

# People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 7th February, 2023

## HYBRID MEETING OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Murray (Chairperson);  
Councillors Bunting, Bower, Canavan,  
Cobain, M. Donnelly, R.M. Donnelly, de Faoite,  
Flynn, Garrett, Magee, Maghie, O'Hara and Verner.

In attendance: Mrs. C. Matthews, Director of Resources and Fleet;  
Mr. D. Sales, Director of Neighbourhood Services;  
Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;  
Ms. N. Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and  
Civic Services; and  
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

### Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were recorded on behalf of Alderman McCoubrey and Councillors McAteer, McMullan and Newton.

### Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 10th and 25th January, 2023 were taken as read and signed as correct.

It was reported that the minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st February.

### Declarations of Interest

The following Councillors declared an interest in item 3 (c) Capacity Building and Revenue Grants as they either worked for or were associated with an organisation in receipt of funding from the DfC and left the meeting whilst the item was under consideration.

- Councillor Canavan – Board of the Blackie River Community Group;
- Councillor Verner – in that she was an employee of the Greater Shankill Partnership (Spectrum Centre);
- Councillor M. Donnelly – Upper Springfield Development Trust; and
- Councillor R. M. Donnelly – West Belfast Partnership Board.

Councillor Garrett also declared an interest as a Member of the West Belfast Partnership Board but as a Council representative on the Board he did not leave the meeting.

### **Update on Special Meeting**

The Committee agreed to convene the special Waste Update committee meeting on Wednesday 22nd March, the date previously reserved for the quarterly housing update meeting, and to request an update paper from the NIHE to be circulated to the Members.

### **Presentations**

#### **Response from Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and presentation from George Best City Airport (GBCA) Re: Bird Strike Management at Victoria Park: Implications to Air Safety**

The Chairperson welcomed to the meeting Mr. M. McDowell, Airfield Operations Manager GBCA, and Mr. K. Mackie, Wildlife Advisory Cons.

Mr. McDowell commenced by providing an overview of the management of Greylag Geese which included detail in respect of the legal responsibilities of airports to ensure that they had a risk management programme to cover a 13km safety zone around the airport, under licence from the NIEA.

Mr. Mackie provided a comprehensive breakdown of the work undertaken with egg control and habitat management to ensure these responsibilities were met, this included detailed information in respect of risk management, greylag geese risk assessment, greylag Management at Victoria Park and the efficacy of long-term egg management at Victoria Park, including consideration of the changes in Geese habitats.

Mr. McDowell advised that the airport valued the NIEA legal agreement and the arrangement with the Council, both were essential as they enabled the airport to continue to discharge its legal responsibilities with regards to air safety. He advised that the current licence with the NIEA was valid until the end of June, however, the current agreement with the Council permitting access to Victoria Park only ran until the end of May, therefore, the airport was seeking the Council to extend its permission in line with the NIEA licence period.

Following a query regarding what might be an acceptable level of grey geese in Victoria Park to ensure both biodiversity and air safety, the representative advised that the airport was required each year to undertake a risk assessment based on the audits carried out and any strikes that had occurred and to ensure that the current control measures were adequate. He stated that these measures had been successful to date, with the risks and associated severity of a collision between geese and an aircraft having been reduced, therefore, the current measures were deemed to be necessary and would be kept in place until they were no longer required.

In relation to a query regarding the fall in the mute swan population in Victoria Park, the representative advised that the decline had been natural and gradual with most of the shift in population having been to The Waterworks.

Following a request from a Member, the airport representative agreed in future to forward its annual assessment for each bird species along with its licence request.

The Committee:

- noted the response from the NIEA in regard to the safety of resident mute swans; and
- agreed to a request from the GBBCA to extend their current Greylag goose licence with the Council from the end of May to the end of June each year due to changes in Geese habits.

### **Presentation from Swimming Buddies**

The Chairperson welcome Ms. S.J. Reynolds, representing Swimming Buddies, to the meeting.

Ms. Reynolds thanked the Members for the opportunity to present. She advised that Swimming Buddies was an accredited Inclusive Swim Centre for children with other abilities, the first of its kind in Europe. It specialised in teaching neurodiverse children water safety, water therapy and teaching them to swim as well as delivering accredited CPD training programs to the leisure industry on best practices for inclusive programs and facilities.

The representative then provided an overview of the organisation's background. She advised that it had been established in Fleming Fulton School in 2017 and since 2019 it had also worked in partnership with the Brook Leisure Centre delivering an inclusive swim program and pioneering the way forward for the industry to reflect 'best practice' in inclusivity. She advised that the sensory pool and the whole facility at Brook were a perfect environment for neurodiverse children and their families to learn the key lifesaving skill of swimming and she highlighted the following key points:

- Sessions were currently based on a 1:1 learning platform for children between the ages of 4 to 14;
- Over 20,000 swim sessions had been delivered to over 300 families;
- Swimming Buddies was accredited by the international wandering, drowning prevention and inclusive aquatics organisation, Autism Swim; and
- It had 19 coaches who had extensive experience in working with and supporting the needs of neurodivergent children and young adults with differing support needs.

She outlined that what had started as a swim program for children on the autism spectrum had further developed into an inclusive program for a wide spectrum of neurodivergent children with a range of other learning needs. Swimming Buddies offered sessions to children and young adults with a range of disabilities, including physical and learning disabilities, visual and hearing impairments, autism, ADHD, brain injuries and many more. The individual coach's expertise enabled delivery of person-centred learning, adaptable to each Buddie and their needs, including the delivery of sister programmes, Baby Buddies Sensory Swim and the Fit Buddies gym program.

The representative advised that the aim of Swimming Buddies was to expand its service, to offer this valuable life skills to more families and to ensure the leisure facility teams throughout the Belfast City Council area were trained and supported to the highest level to fully utilise the purpose-built facilities that were available to local families across the city.

In conclusion, she advised that an all-inclusive approach was not just desirable but necessary and Swimming Buddies was keen to assist the Council in bringing these plans to fruition.

The Committee then viewed a short video showing the work of Swimming Buddies which was available [here](#).

Several Members thanked the representative for her presentation and for the valuable work that Swimming Buddies undertook in the Belfast area. Discussion ensued as to how the Council could best assist the organisation with sharing of its knowledge and also to ensure that, where possible, all areas of play and leisure offerings were inclusive to all in the city.

It was noted that the Council was restricted in what it could do in terms of its current leisure arrangements with GLL. During discussion the Director suggested that GLL representatives could be asked to attend the bi-annual update to the People and Communities Committee which would enable Members to discuss issues such as this directly with them.

The Members were advised that an update report on the Notice of Motion - Inclusive Leisure Services that had been adopted in December was scheduled to be submitted to the April Meeting of Committee and that this would include an update on the current provision offerings with the Councils leisure facilities and also detail where improvements might be required.

The Chairperson thanked the representative for her presentation, and she left the meeting.

Noted.

**Restricted**

**TEO Request for Proposals to support Asylum Seekers**

(Ms. N. Lane, Neighbourhood Services Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Director of Neighbourhood Services advised the Committee that the TEO had asked for Councils to submit urgent proposals, at very short notice and lead in time, for projects to support asylum seekers, which would be funded by the TEO through Home Office Dispersal Funding. The Councils had been asked to submit proposals based on spend up to the end of March 2023 and for spend covering the following financial year 2023/24.

He continued that, given the immediacy of the request from the TEO and the extremely tight deadline, officers had held initial discussions with the main organisations that currently delivered projects of scale to asylum seekers.

The Members were reminded that, in previous submissions to the TEO, the Council had highlighted the considerable pressure that these organisations were under due to the increase in numbers of asylum seekers to Northern Ireland and the many varied demands on the service.

He reported that initial funding proposals had been submitted to the TEO in mid-December, with the TEO advising that Councils would receive notification and documentation regarding the proposals pre-Christmas, however, officers had subsequently been advised on 23rd January that the proposals had been approved by the TEO.

The TEO had indicated that it would provide the Council with initial written correspondence confirming approval for Council spend in-year (up until March 2023) based on the following proposals.

**Proposals submitted to and approved by TEO for Asylum Support Funding**

Delivery Partner	Project	Costs		Total Cost
		2022/23	*2023/24	
<b>Proposal 1: Red Cross</b>	Asylum Support & Triage Project	£60,000	£120,000	£180,000
<b>Proposal 2: Barnardos</b>	School readiness, transition, and parenting support'	£30,000	£50,000	£80,000
<b>Proposal 3: Conway Education Centre</b>	Conway Education Centre: 'Lets Build'	£20,000	£30,000	£50,000
<b>Proposal 4: Lower Ormeau Residents Group</b>	Community Integration Programme	£16,000		£16,000
<b>Proposal 5: Belfast City Council</b>	Cultural Competence and Unconscious Bias Programme	£20,000		£20,000
<b>Proposal 6: Belfast City Council</b>	Project Management & Coordination Costs	£24,000	£40,000	£64,000
	<b>Total Costs (estimates)</b>	<b>£170,000</b>	<b>£240,000</b>	<b>£410,000</b>

*\*2023/24 indicative project delivery costs.*

Several Members expressed concern at the tight timescale for the roll out of this funding, which, in essence, had prevented other smaller organisations who might also have been suitable to deliver the funding having been prohibited from being considered as the process could not be put out to an open call procurement process.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager acknowledged the issues and Members concerns. She explained that officers had only two weeks to submit proposals for consideration to the TEO and, based on the urgency of this request, the proposals had not therefore been subjected to a procurement process but had been accepted by the TEO as eligible for Dispersal Funding. She advised that officers were currently seeking confirmation from the TEO in relation to the conditions of funding and whether this could be progressed as a direct funding agreement arrangement based on the agreed programme. In addition, as some of the proposals involved the recruitment of specialist

staff, therefore, it would not have been feasible to go out to procurement if the spend was to happen in the current financial year.

A Member stated that he understood the time pressures but in future would appreciate the Members being advised as soon as officers became aware of the potential for funding becoming available, rather than at this late stage.

The Members also asked to see the Memorandum of Understanding once it was available.

A Member referred to the recent deputation at the January meeting of Council from End Deportations Belfast and Faith Voices for Reproductive Justice meeting in relation to their ongoing campaign regarding the living conditions of pregnant asylum seekers and refugees and he asked that the Committee agree to write to the Home Office and the Executive Office, calling for the end to the detention of pregnant asylum seekers and refugees at Larne House detention centre and furthermore advocate for the closure of Larne House with a change in focus towards alternatives to detention for refugees and asylum seekers.

The Committee:

- agreed the proposed approach to supporting asylum seekers within the city as set out in the report and approved by TEO;
- agreed that once correspondence had been provided by TEO, in relation to confirming the allocation of funding for Belfast, that the Council go at risk to commence the programme of support until a formal Memorandum of Understanding (funding agreement) had been issued covering the current and next financial year;
- agreed the appropriate approach to the allocation of the funding to the delivery partners to implement the programme and that this be considered as a direct funding agreement arrangement;
- noted that TEO had also agreed that, as part of the funding, the Council would support a Cultural Competence and Unconscious Bias Programme and receive project management and coordination costs; and
- agreed to write to the Home Office and the Executive Office, calling for the end to the detention of pregnant asylum seekers and refugees at Larne House detention centre and furthermore advocate for the closure of Larne House with a change in focus towards alternatives to detention for refugees and asylum seekers.

### **Request for Use of Parks for Event 2023**

The Committee considered requests seeking permission for the use of various parks and facilities during 2023, as follows:

- 24hr Run – Victoria Park – 17th June;
- Darkness in to Light – Ormeau Park – 5th/6th May;
- Belfast International Photo Festival – Botanic Gardens – 19th May to 8th July;

- Bloomfield Gospel Drive In – Dixon Playing Fields – Sunday Services Sunday 16th April to Sunday 24th September 2023, 7.00pm – 7.30pm and Tent Outreach Saturday 29th July to Saturday 26th August 8.00pm - 8.30pm; and
- Vegas Circus on Wheels – Boucher Playing Fields:
  - Saturday 18th March – Thursday 30 March - Set Up
  - Friday 31st March - 2 Live Shows
  - Saturday 1st April - 2 Live Shows
  - Sunday 2nd April - 2 Live Shows
  - Thursday 6th April - 2 Live Shows
  - Saturday 8th April - 2 Live Shows
  - Sunday 9th April - 2 Live Shows
  - Monday 10th April – Sunday 16th April - 2 Shows daily
  - Monday 17th April - Tuesday 18th April: De-Rig

The Committee granted authority to each of the applicants for the proposed events on the dates outlined and delegated authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services:

- to negotiate a fee where appropriate which recognised the costs to Council and endeavoured to minimise any negative impact on the immediate area and take account of the potential wider benefit to the city economy, in conjunction with the Council's Commercial Manager; and
- to negotiate satisfactory terms and conditions of use via an appropriate legal agreement to be prepared by the City Solicitor, including managing final booking confirmation dates and flexibility around 'set up' and take down' periods, and booking amendments, subject to:
  - The organisers resolving any operational issues to the Council's satisfaction;
  - Compliance with Coronavirus restrictions in place at the time of the event;
  - the organisers meeting all the statutory requirements of the Planning and Building Control Service including the terms and conditions of the Park's Entertainment Licence

The Committee noted that the above recommendations were taken as a pre-policy position, in advance of the Council agreeing a more structured framework and policy for 'Events', which was currently being taken forward in conjunction with the Council's Commercial Team and the Director undertook to establish at what stage this corporate piece of work was at and report back to Committee accordingly.

Following a query, the Director further agreed to submit a report to a future meeting detailing the cost breakdown in respect of the Social Levy Fee for the use of the various parks, including tickets prices.

In response to a query as to whether the requested remedial works had been carried out to the Ormeau car park, the Director undertook to check with maintenance and to advise the Member directly.

### **Capacity Building and Revenue Grants 2023/26**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reminded the Members that, at its April 2022 meeting, the Committee had approved the implementation of the large grant funding provided through Community Provision for activity from April 2023 – March 2026, this had included approval of the eligibility criteria and maximum allocation for each grant stream. He also drew the Members' attention to specific details of the applications that had been assessed, scored, moderated and independently verified.

The Members were reminded that, at the October meeting, they had been informed that the requests for funding were in excess of the available budget and that officers would present options for how the budget could be allocated. This report had been due to be presented at the December meeting, where the Members had agreed to defer the report to enable further consideration of the budget implications. The Director reported that, at the January meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, it had been agreed to enhance the budget available for this area of work.

The Director continued that, in light of this additional allocation, there was now sufficient budget to allocate all applications scoring 50 and above the level of funding requested (up to the maximum allocation for each grant) and that there was also now sufficient budget to provide a nominal level of support to those applications that had scored below 50.

The Director then referred to the fact that the Members had previously raised concerns in relation to the varying levels of community capacity across the city. He advised that the scores achieved by organisations in this round of funding had been considerably higher than the last round and that a total of 24 new organisations would be receiving support in this round of funding (8 – Capacity, 16 – Revenue) which officers were interpreting as an encouraging sign of increasing capacity in terms of applying for funding.

Members had also requested a breakdown on an area basis of the number of applications received. This had been provided within the updated report, however, the Members were advised that officers could only assign area based on the postal address of the organisation and that some organisations might deliver in areas outside of this, and indeed on a citywide basis.

An analysis showed that for the Capacity Programme, the highest number of eligible applications had been received from organisations based in the Castle, Botanic and Titanic DEAs. For the Revenue Grant Programme, the highest number of eligible applications had been received from organisations based in the Oldpark, Court and Blackmountain DEAs. The lowest number of eligible applications for the Capacity Programme had been received from organisations based in the Balmoral, Collin and Oldpark DEAs. For the Revenue Grant Programme the lowest number of eligible applications had been received from organisations based in the Lisnasharragh, Ormiston and Balmoral DEAs.



The Members were also asked to note that there had been a good representation across both grant programmes from organisations which served communities of interest in addition to those providing support on a geographic basis. For Capacity, 10 out of 42 (24%) and for Revenue, 31 out of 87 (36%) applications from community of interest focused organisations.

The Committee was advised that officers would continue to review in more depth the applications received from organisations across the city and would work in partnership with those funded organisations as well as other key partners to develop approaches to provide support to those geographic and thematic areas where applications had been of a lower level.

In terms of the applications for the range of broader Council small grants, the applications had closed on Friday, 13th January and had included the following Community Provision grant streams:

- Good Relations;
- Parks Events;
- Support for Sport Large Development Grant;
- Support for Sport Small Development Grant;
- Support for Sport Hospitality Grant;
- Support for Sport Sporting Individual Grant;
- Community Activity Medium Grant; and
- Community Activity Micro Grant.

The Director advised that initial indications had shown that the level of applications exceeded the available budget for a number of these grant streams. He stated that this was a positive sign as it showed that the sector had recovered capacity to apply for and deliver programmes across a range of service areas.

He reported that in most previous years small grants had been advertised in two Tranches, one for activity from April – September and the other from October – March. He advised that officers would provide further detail on the available budget when assessments and allocations had been completed but asked the Members to note that it was likely that many of the streams would not reopen as there would not be an available budget to support further grants.

The Director reminded the Members that, in addition to the Council funding, a portion of the Department for Communities (DfC) Community Support Programme budget had been allocated to provide funding for the Capacity and Revenue grant streams.

The Members were asked to note that these funding programmes were both awarded on a 3-year basis. The Council was in receipt of a two-year Letter of Offer for 2022/24 but there was no confirmation that the DfC funding would remain at the same level for 2024/26. He advised that the awards would be made based on the notional available budget for the 3 - year time-period, however, asked the Members to note that any reduction in the level of Community Support Programme funding in 2024/25 or 2025/26 might require an increased allocation from the Council. He advised that officers would seek early indications from the DfC in relation to the level of support that would be provided in the Letter of Offer for 2024/26. In addition, in order to mitigate against a significant reduction in the funding provided by the DfC, Letters of Offer would

be issued to successful applicants on an annual basis. It was felt that this was good practice and would also provide an opportunity for organisations to reprofile their allocation on an annual basis following submission of monitoring information.

A Member highlighted his frustrations at the ongoing issues that some organisations and groups in parts of the city had with capacity and once again questioned how they could be assisted to optimise their ability to access the funding streams available.

During discussion the Members noted that there were often significant variances in the capacity from one group, or one area, to another, with many simply not having the expertise to fill in the application forms as they were such small groups/organisations.

Discussion also ensued regarding the geographical challenges, with differing levels of allocation across the District Electoral Areas (DEAs), with the Members highlighting within their own DEAS specific areas where there were low numbers of applications. The Members acknowledged that whilst the current model of administering Capacity and Revenue funding via an open call grants process was good practice and transparent, it did not however allow for low capacity issues to be adequately addressed.

During discussion, the Members agreed that it would be useful to receive a report that specifically considered the geographical challenges and lack of capacity in these areas and how these issues might be addressed. It was also agreed that a briefing note should be prepared and circulated to all the Members that would explain in detail the requirements of the current application process.

The Committee:

- agreed that the awards be issued at the level as outlined in the report for the 2023/24 year;
- granted approval for officers to progress with the funding allocation process, including processing funding agreements and ensuring all monitoring requirements were implemented;
- noted the impact that the high level of applications for small grants would have on available budgets and that it was likely that a number of community provision small grants would not be in a position to make a second call for funding for activity from October 2023 – March 2024;
- agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting considering the geographical challenges and lack of capacity in certain areas and giving consideration as to how this could be addressed; and
- agreed that a briefing note be circulated to all Members that would explain in detail the requirements of the current application process.

### **Committee/Strategic Issues**

#### **Resources and Fleet Waste Update**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

**1.1 The purpose of this reports is as follows:**

- To make the Committee aware of the recently published Draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland and to invite comments and feedback to be considered for inclusion in Belfast City Council’s response.
- To make the Committee aware of the recently published Government response to the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) Consultation.

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- Note the Draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland.
- Forward any comments for inclusion in Belfast City Council’s response to the consultation by 28th February.
- Note the Government response to the DRS Consultation.

**3.0 Main report**

**Key Issue**

**Consultation on a Draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland**

**3.1 The Department for the Economy (DfE) has launched a public consultation on the draft Circular Economy (CE) Strategy for Northern Ireland. This draft strategy sets out the Department’s vision to create an innovative, inclusive and competitive economy, with responsible production and consumption at its core. A Circular Economy will be a key enabler of the DfE’s 10x Economic Vision for a decade of innovation.**

**3.2 This draft CE Strategy also aligns directly with Northern Ireland’s draft Programme for Government and the draft Green Growth Strategy. It also makes a significant contribution to many of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.**

**3.3 In March 2022, the Northern Ireland Executive passed the Climate Change Act. This sets out broad targets for cutting greenhouse gas emissions to:**

- 48% lower than the 1990 baseline by 2030.
- net zero by 2050.

- 3.4 The draft CE Strategy states that our efforts to switch to renewable energy, increase energy efficiency and increase carbon capture technology would only tackle 55% of our global emissions. The remaining 45%, which relate to how we make and use things, can be tackled by the transition to a Circular Economy<sup>1</sup>.
- 3.5 The main goal of the CE Strategy is to adopt a circular model and reduce our material footprint to live responsibly, build resilience, exploit new opportunities and to secure future prosperity for businesses, people and the planet.
- 3.6 A circular way offers an economic model, that many countries are pursuing, in which we:
- rethink and reduce our use of earth's resources
  - switch to regenerative resources
  - minimise waste
  - maintain the value of products and materials for as long as possible.
- 3.7 DfE has worked together with all Government departments to develop the draft strategy, in collaboration with external stakeholders from local Government, the private sector, academia, the voluntary and community sectors and others.
- 3.8 The overarching target is to halve Northern Ireland's annual material footprint per person to 8 tonnes by 2050. Our material footprint is the total volume of material embodied within the whole supply chain to meet our demands. It measures the global (domestic and foreign) extraction of raw materials required for goods and services used by the residents of Northern Ireland. To live sustainably, the United Nations recommends that we should only be using an average of 6-8 tonnes of resources per year. However, it is estimated that each person in Northern Ireland is consuming well over 16 tonnes of resources per year.
- 3.9 The draft CE Strategy sets out how this can be achieved through; switching to materials that can be reused, increasing use of fuels that can be replenished, designing things to be kept in use for longer and reducing waste.
- 3.10 It is worth noting that many of the original EU targets for waste prevention have now passed into UK law. In relation to waste, Northern Ireland transposed the following

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<sup>1</sup> 'Completing the Picture: How the Circular Economy Tackles Climate Change<sup>15</sup>' by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation (EMF),

European Circular Economy Package (CEP) targets which requires:

- 55% of household waste by 2025
- 60% of household waste by 2030
- 65% of household waste by 2035
- no more than 10% going to landfill by 2035

3.11 Northern Ireland's Climate Change Act recently introduced a higher target, requiring 70% of waste to be recycled by 2030.

3.12 The draft CE Strategy focuses on four business sectors:

- Construction and the built environment
- Bioeconomy
- Advanced manufacturing
- Tourism and Hospitality

3.13 It focuses on four types of materials:

- Textiles
- Food
- Packaging
- Electricals

3.14 To help create more sustainable production and levels of consumption, the CE Strategy presents twelve proposals for change:

- Develop and implement a programme to support and promote behaviour change
- Create clusters and networks to raise awareness and assist collaboration
- Develop an outcome-focused Circular Economy monitoring framework
- Embed Circular Economy principles in public procurement
- Work with businesses to increase circular design
- Create and support platforms and hubs to share goods and materials
- Maximise the value of materials locally
- Establish a Circular Economy funding programme
- Create a regulatory framework that supports and incentivises greater circulation of goods and materials
- Invest in research and development to support the valorisation of materials
- Embed Circular Economy principles at all levels of education
- Design of future skills programmes and reviews of current programmes to support a Just Transition

- 3.15 The public consultation is open for 10 weeks until Monday 20 March 2023. There will be three virtual consultations for anyone wishing to learn more about the draft strategy. These will take place on:
- Thursday 2 February – 10.30am to 11.30am
  - Tuesday 7 February – 2.30pm to 3.30pm
  - Wednesday 1 March – 6.30pm to 7.30pm
- 3.16 The draft strategy is available at [Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland](#), alongside supporting documentation including information on how to register for the virtual consultation events. A full copy of the consultation “Draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland” is attached as Appendix I.
- 3.17 Belfast City Council’s draft response to the consultation will be presented to March’s People and Communities Committee. Should Members wish to discuss any aspect of the consultation or to provide any comments to be considered in our draft response, please contact in the first instance Jennifer Stephens (Waste Officer – Compliance and Research) email - [stephensj@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:stephensj@belfastcity.gov.uk) Comments should be received on or before 28th February in order to formulate a complete response.

Publication of Government Response to the second Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) consultation

- 3.18 Members may be aware that the proposed Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) is a system where consumers are charged a deposit up-front when they buy a drink in a container that is ‘in scope’ of the scheme. The deposit can be redeemed when the empty container is returned to a designated return point.
- 3.19 Deposit return schemes are a well-established feature across Europe and the world. They often focus on single-use drinks containers, with the most effective schemes achieving collection rates of over 90%.
- 3.20 On 20th January 2023, the UK Government, Welsh Government and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) in Northern Ireland published their response to the second consultation on ‘Introducing a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for drinks containers in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland’.
- 3.21 The aims of the proposed scheme are to boost recycling levels, reduce littering, and promote a circular economy. Key highlights from the response are:

- The Deposit Return Scheme will be introduced from October 2025
- Single-use drinks containers from 50ml to 3 litre containers will be in scope of the Deposit Return Scheme
- Polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles, steel cans and aluminium cans will be included for England, Northern Ireland, and Wales
- Glass bottles will be included for Wales only<sup>2</sup>
- A Deposit Management Organisation (DMO) will be appointed to manage overall operation of the Deposit Return Scheme
- Retailers selling in scope containers in store will be required to host a return point, where consumers can return the empty container and be given their deposit refund, subject to some specific exemptions that retailers can apply for
- Where containers are sold online, it is expected that the scheme will require large grocery retailers to offer consumers a takeback service for those containers

3.22 The consultation response presents further detail that will be set out in legislation. This legislation will place obligations on producers of in scope drinks containers, retailers and the Deposit Management Organisation.

#### Deposit Management Organisation

3.23 The Deposit Management Organisation (DMO) will be responsible for managing the overall operation of the Deposit Return Scheme. The DMO will be appointed by Government through an application process.

3.24 The Deposit Management Organisation will be an industry-led organisation. The DMO will be made up of a consortium of industry representatives with membership of organisations which represent drinks producers, retailers, importers and logistics.

3.25 The DMO will be required to ensure the collection targets are met. The collection targets will be introduced in a phased manner. In year one, at least 70% of in-scope containers that producers place on the market must be collected. In year two, this will increase to 80%, and then 90% from year three onwards.

3.26 The DMO will be responsible for setting the deposit level.

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<sup>2</sup> Glass bottles are also part of Scotland's Deposit Return Scheme, along with PET plastic bottles & metal cans.

**Next Steps**

- 3.27 Regulations, which reflect the policy outcomes set out in the consultation response, are being developed for the DRS.
- 3.28 Engagement will begin soon with prospective consortia interested in being the DMO. Later in the process, UK Government, Welsh Government and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland will formally invite applications for the DMO as part of a fair and open process.
- 3.29 The full consultation is attached as Appendix II and the Government Responses are attached as Appendices III and IV. They can also be accessed electronically:

Consultation on DRS: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/introducing-deposit-return-scheme-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

Government response: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/deposit-return-scheme-summary-2021-consultation-responses-and-publication-government-response>

- 3.30 DAERA intend to host Northern Ireland specific webinars on DRS and EPR on Tuesday 7th (afternoon) and Friday 24th (Morning) February and details of the events will be shared soon.
- 3.31 To find out more about the Deposit Return Scheme visit <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/introducing-deposit-return-scheme-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

**Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)**

- 3.32 Members should be aware of an emerging subject which is attracting increasing attention within the waste industry, namely that of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs).
- 3.33 POPs are chemicals which can remain intact in the environment for long periods, and if not disposed of properly can have harmful impacts on human health and on the environment.
- 3.34 The Environment Agency (EA) in England has undertaken an investigation and confirmed the widespread presence of large quantities of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and other hazardous chemicals in both the textiles and foam of upholstered domestic seating.



- 3.35 Current legislation<sup>3</sup> requires that where POPs breach the permitted level within domestic seating the waste must be destroyed to prevent lasting environmental harm and impacts on the food chain. This means waste containing POPs (sofas, armchairs, upholstered kitchen and dining room chairs, upholstered stools and foot stools, home office chairs, futons, bean bags, floor and sofa cushions) must be incinerated and must not be re-used, recycled or landfilled.
- 3.36 Following this investigation, the EA has issued a series of Regulatory Position Statements (RPS) to Local Authorities in England advising on how POPs should be collected, stored and treated.
- 3.37 The EA also noted that from 1 January 2023, they would be taking enforcement action with regard to non-compliance with the requirements of the RPS. This has created significant challenges for Local Authorities in England due to the time frame involved in adopting operational practices (separate collection & storage) and the lack of facilities which can accept these materials for treatment.
- 3.38 Locally, this subject was raised with DAERA officials by Councils at the January 2023 meeting of the Government Waste Working Group. As a result, DAERA is intending to establish a sub-group to examine the implications for the waste industry with the aim of providing clearer direction (RPS). Dependant on DAERA and NIEA Position Statements, there may be significant implications in relation to the collection methods, storage and segregation arrangements and disposal via incineration of these items.
- 3.39 The Council will continue to work with the Department and the regulator, arc21 and the residual waste treatment contractors to arrive at suitable arrangements for the collection, storage and treatment of this particular waste stream and will update Committee as the matter develops.

**Site Visits Household Recycling Centres and Huhtamaki**

- 3.40 The Service is liaising with Democratic Services to plan a half-day, Members' site visit to a recycling centre followed by a trip to Huhtamaki in Dollingstown Co. Armagh.
- 3.41 The aim is to provide an overview and raise awareness of the work carried out at a recycling centre and the challenges encountered by staff in carrying out essential, front-line

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<sup>3</sup> The Persistent Organic Pollutants Regulations 2007 (as amended) and Retained Regulation (EU) 2019/1021 on persistent organic pollutants as amended by the Persistent Organic Pollutants (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020

work with the goal of driving up the city's recycling rate. This will be followed by a trip to Huhtamaki, who take the paper and light card from kerbside collections and convert it into a fibre packaging product (egg cartons, cup holders). During the site visit Members will receive a brief presentation on the role the factory plays in the local economy, the range of products produced and the importance of quality input material (paper & craft card).

- 3.42 It is anticipated that this visit will take place in March 2023 with further details issued in due course.

**The Future of Kerbside Recycling Collections – Option 5 – full in-housing of collection services**

- 3.43 Members may recall that they requested a full options appraisal on the Future of Recycling Collections. Having presented the findings to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in June 2022, officers were instructed to conduct an in-depth feasibility study regarding Option 5 of the Kerbside Collections economic appraisal, namely the in-housing of all kerbside recycling.
- 3.44 By way of update officers can report that the feasibility study on Option 5 is well progressed with the Service now in receipt of a draft report. Further iterations of this report will be required and the Service is targeting a final version to be available by the end of February 2023. This will then undergo the Council's governance process via SP&R Committee.

**Operational Update – Drivers**

- 3.45 As a consequence of being unable to fulfil all Christmas and New Year Bank Holiday collections due to a shortage of drivers, Resources and Fleet have instigated a 'task and finish' group to review current arrangements in relation to the numbers and activities of Category C (HGV) drivers within Resources and Fleet.
- 3.46 There is undoubtedly a challenging marketplace. A range of measures is being considered to deal with the market conditions both in the short, medium and longer term.

**Public Holiday Arrangements – St Patrick's Day (Friday 17th March)**

- 3.47 Planning has commenced for the staffing requirements for 17th March St Patrick's Day bin collections.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

3.48 None in relation to responding to the consultations.

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

3.49 None in relation to responding to the consultations.

**Abbreviations**

CE – Circular Economy

CEP - Circular Economy Package

DfC - Department for the Economy

DAERA - Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural  
Affairs

DRS – Deposit Return Scheme

DMO – Deposit Management Organisation

A Member referred to the ongoing delay in the roll out of the bottle deposit return scheme and asked the Committee to write to DEFRA seeking an update on the proposed implementation date.

Following a query regarding lack of capacity in the recycling boxes experienced by residents in North Belfast, the Director advised that officers were aware of the issue and were currently looking at ways to resolve the matter.

In response to discussion regarding the cover of waste services over the forthcoming bank holiday periods, the Director undertook to keep the Members fully apprised of the situation.

Following discussion, the Committee:

- noted the Draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland;
- agreed to forward any comments for inclusion in Belfast City Council's response to the consultation by 28th February;
- noted the Government response to the DRS Consultation available [here](#); and
- agreed to write to DEFRA asking why there was such a delay in rolling out the bottle deposit return scheme.

**Anti-Social Behaviour - update on previous  
interventions and initiatives in Parks**

The Committee considered the following report:

**"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

1.1 **Members had requested that a report be brought to Committee to take consideration of successful interventions that have been previously undertaken in Parks, in particular**

Dunville Park, and how similar initiatives might be applied to other Council parks with Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) problems.

1.2 In addition, Committee has asked for a further report to be brought to a subsequent meeting detailing the costs of undertaking repair works to parks damaged by ASB. This report will follow.

## 2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the range of interventions and services which have been previously used within BCC Parks to counteract issues of ASB.

## 3.0 Main report

### Background

3.1 Belfast City Council have the responsibility to maintain and keep our public parks safe for citizens and accessible for all. In the December report to Committee, in response to requests from Members, BCC officers highlighted the amount of ASB reported within Parks over the last 3 years.

3.2 Officers would remind Members to note that the figures presented in the December report may not provide an overall accurate picture of ASB within Parks and therefore, their usefulness in terms of determining patterns or hotspots is extremely limited for the following reasons:

- Residents complaining about ASB in Parks state that they under report what is occurring.
- The capturing of information relating to ASB within Belfast City Council Parks lies within the responsibility of Park Wardens, ASB Officers, and Safer Neighbourhood Officers. However, Safer Neighbourhood and ASB Officers are not located within parks but are rather deployed in the city centre and neighbourhoods.
- A team of Park Wardens is located in each quadrant of the city and each Park in the city is patrolled daily, with the more problematic parks receiving more targeted patrols than others.
- The Park Wardens service operates to the current Parks' closing times (dawn to dusk). However, the BCC and PSNI do plan and carry out interventions outside these hours in response to large events in Parks, reports of ASB and underage drinking etc.

- 3.3** Belfast City Council has previously used a variety of initiatives to tackle ASB in Parks. Each initiative is unique to the specific circumstances within our Parks. The measures have been based upon available resources on a short, medium or long-term basis.

Belfast City Council have 3 teams which work across Parks, these include Park Wardens, SNO's and ASB Officers, their role includes:

A team of 9 Safer Neighbourhood Officers work across the city centre, parks and neighbourhoods. SNOs are a frontline enforcement / engagement service whose primary role is to help address issues of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) by:

- providing a visible presence through high visibility foot patrols
- offer guidance, support, and advice on community safety issues
- challenge low-level anti-social behaviour
- enforce laws relating to on-street drinking and environmental crime
- help to reduce crime and fear of crime

- 3.4** The SNO's are deployed across current hotspots which is updated on a daily basis depending on community safety issues across the city centre, parks and neighbourhoods.

- 3.5** A team of 5 Anti-Social Behaviour Officers work across the city centre, parks and neighbourhoods. ASB Officers are a frontline engagement service whose primary role is to help address issues of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) by:

- Facilitating ASB Forums in partnership with PSNI, Housing Providers and Youth Justice Agency
- Offer guidance, support, and advice on community safety issues
- Central point of contact for the public to raise issues and redirect them to the most appropriate agency / organisation
- Central point of contact for Public Utility Companies / Organisations to address issues / concerns raised
- Challenge low-level anti-social behaviour
- Support the removal of sharps
- Support the delivery of the safer city coordinators action plan

- 3.6** The team service over 20 community safety forums across the city and will react to any ASB issue when they arise.

- 3.7 A team of 24 Park Wardens currently operate from within our Open Spaces and Streetscene (OSS) area teams (8 North, 4 West, 8 East and 4 South) carrying out an important role within our parks and open spaces including security, gate opening/closure, graffiti removal, supporting outreach, enforcing bylaws of the Clean Neighbourhoods Act 2011 as well as addressing ASB issues. Park Wardens are also deployed as required to provide a targeted response to areas of identified ASB during their working hours which reflect the standard opening hours of our parks (dawn to dusk).
- 3.8 Belfast City Council have delivered a variety of initiatives over the last 12 years which have had a positive impact in tackling ASB within our parks. The detail on some of the successful initiatives are detailed below:

3.9 Medium term Initiatives

Partnership Agreement with the Community

Department for Communities, Belfast City Council and the community identified a derelict site within the Divis area (west Belfast) which had suffered ongoing serious ASB issues over a number of years. This site was re-imagined over a 2 year period with investment to have an outdoor sports area to help support the health and well-being of the community. The site is owned by Belfast City Council and a partnership agreement was established with the local community groups to have a key holder responsibility for the facility which involved the opening/closing of the asset with Groups having the flexibility to use the facility and provide animation through an allocated budget of £15,000. The first year of operations has contributed to zero reported ASB incidents within the facility.

3.10 Dedicated Wardens and Animation

Dunville Park (west Belfast) was redeveloped in 2013 with £2 million investment from Belfast City Council and Department for Communities. The Park was transformed into an animated space with investment in the first 2 years which included dedicated wardens who worked from 8am to 10pm throughout the entire year to maintain the site, engage with the public and to work with community organisations and engage particularly with young people. A small, dedicated animation budget was set aside to allow for seasonal events and weekend sports in the facility. This combination of dedicated staff and programmatic resources of investment contributed to very low levels of ASB reported within the Park over that period.

### **3.11 Short Term Initiative**

#### **Reactive Response**

The Páirc Nua Chollann / Colin Park was opened in late 2022 after an investment of over £5 million from the TEO's Urban Village Programme. After the Park opened, a range of ASB involving young people occurred regularly which also created difficulties for the local area. Belfast City Council engaged with a number of stakeholders including community groups and Elected Members regarding the problems and 2 core issues were identified which were times when ASB occurred and the need for animation. To counteract these issues, the time for SNO's to patrol the park was altered from 7pm to an earlier time of 4.30pm and animation of the site was introduced to create a safe welcoming space. Belfast City Council provided a small budget of £15,000 toward animation which provided a short-term intervention which increased usage and helped reduce ASB within the facility. This budget came from a range of CNS services where animation could contribute to a range of mutually beneficial outcomes.

### **3.12 Future initiatives**

The above short, medium and long term solutions highlight the different approaches which has been taken by BCC to help alleviate ASB within Parks.

A key element to gaining any resolution to ASB within parks is partnership working with key stakeholders (Residents, Community & Voluntary Sector, PSNI etc) to identify the core problems and develop joint solutions.

Officers would highlight a variety of initiatives (budget and resources depending) which could be considered in the future to tackle ASB within Council Parks.

The initiatives include:

- Park Wardens focussing on those parks which have the highest level of ASB.
- Partnership Agreements drawn up with appropriate groups from the community and voluntary sector which would include allocating resources to manage the parks opening/closing, animation, and employment of wardens.
- Safer Neighbourhood Officers to be utilised more when patterns of ASB are identified.

- **Animation and seasonal budgets to be allocated to Parks to create welcoming spaces which attract more citizens to use the facilities.**

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

- 3.13 The financial and resource implications for each initiative will vary depending on the size of the Park, issues presenting and the intensity and length of any programme. Members should note that any additional initiatives proposed within Parks would have to be considered and prioritised within the context of the current budgets being agreed as part of the rate setting exercise.**

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

- 3.14 There are no Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessments associated with this report.”**

A Member welcomed the report and referred to the success of dedicated Park Wardens in the Divis Back Path in helping to reduce ASB, prior to removal due to funding issues.

Discussion ensued regarding the remit and role of the Safer Neighbourhood Officers (SNOs) and the Park Wardens, including their enforcement powers and limitations and the Members asked that any future report would consider these roles further and how both were tasked and the resources deployed.

Following discussion, the Committee noted the report and agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting considering the remit, role and responsibility of the positions of Park Warden and SNO's, including consideration of the skill set required for the role.

#### **Committee Plan Update**

The Director of City Services drew the Members' attention to the mid-year report and progress against the agreed actions within the 2022-23 People and Communities Committee Plan.

The Director advised that the plan detailed the priorities within the framework of the relevant Belfast Agenda themes (Our Services; Economic Recovery; Community Recovery; Environmental Recovery; Strategic Planning Frameworks; and Organisational Foundations) and the CNS Departmental key priority areas (Open Spaces and Streetscene; Community Provision; City Protection and Bereavement; and Resources and Fleet). She highlighted that, as detailed in the plan, it was likely that many of these areas of focus would take several years to deliver, however, this update clearly detailed the key deliverables and priorities for 2022-23.

The Director drew the Members' attention to a table attached as an appendix that provided detail and commentary on the progress of all 33 actions. This set out the work undertaken by the Department to deliver the key priorities, to the end of Quarter 2



2022/23, 6 months into the year. 33 actions had been identified across the Department's three Directorates. Of these, 1 had been completed, 22 were currently on track, 5 were considered at risk and were slightly delayed, while a further 5 actions were considered to be behind schedule and would require additional resources to ensure their completion.

The Committee was reminded of the current resource and capacity and resilience pressures on the City and Neighbourhood Services Department. She stated that it was anticipated that recent recruitment exercises would provide additional resources in Quarter 4, and going forward, to assist with the progress of those actions currently considered to be delayed.

The Members were also asked to note that many of the commitments would continue to be delivered with further progress into Quarter 4 and she undertook to keep the Committee updated with the progress.

A Member referred to the glass recycling expansion scheme, expressing disappointment in the ongoing disparity with the scheme as constituents from the former Castlereagh Borough Council still did not have access to the scheme whilst others in the same District Electoral Area did. He also referred to the Responsible Dog Ownership Scheme and stated that he would welcome an update on the proposed pilot in Ormeau Park for a dog run. He also commended the work relation to tree surveys that had been undertaken to identify diseased and damaged trees. The Member concluded by referring to the five-year action plan for the Belfast Open Spaces and Street Scene Plan and stated that he would be keen to see this plan being progressed, along with the required works within the plan.

A Member referred to the work being undertaken by Port Health in relation to the delivery of regulatory functions regarding the NI Protocol. Following discussion in relation to a proposal made by Councillor Bunting that was deemed not competent by the City Solicitor, it was

Moved by Councillor Bunting,  
Seconded by Councillor Verner,

That the Committee agrees to defer the report to enable a further report to be submitted to the next meeting which would consider the work of Port Health in the context of the Court Judgement that had been issued in December in relation to legal action against Mr. Edwin Poots MLA.

#### **Amendment**

Moved by Councillor Garrett,  
Seconded by Councillor M. Donnelly,

That the Committee agrees to note the Committee Plan update.

On a vote on the amendment, 11 Members voted for the proposal and 3 against and it was declared carried.

The Committee therefore noted the content of the mid-year report and the progress against the agreed actions within the 2022-23 People and Communities Committee Plan.

Following further discussion, the Director of City Services agreed to liaise with Councillors Bunting and Verner directly in regard to a query over the Port Health operational update in regard to the sustainability of the financial model and future arrangements to be agreed nationally that were referenced in the report.

### **Update on Belfast Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services provided the Members with an update on the development of a Belfast City Council Sports Development and Physical Activity Strategy (The Strategy), along with an updated timeline for completion of the Strategy.

He reminded the Members that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting in January 2018, had agreed that a Belfast City Council Sports Development Strategy and associated work plan would be developed. The aim of the Strategy was to provide a framework for future decision making on providing funding to National Governing Bodies of Sport delivering programmes in Belfast in support of existing funding streams and work programmes which would enhance sporting opportunities for Belfast's sporting organisations and individuals.

The People and Communities Committee, in June 2018, had subsequently agreed a proposed Terms of Reference and timeline. The Departmental Change Programme had since prompted consideration of wider opportunities to clarify and align the links between sports development and the Council's strategic funding and programming decisions in the areas of asset development, health improvement and community development.

The Members were reminded that, at the People and Communities meeting in November 2020, it had been agreed that the Terms of Reference would be extended to include the following areas:

- In line with the Belfast Agenda the outcomes were extended to 2035;
- Physical activity programming was considered as part of the pathway into organised sport;
- To be considered and aligned with the Leisure Transformation Programme;
- To be identification of alternative sources of financing/partner opportunities;
- Facility/asset utilisation and management to be maximised through collaborative partnership approaches;
- Facility/asset planning and development to be considered taking account of local, citywide and regional need;
- Sport's contribution to improvement of whole health to be considered in the context of partnership working through the work

of the Belfast Community Planning Partnership and associated Boards – particularly the Living Here Board;

- Sport’s contribution to community development to be considered in the context of City and Neighbourhood’s Departmental approach to area working and neighbourhood regeneration; and
- The strategy ‘working title’ to be “Belfast Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy.

In July 2022, following a quotation process, Strategic Leisure had been appointed to support the Council in the production of the Strategy. The Members were advised that initial introductory meetings involving both Council officers and a number of Key Delivery Partners had now taken place, with more than 50 individuals and groups having been involved. In addition, a total of 370 responses had been received via “Your Say Belfast”.

The Director then drew the Members’ attention to the proposed draft timetable, as follows:

Background review of documentation policies and strategies	September 2022- <i>(Completed)</i>
Establish Board and structures for developing strategy	September 2022-October 2022 <i>Completed</i>
Initial face to face consultation with key stakeholders and schools	September 2022-October 2022 <i>Completed</i>
Review and Mapping	September 2022-October 2022 <i>Completed</i>
Focus groups established and face to face meetings to take place	October 2022 - December 2022 <i>Completed</i>
Wider public consultation to take place online using “Your Say Belfast”	October 2022-December 2022 <i>Completed</i>
Analysis of key issues identified with a focus on internal consultation and external feedback	November 2022-January 2023 <i>Completed</i>
Interim Draft Report produced and presented to elected members for discussion	27 February 2023 12.00 -1.30pm
Review Draft Strategy and produce draft report	March 2023-May 2023
Draft Strategy to be released for public consultation	May 2023- July 2023
Analyse feedback from consultation and amend/update strategy	August 2023
Final Strategy to be presented to elected members	September 2023-October 2023
Strategy Launched	October 2023

The Director highlighted that the draft interim draft report was due to be presented to the Members via a Workshop on Monday, 27th February 2023 from 12:00 p.m. - 13:30 p.m. in the Lavery Room, this would be a hybrid meeting and would also be available via MS Teams.

The Chairperson advised that the previous Members Workshop in December had been poorly attended and he encouraged the Members to attend, stating that it was their opportunity to participate further in the discussion forming the Strategy.

The Committee noted the progress to date and agreed to the new proposed timeline for development of the Strategy.

**#InTheLoop recycling on the go campaign to improve the city's on street recycling provision**

(Mr. S. Leonard, Neighbourhood Services Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Director of Neighbourhood Services advised the Members that award-winning, environmental charity Hubbub had recently approached Belfast City Council seeking to explore launching a trial of their #InTheLoop recycling on-the-go campaign to improve the city's on-street recycling provision, alongside a communications campaign. Hubbub had secured new funding from the Coca-Cola Foundation to run a 3-month trial in Northern Ireland and had identified Belfast as potential campaign area.

He advised that Hubbub had been developing and delivering an approach to recycling on-the-go which had first been trialled in 2018 in Leeds, and had been followed in similar trials in Swansea, Edinburgh, Dublin, Wimbledon, Telford and Wrekin and the London Borough of Lambeth. Using the previous trials, Hubbub had tested and refined how innovative design, paired with engaging communications could change behaviour, reduce confusion about recycling and make it easier to recycle.

The Members were shown a design of the bins that would use the #InTheLoop campaign principles, featuring a bright yellow background making it highly visible on the street. This approach would prioritise the collection of high-quality materials (plastic bottles, cans, and glass) and aim to reduce the factors that lead to contamination. Alongside the installation of the new bins, Hubbub would deliver a press launch announcing the trial and a communications campaign, including a paid social media campaign, engagement with the local business improvement district and other local stakeholders. This would raise awareness of the campaign and help to educate consumers about how to recycle correctly, as well as seeking to encourage the use of reusable containers where possible.

The Committee was advised that, should the Members agree to this request, it was anticipated that the campaign would launch around April or May and would be actively promoted and monitored for a period of 3 months. After this point, the Council would have the option to continue the collections but there was no commitment beyond this trial point. The Committee was also advised that an evaluation report would be carried out that would record how effective the trial had been in increasing re-cycling in the pilot bins and with recommendations as to how the pilot could be scaled up.

The Members discussed suitable locations for the placing of the new dual bins (one recycling and one normal street litter bin) throughout the city in order to maximise their potential to ensure that they were positioned where high levels of recyclable material was generated.

During discussion, the Neighbourhood Services Manager highlighted that, based on current cost estimates, it was estimated that the funding of £22,000 being allocated would fund in the region of 20-25 bins (this total included approximately 12 yellow re-cycling bins and 12 normal black street litter bins).

Moved by Councillor Flynn,  
Seconded by Councillor Maghie,

That the Committee agrees to place a trial recycling bin in a park/open space in North, South and West Belfast with the rest in the city centre.

#### **Amendment**

Moved by Councillor Magee,  
Seconded by Councillor de Faoite,

That the Committee agrees to proceed with the pilot based on placing recycling bins in the 4 quadrants of the city and also in the city centre, to ensure an even spread throughout all areas and not just the city centre.

On a vote, eight Members voted for the amendment and five against and it was declared carried.

The amendment was agreed as the substantive motion.

The Committee approved the request from Hububb for Belfast to take part in a trial #InTheLoop recycling on-the-go campaign and agreed to proceed with the pilot based on placing recycling bins in the 4 quadrants of the city and in the city centre and noted that an evaluation report would be available following the pilot.

#### **Reference Group on Older People Update**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services drew the Members' attention to the minutes of the Reference Group on Older People and provided a brief overview of the items that had been considered, as follows:

- Update on the development of Age-friendly Belfast Plan 2022-2026;
- Update on Extreme Weather and Winter Planning with Older People;
- Update in respect of age-friendly Belfast Older Volunteer of the Year Awards; and
- Update in respect of Age Friendly Staffing and Resources.

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes and the recommendations from the Reference Group on Older People meeting held on 19th December, 2022.

**Physical Programme and Asset Management**

**Access paths to the Strangford Playing Fields  
from Glenveagh Special School - and request  
for deputation in March**

The Committee considered the following report:

**1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the proposed project at Strangford Playing Fields to create an accessible pathway around the Park.

**2.0 Recommendations**

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the update and agree to receive a deputation from Glenveagh Special School at the March meeting of the People and Communities Committee.

**3.0 Main report**

**3.1 Background**

Strangford Avenue Playing fields is situated across the road from Glenveagh Special Education school. Glenveagh shares a campus with 3 other special education needs schools: Harberton Special School, Fleming Fulton and Oakwood School. Together the schools service significant pupil numbers. Many also are from outside the immediate area and travel in daily into the school.

**Breakdown of School Demographic**

Glenveagh School 190 pupils aged 8-19 years old.  
(20% wheelchair users)

Harberton 300 pupils aged 4-15years old

Oakwood 70 pupils aged 4-8 years old

Fleming Fulton 100 pupils aged 5-18 years old  
(all physical disabilities)

3.2 Outdoor space at the school campus is extremely constrained particularly given the large number of attendees at the schools and the special needs. Strangford Playing

Fields is the closest alternative site for outdoor recreation. Glenveagh School is the closest in proximity to the park, with the Drummond Park entrance directly opposite their school gate.

- 3.3 However, the schools have indicated that they currently cannot use the park to its full potential due to accessibility limitations around the pedestrian entrance and due to the absence of a suitable accessible bit-mac pathway for their pupils who have physical disabilities and who are wheelchair users. The Playing Fields is also widely used by local residents however the lack of a pathway around the Playing Fields also constrains their access limiting the full potential of the Playing Fields as a key local asset.
- 3.4 The school have invested in a pool of adapted inclusive bikes but have nowhere to ride them on the school campus and have limited storage. The school has enquired if the currently disused pavilion within the Playing Fields could be considered as a storage facility for the adapted bikes, alongside the proposed pathway project, enabling easy access to the park and removing the transportation barrier.
- 3.5 Recently a make-shift trail has been created by Belfast City Council parks staff. This trail has been formed by cutting the grass shorter in a loop around the perimeter of the park through the trees, with bark laid in areas. The purpose of this trail was to provide walkers and runners a scenic route around the park. It also aims to protect the pitches by encouraging recreational use around the perimeter. The feedback on the temporary pathway has been very positive however, the current grass terrain of the trail presents a barrier to people with disabilities from enjoying the park fully and is not suitable surface for inclusive bikes or wheelchairs. These constraints have an adverse impact on a significant number of children with a disability across the school campus.
- 3.6 Officers have therefore been investigating the potential for a permanent path network around the Playing Fields which will benefit both residents and the schools.
- 3.7 Project Development to date

Members are asked to note that Glenveagh school presented a proposal for a new accessible path and entrance to Strangford Park at Belfast Healthy Cities convention in 2017. This proposal was brought to the South Belfast Area Working Group in March 2018. The Working Group agreed that officers would look at the amenity of the site at Strangford Avenue Playing Fields in terms of ensuring it was

suitable for all local stakeholders and that a report would be submitted to the Area Working Group in due course.

- 3.8 In January 2019 the South Area Working group received an update with sketch drawings/ plan and costings of the potential trim trail (1100m long x 2.0m wide). This proposal and estimates were developed internally by council officers as a desktop exercise and no survey or site investigation work was undertaken.
- 3.9 In September 2020 Belfast City Council submitted an application to Department for Communities Access and Inclusion Fund to support the proposed project. Unfortunately, the proposed costings were outside the shortlisting criteria and funding was not secured. As part of this application, letters of support were obtained from adjacent schools, Disability Sport NI, Age Friendly and Engage with Age.

#### Current Status

- 3.10 In May 2022 a feasibility study was completed which outlined 3 options. In addition to a suitable pathway, the feasibility study also looked at an option to re-open the currently dis-used old pavilion as a storage facility of adapted inclusive e.bikes. Architect plans and associated costings have been produced for each of the 3 options.

The recommended option is as follows:

- Trim Trail 562m bit-mac pathway, of minimum 2 metres wide.
- Entrance gates works at Drummond Park entrance to improve accessibility
- Pavilion access works (£2k PC Sum)
- Pavilion refurbishment
- Link Trail 130m

- 3.11 In November 2022 a further application was submitted to DfC Access and Inclusion Programme. Unfortunately this was also deemed ineligible. Council officers have also approached other funders including DfC's community empowerment division. However to date no eligible funding has secured. Council officers however are continuing to look at potential funding sources and exploring this with partners. Members will be aware of the pressures on the Council's capital financing and there is no Council budget secured for the project. Any council capital funding would be required to go through the Council's three stage approval process as agreed by Members.



3.12 Members are asked to note the update and to agree to receive a deputation from Glenveagh Special School at next month's People & Communities Committee

3.13 **Financial and Resource Implications**

No budget secured. Officers from Physical Programmes are exploring potential funding sources and continuing discussions with partners.

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

3.14 This project supports equality as it aims to enhance accessibility of a council amenity to all its users.

The Committee noted the update and agreed to receive a deputation from Glenveagh Special School at the March meeting of the People and Communities Committee and at the request of a Member also agreed to include in future discussions Taughmonagh Primary School, Sure Start and Scribbles Day Nursery given their close proximity to the park.

**Developer Contribution for Open Space**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members regarding three developer contributions that have been secured, via the Developers Contribution Framework, for council maintained open space and the proposed improvements that City & Neighbourhood Services Department plan to deliver as a result of the financial contributions.

1.2 Details of proposed improvements at each park are outlined in Section 3.9 (Main Report).

**2.0 Recommendations**

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the developer contributions for open space received to date and agree to recommend to SP&R committee the proposed improvement works at Knocknagoney, Tullycarnet and Belmont Parks outlined in Section 3.7 of this report.

**3.0 Main Report**

- 3.1 As members will be aware Council's Developer Contributions Framework was ratified for adoption by Full Council on 6th January 2020. Developer Contributions are a planning tool used to mitigate or manage the impacts of new development. They may be used to ensure that new development is supported by the right infrastructure or make sure that the environmental impacts of proposals are appropriately managed. The Council's Developer Contribution Framework sets out the council's approach to securing Developer Contributions as part of the planning application process.**
- 3.2 Policy OS 2 of Planning Policy Statement 8 requires open space to be an integral part of new residential development of 25 units or more, or on sites of one hectare or more. In smaller residential schemes, the need to provide open space will be considered on its individual merits. Exceptions to this policy requirement include apartment developments or specialised housing where a reasonable level of private communal open space is being provided; or where residential development is designed to integrate with and make use of adjoining open space. Policy OS 2 goes on to specify the proportion of a site that needs to be set aside for open space and the requirement for equipped children's play area on larger sites.**
- 3.3 In some cases, as an exception to the normal policy approach, the council may consider it more appropriate for residents of the new development to make use of existing or planned open space in the locality rather than require new open space to be provided on-site as an integral part of the development. When assessing this option, account will be taken of any specific reasons why open space cannot be provided on site, the scale and nature of the proposed development, existing and planned open space in the area, accessibility and connectivity to the open space, and its ability to support residents of the new development.**
- 3.4 It may be necessary for the developer to enhance the existing or planned open space so that it is able to support the additional population and/or improve the site's connectivity to it. In such circumstances, the developer will be required to pay a Commuted Sum to cover the cost in lieu of providing the open space on the site. This will include the cost of improvements to an existing facility where there would normally be a policy requirement to provide this on site. The value of the Commuted Sum will be calculated on a case by case basis.**

- 3.5 In cases where a developer is required to improve existing open space planning officers from Place and Economy Department liaise with CNS Landscape Planning & Development (LPD) Team to identify council maintained open space in proximity to the proposed development site. LPD officers, in partnership with CNS Operational / Outreach Managers, elected members and local users, help quantify potential physical improvements and provide technical support to planners in terms of design and cost estimation. This information can then be used to help inform negotiations around a developer contribution.
- 3.6 Developer Contributions are a form of Planning Obligation and are normally secured through a Planning Agreement under Section 76 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. A Planning Agreement is a legally binding agreement between the relevant parties, normally between the council, landowner, applicant and any other parties directly involved in fulfilling the agreement.
- 3.7 As part of the planning process, developer contributions to improve existing open space were secured by colleagues in Place and Economy Department and relate to residential development schemes below. Council has received each of the financial contributions by way of a Planning Agreement.
1. LA04/2019/0025/F - Parklands, Knocknagoney Dale – £90,000
  2. LA04/2017/0235/F - Rosepark House, Upper Newtownards Road – £53,000
  3. LA04/2015/0670/F - Lands at Castlehill Manor, Castlehill Road – £39,750
- 3.8 City & Neighbourhood Services now wish to deliver a range of open space improvements at council maintained open space referenced in the Planning Agreements or those in closest proximity to the development sites. Council open space to be improved as a result of developer contribution above are:
1. Knocknagoney Park - £90,000 (adjacent to Parklands development site)
  2. Tullycarnet Park – £53,000 (1.6 km from Rosepark House development site)
  3. Belmont Park - £39,550 (1.0 km from Castlehill Manor development site)
- 3.9 Officers from City & Neighbourhood Services Landscape Planning & Development Team and Open Spaces & Street Scene have been working with elected members, operational managers and local users to prioritise and quantify small scale improvements at each of the parks. The total cost of

the works at each park cannot exceed the associated financial contributions received by council. Within this context the proposed improvements at each park are:

- Knocknagoney Park - construction of a new, accessible pedestrian access between Parklands apartment development and the park, including tree maintenance, remedial landscaping and civil engineering works, new lighting and general improvements to the main, lower park entrance.
- Tullycarnet Park - refurbishment of the existing outdoor gym area within the park, currently in a poor state of repair, or replacement of the existing outdoor gym facility with a small sensory play area (consultation is currently ongoing with elected members and park user groups from the local neighbourhood)
- Belmont Park - construction of a new, bound-stone woodland path between the A55 pedestrian footbridge entrance and the Cairnburn Road entrance, installation of accessible picnic benches / hard-standings at the playground area and a hard-standing for a potential park vendor.

3.10 It is envisaged that all improvement works will be designed in-house and supervised by officers from our Landscape Planning & Development Team.

3.11 Colleagues from Place and Economy Department (Plans & Policy Team) have confirmed council has a period of seven years, from receipt of the financial contribution, to deliver agreed open space improvements. In order to assist with internal monitoring of contributions officers from Place and Economy Department (Plans & Policy Team) have requested that, going forward, members are updated regarding proposed open space improvements before commuted sums are released to deliver the works.

### 3.12 Financial and Resource Implications

- The total cost of open space improvement works must not exceed the financial contribution received for each council maintained open space.
- Council has a period of 7 years, from receipt of the financial contribution, to deliver open space improvements.
- Open space improvements will be delivered from within existing budget estimates.
- Members should note that professional fees will not be incurred using this delivery model, therefore 100%

of the financial contribution, secured via the Planning Agreement, can be invested in physical improvements at each site.

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

None.”

The Members discussed at length the use of developer contributions and how these could be best utilised and managed to ensure delivery for the specific area to which they were aligned. Clarification was sought as to whether there were others in the pipeline and a request for early sight of such.

The Committee was advised that the Elected Members for the specific Ward in the areas the park and/or open space were situated would be consulted as part of the process and that the matter could be taken to the area working group for sign off.

The Members requested that a legal opinion be sought as to whether Developer contributions could be bundled with other capital schemes to ensure as much value could be achieved out of any investment in parks and open spaces. The Members were advised that this had been raised previously at the Planning Committee with a determination already having been made on the matter.

The Committee noted the developer contributions for open space received to date and agree to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee the proposed improvement works at Knocknagoney, Tullycarnet and Belmont Parks as outlined in Section 3.7 of the report and to submit an update report to the next meeting of the East Area Working Group.

**Operational Issues**

**Product Safety Update and OPSS funding**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

**1.1 This report is to:**

- i) update Members on the Council’s work to protect consumers in Belfast and Northern Ireland from unsafe consumer products; and**
- ii) highlight available funding to support Belfast City Council’s activity in this area.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- a. Note the Council's ongoing activity and statutory function in relation consumer product safety; and
- b. Agree to avail of current grant funding opportunities to support Belfast City Council's work on product safety.

**Main report**

- 3.1 NI councils have a number of statutory obligations in relation to consumer safety legislation, principally the Consumer Protection Act 1987, and Regulations for safety of specific products such as toys, electrical goods, cosmetics etc. More recently the Market Surveillance (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2021 have also been introduced, setting out how councils must carry out certain functions for product safety, including some additional enforcement powers.
- 3.2 Environmental Health officers have undertaken this regulatory function for several decades. In England, Scotland and Wales, this function has been (and continues to be) carried out by Trading Standards Departments of Local Authorities.
- 3.3 Principally, councils must ensure that businesses involved in the importation, supply or sale of goods comply with their legal obligations and to ensure that goods presented on the market do not present risk of harm or injury to consumers. Councils' activity include:
  - Identification and investigation of potentially unsafe goods through receipt of consumer complaints, visits to premises and inspections/sampling and testing of products.
  - Receipt and sharing of intelligence surrounding unsafe goods or their supply chains, between relevant authorities, including Council Environmental Health Departments in NI, Trading Standards Officers across GB Local Authorities, the Office of Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) and Border Force.
  - Providing advice and education to businesses to raise awareness of product safety requirements to reduce potential for businesses to procure and place unsafe goods on the market in the future.
  - Taking enforcement actions including steps to remove unsafe goods from the market, or to have the goods made safe.

**3.4 A range of product safety initiatives are undertaken each year in co-ordination with all 11 district councils. These are co-ordinated via Environmental Health NI (NI Consumer Protection Subgroup), and may involve partnership working and engagement with agencies and stakeholders operating in related regulatory fields across Government in NI, UK, RoI and beyond. Belfast City Council continues to actively support this work – in 2022/23 initiatives are focusing on:**

- **Undertaking a campaign to raise awareness of the dangers of button batteries by supporting the OPSS ‘Nil by Mouth’ campaign, raising awareness with retailers and consumers, market surveillance through partnership with other relevant services within Environmental Health and external agencies.**
- **Working with Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency to carry out a Part worn tyre initiative to assess the safety and compliance of part worn tyres on the market.**
- **Developing and disseminating guidance to businesses on the topics of PAS 7050 (publicly available specification) ‘Bringing safe products to market’ and E-Cigarettes and E-Liquids.**
- **In conjunction with OPSS, upskilling staff as required on product safety issues including the consistent enforcement of consumer protection regulations, the introduction of new legislation/standards and emerging issues.**
- **Maintaining closer working relationships with relevant partners across NI, UK and Ireland e.g. Trading Standards NI, Invest NI, NI Fire and Rescue, HSE NI, Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government, Medical and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, The Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CPC) and Health Products Regulatory Authority, to ensure effective communication and sharing of information where relevant; to develop mutual understanding of respective roles in order to promote cross departmental working and help to resolve cross cutting issues.**

**3.5 In year funding (in 2022/23) of up to £120,000 has been recently made available by OPSS to Belfast City Council to support activity in these areas of work. Two potential grant funding opportunities are available comprising:**

- a. **A £65,000 grant available to councils that have specific duties to assess product safety and compliance of higher risk consumer goods arriving at UK and NI ports, to ensure unsafe goods are prevented from entering the UK market. These**

products are typically identified by OPSS on the basis of risk assessments carried out using customs data for specific commodities. Details of potentially dangerous products are referred to Councils for the relevant ports around GB and NI for intervention. These products typically involve high risk/poor quality manufactured goods arriving from countries across the world such as China, Hong Kong, Taiwan etc. Eligible activities under this grant include the potential to support engagement with businesses to educate and raise awareness while creating a deterrent for importing unsafe goods, building partnerships with relevant trade bodies and other stakeholders, and improving current processes.

- b. A £55,000 grant is also available to councils to build capability and capacity for product safety work. This is to ensure council's are sufficiently equipped to carry out the statutory duties, while also building strong partnerships with businesses, other councils and Government Departments to improve future compliance across the consumer market. A significant portion of Belfast City Council's activity for delivering the NI Consumer Protection workplan in 2022/23 is eligible for this funding.

- 3.6 Officers have reviewed the 2 available grant funding offers and have confirmed that Belfast City Council is eligible to claim the available funding in full, in line with the eligibility criteria.

#### Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.7 Following Committee approval in November 2020, Council has previously accessed similar OPSS funding opportunities to support product safety work in years 2020/21 and 2021/22. As a result, the potential for grant funding income in 2022/23 was forecasted as part of earlier financial estimates for the current financial year, to support this work area.

#### Asset and Other Implications

None.

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

- 3.8 None.

The Committee:

- noted the Council's ongoing activity and statutory function in relation to consumer product safety; and



- agreed to avail of current grant funding opportunities to support Belfast City Council's work on product safety.

**Proposal for Dual Language Street Signs**

As at least fifteen percent of the total numbers of persons surveyed in the street were in favour of the proposal to erect a second street nameplate in Irish at Ardilea Drive, the Committee approved the application.

**Proposal for Naming New Street**

The Committee approved the application for naming a new street in the City at Pavilion Park Demesne, off Dub Lane, BT9.

Chairperson