

# Climate and City Resilience Committee

Thursday, 9th February, 2023

## MEETING OF THE CLIMATE AND CITY RESILIENCE COMMITTEE

### HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AND REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Walsh (Chairperson);  
Councillors Bower, de Faoite, Donnelly, Ferguson,  
Gormley, Maghie, McCabe, McCann, McKeown,  
McLaughlin, Murray, Smyth, Spratt  
and Thompson.

In attendance: Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;  
Ms. D. Caldwell, Commissioner for Climate and City Resilience;  
Mr. K. Heaney, Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti Poverty;  
Ms. A. Diver, Climate Programme Manager;  
Mr. J. McKearney, Project Support Assistant;  
Mr. R. McLernon, Climate Programme Manager;  
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and  
Mrs. G. Boyd, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

Apologies for an inability to attend were received from Alderman Sandford and Councillors Hutchinson and Newton.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 8th December, 2022 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 February.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

### **Presentation on the Shared Island Initiative by the Shared Island Unit**

The Chairperson welcomed Eoghan Duffy and John O'Liodain from the Shared island Unit to the meeting. Mr Duffy thanked the Chairperson for the opportunity to update Members of the Committee on the developments in relation to the Shared Island Initiative. The Members then received a presentation from Mr. Duffy who outlined the elements of the shared island initiative; the first was building a shared island that included delivering longstanding and new cross-border investments. The second was Inclusive dialogue: 14 events; 2,500+ citizens from all communities, traditions and regions. And lastly the policy research programme: High quality evidence and analysis on deepening cooperation and

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connections on the island. Mr Duffy outlined the key deliverables in relation to the Shared Island research programme, drawing members attention to the Early Childhood Education and Care, North and South that was published on 30 January and Migrant Integration and Experience in Ireland and NI that would be launched next month on 6 March. He advised the Members that all research was available to view on their website [gov.ie/sharedisland/research](http://gov.ie/sharedisland/research). He went on to outline the shared island fund and that it was mainly to deliver strategic investment objectives on Shared Island as set out in Programme for Government and revised National Development Plan (2021-2030). He outlined the shared island fund allocations to date, drawing members attention to the 1 billion euro commitment to 2030 and that over 190 million had been allocated between 2020 – 2022.

Mr Duffy outlined the Shared Island Local Authority Development Funding Scheme providing the overview below:

- Seed capital grants of up to €250,000 for cross-border Local Authority Partnerships.
- 25 awards to 15 Local Authorities in the South working with 9 councils in NI.
- Feasibility projects in progress, to conclude Q4 2023.
- Belfast City Council participating in four feasibility projects:
- Circular Economy Partnership - Belfast and Dublin.
- Development of corridor sectoral enterprise - Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor.
- Harbour Cities - Cork and Belfast.
- Learning Cities - Cork, Belfast, Derry, Limerick.

He highlighted that the objective was to generate well-developed pipeline of cross-border local authority projects and that the impact was Local Authorities cooperating to deliver shared regional development goals and more strategic cooperation by central and local government on the island.

Mr Duffy then provided the update below in relation to the Shared Island Community Climate Action Programme:

- €3m for Shared Island strand to Community Climate Action Programme.
- Projects to include at partner in Northern Ireland (can be a Council).
- 50% of awarded funding for project delivery in Northern Ireland.
- Minister for Environment commenced scheme on 2 February.
- Administered by Community Climate Action Officers in Councils.
- Grants of €5,000 to €100,000.

He advised that the objective was to support Local Authorities to step up climate action in partnership with communities across the island and cross-border projects particularly on: Valuing Networks for Nature: Just Transition; Renewable energy: Flood forecasting; Coastal erosion. The impact of the project was to help to reach climate and energy targets on the island of Ireland and to support collaborative community involvement on climate action.

Mr Duffy concluded his presentation by outlining the objectives for the shared island initiative in 2023. Mr Duffy agreed to share the slide deck with members of the Committee and to provide more information in relation to the projects, in particular the electric vehicle charging infrastructure scheme. After discussion, the committee noted the contents of the presentation.

Noted

**Restricted Items**

**The information contained in the reports associated with the following item 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 item 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.

**Update on Net Zero Belfast Project (Pioneer Places)**

The Committee considered the report that was circulated in advance of the meeting and, with the aid of PowerPoint presentation, the Belfast Climate Commissioner reminded Members of the background to the Net Zero Belfast Project. She advised that the purpose of the report was to update them on the successful application to the UK Net zero living: Pioneer places fund. She pointed out that there were a number of items Members should note – mainly the positive outcome of the funding application which had secured £75k Phase 1 funding; that the Phase 1 funding will be used to develop a plan to accelerate the transition to net zero by developing innovative solutions to overcome non-technical systemic barriers to the commercial deployment of green hydrogen technologies; and that the project was expected to start on 1 April 2023 and end by 30 June 2022. She advised that a further update would be provided to Members once the project was underway.

Noted

**Update on UP2030**

The Committee considered the undernoted report

**“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on Belfast City Council’s involvement in the UP2030 project, which is funded through Horizon Europe.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**The Members of the Committee are asked to:**

- i Note that Belfast, represented by Belfast City Council, is a pilot city within the Horizon Europe UP2030 project, which will focus on the development of a net zero neighbourhood framework and toolkit, the exchange of knowledge between cities and the use of climate tools which support analysis, mapping and engagement in local neighbourhoods.**

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- ii Note that in the update brought to City Growth and Regeneration Committee on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2022, officers proposed that the Linen Quarter District and neighbouring communities would be the initial focus within the project, however noted that no final decision had been taken regarding the location, and also that should the project focus on the Linen Quarter District, Donegall Pass, Market and Sandy Row areas, this would align with the Bolder Vision Strategy and the Belfast Resilience Strategy, while allowing us to consider issues such as the severance and climate issues brought about by the road infrastructure and other factors such as poor public realm and connectivity.**
  
- iii Note that the City Growth and Regeneration Committee ‘noted the progress of a Horizon Europe Urban Planning 2030 bid to support development of a framework that integrated environmental sustainability and urban development aligned to the creation of a net zero neighbourhood as a pilot proposal and the offer of funding to further develop the project which was confirmed not to be definitive of any area at this stage; and approved the participation of the Council as an Associate Member of the Urban Planning 2030 consortium as identified in the report.’**
  
- iv Note that a further update on the Belfast pilot location will be presented to both City Growth and Regeneration Committee and Climate and City Resilience Committees in due course.**

**3.0 Main report**

- 3.1 The Belfast City Council Climate Unit and City Regeneration and Development Division are working together to ensure an integrated approach between urban planning, achieving net zero and aspects of resilience such as supporting play and environmental sustainability in the city centre through engagement with key stakeholders such as young people, families, communities and businesses.**
  
- 3.2 A Bolder Vision for Belfast puts liveability at its core and aims to create a sustainable, connected and vibrant city, and the creation of a people-focused environment with playful streets and spaces for children and families to live and thrive. In December 2020, Belfast launched the Belfast Resilience Strategy alongside the Belfast Net Zero Carbon Roadmap and with the Belfast One Million Trees programme these form key elements of the city’s ambitions to achieve carbon neutrality (80% reduction by 2030 and 100% by 2050). Officers have been working collaboratively to align play,**

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climate neutrality, tree planting and green infrastructure by developing the award-winning Urban Childhood Framework and have been testing these new approaches in the design and implementation of the city centre Cathedral Gardens pop-up park and the new Grey to Green programme.

- 3.3** As a result of our membership in the Resilient Cities Network, Council was invited to participate in a Horizon Europe funding application from the UP2030 (Urban Planning 2030) fund which has been successful. The kick off meeting occurred on 1st and 2nd February 2023, focused on city matchmaking and identification of the tools to be used within participating pilot cities. Horizon Europe is the EU's key funding programme for research and innovation with a budget of €95.5 billion, which looks to tackle climate change, helps to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and boosts the EU's competitiveness and growth and is focused on supporting cities achieve net zero.
- 3.4** UP2030 aims to guide cities through the socio-technical transitions required to meet their climate neutrality ambitions. It will do so by enabling a quantum leap from a 'business as usual', project-by-project decarbonisation approach to a vision-driven, strategy-based approach that is anchored on sound projects and renewed policy development. The approach uses urban planning and design as a vehicle to create better connected, more compact, net-zero neighbourhoods that promote liveability and, through designing with intent, promote mitigation actions.
- 3.5** The UP2030 consortium is made up of 46 partners (see Appendix 1) with a total budget of €11,956,686. Belfast was selected as one of the pilot cities, and has been nominated to receive €204,250 to support research, training and policy development related to the creation of a net zero district through enhanced tree planting, linking to the Resilience Strategy, Belfast Net Zero Carbon Roadmap, the recently formed Belfast Retrofit Hub, and Belfast One Million Trees project, green infrastructure, linking to the Bolder Vision and Council's Grey to Green initiative in the city centre, and play, linking to the Urban Childhood Framework, and Belfast's membership of the Real Play Coalition (a global initiative led by the Lego Foundation, IKEA, ARUP, UNICEF and National Geographic). The Belfast budget will fund staff costs, facilitation and workshop costs.
- 3.6** Through the UP2030 funding, we will create a framework that can be applied to regeneration projects that integrates stakeholder engagement, analysis of the neighbourhood through a net zero lens, potential green infrastructure, potential play opportunities and co-design with young people. The framework will support the integration of play and environmental sustainability into city

design, delivering on ambitions set out in the Belfast Resilience Strategy whereby young people would be involved in the design of places. To maintain alignment with A Bolder Vision and the Resilience Strategy Ambitions, it was proposed that the framework could be tested in the Linen Quarter District, which has the aspirations of becoming the first sustainable and net-zero business district in Northern Ireland. Should that be agreed as the area of focus representatives from neighbouring communities such as Sandy Row, Donegall Pass and the Market area would be invited to participate in the development and out workings of the Net Zero Neighbourhood framework. Lessons learned from this pilot will be used to identify opportunities in other neighbourhoods and bring forward the concept of net-zero districts across the city and the intention is to work across council departments and with city stakeholders to elevate and embed the learning and approaches.

3.7 As referred to previously, project delivery will take place over a three-year period, following kick off meetings in February 2023. Belfast has been assigned a liaison partner; an organisation called Mapping for Change who will support the city throughout the project lifespan. Further reports will be brought to this Committee as the project progress.

#### 4.0 Financial & Resource Implications

4.1 The Horizon Europe UP2030 Project is 100% funded. No additional funding is required from Council however a small team drawn from the Climate Unit and City Regeneration and Development will work together to oversee development and support implementation. The funding is for revenue and does not include any capital costs at this stage.

#### 5.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

5.1 Officers are currently developing the Equality, Good Relations and Rural Needs Screening and will incorporate within the emerging proposals.”

#### 6.0 Appendix 1

6.1 Horizon Europe UP2030 project consortium partners:

Participating Organisation	Country
FRAUNHOFER GESELLSCHAFT ZUR FORDERUNG DER ANGEWANDTEN FORSCHUNG EV	Germany
Belfast City Council	UK
ADELPHI RESEARCH GEMEINNUTZIGE GMBH	Germany
Buro Happold GmbH	Germany

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<b>Design Clips P.C.</b>	<b>Greece</b>
<b>GreenAdapt Gesellschaft für Klimaanpassung mbH</b>	<b>Germany</b>
<b>I-CATALIST SL</b>	<b>Spain</b>
<b>STICHTING ISOCARP INSTITUTE CENTER OF URBAN EXCELLENCE</b>	<b>Netherlands</b>
<b>Thomas Stellmach Planning &amp; Architecture</b>	<b>Germany</b>
<b>TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITEIT DELFT</b>	<b>Netherlands</b>
<b>UNIVERSITAT INTERNACIONAL DE CATALUNYA</b>	<b>Spain</b>
<b>Global Green Growth Institute</b>	<b>Hungary</b>
<b>ICLEI EUROPEAN SECRETARIAT GMBH (ICLEI EUROPASEKRETARIAT GMBH)</b>	<b>Germany</b>
<b>STICHTING GLOBAL RESILIENT CITIES NETWORK</b>	<b>Netherlands</b>
<b>Urban Climate Change Research Network – European Hub</b>	<b>Italy</b>
<b>AQUATEC PROYECTOS PARA EL SECTOR DEL AGUA SA</b>	<b>Spain</b>
<b>CETAQUA, CENTRO TECNOLOGICO DEL AGUA, FUNDACION PRIVADA</b>	<b>Spain</b>
<b>PRAVO I INTERNET FOUNDATION</b>	<b>Bulgaria</b>
<b>LABORATORIO NACIONAL DE ENGENHARIA CIVIL</b>	<b>Portugal</b>
<b>ANAPTYXIAKI MEIZONOS ASTIKIS THESSALONIKIS AE - ANAPTYXIAKOS ORGANISMOS TOPIKIS AUTODIOIKISIS</b>	<b>Greece</b>
<b>MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY</b>	<b>Turkey</b>
<b>MAPPING FOR CHANGE CIC</b>	<b>UK</b>
<b>THE CHANCELLOR MASTERS AND SCHOLARS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE</b>	<b>UK</b>
<b>UNIVERSITY OF STUTTGART</b>	<b>Germany</b>
<b>VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT BRUSSEL</b>	<b>Belgium</b>
<b>ETHNIKO KENTRO EREVNAS KAI TECHNOLOGIKIS ANAPTYXIS</b>	<b>Greece</b>
<b>FUNDACION CIRCE CENTRO DE INVESTIGACION DE RECURSOS Y CONSUMOS ENERGETICOS</b>	<b>Spain</b>
<b>STICHTING DELTARES</b>	<b>Netherlands</b>
<b>DRAXIS ENVIRONMENTAL SA</b>	<b>Greece</b>
<b>ODTU Gunes Enerjisi Uygulama ve Arastirma Merkezi</b>	<b>Turkey</b>
<b>K3Y</b>	<b>Bulgaria</b>
<b>FONDAZIONE LINKS - LEADING INNOVATION &amp; KNOWLEDGE FOR SOCIETY</b>	<b>Italy</b>
<b>MAGGIOLI SPA</b>	<b>Italy</b>
<b>UNIVERSITAT POLITECNICA DE VALENCIA</b>	<b>Spain</b>
<b>Vesela Motika d.o.o.</b>	<b>Croatia</b>

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BUDAPEST FOVAROS ONKORMANYZATA	Hungary
AJUNTAMENT DE GRANOLLERS	Spain
Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality	Turkey
CAMARA MUNICIPAL DE LISBOA	Portugal
LISBOA E-NOVA - AGENCIA DE ENERGIA E AMBIENTE DE LISBOA	Portugal
COMUNE DI MILANO	Italy
STADT MUNSTER	Germany
GEMEENTE ROTTERDAM	Netherlands
DIMOS THESSALONIKIS	Greece
GRAD ZAGREB	Croatia
EIDGENOESSISCHE TECHNISCHE HOCHSCHULE ZUERICH	Switzerland

A member welcomed the inclusion of additional neighbourhoods in the project scope.

After discussion, the Committee noted the contents of the report.

**Update on the management processes and assessment criteria that are used by the One Million Trees Project**

The Committee considered the undernoted report

**“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

**1.1 The purpose of the report is to give members an update on the One Million Trees programme and to respond to the request that officers come back to this committee with a report on the management procedures and policies of the One Million Trees project.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- i Note the agreed site assessment criteria and process undertaken to identify if a site is suitable for tree planting including the expertise used across the Delivery Team and specialist expertise determined on a site by site basis;**
- ii Note that the monitoring of planted sites by the Delivery Team includes surveys within the first three years of planting and identification of survival rates;**
- iii Note that the programme has to date planted 63,500 trees with programme of community engagement underway that includes tree planting, business involvement, schools engagement, give a tree a home events, hedgerow and ancient woodland restoration; and**
- iv Consider an invitation to by the Delivery Team to visit some of the sites already planted under the Million Trees Programme later this year.**



**3.0 Main report**

**3.1 Background**

In the Climate and City Resilience Committee on 8<sup>th</sup> December members requested a report on the management procedures of the One Million Trees project. In particular, a focus on any ecological assessments, site selection, bio security measure, monitoring work and who is sought for specialise and technical advice on such matters was requested.

As members will be aware, the One Million Trees Programme has been running since 2020 and is a city-wide partnership and ambition to plant one million trees in Belfast by 2035. It is one of the ambitions of the Belfast Resilience Strategy, and has three key objectives:

- To create an inclusive structure and processes which enable tree planting and the growth of green infrastructure and biodiversity in Belfast;
- To plant at least one million trees within the next 15 years-delivering a step change in our approach to climate adaptation and environmental improvements; and
- To protect the city and the people of the city by increasing carbon capture, reducing harms from air pollution, weather impact and loss of nature and improving health and well-being.

Since the project began 63,500 trees have been planted across the city. A programme of community engagement is underway that includes tree planting, business involvement, schools engagement, give a tree a home events, hedgerow and ancient woodland restoration.

**3.2 Governance and implementation arrangements**

Belfast City Council agreed it would coordinate the initial phase of the project, liaise with partners and set out recommendations for project implementation. In terms of governance procedures, the Million Trees Steering Group leads the project and is made up of twenty one partners that meet on a biannual basis and agree the strategic direction of the project including to include processes and procedures. The delivery of the project is then taken forward by the Million Trees Delivery team which consists of Belfast Hills Partnership, The Woodland Trust, BCC Climate Team and BCC Trees Team.

The Delivery Team meets fortnightly to coordinate activities under the programme and support the partners to bring forward sites for planting, offering expertise and specialist knowledge on trees, woodland and climate resilience.

### **3.3 Management procedures and site assessment process**

One of the key aims of the Delivery Team is to establish procedures, processes and ensure specialist knowledge and expertise is being used to identify, assess, prepare, plant and monitor sites that are being planted across the city by Million Trees partners.

An agreed site assessment process is applied whenever a potential site comes forward and has been initially scoped for potential suitability by the Delivery Team. This is attached in Appendix 6.1. If the site is over 4 hectares, it is agreed that an Environmental Statement is prepared and in line with the EIA (Forestry) Regulations (NI) 2006. This ensures the impacts of planting the site have been fully identified and assessed before any planting is agreed.

Should the site be identified as having special protections or statutory designations, specialist expertise and/or consultation around wildlife and protected species, habitats, invasive species is used. Along with the specialist expertise and knowledge within Belfast Hills Partnership, the Woodland Trust, and BCC City and Neighbourhood Services team, Million Trees has previously worked with The Conservation Volunteers, John Morris Aborcultural Consultant, Clive Richardson Ecological Consultant, Treeconomics, and RJ Woodland Services.

### **3.4 Availability of sites for tree planting**

Whilst ancient woodland restoration works are ongoing at strategic sites such as Cave Hill, there have been limited sites coming forward for tree planting in Belfast City Council's Estate, with the majority mainly linking in with new capital works and planting existing green spaces and parks. Million Trees Programme is currently supporting the delivery of the Draft Tree Strategy, and it is intended that once this plan is in place that a list of potential sites for planting can be brought forward, appropriate assessments carried out, and planting plans produced. Council officers are currently scoping potential sites and will be working across CNS, Estates, Physical Programmes and Planning teams to bring forward potential sites by September 2023 in time for the next planting season.

**3.5 Supply of trees**

A current priority of the Million Trees programme is to establish a native and sustainable tree supply for Belfast to ensure provenance of trees can be traced and address biosecurity issues such as the spreading of disease. Grovelands tree nursery which was developed under the MT Programme currently supplies some planting on Council land, but this is not at the scale required to meet the targets of planting one million trees by 2035. Council is currently undertaking some work to scope the feasibility of re-establishing its tree nursery at Beechvale, to ensure trees are being grown locally from seeds, to reduce the risk of disease, improve tree health across the city and create a local supply chain that is resilient and climate proofed.

**3.6 Monitoring planted sites**

In terms of monitoring planted sites, the Delivery Team currently carries out 'beat up surveys' to check planted sites, monitor the rate of survival on sites and ensure accurate counting of planting numbers is achieved. These usually take place within the first 3 years of planting and are currently reporting an average of less than 5% failure of trees planted. Maintenance and monitoring on sites are the responsibility of the landowner once the site is planted. For any Council planted sites, Park Managers monitor whip planting, with the larger trees planted by the Tree unit maintained by BCC contractors and written into tender specifications from the outset.

To monitor where trees are being planted across Belfast, an annual count is carried out at the end of each planting season with MT partners. The Climate Team is currently developing a Million Trees monitoring page so that trees planted are able to be mapped, logged and monitored across the city. This will be launched as part of this year's tree count and used ongoing as part of the Programme. As part of the Million Trees community engagement plan, best practice guides around planting and maintenance are planned for roll out in the next year.

- 3.7** To aid with members engagement in the Million Trees Programme and to gain further information on the issues raised in the report, the Delivery Team can facilitate a half day site visit for members later this year to view some of the work of the Million Trees programme across Belfast and gain feedback from Members to help shape the future programme for Million Trees.

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**4.0 Financial & Resource Implications**

**There are no financial implications**

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

**There are no direct equality and good relations implications.”**

Councillor Smyth proposed that Belfast City Council carried out a phase 1 habitat survey on any areas that they are targeting for the one million trees strategy, and that included sites under 4 hectares. The proposal was seconded by Councillor McCann and agreed by the Committee.

After discussion, the Committee noted the contents of the presentation.

Noted

Chairperson