

Public Document Pack

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

23rd March, 2023

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

I enclose a copies of the reports for the following items to be considered at the meeting to be held at 9.30 am on Friday, 24th March, 2023.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

2. Restricted Items

- (i) Gaelic Games Pitch at Henry Jones Playing Fields (Pages 1 - 6)
- (j) Physical Programme Update (Pages 7 - 22)

4. Governance

- (a) Revisions to Scheme of Allowances (Pages 23 - 50)
- (c) Community Ownership Fund (Pages 51 - 74)

8. Equality and Good Relations

- (b) Equality and Diversity- Equality Screening and Rural Needs Outcome Report Q3 22-23 (Pages 75 - 82)

9. Operational

- (h) Update on dual language street signs (Pages 83 - 86)

10. Issues raised in advance by Members

(a) Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service - Councillor Ferguson to raise

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:	Revisions to Scheme of Allowances
Date:	24th March, 2023
Reporting Officer:	Ms. Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor
Contact Officer:	Mr. Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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	To consider amendments to the Council’s Scheme of Allowances to increase the rates of Basic Allowance, Special Responsibility Allowances, and Dependents’ Carers’ Allowance
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is recommended to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. consider whether it wishes to increase the Basic Allowance paid to each Councillor from £15,486 per annum to £16,394 with effect from 1st April, 2022; 2. consider whether it wishes to increase the total maximum Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) from the current £117,774 per annum to £124,676 as set out in Appendix 2 with effect from 1st April, 2022; and 3. Approve the increase to rate of Dependents’ Carers’ Allowance in line with the National Living Wage for 2023-2024

3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p data-bbox="277 226 424 255"><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p data-bbox="277 275 1485 405">The Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019, Part 2, par 3 states that the Council must agree a new Scheme of Allowances for each year in which allowances are paid.</p> <p data-bbox="165 477 1485 562">3.1.1 Paragraphs 4(2) and 5(2) further state that the amount of basic allowance and special responsibility allowances shall be determined by the Council.</p> <p data-bbox="165 629 1485 759">3.1.2 The Department for Communities issued a circular, LG 10/2022, dated 28th March, 2022, which set out revised maximum limits for basic and special responsibility allowances with effect from 1st April, 2021.</p> <p data-bbox="165 826 1485 1059">3.1.3 The Committee, at its meeting in April, 2022, agreed not to apply any increase in the basic and special responsibility allowances, and instead agreed to write to the Department for Communities calling for the current legislation to be amended to provide for the establishment of an independent process to deal with the scheme of allowances, thereby removing Elected Member involvement.</p> <p data-bbox="165 1126 1485 1211">3.1.4 The Council has not yet received a reply from the Department for Communities to our letter send in mid-2022.</p> <p data-bbox="165 1279 1485 1408">3.1.5 The Department for Communities issued a further circular, LG 03/2023 dated 25th January, 2023, which set out revised maximum limits for basic and special responsibility allowances with effect from 1st April,2022.</p>
3.16	<p data-bbox="277 1485 496 1514"><u>Basic Allowance</u></p> <p data-bbox="277 1534 1485 1619">The Committee is requested to consider whether it wishes to increase the rate of basic allowance paid to each Councillor from the current £15,486 per annum to £16,394 per annum.</p>
3.17	<p data-bbox="277 1682 708 1711"><u>Special Responsibility Allowance</u></p> <p data-bbox="277 1731 1485 1973">The Committee is further requested to consider whether it wishes to apply the increase to the Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) budget, with effect from 1st April, 2022. For a number of years, the Council has agreed a split in the special responsibility allowance budget so as to pay both the Chairpersons and the Deputy Chairpersons of the Standing Committees and the Party Officers (Party Leader, Deputy Party Leader and Party Secretary – depending upon</p>

	<p>Party size). The current division of SRAs is set out in Appendix 1. If the increase in the overall budget is increased, a suggested split is set out in Appendix 2.</p> <p><u>Dependents' Carers' Allowance</u></p> <p>3.18 The Department for Communities determines the maximum hourly rates of Dependant's Carers' Allowance for both standard care and specialised care. The rate for standard care is based on the hourly National Living Wage for age 23+, which will increase on 1st April, 2023 from the current rate of £9.50 per hour to £10.42 per hour.</p> <p>3.19 The rate for specialised care is double the rate for standard care. In addition, the Department for Communities sets the maximum monthly amounts for standard care and specialised care, capped at the equivalent of 52 hours per month.</p> <p>3.20 Accordingly, in line with the increase in the National Living Wage, the Committee is requested to agree to following amendment to the Scheme of Allowances:</p> <p><u>"(iv) Dependants' Carers' Allowance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Standard Care £10.42 per hour limited to £542.00 per month</i> • <i>Specialist Care £20.84 per hour limited to £1,084.00 per month"</i> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>3.21 The increase to the maximum rates of each of the allowances has already been considered and can be met through existing budgets.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>3.22 There are not any Good Relations, Equality or Rural Needs issues associate with this report.</p>
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
4.1	<p>Appendix 1 – Current division of SRAs Appendix 2 – Revised division of SRAs if the increase in the maximum is applied Appendix 3 – Proposed Scheme of Allowances 2023-2024 Appendix 4 – Local Government Circular LG 03/2023</p>

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Allocation of Special Responsibility Allowance – Current**Chairpersons and Deputy Chairpersons**

Position	Allowance	Number of Positions	Total
Chairpersons	£5,460.00	7	£38,220
Deputy Chairpersons	£2,730.00	7	£19,110
Chair BW&UH Cttee	£2,730.00	1	£2,730
Dep Chair BW&UH Cttee	£1,365.00	1	£1,365
Total			£61,425

Political Party Officers

Party Officer Basic Allocation £3,465.00

Deputy Leader/Secretary Basic Allocation £3,150

Remainder allocated to Political Party Leaders £162.15 per Member of the Party

Position	Number of Members	Allocation per Party Member	Allocation per Party Strength	Basic Allocation	Total
SF Party Leader	18	£162.15	£2,534.94	£3,465	£6,383.70
SF Deputy Leader				£3,150	£3,150
SF Secretary				£3,150	£3,150
DUP Party Leader	15	£162.15	£2,112.45	£3,465	£5,897.25
DUP Deputy Leader				£3,150	£3,150
DUP Secretary				£3,150	£3,150
Alliance Party Leader	10	£162.15	£1,408.30	£3,465	£5,086.50
Alliance Deputy Leader				£3,150	£3,150
SDLP Party Leader	6	£162.15	£844.98	£3,465	£4,437.90
SDLP Deputy Leader				£3,150	£3,150
Green Party Leader	4	£162.15	£563.32	£3,465	£4,113.60
PBPA Leader	3	£162.15	£422.49	£3,465	£3,951.45
UUP Leader	2	£162.15	£281.66	£3,465	£3,789.30
PUP Leader	2	£162.15	£281.66	£3,465	£3,789.30
Total	60				£56,349

Total

£117,774

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Allocation of Special Responsibility Allowance – with increase applied**Chairpersons and Deputy Chairpersons**

Position	Allowance	Number of Positions	Total
Chairpersons	£5,800	7	£40,600
Deputy Chairpersons	£2,900	7	£20,300
Chair BW&UH Cttee	£2,900	1	£2,900
Dep Chair BW&UH Cttee	£1,450	1	£1,450
Total			£65,250

Political Party Officers

Party Officer Basic Allocation £3,660

Deputy Leader/Secretary Basic Allocation £3,300

Remainder allocated to Political Party Leaders £172.43 per Member of the Party

Position	Number of Members	Allocation per Party Member	Allocation per Party Strength	Basic Allocation	Total
SF Party Leader	18	£172.43	£3,103.74	£3,660.00	£6,763.74
SF Deputy Leader				£3,300.00	£3,300.00
SF Secretary				£3,300.00	£3,300.00
DUP Party Leader	15	£172.43	£2,586.45	£3,660.00	£6,246.45
DUP Deputy Leader				£3,300.00	£3,300.00
DUP Secretary				£3,300.00	£3,300.00
Alliance Party Leader	10	£172.43	£1,724.30	£3,660.00	£5,384.30
Alliance Deputy Leader				£3,300.00	£3,300.00
SDLP Party Leader	6	£172.43	£1,034.58	£3,660.00	£4,694.58
SDLP Deputy Leader				£3,300.00	£3,300.00
Green Party Leader	4	£172.43	£689.72	£3,660.00	£4,349.72
PBPA Leader	3	£172.43	£517.29	£3,660.00	£4,177.29
UUP Leader	2	£172.43	£344.86	£3,660.00	£4,004.86
PUP Leader	2	£172.43	£344.86	£3,660.00	£4,004.86
Total	60				£59,425.80

Total

£124,675.80

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Scheme of Allowances

Payable to Councillors 2023/2024

Revised March, 2023

This Scheme is made under Part 3 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and the Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 and will take effect from 1st April, 2023.

Councillors' allowances

Councillors' allowances are governed by statute and provision is made for the following types of payments:

(a) Allowances:

- (i) Basic Allowance
- (ii) Special Responsibility Allowance
- (iii) Civic Dignitaries Allowance
- (iv) Dependants' Carers' Allowance
- (v) District Policing and Community Safety Partnership Allowances (DPCSP)
- (vi) Renunciations
- (vii) Disqualification or Suspension of a Councillor

(b) Expenses

- (i) Travel
- (ii) Subsistence

In issuing the payment of allowances to elected members the Council follows the instructions set out by the Department of Environment in 'Guidance on Councillor Allowances' March 2012 and further circular updates.

Information regarding other provisions for Councillors is also included:

(c) Additional Information

- (i) IT/Phone Package
- (ii) Councillors' Support Services

(a) Allowances

(i) Basic Allowances

A basic allowance is intended to recognise the time commitment of all Councillors, including such inevitable calls on their time as meetings with officers and constituents and approved duties. Basic allowance is also intended to cover incidental costs incurred by Councillors in their official capacity, such as the use of their homes and the cost of any telephone calls, including mobile phone calls.

The maximum annual allowance with effect from 1st April, 2023 is £16,394 payable monthly.

This allowance will be paid in equal monthly instalments via the Council's Payroll and is subject to tax, National Insurance and pension deductions where applicable.

If a Councillor ceases to be a Councillor before the end of his or her term of office, payment of the allowance will cease and a pro rata calculation will be made to ensure that the Councillor receives the correct amount of allowance. If necessary, an adjustment for under or over payment may be made to ensure that the final payment is correct, and the Council reserves the right to recover any overpayments of Basic Allowance.

In circumstances where a councillor is wholly suspended from carrying out the duties of a councillor in accordance with section 59(5) of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, the whole of the basic allowance payable to the councillor in respect of the period for which the councillor is suspended shall be withheld.

In circumstances where a councillor is wholly suspended from carrying out the duties of a councillor in accordance with section 60(1) (Decisions on Interim Reports) of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, the whole of the basic allowance payable to the councillor in respect of the period for which the councillor is suspended shall be withheld, subject to the provision that the allowance withheld shall be payable to the councillor concerned should the final adjudication of the Commissioner for Standards exonerate the councillor concerned.

In circumstances where a councillor is partially suspended from carrying out the duties of a councillor in accordance with section 59(5) or section 60(1) of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, the basic allowance payable to the councillor in respect of the period for which the councillor is partially suspended shall continue.

Scheme of Allowances 2023/2024

(ii) Special Responsibility Allowances

In addition to Basic Allowance the Council also pays Special Responsibility Allowances to those Councillors it considers to have significant additional responsibilities over and above the generally accepted duties of a Councillor. These special responsibilities are related to the discharge of the Council's functions.

The maximum rate of Special Responsibility Allowance is determined by the Department for Communities. The division of the Special Responsibility Allowance is based upon the positions held by individual Councillors as agreed.

- The Council agreed a special responsibility allowance threshold of £124,676 which may be paid to holders of positions of responsibility. No more than 50% of the Councillors can receive a special responsibility payment and no individual member can receive more than one special responsibility payment.

Special Responsibility Allowance is paid in equal, monthly instalments. Special Responsibility Allowances are liable for tax, National Insurance and pension deductions where applicable

In the event of a Councillor ceasing to hold an office which entitled him or her to receive a Special Responsibility Allowance before the term of office is completed, payment of the Allowance ceases. If necessary, an adjustment for under or overpayment may have to be made to ensure that the final payment is correct, and the Council reserves the right to recover any overpayments of Special Responsibility Allowance.

Rates of Special Responsibility Allowances with effect from 1st September, 2023 are:

Position	Committee	Allowance
Chairperson's Allowance	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee	£5,800
	City Growth and Regeneration Committee	£5,800
	People and Communities Committee	£5,800
	Licensing Committee	£5,800
	Planning Committee	£5,800
	Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee	£2,900
	Brexit Committee	£5,800
	Standards Committee	£5,800

Scheme of Allowances 2023/2024

Deputy Chairperson's Allowance	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee	£2,900
	City Growth and Regeneration Committee	£2,900
	People and Communities Committee	£2,900
	Licensing Committee	£2,900
	Planning Committee	£2,900
	Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee	£1,450
	Brexit Committee	£2,900
	Standards Committee	£2,900

Position	Party	Allowance
Party Group Leader	Sinn Fein (18 Members)	£6,763.74
	DUP (15 Members)	£6,246.45
	Alliance (10 Members)	£5,384.30
	SDLP (6 Members)	£4,694.58
	GREEN (4 Members)	£4,349.72
	PBPA (3 Members)	£4,177.29
	UUP (2 Members)	£4,004.86
	PUP (2 Members)	£4,004.86
Deputy Party Group Leader	Sinn Fein	£3,300
	DUP	£3,300
	Alliance	£3,300
	SDLP	£3,300
Party Secretary	Sinn Fein	£3,300
	DUP	£3,300

In circumstances where a councillor is wholly suspended from carrying out the duties of a councillor in accordance with section 59(5) of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, the whole of any special responsibility allowance payable to the councillor in respect of the period for which the councillor is suspended shall be withheld.

In circumstances where a councillor is wholly suspended from carrying out the duties of a councillor in accordance with section 60(1) (Decisions on Interim Reports) of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, the whole of any special responsibility allowance payable to the councillor in respect of the period for which the councillor is suspended shall be withheld, subject to the provision that the allowance withheld

Scheme of Allowances 2023/2024

shall be payable to the councillor concerned should the final adjudication of the Commissioner for Standards exonerate the councillor concerned.

In circumstances where a councillor is partially suspended from carrying out the duties of a councillor in accordance with section 59(5) of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, that part of any special responsibility allowance (to which the partial suspension relates) payable to the councillor in respect of the period for which the councillor is partially suspended shall be withheld.

In circumstances where a councillor is partially suspended from carrying out the duties of a councillor in accordance with section 60(1) (Decisions on Interim Reports) of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, that part of any special responsibility allowance (to which the partial suspension relates) payable to the councillor in respect of the period for which the councillor is partially suspended shall be withheld, subject to the provision that the allowance withheld shall be payable to the councillor concerned should the final adjudication of the Commissioner for Standards exonerate the councillor concerned.

(iii) Civic Dignitaries Allowance

Section 32 of the Finance Act provides that a council may pay to the Civic Dignitaries such allowances as it considers reasonable to meet the expenses of those offices and they should be considered totally separate from SRA arrangements.

The Civic Dignitary Personal Allowances are paid in equal, monthly instalments and are liable for tax, National Insurance and pension deductions where applicable.

The entitlements, per annum, are:-

- Lord Mayor £34,800
- Deputy Lord Mayor £6,250
- High Sherriff £6,250

Where a Lord Mayor or Deputy Lord Mayor is suspended from carrying out the duties of a councillor in accordance with section 59(5) of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, the part of Civic Allowance payable to the Councillor in respect of the period for which the Councillor is suspended will be withheld.

Scheme of Allowances 2023/2024

(iv) Dependants' Carers' Allowance

Any Member who is the main carer of a dependant, where care is required to enable that Member to perform an Approved Duty (see page 9), may claim Dependent Carers' Allowance (DCA). The rate for Standard Care is based on the hourly national living wage for age 23 or over, and the rate for Specialised Care is double the rate for Standard Care. The rates from 1st April, 2023 are:

- Standard Care £10.42 per hour limited to £541.84 per month
- Specialist Care £20.84 per hour limited to £1,083.68 per month

A dependant is defined as:

- a child under 16 years old;
- a child 16 years old or older, where there is medical / social work evidence that full-time care is required;
- an adult with recognised physical/mental disability where there is medical / social work evidence that full-time care is required; or
- an elderly relative requiring full-time care.

For the purposes of this allowance, a carer is defined as a responsible person over 16 years old who does not normally live with the councillor as part of that household; and is not a parent/guardian of the dependant. A specialist carer is a qualified person who is needed where it is essential to have professional assistance.

Receipts must be obtained from specialist carers and must accompany the claim form. Councillors may claim only once for each occurrence of an approved duty (page 10) and only one Dependants' Carers' Allowance rate is payable, even if there are two or more dependants being cared for.

Councillors must disclose any financial support provided under this allowance when applying for other care services offered by another public body.

This allowance claim may also include the duration of essential travel time, up to a maximum of one hour before the approved duty starts and ending up to one hour after it finishes.

(v) District Policing and Community Safety Partnership Allowances (DPCSP)

This allowance is paid to councillors who are members of the District Policing and Community Safety Partnership. Each councillor is entitled to claim £60 per attendance at each meeting and may claim for up to a maximum of 20 meetings a year. Each member can also claim for mileage for attending each meeting directly from DPCSP.

Chairpersons of each DPCSP are entitled to claim for an additional 10 meetings per year of the DPCSP. In addition the Chairperson of the 4 DPCSPs also sit on the Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) and are entitled to claim for up to 20 meetings per year of this partnership.

(vi) Renunciations

Councillors may, if they wish, renounce their entitlement to basic, chairperson, vice chairperson or special responsibility allowances. They can do this by writing to the Chief Executive. A councillor can subsequently withdraw the renunciation. They can also amend a renunciation (for example, to limit it to one kind of allowance only). The withdrawal or amendment cannot have retrospective effect.

Scheme of Allowances 2023/2024

(vii) Disqualification or Suspension of a Councillor

The Local Government Commissioner for Standards may impose sanctions on a Councillor who is found to have breached the Northern Ireland Code of Conduct for Councillors. Such sanction may be imposed at the conclusion of the Commissioner's adjudication process of the alleged breach or at the conclusion of an interim adjudication by the Commissioner.

For the purpose of this Scheme of Allowances, the following action will be taken upon receipt by the Chief Executive of a decision by the Commissioner which results in the disqualification or the suspension of a Councillor:

Disqualification

If a Councillor is disqualified, then the payment of all allowances and the provision of all support services outlined in this Scheme will cease with immediate effect from the date of disqualification.

Suspension

If a Councillor is wholly suspended for a period, then the payment of all allowances and the provision of all support services outlined in this Scheme will cease with immediate effect from the date of suspension.

(b) Expenses**Travel and Subsistence Allowances**

All claims for travel and subsistence should be submitted within three months. Any claims made outside of this time limit cannot be processed.

(i) Travel

- **Motor Mileage Claims**

The rates of Travel and Subsistence Allowances, including motor mileage and pedal cycle rates, are reviewed annually by the Department for Communities, following consultation with the Northern Ireland Joint Council for Local Government Services.

Claims can only be made where expenditure is incurred in relation to the Councillors undertaking Approved Duties.

Travel claims may be made through Democratic Services and it is a matter for each individual Councillor to ensure that the details contained in any claim are accurate and only include actual expenditure for which they are entitled to make a claim.

In some instances, mileage claims may be liable for tax and National Insurance deductions.

The following rates are currently in use, with most Councillors getting the maximum amount of 65.0p per mile:

	Motor Cars				Pedal Cycle	Motor Cycle (all engine capacities)
	450-999cc	1000-1199cc	1199 + cc	Electric Car		
0-8,500 miles	46.9p	52.2p	65.0p	45.0p	20p	24p
After 8,500 miles	13.7p	14.4p	16.4p	25.0p		
Passenger rate	5.0p					

- **Public Transport**

Expenditure on public transport in relation to attending approved duties can be claimed back only when accompanied by proof of purchase. Any journeys made using public transport should be noted separately in any travel expenses claim.

Scheme of Allowances 2023/2024

(ii) Subsistence

If Councillors attend conferences, courses or undertake visits as representatives of the Council they are entitled to receive appropriate subsistence allowances.

Before a Councillor attends an event, they must obtain Committee approval. Councillors may also attend approved events as part of their Personal Development Plan (PDP).

Any accommodation or travel arrangements for conferences are made directly by the Council.

Councillors should take a careful note and keep receipts for any expenses they incur while they are away on Council business because they may be able to claim for these as part of their subsistence allowances or as incidental expenses. This relates to such things as meals, bus and taxi fares, necessary telephone calls, etc. Purchases of any alcoholic beverages may not be claimed for.

Within the UK

The rates for subsistence allowance are determined by the Department for Communities. The following table shows the current rates of subsistence which may be claimed for:

Maximum Subsistence Rates		
	BRITISH ISLES	LONDON
Accommodation Allowance	£100.70	£122.45
Meal Allowance		
Breakfast	£11.50	
Lunch	£13.50	
Tea	£4.70	
Dinner	£20.95	
Total Meal Allowance	£50.65	

Departments will assist Councillors in the completion of claim forms and Councillors should make contact with an appropriate officer immediately upon returning from the conference to give details of additional expenses incurred and to sign the necessary claim forms.

Claims without receipts should rarely happen. However, Councillors must use the '[Lost or Unobtainable Receipt Voucher](#)' to claim reimbursement for expenditure they have incurred when no receipt is available.

Outside the UK

For travel outside the United Kingdom, the Council will pay advanced subsistence at the rate of £75.00 per 24-hour period, or £45 per part 24-hour period.

Approved Duties

Under the existing Regulations Councillors are entitled to claim expenses in relation to an approved duty. An approved duty may be defined as:-

- (a) attendance at a meeting of the Council or of any of its Committees. Members may only claim travelling allowance for attending Committees to which they have been appointed. A Member, however, may claim mileage allowance for attending a meeting of a Committee to which he or she has not been appointed if he or she is attending at the invitation of the Committee concerned or has been sent by another Committee to state a particular case.
- Or
- (b) attendance approved by the Council for the purpose of, or in connection with, the discharge of the functions of the Council, such as:
- attendance by appointed Councillors at meetings of Advisory/Liaison Committees Steering Groups/ Working Groups;
 - attendance at approved conferences, courses, study visits or seminars as a representative of the Council;
 - attendance by appointed Councillors at meetings of Policing and Community Safety Partnerships of which they are a member;
 - attendance at meetings of community centre committees to which they have been appointed;
 - attendance on a Council or Committee deputation relevant to the functions of the Council;
 - attendance at meetings of outside bodies to which they have been appointed, only if the functions of the Outside Body relates to the statutory functions of the Council, and where remuneration is not made by the Outside Body to which the Councillor has been appointed; and
 - Attendance at training courses or briefing sessions provided by or through the Council

In addition, the Council's Chief Executive can authorise as approved duties certain miscellaneous functions.

Tax

Useful information on treatment of tax for councillors could be found at His Majesty's Revenue and Customs website via <https://www.gov.uk/hmrc-internal-manuals/employment-income-manual/eim65900>.

Councillors' Pension Scheme

Councillors are automatically enrolled in the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers Superannuation Scheme (NILGOSC). The main purpose of the scheme is to provide a pension in retirement for Councillors. The benefits paid under the Scheme are based on length of membership of the Scheme and career average pensionable pay.

The pensionable pay of a councillor consists of the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowance payments only. The contribution rate depends on how much each Councillor is paid but will be between 5.5% and 7.5% of the pensionable allowances received.

If a Councillor no longer wishes to participate in the pension scheme, or has any queries regarding the scheme, NIGOSC should be contacted directly on 0345 3197 320

(c) Additional Information

(i) IT /Phone Package

Personal computer equipment can be provided by the Council to each Councillor on the basis that the Council owns the equipment and lends it to those Councillors who request it.

Councillors IT Package currently consists of the following:

- a Windows Hybrid device: Dell Latitude 5330 2 in 1 (or equivalent), 1 Bluetooth touch pen (if required), and laptop case; and
- a Smartphone, either an Apple iPhone 11 64GB or a Samsung Galaxy A53, which includes call, text and data allowance.

- **Tablet PC**

Each Councillor is entitled to receive a tablet PC for their duration as a Member of Belfast City Council. The device is provided by the Council to assist Councillors in undertaking their role more effectively. The main benefits are having online access to the council minutes system and other Council provided software and to engage more effectively with constituents.

Where a Councillor has been provided with a tablet PC, hard copies of Council, Committee and Working Group report packs will not be provided.

- **Mobile Telephone costs**

Each Councillor will be offered the use of a mobile phone for the duration they remain a Councillor of Belfast City Council. The device is available for upgrade periodically.

The Council will cover the cost of line rental which includes:

- a. the cost of all phone calls to UK landlines or UK mobile phones whilst within the UK;
- b. the cost of all text messages to UK landlines or UK mobile phones whilst within the UK; and
- c. 4GB of data usage per month.

All costs incurred by calls, texts or data usage outside of that detailed above, are met by the Councillor and will be deducted the following month from the Councillor's basic allowance.

Hands free mobile phone equipment

The Council will contribute towards the cost of purchase and installation of hands free mobile phone equipment for use in the Councillors' cars on the following basis:-

- Reimbursement will be made in respect of the costs of installation of the equipment in the Councillor's own private vehicle and shall be subject to the submission of appropriate receipts
- The maximum amount of reimbursement on each occasion to be £250.00.

- **Home Telephone**

The Council may meet the costs of basic monthly/quarterly line rental of the home telephone of each Councillor. Councillors are required to pay the rental cost in the first instance and, having submitted the telephone bill, will then be reimbursed this amount, subject to any tax deductions being applied through the Council's payroll system.

The Department for Communities has determined that as the Councillor's Basic Allowance covers incidental expenses involved in being a Councillor, such as the use of a home telephone, it is therefore not possible to reimburse the cost of telephone calls made on a landline.

- **Broadband Internet Access**

In order to encourage Councillors to use the Council's IT system remotely (from home or office), Councillors may claim part of their home broadband internet rental costs (maximum £25 per month).

As with phone line rental reimbursement, Councillors are required to pay the cost of the broadband in the first instance and, having submitted the appropriate bill, will then be reimbursed up to £25.00 per month, subject to any tax deductions being applied through the Council's payroll.

Access to the Council's systems is provided by means of a virtual private network (VPN). Councillors should speak to officers in Democratic Services to arrange to have the VPN set up on their computer.

- **Electronic Minutes System**

The electronic minutes system is accessible on the Council's website as well as the corporate intranet. The purpose of the system is to have a range of information relating to councillors and the Council's decision-making process in one place.

The system allows Councillors and members of the public to:-

- View the schedule of meetings;
- Access agendas, reports and minutes of Council, Committees, and Working Group Meetings; and
- Search for historical decisions.

The system is also used to alert Councillors that Committee summonses, agenda, minutes and reports have been published and, when any amendments or changes have taken place, Councillors can then access electronically.

(ii) Councillors' Support Services

The Council provides Councillors with a wide range of support services to assist them in carrying out their work as Councillors. Support services include typing of correspondence, post, message and enquiry services, council stationery, research service, room bookings, Councillors training, travel arrangements, expenses and subsistence payments and general enquiries.

- **Members' Common Room**

The Members' Common Room is located at the reception area of the City Hall, adjacent to the Committee Rooms. Individual mail boxes and a kitchen are available for Councillors' use.

- **Party Rooms**

In addition to the Members' Common Room, the Council provides Party Rooms for each of the political party groups within the Council. These may be used for meetings, work or discussions with constituents.

All accommodation and facilities provided are for use in connection with Council or constituency business only.

In addition to a conference table, printer, scanner, television, tea/coffee making facilities and filing space, each Party Room has at least one PC in addition to docking stations for use with the Council provided tablet PCs.

- **Correspondence**

Items for typing may be left with Democratic Services, where a confidential secretarial service is available for letters, reports and all other correspondence related to Council or constituency work.

After typing, letters will be left in the Councillor's mailbox in the Members' Common Room or can be posted to the addressee.

- **Post**

A postal service is available for correspondence which relates to Council or constituency work.

Letters must be addressed to individuals living within the City boundary although letters to public bodies and government Departments with addresses outside the City will also be accepted.

Circularised mail will not be accepted.

Councillors can also be provided with prepaid envelopes for use in their routine correspondence to constituents etc. Please speak to Democratic Services officer to request an allocation of prepaid envelopes.

Postal facilities are not available for party political issues.

- **Message and Inquiry Service**

Democratic Services staff act as a point of contact for all enquiries and telephone messages concerning Councillors from the general public, constituents and Council officers.

The telephones in the party rooms are set to divert to staff on no reply and telephone messages for Councillors will be taken. Urgent messages will be relayed immediately to Councillors, if contact is possible, and other messages will be emailed or left in their mail boxes.

- **Council Stationery**

Personalised headed-paper, compliment slips and business cards with the Council logo will be provided for each Councillor during their term of office. Standard Council stationery items are also available in the Members' Common Room.

- **Civic Gifts**

A limited range of Belfast City Council branded gifts is available for use by Councillors. The gifts are intended for VIP guests to City Hall or for special individuals or groups which a Councillor wishes to recognise. Councillors may also request civic gifts when visiting special individuals or groups when on Council business in other countries. When requesting Civic Gifts, the Councillor must sign a receipt of goods and a database of issued gifts will be maintained.

- **Research and Information Service**

Democratic Services staff will be available to assist Councillors in obtaining information and carrying out research on items related to Council and constituency business.

- **Receiving Constituents**

Councillors may make arrangements to receive constituents or visitors in their party room if space is available. Councillors may also request to book a committee room to meet with a group of up to 15 visitors. Visitors will not be permitted access to party rooms or the committee rooms unless accompanied by a Councillor.

- **Car parking**

Councillors have 24 hour access to the City Hall car park. A pass for display in Councillors' vehicles will be provided by Democratic Services.

Car parking for guests of Councillors is limited. However, if this is required, please contact Democratic Services staff. The visitors' name and the registration number of the vehicle will be required for the purposes of admittance by Security staff.



Chief Executive of each District Council
Finance Officer of each District Council
Other Interested Parties

Local Government and
Housing Regulation Division
Finance Branch
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
BELFAST
BT2 7EG
Phone: 028 9082 3346

email: Anthony.carleton@communities-ni.gov.uk

Our ref: CO1-22-718

25 January 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

**CIRCULAR LG 03/2023 - CONSOLIDATED COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCES CIRCULAR
(UPDATED JANUARY 2023)**

This Local Government Circular provides a consolidated record of all councillor allowances and supersedes Local Government Circular 10/2022.

This consolidated circular is required to determine and reflect an increase in maximum rates for Basic and Special Responsibility Allowance from 1 April 2022 and an increase in Dependants' Carers' Allowance from 1 April 2023.

All determinations are made by the Department under section 31 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and the Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019.

If you have any queries on the content of this circular please contact Jeff Glass on 028 9082 3375 or Ian Lewis on 028 9082 3506 or by email jeff.glass@communities-ni.gov.uk or ian.lewis@communities-ni.gov.uk .

Yours faithfully

ANTHONY CARLETON
Director
Local Government and Housing Regulation

1. Basic Allowance

- valid from 1 April 2022

Basic Allowance
Maximum £16,394 per annum ≠

≠ (The basic allowance includes an element for incidental and consumable costs incurred by councillors in their official capacity. In 2015/16 this element was £1,000 and each year this amount is uplifted in line with the increase applied to the basic allowance, therefore this element within the basic allowance is £1,154 from 1 April 2022.)

2. Dependants' Carers' Allowance

- valid from 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023

The following table states the maximum rates for dependants' carers' allowance.

Dependants' Carers' Allowance	Hourly Rate	Maximum monthly amount
Standard	£9.50 [^]	£494
Specialist	£19.00	£988

[^](Based on national living wage)

- valid from 1 April 2023

The following table states the maximum rates for dependants' carers' allowance.

Dependants' Carers' Allowance	Hourly Rate	Maximum monthly amount
Standard	£10.42 [^]	£542
Specialist	£20.84	£1,084

[^](Based on national living wage)

3. Travel Allowances

– valid from 1 April 2017

The following table states the maximum rates for travel allowances.

Type of Vehicle	Rate per Mile	Rate per Mile Above 8,500 miles	Rate per Mile Above 10,000 miles
A pedal cycle	20.0p	20.0p	20.0p
A motor cycle (all engine capacities)	24.0p	24.0p	24.0p
A motor car of cylinder capacity exceeding 450cc but not exceeding 999cc	46.9p	13.7p	13.7p
A motor car of cylinder capacity exceeding 999cc but not exceeding 1,199cc	52.2p	14.4p	14.4p
A motor car of cylinder capacity exceeding 1,199cc	65.0p	16.4p	16.4p
An electric car	45.0p	45.0p	25.0p
Passenger rate (per passenger)	5.0p	5.0p	5.0p

4. Special Responsibility Allowance

– valid from 1 April 2022

The following table states the maximum rate of Special Responsibility Allowance that a council may pay. The maximum rate is based on the size of the council population. Each council's population figures are updated each year by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and it is the duty of each council to operate within the total maximum rate appropriate to its population band. For ease the maximum any councillor can receive, within each band, is also provided.

Population of council	Maximum Special Responsibility Allowance £	Maximum (1/5th) for individual councillor £
Less than 120,000	57,720	11,544
120,000 to 199,000	80,809	16,162
200,000 +	124,676	24,935

5. Subsistence Allowances

– valid from 1 April 2015

The following table states the maximum rates for subsistence; however, where councils believe it is necessary there is flexibility for councils to increase these rates by applying a suitable measure of price inflation.

PERIOD/MEAL	British Isles Rates £	London Rates £
Accommodation allowance - An absence involving an overnight stay, away from the normal place of residence. This rate does not include any meal allowance.	100.70	122.45
Breakfast allowance - (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period before 11 am)	11.50	11.50
Lunch allowance - (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period including the period between 12 noon and 2pm)	13.50	13.50
Tea allowance - (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period including the period between 3pm and 6pm)	4.70	4.70
Evening meal allowance - (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period ending after 7pm)	20.95	20.95

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Subject:	Community Ownership Fund – New Bidding Window
Date:	24 March 2023
Reporting Officer:	John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy
Contact Officers:	Kevin Heaney, Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty Mark Mulholland, Strategic Policy, and Planning Officer

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 or Summary of main Issues
1.1	To provide Committee with an update on a bidding window, Window 3 Round 2, to apply for the Community Ownership Fund recently opened by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	It is recommended that the Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • note the update in relation to Window 3 Round 2 funding under the Community Ownership Fund;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that Members agree to share this information with relevant local organisations through their existing area networks if appropriate; and • agree that this information is shared with relevant partners through the Community Planning network.
3.0	Main report
3.1	DLUHC have recently launched a new window to apply for the Community Ownership Fund. Community groups can bid for up to £250k matched-funding to buy or take over local community assets at risk of loss to run these as community-owned businesses. In exceptional cases, up to £1m is available for sports clubs to buy a sports ground at risk of loss.
3.2	To apply, groups should submit an Expression of Interest, and this is always open. If successful, they will be invited to submit a full application during one of the bidding windows. The current window opened on 15 February 2023 and will close on 14 April 2023 .
3.3	To date in NI, DLUHC have supported six projects to date including Ballymacash Sports Academy in Lisburn, St. Columb's Hall in Derry Londonderry, and a parish building in Kilcoo.
3.4	DLUHC have provided a promotional pack which includes key information, links, and materials in case for local authorities to share these with relevant groups or in your wider network. This pack is provided at Appendix A for your consideration.
3.5	<p>Round 2 Changes</p> <p>Having learned lessons from the review of the first bidding round after engaging with applicants and sector stakeholders, DLUHC have made some changes to the eligibility requirements and the design of the programme for Round 2 onwards. These changes are explained in full in the updated prospectus.</p>
3.5.1	<p>A summary of the key changes to the eligibility requirements for the relaunch of the Fund include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an extension for project completion from 6 months to 12 months from the date indicated on the offer letter • allowing the approval of bids for assets with at least 15-year leases and reasonable break clauses, although 25-year leases are still preferable • removing the requirement for projects to have had a community use in the last 5 years, although assets must still have evidence of some past community use

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clarifying and simplifying the eligibility requirements for publicly owned assets and sporting assets.
3.5.2	<p>A summary of the key changes to the design of the programme include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> introducing a two-stage application process by including an always open Expression of Interest (EOI) stage moving to three bidding windows per year, meaning applicants can submit a full application once their EOI has been approved, at a time that is right for their project Providing more information to successful applicants on what they can expect after receiving an offer letter introducing a cap on the number of full applications that can be made for each project. Applicants are now permitted two full application attempts. Application attempts from Round 1 will be disregarded from the cap. <p>Expression of Interest (EOI) and main application stage</p>
3.6	<p>DLUHC have introduced a two-stage application process for applicants. Applicants first need to submit an EOI form and have this approved before being sent a link to the full application for the Fund. The EOI form will test whether a project is likely to be eligible through a pass/fail assessment based on the eligibility requirements.</p>
3.7	<p>The EOI stage is designed to strengthen the application process by ensuring that applicants are fully aware of the eligibility requirements ahead of submitting a full application to the Fund. The EOI stage will be always open so that applicants can submit an EOI form at a time that is right for their project.</p>
3.8	<p>If applicants pass the EOI stage, they can then apply in any bidding window suitable for the timings of their project. There will be three bidding windows each year to submit a full application to the Fund.</p> <p>Round 2 Timings</p>
3.9	<p>Window 3 of Round 2 opened on 15 February 2023 and will close on 14 April 2023 at 11:59am. If applicants apply in this window, DLUHC aim to inform them of the outcome of the application in spring 2023. There will be additional bidding windows in the future, with three windows per financial year. The dates of future bidding windows will be announced in due course.</p>

	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u>
3.10	None associated with this report.
	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u>
3.11	None associated with this report
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix A – Community Ownership Fund Local Authority Promotional Pack, 15 March 2023

Local Authority Promotional Pack:

Round 2 Window 3
Announcement

MARCH 15 2023

COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP FUND
COF@Levellingup.gov.uk



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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. The £150m Community Ownership Fund helps communities across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to take ownership of assets at risk of closure.
- 1.2. There is a long-term trend of communities losing assets that foster a sense of community pride and bring people together. This has a knock-on impact on people's satisfaction with the place they live in, and the strength of local communities.
- 1.3. There is evidence that assets of this variety can be successfully and sustainably brought into community ownership. This both enables people to continue to benefit from the places that matter most to them and empowers communities to shape their local areas.
- 1.4. However, we recognise it can be hard for community groups to raise the initial funding required to buy the asset. The Community Ownership Fund will help enable community groups to overcome these barriers.
- 1.5. The Fund ensures that local people across the UK can support and continue benefiting from treasured local institutions whose future may be in doubt. We will invest in community ownership projects where these assets make the biggest difference to the local place.
- 1.6. Community ownership of assets can boost local connections, participation and pride of place, and bolster community resilience. By investing in the capacity of communities across the UK to take ownership of the places and spaces that matter to them, the Fund will help to strengthen the social infrastructure that supports communities to thrive.
- 1.7. From July 2021, community groups have been able to bid for up to £250k matched funding to help them buy or take over local community assets at risk of being lost, to run as community-owned businesses.
- 1.8. In exceptional cases, up to £1m matched funding is available to help establish a community-owned sports club or help buy a sports ground at risk of being lost without community intervention.
- 1.9. The Community Ownership Fund helps to ensure that important parts of the social fabric, such as pubs, sports clubs, theatres and post office buildings, can continue to play a central role in towns and villages across the UK.
- 1.10. This Fund forms part of the UK Government's levelling up agenda, helping support ambition and building opportunity, with support targeted towards places where community assets can make the most difference. The Community Ownership Fund helps to safeguard the small, but much-loved local assets on which we cannot put a price.

2. ROUND 2

Round 2 Changes

Having learned lessons from the review of the first bidding round after engaging with applicants and sector stakeholders, we have made some positive changes to the eligibility requirements and the design of the programme for Round 2 onwards. These changes are explained in full in the updated prospectus.

A summary of the key changes to the eligibility requirements for the relaunch of the Fund include:

- an extension for project completion from 6 months to 12 months from the date indicated on the offer letter
- allowing the approval of bids for assets with at least 15-year leases and reasonable break clauses, although 25-year leases are still preferable
- removing the requirement for projects to have had a community use in the last 5 years, although assets must still have evidence of some past community use
- clarifying and simplifying the eligibility requirements for publicly owned assets and sporting assets.

A summary of the key changes to the design of the programme include:

introducing a two-stage application process by including an always open Expression of Interest (EOI) stage

- moving to three bidding windows per year, meaning applicants can submit a full application once their EOI has been approved, at a time that is right for their project
- Providing more information to successful applicants on what they can expect after receiving an offer letter
- introducing a cap on the number of full applications that can be made for each project. Applicants are now permitted two full application attempts. Application attempts from Round 1 will be disregarded from the cap.

EOI and main application stage

- 2.1. We have introduced a two-stage application process for applicants.
- 2.2. Applicants first need to submit an EOI form and have this approved before being sent a link to the full application for the Fund. The EOI form will test whether a project is likely to be eligible through a pass/fail assessment based on the eligibility requirements.
- 2.3. The EOI stage is designed to strengthen the application process by ensuring that applicants are fully aware of the eligibility requirements ahead of submitting a full application to the Fund.

- 2.4. The EOI stage will be always open so that applicants can submit an EOI form at a time that is right for their project.
- 2.5. If applicants pass the EOI stage, they can then apply in any bidding window suitable for the timings of their project. There will be three bidding windows each year to submit a full application to the Fund.

Round 2 Timings

- 2.6. The first bidding window opened in June and closed on 19 August 2022. Bidding window 2 opened on 31 October and closed on 14 December 2022.
- 2.7. Window 3 of Round 2 opened on 15 February and will close on 14 April 2023 at 11:59am. If applicants apply in this window, we aim to inform you of the outcome of your application in spring 2023.
- 2.8. There will be additional bidding windows in the future, with three windows per financial year. Each bidding window will close at 11:59am on its respective closing date. The dates of future bidding windows will be announced in due course.

LA Introduction to COF PowerPoint Presentation (Updated)



LA Introduction to COF.pptx

3. ELIGIBILITY FOR PUBLICLY OWNED ASSETS

- 3.1. The Community Ownership Fund grant cannot fund the costs of purchasing publicly owned assets where the public authority would credit a capital receipt. However, the Fund will work alongside existing Community Asset Transfers to support these transfers by funding the costs of renovation and refurbishment.
- 3.2. For example, if an applicant was able to secure an asset transfer or raise the funds through another route, they could be eligible for funding from the Community Ownership Fund for any refurbishment needed in order to save that asset.
- 3.3. The purpose of the Fund is to provide support to voluntary and community groups who want to take ownership of assets. We hope however, that local authorities will play an active role in encouraging community groups to apply. We see the role of local authorities and parish councils as providing essential support to the efforts of local community groups, rather than delivering the projects themselves.
- 3.4. Alongside the mandatory eligibility requirements that every applicant will need to fulfil, bids relating to publicly owned assets will also need to demonstrate the following additional requirements. These additional requirements are that:
 - 3.4.1. The responsibility for delivering statutory services (if relevant) is not transferred from the public authority to the community organisation
 - 3.4.2. The Community Ownership Fund grant received will only be used for renovation and refurbishment costs following the transfer of an asset into community ownership; the public authority will not credit a capital receipt from Community Ownership Fund funding.
- 3.5. These additional requirements are necessary because local authorities in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have a number of statutory functions requiring them to provide various services to their communities.
- 3.6. For projects relating to publicly owned assets, we will require additional, specific evidence covering the following points:
 - 3.6.1. **Risk facing the asset** - the Fund will only invest in community assets which would otherwise be lost. We will therefore need evidence from both the current public owner and applicant about the current status of the asset and why its future is at risk
 - 3.6.2. **Impact on service provision** - evidence that any statutory services currently delivered from the asset at risk will be continued by the public authority. This may be evidenced by a letter or appropriate cabinet paper from a local authority, for example
 - 3.6.3. **Deliverability and sustainability** - we can't invest in projects where we assess the transfer of liabilities associated with the asset to be unmanageable or unreasonable. Sustainability of the management of the asset should be evidenced in the application

4. KEY LINKS

- **Prospectus:**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-ownership-fund-prospectus>
- **Updated List of Successful Bidders:**
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/community-ownership-fund-first-round-successful-bidders>
- **Assessment Guidance:**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-ownership-fund-round-2-application-form-assessment-criteria-guidance>
- **Expression of Interest Guidance:**
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/community-ownership-fund-round-2-how-to-express-your-interest-in-applying>
- **Webinar:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-ownership-fund-round-2-webinar-slides>
- **Leveling Up Website:** <https://levellingup.campaign.gov.uk/projects-near-me/>

5. THIS ANNOUNCEMENT

- 5.3. This announcement of successful bidders to the Community Ownership fund will see £7.73m awarded to 30 projects across the United Kingdom. This additional funding takes our overall funding total to £23.9m for 98 projects.
- 5.4. So far, the Community Ownership Fund has awarded £23.9m to 98 projects across the UK, with £17.5m allocated to 67 projects across England, £3.1m allocated to 15 projects in Scotland, £1.8m to 9 projects in Wales and £1.5m to 7 projects in Northern Ireland.
- 5.5. Interested groups can submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) form to start their application process at any time. Applicants who pass the EOI stage are then invited to submit a full application to the Fund at a time that is right for their project.
- 5.6. With a 4-year window until 2024/25 for investment to be released, there is plenty of opportunity for interested community groups to apply to take over invaluable community assets and to run them as businesses – by the community, *for* the community.
- 5.7. Early-stage development support is now available to applicants via the **My Community website**. The service currently only offers initial advice, such as questions about the content of the prospectus. A more in-depth support offers to develop successful business plans will be offered in the next bidding round. You can find more information on the development support provider in section 9 of the prospectus.

6. PROMOTION

- 6.3. We encourage you to share the Round 2 Window 2 announcement of successful projects with your networks. Below you will find some supporting communication products.

Social Media Post Draft

Twitter:

The Community Ownership Fund is now supporting almost 100 communities, with an additional **£7.73m** for **30** new projects across the UK announced as part of the Spring Budget. For a full list of projects being supported see here: <https://tinyurl.com/3897nuz5>

Facebook/Other:

The Community Ownership Fund is now supporting almost 100 communities, with an additional **£7.73m** for **30** new projects across the UK announced as part of the Spring Budget. For a full list of projects being supported see here: <https://tinyurl.com/3897nuz5>

The third application window of Round 2 opened on 15 February and will close at 11:59am on 14 April 2023. If you are a community group looking to take over a local community asset at risk of being lost, then submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) now: <https://tinyurl.com/pkmme5bj>

DLUHC Social Pages

6.4. We will be promoting the Community Ownership Fund on DLUHC social media pages. Please feel free to like and share any post about the Fund with your network. You can find DLUHC's social media pages here:

- Twitter - <https://twitter.com/luhc?s=20&t=vZheyUXTlgGa5Y6yX4E1pA>
- Instagram- <https://www.instagram.com/luhcgovuk/>
- Linked-In- <https://www.linkedin.com/company/luhcgovuk/>
- Facebook- <https://www.facebook.com/luhcgovuk>

Development Support Provider Social Pages

- Twitter- <https://twitter.com/MyCommunityHelp>
- Twitter- <https://twitter.com/localitynews>
- Facebook- <https://www.facebook.com/MyCommunityHelp/>

Updated Webinar slides for applicants

6.5. Below you will find updated webinar slides which can be used if you wish to hold applicant facing webinars:



Community_Owners
hip_Fund_round_2_W

6.6.

5. PHOTOS OF PROJECTS

Hartcliffe City Farm



Page 6

The Old Forge



Leigh Spinners Mill Community Regeneration



Racehorse Community Pub



Ballymacash Sports Academy



Margaret Haes Riding Centre



6. SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS

6.1. Successful Project for Round 2 Window 2

Organisation	Project Name	Total Value	Country	Local Authority
Argyle Community Trust	Brickfields Sports and Community Hub	£1,050,000	England	Plymouth
Courtside Hubs CIC (Courtside) (The Bury Knowle)	Bury Knowle Multi-activity Hub	£260,878	England	Oxfordshire
Courtside Hubs CIC (Courtside) (The Leys Multi activity hub)	The Leys Multi-activity Hub	£699,697	England	Oxfordshire
DesignerMakersCIO	designermakers21 building purchase	£191,596	England	Norfolk
East Boldre Community Stores Limited	East Boldre Chapel Stores	£299,500	England	New Forest
Fighting All Cancers Together	ACT Family Community Centre	£300,000	England	Gateshead
Friends Of The Black Horse Cranham Ltd (registered number RS008746)	Friends Of The Black Horse Cranham Ltd	£300,000	England	Gloucestershire
Groundlings Theatre Trust	Saving the Old Benny	£156,000	England	Portsmouth
Healthy Me Healthy Communities CIC	Gorton Central	£150,000	England	Manchester
Joint Activities & Motor Education Service	JAMES Tramshed Keighley	£121,670	England	Bradford
Lancaster Musicians Coop	Lancaster Music Co-op	£300,000	England	Lancaster
Middlesbrough Rugby Union Football Club Ltd	Tollesby Playing Fields	£138,623	England	Middlesbrough
Old Horn Community Pub Society Limited	Old Horn Community Pub	£199,740	England	North Yorkshire
Sangat community association	sangat centre renovations	£140,500	England	Bradford
Selsey Pavilion Trust	Selsey Pavilion	£299,400	England	Chichester
St Albans Community Association	St Albans Community Centre	£300,000	England	Sandwell
TAAG CIO	TAAG refurbishment	£88,560	England	Newton Abbot
The Fishers Arms Hornccliffe Community Pub Limited	The Fishers Arms	£65,000	England	Northumberland
The Generator Loughborough CIC	The Generator Loughborough	£250,000	England	Charnwood
The George Community Pub (Wickham Market) Limited	The George Community Pub Project	£195,000	England	East Suffolk
The New Mechanics Institution Preservation Trust	Refurbishment of historic Cricketers Arms for community use	£250,000	England	Swindon

The Portland Inn Project CIC	THE PORTLAND INN PROJECT	£299,900	England	Stoke-on-Trent
Wixford Village Hall	Replacement of Wixford Village Hall	£179,862	England	Warwickshire
Greater Shantallow Area Partnership	Northside Community Building	£194,438	Northern Ireland	Derry City and Strabane
Dornie & District Community Trust	Dornie Community Hub	£280,000	Scotland	Highland
Forres Area Community Trust	Forres Town Hall – An Enterprising Community Venue	£300,000	Scotland	Moray
Inspire Inveraray	Inveraray Pier	£44,332	Scotland	Argyll and Bute
Take A Bow Development Trust	Re-Development of the Former New Farm Loch Community Centre	£200,000	Scotland	East Ayrshire
The Aberfeldy Sports Club	The Aberfeldy Sports Club	£300,000	Scotland	Perth and North Perthshire
Tremeirchion Community Pub Ltd	Salisbury Arms Tremeirchion	£175,000	Wales	Denbighshire

6.2. Successful Project for Round 2 Window 1

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Organisation	Project Name	Total Value	Country	Local Authority
Banana Enterprise Network Ltd (Rock Hall)	Save Rock Hall	£295,000	England	Bolton
Caistor and District Community Trust Limited (C&DCT) (2-4 Market Place)	2-4 Market Place	£250,000	England	West Lindsey
Cliftonville Cultural Space	ARK - a new cultural space for Cliftonville	£148,792	England	Thanet
Horrabridge Recreation Field Trust	Horrabridge Replacement Sports Pavilion	£134,000	England	West Devon
Kingswood Arts CIC (Kingwood House Restoration)	Kingswood House Restoration	£180,000	England	Southwark
LifeLine Church (Community Centre)	LifeLine Community Centre	£250,000	England	Barking and Dagenham
Limpley Stoke Community Benefit Society Ltd (Save the Hop Pole)	Save the Hop Pole	£300,000	England	Wiltshire
Margaret Haes Riding Centre Limited (the spirit of the Horse)	The Spirit of the Horse	£171,500	England	Bury
Mind in Bexley and East Kent Ltd (Revival: Food & Mood)	Revival: Food & Mood	£120,550	England	Canterbury

Moor Pool Heritage Trust (Moor Pool Community Jigsaw)	Completing the Moor Pool Community Jigsaw	£96,000	England	Birmingham
Myddleton Road Community Benefit Society Limited	Save The Step	£300,000	England	Haringey
Oxhill Village Hall	Renovation & extension of Oxhill Village Hall	£25,000	England	Stratford-on-Avon
Sawyers Church (Community Centre)	Sawyers Community Centre	£275,000	England	Brentwood
ST GEORGE'S CHURCH FATFIELD PCC	St Georges Fatfield Community Annexe and Cafe project	£250,000	England	Sunderland
The Black Horse Community Group Limited	BHCG Black Horse	£245,395	England	Melton
THE HONEST MILLER COMMUNITY GROUP LIMITED	The Honest Miller, Brook	£262,500	England	Ashford
The Raven Inn Community Benefit Society Limited	The Raven Inn Community pub	£102,000	England	Warrington
The Roxy Collective	The Future of The Roxy	£300,000	England	South Lakeland
Zion Bristol Limited	Zion Community Art Space	£240,000	England	Bristol, City of
Glór Uachtar Tíre (Teach Uidhilin)	Teach Uidhilín	£204,316	Northern Ireland	Newry, Mourne and Down
Kilcoo Regeneration Group Limited	Purchase of the Parish Buildings for Community Use	£195,000	Northern Ireland	Newry, Mourne and Down
KILCOOLEY WOMENS CENTRE (Ladybird Parent Children and Family Care)	LADYBIRDS PARENT, CHILDREN & FAMILY CENTRE	£156,000	Northern Ireland	Ards and North Down
Falkirk Rugby Football and Sports Club (SCIO) (Sunnyside Pavillion)	Sunnyside Pavilion	£115,000	Scotland	Falkirk
Heart of Newhaven Community	The Heart	£300,000	Scotland	City of Edinburgh
Langside Sports Club	Langside Sports Club - Clubhouse and Pavilion Renovation	£100,000	Scotland	Glasgow City
North Arran Community Benefit Society Ltd	Lochranza Country Inn	£300,000	Scotland	North Ayrshire
Aberporth Village Hall and Recreation Ground	Heart of the Community	£280,000	Wales	Ceredigion
Aberystwyth and District Hospice at Home Volunteers	Acquiring Plas Antaron, a place for wellbeing and hope	£179,730	Wales	Ceredigion
HAVERHUB CIC	Expansion and security of Haverhub CIC	£240,000	Wales	Pembrokeshire
SHGT COMMUNITY BENEFIT SOCIETY LTD. (Siop Havards)	Siop Havards	£207,720	Wales	Pembrokeshire

The Llandyrnog Community Shop Ltd.	Llandyrnog Community Shop and Post Office Project (The Llandyrnog Community Shop Ltd)	£200,000	Wales	Denbighshire
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6.3. Successful Project for Round 1

Organisation	Project Name	Total Value	Country	Local Authority
Adwick Park Community and Sports Academies CIO	Adwick Park Community Hub	£235,952	England	Doncaster
Bridge Creative Enterprise CIC	Centre of Social Enterprise and Creativity	£65,870	England	County Durham
Bury Community Football Stadium	Bury Community Football Stadium	£1,000,000	England	Bury
Countrymans Community Pub Society Limited CCPS	Countrymans Community Pub	£230,000	England	Richmondshire
Fontmell Magna Community Land Trust Limited	Community ownership of the Fontmell Magna Village Shop	£204,800	England	Dorset
Friends of Newtown St Martin Pub Limited	Newtown St Martin Pub	£240,000	England	Cornwall
Hartcliffe City Farm Ltd.	Hartcliffe City Farm	£300,000	England	Bristol City of
Heritage Lab CIC Ltd	Pugin Studios	£300,000	England	Thanet
Icarus Theatre Collective	The Old Red Lion: A rich history, an exciting future	£255,172	England	Islington
Newnham on Severn Community Benefit Society NoSCBS	The George Community Hub	£247,500	England	Forest of Dean
Ogbourne Community Pub Society Limited	SavetheSilks	£237,500	England	Wiltshire
Oldham Boxing	Victoria House (The Oldham Boxing Club)	£550,000	England	Oldham
Oxford Arms Pub and Hub	Oxford Arms Pub and Hub	£300,000	England	Herefordshire, County of
The Bell Inn Frisby Community Group Limited	TBIFCG	£150,000	England	Melton
The Weardale Museum	Progressing the Internal Envelope	£56,760	England	County Durham
Ballymacash Sports Academy Limited	Community Hub Project (Phase 2) 2022	£300,000	Northern Ireland	Lisburn and Castlereagh
St Columbs Hall Trust	Aurora	£181,800	Northern Ireland	Derry City and Strabane
St Davids Brass Band SCIO	Vogrie Hall Refurbishment	£127,251	Scotland	MIDLOTHIAN

Clayton West and District Community Hub Limited	Clayton Community Wellbeing Hub	£185,088	England	Hyndburn
Leigh Building Preservation Trust	Leigh Spinners Mill Community Regeneration	£250,000	England	Wigan
Pompey in the Community	The John Jenkins Stadium	£986,000	England	Portsmouth
THE GEORGE COMMUNITY LIMITED	THE GEORGE COMMUNITY	£250,000	England	Ashford
The Light Church Bradford	Purchase and Renovation of The Jubilee Centre	£225,000	England	Bradford
The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Luke, Thurnby Leicester	The Hub Community Centre and Cafe, Manor Field, Thurnby	£250,000	England	Harborough
The Rising Sun Woodcroft Community Pub Project	The Rising Sun Woodcroft Community Pub Project	£175,000	England	Forest of Dean
The Wharf Marple Community Interest Company	The Wharf Marple Community Hub, Heritage, Health & Wellbeing Centre.	£200,000	England	Stockport
Westhall Community Pub Ltd.	Westhall Racehorse Community Pub	£96,600	England	East Suffolk
Whitley Bay Big Local CIO	Community Building for Whitley Bay	£300,000	England	North Tyneside
Grow the Glens Community Interest Company GtG CIC	Glens Digital Hub	£300,000	Northern Ireland	Causeway Coast and Glens
Callander Community Development Trust Ltd	Callander Visitor Information Centre	£124,843	Scotland	Stirling
Local Initiatives in New Galloway	New Galloway Town Hall SOS Save Our Space	£175,000	Scotland	Dumfries and Galloway
Rannoch Community Trust	Rannoch Hub	£250,000	Scotland	Perth and Kinross
The Old Forge Community Benefit Society Limited	The Old Forge Community Benefit Society: a community owned pub	£219,096	Scotland	Highland
THE WHITHORN TRUST	Whithorn ReBuild Renewing the Old Town Hall	£300,000	Scotland	Dumfries and Galloway
Creations of Cymru Film and Media	Refurbishment and Redevelopment of the Queens Ballroom	£90,000	Wales	Blaenau Gwent
Menter Tyn Llan Cyfyngedig	Achub Tyn Llan Save Tyn Llan	£250,000	Wales	Gwynedd
The Coalfields Regeneration Trust	The CANA Resource and Training Centre	£124,258	Wales	Rhondda Cynon Taf

7. Q & A

7.1. General Q&A

Q: Taking ownership of an asset is complicated, what support will be put in place to help?

A: We recognise that taking ownership of an asset can be challenging. The Fund will help ensure that community groups have the necessary help, both practical and financial, to support them in taking ownership of an asset.

We also intend to provide additional early stage support to the applicants who need it the most. Our Delivery Partners will start to offer support from March 2023. Those who express interest in the Fund will be directed to liaise with the Delivery Partner about their support needs. Please refer to section 9 of the prospectus for more information on this support.

7.2. Fund-Specific Q&A

Q: How long will the fund run for?

A: The Fund will run from July 2021 for 4 years until 2025.

Q: How many times can applicants submit an EOI Form to the Fund?

A: The EOI stage of the application process is always open, meaning applicants can submit the form at the time that is right for their projects. There are no limits on how many times you can submit an EOI like there is for the main application stage, however if your project is ineligible you should not submit a new EOI unless the circumstances have changed and you now think your project will be eligible for the Fund.

Q: Do I have to wait before submitting another EOI if I am unsuccessful?

A: There is no time limit on re-submitting an EOI after receiving an unsuccessful outcome from a previous EOI submission. Nonetheless, you should only submit another EOI if there has been a marked change in your projects circumstances that may deem it to be eligible. We may determine that your project will never be eligible for the Fund and will advise you accordingly, in which case you will not be able to submit another EOI.

Q: Can I expect feedback on my EOI submission?

A: You can expect to receive feedback on the outcome of your EOI application within three weeks. Those applicants who are unsuccessful will receive feedback summarising where their application did not meet our eligibility requirements.

Q: What happens if my EOI is successful?

A: You will be written to confirming an invitation to apply for funding. A link to the full application form will be included in this correspondence for you to complete. An invitation to apply for funding does not guarantee a grant from us, but it does indicate that we see potential in your idea.

Q: Is project X eligible for funding?

A: Full eligibility requirements are published in the bidding prospectus.

Q: Will funding be provided in grant or loan form?

A: Applicants can bid for a capital grant of up to £250,000 match funding. In exceptional cases, bidders will be able to make the case for up to £1 million match funding to help establish a community-owned sports club or help buy a sports club/asset at risk of being lost without community intervention. Full details of available funding is provided in the bidding prospectus. This is provided as a grant and is not paid back.

Q: Are you able to advise projects on how best to develop their application?

A: All the information needed to submit a compelling and evidence-based application is available in the prospectus. To ensure fairness for all applicants and uphold the integrity of the bidding process, we are unable to advise applicants beyond what is publicly available on how best to develop and present their application. Although we cannot advise on how to develop applications, we may be able to clarify points in the prospectus that applicants are unsure of.

Q: Why is there a cap at £250,000 on general asset types?

A: This threshold was informed by evidence from previous external programmes funded by the National Lottery which indicated that community groups typically required up to £250,000 to secure ownership of an asset. This cap will maximise the impact of the Fund by allowing hundreds of projects across the UK to submit a successful application to save their community asset.

Q: Why can't the Community Ownership Fund provide funding to save publicly owned assets?

A: The Community Ownership Fund grant cannot fund the costs of purchasing publicly owned assets where the public authority would credit a capital receipt. However, the Fund will work alongside existing Community Asset Transfers to support these transfers by funding the costs of renovation and refurbishment.

For example, if an applicant was able to secure an asset transfer or raise the funds through another route, they could be eligible for funding from the Community Ownership Fund for any refurbishment needed in order to save that asset.

Q: Why have you introduced a two-application limit?

A: As a result of the feedback received from applicants in Round 1 and from stakeholder engagement, we have taken the decision to limit the number of applications for any one asset to two applications during the period of COF funding.

If a project has not been found to be fundable after two attempts, it is unlikely they could benefit from the Community Ownership Fund programme of funding. This means that projects which do not meet the eligibility or standards of the Fund can focus their efforts applying to more suitable opportunities. To clarify, this limit is on a project, not on an organisation – so if the same organisation wishes to apply for funding for more than one asset, this will be accepted.

Q: Will you be making further changes to allow X in the future?

A: We want to make positive changes to ensure that as many community organisations as possible across the UK can save their treasured local assets at risk of loss. We therefore actively engage with

our stakeholders and applicants to understand how the Fund can be improved throughout its lifespan and welcome any feedback to achieve this.

Q: My asset is not at immediate risk of loss but could still do with support for refurbishments/improvements etc. Can I apply?

A: This Fund exists to prevent important assets being lost to the community. In order to meet the Community Ownership Fund eligibility requirements, applicants need to provide evidence that demonstrates that the asset is at risk of being lost to the community. The risk can be from closure, sale, neglect and dereliction under current ownership, or unsustainable operations under the current business model.

Q: Can this Fund be used to save a professional / semi-professional sports club that is important to the community?

A: We are keen to ensure that community groups have the opportunity to bid for funding where there is a risk that a sport, or assets associated with sport such as a sports ground, will be totally lost to that community. However, we won't let funding be used to pay off an existing club's debts – that wouldn't be a good use of public funding. Sports clubs should carefully check the eligibility requirements for the types of organisations we can fund, as we do not fund profit distributing organisations, including those that pay out to shareholders.

If you have any questions, please get in touch with your DLUHC Area Team contact who will contact the Community Ownership Fund Team.

**THANK YOU,
THE COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP FUND.**

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Subject:	Equality & Diversity: Equality Screening and Rural Needs Outcome Report Q3 22-23
Date:	24 March 2023
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, City Solicitor / Director of Legal & Civic Services
Contact Officers:	Sarah Williams, Governance & Compliance 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"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time 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 or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to set out the Quarterly Screening Outcome Report of equality screenings and rural needs impact assessments for Quarter 3 2022-23
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	It is recommended that the Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the Quarterly Screening Outcome Report which will be published on the Council's website
3.0	Main report
	<u>Background</u>
3.1	As Members will be aware, the Council has a duty to have, under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity in relation to the nine equality categories; and • Regard to the desirability of promotion good relations <p>In addition, under section 1 of the Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans, and when designing and delivering public services <p>To this end, the Council has a process to carry out equality screening and rural needs assessment of new and revised policies. This allows any impacts related to equality of opportunity, good relations or rural needs to be identified and addressed.</p>
3.2	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>An equality screening and rural needs impact assessment template is completed by the relevant officer, in collaboration with the Equality and Diversity Unit. On a regular basis, the Unit collates all completed templates into a screening outcome report and publishes onto the Council’s website along with the relevant completed templates. The current screening outcome report for Quarter 2 22-23 is attached at Appendix 1.</p>
3.3	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None.</p>
3.4	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>This report contributes to the Council’s compliance with section 75 or the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Rural Needs Act 2016.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – Screening Outcome Report for Q3 22-23



Belfast
City Council

**Equality Screening Outcome Report and Rural Needs Impact
Assessment from September to December 2022**

Introduction

Legislation – An Overview

Section 75 Statutory Equality Duties

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires the Council, when carrying out its functions in relation to Northern Ireland, to have due regards to the need to promote equality of opportunity between nine categories of persons, namely:

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

Without prejudice to its obligations above, the council must also have regards to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

The Council's Revised Equality Scheme was formally approved by the Equality Commission in March 2021. The revised Scheme outlines how we propose to fulfil our statutory duties under Section 75. Within the Scheme, the council gave a commitment to apply the screening methodology below to all new and revised policies and where necessary and appropriate to subject new policies to further equality impact assessment.

- What is the likely impact of equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy/proposal, for each of the Section 75 equality categories?
- Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within Section 75 equality categories?
- To what extent is the policy/proposal likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

- Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

In keeping with the Council's commitments in its Equality Scheme, the Council has applied the above screening criteria to new policies and proposals. Screening identifies policies that are likely to have an impact on equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

Screening identifies the impact of the policy/proposal as major, minor or none.

- If major – an Equality Impact Assessment may be carried out.
- If minor – consider mitigation or alternative policy and screen out.
- If none – screen out and give reasons.
- Ongoing screening – for strategies/policies that are to be put in place through a series of stages – screen at various stages during implementation.

The council also committed within its Revised Equality Scheme to prepare and publish for information regular reports on its screening exercises. This is screening report providing details on all screenings undertaken from the period October to December 2022.

Rural Needs Impact Assessments

The Council also has a statutory duty under the Rural Needs (Northern Ireland) Act 2016 to consider rural needs in the development of new policies, plans or strategies or in any service design/delivery decisions. The Council must therefore engage with rural stakeholders in relation to policy development when it is relevant and appropriate. The Equality and Diversity Unit is responsible for reporting to the Strategic, Policy and Resources Committee and for ensuring that annual reporting returns are submitted to DAERA.

To further promote openness and transparency, there is a link to each completed screening and rural needs impact assessment template on the Council's website.

www.belfastcity.gov.uk

The templates details all policies screened over this period and includes decisions reached.

Consultation

The development of new policies and proposals will be supported by effective engagement processes to ensure that staff, service users and all interested parties are fully involved.

Planning for, and delivering safe and cost effective services requires close collaboration at many levels.

If you have any queries about this document, and its availability in alternative formats (including Braille, disk and audio cassette, and in other languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English) then please contact:

Lisa McKee
Equality and Diversity Unit
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS

Direct Line 02890 270555
or 028 90 320202 ext 6310
email: equality@belfastcity.gov.uk or McKeeL@belfastcity.gov.uk

Screening Outcome

The screening outcomes are outlined in the table below. Three possible outcomes are recorded:

If **Major** – an Equality Impact Assessment may be carried out. **EQIA** - subject to further scrutiny under Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 to determine the impact upon

those directly affected, which in turn will require informal and formal consultation with a wide range of stakeholders.

If **Minor** – consider mitigation or alternative policy and screen out.

If **None** – screen out and give reasons.

Screening Outcome Options

Major= In

Minor= Out with mitigation

None= Out without mitigation

Rural Needs Impact Assessment Options

Does the policy, plan, strategy or service design/delivery impact on the social and economic needs of people in rural areas?

Belfast City Council Equality Screening Outcome Report and Rural Needs Impact Assessment

This report includes published screenings and Rural Needs Impact Assessments for the period October– December 2022. Copies can be found at:

<http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/council/equality/eqia.aspx>

Description of Policy/Proposal	Rural Needs Impact Assessment	ECNI Screening Decision and Contact
Fuel Poverty Hardship Fund	This fund will have no detrimental impact on rural area residents of Belfast	Screened Out – Mitigating Actions (minor impacts) Contact: Brian Carr
Pilot Workstyles Policy	This policy will have no detrimental impact on rural area residents of Belfast	Screened Out – Mitigating Actions (minor impacts) Contact: Andrea Anderson
Change to Shift Rota in Security Unit	This shift rota will have no detrimental impact on rural area residents of Belfast	Screened Out – Mitigating Actions (minor impacts) Contact: John Terrett

Additional Leave Provision for Bereavement, Miscarriage and Fertility	The addition leave provision will have no detrimental impact on rural area residents of Belfast	Screened Out – No EQIA necessary (no impacts) Contact: Sharon Steele
Age Friendly Belfast Plan 2022-2026	This plan will have no detrimental impact on rural area residents of Belfast	Screened Out – No EQIA necessary (no impacts) Contact: Gillian McAvoy
Smart Belfast Innovation Framework 2022-2026	This framework will have no detrimental impact on rural area residents of Belfast	Screened Out – No EQIA necessary (no impacts) Contact: Paula Fee



Subject:	Update on dual language street signs
Date:	24 th March 2023
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal & Civic Services Kate Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control
Contact Officer:	Ian Harper, Building Control 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"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time 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 or Summary of main Issues
1.1	This report is a further update to members on the dual language street signs applications.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the contents of the report.
3.0	Main report
	<u>Key Issues</u>
	<u>Applicants and current status</u>
3.1	The total number of live requests for dual language street signs received as of 22 nd March 2023 is 458.

3.2	The first dual language street sign under the new policy was agreed by P&C Committee on the 7 th February and ratified by Council on 1 st March 2023, with a further 3 street signs agreed at P&C Committee on 7 th March.
3.3	There are currently 4 applications due to go to P&C Committee in April, subject to the results of the surveys. Officers expect that number to increase at future meetings once there is a full complement of staff in place.
3.4	The third member notification for the next 10 streets was issued on 24 th February and a further list will be issued at the end of March. Officers will review the frequency and number of applications on these lists once there is a full complement of staff.
3.5	Initial assessments to check for any potential adverse impacts on the grounds of equality or good relations were carried out on a further 20 streets on 28 th February 2023 and a further session for 20 streets is scheduled for the first week in April 2023. These assessments involve officers from across the council including Good Relations, Equality and Diversity Unit, Place and Economy and Building Control and include significant preparatory work and for decisions made to be fully documented.
3.6	<p><u>Workloads</u></p> <p>Survey work is the most labour-intensive part of the process. Analysis of the surveys carried out before the adoption of the new policy identified an average of 43 surveys per street. This was due to the fact that requests tended to be for smaller streets due to the requirement to get a third of residents to sign the initial request. As there is no longer a requirement to provide the initial petition, applications for larger streets have increased significantly. Currently the average surveys per street is 116, which is significant additional workload per street.</p> <p><u>Timeframe for the process</u></p>
3.7	Measures are in place to ensure that each stage of the process is progressing in a consistent manner, and bottlenecks are avoided. As many of the tasks as possible are being done in parallel to shorten the overall timeframe from application submitted to consideration by committee. However, given the multiple stages of the process and set timeframes, it does take at least 4 months to get through the process, from when we start to process an application through to reaching decisions and have the signs erected. Timeframes for each

	<p>application also vary due to the specific circumstances for each application. For example, the number of occupiers and therefore the numbers of surveys to be carried out. This makes it difficult to confirm a set number of surveys that will be processed in any month, but numbers will increase as resourcing is fully completed.</p>
3.8	<p>Officers also intend to reduce the time period for responding to the survey from the current 30 days to 14 days. While this would reduce the overall processing time for each application, it may not impact on the number of applications processed as the staffing resources to administer the process remain the same. However officers are keen to explore all possible options for reducing application processing times.</p>
	<p><u>Translations</u></p>
3.9	<p>Officers met with Queens University (QUB) in February regarding the translation of street names. QUB confirmed that additional staffing resource will be in place in March and May and will have a focus on carrying out the necessary research to provide the translations that we require.</p>
3.10	<p>The full list of 458 streets applied for has been provided to QUB, and we have agreed operational arrangements to ensure that we can progress applications in the order received and processed.</p>
3.11	<p>Some translations are more complex and where there is a delay in receiving these, surveys and Committee reports will be progressed without the translations seeking delegation to the Director to agree the translated street name once it is available.</p>
	<p><u>Electoral Office</u></p>
3.12	<p>The electoral register available at the Electoral Office is used to confirm that the applicant is a resident of the street, and also to identify the number of people who will be surveyed.</p>
3.13	<p>The current procedure is to arrange appointments with the Electoral Office and inform them of which streets are required for viewing. These are then provided to staff to view during the appointment.</p>

3.14	Discussions have previously taken place with the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) to look at easier ways of getting access to the register and reducing the time taken and the need for appointments to be made. This was done in conjunction with other local councils, through the Chair of Building Control Northern Ireland. In June 2021 the CEO confirmed that having liaised with her legal representatives, they were not aware of any other way to inspect the register except under supervision, in the current practice. Therefore, a data sharing agreement cannot be used. It was also confirmed that while the legislation permits the sale of the register to government departments, this does not apply to councils.
3.15	Building Control also sought the advice of the Council’s legal services when having these discussions, who agreed with the legal advice provided to the CEO.
	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u>
3.16	In December, three additional staff members were recruited on a temporary basis to deal with the volume of applications received. However, as two of these posts were from within the existing team, the process for backfilling and covering their duties is still ongoing. While they are being trained and are processing dual language street sign applications, there are also other duties in their substantive posts to be undertaken. This includes processing property certificate applications, a key part of the conveyancing process, and the provision of street naming and numbering, which are important in terms of house sales progressing and allowing new homeowners to set up their utilities and amend address critical documentation. When these staff members are fully released to their new roles and training completed, this will allow for an increase in the number of applications being processed.
	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u>
3.17	The process for carrying out initial assessments on the ground of equality and good relations is in place. Where adverse impacts are identified, a further screening will take place and finding presented to Members. This work has been developed working with colleagues in our Equality & Diversity Unit together with an external consultant.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None