

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 17th February, 2023

MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM AND
REMOTELY 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 and Verner.

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; and
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 20th and 27th 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, 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 item 2 (f) Fuel Poverty Hardship Funding that she was employed by an organisation which distributed funding; and 7 (b) Shared City Partnership as the same organisation was a funding sector partner.

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Councillor Beattie declared an interest in item 2 (f) Fuel Poverty Hardship Funding that he was employed by an organisation which operated a social supermarket;

Councillor Verner declared an interest in item 2 (f) Fuel Poverty Hardship Funding that she was associated with an organisation which operated a social supermarket; and

Councillor Bradley declared an interest in item 2 (f) Fuel Poverty Hardship Funding that she was employed by an organisation which distributed funding.

The above-mentioned Members left the meeting whilst these items were under discussion.

Restricted Items

The information contained in the reports associated with the following ten 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 ten 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.

Financial Reporting – Quarter 3 2022/23

The Director of Finance submitted for the Committee's consideration a report which provided information on the financial position for Quarter 2 2022/23, based upon the five step Finance Strategy which had been formulated to protect the financial sustainability of the Council.

He reported that the Quarter 3 financial position for the Council was an underspend of £31k which included funding Covid expenditure and income losses of £2.9m from reserves. The key drivers to this continued to include underspends in employee budgets and additional expenditure controls which had helped offset unbudgeted costs such as the Hardship fund and Cost of Living payments. Delays to programmes, now anticipated to take place in quarter 4, had also contributed to this underspend.

The Quarter 3 Departmental forecast was an overspend of £1.6m, representing 1.0% of the net expenditure budget. This forecast position included absorbing unbudgeted losses, including the Hardship Fund, Cost of Living Payments and the 2022/23 Pay settlement.

The Council had ratified the 2023/24 district rate increase and the associated budgetary gap of £12.5m at its meeting on 1st February. The recommended strategy to fund the gap in 2023/24 would require departmental underspends to balance the shortfall. Should the forecast year end overspend not materialise, consideration would be given to setting aside underspends from 2022/23 to help fund the gap. This would be reported to Members in the year-end financial report in June.

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The Committee:

- noted the Quarter 3 financial report; and
- agreed that reallocations of forecast Departmental underspends would be considered as part of year end reporting taking into consideration the 2023/24 budgetary gap.

**Update on Northern Ireland Council
Strategic Waste Management Arrangements**

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the progress being made on joint working between councils in relation to Waste Management through an update on the SOLACE NI sponsored Strategic Investment Board (SIB) review of current arrangements and their recommendations and which sought permission to move to the next stage of the process.

After discussion, the Committee:

- i adopted, in principle, the recommendations of the SIB Project Business Case report;
- ii approved a funding application with DfC and DAERA in relation to the Subvention Funding required as detailed in the report; and
- iii endorsed the actions of officers to date and to receive future reports in due course.

**Update on City and Neighbourhood
Services Establishment**

The Committee considered a report the purpose of which was to bring forward recommendations to the Committee to support:

- the stabilisation of driver resources in waste collection; and
- the administration support requirements for Bereavement Services

The Committee was advised that there was a wider piece of work to stabilise driver resources in Waste Collection and plan for the future. A cross Departmental group had been established to work on issues impacting the short, medium and long-term driver requirements. This included, for example, establishment numbers, recruitment, managing planned and unplanned absence, standby driver pools, CNS driver academies, and longer-term workforce planning and models. Further reports would be brought back to the Committee in due course.

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In relation to the Bereavement Administration Office, the Committee was informed that it processed almost 4,000 cremations and 1,500 burials per year as well as other Bereavement service requests with an income of approximately £3 million per annum.

The Committee noted the content of the report and agreed to increase the Establishment as follows:

- i 4 Fixed Term Contract HGV driver posts to permanent posts;
- ii 9 current temporary HGV driver posts to permanent posts in the Waste Collection Service; and
- iii 3 administrator posts in Bereavement Administration Support team as permanent.

Entrepreneurship Support Service

The Senior Manager, Economy, submitted a report which updated the Committee on the decision taken by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to support an 11-council Entrepreneurship Support Service, valued at up to £17million over 2 years, from April 2023. This represented a significant scaling up in ambition of the councils' statutory remit around business start-up and targeted entrepreneurship support.

As a condition of the support, DLUHC had confirmed that it wished to work with a "lead council", rather than operate through 11 different contracts. Belfast City Council had been playing a lead role in the research, review and programme development to date. Whilst there was significant risk associated with mobilising a new intervention with a limited funding window, there were also opportunities for the Council to reposition its role in supporting local businesses and to maximise the impact of other investments, including City Deal. It was proposed that the Council takes on the lead role in the commissioning and delivery of the service, subject to all relevant due diligence and risk management being undertaken.

The Committee:

- a. agreed that Belfast City Council should lead on the submission of the application to UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund for the 11-council Entrepreneurship Support Service model; and
- b. agreed that Belfast City Council should lead on the future development and delivery of the services as outlined in the report, subject to additional due diligence and risk management work being undertaken.

Quarterly Update on Organisational Reviews and Change Programme

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided details on the progress on the work programme for the Organisational and Change Portfolio projects.

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Fuel Poverty Hardship Fund

The Director Neighbourhood Services submitted a report providing an update to the Committee on recent discussions with the Department for Communities around the possibility of hardship funding being made available to the Council in-year and to present initial options on how this might be administered.

The Committee:

- noted that funding might be made available in-year from the Department for Communities to address hardship within the City;
- agreed to adopt Option 2 as the delivery model, that is, to bolster existing hardship interventions such as social supermarkets and Fareshare;
- agreed that officers initiate preliminary discussions with potential service providers pending confirmation by DFC on funding allocation;
- agreed, in principle, that the Director of Neighbourhood Services would have delegated authority to realign any underspends in the funding made available to bolster existing hardship interventions; and
- agree, in principle, that any further in-year funding which might be made available to the Council, through partners, is also utilised to enhance the approach being recommended within this report.

Asset Management

The Committee approved:

i) Gasworks Northern Fringe Masterplan Site – Disposal of land to Radius Housing Association

- the disposal of c.1.628 acres of land on Site A Gasworks Northern Fringe for a premium of £1,200,000 and the disposal of c. 0.685 acres on Site D Gasworks Northern Fringe for a premium of £440,000 to Radius Housing Association to facilitate the development of 94 housing units on the Gasworks site.

The Committee noted that the disposal and the proposed development of social housing on the site by Radius Housing Association was contingent on the following and accordingly the Committee approved:

ii) Gasworks Northern Fringe Masterplan Site A – Acquisition of Freehold Title from Northern Ireland Housing Executive

- the acquisition of the freehold title of land within Site A Gasworks Northern Fringe from the NIHE for a premium of £150,000.

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iii) Gasworks Northern Fringe Masterplan Site A – Payment of Premium to Northern Ireland Housing Executive for Release of Long Leasehold Restrictions

- the payment of a premium of £6,000 to NIHE for release of restrictive use covenants on land within Site A Gasworks Northern Fringe.

The Committee agreed further that a report on the possibility that the income from the sale of any land from this Council to either the NIHE or housing associations could be ring fenced for the development of public homes within the city.

Other

iv) Percy Street Community Centre - Licence to The Lower Shankill Community Association (LSCA)

- approved a short-term Licence to LSCA, with terms to be agreed by the Director of Neighbourhood Services and Director of Physical Programmes.

Levelling Up Fund – Lessons Learned

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the Council's approach to Levelling Up Funding. The report sets out the lessons learned through the Council's engagement in the process and both the successful (that is, the Strand Arts Centre) and unsuccessful (that is, 2 Royal Avenue) funding submissions under Levelling Up Round 2.

The Committee noted:

- i. the update provided in respect of the approach taken to Levelling Up Funding, including the securing of significant funding investment for the Strand Arts Centre;
- ii. that, when feedback was received from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in respect of the 2 Royal Avenue application, this feedback would be shared with the Committee highlighting any relevant learning points for future applications for external funding;
- iii. the challenging timescales for funding calls, lack of timely and clear guidance which had been a feature of the previous 2 Rounds of Levelling Up Funding;
- iv. concerns raised by a range of interested parties regarding the decision-making process associated with the Levelling Up Agenda and the formula used by the UK Government in awarding funding to successful applications across the UK; and
- v. the proposed next steps in learning from this Funding Round and also in the development of a corporate process that would ensure that this

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Committee could make decisions on applications for funding opportunities based on priorities and projects agreed by Members.

**Consultancy Cost to Ratepayers –
April 2019 to October 2022**

The Committee:

- noted a report which provided information on the external consultancy cost incurred over the course of the current term;
- agreed that a report on consultancy services in relation to capital works be submitted to a future meeting; and
- agreed that review be undertaken on how decisions on consultancy spending are taken, Committee involvement, how these could be made more transparent and how these costs might be reduced.

**Summer Community Diversionary Festival Programme –
Request to hold a Special Committee Meeting**

The Interim City Solicitor submitted a report seeking approval for the holding of a special meeting of the Committee to award funding through the Summer Community Diversionary Festival Programme.

During discussion, a Member expressed the need to establish a working group to look at issues such as costs associated with individual bonfire sites, clean-up costs, sectarian imagery at bonfires and whether the diversionary fund offered value for money.

In response, the Chief Executive indicated that there were already existing governance arrangements in place and that those issues could be addressed through that forum and the Committee agreed with that course of action.

After further discussion, the Committee agreed that a special meeting of the Committee, if required, be held on 14th April to award funding through the Summer Community Diversionary Festival Programme.

Schedule of Meetings

Arising out of discussion, the Committee noted that, due to the Local Government Elections being moved from 4th till 18th May, the following meetings had been rearranged:

Previously agreed dates

Proposed new dates

Council

Monday 24th April	Tuesday 2nd May
Tuesday 23rd May (Annual meeting of Council)	Monday 5th June

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Friday 14th April	Friday 21st April
Friday 16th June	Friday 23rd June

Matters referred back from Council/Motions

Motion – Winter Outdoor Preparedness Strategy

The Committee was advised the Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 24th January, had referred the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor McMullan and Seconded by Councillor Long, to the Committee for consideration:

Motion - Winter Outdoor Preparedness Strategy

“This Council:

- i notes that the recent spate of icy cold weather in December 2022, which left streets frozen over for days, exposed how poorly prepared the Council is to ensure safe walking, wheeling and cycling across the City; and
- ii notes that other councils have certain measures in place which this Council currently does not, including gritting town centres and high streets and working in conjunction with the Department for Infrastructure to provide additional grit and white salt for use by the council, residents and local businesses.

The Council will work with key stakeholders to put together a funded winter outdoor preparedness strategy and action plan, including a gritting policy, for the City, to be operational by Quarter 3 of the 2023/2024 financial year.”

The motion had been proposed by Councillor McMullan and seconded by Councillor Long.

The Committee agreed to adopt the motion on a Winter Outdoor Preparedness Strategy and that a further report on the possible financial implications, measures which were already being undertaken, details of any Memorandums of Understanding which were already in place and details of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Model be submitted to a future meeting.

Quarterly Update on Motions

The Committee considered the following report:

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“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Committee on the progress of all motions for which this Committee is responsible for.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- i note the updates on all motion for which the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is responsible for; and**
- ii agree to the closure of motions 1, 2, 3, 16, 34, 56, 67, 83, 114, 130, 148, 149, 156, 157,176, 178, 179, 181, 192, 194, 200, 201, 204, 206, 212, 214, 219, 222, 229, 233, 233, 234, 268, 271, 272, 281 as referenced in the attached appendix and paragraph 3.4 below.**

3.0 Main Report

Background

3.1 At the Committee meeting on 25th October 2019, the following motion was agreed:

‘That this Council notes that other councils produce a monthly status report in relation to motions and agrees that Belfast City Council adopts a similar practice and produces a monthly update on motions which will be brought to each full Council Meeting, detailing the following:

- 1. Date received**
- 2. Motion title**
- 3. Submitted by which Councillor**
- 4. Council meeting date**
- 5. Committee the motion is referred to**
- 6. Outcome of Committee where the motion will be debated**
- 7. Month it will be reported back to committee**
- 8. Other action to be taken.’**

3.2 Following a review exercise, a new database containing all motions and Issues Raised in Advance at Committee was created and quarterly reporting to Committee commenced in March, 2021. Attached is the latest quarterly update showing all active motions and Issues Raised in Advance which the SP and R Committee is responsible for.

Closure of Motions and Issues Raised in Advance

3.3 At the Committee meeting on 20th November 2020, it was agreed that motions could be closed for one of two reasons:

- motions which contained an action(s) that has been completed; and
- motions which have become Council policy.

3.4 The Committee are asked to agree that the following 36 motions are now closed:

Category 1 Recommended Closures:

- **Stained Glass Window – Health Service (Ref no 1) – This motion called for the Council to agree to the installation of a stained-glass window in the City Hall to commemorate and celebrate the contribution that those working in the Health Service have made to the lives of the citizens of our city. It has been agreed that this will be progressed by the Installations Working Group. Therefore, it is recommended that this motion is now closed.**
- **Stained Glass Window – Explosives Ordnance Disposal Company (Ref no 2) – This motion called for the Council to agree to the installation of a stained-glass window in the City Hall to acknowledge the work of the Explosives Ordnance Disposal Company, Royal Army Ordnance Corps. It has been agreed that this will be progressed by the Installations Working Group. Therefore, it is recommended that this motion is now closed.**
- **Fire Brigade Union (Ref no 3) – This motion called for the Council to erect a suitable monument in City Hall or it's grounds in recognition of the service of the Fire Service and the 100th anniversary of the Fire Brigades Union. It has been agreed that this will be progressed by the Installations Working Group. Therefore, it is recommended that this motion is now closed.**
- **SEND Act and Out of School Hours Provision (Ref no 16) – This motion called for the Council to arrange a cross party delegation meeting with the Department of Education, Education Authority, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and Out of School Hours Service providers to review resource challenges, share experiences, measure demand and explore best fit options of support to enable all children and young**

people to reach their highest aspirations. This meeting was delayed due to the 2019 local government elections and the Covid-19 pandemic but is now currently being arranged via video call. Therefore, it is recommended that this motion is now closed.

- **Unregulated Car Washes (Ref no 34) – This motion called for a report to be prepared on the number of unregulated car washes across Belfast. The Council has no responsibility for regulating or licensing hand car washes and valet services. Responsibility for Health and Safety at such car washes lies with the HSENI. The NI Environment Agency has responsibility for enforcing the requirements of the Water (NI) Order 1999 and has advised Council officers that, in line with guidance, it would recommend that vehicle washes are connected to mains sewer where possible and a suitable treatment system would be required. The NIEA currently doesn't have any vehicle wash sites in Belfast on their books which hold a consent to discharge. Further enquiries with the NIEA, HSENI and PSNI has not determined that the relevant data can be sourced from elsewhere. Therefore, it is recommended that this motion is now closed.**
- **Public Sector Pay (Ref no 56) – This motion called for the Council to write to the Minister of Finance to ask him to implement fair pay for civil servants and to the British Secretary of State asking that the British Government fully funds its commitments contained within the New Decade, New Approach agreement. This action is now complete and, therefore, it is recommended that this motion is now closed**
- **Review of Hate Crime Legislation in NI (Ref no 67) – This motion called for the Council to write a letter to Judge Desmond Marrinan, as part of his ongoing review of hate crime legislation in Northern Ireland expressing support for the inclusion of misogyny as a standalone offence and as a category of hate crime, recognising crimes targeted at women including trans women as hate crimes based on misogyny. This action has been completed and, therefore, it is recommended that this motion is now closed.**
- **Frederick Douglass Statute (Ref no 83) – This motion called for a letter be sent to the Department for Communities requesting it to consider the installation in Rosemary Street of a statue**

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in remembrance of Frederick Douglass, a slavery abolitionist. The Committee agreed that this work would be progressed by Installations Working Group. Therefore, it is recommended that this motion is now closed.

- **Pay Increase for Health Workers (Ref no 114) –** This motion related to the 2020 pay increase which has been settled and it is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Closure of Ulster Bank (Ref no 130) –** This motion called on the Council to write to relevant MPs requesting an all-party meeting about NatWest's proposals to close Ulster Bank. Responses from MPs were logged November 20, however, implementation of closures commenced. It is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Uplift on Universal Credit (Ref no 148) –** This motion called on the Council to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer requesting it maintain the £20 uplift on Universal Credit in April 2021 and extend the £20 uplift to all legacy benefits. Responses were noted by the Committee on 19.02.21 stating that the Government rejected calls to uplift and it is now recommended that this motion is closed.
- **Black Lives Matters Demonstration (Ref no 149) –** This motion was in relation to calling on having all penalty notices rescinded and prosecutions against Black Lives Matter activists relating to 6th June protests abandoned. This motion was resolved when the PSNI dropped the charges and it is recommended that this is now closed.
- **Child Poverty Task Force (Ref 156) –** This motion called on the Council to write to the Minister for Communities to convene a child poverty task force. The response was noted by the Committee on 19.03.21 outlining that there were no current plans to establish such a task force but that the council would be consulted on in relation to other future linked work. It is therefore recommended that this motion is now closed.
- **Student Support (Ref no 157) –** This motion requested communication with university accommodation providers and private landlords who had not provided rent waivers to do so immediately, and release affected

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students from private rental contracts without penalty. In addition, a letter was to be sent to Department for the Economy and Department of Finance requesting the development and funding of a Student Support Grant for all full time third level students. The requested letters were sent on 21.12.20 and responses received from the Economy Minister and, as this related to student support during the Covid 19 pandemic, it is recommended that this motion is now closed.

- **Mater Hospital Services (Ref no 176) – This motion requested a meeting with Cathy Jack and the Minister for Health Robin Swann MLA to discuss plans for the future of the Mater, after Covid-19. The motion related to the provision of services during the pandemic. This was resolved, with services returning to normal from November 2022, and it is recommended that this motion is now closed.**
- **Pay Rise for Public Sector Workers (Ref no 178) – This motion requested that a letter be sent to the British Government asking it to review its budget allocation to the Executive and to stress to them the need for multi-year budgets with adequate resources to fund pay increases to our health and social care and public sector staff. This issue has since been settled and it is recommended that this motion is now closed.**
- **Statue of Mary Ann McCracken (Ref no 179) – This motion called on the Council to install a statue of Mary Ann McCracken in the grounds of the City Hall. The Committee approved the installation of the statue and this work is being taken forward by the Installations Working Group. It is, therefore, recommended that this motion is now closed.**
- **War Years Remembered (Ref 181) – This motion called on the Council to engage with War Years Remembered to help find a solution to their current difficulties including a possible relocation to Belfast. The Culture and Tourism team engaged with War Years Remembered and signposted to possible funding schemes. War Years Remembered indicated that they will get back in touch if they require any further assistance. It is, therefore, recommended that this motion is now closed.**
- **Marking the Centenary of the Ulster Memorial Tower (Ref no 194) – This motion called for the Council to note**

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the various historic connections between the Ulster Memorial Tower and Belfast City Council and agree to include recognition of this connection in their Centenary programme. The Committee granted retrospective approval for a Member to attend the Centenary Commemoration of the opening of the Ulster Memorial Tower in France on 18th November and authorised the payment of the associated costs. Therefore, it is recommended that this motion is now closed.

- **Triple Lock Guarantee (Ref no 200) – This motion asked for a letter to be sent to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, requesting him to honour the ‘Triple Lock Guarantee’. The response from HM Treasury was noted by the Committee on 19.11.21 and it is recommended that this motion is now closed.**
- **NHS Pay (Ref no 201) – This motion asked for communication to be sent to the Health Minister, Robin Swann, calling upon him to refuse to bring forward the 3% pay offer, urging him, alongside the First and Deputy First Ministers, to lobby the British Government to award a substantial offer and asking him to bring forward proposals on safe staffing. The response from the Minister of Health was noted by the Committee on 19.11.21 and this motion is now recommended for closure.**
- **Universal Credit (Ref 204) – This motion called on the Council to write to the Minister for Communities to uphold the uplift for the remainder of the financial year and to write to the Prime Minister to recommend he reconsider the removal of the uplift. Responses were received from the two Ministers and we are still awaiting a response from the Prime Minister, therefore, it is recommended that this motion is now closed.**
- **Adopt a Kiosk Scheme (Ref no 212) – This motion called for the Council to prepare a report on the feasibility of joining BT’s Adopt a Kiosk scheme, outlining the options open to the Council for the removal of the kiosks, should a decision be taken not to proceed. Officers have reviewed the BT Adopt a Kiosk scheme and have received advice from BT that whilst the old ‘red phone boxes’ can be utilised in a number of ways, modern phone boxes can only be adapted to accommodate a heart defibrillator. Whilst BCC are unable to provide a dedicated resource to identify**

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potential sites across the city for the repurposing of phone kiosks to house defibrillators, or to meet the potential costs associated with installation and maintenance of defibrillators, officers will be happy to direct community groups to BT and the range of organisations' who provide funding for community defibrillators. It is recommended that this motion is now closed.

- **Rent Controls (Ref 214) – This motion called for the Executive to bring forward a rent control scheme for the city. The response was noted by the Committee on 21.12.21 in relation to future plans to be brought forward and it is, therefore, recommended that this motion is now closed.**
- **Publication of information on Members' attendance at meetings (Ref no 219) – This motion requested that the Council, commencing in April 2022, would publish on an annual basis details of Members' attendance at meetings of the Council, Committees and Working Groups, as well as attendances for each year since the commencement of the current Council term. This action was implemented in April 2022 and it is recommended that this motion is now closed.**
- **Insulation inspection and the provision of insulation (Ref 222) – This motion called for the Council to write to the Minister for Communities requesting a review of the affordable warmth scheme. The response was noted by the Committee on 21.01.22 and it, is therefore, recommended that this motion is now closed.**
- **Pay Rise for Leisure Workers (Ref no 229) – This motion called for the Council to meet GLL management and trade union representatives to discuss the feasibility of supporting the joint pay claim submitted by Unite the Union and NIPSA, calling for a 11.75% increase for Belfast City Council terms and conditions members and a 15.75% increase for Castlereagh Borough terms and conditions members, to address retrospective pay legacy issues. An update was provided to the Committee in September 22 and GLL continues to meet regularly with staff, the Trade Unions, and party representatives/Elected Members, on a range of issues. It is proposed that this motion is now closed.**
- **Proposed Closure of Regina Coeli House (Ref no 233) – This motion called for communication to the**

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Department of Communities' Minister and the NIHE to meet with the owners and management Committee of Regina Coeli hostel to discuss the withdrawal of this service. Letters were issued to all mentioned within the motion on 25.01.22. The Regina House facility was closed last year and it is, therefore, recommended that this motion is now closed.

- Irish Sea Border Checks (Ref 234) – This motion authorised the Council's City Solicitor to commence legal proceedings to compel the Minister and the British Government to comply with protocol requirements, subject to any current derogations in the grace period. The Judicial Review was successful and a response was noted by the Committee in December 2022. It is now recommended that this motion is closed.**
- Suspension of Government Debt Recovery for those in receipt of benefits and universal credit (Ref no 268) – This motion called upon the Council to write to the Department of Communities' Minister requesting the immediate suspension of government debt recovery for those in receipt of benefits and universal credit. The response from the Department of Communities was noted by the Committee on 21.10.22 and it proposed that this motion is now closed.**
- Freedom of the City and County Borough of Belfast (Ref no 271) – This motion called for the Council to confer the Freedom of the City and County Borough of Belfast on healthcare workers and those who worked on the frontline during the Covid-19 pandemic. This was granted and an event took place on the evening of 25th August and, therefore, it recommended that this motion is now closed.**
- Devolution of Local Transport Powers (Ref 272) – This motion called on the Council to liaise with relevant personnel and organisations to discuss the devolution of key powers. This motion was declared lost and it is, therefore, recommended that this motion is now closed.**
- Christmas Tree Charity Collection (Ref no 281) – This motion called for the Council to place a collection box beside the Christmas tree in the City Hall and for any funds raised to be channeled through the Lord Mayor's office for distribution to appropriate charities in the city. This was actioned and it is recommended that this motion is now closed.**

Category 2 Recommended Closures:

- **Paid Leave for Miscarriage (Ref no 192) – This motion called upon the Council to bring forward compassionate, fair, and progressive proposals for bereavement leave to provide leave for miscarriage and stillbirth so employees who have been impacted do not have to use sick or annual holiday leave. Through the consultation process with the Trade Unions, enhanced provisions were agreed at JNCC on 15th December 2022, including treating miscarriage as a bereavement and offering 10 days' bereavement leave on full pay to employees who suffer a miscarriage as a day one right and offering 3 days' bereavement leave to an employee who is the partner/surrogate parents for someone who has had a miscarriage. These changes have been implemented as of 01.02.23 and it is now recommended that this motion is closed.**
- **Parental Bereavement Pay and Leave (Ref no 206) – This motion called upon the Council to undertake a review of its bereavement policy, in conjunction with the unions, that sought to establish 2 weeks statutory bereavement leave and pay for all Council workers in line with the Coalition for Bereaved Workers 'Call to Action' document. Through the consultation process with the Trade Unions, enhanced provisions were agreed at JNCC, 15 December 2022, including awarding 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 or for those who have sole responsibility for the funeral arrangements; award 10 consecutive days' full pay, as a day one right with no qualifying service required and award 1 days paid leave to attend the funeral of an extended family member. These changes have been implemented as of 01.02.23 and it is recommended that this motion is now closed.**
- **Fertility Treatment Leave (Ref no 233) – This motion called for the Council to implement a new leave provision for staff, which caters for those who need leave for fertility treatment and offers the same protections as sick leave. Through the consultation process with the Trade Unions, enhanced provisions were agreed at JNCC, 15 December 2022, including awarding 10 days full paid leave following any unsuccessful IVF treatment to employees who have**

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undergone IVF treatment, as a day one right in addition to the paid time off for medical appointments that already exists and offering 3 days' leave to an employee who is the partner/surrogate parents for someone who had unsuccessful IVF treatment. These changes have been implemented as of 01.02.23 and it is recommended that this motion is now closed.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.5 There are no additional financial implications required to implement these recommendations.

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

- 3.6 There are no equality, good relations or rural needs implications contained in this report.”

The Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed to the closure of the motions as listed, except for the motion on the Mater Hospital Services. It agreed also to the closure of the motion on the Living Wage.

Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues

Council Improvement Objectives 2023-24

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy submitted the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present to the Committee the draft corporate improvement objectives for 2023-24 and to seek approval for these to be issued for public consultation, in line with our statutory performance duty obligations.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to agree the draft improvement objectives for 2023-24 and, subject to any amendments, approve their issue for public consultation in line with statutory guidance. The proposed improvement objectives for 2023-24 are as follows:

Our Services and Facilities

Maintain and where appropriate improve resident satisfaction with the council and the services and facilities that we provide

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3.0	Our Communities
	Improve our local areas and enhance how we engage and support residents so everyone can enjoy good quality of life.
	Our Economy
	Help small businesses, including social enterprises and co-operatives, to develop and grow, and by doing so, help create opportunities for local jobs and employment.
	Our Environment
	Help tackle climate change, protect our environment, and improve the sustainability of Belfast.
Our City	
Revitalise our city and help it to innovate in an inclusive and sustainable way.	

Key Issues

- 3.1 We have a statutory duty to agree improvement objectives and produce an annual improvement plan, which must be published by 30th June each year. The Improvement plan does not represent everything that council plans to do, but instead focuses on a smaller set of key improvement priorities, as informed by resident priorities and evidenced by need.**
- 3.2 Since 2021-22, we have grouped our improvements objectives under the headings of: Our Services, Our Communities, Our Economy, Our Environment, and Our City. This framework provides a balanced approach to selecting improvements that resonates with our residents. We have therefore retained this format for the year ahead. However, this year, we have also sought to make the improvement plan more user-friendly, streamlining the language and focusing on outward facing council activity to create a clearer alignment between our improvement aims, actions and indicators. Members should note that our longer term strategic or partnership improvement work will continue to be monitored through the corporate plan or Belfast Agenda.**
- 3.3 During the public consultation, we will work with departments to develop detailed actions, milestones and performance**

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indicators and factor in public feedback. Indicative areas of activity have been included for illustration and are attached.

Next Steps

- 3.4 Councils are legally required to consult on their improvement objectives and to publish an Improvement Plan by 30th June each year. Subject to approval, we will issue the improvement objectives for public consultation via our on-line engagement platform for a period of 8 weeks. During this time, we will work with departments to develop detailed actions, milestones and performance indicators and update as needed based on public feedback. This improvement activity will be reflected within the Corporate Plan, committee plans or other strategic programmes, thereby ensuring that improvement is embedded within our planning and delivery processes. A final report and draft improvement plan will be brought to the SP and R Committee for ratification and publication in June.

SP and R – Draft Improvement Objectives for consultation	17th Feb 2023
Improvement Objectives: 8-week consultation	Mar - Apr 2023
Services refine actions and PIs	Mar - May 2023
S P R Committee approves the Improvement Plan for online publication	June 2023
Publish Improvement Plan	By 30th June, 2023

Financial and Resources Implications

- 3.5 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Improvement actions are programmed within normal business planning.

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

- 3.6 There are no equality or rural need implications arising directly from this report.”

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The Committee approved the draft improvement objectives for 2023/24 and to their issue for public consultation in line with statutory guidance.

IT Equipment Package for Members

The Committee considered in relation to the It Equipment package which would be refreshed for Members following the Local Government Elections in May, 2023.

The Committee:

- i noted that the new IT Equipment package will consist of:
 - a Windows Hybrid device: Dell Latitude 5330 2 in 1 (or equivalent), 1 Bluetooth touch pen (if required), and laptop case; and
 - a Smartphone: Either an Apple iPhone 11 64GB or a Samsung Galaxy A53
- ii noted that the current devices and smart phones used by Members would be redistributed and reused by Council officers where possible; and
- iii endorsed the recommendation that personal printers are no longer provided for home use.

Update on Dual-Language Street Signs

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of main Issues

1.1 At the Committee meeting on 20th January, it was agreed that a report would be brought to the meeting in February providing an update on dual language street signs applications.

1.2 The report:

- provides an overview of applications and current status;
- outlines the stages in the process; and
- outlines the ongoing work in relation to applications within the City centre.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- i note the contents of the report; and
- ii agree the process to be applied to City centre applications.

3.0 Main Report

Key Issues

Applicants and Current Status

- 3.1** Following approval by the Council of the revised Dual Language Streets Signs Policy on 4th July 2022, the Building Control Service received over 500 requests for dual language street signs.
- 3.2** These emailed requests had to be responded to individually, many of which did not contain the required information to validate and process the application. For example, requests which did not include the name of the street or the applicant's full address.
- 3.3** Further emails were sent to applicants requesting the required information. While many responded and provided the information, some did not, and the applications were closed. In writing to confirm the closing of these applications, a further period of time was given to provide the information. All the action above took some time to complete and proved to be much more resource intensive than envisaged. It also involved contacting a limited number of applicants more than once.
- 3.4** The Council's application form went live on 9th September, available on the website through an online form, or via email, by post or in person. Any requests received after that date must be through that formal application form and applicants are advised of this where they have made requests by other means. The reason for this is that the form sets out the required information for a valid application and ensures that all relevant information is provided at the outset. This is in line with other application processes, and with GDPR requirements for the collection and use of data.
- 3.5** As of 6th February 2023, the Service has received 611 requests under the new policy. Some streets have had multiple applications made. Following the aforementioned validation exercise to obtain the requisite missing information, 162 applications proved to be invalid leaving 449 applications to be taken through the process currently. Applications are being processed in batches, in the order received. In relation to the 449 live applications the validity of the applicant is being determined as each batch is processed so it may be the case that the Service discover further invalid applications as

processing proceeds. In addition, it can be confirmed the 449 applications involves 352 unique streets.

Stages of the Application Process

Validation

- 3.6 Once an application is being processed, checks are carried out to ensure the applicant is an occupier of the street. This must be done by attending the Electoral Office for residential applications, which make up the majority of the applications received.

Implementation of the initial assessment process

- 3.7 The initial assessment process, on the grounds of equality and good relations, as described in the public consultation and the EQIA in relation to the policy, was finalised in September and is now being applied to all applications.
- 3.8 This initial assessment is high-level and intended to identify any potential equality or good relations issues. Such assessment is in the context of the considerations set out in the EQIA which accompanied the Policy which set out the various protections in place for minority languages, together with Equality Commission advice that the use of Irish in signage is, in their opinion, a neutral act and that the use of minority languages, particularly Irish and Ulster Scots for common or official purposes would normally or objectively be considered to be a neutral act that would not be discriminatory.
- 3.9 Where adverse impacts on the grounds of equality or good relations are identified as part of this initial assessment the applications will be referred to Committee for direction.

Elected Member Notification

- 3.10 The most recent notification to Members was issued on 26th January. These lists of applications for streets will be issued via Democratic Services as batches are being processed. The purpose of this notification is solely to allow Members to raise equality or good relations concerns in respect of a particular application. Those concerns must be forwarded to the Director of Planning & Building Control who will, in consultation with the City Solicitor, determine whether

the issues raised warrant referral of the application to Committee before a survey takes place.

Electoral Office

- 3.11 Appointments to view files at the Electoral Office have been booked in advance. While these are used to validate that the applicant is an occupier of the street, they are also used to confirm the occupants of the street who will be surveyed.

Survey Preparation and Issue

- 3.12 The issuing of surveys is dependent on the previous stages being undertaken, but the time taken is also determined by the number of properties and occupiers, with some streets involving hundreds of surveys. Surveys are issued with a unique identifier, to ensure they can be tracked, and with a prepaid envelope for return. Results are collated against each application as returned, and the final results provided for the committee report. Occupiers are given 30 days to respond to the survey.

Committee Report

- 3.13 Committee reports will be presented for all applications where the 15% threshold of occupiers in favour of the erection of dual language street sign has been met. The report will include all the results from the surveys, and any findings from the equality and good relations assessment.

Erection of Signs

- 3.14 Following ratification of the Committee decision, erection of the relevant sign will take around 4-6 weeks depending upon the availability of the contract.

Current Position

- 3.15 As outlined at last month's Committee meeting, the first completed application was taken to the People and Communities Committee earlier this month. 5 applications are currently out for survey, with the anticipation that they can be brought to March or April P and C Committee. To date, 6 streets have been surveyed with a total of 707 residents being surveyed. With the further Elected Member notification and initial assessments carried out this will result in more applications being brought to Committee in the months ahead.

City Centre Applications

- 3.16 The EQIA carried out in respect of the Policy states that ‘any decision relating to the erection of a second nameplate in the city centre (business core) will, in addition to the current policy considerations and the survey of occupiers, be subject to a wider public consultation to reflect the community of users.’
- 3.17 Officers have considered a number of options but believe that, from a consistency perspective, it would be appropriate to use the City Centre Boundary as set out in the draft BMAP, excluding the protected housing areas. A map outlining the proposed city centre boundary for the purposes of this Policy is attached.
- 3.18 Officers would also propose that where an application is received for the city centre, that will be subject to public advertisement in accordance with the Council’s policy on placing public adverts. This will be in addition to the survey of the residents of the street. Committee is asked to approve the proposed city centre boundary and the proposed method of wider public consultation for applications in this area.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.19 In December, three additional staff members were recruited on a temporary basis to deal with the volume of applications received. However, as two of these posts were from within the existing team, the process for backfilling and covering their duties is still ongoing. While they are being trained and are processing dual language street sign applications, there are also other duties in their substantive posts to be undertaken. When they are fully released to their new roles and training completed, this will allow for an increase in the number of applications being processed.

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

- 3.20 The process for carrying out initial assessments on the ground of equality and good relations is in place. Where adverse impacts are identified, a further screening will take place and finding presented to Members. This work has been developed working with colleagues in our Equality and Diversity Unit together with an external consultant.”

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During discussion, Members expressed concern in relation to the length of time being taken to implement the policy, the limited number of applications which had been progressed in comparison to the large number of applications which had been made, the failure to address in the report the Gaeltacht Quarter and the time being taken to bring back a report on the bilingual signage at the Olympia Leisure Centre.

In response, the Interim City Solicitor outlined the measures which were being put in place to try and address the concerns around the implementation of the policy. She also indicated that it had been her intention to bring a detailed report to the March meeting in relation to the Gaeltacht Quarter. In this regard, she also undertook to bring a report on the bilingual signage at the Olympia Leisure Centre.

After further discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Beattie,
Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin,

That the Committee agrees, in principle, to progress with dual-language signage in the Gaeltacht Quarter on block as a cost saving measure, subject to equality screening and when finance becomes available.

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

Accordingly, the Committee:

- i noted the contents of the report;
- ii agreed the process to be applied to City centre applications; and
- iii noted that reports on the Dual-Language Street signs in the Gaeltacht Quarter, the Equality Impact Assessment on the erection of bilingual external naming and internal directional signage at Olympia Leisure Centre would be submitted to the March meeting of the Committee.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

Update on Area Working Groups

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meetings of the South Belfast Area Working Group of 30th January and the East Belfast Area Working Group of 31st January and adopted the following recommendations:

- **Linfield FC/ Boys Brigade and Belvoir FC** - that the BIF proposal which includes Phase 1 - *replacement of Belvoir FC's grass football pitch, including car parking resurfacing and widening access lane* is decoupled from the wider masterplan and to note that any future phases will be taken forward separately by Linfield FC and Boys Brigade.

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East Belfast AWG

- **Expansion of Belfast Bikes Scheme 2022/23** - in the first instance, that the new docking station be located at Upper Newtownards Road/ Astoria Gardens (option 2), subject to agreement with landowners and local businesses, and that the Upper Newtownards Road/Sandown Road Carpark (option 3) be the reserve option for the area if the approval for option 2 is not forthcoming.

Asset Management

The Committee:

- i) **Carrick Hill Community Centre – Lease with Carrick Hill Residents Association**
- approved the surrender of the current ground Lease at Carrick Hill Community Centre, subsequent transfer of ownership of the asset to Belfast City Council and a new lease back to Carrick Hill Residents Association.
- ii) **Sally Gardens Community Centre – Lease to Poleglass Community Association**
- approved a new lease with Poleglass Community Association
- iii) **Sally Gardens Community Centre – Licence with Celtic Boys Football Club**
- approved the grant of a licence to Celtic Boys Football Club for a secure storage container at the Sally Gardens sports complex.
- iv) **Falls Park – Licence with Belfast Celtic Football Club**
- approved the grant of a licence to Belfast Celtic Football Club for a secure storage container in Falls Park.
- v) **Forth Meadow Community Greenway – Lease with Northern Ireland Housing Executive**
- approve entering into a lease with Northern Ireland Housing Executive for c. 4 sq. m of land situated at the junction of Ballgomartin Road and Cairnmartin Road to install an illuminated sign as part of the Forth Meadow Community Greenway project.
- vi) **Forth Meadow Community Greenway – Lease with Invest NI**
- approved entering into a lease with Invest NI of c. 16 sq m of land situated at Forthriver Business Park to install a public art sculpture as part of the Forth Meadow Community Greenway project.
- vii) **Forth Meadow Community Greenway – Licence with Braidwater Homes/Coredale**
- approved entering into a licence with Braidwater Homes / Coredale to use part of their land at West Circular Road for the construction of part of the Forth Meadow Community Greenway project.

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- viii) Brook Playing Fields – Agreement with Phoenix Natural Gas Limited**
- approved of a Gas Connection Application Agreement with Phoenix Natural Gas Limited
- ix) Reverend Robert Bradford Memorial Park - Licence with Bluehouse Development Ltd.**
- approved the grant of a Licence Agreement to Bluehouse Development Ltd.
- x) Botanic Gardens (Lower Section) – Licence Agreement with QUB**
- approved the grant of a Licence Agreement to Queen’s University Belfast (QUB)
- xi) City of Belfast Playing Fields – Licence to Antrim and Newtownabbey BC**
- approved the licence of two small plots of land of c. 3 sq m situated at the entrance gates to City of Belfast Playing Fields to Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council to enable the placing of 2no. sandbag bins.
- xii) Cromac Street Car Park – Licence with Northern Ireland Housing Executive**
- approved the renewal of a Licence agreement from the Northern Ireland Housing
- xiii) Smithfield Market – Update on Letting of Units**
- noted the recent lettings at Smithfield Market approved under delegated authority to Director of Physical Programmes.

Finance, Procurement and Performance

Update on Contracts

The Committee:

- approved the public advertisement of tenders, as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Table1 of the Appendix;
- approved the award of STAs, in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in Table 2 of the Appendix, with the exception of those related to advertising at bus stops and for bus internal and external advertising which are deferred to enable information to be provided on the previous expenditure for those contracts;
- approved the modification of the contract, as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Table 3 of the Appendix;
- noted the award of retrospective STAs, in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in Table 4 of the Appendix; and
- approved the extension of the contract with the Now Group for the Bobbin restaurant for a period of 3 months.

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Table 1: Competitive Tenders

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Estimated Total Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services
Deployment of ambient air quality sensor system at Botanic Gardens Belfast (Fully funded)	Up to 34 months	£60,000	D Caldwell	Required as part of the delivery for Horizon 2020 UPSURGE project
Supply and erection of street nameplates	Up to 4 years	£138,000	K Bentley	To supply and erect street nameplates within Belfast
Feasibility study of a Belfast District Heating Initiative and options in relation to energy use, project development and financing	Up to 12 weeks	£60,000	D Caldwell	External expertise required to provide advice and recommendations on a District Heating initiative for Belfast
Supply of mobile column vehicle hoists	Up to 3 years	£40,000	C Matthews	Replacing static 26t ramp recently decommissioned due to unavailability of parts (ramp was 30 years old)
Provision of in-depth technical research and guidance to help Digital Services advance the initiatives/projects that support execution of the IT strategy	Up to 2 years	£45,400	P Gribben	Service required to provided use of proven reference architecture, receive organisation-specific guidance, leverage industry best practices, and enable Digital Services to stay current with changing markets and technologies
Provision of a reusable period waste scheme	Up to 3 years	£141,000	D Sales	Agreed by Council following on from a very successful pilot scheme for individuals ordering similar products online
Fleet Replacement programme 23/24 (purchase/ lease of vehicles during FY)	Up to 1 year	£2.2m	C Matthews	To cover replacement vehicles purchased/ leased during 2023/24 financial year from the annual allocated capital budget considered and approved by the Oversight Board.

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<p>NI Entrepreneurship Support Service 'NIESS' Framework A</p> <p>(Framework value across all 11 councils and using external funding)</p>	<p>Up to 4 years</p>	<p>Up to £26m</p>	<p>J Greer</p>	<p>BCC will act as lead council on behalf of all 11 local authorities to develop and manage the Northern Ireland Enterprise Support Service. The service aims to provide a set of connected Entrepreneurship Support Services where individuals, entrepreneurs or businesses can access a continuum of support to meet their needs, aligned with the relevant stage of their enterprise.</p> <p>This Framework A will include lots to reflect the geographical and service delivery requirements of councils across the region.</p>
<p>NIESS Framework B1</p> <p>(Framework value across all 11 councils and using external funding)</p>	<p>Up to 4 years</p>	<p>Up to £6m</p>	<p>J Greer</p>	<p>As with Framework A; however Framework B1 will include a range of subject matter specialisms with a less focus on organisational capacity (as required with Framework A). This framework will be targeted at SMEs and specialist service providers.</p>
<p>NIESS Framework B2</p> <p>(Framework value across all 11 councils and using external funding)</p>	<p>Up to 4 years</p>	<p>Up to £6m</p>	<p>J Greer</p>	<p>Similar to Framework B1 above but will cover a different range of specialist areas for SMEs and specialist service providers to apply for.</p>

Table 2: Single Tender Actions

Title	Duration	Total Value	SRO	Description	Supplier
<p>Advertising at bus stops</p>	<p>18 months</p>	<p>£140,000</p>	<p>L Caldwell</p>	<p>Advertising council initiatives to the citizens of Belfast and areas of Northern Ireland as required. Clear Chanel is the only company that</p>	<p>Clear Channel</p>

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				provides advertising at bus stops in Northern Ireland	
Bus internal and external advertising	18 months	£140,000	L Caldwell	Advertise council initiatives to the citizens of Belfast and in areas of Northern Ireland as required. Global Outdoor is the only company to provide advertising on Metro and Ulsterbus buses in Northern Ireland	Global Outdoor
Clockwise system	Up to 1 year	£60,313	P Gribben	Continued use of current system required until replacement of system is implemented. (In progress under the HR/Payroll/T&A Project)	Softworks
Port Health Interactive Live Information System (PHILIS) (Fully funded)	Up to 4 years	£73,745	P Gribben	Developed by Suffolk Coastal District Council and which has become the industrial standard for Port Health imported food system. No other supplier exists for a Digitised Food Import System	East Suffolk Council

Table 3: Modification to Contract

Title of Contract	Duration	Modification	SRO	Description	Supplier
T2056 - Peace IV - Delivery of TechConnects – a cross community peace building programme for children & young people using digital technology Lot 3 - Young People (aged 17-24 years)	Up to 29 months	Additional 2 months	D Sales	An extension is requested to 31 March 2023 to allow the project to be completed.	Belfast Metropolitan College

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T1878 - Supply and installation of wet pour repairs	Up to 4 years	Additional 3 months and £20,000	D Sales	Work is underway to complete the tender documents and advertise the new tender but additional time is required to ensure continuity of service whilst tender is evaluated and awarded.	Play and Leisure Services Ltd
T1935 - Supply and erection of street nameplates	Up to 4 years	Additional 3 months and £8,625	J Greer	Work is underway to complete the tender documents and advertise the new tender but additional time is required to ensure continuity of service whilst tender is evaluated and awarded.	Traffic Signs and Equipment Ltd
T1760 - Supply and delivery of general cleaning products and consumables	Up to 5 years	Additional 3 months and £20,000	S Grimes	Work is underway to complete the tender documents and advertise the new tender but additional time is required to ensure continuity of service whilst tender is evaluated and awarded.	Bunzl McLaughlin and Interclean

Table 4: Retrospective Single Tender Actions

Title of Contract	Duration	Value	SRO	Description	Supplier
Requirement for 2 x Business Support Officers for HR (SO2)	Up to 7 months	£46,000	S Toland	The existing contracted provider for T1792 Provision of Temporary Agency Resources: Matrix SCM have confirmed they are unable to	MCS Recruitment

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				fulfil the required roles of Business Support Officer (HR) within the contractually agreed time period.	
T2357 - Delivery of a creative digital capacity building programme	Up to 12 months	£56,000	J Greer	Previously approved by CMT in October 22 and retrospectively by SP&R in November 22. It is being resubmitted as the contract value and duration was underestimated and have been corrected. Previously approved for £50k and 6 months.	Digital Catapult NI

Update on the Waiving of Building Regulation Inspection Fees for Applications including Insulation

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of the report is to update The Committee on:

- the implementation for the waiving of Building Regulation inspection fees for those applications involving loft insulation which are not part of funded schemes or maintenance contracts; and
- the timeline of the exercise.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- note the implementation process which has been discussed and agreed with Legal Services and Audit and Risk Services; and
- note the timeline commencing from 1st December 2022 and to be reviewed after a period of 6 months.

3.0 Main Report

Key Issues

- 3.1 The Committee agreed, at its meeting on 8th November, to waive Building Regulation inspection fees for those applications involving installation of insulation which were not part of funded schemes or maintenance contracts.
- 3.2 The waiving of fees will be implemented from the date of Council ratification on 1st December, 2022 until 31st May, 2023 subject to review.
- 3.3 The Building Control Service will identify qualifying applications from 1st December, 2022 and will engage with applicants if their application is considered eligible. The applicant will be required to complete and return a declaration confirming they are personally paying for the insulation work and their application is not part of a funded scheme which includes the payment of the fee.
- 3.4 On receipt of the signed declaration, the refund will be processed, following the normal process.
- 3.5 This process has been discussed with Audit Governance and Risk Services and Legal Service, both of which are satisfied with the approach being taken.
- 3.6 An update report will be presented to the Committee in June.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.7 Based upon the analysis carried out for the four-year period that was presented to the Committee on 8th November, it is estimated that, on average, £81,000 of fees have been paid per year in relation to insulation. If fees were to be waived for a determined period, the loss in fee income could be assumed to be a pro rata value of this annual estimate.

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

- 3.8 There are no direct Equality, Good Relations or Rural Needs implications.”

The Committee noted:

- the implementation process which has been discussed and agreed with Legal Services and Audit and Risk Services; and

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- the timeline commencing from 1st December 2022 and to be reviewed after a period of 6 months.

Equality and Good Relations

**Equality and Diversity: Disability
Action Plan 2022-2025**

The Committee was advised that the Council was subject to a several different duties in relation to disability. As both a service provider and employer it must be compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995, which outlines measures aimed at ending the discrimination faced by many disabled people. It gives disabled people rights in:

- employment;
- access to goods, facilities and services, including transport;
- the management, buying or renting of property; and
- education.

The Council, as a designated public authority, was also subject to two further inter-related duties under Sections 49A and 49B of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Section 49A placed a duty on designated public authorities to have due regard to the need to:

- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons; and
- Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life.

Section 49B placed a duty on each designated public authority to prepare a Disability Action Plan outlining how it proposes to fulfil the Section 49A duty.

Following a disability mapping exercise carried out last year across the organisation, the Equality and Diversity Unit developed a new draft Disability Action Plan 2022-25 which was brought to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee last year and issued for a 12-week public consultation.

The final Disability Action Plan document had no subsequent amendments from feedback received from the public consultation. It had been planned to bring this to the Disability Working Group before bringing for final approval to Committee, however, the last meeting of the Disability Working Group was cancelled due to it being inquorate.

The Committee approved the Disability Action Plan 2022-25.

**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 6th February, including the following:

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PEACEPLUS

- To note the high-level feedback from the Phase 1 Engagement stage, provide feedback and agree to issue the final report to stakeholders (PEACEPLUS – Phase 1 Engagement Report) in advance of a public meeting on 27th February at 2.00 p.m. in the City Hall
- Note the key milestones for Stage 2 development of the local action plan; and the updated timelines for Stage 2 which included an updated position from SEUPB that applications for the programme will open in April 2023.

PEACE IV

CYP Theme

- To note the key project updates relating to:

CYP1 Tech Connects – Afterschool's and Tech Camps (Giga) project closure is being progressed based on achievement of 119% of Lot 1 and 90% of Lot 2.

CYP5 NIHE - the anticipated level of achievement, the additional mitigations proposed and the next steps of discussions with SEUPB.

SSS Theme

- To note the approved project extension to 28th February 2023 with a 10% budget uplift for the Youth Civic Education contract with Youth Link.

BPR Theme

- To note key project updates relating to:

BPR 1 - NIHE- Cross Community Area Networks level of achievement as outlined in the positional paper and the mitigations proposed to address under delivery.

BPR6 - St Comgall's - following further cross-community consultation, the amended Education Resources have been submitted. The resources will be considered by the Programme Board via previously agreed delegated authority.

GOOD RELATIONS

Segregation and the Environment Research

- To note the report and the actions being taken to implement the recommendations in the research, including the provision already made within the previously agreed Good Relations Action Plan.
- To agree to publish and disseminate the report, Segregation and the Environment, after further internal and external engagement has taken place.

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Seachtain na Gaeilge/Irish Language Week 2023

The Interim City Solicitor advised the Committee that Seachtain na Gaeilge/Irish Language Week was marked every year from 1st till 17th March. Prior to COVID-19, the Council marked this by hosting events for schools in the City Hall. COVID-19 necessitated online events and content in 2021 and 2022. Those events were always well attended and the feedback from participants was always excellent.

The Committee would also be aware that the Council's Culture and Tourism team was currently engaged in the development of a programme to celebrate language and develop a series of events to mark Seachtain na Gaeilge, as part of its Extended Cultural Programme which was initially agreed in February 2022 and more recently by the City Growth and Regeneration Committee on 8th February 2023.

Officers from the Council's Legal and Civic Services Department were responsible for developing the Council's Language Strategy Action Plan, in consultation with other Departments and were supporting the work being undertaken by colleagues in the Culture and Tourism team. As part of that support, it was proposed to hold at least two events in the City Hall to mark Seachtain na Gaeilge. One of those would incorporate the inaugural meeting of the Council's Irish Language Stakeholders Forum. Officers were currently engaging with stakeholders about this event and a precise date will be confirmed in due course.

The details of other potential events were still being considered but, in line with the Council's Language Strategy Action Plan, would be aimed at bringing the Irish language community into the City Hall, particularly school children. Members will recall the recent successful Ulster Scots events which took place in November 2022.

The Committee approved the planned events in the City Hall to mark Seachtain na Gaeilge in 2023.

Operational Issues

Late Requests for the use of Belfast Parks for Events

The Committee considered the following report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 The Committee is asked to note that the Council has received a late request from the Shankill Old Boys Flute Band to host its 'Bring Saint Patrick's Day Back to the Shankill' cultural event in Woodvale Park on Saturday 18th March 2023, from 11 a. m. to 3 p.m.**
- 1.2 The Shankill Old Boys Flute Band, along with an additional 30 flute bands, will assemble in Woodvale Park and parade to Lower Shankill Road before returning to Woodvale Park for dispersing.**

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The event will result in some disruption of certain sections of the Park.

- 1.3 The Committee is also asked to note a request for the use of Botanic Gardens as the location for the 'It is different for Mummies' exhibition. The exhibition marks the 25th Anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement and is described as an act of reparation for future legacy through acknowledgment. This request has had some back and forth to be able to accommodate the exhibition at the site on suitable dates and is the reason for this late request to this Committee.

2.0 **Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- approve the 'Bring St. Patrick's Day Back to the Shankill' demonstration in Woodvale Park and the 'It is different for Mummies' exhibition in Botanic Gardens, subject to the completion of the appropriate Event Management Plans and satisfactory terms being agreed by the Director of Neighbourhood Services and on the condition that the Event Organisers:

- resolve all operational issues to the Council's satisfaction.
- meet all statutory requirements including Public Liability Insurance cover, Health and Safety, and licensing responsibilities; and
- consult with adjoining public bodies and local communities as necessary.

- 2.2 The Committee is asked to note that the above recommendations are taken as a pre-policy position in advance of the Council agreeing a more structured framework and policy for 'Events', which is currently being taken forward in conjunction with a cross Council officer team.

3.0 **Main Report**

Key Issues

Bring St Patrick's Day back to the Shankill

- 3.1 The Shankill Old Boys Flute Band is a cultural and historical band which has been operating for 4 years. The Shankill Old Boys Flute Band event will be attended by an additional 30 bands and up to 2,000 – 3,000 supporters including the 'West Belfast Orange Order' which is supporting the event. The attendees will assemble

in Woodvale Park and parade to Lower Shankill Road before returning to Woodvale Park for dispersing. This event is a pilot scheme, with the ambition to deliver a vibrant cultural family Saint Patricks Day event for the local community the following year.

- 3.2 Organisers estimate that up to 3,000 people could be in attendance. Organisers will provide toilets, first aid cover and stewards for the event. Set up and assembly of bands will commence at 11 a.m., with the main parade leaving at 1.00 p.m. The event will be dismantled, and the site will be clear by 3 p.m.
- 3.3 The event will result in a period of closure for certain areas of the park to allow for safe set up and derig.

Is it different for Mummies?

- 3.4 This exhibition is promoted by Relatives for Justice. It features Evanna Devine's work and is curated by Giada Tagliamonte. The photographs will be exhibited in Botanic Gardens from 1st April to 19th May. Relatives for Justice, which was founded in 1991, is a Belfast based human rights NGO operating across Ireland, providing holistic support services for the bereaved and injured during the conflict.
- 3.5 A total of 10 to 15 vertical portraits in large formats will be situated in a location within the park that is central with easy access to a wide range of audiences. OSS has agreed a suitable location directly in front of the Tropical Ravine.
- 3.6 The narrative: The photographer's lens captures moments of the subjects' mundane life, in the intimacy of their family home. Each of the women's loss is intrinsically troubling. Witnessing the murder of their own child, abduction, an explosion taking away all they had up until a fraction of a second prior... Whilst honouring the unbridgeable loss, this exhibition shines a light on profoundly personal stories of courage, strength and the sheer will to keep pacing ahead.
- 3.7 All images and narrative will be reviewed and approved by the relevant Council Departments prior to installation.
- 3.8 Belfast Photo Festival whICH has exhibited in Botanic Gardens for years is providing advice and assisting the Curator with the operational elements of the exhibition.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.9 There should be no additional costs associated with these requests

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Asset and Other Implications

- 3.10 Council officers will liaise with Event Organisers and promoters in relation to any potential environmental impact from events.**

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

- 3.11 There are no known implications.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**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 9th February.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Castle, Cavehill,
Zoo and North Foreshore Steering Group**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Castle, Cavehill, Zoo and North Foreshore Steering Group of 6th February.

**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 3rd February, as set out below:

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
2023 EVENTS						
Consulate General of Spain (Edinburgh office)	9 March 2023	Spanish Ambassadors Reception to bestow the Order of Civil Merit on Honorary Vice Consulate. Numbers attending – 60 - 75	D	Yes - £115	No as group wish to bring traditional Spanish food	Approve Charge £115 No hospitality
Northern Ireland Football League	22 April 2023	NI Football League 10th Anniversary and Awards Celebration- Drinks Reception,	C & D	Charge £825	Yes, Wine Reception as significant anniversary	Approve Charge Wine Reception <i>£500 given to their chosen</i>

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		Awards, Dinner and entertainment. Numbers attending – 350				<i>caterer for wine on arrival</i>
Newhill Football Club	2 September 2023	Newhill Football Club 50th Anniversary Celebration- Drinks Reception, Awards, Dinner and entertainment. Numbers attending – 200	C & D	No Charge as charity	Yes, Wine Reception as significant anniversary	Approve No Charge Wine Reception <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer for wine on arrival</i>
Belfast Bible College	8 December 2023	Post-Graduation Reception – reception event to make the graduation and achievements of the students at the college. Numbers attending - 200	C & D	No (Charity)	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality
2024 EVENTS						
The Scout Association, Northern Ireland Scout Council	5 January 2024	Chief Scout's Award and Queen's Scout Award Presentation – 120 young people receiving awards and attending a reception. Numbers attending - 450	B & D	No charge - Complimentary as Charity	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No Hospitality
Holocaust Memorial Day Trust	24 January 2024	Northern Ireland regional ceremony to mark Holocaust Memorial Day 2023 - a time for all to remember the millions of people killed in the Holocaust	C	No (charity)	No hospitality <i>(funding provided)</i>	Approve No Charge No hospitality

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		and subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. The event is the official Northern Ireland commemoration of the Holocaust. Numbers attending – 400 - 500				
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**Requests for the use of the City Hall
Grounds for Various Events in 2023**

The Interim City Solicitor submitted for the Committee’s consideration the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To present to the Committee the following requests from various clients for the use of City Hall Grounds:

- **Action Cancer Breast Foot Forward Walk – 9th June, 2023**
- **Belfast One Film Screening – 15th and 16th July, 2023**
- **Pride Picnic – 22nd July, 2023**
- **Belfast Mela Carnival Parade Party – 19th August, 2023**
- **Shine – October 2023**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- i **authorise the use of the City Hall grounds on dates listed above; and**
- ii **authorise the events to take place on the basis of the submission of an event management plan and risk assessment to ensure delivery of a safe public events.**

3.0 Main Report

Background Information

3.1 Members will be aware that requests for the use of City Hall are normally dealt with under the authority delegated by the Committee to the Director of Legal and Civic Services using criteria agreed for this purpose. Occasionally however, it is

necessary to place such requests directly before the Committee and those in this report fall into this category.

Key Issues

- 3.2 Several requests have been received for events over the spring and summer period and this report seeks to update the Committee on larger events using the City Hall grounds, due to the larger scale of activities involved it is deemed necessary to seek Committee approval.

The Proposed Events

- 3.3 The proposed events would take place on the front lawns only and areas such as the Titanic Garden and Cenotaph will remain open to the public. Access to the City Hall building will not be affected.
- 3.4 The event would be free to enter. In each case, the organisers would be providing all stewarding/marshalling staff and first aiders and would of course have to comply with the usual conditions including indemnities for damage and submission of a formal event-management plan.

9th June 2023 - Action Cancer Breast Foot Forward Walk

- 3.5 The Breast Foot Forward walk has taken place at the City Hall since 2014. It is Action Cancer's flagship fundraising event and raises circa £60,000 each year. The City Hall is the starting point for the event, with entertainment and warm up activities, before 800 participants take part in 5k or 10k walk around Belfast returning to the City Hall as the end point. This is an annual event in the City Hall calendar and has been delivered without incident.

15th and 16th July 2023 - Belfast One Cinema Screenings

- 3.6 This event aims to encourage people to experience the city centre shops and hospitality while they are in town. Organisers will be offering attendees information about potential offers provided our business members. Belfast One plan to show 4 films per day. Films early in the day will be aimed at young children and families and later films at a slightly older audience. All films will be rated appropriately. The event will be ticketed and access managed. There will be a big screen and audio equipment and additional entertainment by way of face painting and film props. Previous events in 2022 were very popular and were delivered without incident.

22nd July 2023 Belfast Pride Family Fun Day

- 2.7 This event would take place on the front lawns would include a radio roadshow, various performers on a stage, food stalls and children's attractions. The event would last from 12 noon to 5.00 p.m., although access would be required earlier and later in the day for set ups and strip downs. The event would be free and the organisers estimate up to 5,000 people would be in attendance. Previous event in 2022 and 2019 were very popular and were delivered without incident.

19th August 2023 Belfast Mela Carnival Parade Party

- 3.8 In 2022, ArtsEkta launched a new event as part of the festival titled 'Mela Carnival, a spectacular opening to the festival and begin a series of 50 events across a full week which will culminate in the traditional event at Botanic Gardens. The 2022 event was very successful and it wishes to host the event again this year.

A 800-participant carnival parade will begin at Writers Square, proceed onto Royal Avenue into Donegal Place and end at City Hall grounds. ArtsEkta requests the use of the City Hall grounds for a free to access carnival party and celebration event for the participants, family/friends and wider audiences with stage entertainment, performers, food traders and carnival floats.

14th October 2023 - Cancer Research Shine Night Walk

- 3.9 The Shine Night Walk is a 10k walk around Belfast starting and ending at the City Hall. The grounds infrastructure includes stage entertainment, gantry, marquees and warm up activities for 700 participants. The event took place in 2022 and was very successful and well delivered by Action Cancer fundraising team.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.10 There would be no costs for the council as the various organisers would bear any/all stewarding and equipment costs etc themselves. The utilities costs on the day are of a very minor nature and the normal event support in the form of electrical and water provision in the grounds will be provided.

There are no concerns from an asset management point of view, although the organisers would be required to provide the usual insurances, indemnities, and obligations.

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

3.11 There are no direct good relations, equality or rural needs implications arising from this report.”

The Committee:

1. authorised the use of the City Hall grounds on dates listed below; and
2. authorised the events to take place on the basis of the submission of an event management plan and risk assessment to ensure delivery of a safe public events:
 - Action Cancer Breast Foot Forward Walk – 9th June, 2023
 - Belfast One Film Screening – 15th and 16th July, 2023
 - Pride Picnic – 22nd July, 2023
 - Belfast Mela Carnival Parade Party – 19th August, 2023
 - Shine – October 2023

**Request for the use of the City Hall Grounds –
Belfast Photo Festival Photographic Exhibition**

The Committee was reminded that requests for the use of the City Hall were normally dealt with under the authority delegated by the Committee to the Director of Legal and Civic Services, using criteria agreed for this purpose. Occasionally, however, it was necessary to place such requests directly before the Committee and the request set out below falls into this category.

A request has recently received from the organiser of the Belfast Photo Festival (BPF) to hold a photographic exhibition in the grounds of the City Hall from 13th to 30th June, 2023. The BPF was the visual arts festival of Northern Ireland and one of the leading photography festivals in the UK. Launched in 2011, the festival attracted 85,000 visitors across 24 city centre venues and was one of the city’s major art events.

The Interim City Solicitor stated that, each year, the City-wide festival included the grounds of the City Hall as a primary location for both photographic exhibitions and other events and she provided details of previous events.

The theme for 2023 was ‘Journey’, focusing on photography’s ability to capture and reflect the world around us, from journeys of self-discovery, migration and spiritual journeys. This exhibition would focus on Vasantha Yoganathan’s most renowned body of work, A Myth of Two Souls, which charted an epic 7-year journey across India, Nepal and Sri Lanka, charting a spiritual and personal journey. It would be its debut in Northern Ireland. There will be 24 images in all in the exhibition.

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The exhibition would be installed on the West and East Lawn of City Hall grounds on 10th June and dismantled on 29th June, 2023. It would be free for members of the public to view daily, in line with the opening times of the grounds.

The Good Relations and Corporate Communications Units would review the exhibition images included in the proposal but presently no negative good relations implications have been identified which should stop the exhibition being hosted at the City Hall.

The Committee:

- i. approved the request for Belfast Photo Festival to use the City Hall grounds from 13th to 30th June 2023 to display a photographic exhibition as part of the Belfast Photo Festival; and
- ii. authorised the exhibition in line with similar events previously approved by the Council.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the All-Party
Working Group on the City Centre**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the All-Party Working Group on the City Centre of 26th January.

**The Coronation of Their Majesties
The King and The Queen Consort**

The Committee was advised that a request had been received from a Member for the Council to consider putting in place plans to mark the Coronation weekend. Members would be aware that arrangements had already been made to provide an early May Bank Holiday on Monday 1st May, followed by a Bank Holiday to mark the Coronation on Monday 8th May.

Buckingham Palace had announced details of ceremonial, celebratory and community events which would take place between Saturday 6th and Monday 8th May.

The Coronation Service would take place at Westminster Abbey on Saturday 6th May. This is one of the designated days for flying the Union Flag by DCMS.

On Sunday, 7th May, the Coronation Big Lunch would take place and would be overseen and organised by the Eden Project, funded by The National Lottery. Its aim was to bring people together to boost community spirit, reduce loneliness and support charities and good causes. A special Coronation Concert would be held on the same date.

On Monday 8th May, members of the public would be invited to take part in The Big Help Out, which would encourage people to try volunteering for themselves and join the work being undertaken to support their local areas. This was being organised by The Together Coalition and a wide range of partners such as The Scouts, the Royal Voluntary Service and faith groups. The Big Help Out would highlight the positive impact volunteering has across communities.

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A Coronation Emblem, specially designed for this occasion, represents the rose of England, the thistle of Scotland, the daffodil of Wales and the shamrock of Northern Ireland.

Proposed Programme of Events

Saturday 6th May – Coronation Service

It was proposed to erect a large screen on the west lawn in the grounds of the City Hall to provide a public space for those who wish to view the Coronation Service and ceremonial processions. In keeping with the community theme of bringing people together, a marquee would be placed on the east lawn to provide family activities through a programme of animation such as craft making and a photo-booth.

Sunday 7th May – The Coronation Big Lunch

It was proposed to host a Coronation Big Lunch at the City Hall, to primarily acknowledge the role of volunteering across Belfast which would also reflect other themes of community and diversity. This community lunch would be informal in nature to provide a platform for local people to come together whilst encouraging communities in the city who wished to join in by holding events across Belfast.

Monday 8th May – The Big Help Out

Given the theme of this day, to highlight the positive impact volunteering had across communities, it was not proposed to hold any events at City Hall. Rather, it would provide the opportunity for Civic Dignitaries and councillors more generally to visit local areas to volunteer or see volunteering in action.

The Committee was asked to note that local organisations could apply to the National Lottery 'Awards for All' to mark this occasion through its small grants programme. Projects were required to meet the priorities and eligibility criteria set out for this programme - <http://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/northern-ireland>.

The Committee:

- i. approved the proposed programme of events over the bank holiday weekend of Saturday 6th May to Monday 8th May 2023;
- ii. approved costs in the region of £25,000 to deliver this programme; and
- iii. agreed to illuminate the City Hall on the evening of Sunday, 7th May, 2023.

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**Minutes of the Meeting of the
Social Policy Working Group**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Social Policy Working Group of 14th February.

Chairperson