

# City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 8th February, 2023

## HYBRID MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Murphy (Chairperson);  
Alderman Dorrian;  
Councillors Beattie, Bunting, Duffy, Ferguson,  
Hanvey, Heading, Hussey, T. Kelly, Lyons,  
Maskey, McCabe, McDonough-Brown,  
McLaughlin, Murray, Nelson, O'Hara and Whyte.

In attendance: Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration  
and Development;  
Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development; and  
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillor Spratt.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the 11th and 25th January 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**

In relation to item 6.b) St. Patrick's Day 2023 Update, Councillor McCabe declared an interest, in that she was employed by Féile an Phobail, and left the meeting whilst this item was under discussion.

The Chairperson, Councillor Murphy and Councillor Duffy declared an interest regarding item 3.b) Business Cluster and Community Grant Programme, in that they had assisted some of the organisations who had applied for the grant programme and left the meeting whilst this item was under discussion.

### **Matters Referred Back from Council**

#### **Notice of Motion - Support the network of WW2-era Pillboxes**

It was reported that the Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 24th January, had referred the following motion, which had been proposed by Alderman Dorrian and seconded by Councillor Spratt, to the Committee for consideration:

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“That this Council supports the development of culture and tourism and in doing so will supporting the concept of regenerating the network of WW2-era pillboxes and other structures across Belfast and beyond, and engages with other local councils and relevant government departments to develop an Action Plan to promote their regeneration, in partnership with the local communities where they are sited.”

The proposer of the motion, Alderman Dorrian, addressed the Committee and provided an overview of the motion and described how the Council could incorporate Communities and promote neighbourhood tourism as part of the strategy. He also highlighted that the Department for Communities had recently undertaken a physical audit of structures.

The Committee adopted the motion and agreed, in the first instance, that a report be submitted to a future meeting on how it might be facilitated, resourced and managed.

**Restricted Items**

**The information contained in the report associated with the following two items was 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 two 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.

**Zoo Performance Update - Quarter 3**

The Committee was provided with its quarterly update on the performance of the Zoo in the following areas:

- Visitor Services;
- Education Services;
- Animal Collection;
- Marketing and Events; and
- Financial performance.

The Committee noted the Zoo performance update report for the period October to December 2022.

**Business Cluster and Community Grant Programme**

(Councillor McLaughlin in the Chair)

The Committee was provided with an update on the Business Cluster and Community Grant Programme Tranche 3 and the assessment of applications for consideration.

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The Committee approved the award of Business Cluster and Community Grants that had been assessed to date for Tranche 3 of the programme as outlined in Section 3.5 of the report.

**Request to Present**

(Councillor Murphy in the Chair)

**Visit Belfast Business Plan**

The Committee was reminded that Visit Belfast was the city's Destination Marketing Management Organisation (DMMO) dedicated to marketing Belfast as a city break, conference, day-trip and cruise ship destination. It also, in its visitor servicing role, managed the operation of three gateway Visitor Information Centres (VICs), including Visit Belfast Welcome Centre, the Arrivals Desk at George Best Belfast City Airport and the Arrivals Desk at Belfast International Airport and a range of visitor servicing initiatives on behalf of the Council.

It was highlighted that the Council was the principal funder to Visit Belfast and, as such, received an annual presentation of their business plan as part of the process to approve annual funding.

The Committee:

- Noted the contents of the report and the progress to date; and
- Agreed to receive a presentation on Visit Belfast's 2023-24 Business Plan at the Committee meeting in March 2023, which would include a request for Council support towards the work programme for the coming financial year.

**Regenerating Places and Improving Infrastructure**

**Update on the Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel Strategic Priority**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to:**

- **Outline to Committee the ongoing work across Council and with stakeholders in respect of the Committee's strategic priority of Access, Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel as set out in the CGR Committee Plan, and alignment into the Corporate Plan and refresh**

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of the Belfast Agenda including the new Connectivity, Active & Sustainable Travel subgroup.

- Seek approval from the Committee to convene an All Party Round Table regarding Connectivity, Active and Sustainable travel that will provide an opportunity for Members to have a focused and informed discussion around this Strategic Priority.
- To advise Members of the request from Sustrans to present to a future meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee in relation to their experience of designing and implementing Low Traffic Neighbourhoods.

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 Members are asked to:**

- i Note the content of this report and the emerging work from the Community Planning: Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel subgroup.
- ii Agree to convene an All Party Round Table regarding Connectivity, Active and Sustainable travel in the city.
- iii Agree to receive a presentation from Sustrans at a future meeting of the Committee in relation to their experience of designing and implementing Low Traffic Neighbourhoods.

**3.0 Main report**

**Background**

**3.1 Members will be aware that Active and Sustainable Travel is a strategic priority of this Committee as set out in the Committee Plan under 'Access, Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel', which aligns into the Strategic Priority of 'City Connectivity' as set out in the Corporate Plan. Of relevance to highlight is the further synergy to the ongoing refresh of the Belfast Agenda and the priority theme of Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel under the area of City Development.**

**3.2 Members may also be aware that there are a number of existing Notices of Motion relating to Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel currently open across Council, with regular quarterly reporting to the relevant Committee. Sustrans have noted the recent Notice of Motion on Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and have requested to present to the**

**Committee on their experience of designing and implementing these initiatives.**

- 3.3 Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel cuts across a number of different stakeholders, including Council, DfI and other Government departments, Sustrans, Translink, communities, businesses and anchor institutions. This includes the work being taken forward by the Community Planning structures via the Connectivity, Active & Sustainable Travel subgroup as part of the Belfast Agenda refresh and via the Climate & Resilience Board; Council led Physical Programme projects; A Bolder Vision and the strategic and large-scale infrastructure projects being led by public and private sector city partners, including Translink, Belfast Rapid Transit, DfI etc.**
- 3.4 Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel are critical cross cutting levers and span across a number of areas including:**
- Policy , including LDP/BMTP etc**
  - Strategy, including Bolder Vision**
  - Physical Delivery**
  - Modal Shift/Behaviour Changing eg Cycle to Work/School etc**
  - Climate related.**

**There is a need to amplify the intricacies of the ongoing work across Council and with stakeholders around Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel to ensure that there is a complete line of sight and to enable Council to effectively position itself in terms of what we can deliver, who we need to work with and what we need to influence to ensure that the wider associated benefits of connecting people to opportunities and creating a better connected and environmentally sustainable city are realised.**

- 3.5 Following recent discussions between officers and Elected Members regarding various matters associated with active and sustainable travel, and given how it cuts across various Committees and via the Community Planning process, it has been proposed that it may be helpful for Members to convene an All Party Round Table meeting to ensure they can see all this work holistically, which is not always possible via the current structures. It will provide an overview of the various streams of work underway and where they feed into Council's strategic priorities and governance structures.**
- 3.6 There are internal and external plans that aim to improve Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel in the city and the**

**Belfast Agenda is key to focusing on these priorities and setting out measurable actions that will be delivered by Community Planning partners. As Members are aware the Belfast Agenda is currently going through a refresh and a Sub-Group for the priority area of ‘Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel (CAST)’ under the City Development Board has been established to co-design a four-year Action Plan The current draft (subject to further engagement) is focused on two strategic intents (and with corresponding draft Action Plans).**

- **Replacing car journeys with walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport**
- **Supporting projects that encourage people to use forms of active and sustainable travel**

**3.7 The focus of the group is not only to improve connectivity in the city but to also deliver on the many other benefits that are linked to active and sustainable travel such as improving quality of life, health and wellbeing, access to employment, access to education and tackling climate change. The subgroup is co-chaired by Sustrans and Translink and has representation from various city stakeholders including the VCSE Panel. The draft CAST Action Plan along with the draft Action Plans of the other priority areas of the Belfast Agenda are due to go out for public consultation in Spring 2023.**

**3.8 A Bolder Vision (ABV) is a key lever for delivering Active and Sustainable Travel in the city. ABV is a joint BCC/DfI/DfC initiative that aims to provide a holistic look at the city centre’s infrastructure and connectivity with surrounding communities, its streets and places. This Committee has received several reports on the implementation and progression of the A Bolder Vision Strategy that included agreement on the Visioning Principles and Key Moves. The Visioning Principles set out the vision for the city that includes ‘prioritising integrated walking, cycling and public transport and ending the dominance of the car,’ ‘Providing lively, safe and green streets’ and ‘Removing severance and barriers to movement between the centre of Belfast and the surrounding communities.’**

**3.9 The strategic direction of the Belfast Agenda and A Bolder Vision sits alongside Council’s Physical Programme that oversees the delivery of a number of connectivity projects including Lagan Gateway, Greenways, Belfast Bikes expansion and a range of partnership projects.**

- 3.10 An internal officer Connectivity and Active Travel Group has been established and is seeking to ensure that our policies, projects, interventions, funding opportunities and programming are aligned to not only our internal corporate priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan, Belfast: Our Recovery, LDP and Belfast Agenda but link with various external structures and plans e.g. Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan, Belfast Cycling Network and with key city partners that have clear interdependencies for example the Community Planning Partnership Boards, Innovation & Growth Commission, specific sector groups and NI Executive/Government.
- 3.11 Key to the successful delivery of these priorities is the ability of Council to collaboratively work with external public and private sector partners in relation to strategic opportunities and overcoming challenges. It is important to note that whilst Active and Sustainable Travel is a strategic priority of this Committee and of Council, the powers and responsibility for a significant amount of delivery lie with DfI, including for example, road cycling infrastructure and the delivery of the Department's *Belfast Cycling Network*.
- 3.12 Subject to Members approval, it is proposed to convene an All Party Round Table meeting focused on Connectivity, Active and Sustainable travel, which will provide an opportunity for Members to have a focused informed discussion and to consider ongoing activity, potential opportunities and the work of the Community Planning, CAST Sub Group.
- 3.13 **Financial and Resource Implications**  
No costs associated with this report.
- 3.14 **Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment**  
None associated with this report.”

In response to a Member's question, the Director of City Regeneration and Development highlighted that the draft CAST Action Plan, along with the draft Action Plans of the other priority areas of the Belfast Agenda, were due to go out for public consultation in Spring 2023 and would be submitted to the Community Planning Partnership Board where Members would have the opportunity to provide any further feedback.

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The Committee:

- Noted the contents of the report and the emerging work from the Community Planning: Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel subgroup;
- Agreed to convene an All Party Round Table regarding Connectivity, Active and Sustainable travel in the city; and
- Agreed to receive a presentation from Sustrans at a future meeting of the Committee in relation to their experience of designing and implementing Low Traffic Neighbourhoods.

**Department for Infrastructure – York  
Street Interchange Review Presentation**

The Committee was reminded that, in October 2022, the Minister for Infrastructure had published the Placemaking and Active Travel Review report for the York Street Interchange project. It was reported that the Department for Infrastructure and the York Street Interchange (YSI) design team were undertaking engagement and consultation with relevant stakeholders, and as a part of this engagement the YSI team would present the findings of the YSI Placemaking and Active Travel Review at the Special meeting of the Committee on 22nd February. Members had been asked to consider if there were any specific issues which they would like to raise in advance with the Department to be addressed at the Special Committee.

It was highlighted that a copy of the presentation had been received in advance if the Committee (copy available [here](#)).

During discussion, the following questions were put forward to be submitted to the Department for Infrastructure for consideration:

- Are there any financial estimates in relation to the Place Making Review for cycling infrastructure/Belfast Cycle Network; and
- What was the rationale for the dismissal of the YSI alternative design proposal presented by architect, Mr. M. Hackett (Scenario 2).

After discussion, the Committee:

- Noted the contents of the report; and
- Noted the issues raised and that Members would submit any further questions to be compiled and forwarded to the Department for Infrastructure in advance of their presentation to the Committee on 22nd February on the findings of the York Street Interchange Place-Making Review.



**Positioning Belfast to Compete**

**Belfast Bikes Performance Update - Quarter 3**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

**1.1 To update Members on the performance of the Belfast Bikes scheme in the third quarter (1st October 2022 – 31st December 2022) of year 7 of operation.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is requested to:**

- note the update of the Belfast Bikes performance for Year 7 Q3 (Oct-Dec 2022);
- note the update to the notice of motion regarding free access for young people;
- note the progress with regard to phase one and phase two expansion.

**3.0 Main report**

**3.1 Background**

The Belfast Bikes scheme was launched in 2015 as part Belfast City Council’s physical investment programme. The Department for Regional Development provided initial capital funding for the scheme as part of their Active Travel Demonstration Projects budget. The scheme launched with a network of 30 docking stations and 300 bikes. The scheme has been operated by NSL continually since inception using bikes and supporting infrastructure from ‘Nextbike by TIER’. The scheme currently operates with 428 bikes (including those in reserve for new stands) and 51 docking stations.

**3.2 Expansion of the Scheme**

At CG&R on 12 May 2021 it was agreed that an additional four Belfast Bikes docking stations would be deployed using DFI Active Travel funding. Installation began in Q1 and current status is as follows:

- Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre was installed on 7 July 2022 and is operational;
- Olympia Leisure Centre was installed on 25 October 2022 and is operational;

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- Kennedy Centre installation is currently ongoing and is expected to be operational by the end of January 2023 and is operational
- Waterworks installation has been delayed due to supply chain issues and is expected to be operational by February 2023.

Council officers are currently liaising with the operator and supplier to improve the supply chain issues for future installations.

3.3 At CG&R on 9 June 2021 it was agreed to proceed with an additional 15 docking stations. At SP&R on 18 June 2021 members agreed for £500,000 to be invested in the expansion proposal.

3.4 Works is ongoing for the design and installation of eight stations in Phase 1 (to be installed 2022/23):

- North: Yorkgate and Shore Road
- West: St Mary's College and Shankill Road
- South: Lisburn Road and Malone Road
- East: Castlereagh Road, Upper Newtownards Road.

Seven stations will follow in Phase 2 in the following year (2023/24).

3.5 As previously agreed by the committee, discussion and agreement through Area Working Groups is required to determine exact locations and consider those against the Site Expansion Matrix. These site options and discussions with Area Working Groups commenced in November 2022. The AWGs have agreed the exact locations in South and North; the discussions in East and West are still ongoing.

3.6 **Operational Performance**

**Availability**

Following the ongoing challenges sourcing replacement bike parts, the number of bikes on the street have decreased during Q3. The average daily bikes on the street during Q3 was 294.

3.7 An additional 180 bikes have been purchased to facilitate the ongoing docking station expansion, so availability levels are expected to further increase in coming months.

### **3.8 Membership**

There were 76,565 registered Belfast Bike users at the end of Q3.

- In Q3 'Pay as you go' (PAYG) memberships remained the most popular form of membership, accounting for 88% of users.
- Annual memberships accounted for 12% of users. There is an ongoing trend of users switching from annual membership to PAYG.
- Casual memberships have greatly reduced, accounting for 1% of memberships, due to the introduction of PAYG.

### **3.9 Journeys**

There have been 1,326, 035 journeys since the scheme was launched including 33,452 journeys during Q3 Year 7.

Although this is a decrease of 24% from the same period in Year 6 (which was an exceptionally busy year for the scheme), journeys during this period increased by 3% against Q3 average since the scheme commenced.

### **3.10 Vandalism**

Members will be aware that vandalism is an ongoing problem. Upgrades to the forks to help prevent the unauthorised removal of bikes has been successful however, damage is now being caused to the rear wheels while bikes are being forced from docking stations.

3.11 There were 123 instances of vandalism in Q3. Whilst this is lower than previous periods, it is higher than the quarterly average by 36%. Vandalism costs payable by the Council for this period is £11,734. Whilst this figure is lower than the previous quarter, it is significantly higher than the quarterly average (£3,841)

3.12 Members should note that generally the number of vandalism incidents has decreased in recent times, however vandalism costs have increased due to the higher cost of parts associated with a higher quality of bike. Bikes were upgraded to 'SMART' bikes in 2021. For comparison, in the same period in 2017, there were 226 instances of vandalism at a cost of £7,242 i.e. higher incidents but at a lower cost. See Appendix 1 tables 2 and 3 for annual comparison (copy available on the Council's website).

3.13 Members should also note that following the upgrade to 'SMART' bikes, the amount of theft has decreased due to GPS tracking in the bike allowing for recovery. The operator is very proactive at retrieving missing bikes.

3.14 The bikes operator continues to deliver operational improvements and community engagement initiatives with PSNI to help decrease vandalism incidents.

3.15 **Subscriptions and Usage Revenue**

Income from fees and charges in Q3 was £30,902. This is 22% higher than average for this period. Year to date income from fees and charges is £154,601.

3.16 **MARCOMMS**

Marketing activity during Q3 included:

- Social Media messaging and video promotion on 'Lock it Dock it'
- Article in Winter City Matters magazine (circulation of 160k homes); on new stations at Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre, Olympia Leisure Centre, The Kennedy Centre and the Waterwork.

Belfast Bikes currently has 5.1k followers on Twitter; 1.7k on Facebook; and 1.1k on Instagram.

3.17 **Operator contract**

NSL continues to operate the Belfast Bikes scheme, with a contract renewal available until 2024. Council staff are reviewing the scheme and will make future recommendations for the management, operation and potential expansion of the scheme as part of a new procurement package.

3.18 **Sponsorship**

Sponsorship ended in September 2022 and council officers are currently assessing procurement options for a new sponsor of the scheme. The preferred option is to tender for a 'sponsorship expert' with the required market experience in similar bike schemes, to identify an appropriate sponsor and market value for the Belfast scheme.

**3.19 Response to Notice of Motion**

Following a Notice of Motion from Councillor O'Hara the Committee agreed on 4th March 2020 to investigate 'as part of the current strategic review of the Belfast Bikes Scheme, consideration be given to granting free access to young people 25 years of age and under to the scheme'.

**3.20** Belfast Bikes operator, NSL, added date of birth (D.O.B.) as an essential criteria for users from 13 October 2022. It would be prudent to wait approximately six months to allow the majority of users to upgrade their information before accurate age demographics can be determined.

**3.21** However, initial reports indicate 53% of users fall within the '25 and under' age group. Providing free usage to under 25's is likely to have a significant detrimental impact on revenue generated from the bike scheme, which directly contributes to operating costs.

**3.22 Update on Covered Cycle Stands city-wide**

Whilst Covered Cycle Stands are not part of the Belfast Bikes scheme, both initiatives are aligned to the Bolder Vision with a focus on improvements in the active travel provision and infrastructure across the city. Covered Cycle Stands are part of the Active Travel Enablers project.

**2.23 Phase 1**

Under the Dfl Sustainable and Active Travel elements of the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme, 10 covered cycle stands were funded city-wide. Locations were agreed in previous CGR Committee and the status is as follows:

Gasworks	Installed July 2022
St. George's Market	Stand delivered but still awaiting Dfl approval
Grosvenor Community Centre	Installed September 2022
Shankill Leisure Centre	Installed July 2022
Belmont Park	Installed August 2022
Inverary Community Centre	Installed August 2022

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<b>Belfast Zoo</b>	<b>Installed August 2022</b>
<b>Waterworks</b>	<b>Installed August 2022</b>
<b>Belvoir Activity Centre</b>	<b>Installed August 2022</b>
<b>Mary Peter's Track</b>	<b>Installed September 2022</b>

**3.24 Phase 2**

Members received an update on the DfI funding for the Active Travel Enabling Projects in March 2022 that outlined the projects, budget and timeframe for delivery. In terms of the covered cycle stands, officers drew upon the priority areas identified by Sustrans, and these locations were also assessed in terms of the deliverability within the timeframe as well as the key criteria aligned to cycle infrastructure provision.

Following a procurement process, a supplier has been appointed for the next 10 covered cycle stands being delivered in-year.

**3.25 Financial and Resource Implications**

**Finance**

There are no specific financial or resource implications contained within this report.

**3.26 Equality or Good Relations/ Implications**

**None.”**

During discussion, one Member highlighted the need for an update from the Department for Infrastructure on the Belfast Cycle Network.

After discussion, the Committee:

- Noted the update of the Belfast Bikes performance for Year 7, Quarter 3 (Oct-Dec 2022);
- Noted the update to the notice of motion regarding free access for young people;
- Noted the progress with regard to the phase one and phase two expansion; and

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- Noted that an update on the Belfast Cycle Network would be requested from the Department for Infrastructure for inclusion in its Spring Report Presentation.

**St. Patrick's Day 2023 Update**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report**

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on St Patrick’s Day 2023 to include:**

- Detail on procurement (design award) and duration
- Outline programming plans

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1**

- Members are asked to note details of the report specifically the outlined programme.
- Note that a report will be brought to Committee to update Members on the post event evaluation and the proposed creative commissioning process for 2024 and beyond.
- Members are asked to approve the allocation of up to £30,000 from the Extended Cultural Programme agreed by SP&R on 18th February 2022 to support the development and delivery of the described programme by Féile an Phobal during 1st – 17th March.
- Approve a £15,000 contribution in this financial year from existing and approved departmental budgets for the Gradam Ceoil Bursary Scheme in partnership with Duncairn Arts Centre, Red Shoe productions and TG4.
- Approve the financial allocations at 3.6 of £100,000 to Beat Carnival, £50,000 to Feile and Phobal and £80,000 to Duncairn Arts

**3.0 Main report**

**3.1 Background**

It was agreed by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in January 2021, that a different approach would be taken to the future development of St Patrick’s Day. Officers designed an open and competitive process to support applications for creative development awards for St Patrick’s Day (SPD) 2022. This opportunity was published in the Council’s cultural

database, promoted on social media and via Council's website as well as through partner organisations and networks.

**3.2 Detail on procurement (design award) and duration**

Building on the strong foundation of recent years, Council agreed to develop an ambitious approach to St Patrick's Day in the City. This opportunity was designed to allow space for real innovation and experimentation and genuine co-design with the people of the city. Rather than commissioning an external consultant to review the event it was agreed to test a different approach by directly investing in the local sector through Creative Development Awards that could then be progressed to a next stage commission for March 2022. As a result of this process, four organisations were awarded funding in 2022: Duncairn, Beat Carnival, Maywe and Feile.

**3.3 2023 Approach**

At September 2022 Committee, it was agreed that organisations who had the opportunity to pilot ideas in March 2022 with 'testing' in real time would be taken forward to full delivery in 2023. Officers believed that as per 2022, all four pilots merited support in 2023. Retrospective approval was granted for the 2022 procurement process, which did not include a 'Contest Notice' or an 'Award Notice' as per the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

3.4 It was further agreed that a new Design Contest would be run in a timely manner for any required service contracts to support the delivery of St Patrick's Day in 2024 and beyond. This would be conducted with the support of CPS to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations.

3.5 As in 2022, it was agreed that Council would have an overarching curatorial, programming, production and co-ordination role to produce a festival of events over multiple days and also lead on the marketing of the event.

3.6 At November 2022 Committee, Members were reminded that £240,000 was approved previously by Committee in April 2022 for the St Patrick's Day 2023 event. Further approval was granted to allocate an additional £90,000 from existing Council and department budgets. This brought the overall budget allocation to £330,000. It is proposed that these monies are allocated to,



- **£100,000 Beat Carnival 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).**
- **£50,000 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) approved at Committee in September 2022.**
- **£80,000 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).**

**3.7 Plans for St Patrick’s Day 2023:**

**Council Officials are currently engaged on finalising event proposals, refining both themes and event concepts for 2023.**

**3.8 16th March 2023**

**The concert on the 16th evening at Custom House Square will again take place as per 2022, with Duncairn leading the creative programming and with Council facilitating production, operational and logistical arrangements. This will be a free, but ticketed event.**

**3.9 17th March 2023**

**The Events Team have been guided by health and safety advice over recent months with respect to the 2022 event and as a consequence have engaged with multi-agencies to elongate the parade route by approximately one third. This decision is in large part due to crowd density experienced around the route in 2022, minimising ‘pinch points’ and to assist in improving the visitor experience from a visibility perspective.**

**3.10 The proposed route for the 2023 parade is as follows: City Hall, Chichester Street, Victoria Street, High Street, Donegall Place and return to City Hall for de - rig. The parade will also incorporate the role of ‘punk’ music and the importance of this to Belfast, re - creating parts of the ‘Good Vibrations’ film and stage show which will tour America later in 2023.**

**3.11 St George’s Market will be fully operational on St Patrick’s Day. Ards CCE (a key partner in the bid for Fleadh Cheoil) are programming a number of musical and dance performances to take place within the market to enhance the visitor**

experience and expand the city - wide offering on St Patrick's Day.

- 3.12 On 17th March within 2RA, Maywe will offer four oral history sessions with community groups, story oral recording and a showcase of stories. Additionally on March 18th, Maywe in conjunction with Ards CCE will host Celtic Storm, a globally acclaimed group of Irish traditional musicians and dancers, which has performed to audiences all over the world. The performance will be lead by a group from Ards CCÉ which includes All Ireland Champion musicians, vocalists and dancers.
- 3.13 Féile will run a series of Irish Traditional Sessions between the 10th – 17th March 2023. This will include 40+ venues across the city and city centre (venues will be confirmed by mid-February) with 30+ Irish traditional musicians performing. There will also be a showcase of Irish traditional music in the city centre on St Patrick's Day during the parade, as well as partnership performances with Duncairn Arts in Custom House Square.
- 3.14 Gradam Ceoil Bursary Scheme

At the City Growth and Regeneration Committee on Wednesday 8th September 2021, members agreed to support the Gradam Ceoil bursary scheme of a five-year period (2021 – 25) and contribute £15,000 each year.

The Gradam Ceoil Bursary Scheme is a series of three annual awards awarded to young (18–25-year-old) traditional musicians in Belfast, in partnership with Duncairn Arts Centre, Red Shoe productions and TG4.

Each award is valued at £3,000 each and the programme aims are:

- To provide support, training and mentoring
- To support creativity and cultural expression
- Build capacity in online/broadcasting presentation skills (in acoustics and visuals)
- Develop capacity and profile for the traditional music sector in Belfast.

After attracting a high number of quality applications, the 2021/22 scheme selected three young Belfast traditional musicians to award. Highlights from the 2022 awards included the recipients performing at the Gradam Ceoil awards in Dublin for the Irish President, Michael D. Higgins, as well as

an invite to the Lord Mayor's parlour for a reception to celebrate.

It is proposed to continue this important partnership with a £15,000 contribution in this financial year.

**3.15 Language as Culture**

Members will recall that support up to £30,000 was allocated to Language as Culture within the Extended Cultural Programme that was approved by SP&R on the 18th February 2022, focused on initiatives exploring the diversity of language in our city through cultural activity. Officials from the Culture and Tourism team are currently engaged on the development of a programme through a partnership with Féile an Phobail to celebrate language and develop a weeklong series of events in March 2023 as part of Seachtain na Gaeilge (Irish Language Week).

Seachtain na Gaeilge is an international Irish language festival and one of the biggest celebrations of language and culture that takes place each year in Ireland and in many other countries.

The week coincides with the dates of the Spring Festival, Féile an Earraigh, which is run by Féile an Phobail. To coincide and build on this synergy, Féile an Phobail are aiming to programme events in key city centre spaces that attract footfall and will be visible to the general public. Sites under consideration include at Custom House Square, Writers Square, and Bank Square. Members are asked to approve the allocation of up to £30,000 to support this programme.

**3.16 Marketing**

From January 2022, the Events Team have been engaging with our internal colleagues in Marketing and Visit Belfast on the development and delivery of an Integrated PR and Marketing Plan for St Patrick's Day.

**3.17 Future Planning for City Events (including SPD):**

Planning is already underway by the Tourism. Events and Culture Teams to uplift and future proof SPD ahead of 2024. This will also ensure that the necessary benchmarking and research delivery structures, stakeholder engagement and early procurement are confirmed at an early stage ahead of 2024.

**3.18 Equality and Good Relations Implications/  
Rural Needs Assessment**

**All events will take equality and good relations implications into account and will be reflected in all agreements issued to partner organisations.**

**3.19 Financial and Resource Implications**

**There are no new financial implications. The activities outlined in this report will be resourced from the 2022/23 budget for the Culture and Tourism section of the Economic Development division of the Place and Economy Departmental budget.”**

During discussion, the Director of Economic Development explained further the approach to this year’s celebrations and the partnership between the Culture and Tourism team and Féile an Phobal to develop and deliver the described programme of events.

He highlighted that a report would be submitted to a future meeting to provide an update on the post event evaluation and the proposed creative commissioning process for 2024 and beyond, and further information would be provided to Members in relation to the co-design process and delivery of the described programme for 2023, together with details of community and outreach events.

The Committee:

- Noted the details of the report, specifically the outlined programme;
- Noted that a report would be submitted to a future Committee to update Members on the post event evaluation and the proposed creative commissioning process for 2024 and beyond;
- Approved the allocation of up to £30,000 from the Extended Cultural Programme agreed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 18th February, 2022 to support the development and delivery of the described programme by Féile an Phobal during 1st – 17th March;
- Approved a £15,000 contribution in this financial year from existing and approved departmental budgets for the Gradam Ceoil Bursary Scheme in partnership with Duncairn Arts Centre, Red Shoe productions and TG4;
- Approved the financial allocations of £100,000 to Beat Carnival, £50,000 to Feile and Phobal and £80,000 to Duncairn Arts as outlined in 3.6 of the report; and
- Noted that further information would be provided to Members in relation to the co-design process and delivery of the described programme for 2023, together with details of community and outreach events.

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**Belfast Zoo – Supported Charities amendment**

The Committee was reminded that, under the terms of the zoo licence issued by NIEA, Belfast Zoo was required to demonstrate that it supported in situ conservation projects. The Parks and Leisure Committee, in January 2015, had approved the support of several local, national and international conservation organisations. These projects would be financially supported by Belfast Zoo by distribution of donations received from visitors. The zoo received donations from visitors who could either choose to add a set donation amount to their admission ticket, or provide donations of any amount via website, cheque, over the phone or in-person at the zoo.

The conservation projects previously approved included:

<i>Project</i>	<i>Species</i>	<i>Country/region</i>	<i>Associated info</i>
Tenkile Conservation Alliance	Tree kangaroo	Southeast Asia	Via EEP
The Lemur Conservation Association (AEECL)	Lemurs	Madagascar/Africa	AEECL
Wildlife Conservation Society Nigeria	Gorillas	Madagascar/Africa	Cross River Gorilla Project
Bird Watch Ireland barn owl project	Barn owls	Northern Ireland	UWT research and nest box project
Lion tamarins of Brazil Fund	Lion tamarins	South America	Via Bengt Holst, EAZA
Sifaka Conservation Trust	Sifaka	Madagascar/Africa	
Guanxi François langur conservation action plan	Francois langur	Southeast Asia	Via EEP/IUCN project
Asian nature Conservation Foundation	Asian elephant	Southeast Asia	Kaziranga National Park
Visayan warty pig Conservation Programme run by Philippines Biodiversity Conservation Foundation	Visayan warty pig	Southeast Asia	Via EEP, Zoological Society for the Conservation of Species and Populations (ZGAP)
The Red Panda Network	Red panda network	China	Via EEP
Moloch gibbon conservation	Moloch gibbon	Southeast Asia	Via EEP / The Aspinall Foundation
White tailed sea eagles	White tailed sea eagle	Northern Ireland	

It was reported that three of the previously selected conservation programmes could no longer be supported:

- ***Francois’ langurs – the Fauna and Flora International Species Conservation Programme*** no longer oversees conservation efforts for Francois’ langurs;
- ***White-tailed sea eagle program*** was originally a short-term project run by the Golden Eagle project which is no longer in existence;

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- **Asian Elephant - The Asian Nature Conservation Foundation (ANCF)**, a not-for-profit charitable trust, is required by Indian law to obtain prior permission from the Government of India to receive funds from foreign sources on a case-by-case basis or through a prescribed license. They do not have the required license therefore are unable to receive donated funds.

However, as, the zoo was currently in the process of building a new lion habitat which was scheduled to open for Easter 2023, to highlight and complement this major new development, the zoo would like to support the Panthera.org conservation programme. It was devoted exclusively to the conservation of the world's 40 species of wild cats, including lions, and the vast ecosystems they inhabit.

The Director of Economic Development highlighted that the supported projects would be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure they remain suitable for support and meet the required criteria.

The Committee:

- Noted that three conservation projects could no longer be supported; and
- Approved a new project to be supported, namely, the Panthera.org conservation programme.

**Additional Item**

**Cultural Mapping for Culture, Arts and Heritage**

In agreement with the Chairperson, Alderman Dorrian requested an update on when the Phase One report on Cultural Mapping would be submitted to the Committee for reconsideration.

The Committee noted that the methodology of the Phase One report on Cultural Mapping was being considered further and an updated report would be submitted to the Committee in due course.

Chairperson