

People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 8th September, 2026

MEETING OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

- Members present: Councillor Maghie (Chairperson);
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Abernethy);
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;
Mr. J. Girvan, Director of City and Neighbourhood
Services;
Mr. S. Leonard, Director of Open Spaces,
Resources, Fleet and Transport;
Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;
Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building
Control; and
Mr. B. Flynn, Committee Services Officer.

Apology

An apology was reported on behalf of Alderman Copeland.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 11th August 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 September, subject to the following:

- The Council agreed that the minute under the heading 'Resources and Fleet/Waste Management – Update', be amended to provide that, in consultation with Council staff, union representatives and elected Members, a street cleansing strategy be developed and brought back for the Committee's consideration within eight weeks;
- The Council agreed that the minute under the heading 'DAERA Consultation re: Draft Air Quality (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026', be amended to provide that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee in relation to odour complaints; and
- The Council agreed that the minute under the heading 'Abandoned Bins Protocol and Improvements to Bulky Waste Collections', be amended to provide that additional resourcing of the Council's Dog Warden Service be considered as part of the rate-setting process for 2027/28.

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Declarations of Interest

Councillor Canavan reported that she was related to an individual who worked for the applicant named in the item 'Request for the Use of Botanic Gardens'. She left the meeting whilst the matter was under consideration.

Restricted Items

The information contained in the following reports was 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 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.

Financial Reporting - Quarter 1 2026/27

The Committee noted the contents of the above-mentioned report and the information which was contained within the associated financial reporting pack.

Waste Update - Shared Alleys and Entries Action Plan

The Committee noted the contents of a report in relation to the above-mentioned matter and approved the 'Shared Alleys and Entries Action Plan: Empowering Behavioural Change', together with the 'Fair Usage Protocol' as set out therein.

Request for the Use of Botanic Gardens

The Committee considered a request which had been received seeking the use of Botanic Gardens for the hosting of an event in August 2027.

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the request to enable further information to be provided in relation to the date on which the event would take place; its proposed scale; and also for it to be considered within the context of other events, such as the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann, scheduled to take place in Belfast in August 2027.

Memorial Bench in Woodvale Park

The Committee acceded to a request which had been received seeking approval for the installation of a memorial bench within Woodvale Park. It was noted that the Committee had, in this instance, exercised its discretion in granting approval.

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 12th May, 2026, it had noted that a report would be submitted to a future meeting to examine how the Council might, amongst other things, facilitate public acts of remembrance across its parks and open spaces. That report had been in response to a motion which had been moved by Councillor Bower and seconded by Councillor Maghie. It was noted that work relating to the report was ongoing.

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Motions

Parks Outreach Team

In accordance with the decision of the Standards and Business Committee of 25th August, the Committee considered the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor McKeown and seconded by Councillor de Faoite:

“This Council recognises the value of our parks and open spaces and the role they play in our communities; and acknowledges the significant and positive work of the Parks Outreach Team in engaging with people and communities across the city; and agrees that to support and enhance this work further, promote environmental and horticultural educational opportunities, facilitate community-focused activities and social engagement, and support biodiversity initiatives.

Accordingly, the Council will develop a new strategic approach for the identification and establishment of outreach hubs within the parks estate, and associated programming; will use this new approach to consider how our parks and green spaces can be better used by residents and community and voluntary groups, including any adaptations required to identified locations to enable this; and establish a long-term programme of activity to complement the existing work of the Parks Outreach Team.”

The Committee agreed that a report in this regard be submitted to a future meeting.

**Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE)
Tenancy Succession Policy**

At its meeting on 23rd June, the Committee had adopted a motion, which had been moved by Councillor Canavan and seconded by Councillor Black, in relation to the above-mentioned matter. That motion had called on the Minister for Communities to undertake a review of the tenancy succession policy operated by the NIHE with a view to introducing safeguards to prevent the eviction of individuals following the death of a tenant, particularly where long-term residency and community-based ties existed.

It was reported that a response had been received on behalf of the Minister on 11th August which had indicated that there existed no plans to review the rules regarding tenancy succession. The correspondence had indicated that the Minister’s primary focus remained on addressing housing need through the Social Housing Development Programme.

The Committee noted the receipt of the response from the Minister’s office and agreed that the motion be closed.

Operational Issues

Extension to an Existing Street

The Committee granted approval for the naming of the extension to an existing street as Lady Ishbel Avenue.

Dual Language Street Signs

Arising from discussion, it was noted that clarity would be sought at the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 18th September in respect of the continued consideration by the Committee of applications for dual language street signs in advance of the receipt of legal advice on the current policy and during the policy review period.

Tea and Coffee Provision at Council Playing Fields

The Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services reported that enquiries had been received from sports clubs and site users seeking to formalise the provision of tea and coffee services for spectators attending games at Council-owned playing fields. He indicated that officers had been made aware that clubs were providing the services and it was recommended that the Council should seek to regularise existing operations. He reported also that the Council would oversee a procurement exercise in 2027/28 and that the provision of such services could be included within the scope of that exercise.

The Committee agreed, in principle, to support the continued provision of tea and coffee through the means outlined and that officers would seek to identify and regularise existing operations. In addition, it was agreed that permission be extended to interested clubs to operate at sites across the Council's playing fields, subject to the clubs adhering to all of the conditions stipulated by the Council.

Summer Scheme Grants

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services presented a report which sought the Committee's approval to deliver the Council's summer schemes in 2027/28 through the provision of two grant funds, that is, the Summer Scheme Grant and the Summer Scheme Grant for Children with Additional Needs. He outlined the proposed terms for the operation of the schemes in 2027/28 and the associated costs.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and authorised officers to progress the two summer scheme grants as outlined; and noted further that any additional information collected relating to the scope and extent of the grant schemes would be reported to the Committee in due course.

Toy Safety - Consultation Response

The Committee adopted a response to the above-mentioned consultation exercise, subject to the inclusion of amendments, if any, made by the Council at its meeting on 1st October. The response was made available on the [Council's website](#).

Parkrun Initiative

Further to its decision of 26th June, the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services spoke to a report which highlighted the successes of the *Parkrun* initiatives across the city, particularly those held within the Council's parks and open spaces. The report indicated that the first *Parkrun* had taken place in the Waterworks Park in 2010; and, presently, Belfast hosted ten senior and six junior events each week. Since the initial *Parkrun* in 2010, it had been estimated that over 140,000 participants had completed an event.

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The Committee noted the achievements of the *ParkRun* initiative, together with the level of Council-supported activity. In addition, it was agreed that officers would engage with the various providers to establish if additional support was needed and that a report be submitted to the Committee for consideration.

Request for the Use of Parks

The Committee granted authority for the hosting, in 2026, 2027 and 2028, of the following events, subject to the applicants adhering to the terms and conditions set out within the report:

- Pitt Park Residents Association – ‘Row on Row Remembrance’ at Pitt Park; and
- Velo Club Glendale – ‘Falling Leaves Irish National League Race’ at Falls Park.

Issues Raised in Advance by Members

Recognition of GAA Green Clubs Scheme

Councillor de Faoite requested that a report be submitted to a future meeting to examine the feasibility of recognising sports clubs who use Council facilities and actively support biodiversity, climate action and placemaking. Such a report would examine best practice initiatives – such as the Gaelic Athletic Association’s Green Clubs Programme – which had supported clubs in taking simple and effective sustainability actions.

The Committee agreed that a report in this regard be submitted to a future meeting.

Toilet Provision in Parks

Councillor Flynn outlined several issues relating to the current toilet provision at Victoria Park and Orangefield Park. It was noted that a report in the matter would be submitted in due course.

Chairperson