



|                           |                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Subject:</b>           | <b>Asset Management</b><br><b>i) Botanic Gardens (Lower Section) – Upsurge Licence Extension &amp; Update</b>                                     |
| <b>Date:</b>              | Friday 21 <sup>st</sup> August 2026                                                                                                               |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | Sinead Grimes, Director of Property & Projects                                                                                                    |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>   | Richard Weir, Interim Estates Manager<br>David Logan, Senior Programme Delivery Manager<br>Kevin Heaney, Head of Inclusion Growth and Ant-Poverty |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Restricted Reports</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                              |
| <b>Is this report restricted?</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>                                          |
| <b>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                              |
| Insert number <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                              |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Information relating to any individual</li><li>2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual</li><li>3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li><li>4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter</li><li>5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained</li><li>6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction</li><li>7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</li></ol> |                                                                                                              |
| <b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                              |
| After Committee Decision                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <input type="checkbox"/><br><input type="checkbox"/><br><input type="checkbox"/><br><input type="checkbox"/> |
| After Council Decision                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                              |
| Sometime in the future                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                              |
| Never                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                              |

|                                              |                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Call-in</b>                               |                                                                     |
| <b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b> | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |

|            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1.0</b> | <b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 1.1        | The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Committee on asset related disposal, acquisition and estates matters.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>2.0</b> | <b>Recommendation</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 2.1        | <p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Approve licence extensions at <b>Botanic Gardens (Lower Section)</b> for the continued delivery of the <b>Horizon 2020 Upsurge Project</b> for each partner; and</li> <li>(ii) note the update in relation to the Upsurge Project as set out within this report.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>Main Report</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 3.1        | <p><b><u>Botanic Gardens (Lower Section) –Proposed Licence Agreements in connection with Upsurge</u></b></p> <p>Queens University Belfast (QUB) and Friends of the Field (FotF) have been working in partnership with Belfast City Council on the delivery of the Horizon 2020 UPSURGE project at Botanic Gardens (Lower Section). Members will recall that, at the Strategic Policy &amp; Resources Committee meeting on 20 February 2026, approval was granted for a licence agreement with Friends of Belfast Botanic Gardens (FoBBG) for the delivery of the UPSURGE project at this location for a six-month period. Subject to Members' approval, it is proposed that the Council now enters into new licence agreements with QUB, FotF and FoBBG, commencing 1 September 2026 and running to 31 August 2027. In line with the established UPSURGE partnership arrangements, no licence fees will apply. A Site Map showing each respective licence area is provided at <b>Appendix 1</b>.</p> |
| 3.2        | <p>Members will also recall that, at the Strategic Policy &amp; Resources Committee meeting on 6 February 2026, it was agreed that the development of a GAA pitch on the Lower Section be progressed as part of the approved implementation plan. Entering into the proposed licences with QUB, FotF and FoBBG up to 31 August 2027 will not impede delivery of the pitch project, which remains at design stage and will be subject to the statutory planning process.</p> <p><b><u>Upsurge Project update</u></b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 3.3        | Members are asked to note that the Upsurge Project (i.e. both the demonstrator site and community garden) will remain at the Lower Botanic site until construction of the GAA pitch is scheduled to commence. This is currently estimated as Q3 2027/28 however this will be subject to further refinement as the project is developed and is dependent also on planning timelines.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 3.4        | When the Upsurge Project was first approved in August 2020, members were advised that the project had a 48-month duration. The Project started in September 2021 and was scheduled to finish in September 2025, however an extension was granted until February 2026. However, it subsequently transpired that there was a further period of time required for the exploitation of the results of the Project. This is due to expire in February 2030.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

|            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3.5        | There is no absolute obligation to retain the UPSURGE Project in situ until that time. However, if it is to be moved, the Council must implement viable mitigating measures in order to avoid the risk of funding clawback. Cognisant of members decision to develop a GAA pitch at this location, officers are exploring whether it is possible to co-locate the projects. In tandem, they are also seeking to identify suitable alternative sites. As part of that process, they will engage with EU Horizon, QUB and the organisations that use the Upsurge site as appropriate. |
| 3.6        | The Climate & Resilience Committee will be kept up to date as those discussions progress. However, any final decision in relation to this site will be for Strategic Policy & Resources Committee.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|            | <b><u>Financial and Resources Implications</u></b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 3.7        | In line with the established UPSURGE partnering arrangement, licence fees will not be applicable.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|            | <b><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 3.8        | None associated with this report.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>4.0</b> | <b>Appendices - Documents Attached</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|            | Appendix 1 – Site Map showing the location of each respective licence area at Botanic Gardens (Lower Section)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |