

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 21st January, 2022

MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Walsh (Deputy Chairperson);
The High Sheriff (Councillor Long);
Aldermen Dorrian, Haire, Kingston and Sandford; and
Councillors Beattie, Black, Bunting, Carson, Garrett,
Heading, Lyons, McAllister, McDonough-Brown,
McLaughlin, McReynolds, Murphy and Pankhurst.

Also attended: Councillor Ferguson.

In attendance: Mr. R. Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director
of Finance and Resources;
Mr. J. Walsh, City Solicitor;
Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;
Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational
Strategy;
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology for inability to attend was reported on behalf of the Chairperson (Councillor Groogan).

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 17th December were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 10th January, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

Alderman Sandford and Councillor Pankhurst declared an interest in respect of agenda item 4a – National Association of Councillors Conference, on the basis that they were members of the Association's Northern Ireland Region. As those were Council appointments, they were not required to leave the meeting whilst that item was under consideration.

Alderman Kingston declared an interest in relation to agenda item 5c – Update on Community Provision Funding, in that he was employed on a part-time basis by the

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st January, 2021**

Forward South Partnership, which had benefitted from funding, and left the meeting for the duration of the discussion.

Restricted Items

The information contained in the reports associated with the following eight items is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the Press and public from the meeting during discussion of the following items as, due to the nature of the items, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Section 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Revenue Estimates and District Rate 2022-23

The Committee:

- i. confirmed the cash limits which had been agreed at its meeting 17th December, as follows:
 - a. a cash limit of £48,311,171 for the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for 2022/23, including £3,270,000 for Belfast Investment Fund and £3,000,000 for City Deal;
 - b. a cash limit of £87,423,434 for the People and Communities Committee for 2022/23;
 - c. a cash limit of £19,461,512 for the City Growth and Regeneration Committee for 2022/23;
 - d. a cash limit of £1,462,301 for the Planning Committee for 2022/23; and
 - e. a Capital Financing Budget of £22,274,022 for 2022/23.
- ii. agreed that the increase in the District Rate for 2022/23 should be 2.99%, based on an Estimated Penny Product of £6,577,312, meaning a non-domestic rate of 27.2045 and a domestic rate of 0.3562 and that the amount raised through the District Rate in 2022/23 will be £173,514,937;
- iii. noted the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources' statement on the adequacy of the Council's reserves position and the robustness of the revenue estimates, as required by the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011;
- iv. noted the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement, as set out in Appendix 5 of the Committee report, as required by the Local Government (Capital Finance and Accounting) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011; and

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st January, 2021**

- v. agreed that the aforementioned decisions would not be subject to call-in, as that would cause an unreasonable delay in striking the rate by the legislative deadline of 15th February, 2022, which would be prejudicial to the Council's and the public's interest.

Signage at Olympia Leisure Centre

The City Solicitor reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 24th September, it had considered a report setting out options for the language or languages to be used in naming and signage in leisure facilities designated with a City-wide catchment. The Committee had agreed, in terms of Olympia Leisure Centre, to erect bilingual external naming and internal directional signage, with a report on the detail and appearance of that signage to be submitted to a future meeting.

He reminded the Committee further that this decision had been called in on both procedural and community impact grounds and that the resulting legal opinion had found that only the community impact element had merit. It had also recommended that the Council should, in any reconsideration of the decision, bear in mind its duties under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and its Equality Scheme. The decision of 24th September had then been included on the agenda for the next available meeting of the Council on 10th January and had been referred back to the Committee for further consideration.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor McLaughlin,
Seconded by Councillor Beattie,

That the Committees agrees to proceed with an Equality Impact Assessment on the erection of bilingual external naming and internal directional signage at Olympia Leisure Centre.

On a recorded vote, twelve Members voted for the proposal and six against and it was declared carried.

<u>For 12</u>	<u>Against 6</u>
Councillor Walsh (Chairperson); The High Sheriff (Councillor Long); and Councillors Beattie, Black, Carson, Garrett, Heading, Lyons, McAllister, McLaughlin, McReynolds and Murphy.	Aldermen Dorrian, Haire, Kingston and Sandford; and Councillors Bunting and Pankhurst.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st January, 2021**

**Brexit Committee - Reconfiguration as
Climate and City Resilience Committee**

The City Solicitor reminded the Members that the Council, at its meeting on 1st December, had ratified the Committee's decision of 19th November to reconfigure the Brexit Committee as a Climate and City Resilience Committee and had made a minor amendment to one of its proposed Terms of Reference.

The City Solicitor submitted for the Committee's approval the following Terms of Reference for the new Committee, which had been revised to reflect the amendment agreed by the Council and included a number of additions resulting from discussions which had taken place with the Resilience Commissioner and key Council officers on climate, resilience and wider economic issues:

- i Political oversight of the Resilience Strategy for Belfast including liaising with Belfast Resilience and Sustainability Board
- ii Political oversight of the development and implementation of the Council's Climate Action Plan including liaising with Climate Programme Board, enhancing climate literacy among staff and disclosure of climate data;
- iii influencing and contributing to regional considerations of the implications of climate change and other shocks and stresses identified in the Resilience Assessment on both the work of the Council and on the City;
- iv understanding the economic risks to the city associated with climate change and other shocks and stresses – including how these might impact the ability of Belfast to continue to attract and retain investment and grow the rate base;
- v monitoring the particular implications of climate change for vulnerable and disadvantaged communities across the city and to actively plan with them under the principles of a Just Transition;
- vi to consider public campaigns/public education programmes which the Council may wish to deliver to change behaviour among residents and businesses;
- vii to take account of the Council's statutory responsibilities on sustainable development and relevant Programme for Government commitments; and to hear evidence from other parties;
- viii to consider good practice from other cities and local authorities from the UK, Ireland and internationally;
- ix The continuous monitoring of progress and announcements around Brexit;

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st January, 2021**

- x Influencing and contributing to regional considerations of the implications of Brexit on both the work of the Council and on the district;
- xi to foster and maintain positive relations and cultural links with the European Union, and within the United Kingdom, post Brexit;
- xii Identifying any actions the Council may take to mitigate any adverse impacts arising and capitalising on any opportunities as a result of Brexit;
- xiii establishing links and collaborating with relevant authorities and organisations on a North/South and East/West basis and connections with Europe; and
- xiv to work collaboratively with the Shared Island Unit to avail of funding opportunities and deal with strategic issues and challenges to the benefit of our citizens.

The Committee approved the foregoing Terms of Reference.

City Hall Recovery Plan - Update on Progress

The Committee agreed to note a report providing an update on the progress being made across each of the operational areas in implementing the City Hall Recovery Plan and noted also that arrangements would be reviewed as further decisions were taken by the Northern Ireland Executive.

The Committee agreed also that a report be submitted to the People and Communities Committee addressing issues which had been raised by a Member around the collection of bins.

Assets Management

The Director of Physical Programmes submitted for Committee's consideration a report seeking approval in relation to the following asset related disposal, acquisition and estate matters:

Land at Upper Whiterock Road

(The minute for this item has been restricted - The restriction will be lifted in due course.)

North Foreshore

- The Committee granted approval to enter into a 999-year lease with Northern Ireland Electricity Networks Limited for land needed to install a sub-station at the North Foreshore development site;

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st January, 2021**

Land adjoining 131 Mount Eagles Avenue

- The Committee approved the transfer of a small plot of grassland to an adjoining householder;

Licence Renewal – 118 - 122 Royal Avenue

- The Committee approved the renewal of a licence agreement with Extern Northern Ireland for office premises at 118-122 Royal Avenue, for a period of 9 months from 1st February, 2022; and

Proposed extension of Annual Asset Valuation Contract

- The Committee approved a one-year contract extension with Land and Property Services to carry out its annual asset Valuation of the Council's property holdings.

**Illumination of City Hall on 21st October,
2021 – Legal Opinion on Call-in of Decision**

The Committee was reminded that the decision of the City Solicitor to illuminate the City Hall on 21st October, 2021 to mark the anniversary of the Centenary of Northern Ireland had been called in on both procedural and community impact grounds.

The City Solicitor reported that, given the urgency of the matter, the barrister had, on that date, informed the Council via a summary note that she considered the call-in to have merit on each of the aforementioned grounds. He drew the Committee's attention to a more detailed legal opinion which had subsequently been received by the Council, which supported her earlier view that the call-in had merit on both grounds. It had recommended that the opinion be circulated to Members and that the decision be included on the agenda for the next available meeting of the Council, with any vote to be taken on a qualified majority basis.

After discussion, the Committee noted the legal opinion and agreed that the Party Leaders would work to identify a way of improving the decision-making process for dealing with issues of an urgent nature.

**A City Imagining Cultural Strategy –
Update on St. Patrick's Day Programme**

(Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 17th December, it had considered a report providing an update on the ongoing development of City events, as part of the ten-year cultural strategy, A City Imagining. The report had made specific reference to the new approach being adopted to delivering St. Patrick's Day events from 2022 onwards and had outlined the three-stage process which had been used to assess applications to deliver pilot projects in that year.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st January, 2021**

The Committee had been informed that applications had been received from four organisations and had adopted the recommendation to approve the commissioning of the two which had been ranked highest, namely, Beat Carnival and The Duncairn, with funding of £100,000 and £80,000 to be allocated respectively.

In addition, it had agreed to extend the development phase for the two remaining projects, namely, Féile an Phobail and MayWe, to enable each of them to provide an updated proposal for delivery in March, 2022.

The Director of Economic Development reported that further work had been undertaken with Féile an Phobail and MayWe to enhance their proposals. In terms of content, Féile an Phobail was proposing to develop a music trail, with events taking place in various venues and locations across the City in the lead up to and including 17th March. MayWe was planning to deliver four creative artist and community-led creative commissions, which could be further developed in subsequent years and focus on participation from under-represented communities. Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee approve the commissioning of the projects to be delivered by Féile an Phobail and MayWe and to allocate funding of £50,000 and £40,000 respectively.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Update on Physical Programme

**Peace IV Programme – Shankill Shared Women’s
Centre and Black Mountain Shared Space Projects**

(The minute for this item has been restricted - The restriction will be lifted in due course.)

**Department for Infrastructure Blue and Green Infrastructure
Fund and Active Travel Projects 2021/22**

- The Committee noted the update on the four capital proposals to be supported under this fund and the risks to delivery.

**Proposed movement on the Capital Programme: IT Programme –
Financial Replacement System (Stage 3 – Committed)**

- The Committee noted that a satisfactory tender return had now been achieved and agreed that a maximum of £650,000 of capital be now allocated to this project, which the Director of Finance and Resources has confirmed was within the affordability limits of the Council.

Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund

- The Committee noted that Stage 1 of the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (the application stage) would be launched on Thursday, 17th February.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st January, 2021**

Contracts Awarded

- The Committee noted a list of contracts which had been awarded between October and December, 2021.

Matters referred back from Council/Motions

**Motion: Insulation Inspection and the Provision of Insulation –
Response from Department for Communities**

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 1st December, had passed the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Heading and seconded by Councillor Lyons:

"This Council recognises the lengthy delays which Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Housing Association tenants across Belfast are facing when it comes to insulation inspections and insulation being provided. The absence of adequate insulation only compounds the problems arising from fuel poverty facing many citizens this winter.

The Council notes the warning provided by the Utility Regulator that Northern Ireland households are facing energy bills of around £1,000 higher than last year.

The Council will, therefore, write to the Minister for Communities requesting a review of the affordable warmth scheme, as the current threshold for support is too low and does not reflect the rising costs facing households earning more than £23,000.

The Council will also ask the Minister to undertake a public review exercise for Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Housing Association tenants to detail their experience of accessing insulation for their homes from their housing provider."

The City Solicitor informed the Committee that a response had been received from Ms. J. Woodburn, a Housing Director within the Department for Communities.

Ms. Woodburn had begun by stating that, when the Affordable Warmth Scheme was introduced in 2014, the income threshold had been set at £20,000 per annum to include all social security benefits.

She had outlined the background to the establishment of that threshold by explaining that, in 2013, following successful pilots in 2012, the Department for Communities had held a public consultation and had proposed that the household annual income level be set at a modest level, in line with other Government programmes, such as the level of income for determining eligibility for free school meals, which was £16,190 per annum at that time.

Most respondents to the consultation had agreed that eligibility for the Affordable Warmth Scheme should be determined by household income and not just on social

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st January, 2021**

security benefit passports. However, many respondents had felt that the income threshold proposed had been too low.

She had explained that, following additional research and engagement with stakeholders, a further public consultation had been carried out, which had closed in February, 2018. The consultation had proposed that the income threshold be increased to £23,000 for households occupied by more than one person and reduced to £18,000 for single person households and that certain benefits, namely Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance, Personal Independence Payment and Carers' Allowance, be removed from the calculation of income. Most respondents had agreed that the disability benefits should be removed from the calculation of income but had disagreed with lowering the income threshold to £18,000 for single person households.

Following that, the Minister had approved an increase in the income threshold to £23,000 and the removal of disability benefits from the calculation of income. The changes to the eligibility criteria had been implemented on 1st July 2021, with the average annual income for successful applicants being around £16,000. She added that the Scheme was already oversubscribed with the current income threshold and that there were no plans to increase it.

Ms. Woodburn had gone on to state that the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's Cavity Wall Insulation Action Plan set out its plans for addressing issues related to cavity wall insulation installations in its stock. The Action Plan acknowledged that stock-wide cavity wall insulation remediation/replacement would be necessary but also noted that, given the significant funding required for such a programme, it could only be delivered when such funding became available, which at this time remained uncertain. In the interim, the Housing Executive would investigate and address cavity wall insulation issues where they were having a detrimental impact on the structure of the dwelling and would deliver a small annual programme to test a new cavity wall insulation extraction/installation process that will be developed.

After discussion, the Committee noted the response and agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting on the impact of recent rises in energy prices on fuel poverty in the City and addressing the need to improve the quality of housing overall, given the accepted link between poor housing conditions and fuel poverty.

Motion - Holocaust Memorial Day

The City Solicitor informed the Members that the Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 6th January, had referred the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Pankhurst and seconded by Councillor McCullough to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration:

"This Council agrees to formally mark Holocaust Memorial Day on an annual basis by lighting a flame on the front lawn of Belfast City Hall from 2022 onwards. The Council agrees to light the flame for a full day from dawn until midnight on Holocaust Memorial Day and agrees also to invite members of the Jewish Community and other relevant groups to take part in a short Memorial Service whilst the flame is lit.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st January, 2021**

Furthermore, the Council recommit to vehemently opposing contemporary anti-Semitism, racism, and hatred in all its forms against Jews. To that end, we request that the Council makes this a public declaration and that a letter is sent to representatives of our Jewish brothers and sisters from the Lord Mayor reaffirming this City's solidarity and commitment to stand with the Jewish people, both here in Belfast, and worldwide."

The Committee adopted the motion and agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting on the potential placing of a permanent Holocaust memorial.

Motion - Pay Rise for Leisure Workers

The City Solicitor informed the Members that the Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 6th January, had referred the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Ferguson and seconded by Councillor Matt Collins to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration:

"This Council recognises and appreciates the remarkable role that our leisure workers have played in keeping services running during very difficult services the past year and more, notes that these workers have been substantially underpaid for years and have not had any pay uplift since 2018 and further notes that, since the outsourcing of leisure services, there remains a serious pay legacy issue regarding staff who have TUPE'd over to GLL.

Accordingly, the Council supports the joint pay claim submitted by Unite the Union and NIPSA, calling for a 11.75% increase for Belfast City Council terms and conditions members and a 15.75% increase for Castlereagh Borough terms and conditions members, to address retrospective pay legacy issues. The Council will also host a specific meeting as soon as is reasonably possible, that is open to representatives from all Parties, and also includes Council management, GLL management and trade union representatives, in order to discuss this pay claim."

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

Motion - Playing Pitches in Belfast

The City Solicitor informed the Members that the Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 6th January, had referred the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Brooks and seconded by Councillor T. Kelly to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration:

"There is a constant complaint from both clubs and individuals regarding the shortage of playing pitches in Belfast. However, there also a number of sites, under Council ownership, which could be better utilised to address this issue.

The Council will ask officers to bring forward an action plan which will include investing in identified sites, which are in Council ownership, and

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st January, 2021**

how they can be brought up to match day quality. This will, in turn, generate additional income for the Council while maximising asset use for the benefit of the local community”.

The Committee noted the motion and agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting on how it would be facilitated, resourced and managed.

The Committee noted that a report would be submitted also on the progress of the Parks Improvement Programme, in the context of a request which had been made to include within the motion those Council's parks and open spaces across the City which would benefit from further investment.

Quarterly Update on Motions

The Committee noted the contents of a report providing a quarterly update on motions and issues raised in advance, which fell within the remit of the Committee, and approved the closure of the motion on the accompanying list, relating to Funding for a Citywide Tribunal Service, on the basis that all actions had been completed.

Governance

National Association of Councillors Conference

The Committee was informed that the National Association of Councillors would be holding a conference in Glasgow from 25th till 27th February.

The City Solicitor reported that the theme for the conference would be “Community Empowerment” and that the topics to be covered would include participatory budgets, empowering women and other groups and the importance of communities and democracy. The fee per delegate was £350 and there would also be travel and accommodation costs, which would be met from existing budgets. Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee grant approval for any of the eight Members appointed by the Council to the National Association of Councillors (Northern Ireland Region) to attend the conference.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Local Government Ability to Hold Remote Meetings – Call for Evidence

The City Solicitor informed the Committee that the Department for Communities had issued a Call for Evidence seeking views on the use of the current arrangements, as set out in the Local Government (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of District Council Meetings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020, which made provision for councils in Northern Ireland to hold meetings remotely or in a hybrid format during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Department had stated that it was aware that the experience of remote meetings had been varied and that, whilst the experience of managing and participating in remote meetings had grown considerably during the period since the regulations had come into operation, there had been examples of the difficulties which some councils had faced in using this format.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st January, 2021**

The Department had stated also that it had received representations from the local government sector making the case for permanent provision for remote meetings to be explored. It had, therefore, invited comments from interested parties on the pros and cons of making such arrangements permanent in Northern Ireland and on the use of the arrangements to date.

The City Solicitor submitted for the Committee's approval a draft response to the Call for Evidence and confirmed that it was based on the assertion that the Council would support legislation being put in place which would allow remote/hybrid meetings to be held on a permanent basis. The current arrangements for the holding of remote meetings would, he pointed out, cease on 24th March.

After discussion, the Committee approved the following response for submission to the Department for Communities:

COUNCIL RESPONSE

<u>Questions</u>	
<p>Q1 Generally speaking, how well do you consider the current remote meetings arrangements work?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Very Well</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Well</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Neither well nor poorly</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Poorly</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Very Poorly</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unsure</p> <p>While the powers in section 78 of the Coronavirus Act were brought in specifically to help district councils in Northern Ireland (and local authorities in England and Wales) deal with the challenges of holding meetings during the coronavirus pandemic, the Department would also like to hear from interested parties about the pros and cons of making permanent provision, in whole or in part, for district councils in Northern Ireland.</p>	<p>Q2. Generally speaking, do you think that district councils in Northern Ireland should have the ability to hold at least some meetings remotely on a permanent basis?</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unsure</p> <p>Beyond having provision to avoid face-to-face meetings during the coronavirus pandemic, we are aware of feedback from councils about additional benefits of being able to hold remote meetings including, but not limited to, the environmental and cost benefits of reduced travel, increased participation from local residents, and the potential to attract more diverse council members. We are keen to obtain representative views on the benefits of remote meetings and would particularly welcome any quantitative evidence to support these views.</p> <p>One area which may have been impacted through the holding of remote meetings is the cost savings they have achieved, particularly</p>

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st January, 2021

Q3. What do you think are some of the benefits of the remote meetings arrangements? Please select all that apply.

- More accessible for council members
- Reduction in travel time for councillors
- Meetings more easily accessed by local residents
- Greater transparency for council meetings
- Documents (e.g. minutes, agendas, supporting papers) are more accessible to local residents and others online
- Easier to chair meetings in an orderly fashion
- A virtual format promotes greater equality in speaking time during meetings
- I do not think there are any benefits to remote meetings
- Other (please specify)

Q5. What do you think are some of the disadvantages of the remote meetings arrangements, and do you have any suggestions on how they could be mitigated/overcome? Please select all that apply.

- It is harder for members to talk to one another informally
- Meetings are less accessible for council members or local residents who have a poor-quality internet connection

regarding a reduction in travel expenses and accommodation costs. We would be interested to receive any quantitative data about the cost savings that have been achieved, including any estimates of the comparative cost of running a remote meeting versus a face-to-face meeting.

Q4. (For district councils only)

Have you seen a reduction in costs since implementing remote meetings in your council?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Reference has also been made to the difficulties that some members have had with the remote meeting format, particularly in relation to the difficulties in managing misconduct, the challenges of working with unfamiliar software and technological issues caused by a poor internet connection. We are keen to obtain representative views on the disadvantages of remote meetings and would particularly welcome any quantitative evidence to support these views.

The Department for Communities considers that there are also many advantages of holding meetings face-to-face. For example, physical meetings provide numerous opportunities for councillors to speak with one another informally and build alliances, as well as to encounter local residents face-to-face and listen to their concerns in person.

Additionally, some members have referenced the vast improvement in the quality of debate when there is a lively atmosphere and they are able to make full use of their oratory skills to persuade and

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st January, 2021

<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meetings are less accessible for council members or local residents who are unfamiliar with video conferencing/ technology</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> There is less opportunity for local residents to speak or ask questions</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Some find it more difficult to read documents online than in a physical format</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Debate is restricted by the remote format</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> It is more difficult to provide effective opposition or scrutiny in a remote format</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> It is more difficult to chair meetings in an orderly fashion</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Virtual meetings can be more easily dominated by individual speakers</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> It might enable democratically elected members to live and perform their duties outside their local area on a permanent basis, therefore detaching them from the communities they serve</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I do not think there are any disadvantages to remote meetings</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)</p> <div data-bbox="135 1556 726 1736" style="border: 1px solid black; height: 80px; width: 100%;"></div> <p>Q6. What do you think are some of the main advantages of holding face-to-face meetings, as opposed to remote meeting</p>	<p>influence others. Some may consider remote meetings stifling and that physical meetings are essential to effective democracy and scrutiny.</p> <p>Q7. If permanent arrangements were to be made for district councils in Northern Ireland, for which meetings do you think they should have the option to hold remote meetings?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> For all meetings</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> For most meetings with a few exceptions (please specify)</p> <div data-bbox="826 828 1436 985" style="border: 1px solid black; height: 70px; width: 100%;"></div> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Only for some meetings (please specify)</p> <div data-bbox="829 1209 1439 1344" style="border: 1px solid black; height: 60px; width: 100%;"></div> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I think councils should be able to decide for themselves which meetings they should have the option to hold remotely</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I do not think councils in Northern Ireland should have the option to hold remote meetings for any meetings</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unsure</p> <p>Q9. Would you have any concerns if district councils in Northern Ireland were given the power to decide for themselves which meetings, and in what circumstances, they have the option to hold remote meetings?</p>
--	--

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st January, 2021

It is easier for Members to talk informally

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If provision for remote meetings were made permanent, it might be preferable for the Department to constrain the meetings or circumstances in which remote meetings can be held to ensure that effective democracy and scrutiny can still take place.

There are some occasions, for example, where a remote meeting format may be seen as more appropriate, such as for smaller sub-committees, meetings convened at short notice, or for meetings where attendees are drawn from a large geographical area i.e. for some joint committees and for rural councils. On the other hand, there are occasions where a remote meeting format may be viewed as less appropriate, for example large meetings involving Full Council or a council's Annual Meeting.

Q8. If permanent arrangements were to be made for district councils in Northern Ireland, in which circumstances do you think councils should have the option to hold remote meetings?

- In any circumstances
- Only in extenuating circumstances where a meeting cannot be held face-to-face or some members would be unable to attend (e.g. severe weather events, coronavirus restrictions)
- I think councils in Northern Ireland should be able to decide for themselves which circumstances they should have the option to meet remotely

Q10. If yes, do you have any suggestions on how your concerns could be mitigated/overcome?

In deciding whether and how remote meetings arrangements may be made permanent for district councils in Northern Ireland, the Department for Communities needs to ensure that it complies with the statutory equality duties to have due regard to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. In particular, the Department would need to avoid unlawfully discriminating (either directly or indirectly) against individuals across the nine equality categories, and also consider whether the arrangements advance greater equality of opportunity and good relations.

The potential benefits that remote meetings could have for members or potential members with disabilities or young families has been stated. However, there are also those for whom remote meetings could pose additional difficulties for example those with hearing or visual impairments or those more likely to struggle with the technology.

We are keen to consider views on these aspects of remote meetings and would particularly welcome

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st January, 2021**

<p><input type="checkbox"/> I do not think councils in Northern Ireland should have the option to hold remote meetings under any circumstances</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 60px; width: 100%; margin: 10px 0;"></div> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unsure</p> <p>While district councils in Northern Ireland have risen magnificently to the challenge of ensuring vital council business continues by conducting meetings remotely during these unprecedented times, there may be concerns that, if the arrangements were to be made permanent, a situation could arise where remote meetings arrangements were used by a majority party to avoid effective scrutiny or abuse the power in some other way.</p> <p>Q11. In your view, would making express provision for district councils in Northern Ireland to meet remotely particularly benefit or disadvantage any individuals with across the nine equality categories? e.g. those with disabilities or caring responsibilities?</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unsure</p>	<p>any quantitative evidence to support views provided.</p>
--	---

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st January, 2021**

Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues

Northern Ireland Housing Executive Consultation on Draft Homelessness Strategy 2022 - 2027 – Council Response

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy informed the Committee that the Northern Ireland Housing Executive had, on 27th October, launched a twelve-week consultation on its draft Homelessness Strategy for 2022 – 2027. The Strategy outlined the Housing Executive’s approach to addressing homelessness, with an emphasis being placed on supporting some of the most vulnerable people and households across Northern Ireland.

He drew the Committee’s attention to the following draft Council response to the consultation and recommended that it be submitted to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive:

COUNCIL RESPONSE

1	Do you agree with the vision of ‘Ending Homelessness Together’?	YES	NO
		<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Further Comments:			
The Council is supportive of the vision and has no further comments at this point.			

2	Do you agree with the aim of ‘Wherever possible homelessness should be prevented, if homelessness cannot be prevented it should be rare, brief and non-recurring’?	YES	NO
		<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Further Comments:			
The Council agrees with the aim and has no further comments at this point.			

3	Do you agree with the principles that will guide the delivery of the Strategy?	YES	NO
		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A	Person Centred	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B	Evidence Based	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C	Partnership Working	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D	Expert Led	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
E	Responsive	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
F	Innovative	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
G	Delivering Value for Money	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st January, 2021**

Further Comments:

In terms of A and C – it is also important to consider when/where families of customers are engaged with (where appropriate) both in terms of prevention (trying to prevent or intervene early where relationship breakdowns lead to homelessness) as well as in terms of supporting individuals to secure and maintain tenancies i.e. assessing the ability of the family to act as positive or stabilising influence and in providing ongoing support and to be able to link in with/work alongside support services.

4	Do you agree with the focus objective 1 - ‘Prioritise homelessness prevention;?’	YES <input checked="" type="radio"/>	NO <input type="radio"/>
----------	---	--	------------------------------------

Further Comments:

The Council agrees with the focus objective and has no further comments at this point.

5	<p>Do you agree with the focus outlined in objective 1 that will guide the Year 1 Action Plan? The draft Strategy outlines that actions identified in each year’s Annual Plan throughout the lifespan of the Strategy will focus on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Prevention Activity • Secondary Prevention Activity • Tertiary Prevention Activity <p>These areas are further outlined on page 29 to 31 of the draft Strategy.</p>	YES <input checked="" type="radio"/>	NO <input type="radio"/>
----------	--	--	------------------------------------

Further Comments:

Primary Prevention

The aim to ensure cross-departmental focus at a strategic level coincides with the aim of ensuring multi-agency involvement at the area/operational level – collaboration with key partners across both of these tiers will be key to the successful delivery of the strategy.

Secondary Prevention

The Council welcome the focus on extending Homeless Prevention Fund in order to mainstream projects delivering best outcomes given that prevention efforts often need to be sustained over time in order to maximise impact.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st January, 2021**

Tertiary Prevention

Working collaboratively also key to assisting people to sustain their tenancies – particularly those with complex needs – the ability to tap into wider supports at a community level will be vital.

A	What priority actions do you feel should be considered for objective 1 in the Year 1 Action Plan?
----------	--

The need to take into consideration the needs of people who have No Recourse to Public Funds and do not have the wider support mechanisms that other categories of people might have i.e. through friends and family that they can draw on. People with no recourse to public funds are very often prohibited from accessing homeless shelters that rely on public funds. Consideration should be given to the impact of the ‘Everyone in’ policy that existed during the Covid 19 pandemic, which provided accommodation to homeless people that had no recourse to public funds.

6	Do you agree with objective 2 - ‘Address homelessness by providing secure, appropriate accommodation and support;?’	YES <input checked="" type="radio"/>	NO <input type="radio"/>
----------	--	--	------------------------------------

Further Comments:

From discussions with groups from various communities, it is accepted that hate crime, particularly that of race hate crime is underreported. Therefore, this needs to be a consideration when supporting people into long term housing.

Work needs to be undertaken within communities regarding integration and how challenges around inclusion can be addressed.

7	<p>Do you agree with the focus outlined in objective 2 that will guide the Year 1 Action Plan? The draft Strategy outlines that actions identified in each year’s Annual Plan throughout the lifespan of the Strategy will focus on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the needs of our customers • Improving Access and Inclusion • Flexible and responsive accommodation and support services at the point of need • Implementing ‘Homeless to Home’, Strategic Action Plan for Temporary Accommodation <p>These areas are further outlined on pages 37 to 39 of the draft Strategy.</p>	YES <input checked="" type="radio"/>	NO <input type="radio"/>
----------	---	--	------------------------------------

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st January, 2021**

Further Comments:			
The Council agrees with the focus objective and has no further comments at this point.			
A	What priority actions do you feel should be considered for objective 2 in the Year 1 Action Plan?		
The Council has no comment to make at this point.			

8	Do you agree with objective 3 - 'Support customers exiting homelessness into settled accommodation'?	YES <input checked="" type="radio"/>	NO <input type="radio"/>
Further Comments:			
The Council is proud to be a partner in taking forward the Complex Lives approach and is hopeful that its implementation, alongside Housing First, will make a difference to, and ultimately see a dramatic reduction in, those impacted by chronic homelessness.			

9	Do you agree with the focus outlined in objective 3 that will guide the Year 1 Action Plan? The draft Strategy outlines that actions identified in each year's Annual Plan throughout the lifespan of the Strategy will focus on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Supply • Support • Community Integration These areas are further outlined on pages 47 to 48 of the draft Strategy.	YES <input checked="" type="radio"/>	NO <input type="radio"/>
Further Comments:			
The Council agrees with the focus objective and has no further comments at this point.			
A	What priority actions do you feel should be considered for objective 3 in the Year 1 Action Plan?		
All three – supply, support and integration are inter-related and inter-dependent and as such need to carry equal weight and equal focus in terms of the actions outlined.			

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st January, 2021**

10	Do you agree with the enablers that are outlined in the draft Strategy?	YES	NO
A	Experiential Evidence	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B	Collaboration	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C	Legislation	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D	Interdepartmental Approach	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
E	Funding	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
F	Staff	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
G	Process	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>Further Comments:</p> <p>The Council agrees with the enablers as outlined and has no further comments at this point.</p>			
H	What would you want to see prioritised in the Year 1 Action plan in terms of enablers?		
<p>Clarity on the funding that will be available – by DfC and cross-departmentally is critical in terms of additional funding as well as in terms of improved alignment of existing funding (e.g. for homelessness and via supporting people).</p>			

11. Please provide any other comments which should be considered in the development and delivery of the Homelessness Strategy 2022-27
<p>The Council is supportive of the development of the Homelessness Strategy 2022-27 and has no further comments at this point.</p>

12. Please provide comments on how the Homelessness Strategy 2022-27 should be monitored and reported against:
<p>The Council has currently no views on how the Homeless Strategy 2022-27 should be monitored and reported against.</p>

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st January, 2021**

**Northern Ireland Housing Executive Consultation
on Draft Strategic Action Plan for Temporary
Accommodation – Council Response**

The Committee was informed that the Northern Ireland Housing Executive had, on 27th October, launched a twelve-week consultation on its Draft Strategic Action Plan for Temporary Accommodation

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy explained that the Action Plan had been developed in consultation with key stakeholders, as part of the Housing Executive's Strategic Review of Temporary Accommodation project, which had been conducted with the aim of assessing how effectively the current temporary accommodation portfolio met the needs of homeless customers.

He referred to the following draft Council response to the consultation and recommended that it be submitted to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive:

COUNCIL RESPONSE

1	Do you agree with the planning principles that will guide the delivery of the Action Plan?	YES	NO
A	Person Centred	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B	Evidence Based Planning	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C	Expert Led	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D	Responsive	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
E	Partnership Working	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
F	Innovative	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
G	Value for Money	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>Further Comments:</p> <p>The Council is supportive of the planning principles and has no further comments to add at this point.</p>			

2	Do you agree with the indicators of success identified in the Action Plan?	YES	NO
A	Minimised need for temporary accommodation	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B	Customer receives appropriate accommodation and support at the point of need	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st January, 2021**

C	Good quality, affordable accommodation which is safe, warm and well-managed	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D	Customers moving on from temporary accommodation sustain their tenancies	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>Further Comments:</p> <p>The Council is supportive of the indicators of success and has no further comments to add at this point.</p>			

3	<p>The first indicator of success identified in the Action Plan is: To minimise the need for temporary accommodation. The plan details this will be achieved through ensuring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness is prevented • Tenancies are sustained • Rapid rehousing • Investment in alternatives <p>These areas are further outlined on pages 15 and 16 of the draft Action Plan. Do you agree these are the correct areas of focus to achieve a minimised need for temporary accommodation?</p>	YES <input checked="" type="radio"/>	NO <input type="radio"/>
----------	--	--	------------------------------------

Further Comments:

The Council has nothing further to add.

A	Do you agree with the priority actions for this indicator as detailed in the Year 1 Action Plan?	YES <input checked="" type="radio"/>	NO <input type="radio"/>
----------	--	--	------------------------------------

Further Comments:

The Council welcomes the focus on expanding Housing First and Housing Led responses – and the aim of ‘normal housing within normal communities’ as well as the focus on repurposing and reconfiguration of existing provision such as hostels.

As the action plan notes, there is a high concentration of hostel provision across Belfast as a whole, and particularly within Belfast City Centre, and the associated ‘challenges with large scale congregate settings’ are felt by partner organisations (such as BCC, PSNI, etc.) and, as such, the Council is keen to continue to both develop and build upon collaborative approaches.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st January, 2021**

4	<p>The second indicator of success identified in the Action Plan is: Customer receives appropriate accommodation and support at the point of need, the plan details this will be achieved through ensuring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive understanding of needs at point of presentation • Effective case management process • Flexible support models • Flexible accommodation options • Reduced usage of hotel/B&B accommodation <p>These areas are further outlined on pages 17 and 18 of the draft Action Plan. Do you agree these are the correct areas of focus to ensure the customer receives appropriate accommodation and support at the point of need?</p>	YES <input checked="" type="radio"/>	NO <input type="radio"/>
----------	--	--	------------------------------------

Further Comments:

The Council has nothing further to add.

A	<p>Do you agree with the priority actions for this indicator as detailed in the Year 1 Action Plan?</p>	YES <input checked="" type="radio"/>	NO <input type="radio"/>
----------	---	--	------------------------------------

Further Comments:

The Council has nothing further to add.

5	<p>The third indicator of success identified in the Action Plan is: A sustainable supply of good quality, affordable accommodation which is safe, warm and well-managed, the plan details this will be achieved through the development of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sustainable supply • Physical standards • Suitability standards • Service standards <p>These areas are further outlined on pages 19 and 20 of the draft Action Plan. Do you agree these are the correct areas of focus to ensure good quality, affordable accommodation which is safe, warm and well-managed.</p>	YES <input checked="" type="radio"/>	NO <input type="radio"/>
----------	--	--	------------------------------------

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st January, 2021**

Further Comments:			
The Council has nothing further to add.			
A	Do you agree with the priority actions for this indicator as detailed in the Year 1 Action Plan?	YES <input checked="" type="radio"/>	NO <input type="radio"/>
Further Comments:			
Consideration needed in relation to how need will be prioritised whilst demand continues to outstrip supply in relation to housing options locally and across the region – particularly for complex needs clients who often present in crisis and who often also have urgent and/or longstanding requirements in relation to wider support needs (e.g. where a Belfast-based individual is placed in temporary accommodation in Derry/Londonderry but they are required to attend substitute prescribing services, and to pick up scripts, in Belfast and this cannot be easily changed or where they are under paramilitary threat – real or perceived) which necessitate placement in certain settings or locations?			

6	<p>The fourth indicator of success identified in the Action Plan is: Customers moving on from temporary accommodation sustain their tenancies, the plan details this will be achieved through ensuring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabled customers • Enabled providers • Enabled communities <p>These areas are further outlined on pages 21 and 22 of the draft Action Plan.</p> <p>Do you agree these are the correct areas of focus to ensure customers moving on from temporary accommodation sustain their tenancies?</p>	YES <input checked="" type="radio"/>	NO <input type="radio"/>
Further Comments:			
The Council has nothing further to add.			
A	Do you agree with the priority actions for this indicator as detailed in the Year 1 Action Plan?	YES <input checked="" type="radio"/>	NO <input type="radio"/>
Further Comments:			

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st January, 2021**

- Develop projects to build community capacity to prevent homelessness and sustain tenancies

This could include an additional action (or be more specific on this action) around working with existing community support providers (e.g. in Belfast - advice services, Area Partnership Boards, etc.) and those commissioning community support services (BCC, BHSCT, etc.) to identify collaborative projects or ways in which existing supports could be enhanced.

Staff – as well as training to be able to provide improved direct support, the priority actions will need to be aware of wider support available at community level, particularly when it comes to longer term aspect which will be focussed on creating connections for the customer within the local community – promoting that sense of belonging and integration into the area in which they have been housed as well as for some community acceptance – if they are returning to a community/area where they have been known previously. Again fostering and formalising linkages with key community organisations/partnerships within localities will be key.

Agree that the Complex Lives approach should be mainstreamed if proven successful and that elements of it should be expanded on – where appropriate – beyond ‘complex lives’ clients.

7	Do you agree with the enablers that are outlined in the draft Action Plan?	YES	NO
A	Customer	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B	Funding	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C	Staff	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D	Technology	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
E	Process	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
F	Collaboration	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Further Comments:

The Council has nothing further to add.

G	Do you agree with the priority actions for this indicator as detailed in the Year 1 Action Plan?	YES	NO
		<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Further Comments:

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st January, 2021**

As already demonstrated during the prototyping phase of the Complex Lives approach – collaboration is key not only at a case management/delivery level but also at a planning, policy setting/review and commissioning level across key agencies with an indirect role in preventing homelessness.

As well as ensuring effective commissioning structures are in place to prioritise funding internally, there is also a need to influence effective commissioning by partner organisations to ensure that both prevention and treatment interventions are, at a minimum, complimentary and where possible, working in tandem to achieve improved outcomes for the customer, particularly those with complex needs.

8. Please provide any other comments which should be considered in the development of the Action Plan:

The Council is supportive of the development of the Action Plan and has nothing further to add.

9. Please provide comments on how the Action Plan should be monitored and reported against:

The Council currently has no views on how the Action Plan should be monitored and reported against.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Update on Community Provision Funding

(Mr. R. Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services, 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:

- **update the Committee on further ‘Social Supermarket Support’ funding received from the Department for Communities which has to be spend by end March 2022;**
- **update the Committee on capacity issues for existing funded community partners which is affecting their ability to fully spend existing allocations; and**

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st January, 2021**

- request updated delegated authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to make pro rata allocations given the very tight timescales for delivery.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is requested to grant updated delegated authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to allocate the additional monies received by DfC and any underspends from existing allocations on a pro rata basis to the following delivery partners and only to those who have confirmed they can spend the allocation by end of March 22:

- Area Strategic Partners
- City Thematic Partners
- St. Vincent de Paul and Salvation Army
- Belfast and Lisburn Women’s Aid
- Men’s Advisory Project

3.0 Main Report

Background

3.1 Members will be aware that, at the People and Communities Committee meeting on 9th November 2021, the following was agreed:

- (i) to agree to accept the additional funding allocation of £1,243,710 from the DfC under priority areas of General Community Support and Financial Inclusion.
- (ii) to agree to the following allocation model for the additional funding.

Community Support

**£631,360 (Micro & Medium Grants Programme 21/22)
£250,000 (Area Strategic Partners)
£150,000 (City Thematic partners)**

- (iii) to grant delegated authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to allocate any additional monies which may be received by DfC in-year to relevant delivery partners based on the agreed delivery approaches as outlined within this report.

3.2 However, at the subsequent Council meeting on 1st December, one element of this decision was changed, specifically the

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st January, 2021**

£250,000 allocation to Area Strategic Partners should instead be allocated to:

- (i) £180k to be divided equally between the Salvation Army and St. Vincent de Paul to support their Christmas appeals;**
- (ii) £55k to be allocated to Belfast and Lisburn Women's Aid; and**
- (iii) £15k to be allocated to the Belfast Men's Advisory Project.**

3.3 It is important to note that the change to the People and Communities decision of 9th November was on the basis of the Council having already allocated £650,000 to Area Strategic Partners at Special Council on 26 November 2021.

Current Context

3.4 The Department for Communities has just issued a letter of offer for £239,803.74 to the Council for Social Supermarket Support funding. The aim of a social supermarket model is to offer a sustainable response to food insecurity by seeking to help address the root causes of poverty rather simply provide food.

3.5 Additionally, existing some funded partners (as detailed above) are indicating to officers that they are not in a position to accept even some of the funding already allocated to them due to serious capacity issues. This is primarily down to the requirement for spend by end March 22 from the Department for Communities as the funder and the significant amounts of last minute funding already provided to these partners. Officers have engaged with Department for Communities regarding flexibility of this, but have been advised this is not possible and all spend must take place by end March 22.

Recommendation

Given the very challenging timescales in relation to achieving full spend of all of the Department for Communities funding by the end of March 2022 and the capacity issues being articulated by funded partners, the Committee is asked to grant further delegated authority beyond that given to the Director of Neighbourhood Services on 9th November.

3.6 This would include his authority to allocate the additional Department for Communities Social Supermarket Support funding and any underspends identified in the existing

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st January, 2021**

allocations to the full range of funded partners agreed by Members at the People and Communities Committee on 9th November, at the Special Council meeting on 26 November and the Council meeting on 1st December. Specifically, this would include pro rata allocations to:

- (i) Area Strategic Partners
- (ii) City Thematic Partners
- (iii) St Vincent de Paul and Salvation Army
- (iv) Belfast and Lisburn Women's Aid
- (v) Belfast Men's Advisory Project

3.7 Please note that further allocations to micro/medium grants are not needed as these schemes are adequately financed. Additionally, partners in the above categories who have already indicated they cannot spend their already allocated funding by the end of March 2022, would not be included in any further allocations by the Director and should further partners indicate they cannot spend additional funding, the Director would have the delegated authority to reallocate that pro rata to the remaining organisations who have indicated they can spend the additional funding by the end of March 2022.

3.8 It is worth bringing to Member's attention that the significant amounts of funding coming from the Department for Communities without sufficient warning or adequate timescales in which to ensure the funding can be spent presents a real risk that by end March 22 some of the allocated funding will not be spent. Officers have been highlighting these issues to DfC Officials for some time.

Financial and Resource Implications

3.9 As detailed in the report.

Equality or Good Relations Implications and Rural Needs Assessment

3.10 This is considered on an ongoing basis."

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Finance, Procurement and Performance

Update on Contracts

The Committee:

- approved the public advertisement of tenders, as per Standing Order 37a, as detailed in Table 1 of the appendix to the report;

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st January, 2021**

- approved the award of Single Tender Actions, in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions, as detailed in Table 2 of the appendix to the report;
- approved the modification of the contract, as per Standing Order 37a, as detailed in Table 3 of the appendix to the report; and
- noted the award of retrospective Single Tender Actions, in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions, as detailed in Table 4 of the appendix to the report.

Equality and Good Relations

Equality and Diversity: Annual Report to the Equality Commission of Northern Ireland 2020/21

The Committee was advised that the Council was required, under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, to provide the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland with an annual report on the progress of the implementation of its Equality Scheme. Accordingly, the City Solicitor submitted for the Committee's approval the annual report for 2020/21, which outlined the progress on actions identified to promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

The Committee approved the Council's annual report for 2020/21 for submission to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

Minutes of Meeting of Shared City Partnership

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Shared City Partnership of 17th January, including the following recommendations:

PEACE IV

- to agree to issue formal correspondence to the SEUPB highlighting concerns regarding the reimbursement of claims.

Building Positive Relationships

BPR1

- to agree in principle to the request to reduce contact hours by 27% and delegate authority to the BPR Chair and Programme Manager to consider the detail, subject to SEUPB approval.

BPR3

- to agree to extend the current reduction in contact hours (from 30 to 21 hours) for cohorts completing up to June 2022.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st January, 2021**

BPR4

- to approve, in principle, the request for the extension and reprofiling of the budget and to delegate authority to the PEACE IV Programme Board to progress the modification.

BPR6 - St. Comgalls

- to agree, in principle, to amend the Overnight Study Visit to NI or ROI, in place of Wolverhampton, due to Covid-19 impacts, and to delegate authority to BPR Chair/PIV Programme Manager to consider and approve the finalised arrangements, subject to SEUPB approval.

Good Relations

- to submit to The Executive Office the draft Action Plan for 2022/23, as set out in Appendix 2 of the Committee report;
- to note that, in order to meet the deadline set by The Executive Office, the Action Plan will be submitted in draft by 26th January, with the proviso that it is subject to approval by the Council on 1st February;
- to note that the Action Plan submission is subject to amendment during the assessing and scoring process to be undertaken by The Executive Office;
- to note that the Council will be notified of any changes in the final approved Action Plans;
- to note that a request has been submitted to The Executive Office to increase the programme budget for the BCC1 Community Provision Support Programme, using underspends from other programmes within the DCGRP Action Plan 2021/22; and
- to agree, under the BCC10 Strategic Intervention Programme, that the underspend in the South area of £4k (and if required a proportion of the underspend in North) be reallocated to the Lagan Village Youth and Community Association Centre for a reimagining project.

Operational Issues

**Minutes of Meeting of Party Group
Leaders' Consultative Forum**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum of 13th January.

Request for the use of the City Hall Grounds –

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st January, 2021**

Belfast Photo Festival Photographic Exhibition

The Committee acceded to a request from the organisers of the annual Belfast Photo Festival for the use of the City Hall grounds from 13th till 30th June for a photographic exhibition and noted that the exhibition would be in line with those held in previous years.

**Request for the use of the Cenotaph –
Royal Navy Association**

The Committee acceded to a request from the Royal Naval Association for the use of the Cenotaph at approximately 11.00 a.m. on Sunday, 12th June to hold a commemoration service to mark the 40th Anniversary of the Falklands War.

**Requests for use of the City Hall
and the Provision of Hospitality**

The Committee agreed to adopt the recommendations made in respect of those applications received up to 7th January, as set out below:

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
2022 EVENTS						
European Society for Clinical Cell Analysis	21st September 2022	ESCCA Welcome Reception to open a 3-day conference and exhibition in the ICC. Numbers attending - 400	A & B	No (waived as linked to Visit Belfast)	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality
Holy Trinity Boxing Club	1st October 2022	50th Anniversary Celebration dinner to mark the work of amateur boxing club in Antrim. Numbers attending – 300	C	No (Voluntary/ NFP)	Yes, Wine Reception as significant anniversary	Approve No charge Wine Reception <i>or</i> £500 given to their chosen caterer for wine on tables
British Association of Critical Care Nurses	17th October 2022	BACCN Gala Dinner and Welcome Reception to	A & B	No (charity)	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st January, 2021**

		open a 2-day conference and exhibition in the ICC. Numbers attending - 300				
Belfast Bible College	18th November 2022	Post-Graduation Reception – reception event to make the graduation and achievements of the students at the college. Numbers attending - 200	C & D	No (Charity)	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality
2023 EVENTS						
The Northern Amateur Football League	29th September 2023	Centenary dinner to mark the work of The Northern Amateur Football League in grassroots football in NI. Numbers attending – 200	C	No (Voluntary/ NFP)	Yes, Wine Reception as significant anniversary	Approve No charge Wine Reception or £500 given to their chosen caterer for wine on tables
The Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB)	18th November 2023	Graduation Ceremony for Chartership Qualifications for construction management and leadership. The event will be a ceremony, reception and networking.	C	No - Charity	No	Approve No charge No hospitality

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 21st January, 2021**

		Numbers attending - 150				
--	--	-------------------------	--	--	--	--

**Minutes of Meeting of
Active Belfast Limited Board**

The Committee noted the minutes of the meeting of the Active Belfast Limited Board of 17th January.

Issues Raised in Advance by Members

Flying of the Union Flag

Councillor Lyons referred to the allegations which had been made against Prince Andrew and requested that the Committee give consideration to the matter of the flying of the Union Flag on the City Hall on the Designated Day of 19th February, 2022 to mark the Prince's birthday.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Lyons,
Seconded by Councillor Heading,

That the Committee agrees not to fly the Union Flag on the City Hall on 19th February, 2022 to mark the birthday of Prince Andrew and agrees further that the Party Leaders discuss the potential for using that Designated Day on an alternative date to mark another occasion/event.

On a recorded vote, twelve Members voted for the proposal and six against and it was declared carried.

<u>For 12</u>	<u>Against 6</u>
Councillor Walsh (Chairperson); The High Sheriff (Councillor Long); and Councillors Beattie, Black, Carson, Garrett, Heading, Lyons, McAllister, McLaughlin, McReynolds and Murphy.	Aldermen Dorrian, Haire, Kingston and Sandford; and Councillors Bunting and Pankhurst.

Chairperson