



Belfast  
City Council

# Pavement Café Licensing Consultation: Analysis of responses

Business Research and Development Unit



# Introduction

This report provides a summary of the consultation undertaken by Belfast City Council on a proposal to make the current temporary pavement café licensing scheme permanent.

The consultation aimed to understand people's views towards the proposal and to ascertain what impact the introduction of a permanent scheme would have on residents, businesses and other key stakeholders.

## Background to the consultation

- Council officers undertook a four-week period of pre-consultation with key stakeholders across a number of sectors including Members, DfC, DfI, PSNI and Belfast City Council Disability Advisory Panel.
- Considered the feedback received from the consultation on Fees in 2016 to shape consultation questions; and
- Held a workshop with Members of the Licensing Committee to discuss the pavement café licensing scheme and its future going forward.

These conversations were used to inform and shape the contents of a public online survey and a separate online survey of temporary pavement café licensees. The surveys were set up through the Council's online consultation portal Your Say Belfast where responses could be submitted online. It was promoted widely via the Council's website and on social media. As a result, the story was picked up and circulated by a number of media outlets and organisations e.g., News Letter, Hospitality Ulster, 4NI, and Irish News.

## Summary of feedback

### Public:

- There was strong support for a permanent pavement café licensing scheme for Belfast, 89% of the public consultees were in support.
- There was also strong support (85.5%) for proper regulation to reduce any negative impacts.
- Individuals experiences of pavement cafés have been generally positive.
- The majority of consultees felt that the cost of administering the pavement café licence process should met by Café owners or operators.
- Over half of respondents thought a licence period of 5 years was about right.

### Licensees:

- Licensees consultees were overwhelmingly in support of a permanent pavement café licensing scheme for Belfast (88.5%).
- Most of the pavement café operators felt that the pavement café benefitted their business (92.3%).
- The majority of consultees felt that businesses should not be asked to pay a fee for a permanent pavement café licence (55.6%)

- There was also strong support (70.4%) for proper regulation, monitoring and proportionate enforcement of pavement cafés (licensed and unlicensed) to reduce any negative impacts.

**Unlicensed:**

- The majority of unlicensed businesses surveyed commented they didn't know about the scheme.
- However, the feedback provided was generally positive and the majority of businesses welcomed the permanent scheme and confirmed they would apply.

**Responses received**

In total, 256 people and organisations responded to the public consultation. A further 27 current temporary licence holders responded to the Licensee consultation. The responses comprised as follows:

Method of response	Responses received
Public Consultation (YSB online consultation portal)	256
Licensee Consultation (YSB online consultation portal)	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>283</b>
Additional: Engagement sessions	5
Additional: Correspondence	3

The public consultation respondents were split into three categories, members of the public (94.1%, 241 responses); those who own, operate or were responding on behalf of a business (4.7%, 12 responses) and those responding on behalf of a group or organisation (1.2%, 3 responses). The organisations were Cathedral Quarter Business Improvement District, Linen Quarter Business Improvement District and RNIB NI. [Q9-10 permission given to publish organisation names]

In addition, council received three written responses from representative organisations (IMTAC, FSB and Guide Dogs UK) providing comments on the consultation.

## Public Consultation - Summary Analysis

### The introduction of a permanent Pavement Café Licensing Scheme

Belfast City Council has reviewed the feedback received to the public consultation and a summary of the Council’s analysis is provided below. In all, 256 responses were received to the public consultation which was open from 29<sup>th</sup> September to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023 on the Your Say Belfast platform.

### Pavement Café Culture

The majority of respondents indicate that they have been recent customers of a pavement café in the city, with almost 59% (150 responses) visiting one in the last month (daily/weekly/monthly visits) [Q15]. The most popular locations for visiting pavement cafés is in the city centre (66%) followed by South Belfast (23.8%) [Q16]. This is reflective of the geographic spread of businesses with a temporary pavement café licence, the majority of which are in the city centre.

Individuals experiences of pavement cafés have been generally positive, in particular as customers (Customers = 85%; Pedestrians = 70%; Business Owners = 67% and Road Users = 55%) [Q19]. This positivity continues when considering the impact that pavement cafés have on the city. Almost 86% of respondents felt that pavement cafés were a positive addition to Belfast. There was also general agreement that pavement cafés are of benefit to customers of businesses supplying food and drink (86%); benefit to food and drink businesses (90%); and benefit to other businesses in the area (80%) [Q17].

Respondents were able to comment further on their experiences, and there was a total of 110 comments. [Q18]. Some comments made more than one point. The most frequently cited thematic areas are listed in the table below:

Comment thematic area	Tone	Frequency
Pavement café scheme increase vibrancy / add life	Positive	30
Pavement café scheme obstructs footfall / pavements	Negative	29
Pavement café scheme reduce the risk of covid-19 / airborne infections / allows vulnerable people to safely socialise	Positive	17
Pavement café scheme show NI / Belfast can modernise and give a European feel	Positive	14
Pavement café scheme helps support the hospitality sector (particularly post covid)	Positive	13
Pavement café scheme is good for customers	Positive	13
Pavement cafés are too big in size	Negative	12
Pavement café scheme has a negative impact on some Section 75 groups	Negative	12

In terms of negative experiences of pavement cafés, respondents indicated they had been impacted by the following: [Q21]

Option	Yes	No	No response
Not enough clear footpath width left or pavement café causing an obstruction on the footway for people passing by	84 (33%)	170	2
Pavement café too close to edge of road - causing an obstruction to the use of on-street parking spaces	57 (23%)	195	4
Pavement café area too large - obstructing access or footfall to an adjacent business	62 (25%)	188	6
Not enough space within a pavement café itself or furniture obstructing the building's entrance/exits	65 (26%)	187	4
Pavement cafés not being enclosed by barriers causing a problem for people with a visual disability	71 (28%)	182	3
Pavement café furniture not being removed from the street at night or when the business is closed causing obstruction to vehicles (for example impacting early morning deliveries to other businesses or access for street cleaning)	56 (22%)	196	4
Gathering of rubbish and cleansing issues around pavement café	74 (29%)	177	5

A further 43 (16.8%) consultees responded that either they or a person in your company had encountered accessibility issues e.g., wheelchair access or pram access [Q22]. Of these, 63% (27) have dependents; 26% (11) have a physical disability and 16% (7) have a sight impairment.

Of the 43 consultees who indicated they have encountered accessibility issue, 34 provided further comments on this [Q23]. Some comments made more than one point. The most frequently cited thematic areas are listed in the table below:

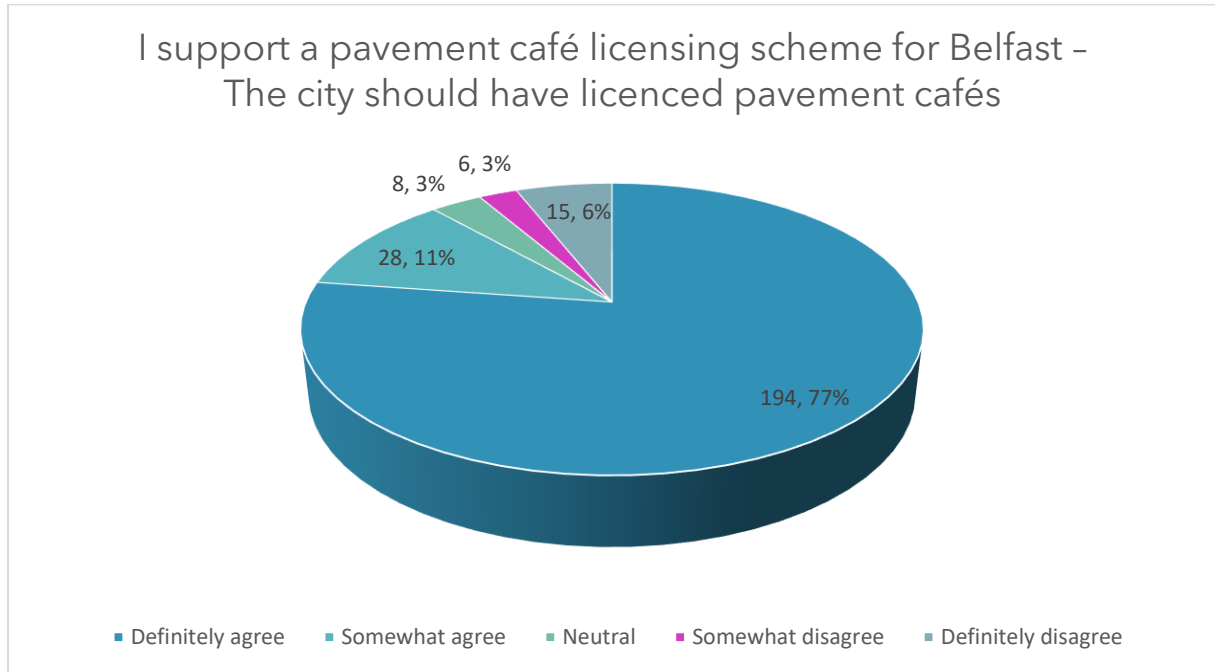
Comment thematic area	Frequency
There were obstructions on the pavement	14
The pavement area was reduced	9

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Had to walk on the road to pass	7
Difficulties for those who are blind or partially sighted (i.e., no barrier)	5
Not accessible for wheelchairs (or prams)	5
Hard to manoeuvre (though space and around obstacles)	4

## A permanent Pavement Café Licensing Scheme

Going forward, the consultees were overwhelmingly in support of a permanent pavement café licensing scheme for Belfast (88%) [Q25].



### Monitoring

There was also strong support (85.4%) for proper regulation, monitoring and proportionate enforcement of pavement cafés (licensed and unlicensed) to reduce any negative impacts [Q26].

### Fees

The majority of consultees felt that the cost of administering the pavement café licence process should be met by Café owners or operators (74.4%, 189 responses) rather than coming from within existing council budgets (25.6%, 65 responses) [Q31].

The level of fee previously agreed by the Council was considered to be about right by 30.6% (78 responses), too low by 16.1% (41 responses); too high by 15.7% (40 responses) and 37.6% (96 responses) either didn't know or had no opinion [Q32].

Respondents who felt the level of fees previously agreed by council were either too high or too low were able to provide further comments on their opinion.

### Fees - too low comments

Of those who felt the fees were too low, 27 offered further comments which were categorised as follows: [Q33]

- Nine proposed that council's administration costs should be covered by the fees levied. Two of the 9 also suggested that in addition to the admin costs, further costs should be covered e.g. partner agency costs (DfI) or impact on environment.

- Four suggested the fees increase from those set in 2016 as 25p per day was too low and to account for general increases over the intervening years.
- Four suggested fees of between £1000 pa and £5000 pa, with one proposing the fees increase over the 5-year term of the licence (yr 1 would be reduced to allow for the businesses initial investment).
- Three suggested a commercial rate based on either rates paid or rent per areas.
- Three suggested a rate based on the space used by the café or number of tables, meaning bigger pavement café areas would pay more than small ones.
- Two suggested fees should be based on increase in profits.

### **Fees - too high comments**

Of those who felt the fees were too high, 22 offered further comments which were categorised as follows: [Q34]

- Eleven suggested there should be no fees.
- Eight commented that the initial application rate (£225) should be reduced, with 3 of the seven adding the annual rate should be reduced or set at a fixed rate.
- Two proposed the fees are shared by both council and the applicant.

### **Licence duration**

When asked about a licence period of 5 years, 52.2% (133 responses) felt that was about right; 26.3% felt it was too long (67 responses); 6.7% too short (17); and 14.9% either didn't know or had no opinion (37 responses) [Q35].



## Demography

### Respondents interest in the public consultation

Respondents described their interest in the consultation as follows: [Q1]

Which of the following best describes your interest as a respondent?	Number
Member of the public	241
Business representative organisation/ trade body	3
Own / Manage a business in Belfast	12
Grand Total	256

#### Additional information:

- Of the 241 members of the public who responded, 196 live in Belfast; 78 work or study in Belfast and 24 are visitors to Belfast. [Q2 note: respondents could pick multiple responses to this question]

#### Gender [Q3]

Male	Female	Use another term	Prefer not to say	Not answered
119/256	109/256	<5/256	7/256	17/256
49.8%	45.6%	<2%	2.9%	

#### Age [Q4]

Under 18	18-24 yrs	25-34 yrs	35-44 yrs	45-54 yrs	55-64 yrs	65 yrs +	Not answered
3/256	9/256	47/256	49/256	74/256	37/256	21/256	16/256
1.3%	3.8%	19.8%	20.4%	30.8%	15.4%	8.8%	

#### Day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months? [Q5]

Yes	No	Prefer not to say	Not answered
36/256	191/256	12/256	17/256
15.1%	79.9%	5.0%	

**How does the disability affect you? [Q6]**

Option	Number
Physical disability	20
Hearing impairment	4
Sight impairment	8
Mental health condition	14
Learning disability	4
Long standing illness	13
Prefer not to say	1
Other	2

**Dependants / Caring responsibilities [Q7]**

Yes	No	Not answered
87/256	152/256	17/256
36.4%	63.6%	

**Type of caring responsibilities [Q8]**

Option	Number
A child or children	56
A person with a disability	22
An elderly person	30
Other	1

**Equality or Rural Needs Assessment issues that should be taken into consideration in relation to the proposed permanent scheme:**

There was a total of 13 responses to this question. Some responses made more than one point. The most frequently cited thematic areas were in relation to areas of concern about the pavement café scheme for those who are blind and partially sighted (6); who have mobility issues (5); who have dependents (2) and the elderly (1). In contrast there were a number of comments in favour of the scheme from those who are clinically extremely vulnerable.

There were no comments received in relation to the draft Rural needs Impact Assessment.

## Licensee Consultation - Summary Analysis

### The introduction of a permanent Pavement Café Licensing Scheme

Belfast City Council has reviewed the feedback received to the Licensee consultation and a summary of the Council's analysis is provided below. In all, 27 responses were received to the licensee consultation which was open from 29<sup>th</sup> September to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023 on the Your Say Belfast platform. The link to the survey was sent to all current temporary pavement café licence holders.

### Temporary Pavement Café Licence Scheme

Of the 27 responses received, 25 were from consultees who have a licence under the temporary scheme. The remaining 2 are unlicensed [Q1]. The reasons cited for being unlicensed were the application process being too difficult and not knowing a licence was required [Q2].

The majority (72%) of those with temporary licence found the application process to be straightforward, the remaining 28% disagreed [Q3].

Suggestions to improve the process going forward included [Q4]:

- Simplifying the approval process
- Shortening the time it takes to go through the process to obtain a licence
- Providing clear guidance and offering face-to-face meetings for advice
- Streamlining the renewals process
- An online payment facility for fees.

Most of the pavement café operators felt that it benefitted their business (92.3%) [Q5]. The benefits outlined included [Q6]:

- Additional seating
- Improved visibility to customers
- Creates vibrancy
- Improves the area and can promote investment/ regeneration
- Enhances the customer experience
- Increases footfall and boosts sales

Almost 85% of consultees intend to apply for a licence when the permanent scheme opens [Q9].

### Operating a Pavement Café

Three quarters (74.1%) of consultees indicated that their pavement café has an enclosure around it [Q11]. The same number of consultees (74.1%) can fully remove their pavement café from the street within 20 minutes [Q13]. Those that can't remove it indicated this was due either to fixed equipment being in place; due to anti-social behaviour or the need for

sturdy fixtures that will last [Q14]. Again, 74.1% of consultees have adequate storage provision [Q15]. Those that don't, stated the equipment was either too large or they hadn't been able to get storage [Q16].

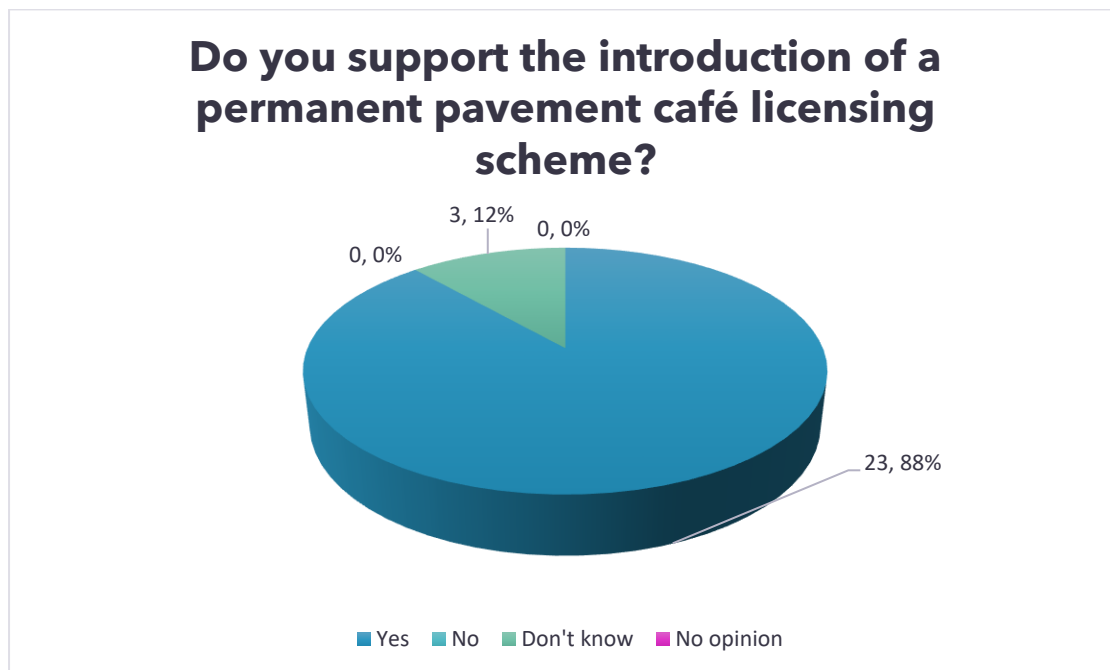
### Accessibility

All (96.3%) but one respondent felt there was enough space within their pavement café to make it accessible for customers with a disability [Q17]. The physical barriers were cited as being difficult to navigate if in a wheelchair by this respondent. When asked if the remaining footpath space outside the pavement café was adequate for pedestrians and/or vehicles to pass by, 96.3% agreed it was [Q19].

In response to the question "Do you feel that pedestrians and other street users should have priority over pavement cafés?"; 59.3% said yes; 33.3% said no and the remainder 7.4% didn't know [Q21].

### A permanent Pavement Café Licensing Scheme

Going forward, the consultees were overwhelmingly in support of a permanent pavement café licensing scheme for Belfast (88.5%) [Q24]. Comments from consultees indicate that a permanent scheme would enhance their businesses, encourage them to invest more, provide clear operating parameters, increase vibrancy and give Belfast a European feel with a café culture.



\*1 respondent didn't answer this question

## **Fees**

The majority of consultees felt that businesses should not be asked to pay a fee for a permanent pavement café licence (55.6%) and 40.7% felt that businesses should pay a fee [Q26].

The level of fee previously agreed by the Council was considered to be reasonable by 51.9%; too high by 33.3% and 14.8% either didn't know or have an opinion [Q27]. No one responded that the fees were too low. The comments made in relation to the fees suggested that there should be no licence fee due to the business rates that the businesses pay [Q28].

Only 11.1% (3) respondents felt the proposed fees would put them off making a permanent licence application. The majority of respondents (51.9%) said the fees wouldn't stop them applying [Q29].

## **License duration**

When asked about a licence period of 5 years, 77.8% felt that was about right; 11.1% felt it was too long; and 11.1% thought it was too short [Q31]. Comments received on the licence duration indicate that businesses would be happy to invest in quality furniture knowing the licence was for 5 years. Other comments felt that the nature of the industry and the need to capture changes mean a shorter licence period would be more appropriate [Q32].

## **Monitoring**

As with the public consultation, there was also strong support (70.4%) for proper regulation, monitoring and proportionate enforcement of pavement cafés (licensed and unlicensed) to reduce any negative impacts. In contrast, 11.1% disagreed and 18.5% either didn't know or have an opinion [Q36]. Comments made by consultees in relation to monitoring and enforcement suggested that there should be a consistent approach, advice and guidance to be given before penalties levied and monitoring would encourage high standards and safety [Q38].

The enforcement of technical requirements and licence conditions in licensed pavement cafés was also considered to be important by the majority of respondents (77.8%). This was important to ensure consistency, compliance and safety [Q39-40].

All (96.3%) but one respondent felt that monitoring and enforcement of unlicensed pavement cafés is important. Respondents felt that the need for a licence should be applied consistently, it would set a high benchmark for the city, and ensure compliance and safety [Q42,44].

## Unlicensed Pavement Café Consultation - Summary Analysis

While many of the pavement cafés operating in Belfast are licenced, there are approximately 140 which don't have a licence. As part of the pavement café public consultation, Building Control officers conducted a survey around the city, visiting 61 premises that currently operate an unlicensed pavement café.

The survey was undertaken to find out the reasons why businesses with unlicensed pavement cafés didn't apply to the temporary scheme when it was introduced in 2020 and to provide them with general information about the permanent scheme moving forward.

### Out of the 61 premises visited:

- 42 businesses commented they didn't know about the scheme.
- 6 businesses commented they owned the land and didn't think they required a licence to operate.
- 1 business commented they knew about the scheme but didn't think they needed a licence.
- 1 business commented they didn't have time to apply and that they only put furniture on the pavement on occasion.
- 1 business commented the application process was difficult regarding amending plans to accommodate DFI recommendations.
- 1 business commented they knew about the scheme; it was an oversight that they didn't apply.
- 3 businesses commented they did apply but did not follow up with required information.
- 2 businesses commented they applied - BCC investigated and hold no record of applications.
- 4 businesses were unable to comment - Employee passed information on to management.

The feedback provided to Council Officers conducting the survey overall was positive, the majority of businesses welcomed the permanent scheme and would apply.

Most felt that the original fee agreed by the Council was reasonable, however two businesses commented that their pavement café area didn't benefit their business and they would like to remove it going forward as its main use was to accommodate customers who smoked cigarettes.

Some of the businesses highlighted they owned or managed multiple premises within Belfast and would also like to apply for a pavement café licence for other stores.

Others commented that the introduction of the permanent scheme would give them assurance by obtaining a licence that would be valid for a number of years. They stated that they would be more willing to invest in the overall presentation of their pavement café area.

## Engagement events

Building Control Officers held a number of targeted engagement events, five in total. Feedback received from stakeholders and umbrella organisations was very positive about the depth of council's engagement with key groups on the topic.

## Disability Advisory Panel

Officers met with Council's Disability Advisory Panel (DAP) on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2023 to brief them on the consultation. The panel is a forum of individuals with knowledge and personal experience of different types of disability. The purpose of the panel is to:

- advise, guide and support the council to respond better to the needs of Deaf and disabled people
- identify priorities in offering accessible and inclusive services and facilities
- draw upon group members' personal experiences to represent the broader issues for Deaf and disabled people in Belfast
- promote equality of opportunity.

Feedback from the DAP in relation to the pavement café licensing scheme included:

- Generally supportive of pavement cafes.
- Concern about vermin with pavement cafes especially as some council lorries cannot get in to clean up.
- Tripping hazard and some businesses have taken over pedestrian areas.
- Concern over emergency vehicles not getting through in a life-threatening situation.
- Too many obstructions on footpaths - dangers around having to walk onto road.
- Pavement Cafes taking over car parking spaces - accessible car parking needs retained.
- Good regulation/monitoring and enforcement required.
- It was understood that the temporary pavement café scheme was light touch brought in to support businesses during Covid and some existing cafes would not have got a licence for the areas they have under a permanent scheme.

## Section 75 Engagement session

There were two targeted engagement sessions spotlighted on Your Say Belfast consultation platform. One session was targeted towards Section 75 groups and the second session was targeted towards the hospitality and business sector.

The Section 75 session was held on 30<sup>th</sup> October and a cross section of representative and umbrella organisations were invited to participate and give their views. The session was attended by Members of the Licensing Committee and IMTAC, Disability Action, RNIB and a representative from the Disability Advisory Panel.



Feedback from this session included:

- In general, felt that pavement cafes are a positive addition to the city with a few that need to be managed better or reviewed due to size.
- Economic benefit to city – but needs to be balanced with regulation and monitoring inspections are important.
- 1 in 4 people identified themselves as having a disability – census 2021. NI have much higher proportion than rest of UK and voices of disabled must be heard – the disabled (purple) £ is worth as much as anyone else’s.
- City needs to be safe for disabled people to go the places they want.
- Concerns over access by emergency vehicles.
- Disabled people have legal protection.
- We must have regard to the rights of disabled people and others to use the footway.
- Recommended clear footpath width of 2m for access and use of key Principles of Inclusive Street design which has been redrafted.
- IMTEC asked for clear guidance from BCC which must be equality screened, and PC Licensing Model must be fit for purpose.
- Important to provide for all disabled people whether they use wheelchair, crutches, walking canes, white stick, etc. or those with prams - all need adequate space.
- Importance of tap-rails on enclosures around PCs for those with visual impairment.
- Some of the interventions made for covid meant significant parts of the public realm were taken over – lost seating, parking spaces, etc. Covid liberalisation cannot become the new norm.
- The relaxed attitude from Covid needs to change going forward. Understand businesses maximising space – but Council needs to audit what has been provided.
- Need to consider PCs in context of other issues such as cycling routes, making sure the number of disabled car parking spaces is not reduced.
- Premises need to remove furniture at night.
- Supportive of Parklets as long as footways are kept clear. Narrow footways are not the way to make a city more accessible.
- Queries raised about payment of rates for PCs.

## Hospitality and Business Sector Engagement session

A second session was held on 6<sup>th</sup> November with the business and hospitality sector and once again, cross section of representative and umbrella organisations at local level, city wide, city centre-focused and sector-focused were invited to participate and give their views. The session was attended by Belfast One BID, Cathedral Quarter BID, Linen Quarter BID, Belfast Chamber, Federation of Small Businesses and Horatio Group.

- Very supportive of Pavement Cafes – see benefits for City and businesses and also very supportive of Parklets (and more pedestrianisation in City).
- Request that we work together (BCC/Dfl/businesses) to have good quality PCs in city. If some licensee not meeting conditions, then revoke their licences.

- Supportive of a Permanent Scheme and regulation/enforcement.
- Requirement to be able to remove furniture in 20 minutes seen as a problem - makes aspiring to good quality enclosure and furniture difficult.
- More professional plans and fees not seen as an issue. Reasonable to pay more if getting more space.
- Transparency of what is likely acceptable (for example in terms of size) would be useful - also useful if council could triage existing ones with Dfl and give existing licensees advance warning of issues.
- Size should not be related to indoor space. If space available and acceptable then should be allowed. But all businesses need opportunity to apply for a PC licence.
- Accept that some existing PCs are too large and will need to reduce in size for permanent scheme.
- Cleansing issues - agreed that should be condition of licence that they need to keep it clean. Suggested possibility of linking with main street cleansing schedule so businesses know on what days (for example twice a month) they must move their furniture.
- Don't think a blanket requirement of 2m clear footpath should be set for accessibility, as 1.5m or even 1m may be acceptable depending on location.
- Feel consultation period short and near Christmas and once proposals firmed up by Committee a further short consultation would be preferable.

## Action Ability Belfast

### Service Users Forum, Springfield Road

- Generally positive about pavement cafes - good for people that still feel vulnerable to covid etc. Disabled people spent a long time shielding.
- Highlighted issues with comfortably entering pavement café areas, spaces can be compact and not suitable for those with a rollator or wheelchair and wouldn't be suitable to accommodate multiple wheelchair or rollator users.
- Users commented on issues they faced using Castle Street where tables and chairs take up a significant part of the pavement forcing them onto the road and also highlighted a similar issue in Fountain Street and the lack of space to navigate around due to the size of pavement café area and high volume of people in the area.
- When footpath width restricted by a pavement café and there is busy two - way pedestrian traffic a mobility scooter user can be forced into the road - often there are not enough dropped kerbs to get back on the pavement quickly.
- Access problems make disabled people/groups on their outings into town avoid certain routes and premises/areas.
- Furniture being used in some pavement cafes isn't sturdy enough. Park benches not suitable.
- Not just people with disabilities impacted - able-bodied are as well e.g., someone with a pram, families, etc.
- Congested areas - mobility scooters find it difficult to progress, you get people with earphones on etc. and people walk into you.

- User suggested taking a group out with various disabilities to use a pavement café area and provide feedback to BCC on the positive and negative impacts - get views of disabled people before approval.
- Good customer care in dealing with people with disabilities is important. Pavement cafes could facilitate disabled customers by removing/stacking some chairs aside for a while to give extra space and facilitate them when they arrive. Also facilitate their access into the inside premises if needed (for access to WC for example).
- Some things in premises can also help - high toilet, grab rails help (even if not fully accessible wc)
- Barriers surrounding pavement café areas can sometimes be more of hinderance than help due to confining the space making it more difficult for some people to manoeuvre. They did acknowledge how barriers could be helpful for those with sight issues.
- User highlighted some barrier bases can be problematic for those who have mobility issues as they extend outwards, and they could potentially trip over them.
- User would like to see more outdoor pavement cafes areas providing rain cover when appropriate.
- Commented on pavement café area in the city centre. Area can be very congested and difficult to navigate due to outdoor seating area and bus stop close by. The wheelchair user she accompanied was told to move away from pavement cafe area by door staff. Another user commented that she had similar issues in this area.
- Retaining accessible car parking important.
- Vans and cars parking on pavement also a problem. Also advertising signs, bins, etc. make it hard for mobility scooters to navigate.
- Concern about emergency services trying to get around pavement cafes.

## Road Service engagement workshop

- Pavement café culture and making spaces people-centric is something DfI support but public safety/road safety/pedestrian safety is paramount.
- Pedestrian numbers in city centre likely to increase over time - for example Eastern Transport Plan will give space back to active travel, less parking spaces, more space for pedestrians. May increase available space for Pavement Cafes in the future. Therefore, not always sufficient to design for today's footfall numbers.
- Starting point is that footway to be kept clear unless it is determined appropriate for a pavement café.
- Discussed pre-determination of zoning areas/footpaths where PCs considered appropriate or not, but each application needs be assessed individually on its own merits - need to consider levels of footfall on footway, etc.
- The existing BCC guidance has been working satisfactorily for temporary scheme (alongside DfI roads technical guidance concerning road junctions/visibility/etc.) but DfI are to review the previously produced DfC document to get agreed NI wide guidance screened and published.
- DfI favoured shorter licence period than 5 years, to help deal with changing road/footpath landscape, but realised this may mean licensees would make less investment.

- Robust Council processes needed to revoke or vary PC Licences to cater for changing road/footpath landscape, need to access services or for events, etc.
- Street furniture (benches/cycle stands) need to be standalone and outside of pavement café areas.
- DfI keen that pavement café furniture is removed outside operation hours, and that these hours should reflect the need to have furniture removed to facilitate unloading/loading hours for those in pedestrianised areas with restricted access for vehicles e.g., removed at night until 11am the next morning - if loading/unloading allowed until 11am.
- Licensing Conditions should reflect local requirement in terms of operational hours and requirements to remove furniture.