

# Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 19th November, 2021

## MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AND  
REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

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

In attendance: Mrs. S. Wylie, Chief Executive;  
Mr. J. Walsh, City Solicitor;  
Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;  
Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational  
Strategy;  
Mr. T. Wallace, Head of Finance;  
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and  
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

### Apologies

An apology for inability to attend was reported on behalf of Alderman Haire.

### Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 22nd October were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st November, subject to:

- i the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee; and
- ii the omission of the minute under the heading "Update on Draft Amenity Bye Laws for the City Centre", which, upon being amended to reflect that the Committee had noted, rather than approved, the draft Bye Laws, had been referred back to the Committee for further consideration and would be placed on the agenda for a future meeting once all Parties briefings had been completed.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

### **Restricted Items**

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

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

### **Revenue Estimates and District Rate 2022/23**

The Head of Finance drew the Committee's attention to a report which provided an update on the development of the Revenue Estimates and the setting of the District Rate for 2022/23.

The report outlined the six key elements involved in the annual setting of the District Rate and provided details of the main business as usual cost pressures, priority growth proposals, the Capital Programme, the Estimated Penny Product, inflation rate, general reserves and the current rates position.

After discussion, the Committee noted the contents of the report.

### **Financial Reporting – Quarter 2 2021-22**

The Head of Finance reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 20th August, it had, in noting the financial position for Quarter 1 of 2021/22, agreed that the five step Finance Strategy which had been approved to manage the impact of Covid-19 upon the Council's finances be extended to the remaining three quarters of the current financial year.

Accordingly, he drew the Members' attention to the financial position and forecast for Quarter 2 of 2021/22, which had been based on that Strategy. The financial position for the Council had shown an underspend of £4,206, 841 (5.5%), which included absorbing Covid-19 expenditure and income losses of £4,204,818. The key contributory factors related to the under occupancy of office buildings, underspends in employee budgets and additional expenditure controls, which had helped to offset income losses. The Quarter 2 forecast had shown an underspend of £3.5m, which represented 2.3% of the net expenditure budget.

He went on to provide an update on the forecast reserves position, rates finalisation and the overall Investment Programme.

At this point, a Member confirmed that a requisition calling for a Special meeting of the Council to be held to consider the provision of emergency funding to the Council's strategic community partners for food and fuel vouchers would be forwarded to the Chief Executive after the meeting.

After discussion, the Committee noted the information which had been provided.

### **Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund – Programme Framework and Next Steps**

The Director of Physical Programmes submitted for the Committee's consideration a report on the delivery of the £8m Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund, which had been established in 2019 to support the delivery of capital projects in local areas.

After discussion, the Committee:

- i. approved the project pathway proposal, including the open call application process, due diligence arrangements and project delivery model;
- ii. approved the introduction of an Outcomes Based Accountability approach to monitoring outcomes; and
- iii. noted the proposed timeframe for the launch of the Fund in January/February, 2022 and that each stage of the process would be timebound to help ensure deliverability of projects.

### **Organisational Reviews and Change Programme**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 22nd October, it had, in addition to approving a staffing structure resulting from the review of Corporate HR (Phase 1), agreed that a report be submitted to its next meeting providing information on other organisational reviews which were currently being undertaken across the Council, including an indicative timeframe for their completion.

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy explained that the Covid-19 pandemic had had a significant impact upon the completion of reviews and the wider change programme, in that the majority of work had been paused from July 2020 onwards, to allow staff to focus on organisational recovery. He drew the Committee's attention to a list of ongoing organisational reviews, together with their initial projected completion date, and pointed out that, in some cases, a date had not been agreed prior to work being paused, due to a project being at an early stage in the overall lifecycle and the scope not yet being fully agreed and/or fully funded.

He confirmed that officers in the Continuous Improvement Team were currently reassessing the status and priority of the organisational review projects and had begun to develop an updated and prioritised plan, using an agreed process, to quickly evaluate and prioritise each project. This process would ensure that the business need for the project was fully up-to-date and that the resources required to successfully deliver it was available within the required timescale. Consideration would also be given to how

Departments could progress elements of this work with less hands-on support from the Continuous Improvement Unit, where appropriate.

He added that officers would then prioritise the programme of work, based upon available resources from across the relevant support services, and seek the necessary approvals at a Corporate level in early December, 2021. A further report on organisational reviews and the change programme, including timelines, would be presented to the Committee in December.

After discussion, the Committee noted the information which had been provided.

### **Employees on Temporary Contracts**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 22nd October, it had, in addition to adopting a motion relating to staff on temporary contracts, agreed that a report be submitted to its next meeting providing a breakdown, on a Departmental and unit basis, of the number of staff currently employed on temporary contracts and the length of time on which they had been on them.

Accordingly, the Director of City and Organisational Strategy submitted for the Committee's consideration a report which confirmed that, at 1st November, 279 staff were filling posts on a temporary basis. 158 of those were permanent staff who had been recruited internally and would return to their substantive post when no longer required. A breakdown of that figure had been provided by Department, section and category and duration of contract.

The remaining 121 staff had been recruited externally on a fixed-term contract basis to fill temporary posts which were primarily specialist/technical or at basic entry level and could not be filled by an internal Council-wide trawl.

The Director went on to point out that considerable work had been undertaken to address the issue of temporary posts across the Council and highlighted the fact that, between June, 2018 and November, 2021, those had been reduced by 186.

After discussion, the Committee:

- i. noted the contents of the report; and
- ii. agreed that a report be submitted to its next meeting:
  - a. on the total number of staff employed in those sections which had been identified as having staff in temporary posts;
  - b. on the actual length of time that those staff who had been identified as being in a temporary post for more than five years had been in that post; and
  - c. accounting for the 186 staff who had vacated temporary posts between June, 2018, and November, 2021.

**Review of 2021 Bonfire Approach**

(Mr. R. Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 4th October had amended as follows a motion on Bonfire Procedures which had been passed by the Committee at its meeting on 24th September:

“This Council will conduct an immediate review of the 2021 bonfire season, to be completed in time for the Committee meeting in November, to include Elected Representatives, statutory agencies, and bonfire builders, in order to highlight issues which will need to be addressed. The Council agrees to write to the Executive Office asking for the FICT report to be published, along with an action plan, as this will help inform the Council’s view moving forward.”

He reported that an external consultant had since been engaged by the Council to undertake the review and had been in contact with all of the Political Parties seeking their input into the review process. Based upon the feedback received, the consultant had drafted the following proposed review framework for consideration:

- i. a review of the Council’s governance, policy and procedures relating to all bonfires and bonfire-related matters in Belfast during 2021;
- ii. a review with Council staff to consider whether the current bonfire governance framework meets the operational requirements pertaining to bonfires and bonfire related issues;
- iii. a review of the relationship between the Council and its statutory partners, in terms of responding to bonfires and bonfire-related issues, which will include the Memorandum of Understanding with the Permanent Secretary’s Working Group; and
- iv. a process which highlights the Council’s response to bonfires and bonfire-related issues over the last decade.

The Director pointed out that, in order to deliver on this framework, the consultant would analyse Council documents and correspondence and host discussions with officers, statutory organisations, Elected Members and community groups/non-Governmental organisations with experience and understanding of bonfire builder’s needs, concerns, and aspirations. The consultant had indicated that a draft report would be submitted to the Council in January 2022. The Chief Executive had also written to the Executive Office asking for the FICT report to be published, along with an action plan, as called for in the aforementioned amendment.

It was then

Moved by Councillor Beattie,  
Seconded by Councillor Lyons,

That the Committee agrees that the Council will regulate illegal and toxic bonfires.

On a vote, twelve Members voted for the proposal and five against, with one “no vote”, and it was declared carried.

The Committee agreed to endorse the proposed review process and noted that the Bonfire Panel would be reconvened to move that forward and address the issues which had been raised in relation to the decision to regulate illegal and toxic bonfires.

### **Update on Physical Programme**

The Committee:

- i. agreed that the ‘Connectivity - Access to the Hills Programme’ be added to the Capital Programme as a Stage 1 – Emerging project, with those projects identified in section 3.5 of the report to be brought forward to Stage 2 and worked up in greater detail; and
- ii. noted the update on the Belfast Destination Hub/Belfast Stories project and agreed that any necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate ‘framework’ arrangements) for the next phase of the project (up to the sign off of Outline Business Case 2) be progressed at risk ahead of the receipt of Belfast Region City Deal funding, in order to ensure that the opening date of early 2028 remained on programme.

### **City Hall Recovery Plan – Update on Progress**

The City Solicitor submitted for the Committee’s consideration a report providing an update on the progress being made across each of the operational areas in implementing the City Hall Recovery Plan. The report highlighted also a request by the NOW Group for the franchise fee for the Bobbin Café to be reduced between November, 2021 and February, 2022, in light of the economic challenges which it was facing around the ongoing pandemic and the Christmas Market.

During discussion, a Member pointed out that the requirement for van drivers to still book into Household Recycling Centres was creating difficulties both for them and other users, in terms of traffic congestion and delays. It was likely that those difficulties would increase over the Christmas period. A further Member stated that he had been made aware of confusion amongst staff working in community centres around the granting of access, in the context of Covid-19 requirements.

After further discussion:

- i. the Committee noted the contents of the report;
- ii. approved an appropriate reduction in the franchise fee for the Bobbin Café between November, 2021 and February, 2022; and
- iii. agreed that a report be submitted to its next meeting addressing the issues which had been raised around access to Household Recycling Centres and community centres and providing details of Covid-19 restrictions which were still in place across the Council and their impact upon service delivery.

### **Update on the Future of the Brexit Committee**

The City Solicitor drew the Members' attention to a report which provided an update on discussions which had taken place on 11th November at the meeting of the Brexit Committee on extending the remit of that Committee to include responsibility for the oversight of climate and resilience strategies for the City.

He reviewed the draft purpose which had been presented to the Committee at that meeting and pointed out that the following Terms of Reference had been presented for consideration:

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

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

The City Solicitor reported that the Brexit Committee had broadly welcomed the proposal to extend the remit of the Committee and had made a number of additional suggestions around the Terms of Reference, such as building in oversight of environmental issues and adding organisational carbon neutrality, elements of inclusive growth and wider economic considerations. It was suggested also that the work of the Working Group on the Climate Crisis be subsumed into the new Committee, that additional resources be allocated and that discussions be held around the name of the Committee and the potential for all-Party representation.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Alderman Kingston,  
Seconded by Councillor Pankhurst,

That the Committee agrees to remove point xiii. from the Terms of Reference and include it within point xii., on the basis that working with the Shared Island Unit was covered under North/South collaboration.

On a vote, five Members voted for the proposal and fourteen against and it was declared lost.

At the request of a Member, the Committee then agreed to amend point xii. to read as follows:

- establishing links and collaborating with relevant authorities and organisations on a European Union, North/South and East/West basis.

The Committee noted that further discussions would take place at the next meeting of the Brexit Committee around the role and responsibilities of that Committee, following which a report would be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources

Committee seeking approval for the reconfigured Committee to proceed on the basis of the new Terms of Reference.

**Weavers Cross Regeneration  
Project and Hope Street Car Park**

The Director of City Regeneration and Development submitted for the Committee's consideration a report which provided an update on Translink's Weavers Cross Regeneration Project, following which the Committee:

- i noted the progress made to date, including Translink's procurement of a development partner for its scheme;
- ii noted the proposed approach at the next stage of Translink's competitive dialogue process for including third party landowners within the scheme, to include the Council's land at Hope Street; and
- iii noted that a report would be submitted to a future meeting for relevant approval, when additional detail of the proposed disposal terms had been established through Translink's Development Agreement process.

**Matters referred back from Council/Motions**

**Motion: Triple Lock Guarantee –  
Response from HM Treasury**

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 1st September, had passed the following motion, which had been proposed by Alderman Copeland and seconded by Councillor Hutchinson:

"As the Chair of the Reference Group on Older People, I am deeply concerned at the consequences for local pensioners, should the Government move to end the State Pension "Triple Lock Guarantee", which was introduced in 2010 to inflation proof the UK state pension.

Accordingly, the Council agrees to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, requesting him to honour the "Triple Lock Guarantee", thereby ensuring the real time, real value of the State Pension.

The Council is aware of other proposed reforms which may be used to camouflage a diluting of the "State Pension Triple Lock Guarantee". This is not acceptable.

The Council also notes the Government's decision to cut the Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit uplift and reiterates its call for the uplift to be retained."

The City Solicitor informed the Committee that a response had been received from the Rt. Hon. Simon Clark M.P., the Minister responsible for public spending.

The Minister had begun by pointing out that the Government was committed to ensuring that older people were able to live with the dignity and respect which they deserve and that the State Pension was the foundation of state support for older people.

He had explained that, since 2010, the State Pension had been uprated by the highest of average earnings growth, price inflation or 2.5%, an approach known as the Triple Lock. The full basic State Pension in 2021/22 was, compared to 2010, over £2,050 a year higher in cash terms and over £875 a year higher in real terms.

The Minister had then made reference to other support available beyond the State Pension, such as Winter Fuel Payments and free eye tests, NHS prescriptions and bus passes. Some pensioners might also qualify for means tested benefits, including Pension Credit and Housing Benefit.

Last year, the Government had delivered primary legislation to increase State Pensions by 2.5%, at a time when earnings had fallen and price inflation had increased by half a percentage point. If this action had not been taken, State Pensions would have been frozen.

Due to the effect of the pandemic and furlough on the labour market, reported average wage growth had increased markedly to above 8% which was an anomaly. Increasing pensions by more than 8% this year would be unfair, unsustainable and hugely costly.

That, he had pointed out, was the reason why the Government was taking the responsible and fair decision to temporarily move to a double lock this year. That meant that the State Pension would rise next year by the higher of inflation or 2.5%, thereby ensuring that pensioners were protected against the rising cost of living.

The Minister had confirmed that this was a temporary change and that it would be for one year only and had added that the Government remained committed to implementing the Triple Lock for the remainder of Parliament.

He had then addressed the request within the motion to retain the Universal Credit uplift by stating that the £20 per week increase was always meant to be a temporary measure to support those households whose incomes and earnings were being affected by the economic shock of Covid-19. Extending the uplift permanently would incur a very significant annual cost and would be equivalent in 2022-23 to adding 1p to the basic rate of income tax and 3p to fuel duty.

He had highlighted the fact that the Government was, within the welfare system, maintaining the increase to Local Housing Allowance rates for Universal Credit and Housing Benefit in cash terms in 2021-22, which was worth an extra £600 on average for more than 1.5 million households. It was also enabling Universal Credit claimants to retain more of their monthly awards by bringing forward to April 2021 a planned reduction in the deductions cap and an increase in the UC advances repayment period.

The Government was also maintaining its focus on helping people move back into work. As part of its comprehensive Plan for Jobs, it had announced the £2 billion

Kickstart scheme, which would create hundreds of thousands of new, fully subsidised jobs for young people, and the new three-year Restart programme, which would provide intensive and tailored support to over one million unemployed Universal Credit claimants across England and Wales and assist them in finding work.

The Minister had added that the Budget had built on this work by making an additional £126 million available for traineeships in England, increasing the payments for employers who hire new apprentices between April and September 2021 and establishing a £7 million flexi-job apprenticeships fund to enable apprentices to work across different employers, which had been launched in August 2021. The National Living Wage had also been raised in April, to ensure that the lowest paid workers continued to receive pay rises.

The Committee noted the response.

**Motion: NHS Pay – Response  
from Minister of Health**

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 1st September, had passed the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Matt Collins and seconded by Councillor Michael Collins:

“This Council notes with concern the 3% pay offer set to be made to health workers. This offer falls way short of satisfying the health unions’ demands for a substantial pay uplift.

Our health workers deserve a real pay increase for their efforts throughout the pandemic. A 3% pay increase is only 1% above the UK inflation rate and is not nearly enough recognition for health staff and their efforts in these difficult times.

The Council notes that this offer comes at a time when health workers are under considerable strain, with Northern Ireland currently struggling with one of the highest Covid-19 death rates across the world.

The Council also notes with concern the recent reports of understaffing in our health service, with 1,800 nursing positions currently vacant in the North, while a further 1,000 vacancies exist in the social work and domiciliary care sector.

In order to retain a vibrant and world class health service, we must reward staff for the vital work which they carry out. Pay disparity with other jurisdictions has left many seeking employment elsewhere and low pay has contributed to staff resigning from the profession altogether.

The pandemic has shown how vital our health service is. Yet many NHS staff still suffer poverty wages and continue to be paid less when compared with other regions in the UK.

The Council resolves to write to the Health Minister, Robin Swann, calling upon him to refuse to bring forward the 3% pay offer, urging him, alongside the First and Deputy First Ministers, to lobby the British

Government to award a substantial offer and asking him to bring forward proposals on safe staffing.

The Council also resolves to convene a cross-party meeting with Political Parties in Belfast City Council and Trade Unionists in the Health service, to discuss the urgent need for a more substantial pay uplift for NHS staff, and the practical steps which can be taken to achieve this.”

The City Solicitor drew the Committee’s attention to a response which had been received from Mr. Robin Swann MLA, Minister of Health.

The Minister had begun by stating that the Department of Health was in receipt of the 34th NHS Pay Review Body Report and the 49th Report of the Review Body for Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration, both of which recommend a 3% uplift in the salaries of relevant staff from April, 2021. He had already written to Trade Unions to confirm that he had fully accepted the pay recommendations set out in those reports.

The Minister had pointed out that the funding held by his Department did not go far enough to meet the recommendations of the Pay Review Bodies. Furthermore, the Treasury had confirmed that it would not be providing any additional funding for the pay uplifts to NHS England. As a result, there would be no additional funding coming to Northern Ireland through the Barnett Formula for these awards.

The Minister had concluded by stating that he had written to the Minister of Finance, who had indicated that he would support his request for Executive in-year monitoring to help fund the recommended uplifts for this year via the October monitoring round.

The Committee noted the response.

### **Governance**

#### **Change of Date of Council Meeting – January, 2022**

The Committee approved the change of date of the Council meeting in January from Tuesday 4th to Monday 10th, with proceedings to commence at the usual time of 6.00 p.m.

#### **Schedule of Meetings 2022**

The Committee approved the following schedule of meetings for 2022, with all meetings to commence at 9.30 a.m.:

- Friday, 14th January (Rate setting, if required)
- Friday, 21st January
- Friday, 18th February

- Friday, 25th March
- Friday, 15th April
- Friday, 20th May
- Friday, 17th June
- Friday, 19th August
- Friday, 23rd September
- Friday, 21st October
- Friday, 18th November and
- Friday, 16th December.

The Committee agreed to refer to the Party Group Leaders a request from a Member to move the monthly meeting of the Council on 1st July to another date in those years in which it would coincide with commemorative events taking place within the City, which some Members might wish to attend.

### **Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues**

#### **Update on Urban Innovation Programme**

(Mrs. D. Colville, City Innovation Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the following report:

#### **“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues**

**1.1 To seek approval for a number of new Smart Belfast initiatives and to provide an update on the work currently underway to review and refresh the Smart Belfast Framework – (to be known as the Urban Innovation Framework) and plans for engagement on that framework with Members and city stakeholders.**

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is requested to:**

- 1. note the work underway on a refreshed Urban Innovation framework (2022 to 2027);**

- 2. note the work underway to develop a £30 million Belfast Region City Deal business case to stimulate investment in advanced wireless infrastructure;**
- 3. grant retrospective approval for a Council-led partner application to the Dept. for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) for a £500,000 Digital Connectivity Infrastructure Accelerator pilot; and**
- 4. note the Council's participation in a £400,000 programme with the city of Sejong to develop approaches for international procurement of innovation.**

**3.0 Main Report**

**Smart Belfast Framework Refresh**

- 3.1 Over the past four years, the Council's Smart Belfast programme has encouraged city institutions together on maximising the potential of urban innovation to help tackle major urban challenges while at the same time helping to grow our economy.**
- 3.2 Developed and managed by the Council's City Innovation team, Smart Belfast has attracted over £10 million of investment to Belfast and delivered a range of successful projects with industry, SMEs and our universities. Furthermore, the Smart Belfast approach directly contributed to the design of the £120m Digital pillar of Belfast Region City Deal. And its concept of collaborative urban innovation has shaped the ambition and programme of the city's new innovation partners – Innovation City Belfast (ICB).**
- 3.3 The development of a refreshed Urban Innovation framework is being developed in a changing strategic environment that includes the implications of Covid on the future of the city and its economy and the Council's commitment to addressing the climate emergency. It also sits against a backdrop of the establishment of ICB, the city deal and the opportunities they represent. The aim of the updated framework will be to identify how emerging technological innovation can best contribute to addressing the many urban priorities and challenges that Belfast now faces and lays out the plans for a Smart District within the city to trial and test new ways of working and delivering services.**
- 3.4 The City Innovation Team is currently completing a draft framework which will be presented to Members at the December SPR Committee meeting. Alongside the development the team is delivering a 2-phase approach to an engagement and consultation programme to ensure**

Members and city stakeholders have the opportunity to inform the framework and its programme of work. Phase 1 is focussing on Members, our 2 Universities and the Belfast Met, public sector departments and industry as the key stakeholders required to make the innovation ecosystem work across the city. Phase 2 will be the delivery of a citizen programme to build capacity to co create and co design the future programmes and projects.

#### Stimulating Advanced Wireless investment

- 3.5 As part of the Belfast Region City Deal Digital programme, the Council is leading on the development of a £30 million proposal aimed at stimulating greater investment in advanced wireless connectivity. The initial geographical focus for investment is the Smart District and central core of the city – but with the aim of creating a successful model that can be scaled to the wider city and region.
- 3.6 The strategic case for the wireless investment is based on the analysis that the region’s innovation, economic and societal ambitions would be greatly enhanced by the widespread availability of next generation wireless connectivity. UK Government’s position is that such connectivity is going to be the backbone for areas such as advanced manufacturing, the creative industries, urban mobility, climate adaptation, etc. However, the Government’s analysis is that, due a number of barriers, there are likely to be delays in reaching this level of widespread wireless connectivity over the medium term. The development of the proposal for BRCD funding seeks to address a number of these barriers and stimulate more rapid private sector investment.
- 3.7 The proposal is being facilitated by independent industry consultants, Real Wireless who have now finalised a three-month techno-feasibility study. Based on the positive findings of this study, Real Wireless are now working with Council and its city and regional partners to develop a project business case. A draft of this business case will be presented to Members in February 2022 prior to final submission to BRCD Executive Board and then to the Department for Economy.

#### Digital Connectivity Infrastructure Accelerator (DCIA) Pilot

- 3.8 In a related strand of work, the Dept. for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has launched a £4 million competition for local councils and regional authorities aimed

at mapping public assets that are needed to support the UK's wireless ambitions. (Public assets such as rooftops, street-poles, spare land could all be utilised to support the faster deployment of wireless networks.)

- 3.9 DCIA will make up to £500,000 available to each participating city for a one-year pilot commencing in January 2022. It will assist partners in mapping the relevant assets and developing the policies and procedures to support easier access to them by the wireless industry.
- 3.10 The Council wishes to lead on a £500,000 bid to the programme (closing date is 18th November 2021) with partner support from Land and Property Services (Ordnance Survey NI), Lisburn and Castlereagh, Ards and North Down, and Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Councils, the Department for Infrastructure and the Department for the Economy.
- 3.11 The expectation is that the learning from the pilot will support local councils regarding the policies and procedures in relation to asset management and planning; and will directly inform the development of our Advanced Wireless proposition to the City Deal described in the item above.
- 3.12 Given the short timeframe (closing date for applications 18 November) and the complexity of a multi-partner bid, Members are asked to retrospectively approve a Council led submission to the programme. And retrospectively approve the commissioning of consultants, Perform Green, to support partners on development of the bid.

**Accelerating Research and Innovation between UK and Global cities**

- 3.13 The Council's City Innovation team have been working with Connected Places Catapult on a £400,000 proposal to the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to develop pilots that will generate opportunities for bilateral trade and investment in innovation between the UK and other global cities. Belfast has been offered the opportunity to link with Sejong, South Korea's leading 'Smart City'. Established in 2008 its population has grown to over 200,000 and is expected to double again in the next decade. It is associated with significant world-leading technologies and industries and offers Belfast companies the opportunity to build their experience in international trade and to tap into global leading innovative technologies.

- 3.14 As part of the programme, we will develop a common best practice playbook for innovative procurement aimed at supporting SMEs between Belfast and global cities to accelerate commercialisation and routes to market for research and innovation.
- 3.15 Working with Connected Places Catapult (CPC), the UK Science and Innovation Network (SIN), and Innovate UK, the programme builds on Smart Belfast programme's experience in such areas as Small Business Research Initiatives, Collaborative Growth Networks and Collaborative Innovation Agreements.
- 3.16 The city will also deliver a £200,000 challenge competition to encourage local SMEs to provide an opportunity for their innovative ideas and products to be exported to the other city. The practical learning of this element will inform and be informed by the emerging playbook. Led by the City Innovation Team local Belfast partners include the Economic Development Team, Invest NI, dept for Economy and our two local universities.
- 3.17 Regular senior level meetings are being scheduled with Belfast and Sejong to explore further the opportunities for collaboration on areas and projects of interest such as zero carbon, marine, automotive and aerospace and knowledge sharing on reg tech and regulatory sandboxes. An MOU will also be developed between the cities to set out expectations and joint ways of working for the pilot programme.

#### Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.18 The maximum £29,600 budget to commission consultants to support the DCIA has been identified in the existing City Innovation team budget.

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

- 3.19 None.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

#### Review of Belfast Agenda (Engagement Findings and Bringing Focus to Delivery)

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy submitted for the Committee's consideration the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues**

**1.1** The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the emerging findings from the Continuing the Conversation engagement programme to date and outline the proposed approach for taking them forward during the next stage in the review of the Belfast Agenda which seeks to co-design underpinning delivery plans with a focus of collaborative gain.

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1** The Committee is asked to:

- i.** consider the emerging findings and recommendations from the initial phase of the Continuing the Conversation Engagement programme outlined in section 3.7;
- ii.** note the proposed approach, structure and timeline for the development of the refreshed Belfast Agenda Strategy document and supporting four-year Delivery Action Plans in section 3.8;
- iii.** note the plans for continued Elected Member engagement, including the date and time for the forthcoming meeting of the All-Party Working Group on Community Planning, detailed in section 3.9; and
- iv.** note the delivery and timetabling for the 2021 Belfast Residents' Survey.

**3.0 Main Report**

**3.1** The Committee, at its meeting on 18th June, received a report on the Continuing the Conversation engagement programme, the initial phase of which revisited the priorities to deliver the vision, outcomes and ambitions in the Belfast Agenda, seeking stakeholder views on what the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) should focus on over the period 2022-26.

**3.2** A range of engagement tools were utilised including an online survey, call for evidence, idea generation and comments and suggestion tool. It was recognised that the lockdown highlighted and intensified the digital divide that exists within the city and as a result shorter paper-based surveys were developed and distributed by Libraries NI across the network of 18 libraries in the Greater Belfast area

and the council's 28 community centres. The views of communities were obtained via five independently facilitated workshops sought to understand what the priorities looked like in all areas and for all communities in Belfast.

**Feedback from Engagement Workshops**

- 3.3 A total of 130 participants from 63 organisations attended the events and told us what the priorities meant for them and their community. The workshops also provided an opportunity to check that the long-term vision and outcomes are still relevant and meaningful. Participants were asked to respond to a simple poll and provided clear support that these should remain unchanged.

Responding to the question, 'Are the vision and outcomes still very relevant, fairly relevant, or no longer relevant', 57% felt they were still very relevant, 40% felt they were fairly relevant and 3% of respondents felt that the visions and outcomes are no longer relevant.

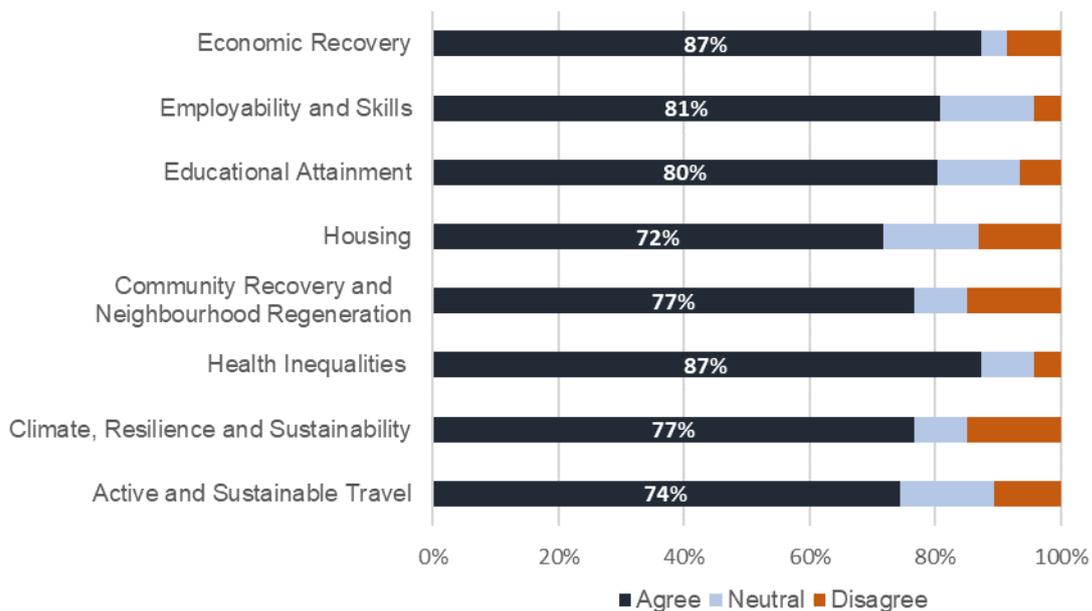
The main substantive discussion of the workshops focussed on the priority themes which had been introduced and explained during the session. The discussion was structured in two parts, asking participants questions on the priorities and what they mean for their communities. Feedback from participants suggests that the emergent priorities are a valid framework to progress to the action planning phase; although some proposed priorities that they felt were missing, or highlighted areas which they felt needed to be made a priority in its own right. Additionally, feedback was received on underpinning considerations, the community planning process, implementation, evaluation, and governance.

**Feedback from Online and Paper-based Surveys**

- 3.4 A subgroup of CPP partners agreed a survey instrument to enable stakeholders including the wider public to provide more detailed views on the vision, outcomes and priorities. The online survey received 50 responses, which ran from 09 June until 30 September 2021. Almost 7 out of 10 people agreed or strongly agreed with the current vision. Respondents also agreed that our outcomes are broadly correct (ranging from 53% to 72%). However, given the written comments, it would appear that some people based their opinion on how well they felt Belfast was meeting these outcomes as opposed to their relevance.

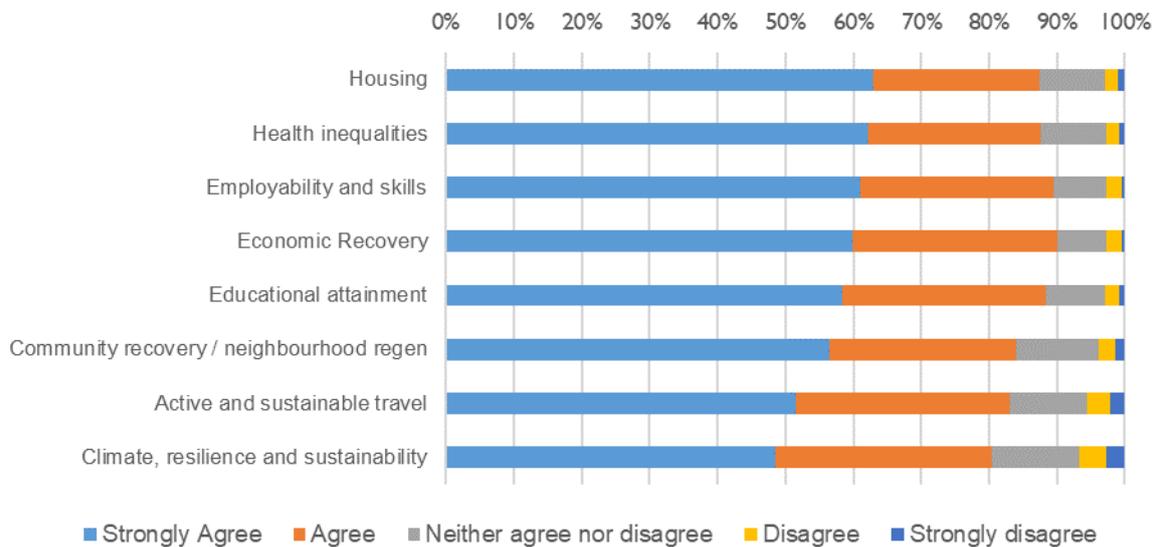
Respondents were further supportive of the proposed priority themes with high levels of agreement (ranging between 72% and 87%) that these themes should be the areas of focus for community planning during the period 2022 -26. The chart below depicts the percentage of respondents who either agreed or disagreed with these priorities. Analysing the strength of opinion, the priorities which attracted the highest levels of agreement included Health Inequalities, Economic Recovery and Employability and Skills.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following priority themes



A total of 385 completed paper-based surveys were received from libraries (214) and community centres (171). This channel provided a more limited opportunity for the public to provide in-depth views, however it provided an opportunity to capture the public’s perception of the long-term vision and outcomes and was also an effective means of capturing further views of the individual priorities. Over 75% of respondents (n=364) agreed with the current vision for Belfast; and 81% of respondents (n=368) agreed that the current outcomes are still relevant. Similar to the survey on Your Say Belfast, the majority of respondents agreed with and supported the identified priorities.

Do you agree or disagree that the following priorities should be priorities for the next 4 years?



Again, most respondents to the paper-based surveys agreed that Health Inequalities, Economic Recovery and Employability and Skills were the top-ranking priorities. The strongest level of support (i.e. the percentage of respondents who strongly agreed) were for the Housing priority.

### 3.5 Call for evidence

A range of information was received as part of a call for evidence, including:

- A 10x Economy, Northern Ireland's Decade of Innovation (Department for Economy)
- A Fair Start, Final Report and Action Plan (Expert Panel on Educational Underachievement in Northern Ireland)
- Equality Can't Wait / Build Homes Now! Campaign (PPR)
- Looking to the Future (Healthy North Belfast)
- Belfast: A Learning City, Holyland and Wider University Area Strategic Study (Louise Browne Associates)
- Reset for Growth, A report by the Belfast Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission
- Building Resilience and Embedding Wellbeing in West Belfast Strategic Plan
- Correspondence from Lower Oldpark Community Association
- Correspondence from West Belfast Partnership Board
- Belfast Agenda Board Workshop Reports

This information will be considered and addressed by convening leads, who will be responsible for leading the development of the supporting action plans (see section 3.8).

3.6 **Specific Engagement with Older People and Children and Young People**

The co-design subgroup identified older people, children and young people as specific cohorts to be directly engaged. Officers attended meetings of the Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership (22/09/21) and the G6 / Greater Belfast Seniors Forum (12/08/21) and posed similar questions to those asked during the engagement workshops. The main findings are listed below:

- Addressing health inequalities and access to health services were cited as the most pressing issues for many older people, particularly the increasing waiting lists for non-Covid related operations and procedures.
- Loneliness and Isolation were highlighted as significant issues for older people in relation to access to the city centre and opportunities to re-engage socially. It was felt that this had a direct impact on mental health.

In addition, community planning officers designed a programme of engagement to obtain the views of children and young people, using several interactive activities to help understand what matters most to them. These activities took place during late September and October to enable access to the school environment. Engagement events took place with training providers (Workforce Training, BCTNI), sports clubs (Tullycarnet FC, Grove Jujitsu, Belfast Phoenix Basketball Club) and schools (Hazelwood Integrated College, Belfast Model School for Girls, Strathearn School).

3.7 **Emerging Findings and Recommendations**

Following analysis of all evidence captured during the engagement programme to date, a number of emerging findings include:

- Terminology – Many respondents stated that many of the terms used in the consultation narrative and stated priorities needed further clarification. For example, many agreed that the definition of ‘economic recovery’ needs refined and questioned whether this was a desired outcome rather than a priority.

- **Active and Sustainable Travel** – Many stakeholders suggested that this issue was wider than just travel. Rather, it should be considered wider to incorporate the transport system and connectivity issues within the city.
- **Community recovery and neighbourhood regeneration** – Respondents also queried the definition of this priority theme, seeking clarification of what was trying to be achieved and how success would be measured. In addition, it was also suggested that regeneration could be a single citywide priority considered to address physical development, infrastructure, dereliction/ vacant sites.
- **Addressing Poverty** – Several participants expressed concern about families and older people who were struggling with poverty (e.g. food poverty, fuel poverty).
- **Measuring Success** – Many participants expressed a clear desire to develop targets and indicators in order to measure progress against the priorities.

It is recommended that each of the above findings are considered and taken forward by identified internal convening leads and in liaison with relevant partners. The emerging considerations, refinements and proposals will be brought back and considered by Members as part of phase 2 of the BA Review process. It is suggested that the wider issue of measuring success is supplemented by creating a new project on Your Say Belfast to enable stakeholders to have their say on the current Belfast Agenda population indicators.

### **3.8 Bringing Focus to Delivery - Phase 2 Action Planning**

Phase 2 will focus on co-designing specific action plans aligned to the agreed strategic priorities. The activities detailed within these supporting delivery plans will take account and be tested against the principles for action planning (see attached).

Any emerging action plans will also take account of the experiences and lessons emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic and what can be achieved through real

collaboration and co-delivery. The ambition is to adopt a pragmatic approach to developing consolidated action plan(s) which draw out those specific interventions which are identified as an urgent priority and whereby community planning can make a significant difference/ impact.

It is important to recognise that as we reassess the key challenges and opportunities facing the city, we are not starting from a blank sheet. Consideration will also be given to a range of inputs which will inform our planning (e.g. the emerging findings and outputs from phase 1; continuing work and commitments from current programmes of work; and recent Belfast Agenda Board action planning workshops). The community planning team are currently undertaking initial work to provide a baseline position. It is also important that we engage with communities and city stakeholders at the right stage and with the input and involvement of statutory and other delivery partners to ensure we secure balance between ambition and what is possible to develop realistic and deliverable plans.

Building on this initial scoping work, it is proposed that convening leads are identified for each priority area to take forward planning involving a core set of community planning and relevant partners. Consideration will be given to:

- i. **Strategic intent / outcomes** – what we are trying to achieve?
- ii. **Measuring success** – what would success look like / potential targets
- iii. **Actions** – core set of actions/ interventions (what, who, when)

Figure 1 below outlines an indicative timeline for phase 2, highlighting individual milestones and ensuring the action plans are developed by the original deadline of end of March 2022.



Figure 1: Action Plan development timeline.

### 3.9 Engagement with Elected Members

Following the all-Member workshop on 3rd September, it is proposed that we adopt a rolling programme of engagement going forward, including the All-Party Working Group on Community Planning, Party Group Briefings and Area Working Groups. On that basis, a meeting of the All-Party Working Group on Community Planning will be scheduled for early December.

The meeting will provide an initial opportunity to contribute to the action planning phase and also input to the review of the Belfast Agenda Outcomes framework that will provide a sense as to whether the outcomes are being achieved. A featured project has also been added to the Belfast Agenda Review Hub on Your Say Belfast where elected members can also continue the conversation.

### 3.10 Belfast Residents' Survey 2021

Since 1999, the Council has undertaken a regular residents' survey to help inform strategic planning and performance management. Following the introduction of community planning, the survey is now also used to track progress against the Belfast Agenda and to inform city priorities. The survey provides statistically reliable perception data based on a representative sample of Belfast residents. It provides a robust evidence base to inform strategic planning and service improvement as well as helping support the council's statutory duty to consult under the Local Government (NI) Act 2014. The last survey was undertaken in early 2019. While we normally undertake the survey every two years, it was delayed this year due to the Covid pandemic. The methodology for the 2021 Survey has also been changed to a telephone survey to reflect the current environment with the pandemic. Telephone numbers including mobile numbers are obtained using recognised European and UK research standards and meet data protection.

Following a quotation exercise, we appointed Social Market Research (SMR) to carry out the survey. A minimum of 1,500 people (aged 16+) will be interviewed from across all DEAs and electoral wards. Quotas are applied to ensure those completing the survey are representative of the population of Belfast. We have included a notice on our website about the survey and have informed the PSNI; those undertaking the interviewing will also provide BCC contacts details should residents require reassurance as to the legitimacy of the caller.

The fieldwork will be carried out between 11th November and 11th December 2021, and we anticipate bringing key findings to Committee in January 2022. The survey, which has been adapted as necessary to reflect the Covid-19 pandemic, will provide feedback from residents on the following matters:

- Living in Belfast
- Your local area
- Your wellbeing
- Belfast City Council

### 3.11 Financial and Resource Implications

Any financial implications arising from this report will be covered from existing budgets. The review process will involve the participation of all community planning partners, who will need to commit their resources to the review process and the agreed action plans.

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

- 3.12 It is recommended that the consultation and engagement activities to review the Belfast Agenda will take account of the draft Audit of Inequalities and include specific sessions with targeted harder to reach groups to ensure that equality implications are considered as part of the review process.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

## Belfast Agenda - Statement of Progress

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy submitted for the Committee’s consideration the following report:

### “1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the development and publication of a Belfast Agenda Statement of Progress in November 2021, which is a legislative requirement for the Council and its community planning partners.

### 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is requested to:
- i. note the statutory requirement for the Council and its community planning partners to publish a second Statement of Progress in November 2021;

- ii. note the process of engagement and input from community planning partners which has led to the development of the Statement of Progress;
- iii. approve the draft Statement of Progress, a copy of which is available on the [Council website](#), and
- iv. agree that the Statement of Progress be published in compliance with legislative requirements, with any revisions made by the Committee being included.

### **3.0 Main Report**

- 3.1 **Members will be aware that The Local Government Act (NI) 2014 requires the Council and its community planning partners to make arrangements to monitor progress against meeting the objectives of the Belfast Agenda and the effectiveness of the actions taken in aiming to achieve these objectives. The legislation also requires the Council to publish a report (Statement of Progress) assessing progress towards the outcomes and actions taken every two years.**
- 3.2 **The second statement of progress is due to be published by the end of November 2021. In recognition of the pressures which local Councils, and community planning partners, have faced over last 18-24 months in responding to Covid-19 the Department for Communities have indicated that they are content that Community Planning Partnerships adopt a light touch approach when producing their statement of progress reports.**
- 3.3 **Nevertheless, the statement of progress provides an opportunity for partners to update the public on the actions that have been undertaken or are ongoing through the community planning process. In addition, it demonstrates the impact of such actions on communities and local people as well as their contribution to the achievement of the ambitions and outcomes outlined in the Belfast Agenda.**
- 3.4 **The draft statement of progress (SOP) has been developed in association with and input from all community planning partners and highlights a number of case studies and noteworthy achievements showcasing the work of partners over the last 24 months including responding to the Covid-19 pandemic. It should be noted that any additional feedback received on the draft SOP will be reflected in the document prior to publication.**

- 3.5 While the Covid-19 pandemic has adversely impacted many of the targets and further widened inequalities in the city, there are several successes worth communicating to the public. It also helps identify key challenges and opportunities facing the city and helps shape the focus of refreshed Belfast Agenda.
- 3.6 The key elements of the statement of progress (in line with DfC guidance) include a restatement of the vision, a short narrative provided on what our long-term outcomes are trying to achieve and why they are important; recent data for our population indicators which provide a sense of progress towards the outcomes; and an update on the collaborative actions being progressed by the Partnership. A summary of the key highlights and achievements delivered over the past two years is set out of pages 6-7 of the attached Statement of Progress.
- 3.7 It is important to note that there has been positive engagement with Elected Members through the Belfast Agenda Members' Reference Group and the recent Members' workshop (3 September 2021) on the refresh of the Belfast Agenda. This engagement has highlighted early consensus around important city challenges which will provide priority areas for collaborative focus with city partners as outlined in the SOP.

#### **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.8 There are no additional resource implications as a result of this report. Alignment of resources to the delivery of the Belfast Agenda is part of the ongoing organisational and financial planning processes.

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

- 3.9 There is no equality, good relations of rural need implications in this report."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

#### **Physical Programme and Asset Management**

##### **Assets Management**

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

**i. Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park**

The Committee granted approval for the Council to enter into a new five-year Lease with Belfast City Marathon Limited for 100 m<sup>2</sup> of office space at Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park.

**ii. Cathedral Gardens**

The Committee granted approval for the Council to enter into a Service Level Agreement with the Turnaround Project (t/a Big Loop Bikes) for the use of two shipping containers at Cathedral Gardens as a temporary Active Travel Hub, prior to the redevelopment of Cathedral Gardens.

**Update on Area Working Groups**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the East Belfast Area Working Group of 4th November, including the following recommendations:

- i TAGIT Boxing Club - that £9,000 of LIF funding be allocated towards the purchase of equipment; and
- ii Westbourne Presbyterian Church/Titanic People – that the original project proposal, which had received an in-principle allocation of £250,000 and which is no longer viable, be removed from the LIF project list, with the monies to be reallocated and officers to continue to work with the group to identify other opportunities for funding.

**Finance, Procurement and Performance**

**Update on Contracts**

The Committee:

- approved the public advertisement of tenders, as per Standing Order 37a, as detailed in Table 1 below;
- approved the modification of the contract, as per Standing Order 37a, as detailed in Table 2 below; and
- noted the award of retrospective Single Tender Actions, in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions, as detailed in Table 3 below.

**Table 1: Competitive Tenders**

<b>Title of Tender</b>	<b>Proposed Contract Duration</b>	<b>Estimated Total Contract Value</b>	<b>SRO</b>	<b>Short description of goods / services</b>
Test and Train environment for the Customer Hub telephony environment	Up to 3 months	£32,777	R Cregan	At present, there is only a 'live' system and there is no capability to test new functions, and train new users without considerable risk to 'live'.
Cloud backup services for Microsoft Office 365 and Dynamics users	Up to 3 years	£98,666	R Cregan	The default backup and recovery functions provided by Microsoft are severely limited. This presents a significant risk to Council data should data be lost or corrupted. This project seeks to overcome this and bring the Office/Dynamics environment in line with the existing on-premises backup protection as agreed by SP&R.
Planned preventative maintenance to thermostatic mixing valve (TMV) including minor remedial repairs at various Council properties	Up to 5 years	£250,000	S Grimes	Statutory compliance requirement
PEACE IV Traveller Support - Capacity Building Project	Up to 8 months	£66,000	R Black	To meet deliverables with the PEACE IV Programme and BPR5 Traveller project. Rescope of project is required following nil

				submissions to previous tender competitions
Consultancy services to undertake analysis, evaluation and provide financial assurance to the Council in respect of land and site proposals	Up to 1 year	£50,000	A Reid	Suitably qualified professional consultancy required to progress the Strategic Sites Assessment and Belfast Destination Hub work-streams and aligned with the Covid-19 Recovery Plan. Replacement tender for T2135 using new Crown Commercial Service framework

**Table 2: Modification to Contract Term**

Title of Contract	Duration	Modification	SRO	Supplier
T1911 - Administration and provision of a suite of First-aid training courses for delivery to Council staff (including organisations delivering Services for and on behalf of the Council)	Up to 3 years	Additional 6 months	J Walsh	Proparamedics
T2013 - Provision of technical expertise to support the development of the Employability and Skills Programme for the Belfast Region City Deal	Up to 2 years	Additional 3 months	R Cregan	Locus Management
T2135 - Consultancy services to undertake analysis, evaluation and provide financial assurance to the Council in respect of real estate proposals	Up to 6 months	Additional 6 months (Retrospective approval May 21 to Nov 21)	A Reid	Cushman and Wakefield
T2181 - Development of economic strategy for Belfast - Position Belfast and BCC in context of	Up to 1 year	Requesting term be amended to include a	A Reid	Tender not yet awarded. Previously approved in

emerging regional strategy positions		further 7-month extension option.		May 2021 for a period of 5 months.
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**Table 3: Retrospective Single Tender Actions**

<b>Title of Contract</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>SRO</b>	<b>Supplier</b>
New automated staff gate at Belfast Zoo	Up to 5 weeks	£32,728	S Grimes	Methodology M&E

**Equality and Good Relations**

**Minutes of Meeting of Shared City Partnership**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Shared City Partnership of 8th November, including the following recommendations relating to the ongoing delivery of the Good Relations Action Plan to:

- i note all updates in relation to the PEACE IV Programme;
- ii make a request to SEUPB for a formal reduction of CYP targets by 10% - 460 participants, which would reduce project targets for CYP3 by 260 and CYP5 by 200;
- iii agree the narratives and locations of the 7 panels for Section 1 of Forth Meadow Community Greenway (FMCG);
- iv agree the design and layout of information panels for FMCG;
- v agree that the panels and narratives would be subject to equality screening;
- vi agree (i) to delegate authority to the Capital Project Board to agree, at its meeting on 17th November, on the design of the panels around the Parks along FMCG, with a further report to be submitted to Partnership meeting in December and (ii) that the contractor be advised to engage with the organisers of established local food banks in terms of organising a potential fundraising event in association with the project;
- vii extend the delivery timeframe for BPR5 LINC5 to 30 September 2022, to increase the capacity building and further develop the Inclusion Forum;

- viii delegate authority to the PEACE IV Programme Board to agree the rescope of the Traveller Support Hub to a Capacity Building programme, subject to SEUPB approval;
- ix extend the participant groups for the BPR5/Roma Advocacy and Advice Skills training to the wider community;
- x amend the format of six hard copy interpretative panels for BPR6/St. Comgall's to be replaced with an online digital resource to enable the content to be more accessible;
- xi extend the delivery timeframe for the Cinematography contract with Morrow Communications to October 2022, to include the BPR6 St Comgalls and to increase the contract award by £5,750, subject to agreement by SEUPB;
- xii agree funding support of £2,500 for Black Mountain Shared Spaces to deliver a cross community Christmas fair at the Springmartin Interface through the Strategic Intervention Programme within BCC10 of the DCGRP Action Plan;
- xiii agree funding support of £1,000 for NI Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers (NICRAS) to deliver translation support in relation to the High Street Voucher Scheme through the Strategic Intervention Programme BCC10;
- xiv agree that a further update report on gaps in Youth Provision be presented to the Living Here Board;
- xv agree that a representative from the Youth Council be invited to join the Shared City Partnership on an advisory capacity. As per the terms of reference, the representative would have the right to participate fully in the discussions of the SCP and to offer advice but would not have any voting rights; and
- xvi agree to the development of a project for young people on the understanding of politics is progressed.

### **Operational Issues**

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

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum of 11th November.

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

The Committee agreed to adopt the recommendations made in respect of those applications received up to 5th November, as set out below:

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
<b>2022 EVENTS</b>						
Northern Ireland Alternatives	19 January 2022	<p><b>STARS Celebration Ceremony (Striving Towards a Restorative Society)</b> celebrating participants in the STARS Programme which covers Shankill, North Belfast and East Belfast involved in positive community initiatives.</p> <p>Numbers attending – 90</p> <p><i>* Numbers and room layout will be reviewed and revised in line with COVID19 social distancing guidelines at the time of this event.</i></p>	D	No (charity)	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality

European Youth Parliament	21 March 2022	<p><b>NI Regional Session of Youth Parliament</b> - teams of secondary students debate and present their ideas and solutions on current topics.</p> <p>Numbers attending – 130</p>	B & D	No (Charity)	No (they provide their own lunches for attendees)	Approve No charge No hospitality
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**Funding for Changing Places Toilet Facilities – Response from Minister of Finance**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 24th September, it had approved a draft response to the Department of Finance’s public consultation on updated building control advice on the fitting of changing places toilet facilities. The response had confirmed the Council’s support for the mandatory provision of changing places toilet facilities under Building Regulations, as a positive way of increasing inclusion for service users and their carers.

The Committee had been informed that, following the introduction of similar regulations in England and issues which had been raised around the financial challenges associated with voluntarily providing changing places toilet facilities in existing premises, a £30 million fund had been launched in July, to be distributed through local authorities.

Accordingly, it had agreed that a letter be forwarded to the Minister of Finance requesting that a similar fund be established in Northern Ireland for retrospective installations in existing premises.

The City Solicitor drew the Members’ attention to a response which had been received from the Minister of Finance.

The Minister had begun by acknowledging the Council’s response to the important consultation on changing places toilet facilities and had stated that the Building Standards Branch was currently analysing the responses and working to publish a summary document in due course.

He had confirmed that he was aware that £30 million of funding for changing places toilet facilities had been launched earlier this year in England and that he would be very supportive of a proposal being put to the Northern Ireland Executive to establish a similar fund to support retrofitting facilities here.

He had pointed out that the Department for Communities led on disability policy and strategy and that it had a track record of establishing and administering grant funding in this area. He was very sympathetic to the dignity issues arising from the limited provision of changing places toilet facilities and would continue to support an equitable and accessible built environment for everyone. The Minister had concluded by recognising that the Council was keen to do so as well and had wished it every success in its work to expand the provision of changing places toilets in the Belfast area.

The Committee noted the response.

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

The Committee noted the minutes of the meeting of the Active Belfast Limited Board of 25th October and, in so doing, noted concerns which had been expressed by a Member on the outcome of a legal opinion which had ruled that GLL was automatically entitled, under the contract arrangements, to increase leisure charges in line with the annual increase in Consumer Price Index, without seeking approval from the Board.

### **Motion – Centenary of the Ulster Memorial Tower**

The Committee granted retrospective approval for a Member to attend the Centenary Commemoration of the opening of the Ulster Memorial Tower in France on 18th November and authorised the payment of the associated costs.

### **Human Rights Day 2021**

The Committee granted approval for the Human Rights campaign flag and the United Nations flag to be flown on the City Hall on 10th December to mark Human Rights Day 2021.

### **Issues Raised in Advance by Members**

#### **Publication of Information on Members' Attendance at Meetings**

The Committee agreed, at the request of Councillor O'Hara, that, in order to improve transparency in Local Government and give the citizens of Belfast confidence in their Elected Members, the Council would, commencing in April, 2022, publish on an annual basis details of Members' attendance at meetings of the Council, Committees and Working Groups, as well as attendances for each year since the commencement of the current Council term.

**Illumination of a Council Building**

The Chairperson (Councillor Groogan) informed the Committee that she had received a request for a Council building to be illuminated in green on the night of Tuesday, 21st December, in support of the Samaritans organisation's Longest Night event.

The Committee agreed, on the basis that the City Hall would be unavailable on that night due to the Christmas lighting, that officers examine the potential for illuminating another Council building.

Chairperson