

People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 7th March, 2023

HYBRID MEETING OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Murray (Chairperson);
Councillors Bower, Bunting, Canavan,
Cobain, M. Collins, M. Donnelly, R.M. Donnelly, de Faoite,
Flynn, Garrett, Magee, Maghie, McAteer, McMullan,
Newton, 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. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building
Control; and
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 7th and 13th February, 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 March.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Verner declared an interest in agenda item 4 (a) Timeframe for Reviews (Strategic Partners and Fuel Hardship) as she worked for one of the Strategic Partners but as the report was for noting she was not required to leave the meeting.

Update on Committee Schedule

The Committee approved the change in date of the People and Communities Committee from Tuesday, 6th to Tuesday, 13th June 2023.

Restricted

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

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

Financial Reporting - Quarter 3 2022/23

The Committee noted the contents of a report which summarised the Quarter 3 financial position for the People and Communities Committee, which had an under-spend of £1.05m (1.6%), with the forecast year end position being a balance position after adjustments.

The Committee noted that the main reasons for the quarter 3 Committee under-spend related to vacant posts across a number of services, the receipt of additional income and the timing of grants and programmes.

The Committee noted the Quarter 3 financial position and the associated financial reporting pack.

Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service – in year update

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the 2022/23 position for the Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service.

The Committee agreed to defer the report and refer it to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and that, in the interim, officers would contact the Department for Communities and, if necessary, TEO to further discuss additional funding options. The Committee further agreed to invite representatives from the Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service to make a presentation to a future meeting of the Committee to update the Members on its work and to present its 5-year business case proposal.

GLL Leisure Management Contract - Six monthly update on contract compliance and performance

The Partnership Manager provided the Board with a comprehensive update on the contract compliance assurances and key performance indicators for the GLL Leisure Management Contract, specifically regarding the following key areas:

- Contract compliance;
- Key Performance Indicators;
- Facility Asset Management monitoring; and
- Health and Safety Compliance assurances

During discussion the Partnership Manager addressed a query in relation to building maintenance and repairs, he advised that the Council had a Division of Labour contract which dealt with these matters, and he undertook to circulate a copy to the Members for information.

The Members also discussed the Loughside Recreation Centre, Shore Road and noted that it was currently only partly open as the building required a significant amount of work to make it fit for purpose.

The Committee noted the six-monthly update in respect of the GLL Management Contract.

Community Support Programme Additional Funding 2022/23

The Committee considered a comprehensive report which provided detail in respect of additional funding awards from the Department for Communities (DfC) via the Community Support Programme 2022/23.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reminded the Members that the DfC provided an annual grant to the Council to help deliver the Council's Community Support Programme (CSP). He continued that, during February 2023, the Council received two additional requests from the DfC to facilitate the allocation of additional monies to those VCSE groups that the Council was already providing support to via the CSP allocation.

The awards were as follows:

- Mitigating the impact of cost-of-living increases; and
- Additional Payment for Salaries.

The Members were provided with a detailed update in terms of the additional funding and the proposed funding allocation models for both additional measures and asked to note that the additional funding required committed spend by the 31st March 2023, which was an extremely tight deadline.

The Committee noted the additional funding and conditions for the allocation, as outlined in the report.

Matters referred back from the Council/Motions

Imagination Library Motion

The Committee agreed to defer the report to enable the proposer of the motion to liaise further with Council officers regarding the proposal and the anticipated costs in advance of a report being submitted to a future meeting.

Committee/Strategic Issues

Timeframe for Reviews (Strategic Partners and Fuel Hardship)

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 update members on timeframes for, and/or progress to date, re. taking forward reviews of funding awarded to Strategic Partners for Covid Response/Recovery (20/21 and 21/22) and for Fuel Hardship Fund (22/23).

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to note the update in relation to:

- timescales for, and current work being undertaken, in relation to the review of funding allocated to Strategic and Thematic Partners (20/21 and 21/22) – with a final paper planned to come through to committee in August 2023,**
- anticipated timescale for receipt of final monitoring returns from delivery partners in relation to implementation of the Fuel Hardship Fund scheme,**
- officer recommendation that the All Party Cost-of-Living Task Group (to be established and which will include member and officer representation) should review relevant collated information regarding same and make recommendations on next steps as to any further review and verification that might be required.**

3.0 Main report

3.0 Background

3.1 It was agreed at P&C committee in August 2022 (ratified at Council in September) that ‘a review of strategic and thematic partners’ would be undertaken and within the minute ‘that a list of the current/proposed Strategic Partners be circulated to the Members of the Committee.’

3.2 It was then further agreed at SP&R committee in November 2022 when the Fuel Hardship Fund scheme was being developed that ‘a report be submitted to the Committee within the next two months providing an update on the work being undertaken to review the strategic and thematic partners.’ Then in December 2022, members requested that ‘the report on the use of strategic partners, which was due to be presented to the Committee early in the new year, would also include information on the oversight measures in place for the Fuel Poverty Hardship Scheme.’ Furthermore, in January 2023, SP&R committee agreed that ‘an All-Party Cost-of-Living Task Group be established, to discuss the challenges and learnings of the scheme, that would be

considered should a similar scheme be required in winter 2023.'

Strategic and thematic partners

- 3.3 Following the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and the associated pressure to readily respond to the needs of communities and communities of interest, Party Group Leaders identified and agreed a number of area-based strategic partners, and thematic partners, that Council would award relevant DfC/central government and BCC funding to, and work in partnership with, to address the needs of local residents during the initial lockdown period(s). Tables 1A and 1B provide a summary of the funding allocations to the respective partners.

Table 1A - 2020/21 – Strategic (area) Partners including allocations made)

East	EBCDA	£550,792.00
North	Crusaders FC	£52,468.00
	Intercomm	£181,064.00
	Loughview Community Action Project	£127,076.00
	North Belfast Advice Partnership	£179,544.00
	North Belfast Alternatives	£10,000.00
	Total	£550,152.00
South	Forward South	£129,370.20
	LORAG	£129,370.20
	Southcity Resource and Development Centre	£129,370.20
	Total	£388,110.60
West	Greater Shankill Partnership	£147,868.00
	Upper Andersonstown Community Forum	£582,522.00
	Greater Shankill Community Council	£10,000.00

	Total	£740,390.00
Total		£2,229,444.60

Table 1B - 2020/21 – Thematic Partners (including allocations made)

Bytes	£32,173.00
Embrace / Nicras	£25,000.00
Forward South	£8,000.00
HereNI	£3,050.00
Red Cross	£50,000.00
Solas	£5,000.00
Store House	£18,000.00
Boring Wells - Food Larder	£14,910.00
Transgender NI	£2,000.00
West Belfast Foodbank	£17,131.00
Womens Aid	£10,000.00
Heart Project	£22,500.00
Age Friendly Partnership (via Engage With Age)	£20,000.00
Belfast and Lisburn Womens Aid 1	£10,000.00
Mens Advisory Partnership	£5,000.00
Belfast Migrant Forum (paid via NIACRO)	£15,000.00
Here NI	£7,500.00
CaraFriend	£7,500.00
Transgender NI	£7,500.00
Heart Project (counselling organisations)	£40,000.00
Belfast and Lisburn Women's Aid	£28,000.00
We are Pangs	£16,500.00
SVDP	£75,000.00
Salvation Army	£75,000.00
Community Food Providers (£2k x	£90,000.00

45 groups)	
North Locality Group (via Ashton Community Trust)	£24,000.00
South Locality Group (via LORAG)	£24,000.00
East Locality Group (via Eastside Partnership)	£24,000.00
West Locality Group (via Upper Springfield Dev Trust)	£24,000.00
Colin Locality Group (via Colin N'hood P'ship)	£24,000.00
TOTAL	£724,764.00

- 3.4 Throughout the subsequent recovery phases from Covid, and ongoing changes and easing of restrictions, further funding allocations were made to strategic and thematic partners (via officer reports to committee and members then discussing and determining final approach re. same).

Table 2A - 2021/22 – Strategic (area) Partners (including allocations made)

East	EBCDA	£155,920
North	Intercomm	£53,700
	Loughview Community Action Project	£53,700
	North Belfast Advice Partnership - Vine Centre	£53,706.67
	Total	£161,107
South	Forward South	£37,456.67
	Southcity Resource and Development Centre	£37,456.67
	LORAG	£37,456.67
	Total	£112,370.01
West	Upper A'Town Community Forum	£174,120

	Greater Shankill Partnership	£46,470
		£220,590
	TOTAL	£603,516.68

Table 2B - 2021/22 – Thematic Partners (including allocations made)

Salvation Army	£90,000.00
SVP	£90,000.00
South Locality Group	£10,500.00
East Locality Group	£10,500.00
West Locality Group	£10,500.00
Colin Locality Group	£10,500.00
Age Friendly Partnership	£7,500.00
Belfast and Lisburn Womens Aid	£71,500.00
Mens Advisory Partnership	£16,500.00
Belfast Migrant Forum (paid via NIACRO)	£6,000.00
Here NI	£3,000.00
CaraFriend	£3,000.00
Transgender NI	£3,000.00
Heart Project (Counselling organisations)	£16,500.00
Parent Rooms	£6,000.00
TOTAL	£355,000

- 3.5 The DfC allocation of Social Supermarket Funding in 2021/22 and 2022/23 was also offered out to current strategic and thematic partners as a starting point with those partners, and elected members, encouraged to make officers aware of any other groups who might be interested in applying to deliver support under this scheme. Table 3 below outlines the funding allocations made, and to which groups.

Table 3 - 21/22 & 22/23 – Strategic (area) and Thematic Social Supermarket Funding allocations

2021/22 allocations		2022/23 allocations	
North		North	
		North Belfast Advice Partnership	£11,323.33

		Loughview Community Action Project	£11,323.33
		Ashton Community Trust	£11,323.33
South		South	
Southcity	£20,000.00	LORAG	£7,896.67
		Southcity	£7,896.67
		Forward South	£7,896.67
East		East	
EBCDA	£20,000.00	In this Together	£16,432.50
		Larder	£16,432.50
West		West	
Upper Andersonstown Community Forum	£30,000.00	Blackie River Centre	£36,700.00
Greater Shankill Partnership	£20,000.00	Greater Shankill Partnership	£9,780.00
TOTAL	£90,000	TOTAL	£137,005

Approach to review

- 3.6 In terms of the request to review strategic and thematic partners, it is important to note that given the selection of these partners had been a political decision, it would be inappropriate for officers to undertake such a review.
- 3.7 Therefore, in response to the request from members to conduct a review alongside recommendations made by AGRS-Audit Governance and Risk Services unit within Council, officers have commissioned Cavanagh Kelly to undertake an independent financial audit in relation to the allocation of Covid-19 related funding awarded to strategic (area and thematic) partners (as well as via the micro and medium and kitchen equipment grants schemes) during 20/21 and 21/22.

- 3.8 The main purpose of the audit is to ensure that all funds allocated during this period, and via the various schemes set out above, were spent in line with Letters of Offer/ Funding Agreements, as well as in line with guidance on public spending which was shared with delivery partners at the time. In tandem, officers are also collating and reviewing monitoring returns and supporting information to ensure that key targets and actions were achieved.
- 3.9 The financial audit has been underway since September 2022 with initial work focusing on:
- i A desktop review of 110 sample claims from projects resulting from open calls for Micro, medium, or Kitchen Equipment Grants (KEG) - up to a maximum value of £5,000
 - ii A desktop review of 3 sample claims from projects arising from Direct Award Thematic funds with values between to £10,000 to £18,000.
 - iii Site verification visits to 12 Strategic (area) partnership organisations who received Covid-19 funding.

Timescales

- 3.10 A draft interim report has recently been received (late-Feb 23) by Cavanagh Kelly for officers' consideration and feedback which will include views from Departmental finance and Corporate AGRS colleagues. A final report relating to this exercise is expected by the end of March/early May. The focus of this initial work is linked to the DfC funding allocations.
- 3.11 In addition, we have requested that the team within Cavanagh Kelly expand their work to include completing verification of an additional 9 Strategic area funding awards, and 10 Thematic awards, allocated from Council funding, to provide a complete picture.
- 3.12 It is anticipated that we will have all required information from both of these audit exercises, alongside the internal review of monitoring returns, by the end of June and therefore be in a position to bring a composite, comprehensive report through to Committee in August 2023.

Fuel Hardship Fund

- 3.13 In order to ensure appropriate audit and assurance processes were applied to the delivery of the Fuel Hardship Fund, all identified strategic partners were issued with a range of supporting documents and guidance notes including; project proposal application form, BCC voucher

protocols, client data capture sheet, monitoring s/sheet template and monitoring return template.

The guidance notes in particular, provided detailed information on the scope and nature of the scheme including an overview of the aims of the scheme, the eligibility criteria as agreed by members, guiding principles, the expected duration (Dec 22-Mar 23), and an outline of payment terms including eligible, ineligible and restricted costs. The client data capture template issued to partners covered personal details, proof of eligibility and the need to retain supporting evidence as well as recording the voucher allocation noted against utilities). Members should note that as part of the guidance issued, the deadline for strategic partners to submit final monitoring returns on the Fuel Hardship Fund is 6th June 2023.

- 3.14 Officers met the with nominated delivery partners as a collective group on a number of occasions over recent months including prior to the scheme commencing on 30th November 2022, and again on 13th December 2022. Officers have also been in constant contact with partners throughout the delivery period – particularly between Dec 22-Feb 23 providing clarity, answering queries and to ensure the Council website was kept update in relation to scheme availability at a local level. An initial post-delivery review meeting with partners was held on 20th February 2023 to commence the formal process of gathering initial feedback.
- 3.15 Members will note that the verification and vouching of the Fuel Hardship Fund cannot therefore occur until after receipt of final monitoring returns from partners up to 6th June. NB. It has still to be determined whether this will be completed in-house by officers (very much dependent on staffing capacity and capability), or externally by an independent consultant.
- 3.16 Given the member request at SP&R committee in Jan 2023, that an All-Party Cost-of-Living Task Group be established, it is proposed that cross party nominations are sought post-Council elections in May via the PGL forum. The Members' Task Group, supported by officers, will consider the collated information and feedback gleaned via the returns (as noted previously due to be submitted in early June 2023 by the delivery partners) and agree next steps in relation to further verification, vouching and review.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.17 Costs of securing the services of Cavanagh Kelly to undertake the financial audit of Covid-19 funding allocations to strategic and thematic partners during 20/21 and 21/22

have been met from within existing budgets within CNS. It is envisaged that any vouching and verification and review requirements needed in relation to the Fuel Hardship Fund will also be met by utilising existing CNS budgets in 23/24 (staffing and/or financial).

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

- 3.18 Considered independently as part of the design and implementation or all related funding schemes in addressing Covid response, Covid Recovery and Fuel Hardship.”

The Committee noted the update.

**Consultation on a Draft Circular Economy Strategy
for Northern Ireland and Operations Update**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 To present to Committee Belfast City Council’s draft response to the recently published Draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Approve the draft Belfast City Council response to the Draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland.
- Note the recruitment of a Chief Executive by Arc21.

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

- 3.1 Members may recall from last month’s meeting (7th February 2023) that the Department for the Economy (DfE) has recently 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.
- 3.2 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.

- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 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.
- 3.6 The draft Strategy is set out in two parts: the Executive Summary and first four chapters provides an outline of the Circular Economy and the second part covers proposals for initiating change and how this can be monitored and measured.
- 3.7 The draft CE Strategy focuses on four business sectors:
- Construction and the built environment
 - Bioeconomy
 - Advanced manufacturing
 - Tourism and Hospitality
- 3.8 It focuses on four types of materials:
- Textiles
 - Food
 - Packaging
 - Electricals
- 3.9 To help create more sustainable production and levels of consumption, the CE Strategy presents twelve proposals for change:
1. Develop and implement a programme to support and promote behaviour change.
 2. Create clusters and networks to raise awareness and assist collaboration.
 3. Develop an outcome-focused Circular Economy monitoring framework.

4. Embed Circular Economy principles in public procurement.
 5. Work with businesses to increase circular design.
 6. Create and support platforms and hubs to share goods and materials.
 7. Maximise the value of materials locally.
 8. Establish a Circular Economy funding programme.
 9. Create a regulatory framework that supports and incentivises greater circulation of goods and materials.
 10. Invest in research and development to support the valorisation of materials.
 11. Embed Circular Economy principles at all levels of education.
 12. Design of future skills programmes and reviews of current programmes to support a Just Transition.
- 3.10 There are 19 Questions posed in total within the response template. Questions 1-4 cover contact details and the remaining 15 questions cover views on the vision, materials footprint target, proposals for change, clusters and networks, embedding CE principles into public procurement, creating and supporting platforms and hubs, maximising the value of materials locally, a CE funding programme, funding instruments, a regulatory framework, development of a skills programme and delivery of the strategy.
- 3.11 The closing date for responses to the draft strategy is 20 March 2023.
- 3.12 The draft strategy is available at [Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland](#) and a full copy of the 'Draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland' is also attached as Appendix I
- 3.13 A copy of our draft response to the consultation questions is attached as Appendix II
- 3.14 A copy of arc21's draft response to the consultation questions is attached as Appendix III

Operations Update

- 3.15 Committee is asked to note Arc21 has advised the Council of a recruitment exercise for the appointment of a Chief Executive on a permanent basis. Councils will be represented in the process by those on the Joint Committee and by involvement of a Chief Executive of a member Council. Committee will be updated on the outcome in due course.
- 3.16 St Patrick's Day 17th March 2023 Bank Holiday. Planning for coverage of bank holiday bin collections has been completed and a separate note updating elected members was sent out on the 27th February 2023. Planning for Easter Bank Holidays has commenced, and Members will be updated in due course.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.17 None in relation to responding to the consultations.

Equality or Rural Needs Implications

- 3.18 None in relation to responding to the consultations.”

During discussion a Member referred to the need to try and encourage the recycling of glass and also the need to try and reduce 'fast textiles'. The Members were advised that a report would be being submitted to Committee in due course which would further consider these issues.

The Committee approved the draft Belfast City Council response to the Draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland available [here](#) and noted the recruitment of a Chief Executive by Arc21.

More Circularity Less Carbon

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 To present the 'More Circularity Less Carbon' report for Belfast City Council's waste management activities.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the contents of the report and it is envisaged that the key findings and recommendations will be integrated into the next Council waste plan and contribute to the Council's climate change actions.

3.0 Main report

Background

- 3.1 The 'More Circularity, Less Carbon' (MCLC) campaign was launched by the Association of Cities and Regions Plus (ACR+) in November 2019, to help its members in addressing the carbon footprint of their waste. ACR+ has partnered with its constituent member Zero Waste Scotland to assess how individual territories can reduce the carbon impact of municipal waste by 25% by 2025.
- 3.2 Zero Waste Scotland's Carbon Metric International (CMI) tool, enables cities or regions to measure the carbon impact of their municipal waste, take effective actions to reduce it, and track their progress towards the 2025 target. Belfast is one of the ACR+ members which benefited from this project and received support to use the CMI to quantify the whole-life carbon impacts of its household waste. The results are summarised in the attached report (Appendix 1 – The Carbon Footprint of Waste - Belfast), which has three main objectives:
- Provide a detailed breakdown of waste carbon impacts by materials and management/treatment process;
 - Enable Belfast to establish its 2025 waste carbon reduction target;
 - Assess several carbon reduction scenarios that can help Belfast achieve its target.
- 3.3 The Carbon Metric provides policymakers and stakeholders with an alternative to weight-based waste measurement, allowing them to identify and focus specifically on those waste materials with the highest carbon impacts and greatest potential carbon savings. The whole-life carbon impacts of household waste in Belfast were quantified in the report and based on 2020 data.

Key findings

- 3.4 The carbon impacts of household waste in Belfast in 2020 were approximately 360,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂eq.), or 1.05 tCO₂eq./capita.
- 3.5 The graphic below shows that the carbon saved through recycling was slightly more than the carbon impacts of landfilling and incineration, meaning Belfast's household waste management activity is net carbon negative. However, whenever the embodied carbon impacts of the waste material (i.e. the emissions generated by the extraction of

resources, production, manufacturing, etc. of the corresponding products, labelled as 'Generated') are considered this tips the scales into a carbon positive picture. These 'generated' emissions are always the highest contributor to the net carbon impacts of waste, which is why waste prevention, in accordance with the waste hierarchy, offers the greatest carbon savings. Accounting for the full lifecycle impacts, Belfast's waste carbon intensity is 2.4 tCO₂eq./tonne of waste collected

- 3.6 The report included a breakdown graph demonstrating the whole-life carbon impacts of waste by stage (tCO₂eq) available [here](#)
- 3.7 The different materials purchased, consumed and collected as waste have different impacts in terms of CO₂e emissions. The following graphic shows the amount of waste collected by each waste category¹ and their associated carbon impacts. This highlights the importance of having a range of metrics available to decision makers tackling this issue, rather than solely relying upon the weight-based metric.
- 3.8 Textiles, plastic and food wastes are the most carbon-intensive fractions. It is interesting to highlight the importance of textile waste when it comes to carbon emissions, when the associated tonnages are relatively low. Textile production is hugely intensive in terms of carbon footprint and environmental impact. It is estimated that the fashion industry is responsible for 10% of global carbon emissions – more than international flights and maritime shipping combined.²
- 3.9 The report included a graph showing - Weight vs carbon impacts of key waste categories in Belfast (available [here](#))

Scenarios

- 3.10 In relation to its waste activities, in order to achieve a 25% reduction in CO₂e emissions by 2025, the Council must reduce its waste carbon impacts by 90,025 tCO₂eq, to a total of 275,075 tCO₂eq. Given that most of the carbon impact is associated with the production of the item in the first place, various waste reduction scenarios are presented in the report to achieve this challenging goal with the spotlight on textiles, food, plastics, paper/cardboard wastes.
- 3.11 The report also outlines a number of scenarios which involve improved recycling. Increasing the recycling rate of plastics

¹ Each category does not refer to waste tonnages in a single stream (e.g. 'garden waste collected in civic amenity sites'), but rather to the total waste fraction that encompassed in multiple waste streams (e.g. garden waste collected in civic amenity sites, garden waste collected door-to-door, and garden waste improperly discarded in residual waste

² EPRS (2017) UN (2018)

has the largest impact in terms of emissions reduction relative to business as usual. Increasing the recycling rates of paper, glass, and food can also help to reduce carbon emissions, but compared to the waste reduction scenario analysis, it is not as effective. It is important to note that the scenarios are indicative only, they do not reflect what may be achievable in an urban environment.

- 3.12 The report notes that further benefits could be achieved depending on the recycling routes used for the different materials. The impact of food waste recycling also depends on whether energy or fuel is produced, and on the bio-based products generated (soil conditioner, bio fertilisers, etc.). Therefore, in addition to increasing capture rate, exploring other treatment routes may bring further benefits.
- 3.13 During the compilation of the report where local data was unavailable, generic UK or European wide processes have been used to estimate life-cycle impacts. It should also be noted that the data may have been impacted by the covid pandemic and its influence on waste management operations during this period. In general, this seemed to depress recycling figures across the board.

Conclusions

- 3.14 The 2020 carbon impacts of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste in Belfast are assessed by the International Carbon Metric at 360,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (t CO₂eq.), or 1.05 tonnes CO₂eq./capita.
- 3.15 To achieve a 25% reduction by 2025 as part of the ACR+ 'More Circularity Less Carbon' campaign, Belfast must reduce its waste carbon impacts by approximately 90,000 tCO₂eq, to a total of 270,000 tCO₂eq.
- 3.16 Prevention and re-use activities represent the main potential for reduction of carbon within waste management activities. In terms of levers to drive the prevention strand, much of this lies with central government policy which needs to create the environment to bring about the desired behavioural change. The Council can support any new policy direction through communications and collaboration with stakeholders such as the social enterprise and community organisations which currently make up the foundation blocks of the repair and re-use sector.
- 3.17 Further carbon savings can be achieved by capturing more materials for recycling instead of waste to energy (incineration) and landfilling. This is particularly the case for increased recycling of plastic (capture rate and quality of sorted plastic) although this may be more challenging for the

Council when the Deposit Return Scheme is launched in 2025.

- 318 The Council must ensure that waste prevention, re-use and repair activities feature more prominently in the next waste plan which will be developed following completion of the DAERA waste strategy, due December 2023.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.19 There are no financial or resource implications associated with this report.

Equality or Good Relations Implications and Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.20 There are no good relations or rural needs associated with this report.”

Following a query regarding the uptake of home composting kits, the Director undertook to liaise directly with the Member.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and that it was envisaged that the key findings and recommendations would be integrated into the next Council waste plan and contribute to the Council’s climate change actions.

Belfast Boxing Strategy 2022-2023 Quarter 3 - Update and extension of programme for 2023-2024

The Director of Neighbourhood Services drew the Members’ attention to the contents of a report which provided an update on the implementation of the Belfast Boxing Strategy, for the period October to December 2022 (Quarter 3). The report noted that the Irish Athletic Boxing Association Ulster Branch (IABA) had advised that it anticipated that all the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) would be achieved by the end of 2022/23.

The Committee was advised that, pending the development of Council’s Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy, the IABA had asked the Council to extend the current strategy and related level of annual support for a further twelve-month period.

The Committee:

- noted the progress to date of the strategy annual work plan for the current year 2022/23;
- agreed to extend the Belfast Boxing Strategy and delivery of the related programme from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024, pending the production of the new Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy for Belfast; and

- agreed that annual update reports on the Boxing Strategy be submitted annually to the March meeting of the People and Communities Committee instead of quarterly updates.

Stadia Community Benefits Initiative
2022-2023 Quarter 3 Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 To advise Committee of progress with the Stadia Community Benefits Initiative (SCBI) for Quarter 3 of the current financial year and to provide an update on the action plan.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note progress to date.

3.0 Main report

3.1 The Council has been undertaking the Leisure Transformation Programme to renew its Leisure facilities across the City. This Programme has been influenced by the Partnership opportunities presented by the NI Executive Stadia Programme.

3.2 The Council, Department for Communities (DfC) and the Irish Football Association (IFA) have recognised the opportunities presented by the Stadia Programme, have committed to work together to maximise these benefits and have agreed to establish a Stadium Community Benefits Initiative as part of the Belfast Community Benefits Initiative (‘the Project’) to implement and deliver agreed objectives including promoting equality, tackling poverty, and tackling social exclusion within the Belfast area.

3.3 In March 2016 the Council, DfC and IFA signed an agreement which sets out their respective commitments to the project. As other major stadia are developed in Belfast, it is anticipated that other sports governing bodies shall become parties to the agreement. At its April 2018 meeting People and Communities committee agreed that Council would work with the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) within the Stadia Community Benefits Initiative and recognised their significant planned investment in Gaelic Games in the city to support their Gaelfast strategy. GAA activities became fully incorporated into the action plan at the start of financial year 2019-2020, with Gaelfast staff imbedded into the governance

structure at the Delivery Board and the Policy and Performance Group.

- 3.4 The agreement is for a period of ten years with financial commitment from Council and IFA in place to the end of March 2026. Delivery is managed through monthly meetings of the Delivery Board, which reports quarterly to the Policy and Performance Board. Financial and performance reports will be presented to Council and other partners' Boards as necessary.
- 3.5 The Policy & Performance Group is responsible for agreeing the Benefits Realisation Plan and associated annual targets. Work was undertaken to ensure the end benefits/outcomes are aligned to partners' strategies. To measure the progress of this the Council and the IFA have developed a range of indicators/intermediate benefits which are monitored through programme delivery:
- a. Number of coaching sessions provided
 - b. Number of coaches engaged in delivering coaching
 - c. Number of sessions improving club governance
 - d. Number of volunteering opportunities
 - e. Participation opportunities for under 16s
 - f. Female participation rates
 - g. Number of people completing skills development programme
 - h. Number of sessions for under-represented groups
 - i. Number of sessions for school and youth groups
 - j. Community group usage of stadia
 - k. Number of clubs attaining club-mark
 - l. Educational opportunities
 - m. Number of programmes targeting ASB
 - n. Improved collaborative working
 - o. Number of disabled participants
 - p. Number of older people participating
- 3.6 The policy and performance group held their meeting on Friday 24 February to review performance to date and to be updated in terms of the programme for Q3 and Q4
- 3.7 Following the completion of a baseline assessment in early 2017, annual workplans are developed each year. The Action Plan for 2022-2023 has been produced by the partners and includes a mixture of sports specific programmes including National Governing Body specific coach education courses and some joint collaborative initiatives delivered by both sporting codes such as information webinars which continue to prove popular. A successful joint conference took place in January 2023.

Performance

- 3.8 Delivery to date in Q1, Q2 and Q3 of year 6 (financial year 2022/2023) has been strong and details of the IFA and GAA specific activities are included at appendix 1 and appendix 2

A number of joint initiatives are also planned for Q4.

Financial Implications

- 3.9 In accordance with the Council's obligations under its DfC Funding Agreement for the Olympia Regeneration Project, the Council has committed a sum of £100,000 per annum for a minimum of ten years, so that a minimum of £1,000,000 is contributed in total to the Project.

- 3.10 In relation to 2022/23 Q3 spend, partners have reported a normal level of spend in line with programmes delivered. Partners have projected full utilisation of the budget across both joint and individual work programmes by the end of March 2023.

Equality or Good Relations Implications and Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.11 There are no additional impacts related to this report."

The Committee noted the update.

Community Infrastructure Pilot Update

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 update members on work undertaken by officers in the last few months to identify issues and needs within the Community Infrastructure Pilot areas previously approved by Committee on 9th November 2021.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members of the Committee are asked to note the update, and

- To liaise with the relevant Neighbourhood Integration Manager should they require more information, and/or if they would like to contribute to the ongoing mapping and engagement exercise, and
- To agree that more detailed reports (on mapping, engagement and delivery in each of the pilot areas)

are presented to the next round of Area Working Groups planned for August/September 2023, and

- To agree that a composite report will then be brought to P&C committee in October 2023.

3.0 Main report

Background

- 3.1 Committee (alongside Area Working Groups) previously considered reports in May and November 2021 which agreed the approach proposed within them (namely the development of Community Infrastructure Pilots) to help address weak community infrastructure in targeted localities, with members subsequently deciding that there should be 8 pilot projects developed (2 per area – N, S, E & W, rather than the 4 – one per area of the city initially proposed). With each pilot area being supported with a £15k per annum budget for a 2-year period.
- 3.2 It was further agreed that Neighbourhood Integration Managers (NIMs), supported by the Neighbourhood Services Manager aligned with community planning and the community provision review within Neighbourhood Services/CNS, would lead on developing and delivering the approach, working alongside identified internal and external stakeholders, and key communities/community groups within the 8 areas selected. The table below, outlines the NIM for each area, as well as the areas chosen by members for targeting.
- 3.3 Table 1 – Neighbourhood Integration Managers by area/Areas identified for targeting

<p>East Neighbourhood Integration Manager – Kathy Watters wattersk@belfastcity.gov.uk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ormiston DEA – Braniel • Lisnasharragh DEA – Clonduff
<p>South Neighbourhood Integration Manager – Denise Smith smithdenise@belfastcity.gov.uk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Botanic DEA – Ballynafeigh including Annadale) • Balmoral DEA – Finaghy
<p>North Neighbourhood Integration Manager – Vacant gillilandk@belfastcity.gov.uk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oldpark DEA – Mid Antrim Road (Limestone/Glandore) • Castle DEA – Lower

	Shore Road
West Neighbourhood Integration Manager – Alice McGlone mcglonea@belfastcity.gov.uk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colin DEA – Black’s Gate (former Visteon site) • Court DEA – Glencairn

- 3.4 The update report tabled at P&C Committee in November 2022, highlighted that this work had been significantly delayed as a result of staffing issues and competing service demands on the within CNS, and in particular, on the team tasked with leading this piece of work. The report also noted that the additional budget had also been impacted and was no longer available.
- 3.5 Following this update, members requested that ‘a meeting be convened between officers and Elected Members to further explore any short-term actions that could be taken to support the participating areas identified in the Community Infrastructure Pilot.’
- 3.6 In the interim period, in preparation for further engagement with members, each Neighbourhood Integration Manager has been liaising with the internal Area Teams (these meet quarterly and comprise of council staff from across the range of service areas within neighbourhood services i.e. community services, community safety, good relations, leisure development, parks outreach, open space and street scene, health development, environmental education) in order to begin to map the following information:
- Groups active in the area
 - Stakeholders to include in discussion
 - Community Facility in the area - If yes – details of programming offered
 - Community Assets – Eg Churches/Playgrounds/Parks/ Centres – Youth/ Leisure/ Community
 - Feedback on current needs or issues
 - Funding – CNS/Physical Programmes/ external
- 3.7 NIMs have also commenced one to one engagement with elected members and key stakeholders operating within the pilot areas to build on this picture – and this element will continue throughout February and March 2023. Members are encouraged to contact the NIM for their area if they wish to share information, or discuss in more detail, their aspirations for, and understanding of needs/issues, in the area.

- 3.8 It is also worth noting that, in some areas, actions have already been undertaken or are underway, whereas for others it is still very much about assessing the need and capacity within that locality. This would be the case for example in North, where unfortunately the Neighbourhood Integration Manager posts has been vacant from November 2022.
- 3.9 As such, officers are proposing that this work continues between now and the summer months and that more detailed reports are then brought forward to the August round of Area Working Group meetings. These will outline the results of the mapping exercise, feedback from the stakeholder engagement, give an overview of any action(s) already undertaken, and make recommendations in relation to next steps/further actions required and how these might be taken forward.
- 3.10 Officers will then bring a composite report to P&C committee in October 2023 (as EAWG is only meeting on 7 September 2023).

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.11 As previously reported at committee in November 2022, there is currently no additional budget identified to support this work in-year, or for 23/24. However, as noted above, any identified needs or asks will, where possible, be met via existing BCC resources, and by linking in with key statutory and VCSE partners in the identified areas to see what they can also provide.

Equality or Good Relations Implications and Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.12 Will be considered as part of the needs assessment and action planning and delivery processes within each pilot area.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations as outlined at 2.1 of the report and further agreed that the information within the reports due to be submitted to the West Area Working Group and the People and Communities Committee regarding the Black's Gate site would include information and recommendations on commercial, open spaces and the management of the community centre moving forward.

Partnership Agreements 2023/24

The Committee considered a report regarding the existing Partnership Agreements that were currently in place to deliver services aligned to Neighbourhood Services activity.

The Members were reminded that an extensive review of the first six Partnership Agreements listed below had been undertaken in 2021/22. In line with the review

findings, the Council had agreed that these partnership funding arrangements would continue at the same level to deliver services in 2022/23.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services advised that, at the start of 2023, a desktop review of the last two agreements listed below, which had not formed part of the original review, had been undertaken. At this stage it had been agreed that these funded programmes would be considered as part of the overall departmental partnership arrangements, and they were now being presented for consideration. He continued that, in line with any decision to extend the funding arrangements, officers would agree specific deliverables with the organisations in advance of next year's programme and events. It was noted that these were likely to include information in relation to economic impact, visitor numbers and increased audiences, and increased cultural diversity and awareness.

Project	Funding
Belfast Hills Partnership	£36,900
Lagan Valley Regional Park	£67,000
Outdoor Recreation NI (promotion of mountain bike trails)	£5,000
Keep NI Beautiful (Live Here Love Here and Eco Schools Project)	£55,000
Mary Peters Trust	£5,000
Bryson Energy (previously Play Resource) *	£31,209
Belfast Mela	£20,000
Belfast International Arts Festival	£20,000
TOTAL	£240,109

* Note – Play Resource Warehouse is no longer in existence and instead has merged with Bryson Energy.

The Director advised that the review had recognised the annual nature of budgeting within local government, however, it highlighted that forward planning and service delivery could be improved if a longer-term funding cycle could be provided to the partner funding arrangements. He continued that, whilst this was recognised as desirable, given the wider financial support provided to the community/voluntary sector on an annual basis and the challenges to financial planning, currently it was not recommended that funding be allocated beyond the 2023/24 financial year to the Partners.

The Committee:

- agreed to continue funding to each of the partners at the same level for the 2023/24 financial year (£240,109); and
- to enhance the promotion of partnership efforts to increase public awareness of activity delivered through these funding agreements.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

Pitch Partner Agreements Update

The Committee noted the quarterly progress report in relation to Partner Agreements at seven sites and that all Partners had been compliant on reporting matters and financial checks for October – December 2022/23.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services then referred to a request to extend all existing agreements. He advised that, as the Committee was aware, the Council was currently developing a new policy regarding the management of assets within the community with a pilot being delivered across a number of sites. One of the sites included in the initial pilot was Ulidia Playing Fields and this site had been assessed using the pilot approach. At its meeting in October, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee had endorsed the recommendation from the People and Communities Committee to transfer the existing Partner Agreement at Ulidia to a long-term lease.

The Director continued that it was anticipated, following review of the Community Asset Transfer pilot process, a number of the sites might also be made available for consideration under new management arrangements, therefore, to ensure continuity of service provision, it was proposed that the existing Partner Agreements would continue until any new arrangements had been put in place.

The Committee:

- agreed to extend all current partner agreements until 31st March 2024 or until new arrangements were put in place following completion of the Community Asset Transfer Pilot; and
- noted the progress to date at Partner Agreement sites for quarter 3 (October to December) 2022/23 and agreed that going forward annual update reports on the Pitch Partner Agreements be submitted to the March meeting of the People and Communities Committee instead of quarterly updates.

Operational Issues

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 La Salle Drive, Hopefield Avenue and Suffolk Parade the Committee approved the applications.

Dog Warden Service Update

(Ms. K. Jackson, Dog Warden Supervisor, attended in connection with this agenda item.)

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 To provide members of the People and Communities Committee with an update on the Dog Warden Service and in particular: Responsible Dog Ownership; our Internal Review and Proposed Changes to Fixed Penalty Fines for dog fouling offences. The proposed changes to the Fixed Penalty Fines also apply to littering offences.**

The Committee noted the previous update at the meeting on 11 October 2022 and agreed that a follow up report would be submitted to a future meeting which would consider, amongst other issues:

- Enhancing and localising the dog foul media campaign.
- Developing a further stencilling campaign (including liaison with Dfl in this regard).
- Increasing the use of signage.
- Consideration of the use of the Customer Hub in identifying 'hotspots'.
- Linking directly with the Elected Members for identified hotspot areas.
- The provision of free dog foul bags in problem areas.
- Ensuring adequate bins for disposal were available.
- The development of responsible dog ownership campaigns in the Council's parks and playing field locations.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the update on Responsible Dog Ownership.
- Note an Internal Review is underway.
- Consider Options 1 – 3 in relation to the new fixed penalty limits for dog fouling and agree a preferred option.
- Consider Option 4 - applying any changes made to the fixed penalty limits for dog fouling offences to littering offences.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Dog fouling and irresponsible dog ownership go hand in hand and can impact the quality and amenity of our neighbourhoods. Clearly, whilst the majority of dog owners exercise responsible dog management, there are a small number of owners who have less regard for this and this can have an impact on areas in the city. This requires on-going re-direction of our resources to address in terms of its removal from the streets, as well as providing a wide range of education and awareness programmes together with the use of fines where infringements are detected.

3.2 The Dog Warden Service as part of their role deploy routine monitoring patrols, to detect dog fouling incidents. However, it is widely recognised that the problem of dog fouling cannot be addressed solely by enforcement intervention.

3.3 To encourage a change in behaviour, a wider programme supporting responsible dog ownership is an essential

element of the Council’s approach to reducing levels of dog fouling throughout the city. Part 1 of this report summarises the activities undertaken to address the issue of dog fouling and encourage Responsible Dog Ownership.

3.4 PART 1 – RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERSHIP

Enforcement

3.5 Enforcement and visibility of same is an integral part of dealing with dog fouling. Councils are required to provide the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) with statistical information on a wide range of dog control service areas and enforcement for example: dog licences, complaints regarding stray dogs, dog attacks and dog warden enforcement actions. This information is provided by Councils on a quarterly basis, collated and held by DAERA. It is then referred to by Councils and DAERA when providing responses to dog related information requests from the media, the public and animal welfare stakeholders.

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/council-dog-summarystatistics>

3.6 The following table provides enforcement statistics for BCC for along with the DAERA NI average for 21/22.

Year	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23 to date	DAERA NI Average per Council 21/22
Fixed Penalties issued - Fouling	82	54	101	5	20	14	Not recorded by DAERA
Summons issued - Fouling	17	13	4	0	3	1	Not recorded by DAERA
Fixed Penalties issued - Straying	384	387	328	61	170	22*	42
Summons issued – Straying	120	126	81	0	21	9	6
Fixed Penalties issues – No license	338	341	244	61	180	122	65
Summons issues – No license	180	175	116	0	31	32	7

Total Dog Licenses issues	11,872	11,819	11,519	10,741	10,774	9,856 (to end of January)	12,631
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* Dramatic reduction in straying FPNs due to legal opinion on definition of a stray.

Environmental Education and Outreach Team (EEOT)

- 3.7 The Environmental Education and Outreach Team have a project plan detailing a range of activities through educational, promotional and community-based programmes scheduled throughout the course of each year, which aims to highlight the problems of dog fouling.
- 3.8 In late 2019, prior to the pandemic, the EEOT launched the Green Dog Walkers Project, which is a non-confrontational, voluntary, UK wide scheme to change attitudes towards dog fouling. On signing, individuals pledge to commit to the principles of good dog ownership i.e. to clean up after their dog and encourage others to do the same. They get a lead with messaging on it and poo bags. The Team is in the process of re-instating this initiative and is encouraging Green Dog Walkers to sign-up at their events with Scoop Dog. The project will also go live on our website in the next few weeks.
- 3.9 The EEOT provide our community centres with a supply of poo bags for members of the public, to further broaden the reach of their support of the Responsible Dog Ownership Campaign.
- 3.10 The EEOT engage with schools and to make the biggest impact, in person visits are their preference. They have computer games, curriculum packs, activities and digital files they can give to schools. Large banners are also available for school railings.
- 3.11 They have a new campaign inviting local school children to design colourful billboard ads, urging owners to clean up after their dogs and keep our local communities clean. Four winners will have their designs displayed on a billboard in their area.

Stencilling

- 3.12 The legislation that relates to local authorities placing functional advertisements on pavements e.g. Stencilling, has been updated since we last liaised with the Department for Infrastructure and we have written to DfI again, seeking permission to re-instate a stencilling programme. We await a response. Over the last 3 months colleagues in OSS have been carrying out stencilling in parks across the City.

Dog Fouling Campaign

- 3.13 Following a request from P&C, for a 'hard hitting' campaign, marketing and corporate communications designed and activated a fully integrated campaign for 3 weeks from 10 October 2022. The second burst of the advertising campaign is currently in market (running from 13 February 2023 and finishes on 5 March 2023). The overarching campaign message is #YourDogYourJob. Tactical outdoor advertising on buses and adshels was used as part of the media mix to target hotspot areas and across main arterial routes. Analysis of complaints, information from dog fouling patrols and Elected Members was also used to determine hotspot locations. As well as outdoor, the advertising media mix included; radio, online advertising and paid for social media promoted posts.

High Visibility Patrols

- 3.14 Dog Wardens routinely carry out high visibility patrols and in October 2022, to support the media medic campaign, they carried out 30 high visibility patrols, totaling 46.3 hours.

3.15 Evaluation of October 2022 Dog Fouling Advertising Campaign

- The adshels were seen on average 10.7 times by over 70% of all adults.
 - The T-sides on buses were seen on average 3.4 times by 472,747 people.
 - The Q radio advert was heard on average 4.9 times.
 - The U105 advert was heard by 243,661 people on average 5.9 times.
 - Click through rates were strong.
 - 58% of dog owners recalled seeing the adverts.
- 3.16 In general respondents were pleased to see a campaign tackling the issue. However, it was recognised there are challenges to having an influencing impact on that minority of irresponsible dog owners.
- 3.17 Advertising alone will never deal with this issue and it is recognised there is a need to continually reinforce our Responsible Dog Ownership messages through education and enforcement.
- 3.18 Colleagues in the Quality Team assessed the levels of dog fouling in 10 streets in North, South, East and West Belfast before and after the campaign. They looked at old dog fouling and new dog fouling, before and after. New dog fouling decreased across all areas, bar west. Old dog fouling

increased across all areas. Dog Wardens routinely make colleagues in OSS aware of hotspots as street cleaning schedules may need to be adjusted.

Dog Fouling Signage

- 3.19 We have continued the use of signage, throughout the City, where there appears to be an increase in the incidence of dog fouling.

Parks and Open Spaces

- 3.20 The Dog Wardens carry out high visibility fouling patrols across the City and are assisted in the parks by Park Wardens. Dog Wardens and Park Wardens are carrying out joint patrols, when possible, to increase awareness of our Responsible Dog Ownership Campaign in the Council's parks and playing field locations. Traditionally, there was a high level of detection of fouling in parks and Dog Wardens are currently targeting our parks, along with other hotspots.

Local Hotspots

- 3.21 Analysis of complaints and information from dog fouling patrols and Elected Members are used to determine current hotspot locations. We are investigating the use of map info to help with the analysis of complaints. This will enable the Dog Wardens to see the weekly / monthly hotspots on one map of Belfast and target resources appropriately.

3.22 PART 2 - INTERNAL REVIEW OF DOG WARDEN SERVICE

- 3.23 The Dog Warden Service operates 7 days a week (except Bank Holidays) from 08:00 to 20:00 hours. There are 12 Dog Wardens who operate in 4 teams, 2 Supervisors and a Dog Warden and Animal Welfare Manager (temporary post until September 2023 with any extension subject to finding the finances).

- 3.24 There were 2,821 service requests in 2021/22 with 2,239 between 1 April and 31 December 2022, averaging 249 per month. The top two categories of service request going back 4 years are straying and fouling, with barking and dog attacks third and fourth.

- 3.25 We are in the process of reviewing the Dog Warden Service through a process known as Service Design. This approach moves away from a pure focus on a specific structure to a focus on the service being delivered to the customer. Designing a service that the customer needs involves designing, processes, procedures, technology solutions and a structure to support the delivery.

3.26 We aim to have most of the findings of the review implemented in the next 9 – 12 months.

3.27 **PART 3 - PROPOSED CHANGES TO FIXED PENALTY FINES FOR DOG CONTROL OFFENCES**

3.28 The Environmental Offences (Fixed Penalties) (Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 which were made on 8 December 2022 came into force on 30 December 2022 and amend the previous 2012 Regulations. The effect is to alter the amount of a fixed penalty capable of being specified by the Council for a fixed penalty under:

(a) Article 6 (6A) (a) of the Litter Order;

(b) Section 44 (1) (a) of the 2011 Act insofar as it relates to an offence under a Dog Control Order set out in Schedule 1 to the 2012 regulations i.e. offence of dog fouling.

and specifying that it shall be not less than £50 and not more than £200. Legislation previously specified not less than £50 and not more than £80.

Current Situation

3.29 The Council previously agreed to set the level of fixed penalty fine for dog fouling at £80, reduced to £50 if paid within 10 days.

3.30 **Options**

Option 1 – no change

Option 2 – increase to maximum of £200 with reduction if paid within 10 days. Suggested reduction to £100 as an incentive to pay the fixed penalty promptly and avoid court action.

Option 3 – increase but not to maximum with reduction if paid within 10 days. Could be anything from £90 - £190, with any level of reduction.

3.31 If a change is made we will have to update our signage. Officers and Elected Members are inundated with complaints about dog fouling. It is extremely difficult to catch offenders as they often modify their behaviour and pick up after their dog if they see a Dog Warden patrolling. Patrolling is really only a deterrent but it is labour intensive. During the 46.3 hours of patrols carried out in October 2022 only one dog fouling incident was observed and therefore only 1 fixed penalty notice was served.

- 3.32 This is a sensitive time to consider increasing the cost of anything. We recognise a balance has to be struck – on the one hand the public, staff and Members are clearly frustrated with the level of dog fouling across the City but on the other, an increase in the fixed penalty fine should act as a deterrent to the minority of dog owners who are irresponsible.
- 3.33 Option 4 – Consider applying any changes made to the fixed penalty limits for dog fouling offences to littering offences. The Council previously agreed to set the level of fixed penalty fine for littering at £80, reduced to £60 if paid within 10 days. There would be no additional signage costs as most signs include information about dog fouling and littering.

Finance and Resource Implications

- 3.34 There will be finance implications for some of the actions falling out of the Internal Review in Part 2 of this report e.g. mobile technology, but this is being considered within existing budgets and across the Service.

There are cost implications for Part 3 of this report if changes are required to signage. We do already have a budget for signage and cost varies depending on the size of the sign and the method of mounting but is in the region of £20 - £25 plus VAT each. We were about to order signage when we became aware of the changes to the legislation and have held off on placing an order until Elected Members make a decision.

Asset and Other Implications

- 3.35 None

Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment

- 3.36 None.”

The Committee thanked the Director for the update report and detailed discussion ensued regarding the ongoing issues with irresponsible dog ownership, specifically regarding the issues with dog fouling throughout the city.

During discussion the following issues were, once again, discussed/highlighted:

- Enhancing and localising the dog foul media campaign;
- Developing a further stencilling campaign (including liaison with DfI in this regard) and increasing the use of signage;
- The provision of free dog foul bags in problem areas and at community centres;
- Ensuring adequate bins for disposal were available for the disposal of dog waste and the use of Fido machines;

- Whether staffing levels were adequate; and
- The development of responsible dog ownership campaigns in the Council's parks and playing field locations.

Due to the complexity of the issues throughout the city and the ongoing problems these created for the community, a Member stated that he wished to see an immediate, specific, targeted, zero tolerance, citywide dog fouling intervention plan being implemented. He suggested that this intervention should use all methods currently available to the Council, with the specific aim of reducing the instances of dog fouling across the city. He stated that the intervention should be well publicised and have the ability to touch every community in each quarter of the city, with those responsible left in no doubt that irresponsible behaviour would not be tolerated.

Detailed discussion ensued during which the Dog Warden Supervisor addressed a number of queries. The Members also considered the opportunity for the Council to consider introducing new fixed penalty limits.

Due to the volume of issues that had been highlighted during the discussion, the Committee:

- noted the update on Responsible Dog Ownership and agreed a targeted citywide dog fouling intervention plan to address the ongoing problems of irresponsible dog owner behaviours, it further agreed to hold a Committee Workshop during March/April which would consider the methods currently available to the Council and any new measures that could be introduced which would have the specific aim to drive down instances of dog fouling across the city; and
- agreed to defer consideration of new fixed penalty limits for dog fouling and dog fouling offences to littering offences until a future meeting.

Attendance at Welcoming Interactive Conference

The Committee was advised that, as part of the Inclusive Cities Project, an invitation had been extended to the Council to attend a conference presented by Welcoming America in San Jose, California from 26th – 28th April 2023.

The Members noted that this was an annual conference that highlighted successful practices and inspiring stories about immigrant inclusion, programmes, policies and partnerships. Given the strategic importance of the issue of inclusion, along with the fact that the Council had signed up to be a City of Sanctuary and its wish to see Belfast as a welcoming safe and inclusive city, this would be an opportunity for the Good Relations Officer, as a lead officer for the Inclusive Cities Project within the Council, to feed the learning into the Council's own Race Equality Plan, the Belfast Agenda on Good Relations, the TEO Dispersal Fund for Asylum Seekers, the PEACE PLUS Local Action Plan, the District Council Good Relations Plan and as facilitator of the Migrant Forum for Belfast to share good practice with the members of that Forum and the Shared City Partnership.

The Committee noted that the Good Relations Officer would be attending the Conference in San Jose, California and that the only cost to Council would be the return travel from Belfast to Dublin, visa costs and the associated subsistence costs on the two days of travel.

Port Health Update

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:

- a) Provide a brief update on current Port Health operations; and
- b) to seek approval to sign a number of operational Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) that clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Council, Food Standards Agency and DAERA in respect of joint working arrangements.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- i) Note the update on Port Health operations
- ii) Agree to sign the draft Operational MOUs to clarify roles and responsibilities of BCC and DAERA for joint working arrangements.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Port Health operations

Members will be aware that Belfast City Council’s Port Health service have been working jointly with DAERA at Belfast Port for many years, and this has continued since the UK’s exit from the European Union. Members will also be aware that since the beginning of 2021, the Port health function services an increased volume of food consignments entering via Belfast Port, ensuring that food is fit and safe to eat.

- ##### **3.2 Funding:** The service is currently funded on an annual basis via the Central Competent Authorities for the respective food policy areas (Food Standards Agency for fish, high risk food and plastics/kitchenware from China/Hong Kong and DAERA for organic products and Illegal Unreported and Unregulated Fishing). Bids have been submitted by FSA and DAERA to Department of Finance for 2023/24 and FSA and DAERA have indicated they anticipate that these will be successful. It is also anticipated that a longer term financing model for the

service will need to be considered and agreed following the final and agreed outcome of the recent UK/EU discussions.

- 3.3 **Staffing:** To facilitate increased service levels, the Port Health team was expanded in late 2020, however recruitment and retention challenges prompted an interim review of staffing structure to rebalance the number of Environmental Health Officers required. This resulted in a small increase in support roles to offset a similar small reduction in EHO numbers. Recruitment campaigns have reduced the number of vacant posts. Staff wellbeing and health and safety is a key issue and improved welfare facilities on site, additional health and safety training and equipment have been provided.
- 3.4 **Facilities:** Belfast City Council's port health function continues to operate from the inspection facility at Corry Place, which is shared with DAERA for some inspections. To ensure the facility is fit for purpose to meet the required standards, DAERA invested in upgrades at the site, providing additional office accommodation, food storage facilities and security measures. An MOU to clarify DAERA responsibilities for these upgrades, together with the practical arrangements for managing use of the facility has been prepared.
- 3.5 **IT systems:** Officers are engaging with DAERA and FSA and DEFRA on emerging developments at regional, national and global levels, to ensure that IT systems used by the Council are fit for purpose and effectively integrated to ensure a more efficient and streamlined approach.
- 3.6 **Facilitating joint service delivery – Memorandums of Understanding**

To clarify joint working arrangements, roles and responsibilities in a number of key areas related to food exports from NI and imports to NI, draft Memorandums of Understanding have been prepared. These include the following:

	<u>Subject of MOU</u>	<u>Main contents/issues</u>
1	Shared use of Point of Entry Facilities at Corry Place	Sets out roles and responsibilities for maintenance of upgraded equipment and facilities by DAERA, roles and responsibilities of Food Standards Agency as a Central Competent Authority, roles and responsibilities of

		Belfast City Council as the leaseholder for the site, and arrangements for joint working including cleaning, health and safety, security, and prioritisation of bookings.
2	Shared use of Point of Entry facilities at Corry Road (Dufferin)	Sets out roles and responsibilities for maintenance of the site by the main leaseholder (Border Force) and roles and responsibilities of users including DAERA, Food Standards Agency, and Belfast City Council, and arrangements for joint working, including cleaning, health and safety and prioritisation of bookings.
3	Use of contract services at Point of Entry facilities	Sets out the roles of responsibilities of contract services provided to Councils by DAERA in respect of Stevedores at inspection facilities, including loading/unloading, cleaning, health and safety etc.
4	DAERA Trade Export Certification programme – (trade certification, export health certificates and support health attestations)	Sets out arrangements for certifications / attestations by Environmental Health Officers of Belfast City Council, on behalf of DAERA, for businesses within the council area who wish to export fish, eggs and related composite products, to ensure they meet food import requirements of other countries across the globe. The number of requests for attestations/certifications in Belfast is extremely low, and this is not expected to impact significantly on Council resources. Should this change a review of the MOU would be requested. This MOU was drafted in consultation with all 11 District Councils and has been approved by Environmental Health NI (EHNI) and the Society of Local Authority

		Chief Executive and Senior Managers NI (SOLACE).
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- 3.7 The draft MOUs above have been considered in detail to ensure that the contents support the Council in delivering its statutory functions, while ensuring all operational requirements are addressed to facilitate the Councils staff in carrying out their roles.

Finance and Resource Implications

- 3.8 None

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

None.”

The Committee noted the update on Port Health operations and agreed to sign the draft Operational Memorandums of Understandings to clarify the roles and responsibilities of Belfast City Council and DAERA for the joint working arrangements.

Chairperson