

People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 10th September, 2024

MEETING OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Brooks (Chairperson);
Councillors Abernethy, Bell, Black,
Bunting, Cobain, Doherty, M. Donnelly, R-M Donnelly,
Flynn, Garrett, Magee, Maghie, Maskey, McKeown
McLaughlin and Verner.

In attendance: Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;
Mr. S. Leonard, Director OSSS and Resources and Fleet;
Mr. J. Girvan, Director of Neighbourhood Services; and
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were recorded from Councillors Bower, Bradley and Canavan.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 6th August were taken as read and signed as correct.

It was reported that the minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 2nd September.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor McKeown declared an interest in agenda item 3 (a) Consultation on Policy Proposals underpinning a Public Health Bill for Northern Ireland as he was employee of the Health Service but as there was no discussion on the matter, he did not have to leave the meeting.

Councillor M. Donnelly declared an interest in agenda item 4 (b) Social Supermarkets 2025/26 as he was associated with a group that had previously been awarded funding and he left the meeting whilst the item was being considered.

Restricted

Request for use of Boucher Road Playing Fields – Aiken Promotions

The Director OSSS and Resources and Fleet reported that a request had been received from Aiken Promotions seeking to use the Boucher Road Playing Fields for a minimum of 1 show and a maximum of 6 shows during a 4-week period in either May, June or July, 2026 through to 2030 inclusive. The Promoter had also requested the use of Botanic

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Gardens for a minimum of 1 show and a maximum of 9 shows during a 4-week period in either May, June or July, 2026 through to 2030 inclusive.

The Committee noted that, whilst it was recognised that a 5-year commitment with the promotor assisted them in securing headline acts, this represented a sizeable commitment from the Council. Therefore, it was important that any permission given to the promotor permitted the Council to review it and amend it should other priorities arise for any of the proposed sites, for example, improvements to the site under the Council's Capital programme and/or pitch improvement programme.

The Members discussed the request in detail and several of the Members referred to the Pitches Strategy, which was currently pending and stated that they wished, where possible, to see the Boucher Road Playing Fields used for sport, especially in light of the stress that organisations were under on a weekly basis trying to secure a pitch allocation for their relevant sport and he reiterated the need to ensure that flexibility was built into any agreement.

The Director OSSS and Resources and Fleet provided a reassurance that, as with other similar requests, multiple year approval would be subject to annual review and added that the promotor would have to confirm specific dates annually and no later than six months in advance of the proposed event date.

A Member also referred to the engagement process with local residents around the events at Boucher Road and sought clarification as to what was required from the promoters to ensure consistency across the promoters and other Council venues.

Following detailed consideration the Committee:

- granted authority to the applicant to hold up to 9 concerts at Botanic Gardens during a 4-week period in either May, June or July 2026 – 2030 inclusive; and
- agreed that the request for the Boucher Road Playing fields would be considered on a yearly basis, pending the outcome of the pitches strategy.

The Committee further agreed that events seeking multiple year approval would be subject to annual review, with the Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services having the authority, under the scheme of delegation, to remove the permission for subsequent years based on officer recommendation or to reflect corporate priorities for the site, for example, the outcome of the pending Pitches Strategy.

Granted delegated authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to negotiate satisfactory terms and conditions of use via an appropriate legal agreement prepared by the City Solicitor, including managing final booking confirmation dates and flexibility around 'set up' and 'take down' periods, and booking amendments, subject to:

- The promotor resolving any operational issues to the Council's satisfaction;
- The promotor carrying out appropriate resident and community engagement

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- The promoter meeting all the statutory requirements of the Planning and Building Control Service including the terms and conditions of the Park's Entertainment Licence;
- The promotor confirming specific event dates annually, no later than six months in advance of the proposed event date; and
- A review clause, to allow for consideration of any issues during previous events and any other Council priorities that arise for both sites.

The Committee:

- noted that the fee for the use of Belfast Parks was detailed in the departmental pricing schedule and was subject to change as part of the annual pricing review; and
- that the above recommendations were taken as a pre-policy position, in advance of the Council agreeing a more structured framework and policy for 'Events', which was currently being taken forward in conjunction with the Council's Commercial Team.

It was further agreed that an update would be sought from the Council's Commercial Team as to the status of the ongoing review into the framework and policy for Events and also on the progress of the Pitches Strategy Report.

Quarter 1 Finance Update

The Director of City Services summarised the contents of the report which presented a Quarter 1 financial position for the People and Communities Committee, including a forecast of the year end outturn. She explained that the Quarter 1 position for the Committee showed an underspend of £1.4m (-5.4%), with the forecast year end position being an overspend of £73k (0.1%) which was well within the acceptable variance limit.

The Committee was advised that the main reasons for the quarter 1 Committee underspend related to vacant posts and posts under review across a number of services, contract cost reductions, the receipt of additional income and the timing of grants and programmes.

The Committee noted the report and the associated financial reporting pack.

Request for the use of Botanic Gardens for a Christmas Ice Experience

The Committee considered a request that had been received from Jordan Events Ltd. seeking to host a Christmas Spectacular Winter Ice experience in Botanic Gardens from 15th November 2024 to 2nd January 2025 and noted that the proposed event would include the following fixtures:

- Christmas Market Stalls;
- Ice Museum;
- Ice Rink and slide;
- Big Wheel;

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- Public bar and food offering; and
- Décor features.

Following a query from a Member, the Director OSSS and Resources and Fleet confirmed that there would be no entry fee for this event, however, some of the fixtures detailed above would be charged for individually. He also confirmed that the park would not close for the event, stating that it would have longer opening hours than it normally would have at that time of year, which would help to animate the space. He added that the organisers had indicated that approximately 10 days either side of the event operating dates would be required for event build and derig, however, there would be no requirement to close the park.

Following a query regarding the illumination of other parks, the Director advised the Members that this issue was being addressed as part of the Capital Programme discussions.

At the request of a Member, the Director undertook to liaise with the event promoter to discuss the possibility of future events taking place in other Council parks.

A Member asked the Director to ensure that due diligence of the applicants was undertaken to ensure the Council was achieving value for money. The Director assured the Members that through due diligence checks would be undertaken and if any issue was highlighted or the Companies were not deemed to meet the required criteria a subsequent report would be submitted to the Committee.

Following a further query, the Director undertook to ascertain which charity the promoter intended to donate to and to liaise with him directly and also noted that any decision regarding the distribution of the Social Fee for Botanic would be considered by the South Area Working Group in due course.

During discussion the Director also advised that the promoters had indicated that they would be keen to engage with residents at an early stage regarding the event to help mitigate for any issues that might arise.

The Committee granted authority to the applicant for the proposed event on the dates noted, subject to due diligence of the applicant, the completion of the appropriate event management plans and satisfactory terms being agreed by the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services and on condition that the Event Organisers:

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

The Committee noted that the above recommendations were taken as a pre-policy position, in advance of the Council agreeing a more structured framework and policy for

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'Events', which was currently being taken forward in conjunction with the Council's Commercial Team.

**Consultation on the Draft Local Government
Cremation Regulations NI 2024**

The Committee considered a report on a consultation being undertaken by the Department for Communities with Belfast City Council on proposed new cremation regulations.

The Director of City Services provided the Members with an overview of the previous regulations. She reported that the Cremation (Belfast) 1961 Regulations had been copied from the English Cremation Act 1902 to allow the Belfast Corporation to introduce cremation to Northern Ireland. Therefore, the 1961 Regulations only applied to Belfast and due to the passing of time required an update to reflect current practices and the addition of other crematoria.

She added that, in July 2024, the Department for Communities had issued the Council with a consultation document, with a short turnaround, as they were urgently required to legislate for other councils. Upon request, the Council had been granted an extension to the consultation deadline from the department until the 14th October 2024.

The Members were advised that the Department for Communities was clear that, due to the urgency to legislate for other councils, it had copied across the Cremation (England and Wales) Regulations 2008. This 'copy across' was therefore accompanied by some risks and potential unintended consequences for councils and their partner agencies, some of which she drew the Members' attention to.

The Director advised that, overall, Belfast City Council supported the need to replace the Cremation (Belfast) 1961 Regulations with regulations which any local council could adopt. The Council also supported the opportunity to resolve some of the administrative burden on bereaved families and to streamline and simplify the administrative processes. Belfast City Council had a self-interest to fully understand what the opportunities, risks and potential consequences of copying across the England and Wales Regulations 2008 might be and to reflect this in the consultation response. She added that officers would also be concerned that the relevant partners had not been consulted on these regulations, for example, DHSSC, NI Trusts, DOJ, Medical referees, Funeral Directors and that there was no lead in time proposed.

The Members were asked to note and approve the draft response, subject to officers continuing to engage internally with Legal Services on any final comments in relation to the regulations prior to approval at the October meeting of the Council.

The Committee approved the draft consultation response on the Local Government Cremation Regulations NI 2024 at Appendix C of the agenda, subject to any final changes by Legal Services, which, if made, would be e-mailed to the Members of the Committee in advance of the October Council meeting.

The Committee noted that the response outlined concerns that the Council would seek to be addressed by the Department for Communities prior to commencement of the legislation.

Committee/Strategic Issues

**Consultation on Policy Proposals underpinning
a Public Health Bill for Northern Ireland**

The Director of City Services advised the Committee that a public consultation had been launched by Department of Health setting out the proposals which would underpin a new health protection legislative framework for Northern Ireland, and which was based on the recommendations of the Review of the 1967 Act and learning from recent public health emergencies.

She reported that this was the second public consultation on Public Health which sought views on specific policy proposals that would underpin the provisions to be included in the Bill. The first public consultation had been in September 2015 and had asked basic questions about current Public Health law. The outcome of that consultation had enabled a final report to be published by Department of Health in March 2016, which had set out key recommendations for legislative reform and the shaping of future public health protection law in Northern Ireland, leading to the current consultation.

The Director drew the Members' attention to a detailed response to the questions posed in the consultation questionnaire. She reported that the responses had been developed with input from Health and Environmental Services, Good Relations, and the Equality Team as well as Legal Services.

The Committee endorsed the consultation response on Policy Proposals underpinning a Public Health Bill for Northern Ireland available [here](#) and agreed its submission to the Department of Health by the 14th October deadline.

**Council's 2024 Updating and Screening
Assessment for Ambient Air Quality**

(Mr. A. Curran, Environmental Protection Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 The People and Communities Committee will be aware that Belfast City Council is required to manage ambient air quality across the city in accordance with the provisions of Part III of the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 and current accompanying Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance (LAQM.(TG22)). LAQM.TG(22) establishes a cycle of annual ambient air quality reporting for Northern Ireland councils, to include that an Updating and Screening Assessment (USA) report be submitted to the Department of Environment, Agriculture and Rural Affairs (DAERA) technical assessors by 30th June 2024. An Updating and**

Screening Assessment is intended to identify any significant changes that may have occurred since the previous round of ambient air quality review and assessment was completed. An extension to the above-mentioned submission date has been obtained from DAERA to allow for the 2024 USA report to be considered by the People and Communities Committee in advance of submission. The USA report has been developed using the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Northern Ireland Updating and Screening Assessment 2024 Template. A copy of the Belfast City Council 2024 Updating and Screening Assessment (USA) Report is provided as Appendix 1 to this Committee report.

- 1.2 The Committee will be additionally aware that the council has declared four Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAS) across the city for exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) objectives, associated principally with road transport emissions. These AQMAS therefore encompass arterial road transport routes within the city including, the M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink corridor, Ormeau Road, Upper Newtownards Road and area around Cromac Street, East Bridge Street, Ravenhill Road and the Albertbridge Road. All of these AQMAS have been declared for exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide 40 µgm⁻³ annual mean objective, with the M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink corridor AQMA additionally having been declared for exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide 200 µgm⁻³ 1-hour mean objective.
- 1.3 Key conclusions from the 2024 USA report include that there were no exceedances during the 2023 monitoring year of any air quality objectives at locations of relevant public exposure across the city. A further conclusion of the 2024 USA report is that based upon current and historical monitoring data for road transport related nitrogen dioxide, the Ormeau Road and Upper Newtownards Road Air Quality Management Areas should now be revoked.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1

- The People and Communities Committee are requested to note the contents and conclusions of the Belfast City Council 2024 Updating and Screening Assessment report and to agree that the report be submitted to DAERA's technical assessors for appraisal.
- The Committee is further requested to agree that pending acceptance of the 2024 USA report and the conclusions detailed and also taking account of the recommendation received from DAERA for the BCC 2023 Air Quality Progress Report, Belfast City Council will move to revoke

the Ormeau Road and Upper Newtownards Road Air Quality
Management Areas by order.

3.0 Main Report

- 3.1** The 2024 USA report has considered the results of ambient air quality monitoring undertaken across the city during 2023 for a range of ambient air pollutants as detailed within The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, with a principal focus on road transport related nitrogen dioxide monitoring.
- 3.2** Belfast City Council undertakes automatic monitoring at roadside locations for nitrogen dioxide within the M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink corridor, Ormeau Road and Upper Newtownards Road AQMA. During 2023, there were no monitored exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide annual or hourly mean objectives recorded at any of our automatic monitoring sites. Moreover, we additionally undertake particulate matter (PM₁₀) monitoring at our Stockmans Lane roadside monitoring site, within the M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink AQMA. No exceedances of the PM₁₀ annual or 24-hour mean objectives were recorded during 2023.
- 3.3** The Belfast Centre Automatic Urban and Rural Network (AURN) site is located at Lombard Street within a pedestrianised area of the city centre and classified as an urban centre site, meaning that it is representative of a continuously built-up urban area, but located such that its pollution levels are not influenced significantly by any single source or street, but rather by the integrated contribution from all sources upwind of the station. Automatic and non-automatic monitoring is undertaken at the Belfast Centre AURN site for carbon monoxide (CO), ozone (O₃), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), sulphur dioxide (SO₂), particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) and benzene (C₆H₆). No exceedances of any Air Quality Strategy objectives were recorded during 2023 at the Belfast Centre site.
- 3.4** During 2023, we augmented our automatic roadside monitoring for nitrogen dioxide with a series of 84 passive nitrogen dioxide diffusion tubes, located at 76 predominantly roadside or kerbside monitoring locations across the city. Monitoring results for 2023 indicate that there were exceedances of the 40 µgm⁻³ nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective only at two kerbside monitoring locations; Henry Place (43.0 µgm⁻³), within the existing M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink corridor AQMA, and at the junction of the M3 Motorway off slip with the A12 Westlink and Nelson Street (42.3 µgm⁻³), immediately adjacent to the M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink corridor AQMA. A diffusion tube located at Stockmans

Lane roundabout was within 10% of the objective in 2023, having recorded an annual mean of $36.3 \mu\text{gm}^{-3}$ during 2023.

- 3.5 Annual mean objectives apply only at locations where members of the public may be regularly exposed over a substantial period of the objective, including at building façades of residential properties, schools, hospitals and care homes, etc. Accordingly, when the above-mentioned kerbside monitored nitrogen dioxide annual mean concentrations were distance corrected to the façade of the nearest residential premises, the 2023 nitrogen dioxide annual mean concentrations were reduced to $29.2 \mu\text{gm}^{-3}$ and $29.1 \mu\text{gm}^{-3}$ respectively, both comfortably below the $40 \mu\text{gm}^{-3}$ annual mean objective. This reduction is supported by a second diffusion tube monitoring location at Henry Place, situated at residential apartments in Carlisle Road adjacent to the A12 Westlink, which recorded a nitrogen dioxide annual mean concentration of $26.0 \mu\text{gm}^{-3}$ in 2023. Technical details of all various quality assurance, quality controls and distance corrections applied to our monitoring data are detailed within the USA report.
- 3.6 In addition, and in respect of the nitrogen dioxide $200 \mu\text{gm}^{-3}$ 1-hour mean objective, Defra have advised that where NO_2 1-hour mean monitoring data is not available, as in the case of nitrogen dioxide monitoring by passive diffusion tube, local authorities may rely on the outworkings of a Defra study, which indicates that exceedances of the NO_2 1-hour mean objective are unlikely to occur where the nitrogen dioxide annual mean concentration is below $60 \mu\text{gm}^{-3}$. Accordingly, all annual mean nitrogen dioxide diffusion tube monitoring data would indicate that there were no exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide 1-hour mean objective in 2023.
- 3.7 On the basis of our ambient monitoring data for 2023, it is considered that there is no need to proceed to a detailed assessment for any of the ambient air pollutants under consideration. Moreover, it is additionally considered that there is no need to extend the boundaries of any of our Air Quality Management Areas at this time.
- 3.8 Reflecting upon historical monitoring data and monitoring trends within our AQMAs, it is however noted that the annual mean objective for nitrogen dioxide has now been achieved within our Ormeau Road and Upper Newtownards Road AQMAs over a number of years. Monitoring data for the Upper Newtownards Road AQMA indicates that the annual mean objective for nitrogen dioxide has been achieved at the automatic monitoring site since 2011 and at the diffusion tube monitoring site, at the complex junction of the Upper Newtownards Road, Knock Road and Hawthornden Way since 2017. Moreover, monitoring data within

the Ormeau Road AQMA indicates that the nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective has been achieved at the automatic monitoring site since 2014, and at the diffusion tube monitoring sites since before 2011.

- 3.9 LAQM.TG(22) advises that the revocation of an AQMA should be considered following three consecutive years of compliance with the relevant objective, as evidenced through monitoring. Where NO₂ monitoring is completed using diffusion tubes, to account for the inherent uncertainty associated with the monitoring method, it is recommended that revocation of an AQMA should be considered following three consecutive years of annual mean NO₂ concentrations being lower than 36 µgm⁻³ (i.e. within 10% of the annual mean NO₂ objective). There should not be any declared AQMAs for which compliance with the relevant objective has been achieved for a consecutive five-year period.
- 3.10 In respect of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on revocation, Defra has advised that compliance first achieved in 2020 is unlikely to be representative of long-term trends in pollutant concentrations due to the impact of Covid-19 and associated lock down measures, adding that similarly in 2021, pollutant concentrations continued to be impacted by the change in typical activity that resulted from Covid-19 restrictions. Defra have further advised however that where 2020 and 2021 monitoring years are a continuation of a downward trend and part of many consecutive years of compliance (e.g. where compliance has also been achieved in 2019, prior to Covid-19), the AQMA may be appropriate for revocation.
- 3.11 Moreover, DAERA's technical assessors, in their report concerning the council's 2023 Air Quality Progress report advised that nitrogen dioxide annual mean concentrations have been below the objective for over five years in AQMA Nos. 3 (Upper Newtownards Road) and 4 (Ormeau Road) and that additionally, the council's Detailed Assessment, published in 2023, predicted that there were no exceedances at relevant public exposure locations within the AQMAs for a 2019 base year and for a 2028 forward projection year. The assessors therefore recommended that the Council should liaise with DAERA to consider revoking AQMA Nos. 3 and 4. The assessors additionally recommended that the AQMA No 1 (M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink) should be amended to revoke the designation for the 1-hour mean NO₂ objective as compliance has been achieved for more than five years.
- 3.12 The People and Communities Committee will recall that it considered the outworkings of the Air Quality Detailed Assessment under agenda item 12 at its meeting of 13th June 2023.

<https://minutes3.belfastcity.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=166andMId=11151>

- 3.13 On the basis of the abovementioned technical assessor comments, in compliance with Defra LAQM.TG(22) technical guidance, and in consideration of a further full year of post Covid-19 pandemic ambient monitoring data, confirming continuing compliance with the annual mean objective for nitrogen dioxide within the Upper Newtownards Road and Ormeau Road AQMAs, Belfast City Council will now move to revoke these AQMAs by order in accordance with the provisions of Article 12(4)b of Part III of The Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002. As part of the revocation process, Belfast City Council will also give consideration to the continuing need for the M1 Motorway / A12 Westlink Corridor AQMA 1-hour mean declaration.
- 3.14 The revocations will require completion of a detailed assessment for each AQMA, to be informed by atmospheric dispersion modelling confirming compliance with the annual nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective throughout the entirety of the AQMA, as opposed to just those areas of compliance demonstrated by ambient monitoring alone. Reports concerning the revocation of AQMA Nos 3 (Upper Newtownards Road) and 4 (Ormeau Road) will in due course be provided to the People and Communities Committee for consideration.
- 3.15 Members are advised that the council will consider the continuing need for automatic and passive nitrogen dioxide monitoring within the areas of the two revoked AQMAs in consultation with DAERA. Data from our roadside automatic monitoring sites currently forms a component of the nitrogen dioxide annual mean for urban roadside monitoring sites reported within the annual Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) and DAERA Northern Ireland Environmental Statistics Reports. <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/northern-ireland-environmental-statistics-report>
- 3.16 As a further aspect of the Updating and Screening Assessment, Belfast City Council has conducted a review of key road traffic routes and road transport sources across the city for the 2023 year in order to identify any recent significant changes that might affect ambient air quality. The council has confirmed within the 2024 USA report that there are no new or updated road transport sources that have not been considered through previous review and assessment processes. We have also confirmed that the air quality impacts of the new Grand Central Station development have previously been considered as an aspect of the planning process. We have provided similar commentary concerning air quality impacts of Belfast Harbour and George Best Belfast City Airport.

- 3.17 With regard to new significant industrial premises or processes, we have identified 2 new industrial processes within the 2024 USA report but confirmed that respective air quality impacts have been assessed and managed through the planning process.
- 3.18 For commercial and domestic sources, we have confirmed that these sources were considered in detail as a component of the council's 2023 Air Quality Detailed Assessment, adding that there were no further relevant commercial or domestic sources identified during the 2023 year.
- 3.19 By way of conclusion to the 2024 Updating and Screening Assessment report, we have confirmed that there is no need to declare any new Air Quality Management Areas for the city at this time. We have additionally confirmed that on this basis of our historical and current monitoring data, we will move to revoke the Ormeau Road and Upper Newtownards Road Air Quality Management Areas.

Financial and Resource Implications.

- 3.20 There are no financial or resource implications associated with the development of this 2024 Updating and Screening Assessment Report. This report has been developed from within existing staff resources. The Committee is advised however, the revocation orders for the AQMAs are required to be published in the Belfast Gazette and once at least in each of two successive weeks in more than one newspaper circulating within the district to which the revocation order relates. There will be financial costs associated with publication of the revocation orders.

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

- 3.21 There are no equality or good relations implications associated with this Updating and Screening Assessment report. A Rural Needs Assessment is not required."

A Member referred to the Clean Air Strategy and stated that he hoped that it would take account of the World Health Organisation guidelines. He queried if it was necessary to move to revoke the two air quality managements areas at the Ormeau Road and Upper Newtownards Road immediately. The Director of City Services advised that the Members did not have to decide right away, however, should these be revoked, it would enable the resources to be utilised elsewhere in the city. She stated that a report on the appraisers response would be provided at a later stage.

In response to a query regarding the worst affected parts of the city with air pollution caused by transportation, the officer advised that the M1 Motorway Air Quality Management

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areas (at Henry Place) was the area in Belfast with consistent higher pollution levels and stated that she was happy to discuss this issue in more detail directly with the Member if required.

The Committee:

- noted the contents and conclusions of the Belfast City Council 2024 Updating and Screening Assessment report and agreed that the report be submitted to DAERA's technical assessors for appraisal; and
- agreed, at this stage, not to move to revoke the Ormeau Road and Upper Newtownards Road Air Quality Management Areas by order and instead to await acceptance of the 2024 USA report and an update on the conclusions and recommendations received from DAERA / DEFRA.

Operational Issues

Waste Management Update

(Mr. J. McConnell, City Services Manager, Resources and Fleet, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on the latest waste statistics published by NIEA, to give members an update on the Council's Waste Framework and to update members on some initial results from the restricted access pilots, firstly with the DFI/PSNI pilot and also with the introduction of smaller vehicles in difficult to access streets. It also provides members with an update on Phase 1 of the expansion of the Kerbside Glass Collection arrangements to 22,000 additional households.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 Committee members are requested to note the contents of this report.

3.0 Main Report

Key Issues

Waste Performance and Recycling Rates

3.1 The most recent waste statistics published by the NIEA are the January to March 2024 quarterly statistics. The report is a snapshot of the final quarter of the 23/24 financial year versus the same period the previous year. As a result, it is less informative

than the annual report (due November 2024) but does contain one table (table 18) which provides an overview of performance in relation to the waste Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) over the course of a rolling twelve months.

- 3.2 The overall picture for NI as a region is one of an increasing quantity of waste collected (999,913 tonnes collected, up 3%), a slight increase in the municipal reuse and recycling rate (up 0.9% points to 51.1%) combined with a significant decrease in the landfill disposal rate (down 4% points to 18%).
- 3.3 An examination of the figures for Belfast City Council, indicates the following;
- **Municipal Waste Arisings** - the total tonnage of all types of waste collected by the Council was 160,282 tonnes. This is an increase of approximately 2,500 tonnes (1.5%) on the previous year.
 - **Municipal Waste Recycling Rate** – the percentage of all types of waste collected by the Council which was re-used, recycled or composted, increased by 1.3% to 38.3%.
 - **Household Waste Recycling Rate**– the percentage of household waste only collected by the Council which was re-used, recycled or composted, increased slightly by 0.3% to 41.1%.
 - **Landfill Diversion Rate** – the percentage of all Council waste sent to landfill was 7%, down from 29% in the previous year.
- 3.4 Based on these provisional figures, in 2023/24 the combined tonnages of recyclables collected from the various kerbside schemes (blue bin, brown bin and kerbside box) and recycling centres remained largely unchanged. The main contributors to the uplift in these figures were the increased tonnage of street sweeps processed in 2023/24 and the onboarding of the new arc21, interim residual waste treatment contract.
- 3.5 This residual waste treatment contract involves the haulage and treatment of the non-recyclable waste collected at the Council's Waste Transfer Station from across the city. On arrival at the contractor's Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) the material undergoes a pre-treatment exercise where a proportion of the waste is captured for recycling. The remaining waste is then prepared and baled for onward shipment to European Energy from Waste (EfW) facilities. This contract has delivered a step change in the Council's landfill disposal figures resulting in just 7% of residual waste ending up in landfill.

- 3.6 As noted within this report, and brought to the attention of Members through various consultation responses, there are a number of legislative, strategic and financial drivers which are going to shape future waste management arrangements. The full nature and implications of these policy drivers remain unclear and in the absence of sufficient clarity, radical, systemic change aimed at delivering significant improvements in the recycling rate and environmental outcomes are unlikely.

Waste Framework Update

- 3.7 At the People and Communities Committee meeting of June 2017, Members approved the Waste Framework document. It provides an overview of options on how waste could be managed within the city over the next decade. It was developed to align with the objectives of the Belfast Agenda and Resourceful Belfast (Circular Economy), designing out waste, improving the quantity and quality of recycling and supporting local jobs. These objectives are mirrored in DAERA's recent public consultation exercise; Rethinking Our Resources, Measures for Climate Action and a Circular Economy in NI.

The Waste Framework focuses on four themes (i) Collection Arrangements, (ii) Infrastructure, (iii) Behaviour Change and (iv) Technology. The following sections provide an insight on the work and initiatives currently being undertaken under the four main workstreams.

- 3.8 (i) Collection Arrangements

Inner City Recycling Scheme Update

On 1 August 2024, Bryson Recycling commenced the new contract for the delivery of the kerbside recycling scheme in the inner city. One of the main changes to the contract is that the delivery of the kerbside boxes to householders is outside the scope of the contract and these orders will be serviced by our normal bin delivery contractor.

Officers are working with Bryson Recycling to ensure that the contract delivers according to the terms, conditions and service delivery plan. Bryson Recycling has recently appointed a Customer Liaison Officer to assist with the delivery of this contract and to address customer issues raised by the Council. They are also in the process of installing in-cab technology to assist with communication and resolution of customer issues.

Pre-loved Toys

- 3.9 Following successful campaigns over the last two years, feedback from the main partner on the project, East Belfast Missions, noted that the level of resources required to deliver this project in its current guise far outstrips the current resourcing arrangements and that many charities are now naturally running their own schemes with a preference for monetary donations or new items. This presents a challenging environment both in terms of resourcing and teaming up with charities already involved in alternative schemes. The Service is exploring alternative delivery models for 2024 which may be more partnership based rather than a lead-partner model.

Kerbside Glass

- 3.10 As part of the 2024/25 revenue estimates setting process, Members committed to delivering phase 1 of this scheme which involves an expansion to approximately 22,000 households.

The Council has recently received a Letter of Offer from DAERA regarding financial support for the capital assets of the scheme on a 50/50 basis. Subject to approval at the August 2024 SPandR committee meeting, the project moves to stage 3 committed within the Council's Capital Programme. Following this, the Memorandum of Understanding will be completed and returned to DAERA.

- 3.11 Planning for expansion of the scheme is ongoing and orders for the boxes and vehicles will be placed following the SPandR decision. Given the lead time associated with the boxes, it is envisaged that the project will be rolled-out in Q4 24/25.
- 3.12 One of the key aspects of planning the project is the construction of the collection routes. In mapping out phase 1 of the expansion the Service is considering; existing kerbside glass provision (or otherwise), glass bring bank availability and the views of those residents who transferred to Belfast City Council under Local Government Reform and who then received a different kerbside recycling scheme which no longer included glass collections. Taking these factors into consideration the proposed catchment area for phase 1 is set out in Appendix 1.

- 3.13 **Community Repaint Scheme**

The Service is exploring the potential for a Community RePaint scheme at HWRCs. Not only would this seek to reduce the amount

of paint being treated and disposed of through the sites but it may provide a useful resource to community groups.

- 3.14 In January 2023, Members agreed to the establishment of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) in principle with the Community RePaint scheme. The service has completed phase 1 of this initiative which involved an assessment of the preferred approach and level of demand.

The Service is now progressing this scheme with a procurement exercise for a service provider combined with new containers for the paint (funding provided by the Council's Climate team) with a planned go live date of Q3 2024/25.

(ii) Infrastructure

- 3.15 Recycling Centres and Dargan Road WTS

Following SPandR approval for capital funding, the Service initiated and completed a procurement exercise for a multi-year, container provision contract. An inception meeting has been held with the successful contractor and a prioritisation plan for the skips and compactors for the first year expenditure agreed. The orders are due to be placed in Q2 24/25 and it is anticipated that skips will start to appear on site in Q3 24/25.

- 3.16 Recycling Centres and Pedestrian Access

The pedestrian access gate at Alexandra Park, Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) has been completed and operational as of August 2022.

The service has requested that our colleagues in Property and Projects commission a feasibility study regarding pedestrian access for Palmerston Road and Blackstaff Way HWRC.

- 3.17 Connected Circular Economy - Shared Island Project

The Service has worked with colleagues in the Economic Development Unit and Climate Team along with Dublin City Council (DCC) to deliver a feasibility study into a 'Connected Circular Economy.' This report looks at how the two cities can share knowledge and good practice with the ambition for the development of hubs in Dublin and Belfast to support the growth of the circular economy island-wide.

Colleagues in the Economic Development Unit are liaising with DCC to explore opportunities for funding which would enable the progression of the report's recommendations and take these

forward to develop more detailed business cases for the preferred option(s)

(iii) Behaviour Change

Waste Tourism

- 3.18 The Service has been closely monitoring the waste disposed of at recycling centres and civic amenity sites and in particular the levels of non-recyclable waste. It is noted that all neighbouring councils have various policies and procedures in place such as, proof of residency or an online booking system for site users, to restrict waste at their sites to that of their own rate payers.
- 3.19 Staff at a number of recycling centres report an increase in site users which are not recognised as local and this also includes 'man with a van' type operations. This issue has escalated since the decision by a neighbouring council to implement a booking system for all site users in September 2023.
- 3.20 The Service is analysing the data from the recycling centres and provisional findings would support this anecdotal evidence. This could obviously have a detrimental impact on both the Council's recycling rate and finances. It is the intention of the Service to present a report to the committee in the near future regarding this issue.

(iv) Information Technology

3.2.1 In-Cab Technology

In previous reports to Committee officers outlined the proposal to introduce a modern software system to drive efficiency and deliver the following;

- Hold all safety information on vehicles and routes.
- incorporate live time information flows to and from the operating centre to crews and vice versa.
- capture all the functionality of the Report IT App
- optimise routes as the city grows to ensure operational efficiency.
- link in with Customer Hub software to deliver customer service.
- monitor vehicle condition and driver behaviour.

- 3.22 By way of update, a tender for the procurement for the solution was issued by Central Procurement Services. This tender closed on 28th August, 2024 and an evaluation of the technical and financial aspects of the bid will now be carried out to determine the

leading bids. It is then proposed to hold demonstrations of those systems before considering the preferred bidder. Dependant on the preferred bid and the satisfactory contract award, it is still envisaged that the system could begin to be operationalised in Q1 2025/26.

Operational update - Access Issues

i. PSNI/DFI collaboration exercise

- 3.23 Since the update given to members at the August People and Communities Committee meeting, officers have been collating data on the specific streets that have been targeted by the pilot since inception in May.

In addition, a regular review meeting was held on 23rd August with representatives from DFI. The purpose of these meetings are to discuss any issues encountered by any party, to learn from progress to date, and also are used by Council Officers to feed in any concerns for the other parties to consider

Initial findings

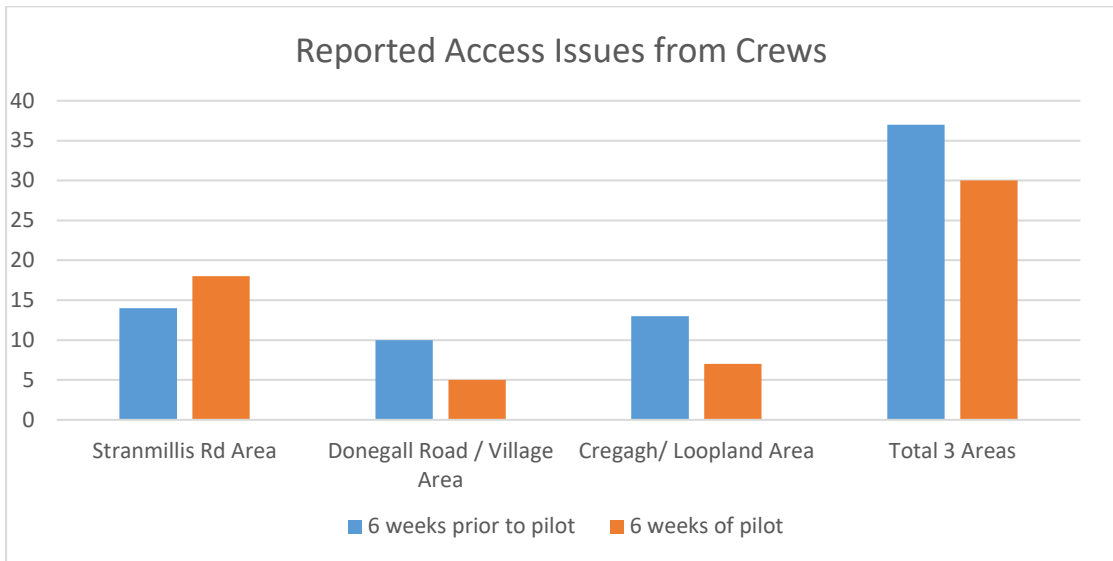
- 3.24 In terms of the data, two internal sources have been used

- information reported back from crews as part of their daily reports via the Report-It App
- information received into the customer hub from residents

Report-It App data

- 3.25 The information reported back from crews via the Report-It App was used for each area to compare the six weeks of collections immediately before the pilot with the six weeks of the pilot. This set of data shows a mixed set of results.
- 3.26 Chart 1 shows that in one area, Stranmillis, the number of access issues increased from 14 to 18 instances of blocked access over a six week period, but there were reductions in both the Donegall Road/Village area, down from 10 instances to 5 and in the Cregagh/Loopland area there was also a reduction, down from 13 to 6. Taking the three areas together there was an overall reduction from 37 instances to 30, a reduction of approximately 19%
- 3.27 It should be emphasised that this data only covers the small period of time since launch of the pilot (3 months out of an 18 month period) , and that results to date should be treated with a degree of caution.

Chart 1

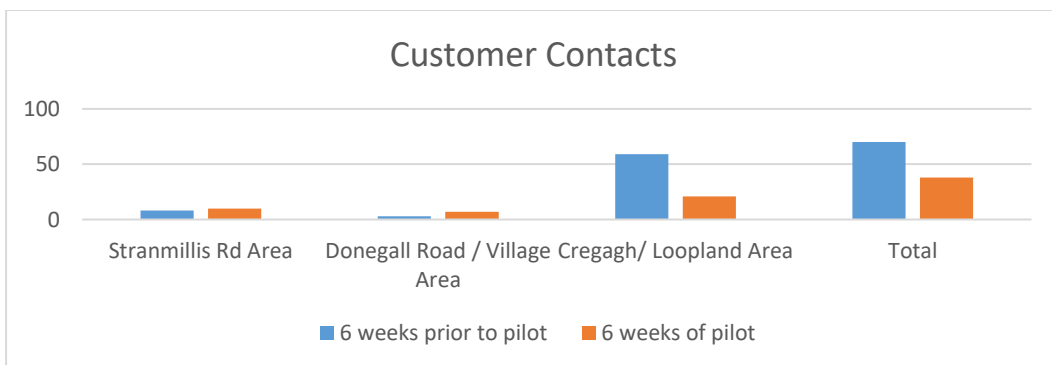


Customer Contact Data

3.27 In relation to the number of customer contacts received through the Customer Hub over a similar 6 week period prior to and during the first phase of the pilot, the like for like figures are detailed in Chart 2.

3.28 For the Stranmillis area there was an increase of customer contacts from 8 to 10. There was also an increase in the Donegall Road / Village Area from 3 to 7. There was however a significant reduction in the Loopland / Cregagh Road area from 59 to 21. Overall, there was a reduction in customer contacts from 70 to 38, or approximately 46%. Again, these are early figures and only cover the first cycle in three areas.

Chart 2



3.29

ii. Introduction of Small Vehicles

As previously reported to Committee Waste Collections started Phase 1 of the introduction on 12th August. At the time of writing of this report the first small vehicle has been deployed on routes for 2 weeks and will have completed just one cycle for those streets chosen.

- 3.30** Initial results are very encouraging, but again these are only based on two weeks of operation. Of the 128 streets serviced by the vehicles on the routes during this period, crews have been able to access these streets on all except for 1 occasion¹, indicating an initial success rate of over 99%.

That said, the Customer Hub has had contact from residents of 7 streets in the first week of operation in relation to collection services. The Waste Collection Team has analysed the vehicle tracking information for those 7 streets and have confirmed that the vehicle has indeed been able to access the street and empty bins there, ruling out access as a cause for any non-collection.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.31** There are no finance and resource implications in this report.

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

- 3.32** There are none in this report.”

Several Members asked that the Committees thanks be recorded to East Belfast Missions for its work in delivering the successful Pre-loved Toys Scheme. Following a query regarding extending the scheme, the Director of OSS and Fleet advised that other delivery options were currently being explored and suggested that officers could also look at exploring the feasibility of expanding the scheme to throughout the year.

A Member welcomed the long overdue expansion of the glass recycling scheme, particularly the inclusion of Ormiston and stated that she wished to see the expansion across other areas of the city.

Following a query, the City Services Manager advised that pedestrianisation of the Palmerton Road HRC was next on the list, however, a date for commencement of the works was yet to be agreed.

¹ Reason given by crew was due to road works in the street

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A Member requested that the response times for Bryson missed collections be assessed as it was currently very slow, with an update to be made to committee in due course.

A Member stated that she no longer received the daily missed waste collection report that had previously been circulated to all Elected Members and it was agreed that officers would arrange to have this reinstated.

The Committee noted the update report.

Call for Social Supermarkets 2025/26

(Ms. N. Lane, Neighbourhood Services Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek members approval to operate an open call for grant applications to the Social Supermarket Fund in 25/26 as outlined in the report.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 Members are asked to consider the contents of the report and to grant approval to operate an open call for grant applications to the Social Supermarket Fund in 25/26 as outlined in the report.

3.0 Main Report

Background

3.1 In response to recommendations in the Welfare Reform Mitigations report, the Department for Communities (DfC) has operated a Social Supermarket Pilot programme since October 2017. Funding was made available through the Community Support Programme (CSP) in 20/21 to expand the concept to all council areas.

The aim of a social supermarket is to offer a sustainable response to food insecurity by seeking to help address the root causes of poverty rather than simply provide food. This is achieved by providing, in addition to food support, a referral network for wraparound support. Food supply should ideally come from donations, surplus, or purchased at a discount, however, funding can also be used towards the purchase of food vouchers.

3.2 In the years 21-24, Council worked with identified partners to develop models for delivery. Committee granted approval on

9 November 2023 to operate an open call for grant applications to the Social Supermarket Fund in 2024/25.

- 3.3 Members were advised at this point that because activity is 100% funded by DfC, there was a risk that funding to support successful applications might not be in place from April 24. However, on balance, it was agreed that it was preferable to undertake the application process so that funding could be issued as soon as it became available from the department.
- 3.4 Members agreed that funding of up to £50,000 would be available for each individual project; this in line with other large grant funding programmes. The Social Supermarket Support Fund was opened on 5 December 2023 and received 28 applications totalling £946,619.70 by the closing date of 12 noon on Friday 26 January 2024.
- 3.5 In the absence of a Letter of Offer from DfC to fund this area of work, in April 24 SPandR agreed to provide £122,627 to fund 21 Social Supermarket Projects. This allocation was made from the 24/25 Hardship Programme.
- 3.6 Council received the CSP 2024/25 Letter of Offer from DfC on 3 July 2024. It contained an allocation of £672,650, an increase of £253,906 on the 23/24 allocation. SPandR agreed to make an additional contribution to provide a total budget of £785,744 to support 21 projects.

Key Issues

- 3.7 It is recommended that the 25/26 Social Supermarket fund would operate on the same parameters as in 24/25 for delivery between 1st April 2025 – 31st March 2026. These are;
- Applications would be open to any constituted group delivering eligible projects.
 - Eligible projects will be those that can demonstrate that they provide food/food support to individuals impacted by poverty and provide wraparound support through their own services and/or a referral network
 - Maximum level of award will be £50,000. (This is the maximum level of award that was available in 24/15 and is a reasonable limit given that the level of Social Supermarket funding from DfC in 24/25 was £672,650.)
 - Allocation of funding to projects will be based on a quality score.
- 3.8 Open calls for grant funding are administered through the Council's Central Grants Unit in Place and Economy. In order to

ensure that Funding Agreements can be issued to successful applicants from April 25, approval for successful applicants has to be brought to committee in January/February 25. In order to ensure sufficient time for applications to be made, eligibility checked and assessed, it is recommended that applications open from mid October – end November. Applications would be open to any constituted group delivering eligible projects. CGU support would ensure that applications are administered within a recognised independent process that allows for separation of duties between project delivery and administration staff.

- 3.9 At the time of writing, there is no confirmation of a budget from DfC for the Social Supermarket Fund in 25/26. Social Supermarket funding is delivered through a ringfenced welfare reform mitigations budget which is agreed in principle until March 25, there is no confirmation at present beyond that date. Officers have sought an updated position from DfC but no further information has been provided at this stage. In 23/24 and 24/25 an element of funds was drawn from Belfast City Council Hardship Funding but again, there is no confirmed budget for this in 25/26.
- 3.10 Members should note that in the event that no funding is made available from DfC, Council will be under no obligation to make awards to organisations who have applied, although this would have to be balanced against the work required from applicants to make applications.
- 3.11 Members should also consider that if an open call was not agreed until confirmation of funding levels was received, it would not allow for the practical delivery of activity in 25/26. In 23/24 and 24/25 the funding for social supermarkets was not confirmed by DfC until July. Had an open call process been implemented only on confirmation of funding, support would not have been available to organisations until February.

Members are asked to consider the issues listed above and if content, approve that council operates an open call for applications for the Social Supermarket Fund in 25/26.

4.1 **Financial and Resource Implications**

All human resources required to support the 25/26 approach are currently in place. No funding for 25/26 is yet in place.

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

None identified at present. Equality Screening of the 25/26 grant application process will be completed.”

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Several of the Members highlighted the need to see a geographical spread of the funding across the city and emphasised the need to ensure that groups and organisations were made aware of this funding opportunity and encouraged to apply.

At the request of a Member, officers agreed that a report would be submitted to a future meeting providing more detail on the Social Supermarket activity, to date, along with the outcomes and how these had been delivered throughout the city.

The Committee granted approval to operate an open call for grant applications to the Social Supermarket Fund in 2025/26, as outlined in the report.

Request for Nomination to Travellers Sub-Group

(Ms. N. Lane, Neighbourhood Services Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee was asked to consider a request from Northern Ireland Local Government Partnership on Traveller Issues (NILGPTI) seeking the Council to nominate 1 - 3 Elected Members, along with an officer, to the Partnership. They noted that the Partnership met every two months, with each Council hosting the meeting on a rotational basis.

Following a query, the Neighbourhood Services Manager advised that the Traveller Engagement Officer post had been transferred to the Good Relations Unit, as it would be focussing on engagement with ethnic minorities including Irish Travellers.

Several of the Members alluded to the fact that Elected Member nominations had already been made to the NILGPTI, however, they had not received any correspondence regarding meetings of the partnership.

The Committee agreed to defer the report to enable officers to liaise with Democratic Services to confirm if any Elected Members had previously been nominated to the NILGPTI.

**Request from Advice Space for sponsorship
of 60th Anniversary event and conference**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services drew the Members' attention to a request that had been received from Advice Space, formally Citizens Advice. He advised that the organisation planned to host a 60th anniversary conference to celebrate its 60-year Anniversary in offering generalist advice services to the people of Belfast. He reported that the main theme of the conference would be looking at the development of the welfare state since its inception and examining if it was fit for purpose today and for the future. It was expected that over 80 delegates would participate in the event.

The Committee agreed to award £2000.00 to Advice Space to sponsor its 60th anniversary and conference event on Thursday 28th November in the Riddel Hall Stranmillis.

Public Right of Ways at Old Coach Road

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 Under the Article 3 of the Access to the Countryside Order (NI) 1983 all Local Councils have a duty to

...assert, protect and keep open and free from obstruction or encroachment any Public Right of Way.

1.2 Investigation into the Old Coach Road began in 1998. In 2023 complaints were made to the Council regarding the condition of the path. As the path was not an asserted Public Right of Way (PRoW) the Council had no power to take any further action. To ascertain if a PRoW exists the Council opened a neighbourhood enquiry to gather evidence. 118 responses were received, 113 indicated that they believed a PRoW did exist, 1 stated that a PRoW did not exist but did not provide a reason for this.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 Members are asked to assert three Public Rights of Way on foot from:

1. Upper Malone Road to Old Coach Road
2. Old Coach Road to Malone Heights
3. Old Coach Road to Malone Playing Fields

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Key Issues

The Access to the Countryside (Northern Ireland) Order 1983 places a duty on District Councils to ‘assert, protect and keep open and free from obstruction or encroachment any public right of way’.

In 1998 an investigation was begun into the nature of paths which run along remnants of the Old Coach Road. This road carried traffic from Belfast to Dublin but was abandoned when the road was diverted in the 1800s. Remnants of the road continued to be used and subsequently a number of recreational facilities were developed on the land including Malone Playing Fields.

Legal Services have been consulted and have confirmed that the path appears to meet the common law tests for establishment of a

public right of way. The public's right would terminate at the entrance to Malone Playing Fields which meet the criteria of being a place to which the public can legitimately resort. The public's right also extends to other sections of the Old Coach Road namely Malone Heights and a further section from Old Coach Road to Upper Malone Road. It is therefore recommended that the Council assert these Public Rights of Way as required by its duty under the Access to the Countryside Order.

For a Public Right of Way to exist at Common Law there are two essential elements,

- a) Dedication by the owner of the soil
- b) Acceptance of the Right of Way by the public

Dedication by the Landowner can be either express or presumed. The vast majority of cases will turn on presumed dedication by the Landowner, as only very rarely will a Landowner expressly dedicate his lands as a Public Right of Way.

The following evidence shows presumed dedication by the landowner;

- a) Continued use of the path for a number of years.
- b) The routes in question have been used 'as of right' by the general public.
- c) The public's use of the path was open has continued during the past 26 years when the case was first opened and for a continued period previous to that. Prior to this the public's use of the path was such that the landowner knew or should have known about it, did nothing to stop it. Malone Playing Fields have a kissing gate leaving access open at all times.
- d) The use continued for a sufficient period to imply the owner intended to dedicate Public Rights of Way.
- e) The routes connects a number of public places or places to which the public regularly resort
- f) That use has followed a more or less consistent line.

Given the above assessment, members are asked to assert the three noted routes in the vicinity of the Old Coach Road as Public Rights of Way on foot.

3.2 Financial and Resource Implications

There are no known financial implications at this time. However, the Council does have a discretionary power to maintain public rights of way when a landowner cannot be traced.

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

There are no Equality or Good Relations Implications.”

A Member sought clarification from the Director that if the Council agreed to assert the three Public Rights of Way that it could commit to keeping them accessible.

The Committee agreed, in principle, to assert three Public Rights of Way on foot from:

1. Upper Malone Road to Old Coach Road;
2. Old Coach Road to Malone Heights; and
3. Old Coach Road to Malone Playing Fields.

Subject to clarification being sought from Legal Services that the Council could commit to maintaining the surfaces and keeping the right of ways clear and accessible.

Falls Parks Cyclocross Event

Given that this was a request for financial support and no budget was available, the Committee agreed to refer this matter to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for its consideration.

Proposal for Dual Language Street Signage

A Member noted her concern at the 50/50 response rate in one of the streets and outlined the damage that this could do to Good Relations.

The Committee agreed the erection of second street nameplate in Irish at, Lupus Grove, Herbert Street, Ladbrook Drive, Hillman Court, Lagmore Glen, North Parade, Mulberry Park, Brompton Park, Grangeville Drive and Clifondene Crescent.

Naming of New Streets in the City

The Committee approved the applications for the naming of the following new streets in the city:

Proposed Name	Location	Applicant
Black Ridge Avenue	Off Monagh By Pass, BT11	Apex Housing Association
Black Ridge Lane	Off Monagh By Pass, BT11	Apex Housing Association
Black Ridge Terrace	Off Monagh By Pass, BT11	Apex Housing Association

Request for the use of Parks for 2024 Events

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The Committee is asked to note that Council has received two requests from event organisers to host events in Botanic Gardens in November 2024 and these include.

- **Red Sky at Night – Household Belfast C.I.C – Tropical Ravine**
- **Sound of Belfast and The Factory Sessions – Factory 61 – Tropical Ravine**
- **Puzzle Lady Filming – Five Down Films Ltd – Friars Bush Cemetery**

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is asked to grant authority to the applicants for the proposed events on the dates noted; subject to the completion of the appropriate event management plans and satisfactory terms being agreed by the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services and on the condition that the Event Organisers:

- I. resolves all operational issues to the Council’s satisfaction;**
- II. meets all statutory requirements including Public Liability Insurance cover, Health and Safety, and licensing responsibilities; and**
- III. shall consult with adjoining public bodies and local communities as necessary.**

Please 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 the Councils Commercial team.

3.0 Main Report

Key Issues

3.2 If agreed, the event organiser or promoters will be required in advance of the event to submit an event management plan for approval by the Council and all relevant statutory bodies. This will include an assessment of how the event will impact upon the surrounding area and measures to mitigate these impacts.

- 3.3 **Red Sky at Night – Household Belfast C.I.C – Tropical Ravine – Monday 28 October 2024 to Monday 4 November 2024**
- 3.4 Belfast City Council has received a request from Household Belfast to host an art exhibition called Red Sky at Night in Botanic Gardens Tropical Ravine. Household work with various communities throughout Belfast to create public artworks that the people in the area can relate to.
- 3.5 The artist that Household will be working alongside is Kanich Khajonsi who wishes to create an immersive arts installation in the Tropical Ravine. This will involve the set up of speakers and various lights and small objects to create an immersive experience for those who are attending the event. This event is co-funded between Belfast City Councils 2024 programme and the British Council.
- 3.6 The event will be free to members of the public to book onto and will have time slots beginning at 4pm with last entry to the exhibition being at 10pm. Members are to be aware this takes place outside of the regular opening hours of the Ravine and Botanic Gardens therefore, staff would need to be available to open and close the park to those attending.
- 3.7 As the event will operate outside of normal opening hours a member of staff will be required to open / close and staff the facility. Any staffing costs incurred by Council will be charged to the event organiser.
- 3.8 **Key Dates for the event are:**
- 3.9 Set Up – Monday 28 October to Thursday 31 October 2024
Event – Friday 1, Saturday 2 and Sunday 3 November 2024 – 4pm to 10pm
De-rig – Monday 4 November 2024 – 4pm
- 3.10 **Sound of Belfast and The Factory Sessions – Factory 61 – Tropical Ravine – Thursday 14 November 2024**
- 3.11 Belfast City Council have received a request from Factory 61 to host their Sound of Belfast and The Factory Sessions in Botanic Gardens Tropical Ravine on Thursday 14 November 2024.
- 3.12 Factory 61 was originally set up in collaboration with South Regional college to create a pathway for students into the music industry. Their mission is to incubate upcoming talent in the local area by offering professional music and audio services while helping artists create a career in music.

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- 3.13 The event is a music gig for local up and coming artists and is designed to be a unique experience for those in attendance as it is designed to an intimate experience for a maximum of 120 people. There will be a charge of between £10-15 per ticket for those who wish to attend the event. Ticket sales will be managed by Eventbrite
- 3.14 As the event will operate outside of normal opening hours a member of staff will be required to open / close and staff the facility. Any staffing costs incurred by Council will be charged to the event organiser.
- 3.15 **Key Dates for the event are:**
- Set Up – Thursday 14 November 2024 – 12pm to 5pm
Event – Thursday 14 November 2024 – 6pm to 8.30pm
De-Rig – Thursday 14 November – 9.30pm
- 3.17 **Puzzle Lady Filming – Five Down Films Ltd – Friars Bush – Three separate Occasions between 23 September and 17 October 2024**
- 3.18 Belfast City Council has received a request from Five Down Films to use Friars Bush Cemetery to film scenes for the upcoming T.V show Puzzle Lady. The event organiser wishes to film between the hours of 2pm and 2am and they have provided us with the following information for what the show is about.
- 3.19 ‘When a strange murder takes place in the sleepy market town of Bakerbury, the local police are baffled by a crossword puzzle left on the body. With their case going nowhere, they turn reluctantly to Cora Felton, a recent arrival in Bakerbury; whose fame as the eponymous Puzzle Lady suggests she can help DCI Hooper and the Bakerbury police solve its first murder case. But the eccentric Cora isn’t who she claims to be: she’s the fraudulent front-woman for her long-suffering niece - Sherry Carter - a puzzle genius who only came to Bakerbury to escape her rock-star turned abuser ex-husband.’
- 3.20 The scenes taking place in Friars Bush are specifically based around the element of a puzzle. There are three murders that occur, and the bodies are left in the cemetery each containing a puzzle. The amateur Sleuth then connects the dots to solve the case. A further scene will include a chase through the cemetery with an imitation gun being used along with undercover police officers.

- 3.21 A member of staff will be on site at all times during the period of filming to open and close the cemetery. They will also be responsible for ensuring that the event organiser is following the necessary health and safety guidelines.

Key Dates for the event are:

- 3.22 The event organiser has requested permission to be able to film on three separate occasions between the 23 September and 17 October 2024. They are responsible for contacting the cemetery manager three days prior to filming to allow a member of staff to be available to facilitate the request.
- 3.23 There will be a fee applied for filming in the cemetery. As per the councils agreed scale of charges this will equate to a cost of £70 per hour which will equate to a total cost of £2520 over the three days filming.
- 3.24 As the event will operate outside of normal opening hours a member of staff will be required to open / close and staff the facility. Any staffing costs incurred by Council will be charged to the event organiser.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.25 None.

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

- 3.26 There are no known implications.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations at paragraph 2.0 of the report.

Alleygating Phase 5 Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the Alleygate Phase 5b Programme.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report that the Notice of Intention for Phase 5b and additional self-funded streets are advertised as per the legislation.

3.0 Main Report

- 3.1** Members will recall that at its November 2023 meeting the Council's SP&R committee agreed to proceed with the publication of a Gating Order for the installation of gates in those streets where the threshold for responses to the consultation had been 40% and above. Furthermore it agreed to proceed with a further consultation exercise for all remaining streets that had not met the Threshold.
- 3.2** All those streets that were not advertised in Tranche 1 of Phase 5 have been revisited. Residents were canvassed through a postal survey, and this was followed up with a door-to-door consultation. Those streets that still had low returns were visited three times by canvassers and a form or information letter delivered.
- 3.3** All those streets canvassed have now reached the threshold for consultation responses returned as agreed at the November 2023 meeting of the Council's SP&R Committee and can now progress to the Notice of Intention phase.
- 3.4** Councillors should note that within Tranche 2 there were 857 responses received from the 1065 residences canvassed. There were responses from 361 residences citing that they have been the victim of antisocial behaviour and crime. However there have been 33 objections received to the installation of gates.
- 3.5** A sizeable amount of these objections related to post gating issues with waste and bin collections. Some have cited ability issues with opening and closing of gates. Officers will contact those respondents to allay any fears and source solutions to any problems. It is anticipated that this should negate possible objections to the Notice of Intention.
- 3.6** The additional self-funded locations at Coles Alley and Ventry Lane have returned the requisite consultation forms with no objections and citing a high level of crime, drug use and antisocial behaviour.
- 3.7** Members should note that should objections be received during the Notice of Intention phase this may necessitate the Council holding a local inquiry, which, to date, has not been necessary in previous phases.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.8** All associated costs are covered within existing budget estimates.

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

3.9 No Good Relations or Equality issues.”

The Committee noted the report and agreed that the Notice of Intention for Phase 5b and additional self-funded streets be advertised as per the legislation.

**Request for the use of Alexandra Park
for the North Belfast Lantern Parade**

The Committee was advised that a request had been received from New Lodge Arts seeking to host the North Belfast Lantern Parade in Alexandra Park. The event was a project of the Ashton Community Trust that was managed by New Lodge Arts, a voluntary organisation working across communities in North Belfast for over 20 years.

The Members noted that the event was aimed at families, with the following planned events:

- A Lantern Parade making its way from Girdwood Community Hub in Cliftonpark Avenue to Alexandra Park;
- Art Workshops and street performers;
- An outdoor cinema;
- Magical evening event to include outdoor performances;
- Stage entertainment; and
- Fireworks display to close the event.

Following a query from a Member, the Director advised that the Council did not have a policy in relation to fireworks and the potential noise impact to animals, in particular dogs, but provided reassurance that all fireworks displays were licensed in accordance with the relevant statutory requirements.

The Committee granted authority to New Lodge Arts for the use of Alexandra Park on 29th – 30th October, to host the North Belfast Lantern Parade, subject to the completion of the appropriate event management plans and satisfactory terms being agreed by the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services and on the condition that the Event Organisers:

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

The Committee noted that the above recommendation was taken as a pre-policy position in advance of the Council agreeing a more structured framework and policy for ‘Events’, which was currently being taken forward in conjunction with the Council’s Commercial team.

**People and Communities Committee,
Tuesday, 10th September, 2024**

Issues Raised in Advance – Chairperson (Councillor R. Brooks)

At the request of the Chairperson (Councillor R. Brooks) and Councillor Flynn, the Committee agreed that an update report would be submitted to a future meeting providing options, along with the feasibility of pilot areas for dog litter bins to be located now that the tender had been completed, to include looking at mixed bin options and benchmarking against what other Councils were doing.

Chairperson