



People & Communities

Committee Plan 2025- 2026

Year End Update Report



Belfast
City Council

Introduction

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

Its specific functions include:

- Developing and delivering programmes, events, and activities to promote health, safety and wellbeing at a local level
- Developing and delivering programmes, events and activities to promote health, safety and well being at a local level.
- Administering and enforcing the Council's powers and duties under the Public Health Acts and all environmental health and building related legislation and regulations.
- Securing and providing adequate provision for the recycling, treatment and disposal of commercial and domestic waste including bulky waste and the collection and disposal of abandoned motor vehicles.
- Exercising the Council's powers for improving local environmental quality in relation to housing legislation, managing controlled waste, emergency planning and community safety and anti-social behaviour, clean neighbourhoods and other environmental or regulatory issues not falling within the remit of any other Committee.
- Managing, maintaining, and maximising the benefit of the Council's parks, pitches, playgrounds, and other public spaces as well as community centres and other indoor facilities
- Developing and implementing activities to ensure the delivery of corporate strategies and initiatives in respect of the promotion of health and physical activity, environmental protection, community safety and other such areas under the domain of this Committee.
- Overseeing the delivery of the Council's frontline services and associated community assets including:
 - Environmental Health Services
 - Cleansing
 - Waste Management
 - Parks and Leisure Service (excluding Zoo, Malone House and Belfast Castle)
 - Neighbourhood and Development Services
 - Community Services,
 - Community Safety
 - Emergency Planning
 - Building Control

Ref: Standing Orders – December 2021

People & Communities Committee Members



Councillor Fred Cobain (Chair)
Party: DUP
Ward: Castle



Councillor Matt Garrett
Party: Sinn Fein
Ward: Collin



Councillor Micky Murray
Party: Alliance Party
Ward: Balmoral



Councillor Christina Black
Party: Sinn Fein
Ward: Court



Councillor Christine Bower
Party: Alliance Party
Ward: Ormiston



Councillor Nicola Bradley
Party: Sinn Fein
Ward: Oldpark



Councillor Sarah Bunting
Party: DUP
Ward: Balmoral



Councillor Claire Canavan
Party: Sinn Fein
Ward: Court



Councillor Ruth Brooks
Party: DUP
Ward: Titanic



Councillor Micheal Donnelly
Party: Sinn Fein
Ward: Black Mountain



Councillor Jordan Doran
Party: DUP
Ward: Old Park



Councillor Róis-Máire Donnelly
Party: Sinn Fein
Ward: Black Mountain



Councillor Nicola Verner
Party: DUP
Ward: Court



Councillor Anthony Flynn
Party: Green Party
Ward: Ormiston



Councillor JJ Magee
Party: Sinn Fein
Ward: Oldpark



Councillor Jenna Maghie
Party: Alliance Party
Ward: Ormiston



Councillor Gary McKeown
Party: SDLP
Ward: Botanic



Councillor Sonia Copeland
Party: UUP
Ward: Titanic



Councillor Hedley Abernethy
Party: Alliance Party
Ward: Ormiston



Councillor Michael Collins
Party: People Before Profit
Ward: Collin

Our People and Communities

End of Year RAG Status	
Green	Achieved
Amber	Partially Achieved
Red	Not Achieved

<p>Build capacity within our communities. Senior Responsible Officer: Jim Girvan, Director City & Neighbourhood Services</p>			
Action	Expected end date	RAG status	End of Year Progress Update
1. Implement the recommendations of the review of the Belfast City Council Funded advice services	September 2026	Partially Achieved	Advice partners undertook to facilitate Area coordination meetings from January 2026; Council is putting in place additional staff resources to support this area of work
2. Develop a new Community Support Plan for the period 2025-29 which set out the basis for how we provide support to local communities and residents across the city. This will include support to the community, voluntary and social enterprise sectors.	October 2025	Achieved	Community Support large grants awards were agreed at Feb council, notifications are being issued to all applicants. Other streams of CSP delivery will be programmed on a priority basis.
<p>Addressing vulnerabilities and responding to societal challenges Senior Responsible Officer: Jim Girvan, Director City & Neighbourhood Services</p>			
Action	Expected end date	RAG status	End of Year Progress Update
3. Continue to deliver the Social Supermarkets programme to support the most vulnerable and disadvantaged communities in the city.	March 2026	Achieved	Assessment process for delivery 26-28 has been completed. On the 20th of Feb 2026 SP&R committee agreed to fund 19 Social Supermarket projects, Q1 funding provided. A decision will be made in May regarding further funding.
<p>Increase opportunities for people to be physically active. Senior Responsible Officer: Jim Girvan, Director City & Neighbourhood Services</p>			

Action	Expected end date	RAG status	End of Year Progress Update
4. Deliver the Boxing Strategy Action Plan to facilitate the growth and development of boxing across Belfast.	March 2026	Achieved	SP&R Committee agreed to extend the Belfast Boxing Strategy and funding for delivery of the related work programme from 1st April 2026 until 31st March 2027. This will allow time to finalise the Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy.
5. Work in partnership and deliver an annual work programme with Irish Football Association and Gaelfast to deliver the Stadia Community Benefits Initiative.	March 2026	Achieved	Project ended 31 March 2026. Consultant appointed to carry out final review of the programme.
6. Oversight of the contract with and ongoing management of relationships with Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) for the effective operation of BCC leisure centres.	Ongoing	Achieved	In line with the approved contract management plan, regular operational and strategic meetings are ongoing to ensure oversight of the GLL contract. The last six-month contract compliance and performance report, covering quarters 1 and 2 2025/26 was presented to the People and Communities Committee in November 2025. The next six-month report, covering quarter 3 and 4 for 2025/26 will be presented to the People and Communities Committee in May 2026.
Senior responsible officer: Stephen Leonard, Director City & Neighbourhood Services			
Action	Expected end date	RAG status	End of Year Progress Update
7. Scope the recommended options from the review and agree an action plan for allotments	March 2026	Achieved	Action plan has been agreed, and implementation is in process. Monthly meetings taking place to progress the action plan.
8. Continue to deliver the annual Playground Improvement Programme (PIP) to ensure that we	Ongoing	Achieved	White Rise, and Ohio Street Playgrounds complete. Work at Finroy Street commenced, work at Rodden Crescent to commence on site in Q1 2026/27.

can continue to provide high quality playground facilities and equipment across the city.			
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Our Place

End of Year RAG Status	
Green	Achieved
Amber	Partially Achieved
Red	Not Achieved

Heritage Tourism Senior Responsible Officer: Siobhan Toland, Director City and Neighbourhood Services			
Action	Expected End Date	RAG status	End of Year Progress Update
9. To explore community arrangement with external providers to assist with ambitions for heritage tourism within the context of the tourism strategy for historical cemeteries and city cemetery visitor centre to increase visibility and footfall.	TBC	Partially Achieved	Procurement exercise to be completed to appoint operator. Currently with Legal and the City Solicitor.
Off-street Car Parking Senior Responsible Officer: Siobhan Toland, Director City and Neighbourhood Services			
Action	Expected End Date	RAG status	End of Year Progress Update
10. Continue to work with the Department for Infrastructure on taking forward the Belfast off-street Parking Order for the city.	January 2026	Partially Achieved	Correspondence received from DfI Minister in Q3 regarding council readiness for relocation of legislation. BCC ready to consult on draft order. A report was taken to members in January 2026. Consultation on Belfast off-street parking order currently live
Open Spaces Senior Responsible Officer: Stephen Leonard, Director City and Neighbourhood Services			

Action	Expected End Date	RAG status	End of Year Progress Update
11. Continue to work in partnership with Planning to secure/ deliver Section 76 contributions for council maintained open space.	Ongoing	Achieved	Continuing to work in partnership with Planning to secure and deliver Section 76 development contributions for open spaces.
Reservoir Improvement Programme			
Senior Responsible Officer: Stephen Leonard, Director City and Neighbourhood Services			
Action	Expected End Date	RAG status	End of Year Progress Update
12. Continued inspection, reporting and improvement on the structural integrity of reservoirs to meet new statutory requirements (Reservoirs Act NI 2015).	Ongoing	Achieved	A new three-year professional services contract is now in place for monthly and annual reservoir safety inspection & reports.

Our Planet	End of Year RAG Status	
	Green	Achieved
	Amber	Partially Achieved
	Red	Not Achieved

Transition to low carbon			
Senior Responsible Officer: Siobhan Toland, Director City and Neighbourhood Services			
Action	Expected End Date	RAG status	End of Year Progress Update
13. Coordinate the delivery of the Belfast City Council Air Quality Action Plan 2021 – 2026, in working partnership with Belfast Air Quality Steering Group Members.	June 2026	Achieved	Monitoring and associated work continue this year’s local air quality management programme as we enter the final year of the current Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026. The final Progress Report associated with the current Action Plan will be prepared and presented to the People and Communities Committee, prior to its submission to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) in August 2026.

			<p>The council’s 2025 Progress Report has been assessed and accepted by DAERA’s independent Technical Appraisers. The 2025 report and historical air quality reports may be accessed via the DAERA NI Air website via the following weblink: https://www.airqualityni.co.uk/reports/district-council-reports-1</p> <p>The 2025 Progress Report includes details of recent ambient air quality monitoring data for Belfast, an analysis of monitoring trends, an assessment of compliance with relevant ambient air quality objectives and standards, and an assessment of progress with actions detailed within the Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026. This includes any recent ambient air quality conclusions and proposed actions.</p> <p>Findings of the School Streets Air Quality monitoring project were provided to the November 2025 meeting of the People and Communities Committee. A meeting is now to be convened with Elected Representatives and stakeholders in order to plan the next steps.</p> <p>Upon consideration of ratified ambient air quality monitoring data for 2025, an assessment of compliance with relevant air quality objectives and standards, the outworkings and conclusions of the 2026 Progress Report, the council will engage with DAERA, competent authorities and city partner organisations concerning the development of a new 5-year Air Quality Action Plan for Belfast City.</p>
<p>Senior Responsible Officer: Stephen Leonard, Director City and Neighbourhood Services</p>			
Action	Expected End Date	RAG status	End of Year Progress Update
<p>14. Develop the Net Zero Fleet Replacement Strategy to agree council approach to transition to an alternative (non-fossil) fuel.</p>	<p>TBC</p>	<p>Partially Achieved</p>	<p>In year activities progressing, and officers are engaging with an external consultant as a strategic review is required for the fleet transition from fossil fuels to an alternative power source. The AECOM report produced in July 2021 is being refreshed to reflect changes in cost and available technology. It is anticipated that the review and refresh of this document will be completed by the end of April 2026. BCC is currently engaging with WEEV and have made an application for funding to provide several charging points in 5 depots across our estate. The grant funding would cover 75% of the installation of EV charging facilities at five BCC sites. This work will complement the Aecom review and future discussions in relation to the Duncrue Masterplan.</p>

15. Continue to deliver the Fleet Replacement Programme gradually replacing existing old fleet with new low emission vehicles.	TBC	Partially Achieved	All new vehicles purchased as part of the fleet replacement programme, will be powered by low emission Euro 6, or equivalent standard, engines. Also, fleet will continue to utilise low emission HVO fuel as an alternative to diesel fuel. 85% of the Council fleet fuel consumption is HVO. The review of the AECOM report by CENEX will provide a 3-year action plan that will move this forward.
16. Continue to lead on the Climate Action Programme for four keys projects including City Centre Recycling pilot; Carbon retention assessment at Cavehill; Species rich grassland pilots; and business case for potential Tree Nursery.	September 2025	Achieved	OSS work is complete, business case for Beechvale Farm which includes Tree Nursery sitting with Estates. Work will continue with Estates.
17. Deliver the Belfast City Council's Tree Strategy and action plan to help manage and improve the tree scape in the city, to provide a resilient and diverse urban forest for future generations.	October 2033	Achieved	Following the sign off the Belfast Tree Strategy and action plan we have achieved the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In March 2025 (second year in a row), we were awarded Tree Cities of the World status and are currently the only Council in Ireland to hold this status. A new application has been submitted for 2026/27 for TCOTW accreditation and awaiting the outcome - We have changed our health in condition tree inspection cycle from once every seven years to every three years this will improve the health and safety of our trees.
Promote sustainable circular economy approaches.			
Senior Responsible Officer: Stephen Leonard, Director City and Neighbourhood Services			
Action	Expected End Date	RAG status	End of Year Progress Update
18. Subject to approval, determine the implementation plan for Household Glass collection services.	October 2025	Achieved	Implementation plan agreed and the approval for phase 2 and 3.
19. Bring revised options paper on Kerbside Recycling to council governance for consideration and approval.	March 2026	Partially Achieved	DAERA Waste Strategy suggests the 'consistency in collections' guidance will be produced by March 2027, BCC awaiting regulator to provide documents needed.

20. Develop and seek approval for a single use plastics policy for the council.	January 2026	Achieved	A Single Use Plastic Policy was developed and the approved at P&C. Implementation is with City and Organisational Strategy.
21. Complete a review of litter bin provision to ensure adequate resourcing and arrangements for waste disposal across the city.	December 2025	Achieved	Review of litter bins completed and has moved into implementation stage through business as usual.
Climate Resilience			
Senior Responsible Officer: Stephen Leonard, Director City and Neighbourhood Services			
Action	Expected End Date	RAG status	End of Year Progress Update
22. Develop the Local Biodiversity Action Plan to set out our approach to address threatened species and habitats and protect and restore biological systems.	September 2026	Partially Achieved	<p>Members approved funding last financial year to support the development of a Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) for Belfast. Development is statutory responsibility of Council and will provide a mechanism for local delivery on the protection and enhancement of biodiversity across the city. It will set out local priorities for action, along with targets for priority habitats, species, and locally important wildlife sites.</p> <p>ARUP Consulting were successfully appointed in January to lead on the project. Our newly appointed Biodiversity Officer is working closely with their project team on the development of the draft plan, including an ongoing biodiversity data audit and assessment and associated stakeholder engagement.</p> <p>At this point it is envisaged that a further update on the LBAP and the planned consultation will be presented to Committee in June. It is anticipated that public consultation on the draft plan, hosted on the Your Say platform, will run for 14 weeks between July and September and will include drop-in events, with the final plan expected to be in place later in the Autumn.</p>
23. Develop a Herbicide use policy for the Council	March 2026	Partially Achieved	Work nearing completion on developing an internal Herbicide Reduction protocol. In the final stages of completion this internal document will outline our commitment to reduce the use and reliance on herbicides across the council estate, in line with best

			practice. Final trialling of alternative weed control methods and engagement with operational managers is ongoing.
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<h1>Compassionate City</h1>	End of Year RAG Status	
	Green	Achieved
	Amber	Partially Achieved
	Red	Not Achieved

Good Relations Action Plan			
Senior Responsible Officer: Jim Girvan, Director City & Neighbourhood Services			
Action	Expected End Date	RAG status	End of Year Progress Update
24. Continue to implement the Good Relations Action Plan to support the delivery of locally identified good relations priorities.	Ongoing	Achieved	Letter of Offer has been received and returned, and action plan is in full operational progression. Q1-4 48 grants have been approved and interface open call completed. Refugee integration week, Day of Reflection and the Beacons programme are being rolled out. 5 projects allocated support Under Minority Ethnic Equality and Inclusion Programme, 5 Projects Supported under the Interface Programme. 2 Projects for Good Relations Week, Shared Education Programme developed, and 6 Strategic Connections Programmes supported. Project commencing with Social Change Initiative. Beacons Tender has been advertised and closes at the End of March. Work for 2026 Beacons Programme has commenced and currently 17 EOIs from the Community. Further to this Council are to receive a further £180,000 from TEO which will be used to offset Beacon's overspend and Salary Costs.
Community Safety			
Senior Responsible Officer: Jim Girvan, Director City & Neighbourhood Services			
Action	Expected End Date	RAG status	End of Year Progress Update
25. Delivery of the Police and Community Safety action plan, to make people feel safer and confidence in Policing.	Ongoing	Achieved	The PCSP action plan was developed, and delivery was achieved.

26. Continue to facilitate the five multi-agency (D) PCSP's which work to make communities safer, making sure that the voices of local people are heard.	Ongoing	Achieved	Meetings of the PCSP continued to be held up to 31st March 2026.
Ending Violence Against Women and Girls			
Senior Responsible Officer: Jim Girvan, Director City & Neighbourhood Services			
Action	Expected End Date	RAG status	End of Year Progress Update
27. Delivery of the ending violent against women and girls' initiative	Ongoing	Achieved	Delivery of Local Change Fund, Regional Change Fund and Momentum programme underway and on target. Additional funding committed by TEO in Year which has extended the delivery of some elements of the overall programme into Q1 of 2026/2027. Awaiting confirmation of funding and Letter of Offer for delivery of a similar EVAWG Programme for 2026-2028.

Improving Our Services

End of Year RAG Status	
Green	Achieved
Amber	Partially Achieved
Red	Not Achieved

Bereavement Services			
Senior Responsible Officer: Siobhan Toland, Director City and Neighbourhood Services			
Action	Expected End Date	RAG status	End of Year Progress Update
28. Complete the review of Bereavement services to ensure responsive, integrated, and flexible services are realised through the programme benefits with support from CI, CHR and Departmental HR.	December 2025	Partially Achieved	Work to be completed to deliver and implement service review of structural element. Various internal stakeholders working to resolve including CI, Legal and CHR.
Port Health			
Senior Responsible Officer: Siobhan Toland, Director City and Neighbourhood Services			

Action	Expected End Date	RAG status	End of Year Progress Update
29. Complete the review of Port health to ensure responsive, integrated, and flexible services are realised through the programme benefits with support from CI, CHR and Departmental HR.	March 2027	Partially Achieved	Uncertainties remain while direction from UK Government and the outcome of negotiations on a proposed SPS agreement with EU are awaited and the funding model remains temporary. However, a service baselining exercise has been completed, with short-term development actions progressed. A review of the challenges posed by temporary posts and shift working arrangements has also been completed and a report with recommendations is due to be brought to CMT for consideration in Q1 of 2026/27.
Houses in Multiple Occupancy			
Senior Responsible Officer: Siobhan Toland, Director City and Neighbourhood Services			
Action	Expected End Date	RAG status	End of Year Progress Update
30. Complete the review of HMO to ensure responsive, integrated, and flexible services are realised through the programme benefits with support from CI, CHR and Departmental HR.	June 2026	Partially Achieved	Review is expected to be completed by June 2026.
Neighbourhood Services Pathway Forward			
Senior Responsible Officer: Jim Girvan, Director City & Neighbourhood Services			
Action	Expected End Date	RAG status	End of Year Progress Update
31. Complete the review of Neighbourhood Services to ensure responsive, integrated, and flexible services are realised through the programme benefits with support from CI, CHR and Departmental HR.	March 2027	Partially Achieved	Project Plans approved by Neighbourhood Services DMT for the Cohesive Departmental Plan with Outcomes Framework; Funding Approaches; Data Management and Staff Learning & Development projects. Project Teams have been established, and project delivery is underway.
Park Warden			
Senior Responsible Officers: Stephen Leonard and Jim Girvan Directors City & Neighbourhood Services			
Action	Expected End Date	RAG status	End of Year Progress Update

32. Complete the review of Park Warden to ensure responsive, integrated, and flexible services are realised through the programme benefits with support from CI, CHR and Departmental HR.	April 2026	Partially Achieved	Parks Warden review ongoing, with a growth proposal being considered. Once decisions have been made the operating model will be finalised.
Park Events and Outreach			
Senior Responsible Officers: Stephen Leonard and Jim Girvan Directors City & Neighbourhood Services			
Action	Expected End Date	RAG status	End of Year Progress Update
33. Complete the review of Park Events and Outreach to ensure responsive, integrated, and flexible services are realised through the programme benefits with support from CI, CHR and Departmental HR.	December 2026	Achieved	Report was taken to CMT and approved.

Organisational Priorities

End of Year RAG Status	
Green	Achieved
Amber	Partially Achieved
Red	Not Achieved

Bereavement Services			
Senior Responsible Officer: Siobhan Toland, Director City and Neighbourhood Services			
Action	Expected End Date	RAG status	End of Year Progress Update
34. CNS to work with Physical Programmes and Estates to support the identification, acquisition, and development of new burial land provision for BCC.	TBC	Not Achieved	Burial provision board in place with representation from P&P, Corporate Finance and CNS as client. The objective of this board is to track progress, manage risks and ensure good governance.

		Not Achieved	
35. CNS to work with Physical Programmes on preparing for the new Crematorium development and the repurposing of the existing crematorium building.	January 2026	Not Achieved	A review of the 2016 financial business case (FBC) for the new crematorium has been completed. This was presented to a member’s workshop in September 2025. Update on member queries presented to the working group in February 2026. Decision made by SP&R in February 2026 to proceed with the new two chapel development at Roselawn. Tabled at full council in March, decision subject to call in.
Port Health			
Senior Responsible Officer: Siobhan Toland, Director City and Neighbourhood Services			
Action	Expected End Date	RAG status	End of Year Progress Update
36. Advocate for a long-term sustainable funding model to secure adequate funding and review resources (Including staff) to ensure effective delivery of the Council’s legal responsibilities at Belfast Port.	March 2026	Partially Achieved	In 2025/56 City Services advocated for a long-term funding model for delivery of responsibilities under the Windsor framework, engaging at senior levels with Food Standards Agency and DAERA. FSA and DAERA secured multiyear funding for Windsor Framework with HM Treasury to 2029/30 from which Councils can draw down funds to meet resourcing requirements on an annual basis. New uncertainty arising from UK Government / EU negotiations on a Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreement has potential to change the operational requirements at Ports in the future. Engagement with partners will remain active to understand the resourcing implications of any forthcoming changes in 2027 or 2028.
Digital Development			
Senior Responsible Officer: Siobhan Toland, Director City and Neighbourhood Services			
Action	Expected End Date	RAG status	End of Year Progress Update
37. Progress plans to replace the current software system with a single modern and intuitive case management system designed to embed mobile technology and digitally transform how we plan, manage, and monitor our service delivery across the core regulatory areas of City Services & community safety within Neighbourhood Services.	January 2030	Partially Achieved	Following the recent supplier sense check and careful consideration, the Board agreed to defer the procurement process for at least 18 months. This will allow additional time to complete further organisational readiness activities. A plan has already been drafted and implementation has commenced. Cleansing: Batch deletions are paused pending the recruitment of resources. Legislative Changes/Updates: All new legislative requirements are on track, with the final FSDM patch scheduled for delivery in the coming months.

Senior Responsible Officer: Stephen Leonard, Director City and Neighbourhood Services			
Action	Expected End Date	RAG status	End of Year Progress Update
38. Procure and implement a modern booking system for parks and community facilities subject to digital services work programme.	March 2026	Partially Achieved	This is a project within the Neighbourhood Services Pathway forward Initiative. Agreement that the booking system will support corporate bookings. The project is now part of digital services work plan and an IT project manager to be appointed.
Asset Management			
Senior Responsible Officer: Stephen Leonard, Director City and Neighbourhood Services			
Action	Expected End Date	RAG status	End of Year Progress Update
39. Develop a container policy for parks.	December 2025	Partially Achieved	It has been agreed that it will be an internal container in parks protocol rather than a policy. The draft internal process has been developed; however, health and safety aspects still need to be included and finalised.

Contact us:

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Belfast
City Council