

# Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 21st October, 2022

## MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AND  
REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor McDonough-Brown (Chairperson);  
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor M. Kelly);  
and Councillors Bunting, Ferguson, Garrett,  
Groogan, Long, Lyons, McLaughlin, McMullan,  
Murphy, Pankhurst, Spratt, Verner and Walsh.

Also attended: Councillors Flynn and McKeown.

In attendance: Mr. J. Walsh, Chief Executive;  
Mr. R. Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of  
Finance and Resources;  
Ms. N. Largey, Interim City Solicitor and Director of  
Legal and Civic Services;  
Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;  
Mrs. C. Matthews, Director of Resources and Fleet;  
Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and  
Development;  
Mrs. C. Sheridan, Director of Human Resources;  
Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;  
Mrs. D. Colville, City Innovation Manager;  
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and  
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

### Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported on behalf of Alderman Haire and Councillor Beattie.

### Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 23rd September were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council, at its meeting on 3rd October, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

### **Declarations of Interest**

Councillors Garrett, Groogan, Murphy and Spratt declared an interest in respect of agenda item 6a – Update on Physical Programme, in so far as it related to the Cathedral Gardens Project, on the basis that they would, as members of the Planning Committee, be required to determine a planning application at some point and took no part in the decision-making process.

Councillor Lyons declared an interest in relation to agenda item 10a – Fuel Poverty Hardship Fund, in that he owned shares in a community energy project, the value of which was below the beneficial interest threshold.

The Chief Executive advised the Member that his declaration was not of such significance as to necessitate his withdrawal from the meeting whilst that item was being considered.

### **Restricted Items**

**The information contained in the reports associated with the following seven 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 seven 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.

### **Medium Term Financial Plan and Efficiency Programme**

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources submitted for the Committee's consideration a report which provided an assessment of the key issues which would influence the rate setting process for 2023/24 and the development of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan for 2023/24 - 2025/26.

After discussion, the Committee:

- i. noted the challenges to be taken into consideration as part of the annual and medium-term rate setting; and
- ii. agreed to continue to receive monthly rate update reports to enable the striking of the district rate by February, 2023.

### **Augment the City Innovation and the Visitor Experience**

The City Innovation Manager submitted for the Committee's consideration a report providing information on a twelve-month project, entitled Augment the City, which was being developed currently by the Council. The project sought to help Belfast City Region partners to better understand, and plan for, new digital technologies which

would be likely to shape the content and presentation of major visitor and cultural investments over the next five years, including Belfast Stories, the City Hall exhibition and other visitor locations across the city region. The report also outlined the complementary strands of work which would make up the Augment the City project, as well as a range of substantial industry co-investments and additional benefits which the project could attract to Belfast.

Accordingly, she recommended that the Committee:

- i note the proposal for the Augment the City project and the benefits which it was expected to generate for Belfast;
- ii approve the development and submission of a £1 million business case to the Belfast City Region Deal Digital pillar to deliver a Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) challenge competition for the region's creative and digital SME sector;
- iii approve the development of a collaborative agreement with BT and other key industry partners to create a timebound world-class visitor immersive showcase in the City Hall; and
- iv note that any proposals for the world-class visitor showcase would be presented to the City Hall/City Hall Grounds Installations Working Group for consideration.

As the Committee had failed to reach a consensus, a vote was taken. Fifteen Members voted in favour of adopting the recommendations and one against and, accordingly, they were adopted.

#### **Update on Employees on Temporary Contracts and Agency Workers**

The Director of Human Resources submitted for the Committee's consideration a report providing an update on the number of employees on temporary contracts and agency assignees engaged by the Council and outlining the steps being taken to reduce the Council's reliance on these two categories.

She reported that, at 30th September, 227 staff had been filling posts on a temporary basis, 138 of whom were permanent staff and would return to their substantive post when no longer required. The other 89 were Fixed Term Contract employees who did not have a substantive post to return to. 333 agency assignees had been engaged by the Council on that date.

The Director then outlined the actions which had been taken to reduce the number of long-standing temporary posts. She reminded the Committee that the Council, at its meeting on 4th October, 2021, had adopted a motion agreeing to seek a legal opinion on the potential for anyone on a temporary contract who had been employed for twelve continuous months, regardless of job title, to have that contract made permanent if they so wished.

She confirmed that Senior Counsel had since advised that the implementation of this proposal could give rise to breaches of the statutory Local Government Staff Commission's Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection and that there were unforeseen potential consequences of these matters which could well emerge and result in litigation. She and the City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services were due to meet with the Local Government Staff Commission on 28th October and, subsequently, with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland to consider the legal opinion and discuss measures which were being considered to prevent similar situations arising in the future.

She went on to point out that a recent external recruitment exercise for General Operatives within the City and Neighbourhood Services Department had resulted in the appointment of 45 permanent staff and that the recruitment of permanent Sweeper/Driver Labourer's, Recycling Operatives, Park Operatives and Gardeners was planned. A recruitment exercise to appoint 40 Business Support Clerks on a permanent basis had also been completed. The filling of all of the aforementioned posts would reduce the requirement for temporary/agency staff moving forward. Officers would, she stressed, continue to prioritise addressing temporary posts which had been in place for a considerable period of time, with the Corporate Management Team providing oversight of this work on an ongoing basis.

The Director concluded by seeking approval from the Committee to engage an external consultant to undertake a feasibility study to determine whether an in-house agency might offer better value for money for the Council. The feasibility study would cost approximately £30,000 and would be met from existing budgets.

After discussion, the Committee:

- i. noted the contents of the report;
- ii. granted approval to engage an external consultant to undertake a feasibility study on the potential for establishing an in-house agency;
- iii. agreed that a report be submitted to its next meeting on the outcome of the meetings with the Local Government Staff Commission and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland; and
- iv. agreed that information be submitted to a future meeting on external consultancy costs incurred over the course of the current Council term.

**Organisational Reviews  
and Change Programme**

The Committee noted the contents of a report providing an update on the indicative timescales and prioritised work programme associated with the Organisational Reviews and Change Portfolio.

**Glass Recycling Collection Service**

In response to a request by Councillor Long for clarification around the timeframe for the resumption of the glass recycling collection service, the Director of Resources and Fleet confirmed that a recruitment exercise to appoint drivers had been completed and that it was anticipated that the service would resume shortly.

**Update on External Funding  
(Shared Island and Peace Plus)**

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy submitted for the Committee's consideration a report providing an update on the work which was underway to identify and maximise funding opportunities, including recent feedback received on project Concept Notes which had been submitted under PEACEPLUS Measure 1.4 (Reimaging Communities). Approval was also being sought to purchase a licence for a GrantFinder management solution, an advanced funding and grants database and portal covering local, national, European and international funding opportunities and open calls.

Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee:

- i. note the update provided in relation to work underway around open funding calls;
- ii. note the feedback received from the Special EU Programmes Body on the Concept Notes submitted under PEACEPLUS Investment Area 1.4 and agree to further develop the LGBTQ+ Hub and the Reconnected Belfast (including redevelopment aspects of the Waterworks and Alexandra Park) proposals to ensure their readiness for application stage;
- iii. note that officers were currently progressing work to establish candidate projects for Investment Area 5.5 - Geothermal Demonstration Programme, alongside ongoing work for Peace Plus Investment Areas 1.1, 1.3 and 1.4; and
- iv. approve the purchase of a two-year license for the GrantFinder funding portal, with the option to extend for a further period, subject to funding availability.

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations and agreed that Members also be provided with access to the GrantFinder funding portal.

### **Additional Funding Streams**

At the request of Councillor Walsh, the Committee agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting outlining the potential for applying, firstly, for a share of the €15m which had been allocated, through the Shared Island Fund, to a shared island electric vehicle charging infrastructure project and, secondly, for a share of the €3m which had been allocated to the Community Climate Action Plan.

### **Update on PEACE IV Programme**

The Director of Physical Programmes reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 20th April, 2018, it had agreed that the Council would act as the lead partner for two projects being delivered under the Peace IV Objective 3.1 - Shared Spaces and Services Theme, namely the Black Mountain Shared Space and the Shankill Shared Women's Centre. The Committee had been advised that the Council would effectively be acting as 'guarantor' for the projects and that, as neither had been approved originally as Council projects, no financing had been put in place from a capital perspective and no allowance had been made within budgets for ongoing revenue costs.

She explained that subsequent Letters of Offer from the Special EU Programmes Body had confirmed that the funding being offered for each project had been considerably lower than that which had been requested, with some elements having been removed completely.

She went on to provide an update on the current status of the projects. In terms of Black Mountain Shared Space, it had been necessary to redesign the project and split it into two phases. She confirmed that the tender process for the construction of Phase 1 had been carried out and pointed out that the budget deficit figure provided within the report was reflective of increased construction costs and the significant reduction in the funding originally applied for. She provided details of the time constraints involved and stressed that, whilst the budget deficit position represented a financial risk to the Council, any decision not to proceed would jeopardise the delivery of the project and, in turn, the overall development of the Peace Corridor.

Accordingly, the Director recommended that the Committee grant approval to proceed with the appointment of the contractor and the commencement of construction works, with an update to be provided in due course on the outcome of ongoing discussions with funding partners to secure additional funding to meet the deficit.

In terms of the Shankill Shared Women's Centre, the Special EU Programmes Body had, in response to a request from the Council, provided additional funding to cover the budget deficit which had been identified following the tender process. Work was progressing well and representatives of the Shankill Shared Women's Centre, the Council's Project Management Team, the Delivery Team and the contractor were meeting on a regular basis.

The Committee adopted the recommendation in relation to the Black Mountain Shared Space project and noted the update on the Shankill Shared Women's Centre project.

### **City Centre Property – Targeted Acquisition**

The Committee:

- i. noted the decision of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 12th October to agree to undertake a scoping exercise in relation to the potential acquisition/transfer of two derelict properties within the City centre area;
- ii. noted the details of the scoping exercise which was currently underway in relation to these properties and that one of them was being marketed, with offers being sought;
- iii. agreed, given the open market timeframe for this property, that a without prejudice bid be made, subject to the conditions set out within the report, and, if the acquisition is to progress further, that the decision be ratified by the Council before proceeding with a confirmed bid; and
- iv. agreed that officers undertake further engagement with the Department for Communities to explore the next steps in relation to the other property.

### **Matters referred back from Council/Motions**

#### **Motion: Suspension of Government Debt Recovery for those in receipt of Benefits and Universal Credit – Response from Department for Communities**

The Committee was reminded that the Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 23rd August, had agreed to adopt the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Matt Collins and seconded by Councillor Ferguson:

"This Council notes new research carried out by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation documenting the alarming cost of living impact due to benefit deductions and debt recovery.

Many in receipt of means tested benefits and on Universal Credit, including many in work, are in bill payment arrears; taking on unaffordable debt; are going without household essentials; and are unable to properly heat their homes or feed their families. With inflation continuing to rise and the hardship emergency predicted to become more extreme as we face into the winter months the situation for many is set to worsen in the absence of immediate intervention.

Benefit reductions to repay government and utility providers at unaffordable rates are compounding the hardship crisis faced by many of those struggling the most. Government departments are in some cases claiming back debts at higher rates than private creditors. Many people are unaware that they can receive debt reduction help.

The Council will write to the Department of Communities' Minister requesting the immediate suspension of government debt recovery for those in receipt of benefits and universal credit.

The Council also requests that the Department of Communities provide information on how many benefit and universal credit claims were subject to deductions in the most recent month for which data is available, broken down by Council area; how much on average was deducted in each Council area; what the total sum was of deductions in each Council area; and what proportion of each of those sums was deducted to repay advance payments."

The Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services informed the Committee that a response had been received from Ms. L. McLaughlin, Director of Pensions, Disability, Benefit Security and Debt, on behalf of the Minister for Communities.

Ms. McLaughlin had begun by assuring the Council that the Department for Communities understood the financial hardship which many people were experiencing as a result of the current cost of living crisis. The Department was continuing to consider options to provide both immediate and medium to longer term interventions to help alleviate financial pressures, including supporting individuals who were struggling financially.

She had then addressed the reference within the motion to deductions which were made to repay utility providers by confirming that customers in receipt of certain benefits may have deductions taken from their benefit and paid to a creditor under what was known as the Third-Party Deductions Scheme. There were, however, limits to the level of deductions from benefit which could be made under this Scheme and she provided an assurance that third party deductions would only be made when it was considered to be in the best interest of the individual or their family. These were last resort deductions and were taken when an individual was in rent or utility arrears and where there was a risk of eviction, or their energy or utility supply being disconnected if payment was not made. It was, therefore, a safeguarding measure for many vulnerable individuals and their families.

Ms. McLaughlin had then referred to the request within the motion for the Minister to consider an immediate suspension of government debt from benefit and Universal Credit claimants, to help ease the financial burdens. She had pointed out that the temporary suspension of debt recovery, which had, in 2020, been implemented as part of the Department's Covid pandemic response, was in line with and supported by the Department for Work and Pensions. The Department for Work and Pensions was not considering a further pause in recovery activity at this time.

She had gone on to stress that to implement a unilateral suspension of recovery in Northern Ireland would be a complex process, relying on manual action in respect of over 200,000 cases. More significantly, it would constitute a break in parity with the Department for Work and Pensions' approach and would, therefore, require Treasury approval. Pursuing a temporary suspension in Northern Ireland would also result in

financial penalties to the Northern Ireland Executive's Block Grant at a time of significant existing funding pressures. The financial cost of any divergence from parity, of this nature, would require Executive agreement.

However, the Department for Communities had a level of existing discretion to reduce, defer and, in exceptional circumstances, to waive social security debt. As an alternative to suspending all debt recovery, the Department encouraged those people who were experiencing difficulty with their repayments to contact the Debt Management Service. Staff there were trained to support and work with individuals to help put in place a more affordable and sustainable repayment plan and could signpost individuals to organisations delivering independent debt advice and other support services. The Department was currently finalising a programme of communications aimed at raising public awareness of the support available in respect of debt recovery and officials were working closely with the independent advice sector to ensure that information and support reached those who needed it.

Ms. McLaughlin had concluded by pointing out that the Department for Communities had been unable to provide the information requested within the motion on the number of benefit claims which were subject to deductions, how much on average was deducted, the total sum of deductions and the proportion of deductions made to repay a Universal Credit advance, as it was not collated on a council-by-council basis. Annex 1 of the response did, however, provide the data requested on all benefit claimants in Northern Ireland who had been subject to benefit deductions during August 2022, although this data had not been quality assured to Office of National Statistics standards.

The Committee noted the response.

### **Quarterly Update on Motions**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress of all motions for which the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is responsible.**

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- **note the updates on all motion for which the SP and R Committee is responsible; and**
- **agree to the closure of motions 52, 74, 80, 97, 99, 136, 248, 253, 256, 259, 260 and 261 as referenced in the attached appendix and in paragraph 3.4 below.**

**3.0 Main Report**

**Background**

**3.1 At the Committee meeting on 25th October 2019, the following motion was adopted:**

**‘This Council notes that other councils produce a monthly status report in relation to Notices of Motion and agrees that Belfast City Council adopts a similar practice and produces a monthly update on motions which will be brought to each full Council Meeting, detailing the following:**

- 1. Date received**
- 2. Notice of motion title**
- 3. Submitted by which Councillor**
- 4. Council meeting date**
- 5. Committee motion is referred to**
- 6. Outcome of committee where Notice of Motion will be debated**
- 7. Month it will be reported back to committee**
- 8. Other action to be taken.’**

**3.2 Following a review exercise, a new database containing all motions and Issues Raised in Advance at Committee was created and quarterly reporting to Committee commenced in March, 2021. The attached appendix provides the latest quarterly update showing all active motions and Issues Raised in Advance which this Committee is responsible for.**

**Closure of Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance**

**3.3 At the Committee meeting on 20th November 2020, it was agreed that motions could be closed for one of two reasons:**

- Motions which contained an action(s) that has been completed; and**
- Motions have become Council policy.**

**3.4 The Committee is asked to agree that the following 12 motions are now closed:**

**Category 1 Recommended Closures:**

- **National Armed Forces Day (Ref no 97)** – This motion called for the Council to bid for the National Armed Forces Day to be held in Belfast in June 2022. The Committee voted against the motion in September 2020 and, therefore, it is recommended that this motion be closed.
- **Summer Youth Employment Programme (Ref no 99)** – This motion called for the Council to work with other public sector bodies, the Belfast Chamber of Commerce and the private sector to develop a summer Youth Employment Programme, aimed at 14 – 21 year olds primarily from areas of multiple deprivation. The Employability and Skills team delivered a pilot 6 week paid ‘Belfast Summer Work Experience’ programme to 30 young people of which 30 achieved Level 1 City and Guilds accreditation in Personal Development and Employability Qualifications. Therefore, it is recommended that this motion be closed.
- **Re-opening doctors’ surgeries (Ref no 136)** – As requested, the Council’s views were expressed in writing to the Minister of Health.
- **50th Anniversary of Bloody Friday (Ref no 248)** – This motion called for the Council to provide citizens with the opportunity to engage in a programme of commemoration and education, designed to build positive relationships for the future. An event was held on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2022 in response to this motion and it is, therefore, recommended that this motion be closed.
- **Belfast Region City Deal (Ref no 253)** - This motion requested that a further update on the latest position of the BRCD be presented to the Committee in June 22. This update was provided and, therefore, it is recommended that this motion be closed.
- **Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill (Ref no 256)** – This motion was a request for the UK Government to abandon the aforementioned Bill. This Bill has now made its way through the House of Commons and is at second stage in the House of Lords. Therefore, it is recommended that this motion be closed.

- Care home and top up fees (Ref no 259) - As requested, the Council's views were expressed in writing to the Department of Health and it is recommended that this motion be closed.
- Support the Caterpillar strike for fair pay (Ref no 260) – The Council was asked to write to the senior management urging them to enter discussion with trade unions to negotiate a fair pay increase. As the proposed strike was called off, no letter was required and it is recommended that this motion be closed.
- Continuance of hybrid meetings (Ref no 261) – As requested, the Council's views were expressed in writing to the Department of Communities, with an update provided to this Committee on 19th August 2022.

**Category 2 Recommended Closures:**

- Menopause Aware ( Ref no 52 ) –This motion called for the Council to work with Trades Unions to ensure that the council and it's staff are menopause aware, have an understanding of the support available and recognise it as a workplace issue. The Menopause Policy has now been agreed with the Joint Negotiating and Consultative Committee and will be implemented. Therefore, it is recommended that this motion be now closed.
- Disabled People and Older People (Ref no 74) – This motion called for the Council to recommit to the commitment made in the Belfast Agenda to be an accessible city for all by 2035. It called for a focus on consultation with disabled people, older people and carers; creation of a reference group for older people and creation of an access and inclusion senior staff role. The draft Age Friendly Belfast Plan 2022–2026 is currently out for consultation and emerging priorities include infrastructure and social inclusion. Work continues with the Council's Internal Reference Group on Older People and council have secured funding for an Age-Friendly Co-ordinator with recruitment commencing in Autumn 22. Therefore, it is recommended that this motion is now closed.
- Opening our streets for everyone (Ref no 80) – This motion called for the Council, as part of its recovery programme post Covid 19, to identify opportunities to enhance the city by looking at ways to encourage less car presence, affording businesses

extra space and supporting the move towards reduced car use to help create a cleaner, greener, healthier city for all. The Council has subsequently taken a number of measures as part of Covid recovery to support businesses and communities in relation to this motion, including delivery of the DfC Covid Recovery Revitalisation Programme, one- off capital grants to various community groups and business clusters and the implementation of a temporary process for pavement café licensing with no associated fee. Further elements of proposals put forward within this motion will be incorporated as part of the BV Strategy and will be brought back to the Committee. Therefore, it is recommended that this motion be now closed.

**3.5 Financial and Resource Implications**

There are no additional financial implications required to implement these recommendations.

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

There are no equality, good relations or rural needs implications contained in this report.”

After discussion, the Committee:

- i. approved the closure of those motions outlined in paragraph 3.4 of the report, with the exception of number 74 – Disabled People and Older People which, at the request of the proposer, Councillor McMullan, was to remain open;
- ii. noted that officers would continue to work to ensure that motions were allocated to the appropriate area/s of responsibility;
- iii. agreed that, in future, the proposer of a motion being recommended for closure would be informed in advance of the quarterly report being presented to the Committee; and
- iv. agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee on how the Summer Youth Employment Programme referred to within paragraph 3.4 of the report, could be enhanced in 2023.

## Governance

### Scheme of Delegation

The Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services reminded the Committee that the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Finances and Resources was due to retire from the Council on 31st October.

She explained that there were a number of references within the Scheme of Delegation to the Director and to functions which had been specifically delegated to that role. In order to ensure the smooth operation of Council business until such time as a review of the Scheme, which had been initiated following the recent changes to the Corporate Management Tier, had been completed, it was necessary to make a number of revisions in the short term.

Accordingly, she recommended that the Committee approve the following changes to the Scheme of Delegation:

- i. that the Director of Finance be added to those Chief Officers listed in Appendix A;
- ii. that those functions in Section 3.5 specifically delegated to the Strategic Director of Finance be now assigned to the Director of Finance; and
- iii. that, where reference is made to the Strategic Director of Finance and Resources, this now refers to the Director of Finance.

The Committee adopted the recommendation and noted that the changes only referred to the functions delegated to the Strategic Director of Finance and Resources and not to the role of Deputy Chief Executive.

## Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues

### Smart City Expo World Congress 2022

The Committee considered the following report:

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

- 1.1 **Following an invitation from the Trade and Investment organisation of the Catalonia government, this report seeks the Committee’s approval for the City Innovation Manager to attend the Smart Cities Expo World Congress which is taking place from 15th until 17th November 2022.**

- 1.2 This invitation also includes a specific invitation for the City Innovation Manager to attend a closed meeting of the Chief innovation Officers of world cities to share practice and develop opportunities for smart cities collaboration.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to approve the attendance of the City Innovation Manager at the Barcelona Smart Cities Expo World Congress between 15th and 17th November, representing the Council, and to identify potential Smart City Co-investment.

3.0 Main Report

The Smart Belfast urban innovation programme encourages collaboration between our universities, digital SMEs, industry, the public sector and communities, with the aim of developing novel solutions to complex urban challenges.

- 3.1 'Smart Belfast' also represents an attractive inward investment proposition and complements other activities such as the Renewed Ambition programme. For example, the existence of Smart Belfast directly led to the collaboration between Belfast and the Korean City of Sejong; and our membership of such international networks such as the G20 Smart Cities Alliance and Mastercard City Possible. The value of a 'smart city' strand is increasingly recognised by Invest NI – who, with encouragement from the Council, are now proactive in harnessing 'Smart Belfast' as part of the city's value proposition.

- 3.2 The annual international gathering of the world's smart cities is the Barcelona [Smart Cities Expo World Congress](#) which this year takes place between 15 and 17 November 2022. The event brings together over 20,000 delegates from 700 cities and over 1,000 digital and technology companies. Some 574 media outlets from across the world are in attendance. 56% of attendees hold senior management positions/ C Level executive roles in cities and companies, whilst over 400 experts and industry practitioners are part of the programme. (Other smart cities such as Dublin, Leeds, Manchester and London have an annual significant presence at the event bringing a large number of officers to promote their city's innovation activities and opportunities.)

- 3.3 This year's event will focus on key themes including Enabling Urban Technologies, the Climate Emergency, Urban Mobility, Inclusive Economy, Infrastructure and Buildings, and Security. The event provides a comprehensive approach to understanding the

challenges of cities across the globe, which can inform Belfast's own efforts to integrate digital innovation into its wider urban agenda. Gaining insight into how other cities are tackling these challenges, whilst discussing directly with the innovators who are overcoming them is invaluable.

- 3.4 At the same time, Belfast has an opportunity to showcase its new Smart Belfast urban innovation framework to the world's most exciting and influential technology companies to highlight we are an innovative, open and forward-thinking city that is ideal for collaborative investment. Offers have been received from a range of global industry players to meet at the conference to explore potential areas of co investment in the City's Smart Belfast programme.

#### The Event

- 3.5 The City Innovation Manager has identified a number of opportunities for Belfast to present, showcase and promote the city's new urban innovation framework at the event:
- For the first time (following encouragement from the Council), Invest NI has a physical presence at this year's Congress – and is supporting a number of the region's innovative SMEs to showcase their offerings to industry and other cities. Invest NI has offered to host the Council at its showcase.
  - Fira Barcelona has invited Belfast to an exclusive meeting of the world's Chief Innovation Officers during the Congress to discuss collaboration between cities and with industry.
  - A number of industry partners have offered to broker discussions with their European and global executive teams focusing on collaboration and co-investment.
  - As a member of its international 'City Possible' program, Belfast has been invited by Mastercard to participate in its work to support innovative SME to share practice and opportunities.
  - Belfast has also been invited to present its urban innovation framework to the G20 Smart Cities Alliance. The Alliance has recently established a global Urban Transformation Hub which aims to support cities in large scale public/private infrastructure co-investments. The Alliance is keen to discuss the opportunities in relation to the Belfast Smart District, the Innovation for Societal Impact fund, and the Belfast Advanced Wireless programme.

- 3.6 Following the event, a full industry opportunity report will be presented to the Council to inform the delivery of the Smart Belfast framework. This will also be presented to Innovation City Belfast partners to inform the delivery of the partnership's own priorities.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.7 The full congress pass is normally €1,250. However, a free invitation has been extended by the Catalonia Trade organisation, Fira, to Belfast's City Innovation Manager. Travel and accommodation costs will be required and can be covered from the existing agreed Smart Belfast budgets.

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

- 3.8 None.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

**Sustain Exchange Climate Business  
Conference Funding Agreement**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with an update on the Net Zero Faster event hosted by the Management and Leadership Network (MLN) who host a prominent climate business conference 'Sustain Exchange' in Belfast with up to 300 business leaders on Thursday 27th October 2022.

- 1.2 To request approval for a funding agreement to be put in place between Belfast City Council and the event organiser with the value of £10,000.

**2.0 Recommendation**

- 2.1 It is recommended that Committee approve a funding contribution of £10,000 towards the Net Zero Faster event. This will be allocated from the Climate Unit budget.

**3.0 Main Report**

- 3.1 The Committee will recall that, at its meeting on 23rd September, it agreed to defer consideration of a report seeking approval for the Council to enter into a funding agreement, to the value of £10,000, with the organisers of the

above-mentioned climate business conference being planned for Belfast, to enable further information to be provided on other potential funders.

### **3.2 Purpose and Format of Event**

The event will be planned to deliver on the objectives above and will connect local business leaders with international thought leaders with those at the forefront of the transition locally. The event will put the challenges, opportunities and absolute need for positive action associated with climate change, on the agenda for local organisations and leaders.

The event is expected to attract some 300 local leaders (primarily business leaders but also those from the public, NDPB and third sectors) and will either be delivered as an in-person-only event or a hybrid event which would see 120 leaders gather in-person with some additional 200 leaders attending the event via a live stream. Both delivery models will ensure the messages, around the importance of positive climate action, have reach and that partners get a level of profile, amongst the NI business / leadership community, to justify their investment. Planning for the event is currently in its final stages.

### **3.3 Opening Address and Format**

The opening keynote address will be delivered by three world-renowned authorities on how to achieve 'net zero faster'. They will focus on the business threat of the climate crisis, the legacy of the imperative for businesses and leaders to act fast and meaningfully. The keynote speakers will be followed by a carefully selected line-up of local leaders who will be challenged to share their story (exemplar), insights (expert) or support offering (stakeholder).

As exemplars these businesses will share their story and associated lessons in an engaging, informative, and entertaining manner. The speakers will encourage and empower other sectoral representative bodies (insurance, banking, hospitality transport and logistics etc) to consider their own climate impact and take the first steps on their pursuit of net zero faster.

The keynote speakers are:

Norman Crowley - Norman founded and sold 3 businesses for over three-quarters of a billion dollars before the age of 40. He began his first business, a welding company at age 16, employing a team of 8 within a year, and sold that business when he was 20. He then started an internet

business called Trinity Commerce, growing the company to 170 employees by the time he was 28. He went on to cofound Inspired Gaming Group (the world's largest server-based gaming company), which was sold for \$500 million; and Europe's largest Wi-Fi hotspot provider, The Cloud, which was bought by BSkyB for \$77 million. Feeling his next venture should make a real difference in addressing the global climate change issue, Norman founded CoolPlanet which helps firms reduce consumption, optimise systems, lower emissions and achieve net zero. Aiming to cool the planet as fast as possible, the business has already saved some 2,597,963 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. In 2021, Norman founded AVA, a company which transforms some of the world's most desirable classic cars to electric. It brings together a team of F1-grade engineers to create cars that not only have the lowest carbon footprint on the road, but that are built in a way that has the least impact on the planet.

Eric Lonergan – Eric is described by The Irish Times as 'probably the finest, and certainly the most thoughtful, Irish economist of his generation'. An internationally-renowned thinker, Eric is best known as a policy economist, macro hedge fund manager, and writer. His most recent book is entitled Supercharge Me: Net Zero Faster and he is also the author of the international bestseller, 'Angrynomics', and 'Money' (2nd ed) published by Routledge. He has written for Foreign Affairs, The Financial Times, and The Economist. Invited to speak around the globe, Eric also advises governments and policymakers.

Corinne Sawers - Corinne has spent the last decade advising global business and governments on climate, sustainability and food systems. She has previously worked with McKinsey, KKR and SystemIQ (a boutique sustainability advisory firm and fund). She co-founded More United (with the late Lord Paddy Ashdown) and also co-founded a social enterprise focused on improving diversity in the technology sector. Corrine holds an MBA from INSEAD, an MSc from the London School of Economics and a BA from the University of Oxford. She is the co-author of Supercharge Me: Net Zero Faster.

#### **3.4 Management and Leadership Network Experience**

Management and Leadership Network (MLN) provide managers and leaders in Northern Ireland with access to the thinking, insights and experiences of high-achievers and thought-leaders with the aim of supporting and developing individual managers, companies and our economy. MLN is funded by a small number of forward-thinking champion organisations (Amet, Mills Selig law firm, Danske Bank,

Electric Ireland, FPM, Ulster University, CPL and Xperience) which means the network it is free to join and use.

MLN has previous experience in hosting several large events with 500 + attendees.

Virtual summits organised by Management and Leadership Network include:

- Galvanise NI May 2020 - 1400 Business leaders
- Re- launch July 2020- 900 business leaders
- Unlearn 2021 December 2020- 700 business leaders
- WELL – February 2021 – 1000 business leaders

Leadership Summit - February 2020 Prior to first lockdown MLN hosted 500 paying business leaders at Titanic Belfast. BCC was a partner on this event which featured world class speakers including Lord David Puttnam at Titanic Belfast. Podiem and MLN's virtual events have been created and delivered in a 3 to 4 week lead time (and have consistently attracted business leader audiences of 500+).

As host, MLN will facilitate the event and invite all speakers to provide their slides in advance so that the idea-sharing session is delivered in a concise, visually impactful and professional manner. Belfast City Council would once again be invited to participate and profile its extensive climate work i.e Mini – Stern Report, and associated Housing and Transport Readiness Assessments, Climate Ambitions Report, Reset Agenda, internal climate mitigation and adaptation plans and/or the work of the Belfast Climate Commission, Resilience and Sustainability Board etc.

### 3.5 Legacy Platform and Annual Event

The conference is an opportunity to highlight and celebrate the activity that is already underway in Belfast. As the host city it positions Belfast as a centre of excellence and activity when it comes to businesses and getting to net zero faster. The climate challenge will inevitably move further up the political and business agenda as we move through the decade and the pace of change on this issue is fast, so there is a need for annual event for the NI business/leadership community to share knowledge, experience and progress and supporting platforms available all year round to share resources.

**3.6 Net Zero Faster Branding**

The conference will be branded with the theme of 'Net Zero Faster'. It is designed to speak to and encourage participation from those businesses well on their way and those just starting their zero-carbon pathway. It acknowledges the challenges involved in committing to take meaningful action and will offer examples, insights and inspiration for individuals, businesses and policy makers. Podiem will complete a comprehensive evaluation report on the conference.

**3.7 Date, Venue and Contingence**

The total cost of the conference will be in excess of £60,000. Podiem has already secured some corporate sponsorship for the event from Danske bank and are in advanced conversations with Belfast Harbour along with other corporate partners of MLN. The event will be hosted at Titanic Belfast to encourage use of public transport and cycle networks and to accommodate both in-person and virtual attendees.

**3.8 Partner Contribution and Profile Benefits**

Should the Council choose to support the conference it would be profiled as an 'Event Partner' alongside several other lead event partners. The Council brand will be prominent on all event marketing collateral as well as 'at-event'. A Council representative would be invited to participate in the event press launch and MLN would like the Council to deliver a presentation. The Council would also promote the conference through its social media and other relevant communication channels.

**3.9 Sponsors**

Confirmed sponsors for the event are Danske Bank and Mills Selig (Belfast based law firm). There will be no formal role for energy companies at the event - they will neither be sponsors nor speakers.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.10** There is provision for £10,000 contribution towards the event via the Climate Unit budget.

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

- 3.11 **There are no direct equality and good relations implications. Any good relations or equality implications will be identified as part of the Council’s screening process.”**

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Ferguson,  
Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin,

That the Committee agrees, in light of the significant cost involved and the limited level of participation/recognition to be afforded to the Council, not to sponsor the Sustain Exchange Climate Business Conference.

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

Accordingly, the Committee agreed that a funding agreement be put in place between the Council and the event organiser to the value of £10,000.

**Community Wealth Building Summit and Inclusive Growth Conference**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

- 1.1 **To make the Committee aware of two up-coming events being planned by the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) and the Centre for Progressive Policy (CPP) / Inclusive Growth Network (IGN) focusing on community wealth building and inclusive growth which are scheduled for mid-late November, 2022.**
- 1.2 **The detailed programmes for each event have not yet been made available, however, given the subject matter for both events, with a focus on cost-of-living and the importance of focusing on creating inclusive and sustainable economic models, it is suggested that the Chair and Deputy Chair (or their nominees) of this Committee may wish to attend the event(s).**
- 1.3 **The Committee should note that reports and information emerging from both events, such as recordings of sessions and presentations will be made available to Members through circulation to the Committee and the Social Policy Working Group.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- (i) agree that the Chair and Deputy Chair (or their nominees) be authorised to attend the Inclusive Growth Conference and the Community Wealth Building Summit; and**
- (ii) note that a number of the sessions during both events will be available online with options to join remotely (free of charge) and officers will circulate details of programme when becomes available.**

**3.0 Main Report**

**Key Issues**

- 3.1 Two key networking and information-sharing events looking at new economic growth models with a focus on place are being planned for November 2022 by the (i) Centre for Local Economic Strategies and (ii) Centre for Progressive Policy/Inclusive Growth Network.**
- 3.2 The Committee will be aware that the Inclusive Growth Network (IGN) was established in 2020 and hosted by the Centre for Progressive Policy. It is funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and supported by Metro Dynamics and the Royal Society of Arts. As members, Belfast is one of 12 councils and combined authorities leading the drive for inclusive local economies across the UK.**
- 3.3 IGN membership provides Belfast with access to a facilitated peer network to draw on practical evidence, knowledge and expertise, as well as a package of support designed to inform and advance our local activity to create more inclusive and sustainable economies. This year the IGN's programme of support for Belfast includes providing expertise to develop an Inclusive Growth scorecard and reporting framework to assist measure and assess our progress in delivering the inclusive growth ambitions for the city and as a council.**
- 3.4 The Council also has an established bespoke membership of Centre for Local Economic Strategies which acts as a critical friend to local economies with a focus on practice-based research and a peer network of practitioners to create change as well as promoting and supporting organisations to build community wealth. Members will be aware that CLES are currently supporting the Belfast Anchors Procurement and Commissioning Working Group on the completion of the**

procurement spend analysis for the additional cohort of organisations.

#### **Community Wealth Building Summit**

- 3.5 CLES organise an annual one-day Community Wealth Building Summit to expand and explore community wealth building which will take place on Friday 18th November in Birmingham. With a focus on the cost-of-living pressures, this year's event aims to examine the future of local economic development and the role that community wealth building can play in unlocking solutions to the pressing challenges being experienced in places.

Whilst the event is being scheduled to take place in-person, it is understood that a number of the key discussion sessions will be streamed virtually/online and can be accessed free of charge. The detailed programme for the event has yet to be made available and will be circulated to Members.

#### **Inclusive Growth Conference**

- 3.6 The CPP/IGN hold an annual Inclusive Growth Conference and networking event, which has been scheduled for Thursday 22nd November, 2022. This is a one-day event which will be held in-person in central London, with the aim of exploring how inclusive economic growth can meet the long-standing economic challenges of increasing inequalities, low productivity and wages in the context of the growing cost-of-living crisis. The detailed programme for the event has yet to be made available

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

- 3.7 The costs to attend each of the two one-day events is estimated to be in the region of £400, with the main costs associated with travel and accommodation. The costs will be met from Departmental budgets.

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

- 3.8 There are no equality, good relations or rural needs implications relating to this report."

After discussion, the Committee agreed, in view of the costs involved, that the Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson (or their nominees) be authorised to attend the Inclusive Growth Conference and the Community Wealth Building Summit on an online basis only.

**Update on the Implementation of the  
Dual Language Street Sign Policy**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the implementation of the Dual Language Street Sign Policy.**

**2.0 Recommendation**

**2.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the update.**

**3.0 Main Report**

**3.1 Since 15th July, the Building Control Service has received over 500 requests for street signs in a second language.**

**3.2 Most of these requests received by email required further information to be sought from the applicant. All have been responded to with a request to provide the missing information to allow for validation to be carried out. Where this information is not provided within four weeks, a further reminder allowing seven days is issued to the applicant. If there is no response these are being closed and the applicant informed. An online application form is now available on the Council’s website to capture all required information for new applications.**

**3.3 Where multiple applications are received for the same street from different applicants, these will be processed in the order in which they were received.**

**3.4 The Service has visited the Electoral Office to obtain the details of residents in the first batch of 15 streets in order to validate these applications.**

**3.5 The first list of Members’ notifications in respect of these applications will be emailed to Members no later than w/c 24th October 2022.**

**3.6 This Member notification process will replicate the process for notifying members in relation to planning applications that relate to their DEA or within the City Centre. The purpose**

of the notification is to allow members to raise any potential adverse impacts on equality, good relations or rural needs in relation to the proposed street sign. That representation must be sent to the Director of Planning and Building Control within 21 days of the notification. If either the Elected Member notification or the initial assessment identifies a potential adverse impact on equality, good relations or rural needs the application will be referred to Committee for approval to proceed to survey.

- 3.7 The process for the initial assessment has been finalised and assessments have been carried out for the first list of streets. This process will initially include officers from Building Control, Good Relations, Equality and Diversity Unit and Legal Services.
- 3.8 Part of this initial assessment will be to determine if the street falls within the city centre business core, for which additional consultation may be required.
- 3.9 The next stage is to survey streets, and this will be done in the order the applications were received. There are currently two streets out for survey.
- 3.10 Timeframes for a final decision in respect of applications will be dependent on a number of factors including the size of any street surveyed, whether the application has to be referred to Committee and current resources as officers prioritise the tasks.
- 3.11 Approval has been granted for three additional staff to be recruited on a temporary basis who will be focussed on dealing with the applications once recruited and trained. It is hoped these officers will be in post by in December 2022.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.12 None – additional staff previously approved.

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

- 3.13 Equality and good relations issues arising from this report are addressed in the established processes for dealing with applications.”

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

## Physical Programme and Asset Management

### Update on Physical Programme

The Committee considered the following report:

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

**1.1** The Council’s Physical Programme currently includes 170 capital projects with investment of £150m+ via a range of internal and external funding streams, together with projects which the Council delivers on behalf of external agencies. This report requests a movement on the Capital Programme for Cathedral Gardens Redevelopment project and notes a satisfactory tender return for IT Programme - Server and Storage Technology Refresh project.

**2.1** The Committee is requested to consider the following items on the Capital Programme:

- Cathedral Gardens Project - agree that the project is moved to *Stage 3 – Committed* and agree that necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate ‘framework’ arrangements) be initiated with contract to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.
- IT Programme – Server and Storage Technology Refresh project - Note that a satisfactory tender return has been received and that the Director of Finance and Resources has confirmed that this project is within the affordability limits of the Council and agreed that a maximum of £513,000 be allocated.

#### **3.0 Main Report**

**3.1** The Committee will be aware that the Council runs a substantial Physical Programme. This includes the rolling Capital Programme – a multimillion regeneration programme of investment across the city which improves existing Council assets or provides new council facilities. The Council also delivers externally focused funding streams such as BIF, LIF and SOF, as well as numerous capital programmes that we deliver for central government. Our funding partners include NHLF, SEUPB Peace IV, the Executive Office via Social Investment Fund and Urban Villages, DfC, DfI, DAERA, Ulster Garden Villages and others. When appropriate, the Physical Programmes Department is

happy to arrange site visits to any projects that have been completed.

**Proposed Movement – Capital Programme**

- 3.2 Members have previously agreed that all capital projects must go through a Three Stage process where decisions on which projects progress are taken by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. This provides assurance on the level of financial control and will allow Members to properly consider the opportunity costs of approving one capital project over another capital project.

The Committee is asked to agree to the following movements on the Capital Programme:

Project	Overview	Stage movement
Cathedral Gardens	Redevelopment of Cathedral Gardens	Move to Stage 3 - Committed

**Cathedral Gardens**

- 3.3 The Committee will recall that, in January 2016, this project was moved to *Stage 2 – Uncommitted* on the Capital Programme. The Council endorsed their commitment to the redevelopment of Cathedral Gardens as part of Phase 3 of the Streets Ahead project and agreed in principle to ring-fence an allocation (up to a maximum of £5m) as part of this subject to final confirmation of the costs and a commitment from Department for Communities for the delivery of Streets Ahead 3. In November 2019, in light of Department for Communities correspondence that the Belfast Streets Ahead scheme would not proceed, Belfast City Council agreed to de-couple it from the BSA project to include the Belfast Blitz memorial. This memorial involves the design, commissioning and installation of a permanent memorial to mark the Belfast Blitz.

The redevelopment of Cathedral Gardens provides a significant opportunity to inject critical and much needed quality public urban space into the city centre. The area adjacent to and surrounding Cathedral Gardens is home to a rich history of fabrication and cultural identity. It is a precinct in the process of evolution through a mixture of commercial, education and housing related developments that are transforming this part of Belfast into a new and vibrant mixed-use neighbourhood for the city.

- 3.4 The Outline Business Case has now been prepared following public consultation. It is recommended that the project now progresses to Stage 3 – Committed and that it is held at Tier 0 – Scheme at Risk pending further development of the project and a satisfactory tender return. An update will be brought back to the Committee at this stage, along with the final budget allocation and confirmation that this is within the affordability limits of the Council. Members are asked to agree that necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate ‘framework’ arrangements) be initiated with contract to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.

IT Programme – Server and Storage Technology Refresh

- 3.5 Under the Council’s IT Programme, this project has been identified as being business critical and required to ensure continuity of service provision. Many of the Council’s ICT systems and information reside on Council owned servers and data storage units in two datacentres. The hardware is now six years old and must be replaced to ensure continuity of service and support, reduce risk of failure, and to avoid escalating support costs. Members will recall in June 2021 the project was moved to *Stage 3 – Committed* on the Capital Programme but held at *Tier 0 – Scheme at risk* pending a satisfactory tender return. The Committee is now advised that a satisfactory tender return has now been received. The Committee is further advised that the Director of Finance and Resources has confirmed that this project is within the affordability limits of the Council and agreed that a maximum of £513,000 be allocated.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.6 *Financial* – IT Programme – Server and Storage Technology Refresh project: £513,000 under the Capital Programme.

*Resources* – Officer time to deliver as required.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.7 All capital projects are screened as part of the stage approval process.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **Asset Management**

The Committee:

#### **Balmoral Estate – Plot 83**

- granted approval to enter into a new licence agreement with J C Decaux Limited for a term of three years, from 1st October, 2022, with the Council to receive an annual licence fee of £22,000;

#### **Site 10, 118-122 Royal Avenue**

- granted approval to enter into a further agreement with Extern Northern Ireland for the short-term use of the office building, with the Council to receive a monthly fee of £1,875 (plus VAT);

#### **Sugarhouse Entry**

- granted approval to enter into agreements with property owners in Sugarhouse Entry, to allow the Council to erect lighting and supply power to the lighting and interpretative panels, as part of the Entries Phase 2 Environmental Improvement Project, with any financial implications to be covered from within approved external funding Letters of Offer;

#### **Dundela Crescent Car Park**

- approved a licence extension, with crane oversailing rights, with Kelly Brothers Building Contractors, to facilitate a residential apartment development, with the Council to receive a monthly licence fee of £500 (plus VAT) for the use of its land and £1,250 (plus VAT) for the siting of the tower crane/base and oversailing; and

#### **Cathedral Gardens**

- approved the grant of a Licence to Sustrans for the use of two shipping containers to provide programming, training and active travel promotion services at the temporary Active Travel Hub, prior to redevelopment of Cathedral Gardens, with the operator to be charged a fee to cover utilities costs and rates.

### **Update on Area Working Groups**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the South Belfast Area Working Group of 10th October.

**Community Asset Management Framework**  
**Pilot Community Benefit Sites - Update**  
**on Clarendon and Ulidia Playing Fields**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

**1.1 To update the Committee on the progress to date and seek approvals for the next stage of the pilot initiative.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is requested to support the recommendations made by DTNI in relation to the future management of Clarendon and Ulidia Playing fields by the community and agree:**

- to seek the consent of DFC to the grant of a lease for a term of 25 years, at a nominal rent at each site; and
- that, if DFC approval is received, an award of £20,000 per annum be made to each lessee, subject to periodic review against the projections of the business case, with the review period to be negotiated as part of the lease.

**3.0 Main Report**

**Background**

**3.1 The People and Communities Committee, at its meeting on 9th November 2021, received the attached report from the Directors of Neighbourhood Services and Physical Programmes and approved the commencement of a pilot scheme to identify future management models for a number of Council assets. The pilot is testing the decision-making value of a draft Community Management Assessment Framework and toolkit previously developed for Council by Development Trusts NI (DTNI). Sites chosen reflect the existing variety of management models, functions and end user demographics found among council assets. The key output from each pilot will be a recommendation as to the future management model. The preferred management option will be that which delivers the greatest community benefit and supports the council in delivering the outcomes of the Belfast Agenda.**

- 3.2 DTNI was appointed to take forward the pilot and work directly with community-based organisations identified at the following sites:**
- **Clarendon Playing Fields;**
  - **Ulidia Playing Fields;**
  - **Hammer Pitch, changing rooms and community space;**
  - **Willowbank Multi Sports Facility;**
  - **Tullycarnet Park Boxing Club;**
  - **Former Upper Ardoyne Youth Centre;**
- 3.3 The sites at Ulidia and Clarendon Playing Fields have now been assessed by DTNI and its recommendations form the body of this report. Assessment of other sites is ongoing and reports will be presented to the Committee as DTNI makes its returns.**
- 3.4 Ulidia Playing fields has been under community management by Rosario FC since 2016. Through means of a partner agreement, the club deliver community development outcomes through sports programming. Quarterly reporting ensures the outcomes are monitored and a grant is assessed and paid accordingly. The agreement is due to terminate in 2023 and the process of developing the business case has included consideration of the significant outcomes delivered through community management of the site in the last 6 years.**
- 3.5 Clarendon Playing Fields has been managed by Clarendon Development Association under a number of Facilities Management Agreements since 2005. In 2016 council moved away from entering into such agreements which had been focused largely on site management, and moved towards the partnership model with a social, community outcomes focus. The community benefit delivered by CDA at Clarendon playing fields was acknowledged by committee in 2017 with agreement for the club to have preferential use of the site and to locate a portacabin there for the delivery of homework clubs and youth activity. The legal agreement at Clarendon has been overholding since 2016.**
- 3.6 Under the current legal agreements, facilities at these sites have been used to deliver community development outcomes at a local level through and alongside sports outcomes.**

**The council is in receipt of requests from both communities for the continuation of community management of the sites rather than a reversion to council management. The requests from Rosario FC and Clarendon Development Agency have**

been the subject of ongoing engagement between officers, elected members and the organisations for some time.

- 3.7 In both cases the applicants were proposing that their long-term management of the site would have greater community benefit than a reversion to Council management at the termination point of the current legal agreement. They also identified opportunities for capital development at both sites using external investment but neither have the security of tenure required to be successful in a funding application.
- 3.8 DTNI was asked to work with the two community organisations to assess their capacity to undertake the future management of the site and to determine the benefit to the community in their doing so. This was to be achieved through development of a community benefits realisation plan and a business case to demonstrate the organisations long term sustainability. These documents would support identification of a recommended mechanism for the transfer of the asset to community management assessed against the draft framework.

#### Key Issues

- 3.9 Given the similarity in scale and functionality of the sites at Clarendon and Ulidia and the similar aspirations of the community organisations currently delivering services at the sites, the same recommendation has come forward for both sites, ie. that the existing Clarendon Development Association and a newly formed Rosario Development Company each enter into a long-term lease with the Council. Both organisations are requesting that the lease is rent free in order to support a sustainable financial model focused on the delivery of sporting programmes and community provision at the sites. DFC approval will have to be sought for this on the grounds of an evidence base of ongoing community benefit.
- 3.10 It should be noted that the current model of management is not by lease and so no rent is currently applied.
- 3.11 The exact lease terms will be subject to the approval of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to the grant of a lease and to the approval that detailed terms can be agreed by estates and legal services officers.

The business cases provided by DTNI have been based on a term of 25 years and assume the following roles and responsibilities:

Responsibility	Owner
Premises insurance	BCC
Buildings Maintenance	Lessee
Pitch Maintenance	Lessee
Perimeter Maintenance (fencing and trees)	BCC
Synthetic pitch surface replacement	Potentially shared

### Financial and Resource Implications

#### 3.12 Clarendon Playing Fields

In the case of the current agreement at Clarendon PF the Council insures the facility and pays premises costs including utilities for the changing pavilion. Council pays the development association a fee for their day-to-day management of the facility and the association manages the bookings and retains the income. The fee paid (assessed against RPI annually) was £18,888 last year.

- 3.13 DTNI is recommending that, under the new legal agreement, the Council pay the development association £20,000 per year in order to ensure the sustainability for their business model. Financial modelling contained within the business case suggests that by year 5 of operation the association may have in the region of £50,000 to reinvest in the site. Based on the association's aspirations for capital development of the site it is not possible at this time to identify if and when the current 3G synthetic pitch surface may need replacing so there may be a need for council to contribute capital to the pitch surface replacement if the site has not been developed by the end of its useful lifespan which is potentially 2028.

- 3.14 Based on current costs to the Council, a long term lease including a payment of £20,000 to Clarendon Development Association would largely reflect the current cost for the site and represent no major financial change.

#### Ulidia Playing Fields

- 3.15 This site is currently operated by Rosario FC under a partner agreement the terms of which give responsibility for the management and maintenance of the site to the Council, which retains all income from the bookings to offset costs. The annual average income from the site is £42,808.

- 3.16 In line with all other partner agreements, the Council pays Rosario FC £20,000 for the delivery of sporting programmes at the site from a budget held for this purpose by the Sports Development Unit. When the original grass pitch, on which the partner agreement was based, was upgraded to a synthetic floodlit surface Council agreed to pay up to an additional £2,000 per month to support the club to staff the extended opening hours. The current maximum payment in any year to Rosario FC is therefore £44,000 paid through the Sports Development Unit assessed against the sporting outcomes delivered by the club.
- 3.17 DTNI is recommending, as with the Clarendon site, that under the new legal agreement the Council pay Rosario Development Association £20,000 per year in order to ensure the sustainability for their business model and generate a small reserve annually for reinvestment in the site. The 3G pitch surface is likely to reach the end of its useful life by 2029 and, dependant on the value of reserves achieved by that time, the Council may be required to contribute Capital towards replacement.
- 3.18 Based on current costs, a long-term lease to Rosario Development Association including a payment of £20,000 annually would represent an annual saving to the budget of the Sports Development Unit of up to £24,000 but an average loss of income from the site of £42,808. This can be managed from within existing revenue budgets.
- 3.19 Based on the assessment carried out by DTNI and the business cases put forward as part of that work, officers are recommending that not only can greater social outcomes be achieved through long term community management of these sites but that the potential for further capital development of the sites increases under community management.

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

- 3.20 The final Community Asset Management Policy will be screened in line with Council Policy.

**Both groups have existing agreements with the Council.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**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 award of Single Tender Actions, in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions, as detailed in Table 2 below;
- approved the modification of the contract, as per Standing Order 37a, as detailed in Table 3 below;
- noted the award of retrospective Single Tender Actions, in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions, as detailed in Table 4 below; and
- approved the estimated expenditure of permitted excluded contracts, as detailed in Financial Regulations K11 and set out in Table 5 below.

**Table 1: Competitive Tenders**

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Estimated Total Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services
Design Contest to support the delivery of Belfast Imagining 2024  *Previously approved Sept 2022 for £2.5m but revised total now £1.85m	Up to 22 months	£1,850,000	J Greer	A Design Contest process to seek out project proposals for the year of culture through a competitive and 3 staged process that will lead to a series of civic and culturally led programmes, events and projects for 2024 totalling £1.85million which has been allocated from the cultural reserve for 2024.
Dynamic Purchasing System for the supply and delivery of goods	Up to 5 years	£640,000	J Greer	Lot 1 - Animal themed plush/soft toys Lot 2 - Animal themed toys and games Lot 3 - Animal themed

for resale at Belfast Zoo (Generates income at Belfast Zoo shop)				gifts/souvenirs/keyrings and magnets, to include branded stationery, clothing and accessories
Callouts, repairs & planned maintenance of metal work and small engineering	Up to 5 years	£750,000	S Grimes	To have a specialist contractor to support the in-house team deliver repairs and maintenance works relating to metalwork and small engineering
Meeting room booking system (Artifax)	Up to 4 years	£70,000	R Cregan	An event booking system used by facilities for City Hall and self-service booking for meeting rooms. The current GCloud contract with Artifax expires on 31/12/22.
Appointment of a contractor to develop and deliver a number of sector specific projects supported by the Council under the Output Belfast brand	Up to 6 months	£48,000	J Greer	The Output Belfast brand has developed considerably over the past three years. It has become synonymous with the City's interactive, convergence and music sectors
Provision of Temporary Agency Resources	Up to 12 months	£2,600,000	J Tully	The current contract is due to expire 31 March 2023. The Council is developing an agency strategy to reduce spend and tighten controls on use of agency resources and to explore the feasibility of establishing a Council agency.
Contract to provide reusable period products and distribute them to individual household who apply for the scheme living within the BCC boundary	Up to 3 years	£150,000	D Sales	The company will provide quality reusable period products – cups and pads and/or pants, a page on their website for people to apply for the product designed in conjunction with the Council. Contract period subject to continued funding.

Independent evaluation of the PCSP programme of work from 2022 - 2025	Up to 3 years and 6 months	£70,000	S Toland	Independent evaluations are required by the funding body
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**Table 2: Single Tender Actions**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Total Value</b>	<b>SRO</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Supplier</b>
Provision of a Case Management solution across City and Neighbourhood Services Department 'C&NS'	Up to 2 years	£164,216	R Cregan	A two-year STA is required for continued maintenance and support of the current system whilst it is determined how the replacement of the system will be best carried out in alignment with the Customer Focus programme priorities and service design within C&NS. The 2 years will allow time to complete market research, the procurement process, map out processes, data migration, configuration and implementation of the new system. Civica have proprietary rights for the continued use of their system and	Civica

				are therefore the only available supplier.	
T2150 - Masternaut – fleet GPS tracking/telematics	Up to 1 year	£60,000	R Cregan	<p>Fleet GPS tracking system installed in council vehicles. The GPS system improves utilisation, planning and efficiency of fleet assets, such as improved fuel economy by discouraging speeding and engine idling. A one-year STA is required for continued maintenance and support of the current system whilst the 'in cab technology project' is progressed. This requirement is being incorporated into the new in cab system which is currently being procured. Masternaut have proprietary rights for the continued use of their system and are therefore the only available supplier.</p>	Masternaut Ltd

Use of eyebolts/lamp posts 'Wayleaves' for erection of festive lighting	Up to 3 months	£45,000	J Greer	Belfast City Centre Management own the infrastructure required to erect Christmas illuminations across City Centre	Belfast City Centre Management
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**Table 3: Modification to Contract**

<b>Title of Contract</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Modification</b>	<b>SRO</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Supplier</b>
T2111 - PEACE IV Programme – Project to support Roma Community - BPR5 Project *Please not this request is retrospective	Up to 22 months	Additional 3 months	S Toland	To allow completion of training and capacity building elements. It is acknowledged that the Roma Hub element of the project is closed and that the extension is for the outstanding deliverables not yet achieved.	Forward South Partnership

**Table 4: Retrospective Single Tender Actions**

Title of Contract	Duration	Value	SRO	Description	Supplier
Annual service and inspection of all Council leisure facilities that have disabled pool hoists	Up to 3 years	£35,000	S Grimes	The servicing of the pool pods can only be carried out by the installation contractor, Poolpod Products Ltd.	Poolpod Products Ltd

**Table 5: Excluded service contracts/ non procurement spend**

Title	Duration	Total Value	SRO	Description	Supplier/ Provider
Use of eyebolts/lamp posts 'Wayleaves' for erection of festive lighting	Up to 3 months	£45,000	J Greer	Belfast City Centre Management own the infrastructure required to erect Christmas illuminations across City Centre	Belfast City Centre Management

**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 10th October, including the recommendations:

**PEACE IV**

**Secretariat**

- to delegate authority to the BPR Chair and Peace IV Programme Manager to consider mitigations for the Roma project.

**CYP1**

- to extend the Tech Connects, Belfast Metropolitan College (Digital Insights Programme) until 31st January; 2023.

**BPR 1 and CYP 5 NIHE**

- to approve the extension and revised approach for delivery to December, 2022.

**BPR 5 - Lincs NI Alternatives**

- to approve a further extension to the project until the end of November 2022 to allow completion of all deliverables.

**BPR 5 - Roma Forward South Partnership**

- to extend the project until end of December, 2022 to ensure the completion of all remaining elements.

**BPR Cinematography – Morrow**

- to further extend the project until the end of December, 2022 to ensure the completion of all remaining filming.

**Good Relations**

- to note the presentation by Dr. Lucy Michael on research into the lived experiences of minority ethnic communities in Belfast and approved the draft findings for launch on 1st December, 2022;
- to note the Quarter 2 update on the delivery of the Council's Good Relations Action Plan;
- to award funding to the following projects, as part of the Interfaces element of the Good Relations Action Plan:

BCC7: Christmas Interface Events

- Colin Neighbourhood Partnership - £1,500
- Dunmurry Community Association - £1,225
- Suffolk Community Forum - £1,500
- Holy Family Community Centre - £1,495
- Finaghy Resident Group - £1,500;

- to note that, under BCC9 - Strategic Intervention Programme, £2,000 had been allocated, under delegated authority, to New Lodge Arts for its annual Lantern Parade;
- to note that, under BCC9 - Strategic Intervention Programme, £7,000 had been allocated, under delegated authority, to the Mornington Community Project to support its 'Learning through Engagement Project', bringing together women from diverse backgrounds in South Belfast; and

- to approve the allocation of £5,000 to the WAVE Trauma Centre to deliver a project of engagement with young people from a number of interface areas who had been impacted by the conflict.

### **PEACE PLUS**

- to note that the Partnership had agreed unanimously to sign-off on the proposed stakeholder engagement plan; and
- to note that the Partnership had agreed i). to share the stakeholder engagement workshops with key contacts and attend public information sessions, if available, and ii). to provide feedback on the draft vision for Belfast PEACEPLUS and the participatory role of the Partnership as discussed at the recent workshop.

### **Operational Issues**

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

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

#### **Human Rights Day 2022**

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 2022.

#### **Ulster-Scots Language Week Exhibition**

The Committee granted approval for an exhibition, consisting of framed photographs depicting Ulster-Scots placenames in different parts of Belfast, to be placed in the reception area of the City Hall to mark Ulster-Scots Language Week from 21st till 28th November.

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

The Committee adopted the recommendations in respect of those applications received up to 7th October, as set out below:

**B**  
**4296**

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee**  
**Friday, 21st October, 2022**

<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION</b>	<b>FUNCTION DATE</b>	<b>FUNCTION DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>CRITERIA MET</b>	<b>ROOM CHARGE</b>	<b>HOSPITALITY OFFERED</b>	<b>CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND</b>
<b>2022 EVENTS</b>						
Department of International Trade	17 November 2022	<b>Northern Ireland Export Champion launch</b> to showcase Northern Ireland Export Champion's contribution to exporting to the Northern Ireland business community.  Numbers attending – 100	B	Charge £115	No hospitality	Approve Charge £115 No hospitality
NI Housing Executive	22 November 2022	<b>Peace IV Building Positive Relations programme</b> is in partnership with Belfast City Council – Launch of Project presentations for participants in the programme  Numbers attending – 120	B	Charge £115	No hospitality	Approve Charge £115 No hospitality
Chartered Institute of Marketing Ireland	30 November 2022	<b>Celebration of 50 Years of CIM Ireland</b> - drinks and networking reception to acknowledge work of CIM.	B and C	Charge £300	Yes, Wine Reception as significant anniversary	Approve Charge £300 Wine Reception <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer for wine on arrival</i>

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee  
Friday, 21st October, 2022**

**B  
4297**

		Numbers attending – 50				
<b>2023 EVENTS</b>						
An Droichead	4 March 2023	<b>An Droichead 30th Anniversary Gala dinner</b> – a leading Irish language organisation in Ireland.  Numbers attending – 200	B & C	No charge - Complimentary as Charity	Yes, Wine Reception as significant anniversary	Approve No Charge Wine Reception <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer for wine on arrival</i>
International Association of Gaming Advisors (IAGA)	20 June 2023	<b>Conference Welcome Reception</b> for guests attending their 3-day conference taking place in ICC Belfast.  Numbers attending – 200	A & B	No (waived as linked to Visit Belfast)	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality
<b>2024 EVENTS</b>						
British Hip Society	28 February 2024	<b>Conference Welcome Reception and Dinner</b> for guests attending their 3-day conference taking place in Belfast.  Numbers attending – 40	A & B	No (Waived as linked to Visit Belfast)	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality

**Minutes of the Meeting of the All-Party  
Working Group on the City Centre**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the All-Party Working Group on the City Centre of 7th October.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the  
Social Policy Working Group**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Social Policy Working Group of 18th October.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the  
Language Strategy Working Group**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Language Strategy Working Group of 30th September.

**Issues Raised in Advance by Members**

**Fuel Poverty Hardship Fund**

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor Flynn requested the Committee to consider the following motion:

“This Council recognises the enormous hardship facing households across Belfast caused by rising fuel, food and energy bills and notes the devastating report from the University of York, which suggests that 72% of Northern Ireland households will be in fuel poverty by January, 2023.

In order to address these challenges, the Council will:

- i. allocate £500k from Council reserves to set up an Emergency Fuel Poverty Hardship Fund, to be used to administer one-off vouchers to households in most need in Belfast and authorises officers to engage with partners and provide Members with options on the administration of a scheme;
- ii. write to the Department for Communities requesting match funding for this scheme; and
- iii. commit to a long-term strategy around leveraging community-owned energy projects to reduce energy bills and create sustainable communities, with officers to report to Committee when capacity allows.”

The motion was proposed by Councillor Groogan and seconded by Councillor Ferguson.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources reminded the Committee that he had, earlier in the meeting, within the report on the Medium-Term Financial Plan and Efficiency Programme, provided details of uncontrollable costs which the Council would be required to fund. He pointed out that the half-year finance report which was due to be presented in November would provide a more realistic reflection of the current financial position and recommended that the Committee consider the funding request in the context of that report, rather than committing to using the Council's reserves at this stage.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to adopt the motion and:

- i. endorsed the recommendation that the allocation of funding of £500k be considered as part of the half-yearly finance report to be submitted to its meeting in November; and
- ii. agreed that a report be submitted to its meeting in November around the administration of the scheme and potential recipients and identifying how this motion could be aligned to others which had been passed by the Council previously.

### **Christmas Tree Charity Collection**

At the request of Councillor McKeown, the Committee agreed that a collection box be placed beside the Christmas tree in the Rotunda area of the City Hall to enable visitors to make donations when viewing the tree, taking photographs etc. The funds raised would be channelled through the Lord Mayor's office for distribution to appropriate charities in the City.

### **Mr. Ronan Cregan**

The Chairperson pointed out that this would be the last meeting which would be attended by Mr. Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources, as he was due to retire from the Council at the end of October. He thanked the Director for the significant contribution which he had made to the work of the Council and wished him well in his retirement.

Chairperson