

People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 23rd June, 2026

MEETING OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

- Members present: Councillor Maghie (Chairperson);
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Abernethy);
Alderman Copeland; and
Councillors Beattie, Black, Bower, Bradley,
R. Brooks, Bunting, Canavan, Cobain,
de Faoite, M. Donnelly, Doran, Flynn, Garrett,
Magee, Murray, McKeown and Verner.
- In attendance: Mr. D. Sales, Strategic Director of City and
Neighbourhood Services;
Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;
Mr. J. Girvan, Director of City and Neighbourhood
Services;
Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building
Control; and
Mr. B. Flynn, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies were received.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 12th May were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st June, subject to the following amendments:

- That the minute under the heading 'European City of Sport 2026 Programme' was amended to provide that letters be issued to the Home Office and to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland outlining the economic barriers faced by non-visa nationals travelling from the Republic of Ireland to Belfast to attend the international cricket matches due to the Electronic Travel Authorisation process;
- That the minute under the heading 'Playground Accessibility – Update' was amended to reflect that a report be submitted to a future meeting requesting that officers carry out a scoping exercise across all play parks in the city to aim to have accessible play facilities for children with additional needs in each play park; to consider building new play parks on sites which are not suitable for housing or pitches; to investigate how it could work with the Department for Communities and the Shared Island Fund; and the creation of an exemplary park in each quarter of the City, with accessible play park equipment for children with additional needs;

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- That the minute under the heading 'Pitch Partner and Facilities Management Agreements' was amended to provide that officers would consider the feasibility that Blanchflower Playing Fields be used by St. Matthew's and Doyle football clubs within the report to come back to the Committee;
- That the minute under the heading 'Requests for the Use of Parks' was amended to reflect that a report providing an update on the Social Value Levy Fund be submitted to the June meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee;
- That the minute under the heading 'Dog Fouling Programme – Update' was amended to reflect that information be provided to the Committee on the number of lamppost bins in storage and the plans for their installation across residential areas; and
- That the minute under the heading 'Dual Language Street Signs – Review of Data Survey Process' was amended to reflect that the City Solicitor had advised that a report would be submitted to a future meeting examining the Dual Language Street Signs Policy.

Declaration of Interest

In respect of the items 'Proposal for RAPID Drugs' Disposal Bin - Ormeau Park' and 'Update on The Tobacco and Vapes Act 2026', Councillor McKeown declared interests in that his employer was associated with the items. He retired from the meeting whilst the item 'Update on The Tobacco and Vapes Act 2026' was under discussion, since it had become subject to discussion.

Matter Arising – Urban Meadows

(Ms. E. McCullough, Lead Officer, Open Space and Streetscene, attended in connection with this item).

At the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 19th June, it had been requested that a verbal update be provided to the Committee regarding the progress achieved in the creation of 'urban meadows' at the four sites identified across the City, namely, Glencairn Park, Ormeau Park, Belmont Park and Brook Leisure Centre.

The Lead Officer reported that work was ongoing on the projects in conjunction with the Property and Projects Department and that a procurement exercise for the grassland enhancement work would commence in July. Once the contractor was appointed, it was anticipated that work would begin during the autumn period. A further report in this regard would be submitted for the Committee's consideration in due course.

Noted.

Restricted Items

The information contained in the reports associated with the following items were restricted under Part 1, Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.

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

Greenwich Leisure Limited - Six-Monthly Update
re: Contract Compliance and Performance

The Committee considered a report in relation to the above-mentioned matter and agreed to note the following:

- The information provided in relation to contract compliance;
- The information provided in relation to key performance indicators;
- The supporting narrative presented;
- The facility asset management monitoring information; and
- The health and safety compliance assurances as presented.

Healthwise and Physical Activity
Referral Programmes – Update

The Committee noted the contents of the six-monthly report on the exercise and health referral programmes which were overseen by Greenwich Leisure Limited across Belfast, which included an overview of the various contracts and services, together with key performance indicators.

Arising from discussion, the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services undertook to provide an update in relation to the extent of the use of the Shankill Leisure Centre as part of the activity and referral programmes. In addition, it was agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting that would examine the feasibility of the Council providing support for parkrun initiatives across the City, given their popularity and the associated community health benefits.

Resources and Fleet Waste

The Committee considered a report in relation to the above-mentioned matter.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to note the information which had been provided. However, it was agreed to defer consideration of the recommendations contained in the report on the understanding that they would be addressed as part of a wider thematic report that would examine a range of waste management issues raised over previous months and which were linked to the Council's policies and processes.

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Pitch Partnership Agreements - Legal Matters

The Committee, at its meeting on 12th May, had agreed to defer consideration of the above-mentioned report to enable officers to consider the feasibility of the Council entering into three-year pitch partnership agreements and the impact, if any, such an amendment might have upon the Pitches Strategy. Accordingly, the Committee considered the deferred report which had been updated to reflect the additional information which had been requested.

The Committee agreed to adopt the recommendations contained within the report. In addition, the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services agreed to provide an update to a Member regarding the provision of a Static Warden at the Marrowbone Park.

Partnership Agreements 2026/27

The Committee was reminded that the Council worked in partnership with local organisations to help achieve common strategic objectives. In this regard, support was provided to enable such groups to achieve strategic objectives, measured against outcomes-based frameworks. Accordingly, it was recommended that the Committee approve the payments for 2026/27, in the sum of £82,150, provision for which had been allocated within departmental budgets, as set out below:

- Belfast Hills Partnership - £36,900
- Outscape - £5,250
- Belfast Mela - £20,000
- Belfast International Arts Festival - £20,000

Regarding a request received from the Belfast Hills Partnership for additional discretionary funding in 2026/27, the Committee agreed that the matter be referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Matters Referred by the Council/Motions

**Northern Ireland Housing Executive –
Tenancy Succession Policy**

Further to the decision of the Standards and Business Committee of 26th May, the Committee considered a motion in respect of the above-mentioned matter, which had been proposed by Councillor Canavan and seconded by Councillor Black, as set out hereunder:

“This Council notes:

- The ongoing housing crisis across the North and the increasing demand for permanent social housing.
- That many families live for long periods in Housing Executive properties and develop vital community roots.
- That the current Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) succession policy prevents family members who have lived long-term in a property from

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succeeding a tenancy following the death of the tenant, where succession has already previously occurred (for example, between husband and wife).

- That this policy can lead to unnecessary displacement, eviction, hardship, and further breakdown of family units.

This Council believes:

- That housing policy should prioritise stability for families and communities.
- That family members or partners who have contributed to and depended on the household should not face eviction due to restrictive succession rules.
- That social housing should be managed in a way that balances fairness, community stability, and objective housing need.

This Council resolves:

- To write to the Minister of the Department for Communities calling on him to undertake a legislative review of the NIHE tenancy succession policy.
- To request the introduction of safeguards to prevent unnecessary eviction or relocation following the death of a tenant, particularly where long-term residence and established community ties exist.
- To support the development of a fair and community-aligned succession policy that protects households while ensuring that social housing is allocated on the basis of objective need.
- To seek engagement with residents' groups, community organisations, and elected representatives in the development of any revised succession policy.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Canavan,
Seconded by Councillor Black and

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to adopt the motion and agrees further that a letter be forwarded to the Minister for the Department for Communities outlining the issues set out within the motion, subject to the adoption of the resolution by the Council at its meeting on 1st July.

Arising from discussion, the Committee agreed also to write to the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister requesting that an update be provided in relation to a paper which had been submitted for approval by the Minister for Communities regarding the Social Housing Development Programme.

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**Policy Prohibiting Key Lock Boxes
Associated with Short-term Holiday Lets**

Further to the decision of the Standards and Business Committee of 26th May, the Committee considered a motion in respect of the above-mentioned matter, which had been proposed by Councillor McKay and seconded by Councillor Carson. The motion is set out hereunder:

“That this Council agrees to introduce a policy prohibiting lockboxes from being installed on any property, wall, railing, fence, or street furniture other than the dwelling to which they relate.

This measure is needed because the proliferation of lockboxes in areas in Belfast particularly the inner city with high concentrations of short-term holiday lets is causing visual clutter and environmental harm, while also diminishing the amenity of residential streets and shared spaces, the Council should also ensure that any breach is subject to enforcement action and removal.

This approach is consistent with action already taken by other councils and city authorities to restrict or remove external lockboxes associated with short-term holiday lets.”

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor M. Donnelly,
Seconded by Councillor McKeown and

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to adopt the motion and agrees further that letters be forwarded to the Executive Office and other relevant government departments seeking clarification on how they intended to introduce and expedite measures to address the proliferation of short-term lets and associated lockboxes across the City.

In addition, it was agreed that an all-Members’ workshop be held to consider the wider matter, together with the Council’s powers in this regard, during the autumn period.

Committee and Strategic Issues

Food Service Delivery Plan 2026/27

The Committee was reminded that the Food Standards Agency, in its monitoring and oversight role, required all councils to prepare annual Food Service Delivery Plans which outlined the key functions and planned activities to enable the delivery of food hygiene, food standards and other food safety related responsibilities.

The Committee approved the Council’s Food Service Delivery Plan for 2026/27 which would be submitted to the Food Standards Agency for review.

Arising from discussion, the Director of City Services undertook to provide further information in relation to queries raised regarding allergens and food temperature regulations, particularly how such regulations were applied to delivery companies.

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**Consultation on Animal Welfare
Policy Reforms in Northern Ireland**

The Committee agreed to adopt a response in respect of the above-mentioned exercise and agreed that it be forwarded to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs by the closing date of 30th June, on the proviso that amendments, if any, made by the Council at its meeting on 1st July be notified to DAERA. The response can be accessed [here](#).

Following a number of comments from a Member, the Committee agreed that the response be strengthened to emphasise that DAERA should remain as the lead agency – particularly in respect of data collection and rehoming duties – in animal welfare and that additional resources should be provided, should any additional duties fall under local councils as a result of the consultation and review. In addition, the Council would encourage DAERA to include mandatory behavioural welfare standards, socialisation requirements, record keeping standards and transparent reporting requirements to ensure consistency across the sector. The Committee endorsed further comments to strengthen the response regarding the need for a review of dog license fees, the promotion of the concept ‘responsible dog ownership’, breeder identification and issues regarding microchipping of owned pet cats.

In addition, it was agreed that a letter be forwarded to the DAERA Minister inviting him to meet with Elected Members in respect of animal welfare issue in Belfast and to request that the Council be invited to partake in any evidence session relating to the consultation exercise.

Operational Issues

Pride of Place Awards 2026

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 14th April, it had endorsed the nomination of five local groups to categories in the 2026 Pride of Place Awards and approved the attendance of their representatives at the awards ceremony in Dublin on 24th October. Accordingly, the Director sought the Committee’s approval to enable the attendance also at the event of the Chairperson, the Deputy Chairperson, together with the Director of Neighbourhood Services and a departmental officer (or their nominees).

The Committee granted the approval sought and authorised the travel, subsistence and accommodation costs associated with attendance at the ceremony.

**Framework for Supporting Sports Clubs/
Individuals Travelling to Events outside Belfast**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 This paper provides a framework funding proposal to support Belfast sports teams and individuals traveling outside Northern Ireland to compete in recognised sporting events where qualification or Governing Body selection has taken place.**

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 Members are asked to:

- Approve the eligibility criteria for funding traveling teams outside NI
- Approve maximum funding allocation per team under delegated authority to £5,000
- Approve increasing funding calls for Individual athletes to four times per year under delegated authority
- Authorise officers to work up an application process in line with council funding procedures

3.1 Background Information

During the rate setting process in 2026, Members agreed to allocate funds of £100,000 to support Belfast sports teams/clubs traveling to competitive events outside of Belfast. Members instructed officers to draw up a framework for a funding allocation model which would open 4 times per year. This would be a standalone funding stream in addition to the current Support for Sport grant process managed under CGU that allocates Small (£1500), Large (£5000) and Hospitality (up to £3000).

3.2 Members will be aware that since a review of Support for Sport in 2012 an allocation of £15,000 is awarded to talented athletes annually under delegated authority. An individual can apply for a maximum of £1000 for costs associated with travel to Governing Body approved competitions and representative squad training outside NI. Currently Individual grants are applied for on behalf of the athlete by the Sport's Governing Body (GB) and managed by CGU. The annual fund is usually allocated fully at Tranche One. This results in many athletes missing out on support due to smaller GB's not having the capacity to apply and/or the notification of selection is late, and application deadlines are missed. Opening the application process to four times per year would increase funding for athletes from minority sports and allow officers to support more applications from women and girls and disability athletes. It is anticipated the funding will be split equally between the 4 financial quarters with an option to roll over any underspend into the next quarter.

3.3 Team Travel

More recently officers have received regular requests for support towards sports teams travelling in a representative capacity outside NI. Council does not have a currently fund travel for sports clubs. Research conducted with neighbouring council's demonstrates a lack of a consistent approach with only four council offering specific club travel grants however the majority

offer individual grants where members of team sports can apply as individual.

Table 1. Council areas providing team travel support

Council area	Max Amount	Criteria
Antrim & N'Abbey	£1500	Exceptional Team Competitions
ABC Council	£2000	Representative events -must Cost £4K+ to receive max amount
Derry & Strabane	£1600	Must qualify for event
Ards & North Down	£500	Must be representative competitions

3.4 The fund will open four times per year for both individual and team travel, which will maximise both the range of sports and competitions throughout the seasons.

4.0 Financial and Resource Implications

4.1 The Leisure Development Unit would manage the application and verification process in line with good practice and procedures. Leisure Development Unit has the financial resources to cover the cost of the initiative.

5.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

5.1 There are no Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessments associated with this report.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations as set out in section 2.1. of the report.

Party Political Use of Community Centres and Bowling Pavilions

The Committee was reminded that, since the early 1980s, there had been an agreement that Council-owned community centres and bowling pavilions could not be hired for party political purposes, which was part of the Conditions of Hire agreements. At the request of a number of locally-elected Members, officers had liaised with the Council’s Legal Services Department in this regard with a view to having the restriction eased and, accordingly, the following addendum to clause 1.11 of the Conditions of Hire was recommended for approval:

“However, community centres/bowling pavilions can be used by political parties for public good i.e., for constituency/advisory clinics, or community engagement purposes, where the activity does not involve campaigning, fundraising, or promotion of a political party or its policies, and is intended to provide a service or information to members of the public. Political Parties will not be able to book a venue during the pre-election ‘Purdah’ period.”

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Proposal

Moved by Councillor Murray,
Seconded by The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Abernethy),

That the Committee agrees to approve the amendment to the Conditions of Hire document and agrees further that bookings of community centres/bowling pavilions for political purposes be permitted only by Elected Members of the Council.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Bunting,
Seconded by Councillor Verner,

That the proposal be amended to reflect the inclusion of Belfast's Members of Parliament and Members of the Legislative Assembly in addition to Elected Members of the Council as being permitted to use community centres/bowling pavilions for political purposes.

On a vote, fifteen Members voted in favour of the amendment and four against and it was declared carried. The Committee adopted the amendment as the substantive motion without the requirement for a further vote.

It was noted that the bookings by Elected Members of the Council, Members of Parliament and Members of the Legislative Assembly be considered as 'community-based usage' and no charges would be levied.

Off-Street Car Parking - Update

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 13th January, it had noted the progress which had been achieved in respect of the implementation of the Draft Belfast Off-Street Parking (Public Car Parks) Order 2026. That Order sought to consolidate and modernise regulations for council-managed car parks, thus assisting local authorities to manage parking on sites previously overseen by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). Accordingly, it was reported that the Council intended to publish a Notice of Intention in respect of the car parks at Shaw's Bridge, Stranmillis, Slievegallion Drive and Parkgate Avenue.

The Committee approved the publishing of the Notice of Intention in respect of the aforementioned car parks; noted the results of a consultation exercise in this regard; and noted that further updates would be submitted in due course.

Proposals for RAPID Drugs' Disposal Bin - Ormeau Park

The Committee was informed that the RAPID (Remove All Prescription and Illegal Drugs) initiative allowed for the safe and anonymous disposal of unwanted, unused, or illegal drugs or medicines in secure disposal bins. Officers within the Community Safety unit have worked with the Belfast Drug and Alcohol Coordination Team (BDACT) on several initiatives including the RAPID scheme. BDACT have indicated there exists currently a gap within the Ormeau area and they wished to explore options with the Council to install a RAPID bin within the vicinity of Ormeau Park.

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The Committee agreed that a RAPID bin be erected in the area inside the Ormeau Road entrance to the Ormeau Park. It was noted that discussions would be undertaken with local communities and agencies prior to the installation of the bin.

The Tobacco and Vapes Act 2026

(Ms. D. Heron, Senior Environmental Health Officer, attended in connection with this matter).

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided an overview of the provisions contained within the above-mentioned legislation and its implications to the Council.

During discussion in the matter, the Senior Environmental Health Officer advised the Committee that it was anticipated that a number of further restrictions would be introduced. From the 1st June, 2027, she reported, the current rules relating to tobacco advertising would be extended to include vaping products, cigarettes papers, herbal smoking products and other nicotine commodities. In addition, a consultation was ongoing which was proposing to introduce further regulations on tobacco, vaping and nicotine product packaging, device appearance and display restrictions which was expected to be introduced in the near future.

Friar's Bush Burial Ground

The Committee considered further the two requests which had been received for the use of Friar's Bush Burial Ground for the purposes of hosting tours. The requests, which had been submitted by the 'Friends of Friar's Bush' and 'Cairde na Cille' (friends of the church), had been deferred at the meeting in May to enable officers to undertake further discussions with the applicants in respect of the specific days they would be granted access to the site. The Director of City Services advised the Committee that, given the Council's access and operational requirements, the recommendations as presented to the May meeting remained unchanged.

The Committee agreed to grant, for a period of one-year, subject to the applicants adhering to all of the stipulations set out within the report, access to the Friar's Bush Burial Ground for the purposes of providing tours, as follows:

- Friends of Friar's Bush – Saturdays, Mondays, Wednesdays Thursdays and Fridays; and
- Cairde na Cille – Sundays and Tuesdays.

The Committee noted also several comments made in relation to staff resourcing at cemeteries during peak periods.

Requests for the Use of Parks for Events

The Committee granted approval for the hosting of the following events, subject to the applicants adhering to all of the stipulations as set out within the report:

- The Ark Church - outdoor church services in Waterworks Park (5th July), Marrowbone Park (19th July) and in Woodvale Park (23rd July);

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- Shankill Old Boys' Flute Band – a musical ensemble in Woodvale Park (16th and 17th July);
- Belfast No. 6 Royal Black District Chapter – wreath laying ceremony in Woodvale Park (2nd August); and
- The Cedar Foundation – a one-day celebration event in the Ormeau Park to mark the organisation's 85th anniversary (20th August).

Use of Parks - East Belfast Cultural Festival

In respect of four events associated with the East Belfast Cultural Festival, the Committee agreed to defer consideration of the applications to enable further information to be provided to Party Group Leaders and/or at a special Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, prior to the meeting of the Council on 1st July,

Dog Fouling Action Plan - Post Mounted Bins Update

(Ms. E. Gowdy, Lead Officer, Open Space and Streetscene, attended in connection with this item).

At its meeting in May, the Committee had requested an update report on the installation of post-mounted litter bins across the City as part of the Council's Dog Fouling Action Plan. Accordingly, the Committee noted the contents of a report in this regard and several queries and suggestions made by Members.

Dual Language Street Signs re: 'Long Streets'

The Committee considered the following report:

1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To consider applications for the erection of dual language street signs for two existing streets within the city which have been designated as long streets in line with the policy.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 Members are asked to consider the Dual Language Street Sign survey results for Donegall Park Avenue and Oldpark Road which have been identified as "long streets" in line with Policy and either:

- a) **Agree that dual language streets signs with a second language in Irish be erected along the full length of the streets, and/or**
- b) **Agree that dual language streets signs with a second language in Irish be erected in specified locations within**

the streets taking into consideration the breakdown of survey results along the length of the street and the current/proposed street sign locations shown on maps provided.

Members are further asked to note the survey results for Skegoneill Avenue which failed to meet the 15% threshold in favour of a proposal to have dual language street signs with a second language in Irish erected and agree to this application remaining closed.

3.0 Main Report

Key Issues

3.1 Members are reminded of the Committee report in March 2025 which sought approval to survey Oldpark Road, Donegall Park Avenue and Skegoneill Avenue. These streets were identified as 'long streets' in line with policy during the initial assessment process which also identified the potential for adverse impacts in relation to the carrying out of the survey.

3.2 In relation to long streets the policy states as follows:

'Consideration will to be given to "long streets" where opinion on whether to have a second language street sign may differ between readily identifiable, substantial lengths of the street. In these circumstances, the decision as to the erection of dual language nameplates in certain portions of the street will be made by Committee, exercising its residual discretion and taking into account advice from officers.'

3.3 The Committee agreed that, in respect of the applications for the erection of dual language street signs in Irish for Oldpark Road, Donegall Park Avenue, and Skegoneill Avenue, that surveys of occupiers of those streets should be carried out with further analysis of the results using the proposed approach for "long streets" as set out in the report.

3.4 Surveys were carried out on all three streets in line with policy and both Oldpark Road and Donegall Park Avenue met the 15% threshold of occupiers in favour of the proposal at survey to have dual language street signs erected with the second language in Irish.

3.5 Accordingly, members are asked to consider the following applications to erect dual language street nameplates showing the name of the street expressed in a language other than English. The second language is Irish.

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English Name	Non- English Name	Location	Persons surveyed
Donegall Park Avenue	Ascaill Pháirc Dhún na nGall	Between Antrim Road & Shore Road, BT15	205
Oldpark Road	Bóthar na Seanpháirce	Between Ballysillan Road and Crumlin Road, BT14	756

- 3.6 The translations were authenticated by Queens University, the approved translator for Belfast City Council.**
- 3.7 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.**
- 3.8 Donegall Park Avenue, BT15. Survey conducted between 6th November 2025 to 3rd December 2025**
- **74 occupiers (36.10%) were in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.**
 - **53 occupiers (25.85%) were not in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.**
 - **2 occupiers (0.98%) had no preference either way.**
- 3.9 One person commented that they have concerns about erecting dual language signs at the bottom of the Avenue as it would cause conflict or incite vandalism.**
- 3.10 Oldpark Road, BT14 Survey conducted between 9th December 2025 to 14th January 2026.**
- **136 occupiers (17.99%) were in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.**
 - **58 occupiers (7.67%) were not in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.**
 - **5 occupiers (0.66%) had no preference either way.**
- 3.11 One person commented that the upper part (of the Oldpark Road) is a Unionist area and is part of UK.**
- 3.12 One person commented that the section of the Oldpark Road which starts at the bottom junction with Crumlin Road and the top section at the junction of Ballysillan Road are Unionist areas. In relation to the middle section (The Bone) they have no objection to dual language signage being erected. The person believes the survey process causes friction and upset between Catholics and**

Protestants. They also believe money will be wasted as the street signs will be damaged.

- 3.13 One person commented that the Oldpark Road is long and covers a large area. They noted that the bottom and top ends of the Oldpark are Unionist/Loyalist and the middle section (The Bone) is Nationalist/Republican. They also note that the area towards the top end is of mixed religion. They note that it would be a waste of money to erect dual language signs at the top and bottom of the road as they will be vandalised.

Additional Survey Analysis

- 3.14 As previously agreed by Council, additional analysis of the results of the surveys has been carried out by officers to confirm any difference of opinion in readily identifiable sections, of the street in line with the policy consideration outlined at 3.3 in the report.
- 3.15 Members can review this analysis which is represented on maps within Appendix A (Donegall Park Avenue) and Appendix B (Oldpark Road). Based on this analysis Members are asked to consider if all the signage locations identified should be replaced with dual language streets signs with a second language in Irish. Alternately members can decide if only specific signs should be replaced / erected and confirm these locations.

Application Not Meeting Overall Threshold at Street Survey

- 3.16 Skegoneill Avenue, BT15 Survey conducted between 16th October 2025 to 12th November 2025. 242 persons were surveyed.
- 29 occupiers (11.98%) were in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.
 - 43 occupiers (17.77%) were not in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.
 - 1 occupier (0.41%) had no preference either way.
- 3.17 The current policy on dual language street signs states as follows:

“If the minimum threshold of fifteen percent is not met, the Applicant will be given two weeks to advise the Council of any special circumstances in relation to the application. If such special circumstances relate to the processing of a survey, the Strategic Director of Place and Economy, in conjunction with the City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services will determine whether such exceptional circumstances exist to refer the matter to Committee. Where exceptional circumstances relate to matters other than the processing of a survey, the matter will be referred

to Committee. If there are no special circumstances, the application will end.”

- 3.18 In this regard the applicant was advised by letter that Skegoneill Avenue failed to meet the threshold and was given two weeks to provide details of any special circumstances pertaining to the application. This correspondence was issued on 14th November 2025 with a deadline of 28th November 2025. No correspondence detailing any special circumstances was received.
- 3.19 Therefore, given that the survey for this street did not meet the minimum 15% threshold to be considered for approval by committee, and that no exceptional circumstances were raised, no further analysis was carried out, and the application was closed.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.20 If all the signage in Oldpark Road and Donegal Park Avenue are to be replaced there will be a cost of approximately £2490 to cover the manufacture and erection of the 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

- 3.21 Each application for a dual language street sign is subject to an initial assessment and an elected member notification process to identify any potential adverse impacts on equality, good relations and rural needs.
- 3.22 The initial assessment for Donegal Park Avenue, Oldpark Road and Skegoneill Avenue identified that the carrying out of the surveys had the potential to cause adverse impacts on the grounds of good relations.
- 3.23 These applications were subsequently screened and draft screening identified that the carrying out of surveys in themselves had the potential to give rise to community tension, as could the erection of the street signs and therefore had the potential to give rise to adverse impact on the grounds of good relations.
- 3.24 It was acknowledged, however, that the process could alternatively assist in promoting cultural and linguistic diversity. It also determined that the streets met the definition of “long streets” contained in clause 3 (X) of the policy, in that opinion on whether to have a second language street sign may differ between readily identifiable, substantial lengths of the streets.
- 3.25 The elected member notification carried out for Donegal Park Avenue, Oldpark Road and Skegoneill Avenue did not identify any

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potential for adverse impacts. The applications were presented to Committee prior to survey in line with the agreed process referencing the initial assessment and screening and the streets were approved for survey by Committee and full Council.

The Committee agreed that Dual Language Street Signs be erected in Oldpark Road in suitable locations taking into account the results of the street survey as illustrated in Appendix 2 to the report; and

The Committee agreed also to defer noting the decision to close the application for Dual Language Street Signs in Skegoneill Avenue to enable the matter – in conjunction with the other streets which had failed to meet the 15% threshold – to be reconsidered within the context of a further report which would review and provide further clarity on the Council's policy.

Proposal

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

That Dual Language Street Signs in Irish be erected along the length of Donegall Park Avenue.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Bunting,
Seconded by Councillor R. Brooks,

That the Committee agrees that Dual Language Street Signs in Irish be erected in Donegall Park Avenue in 'suitable locations' considering the results of the street survey as illustrated in Appendix 1 to the report.

On a vote, ten Members voted for the amendment and nine against. The Committee adopted the amendment as the substantive motion without the requirement for a further vote.

Proposals for Dual Language Street Signs – Monthly Report

The Committee agreed to the erection of a dual language street sign, to include Irish, at Ladybrook Park, Flax Street, Blacks Gate Crescent, Upper Castle Park, Teeling View, Larkspur Rise, Laurelbank, Meadow Grove, Fairyknowe Park, Deanby Gardens and Areema Drive.

Regarding the applications which the Committee noted from the report had been closed in respect of Dual Language Street Signs at Knockeden Crescent, Willowfield Gardens, Pilot Street, Caffrey Avenue and Glenwood Green:

Proposal

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

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That the Committee agrees to exercise the residual discretion within the policy and approve the applications for Pilot Street, Caffrey Avenue and Glenwood Green.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Bunting,
Seconded by Councillor R. Brooks,

That the Committee agrees that the applications for Dual Language Street Signs in Irish at Knockeden Crescent, Willowfield Gardens, Pilot Street, Caffrey Avenue and Glenwood Green be reconsidered within the context of a further report which will review and provide additional clarity on the Council's policy.

On a vote, ten Members voted for the amendment and nine against. The Committee adopted the amendment as the substantive motion without the requirement for a further vote.

**Dual Language Street Signs – Streets
with Potential Adverse Impacts**

The Committee considered the following report:

1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To consider if a street survey of occupiers will be carried out for three applications for the erection of dual language street signs in Irish within the city where potential adverse impacts have been identified by the initial assessments.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 Members are asked to consider the report and matters raised in relation to the applications for dual language street signs in Irish received for Fernwood Street, Cliftonpark Avenue and Dromore Street and either:

- a) Agree that surveys of occupiers of these streets be carried out; or**
- b) Agree that no surveys will be carried out on the grounds of the potential adverse impacts identified and these applications are closed.**

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Key Issues

The power for the Council to consider applications to erect a second street nameplate in a language other than English is contained in Article 11 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1995.

- 3.2 The Dual Language Street Sign policy states that *“each application will be subject to an initial assessment for any potential adverse impacts on equality, good relations and rural needs and where any adverse impacts are identified that information will be brought to Committee.”*
- 3.3 The initial assessments were carried out for these three streets and potential adverse impacts were identified.
- 3.4 Draft equality screenings were therefore carried out, assessing the request for dual language street signs in Irish on Fernwood Street, Cliftonpark Avenue and Dromore Street for equality and good relations issues.
- 3.5 The screenings have identified that the carrying out of surveys and the erection of Irish language street signs in these areas has the potential to give rise to community tension. Conversely the screenings also identified that the process could assist in promoting cultural and linguistic diversity. The findings are outlined in the equality and good relation section below.
- 3.6 The council retains ‘residual discretion’ in relation to these applications. In effect this gives elected members the option not to proceed to survey and/ or halt the erection of a dual language street sign in a street where, in the view of elected members this action would be considered inappropriate.
- 3.7 These applications are therefore being brought to Committee to determine if surveys of residents of these streets will take place, considering the information presented in the report.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.8 If it is decided to carry out surveys, the resulting tasks are included within existing resources and budgets for the process.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.9 An EQIA was carried out on the Dual Language Street Signs policy in 2021-22. This confirmed the initial assessment process to be carried out, which may indicate the requirement for equality screening.
- 3.10 The applications for dual language street signs (with the second language in Irish) at Fernwood Street, Cliftonpark Avenue and Dromore Street were assessed for equality of opportunity and good relations issues through the initial assessment process. This process identified that the potential for adverse impact existed and recommended further screening prior to referral to committee for authority to proceed to survey.

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- 3.11 The draft screenings have identified that the carrying out of a survey in itself in these areas has the potential to give rise to community tension, as could the erection of the street signs and therefore has the potential to give rise to adverse impact on the grounds of good relations. It is acknowledged; however, the process could alternatively assist in promoting cultural and linguistic diversity.**
- 3.12 The applications were also presented to elected members as part of the elected member notification procedure, and no objections were received.**

Proposal

Moved by Councillor M. Donnelly,
Seconded by Councillor de Faoite,

That the Committee agrees that surveys be conducted on residents in Fernwood Street, Cliftonpark Avenue and Dromore Street in relation to the applications received for the erection of dual language street signs in Irish.

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

**Department for Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs – Lagan Meadows
Consultation re: ‘Quiet Area’**

The Committee agreed to endorse a response to the above-mentioned consultation exercise and Members’ comments thereon, particularly in reference to both Belfast International and Belfast City Airport in respect of the high number of flights that pass over the meadows causing noise pollution. The response can be accessed [here](#).

Issues Raised in Advance by Members

Prior to considering ‘Issues Raised in Advance’ the Chairperson reminded Members of the provisions of Standing Order 46, which related to requests for items to be Included on an agenda. The Standing Order, she pointed out, stated that Members must first raise an issue with the appropriate Chief Officer, with a view to resolving the matter, rather than placing it in front of the Committee. She requested that Members note also that, should there be item on the agenda related to the matter they wish to raise, it would entirely appropriate to do so as part of the overall discussion.

Bulky Waste Collection Response Time

At the request of Councillor R. Brooks, the Committee agreed that a report be submitted in respect of a range of issues regarding the Council’s above-mentioned service that would examine overall performance, resourcing and over-arching policies.

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**Refuse Bags on Pavements in the
City Centre/Arterial Routes**

At the request of Councillor de Faoite, the Committee agreed that a report be submitted that would outline the Council's policies in relation to the management of refuse bags left on pavements and arterial routes – to include also the University area. Such a report would examine best practice as carried out by other authorities in this regard.

Changing Pavilion at Cherryvale Playing Fields

At the request of Councillor de Faoite, the Committee agreed that a condition survey be undertaken at the above-mentioned site and a report be submitted to the Committee that would outline also the current condition of all of the Council's changing facilities.

Support for Youth Work Charter

On the proposal of Councillor Bradley, which was seconded by Councillor McKeown, the Committee agreed to endorse the following Youth Work Charter, which had been launched by the Youth Work Alliance, as an advocacy framework to protect, fund and unify the voluntary youth sector.

“This Council notes the publication of the Youth Work Charter by the Youth Work Alliance and recognises the essential role that youth services play in supporting young people, strengthening communities, and improving safety and wellbeing across Belfast.

The Council further notes the ongoing pressures on the youth work sector, including funding uncertainty and the impact this has on open-access provision and the ability of organisations to plan and deliver long-term support. This Council therefore agrees to formally endorse the Youth Work Charter and to express its support for the principles it sets out.

The Council further agrees to write to the Minister for Education calling on the Department of Education to endorse the Charter, to outline how the Minister and the Department intend to implement its commitments, and to ensure that youth services are sustainably and adequately funded, including the reinstatement of ring-fenced funding by the Department for youth services.”

Chairperson