

Public Document Pack

**Democratic Services Section
Legal and Civic Services Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS**

14th December, 2021

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

In addition to those matters previously notified to you, the following items will also be considered at the meeting to be held at 9.30 a.m. on Friday, 17th December, 2021.

Yours faithfully,

SUZANNE WYLIE

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

2. Restricted Items

- (h) City Hall Recovery Plan - Update on Progress (Pages 1 - 8)

4. Governance

- (a) Establishment of Castle, Cavehill, Zoo and North Foreshore Working Group (Pages 9 - 10)

5. Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues

- (f) Consultation on Draft Green Growth Strategy for Northern Ireland (Pages 11 - 18)
- (g) Consultation on Draft Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 (Pages 19 - 24)

6. Physical Programme and Asset Management

- (b) Update on Area Working Groups (Pages 25 - 70)

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6
of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

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Subject:	Establishment of Castle, Cavehill, Zoo and North Foreshore Working Group
Date:	17th December, 2021
Reporting Officer:	John Walsh, City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services Sinead Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes
Contact Officer:	Sabine Kalke, Project Sponsor

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The North Foreshore Members' Steering Group was established in 2016 to oversee the management of the North Foreshore, especially in relation to policy, resource allocation and financial risk of future development at the site. The group hasn't met since 2019 and it is suggested that it be re-established although with a wider remit.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to agree to re-establish the former North Foreshore Members' Steering Group, with a wider remit to include the Castle, Cavehill, Belfast Zoo and the NFS and to rename it the Castle, Cavehill, Zoo and NFS Working Group.

3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>It is suggested to re-establish the NFS Steering Group although with a wider remit.</p> <p>As there are currently a multitude of ideas, plans and developments going on in parts of North Belfast, including the Belfast Zoo, the Belfast Hills and the Giant's Park, it is proposed to establish a Member-led steering group to oversee and coordinate the developments in the wider area.</p>
3.2	<p>It is important to have a vision for this wider area and to ensure that planned developments fit into this vision. The areas are hugely important for North Belfast and the whole of the City and it is essential to maximise the impact that those developments could have.</p>
3.3	<p>The remit of the Group is to oversee the different developments and to help ensure the economic, social and community benefits of proposals are maximised. A request for a nomination from each Party will be issued through Democratic Services in the coming days.</p>
	Financial and Resource Implications
3.4	None associated with this report
	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment
3.5	None associated with this report
4.0	Documents Attached
	None



Subject:	Consultation Response - Draft Green Growth Strategy for Northern Ireland
Date:	17th December, 2021
Reporting Officer:	John Tully, Strategic Director of City and Organisational Strategy
Contact Officer:	Debbie Caldwell, Belfast Climate Commissioner Richard McLernon, Resilience Project Coordinator

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To advise the Committee that a response to the Draft Green Growth Strategy has been collated by Council officers. Should the Committee approve the draft consultation response, it will be submitted to DAERA on behalf of the Council.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to approve the draft consultation response for submission to DAERA. Any additional comments received from Members these will be incorporated in the response.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	DAERA has produced a Draft Green Growth Strategy for Northern Ireland which is currently under public consultation, with a closing date of 21st December 2021.

3.2	The Draft Green Growth Strategy can be accessed here , and a draft response to the questions set out by DAERA within the consultation is attached at Appendix 1.
3.3	<p>The Draft Green Growth Strategy is high level in nature, setting out a vision for Northern Ireland by 2050 whereby:</p> <p>“Northern Ireland has taken significant action for the climate and our environment, has placed nature and biodiversity on a path to recovery, and moved from a high to a low emissions society. We have made this change fairly and have demonstrated a responsibility for each other and for the place in which we live. As a result of all our efforts, we have a more resilient environment with a healthy ecosystem and a strong sustainable economy. More people are employed in green jobs and all generations benefit from improved wellbeing.”</p>
3.4	The Draft Strategy will be followed by a detailed Climate Action Plan which will be developed in 2022, with a focus on sectors that are identified by the Climate Change Committee (CCC), including agriculture, energy supply, waste management, transport, business, other, residential, land use, land use change and forestry.
3.5	The Draft Strategy notes that two Draft Climate Bills currently exist and commits to making any necessary changes to fit with the final agreed Climate Bill.
3.6	The Draft Strategy draws on the evidence-based approach set out by the Climate Change Committee (CCC), underpinned by a commitment to Just Transition, engagement and setting in place appropriate governance and processes to measure progress.
3.7	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There are no financial or resource implications at present.</p>
3.8	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are no direct equality or good relations/rural needs implications.</p>
4.0	Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1 - Draft Belfast City Council Draft Green Growth Strategy Response</p> <p>Draft Green Growth Strategy for Northern Ireland here</p>

Questions set out within the Draft Green Growth Strategy for Northern Ireland:

Q1 - Is our Vision 2050 the right vision? If not, what would you change?

Belfast Resilience Strategy sets out the goal for Belfast to “transition to an inclusive, net-zero-emissions, climate resilient economy in a generation.” To align with the language used in the Belfast Resilience Strategy and that used in the Belfast Net Zero Carbon Roadmap we would encourage the use of the phrase net-zero-emissions society rather than low emissions society. We feel this would set the appropriate level of ambition for all stakeholders across Northern Ireland society, and recommend that appropriate support is put in place to facilitate this transition.

Q2 - Are our Green Growth principles right? If not, what should be included / taken out and why?

Yes, we feel that the Green Growth principles are appropriate for a high-level strategy such as the Draft Green Growth Strategy for Northern Ireland. Furthermore, a commitment to a local placemaking approach would enhance the role of local authorities in coordinating local action to address the climate crisis, with appropriate resources put in place to facilitate this process.

Section 2

Q3 - Are we right to adopt a Green Growth approach bringing together green jobs, climate action and the environment?

Yes, we believe this is the correct approach. We refer you to the recommendations of the Reset for Growth report produced by the Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission which is summarised in the following report and attached for your information:
<https://minutes3.belfastcity.gov.uk/documents/s93148/Belfast%20Innovation%20and%20Inclusive%20Growth%20Commission%20Reset%20for%20Growth%20Report%20-%20Council%20Response.pdf>

More is needed in terms of growing specific clusters and industries like the hydrogen industry. There needs to be a clear strategy for this.

Q4 - Is a statutory Green Growth test needed to ensure we put climate action, environment and green jobs at the heart of policy development?

Yes, however the test and the process of application should be clearly defined to ensure that it is used effectively. We further recommend that it is applied across all programmes of government and to all funding programmes. We welcome the linking of public funding to climate responsibilities as this will focus minds and ensure deliverables and outcomes are clearly linked to addressing the climate crisis. Potentially the test should prevent actions that have a negative impact on Green Growth as well as supporting those with a positive impact.

Q5 - Should Green Growth be one of our top Executive investment and budgetary priorities?

Yes, it should be a top priority given the cross cutting and urgent nature of the issues being addressed. The Committee for Climate Change and the Draft Green Growth Strategy recognise the need for action throughout the 2020s to ensure that “by the 2030s choices in all areas must be the low-carbon option.”

This needs to include access to various forms of funding including the Green Investment Board and joint investment frameworks with the private sector.

Section 3

Q6 - Do we need specific targets for each sector set out in Climate Action Plans? If yes, how would this be brought about; and if no, how should we ensure we drive change?

Yes, specific targets should be set out in the forthcoming Climate Action Plans, linked to relevant strategies such as the forthcoming Energy Strategy and the forthcoming Environment Strategy. These should be developed through an evidence-based approach, in collaboration with key stakeholders in each sector. Reports such as the Belfast Net Zero Carbon Roadmap set out a potential pathway to achieving net zero across a range of sectors including housing and transport https://pcancities.org.uk/sites/default/files/Belfast%20Net-Zero%20Carbon%20Roadmap_0.pdf

We propose that a robust results framework is established with indicators, milestones and targets that cascade from regional through to sectoral and local levels. We also recommend that a costed implementation plan is developed (incorporating an economic appraisal of delivery options) along with a resource mobilisation plan to ensure that the strategy can be delivered within the timeframe. This will require innovative financial models that can crowd in private sector finance. We are working closely with colleagues at PCAN, the UK Climate Investment Commission and LSE on potential financial models and are happy to share this experience.

A public facing report should be produced annually – commitment must be given now to quicker wins such as housing retrofit, transport, decarbonisation and energy transition.

Q7 - Do you agree on the definition of the sectors?

Yes, we agree with the alignment of sectors to those defined by the Committee for Climate Change (CCC) to allow measurement of progress to be undertaken by the CCC as well as through local mechanisms.

Section 4

Q8 - Do you agree with the adoption of a Just Transition approach? If not, what approach should we be taking and why?

Yes, the Just Transition approach is at the heart of the work of Belfast Climate Commission, a partnership between Belfast City Council and Queens University of Belfast. It is vital that those most vulnerable in society, and those potentially most impacted by the anticipated changes are protected from negative impacts, that all members of society have a voice in the process, and that an affordable and fair transition is made available for all across society.

Q9 - How do we ensure this Just Transition - is a Commission the right way forward?

We believe that a Just Transition Framework is the right way forward, with appropriate governance to ensure integration across policies and action, at the regional and local level. The VCSE sector is often the voice of the vulnerable and underrepresented in our society and should be given a role in advocating for and ensuring that the most vulnerable are protected throughout the transition. The VCSE panel within Belfast Community Planning Partnership is an example of how that voice can be incorporated into a strategic programme of planning and delivery.

Q10 - How do we make sure the public and all stakeholders (including young people) are actively engaged with Green Growth? Is a Citizen Assembly Panel the right structure?

We recommend a review of existing engagement mechanisms in Northern Ireland to identify strengths and weaknesses, supporting existing good practice where possible and addressing gaps in representation where they exist. A wide-ranging engagement framework would ensure that there is the greatest chance of hearing as many voices as possible, including people of all ages. Oversight and coordination should be incorporated into the framework, and the framework should be appropriately resourced.

Section 5

Q11 - How can we work most effectively with businesses, local government and organisations across Northern Ireland to maximise and deliver our decarbonisation and Green Growth efforts?

Through the Green Growth governance arrangements, forthcoming climate action plan mechanisms, the co-design and co-delivery of programmes at both regional and local authority levels, to ensure a joined-up approach across sectors. Thematic advisory panels may be required as sectoral targets and plans are developed, and to address underpinning issues such as climate finance, innovation and technology.

We have drawn on the recent positive engagement through the LGA with UK government departments to highlight below the importance of a place based approach and the role of local government in encouraging a strong public and private sector partnering approach.

Regional and local government collaboration will be essential to delivering the strategy. Supporting green growth requires significant national, regional and sector leadership, but only local government can mobilise and join-up the collective action of all partners, businesses, and people in places. Local government therefore has a unique and powerful place leadership and delivery role on cross-cutting issues like climate change, which was exemplified during the pandemic.

More than half of the emissions reductions that are needed rely on people and businesses taking up low-carbon solutions. These are decisions that are made at a local and individual level, and many of these decisions depend on having supporting infrastructure and systems in place.

Places are very different, which can mean a quite fundamentally different journey to Net Zero. The journey facing a town or city economy will be different from a rural area dominated by the agriculture sector. Variations include population density, shape of the economy, infrastructure, geographical features, etc.

Local government holds a wide range of important powers and assets for decarbonising and adapting to climate change in places and achieving a just transition to Net Zero, and it is ambitious to fulfil this potential as an essential delivery partner.

However, there is a need to grow the capacity and skills in local government rapidly. This includes on exchanging experience of what works in different places, how the impacts of different initiatives can be understood, success replicated, and the need to upskill within local government.

Crucially though, the overall strategy towards green growth should outline the support for local government to fulfil its role, and provide clarity on the expectations of local government and so the certainty on where they will need to invest in developing capacity.

Day to day local government engages with a multiplicity of regional agencies and schemes, on a range of different programmes with overlapping objectives. There is lots of positive work underway, but a fragmented policy and funding environment creates complexity, uncertainty and missed opportunity; and often without the scale to deliver the level of change necessary.

Within this complexity there is not the overall long-term regional strategy around what local authorities are working towards and clarity of what is expected of them. This can limit the huge potential of local government to play its leadership role in place, and to build its own capacity and local path to support green growth and deliver against Net Zero commitments.

BCC would like to work towards building a partnership which ensures the right balance of powers, responsibilities, and where resources rest at the right level to best achieve different outcomes. We propose:

- including a chapter in the Strategy on the role of local government in place which sets out how regional government and local government will work together to deliver the strategy in places;
- creating a leadership group of government departments and local government to take forward this chapter of the Strategy, developing, leading and overseeing the delivery of a single framework / programme for local government;
- agreeing some underlying principles moving forward, including clarity of ambitions and time frames; expectations of local government; what/how to prioritise actions; powers and accountabilities to move to the right level for delivery; resourcing for duration; local flexibilities; support for local capacity building/learning.

Next steps to develop a collaborative programme of actions could include:

- preparing a statement of intent marking the beginning of renewed collaboration across all levels of government;
- developing a cross-departmental and local government green growth leadership group to take forward the Strategy; (similar to a City/Growth Deal structure) and
- establishing sub-groups to work on priority and complex issues (such as decarbonising and adapting homes and places, decarbonising and adapting transport, supporting green jobs and skills, building consensus for change etc.), developing evidence and information sharing, mapping how everything works in places.

Q12 - How should the public sector be leading by example on Green Growth?

Belfast City Council has undertaken a range of measures including the declaration of a climate emergency in October 2019, establishing a Resilience and Sustainability Board within the Belfast Community Planning Partnership, establishing the Belfast Climate Commission in partnership with Queens University of Belfast, appointing the first Commissioner for Resilience in Northern Ireland, and subsequently appointing the Belfast Climate Commissioner, with the aim of driving forward a programme to address the climate crisis.

The Council has developed a draft Adaptation Plan and is in the process of developing a Council Decarbonisation Plan, with a small budget established to enable this work programme. Council part funded the Belfast Net Zero Carbon Roadmap and commissioned the Belfast Climate Risk Assessment. In addition, Belfast City Council has signed up to the Carbon Disclosure Project, and to a number of global frameworks such as the Race to Zero, Race to Resilience, WWF One Planet City Challenge, the Core Cities UK COP26 Declaration, and the Glasgow Food and Climate Pledge.

Through the Place Based Climate Action Network (PCAN) and Core Cities Climate Investment Commission, Belfast City Council has been at the forefront of efforts to establish climate finance mechanisms as well as using Council resources to integrate green and blue infrastructure, lead on initiatives such as the Belfast One Million Trees Programme, and the Greenways Programme across the city. In addition, Belfast City Council will seek to ensure skills and job opportunities are available for all citizens, working closely with education providers and employers in the city. This Council is ambitious to do more, but will need to work with central government to ensure the right focus, programmes and resources to deliver.

Section 6

Q13 - What indicators should we use to measure the success (or otherwise) of our Green Growth strategy?

As noted above, we propose that a robust results framework is established with indicators, milestones and targets that cascade from regional through to sectoral and local levels. We recommend that a suite of indicators be developed that can measure progress against sectoral targets, assess the success of the Just Transition approach, and levels of engagement in the Green Growth process. These should be drawn from best practice with advice provided from relevant experts.

Given that this is a cross-cutting strategy, indicators should be aligned with related strategies and programmes of work in order to avoid duplication of effort. For example, indicators around Circular

Economy should be aligned with those being developed for the NI Circular Economy strategic framework. Consider economic, environmental and social indicators.

Examples (not an exhaustive list) could include:

- Number of Circular Economy Industries.
- Number of jobs that have been reviewed and "greened"
- Number of green social enterprises, e.g. sharing economy
- Carbon footprint of products
- Co2 production
- Biogas production
- Energy usage, including renewable
- Water consumption
- Material consumption
- Waste prevented and waste reduction measures
- Waste/material reused
- Waste recycled
- Locally produced products containing recycled material (and % content)
- Total waste produced and amount sent to landfill/EFW etc.
- Measuring sustainability of all new developments and industries

Q14 - How can there be effective oversight of Green Growth - should there be a dedicated Assembly Committee, or independent scrutiny?

A dedicated Assembly Committee would be essential to ensure cross party support and that there is an oversight mechanism at the heart of government. Potentially both a Committee and independent scrutiny mechanism. Each Permanent Secretary should be given specific targets.

Section 7

Q15 - Please add any other comments or suggestions you think are relevant to developing and delivering our Green Growth strategy.

We welcome the recognition of Belfast's work programmes in the Draft Green Growth Strategy for Northern Ireland and strongly recommend that local government becomes a coordinating and delivery mechanism for local programmes to drive the Green Growth Strategy as it delivers on the ground. Local government must be resourced appropriately to enable effective delivery and to support ongoing programmes of research, engagement and innovation. In relation to 'green jobs' there should be a focus on greening existing sectors of employment as well as support for new jobs that enable a green economy in Northern Ireland.



Subject:	Response to Department for Communities Consultation on Draft Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022
Date:	17th December 2021
Reporting Officer:	Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resource
Contact Officer:	Trevor Wallace, Head of Finance

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to make the Committee aware of the Department for Communities consultation on the draft Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 and to seek its approval of the Council's draft response.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to consider the draft response and approve its submission to the Department for Communities, subject to any comments or amendment provided, with the proviso that the response is subject to ratification by the Council on 10th January 2022.
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	On 8th October 2021, the Department for Communities published a consultation to seeks views on changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme in Northern Ireland (LGPS(NI)). It outlines proposed changes to the LGPS (NI) to cover both the changes required by an Employment Tribunal ruling in relation to survivor benefits, and a number of technical

	amendments and minor policy updates. The Department for Communities (DfC) is consulting on changes to the regulations governing the LGPS (NI).
3.2	<p>Members should note that the closing date for responses was 10th December 2021, but officers have sought an extension to allow the draft response to be brought to this Committee. A copy of the draft response to the consultation is attached and a summary of the key issues are outlined below. As the closing date for responses is prior to the Council meeting on 10th January, it is proposed that the response, subject to any comments or amendments from Members, be submitted with the caveat that it is still subject to ratification by the Council.</p> <p>A Link to the Consultation is provided below.</p> <p>Consultation on the draft Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 Department for Communities (communities-ni.gov.uk)</p>
3.3	<p>NILGOSC has provided information on the proposed key changes and these are outlined below.</p> <p>In summary the key areas are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Survivor Benefits 2. 30 Day Rule 3. Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs) – removal of 50% limit 4. Refunds – discretion to pay out after five years 5. Death Grants 6. Exit certificates 7. Internal dispute resolution procedures 8. Forfeiture 9. Fluctuating emolument for final salary pay
3.4	<p>The summary and rationale for the changes are as follows:</p> <p>1.Survivor Benefits</p> <p>Historically, the Local Government Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) (“LGPS (NI)”) had different treatments for survivors of marriages than took place while the member was either a deferred member or a pensioner. A surviving widow’s pension was based on service from 6th April 1978, whereas a surviving widower’s pension was based on service from 6th April 1988. Surviving civil partners were treated as widowers. Earlier in January 2020, amendments made some headway towards equalising survivors’ benefits. Same-sex survivors’ benefits were equalised with widows of opposite sex marriages and male survivors of opposite sex civil partnerships had the same benefits as widowers of opposite sex marriages for deaths from 13 January 2020. However, it is now proposed that both the</p>

	<p>changes made in January 2020 and these amendments are backdated to 2005 and that there will be equal treatment regardless of gender of the [deceased] member or the surviving spouse or civil partner</p>
3.5	<p>2. 30 Day Rule</p> <p>At present members pay contributions for the first 30 consecutive days of absence e.g., while on a career break or authorised unpaid leave. It is proposed that this rule be amended so that employees only pay contributions where the break is for 30 consecutive days or less.</p>
3.6	<p>3. Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs) – removal of 50% limit</p> <p>The regulations currently restrict member contributions to an AVC to 50% of pensionable pay in each pay period. It is proposed that this limit be removed.</p>
3.7	<p>4. Refunds – discretion to pay out after five years</p> <p>Under current regulations refunds must be paid by NILGOSC within five years of the date of leaving. The amending regulations propose giving NILGOSC discretion to pay refunds out after five years has elapsed. Refunds must be paid out before age 75.</p>
3.8	<p>5. Death Grants</p> <p>Currently, a death grant can only be paid where a member dies before the age of 75. It is proposed that this age limit is removed, and death grants would be paid to the estates/survivors of those over age 75 on the same basis as pensioners i.e., 10 times the annual pension earned less any pension payments already made. It is proposed that this be backdated to 1st April 2015.</p>
3.9	<p>6. Exit certificates</p> <p>It is proposed that NILGOSC could issue an interim exit certificate, subject to the Department's approval and conditions. This proposal would allow NILGOSC to react quickly in some circumstances and issue an interim exit certificate e.g., insolvency. The final exit certificate would then be issued in due course once all the data was available and the actuary had calculated the exit position.</p>
3.10	<p>7. Internal dispute resolution procedures</p> <p>The amending regulations propose increasing the time for each of the two stages from two to four months.</p>

3.11	<p>8. Forfeiture</p> <p>At present it is difficult for an employer to seek forfeiture of pension rights as an offence must have been committed in connection with an employment for which an employee is convicted and because of which they left employment. Generally, these offences are not uncovered until after the employee has left employment. The amendments propose removing the requirement that the person must have left their employment because of the offence. As before, the forfeiture certificate can only be issued by a Minister.</p>
3.12	<p>9. Fluctuating emolument for final salary pay</p> <p>Currently, for calculation of final salary pay, fluctuating emoluments are averaged over the period that they were paid for, if it is less than three years; otherwise, they are averaged over three years. The amendments propose reverting to the earlier position where these fluctuating emoluments are always averaged over three years. This only applies to those members who have final salary membership i.e., before 1 April 2015.</p>
3.13	<p>Members are asked to consider the attach draft response included in and approve its submission to the Department for Communities.</p>
3.14	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There are no implications associated with this report.</p>
3.15	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are no implications associated with this report.</p> <p>Members are advised that DfC has undertaken an equality screening assessment on the proposed changes and this is available on their website.</p>
4.0	<p>Documents Attached</p>
	<p>Draft consultation response</p>

Appendix 1: Draft Consultation Response

The Council notes that the changes proposed to the scheme, as indicated in section 3, brings it in line with ensuring equality of treatment regardless of gender or sexual orientation through equalisation of survivor benefits. It is also noted that it is best implemented through making both amendments retrospective to 2005.

However, as liabilities are underwritten by the employers any increase in benefits could potentially become an employer cost, therefore any financial impact on the employer should be considered by the Department.

In relation to the "Other Amendments" proposed in Section 4, the Council is in agreement with these proposed policy amendments.

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Subject:	Update on Area Working Groups
Date:	17th December, 2021
Reporting Officer:	Ryan Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Alison Allen, Neighbourhood Services Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To present to the Committee for approval the most recent round of Area Working Group minutes.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is requested to approve the most recent AWG Minutes, as attached - South (22nd November) North (24th November), West (25th November) and East (2nd December).</p> <p>The Committee is specifically asked to note that, in relation to the Community Infrastructure Pilot Initiative, the South Belfast AWG had agreed that further discussions take place with the Members in Balmoral and Botanic DEA to refine the precise geographical areas. Those discussions have since taken place and the Committee is asked to approve the outcome, which is that the following areas will be the specific geographics for the Community Infrastructure Pilots in South Belfast:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Botanic DEA Pilot – Ballynafeigh (including Annadale) - Balmoral DEA Pilot - Finaghy

3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Members agreed, in June 2016, that the minutes of the Area Working Groups would be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for approval going forward, in line with the Council's commitment to openness and transparency and to ensure a consistent approach with other Member-led Working Groups.</p> <p>A summary of the key recommendations made by Area Working Groups is presented below for Members information:</p> <p><u>Alleyway Transformation Pilots</u></p>
3.2	<p>Each Area Working Group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agreed the matrix for the scoring and assessment of pilot sites; • delegated authority to officers, via the outreach team, to assess the sites against the scoring matrix and to rank them in order of highest score; and • noted the timeline for the key stages of the alleygating process and the indicative timescales provided. <p>The East, North and West Belfast Area Working Groups agreed the proposed sites for alleyway transformation programmes moving forward. The South Belfast Area Working Group agreed to give Members additional time to submit a final list of sites which were most likely to qualify immediately for the pilot programme.</p> <p>The East Belfast Area Working Group also specifically added the following alleyways for consideration with any East Belfast pilot scheme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rainbow alley in Reid Street; • the alleyway between Knockbreda Park and Ormeau Road; and • the alleyway between Rosetta Park and Knockbreda Road. <p><u>Community Infrastructure Pilots</u></p>
3.3	<p>The following areas were selected for Community Infrastructure Pilots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - North: Mid Antrim Road (Limestone/Glandore) and Lower Shore Road (Castle) - East: Braniel and Clonduff - West: Black's Gate (former Visteon Site) and Suffolk

	<p>As highlighted earlier in the report, the South Area Working Group agreed that further discussion should take place with the Members for Balmoral and Botanic DEA's. Those discussions have now concluded and the specific areas selected for South Belfast are detailed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - South: Ballynafeigh (including Annadale) and Finaghy <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>3.4 Financial and Resource implications are outlined in the minutes for each Area Working Group</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications and Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>3.5 This will be considered on an ongoing basis.</p>
4.0	Documents Attached
4.1	<p>Appendix 1 – South Belfast AWG Minutes of 22nd November</p> <p>Appendix 2 – North Belfast AWG Minutes of 24th November</p> <p>Appendix 3 – West Belfast AWG Minutes of 25th November</p> <p>Appendix 4 – East Belfast AWG Minutes of 2nd December</p>

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South Belfast Area Working Group

Monday, 22nd November, 2021

MEETING OF SOUTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

- Members present: Councillor Groogan (Chairperson); and Councillors Bunting, Gormley, T. Kelly, Lyons, McAteer and McKeown.
- In attendance: Mr. R. Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services;
Mr. S. Leonard, Neighbourhood Services Manager (South Belfast);
Ms. D. Smith, Neighbourhood Integration Manager; (South Belfast);
Ms. E. Mullan, OSS Lead Officer;
Mr. F. Grant, OSS Area Manager (South Belfast);
Mr. S. Conlon, OSS Area Manager (Holylands);
Mrs. M. Higgins, Lead Officer – Community Provision;
Mr. M. Magee, City Development and Regeneration Project Officer;
Mr. B. Corr, Portfolio and Programme Co-ordinator;
Ms. S. Kalke, Project Sponsor; and
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Spratt.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 6th September were approved by the Working Group.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor T. Kelly declared an interest in relation to agenda item 2 – Requests to Present, on the basis that her husband was employed by the Greater Village Regeneration Trust, which worked with Treeco/Tree NI.

Councillor McKeown declared an interest in relation to agenda item 2 – Requests to Present, in that he was on the steering group of the Rosario Youth Club's capital funding project.

As permission was only being sought for the organisations to attend a future meeting, there was no requirement for those Members to leave the meeting whilst it was being considered.

Councillor McAteer declared an interest in relation to the presentation on the work of the Lagan Navigation Trust, on the basis that she was on the Board of that organisation. However, since that was a Council appointment, she was not required to leave the meeting for the duration of the presentation.

Councillors Gormley and Lyons declared an interest in relation to agenda item 5 - Alleyway Transformation Programme/Phase V Alleygating Scheme, on the basis that they each lived in a street whose alleyway had been put forward for participation in the transformation programme.

However, as the Working Group did not proceed as far as selecting sites, they were not required to leave the meeting.

Request to Attend Meeting

The Chairperson reported that Chief Inspector A. Hagan, who had been invited to provide details around the installation of CCTV cameras in the Holylands area, had requested permission to join the meeting at the start of proceedings, in order to gain a greater understanding of the role of the Working Group.

The Working Group approved the request.

Requests to Present

The Working Group agreed to receive at a future meeting a presentation on the work of Treeco/Tree NI and on Rosario Youth Club's capital funding project.

Presentation - Lagan Navigation Trust

The Working Group was reminded that, at its meeting on 6th September, it had agreed to receive at a future meeting a presentation on the work of the Lagan Navigation Trust.

It was reported that Ms. B. Turnbull, the Trust's Chief Officer, was in attendance and she was welcomed to the meeting.

Ms. Turnbull informed the Working Group that the Lagan Navigation waterway stretched for twenty-seven miles between Belfast and Lough Neagh and passed through the Belfast City, Lisburn and Castlereagh and Armagh Banbridge and Craigavon council areas, all of whom were core funders of the Trust. The twenty-seven locks along the route had been designated as Scheduled Historic Monuments, which afforded them protected status, and were the largest such collection within one asset in Northern Ireland.

She explained that the Lagan Navigation Trust, which had been established in 2009, acted as the custodian of the 300-year-old waterway and operated with the primary objective of re-opening the Lagan Navigation waterway from Belfast Harbour to Lough Neagh.

In terms of current issues, she pointed out that the only route along the waterway from the Harbour currently was via the Lagan Weir, which could only be crossed twice a day when the tide was of sufficient height. There was, therefore, a pressing need for a

sea lock to be constructed to realise the Trust's ambition of eventually linking Lough Neagh to the Eastern seaboard. The Trust's engineers had confirmed that the only location which could accommodate such a lock was at the Queen's Quay, adjacent to the Lagan Weir.

(At this point, Councillor Lyons declared an interest, in that he was on the Board of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners and took no part in the ensuing discussions around the proposed sea lock.)

Ms. Turnbull went on to point out that the Trust was in the process of drafting its three-year business plan, which would reflect current social, economic and climate change issues and link into the Programme for Government and the Council's Corporate objectives. It was envisaged that the Plan would be completed by mid-December and would be shared with the Council. She concluded by congratulating the Council on the completion of its impressive Lagan Gateway project and thanking it for its ongoing support.

During discussion around a potential sea lock, Ms. Turnbull confirmed that preliminary discussions had taken place as far back as 2010 but had yet to be progressed. Lagan Navigation Trust had, in March, produced for Ministerial consideration a briefing paper which had set out the rationale for the lock, the potential benefits and the discussions to date. She undertook to forward that document for circulation to Members and stressed that she would appreciate the Council's support in having the sea lock project progressed.

The Chairperson thanked Ms. Turnbull for attending, following which the Working Group noted the presentation and agreed that it would, at its next meeting, having considered the briefing paper, give consideration to how the Council might support the Trust's call for the provision of a sea lock.

Presentation - Open Space and Street Scene

The Neighbourhood Services Manager provided the Working Group with an overview of the new Open Spaces and Streetscene model of neighbourhood working which was now operating across the City.

He explained that the model had been designed to improve integration, flexibility and responsiveness, with an emphasis being placed on teams taking pride in their work, maintaining environmental standards and working together to maintain the public realm for the benefit of the City's residents and visitors. The model consisted primarily of six designations, namely, Area Manager, Assistant Area Manager, Supervisor, Sweeper Driver/Labourer, Combined HGV/LGV Driver/Loader and General Operative and was supported by other specialist roles.

He then provided details of the Open Spaces and Streetscene staffing structure for South Belfast and pointed out that a separate team, operating along the same lines, had been established to deal solely with the Holylands area. He outlined the extent of the work covered by each team and, in terms of current challenges, referred to graffiti, antisocial behaviour, fly tipping, damage to play parks, climate change and legislative restrictions, as well as the theft of bins, which was particularly prevalent in the Holylands area.

He went to highlight a number of notable achievements and awards which had been secured by the Open Spaces and Streetscene service and pointed to the completion of a recruitment campaign, increased learning and development opportunities, a review of equipment and geographical areas and the roll out of additional litter bins and floral displays, moving forward.

In addressing an issue which had been raised by a Member, the OSS Area Manager for the Holylands area confirmed that the Council had currently replaced approximately one quarter of the bins which had been stolen and was working to replace the others. According to information which had been obtained from the Police Service of Northern Ireland, thefts had occurred from both gated and non-gated entries.

In response to a further Member, he pointed out that, whilst the Council did clear leaves from its properties where they were causing a blockage or creating other difficulties, overall responsibility for leaf clearance rested with the Department for Infrastructure. He undertook to raise the issue with that Department and provide clarification at the next meeting of the Working Group.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager then addressed an issue which had been raised around the adequacy of resources in South Belfast, by confirming that an audit of Council vehicles was progressing, as was the recruitment of permanent staff. This should improve overall service delivery moving forward.

The Working Group commended the work of the Open Spaces and Streetscene service and noted the information which had been provided.

Alleyway Transformation Programme/ Phase V Alleygating Scheme

The Neighbourhood Services Manager submitted for the Working Group's consideration the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Members will recall that the People and Communities Committee, at its meeting in September 2021, considered a report from officers on a potential pilot alleyway transformation programme.**
- 1.2 Following discussion at Committee and full Council, Members agreed to the delivery of a number of pilot alleyway transformation schemes throughout the city and further agreed that the final area selection, number of pilots and the detail of intervention be delegated to the Area Working Groups who would be asked to adopt a flexible approach as to how the funding was allocated.**
- 1.3 This report provides the committee with an update on progress to date, in particular, the identification of possible sites by our Area Outreach teams and elected representatives, a matrix for assessing the eligibility of potential schemes and the next steps following the selection of sites by the Area Working group.**

1.4 The report also provides a timeline for the key stages of the alleygating process and indicative timescales.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1

The Area Working group is asked to:

- i agree the matrix for the scoring and assessment of pilot sites;
- ii consider the sites identified in this report and agree that these are the sites for alleyway transformation programmes for the SBAWG moving forward;
- iii delegate authority to officers via the outreach team to assess these sites against the scoring matrix and rank them in order of highest score;
- iv note the next steps; and
- v note the timeline for the key stages of the alleygating process and the indicative timescales provided.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 DFI has agreed that, in order to test the processes required to deliver an alleyway transformation scheme, a number of pilot projects be initiated, to develop a framework which will be used for a larger programme, and be a path-finding exercise, for other councils as a recognised method to access the DfI monies.

3.2 Successful pilot projects will involve the community receiving a `Starter Pack` of materials and information to support the regeneration of alleyways and deliver a transformation project.

The pack would / should include: -

- a. Plants, planters, soil / compost, seats etc.
- b. Planting / growing / basic wooden planter and willow plant support(trellis) workshops to develop community capacity for the longevity of the project
- c. Signposting communities to other departments and agencies for issues not within the remit or responsibility of BCC.
- d. Signposting communities to funding opportunities they could avail of to further develop and maintain the area after BCC / DFI funding has been utilised.
- e. Legal information / liabilities and ownership of alleyways.

- 3.3** Members will recall that the Council agreed that the final area selection, number of pilots and the detail of intervention be delegated to the Area Working Groups who would be asked to adopt a flexible approach as to how the funding was allocated.
- 3.4** Officers have prepared a scoring matrix to assess, score and rank each potential pilot and this has been circulated.
- 3.5** It was agreed at the September meeting of the People and Communities Committee that the Council Outreach teams would identify potential alleyway sites across each of the four quadrants of the city, based on officer knowledge, community infrastructure and delivery of improved outcomes. The list would be presented to Members on a North, South, East and West basis.
- 3.6** At the meeting of the SP and R Committee in May, Members considered a report on alleygating and the process for Members to input into the identification of gate locations, specifically through pro-forma. This was issued to Members and, as part of it, they were asked to identify potential gating locations as well as locations suitable for alleyway transformation, for further consideration at the SP and R Committee and Area Working Groups over the autumn.
- 3.7** Officers have collated the returns for this AWG in respect of Alleyway Transformation and these have been circulated. This includes sites identified by the area outreach team.
- 3.8** Members should note that, at the People and Communities Committee, it was decided that up to 5 sites per quadrant of the city would be the limit for this pilot. It is proposed that the 5 that score the highest will be considered for the pilot. Once scoring is complete the ranked list of sites will be reported back to this AWG. Following approval officers will begin the process of drawing down the monies from the Department for Infrastructure for the top five ranked sites.
- 3.9** The learnings from the pilot projects will be used to inform further bids into £1-2 million fund and it is proposed that those alleyways not chosen for this pilot will be completed as part of future phases of this scheme.

Alleygating Phase V Timescales

- 3.10** The key stages of the alleygating process and indicative timescales are listed below. Members should note this process only commences when the final list of locations to be gated is agreed by Council.

- **Month 1 – Regulatory and Community Consultation Commenced**
- **Month 3 – Regulatory Consultation Completed**
- **Month 4 – Community Consultation Completed**
- **Month 5 – Legal Preparation**
- **Month 7/8 – Notice of Intention Advertised**
- **Month 8/9 – Clarification of Objections**
- **Month 9 – People and Communities Committee Consideration Traffic Regulation Order**
- **Month 10 – Full Council Approval of Traffic Regulation Order**
- **Month 10 – Gates Ordered**
- **Month 12 – Gates Manufactured and Installation Commenced**

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.11 Capital expenditure associated with the alleyway transformation programme will be accessed via the DFI alleyway transformation scheme with outreach and capacity building support supported via existing Council resources.**

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.12 There are no known Equality, Good Relations or Rural needs implications.”**

During discussion, a Member made the point that some sites on the list would be more suitable for development in the longer term and that the Working Group should focus only on those which would be likely to qualify immediately for the pilot programme. Other Members stated that they were aware of other such sites but had not put them forward as they had been under the impression that numbers were to be limited.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager confirmed that officers would be content to work with Members to identify those sites on the list which were most likely to qualify immediately for the pilot programme, as well as others which Members might wish to put forward. Officers would then rank these in accordance with the scoring matrix and should be in a position to draw down the funding from the Department for Infrastructure straight away. Those sites which had failed to meet the criteria on this occasion would be considered in any future roll out of the programme.

After discussion, the Working Group:

- i. approved the matrix for the scoring and assessment of pilot sites;
- ii. agreed that each Member be allowed one week from the date of the meeting to submit a final list of sites which were most likely to qualify immediately for the pilot programme;

- iii. delegated authority to officers, via the Council's Outreach Team, to assess these sites against the scoring matrix and rank them in order of highest score for inclusion in the pilot programme;
- iv. noted that a list of the sites which had been selected for the pilot programme would be submitted to its next meeting; and
- v. noted the timescales for Phase V of the Alleygating Scheme and agreed that the Neighbourhood Services Manager (Social and Community Recovery) be invited to attend its next meeting, to provide details of the locations which had been put forward for potential alleygating and the selection process.

Community Infrastructure Pilot Initiative

The Working Group considered the following report:

1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 **The purpose of this report is to update the Working Group on the proposed Community Infrastructure Pilot, including the methodology and resources outlined.**
- 1.2 **The Working Group is asked to consider the information that is provided in relation to potential areas that could be included within the pilot programme and recommend two areas within South Belfast.**

2.0 Recommendation

The Working Group is asked to note the detail of the proposed Community Infrastructure Pilot and agree two areas within South Belfast that will be included in the project.

3.0 Main Report

Background

- 3.1 **In June 2021, the Council granted approval for officers to develop a pilot approach to addressing weak community infrastructure in four areas across the city. Officers have been developing the framework for this approach and are seeking approval to develop the project as outlined.**
- 3.2 **Community infrastructure is commonly defined as a complex system of facilities, programmes, and social networks that aims to improve people's quality of life. These services, networks and physical assets work in tandem to form the foundation of a strong neighbourhood. This pilot initiative will seek to use a new methodology to support identified communities with low community infrastructure.**

- 3.3** In Summer/Autumn 21, the Council facilitated engagement to update the community plan for Belfast, the Belfast Agenda. The need to build community infrastructure within certain parts of the city has been identified as a priority and is likely to appear as a key commitment in the refreshed Belfast Agenda plan which will be produced in March 2022.
- 3.4** Recent experience shows that communities require support and resources from a range of services within Council. The development of the community infrastructure pilot will be an opportunity to take an integrated approach to identifying and responding to area needs.
- 3.5** In addition, there are a range of other agencies and organisations who provide considerable support for communities to develop and build strong community infrastructure. These include Department for Communities, NIHE, NICVA and large CVS organisations, especially those funded through BCC Capacity Building Funding. The pilot will engage with relevant partners to ensure complementarity and added value.

Methodology

- 3.6** Members agreed that Area Working Groups (AWGs) would play an important role in the identification of pilot areas within each area of the city. Initial engagement with AWGs has highlighted that it will be difficult to limit the project to one area in each of the four geographies of the city. Some members have also highlighted the need to work with communities of interest as well as defined geographic areas. Based on this feedback officers are proposing that the pilot will work with 8 areas/communities of interest. Communities of interest that have been identified in specific geographic areas will be highlighted in the area summary.
- 3.7** Phase 1 of the programme will focus on the identification of areas and development of an agreed methodology. Delivery within communities will be on a two-year basis from April 2022 – March 2024 with ongoing and final review to assess impact.
- 3.8** An overall framework will underpin the approach in all identified areas. This will ensure consistency whilst enabling the development of local responses. The framework will be underpinned by a co-design process which will gather stakeholder information about local issues and develop agreed responses which will be captured in a two-year action plan for each area.
- 3.9** The action plan will be produced through a co-design process and there will be a finance of £15,000 per annum to support

delivery of the action plan. This allocation will not be a grant payment but will be allocated for the delivery of specified actions by an identified lead. In most cases this will be a community and voluntary sector organisation but in cases where there is not capacity to deliver on identified actions council officers may act as lead if agreed through the co-design process.

- 3.10 Members should note that this funding allocation will be for revenue rather than capital funding.
- 3.11 Given the Council's ambition that this approach will create an opportunity to review the way in which we resource and support areas/communities which have weak community infrastructure, officers have identified the need to secure external technical support to assist in the development of an agreed methodology that will identify and contribute to changed outcomes for these communities. This resource will identify best practise in other similar initiatives and assist in developing a delivery, reporting and evaluation framework.
- 3.12 To enhance the impact of this project and in recognition of potential linkages with the Belfast Agenda it is recommended that an Advisory Group for the Project is established. It is recommended that this should have representation from relevant stakeholders including but not limited to; Chair of 4 x area working groups, DfC, 2 representatives from VCSE panel, 1 representative from CPP/Living Here Board, NICVA, NIHE and relevant BCC staff. This Advisory Group will have oversight of the overall project delivery and will provide updates to the People & Communities committee and Living Here Board.
- 3.13 Area teams within Belfast City Council community provision will support development of local approaches and updates from these will be provided to the Advisory Group.
- 3.14 Council officers will attend November/December AWG meetings to provide an overview of existing Council resources at a citywide and area level. This will include:
- Mapping of existing BCC grant funding and council facilities
 - Information on existing interventions (i.e. Neighbourhood Renewal, Urban Villages)
 - Indicators of need i.e. multiple deprivation and qualitative feedback

Officers suggest that the following selection criteria are used when identifying an area:

- limited access to funding
- limited access to community facilities
- lower access to services/engagement with Council
- evidence of need/inequalities/deprivation
- limited linkage with other initiatives particularly Neighbourhood Renewal, Urban Villages and Communities in Transition (CIT)
- No more than 1 pilot in every DEA

3.15 Officers have carried out an initial assessment on those areas that could benefit from the project. Members are asked to consider the information in Appendix 1 (Area Summary) and agree two recommended areas that will be included in the community infrastructure pilot in south Belfast.

Financial and Resource Implications

3.16 All financial resources outlined in this report can be delivered through existing budgets. Existing human resource will be used to deliver the programme.

Equality or Good Relations Implications and Rural Needs Assessment

3.17 This programme seeks to address issues of inequality by developing community infrastructure, programme delivery will seek to have a positive impact on good relations and rural needs.”

After discussion, the Working agreed:

- i to proceed with the community infrastructure pilot for the Lower/Mid Lisburn Road, which had been ranked first in the appendix to the report, subject to it being redesignated as Mid/Upper Lisburn Road, on the basis that the Lower Lisburn Road was located within the Botanic District Electoral Area and that areas of need had been identified in the Upper Lisburn Road area. It was agreed that officers would meet with the Members from the Balmoral District Electoral Area in advance of the next meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to define the precise geographical area and the organisations with whom the Council should engage; and
- ii that officers would meet with the Members from the Botanic District Electoral Area in advance of the next meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to discuss the potential for including the Lower Lisburn Road, parts of the Ormeau Road and BAME communities around the wider University area within the Annadale pilot area, which had been ranked second in the appendix to the report.

Update on Holylands Area Intervention Proposal/Installation of CCTV

The Neighbourhood Services Manager drew the Working Group's attention to an Intervention Proposal which had been developed through the Living Here Board, to address longstanding issues in the Wider University and Lower Ormeau area.

He explained that the proposal sought to ensure that the area was welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive, thereby making it an appealing place to live, work and invest. A collaborative inter-agency approach would be adopted to address issues such as community safety and cohesion, housing and physical and environmental regeneration and would include a range of short and medium-term actions with dedicated project management support. Governance would be provided through the Community Planning Partnership, with additional oversight being provided via a co-chairing arrangement between the Strategic Partnership Group and the Council.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager went on to explain that the intervention proposal would comprise the following six Priority Actions:

1. Installation of CCTV;
2. An Alleyway Transformation Programme – to co-ordinate support for residents and groups who wish to transform and regenerate communal and open spaces and building upon the success of previous initiatives;
3. A new Community Involvement Model – recognising the complex environment and ongoing tensions and seeking to enhance inter-community relationships and cohesion;
4. Policy and Legislative Interventions – whilst planning policy and legislative issues were outside the remit of the Interagency Action Group and the Living Here Board, the formation of the Strategic Partnership Group offered an opportunity to escalate escalation of issues requiring legislation and policy changes, with on-street drinking, dispersal orders and housing policy and legislation being identified as requiring an immediate focus;
5. Baseline Analysis – will include a geographical definition, PSNI and crime data, housing and the changing environment attitudinal data and
6. Co-Design Action Plan – co-design of a shared inter-agency action plan to address immediate and medium-term priorities, with a focus on reducing crime and antisocial behaviour, community cohesion, the wellbeing of residents and continued operational planning for peak periods of the year.

Chief Inspector Hagan addressed Priority Action 1 by explaining that the Police Service of Northern Ireland had, in September, submitted to the Interagency Action Group and the Living Here Board a proposal to erect closed circuit television in the Holylands and Wider Ormeau area. Consideration was being given to re-installing cameras at five reported hotspots. He outlined the estimated costs of the project and pointed out that it

would be likely to result in a 16% to 35% reduction in crime, with between 355 and 778 fewer reported incidents. He concluded by stating that consultation on the proposal would take place during the month of December.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager went on to highlight two medium-term actions which had been identified as part of the intervention proposal, the first of which would involve securing an enabling fund to progress a participatory budgetary pilot, with a view to enabling local people to identify priorities and projects aligned with agreed themes. The second action would involve the formulation of a long-term vision and development plan for the area and would examine the potential for regeneration and investment. He then provided details of outcomes and indicators and reviewed the role and responsibilities for the post of Project Manager, who would be appointed for two years initially and be based in the Community Planning Unit. He concluded by outlining the estimated overall costs of the intervention proposal, the key issues which lay ahead and the indicative timeline for delivering the various elements therein.

The Chairperson thanked Chief Inspector Hagan for his contribution, following which the Working Group noted the information which had been provided.

Chairperson

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North Belfast Area Working Group

Wednesday, 24th November, 2021

NORTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Murphy (In the Chair);
Councillors Bradley, Cobain, Ferguson, Magee, Maskey,
McAllister and O'Hara.

In attendance: Mr. R. Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services;
Ms. K. Gilliland, Neighbourhood Services Manager;
Mrs. M. Higgins, Lead Officer – Community Provision;
Mr. S. Leonard, Neighbourhood Services Manager;
Ms. E. Mullan, Lead Officer, Open Spaces;
Mr. D. Salters, Open Spaces Area Manager; and
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for the inability to attend were reported on behalf of the Chairperson, Councillor McCullough, and from Councillor Pankhurst.

Nomination of Chairperson for the meeting

It was agreed that Councillor Murphy would chair the meeting in the absence of the Chairperson.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 25th August, 2021 were agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.

Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were reported.

Presentations

Open Spaces and Street Scene

Mr. S. Leonard, Neighbourhood Services Manager, provided the Working Group with an overview of the work of the Open Spaces and Streetscene (OSS) service. He explained that the service had been created in 2019, with the merging of the former Parks and Street Cleansing sections. He explained the services that they provided which included street sweeping, bin collections, entry clearing, graffiti, litter, recycling, the maintenance of parks, open spaces and playgrounds.

The Members were advised that Council staff had issued 2,500 Fixed Penalty Notices for littering and dog fouling offences, emptied over 9 million wheelie bins, carried out 38,500 bulky waste collections and that over 4,787 streets were cleaned across the city per week.

He outlined a number of challenges that the OSS Service faced, including the creation of multi-tasking teams, new assets, the implementation of the Belfast Open Spaces Strategy (BOSS). He outlined that the Covid-19 pandemic had added a number of pressures on the service, particularly in terms of ensuring staff safety through social distancing, such as reduced staff access to vehicles, staff being redesignated to other key service areas and the impact of staff sickness absence. He explained that, cumulatively, the service had, at times, been operating at a reduction of 35-40% capacity. He advised the Working Group that that had invariably led to a drop in service and he apologised on behalf of the section for that.

The Working Group was advised that new routes for street cleansing were currently being examined for an improved service. The Neighbourhood Services Manager also advised the Members that further staff recruitment was underway and that, by March 2022, they would have a full complement of 400 staff in full time employment, this would include 100 staff evenly spread throughout the north area.

During discussion several of the Members raised ongoing issues regarding hotspots for littering and the need for additional bins, including recycling facilities, across the City's parks and public spaces. The Neighbourhood Services Manager advised that in the near future a trial would be taking place on the introduction of litter bins with sensors and noted that it was anticipated that this would help provide more information to enable officers to identify where additional bins needed to be located.

A Member referred to the lack of sweepers operating in the Castle Area and queried if this was a result of available drivers or if the frequency of cleans needed to be reviewed.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager advised that currently permanent staff were being recruited and he confirmed that maintaining adequate staffing resources was an ongoing issue. He reported that the upskilling of existing staff was being progressed through a Driver Academy that had recently been established within the Council, in which 20 staff were currently training for their Category C licence.

During further discussion, Members discussed the Waterworks and the Forth Meadow Community Greenway, highlighting that a full complement of staff was needed on a daily basis to maintain standards.

The Working Group commended the work of the Open Spaces and Streetscene service and noted the information which had been provided.

Alleyway Transformation

The Neighbourhood Services Manager reminded the Members that the delivery of a number of pilot alleyway transformation schemes throughout the city had been agreed by the People and Communities Committee. It had also been agreed at the October meeting of the Council that the final area selection, number of pilots and the detail of intervention would be delegated to the Area Working Groups (subject to a final decision by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee) who would be asked to adopt a flexible approach as to how the funding was allocated.

He reminded the Members that the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) had agreed that in order to test the processes required to deliver an alleyway transformation scheme that a number of pilot projects would be initiated, to develop a framework which would be used for

a larger programme, and be a path-finding exercise, for other councils as a recognised method to access the Dfl monies.

Successful pilots projects would involve the community receiving a `Starter Pack` of materials and information to support the regeneration of alleyways and to deliver a transformation project. The pack would include the following contents/information:

- Plants, planters, soil / compost, seats;
- Planting / growing / basic wooden planter and willow plant support (trellis) workshops to develop community capacity for the longevity of the project;
- Signposting information directing communities to other departments and agencies for issues not within the remit or responsibility of the Council;
- Signposting information directing communities to funding opportunities they could avail of to further develop and maintain the area after Council / DFI funding had been utilized; and
- Legal information in regard to liabilities and ownership of alleyways.

He then proceeded to provide the Members with an overview regarding the possible identification of sites by the Area Outreach teams and Elected Representatives and drew their attention to the proposed matrix for assessing the eligibility of the potential schemes and the next steps following the selection of sites by the Area Working group.

He advised that, as previously agreed, a proforma had been circulated to the Members seeking input into the identification of gate locations as well as locations suitable for alleyway transformation. He drew the Members' attention to the collated returns for the North AWG, which included sites identified by the area outreach team.

At the People and Communities Committee it had been agreed that up to five sites (per quadrant of the city) would be the limit for the pilot. It was suggested that the five sites that scored the highest be considered for the pilot. Once scoring had been completed, the ranked list of sites would then be reported back to the respective AWGs.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager advised that, following approval, officers would begin the process of drawing down the monies from Dfl for the top five ranked sites. The learnings from the pilot projects would then be used to inform further bids into £1-2 million fund and it was suggested that those alleyways that were not chosen for this pilot would be completed as part of future phases of this scheme.

He then detailed the key stages of the alleygating process and indicative timescales, as follows

- Month 1 – Regulatory and Community Consultation Commenced
- Month 3 – Regulatory Consultation Completed
- Month 4 – Community Consultation Completed
- Month 5 – Legal Preparation
- Month 7/8 – Notice of Intention Advertised
- Month 8/9 – Clarification of Objections
- Month 9 – People & Communities Committee Consideration of Traffic Regulation Order
- Month 10 – Full Council Approval of Traffic Regulation Order
- Month 10 – Gates Ordered
- Month 12 – Gates Manufactured and Installation Commenced

The Members were asked to note this process would only commence when the final list of locations to be gated had been agreed by the Council.

The Members discussed at length the number of unadopted alleyways throughout the City and the huge volume of work and funding that would be required to progress the required works.

Several Member reiterated the resources and funding that would be required and emphasised the enormity of the issue. Officers were asked to investigate if the Council could link in with other transformation funding opportunities available through other channels.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager advised that a report on the issue of unadopted alleyways, including consideration of all funding options, was currently being prepared for the January meeting of the People and Communities Committee and highlighted that there was a need to address and progress works to those alleyways that posed the most risk.

The Working Group:

- agreed the matrix for the scoring and assessment of pilot sites;
- agreed the proposed sites for alleyway transformation programmes for the NAWG moving forward;
- agreed that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee delegate authority to officers, via the outreach team, to assess the sites against the scoring matrix and to rank them in order of highest score; and
- noted the timeline for the key stages of the alleygating process and the indicative timescales provided.

Community Infrastructure Update

The Working Group considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the proposed Community Infrastructure Pilot including the methodology and resources outlined.

Members are asked to consider the information that is provided in relation to potential areas that could be included within the pilot programme and recommend 2 areas within north Belfast.

2.0 Recommendations

Members are asked to note the detail of the proposed Community Infrastructure Pilot and agree 2 areas within north Belfast that will be included in the project.

3.0 Main report

Background

3.1 In June 2021 Council granted approval for officers to develop a pilot approach to addressing weak community infrastructure in 4

areas across the city. Officers have been developing the framework for this approach and are seeking approval to develop the project as outlined.

- 3.2 Community infrastructure is commonly defined as a complex system of facilities, programmes, and social networks that aims to improve people's quality of life. These services, networks and physical assets work in tandem to form the foundation of a strong neighbourhood. This pilot initiative will seek to use a new methodology to support identified communities with low community infrastructure.
- 3.3 In Summer/Autumn 21 Council facilitated engagement to update the community plan for Belfast, the Belfast Agenda. The need to build community infrastructure within certain parts of the city has been identified as a priority and is likely to appear as a key commitment in the refreshed Belfast Agenda plan which will be produced in March 2022.
- 3.4 Recent experience shows that communities require support and resources from a range of services within Council. The development of the community infrastructure pilot will be an opportunity to take an integrated approach to identifying and responding to area needs.
- 3.5 In addition, there are a range of other agencies and organisations who provide considerable support for communities to develop and build strong community infrastructure. These include Department for Communities, NIHE, NICVA and large CVS organisations, especially those funded through BCC Capacity Building Funding. The pilot will engage with relevant partners to ensure complementarity and added value.

Methodology

- 3.6 Members agreed that Area Working Groups (AWGs) would play an important role in the identification of pilot areas within each area of the city. Initial engagement with AWGs has highlighted that it will be difficult to limit the project to 1 area in each of the 4 geographies of the city. Some members have also highlighted the need to work with communities of interest as well as defined geographic areas. Based on this feedback officers are proposing that the pilot will work with 8 areas/communities of interest. Communities of interest that have been identified in specific geographic areas will be highlighted in the area summary.
- 3.7 Phase 1 of the programme will focus on the identification of areas and development of an agreed methodology. Delivery within communities will be on a two year basis from April 2022 – March 2024 with ongoing and final review to assess impact.
- 3.8 An overall framework will underpin the approach in all identified areas. This will ensure consistency whilst enabling the development of local responses. The framework will be

underpinned by a co-design process which will gather stakeholder information about local issues and develop agreed responses which will be captured in a two year action plan for each area.

- 3.9 The action plan will be produced through a co-design process and there will be a finance of £15,000 per annum to support delivery of the action plan. This allocation will not be a grant payment but will be allocated for the delivery of specified actions by an identified lead. In most cases this will be a community & voluntary sector organisation but in cases where there is not capacity to deliver on identified actions council officers may act as lead if agreed through the co-design process.
- 3.10 Members should note that this funding allocation will be for revenue rather than capital funding.
- 3.11 Given Council's ambition that this approach will create an opportunity to review the way in which we resource and support areas/communities which have weak community infrastructure, officers have identified the need to secure external technical support to assist in the development of an agreed methodology that will identify and contribute to changed outcomes for these communities. This resource will identify best practise in other similar initiatives and assist in developing a delivery, reporting and evaluation framework.
- 3.12 To enhance the impact of this project and in recognition of potential linkages with the Belfast Agenda it is recommended that an Advisory Group for the Project is established. It is recommended that this should have representation from relevant stakeholders including but not limited to; Chair of 4 x area working groups, DfC, 2 representatives from VCSE panel, 1 representative from CPP/Living Here Board, NICVA, NIHE and relevant BCC staff. This Advisory Group will have oversight of the overall project delivery and will provide updates to the People & Communities committee and Living Here Board.
- 3.13 Area teams within Belfast City Council community provision will support development of local approaches and updates from these will be provided to the Advisory Group.
- 3.14 Council officers will attend November/December AWG meetings to provide an overview of existing Council resources at a citywide and area level. This will include:
- Mapping of existing BCC grant funding and council facilities
 - Information on existing interventions (i.e. Neighbourhood Renewal, Urban Villages)
 - Indicators of need i.e. multiple deprivation and qualitative feedback

Officers suggest that the following selection criteria are used when identifying an area:

- **limited access to funding**
- **limited access to community facilities**
- **lower access to services/engagement with Council**
- **evidence of need/inequalities/deprivation**
- **limited linkage with other initiatives particularly Neighbourhood Renewal, Urban Villages and Communities in Transition (CIT)**
- **No more than 1 pilot in every DEA**

3.15 Officers have carried out an initial assessment on those areas that could benefit from the project. Members are asked to consider the information in Appendix 1 (Area Summary) and agree two recommended areas that will be included in the community infrastructure pilot in north Belfast.

3.16 Financial and Resource Implications

All financial resources outlined in this report can be delivered through existing budgets. Existing human resource will be used to deliver the programme.

3.17 Equality or Good Relations Implications and Rural Needs Assessment

This programme seeks to address issues of inequality by developing community infrastructure, programme delivery will seek to have a positive impact on good relations and rural needs.”

Several of the Members referred to communities of interest and diversity across the City and the need to do more for inclusion.

The Lead Officer, Community Provision, Mrs. M Higgins, assured the Members that work was ongoing with BAME communities in the City and suggested that officers could link in with the Shared City Partnership through the Good Relations Action Plan to further develop this work. In addition, it was noted that officers were keen to progress this work through locality area working.

Discussion ensued, during which it was noted that resources and funding were needed to progress work with minority communities and it was agreed that a report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Working Group that would give consideration as to how to progress work with Communities of Interest across the City.

The Members noted the Community Infrastructure Pilot and agreed the following two areas (ranked as 1 and 2 in appendix 1) as the areas within north Belfast to be included in the project:

- 1 - Mid Antrim Road (Limestone/Glandore) (Oldpark); and
- 2 - Lower Shore Road (Castle)

**Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) BCC and
Belfast Cavehill Mountainbikers' Club –
People and Communities Report**

The Working Group noted that the People and Communities Committee, at its meeting on 9th November, had agreed terms of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Belfast City Council and the Cavehill Mountainbikers Club in respect of the pilot use of a mountain bike trail in Cave Hill Country Park available [here](#).

The Members noted the pilot and suggested that at the end of the pilot period the consultation needed to be widened out to other areas within the Park.

Noted.

Organisation of Future Presentations

The Working Group agreed that officers, in liaison with the Chairperson, would agree the timeline for future presentations to the Working Group.

Chairperson

West Belfast Area Working Group

Thursday, 25th November, 2021

WEST BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP
HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Corr (Chairperson),
Alderman Kingston; and
Councillors Baker, Black, Canavan, Carson, Matt Collins,
Donnelly, Garrett, Hutchinson, McCabe and Verner.

In attendance: Mr. R. Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services;
Mrs. A. Allen, Neighbourhood Services Manager;
Mr. S. Leonard, Neighbourhood Services Manager;
Mr. S. Conlon, Open Spaces and Streetscene Area Manager;
Ms. A. McGlone, Neighbourhood Integration Manager;
Mr. L. McKinley, Open Spaces and Streetscene Area
Manager; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported on behalf of Councillors Beattie, McLoughlin and Walsh.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 26th August were agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Baker declared an interest in respect of the item 2(b) – Presentation from Lagmore Youth Project, in that he was a volunteer and board member of Lagmore Youth Project.

Councillor McCabe declared an interest, in that her husband worked for the Upper Andersonstown Community Forum.

Presentations

Request to Present at January meeting - Belfast Celtic

The Working Group agreed to receive a presentation from Belfast Celtic its next meeting.

Presentation from Lagmore Youth Project

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. Colm Fanning from Lagmore Youth to the meeting. Mr. Fanning pointed out to the Members that Lagmore had a population of more than 9000, equating to the population of Ballyclare, and larger than towns such as Magherafelt and Ballycastle.

He reported that the Lagmore Community was built over 30 years ago, and that the area had very little infrastructure or resources to support its growing population. He added that there were no community development officers, that four part-time youth work staff had recently been assigned to the area and that it had been volunteers who had been supporting youth work in the area.

He pointed out that Lagmore Youth Project had been established in 2019 to meet the needs of the community which lacked the resources and infrastructure to engage the population of the Lagmore and Mount Eagles areas.

He informed the Working Group that the youth project had been working with an architect, on a design plan for a youth centre adjacent to pitches at Whiterise and a small playpark, through engagement with young people to ensure that the facility would meet the needs of the young people of the area. He stated that the design included indoor climbing, sports facilities, a minor hall space for young people to visit and relax. A social enterprise housing a restaurant or café was also proposed in order to support the youth project.

He highlighted that the design included direct access from the existing MUGA pitches to changing facilities to support the use of the pitches by football clubs and young people. He added that the design also incorporated training rooms and ICT areas to facilitate leadership and good relationship programmes and allow young people to have a quiet area for homework and informal education.

Mr. Fanning informed the Working Group that Lagmore Youth Project was asking the Members for their support to continue the development of the Whiterise Playpark and for the construction of the much-needed community facilities.

A number of Members complemented Mr. Fanning on the design plan and the impact that Lagmore Youth Project had on the area and the Chairperson thanked him for his presentation to the Working Group.

Open Spaces and Streetscene Presentation

Mr. S. Leonard, Neighbourhood Services Manager, provided the Working Group with an overview of the work of the Open Spaces and Streetscene (OSS) service. He explained that the service had been created in 2019, with the merging of the former Parks and Street Cleansing sections. He explained the services that they provided which included street sweeping, bin collections, entry clearing, graffiti, litter, recycling, the maintenance of parks, open spaces and playgrounds.

The Members were advised that Council staff had issued 2,500 Fixed Penalty Notices for littering and dog fouling offences, emptied over 9 million wheelie bins, carried out 38,500 bulky waste collections and that over 4,787 streets were cleaned across the city per week.

He outlined a number of challenges that the OSS Service faced, including the creation of multi-tasking teams, new assets, the implementation of the Belfast Open Spaces Strategy (BOSS). He outlined that the Covid-19 pandemic had added a number of pressures on the

service, particularly in terms of ensuring staff safety through social distancing, such as reduced staff access to vehicles, staff being redesignated to other key service areas and the impact of staff sickness absence. He explained that, cumulatively, the service had, at times, been operating at a reduction of 35-40% capacity. He advised the Working Group that that had invariably led to a drop-in service and he apologised on behalf of the section for that.

The Working Group was advised that new routes for street cleansing were currently being examined for an improved service. The Neighbourhood Services Manager also advised the Members that a learning and development programme had been developed for new OSS staff to ensure consistent standards across the city and that recruitment had been ongoing.

During discussion several of the Members commended the OSS staff for their work during the pandemic and asked that the support the staff had been receiving recently would be maintained, as the improvements had been felt across the community.

The Chairperson thanked the Neighbourhood Services Manager for his presentation and the Working Group noted the information which had been provided.

Alleyway Transformation Update

The Working Group considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Members will recall that the People & Communities Committee, at its meeting in September 2021, considered a report from officers on a potential pilot alleyway transformation programme.**
- 1.2 Following discussion at committee and full Council members agreed to the delivery of a number of pilot alleyway transformation schemes throughout the city and further agreed that the final area selection, number of pilots and the detail of intervention be delegated to the Area Working Groups who would be asked to adopt a flexible approach as to how the funding was allocated.**
- 1.3 This report provides the committee with an update on progress to date, in particular, the identification of possible sites by our Area Outreach teams and elected representatives, a matrix for assessing the eligibility of potential schemes and the next steps following the selection of sites by the Area Working group.**
- 1.4 The report also provides a timeline for the key stages of the alleywaying process and indicative timescales.**

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Area Working group is asked to:**
 - To agree the matrix for the scoring and assessment of pilot sites,**
 - To consider the sites identified in this report and to agree these are the sites for alleyway transformation programmes for the WAWG moving forward and,**

- To delegate it to officers via the outreach team to assess these sites against the scoring matrix and rank them in order of highest score.
- To note the next steps.
- Note the timeline for the key stages of the alleygating process and the indicative timescales provided.

3.0 Main report

- 3.1** DFI have agreed that in order to test the processes required to deliver an alleyway transformation scheme, a number of pilot projects be initiated, to develop a framework which will be used for a larger programme, and be a path-finding exercise, for other councils as a recognised method to access the Dfl monies.
- 3.2** Successful pilots projects will involve the community receiving a `Starter Pack` of materials and information to support the regeneration of alleyways and deliver a transformation project.

The pack would / should include: -

- a. Plants, planters, soil / compost, seats etc.
 - b. Planting / growing / basic wooden planter and willow plant support (trellis) workshops to develop community capacity for the longevity of the project.
 - c. Signposting communities to other departments and agencies for issues not within the remit or responsibility of BCC.
 - d. Signposting communities to funding opportunities they could avail of to further develop and maintain the area after BCC / DFI funding has been utilised.
 - e. Legal information / liabilities and ownership of alleyways.
- 3.3** Members will recall that at full Council it was agreed that the final area selection, number of pilots and the detail of intervention be delegated to the Area Working Groups who would be asked to adopt a flexible approach as to how the funding was allocated.
- 3.4** Officers have prepared a scoring matrix to assess, score and rank each potential pilot.
- 3.5** It was agreed at the September meeting of People & Communities Committee that the Council Outreach teams would identify potential alleyway sites across each of the 4 quadrants of the city, based on officer knowledge, community infrastructure and delivery of improved outcomes. The list would be presented to Members on a North, South, East & West basis.
- 3.6** At the May SP&R committee members considered a paper on alleygating and the process for Members to input into the identification of gate locations, specifically through a pro-forma. This was issued to members and as part of it they were asked to identify potential gating locations as well as locations suitable for

alleyway transformation, for further consideration at SP&R committee and Area Working Groups over the autumn.

- 3.7 Officers have collated the returns for this AWG in respect of Alleyway Transformation. This includes sites identified by the area outreach team.
- 3.8 Members should note that at People & Communities committee it was decided that up to 5 sites per quadrant of the city would be the limit for this pilot. It is proposed that the 5 that score the highest will be considered for the pilot. Once scoring is complete the ranked list of sites will be reported back to this AWG. Following approval officers will begin the process of drawing down the monies from the Department for Infrastructure for the top five ranked sites.
- 3.9 The learnings from the pilot projects will be used to inform further bids into £1-2 million fund and it is proposed that those alleyways not chosen for this pilot will be completed as part of future phases of this scheme.

Allegating Phase V Time scales

- 3.10 The key stages of the alleygating process and indicative timescales are listed below. Members should note this process only commences when the final list of locations to be gated is agreed by Council.
- Month 1 – Regulatory and Community Consultation Commenced
 - Month 3 – Regulatory Consultation Completed
 - Month 4 – Community Consultation Completed
 - Month 5 – Legal Preparation
 - Month 7/8 – Notice of Intention Advertised
 - Month 8/9 – Clarification of Objections
 - Month 9 – People & Communities Committee Consideration of Traffic Regulation Order
 - Month 10 – Full Council Approval of Traffic Regulation Order
 - Month 10 – Gates Ordered
 - Month 12 – Gates Manufactured and Installation Commenced

Financial & Resource Implications

- 3.11 Capital expenditure associated with the alleyway transformation programme will be accessed via the DFI alleyway transformation scheme with outreach and capacity building support supported via existing Council resources.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.12 There are no known Equality, Good Relations or Rural needs implications.”

The Area Working group:

- agreed the matrix for the scoring and assessment of pilot sites;
- agreed the proposed sites for alleyway transformation programmes for the WAWG moving forward;
- delegated authority to officers, via the outreach team, to assess the sites against the scoring matrix and to rank them in order of highest score; and
- noted the timeline for the key stages of the alleywaying process and the indicative timescales provided.

Community Infrastructure Update

The Working Group considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on the proposed Community Infrastructure Pilot including the methodology and resources outlined.**

Members are asked to consider the information that is provided in relation to potential areas that could be included within the pilot programme and recommend 2 areas within west Belfast.

2.0 Recommendations

Members are asked to note the detail of the proposed Community Infrastructure Pilot and agree 2 areas within west Belfast that will be included in the project.

3.0 Main report

Background

- 3.1 In June 2021 Council granted approval for officers to develop a pilot approach to addressing weak community infrastructure in 4 areas across the city. Officers have been developing the framework for this approach and are seeking approval to develop the project as outlined.**
- 3.2 Community infrastructure is commonly defined as a complex system of facilities, programmes, and social networks that aims to improve people’s quality of life. These services, networks and physical assets work in tandem to form the foundation of a strong neighbourhood. This pilot initiative will seek to use a new methodology to support identified communities with low community infrastructure.**
- 3.3 In Summer/Autumn 21 Council facilitated engagement to update the community plan for Belfast, the Belfast Agenda. The need to**

build community infrastructure within certain parts of the city has been identified as a priority and is likely to appear as a key commitment in the refreshed Belfast Agenda plan which will be produced in March 2022.

- 3.4 Recent experience shows that communities require support and resources from a range of services within Council. The development of the community infrastructure pilot will be an opportunity to take an integrated approach to identifying and responding to area needs.
- 3.5 In addition, there are a range of other agencies and organisations who provide considerable support for communities to develop and build strong community infrastructure. These include Department for Communities, NIHE, NICVA and large CVS organisations, especially those funded through BCC Capacity Building Funding. The pilot will engage with relevant partners to ensure complementarity and added value.

Methodology

- 3.6 Members agreed that Area Working Groups (AWGs) would play an important role in the identification of pilot areas within each area of the city. Initial engagement with AWGs has highlighted that it will be difficult to limit the project to 1 area in each of the 4 geographies of the city. Some members have also highlighted the need to work with communities of interest as well as defined geographic areas. Based on this feedback officers are proposing that the pilot will work with 8 areas/communities of interest. Communities of interest that have been identified in specific geographic areas will be highlighted in the area summary.
- 3.7 Phase 1 of the programme will focus on the identification of areas and development of an agreed methodology. Delivery within communities will be on a two year basis from April 2022 – March 2024 with ongoing and final review to assess impact.
- 3.8 An overall framework will underpin the approach in all identified areas. This will ensure consistency whilst enabling the development of local responses. The framework will be underpinned by a co-design process which will gather stakeholder information about local issues and develop agreed responses which will be captured in a two year action plan for each area.
- 3.9 The action plan will be produced through a co-design process and there will be a finance of £15,000 per annum to support delivery of the action plan. This allocation will not be a grant payment but will be allocated for the delivery of specified actions by an identified lead. In most cases this will be a community & voluntary sector organisation but in cases where there is not capacity to deliver on identified actions council officers may act as lead if agreed through the co-design process.
- 3.10 Members should note that this funding allocation will be for revenue rather than capital funding.

- 3.11 Given Council's ambition that this approach will create an opportunity to review the way in which we resource and support areas/communities which have weak community infrastructure, officers have identified the need to secure external technical support to assist in the development of an agreed methodology that will identify and contribute to changed outcomes for these communities. This resource will identify best practise in other similar initiatives and assist in developing a delivery, reporting and evaluation framework.
- 3.12 To enhance the impact of this project and in recognition of potential linkages with the Belfast Agenda it is recommended that an Advisory Group for the Project is established. It is recommended that this should have representation from relevant stakeholders including but not limited to; Chair of 4 x area working groups, DfC, 2 representatives from VCSE panel, 1 representative from CPP/Living Here Board, NICVA, NIHE and relevant BCC staff. This Advisory Group will have oversight of the overall project delivery and will provide updates to the People & Communities committee and Living Here Board.
- 3.13 Area teams within Belfast City Council community provision will support development of local approaches and updates from these will be provided to the Advisory Group.
- 3.14 Council officers will attend November/December AWG meetings to provide an overview of existing Council resources at a citywide and area level. This will include:
- Mapping of existing BCC grant funding and council facilities
 - Information on existing interventions (i.e. Neighbourhood Renewal, Urban Villages)
 - Indicators of need i.e. multiple deprivation and qualitative feedback

Officers suggest that the following selection criteria are used when identifying an area:

- limited access to funding
 - limited access to community facilities
 - lower access to services/engagement with Council
 - evidence of need/inequalities/deprivation
 - limited linkage with other initiatives particularly Neighbourhood Renewal, Urban Villages and Communities in Transition (CIT)
 - No more than 1 pilot in every DEA
- 3.15 Officers have carried out an initial assessment on those areas that could benefit from the project. Members are asked to consider the information in the Area Summary and agree two recommended areas that will be included in the community infrastructure pilot in west Belfast.

Financial & Resource Implications

- 3.16 All financial resources outlined in this report can be delivered through existing budgets. Existing human resource will be used to deliver the programme.**

Equality or Good Relations Implications and Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.17 programme seeks to address issues of inequality by developing community infrastructure, programme delivery will seek to have a positive impact on good relations and rural needs.”**

The Working Group noted the Community Infrastructure Pilot and agreed the following two areas (ranked as 1 and 2 in appendix 1) as the areas within west Belfast to be included in the project:

1. Colin - Black's Gate (former Visteon site)
2. Blackmountain - Suffolk

Chairperson

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East Belfast Area Working Group

Thursday, 2nd December, 2021

MEETING OF EAST BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Alderman Sandford (Chairperson),
Aldermen Dorrian, Haire and Rodgers;
The High Sheriff, Councillor Long; and
Councillors Brooks, de Faoite, Flynn, Howard,
M. Kelly, McMullan, McReynolds,
Newton and Smyth.

In attendance: Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;
Ms. A. Allen, Neighbourhood Services Manager;
Mr. S. Leonard, Neighbourhood Services Manager;
Mr. S. Conlon, Open Spaces and Streetscene Area Manager;
Mr. C. Willetts, Open Spaces and Streetscene Area Manager;
Ms. K. Watters, Neighbourhood Integration Manager;
Ms. M. Higgins, Lead Officer - Community Provision;
Ms. P. Conway, Strategic Sites Development Surveyor; and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Alderman Copeland and Councillors Hanvey, Kyle and Mulholland.

Minutes

The Working Group agreed that the minutes of the meeting of 4th November were an accurate record of proceedings.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

Open Spaces and Streetscene Update – Presentation

Mr. S. Leonard, Neighbourhood Services Manager, provided the Working Group with an overview of the work of the Open Spaces and Streetscene (OSS) service. He explained that the service had been created in 2019, with the merging of the former Parks and Street Cleansing sections. He explained the services that they provided which included street sweeping, bin collections, entry clearing, graffiti, litter, recycling, the maintenance of parks, open spaces and playgrounds.

The Members were advised that Council staff had issued 2,500 Fixed Penalty Notices for littering and dog fouling offences, emptied over 9 million wheelie bins, carried out 38,500 bulky waste collections and that over 4,787 streets were cleaned across the city per week.

He outlined a number of challenges that the OSS Service faced, including the creation of multi-tasking teams, new assets, the implementation of the Belfast Open Spaces Strategy (BOSS). He outlined that the Covid-19 pandemic had added a number of pressures on the service, particularly in terms of ensuring staff safety through social distancing, such as reduced staff access to vehicles, staff being redesignated to other key service areas and the impact of staff sickness absence. He explained that, cumulatively, the service had, at times, been operating at a reduction of 35-40% capacity. He advised the Working Group that that had invariably led to a drop in service and he apologised on behalf of the section for that.

The Working Group was advised that new routes for street cleansing were currently being examined for an improved service. The Neighbourhood Services Manager also advised the Members that further staff recruitment was underway and that, by March 2022, they would have a full complement of 400 staff in full time employment.

A number of Members thanked Mr. C. Willetts, Open Spaces and Streetscene Area Manager for East, for his hard work in what was a challenging time.

A Member raised concerns in relation to some recurrent missed bin collections but stated that, when reported, Council staff were quick to respond within a few days. He further queried whether Cherryvale Park changing facilities were still unavailable for use and an issue regarding overgrown trees over one of the football pitches within the park.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager advised the Working Group that routine bin collections fell under the remit of City Services and that perhaps it might wish to request a presentation in relation to recurrent issues at a future meeting.

A further Member asked officers whether, in terms of future proofing the Council, they would consider reintroducing horticultural apprenticeships through the Council, perhaps in conjunction with CAFRE or a university. He also requested an update on the works at Cherryvale Park and for more benches and bins to be installed, given the increased use of the park over the pandemic.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager advised the Working Group that, in terms of future proofing, a Driver Academy had recently been established within the Council, in which 20 staff were currently training for their Category C licence. He added that, as the park improvement plans were established and, given that biodiversity was a key concern for Members, they would certainly consider a similar programme for horticultural skills, particularly in the context of the Belfast Open Spaces Strategy. In response to a Member's question, he added that the Biodiversity Strategy for the City would be completed soon.

A Member reminded the officers that a motion had been passed by the Council, in July 2020, in respect of seeking to provide additional bins, including recycling facilities, across the City's parks and public spaces.

During further discussion, Members raised issues relating to the maintenance of the railings around the City's parks, the removal of weeds on pavements, the removal of leaves from the greenways, the provision of lamppost bins for dog fouling and the provision of bike racks.

In response to a Member's question, the Open Spaces and Streetscene Area Manager for East confirmed to the Working Group that Holland Drive, Sandown Road and the Comber Greenway were cleaned on a weekly basis.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager advised the Members that they would look into the other issues which had been raised by the Members.

The Chairperson thanked the officers for the update which had been provided.

Alleyway Transformation Update

The Working Group considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

Members will recall that the People & Communities Committee, at its meeting in September 2021, considered a report from officers on a potential pilot alleyway transformation programme.

1.2 Following discussion at committee and full Council members agreed to the delivery of a number of pilot alleyway transformation schemes throughout the city and further agreed that the final area selection, number of pilots and the detail of intervention be delegated to the Area Working Groups who would be asked to adopt a flexible approach as to how the funding was allocated.

1.3 This report provides the committee with an update on progress to date, in particular, the identification of possible sites by our Area Outreach teams and elected representatives, a matrix for assessing the eligibility of potential schemes and the next steps following the selection of sites by the Area Working group.

1.4 The report also provides a timeline for the key stages of the alleywaying process and indicative timescales.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Area Working group is asked to:

- To agree the matrix for the scoring and assessment of pilot sites,
- To consider the sites identified in this report and to agree these are the sites for alleyway transformation programmes for the EAWG moving forward and,
- To delegate it to officers via the outreach team to assess these sites against the scoring matrix and rank them in order of highest score.
- To note the next steps.
- Note the timeline for the key stages of the alleywaying process and the indicative timescales provided.

3.0 Main report

3.1 DfI have agreed that in order to test the processes required to deliver an alleyway transformation scheme, a number of pilot projects be initiated, to develop a framework which will be used for a larger programme, and be a path-finding exercise, for other councils as a recognised method to access the DfI monies.

- 3.2 Successful pilots projects will involve the community receiving a `Starter Pack` of materials and information to support the regeneration of alleyways and deliver a transformation project.**

The pack would / should include: -

- a. Plants, planters, soil / compost, seats etc.**
 - b. Planting / growing / basic wooden planter and willow plant support (trellis) workshops to develop community capacity for the longevity of the project.**
 - c. Signposting communities to other departments and agencies for issues not within the remit or responsibility of BCC.**
 - d. Signposting communities to funding opportunities they could avail of to further develop and maintain the area after BCC / DFI funding has been utilised.**
 - e. Legal information / liabilities and ownership of alleyways.**
- 3.3 Members will recall that at full Council it was agreed that the final area selection, number of pilots and the detail of intervention be delegated to the Area Working Groups who would be asked to adopt a flexible approach as to how the funding was allocated.**
- 3.4 Officers have prepared a scoring matrix to assess, score and rank each potential pilot and this is attached as Appendix 1.**
- 3.5 It was agreed at the September meeting of People & Communities Committee that the Council Outreach teams would identify potential alleyway sites across each of the 4 quadrants of the city, based on officer knowledge, community infrastructure and delivery of improved outcomes. The list would be presented to Members on a North, South, East & West basis.**
- 3.6 At the May SP&R committee members considered a paper on alleygating and the process for Members to input into the identification of gate locations, specifically through a pro-forma. This was issued to members and as part of it they were asked to identify potential gating locations as well as locations suitable for alleyway transformation, for further consideration at SP&R committee and Area Working Groups over the autumn.**
- 3.7 Officers have collated the returns for this AWG in respect of Alleyway Transformation and these are outlined in Appendix 2. This includes sites identified by the area outreach team.**
- 3.8 Members should note that at People & Communities committee it was decided that up to 5 sites per quadrant of the city would be the limit for this pilot. It is proposed that the 5 that score the highest will be considered for the pilot. Once scoring is complete the ranked list of sites will be reported back to this AWG. Following approval officers will begin the process of drawing down the monies from the Department for Infrastructure for the top five ranked sites.**

3.9 The learnings from the pilot projects will be used to inform further bids into £1-2 million fund and it is proposed that those alleyways not chosen for this pilot will be completed as part of future phases of this scheme.

3.10 **Alleygating Phase V Time scales**

The key stages of the alleygating process and indicative timescales are listed below. Members should note this process only commences when the final list of locations to be gated is agreed by Council.

- **Month 1 – Regulatory and Community Consultation Commenced**
- **Month 3 – Regulatory Consultation Completed**
- **Month 4 – Community Consultation Completed**
- **Month 5 – Legal Preparation**
- **Month 7/8 – Notice of Intention Advertised**
- **Month 8/9 – Clarification of Objections**
- **Month 9 – People & Communities Committee Consideration of Traffic Regulation Order**
- **Month 10 – Full Council Approval of Traffic Regulation Order**
- **Month 10 – Gates Ordered**
- **Month 12 – Gates Manufactured and Installation Commenced**

3.11 **Financial & Resource Implications**

Capital expenditure associated with the alleyway transformation programme will be accessed via the DFI alleyway transformation scheme with outreach and capacity building support supported via existing Council resources.

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

There are no known Equality, Good Relations or Rural needs implications.”

Mr. S. Leonard, Neighbourhood Services Manager, advised the Working Group that he was content to receive any further suggestions from Members within the next few weeks.

The Working Group recommended that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee would agree the contents of the report and to add the following alleyways for consideration within the pilot scheme:

- rainbow alley in Reid Street;
- the alleyway between Knockbreda Park and Ormeau Road; and
- the alleyway between Rosetta Park and Knockbreda Road.

Community Infrastructure Pilot Update

The Working Group considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on the proposed Community Infrastructure Pilot including the methodology and resources outlined.**

Members are asked to consider the information that is provided in relation to potential areas that could be included within the pilot programme and recommend 2 areas within east Belfast.

2.0 Recommendations

Members are asked to note the detail of the proposed Community Infrastructure Pilot and agree 2 areas within east Belfast that will be included in the project.

3.0 Main report

Background

- 3.1 In June 2021 Council granted approval for officers to develop a pilot approach to addressing weak community infrastructure in 4 areas across the city. Officers have been developing the framework for this approach and are seeking approval to develop the project as outlined.**
- 3.2 Community infrastructure is commonly defined as a complex system of facilities, programmes, and social networks that aims to improve people’s quality of life. These services, networks and physical assets work in tandem to form the foundation of a strong neighbourhood. This pilot initiative will seek to use a new methodology to support identified communities with low community infrastructure.**
- 3.3 In Summer/Autumn 21 Council facilitated engagement to update the community plan for Belfast, the Belfast Agenda. The need to build community infrastructure within certain parts of the city has been identified as a priority and is likely to appear as a key commitment in the refreshed Belfast Agenda plan which will be produced in March 2022.**
- 3.4 Recent experience shows that communities require support and resources from a range of services within Council. The development of the community infrastructure pilot will be an opportunity to take an integrated approach to identifying and responding to area needs.**
- 3.5 In addition, there are a range of other agencies and organisations who provide considerable support for communities to develop and build strong community infrastructure. These include Department for Communities, NIHE, NICVA and large CVS organisations, especially those funded through BCC Capacity Building Funding. The pilot will engage with relevant partners to ensure complementarity and added value.**

Methodology

- 3.6** Members agreed that Area Working Groups (AWGs) would play an important role in the identification of pilot areas within each area of the city. Initial engagement with AWGs has highlighted that it will be difficult to limit the project to 1 area in each of the 4 geographies of the city. Some members have also highlighted the need to work with communities of interest as well as defined geographic areas. Based on this feedback officers are proposing that the pilot will work with 8 areas/communities of interest. Communities of interest that have been identified in specific geographic areas will be highlighted in the area summary.
- 3.7** Phase 1 of the programme will focus on the identification of areas and development of an agreed methodology. Delivery within communities will be on a two year basis from April 2022 – March 2024 with ongoing and final review to assess impact.
- 3.8** An overall framework will underpin the approach in all identified areas. This will ensure consistency whilst enabling the development of local responses. The framework will be underpinned by a co-design process which will gather stakeholder information about local issues and develop agreed responses which will be captured in a two year action plan for each area.
- 3.9** The action plan will be produced through a co-design process and there will be a finance of £15,000 per annum to support delivery of the action plan. This allocation will not be a grant payment but will be allocated for the delivery of specified actions by an identified lead. In most cases this will be a community & voluntary sector organisation but in cases where there is not capacity to deliver on identified actions council officers may act as lead if agreed through the co-design process.
- 3.10** Members should note that this funding allocation will be for revenue rather than capital funding.
- 3.11** Given Council's ambition that this approach will create an opportunity to review the way in which we resource and support areas/communities which have weak community infrastructure, officers have identified the need to secure external technical support to assist in the development of an agreed methodology that will identify and contribute to changed outcomes for these communities. This resource will identify best practise in other similar initiatives and assist in developing a delivery, reporting and evaluation framework.
- 3.12** To enhance the impact of this project and in recognition of potential linkages with the Belfast Agenda it is recommended that an Advisory Group for the Project is established. It is recommended that this should have representation from relevant stakeholders including but not limited to; Chair of 4 x area working groups, DfC, 2 representatives from VCSE panel, 1 representative

from CPP/Living Here Board, NICVA, NIHE and relevant BCC staff. This Advisory Group will have oversight of the overall project delivery and will provide updates to the People & Communities committee and Living Here Board.

3.13 Area teams within Belfast City Council community provision will support development of local approaches and updates from these will be provided to the Advisory Group.

3.14 Council officers will attend November/December AWG meetings to provide an overview of existing Council resources at a citywide and area level. This will include:

- Mapping of existing BCC grant funding and council facilities
- Information on existing interventions (i.e. Neighbourhood Renewal, Urban Villages)
- Indicators of need i.e. multiple deprivation and qualitative feedback

Officers suggest that the following selection criteria are used when identifying an area:

- limited access to funding
- limited access to community facilities
- lower access to services/engagement with Council
- evidence of need/inequalities/deprivation
- limited linkage with other initiatives particularly Neighbourhood Renewal, Urban Villages and Communities in Transition (CIT)
- No more than 1 pilot in every DEA

3.15 Officers have carried out an initial assessment on those areas that could benefit from the project. Members are asked to consider the information in Appendix 1 (available on mod.gov) and agree two recommended areas that will be included in the community infrastructure pilot in east Belfast.

3.16 Financial & Resource Implications

All financial resources outlined in this report can be delivered through existing budgets. Existing human resource will be used to deliver the programme.

3.17 Equality or Good Relations Implications and Rural Needs Assessment

This programme seeks to address issues of inequality by developing community infrastructure, programme delivery will seek to have a positive impact on good relations and rural needs.”

During discussion, a Member queried what had happened to the former Community Centre Committees which used to have Councillors as Committee members in addition to

community representatives. The Lead Officer - Community Provision agreed to look into those Committees.

She advised the Members that the East Area team, through community safety, was carrying out a mapping exercise of residents' groups and that officers would share the information with Members when it had been completed.

She explained that each area had been ranked based on an assessment of the following 3 criteria:

- access to Council funding;
- access to Council facilities; and
- whether it was in receipt of support from other government initiatives, for example, Neighbourhood Renewal, Urban Villages, Communities in Transition.

She advised the Working Group that, based on the analysis and on the agreed approach of only 1 in each DEA, the suggested areas in east Belfast were Braniel (Ormiston) and Clonduff (Lisnasharragh).

A number of Members stated that, while there were a number of areas which were in need of support, they agreed that Braniel and Clonduff should be selected as the areas for East Belfast for the pilot.

Moved by Councillor Flynn
Seconded by Councillor Brooks and

Resolved – that Braniel and Clonduff be included in the pilot project.

Date of Next Meeting

The Working Group was advised that a Special meeting was proposed to be held at 12.30pm on Thursday, 13th January, 2022. A number of Members advised that a lunchtime meeting was not suitable, due to their other work commitments, and that all meetings should take place in the evening to allow full attendance.

Ms. A. Allen, Neighbourhood Services Manager, advised the Members that she believed that the date had been selected as it was related to a DFI consultation and that officers wanted to engage with Members at the earliest opportunity. However, she suggested that officers could perhaps circulate the information relating to the consultation to the Members, or to liaise with the Chairperson to find another suitable evening on which to meet.

The Working Group agreed to that course of action.

Request to Present at a Future Meeting **– Hawarden Tennis Club**

The Working Group noted that correspondence had been received from Hawarden Tennis Club and agreed to receive a presentation from representatives of the Club at a future meeting.

Upon receiving advice from the Neighbourhood Services Manager, the Working Group further agreed to the phasing and coordinating of any future presentations by officers.

Chairperson