

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 20th January, 2023

MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM AND
REMOVED VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor McDonough-Brown (Chairperson);
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor M. Kelly);
Aldermen Dorrian and Haire; and
Councillors Beattie, Bradley, Bunting, Ferguson,
Garrett, Groogan, Heading, Long, Lyons, McLaughlin,
McMullan, Murphy, Spratt, Thompson, Verner and Walsh.

In attendance: Mr. J. Walsh, Chief Executive;
Ms. N. Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and
Civic Services;
Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;
Ms. C. Matthews, Director of Resources and Fleet;
Ms. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and
Development;
Mr. D. Sales, Director of Neighbourhood Services;
Ms. C. Sheridan, Director of Human Resources;
Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;
Mr. T. Wallace, Director of Finance;
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

Also attended: Councillors de Faoite and Flynn.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 16th December were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council, at its meeting on 9th January, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Groogan declared an interest in respect of agenda item 2a - Revenue Estimates and District Rate 2023/24, in that she was employed by an organisation which

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was an applicant for a Capacity Grant. She declared an interest also in relation to item 7a - Minutes of the Meeting of the Shared City Partnership, as that organisation had been referred to in the PEACE IV update on Building Positive Relations Theme.

Councillor Beattie declared an interest in relation to agenda item 2a - Revenue Estimates and District Rate 2023/24, in that he was employed by an organisation which might avail of Capacity and Revenue Grants. He declared an interest also in respect of agenda item 8b - Requests for Use of the City Hall and the Provision of Hospitality, as that organisation was included in the list of applications to be approved for 2023.

Councillor Verner declared an interest in respect of agenda item 2a - Revenue Estimates and District Rate 2023/24, on the basis that that she was employed by an organisation which received a Revenue Grant.

The City Solicitor informed those Members who had declared an interest in relation to item 2a - Revenue Estimates and District Rate 2023/24, that, as the Committee was not being asked at this stage to allocate funding for Capacity and Revenue Grants to specific organisations, they would not be required to leave the meeting whilst the report was being considered.

NI REVAL 2023

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 18th November, it had agreed that a representative of Land and Property Services be invited to attend its meeting in January to provide a presentation on the outcome of its NI REVAL 2023 non-domestic revaluation exercise.

Accordingly, Mr. G. Humphrey was welcomed to the meeting.

Mr. Humphrey informed the Committee that the revaluation exercise had involved a review of the rateable value of more than 74,500 non-domestic properties across Northern Ireland, including cinemas, factories, hospitals, hotels, licenced premises, offices, playing fields, power stations, schools, shops and warehouses. The previous revaluation had been undertaken in 2020.

He pointed out that:

- regular revaluations were essential to maintain fairness and equality between ratepayers;
- a revaluation did not increase or decrease the total Northern Ireland rates revenue;
- revaluations sought to redistribute the rate burden by rebalancing business rates;

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- revaluations ensured that business rates stayed up-to date and reflected local economic change; and
- revaluations reflected relative changes between properties which occurred over time.

He explained that new rateable values had been based upon an estimate of open market rents on the statutory valuation date of 1st October, 2021 and that those would be used to calculate business rates liabilities from 1st April, 2023. A draft schedule of values had been published on 11th January, 2023, which enabled a ratepayer to view their draft valuation and contact Land and Property Services, should they feel that their figure was inaccurate.

In terms of initial outcomes, seven councils had seen a decline in Net Annual Value from 2020, three had witnessed an increase and one, namely Belfast City Council, had remained unchanged. The revaluation for Belfast had been based on 16,982 valuation list entries and he provided a brief breakdown of the results for various non-domestic category types.

Mr. Humphrey concluded by confirming that 75% of non-domestic properties were entitled to some form of rates relief, amounting to £243 million, and provided details of the various categories of properties/businesses which were eligible.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Restricted Items

The information contained in the reports associated with the following four items is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

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

Revenue Estimates and District Rate 2023/24

The Director of Finance submitted for the Committee's consideration a report on the development of the revenue estimates for 2023/24 and the next steps in the rate setting process. The report provided information on the current financial position, Departmental and additional growth proposals, medium-term financial planning and the financial strategy for the next two years. It also set out a number of recommendations for the Committee's consideration, including the striking of the rate and the proposed cash limits for the Council's Standing Committees.

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Proposal

Moved by Councillor Long,
Seconded by Councillor Groogan and

Resolved – That the Committee agrees that the kerbside glass expansion project be taken forward as a priority for the 2024/25 rate setting process and that officers begin the preparatory work to enable it to be introduced from 1st April, 2024.

At the request of Councillor Spratt, the Committee agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting outlining how the glass collection service trial reduced the use/volume of glass recycling in recycling centres and how any extra capacity could be used to provide an additional soft plastic recycling service, with the estimated cost to be included.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Long,
Seconded by Councillor McDonough-Brown (Chairperson),

That the Committee agrees not to allocate funding of £500k to the Summer Diversionary Festival Programme in 2023/24 and to develop a new scheme for 2024/25 which would seek to build capacity at a local level.

On a recorded vote, five Members voted for the proposal and fifteen against and it was declared lost.

<u>For 5</u>	<u>Against 15</u>
Councillor McDonough-Brown (Chairperson); The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor M. Kelly); and Councillors Groogan, Long and McMullan.	Aldermen Dorrian and Haire; and Councillors Beattie, Bradley, Bunting, Ferguson, Garrett, Heading, Lyons, McLaughlin, Murphy, Spratt, Thompson, Verner and Walsh.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor McLaughlin,
Seconded by Councillor McDonough-Brown (Chairperson),

That the Committee agrees to adopt the recommendations contained within the report.

On a vote, eighteen Members voted for the proposal and one against, with one 'no vote' and it was declared carried.

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Accordingly, the Committee:

- i. approved an indicative domestic rate increase of 7.99% for 2023/24;
- ii. approved the proposed Financing Strategy to fund the 2023/24 budgetary gap in 2023/24 and 2024/25, as set out within the report;
- iii. noted the implications of this approach for the 2024/25 rate setting process;
- iv. approved the growth proposals included in the 2023/24 uncontrollable cost increase of £27.2m, as set out within the report;
- v. agreed to recommend the following cash limits for 2023/24:
 - a. a cash limit of £50,355,486 for the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for 2023/24, including £3,270,000 for Belfast Investment Fund and £3,000,000 for City Deal;
 - b. a cash limit of £98,901,629 for the People and Communities Committee for 2023/24;
 - c. a cash limit of £20,445,354 for the City Growth and Regeneration Committee for 2023/24;
 - d. a cash limit of £1,624,167 for the Planning Committee for 2023/24; and
 - e. a Capital Financing Budget of £22,274,022 for 2023/24 and
- vi. agreed that the aforementioned decisions would not be subject to call-in, as this would cause an unreasonable delay which would be prejudicial to the Council's and the public's interests in striking the rate by the legislative deadline of 15th February, 2023.

**Update on Section 76 Developer Contributions
(Public Realm Improvement Works)**

*This minute has been restricted on the basis of Commercial Sensitivity.
The restriction will be removed in due course.*

**Update on Employees on Temporary
Contracts and Agency Workers**

The Director of Human Resources submitted for the Committee's consideration a report providing an update on the number of employees on temporary contracts and agency assignees and outlining the steps being taken to reduce the reliance on those two groups.

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She reported that, on 31st December, 218 staff had been filling posts on a temporary basis, 140 of whom had substantive Council posts to return to. The other 78 were Fixed Term Contract employees who had no substantive post. Since 1st October, 7 temporary staff had been given permanent status, in line with the fixed term contract guidelines, however, over the same time period, an additional 17 temporary project posts had been created, on the basis of business/operational need.

The total number of agency assignees engaged by the Council on 31st December had been 275, which was 58 less than in the previous quarter. A dedicated Corporate Contract Manager had now been appointed to manage, challenge and control agency usage across all Departments and would take up post on 6th February.

She then provided an update on the ongoing recruitment exercises for the permanent posts of General Operatives and Business Support Clerks and confirmed that, to date, there had been 54 and 30 appointments respectively.

The Director went on to provide details of the advice which had been received from counsel, the Local Government Staff Commission and the Equality Commission NI on the motion which had been adopted by the Committee on 22nd October, 2021, on the potential for anyone on a temporary contract who had been employed for twelve continuous months, regardless of job title, to have that contract made permanent, if they so wished.

After discussion, the Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed:

- i. that officers investigate the possibility of the Council employing 'at risk' those people who had been working for a significant length of time on temporary projects which were being funded by other agencies; and
- ii. noted that the Director of Human Resources would seek to identify additional support which could be offered to temporary staff, including those with disabilities, applying for permanent Council posts.

Update on Living Wage Accreditation

The Committee noted the contents of a report providing an update on the Council's application for Living Wage accreditation and the next steps in the process.

Matters referred back from Council/Motions

Motion - Comber Greenway

The Committee was reminded that the Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 5th January, had considered the following motion which had been received for submission to the Council on 9th January:

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“This Council notes the significant contribution which the Comber Greenway makes to East Belfast, in terms of active travel, urban biodiversity, and wildlife.

The Council further notes the strategic importance of having well maintained and connected routes in the City, including gritting during the winter periods, providing residents and commuters with safe alternatives to getting around the City.

The Council will -

- i. engage with relevant stakeholders to consider a plan for gritting the Comber Greenway, making it accessible at all times of the year; and
- ii. engage with the Department for Infrastructure regarding an asset transfer of the Comber Greenway between the Beersbridge Road and Tullycarnet boundary, with a view to bringing the urban path under full Council ownership.”

The motion had been proposed by Councillor Flynn and seconded by Councillor Groogan.

Councillor Flynn sought and was granted approval by the Committee to replace point ii. of his motion with the following wording:

- The Council will engage with the Department for Infrastructure regarding an asset transfer, including relevant resource, of the Comber Greenway between the Beersbridge Road and Tullycarnet boundary, with the aim of bringing the urban path under full Council ownership. Additionally, it will engage with the EastSide Partnership, with a view to partnering for the benefit of the Comber Greenway, similar to the successful model in place between the two organisations for the Connswater Community Greenway.

After discussion, the Committee noted the motion, as amended, and agreed, in the first instance, that a report be submitted to a future meeting on how it might be facilitated, resourced and managed. The Committee agreed also that a letter be forwarded to Northern Ireland Electricity requesting it to install and switch on lighting on the Comber Greenway as soon as possible for the benefit of residents and users.

Motion – School Street Schemes

The Committee was reminded that the Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 5th January, had considered the following motion which had been received for submission to the Council on 9th January:

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This Council:

- i notes that the “School Street” schemes in the Republic of Ireland and GB, which close the roads outside schools during drop-off and pick-up times, have the multiple benefits of improving road safety for pupils, encouraging active travel to school by walking, cycling and public transport, and improving the air quality around schools;
- ii commends Fingal County Council, which has successfully pioneered the scheme at many schools in North County Dublin;
- iii recognises that we do not have the statutory powers to introduce such a scheme in Belfast, either in pilot or permanent form;
- iv calls upon the Department for Infrastructure to bring forward urgently a School Streets pilot project in Belfast, identifying a number of pilot schools across the City;
- v agrees that the Area Working Groups will agree a number of schools in each area to recommend to the Department for Infrastructure as part of a pilot scheme; and
- vi shall explore further ways to work with all relevant partners to develop School Streets and support measures to cut vehicle emissions and pollution in the vicinity of schools, including enforceable No-Idling Zones, air quality measuring and tree planting as part of the one million trees initiative.

The motion had been proposed by Councillor de Faoite and seconded by Councillor McKeown.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Ferguson,
Seconded by Councillor Lyons,

That the Committee agrees to adopt the motion in full.

On a vote, four Members voted for the proposal and sixteen against and it was declared lost.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor McLaughlin,
Seconded by Councillor McDonough-Brown (Chairperson) and

Resolved - That the Committee agrees, in the first instance, that the Council write to the Department for Infrastructure requesting it to bring forward a School Streets pilot project in Belfast, with the response to be

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presented to the Committee for consideration and a decision to be taken on the way forward.

Motion – Leave Arrangements

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 Three motions were agreed by the Council in 2021 relating to leave arrangements for parental bereavement leave and pay, miscarriage leave and fertility treatment leave.

1.2 This report informs the Committee of the outcome of the consultation with the Trade Unions and the additional leave provisions which will be implemented on 1st February 2023, pending completion of the equality screening.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is asked to note the outcome of the consultation with the Trade Unions on enhanced leave arrangements.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, on 19th August 2022, agreed that the Council would consult with the Trade Unions on the proposed enhanced leave arrangements as follows:

Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay

3.2 To award 10 consecutive days bereavement leave, not solely in the case of a child under 18, but for the death of a close relative;

To award 10 consecutive days full pay, not statutory pay, as a day one right with no qualifying service required: and

To award 1 days paid leave to attend the funeral of an extended family member.

Paid Leave for Miscarriage

3.3 To treat miscarriage as a bereavement and offer 10 days' bereavement leave on full pay to employees who suffer a miscarriage as a day one right.

Fertility Treatment Leave

- 3.4 To award 10 days full paid leave following any unsuccessful IVF treatment to employees who have undergone IVF treatment, as a day one right, in addition to the paid time off for medical appointments that already exists.

Through the consultation process with the Trade Unions, the following more favourable provisions were agreed at JNCC on 15th December 2022:

Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay

- 3.5 Award 10 consecutive days' bereavement leave, not solely in the case of a child under 18, including the case of still birth for the partner, or the death of a close relative (1) or for those who have sole responsibility for the funeral arrangements.

Award 10 consecutive days' full pay, not statutory pay, as a day one right with no qualifying service required.

Award 1 days' paid leave to attend the funeral of an extended family member (2)

(1) The definition of a close relative is a 'spouse, civil partner, mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, stepdaughter, stepson, stepmother, stepfather, stepbrother or stepsister'. There may be exceptional circumstances where the 10 days could be awarded outside of the above 'close relative' definition' e.g., for the death of a grandparent when the employee was brought up by their grandparents.

(2) The definition of an extended family member is grandparent, grandchild, mother/father-in-law, daughter/son-in-law.'

Paid Leave for Miscarriage:

- 3.6 Treat miscarriage as a bereavement and offer 10 days' bereavement leave on full pay to employees who suffer a miscarriage as a day one right.

Offer 3 days' bereavement leave to an employee who is the partner/surrogate parents for someone who had a miscarriage.

Fertility Treatment Leave:

- 3.7 Award 10 days full paid leave following any unsuccessful IVF treatment to employees who have undergone IVF treatment, as

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a day one right in addition to the paid time off for medical appointments that already exists

Offer 3 days' leave to an employee who is the partner/surrogate parents for someone who had unsuccessful IVF treatment.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.8 There will be an impact in terms of increased leave entitlement in the case of bereavement, miscarriage and IVF treatment as outlined above.

**Equality or Good Relations Implications/
Rural Needs Assessment**

- 3.9 The introduction of the enhanced leave provisions will be subject to equality and rural needs screening.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues

Update on City Region Growth Deal

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 This report is to provide the Committee with an update on the progress of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD).

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note:

- i the engagement that took place with senior government officials at the City and Growth Deals Senior Stocktake session;
- ii the progress being made on the Contracts for Funding which are required for each of the capital projects delivered through the Deal and the update on project development and delivery across the pillars of investment; and
- iii the update in respect of the BRCD Council Panel.

3.0 Main Report

City and Growth Deals Senior Stocktake

3.1 A City and Growth Deals Senior Stocktake meeting was held in October 2022, hosted by the Department of Finance (DoF). The stocktake was chaired by the Permanent Secretary of DoF and participants included the Head of the Civil Service, Permanent Secretaries and senior officials of a number of government departments and senior representatives of the City and Growth Deal partners. This workshop was held in order to discuss progress to date across all Northern Ireland City and Growth Deals and key issues and challenges being experienced, such as the impact of construction inflation and concerns about the complexity of arrangements and pace of delivery. A detailed discussion on the Stocktake took place at the November meeting of the Executive Board and members of the Board broadly welcomed the stocktake and in particular highlighted the need to build on the positive engagement, with a number of areas of change identified including:

- The adoption of a ‘Clearing House’ approach to resolve key issues and challenges at leadership level at an earlier stage;**
- The need to reset the model of working with a stronger focus required on outcomes and opportunities across all the deals;**
- Agreement of a set of principles to underpin a more collaborative model of working to help ensure a focus on delivery and avoid the introduction of additional complexity;**
- The need to establish shared commitment to and accountability for timeframes as well as quality/cost;**
- The need for increased clarity in relation to the distinct roles and responsibilities of government departments and government agencies to avoid duplication and support timely decision making; and**
- The potential to use departmental resource in different ways to support deals respond to cross-deal challenges**

3.2 The Programme Director for the BRCD is engaging directly with senior officials in the key government departments to seek to agree a plan of action in line with the areas of change/action identified by the Executive Board.

Contracts for Funding

- 3.3 As previously noted by the Committee, before funding can flow to projects for which Outline Business Cases (OBCs) have been approved, Contracts for Funding need to be agreed between departments and the Accountable Body and Funding Agreements agreed between the Accountable Body and Project Sponsors.
- 3.4 It was also noted by Members that the Committee would be advised of progress to agree the funding agreements for each project. Since the last update to the Committee in November progress has continued to prepare and agree a number of contracts as outlined below:
- In addition to Studio Ulster, the contract for which was approved and signed in the summer, contracts have now been approved and signed for Carrickfergus Regeneration, Bangor Waterfront, and Newry City Centre Regeneration and a number of press releases have been issued to mark these significant milestones for deal delivery;
 - The Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre (AMIC) contract is currently being considered with final approval and signing expected in the coming weeks;
 - Draft Contracts for the Institute for Research Excellence in Advanced Clinical Healthcare (iREACH), the Global Innovation Institute and Mourne Mountain Gateway are being actively progressed.

Progress across BRCD Pillars

Innovation

- 3.5 **AMIC** has been advanced by Queen's University and is now nearing conclusion and finalisation of the detailed designs, RIBA Stage 3, and its associated report. The planning application for construction of the 'Factory for the Future' at Global Point is also being progressed. The invitation to tender for the prime contractor for the project is also expected to be published this month.
- 3.6 **The Global Innovation Institute** is proceeding through to RIBA Stage 3 in the coming months. There has been ongoing industry engagement to inform the process and a review of the commercial model is being carried out. The iREACH project continues to move through RIBA Stage 2, is considering in further detail its site proposals and commercial model and has

been undertaking significant stakeholder engagement on final proposals.

- 3.7 The Centre for Digital Healthcare Technology project is considering early procurement of equipment for the Royal Victoria Hospital Living Lab and revisions to the OBC are likely to be required to reflect this potential change of scope.
- 3.8 Construction work on Studio Ulster commenced on site in October 2022. Following the publication of the Prior Information Notice on 18th November, the procurement for the appointment of an operator and equipment for Studio Ulster has progressed to the next stage of the Competitive Dialogue tender process, with the tender opportunity for Studio Ulster published on 21st December.

Digital

- 3.9 Since the last update to the Committee, the OBC for the Venture Fund element of the Innovation Challenge Fund has progressed well, with a Strategic case review completed with key Government and partner stakeholders in December. Members also previously approved the commencement of a separate business case for the Augment the City pilot project in October 2022. Since then and following consideration by the Digital Advisory Board a draft business case has been shared with the Department for the Economy and the Belfast City Innovation team are currently reviewing the feedback received. Members will be kept updated as this project progresses. It was previously reported that the Digital Twin project led by Digital Catapult UK, received Ministerial approval on 28th October 2022 and it is now awaiting DoF supply approval.
- 3.10 The i4c Innovation Centre project, led by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, received approval from the Economy Minister in Spring 2022 and following intensive engagement with the Department for the Economy the OBC has now been updated and was re-submitted on 22nd December 2022. The updated OBC includes an additional financial contribution, approved by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, to address the challenges previously identified. Once final consideration by Casework Committee has been completed, the project will proceed for DoF supply approval.

Tourism and Regeneration

- 3.11 Carrickfergus Regeneration, Bangor Waterfront, Newry Regeneration and Mourne Mountain Gateway, either have or are progressing towards having a signed Contract for Funding

and Funding Agreement in place. These projects are now ensuring that the required project resources are in place, governance is being established and the development of procurement documentation is ongoing, with a number of procurements for Integrated Design Teams expected to go live over the next few months.

- 3.12 The OBC for Destination Royal Hillsborough is being progressed for DoF supply approval. The contract for funding is being drafted alongside the supply approval process, to ensure that this can be agreed as quickly as possible following DoF approval.
- 3.13 The Gobbins attended casework in February 2022 and following extensive engagement between the Department for Economy, Tourism NI, BRCD PMO and Mid and East Antrim Borough Council a paper is to be submitted to Casework for re-endorsement, to enable OBC approvals to be progressed. The project team are continuing to develop the Integrated Consultancy Team procurement documentation for this project and Mid and East Antrim Borough Council have agreed to progress the procurement, whilst OBC approvals are being obtained.
- 3.14 Belfast Stories, the Council's flagship project, continues to progress against the agreed programme with OBC submission and casework review anticipated later this year. The procurement of professional services has commenced, with an encouraging level of interest in the prequalification stage which is now nearing completion. A public consultation has now been completed which received positive feedback and will inform the design brief for the project. A Belfast Stories Benefits Framework is in also in place and will continue to be refined as the project evolves and opportunities to maximise social value including employability, skills and education are being considered at each project stage.

Employability and Skills (E&S)

- 3.15 As Members will be aware, the E&S pillar developed and trialled a skills assessment process to understand the labour and skills implications of the city deal investment projects. Analysing the employment potential of the city deal investments, the prevalent labour and skills conditions and reviewing to what extent the existing employability and skills ecosystem is equipped to respond. The first assessment focusing upon the construction opportunities arising through the city deal investment has recently been completed. Findings from this process which are being reviewed by the

E&S Board, highlight the key challenge in terms of labour and skills availability the sector is currently facing and identify a number of practical recommendations that could be taken forward by the city deal, its associated partners and wider stakeholders.

- 3.16 A further assessment is also underway for the advanced manufacturing sector aligned to AMIC, as well as wider manufacturing focused city and growth deal investment projects, it is expected this assessment will be completed in February/March 23. Recognising the potential of this model to undertake Northern Ireland wide assessments spanning across the four city and growth deals, it has been agreed that a Cross Deal Skills Group should be established in order to oversee and manage a series of skills assessments at a Northern Ireland level, focusing upon key sectors where city deal investment is aligned. The group will comprise of representatives from across each city deal in Northern Ireland and also representatives from relevant government departments. BRCD is playing a leading role in the development of this group, developing terms of reference and its initial work programme, as well as fulfilling the role of secretariat.
- 3.17 In relation to the Digital Transformation Flexible Fund the business case has been submitted to Invest Northern Ireland, the project is currently undergoing economic appraisal with the view to progressing to casework. Concurrently Newry, Mourne and Down District Council who will lead the delivery of the project are progressing with critical with pre-development work to establish the application and funding process for businesses applying to the fund, which will enable the project to mobilise quickly post departmental approval.
- 3.18 Work continues to maximise efforts to deliver inclusive growth and to create access to the opportunities arising through the deal. Engagement is underway with the Construction Employers Federation to explore a joint event aimed at raising awareness of future procurement opportunities and profiling the employability and skills support available to contractors, the need for which was one of the findings from the recent construction skills assessment.

Infrastructure

- 3.19 Work is continuing on three Infrastructure projects, Belfast Rapid Transit Phase 2, the Lagan Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge and the Newry Southern Relief Road. There are no significant updates from this pillar since the last meeting.

BRCDC Council Panel

- 3.20 A hybrid meeting of the BRCDC Council Panel is due to be held on 25th January which will be hosted by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council. The Panel Members will be considering a detailed programme update and will receive presentations on the BRCDC investments in Newry, Mourne and Down and on Communications and Engagement, which will include an overview of the newly developed BRCDC Website.
- 3.21 The minutes of the previous Panel meeting hosted by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council will be considered at the Panel meeting on 25th January and will be included for notation in the next update report to this Committee.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.22 All costs associated with the BRCDC are within existing budgets.

**Equality or Good Relations Implications/
Rural Needs Assessment**

- 3.23 The approach taken to develop the City Deal has been subject to independent equality screening and rural proofing and states that:

‘BRCDC is inherently inclusive, affording an opportunity for the region to grow in a way that will benefit the economy of Northern Ireland as a whole, thereby enhancing the lives and well-being of its citizens. If during further development of the programme it becomes apparent that there may be an adverse impact on certain groups or communities then the partnership commits to carrying out further Section 75 work and including screening and EQIAs as and when appropriate.’”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**SOLACE NI Report on Strategic Funding Alignment -
Mapping of Investment Fund Opportunities in Northern Ireland**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on work undertaken on behalf of the SOLACE to examine and identify funding opportunities available to Northern Ireland and associated ‘Investment Mapping Tool’ developed for use by councils.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is requested to:

- i endorse the covering report and Investment Mapping Tool produced by Ekosgen;**
- ii agree that Council officers use this report and the Investment Mapping Tool as a 'live' tool which should be updated as may be required, to guide and inform a corporate approach to funding opportunities;**
- iii agree that officers design a process to continuously review and update the investment mapping tool, investment/funding opportunities and approved/committed projects internally and link this as appropriate to projects across the wider local government sector. Mindful that there will be resource implications by introducing and maintaining this process;**
- iv agree that officers design an internal process to continuously review and update the investment mapping tool populating it with funding opportunities and approved/committed projects internally and also across local government; and**
- v note that the final report may be shared on behalf of the Council and also the wider local government sector via SOLACE NI, with relevant partner organisations in Central Government, Community Planning Partnerships and City and Growth Deal Boards.**

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Members may be aware that Ekosgen had been commissioned by SOLACE NI last summer to undertake a scoping exercise of the existing funding landscape and to identify potential sources of investment/funding opportunities available to councils in Northern Ireland.

3.2 The aims of this project were to:

- i provide councils and SOLACE NI with a clear understanding of the existing funding landscape and to inform the strategic alignment within and between councils and partners of investment funds in Northern Ireland;**

- ii **inform council officers of the timeframes that exist within these funds including engagement sessions, fund opening submission dates, fund award and fund closing dates; and**
 - iii **where possible, outline the range of different projects that are currently within the pipeline in Northern Ireland delivered through these investment funding vehicles.**
- 3.3 The study focused on identifying and alignment of the various thematic areas eligible for the available/emerging funds and the associated priorities, timings and bid submission dates. Within the context of the growing fiscal pressures facing local government. SOLACE identified the importance for councils to understand what funding opportunities may exist and how such funding opportunities align with existing sectoral and strategic priorities.**
- 3.4 SOLACE also recognised the importance of this work in providing an opportunity for each council to explore how as a local government sector and individual councils we can scope out existing (and potential future) partnerships to maximise the drawdown and benefit of these funding opportunities.**
- 3.5 The report presents the findings of an investment mapping exercise conducted by Ekosgen. The purpose of this report is threefold:**
 - i to provide an overview of the range of different sources of investment available to local authorities in Northern Ireland;**
 - ii to identify any potential areas of synergy or potential overlap across funding themes and potential projects; and**
 - iii to inform users of the content and use of the Investment Mapping Tool which has been created for the purposes of detailing the strategic fit of the Northern Ireland Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) programmes Interventions List against the investment themes, projects, and missions of other funding programmes currently active in Northern Ireland.**
- 3.6 The Committee should note that the baseline funding programme set out within the Mapping Tool is interchangeable and, for example, the Peace Plus programme could substitute the Shared Prosperity Fund to demonstrate strategic fit against the investment themes, projects, and missions of other**

funding programmes as required by each Council. The wider aim of this tool is to establish synergies that could be gained from acknowledging that investment funds in Northern Ireland have similar aims and objectives, and thus can be exploited for wider collaboration across the funds.

- 3.7 The mapping tool can be used in the decision-making process of councils and across wider funding partners to identify potential areas of complementarity between their projects and other investment funds.
- 3.8 The mapping tool can and will be used by each council or in conjunction with sub-regional partners to align their strategic objectives against emerging funding opportunities. The tool can be tailored and designed to assess and map the funding needs of each Council, including Belfast, aligned to emerging priorities. The application and ongoing maintenance and analysing of the mapping tool will be important and will help inform future decision-making processes of elected Members.
- 3.9 If the Committee agrees, officers will design a process to continuously review and update the investment mapping tool, populating it with funding opportunities and approved/committed projects internally and also across local government. The resource implications of this will be considered within existing service areas.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.10 None associated with this report. This report was commissioned by and will be paid through SOLACE NI on the basis of equal contribution by each Council of £1,310.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.11 None associated with this report.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

APSE 2030 Commission Report

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to highlight to the Committee the findings and recommendations of the APSE 2030 Commission, and to note that NILGA is engaging with APSE to seek, and jointly organise, a NI launch of the Commission’s Report.

This report can be accessed at:
<https://www.apse.org.uk/index.cfm/apse/research/local-government-commission-2030/commission-report-findings/>

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is requested to:

- i note the contents of the report produced by APSE following the publication of its ‘Local by Default report’ which followed the work of the APSE 2030 commission; and**
- ii agree that officers continue to engage with colleagues in NILGA and APSE in terms of the outworking’s of this report to ensure our corporate interests and priorities are promoted alongside any associated lobbying of this report.**

3.0 Main Report

3.1 The Committee will recall that a report was presented to the Committee in February 2020 which endorsed key areas of interest for the Council on which officers could engage with the APSE Commission. These included:

- enhanced devolution to local government including regeneration, planning, skills investment and planning, and local transport planning;**
- enhanced local investment powers, to ensure that councils have the fiscal levers to tackle issues at community and city level; and**
- the introduction of legislation/measures that strengthen the relationship between central and local government, including a duty to collaborate to provide for responsive and integrated public services delivery at regional, city and community level.**

APSE 2030 Local Government Commission Summary

3.2 The APSE Local Government Commission (ALGC) 2030 was set up to explore what the next decade could hold for a revitalised local government. The final report recently published by ALGC, issued a drastic warning to UK Governments to ‘reset the system’ to avoid local councils failing the communities they serve.

- 3.3 The ALGC 2030 received hundreds of pieces of evidence, including oral witness testimonies from local councils and NILGA, during the course of its 18 months of work, and found that UK local government is facing its biggest economic, political, and social challenges since the Second World War.
- 3.4 Alongside multiple public policy crises in finance, adult care, housing and climate change, the Commissioners found that the system of local government itself has been hindered significantly by a lack of powers, resources, and the centralisation of decision making, which mistrusts and obstructs local councils, and ignores their democratic legitimacy.
- 3.5 APSE Chief Executive, Mr. Paul O'Brien, noted that 'Evidence to the Commission, almost without exception, exposed frustration at a system which has, over a number of decades, relied upon the fanciful concept of all-seeing all-knowing central administrations, and yet local government, with the right powers and resources, can be a force for good, bringing about positive change at a community level and be best placed to understand and deliver on local economic, environmental, and social wellbeing for local areas. That is why we are calling for a fundamental reset to the system, including a new financial and constitutional settlement, for local government.'
- 3.6 The detailed report sets out calls for a new relationship between central administrations across the UK and local government, challenging them to recognise that the levelling-up agenda cannot be delivered whilst local councils are forced to act as by-standers. The Commission warns the alternative will be the continuation of communities being disenfranchised by a system of local government, that is constrained and no longer fit for purpose.

Key Theme 'Local by Default'

- 3.7 The theme of the report 'Local by default' suggests that powers and responsibilities should sit with local government unless the evidence or a reasoned argument shows it to be wholly inappropriate. This is not to endorse a naïve localism but instead recognises that different policy issues and contemporary challenges are best resolved by different parts of government working in collaboration. To ensure this, the report calls for local government to be assured of a new settlement, which enshrines its powers and responsibilities over local areas, with the right resources to deliver meaningful change.

3.8 The Commissioners recognised the binary opposition often drawn between central and local government, and the report advocates the move towards a mature relationship which clearly defines the roles and responsibilities between different spheres of government, accepting both as integral and equal parts of the system of governance.

3.9 The report finds that the absence of any clarity over the constitutional status of local government has contributed to a piecemeal and damaging systemic drift towards legalism in relation to central-local relations, which it is argued means representative localism remains stilted and at the whim of ministers.

3.10 **Report Recommendations**

The 'Local by Default' report makes 29 recommendations which centre upon:

- A new relationship with local government
- Adopting the principle of 'local by default'
- Revitalising local government
- The roles and powers of local government
- A sustainable financial settlement for local government
- Local democracy, representation, and accountability
- The local government workforce
- Addressing inequalities and engaging communities.

Further detail in relation to the ALGC recommendations are contained within the Commission's report.

Financial and Resource Implications

3.11 None associated with this report.

**Equality or Good Relations Implications/
Rural Needs Assessment**

3.12 None associated with this report."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Update on Workstyles Policy

The Committee noted the contents of a report providing information on a new Council Workstyles Policy [here](#), which would be implemented on a pilot basis for 18 months from 1st April, 2023.

**30U30 Northern Ireland Climate
Change-Makers Programme**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To inform the Committee of an approach to the Council for support for the 30U30 (30 under 30) Northern Ireland Climate Change-Maker’s programme. The programme is coordinated by two lead partner organisations, namely Podiem and Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, and is currently supported by DAERA, Pinsent Masons, Pacem and Danske Bank, with a request for local authority involvement being addressed through this approach to the Council.

1.2 The 30 under 30 programme is a climate focused programme, where young leaders from Northern Ireland have the opportunity to take part in an international learning programme, led by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful and Podiem. The current cohort of young leaders has already been recruited and there is a request to the Council to support the programme of activity they will undertake. All of the 30U30 modules are being delivered in Belfast City Centre and the majority of the participants either reside or work within the Council’s footprint. The cohort is strengthened by its diversity with a broad range of backgrounds and interest/expertise areas represented. Over 55% of the group are female and there is a mix of those in education, employment and currently economically inactive.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is recommended to approve a contribution of £8,750 plus VAT to the overall programme costs of approximately £100,000 in total. This will resource three modules, taking place in February and March 2023, including the finale event on Thursday 30th March.

2.2 Should the Council support the initiative, the Climate Unit will explore opportunities to align with our existing climate programme and the work being undertaken with young leaders through Belfast Climate Commission and within other projects such as Belfast One Million Trees and the UPSURGE project.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 30U30 (30 Under 30) is a programme designed develop 30 'exceptional potential leaders' in NI under the age of 30 with a focus on addressing climate change. These leaders have been competitively selected from a diverse range of industries, sectors and educational backgrounds. As mentioned above the majority of participants are from the Belfast area with over 55% of the group being female. There is a mix of those in education, employment and currently economically inactive.

3.2 Within the modular programme participants will learn from globally renowned thought leaders and performers across a range of relevant topics. These topics have been carefully crafted to create a cohort of leaders who will return to their fields of expertise with the tools to become planet positive change-makers in the short/long term. Speakers and facilitators include individuals such as:

- Alice Thompson - an international speaker and social business leader who co-founded Social Bite in Edinburgh and helped to establish 'The Worlds Big Sleepout' which took place in 52 cities around the world.**
- Gerry Hussey - Ireland's leading health, wellbeing and performance coach, who has worked with many leading sports people and teams, and author of 'Awaken Your Power Within'.**
- Philip Hesketh - an international authority on influence and persuasion, who has worked with clients such as the BBC, Nestle, Walt Disney, Nike, Microsoft and Bank of America among others.**
- René Carayol MBE - has worked with leaders such as Mikael Gorbachev, Nelson Mandela, Sir Richard Branson, Bill Clinton, and Kofi Annan, and authored the book 'SPIKE'. He has been Chairman, CEO and MD of businesses and served on the boards of Marks and Spencer's and Pepsi. He is an authority on inclusivity and leadership.**

3.3 The programme includes an international element which will encourage and enable the NI climate change-makers to build relationships and collaborations with climate change-makers from other parts of the world through the 30 under 30 programme currently run by the North American Association for Environmental Education.

Potential Benefits for the Council

- 3.4 The programme coordinators will ensure that the Council will be positioned as championing (along with the other partners) the creation and development of the next generation of local leaders who will lead work to address climate change in Northern Ireland. This will support the cities ambition, articulated in the Belfast Resilience Strategy, to ‘transition to a low-carbon economy in a generation’. It will also build on work undertaken by the Council Climate Unit with young people through the Belfast Climate Commission and Council funded research on young people’s perceptions of the climate crisis undertaken during COP26 in 2021.
- 3.5 In terms of profile, the Council brand will be prominent at the three modules (including the finale event) and a Council representative will be included within photographs at each of the three modules.
- 3.6 There is an opportunity for a member of the Council’s Climate team to present on how a city is playing its part in helping to avert a climate crisis. The cohort will feature some of NI’s finest future leadership talent (including those from the local government sector), so this content will be very useful and relevant to the participants.
- 3.7 There is an opportunity for the Lord Mayor of Belfast to greet the group and hear how they are planning to create meaningful impact as a direct consequence of the programme. This would form part of the 30U30 graduation.
- 3.8 There is also an opportunity to host one of the remaining modules, potentially the finale on 30th March, in the City Hall.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.10 £8,750 plus VAT - which will be allocated from existing City and Organisational Strategy budgets.

**Equality or Good Relations Implications/
Rural Needs Implications**

- 3.11 None.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

**Energy One Stop Shop Implementation
Plan – Consultation on Policy Options**

The Committee considered the following report and accompanying response in respect of the Department for the Economy's consultation on the Plan for the Implementation of the Energy One Stop Shop:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To update the Committee on the Energy One Stop Shop Implementation Plan – consultation on policy options. The closing date of the consultation has been extended from 20th January to 31st January, 2023 at 5 p. m.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee review the following summary of the DFE Energy One Stop Shop Implementation Plan – consultation on policy options and the attached officer response, which will be submitted prior to 31st January, on the basis that it is subject to Council ratification:

- While broadly welcoming the Energy One Stop Shop principles, objectives, services and phased approach we have requested alignment with both regional and local targets and initiatives including the Belfast net zero targets of 66% reduction in scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2025, 80% reduction by 2030, and 100% reduction by 2050, the development of the Belfast Local Area Energy Plan and the development of the Belfast EV Strategy. We have also encouraged a tailored communication and engagement approach to the most vulnerable in society, and that research be undertaken to understand the needs of the most vulnerable, our communities and partners, such as the Council, in supporting the energy transition and ensuring a just transition.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 One of the key actions in the NI Energy Strategy is that the Department for Economy (DFE) establish an Energy One Stop Shop to provide impartial information, advice and support aimed at helping to overcome the barriers that consumers face in moving to sustainable technologies and may provide a number of benefits and advantages. In the consultation document DFE have set out a series of principles, strategic objectives and services which could be provided by the One Stop Shop.

3.2 Energy One Stop Shop Principles

The suggested principles underpinning the work of the Energy One Stop Shop are that it will:

- **Be consumer centric – the One Stop Shop will focus on delivering positive outcomes for consumers;**
- **Provide tailored services – the One Stop Shop will meet the needs of individual consumer groups to ensure domestic and non-domestic consumers have access to the adequate types and levels of information, advice and support that they need;**
- **Have adequate sectoral and technical expertise – the One Stop Shop will provide up to date, accurate and factual information and advice on existing and upcoming products, technologies and services;**
- **Deliver a trusted service – building consumer trust will be a key priority for the One Stop Shop;**
- **Provide impartial information and advice – the One Stop Shop will only provide factual, accurate and independent information; and**
- **Deliver service in partnership with other bodies and organisations – the One Stop Shop will create partnerships with other organisations to ensure a presence across Northern Ireland and to maximise the benefits to consumers.**

3.3 Energy One Stop Shop Strategic Objectives

DFE has identified a set of strategic objectives for the Energy One Stop Shop which are that it will inform, advise and support people, businesses and communities to enable them to transition to affordable, smart decarbonised solutions for their energy efficiency, power, heat and transport needs, with special regard to those who may be least able to with a focus on:

- **Domestic consumers with vulnerable characteristics (e.g. low income, of pensionable age, digitally excluded, living with chronic ailment or disability and in rural areas);**

- All other domestic consumers;
- Small businesses (up to 50 employees); and
- Larger businesses (over 50 employees).

3.4 The Council response welcomes the principles and strategic objectives set out above however encourages the Energy One Stop Shop to align with and support the delivery of both regional and local net zero targets such as the Belfast target of a 66% reduction in scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2025, 80% by 2030 and 100% by 2050. Council have also encouraged the Energy One Stop Shop to be aware of and support initiatives such as the development of a Belfast Local Area Energy Plan and Belfast EV Strategy both of which are due to complete in 2023.

3.5 Energy One Stop Shop Services

It is proposed that the Energy One Stop Shop services will include the following:

- A single point of contact service that makes available and delivers energy information and advice in an easily accessible manner through a suitable range of communication channels;
- Signposting and warm referrals to relevant organisations and service delivery partners;
- Encouragement of behavioural change through information and awareness campaigns and measures such as developing net zero kitemark certifications;
- Wrap around support to hand-hold certain consumer groups from decision-making through implementation and follow-up support to ensure the best outcomes for them; and
- Non-financial support such as training, outreach activities, carrying out energy audits and developing support networks.

3.6 Potential additional activities have been identified within the consultation, which include:

- To lead in the production of national and sectoral statistics to meet reporting obligations, guide policy and inform investment decisions;

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- To undertake a programme of energy and behavioural research;
- To support energy education in schools;
- Provide support to businesses and public authorities including grants, financial support, energy audits, training, toolkits and kitemark certification;
- Provide support to sustainable energy communities including financial support;
- Deliver or administer financial support schemes, especially targeted to those who need it most;
- Monitor compliance and raise awareness of labelling and eco-design regulations.

3.7 The Council is broadly in agreement with the suggested services, however, it has suggested a potential programme to understand and meet the needs of the most vulnerable in society, communities and partners such as the Council. We have also suggested a tailored communication and engagement plan may support this activity within the wider communication approach outlined in the consultation documents.

3.8 **Implementation Timeframe**

The consultation document outlines the intention to develop a project plan in 2023 and to initiate a 3-year pilot as soon as possible, subject to funding.

Phase 1 services within the pilot would include:

- Establishing a dedicated website, social media channels and freephone helpline;
- Free and independent information to consumers and business by phone;
- Detailed information online and through social media, with the initial focus on energy efficiency;
- Signposting to other organisations who are sources of energy advice; and
- Raising awareness of energy issues and energy.

3.9 Phase 2 services include:

- Free and impartial advice to consumers and businesses by phone, face to face, video-conference, messaging services;
- Outreach activities and information campaigns;
- Warm referrals to service delivery partners;
- Non-financial support identified by the pilot as being asked for by consumers;
- Create and develop service delivery partnerships; and
- Develop and undertake a programme of energy and net zero consumer behavioural research.

3.10 Beyond the 3-year pilot, in year 4 onwards it is proposed that the service includes:

- Wrap-around support to certain consumer groups from decision-making through implementation and follow-up support;
- Kitemark certifications;
- Support networks and community champions; and
- Compilation of NI and sectoral statistics to comply with any future net zero monitoring and reporting requirements required by the NI Executive.

3.11 The attached draft Council response supports the above phased approach, however, it suggests that could any service be accelerated into an earlier phase it should be done so at the earliest opportunity.

Financial and Resource Implications

3.12 None

**Equality or Good Relations Implications/
Rural Needs Implications**

3.13 None.

Draft Energy One Stop Shop Consultation Response

QUESTION 1 – Do you agree with the Energy One Stop Shop underpinning principles?

Belfast City Council response: Yes, we agree with the identified principles as set out in the consultation document. In addition, we would encourage the Energy One Stop Shop to align with and support regional and local targets where feasible, for example the Belfast target of a 66% reduction in carbon emissions by 2025 based on 2020 baselines, 80% reduction by 2030, and 100% by 2050 which have been adopted by the city and were recommended in the Belfast Net Zero Carbon Roadmap.

QUESTION 2 – Do you agree with the definitions for each of the proposed principles?

Belfast City Council response: Yes.

QUESTION 3 – Do you agree with the proposed strategic objectives for the Energy One Stop Shop?

Belfast City Council response: Yes, we welcome the strategic objectives and the focus on people, businesses and communities, decarbonisation, and the regard to those who may be least able to afford to make changes in relation to energy efficiency, power, heat and transport. As set out above we would encourage the Energy One Stop Shop to align with and support regional and local targets and initiatives, for example in Belfast a Retrofit Hub has been established which is working to develop a retrofit programme for the city and we would welcome advice, guidance, and input from the Energy One Stop Shop in that and other initiatives such as the development of a Belfast Local Energy Plan and development of a Belfast EV Strategy which are both underway and due to complete during 2023.

QUESTION 4 – Do you agree that the Energy One Stop Shop should provide advice, information and support to domestic consumers, micro, small and medium businesses and community energy groups?

Belfast City Council response: Yes. We would also encourage the reach and uptake of information to be analysed to identify areas or groups which are not availing of the support and information provided.

QUESTION 5 – Do you agree that the Energy One Stop Shop should take account of the needs of vulnerable domestic consumers, in particular those with low incomes, of pensionable age, digitally excluded, living with chronic ailment or disability or in rural areas?

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Belfast City Council response: Yes, we welcome this focus on vulnerable domestic consumers and would encourage this to be a key part of the communications and service delivery plans of the Energy One Stop Shop. Belfast City Council would be keen to work with the new One Stop Shop to explore opportunities for alignment with existing programmes in Belfast.

We would welcome a referral pathway from the Council into the One Stop Shop for vulnerable domestic consumers and vice versa. The most vulnerable in our community will require financial support, however the current grant schemes available have limited funding and are oversubscribed due to the demand, especially within Belfast. We would like to see additional information around the resources to support both the Energy One Stop Shop and local provision by the likes of Belfast City Council.

QUESTION 6 – Do you agree with the types of services and support that the Energy One Stop Shop should deliver?

Belfast City Council response: Yes.

QUESTION 7 – Should the Energy One Stop Shop deliver any other services or activities? If so, list your priorities.

Belfast City Council response: In addition to the suggestion “to undertake a programme of energy and behavioural research” we would welcome research and stakeholder engagement on the needs of the most vulnerable in society, the needs of communities, and the needs of partners such as Council in relation to making the energy transition and achieving a just transition. The Belfast Community Planning Partnership may be of assistance in looking at the above in a Belfast context. We would also welcome a role on identifying and disseminating best practice from other locations to key stakeholders.

With regards to the most vulnerable in society, home visits to these customers could be advantageous. Face-to-face interaction and additional hand holding may be required for some and visiting vulnerable customers in their own home can assist with building up a relationship and highlight the need for signposting and onward referrals.

QUESTION 8 – Do you agree with the proposed initial list of consumer engagement channels for the Energy One Stop Shop?

Belfast City Council response: Yes, we agree with the suggested communication channels however given the focus on vulnerable communities and individuals it may be helpful to develop a tailored communication and engagement plan to support this work.

QUESTION 9 – Do you agree with the proposed approach to refine and improve consumer engagement?

Belfast City Council response: Yes, however as noted above it may be helpful to develop and tailored communication and engagement plan to support this work.

QUESTION 10 – Do you agree with the proposal to commence the operation of the Energy One Stop Shop with a Pilot and that it should launch as soon as possible?

Belfast City Council response: Yes, in addition should any support be required during the project plan development, or 3-year pilot phase please contact the Climate Unit, Belfast City Council.

QUESTION 11 – Do you agree with the proposed Energy One Stop Shop Implementation Roadmap?

Belfast City Council response: Yes, as above should any support be required during the project plan development, or 3-year pilot phase please contact the Climate Unit, Belfast City Council.

QUESTION 12 – Do you agree with the proposed services that would be available in Year 1 of the Pilot?

Belfast City Council response: Yes, we agree with the proposed phasing of services, however, should it be possible to accelerate the inclusion of services (due to funding or operational need) this should be considered.

QUESTION 13 – Do you agree with the proposed additional services that the Energy One Stop Shop Pilot would introduce in Years 2 and 3?

Belfast City Council response: Yes, we agree with the proposed phasing of services, however, should it be possible to accelerate the inclusion of services (due to funding or operational need) this should be considered.

QUESTION 14 – Do you agree with the proposed services that the Energy One Stop Shop may consider introducing from Year 4 onwards?

Belfast City Council response: Yes, we agree with the proposed phasing of services, however, should it be possible to accelerate the inclusion of services (due to funding or operational need) this should be considered.

QUESTION 15 – Do you agree with the proposal to create a new brand for the Energy One Stop Shop?

Belfast City Council response: Yes, we feel that this would support consumer and partner awareness.”

The Committee endorsed the foregoing response for submission to the Department for the Economy.

Our Place in Space Commissioning Agreement

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on the final stage of the *Our Place in Space* project, as part of the UNBOXED festival of creativity.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- i note the contents of this report and the successful delivery of the *Our Place in Space* project; and**
- ii approve the variations to the original commissioning agreement as set out at in paragraph 3.13.**

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Festival 2022 is an initiative funded by the UK Government, in partnership with relevant departments in the devolved governments. The focus of Festival 2022 is a celebration of creativity and innovation in STEAM, with a global outlook. The project recognises the role of the arts and creative sectors in:

- Bringing people together and fostering civic pride**
- Helping to attract inward investment**

3.2 The Programme has brought together creative teams of scientists, artists, engineers and technologists to create ten large-scale extraordinary, public engagement projects.

3.3 Of these ten commissions, six have been driven by collaborations from across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and contracted by Festival UK 2022 Ltd; the special purpose vehicle established to curate, manage and

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promote the Festival. However, the remaining four commissions were delivered by Strategic Delivery Bodies and led by creatives from each of the four areas.

- 3.4** Following a meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee in October 2020 it was agreed that the Council would act as the Strategic Delivery Body for Northern Ireland, alongside equivalent organisations in England, Scotland and Wales.
- 3.5** In this role the Council agreed to:
- Receive a proportion of the Festival funding via Department for Communities, awarded by the UK Government through Barnett consequentials;
 - Commission and contract a creative team of local practitioners to work internationally to produce a single large-scale project;
 - Support that creative team with producing the commission to the brief of open, original and optimistic;
 - Coordinate communications activity;
 - Work with the other Strategic Delivery Bodies and Festival UK 2022 Ltd to coordinate the Festival’s overall programme, creating balance across the ten commissions; and
 - Actively participate to ensure all commissions showcase creativity and innovation and have a clear global dimension.
- 3.6** The Council delivered on the above activities, including administering funding from the Department for Communities and acting as co-commissioner of the *Our Place in Space* project that was selected following a competitive commissioning process.
- 3.8** Centred around an epic scale model of the solar system designed by the artist Oliver Jeffers with scientist Professor Stephen Smartt and a creative team led by Nerve Centre, *Our Place in Space* is a 10km sculpture trail of the solar system, interactive AR app and learning and events programme.
- 3.8** In 2022, the 10km *Our Place in Space* sculpture trail landed on the banks of the River Foyle in Derry~Londonderry (22 April - 22 May) before moving to Divis and the Black Mountain in Belfast (11 June - 10 July). It then travelled to Cambridge

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(30 July - 28 August) followed by Liverpool (14 October – 6 November).

- 3.9** The trail will return to Northern Ireland at the Ulster Transport Museum and North Down Coastal Path on 24 February – 26 March 2023.
- 3.10** A final evaluation is currently being completed however to date the *Our Place in Space* project has delivered the following benefits:
- Reaching over 1 million people through the sculpture trail in 4 cities;
 - Engagement with 28,000 young people and 2,200 teachers through the creative learning programme, including production of 5 learning resources;
 - Attendance of 150,000 people at associated events;
 - App downloaded in 150 countries; and
 - Creation of unique Minecraft world
- 3.11** Due to the addition of a fifth site for the *Our Place in Space* project, Liverpool, the original timeline has been extended with the final installation of the *Our Place in Space* trail now taking place in the Ulster Transport Museum in February 2023.
- 3.12** The UK based special purpose vehicle set up to deliver the festival that *Our Place in Space* was part of is due to dissolve in February 2023. In advance of this there are a number of proposed variations to the original commissioning agreement of which the Council is a signatory and, therefore, these require an updated approval by the Committee.
- 3.13** These variations are:
- An additional £500,000 of funding from Festival UK 2022 Ltd to the Nerve Centre to deliver the extended scope of the project including the additional locations. There is no additional contribution from the Council or the Department for Communities; and
 - To note the closure of Festival UK 22/UNBOXED as an entity, and the ongoing/extension of the relationship between BCC and Nerve Centre to continue until June 2023 to allow for the completion of the delivery of the original agreement, the Ulster Transport Museum installation as the final location that was delayed due to the delivery of an extended programme.

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Financial and Resource Implications

3.14 There are financial implications to this report.

**Equality or Good Relations Implications /
Rural Needs Assessment**

3.15 None.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

Asset Management

Cliftonville Playing Fields

The Committee approved the assignment of the Council’s leasehold interest in a portion of land which has been encroached on to the rear of 14 Glenard Brook, with the Council to receive a premium of £110.

North Foreshore

The Committee noted that a deed of variation had been agreed between the Council and Invest NI to release approximately 7.2 acres of land from European Regional Development Fund/Invest NI funding conditions to allow for a lease of the land to Belfast Harbour Commissioner for the Phase 2A Film Studios extension.

Balmoral Estate

The Committee approved the extension of the current term of the ground lease at Plot 72, Balmoral Estate to a term of 125 years from 1st May 2022, amended the rent review pattern from 25 yearly to 5 yearly and noted that the Council would receive a single premium payment of £5,000.

Update on Area Working Groups

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the East Belfast Area Working Group of 12th January, including the recommendation relating to the expansion of the Belfast Bikes Scheme that Connswater Community Greenway be selected for the Castlereagh Road area and that, for the Upper Newtownards Road area, a visit be arranged to view the proposed sites and the suggested options of Sandown Road and Bloomfield Collegiate.

Finance, Procurement and Performance

Update on Contracts

The Committee:

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- approved the public advertisement of tenders as per Standing Order 37a, as detailed in Table 1 below;
- approved the award of Single Tender Actions, in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions, as detailed in Table 2 below; and
- noted the award of retrospective Single Tender Actions, in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions, as detailed in Table 3 below.

Table 1: Competitive Tenders

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Estimated Total Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services
Procurement of the Belfast WiFi Service	Up to 3 years	£536,581	P Gribben	The Belfast WiFi service is required to deliver public WiFi services across over 100 council sites as well as external, city centre locations.
Provision of a daily media monitoring service	Up to 4 years	£92,000	L Caldwell	To effectively protect the image and reputation of Belfast City Council it is necessary to have a daily media monitoring service to alert the marcomms team to coverage related to the organisation. This service also assists with monitoring and evaluating KPIs for the organisation.
The development and management of the HUB-IN Open Challenge Call	Up to 12 months	£50,000	J Tully	This fund will enable creative industry organisations to develop pre commercial products or services for the Maritime Mile.

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A visitor photography service at Belfast Zoo	Up to 3 years	£210,000 (income)	J Greer	Photographer photo service at summer camps/ workshops etc. This is an income/ concession type contract.
Management Services to support stakeholder/industry engagement and to provide technology expertise to assist with the delivery of the Augment the City Project	Up to 18 months	£170,000	D Colville	BCC is seeking to engage a suitably qualified organisation to assist with the design, development and delivery of the Augment the City grant competition. Ensuring the transfer of learning to City Deal partners on competition design, technological disruption in the visitor sector etc.
St Patrick's Day Parade	Up to 6 months	£100,000	J Greer	To deliver a commission for the St Patricks Day parade 2023. Service contract to be awarded to Beat using the previous run Design Contest (competitive process).
St Patricks Day music programme	Up to 6 months	£50,000	J Greer	To deliver a music programme city wide for the St Patricks Day celebrations 2023. Service contract to be awarded to Feile using the previous run Design Contest (competitive process).

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Music for St Patrick's Eve Concert	Up to 6 months	£80,000	J Greer	To deliver a commission for the music element of St Patricks Eve concert 2023. Service contract to be awarded to Duncairn using the previous run Design Contest (competitive process).
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Table 2: Single Tender Actions

Title	Duration	Total Value	SRO	Description	Supplier
T2335 Procurement of a Local Area Energy Plan for Belfast and Queens Island	Up to 11 months	£180,000	J Tully	Approved by SP and R in Sept 2022 for a period of 6 months. Following further discussions with the supplier and their proposal an updated contract period of 11 months is required. No change to value.	Energy Systems Catapult

Table 3: Retrospective Single Tender Actions

Title of Contract	Duration	Value	SRO	Description	Supplier
Oracle Site License for 1000 named users	Up to 1 year	£37,418	P Gribben	Proprietary software and licenses from Oracle for multiple applications. This is necessary for the operation of key corporate systems, which depend on	Oracle Digital Renewal Centre

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				Oracle databases. Therefore, an absence of a valid Oracle license would mean that normal council functions would be put at severe risk. The license can only be procured directly with Oracle.	
Delivery of a comprehensive domestic and sexual violence and abuse awareness raising and training programme (Fully Funded)	Up to 7 months	£38,000	D Sales	Women's Aid are the only organisation operating within the market who can deliver this project. This was previously carried out under a funding agreement but following legal advice they have now advised we get an STA as this needs to be a contract for services.	Women's Aid

Equality and Good Relations

Minutes of the Meeting of the Shared City Partnership

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Shared City Partnership of 9th January, including the recommendations:

PEACE IV

CYP 1 - Tech Connects – Insights Element (Belfast Metropolitan College)

- to extend the project to 31st March 2023, subject to provisions for the Council's closure period.

CYP 3 - On the Right Track Sports Element

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- to explore project closure, subject to agreement with Council management and the Special EU Programmes Body; and
- to agree that the £5 per completed participant underclaimed by the Active Communities Network be reviewed and eligible payment progressed.

CYP 5 - NIHE Local Area Network Partner Delivery

- to note the preliminary level of achievement; and
- to delegate authority to the CYP and BPR Thematic Chairs and Programme Manager to progress discussions with the Special EU Programmes Body, with a further report to be presented to the Partnership in February, 2023.

SSS Theme

- to approve the reallocation of funding for the resource allocation.

BPR 1 - NIHE

- to note the preliminary level of achievement;
- to delegate authority to the BPR Thematic Chair and Programme Manager to progress discussions with the Special EU Programmes Body, with a further report to be presented to the Partnership in February, 2023; and
- to extend the BPR1 project to 28th February, 2023 to maximise the achievement of targets, subject to agreement with the Special EU Programmes Body.

BPR 3 – NICVA

- to note the on-the-spot verification which had taken place on 7th December, 2022.

BPR 5 - LINCS

- to note that the project had completed with a small, localised event on 9th December, 2022.

BPR 5 - ROMA

- to note that the final event was held at Ormeau Bowling centre on Monday 19th December 2022.

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GOOD RELATIONS

Good Relations Audit:

- to submit both the Good Relations Audit and accompanying Good Relations Action Plan to The Executive Office for delivery during 2023/24.

Good Relations Action Plan

- to note the update for Quarter 3 2022/23.

PEACEPLUS

- to approve the process for finalising the Stage 1 report, including the Partnership's participation in an in-person workshop on 19th January.

**Equality and Diversity: Equality Screening
And Rural Needs Outcome Report**

The Committee noted the contents of a report providing a summary of equality screenings and rural needs impact assessments for the period from July to September, 2022.

Operational Issues

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Party
Group Leaders' Consultative Forum**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum of 12th January.

**Requests for Use of the City Hall
and the Provision of Hospitality**

The Committee adopted the recommendations in respect of those applications received up to 6th January, as set out below:

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NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
2023 EVENTS						
Blackie River Community Groups	23 February 2023	Discrimination in Sport review relating to people with disabilities, ethnicity, gender in various sports. Numbers attending – 60	D	No charge as community group	Yes, tea and coffee reception as community group	Approve No Charge Tea and Coffee Reception <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer for tea and coffee</i>
Royal Town Planning Institute	23 March 2023	NI Annual Dinner The RTPI is the leading professional body for spatial planners in the UK and annual dinner invites leading figures in the planning and construction profession. Numbers attending – 150	B	No (Charity)	No Hospitality	Approve No Charge No Hospitality
UKinbound	21 September 2023	Annual Conference and Awards for Excellence Gala Dinner for guests attending their 2-day conference taking place in ICC. UKinbound is a leading travel trade association, focuses solely on the interests of the UK's inbound tourism sector. This event will showcase	A and B	No (Waivered as linked to Visit Belfast)	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality

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		Belfast to to over 70 of the UK's leading inbound tour operators. Numbers attending – 300				
Queens Graduates Football Club	14 October 2023	Queens Graduates Football Club 50th Anniversary Celebration- Drinks Reception, Awards, Dinner and entertainment. Numbers attending – 250	C and D	No Charge as voluntary group	Yes, Wine Reception as significant anniversary	Approve No Charge Wine Reception <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer for wine on arrival</i>
Image Nation NI	4 November 2023	Belfast Diwali Celebrations – an evening of food and entertainment to celebrate one of the biggest celebrations in Hindu Calendar. Numbers attending – 100	C	No charge as not for profit group	Yes, Soft drinks reception.	Approve No Charge Soft Drink Reception <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer.</i>

Issues Raised in Advance by Members

Levelling Up Fund

At the request of Councillor McLaughlin, the Committee agreed, in light of the failure by the Council to secure Round 2 Levelling Up Funding for 2 Royal Avenue and to submit any applications under Round 1, that a report be submitted to its next monthly meeting outlining the lessons learned and providing feedback on the unsuccessful application.

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Dual-Language Street Signage

At the request of Councillor McLaughlin, the Committee agreed that a report be submitted to its next monthly meeting outlining the reasons for the delay in processing the significant backlog of applications for the erection of dual-language street signs which had been received since the implementation of the revised Policy.

Bin Collection

The Chief Executive apologised to the Members and to the public for the issues which had arisen over the Christmas period around missed bin collections and provided an assurance that work was underway to ensure that, in future, the service met the needs and expectations of all users.

Chairperson