continue to promote/communicate our options for access to information/forms/ people/services in relation to council buildings	2019	Corpor ate Comm unicati ons	Survey the number of departments who do this successfully and report on findings	Due to the Covid -19 this action has been delayed. This action is now part of the Language Officer role. Not completed
	Improve awareness of disabled toilet facilities for people with disabilities Improve accessibility to Changing Places facilities across the City Improve social inclusion for people with disabilities	To promote and review disabled toilet access and engage with disability groups to encourage wider use To promote the Changing Places facilities across the City and review the existing process	2019 2019 2019	City & Neighb ourhoo d Service s Depart ment	Report on the review of existing process and the number of stakeholder organisations engaged for 19/20 Increase in choice of available Changing Places facilities across the city from 3 to 5 over the next 24 months Ensuring a continuing presence of Changing Places facilities are	The waste service continues to provide toilet provision for all, ensuring that the facilities meet a broad spectrum of needs. To ensure the Council improves the awareness of disabled toilet facilities for people with disabilities, the service has met with several relevant professional organisations such as British Toilet Association, & Disability Action to get a lead

		To provide information and training (where necessary) to front-line staff about RADAR key, including its use and how to apply for it			available on BCC and Changing Places website	on best or new approaches, terminology and thinking. As well as this the service meets (through community engage) the G8 group, who represent various community groups across the City, to ensure the agenda of toilet provision and residents needs in an age friendly Belfast is taken into any reviews or approaches The waste service has always encouraged a proactive approach to providing public toilets and has been a champion of the provision of Changing Places toilets and will continue to work with professional associations, and Council services to extend the range of Changing places toilets. The service however has no remit over the installation of these toilets. There are now 10 changing places facilities across the City, of which 3 are provided by Belfast or Belfast related services. The waste service maintains a relationship with and represents the Council to the Changing Places Org, http://www.changing-places.org/

						and ensures all Belfast CP facilities are registered. Appropriate staff within the new customer hub/contact services are all briefed on the processes to obtain a RADAR key, and promotion of the RADAR scheme is provided on the Council website. Completed Changing Places facilities were provided at the Spring Fair but were not available for the Summer Rose Fair as no provider. Partially
	Develop the capacity of the organisation to support disabled people to access the city centre	Scope and research the accessibility of Belfast City Centre to identify gaps and opportunities, to enable disabled people to participate fully in city centre life. This will include initiatives to promote accessibility in the city centre from an economic development and perspective.	2019	Place and Economy Department	Conclusion of research and determine next steps in delivery to target hard to reach groups	Scoping and research into the accessibility of the city centre to support the development of a diverse and vibrant city centre has been undertaken from a number of angles. This includes the development of: • the Cultural Strategy which has a priority to support high quality cultural events that are accessible, diverse and inclusive; • the Sundays in the City programme, which identified improvements to public transport to improve access into the city centre; • the City Centre Connectivity Study which has produced a Bolder Vision which sets the

						ambition to transform the city centre to be a healthy, shared, vibrant and sustainable space. To maximise the impact, these workstrands will be taken forward in an integrated way under the Future City Centre programme.
	Persons with a disability are able to attend and fully engage in events and programmes delivered by council	Ensure that the Inclusive Events Checklist is completed for all events that are being held in council facilities	2019-2022	All Departments	% large events held with an inclusive events checklist completed	Improvements were made at the Autumn Fair so that the event was more Dementia friendly i.e. revised signage, provision of quiet space. Seven Inclusive Events plans were completed in 2019 Completed
	Persons with a disability are able to easily access relevant council information	Promote the range of alternative formats that are available	2019-2022	All Departments	Evaluation of accessibility of council information via various formats	Due to the Covid -19 this training has been delayed. Not completed
	Promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people	Organise specialist training/workshop for Project Sponsors/Project Managers/APMs regarding the relevant DDA issues on capital build scheme	2019	Property and Projects Department	Deliver 2 training sessions % of staff who found the training useful	Due to the Covid -19 this training has been delayed. Not completed

Minutes of Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum
10th December 2020

Attendance

Members:
Councillor Christina Black (Chair)
Councillor Billy Hutchinson
Councillor Michael Long
Councillor Donal Lyons
Councillor Mal O'Hara
Alderman George Dorrian
Alderman Sonia Copeland
Councillor Fiona Ferguson
Councillor Ciaran Beattie

Officers:
Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive
Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources
John Walsh, City Solicitor
Sinead Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes (for Item 8)
John Tully, Director of City & Organisational Strategy (Items 5 & 9)
Christine Robinson, Strategy, Policy & Partnerships Manager (for Item 4)
Joanne Delaney, Portfolio and Programme Coordinator (secretariat)

1. Finance Update

The Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Finance and Resources presented to members an update on the rate setting process for 2021/22. He advised that Director challenge meetings had taken place and a report will be brought to December SP&R for Members consideration. This report will also include an overview of the priorities and work in progress to deliver the required level of efficiency savings and growth proposals for 2021/22. In relation to a query raised by a Member on the proposed extension to the deadline for setting the district rate, the Director advised he is still awaiting confirmation.

Members discussed the work being carried out by Ulster University to undertake Rates income modelling projections, particularly in relation to vacant properties and the impact on District Rates. An update will be provided to Members as this work progresses.

2. Current Restrictions

The Chief Executive provided an update to Members on the easing of restrictions shortly due to commence and advised that officers are currently assessing the impact on Council services, with a report to be presented to December SP&R Committee. She advised, clarification and guidance is being sought from the Executive Office on specific areas where required in relation to the new regulations. Some Members raised issues in relation to the role for Council regarding enforcement, and the Chief Executive advised that work is ongoing with other bodies regarding enforcement of the new regulations and this will be carried out in line with available resources.

3. Belfast Region City Deal

The Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Finance and Resources provided an update on the progress of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD), including an update on the development of Outline Business Cases (OBCs) and progress on agreeing a phased deal with the NI and UK Governments so that funding can begin to flow from 1 April 2021. Members also received an overview on Destination Hub a key project under the tourism and regeneration pillar led by Belfast City Council and the key regional projects funded through the BRCD that will transform the region's economy, including Belfast's economy, tackling fundamental barriers to inclusive growth, driving increased productivity and helping to drive economic recovery**.** An update report on these projects along with OBC progress will be brought to December SP&R.

4. Civic Engagement Platform (Your Say Belfast) Demonstration

The Strategic Policy & Partnership Manager carried out a demonstration on the recently launched new corporate platform for citizen engagement: 'Your Say Belfast'. An online web based platform that allows citizens to provide their input, and discuss their views on a wide range of city projects, initiatives and topics. She advised that guidance on use of the site and how to register had been circulated to all Members. Members to contact the Strategic Policy & Partnership Manager should they require individual tutorial session on how to use the site. A Member raised a query in relation Belfast: One Million Trees and the Strategic Policy & Partnership Manager to follow up.

5. NILGA - Transformation and Driving Practical Change in Local Government

The Director of City & Organisational Strategy updated members on a request from NILGA, seeking corporate views on local government reform to date. As well as what is needed to sustain councils and revitalise communities as part of post pandemic recovery and towards

a more locally driven suite of policies and resources for Northern Ireland. He outlined the proposed draft response that would be submitted to December SP&R for consideration**.** Party Leaders agreed to provide any additional comments to the draft response, by Monday 14 December in advance of SP&R.

6. Review of Active Belfast

The Chief Executive outlined that Members had agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting of SP&R setting out the terms of reference for a review of the Active Belfast Limited Board, which will also consider membership and governance arrangements. She advised that a workshop would be organised for Party Group Leaders to discuss with a report to then be brought to a future meeting of SP&R. Members noted that a public recruitment process is planned for January to March 2021 for independent members of the Board.

7. Notice of Motions/Business Committee

The City Solicitor discussed the proposal on a process for dealing with Notices of Motion previously considered by SP&R Committee. Members discussed in detail different options of managing the process of Notice of Motions, including the consideration of a Business Committee. There was a general consensus that the City Solicitor look at a Business Committee model that would be bespoke to the Council and would include all party representation. A report will be bought back to the Forum for consideration in advance of being submitted to SP&R Committee. It was agreed that this would be done in line with a review of standing orders.

8. Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund

Members received a presentation on the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund designed to support capital projects within the Belfast City Council area. The Director of Physical Programmes outlined the proposed underlining principles, funding allocation models and the use of thresholds for the fund. She advised a report will be presented to December SP&R to consider these proposals. Members provided some feedback which was noted by the Director and any further feedback to be forwarded to the Director in advance of SP&R. A further report will be bought in January on the specifics of the fund including the decision making process.

9. Development of Inclusive Growth Team

The Director of City & Organisational Strategy provided an update for Members on the development of the Inclusive Growth Team to drive forward the Inclusive Growth Strategy. A report will be presented to December SP&R for consideration.

10. Planning Update

The Chief Executive updated the Forum on the live planning applications and informed the Forum of the applications that were being presented to the Planning Committee in January and February.

11. AOB

Nightingale Court Service

The Chief Executive advised that a request had been received regarding the use of the Waterfront for a Nightingale Court Service, given the pressure on existing courts provision with ongoing social distancing requirements. The Director of Physical Projects advised that this is a booking of space rather than a lease so it will be brought to SP&R Committee in December for notation only and that the ICC Board have approved.

Commercial Plan

The Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Finance and Resources provided an update for Members on the proposed Commercial Plan and Pricing Policy, which were referred back to SP&R following December Council meeting. Following discussion. It was agreed that Party Briefings would be held in January to discuss the plans in more detail and how best to take this work forward.

Installation of a memorial bench for Noah Donohoe

The Chief Executive advised Members of a request from the Family of Noah Donohoe to install a memorial bench in Botanic Gardens with a plaque attached in memory of Noah. Members agreed the request, and in empathy with the Donohoe family agreed that the cost will be covered by the Council given the exceptional circumstances of this tragic case.

Investigation Timeframes

The City Solicitor provided an update on the timeframe for the independent investigation being carried out by Peter Coll QC relating to Roselawn on 30 June. Members noted it would be completed in early January.

Operational Recovery

Alderman Copeland raised an issue in relation to contacting officers in key services, where staff are not back in the office and are still home working. The Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Finance and Resources to follow up.

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Belfast City Council

STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Subject:	**Minutes of Meeting of Audit and Risk Panel**
Date:	18th December, 2020
Reporting Officer:	Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources and Deputy Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	Claire O'Prey, Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services

Restricted Reports				
Is this report restricted?	**Yes**		**No**	X
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?				
After Committee Decision				
After Council Decision				
Sometime in the future				
Never				

Call-in				
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	**Yes**	X	**No**	

1.0	**Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with a summary of the key issues which were considered and discussed by the Audit and Risk Panel at its December meeting and present the minutes of the last meeting of the Panel for approval.
2.0	**Recommendations**
2.1	The Committee is requested to note the key issues arising at the meeting, approves the addition of two critical services to the Business Continuity Management policy in Appendix B and approve the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Risk Panel of 8th December 2020 at Appendix A.

3.0	**Main Report**
	Key Issues <u>Audit and Risk Panel</u>
3.1	This was the **second virtual meeting of the Audit and Risk Panel, with the new non-executive member, Ms. Fahy also in attendance**. The minutes of the meeting are attached at Appendix A, with key matters summarised below. <u>Belfast City Council Statement of Accounts 2019/20 / NIAO Report to Those Charged with Governance</u>
3.2	The Panel considered the draft **Statement of Accounts** of the Council for the year-end 31 March 2020, noting the position regarding reserves, debtors and creditors and the annual governance statement. These accounts are a fundamental part of the councils overall corporate governance framework and provide assurance to Members and ratepayers on the stewardship of the councils finances and its financial position.
3.3	The NIAO Director informed the Panel that their audit of the accounts is almost complete and on the basis of the work completed to date, the Local Government Auditor (LGA) will report on the 2019-20 financial statements with an **unqualified audit opinion**.
3.4	The Panel considered the **draft Report to those Charged with Governance for 2019/20**, which outlines the system / control issues arising from the NIAO audit, noting that **no significant issues had been raised by the NIAO.** <u>Internal Audit Plan / Implementation of Audit Recommendations</u>
3.5	The Panel received an update on the **progress being made to deliver the internal audit plan for 2020/21**, a plan that has been revised to reflect changes to the Council's assurance needs arising from the impact of Covid-19, while continuing to meet our statutory obligations in relation to financial management, systems of internal control, management of risk and good governance.
3.6	

	The Panel also noted a number of audits / reviews finalised in the period and **requested progress updates on the implementation of the recommendations arising from the audits of government procurement cards; health and safety arrangements for work related transport and resilience**.
3.7	The Panel was also provided with an update on the recent Recommendations Monitor exercise, noting that performance in implementing agreed audit recommendations had dropped. The Panel were informed that senior management had been made aware of the need to implement these agreed recommendations to maintain robust internal controls particularly in the changed environment.
	<u>Risk Management / Business Continuity Management (BCM)</u>
3.8	The Panel considered **the corporate risk register that had been updated in the light of Covid-19**, and the key mitigating actions that management would take to help manage these risks to a more acceptable level. **The Panel was informed that the risk rating has increased for two corporate risks, the risk relating to the Council's Financial Position and the risk relating to the Strength of the Member / Officer Relationship.** The Panel will receive quarterly updates on the progress being made to manage the corporate risks.
3.9	The Panel received an update on the work that had been done by critical services to substantively review and update their BCM plans to reflect the learning to date from our response to the impact of Covid-19. The Panel also **agreed for two further services to be added to the current list of 15 critical services outlined in the BCM policy, namely Property Maintenance and the Customer Hub** (due to be operational in April 2021). The updated BCM policy is at Appendix B.
	<u>Covid19 Fraud Risks / Raising Concerns</u>
3.10	The Panel was informed of a guide published by the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) on Covid-19 Fraud Risks. In essence the NIAO highlight that the impact of Covid19 has increased the risk of fraud because the application of normal internal controls may be disrupted due to remote working / reassignment of staff / processes moving online. The Panel noted that AGRS has been working on an update of the Council's corporate fraud risk assessment and **from initial discussions with management, in comparison to the previous fraud risk assessment, the level of fraud risk in the Council, has potentially**

	increased in 3 areas; grants / funding; IT / cyber security and contract management. The Panel noted the measures that had been taken and are planned to ensure that appropriate mitigations are put in place.
3.11	The Panel also considered recent guidance issued by the NIAO on Raising Concerns (whistleblowing) and noted the work that was underway to ensure that the Council's arrangements reflected best practice.
	Corporate Health and Safety, Absence Management and Performance Improvement
3.12	The Panel received reports / updates for quarter ending September 2020 on corporate health and safety, absence management and performance improvement. **The Panel welcomed these updates including the significant decrease in sickness absence at the end of quarter two which is 4.33 days compared to 6.05 days for the same period last year.** The Panel requested that Corporate HR consider what further analysis and reporting is needed around absence due to stress, depression and anxiety. The Panel noted the changed arrangements for meeting our performance improvement duty during 2020-21 due to Covid-19, as advised by the Department for Communities.
	Financial and Resource Implications
3.13	None
	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment
3.14	None known at this time .
4.0	**Documents Attached**
	Appendix A - Minutes of Audit and Risk Panel 8 December 2020 Appendix B – Updated Business Continuity Management Policy

Appendix A

Audit and Risk Panel

Tuesday, 8th December, 2020

REMOTE MEETING OF AUDIT AND RISK PANEL

Members present: Alderman Rodgers (in the Chair);
Councillors Carson, Hanvey, Hutchinson, Hussey, O'Hara; and Ms. G. Fahy

In attendance: Mr. R. Cregan, Strategic Director of Finance and Resources;
Ms. C. O'Prey, Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services (AGRS);
Mr. T. Wallace, Head of Finance;
Ms. C. Sheridan, Head of Human Resources;
Mr. M. Whitmore, Audit, Governance and Risk Services Manager;
Mr. L. Mulholland, Audit, Governance and Risk Services Manager;
Mrs. E. Eaton, Corporate Health and Safety Manager;
Ms. H. Lyons, Corporate Finance Manager;
Ms. C. Kane, Director, Northern Ireland Audit Office;
Mr. B. Murray, Waste Manager (Strategic Planning and Delivery) and
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology for inability to attend was reported from Councillor Matt. Collins.

Minutes

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

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

Schedule of Meetings

The Audit Panel agreed to the following meeting dates for the period from January – December, 2021, to commence at 12.30pm, with a pre-meeting for Members at 12.15pm:

- Tuesday, 9th March;
- Tuesday, 8th June;
- Tuesday, 7th September; and
- Tuesday, 7th December.

Absence Rates Q/E September 2020

The Panel considered a report providing information on the absence figures for quarter two the financial year 2020/2021. The Head of Human Resources reported that sickness absence, per full-time employee (FTE), for that period had been 4.33 days, which was a significant decrease of 1.72 days compared to absence for the same period last year (6.05). She explained that the corporate target was 12.26 days. The Panel was advised that the absence rate reduced to 4.12 days per FTE when COVID 19 related absence was discounted, against an agreed corporate target of 6.13 days.

She explained that there had been an increase in the number of staff with no absence throughout the year, at 77.7% compared to the same period last year (61.88%). The Panel was advised that long term absences had also decreased compared to the same time last year.

The Head of Human Resources highlighted that analysis showed that depression/anxiety/stress and musculo-skeletal were the top two reasons for absence, and Depression, Anxiety, Stress accounted for almost 45% of all days lost due to sickness absence (44.64%), and 79.15% of these days were attributed to personal stress. She advised that musculo-skeletal related absence accounted for almost 20% of all days lost due to sickness absence (19.12%) with 89.66% of these days were attributable to non-work related reasons.

She outlined that, in quarter two, 338 employees were off due to sickness absence and discretion had been applied to 49 of these employees (14.5%) and their absence accounted for approximately 26% of the total absence for quarter two.

In respect of disability related absence, 36.67% of absence was recorded as disability related, with 52.42% being managed as long term.

The Members were advised that the Council continued to be impacted by absence due to COVID 19. A total of 68 employees were recorded as absent due to COVID19, accounting for 4.88% of the total absence in quarter two. The Panel was advised that management had been operating in accordance with government and public health guidance since the start of the pandemic and had provided guidance to both management and staff.

The Head of Human Resources advised that a review of the Attendance Policy and Booklet was ongoing and that consultation with management, Occupational Health and employee Counselling had taken place. She explained that any revisions to the current absence trigger points would be reported to the Panel, once consultation with Trade Unions had been completed.

She highlighted that Corporate HR was currently in the process of designing an absence reporting 'dash board' that would standardise how absence was reported to Department Management Teams to help assist within case management and compliance with the Attendance Policy.

In response to Members questions, she explained further the management of sickness absence due to stress and highlighted the services the Council provided such as Occupation Health, Employee Counselling and online resources. She also provided further information regarding staff which had been working from home and furloughed since the pandemic, together with its impact on sick absence figures.

After discussion, the Panel noted the information which was provided and that a reporting mechanism to provide further detail and benchmarking on sickness absence due to stress, depression and anxiety would be examined for the next meeting, together with further data on the impact of Covid-19 and furlough on the Council's overall sick absence figures.

Corporate Health and Safety Performance Report

The Corporate Health and Safety Manager reported that the number of employee accidents for quarter two of 2020/2021 was 28, which was 12 more than in the previous quarter. She highlighted that the highest number of accidents had been caused by employees being injured while lifting or carrying.

She advised that there were 8 non-employee accidents during the quarter, 3 of which were due to slips, trips or falls.

The Panel was informed that the number of RIDDOR reportable accidents had also increased by 3 from the last quarter, to 9.

The Corporate Health and Safety Manager reported that there had been an increase in the number of reported Work Related Violence incidents from the last quarter, from 16 to 38, and the majority of which were of verbal abuse.

The Panel was provided with details of two complaints which were made to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) by staff during the last quarter in relation to training and equipment safety and staff uniform. The Corporate Health and Safety Manager also explained that Malone House had been inspected as part of a routine NIFRS inspection programme and no action was anticipated.

With regards to Covid-19, the Corporate Health and Safety Manager explained that the Unit continued to support the Council's Silver Group, Operational Recovery Group and individual service managers to comply with evolving government guidance and to ensure the health and safety of the Council's workers and others. It was acknowledged, however, that the resource required from the Corporate Health and Safety Unit to support the organisation came at the expense of a reduction of routine health and safety activity including inspections and training. She highlighted that fire risk assessments and performance monitoring of outstanding health, safety and fire actions were anticipated to resume in quarter three.

During discussion, the Corporate Health and Safety Manager advised that an update on the well-being of the employee who had been assaulted in the Holylands and the status of the investigation would be provided to the Panel.

Noted.

Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) - Draft report to those charged with governance for 2019/20 and update on the 2019/20 audit

The Panel was advised that the Local Government Auditor had issued, in draft format, her Report to those Charged with Governance for 2019/2020.

The Director of the Northern Ireland Audit Office provided an overview of the draft report, which summarised the system and control issues arising from the Northern Ireland Audit Office's audit of the Council's Financial Statements for 2019/2020. She indicated that the audit had been largely completed and that it was anticipated that the Local Government Auditor would certify the Council's statements with an "unqualified opinion".

She informed the Panel that the Local Government Auditor had identified two areas where she has made prioritised recommendations.

It was reported that the Auditor had initially identified no significant risks as part of the audit strategy. However, having reconsidered their audit in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting financial pressures on Councils, the Auditor has since included a significant risk to consider the financial resilience of the Council as part of the audit of the 2019-20 accounts. The Auditor had assessed the going concern basis for the preparation of the accounts, recommended additional Covid-19 related disclosures and reviewed the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Director of the Northern Ireland Audit Office advised that the 'Priority 2' recommendation needed to be reviewed and responded to by management as follows: Reconciliation of trial balance to financial statements – recommendation that the primary statements and supporting notes reconcile to the underlying transactions and sufficient supporting documentation is held for all manual adjustments to the figures included in the accounts.

She highlighted the 'Priority 3' area for response was in relation to Borrowings and explained the recommendation to formally document the notification of all borrowing to the Chief Executive and Finance Director.

She also provided an overview of the liabilities, disclosures, and the implementation of last year's recommendations.

During discussion, the Chairperson, on behalf of the Panel, thanked the Finance Team and the NIAO staff for their hard work on the completion of the 2019-20 Draft Report to those charged with Governance.

The Head of Finance highlighted that, in relation to the Auditor's recommendations, management had not had the opportunity to provide comments to address these issues, however, these would be presented to the Audit and Risk Panel at its meeting in March 2021.

After discussion, the Panel noted the Report to those charged with Governance and the Audit results for 2019/20.

Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) - Financial Statement of Accounts for approval 2019/20

The Panel considered the following report which had been prepared by the Financial Accounting Manager and her team:

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to the Audit and Risk Panel, the Statement of Accounts of the Council, including the Annual Governance Statement, for the period ending 31 March 2020.

1.2 The Statement of Accounts are an important element of the council's overall corporate governance framework as they provide assurance to Members and ratepayers on the stewardship of the council's finances and its financial position.

1.3 The Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2020, as attached, have been prepared in line with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019/20 based on International Financial Reporting Standards and the Department for the Communities Accounts Direction, Circular LG 03/20 dated 17 February 2020.

1.4 I can confirm that the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2020 has been prepared in the form directed by the Department for the Communities and in my opinion the Statement of Accounts give a true and fair view of the income and expenditure and cash flows for the financial year and the financial position as at the end of the financial year.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Panel is asked to

- **Recommend that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approve the Council's Statement of**

Accounts and incorporated Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2020.

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

3.1 Audit Opinion

It is the Local government Auditors' opinion that:

- **the financial statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with relevant legal and statutory requirements and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019-20, of the financial position of Belfast City Council as at 31 March 2020 and its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and**
- **the statement of accounts have been properly prepared in accordance with the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and the Department for Communities directions issued thereunder; and**
- **the part of the Remuneration Report to be audited has been properly prepared in accordance with the Department for Communities directions made under the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015; and**
- **the information given in the Narrative Report for the financial year ended 31 March 2020 is consistent with the financial statements.**

Reserves

3.2 General Fund

The credit balance on the General Fund has increased to £28,692,673 (of which £15,791,541 relates to specified reserves). The movement on the reserves balance is summarised in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Summary of Reserves Position

Opening Balance	**£25.8m**
In year movement in reserves	**£2.9m**
Closing Balance	**£28.7m**

Specified Reserves at year end	**£15.8m**
Balance Available	**£12.9m**

3.3 Capital Fund £19,369,748

The Capital Fund is made up of the Belfast Investment Fund (£723). The fund has been created to support key partnership projects to regenerate Belfast and help lever substantial funds from other sources, the Local Investment Fund (£1,171,489) to fund smaller local regeneration projects, the City Centre Investment Fund (£15,154,012) to support the Belfast City Centre Regeneration Investment Plans, the Social Outcomes Fund (£3,043,524) to support City Centre projects which might not generate a direct financial return but would enhance the overall City Centre offer and support the attraction of investment.

3.4 Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund £8,000,000

This fund, created in year from the Belfast Investment Fund, is to support neighbourhood regeneration and tourism projects in local neighbourhoods.

3.5 Leisure Mobilisation Fund £887,800

This fund is to support the Leisure Transformation Programme and will cover programme level costs including communications, engagement and procurement costs.

3.6 Capital Receipts Reserve £9,772,458 and Deferred Capital Receipts £342,300

These are capital receipts which have originated primarily from the sale of assets and which have not yet been used to finance capital expenditure.

3.7 Other Fund Balances and Reserves £298,224

This relates to the Election Reserve (£3,300) which has been set up to smooth the cost of running council elections, the BWUH Subvention Fund (£135,499) to support national and international organisations in bringing their conferences to Belfast and the BWUH Sinking Fund (£159,425) to support planned maintenance and future capital works at the new exhibition centre.

3.8 **Debt**

The overall level of trade debtors had increased this year from £2.5m at 31 March 2019 to £4.1m at 31 March 2020. The main reason is an increase in public authority debt at year end. An analysis of trade debtors, inclusive of VAT, for the last two years is shown below:

	31 March 2020	31 March 2019
Less than three months	£3,239,834	£2,131,221
Three to one year	£614,739	£128,050
More than one year	£218,298	£285,208
Total	**£4,072,871**	**£2,544,479**

3.9 **Creditors**

The Department for Communities has set councils a target of paying invoices within 30 days. During the year the council paid 67,810 invoices totalling £182,900,458.

The average time taken to pay creditor invoices was 10 days for the year ended 31 March 2020. The Council paid 50,885 invoices within 10 days, 63,385 invoices within 30 days, and 4,425 invoices outside of 30 days. The council endeavours to process invoices as quickly as possible and has an improvement plan to support this process.

Annual Governance Statement (AGS)

3.10 **The Statement of Accounts include Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for the year 2019/20, which has been prepared in line with the Accounts Directive provided by the Department for Communities, NIAO guidance and is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government'. Specifically the AGS sets out:**

- **scope of responsibility of the Council in relation to governance**
- **the purpose of the governance framework**
- **the governance framework in place**
- **review of effectiveness of the governance framework**
- **significant governance issues to be disclosed.**

3.11 **The AGS is approved by the Chair of the Strategic Policy and Resources, the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance**

and Resources. It is subject to review by the LGA (NIAO) as part of their annual audit.

Financial & Resource Implications

3.12 None

Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

3.13 None."

After discussion, the Panel recommended that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approve the Council's Statement of Accounts and incorporated Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31st March, 2020.

AGRS Progress Report November 2020

The Panel considered a report which provided an overview of the specific internal audits which had been carried out and finalised during September, 2020 and November, 2020 by Audit, Governance and Risk Services.

It was highlighted that a number of audits had been completed during the period, 1 of which had received an assurance opinion of major improvement, relating to Government Procurement Cards; 3 audits, that is, Health and Safety - Work Related Transport, Police and Community Safety Partnerships, Corporate risk reviews – Management of City Risks and Sustainable Development/Preparing for Climate Change, had an audit opinion of some improvement needed.

The Panel was informed that that the following audits were in progress:

- Accounts payable (fieldwork)
- Temporary Expenditure Controls - Agency (fieldwork)
- Temporary Expenditure Controls - Vacancy Control (fieldwork)
- Cash Flow Forecasting (fieldwork)
- Estates Management (fieldwork)
- Peace IV (fieldwork)
- Property Maintenance (draft report)
- Performance Management (drafting report)
- Pitches (draft report)

The AGRS Manager also provided an overview of other key pieces of work which had been completed in the quarter, such as Follow Up on Cloud Computing;
HR Payroll Phase 2 – Organisation Structure; and Changes to Financial Governance Arrangements.

He highlighted that AGRS regularly provided advice and consultancy to departments and services around the Council and that this had increased in recent

months as the Council responded and recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic. He advised that the Team also continued to provide ongoing advice and consultancy to boards and working groups.

He pointed out that AGRS had undertaken an exercise to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the implementation of outstanding audit actions; the results of this exercise are reported separately.

In relation to investigations, he advised that AGRS were currently liaising with departments regarding 2 new whistleblowing cases, and with the PSNI and Council departments on 1 case which had been referred to the Police for investigation. He pointed out that separate reports on Whistleblowing and Fraud arrangements had been prepared, in light of new publications by the NIAO.

During discussion, the Panel raised a number of queries in relation to the audits of Government Procurement Cards, Work Related Transport, PCSP's, City Risks / Resilience and the HR / Payroll project and requested that an update on these queries was brought to the next meeting.

The Panel noted the AGRS Progress Report for the period September, 2020 – November, 2020 and that further information would be provided to the Panel in relation to the issues raised.

Recommendations Monitor - Update and analysis of impact of Covid19 on the implementation of audit recommendations

The AGRS Manager updated the Panel on the recent review by AGRS of outstanding audit actions across the council which involved a series of meetings with management, to ascertain the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had had on the implementation of those actions. He reported that overall, the COVID-19 pandemic had delayed progress with an implementation rate of 17% compared to a rate of 31% in the last exercise. The AGRS Manager outlined the areas were progress had been made in the period and drew out key themes in relation to the recommendations that remained outstanding relating to efficiencies, cyber security, new IT systems, agreement of the People Strategy and health and safety.

The Audit and Risk Panel noted the update on the progress made by management to implement audit recommendations and the areas where further action was required.

Corporate Risk Management

Corporate Risk Management report for QE September 2020

The Head of AGRS updated the Panel on the work which had been undertaken to support management in the review of risks in the context of Covid19 and the significant change in both the internal and external environment that the Council was working in, which had an impact on council priorities and on the risks the Council was facing.

The Head of AGRS summarised the key points arising from the refresh of the corporate risk register noting that updated risk mitigation plans were in place for 23 of the 25 corporate risks, with the level of risk increasing for 2 corporate risks. The Head of AGRS explained that now the refresh of the corporate risk register had been completed, in future the Panel would receive a shorter dash board style report on the management of the corporate risks.

She provided an update on the quarterly assurance statement process, reporting that assurance statements had been received for all departments, with the exception of one department which was under consideration.

The Panel also received an update on the work that had been undertaken by critical services to review and update the Business Continuity Management plans, to take account of the learning to date from the Council's response / recovery to the pandemic, with updated plans in place for 13 of the 15 critical services.

The Panel noted the information which had been provided, in particular:

a) the re-assessment of the impact and likelihood of the corporate risks and the update of their risk mitigation plans in the light of Covid-19;
b) the assurances from management regarding compliance with the Risk Strategy, based on the assurance statements for QE September 2020; and
c) the work that was being done to ensure that business continuity plans for the critical services were up to date to complement the work that was being done corporately to ensure that plans were in place to respond effectively to local lockdowns / second wave of Covid19.

Update on waste targets and impact of Covid-19

In response to a query raised at the September meeting of the Panel regarding the impact of the pandemic on recycling rates, the Waste Manager (Strategic Planning and Delivery) attended and provided an update on the city's recycling rate for the first six months of the year (April to September 2020) in the context of operating in a Covid-19 environment.

He stated that, when Covid-19 impacted upon the community in March 2020, as an essential service, the Resources and Fleet Service had to quickly adapt to new operating conditions in an extremely challenging environment. He advised that new arrangements were introduced in order to safeguard the health and safety of staff and the public. Some of these measures included:

- The fitting of perspex screens to the Refuse Collection Vehicle (RCV) cabs to separate the driver from the collection crew member, while a van shadowed the RCV with the third member of the collection crew on board;
- Revised layout to the Duncrue operations site to ensure social distancing measures were maintained;

- After a period of 8 weeks lockdown closure, the recycling centres re-opened with a number of restrictions in place and a booking system for vans to assist with the flow of users through the site;
- Some schemes were temporarily suspended such as the purple box for glass recycling (subsequently recovered) and the Wheelie-box pilot in the Castle area of the city to reduce the potential for transmission of the virus through handling of materials; and
- Commercial waste collection services were limited to those businesses which remained open for essential services and these resources were diverted to kerbside services to assist with the increase in materials generated from homes during the lockdown phase.

He advised that the new environment resulted in an increase of around 18% on kerbside dry recyclables collected and 11% in organic (garden and food waste) collections, when compared with the first six months of 2019. However, these gains were offset by increased kerbside residual volumes and the reduction in recyclables normally collected through the recycling centres, which were closed due to lockdown for 8 weeks.

He highlighted that the key points to note in terms of waste management performance during this period were as follows:

- The overall amount of waste collected for the half-year April to September 2020 was approximately 89,000 tonnes, similar to the same period last year;
- The household recycling rate for the half year was 49%, the same as the same period last year; and
- There was a significant reduction in the household landfill rate and this was reflected in a corresponding uplift in the energy recovery figures. This was a preferable outcome in terms of the application of the waste hierarchy.

He pointed out that further information was provided under Appendix 1 – Waste Management Performance Report (April to September 2020) and advised that the figures which had been provided had been compiled on validated data contained within the Waste Data Flow system for the period Apr-Jun 2019, compared with provisional Waste Data Flow input for Apr-Jun 2020 and the estimated figures for the period Jul-Sep 2020. As such, the data was subject to change during the validation process conducted by the NIEA.

Noted.

Review and update of Risk Management Strategy and Business Continuity Management Policy

The Panel considered the undernoted report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The Audit & Risk Panel's terms of reference includes consideration of the Council's framework of assurance, monitoring the effective development and operation of risk management in the Council and approving the Risk Management Strategy. This report addresses these requirements in relation to risk management and business continuity management.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 That the Audit & Risk Panel approves the updated Risk Strategy and notes the gap analysis that was undertaken against the updated Orange Book `Management of risk - Principles and Concepts' issued in February 2020.

2.2 That the Audit & Risk Panel approves the addition of two further services, Property Maintenance and the Customer Hub, to the current list of 15 critical services outlined at appendix C of the BCM policy.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Risk Management Strategy

3.1.1 The Council is required by statute to have arrangements in place for the management of risk. Legal requirements aside, effective risk management is required to ensure the continued financial and organisational well-being of the Council The updated Risk Strategy was approved by the Council in February 2019 and is reviewed and updated annually.

Annual Review of the Risk Strategy

3.1.2 On behalf of the Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Finance and Resources, AGRS are responsible for maintenance of the Risk Strategy and, as such, we review the strategy regularly to ensure that it reflects current legislation and best practice.

3.1.3 **In terms of ensuring that our Risk Strategy reflects best practice, we undertook a review of the Councils risk management arrangements against the main principles set out in the Orange Book `Management of risk - Principles and Concepts'. The Orange Book is a guidance document published by HM Treasury setting out the main principles underlying effective risk management in the public sector. An update to the previous version issued in 2004 was issued in February 2020.**

3.1.4 **The detailed gap analysis setting out how the Council's risk management arrangements comply with the principles in the Orange Book is at appendix A. We have assessed that the Council is complying with the main principles of the Orange Book and we have identified the following areas for further improvement:**

- **While values and behaviours have been defined, they have not yet been effectively communicated and embedded at all levels. This should be addressed with the finalisation and implementation of the People Strategy.**
- **AGRS to ensure that sufficient consideration is given to re-starting the usual quarterly assurance process in 2021/22.**
- **While the Council has a range of performance management measures in place and meets our objectives under the improvement plan requirements, there is no overarching documented performance management framework. AGRS to ensure that the current system of regular risk review and reporting to members and management aligns with any work being undertaken to develop an overarching corporate performance management framework.**
- **The risk management framework is built on the Three Lines of Defence Model, with risk management processes and systems in place (control); regular risk management reporting to confirm that these processes and systems are in place (oversight) and; audits and reviews that provide independent assurance that these processes and systems are well designed and operating in practice. (Independent assurance). To further build on this, AGRS will work with risk owners to help them assess the assurances available for each corporate risk at the 1st 2nd and 3rd lines of defence.**

- **Following agreement of the corporate risk update in the light of Covid-19, AGRS to re-start the corporate risk management dashboard style report.**

3.1.5 **Aside from appending the risk assessment guide to the Risk Strategy, our review did not identify any further updates needed to the Council's Risk Strategy. The updated policy is attached at Appendix B. The gap analysis against the Orange Book principles should assist with the Audit & Risk Panel's review of the effectiveness of risk management arrangements when considering the annual governance statement.**

3.2 **Annual Review of the Business Continuity Management Policy**

3.2.1 **Business Continuity Management (BCM) provides the Council with a framework to allow it to effectively respond to incidents and to continue to delivery critical services. The Business Continuity Management Policy outlines the Council's policy, requirements and roles and responsibilities for its BCM systems. The Policy was last updated in 2019.**

3.2.2 **On behalf of the Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Finance and Resources AGRS are responsible for maintenance of the Business Continuity Management policy and, as such, we review the policy at intervals to ensure that it reflects current legislation and best practice.**

3.2.3 **After reflecting on the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic and as discussed at the Organisational Recovery Governance Group, management have identified 2 further services that should be added to the current list of 15 critical services outlined at appendix C of the BCM policy, namely:**

Critical Service	Nature of critical service
Property Maintenance	▪ Completion of Emergency / Callout / Reactive Work Requests ▪ Procurement and management of essential stores items
Customer Hub (due to be operational in April 2021)	▪ Initially, the Hub will manage all customer contact for cleansing / waste and calls that would have been received through the main switchboard and corporate complaints numbers.

	Note that switchboard is currently part of the BCM plan for Civic Headquarters

3.2.4 Subject to the Panel's agreement of the addition of these services to the list of critical services, AGRS will update the policy and work with the services to ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities under this policy.

3.2.5 We have also embedded some of the key BCM templates in an appendix to the policy, so that they are readily accessible.

3.3.6 At this point no further updates to the BCM policy were identified, however there may be more learning from the Council's response to Covid-19 that would be applicable to this policy and this will be examined as part of an overall lessons learned exercise. The policy is attached at Appendix C for information."

Ms Fahy queried the wording of the risk appetite statement for the Council and asked that it was reviewed to reflect the different risk appetite levels that were appropriate for different categories of risk such as governance and compliance. The Head of AGRS indicated that she would review the wording and bring revised wording back to the Panel in March 2021.

The Panel adopted the recommendations.

NIAO Good Practice Guidance: Covid-19 Fraud Risks NIAO August 2020 / Update on Corporate Fraud Risk Assessment

Summary of NIAO guide on Covid-19 Fraud Risks

The AGRS Manager provided an update on a short guide published by the NIAO in August 2020 on Covid-19 Fraud Risks and provided the Panel with an update on work that AGRS were undertaking with departments in relation to the Council's Corporate Fraud Risk Assessment.

He advised that the guide stated that 'fraud risks increase in times of change or crisis' and that the 'pandemic and the resulting emergency measures put in place, for example the payment of business support grants, 'have significantly increased the opportunities for fraudsters'. It was vitally important therefore that staff were aware of the increasing risks and that appropriate measures were in place to mitigate these.

In response, AGRS had been working with departments to review and re-assess, where appropriate, the key fraud risk areas as set out in the Council's Corporate Fraud Assessment.

He stated that the publication set out 6 key areas where the application of normal internal controls might be disrupted due to Covid-19 and the subsequent potential increased risk of fraud in these areas:

- Governance;
- Covid-19 funding;
- Procurement;
- IT / Cyber / Data Security;
- Payroll / Recruitment; and
- Staff.

The AGRS Manager highlighted that, in terms of governance, the NIAO had highlighted the possibility of significant issues or failures arising from the non-application of usual internal controls due to staff working under pressure or being reassigned to new roles combined with potentially less oversight from Audit Committee's should their usual meetings be disrupted.

He provided an overview of the guidance on potential risks in relation to Covid-19 funding, Procurement, IT / Cyber / Data Security, Payroll / recruitment, and pressures on Staff.

Corporate Fraud Risk Assessment

The AGRS Manager advised that the NIAO publication had been a very useful reminder of the increased risk of fraud, particularly during times of crisis or change, when fraudsters sought to take advantage of the changes that had been imposed on many organisations, including the council, in responding to the pandemic. Consequently, AGRS had used the guide to inform its review of the council's fraud risk assessment.

He informed the panel that the main changes to Council processes due to Covid-19 included: Significant numbers of staff having to work remotely at home since March 2020; Staff being redeployed or reassigned to different roles; and Processes moving 'on-line'. He highlighted that these changes had had a knock on effect on the application of normal internal controls which were designed, amongst other things, to manage and reduce the risk of fraud.

He explained that, in the context of these changes and the NIAO Guide, AGRS had undertaken a detailed 'desk top exercise 'to review and analyse the departmental fraud risk returns which had been previously completed and agreed with departments. The returns set out the key fraud risks, controls and assessment ratings for key activities. He advised that the AGRS had considered how the activities and related fraud risks might have changed based on their knowledge of:

a) changes to financial governance arrangements or internal processes;
b) issues arising from investigations, NFI exercises, internal audits, and recommendations monitoring exercises and
c) instances of attempted fraud since March 2020.

He confirmed that, following this desk top exercise, AGRS officers met managers from each department to review the returns, discuss the impact of Covid19 on the level of risk and support management in their evaluation of the impact of any changes to the fraud risks.

The AGRS Manager advised that the initial findings and review and discussions with management had indicated that there was awareness and agreement that the impact of Covid-19 had increased the inherent risk of fraud in the following areas:

- Rates income / evasion;
- Bank Mandate / Supplier bank details;
- Grants / funding;.
- IT / Cyber Security;
- Procurement; and
- Contract management.

He pointed out that, as work was still ongoing, AGRS would bring a more detailed analysis to the next meeting, however, from initial discussions with management, in comparison to the previous fraud risk assessment undertaken in September 2018, the level of fraud risk, had potentially increased in 3 of these areas - Grants / funding, IT / cyber security and contract management, and summarised the detail.

He provided an overview of the corporate level response to managing the increased risk of fraud and the actions which had been taken to address the changes and impacts brought about as a result of the pandemic, such as the Financial governance changes, Two factor authentication / raising awareness, Temporary Expenditure Controls, and coverage of these areas in the AGRS Audit Plan 20/21.

The Panel was also reminded that the Council had a number of measures in place to manage the risk of fraud, in addition to the Corporate Fraud Risk Assessment such as:

- The Council's Fraud Policy and Response Plan, reviewed annually;
- The Council's Whistleblowing Policy enabling concerns to be raised and reported in a protected way;
- Fraud awareness training and communication – provided periodically by AGRS;
- Policies – A variety of different policies were in place that help direct management of fraud risk including the Financial Regulations and
- Accounting Manual, Code of Conduct, Policy and Guidance for Declarations of Potential Conflicts of Interest, and Gifts and Hospitality;
- Financial Controls – Departments / Services / Units should also have local financial procedures and control arrangements – this being the first line of defence against fraud;
- Management oversight – the 2nd line of defence, comprising financial, IT, HR monitoring, reporting and review; and

- Audit and Data Matching – including a programme of internal audit, external audit, complemented by participation in the National Fraud Initiative.

That Panel noted the contents of the report, the NIAO guide and the work AGRS was undertaking with departments to review and update the Council's Corporate Fraud Risk Assessment and ensure appropriate mitigations were in place.

NIAO Good Practice Guidance: Raising Concerns: A good practice guide for the Northern Ireland public sector / Self-assessment of arrangements in the Council

The AGRS Manager reported that the NIAO had recently published a 'good practice' guide on 'Raising Concerns' (whistleblowing) in the public sector (copy available on here). Some of the main issues and themes addressed in the Guide include:

a) Organisational culture;
b) Raising concerns needs to be seen as a normal part of business;
c) Raising concern champions; and
d) Strong visible leadership.

The AGRS Manager explained that, in relation to Organisational Culture, the guide set out that in order to instil an organisation culture which encourages the raising of concerns: Employees needed to be able to feel that they could 'speak up'; There needed to be 'active listening' to all concerns raised, either internally or from members of the public; and Organisations needed to protect and look after those that spoke up.

He stated that the guide advised that raising concerns should be seen as normal and routine, not exceptional, inappropriate or a criticism:

- The fundamental purpose in every case was the same - to bring into the open an issue of concern so that it could be appropriately addressed, therefore minimising any harm, risk, wrongdoing etc; and
- Anonymous complaints were to be treated in the same way as those from named sources. The NIAO pointed out that some of the biggest cases came from anonymous tip-offs, for example the concern raised regarding the RHI.

He pointed out that the guide outlined the benefits of having Raising Concerns Champions in that this role could be a source of support and advice for staff but, in addition, a key resource for connecting the organisation to service users and the wider public. He advised that the NIAO also highlighted that strong visible leadership was essential to create a culture where people feel comfortable raising concerns.

The AGRS Manager provided an overview of how the Guidance could be applied in the Council. He reminded the Panel that the Council had a Whistleblowing Policy in place which was reviewed and updated annually, with the last update being approved by the Audit and Risk Panel in September 2020.

He reported that the AGRS had undertaken the self-assessment exercise (appendix 2) as outlined in the NIAO Guidance and found that, in general, the Council's arrangements were in line with the good practice guide and a number of potential improvement actions had been identified.

He suggested that the NIAO Guide should be used to review and update the Councils Whistleblowing Policy, with an updated draft to be presented to the March meeting of the Audit and Risk Panel with an update on the progress of the actions which had been outlined in the report to explore, and where appropriate, implement those actions.

During discussion, the Panel highlighted the importance of culture and the aspects being raised in the cases. The AGRS Manager advised that the end of year report would provide further high level analysis of the cases and concerns raised.

After discussion, the Panel noted the report and the NIAO good practice guide, the self-assessment against good practice and the proposed actions to improve the Council's current arrangements for raising concerns (whistleblowing).

Audit and Risk Panel Training and Annual Review of Effectiveness of Audit and Risk Panel

The Panel were provided with an update on the plans for the annual training session for 2020/21 and the progress made to implement actions arising from the previous training session.

It was reported that, in addition to the induction briefing provided to new members, In line with good practice, annual training / briefing sessions were organised to support the Panel in the discharge of their responsibilities as outlined in the terms of reference. These sessions were usually held in October / November, however the impact of Covid 19 on the priorities of the Audit and Risk Panel had impacted on organisation of the annual training session for 20/21.

The Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services suggested that the AGRS Team organise a tightly focussed and interactive online training / briefing session for the Panel in March / April 2021. She advised that the AGRS would research options for delivery in-house or engaging a subject matter expert.

She informed the Panel that the draft outline objectives for the session were:

- Strategic context of the Council and impact on the Audit and Risk Panel;
  - Audit and Risk Panel role and oversight
  - Assurance framework
  - Risk management
  - Fraud / whistleblowing

- Internal audit
- Performance management and improvement;
- Impact of Covid-19 on risk, control and governance arrangements;
- How the Panel fulfils its responsibilities / areas for improvement; and
- Current developments.

She informed the Panel that, on behalf of Members, AGRS had completed an initial assessment of the Audit and Risk Panel effectiveness against CIPFA best practice and that this was set out in the appendix. The Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services advised that, in line with previous years this initial assessment found the Panel to be in compliance with best practice. She explained that the key changes from the previous year's assessment include reference to the:

- Impact of Covid-19 on the usual frequency of Panel meetings, with the usual year-end June 2020 meeting replaced with papers being issued for comment in August 2020 and a virtual meeting convened in September 2020 to discuss the year-end papers;
- Work being done corporately to establish a Standards Committee and how, when this new committee was established, the Panel's terms of reference would need to be updated to reflect the Panel's link with the new committee, namely, the likely role of the Panel in evaluating the effectiveness of the Standards Committee in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct between members and officers;
- The delivery of an audit / governance / risk / investigations module on the Senior Leadership Programme to help raise awareness of the role and purpose of the Panel; and
- The deferral of the 20/21 annual training session due to the impact of Covid19.

During discussion, the Panel suggested that, subject to Health and Safety Guidelines, the Training could be held provisionally online, with a view to arranging a face to face session, if possible.

After discussion, the Panel approved the proposed approach for the delivery of the training session for 2020/21 to be held provisionally online, with the possibility of a meeting in person should the regulations/guidelines allow, including proposed timing and outline objectives, The Panel also noted the contents of the report and noted the progress update against the actions arising from the previous Audit and Risk Panel training / workshop in October 2019.

Performance Improvement 2019-20 Year End Assessment and Arrangements for 2020

The Panel considered the undernoted report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to:

- **Update the Panel on progress to comply with the performance improvement duty as laid in in Part 12 of the Local Government (NI) Act 2014 in the context of the Covid-19 emergency; specifically in relation the 2019-20 Audit;**
- **Update the Panel on recent work carried out by the Performance Improvement Working Group in relation to the arrangements for 2020-21 and arrangements for performance improvement in the longer term.**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Panel is asked to:

- **Note the update on the 2019-20 Audit in the context of the Covid-19 emergency including correspondence from the NIAO received by the Chair of the Performance Improvement Working Group (Chief Executive M&EA);**
- **Note the update on work carried out by the Performance Improvement Working Group on the arrangements for 2020-2021 including correspondence from DfC to the Chair of the Performance Improvement Working Group outlining proposed way forward.**

3.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main issues

Year End Corporate Performance Assessment

3.1 The Performance Unit within the Finance and Resources Directorate produced a Year End Operational Update for 2019-20 which was considered by the Panel at the September meeting. Subsequently as required the report was published online by the 30 September 2020.

NIAO audit and assessment 2020

3.2 **As previously advised, the NIAO audit and assessment of BCC's Improvement activity normally takes place between July and October each year. This timeline has understandably had to shift given the current situation. The NIAO have advised that they have begun to contact Councils, with audits due to commence in the next few weeks. The deadline for the completion of audits has been extended to allow for the necessary change in legislation to be completed with a proposed new deadline of 31 March 2021.**

3.3 **The Performance Improvement Working Group, made up of representatives from each of the 11 Councils and chaired by the Chief Executive of M&EA, on behalf of SOLACE NI, have been involved in recent discussions with the Department for Communities and the NIAO. The NIAO recently issued correspondence to the Chair (Appendix 1) to confirm that the primary focus of 2019-20 audit will be the 2019-20 Self-Assessment Report, it will not be looking at the performance improvement plan as these were not required to be published for 2020-21. Given a full audit isn't required this year it is anticipated that input from NIAO this year will be in the region of 25% to 30% of the previous years' work, which will be reflected in the fees to Councils. The Panel will be updated once the audit has been completed. BCC's progress against NIAO's proposals for improvement in 2019 is included at Appendix 2.**

<u>Arrangements for Performance Improvement 2020-21 and beyond</u>

3.4 **The Performance Improvement Working Group, recently considered the most appropriate steps to be taken in the short, medium and longer term for Performance Improvement in the coming years. Mindful of the long-term impacts of the COVID pandemic on local government, it was also highlighted that a more generic and pragmatic approach to improvement will be required. As evidenced by the significant outputs and outcomes achieved by Councils during the COVID pandemic, an ability to respond to constraints and opportunities as they arise will be critical.**

3.5 **A letter was issued to the Department for Communities by the Chair of the Performance Improvement Working Group in October, outlining the proposed next steps in the short, medium and longer term. In summary the following key actions were proposed:**

Short Term (1 month) Clarification and official correspondence on the scope, process and timeline for the Performance Audit and Assessment in 2020/21.

Medium Term (12 months)

Clarification on:

- **the scope and focus of the Performance Improvement Plan for 2021/22 and timeline for publication;**
- **whether each Council must consult on the draft performance improvement objectives 2021/22 (or recovery objectives) and timeline**
- **content of the Self-Assessment 2020/21, in the absence of the Performance Improvement Plan 2020/21**
- **the scope process and timeline of the Performance audit and assessment 2021/22**

Long Term (24 months)

A full review of Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 including a review of The Performance Indicators and Standards Order.

3.6 The Department for Communities' response to this letter is attached for Members' information (Appendix 3). The working group will continue to work with the Department over the coming months and the Panel will be updated as this work progresses. Members should note that whilst this work is ongoing there may be differences to the usual annual reporting timetable to the Panel.

Financial and Resource Implications

3.7 Audit fees will be calculated on the basis of the time spent by the NIAO on Belfast's audit and as outlined should be reduced this year to 25%-30% of the previous cost in line with the reduced audit.

3.8 Equality and Good Relations Implications

None associated with this report."

The Panel noted the information which had been provided, in particular:

- the update on the 2019-20 Audit in the context of the Covid-19 emergency including correspondence from the NIAO received by

the Chair of the Performance Improvement Working Group (Chief Executive M&EA); and

- the update on work carried out by the Performance Improvement Working Group on the arrangements for 2020-2021 including correspondence from the Department for Communities to the Chair of the Performance Improvement Working Group outlining proposed way forward.

Chairperson

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Belfast City Council

BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT POLICY

Policy or template title	Business Continuity Management Policy
Document version	Draft V 1.3
Departmental ownership	Finance and Resources
Document owner	Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive / Strategic Director of Finance and Resources
Officer responsible or document author	Claire O'Prey, Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services (AGRS)
Date of approval	June 2014
Date of last review	November 2020
Date of last update	March 2020 (minor updates to Appendix C)
Updated by	Claire O'Prey, Head of Audit, Governance & Risk Services
Date of next review	November 2021
Approval details	Corporate Management Team, Audit Assurance Board and Audit & Risk Panel.
Locations of where document is held and referenced	Interlink

Intended audience	**Communication process for the policy**
Elected members	Audit & Risk Panel reports.
Directors	CMT reports and quarterly risk and audit update meetings with the Head of AGRS. (NB Directors are responsible for ensuring that BC Plans are communicated to all relevant staff)
Operational Directors / Heads of Service (for critical services)	Email
BCM Champions	Regular, BCM training / information sessions Email
Staff in critical services	Team meetings / BC exercises

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Business Continuity Management (BCM) is about having appropriate BCM Systems (BCMS) in place to identify the critical services that are delivered by the Council and plan how to maintain these in the event of an incident[1].

1.2 BCMS provides the framework for building resilience and capability for an effective response, enabling the Council to continue to deliver critical services in the event of an incident.

1.3 The BCM policy contributes to the risk, control and governance framework of the Council and represents best practice as set out in the Northern Ireland Civil Contingencies Framework[2] and is consistent with the requirements of the ISO 22301.

1.4 Section 12 of the Council's Emergency Plan specifies when the Council will activate an emergency planning response to business continuity incidents.

1.5 This document outlines the Council's policy and requirements for BCMS.

1.6 A high level overview of the Council's BCMS is given below:



Source: BS ISO 22313:2014 – ISO BCM LIFECYCLE

[1] Incident - A situation that might be or could lead to a disruption, loss, emergency or crisis.

[2] Civil Contingency Act in the UK placed a regulatory requirement on local councils to carry out BCM, in Northern Ireland it was adopted as best practice by the Secretary of State in November 2005.

OBJECTIVES

2.1 The objectives of this Policy are:

- To ensure that the Council's capability to respond effectively to an incident is maximised.

- To communicate effectively with our internal and external interested parties during an incident and to continue to provide critical services to these parties, in the event of an incident.

- To ensure the frequency/impact of potential incidents is reduced to an acceptable level and an effective BCMS is developed, maintained and exercised throughout the Council.

- To ensure compliance with appropriate governance and regulatory obligations, and relevant external standards and good practices adopted by Belfast City Council in relation to Business Continuity.

- To ensure that BCM solutions are in place should key internal / external suppliers and / or outsource providers suffer an incident, or there is an unexpected termination of a relevant agreement.

SCOPE

3.1 This Policy applies to all Departments in Belfast City Council.

POLICY

4.1 In the event of an incident resulting in a reduced capacity to deliver all services, Belfast City Council will focus on the delivery of critical services.

4.2 The criteria for determining whether a service is `critical' is set out at appendix B.

4.3 The current list of critical services is set out at appendix C.

4.4 All Departments must ensure that they have an effective BCMS which will:

- enable their critical services to respond effectively to an incident

- reduce the frequency and impact of potential incidents occurring to an acceptable level and

- manage the impacts, recovery and restoration of critical services should an incident occur, until normal operations are resumed.

4.5 Business continuity management systems should be regularly reviewed, updated and exercised to provide a level of assurance that the Council has the capability and solutions to respond in a timely and appropriate manner to any incident.

4.6 All Departments must comply with this Policy. Roles and responsibilities are set out at Appendix A.

COMPETENCE & AWARENESS

5.1 The Council is committed to providing the necessary training and awareness activities to ensure that required staff develop and maintain the relevant competencies to fulfil their roles set out at Appendix A.

5.2 The BCM policy shall be made available to all staff, the policy can be found on the interlink site.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF BCMS

6.1 At regular intervals, a performance evaluation will be undertaken of the Council's BCMS, to ensure its continuing suitability, adequacy and effectiveness. The performance evaluation will be undertaken by an independent expert appointed by AGRS and will be reported to the Audit Assurance Board and Audit & Risk Panel.

POLICY REVIEW PROCESS

7.1 The Council's Business Continuity Management Policy is subject to strict version control and will be reviewed by AGRS regularly, in line with the Council's needs.

REPORTING

8.1 The Corporate Management Team, the Audit Assurance Board and the Audit & Risk Panel will receive regular reports on compliance with the Council's BCM policy.

FUNDING

9.1 All resources required for Departmental BCM contingency measures will be funded from existing departmental budgets. Directors should ensure sufficient funds are available.

9.2 BCM training and miscellaneous expenditure associated with the support, oversight and monitoring of the BCM policy and framework will be funded from the AGRS budget.

9.3 In exceptional circumstances requests for funding contingency measures will be referred to the Deputy Chief Executive / Strategic Director of Finance and Resources.

APPENDIX A - BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS - ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Audit & Risk Panel and Audit Assurance Board should:

a) Provide leadership and ongoing commitment to implementation of the BCM policy.

b) Review and approve the BCM policy.

c) Monitor compliance with the BCM policy.

d) At appropriate intervals, receive assurance on continuing suitability, adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's BCMS.

CMT should:

a) Provide leadership and ongoing commitment to implementation of the BCMS policy.

b) Review the BCMS policy and recommend for approval by the Audit & Risk Panel.

c) Receive regular reports on and monitor compliance with the BCM policy and to consider whether there is a need for further action.

Deputy Chief Executive / Strategic Director of Finance and Resources should:

a) Provide leadership and ongoing commitment to implementation of the BCM policy.

b) Review the BCM policy and recommend for consideration by CMT.

c) Monitor compliance with the BCM policy, taking action where appropriate.

d) Ensure that at appropriate intervals, a performance evaluation is undertaken of the Council's BCMS, to ensure its continuing suitability, adequacy and effectiveness.

Directors should:

a) Ensure that there are clearly defined and documented roles and responsibilities for BCMS within their Department. This includes the appointment of BCM champion(s).

b) Ensure that BCM is a quarterly standing agenda item at Department Management Team Meetings.

c) Consider supply chain continuity for critical services.

d) Ensure that processes are in place to:

- Identify critical services
- Consider BCMS in relation to the development of any strategic business projects
- Complete Business Impact Analysis (BIA) reviews
- Produce and update BC strategies.

e) Where relevant, prepare an appropriate Business Continuity Plan (BCP).

f) Where formal BCP's are produced, ensure that:

- Plans are commensurate with the size and complexity of the processes
- Plans are based upon: 'Worst case' scenario
- Plans are communicated to all relevant staff
- Plans include the requirement to communicate with internal and external interested parties during an incident (who, what, when, how) following agreed protocols
- Plans undergo a thorough review at least annually, with Directors reviewing and approving the "BC Plan Review" template before it is submitted to AGRS for monitoring purposes.

g) Maintain and exercise the BCP, ensuring that:

- there is a suitable exercise programme in place that, over a period of time, leads to objective assurance that the BCP will work as anticipated when required
- the scope of the BC exercises gives meaningful assurance on the ability to continue to deliver the critical service in the event of an incident
- an aspect of the plan is exercised annually, based upon a suitable scenario, this should be consistent with the complexity of the plan and follow the exercise programme for the critical service
- the scope of the exercise is captured in the "BC Exercise Planning" template and reviewed and approved by the HOS / Director in advance of the exercise before submitting it to AGRS for monitoring purposes
- the results of the exercise are captured in the "BC Exercise Report" template which is reviewed and approved by the HOS / Director before it is submitted to

AGRS for monitoring purposes. All actions arising from the BC exercise should be recorded and allocated an action owner and timescale for delivery with appropriate debrief carried out.

h) Following an incident, ensuring that a "BC Plan Invocation Report" template is completed, reviewed and approved by the HOS / Director before submitting it to AGRS for monitoring purposes.

i) Review and update BCMS arrangements

j) Directors should ensure sufficient funds are available for required BCMS contingency measures

k) Directors should consider BCMS requirements in relation to any major changes to service provision.

AGRS should:

a) Assist management in implementing BCMS within Belfast City Council, through update of the BCM policy, provision of guidance and templates as appropriate

b) Ensure BCM policy complies with regulations and is consistent with best practice

c) Monitor and report on compliance with the BCM policy

d) Chair and facilitate meetings of the BCM Champions

e) Identify BCM champions training needs and source and organise relevant training as required.

f) Report on compliance with the policy quarterly to CMT, the Audit Assurance Board and Audit & Risk Panel

g) Provide advice to BCM champions on the design and delivery of an appropriate exercise programme

h) Ensure that there is sufficient liaison and involvement with 'specialist' teams and their plans including Digital Services, accommodation and emergency planning

i) To organise periodic independent performance evaluations of the Councils BCMS to provide assurance that it is adequate and effective.

The BCM Champions should:

a) Adhere to BCM policy and framework

b) Promote understanding and awareness of BCMS and give advice to management, where required, on issues relating to the implementation and the delivery of BCMS within the critical service

c) Ensure that training and support needs are identified and discussed at their PDP meetings and with AGRS where appropriate

d) Attend BCM champion meetings as requested and contribute towards implementing any actions arising

e) Ensure that Business Continuity plans are up to date, reviewed annually and signed off by the Director, completing the "BC Plan Review" template to evidence the plan review and submitting to AGRS for monitoring purposes

f) Ensure that a suitable exercise programme is in place that, over a period of time, leads to objective assurance that the BCP will work as anticipated when required

g) Ensure that the scope of the exercise is captured in the "BC Exercise Planning" template and reviewed and approved by the HOS / Director in advance of the exercise and submitting to AGRS for monitoring purposes

h) Ensure that an appropriate exercise of the BC plan is undertaken at least annually, completing the "BC Exercise Report" template to record the exercise and submitting the BC Exercise Report to the HOS / Director for sign off and to AGRS for monitoring purposes

i) Following an incident, completing the "BC Plan Invocation Report" template, for review and sign off by the Director and submitting to AGRS for monitoring purposes

j) Ensure that all key BCMS documents for the critical service are saved to the BCM shared drive

k) Provide updates on BCMS issues / developments at their Service and Departmental Team Meetings, as required.

Staff working in Critical Services should:

a) Familiarise themselves with the BC Plan for the critical service.

b) Participate in BC plan exercises when requested.

c) Contact their BCM champion with any queries related to the BC plan.

APPENDIX B – PRIORITISATION CRITERIA FOR CRITICAL SERVICES

1	**Civil Protection Capability**
	The failure to deliver the service would significantly affect the Council's ability to respond to an emergency and take effective action to reduce, control or mitigate the effects of the emergency.
2	**Effect of an Emergency on the City**
	Following the occurrence of an emergency in the city there will be pressure on the service to increase its level and quantum of service beyond standard day to day service levels to maintain its delivery and mitigate the effects of the emergency.
3	**Impact on Human Welfare**
	The failure to provide the service would have a significant effect on individuals to whom the Council owes a duty of care or other individual vulnerable persons in the community. Such effect includes the ability for individuals to access medical care, food and water, accommodation and other social care support which they would be unable to access independently.
4	**Impact on the Environment**
	The failure to provide the service would have a significant effect on the environment or a significant risk of damage to the environment with medium to long term or even permanent damage if left unchecked and which if possible to clean up would involve significant costs to rectify.
5	**Impact on Security and Safety**
	The failure to provide the service would have a significant effect on the security and safety of citizens. The failure to provide the service would have a significant effect to the functioning of the community. For example resulting in citizens being unable to go about their day to day business without fear of perceived injury or risk of actual injury.
6	**Reputation**
	The failure to provide the service could have a significant negative effect on the reputation of the Council as a provider of key services to citizens.
7	**Dependency**
	The service provided is a key dependency of a Level 1 service, without which the Level 1 service would be unable to carry out its duties.

APPENDIX C – THE COUNCIL'S CRITICAL SERVICES FOR BCMS PURPOSES

	Critical Service	Nature of critical service
1	City Protection Services	▪ Control and Prevention of Legionnaires Disease. ▪ Emergency Response ▪ Port Health – Infectious Disease Control ▪ Scientific services ▪ Port Health – Imported Food Control ▪ Business Support - Communication ▪ Food Safety - Investigation of Food Poisoning ▪ Food and Product Hazard Warnings ▪ Responding to dog attacks and suspected cases of rabies ▪ Pest control
2	Waste Management	▪ Maintain operations at Waste Transfer Station ▪ Ensure continuity of landfill provision ▪ Maintain operations at Recycling Centres & CA sites ▪ Waste Collection
3	Building Control	▪ Respond to dangerous structures
4	Cleansing	▪ Street Cleansing and Customer Contact Centre
5	Fleet management	▪ Maintenance of fleet equipment ▪ Break downs and accidents
6	Civic headquarters (telephone, security etc)	▪ Telephony (to transfer to the Customer Hub April 2021) ▪ Reception ▪ Security Officers ▪ Security Control Room ▪ Staff/Member Catering ▪ Building Cleaning
7	Bereavement Services	▪ Crematorium and funeral services ▪ Issuing of cremated remains to Funeral Directors & the public ▪ Disposal of cremated remains (burying & scattering) ▪ Burials
8	Zoo	▪ Animal care (including feed provision / veterinary care / keeper care) ▪ Safety (dangerous structures / safety of staff / visitors / public)
9	Finance	▪ Employee Services

		▪ Financial Control ▪ CTU – Accounts Payable
10	H&S	<u>Health & Safety Team:</u> ▪ Practical advice to relevant staff to allow them to continuing essential duties as safely as possible ▪ Dynamic Risk Assessments ▪ Ensuring that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the Council continues to comply with relevant H&S legislation
11	Digital Services	▪ Network connectivity and services to all sites where possible ▪ VOIP ▪ Server availability ▪ Internal email ▪ External connectivity to ISP ▪ External email ▪ Digital Services service desk
12	BDM&CP	▪ Registration of Deaths, Births and Still births ▪ Notice and Registration of Marriages and Civil Partnerships ▪ Performance of Marriages and Civil Partnerships ▪ Production of certificates on request.
13	Democratic Services	▪ Supporting civic dignitaries to provide leadership in an emergency ▪ Provision of advice and guidance to elected Members and Departments ▪ Communicating with elected Members ▪ Provision of administrative support to any scheduled emergency meetings of the Council or its Committees
14	HR	▪ Provision of corporate HR advice <u>Employee Relations:</u> ▪ Provide practical advice to relevant staff on employee relations issues that will assist in ensuring essential services are maintained ▪ To assist in consultations where job functions may change and/or policies may need to be applied/amended ▪ To provide practical advice and support on terms and conditions, employment law, etc so as to ensure essential services can be maintained

		<u>Employee Resourcing:</u> ▪ Provide practical advice and support to relevant sections to ensure, so far as is practicable, that employee levels are maintained at a level that facilitates the delivery of essential service <u>Learning and Development:</u> ▪ To ensure, so far as is practicable, that any essential training and development is maintained ▪ To assist, so far as is reasonably practicable, in the provision of any additional training that may be required to ensure essential services are maintained. ▪ To ensure any attachments working with BCC are adequately catered for during any relevant incidents, including the option to return to parent organisations if necessary <u>Occupational Health:</u> ▪ To advise on any relevant health issues <u>Employee Counselling:</u> ▪ To provide trauma support to staff if applicable ▪ To provide general counselling support to staff as required
15	Corporate Communications	Corporate Communications provides a key support function to the above critical services. The classification of Corporate Communication as a critical service is under review.
16	Property Maintenance	▪ Completion of Emergency / Callout / Reactive Work Requests ▪ Procurement and management of essential stores items
17	Customer Hub (operational from April 2021)	▪ Initially, the Hub will manage all customer contact for cleansing / waste and calls that would have been received through the main switchboard and corporate complaints numbers.

Note:

Leisure centres and community centres are crucial in supporting the Council's response to an emergency, through their use as emergency rest centres, which is co-ordinated between the Emergency Planning Unit, City & Neighbourhood Services Community Services and GLL. However the delivery of day to day services at community centres is not classed as a critical service for the Council's BCMS purposes and GLL are responsible for business continuity management at the leisure centres.

APPENDIX D – BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT TEMPLATES

BC Plan Review Report



BC Plan Review Report.docx

BC Exercise Planning Report



Planning Report.doc

BC Exercise Report



Exercise Report.doc

BC Plan Invocation Report



Invocation Report.docx

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Belfast City Council

STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Subject:	**Request for Donation to the Northern Ireland Children's Hospice**
Date:	18th December 2020
Reporting Officer:	John Tully, Director of City & Organisational Strategy
Contact Officer:	Christine Sheridan, Head of Human Resources

Restricted Reports				
Is this report restricted?	**Yes**		**No**	X
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?				
After Committee Decision				
After Council Decision				
Sometime in the future				
Never				

Call-in				
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	**Yes**	X	**No**	

1.0	**Purpose of Report**
1.1	This report is to seek approval to make a donation to the Northern Ireland Children's Hospice's "Big Night In" fundraiser.
2.0	**Recommendation**
2.1	The Committee is asked to agree to make a donation of £1,000 to the Northern Ireland Children's Hospice's "Big Night In" fundraiser.
3.0	**Main Report**
3.1	The Council has received a request for support from the Northern Ireland Children's Hospice (NICH) Support Group. Like many charities, the Children's Hospice has been

	struggling to raise funds since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic several months ago. The Hospice needs £15 million per annum to run the Hospice. It receivse £4.5 million from the NI Government, leaving a further £10.5 million to be generated through corporate support, shops, legacies and fundraising activities.
3.2	On 25th November 2020, the NICH Support Group contacted the Chief Executive's Office regarding sponsorship of an online gala concert entitled "Northern Ireland's Big Night In 2020" to help raise much needed financial support for the Northern Ireland Children's Hospice. The event took place on Friday 4 December and was supported by a number of local organisations with participation from various local celebrities.
3.3	Further correspondence with the Support Group regarding Committee approval timeframes clarified that any donation would be equally welcomed. The Committee is therefore asked to approve that a donation of £1,000 is made to the Children's Hospice fundraising activities.
	Financial and Resource Implications
3.4	Cost of sponsorship is £1,000 and will be covered from existing budgets.
	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment
3.5	The NI Children's Hospice provides care and support for critically ill children and their families and carers, across all of N. Ireland.
4.0	**Documents Attached**
	None

Belfast City Council

Subject:	**Request for the use of the City Hall and the Provision of Hospitality**
Date:	18th December 2020
Reporting Officer:	John Walsh, City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Aisling Milliken, Functions and Exhibition Manager

Restricted Reports				
Is this report restricted?	**Yes**		**No**	X
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?				
After Committee Decision				
After Council Decision				
Sometime in the future				
Never				

Call-in				
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	**Yes**	X	**No**	

1.0	**Purpose of Report**
1.1	This report, together with the attached appendix, contains the recommended approach in respect of each of the requests by external organisations for access to the City Hall function rooms received up to 5 December 2020 which appear to the Function Management Unit to comply with the criteria previously established by the Committee and are recommended for approval.
2.0	**Recommendations**
2.1	The Committee is asked to approve the recommendations made in respect of applications received up to 5th December 2020 as set out in the attached appendix.
3.0	**Main Report**
3.1	<u>Background Information</u> Members will be aware that the Committee, at its meeting of 6th January 2017, agreed to modify the criteria governing access to the City Hall function rooms for external organisations.

3.2	The Committee agreed also to the implementation of room-hire charges for some categories of function, and also revised the approach to the provision of civic hospitality for functions on foot of the agreed efficiency programme. Some further modifications to this approach were agreed at the Committee's meetings of 24th March 2017, 23rd June 2017, 23rd June 2019 and 25th October 2019.
	Key Issues
3.3	The existing revised criteria and scale of charges have been applied to the various requests received and the recommendations herein are offered to the Committee on this basis for approval.
3.4	The attached appendix covers an application to hold a function in 2021, however, approval is provisional and function date to be approved in due course pending NI Executive and Council approval to reinstate functions in City Hall.
	COVID-19 implications
3.5	In managing and delivering future functions, liaison with and guidance for organisers will be provided by officers to ensure compliance with any relevant social distancing guidelines at the time of their function. Committee approval for their function to take place in City Hall is recommended on the basis of their compliance to this caveat and what is permissible and feasible in City Hall function rooms.
	Financial and Resource Implications
3.6	The implementation of charging for external functions has commenced, in line with the Committee's decisions in the matter.
	Equality and Good Relations / Rural Needs Implications
3.7	There are no direct good relations, equality or rural needs implications arising from this report.
4.0	**Document Attached**
	Function requests received up to 5 December 2020

DECEMBER 2020 CITY HALL FUNCTION APPLICATIONS

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
2021 EVENTS						
British Council of Northern Ireland	On Date to be agreed *Dependent on City Hall recovery and COVID guidelines*	**Mock Council of the European Union –** Schools event to encourage debating skills and participation in democracy now in 15th year. Numbers attending – 90 ** Numbers and room layout will be reviewed and revised in line with COVID19 social distancing guidelines at the time of this event.*	B & D	No (Charity)	No	Recommend to approve, No charge, No hospitality

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Belfast City Council

STRATEGIC POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Subject:	**Bilingual Street Signage – Counsel Opinion on Call-in**
Date:	18th December 2020
Reporting Officer:	John Walsh, City Solicitor
Contact Officer:	John Walsh, City Solicitor

Restricted Reports				
Is this report restricted?	**Yes**		**No**	X
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?				
After Committee Decision				
After Council Decision				
Sometime in the future				
Never				

Call-in				
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	**Yes**		**No**	X

1.0	**Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues**
1.1	The decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 23rd October 2020 relating to bilingual street signage, changing the current policy requirements and establishing a trigger for consultation of an expression of interest by a resident/residents/Elected Member with a 15% threshold of residents responding positively as satisfying a policy position to erect a second nameplate other than in English, was called in on both procedural and adverse community impact grounds.
1.2	In accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2014 and Standing Orders, Counsel's opinion has been obtained and the grounds set out within the call-in have been analysed.

1.3	Counsel finds that the grounds for challenge do not have merit on either the procedural or the adverse community impact ground. Her opinion reflects that there was no failure to take into account relevant considerations including resources, that the policy when drafted will be subject to equality screening and consultation, and that the operation of residual discretion will allow for appropriate consideration of any potentially sensitive decisions.
2.0	**Recommendation**
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the content of Counsel's opinion as attached.
3.0	**Main Report**
3.1	<u>Key Issues</u> As above.
3.2	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u> N/A
3.3	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> A draft policy will be presented to Committee in January and thereafter put out for consultation.
4.0	**Document Attached**
	Counsel's opinion

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6
of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Document is Restricted

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