

People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 13th June, 2023

HYBRID MEETING OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Murray (Chairperson);
Councillors Bell, Black, Bower, Brooks, Bunting,
Canavan, Cobain, de Faoite, Doherty, M. Donnelly,
R-M Donnelly, Flynn, Kelly, Magee, Maghie,
G. McAteer, McCusker, Ó Néill and Verner.

In attendance: Mr. D. Sales, Director of Neighbourhood Services;
Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;
Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;
Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor; and
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 4th April, 2023 were taken as read and signed as correct.

It was reported that the minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 2nd May.

Declarations of Interest

Councillors Black, Canavan, M. Donnelly, RM Donnelly, Ó Néill and Verner declared an interest in item 2b – Community Support Programme in that they were associated with or worked for an organisation which was in receipt of funding and left the meeting whilst the item was under consideration.

Restricted

The information contained in the reports associated with the following 2 items is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the Members of the Press and public from the Committee meeting during discussion on the following 2 items as, due to their nature, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Section 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

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GLL Leisure Management Contract - Six monthly update on contract compliance and performance

The Council's contract with Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) commenced on 1st January 2015. Since the dissolution of Active Belfast Limited in June 2022, the Council had assumed direct responsibility for contract management. At its meeting on 18th November the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed that future reports would be presented through the People and Communities Committee.

It was further agreed that contract compliance and performance reports would be presented, at a strategic level, to Committee on a six-monthly basis in November and May. That would allow for sufficient time to collate and verify management information data related to the preceding six-month periods of April to September and October to March.

The six-monthly reports, as submitted, includes detailed quarterly information on the two relevant quarters within each six-month period.

The Committee noted the:

- information provided in paragraph 3.3 of the report in relation to contract compliance;
- information provided at paragraph 3.4 in relation to key performance indicators;
- supporting; narrative presented at paragraph 3;
- facility asset management monitoring information set out at paragraph 3.6; and
- Health and Safety compliance assurances presented at paragraph 3.7.

Community Support Funding Update

The Committee was reminded that the Department for Communities (DfC) provided an annual grant to the Council to help deliver the Council's Community Support Programme (CSP).

At its meeting in April, the Committee was advised that on 27 March 2023 the Chief Executive had received correspondence from the Permanent Secretary, DfC, relating to the CSP which stated that the Department could only provide support to cover the three-month period up to 30th June 2023 with the allocations based on the 2022/23 budget settlement. The correspondence added; *"I hope you will understand why this allocation cannot be interpreted as an assurance as to the level of funding available for the remainder of 2023/24, given the absence of clarity on the overall budget settlement for the Department."*

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reported that on 7th June 2023 the Council received further correspondence advising that the department had decided to extend the interim funding arrangements, based on the 2022/23 opening budget allocations, and that these will run from 1st July to 30th September 2023.

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The letter also noted that the department is currently consulting on the Department for Communities Proposed Budget 2023-24 and has produced an EQIA which it was seeking feedback on.

The report also outlined the impact on funding awards and provided an update on the Social Supermarket Fund.

The Committee:

- Noted the further communication from Department for Communities (DfC) which stated that they would issue funding for the Community Support Programme until 30 September 2023;
- Granted approval to offer additional three-month contracts and payments to organisations funded via the Revenue for Community Buildings Grant and Capacity Building Grant; two months extension for Advice Grant; and noted that the payment would be a further 25% of the allocation agreed by the Committee in February for Revenue and Capacity grants and 25% of the area consortia allocation used in 2022/23;
- Granted approval to issue Letters of Offer/Funding Agreements for the first six months of the year (up until 30 September 2023) for activity that was 100% DfC/CSP funded but that Belfast City Council administers on their behalf. This would enable payments for Welfare Reform Tribunal Representation to the Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service and for Welfare Reform Mitigations Face to Face to Generalist Advice Organisations;
- Granted approval to authorize that the Director of Neighbourhood Services could issue further payments to those organisations who are funded through Welfare Reform mitigations (Tribunal and Face to face) through delegated authority if further notification of additional funding was received from DfC; and
- Noted an update on Social Supermarket Funding

Matters referred back from the Council/Motions

Notices of Motion Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 To provide an update to People and Communities Committee on Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance by Members.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that People and Communities Committee:

- **Notes the updates to all Notices of Motion / Issues Raised in Advance that the Committee is responsible for as referenced in Appendix 1; and**

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- **Agree to the closure of Issues Raised in Advance and Notices of Motion as referenced in Appendix 1 and noted below.**

3.0 Main report

Background

- 3.1 Members will recall that the previous Notices of Motion update was presented to People and Communities Committee in June 2022.**
- 3.2 This report provides an overview of the progress on those Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance which remained open following the June 22 update.**

Notice of Motion Updates

- 3.3 There are currently 36 active Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance which the People and Communities Committee is responsible for. An update on those Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance which remain active on the live database is attached at Appendix 1.**

Closure of Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance

- 3.4 At SP&R Committee on 20th November 2020, it was agreed that Notices of Motion could be closed for one of two reasons:**
- **Category 1 - Notices of Motion which contained an action that has been completed. All Notices of Motion within this category contained a specific task that has since been complete. It is worth noting that, when Committee agree to action a Notice of Motion, there are sometimes additional actions agreed alongside the Notice of Motion. As these are not technically part of the Notice of Motion, they are taken forward through normal committee decision making processes. The Notice of Motion can therefore be closed, but additional actions related to it will continue to be progressed and reported to the committee. These additional actions are not contained in this report, but will be noted in the live database moving forward.**
 - **Category 2 - Notices of Motion have become Council policy or absorbed in to a strategic programme of work. These Notices of Motion did not contain a specific task that could be complete. Instead, they were more strategic in nature and required changes in Council policy and/ or strategy for long term outcomes. Those listed within this**

category have all been agreed by Committee and are now either Council policy or are currently being implemented through a Council strategy that is managed by a Standing Committee through the corporate planning process.

- 3.5 Following an update of those Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance on the live database, it is recommended that Members approve the following Motions/Issues for closure.

Category 1 Recommended Closures:

- 3.6 **Proposal for pedestrian crossing at new BCC playpark on Upper Dunmurry Lane (Ref 38)**

Following discussion on this Issue Raised in Advance ..'the Committee agreed to write to the Department for Infrastructure in regards to an update on the Pedestrian Crossing requests for Upper Dunmurry Lane and Cherryvale'.

Upper Dunmurry Lane - Whilst DfI had hoped to deliver this scheme in the 2022/23 financial year dependent upon confirmation of budget and availability of contractor resource, unfortunately the scheme is yet to be progressed. Officers will continue to liaise with DfI to progress this request.

Cherryvale - DfI continue to undertake the relevant safety assessments required to progress the installation of this crossing. Officers will continue to keep Members updated going forward. It is therefore recommended that this Issue is closed as the specific actions within have been undertaken.

- 3.7 **Historic Graveyards – (Ref No. 48)**

This Motion proposed that '...Council organise a tour of the two cemeteries for Members; prepare a maintenance and conservation plan; provide a report on the plan and costs and set a timeframe for the completion of the required works'.

Site visits have taken place one of which included Chief Executive, Director of Physical Programmes and Director of City Services. With funding support from DfC, Historic Environment Division, condition surveys have been carried out by a conservation architect. The resulting reports include indicative costings for the work required. Proposed works will now follow the standard council process for development as capital projects. It is therefore recommended that this Motion is closed as the requested actions have now been undertaken.

3.8 Support for Young People and Students (Ref 123)

This Motion proposed that ‘..this Council notes the adverse effect COVID-19 has had on our city’s young people and students. Accordingly, we call upon the Council to facilitate an ad hoc meeting with key stakeholders to amplify the wide range issues and ensure a joined up approach is taken.’

As previously noted, officers met with Cllrs Kate Nicholl and Sian Mulholland in January 2021 to discuss this Motion and followed up with a short note of key discussion points and potential direction. Feedback from Members on how to progress this Motion was not received. As both the proposer and seconder of this Motion are no longer BCC councillors, and with relevant Community Planning Partners including EA, BHSCT, UU and QUB continuing to support Children and Young People through both Covid response and recovery periods, it is recommended that this Motion is now closed.

3.9 Recent Violence and Public Disorder (Ref 182)

This Motion proposed that ‘..Council will: commit to supporting all elements of the Youth Service, including our own Belfast Youth Forum; and will convene an urgent meeting of the relevant statutory agencies and third sector organisations to develop a consistent, young person led approach for the coming summer period; engage with Trade Unions to ensure safety of our staff and; will support the ongoing process for the formation of a NI Youth Assembly; and seek assurances that Youth Citizens’ Assemblies will be considered as an engagement model to make recommendations for the city on addressing poverty, inequality, eradicating paramilitarism, integrating communities, expanding opportunity and tackling the climate crises’.

Following on from previous updates on this Motion, a new Children & Young People Coordinator was recently appointed and is currently refreshing membership and involvement of the BCC Youth Council. Links have also been made with the NI lead for the UK Youth Parliament and we plan to also reach out to the NI Youth Assembly lead and to the EA lead for their youth engagement forums in due course. We will continue to support C&YP actions identified under community planning as well as via our own service areas within CNS - for example in relation to planning for, and responding to, disorder at a local level - our Community Safety team and PCSPs are funding a number of initiatives focused on diversionary activity and linking with key stakeholders through the partnerships (city and areas) re. same.

In light of these ongoing actions, it is recommended that this Motion is now closed.

3.10 City Centre Safety for Women (Ref 218)

'At the request of Councillor Black, the Committee agreed that an update report be submitted to a future meeting, to include relevant information and feedback, from the PSCPs, Partners and other Stakeholders, on the issue of City Centre Safety for Women'.

Following on from previous updates on this Issue Raised in Advance, a report and suggested actions focused on 'inclusive and safe' (including those relating to the safety of women in the city centre) are to be considered internally by officers before being discussed more broadly with the PCSPs to see what can be achieved in 2023/24. As the Clean, Green, Inclusive and Safe action plan will pick these issues up going forward, it is recommended that this Motion is now closed.

3.11 Request to present to Committee – Inclusive Parks (Ref 251)

A presentation from Playboard NI and the Mae Murray Foundation was received at People and Communities Committee in June 2022 therefore this Issue Raised in Advance can be closed.

3.12 Cleansing Task Force (Ref 255)

The first meeting of the Cleanliness Task Force was held on 17 August 2022, with a number of meetings held since. It was agreed at the Cleanliness Task Force held on 28 April 2023 that the Task Force had fulfilled its Terms of Reference and that no further meetings would be required at this time. It is therefore recommended that this Motion is closed.

3.13 Review of Non-Residential Fees for the re-opening of graves in Blaris Cemetery for Collin Residents (Ref 265)

This Issue Raised in Advance requested that that a letter be issued to Lisburn and Castlereagh (LCCC) seeking a review of non-residential fees for the re-opening of graves in Blaris Cemetery for Collin Residents. A further Member asked the Committee to write to the Minister for Communities to establish if there were any plans to review the Burial Ground Regulations in relation to fees for burials and to ascertain if the Department had any plans to work with Councils to ensure that residents were not faced with disproportionate charges during a bereavement. The Committee accordingly agreed to issue the letters as requested.

Correspondence was issued to LCCC and DfC as agreed by Committee and responses received. An update report was provided to Committee in October 2022. In their response, Department for Communities advised that the Burial Grounds Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1992 were made under section 181 of the Public Health Ireland Act 1878 Act (the 1878 Act). This section does not provide the Department with the power to make regulations regarding burial fees which is the sole responsibility of Councils. LCCC replied to advise that there was a three year period following Local Government Reform from April 2015 to March 2018 where the resident rate was applied. LCCC advised that their position on this matter has been reviewed following by the Northern Ireland Public Sector Ombudsman following a similar challenge and had been supported in decision making and consistency on the matter. Given that the specific actions have been undertaken and that LCCC have outlined their position on this issue, it is recommended that this is now closed.

3.14 Support for Parents (Ref 275)

This Motion proposed.. ‘to support parents, the Council commits to providing a list of existing initiatives which it delivers, with a view to working with the voluntary and community sector, as well as other partners, to explore if such initiatives may be improved, as well as seeking to bring forward new programmes during the cost-of-living crisis. The Council also commits to seeking parents’ views on any further support it will provide to families to ensure that parent voice is a significant factor in the design and implementation of new initiatives that will help tackle the cost-of-living crisis for parents’.

The first action within this Motion regarding support for Parenting Week 2022 has been completed. A number of support programmes for parents are delivered via our community and play centre programming and via external organisations who book our centres. These include Parent and Toddler clubs, After-Schools Programmes, Homework Clubs, Summer Scheme Programmes and Money Saver Events. Our Play Service also provides a number of further targeted support projects including cultural confidence projects for Ethnic Minorities where we deliver sessions to parents and children from ethnic minority backgrounds and project support for Refugees delivered at three hotels in the city and in Botanic Park. The team are also delivering support to a Neurodiverse Parents Group with sessions for parents to talk and share experiences of children with neurodiverse profiles. Given the volume of ongoing work in

relation to this Motion, it is recommended that this Motion is now closed.

3.15 Bins not being removed from the street (Ref 276)

This is being progressed as part of the actions arising from the Special P&C committee on the 22nd March 2023 therefore it is recommended that this issue is now closed.

3.16 Belfast Cycle Network (Ref 288)

This Motion requested that the Council engage with PSNI and Department for Infrastructure, to develop a long-term, comprehensive strategy to ensure that the Belfast cycle network is kept clean and free from obstructions, such as parked cars and commercial bins.

Officers continue to engage with key partners, in particular DfI, through established Community Planning structures. Processes are in place within council to address any cleansing issues which are raised; however, enforcement of obstructions lies with DfI. Given that the specific actions within have been undertaken, it is recommended that this Motion is now closed.

3.17 Missed bin collections (Ref 299)

This is being progressed as part of the actions arising from the Special P&C committee on 22nd March 2023 therefore it is recommended that this issue is now closed.

Category 2 Recommended Closures

3.18 Belfast City Council Cycling Champion (Ref 124)

This Motion proposed that *'this Council agrees to introduce a Belfast City Council - Cycling Champion within the Council to support active travel and bicycle use; and agrees to write to the Minister for Infrastructure calling on the publication of the Belfast Bicycle Network'*.

An internal officer Connectivity and Active Travel Group has been established and is seeking to ensure that our policies, projects, interventions, funding opportunities and programming are aligned to not only our internal corporate priorities but link with various external structures and plans e.g. Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan, Belfast Cycling Network. This work will also feed into an All Party Member workshop on the sustainable and active work and engagement that Council are undertaking. Officers intend to present a paper to CMT in the coming weeks regarding

a three-year workplace Active Travel Plan which includes the nomination of a senior CMT officer as an Active Travel Champion, therefore it is recommended that this Motion is now closed.

3.19 Graffiti Removal (Ref 244)

This Motion proposed that '...this is not a problem unique to Belfast but is one for which we should consider innovative solutions alongside traditional cleaning methods Council will also work in an inter-agency capacity to address issues around unwanted graffiti across the city. In doing so, Council should consider how its team can be made available to other agencies on a commercial basis'.

As per recent updates to the Cleanliness Task Force, a database has been established to track problem graffiti areas to enable the alignment of resources. Environmental Education and Outreach Team are working with the Neighbourhood Manager (OSS) on a pilot to support community groups in graffiti removal. Officers continue to work with partner agencies in regard to education and awareness, with a number of environmental school visits undertaken which include the issue of the impact and cost of graffiti. It is officers' intention to write to the Permanent Secretaries of each department to encourage consideration of participation in graffiti removal for team building days/activities. As the specific points within the Motion have been addressed and reporting will be ongoing, it is recommended that this Motion is now closed.

3.20 Financial & Resource Implications

There are no additional financial implications required to implement these recommendations.

3.21 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

There are no equality, good relations or rural needs implications contained in this report."

The Committee:

- Noted the updates to all Notices of Motion / Issues Raised in Advance that the Committee was responsible for as referenced in Appendix 1 to the report; and
- Agreed to the closure of Issues Raised in Advance and Notices of Motion as referenced in Appendix 1, with the exception of the Review of the Non-Residential Fees for the re-opening of graves in Blaris Cemetery for Collin Residents; and the Belfast Cycle Network. It was agreed also that the Cleansing Task Force be retained.

Update on Motion Vaping

The Director of City Services submitted for the Committee's consideration the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 To brief the Committee on the motion passed at Council in relating to vaping, which was proposed by Councillor John Kyle and seconded by Councillor Donal Lyons, and to update Members on relevant partner activity underway in this area, along with next steps for consideration and implementation of the motion.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the updates on current policy context and existing strategic level engagements in relation to tobacco control and vaping issues, and to agree:
- i. to receive a further report on proposals for Elected Member engagement with partners and stakeholders on a range of issues surrounding use of vapes
 - ii. to receive a further report on the use of vapes in Council premises

3.0 Main report

- 3.1 The Standards and Business Committee at its meeting on 28th March 2023 agreed a proposal for the following motion to be referred to Council for debate:

‘Belfast faces a growing problem of vaping by children and young adults. These products are addictive, damaging to health and often contain illegal substances.

The legislation covering their sale is inadequate. While it is illegal to sell them to under 18s there is no registration of retailers, no restriction on the display of the products and no resources to identify illegal and harmful additives.

Some disposable vapes are designed to be attractive to children and many are discarded in the street posing an environmental and health risk.

In the face of a developing public health crisis this Council will convene a working group with other stakeholders, including the Department of Health, the Public Health Agency and the PSNI to

consider measures to strengthen current legislation and enforcement, including the consideration of a ban on the sale of disposable vapes.

Furthermore, the Council will ban the use of vapes by under 18s in all its sites and premises.'

The proposer of the motion addressed the Council and provided an overview of the motion. The motion was seconded by Councillor Lyons and Council agreed that the motion be passed.

Regional policy context and existing partnerships

- 3.3 Issues surrounding the sale and use of nicotine inhaling product (NIPs), including disposable vapes are currently being considered by a range of agencies, partners and working groups. Design proposals for a Council working group will need to consider the current policy and partnership landscape in this area, to ensure that Belfast City Council's voice is effective in influencing policy and legislative developments, while also ensuring that all impacts of vaping on the city (such as health and environment) are explored.
- 3.4 NIPs are an emergent area of focus as more research on the impacts of these products becomes available. Policy and legislative matters in this area are mostly devolved matters for the NI Assembly and the other regional legislatures in GB. In Scotland retailers who wish to sell NIPs must be registered to do so, however registration is currently not required in England or Northern Ireland. In England, Ministers recently announced they are looking at regulation of NIPs and committed £3 million additional funding for English Authorities to tackle the issue. This includes looking at accessibility to children, the marketing and flavourings of e-cigarettes, the environmental impact of disposables and strengthening the current Regulations.
- 3.5 In Northern Ireland, Belfast City Council participates in a number of regional groups with key partners, including other NI Councils, Department of Health and the Public Health Agency. Whilst these groups have been focused on tobacco control for many years, they are also now looking at how best to deal with the emerging issues around NIPs.
- 3.6 The Tobacco Strategy Implementation Steering Group (TSISG) was set up to oversee the implementation of a ten-year Tobacco Control Strategy for NI and a successor strategy is set to be published in 2024. TSISG are monitoring the various issues around NIPs and will be taken account of when shaping the aims of the new strategy. The Council are represented on the TSISG at

Officer level, along with multiple partner organisations including the Department of Health and Public Health Agency. In addition the Council are also a member of the TSISG Policy, Legislation and Enforcement Sub-Group which focuses on the policy, enforcement, and legislative aspects of the Strategy.

- 3.7 The Tobacco Control Group (TCG) is a regional sub-group of EHNI. All 11 NI Councils are represented and they identify priorities for tobacco control work undertaken by Councils to support the implementation of the NI Tobacco Control Strategy. This year the TCG intend to carry out a scoping exercise to identify the major issues around NIPs and in collaboration with the Department of Health and put forward recommendations to influence future decision making.

- 3.8 Product safety regulation - MHRA and Consumer Protection Subgroup (EHNI)

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is the competent authority for a notification scheme for manufacturers of e-cigarettes and refill containers within Great Britain and Northern Ireland. MHRA is responsible for implementing technical and safety provisions of the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016 (TRPR), as amended. The Consumer Protection Subgroup of EHNI have engaged with MHRA on a number of occasions detailing concerns regarding enforcement of the Regulations at the ever growing and changing retail level.

- 3.9 Belfast City Council regulatory activities

Belfast City Council investigate complaints regarding unregistered products which fail to meet the safety requirements of the above Regulations, on most occasions these complaints relate to products with a tank size greater than the prescribed maximum 2ml volume. Council officers also routinely provide advice to businesses and have developed a leaflet (with associated website content) to advise retailers of the product safety requirements regarding e-cigarettes and e-liquids.

- 3.10 Belfast City Council also carries out test purchasing to monitor/ assess compliance with underage sale legislation (selling to under 18s). In 2022/23, 40 fixed penalty notices were issued for underage sales offences. A Restricted Premises Order was also obtained as a result of repeat occurrences, banning a retailer from selling both tobacco and vaping products for a period 12 months.

Environmental concerns

- 3.11 Use of disposable vapes creates additional environmental issues including disposal/littering and impacts on waste treatment. Disposable vapes are classed as waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) as they are made of plastic and contain lithium batteries and copper. They are not straightforward to recycle and many end up in landfill, with some estimates saying that over 1.3 million are disposed of weekly. In addition, many are simply discarded on the street, and in public open spaces such as parks.

Proposal for a working group to consider options for a ban on sales of disposable vapes

- 3.12 In view of the existing engagement structures and policy development processes currently ongoing at regional level, officers plan to initially consult with relevant partners and groups, to identify the most effective and appropriate options for a specific Belfast City Council engagement on this issue. Officers will bring back a proposal for partner engagement on this issue to a future committee for Member consideration.

3.13 **Use of vapes in Council premises:**

With regards to the proposal for 'the Council to ban the use of vapes by under 18s in all its sites and premises', the Corporate Health and Safety Manager will bring a report back to Committee regarding the use of electronic cigarettes in Council sites and premises.

3.14 **Finance and Resource Implications**

None

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

None.”

The Committee noted the updates on the current policy context and existing strategic level engagements in relation to tobacco control and vaping issues, and agreed:

- i) to receive a further report on proposals for Elected Member engagement with partners and stakeholders on a range of issues surrounding use of vapes; and
- ii) to receive a further report on the use of vapes in Council premises.

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Motion: Graffiti - Development of Memorandums of Understanding

The Committee was advised that at the meeting of the Standards and Business Committee held on 28th March, the following motion, which was proposed by Councillor McKeown and seconded by Councillor Whyte, was referred to the Committee for consideration:

“This Council recognises the impact graffiti has on communities in terms of the environment and appearance of an area, but also on the wellbeing of residents.

While the Council has a limited programme of graffiti removal and the role of this is under regular review, it is recognised that this alone cannot meet the widespread need to tackle this issue, nor should it fall solely to the ratepayer to fund this work.

The Council will therefore commence work on developing Memorandums of Understanding with utility companies, telecoms companies, government departments and other public bodies to seek agreement that they will remove graffiti on utility boxes and other property within their ownership within a defined, short period of time. Further, the Council will look at whether any additional bye-laws are required to support this work.

To enable the simple and quick reporting and redirection of graffiti notifications to responsible bodies under this model, the Council will work with these groups to map and catalogue public infrastructure and its respective ownership, and provide a single point of contact within the Customer Hub for members of the public and council staff to report incidents, which will then be redirected to the responsible body for action under the Memorandums of Understanding.”

The Committee adopted the motion and agreed that a report on how this would be facilitated, resourced and managed be brought back.

Committee/Strategic Issues

Affordable Warmth Scheme update and Service Level agreement

The Committee agreed to defer, until a special meeting on 26th June, the request from the Department of Communities (DfC) to sign the interim service level agreement provided for the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2024, acknowledging that the DfC had put the Council on notice to terminate the arrangement on 31st August 2023 and that representatives of DfC and the NIHE be invited to attend the meeting.

Air Quality Detailed Assessment

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 At the People and Communities Committee meeting of 8th October 2019, and upon consideration of agenda item 3b, ‘*Local Air Quality Management Update for Belfast*’, the Committee agreed a proposal that the council would agree to look at undertaking a detailed air quality assessment for the city and to measure particulate matter (PM_{2.5}). The Committee additionally agreed to bring back a further report on how the Council might undertake such a detailed assessment, to include the measurement of PM_{2.5}.
- 1.2 A number of subsequent reports were provided to the People and Communities Committee as to how a detailed review and assessment for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) might be delivered for the city and on the basis of these reports, a competitive European Tender exercise was undertaken by the council in September 2020 in order to appoint an appropriately experienced environmental consultancy to deliver the detailed assessment project.
- 1.3 Aecom consultants were appointed by the council in early 2021 to deliver the detailed assessment project over an approximate 2-year period, with a final project report scheduled to be presented to the People and Communities Committee by the end of March 2023. The Committee will be aware that Aecom consultants attended a special meeting of the People and Communities Committee on 13th February 2023 in order to provide an overview of the key findings of the Detailed Assessment and to receive comments from the Committee.
- 1.4 The Aecom detailed assessment has therefore considered nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), particulate matter (PM₁₀) and fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) for the city and it has been undertaken in accordance with the provisions of Part III of the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 and of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance (LAQM.TG22).
- 1.5 The detailed assessment has considered nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), particulate matter (PM₁₀) and fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) concentrations in terms of national and European air quality standards and objectives and having regard to the September 2021 World Health Organisation (WHO) Air Quality Guideline values. WHO has advised that the Air Quality Guidelines provide evidence-informed, non-binding recommendations for protecting public health from the adverse effects of air pollutants by eliminating or reducing exposure to hazardous air pollutants and

by guiding national and local authorities in their risk management decisions.

1.6 The Committee is advised that fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) is not in regulation for the purposes of district council local air quality management statutory functions but it has nevertheless been proactively considered for the Belfast City Council area via this detailed assessment. By way of comparator, The Environmental Targets (Fine Particulate Matter) (England) Regulations 2023 have established an annual mean concentration target value for PM_{2.5} of 10 mg/m³ to be achieved by 31st December 2040.

1.7 The Committee is further advised that the detailed assessment project was completed at the end of March 2023 in accordance with the project timeline and tender schedule. This report serves therefore to provide a brief overview of the key outworkings and conclusions of the detailed assessment to the People and Communities Committee and to seek permission to add the Detailed Assessment reports to the Member's Library.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is invited to:

- Note this covering report concerning the key outworkings and conclusions of the Aecom detailed assessment for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), particulate matter (PM₁₀) and fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) for the Belfast City Council area and to agree that the detailed assessment project reports covering ambient monitoring, atmospheric dispersion modelling and a summary of the detailed assessment be added to the Members' Library.

2.2 The Committee is additionally invited to note that Air Quality Officers from the Scientific Unit, upon request, will provide Party Briefings on the Detailed Assessment.

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

3.1 The Committee has been advised previously that the detailed assessment project comprises four main components; (i) additional ambient monitoring; (ii) development of an emissions inventory for Belfast; (iii) atmospheric dispersion modelling for the Belfast City Council area and (iv) provision of a final written summary report of the Detailed Assessment project for NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}.

3.2 The detailed assessment has therefore been undertaken for a 2019 base year, in order to overcome the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on ambient air quality concentrations, and for a forward projection year of 2028. This approach reflects Defra and Institute of Air Quality Management Covid-19 guidance that for an air quality study that includes validation against monitoring data, 2019 monitoring data should be used as the last 'typical' air quality year.

3.3 Additional Ambient Monitoring.

Belfast City Council already undertakes a significant range of ambient air quality monitoring across the city using a combination of automatic and passive diffusion type monitoring equipment. For the purposes of the detailed assessment, additional ambient monitoring was undertaken during 2021 by Aecom consultants using Zephyr air quality monitors at locations representative of key nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter emission sources located throughout the Belfast City Council area, i.e. at the A2 Sydenham By-Pass adjacent to George Best Belfast City Airport; at the A55 Upper Knockbreda Road; at Clara Street in east Belfast; at Lombard Street in the city centre; at the A12 Westlink at Henry Place; and at Mount Eagles Glen in southwest of the city.

3.3.1 There were no monitored exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide 40 mg/m³ annual mean objective during 2019 at any Zephyr monitoring site, with the exception of the A12 Westlink site located adjacent to Henry Place (50.3 mg/m³). This site falls within the existing M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink corridor Air Quality Management Area and a similar nitrogen dioxide annual mean concentration was recorded for 2019 at the nearby council nitrogen dioxide diffusion tube monitoring site. There were no monitored exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide 200 mg/m³ 1-hour mean objective (18 exceedances permitted per annum).

3.3.2 There were no monitored exceedances of the PM₁₀ 40 mg/m³ annual mean objective at any Zephyr monitoring site during 2019 and no monitored exceedances of the PM₁₀ 50 mg/m³ 24-hour mean objective.

3.3.3 There were no monitored exceedances of the PM_{2.5} 20 mg/m³ annual mean objective / limit value at any Zephyr monitoring site during 2019.

3.4 Emissions inventory.

An emissions inventory for Belfast was compiled by Aecom consultants and council Air Quality Officers covering nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter emission sources, including George Best Belfast City Airport, the Belfast Harbour, railways, domestic and industrial combustion sources and the local road network. Road fleet emissions were additionally informed by a series of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) surveys. Data from the emissions inventory was employed in the various atmospheric dispersion modelling studies for the city.

3.5 Atmospheric dispersion modelling for the Belfast City Council area.

Atmospheric dispersion modelling was undertaken by Aecom consultants for NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} for the Belfast City Council area for a 2019 base year and for a forward projection year of 2028. In addition to the citywide modelled grids for 2019 and 2028, modelling was also undertaken at 1,797 discrete receptor locations, representative of residential properties, health care facilities, hospitals, education facilities and other locations considered sensitive to air pollution. The atmospheric dispersion modelling data has been validated, verified and adjusted using ratified Belfast City Council ambient monitoring data, together with calibrated and ratified monitoring data from the six Zephyr air quality monitors, to ensure that it is reflective of ambient conditions in the 2019 base year and the forward projection year of 2028.

3.5.1 Modelled ambient concentrations were compared with air quality objectives detailed within the Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and with the September 2021 World Health Organization (WHO) Global Air Quality Guidelines in order to identify areas of exceedance across the city.

3.5.2 2019 city-wide modelled nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) concentrations.

Annual mean nitrogen dioxide concentrations for 2019 were predicted to be above the UK AQO level of 40 µg/m³ at 24 discrete sensitive receptor locations. All of these receptors are within or near to the boundaries of the existing Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) along the M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink corridor (AQMA 1) and East Bridge Street / Cromac Street (AQMA 2). Within the uncertainties of the modelling, Aecom have concluded that the exceedances do not warrant any amendment to the boundaries of AQMA 1 and AQMA 2 at this time. Predicted 2019 annual mean NO₂ concentrations within AQMA 3, which covers a

section of Upper Newtownards Road, Knock Road and Hawthornden Way, and AQMA 4 which covers the Ormeau Road from the junction with Donegall Pass to the Belfast City boundary at Galwally, were below the UK AQO level at all locations of relevant exposure. Aecom have therefore advised that the results of recent years' monitoring at locations within AQMA 3 and AQMA 4 indicate that the AQO is now being met. Aecom have consequently advised that consideration should be given to the revocation of AQMA 3 and AQMA 4, subject to a continuation of monitored NO₂ concentrations below the AQO in these AQMAs. Aecom's conclusions are consistent with those of the council concerning AQMAs 3 and 4, as detailed within our 2022 Air Quality Progress Report. The 1-hour mean AQO of 200 µg/m³ was not predicted to be exceeded during 2019.

3.5.3 With the exception of the rural areas in the western part of the council's administrative area, predicted 2019 annual mean NO₂ concentrations throughout the city exceeded the much more stringent WHO AQG of 10 µg/m³. For the nitrogen dioxide 24-hour mean AQG of 25 µg/m³ (99th percentile, 3-4 exceedances per annum), Aecom have noted that monitoring results would suggest that the 24-hour mean NO₂ WHO AQG is likely to be exceeded across much of the Council's administrative area, particularly in the city centre area and near busy roads.

3.5.4 2028 city-wide modelled nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) concentrations.

For the future assessment year of 2028, predicted annual mean NO₂ concentrations are below the UK AQO of 40 µg/m³ at all locations of relevant exposure throughout the city, the highest annual mean concentration being around 31 µg/m³ in the vicinity of Stockmans Lane. The 1-hour mean AQO of 200 µg/m³ is not predicted to be exceeded during 2028.

3.5.5 In comparison to the much more stringent WHO AQG for annual mean NO₂ concentrations of 10 µg/m³, most of the city centre and surrounding areas, particularly close to the major road network, are predicted to exceed this AQG in 2028.

3.5.6 2019 city-wide modelled PM₁₀ concentrations.

Annual mean PM₁₀ concentrations in 2019 were predicted to be well below the UK AQO level of 40 µg/m³ at all locations of relevant exposure throughout the city, with the highest concentration around 21 µg/m³. Similarly, the number of exceedances of the PM₁₀ 24-hour mean (50 µg/m³) were predicted to be well below the 35 permitted per annum.

3.5.7 Annual mean PM₁₀ concentrations in 2019 exceeded the much more stringent WHO AQG for PM₁₀ of 15 µg/m³ at 1,100 of the 1,797 modelled discrete receptors and the contour plots indicated that the AQG was exceeded across most of the city centre area. In many areas, background PM₁₀ concentrations alone were found to approach or exceed the WHO AQG level.

3.5.8 2028 city-wide modelled PM₁₀ concentrations.

For the future assessment year of 2028, predicted annual mean PM₁₀ concentrations are well below the UK AQO of 40 µg/m³ at locations of relevant exposure throughout the city. As previously, there are no predicted exceedances of the PM₁₀ 24-hour mean (50 µg/m³).

3.5.9 Annual mean PM₁₀ concentrations in 2028 are predicted to exceed the much more stringent WHO AQG for PM₁₀ of 15 µg/m³ at 645 of the 1,797 modelled discrete receptors, and the contour plots indicate that the AQG is exceeded across a large part of the city centre area. In many areas, background PM₁₀ concentrations alone are found to approach or exceed the AQG level.

3.5.10 2019 city-wide modelled PM_{2.5} concentrations.

There are no sensitive receptor locations where predicted 2019 annual mean PM_{2.5} concentrations were greater than the 20 µg/m³ limit value / objective.

3.5.11 Compared with the much more stringent WHO annual mean PM_{2.5} AQG level of 5 µg/m³, all modelled receptors have predicted PM_{2.5} concentrations of 5 µg/m³ or higher. It should be noted that the lowest PM_{2.5} background concentration at any location across the city in 2019 was 6.6 µg/m³, which itself exceeds the AQG level of 5 µg/m³.

3.5.12 2028 city-wide modelled PM_{2.5} concentrations.

There are no predicted 2028 annual mean PM_{2.5} concentrations greater than 20 µg/m³ and therefore unlikely to be any locations of exceedance of the UK annual mean PM_{2.5} AQO.

3.5.13 Compared with the much more stringent WHO annual mean PM_{2.5} Air Quality Guideline level of 5 µg/m³, all 1,797 sensitive receptor locations have predicted concentrations of 5 µg/m³ or higher. It should be noted that the lowest PM_{2.5} background concentration at any location across the city in 2028 is 5.9 µg/m³, which itself exceeds the AQG level of 5 µg/m³.

3.6 2019 Source apportionment.

Source apportionment studies for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) for 2019 have indicated that within our AQMAs, the predominant contributor to 2019 annual mean nitrogen dioxide concentrations was road traffic emissions, accounting for between approximately 56% and 77% depending on receptor location.

3.6.1 For PM₁₀, the regional background sector was the predominant contributor to 2019 annual mean PM₁₀ concentrations, accounting for more than 53% of the total modelled PM₁₀ concentrations. The regional background includes sources from outside of Belfast that the council has no control over, including natural sources such as windblown dust and sea salt, and secondary particulates. Domestic background sources (which include domestic, commercial and institutional space heating) were estimated to typically account for 15% to 19% of the total modelled PM₁₀ concentrations in 2019. The other background sector, which includes all other local background sources of air pollution, accounted for approximately 11% to 12%.

3.6.2 In 2019, the source apportionment for PM_{2.5} followed a similar pattern to PM₁₀. The regional background sector was the predominant contributor to 2019 annual mean PM_{2.5} concentrations, accounting for around 47% to 50% of the total modelled PM_{2.5} concentrations. The regional background includes sources from outside of Belfast that the Council has no control over, including natural sources such as windblown dust and sea salt and secondary particulates. The domestic background was estimated to account for approximately 22% to 34% of the total modelled 2019 PM_{2.5} concentrations, indicating that this is also a significant contributor to ambient PM_{2.5} concentrations. The other background sector accounted for an estimated 8% to 11%.

3.7 2028 Source apportionment.

For nitrogen dioxide, the predominant source sector contribution to 2028 annual mean NO₂ concentrations at most of the selected receptors remains road traffic emissions, accounting for between approximately 27% and 66% depending on location. However, the domestic background is also an important contributor in 2028 at some receptor locations; the source apportionment results indicating that in certain areas of the city, the domestic background sector is an important secondary contributor, after road traffic, and may become the dominant sector of NOx emissions in some localities.

- 3.7.1 For PM_{10} , the primary contribution to 2028 annual mean PM_{10} concentration for the receptors considered comes from the regional background, accounting for more than 50% of the total modelled PM_{10} concentrations. The domestic background, which includes domestic, commercial and institutional space heating, is estimated to typically account for 15% to 20% of the total modelled PM_{10} concentrations. The 'other background' sector, which includes all other local background sources of air pollution, accounts for approximately 11% to 12%.
- 3.7.2 The 2028 source apportionment for $PM_{2.5}$ follows a similar pattern to that for PM_{10} . The primary contribution to 2028 annual mean $PM_{2.5}$ concentration for receptors considered comes from regional background, accounting for around 44% to 48% of total modelled $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations. The domestic background is estimated to account for approximately 23% to 36% of the total modelled $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations, indicating that this is also a significant contributor to ambient $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations in 2028. The other background sector accounts for an estimated 8% to 11%.

3.8 Conclusions.

With regard to nitrogen dioxide, Aecom have recommended that local actions aimed at road traffic are likely to remain the most effective action for reducing ambient concentrations at nitrogen dioxide hotspot locations in the city. Fleet projections indicate that the next few years will see accelerated uptake of low-emissions / zero-emissions vehicles and efforts should continue to be made to support the improvement of the vehicle fleet alongside the continued incentivisation of other transport modes and active travel options. These recommendations are consistent with the objectives of the Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026.

- 3.8.1 This Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) has been produced as part of our statutory duties required by the Local Air Quality Management framework. It outlines the actions that the Council, our statutory partners and other city bodies or organisations will take to improve ambient air quality in Belfast during the years 2021-2026. This AQAP succeeds the previous Action Plan, which covered the period 2015-2020. The Air Quality Action Plan contains mitigation measures to be implemented by the Council and its partner organisations which includes Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA); Department for Infrastructure (DfI), Belfast Planning Service, Translink, Sustrans and Belfast Harbour Commissioners. Such measures include sustainable transport measures, improved cycling infrastructure etc

3.8.2 For PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}, Aecom have recommended that targeted actions to reduce public exposure to PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} should focus on the sources that contribute to the domestic background sector, as source apportionment has indicated that this sector is accountable for more than 25% of the total modelled particulate matter concentrations across the city. Source apportionment calculations indicate that targeting the domestic background sector with alternative sustainable heating systems, will also have benefits in terms of reducing NO₂ concentrations. DAERA have been informed of the outworking's of this report and they have advised that they continue to work on the Air Quality Strategy for Northern Ireland which will seek to address how air quality can be managed and improved through future policy and/or legislative changes.

3.9 Financial & Resource Implications

The Committee is advised that funding to support delivery of this detailed assessment project has been provided by DAERA during the 2020-2021, 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 Local Air Quality Management grant years. Moreover, management of the detailed assessment project and technical air quality contributions were provided by Air Quality Officers from the council's Scientific Unit.

3.10 Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessments

None.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Food Service Delivery Plan 2023/24

The Committee approved the draft Belfast City Council Food Service Delivery Plan 2023-2024.

Belfast City Youth Council update

The Committee:

- noted the content of the report relating to the Youth Council;
- agree that be next two scheduled meetings of the Youth Council and People and Communities Committee be cancelled but that the special meeting on 26th June be retained to consider 2 deferred items;
- agreed that youth champions from each party would meet with the existing cohort of the BCYC over the summer months;

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- agreed that officers progress the recruitment and selection of the 2023/25 Youth Council by October 2023 using the process outlined in the report; and
- that the Young People's Co-ordinator be invited to attend the next meeting of the Committee to provide an update on the Youth Council.

Minutes of Older People's Reference Group meeting

The Committee:

- noted approved an adopted the minutes from the Reference Group on Older People meeting held on 21st March 2023; and
- agreed that the Greater Belfast Seniors Forum be invited to the next meeting of the Older People's Reference Group on 19th September in the Conor Room, City Hall.

**Collaborative Shared Space Programme –
Girdwood Community Hub**

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

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the Girdwood Shared Space and Youth Management proposal and provision of programming with the Hub.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- i. Note that a proprietary funding agreement regarding the Collaborative Shared Space Programme will be agreed via delegated authority for a period of up to 2 years until 31 March 25
and**
- ii. endorse the emerging business case to support the proprietary use of local community organisations to deliver a robust youth engagement and activity programme.**

3.0 Main report

Background

- 3.1** In relation to the Girdwood site, Members will be aware that Council manages the delivery of the Hub , and the Department for Communities (DfC) are currently leading on the wider development of the Girdwood Park site.
- 3.2** Girdwood Community Hub has the principles of shared space built into its core and, to enable the facility to benefit inter and intra community relations, the Council set up a dedicated Community Hub Forum whose role is to promote and help advise on enhancing the hub as a welcoming, open, shared, and safe space. The Girdwood Community Hub Forum is chaired by the Council with representation from local community and voluntary representatives, stakeholders, and statutory agencies alongside two Elected Members.
- 3.3** A working group which reports to the Forum has been set up to cover the programming of the youth space within the Hub and delivery of shared space programmes. This was set up to ensure that work was focussed and coordinated prior to any proposals being brought forward to manage the youth space from the Girdwood Community Trust. As part of this process in the interim, the youth organisations on the working group have been drawing up proposals to deliver shared space programmes to animate the space on the Girdwood site.
- 3.4** Given the importance of subsidiarity in the delivery of youth services at Girdwood and as an interim measure to ensure that the space is animated appropriately, Council has previously supported a collaborative activity programme which is designed and delivered in partnership with local youth providers, namely those from six-neighbouring community/youth organisations - Lower Shankill, Lower Oldpark, Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum and New Lodge Arts, TAMHI and Our Club Our Community
- 3.5** Since the opening of the centre, the Girdwood Hub Forum have supported these neighbouring organisations as they are best placed to deliver youth-based engagement and activity programmes being delivered and have positively impacted on the current aims and objectives around good relations, shared space, and interventions. Critically, these locally based youth organisations have the capacity and grassroots relationships to expedite a rapid response to address issues which arise as well as ASB in parallel to the delivery of an activity-based programme that seeks to change the attitudes of the young people using the

Hub. The period would be for two years with a caveat of a break clause included. This would reduce the risk to Council in the event of a proposal being submitted by Girdwood Community Trust regarding management of the Youth Space and approved by Council in future.(More detail on the background to this is provided in paragraphs 3.10 & 3.11.) This would bring a stop to the short-term funding and the proprietary agreement would cease.

- 3.6 Programme delivery from the local organisations has been shown to contribute to the reduction of ASB at the site and has also delivered on other important outcomes linked to good relations and shared space. The summer programming has always contributed towards Girdwood being considered a safe and welcoming space for all and proves important during times of potential tension. The programme offer is diverse and makes use of the different and innovative aspects of the facility. Delivery is collaborative in nature involving local community youth providers, primarily funded by the Council. The programme is agreed quarterly in advance with the Working Group and includes sessions in arts, IT, sports, personal development, and good relations and encourages access to other services within the Hub.
- 3.7 The programmes also include outreach and detached work which aims to support local young people at risk, reduce ASB on site and encourage involvement in the Youth Space and Hub. The youth programme has developed and evolved and now offers activities 6 days a week. In a climate where central government are announcing reductions in budget such as the Education Authority and TEO, this provision at Girdwood would be most needed to keep a consistency of relevant programming at the surrounding site.

Request

- 3.8 Therefore, as in previous years, Officers have developed a business case for approval under the scheme of delegation for the Director of Neighbourhood Services to procure services for youth programming promoting shared space from the six-neighbouring community/youth organisations - Lower Shankill, Lower Oldpark, Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum and New Lodge Arts, TAMHI and Our Club Our Community. The request is for members to note that a proprietary funding agreement has been agreed and would cover the period from April 2023 to end March 2025, with a break clause in place should a Youth Space Management proposal be approved for handover to the Girdwood Community Trust.

- 3.9 To date financial support for the youth programme has been funded through the Girdwood Youth Space budget and includes procurement of facility hire, coaching and facilitator costs, tools and materials and sessional fees for youth workers. Community based staffing in the form of sessional youth workers is currently largely funded by The Executive Office, however, with some organisations facing delays in their letter of offers from TEO delays, this poses financial difficulties for some of the organisations.

Proposal for Youth Space Management

- 3.10 Over the development of this project, the local community have expressed an ambition for future community management of Girdwood Community Hub. Given the stated ambition of the local community to develop the capability to support community management in the future, Council agreed that a useful first step to develop confidence by all parties would be to develop and consider an SLA for community management of the dedicated Youth Space. This identified pilot will in effect support the development of trust, relationships, and capacity among the local community groups towards their aspiration of community management.
- 3.11 Members may wish to note that Girdwood Community Trust have submitted a preliminary draft proposal to Council regarding management of the Youth Space and that details are being worked through with Council Officers. When discussions have been finalised, a report will be brought to Members for consideration in due course

3.12 **Financial and Resource Implications**

Programme resources for these services are within service revenue estimates.

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

The aim of the Community Hub and the associated programme is to promote shared space which will contribute to the enhancement of good relations.”

The Committee:

- noted that a proprietary funding agreement regarding the Collaborative Shared Space Programme would be agreed via delegated authority for a period of up to 2 years until 31st March 2025; and

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- endorsed the emerging business case to support the proprietary use of local community organisations to deliver a robust youth engagement and activity programme.

Annual GLL policies and operational procedures alignment statement

The Committee noted a report which provided details on annual assurances on GLL policy and procedure alignments as set out in the leisure management contract.

Six monthly Healthwise and Physical Activity Referral Programmes update

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided a six-monthly update on the exercise and health referral programmes managed by GLL.

Attendance at MJ Awards

The Committee:

- agreed to the council's attendance at the MJ Awards ceremony on 23rd June 2023 and noted that the event will take place before this recommendation will be ratified at the 3rd July Council meeting; and
- approved the attendance of the Chairperson of the People and Communities Committee, or his nominee, and one council officer.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

Playground Improvement Programme

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the successful 2022-2023 Playground Improvement Programme (PIP) and outline plans for new playground refurbishments under the 2023-2024 programme.**

Members are asked to note that refurbishments are to be funded under the Capital Programme and that an allocation of £580,000 has been agreed for this work in this financial year.

Members should also note that under last year's PIP (2022-23);

- **Refurbishment of Westlands playground (Waterworks Park) was completed**

- Refurbishment of Sally Gardens playground was completed
- Refurbishment works at Areema playground are nearing completion

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Agree refurbishment works at the sites below as part of the Playground Improvement Programme (PIP) 2023-2024. This year's programme has been allocated a budget of £580,000 under the Capital Programme for financial year 2023-2024.
 - Loughside Park playground
 - New Lodge playground
 - North Link Playground

3.0 Main report

Playground Improvement Programme

- 3.1 Since its inception in 2012, the Playground Refurbishment Programme continues to make a positive impact to the overall quality and play value of the city's playgrounds, improving accessibility, providing more inclusive equipment, new safety surfacing, boundary fencing, site furniture and landscaping works. Physical improvements have made the facilities more inviting, inclusive, and fun places for children and parents to visit.
- 3.2 With continued investment over the last eleven years, Council is achieving the desired improvements at playgrounds selected under the programme. On independent re-inspection, quality scores for the newly refurbished sites below have moved to the higher standard of good – excellent (see Appendix 1 – Refurbished playground images).
- Westlands playground
 - Sally Gardens playground
- 3.3 Members should note that Play Services Ireland (PSI) Ltd undertook annual inspections at all 105 council-maintained playgrounds earlier this year (see Appendix 2 – Typical inspection report 2023: Loughside playground). The 'mean quality score' they allocated for each site relates to the condition of existing play equipment and compliance with European safety standards BS EN 1176 & 1177: 2020. All playgrounds were then

ranked in order of their mean quality score, helping to identify facilities in most need of improvement this year (see Appendix 3 – Mean Quality Scores Report).

- 3.4 In reference to the Mean Quality Scores Report, Members should note that the lowest scoring playground (Sally Gardens: ranked 105th) was inspected by PSI Ltd. before the facility was refurbished in April 2023 under PIP 2023-23.
- 3.5 As a result of refurbishment works, selected playgrounds listed under Item 2.1 are expected to move from the quality classification of ‘fair - fairly good’ to ‘excellent’ when re-inspected.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.6 All proposed playground refurbishment works will be funded through the Capital Programme within an allocated budget of £580,000. CNS Landscape Planning & Development Officers will continue to re-design play facilities and project manage all works associated with the delivery of PIP 2023-24.
- 3.7 As with previous years, C&NS OSS Managers will continue to assist with the distribution of information relating to playground improvements to elected members, local communities, and user groups.

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

- 3.8 None.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Short term future of Loughside Recreation Centre

The Committee was reminded that Loughside Recreation Centre was closed, along with all Belfast City Council leisure centres, in March 2020 in compliance with Covid-19 legislation. While other centres re-opened on a phased basis, as the pandemic restrictions were eased, it was agreed that Loughside would remain closed. Initially this was due to difficulties in complying with social distancing guidelines and related operating restrictions.

As restrictions were further eased and other leisure centres returned to pre-Covid operating models, it was agreed that Loughside should remain substantially closed but that provision be made for access to changing and toilet facilities to cater for users of the outdoor grass pitches. Subsequently one wing (approximately ¼ of the building) was adapted to allow restricted access, via dedicated external doors, to a suite of changing rooms and toilets. There is no access from the newly created ‘changing pavilion’ area to the rest of the building. A Partner Agreement was signed with Loughside FC under which the club

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opens/closes and is responsible for cleaning the ringfenced changing pavilion section of the building. GLL remain responsible for all statutory functions (health and safety, fire alarm checks, legionella flushing, daily inspections, etc.). This operating model has been in place since the end of 2021.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services advised the Committee that re-opening Loughside would require substantial investment, including major roof repairs, a new passenger lift, mechanical and electrical upgrades and various repairs to the fabric of the building. Major issues relating to the fabric of the building had existed since before the pandemic and substantial investment in reactive maintenance was required on an annual basis leading up to 2020 to keep the building open and fully operational.

Alongside the condition of the building, Loughside had for many years recorded very low demand consistently returning the lowest throughput, space occupancy and income figures in the leisure estate.

The long-term future of Loughside RC, along with Ballysillan, Belvoir, Ormeau Park/Ozone, Shankill and Whiterock, was earmarked for inclusion in the Leisure Transformation Programme Phase 4 strategic review.

The Committee granted approval to continue with the current operating model at Loughside Recreation Centre pending the outcome of the LTP Phase 4 strategic review.

Operational Issues

Proposal for dual language street signs

The Director of Planning and Building Control submitted for the Committee's consideration the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 To consider applications for the erection of dual language street signs for ten existing streets within the city.**
- 1.2 To consider a request from a resident of Downview Park West, who has written to Belfast City Council requesting to address members at Committee. This resident is objecting to the dual language street nameplate.**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to agree to:

- (1) The erection of a second street nameplate in Irish at, Orchardville Avenue, Wynchurch Avenue, Mayfield Square, Hillhead Avenue, St Meryl Park, Chichester Avenue, Ballymurphy Drive, Airfield Heights and Margareta Park.**

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(2) Receive a deputation from an objector in respect of the application for Downview Park West at a future meeting of the Committee.

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

3.1 The Council may erect a second street nameplate in a language other than English pursuant to Article 11 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1995.

3.2 Members are asked to consider the following applications to erect a second street nameplate showing the name of the street expressed in a language other than English. The second language is Irish.

| English Name | Non- English Name | Location | Persons surveyed |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Orchardville Avenue, BT10 0JH | Ascaill Orchardville | Finaghy Road North | 93 |
| Wynchurch Avenue, BT6 OJP | Ascaill Wynchurch | Off Rosetta Road | 113 |
| Mayfield Square, BT10 0QT | Cearnóg Ghort na Bealtaine | Off Blacks Road | 169 |
| Hillhead Avenue, BT11 9GD | Ascaill an Mhullaigh | Off Stewartstown Road | 67 |
| St Meryl Park, BT11 8FY | Páirc Naomh Muirgheal | Off Glen Road | 112 |
| Downview Park West, BT15 5HN | Páirc Radharc an Dúin Thair | Off Downview Park, Antrim Road | 177 |
| Chichester Avenue, BT15 5EH | Ascaill Chichester | Off Antrim Road | 70 |
| Ballymurphy Drive, BT12 7JJ | Céide Bhaile Uí Mhurchú | Off Ballymurphy Road | 99 |
| Margaretta Park, BT17 0JQ | Páirc Margaretta | Off Stewartstown Road | 125 |

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| | | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|---------------|-----|
| Airfield Heights, BT11 8QU | Arda na hAerpháirce | Off Glen Road | 179 |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|---------------|-----|

3.4 The translations were authenticated by Queens University, the approved translator for Belfast City Council.

3.5 In accordance with the Council's policy for the erection of dual language street signs, surveys of all persons appearing on the electoral register, plus owners or tenants in actual possession of commercial premises, for the above streets were carried out and the following responses were received.

3.6 Orchardville Avenue, BT10

- 37 occupiers (39.78 %) were in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
- 2 occupiers (2.15%) were not in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
- 4 occupiers (4.30%) had no preference either way
- 50 occupiers (53.76 %) did not respond to the survey

One resident from Orchardville Avenue who is not in favour of the dual language nameplate has responded on the survey form that they would prefer that the money was spent on things which directly impact on families. While they believe in equality, they believe that dual language street signage is not the best use of time and money to promote inclusion. This resident is also concerned that the sign could be seen as an endorsement from residents who could become a target for people who are not happy with the signage.

3.7 Wynchurch Avenue, BT6

- 20 occupiers (17.70%) were in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
- 30 occupiers (26.55%) were not in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
- 4 occupiers (3.54%) had no preference either way
- 59 occupiers (52.21%) did not respond to the survey

3.8 One resident from Wynchurch Avenue who is not in favour of the dual language nameplate has responded on the survey form that they are concerned about the divisive impact of an Irish translation on a street name plate.

3.9 Mayfield Square, BT10

- 49 occupiers (28.99%) were in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
- 3 occupiers (1.78%) were not in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
- 1 occupiers (0.59%) had no preference either way
- 116 occupiers (68.64%) did not respond to the survey

3.10 Hillhead Avenue, BT11

- 33 occupiers (49.25%) were in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
- 2 occupiers (2.99 %) were not in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
- 1 occupier (1.49%) had no preference either way
- 31 occupiers (46.27%) did not respond to the survey

3.11 St Meryl Park, BT11

- 54 occupiers (48.21%) were in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
- 1 occupier (0.89%) had no preference either way
- 57 occupiers (50.89%) did not respond to the survey

3.12 Downview Park West, BT15

- 70 occupiers (39.55%) were in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
- 36 occupiers (20.34 %) were not in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
- 71 occupiers (40.11%) did not respond to the survey

One resident from Downview Park West who is not in favour of the dual language nameplate has written in to complain about the time and money being wasted on what they perceive to be trivial issues. Another resident telephoned to raise a concern about their property depreciating in value should the signage be erected

A further resident from Downview Park West has written in and is strongly objecting to the dual language nameplate in a mixed area. The resident feels that a dual language nameplate can be very divisive. The resident has also requested to address the decision makers at Committee.

3.13 Chichester Avenue, BT15 5EH

- 12 occupiers (17.14%) were in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
- 10 occupiers (14.29%) were not in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
- 1 occupier (1.43%) had no preference either way
- 47 occupiers (67.14%) did not respond to the survey

3.14 Ballymurphy Drive, BT12

- 29 occupiers (29.29%) were in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
- 70 occupiers (70.71%) did not respond to the survey check if these change

3.15 Margaretta Park, BT17

- 61 occupiers (48.80%) were in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
- 1 occupier (0.8%) was not in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
- 63 (50.40%) did not respond to the survey

3.16 Airfield Heights, BT11

- 53 occupiers (29.61%) were in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
- 126 occupiers (70.39%) did not respond to the survey

Assessment against policy

3.17 The Council's policy on the erection of a second street nameplate requires that at least fifteen percent (15%) of the occupiers surveyed must be in favour of the proposal to erect a second street sign in a language other than English, to progress to Committee for consideration.

3.18 All of the surveys listed above demonstrate compliance with the threshold contained within the Policy. However the Committee is reminded that the Council retain a residual discretion under the Policy to decide to erect or not to erect a street sign in a language other than English in certain circumstances. This will be done on a case by case basis.

3.19 The Policy states that it may be appropriate to depart from the procedures in this Policy when there are clear reasons for doing so. This may include taking into account:

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- (a) the views of the Occupiers of the street;
 - (b) the results of the initial assessment for the application, including any identified potential adverse impacts on equality, good relations and rural needs;
 - (c) consideration of the local context of the application;
 - (d) any other Council policies or strategies related to the application; and
 - (e) all material considerations relating to the application.
- 3.20 As appears above one of the objectors in respect of the Downview Park West application has asked to make a deputation to the Committee. Committee are asked to consider inviting the resident to a subsequent meeting of the Committee and defer making a decision in respect of that application until it has heard that deputation.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.21 There is a cost of approximately £3,350 to cover the cost of the manufacturing and erection of approximately 28 dual language street signs. The cost for these street signs has been allowed for in the current budget.

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

- 3.22 Each application for a dual language street sign is subject to an initial assessment for any potential adverse impacts on the grounds of equality, good relations and rural needs.
- 3.23 The initial assessments and elected member notification carried out for the 10 applications being considered did not identify any potential adverse impacts to prevent the surveys being carried out. However, the Committee is entitled to take into account the concerns raised by the residents as set out above in arriving to their decision.”

After discussion, it was

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

That the Committee agrees to the erection of a second street nameplate in Irish at Orchardville Avenue, Mayfield Square, Hillhead Avenue, St Meryl Park, Downview Park West, Chichester Avenue, Ballymurphy Drive, Airfield Heights and Margaretta Park; and that the application in respect of Wynchurch Avenue be deferred to enable the occupiers to be resurveyed.

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

Further Proposal

Moved by Councillor Cobain,
Seconded by Councillor Verner,

That, notwithstanding the previous decision, the objector to the application in relation to Downview Park West who had requested to address the Committee be invited to the next meeting.

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

Proposal for naming new street

The Committee approved the following applications for the naming of new streets and the continuation of an existing street:

| Proposed Name | Location |
|----------------------|---|
| Grays Lane Mews | Off Grays Lane, BT15 4HT At junction of Shore Road |
| Gardenmore Walk | Off Gardenmore Road, BT17 0BH At junction of Summerhill Road |

| Proposed Continuation of Existing Street | Location |
|---|--|
| Collingwood Avenue, BT7 1QT | Between Carmel Street and Damascus Street, BT7 |

**Request for use of Dundonald Cemetery –
Apprentice Boys of Derry**

The Committee noted:

- the use of Dundonald Cemetery on 29th June to facilitate the event subject to the event organisers resolving all operational issues to the Council's satisfaction; and
- the approval by the Director of City Services under delegated authority for the use in advance of the July council to allow the event to take place on the 29th June.

Requests for the use of Parks for 2023 events

The Committee considered requests seeking permission for the use of various parks and facilities during 2023, as follows:

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- Live@C.S.Lewis Square – C. S. Lewis Square – Live outdoor music and family funday as part of the Easside Arts Festival 29th – 31st July; and
- Space for Everyone – Cathedral Gardens – launch activity 18th – 26th July.

The Committee granted authority for the aforementioned requests and delegated authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to:

- i. negotiate an appropriate fee which recognises the costs to Council, minimises negative impact on the immediate area and takes account of the potential wider benefit to the city economy, in conjunction with the Council's Commercial Manager;
- ii. negotiate satisfactory terms and conditions of use via an appropriate legal agreement prepared by the City Solicitor, including managing final booking confirmation dates and flexibility around 'set up' and take down' periods, and booking amendments, subject to:
 - the promoter resolving any operational issues to the Council's satisfaction;
 - compliance with Coronavirus restrictions in place at the time of the event; and
 - the promoter meeting all the statutory requirements of the Planning and Building Control Service, including the terms and conditions of the Park's Entertainment Licence.

The Committee noted that the above recommendations were taken as a pre-policy position, in advance of the Council agreeing a more structured framework and policy for 'Events', which was currently being taken forward in conjunction with the Council's Commercial team.

Pest Control Service Delivery Update

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided an update on the current status of the Pest Control Service, planned improvements and the work being undertaken towards full resumption of all services.

Issues Raised in Advance by Members

Swimming Buddies - Brook Leisure Centre (Councillor Murray to raise)

The Committee agreed that representatives of swimming buddies, concerned parents and GLL be invited to the special meeting to be held on 26th June.

Chairperson