

# Minutes of Special Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum

## Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2026

### Attendance

#### Members:

Councillor Ciaran Beattie  
Councillor Natasha Brennan  
Councillor Sarah Bunting  
Councillor Séamas de Faoite  
Councillor Michael Long  
Councillor Áine Groogan

#### Officers:

John Walsh, Chief Executive  
Sharon McNicholl, Deputy Chief Executive/Strategic Director of Corporate Services  
Trevor Wallace, Director of Finance  
Nora Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services  
David Sales, Strategic Director of City & Neighbourhood Services  
Jim Girvan, Director of Neighbourhood Services  
Sinead Grimes, Director of Property & Projects  
Geoff Dickson, Strategic Planning & Policy Manager (secretariat)

### 1. Community Support Plan

The Strategic Director of City & Neighbourhood Services and the Director of Neighbourhood Services outlined the proposed approach to developing a community capacity pilot, in line with the decision made at SP&R Committee the previous week. Should Members agree to the outline approach at Committee, a more detailed implementation plan will be brought back for consideration and approval.

Discussion focused on how money would be allocated on an area basis, as well as the need to ensure other communities that are not geographical in nature were able to avail of the capacity grants.

A member also raised the need for overall investment in community centres should be considered as a priority in the future.

Members agreed the report be taken to SP&R Committee for consideration.

### 2. Leisure Update

The Director of Finance outlined the options for completing the existing phases of the Leisure Transformation Programme, namely the second building at Girdwood.

Members also discussed the need to progress the next phase of the programme and look at options regarding the remaining leisure estate including Shankill, Ozone, Ballysillan and Whiterock leisure centres.

Members were content that the report be discussed at SP&R Committee.

### **3. Pitches Programme – Proposed Phasing and Implementation Plan**

The Strategic Director of City & Neighbourhood Services updated Members on the completion of the Pitches Strategy, with a view to bringing the draft strategy to Committee in March. He then outlined the potential implementation plan for the capital investment, focusing the initial priorities on the pitches that will bring the most benefit to the highest demand sports.

Some Members showed aspects of concern with some of the possible sites for pitch investment, including Boucher Playing Fields and Botanic Gardens.

Members agreed that the paper be brought to Committee for discussion.

### **4. Revenue Estimates 2026/27**

The Director of Finance updated Members on the current estimating process, including changes to the Estimated Penny Product (EPP) following the Finance Ministers rate revaluation suspension. The Director of Finance also reminded Members of the requirement to strike the rate by 15<sup>th</sup> February.

Members agreed that the paper be brought to SP&R Committee for consideration.

### **5. AOB**

#### **Attack on Cleansing Staff**

The Chief Executive updated members on the situation regarding the assault on members of staff whilst cleaning the city centre and the discussions with trade unions since the attack regarding additional safety measures being introduced to protect staff. Party Group Leaders joined CMT in condemning the attack and offering their support to the staff involved.